

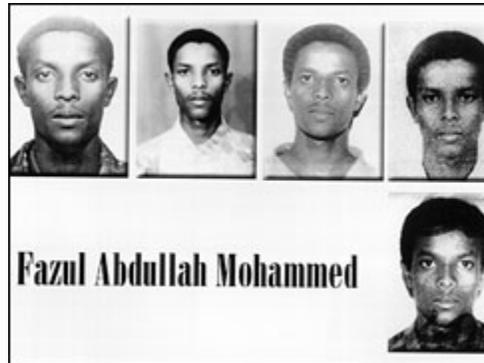
## **APPENDIX B**

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS FROM THE HORN OF AFRICA**

- I. Abdullah Muhammad Fazul**
- II. Abu Hafs al-Masri**
- III. Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys**
- IV. Saif al-Adel**
- V. Lesser Members/Affiliates of Al-Qa'ida**
  - a. Aden Hashi Fara Ayro**
  - b. Gouled Hasan Dourad**
  - c. Abu Talha al-Sudani**



## I. Abdullah Muhammad Fazul



### Childhood and Adolescence<sup>1</sup>

Abdullah Muhammad Fazul Husseine Mullah Ati<sup>2</sup> (Arabic: عبد الله محمد فاضل حسين ملا اتي) was born in the district of Magoudjou<sup>3</sup> in the town of Moroni, the capital city of Grande Comore, the largest of the four<sup>4</sup> Comoros Islands, a tiny former French colony off the northeastern coast of Mozambique. Though he has used February 25, 1974 and December 25, 1974 as dates of birth on various documents, it is likely that his true date of birth is August 25, 1972, a date also used in some documents.<sup>5</sup> He was the youngest of six children, and his parents separated during his infancy over his father's decision to take a second wife. Not long after in 1975, the Comoros declared its independence from France, and it has been politically and economically unstable ever since. There have been no fewer than nineteen coups or attempted coups on the islands since independence, and lacking any natural resources or industries, the tiny nation is extremely poor.<sup>6</sup> There are no post-secondary educational institutions on the islands, and all who would seek higher learning must do so overseas.

<sup>1</sup> The following sketch of Fazul's early life is based on information derived from these sources: Hirschorn, "Elusive Al Qaeda Operative"; McNeil, "Assests of a Bombing Suspect"; "On the Trail of Man Wanted for Bomb Blast"; Vick, "FBI Trails Embassy Bombing Suspect"; "What Turns a Boy into a Terrorist?"

<sup>2</sup> Name at birth from wanted poster here: <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/english/index.cfm?page=Fazul>. In the autobiographical document described in "On the Trail of Man Wanted for Bomb Blast," Fazul gives his name at the beginning of the document as follows: "Abdullah Muhammad, a.k.a. `Ali Fadir Husayn Mulla Ati, a.k.a. Harun Fazul."

<sup>3</sup> "On the Trail of Man Wanted for Bomb Blast." *The Nation* (Nairobi), May 13, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the three islands under its current jurisdiction, the Comoran government lays claim to the island of Mayotte, though the latter is currently a French overseas territory.

<sup>5</sup> Hirschorn, "Elusive." His current age is almost invariably cited in media reports in accordance with the '72 birthdate – e.g., recent reporting (early 2007) on Fazul gives his age as being 34. When referring to his early life, however, different writers give different ages for significant events – thus, different sources give his age when first travelling to Pakistan as somewhere between 14 and 18, with a plurality of sources citing 16. This variance is probably due to the different dates of birth used by Fazul in various documents.

<sup>6</sup> "Comoros," *C.I.A. World Factbook*, < <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/cn.html> > Accessed 20 February 2007.

In relative terms, Fazul's family appear to have been among the small middle class of Moroni. One of Fazul's sisters owned a clothing shop on Magoudjou Street in Moroni and his uncle Sagaff Abdullah had a mattress shop on the same street, opposite the largest hospital in the Comoros. Fazul's father was a well-known and respected preacher in the islands. Several of the members of Fazul's father's family moved to Pakistan in the 1970s; such a move would have been far beyond the means of most of the islands' inhabitants. The Moroni home of Fazul's late mother (d. 1997), where Fazul lived during his childhood, is described as "a sizable masonry home in a neighborhood where other houses are made of galvanized tin or palm leaves."<sup>7</sup> In a home video taken when Fazul was fifteen years old, one can see that he and the other people in the video are well-dressed-Harun wears slacks and a button-up shirt-and that the home is well-appointed; women and men are visible mingling together at the gathering, and none of the women wear any kind of head covering.<sup>8</sup> This provides some indication that the maternal branch of Fazul's immediate family was Islamically liberal, which is true of the majority of Comoran Muslims.<sup>9</sup>

Fazul had close and enduring relationships with his family, with the exception of his father; interviewed at his apartment in central Moroni in 1998, his father claimed to have rarely seen his son since childhood.<sup>10</sup> Throughout his adult life, Fazul made frequent trips home to visit with his mother's family as well as that of his father-in-law, who is Fazul's paternal uncle. Fazul wrote letters to his family as well, and in at least one letter to his brother Omar, who is five years older, he frankly discussed his turn to Islamist terrorism. In 1996, Fazul paid for his mother to be flown to Paris for cancer treatment; on the very day of the embassy bombings, 7 August 1998, Fazul arranged for his father-in-law to be flown from a hospital in Nairobi back to Moroni.<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that he has constantly been on the move since joining al-Qa'ida, Fazul has managed to keep his wife and children with him for much of the time.

As a child and young teen, Fazul appears by all accounts to have been precocious but otherwise normal. He played soccer and the flute, enjoyed dancing to popular music-several people remembered him dancing like Michael Jackson-and liked to show off his prowess at twirling around kung fu fighting sticks. When playing with others he

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<sup>7</sup> Vick, "FBI Trails."

<sup>8</sup> "What Turns a Boy Into a Terrorist?"

<sup>9</sup> The Comoros Islands are 98% Sunni Muslim, though it is common to see women in public there without any head coverings. Qat and alcohol are available in shops, and Islamist parties have consistently done miserably at the polls in the elections that have punctuated the many Comoran coups. Local people interviewed about Fazul generally view him as a villain, and the traditional Muslim leadership there has expressed alarm and disapproval at the Saudi-funded incursion of Wahhabism there. The islands' grand mufti stated in 1998, referring to Hasan al-Turabi's National Islamic Front, which had offered "scholarships" to Comorans for study at madarasas abroad since the mid-1980s, "We are openly against this organization. They are looking for people who are not well in the mind, who are poor, who need new visions" (Vick, "FBI Trails Embassy Bombing Suspect").

<sup>10</sup> Vick, "FBI Trails Embassy Bombing Suspect."

<sup>11</sup> Fazul's father-in-law died soon thereafter; already in the late stages of a terminal illness, he died of injuries sustained when Comoran police tipped him out of his bed during a search following the embassy bombings.

sometimes pretended to be James Bond. In other words, he was exposed to and enjoyed the kind of Western cultural productions that are anathema to Salafis.

Fazul received a traditional Islamic education in his early years. At the age of four he began basic Qur'an studies with an uncle and at seven began attending the madrasa of Fundi<sup>12</sup> Twawilou Abdulfateh. By age 9 he had memorized much of the Qur'an and began in this year to appear on Radio Comoros, reading instructions on prayer and other Islamic matters prepared by his Qur'an teacher. At 13, he began to read instructions and advice on the radio that he prepared himself. By this point, Fazul had learned Swahili, Comorian (related to Swahili), French and Arabic, and had had a good deal of exposure to English as well. As an adult he would become fluent in all of these tongues.

His first madrasa teacher, Fundi Twawilou, remembers Fazul fondly, recalling that he was exceptionally bright; Fazul was two levels ahead of one of his sisters, though she was the elder by several years. But Fundi Twawilou also saw the beginnings of Fazul's propensity for violence. He recalls that Fazul often had bouts of rage; he would pick fights with older boys on the soccer field, and sometimes administered his own corporal punishment to classmates for mistakes in reciting the Qur'an, slamming them down in their chairs. At the local French-language public school, Fazul was expelled for striking his French teacher. At age 11, he cut the ear of one of Fundi Twawilou's charges for making a mistake in Qur'an recitation and the teacher asked Fazul to leave the school.<sup>13</sup>

At this point, Fazul began attending the classes of an older teacher, Fundi Muhammad Ali, who remembers Fazul as "brilliant, respectful to others, deeply religious and very calm."<sup>14</sup> Friends who knew him in these years generally corroborate this view. One former schoolmate recalls that Fazul was "a bit reserved. In fact, a recluse of sorts. Only arguments on matters of religion seemed to interest him. Then he could argue with heated passion."<sup>15</sup> Another former classmate and congregant at the same mosque that Fazul frequented remembers his unusual intelligence and breadth of knowledge – he said that Fazul "knew more than the average Comoran boy," and that he "was always quoting this or that philosopher or 'religious leader'" – but also "his bitterness about the tumultuous politics of the islands." Saying that Fazul was an "unhappy young man who was always complaining," this person remembers Fazul as being a fierce critic of the French and of the founding president of the independent Comoros, Ahmed Abdullah.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "Fundi" is Swahili for a skilled person, expert, or teacher, in this instance roughly equivalent to the Arabic "sheikh."

<sup>13</sup> McNeil, "Assesses of a Bombing Suspect." Elsewhere in the same article McNeil describes this event in slightly different terms; he calls Fazul a "brilliant student of the Koran who was thrown out of religious school for caning a lazy pupil hard enough to draw blood."

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "On the Trail of Man Wanted for Bomb Blast."

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

This angry interest in domestic politics is evident in the letter that Fazul wrote to his brother Omar in 1991.<sup>17</sup>

### Radicalization

Though clearly religious in childhood, there are no indications that Fazul held radical or even particularly conservative beliefs up to this point.<sup>18</sup> This definitely changed, however, when Fazul, at age 16, left the tutelage of Fundi Muhammad Ali for that of Soidiki M'Bapandza, the islands' most prominent Salafi/Wahhabi sheikh. Fundi Soidiki, who was once a leader of an Islamist opposition party in the Comoros, runs a number of madrasas in the Hadoudja district of Moroni that teach a Saudi-designed curriculum in place of the government-approved curriculum taught at the other Comoran madrasas. Unlike the other madrasas, at Soidiki's school the sexes are strictly segregated and girls must fully cover their heads. The local Muslim establishment expresses suspicion about Soidiki and his school; he and his students do not attend the public mosques or join the wider community in religious festivals, and it is well known on the islands that he is supported by Saudi money. In fact, soon after Fazul enrolled in Soidiki's school it began to receive financing from the al-Haramayn Foundation,<sup>19</sup> an organization which was functionally an extension of al-Qa'ida, and one with which Fazul would work closely on a number of occasions in his subsequent career as an al-Qa'ida operative. This was one of the earliest financing ventures of the organization outside of South Asia, and began even before al-Haramayn moved its headquarters from Karachi to Riyadh in 1992.

Fazul apparently spent two years studying with Soidiki. His future wife also studied at the school, though on account of their age difference they did not attend the madrasa at the same time. At age 18, at the end of his course of study with Soidiki, Fazul received a scholarship to study abroad. It may be that this money came from al-Haramayn, though a Comoran official and members of Fazul's family told one reporter in 1998 that the money had come from a Sudanese group called *al-Jabha*, or "The Front," which is very likely none other than the National Islamic Front (*al-Jabha al-Islamiyya al-Qawmiyya*) of Hassan al-Turabi, which in the following year would become the host of Osama bin Laden.<sup>20</sup> Either way, Fazul would have been traveling on al-Qa'ida-connected money.

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<sup>17</sup> Fazul refers in that letter to four Comoran politicians, one of whom (Moustoifa Said Cheikh, leader of the Front Démocratique des Comores) he claims attempted to encompass the death of his teacher Soidiki, and implies his desire to kill these men. When police searched the Fazul family home in Moroni in Sept. 1998 they found a "list of prominent Comorans who would have to be killed to make way for fundamentalist rule" (McNeil, "Assets of a Bombing Suspect").

<sup>18</sup> In the autobiographical manuscript described in "On the Trail of Man Wanted for Bomb Blast," however, Fazul says that he knew what he wanted to do from a very young age. One might also consider his response to classmates who mispronounced words from the Qur'an as an early indication of his willingness to turn to violence in defence of Islam.

<sup>19</sup> Pérouse de Montclos, Profile of the al-Haramayn Foundation.

<sup>20</sup> Vick, "FBI Trails Embassy Bombing Suspect." This information is somewhat dubious, however, since these same sources told Vick that the money was for study *in* Sudan, and that Fazul went to study there. There is no doubt that Fazul went to Pakistan on his scholarship, *not* Sudan, though he may have told some people he was going to Sudan to hide his intentions to join the jihad in Afghanistan. In his letter to his

Given Soidiki's profile and his financial connections with al-Qa'ida-affiliated organizations, it is probable that Fazul's radicalization occurred while studying with this teacher. In his 1991 letter to his brother Omar as well as in the autobiographical manuscript discovered by police in 2005, Fazul clearly indicates that he brought his radical beliefs with him when he first left for Pakistan.

### Joining al-Qa'ida

Fazul flew to Karachi, Pakistan in 1990, soon after the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan. He enrolled as a medical student in an un-named Pakistani university, switched almost immediately to Islamic studies, and was recruited before the end of his first year of studies to train to become a *mujahid* (holy warrior) in Afghanistan. He does not name the person who connected him to the mujahidin, but within his first year in Pakistan he found himself at the Bayt al-Ansar in Peshawar, founded by Osama bin Laden and `Abdullah `Azzam. Fazul writes that he saw both of these men lecture at the Bayt al-Ansar during his time there.<sup>21</sup> This was the first "guest-house" that foreign fighters would stay at in Peshawar before being taken to a first-level training camp in Afghanistan. Those who stood out in the initial training would be invited to receive more advanced training at further camps. Fazul was selected in this manner and given two months of training in small arms, heavy weapons, explosives and bomb-making, surveillance evasion, guerrilla warfare and even "how to kill a president in full view while he's with his bodyguards."<sup>22</sup> Among his trainers was Ali Abdelsoud Mohammad, the former major in the Egyptian army who later joined the U.S. Army and attempted to infiltrate the FBI and CIA as a double agent; Ali admitted to having trained Fazul in 1991 and 1992.<sup>23</sup>

In his 1991 letter to his brother Omar, Fazul says that he has "joined their group," that he "got confirmed" with al-Qa'ida. It was not long before he was given his first mission – help train the Somali Islamist militias that were opposing the United Nations intervention there.<sup>24</sup> This was in early spring of 1993, and Fazul was sent with a larger group of operatives that included Ali A. Mohammad, Abu Ubayda al-Banshiri, Mohammad Sadiq Odeh, Muhammed Atef, and Saif al-Adel. Ali Mohammad was sent to Nairobi to case targets, and the U.S. Embassy there was identified as a future target at this time.<sup>25</sup> In his 1997 report on the East Africa al-Qa'ida cell, Fazul refers to the fact that this team sent to Somalia in 1993 was directly involved in the so-called Battle of Mogadishu of October '93, during which two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters were shot

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brother Omar, he asks that Omar not tell the rest of the family that he's in Afghanistan, writing that "it is totally normal in the face of God to lie – it is for the good of Muslims."

<sup>21</sup> "On the Trail of Man Wanted for Bomb Blast."

<sup>22</sup> Fazul, letter to his brother Omar, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Weiser, "U.S. Charges Ex-Soldier"; on Ali Mohammad, see Wright, *The Looming Tower*, pp. 179ff.

<sup>24</sup> *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.*, S(9) 98 Cr. 1023, Indictment, pp. 16f.

<sup>25</sup> International Crisis Group, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 7.

down and 18 U.S. soldiers were killed.<sup>26</sup> The Somali group that these al-Qa'ida operatives worked most closely with was al-Ittihad al-Islami, which was partly funded by the al-Haramayn Foundation.<sup>27</sup> The leadership of this group went on to lead the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC, a.k.a. Islamic Courts Union), which recently controlled much of Somalia and offered refuge to al-Qa'ida; in January of 2007 the CIC was routed by the Ethiopian Army, with support from the U.S.

The following year Fazul returned briefly to the Comoros. He asked his father to take him to his uncle's house on one of the other islands. Fazul asked his uncle for his cousin Halima's hand in marriage; Halima was 17 at the time, was still studying at Soidiki's madrasa, and had never met Fazul before then. In her deposition to a Comoran magistrate, Halima gives the date of their marriage as April 4, 1994. Three weeks later they moved to Kenya, remaining there until December of that year; at this time Fazul assumed the pseudonym Haroun Fazul. Also in 1994, Fazul accompanied Wadih al-Hage, who was working as Osama bin Laden's secretary in Khartoum, to the wedding in Mombasa of Mohammad Siddiq Odeh. These three would later be part of the cell that organized and carried out the bombings of the Kenyan and Tanzanian U.S. Embassy in 1998.

#### 1994-1998: Bombing the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi

The embassy bombings took nearly five years of preparation and planning, and Fazul was centrally involved at every step along the way. Following Ali Mohammad's target-identification activities in Nairobi, an apartment was rented there in January of 1994; Fazul lived there for much of the year, and his new wife Halima joined him in May. Fazul was a relatively low-level al-Qa'ida operative at this stage and would remain so until after the embassy bombings. He was directed by Wadih al-Hage and Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, and, beginning with his 1997 promotion to media and communications officer for the East Africa cell, he communicated with the al-Qa'ida high command via the London-based Khalid al-Fawwaz.<sup>28</sup>

At the end of 1994 Fazul moved his family to Khartoum, joining the contingent of al-Qa'ida families that had relocated there from South Asia with Osama bin Laden. From this point to the spring of 1996 Fazul moved relatively frequently between Khartoum, Nairobi and Mogadishu, undertaking a variety of tasks related to the plot. Travel between these points was facilitated by the existence of an underground transportation network used in the movement of qat (also spelled khat), a plant chewed for its narcotic properties.<sup>29</sup> In Nairobi he worked under the cover of a bogus charity founded there by

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<sup>26</sup> In that report Fazul writes that his cell is likely in danger of being targeted by agents of the U.S. "since America knows well that the youth who lived in Somalia and were member's of the Shaykh's [sc. Usama's] cell are the ones who killed the Americans in Somalia."

<sup>27</sup> International Crisis Group, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," pp. 2ff.; Pérouse de Montclos, Profile of the al-Haramayn Foundation.

<sup>28</sup> Fazul refers to his appointment to this position by Fawwaz in his 1997 report.

<sup>29</sup> *Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack*, p. 45. Odeh testified in U.S. court that he traveled between Nairobi and Mogadishu on the airplanes of qat smugglers. Because qat must be chewed within days of harvest for the active ingredient to work, the smuggling infrastructure has to be quick and reliable.

Wadih al-Hage with the morbidly ironic name of Help Africa People. The Nairobi cell also worked very closely with Mercy International Relief Agency, an organization run by the Salafi ideologue Safar al-Hawali, and the Nairobi branch of the al-Haramayn Foundation; both of these groups supported the Ittihad al-Islami group.<sup>30</sup> Fazul also had courier responsibilities, ferrying money between different members of the African cells; Fazul carried money from Abu Ubayda al-Banshiri to several members of the Nairobi group at various times.<sup>31</sup> In 1996 he and Wadih al-Hage transported \$7,000 from Osama to a contact in Mombasa.<sup>32</sup> Key leaders of al-Ittihad al-Islami (and later of the Somalian Council of Islamic Courts), including Hassan Dahir Aweys and Hassan Turki, were also involved in the preparations, and helped provide shelter, identity and travel documents and access to the massive Somalian arms market.<sup>33</sup>

In May of 1996, when al-Qa'ida closed up shop in Sudan and Osama returned to Afghanistan, Fazul returned with his wife to the Comoros; around this time their first child was born, a daughter whom they named Afiya.<sup>34</sup> Fazul stayed for most of May before returning to Kenya, and his family joined him there later that summer.<sup>35</sup> Fazul's early return was eventuated by the 21 May sinking of a steamship on Lake Victoria, one of whose passengers was senior al-Qa'ida military commander Abu Ubayda al-Banshiri (a.k.a. Adel Habib). Joined by Wadih al-Hage and other operatives, Fazul stayed in Mwanza, Tanzania for several days to confirm that Banshiri had died, and then reported the news back to Osama.

In 1997 things became more difficult for the Nairobi cell. Fazul wrote during that summer that Osama's declaration of war upon America put the cell at serious risk of capture, and complained that he had had to learn of it from CNN.<sup>36</sup> He also wrote of his alarm at seeing a CNN report about the capture of an al-Qa'ida operative close to bin Laden; Fazul correctly believed this person to be Abu al-Fadl al-Makki, though he was not thus identified in the press. In response to this, Fazul gathered Wadih al-Hage's files and hid them somewhere in Nairobi.<sup>37</sup> Also that summer, the FBI raided Wadih al-Hage's home, seizing a large amount of digital and paper data, but due to lack of Arabic-speaking resources, the material was left mostly untranslated. Around the same time, the CIA raided the Nairobi offices of the al-Haramayn Foundation, but soon thereafter the agency dropped its investigation.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> International Crisis Group, "Counter-terrorism in Somalia," p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.*, S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y., testimony of Sikander Juma (a.k.a. Ashkaf Hussein), trial transcript of day 31, April 18, 2001, p. 4287.

<sup>32</sup> *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.*, S(9) 98 Cr. 1023, Indictment, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> International Crisis Group, "Counter-terrorism in Somalia," pp. 7f.

<sup>34</sup> They had a son (Lukman) the following year and another daughter (Sumeiya) in 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Halima Fazul, deposition.

<sup>36</sup> Fazul, August 1997 letter to "brother Sharif."

<sup>37</sup> Details about the contents of these files can be found in *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.*, S(9) 98 Cr. 1023, Indictment, p. 28.

<sup>38</sup> *Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack*, p. 30.

After these near misses, the cell went ahead with the execution of the bombing plot. Fazul made frequent trips between Nairobi and Khartoum during this period.<sup>39</sup> On May 1, with the help of a local named Sikander Juma, Fazul rented a large walled villa in the suburbs of Nairobi, at 43 New Runda Estates. Though he told the property owner (one Tamarra Ratemo) that he needed the large house for his family and business guests, in fact his family lived with the Jumans and at Wadih al-Hage's home in Nairobi; the villa was used as the bomb factory for the Nairobi embassy bombing. Throughout the spring and summer, Fazul was one of the key players in the lead-up to the bombing, and on the morning of August 7, 1998, he drove a white pick-up truck ahead of the bomb truck to the embassy. At 10:45 AM local time, two vehicle-borne bombs were detonated outside the U.S. Embassy, killing 224 and wounding more than 4000 people. Later that day Fazul arranged for his family and father-in-law to fly to the Comoros, and that evening he arranged for the keys of the villa to be handed over to the owner, having already hired local people to clean it out. He stayed on in Nairobi for another week, and on August 14 flew to the Comoros; on the 22<sup>nd</sup> he left the Comoros for Dubai and from there most likely proceeded to Pakistan.<sup>40</sup>

The leadership of the East African cell up to this point had been provided by Wadih el-Hage and then, after al-Hage's return to the U.S. in 1997, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah. On August 1, 1998, the latter directed all al-Qa'ida personnel to leave Kenya by the 6<sup>th</sup> of that month. This provides an indication of Fazul's "rank" in the organization at this time. The last to leave Nairobi, a full week after the bombing, Fazul had an intermediate position between the administrative leadership, which came to Nairobi in the week before the bombing to oversee the final preparations, and the foot-soldiers, who were all supposed to die in the attacks (Rashid al-Owhali survived and was later arrested). His letter of 1997 included the statement that "we do not want to know the operations plans since we are just implementers." After the summer of 1998, this began to change, and ultimately Fazul would take over the leadership of al-Qa'ida's operations in East Africa.

#### 1999-2001: al-Qa'ida, Liberia and West African Blood Diamonds<sup>41</sup>

In the year following the embassy bombings Fazul became one of the key players in al-Qa'ida's entry into the blood diamond business. After the embassy bombings, the U.S. began to take steps to freeze al-Qa'ida's assets, and in response al-Qa'ida began to sink millions of dollars into West African blood diamonds, an ideal way to launder, protect and increase its financial resources. Fazul would spend the bulk of this period in West Africa as a protected guest of Charles Taylor and one of the two al-Qa'ida members who oversaw the organization's end of Taylor's diamond business.

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<sup>39</sup> According to *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.*, S(9) 98 Cr. 1023, Indictment, pp. 26ff., Fazul flew from Khartoum to Nairobi on March 4, April 28 and May 10 of 1998.

<sup>40</sup> A detailed timeline of the embassy bombings can be found in *Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack*, pp. 63ff.

<sup>41</sup> A much more detailed account of al-Qa'ida's relationship to the West African diamond trade can be found in Douglas Farah's *Blood From Stones*.

The relationship began in 22 September 1998, less than two months after the embassy bombings, when Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah arrived in Monrovia, Liberia, to meet with Ibrahim Bah, a Senegalese soldier of fortune who was part of Taylor's inner circle and had the rank of general in the Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which was controlled directly by Taylor.<sup>42</sup> Bah introduced Abdullah to senior RUF commanders, including Sam Bockerie, and it was agreed that Abdullah would later send al-Qa'ida representatives with cash. In March of 1999, Fazul and Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani<sup>43</sup> came to Liberia and spent several days touring the diamond fields in Sierra Leone controlled by the RUF. They met with Bockerie in Foya, Liberia and gave him \$50,000 in cash; they were given a package of diamonds in return, and then made calls by satellite phone to Belgium and Pakistan. They then met with Taylor at his Congo Town home and gave him half a million dollars in cash.

In December of 2000, the two met with the Lebanese diamond dealers Samih Ossaily and Allie Darwish in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and another large transaction was made. On January 22, 2001, the two Lebanese dealers signed a three year lease on a large house in Monrovia that would become the headquarters of Fazul and Ghailani on their frequent trips to Liberia in this period. They came on March 3 using Yemeni passports and stayed on through the mining season, to the end of summer; during this period al-Qa'ida cornered the market on Liberian and Sierra Leonean diamonds, which are among the highest quality diamonds in the world. In late June, along with a female al-Qa'ida operative using the pseudonym Feriel Shahin, Fazul and Abdullah flew to Karachi, stayed several nights at the Shaharah-e Faisal hotel, and then proceeded to Quetta.

In July 2001 Fazul and Abdullah returned to West Africa, staying initially at the presidential complex of Blaise Campaore in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. In that same month, Aziz Nassour, another Lebanese diamond dealer and cousin of Ossaily, flew from Beirut to Dubai to pick up \$1 million in cash; this was then delivered to Taylor as an up-front payment for offering the two al-Qa'ida operatives a safe haven. Once the cash was delivered, the two moved from Burkina Faso to a military camp near Taylor's private farm called Camp Gbatala, where Liberia's elite Anti-Terrorism Unit trained with South African mercenaries. They remained in hiding there until at least December of 2001. In late November, on the basis of European intelligence indicating that the two were in Camp Gbatala, the DIA stood up a snatch team of Special Forces, but, unable to confirm the identifications, the team was told to stand down a week later.

The relationship with Taylor and his RUF allies maintained by Fazul and Abdullah was hugely successful for al-Qa'ida. More than \$20 million was moved by al-Qa'ida in this way, and firm ties were made with important actors in the international

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<sup>42</sup> Farah, "Al Qaeda Cash Tied to Diamon Trade." Bah fought with Senegalese separatists in the 1970s, went on to train with Qaddafi in Libya, fought with the mujahidin in Afghanistan in the 1980s (where he made his initial contacts with future al-Qa'ida leadership), and later trained a number of people who became West African warlords, including Taylor and Foday Sankoh, founder of the RUF. As of the late 1990s, Bah was in charge of Taylor's diamond-related activities and was the conduit point between RUF commanders and al-Qa'ida and Hezbollah diamond buyers.

<sup>43</sup> Ghailani was arrested in Pakistan in 2004.

black market in blood diamonds and weapons. There is evidence that suggests the two bought weapons through Nassour and Ossaily, possibly even SA-8 surface-to-air missiles.<sup>44</sup> The large sum paid to Taylor to protect Fazul and Abdullah, probably in anticipation of a worldwide manhunt in the wake of 9/11, is an indication of Fazul's rise in the organization, or at the very least shows that he was recognized by this point as an extremely valuable asset.

#### 2002-2007: Leading the East Africa cell

Fazul's next assignment was to assume a leading role in al-Qa'ida's East Africa operations. His base of operations for 2002 was the village of Siyu on the Lamu Archipelago on the northern coast of Kenya, where he lived under the pseudonym Abdulkarim.<sup>45</sup> In that remote village of around 2,000 people Fazul set up shop as a preacher and madrasa teacher, establishing his own madrasa for this purpose. He was joined there by a number of other operatives who would go on to participate in an attack in Mombasa towards the end of the year; some of them worked as fishermen, others worked with Fazul as preachers and missionaries. Their message as preachers was predictably Salafi in tone; the village chief later testified that "they were teaching against the celebration of Maulid (the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad) and the people were not pleased with it."<sup>46</sup> Fazul also married a local girl in Siyu, 16-year-old Amina Kubwa,<sup>47</sup> and recruited her father, brother and one of her cousins to help with the November bombings.<sup>48</sup> In July of 2002 Fazul was arrested by Kenyan police for credit card fraud, but he escaped after only one day in custody; the Kenyan authorities claim they didn't recognize him.<sup>49</sup>

The beginnings of the bombing plot of 2002 began in November of 2001, when several members of the team gathered in Mogadishu and began training in rented apartments in small arms and explosives.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the year, Fazul would occasionally come in to Mogadishu to oversee the progress of the team there. By April 2002 the targets were identified and by August the group had smuggled a number of SA-7b Grail missiles and shoulder-launchers into Kenya from Somalia by sea; the weapons had been earlier bought in Yemen.<sup>51</sup> On November 28, the team split into four groups; one group stayed in Mombasa, one went to Mombasa to suicide bomb the Paradise Hotel,<sup>52</sup> one went to Lamu to prepare an escape boat, and the final group, led by Fazul, carried out the failed missile attack on an Israeli passenger plane as it left Moi

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<sup>44</sup> Farah, "Report Says Africans Harbored Al Qaeda."

<sup>45</sup> Interestingly, Fazul's association with Lamu goes back much further; he listed it as his birthplace in a Kenyan identity card that he illegally obtained in 1996 (Vick, "FBI Trails Embassy Bombing Suspect").

<sup>46</sup> "Witness tells of terror suspect's marriage."

<sup>47</sup> Mutonya and Munene, "Woman helps identify bomb raid suspects." Muiruri, "Most wanted terrorist named," writes that she was 14 at the time of marriage.

<sup>48</sup> These were Kubwa Muhammad, Muhammad Kubwa and Abud Rogo Muhammad, respectively (Lacey, "Kenya to Charge 4").

<sup>49</sup> "Bush should heed Hempstone's advice."

<sup>50</sup> Peleman et al., *Report of the Panel of Experts*, p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> A three-man team drove an explosives-laden SUV onto the lobby steps of the hotel; the detonation killed 13 and injured 80 people.

International Airport in Mombasa. The following day Fazul returned with some of the team to Lamu and escaped by boat, most likely to Somalia.

The following two years had Fazul planning further bomb attacks in the area. In early 2003 he was sighted at a mosque in Mogadishu, and in May he was spotted in Mombasa. The CIA contracted with Muhammad Dheere, a warlord based north of Mogadishu, to try to capture Fazul after these sightings, but the operation instead netted a lesser al-Qa'ida operative, a Yemeni by the name of Sulayman Abdullah Salim Hemed.<sup>53</sup> He informed police that Fazul was planning an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, and it subsequently closed down for a week.<sup>54</sup> The following year communications from Saleh Nabhan, a senior member of al-Qa'ida's East Africa cell, were intercepted, leading ultimately to the uncovering and therefore thwarting of a plot to bomb the new U.S. Embassy in Nairobi sometime in 2004. The plan was to drive a bomb truck into the Embassy and at the same time to fly a chartered airplane into the building.

Following this unsuccessful plot, nothing is known about Fazul's operational activities, though he does appear to have had a high-level position within the Council of Islamic Courts in Somalia since at least 2005, possibly as head of intelligence.<sup>55</sup> He was spotted during March of that year taking a *kwassa kwassa* (a kind of boat) from Moroni to the island of Mayotte.<sup>56</sup> He continued to work with the CIC in Somalia through 2006, and at the end of December had his wife Halima and their three children join him in Mogadishu from Pakistan.<sup>57</sup>

On January 8 and 9, 2007, at least one U.S. C-130 gunship attacked targets in Somalia in an attempt to kill Fazul and two other senior al-Qa'ida operatives.<sup>58</sup> It was initially reported that Fazul had died, but this was later retracted. On January 11, Kenyan police captured Fazul's wife and three children, along with other operatives and their family members attempting to flee Somalia. The group initially included Fazul; they stopped for the night in a forest in Kiunga on the Kenyan border, and Fazul and three other men set off alone. The rest of the party was arrested there in the morning. Fazul's wife was arrested with his laptop computer and more than \$5,000 in cash. According to Kenyan police, who managed to bypass the password protect on the laptop in late January, the computer contained "vital information on terrorism training and intelligence collection including spying."<sup>59</sup> Members of the elite U.S. anti-terrorism Task Force 88 are currently on the ground in East Africa searching for Fazul. According to a Madagascar newspaper, there had been claims of a sighting of Fazul at Majunga, a port

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<sup>53</sup> Butler, "5-Year Hunt Fails to Net Qaeda Suspect." Hemed was captured in June of 2003.

<sup>54</sup> "Target of U.S. strike wanted for multiple attacks."

<sup>55</sup> "Computer May Hold Clue on Terror Suspect."

<sup>56</sup> Rodier, "Chasse aux djihadists"; D.H., "Un lieutenant de Ben Laden à l'île de Mayotte?"

<sup>57</sup> "Computer May Hold Clue on Terror Suspect."

<sup>58</sup> U.S. military assets were already active in the area in support of the Ethiopian army's invasion force that ousted the CIC from its areas of control beginning in December 2006 and continuing to the present date into early 2007.

<sup>59</sup> "Kenya: We have hacked al-Qaida laptop."

city on the northwest coast of Madagascar, in the weeks following the U.S. bombing operation in Somalia.<sup>60</sup>

Though the chances of catching Fazul are as good now as they've ever been, it won't be easy. He has used dozens if not scores of pseudonyms,<sup>61</sup> has extensive contacts with virtually every kind of criminal underground in the region, and, as the photographs at the head of this profile attest, he is skilled at disguising his appearance. In his al-Qa'ida career he has successfully passed as a Kenyan, a Somali, a Sudanese, a Moroccan, a Yemeni and a South Asian, and he has command of at least five languages. Highly intelligent and thoroughly trained, he is one the most dangerous international terrorists alive today.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "Qaida-Terrorist versteckt sich in Madagaskar."

<sup>61</sup> In addition to the many permutations of Abdullah Muhammad Fazul, his known pseudonyms include the following: Abu Aisha, Abu Luqman, Abu Sayf al-Sudani, Harun al-Qamar, Ahmad Hassan, Abdulkarim, `Ali Fadil Husayn and Fu'ad Muhammad.

<sup>62</sup> Harmony documents pertaining to Fazul are: AFGP-2002-800080, AFGP-2002-800081, AFGP-2002-800083, AFGP-2002-800084, AFGP-2002-800086, AFGP-2002-800087, and AFGP-2002-800089.; also see Appendix C-III.

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<sup>64</sup> Kindly shared with the CTC by Bryan Bender, a journalist at the Boston Globe.

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## II. Abu Hafs al-Masri



Judging by the praise heaped upon him by other jihadis, Abu Hafs al-Masri<sup>66</sup> was one of al-Qa'ida's most talented, trusted, and militant members. Truly in Osama bin Laden's inner circle, he had been involved with al-Qa'ida since its inception and served as its military commander and security chief.<sup>67</sup> He was present at several key moments in the formation of al-Qa'ida and even sat at bin Laden's side during his infamous press conference in 1998 when bin Laden formally established the formation of the "World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders."<sup>68</sup> As al-Qa'ida's military commander, Abu Hafs' key duties were recruiting, vetting, and training new al-Qa'ida members as well as planning and facilitating terrorist attacks. He was involved in organizing some of the group's more spectacular attacks, including the U.S Embassy bombings in East Africa and 9/11. His importance and influence on Osama bin Laden and the al-Qa'ida organization cannot be overstressed. In fact, ten months before Abu Hafs' death, bin Laden personally nominated him as his replacement.<sup>69</sup>

While little is known about his childhood years, it is believed that Abu Hafs was born in Menoufya, Egypt on June 17, 1944. Little else is mentioned about his upbringing or teenage years. Most information about him begins as a young adult when he lived in the Asyut region of Egypt. There he was briefly a student at Asyut University, but soon dropped out after he became involved with the militant Islamist group Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ). In 1980, he entered the police force with the intention of infiltrating its ranks in order to help EIJ militants seize weapons for their struggle against the government. Fearing eventual capture and exposure as an EIJ member, he moved to

<sup>66</sup> He is most commonly referred to as Abu Hafs and Muhammed Atef. Allegedly his real name is Subhi Abu-Sittah, but his other aliases include Subhi Abd-al-Aziz Abu-Sittah, Sheikh Tasser Abdullah, Taysir, Abu Fatima and Al Khafir.

<sup>67</sup> Abu Hafs' daughter married Osama bin Laden's son Mohammed in February, 2001, further cementing their strong personal and professional relationship.

<sup>68</sup> Wright, *The Looming Tower*. pp. 131-133.

<sup>69</sup> "Profile: Abu Hafs al-Masri," Al Jazeera.net, May 10, 2004, <http://english.aljazeera.net/English/archive/archive?ArchiveId=2379>.

Cairo where he was eventually imprisoned and sentenced to five years for his subversive activities.<sup>70</sup>

Although much of the information available supports the assumption that he was indeed an Egyptian policeman and a member of EIJ, some dispute these claims. For example, in a 2001 *Guardian* interview, Montasser al-Zayat, an Islamist lawyer and former associate of Ayman al-Zawahiri, suggested that Abu Hafs was not one of the EIJ members swept up after the assassination of Sadat. In the same article, Egyptian Interior Ministry officials state that Abu Hafs was never a policeman and had no arrests prior to leaving for Afghanistan.<sup>71</sup> Regardless of what the truth is about his background, Abu Hafs eventually left Egypt to travel to South Asia in order to join the anti-Soviet jihad, and later, al-Qa'ida.

Abu Hafs likely arrived in Pakistan and later Afghanistan during the mid-1980s. Once in Peshawar, Pakistan, he linked up with Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam and became involved in their Maktab al-Khidmat, or Services Bureau, which facilitated jihadis' travels to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. Bin Laden personally authorized a \$200-a-month salary for Hafs' work at the Services Bureau starting in early 1987.<sup>72</sup> However, he was not satisfied with just playing a supporting role in the jihad and eventually decided to join the fighting in Afghanistan. Bin Laden, Abu Hafs and several other Arab jihadis left Peshawar and established one of the first all-Arab camps in Jaji, Afghanistan called the Masada (Lion's Den). The camp was located in close proximity to a large Soviet Army garrison and eventually Soviet forces attacked the Lion's Den in mid-1997. A month-long battle ensued with the Soviets initially gaining the upper hand, but they eventually retreated after several counterattacks by the Arabs. It was after this battle that Osama bin Laden, Abu Hafs, Abu Ubaydah al-Banshiri, and other Afghan-Arabs began attracting widespread attention in the Arab world for their "heroic efforts."<sup>73</sup> Already battle-proven and fully dedicated to jihad, Abu Hafs undoubtedly made a huge impression on Osama bin Laden. Perhaps as a reward and a token of gratitude, bin Laden then designated him as al-Qa'ida's security chief responsible for bin Laden's safety and the screening of guests. During this period of time, Abu Hafs also held the role of the number two military commander behind Abu Ubaydah.<sup>74</sup>

Abu Hafs followed bin Laden to the Sudan in 1992, where he continued to help actively plan and coordinate training, plot terrorist attacks, and set up al-Qa'ida cells. In

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<sup>70</sup> Zaynah, "Muhammed Atif, Defendant Accused of Planning the 11 September Attacks and Al-Aq'ida Organization's Military Official," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 8, 2001; "Profile: Abu Hafs al-Masri," "Atef, Muhammed, MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Database, January 16, 2007, <http://www.tkb.org/KeyLeader.jsp?memID=5823>.

<sup>71</sup> Dawoud, "Mohammed Atef," *The Guardian*, November 19, 2001, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,,597355,00.html>; Muhammed Salah, "Egypt Supplies United States with Information About 'Abu-Hafs,'" *Al-Hayah*, December 6, 1998;

<sup>72</sup> A raid on the al-Haramayn office in Sarajevo in 2002 produced a document from a laptop that supports the claim that Abu Hafs was one of the first, future members of al-Qa'ida to be involved in the Services Bureau; Peter Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know*, p. 77.

<sup>73</sup> Wright, p. 116-120.

<sup>74</sup> Rahimullah Yusufzai, "An Insider's Guide to bin Laden's Shadowy Cabinet," *The Sunday Times*, September 30, 2001.

1992 and 1993, bin Laden sent him to Somalia to make contact with local tribes and give them assistance in their fight against United Nations and U.S. forces involved in Operation Restore Hope. Abu Hafs apparently returned to Peshawar sometime in 1993, where he tasked and prepared several al-Qa'ida members for missions into Kenya, Somalia, and Ogaden to recon sites and establish training camps. He then returned to Africa where he visited his teams in Somalia and offered help to the Somali Islamic Union.<sup>75</sup> However, in late 1993, Abu Hafs ordered some of those same camps closed due to security and other problems.<sup>76</sup> He also helped establish cover companies in Nairobi and Mombassa, Kenya, in order to fund al-Qa'ida's African operations.<sup>77</sup> Abu Hafs often met and guided other top al-Qa'ida members and trainers while in Africa and helped plot the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Although five years before the actual attacks occurred, Abu Hafs met with Ali Mohammed, another Egyptian al-Qa'ida member, and Osama bin Laden in Khartoum, Sudan, in 1993 to discuss Mohammed's recon efforts of Western embassies in Nairobi.<sup>78</sup> In 1996, Abu Hafs became the primary military commander of al-Qa'ida after Abu Ubaydah died in a ferry accident on Lake Victoria. In that same year, al-Qa'ida was kicked out of the Sudan and moved its operations back to Afghanistan.

During his tenure as military chief in Afghanistan, Abu Hafs' main responsibilities were to oversee the training at terrorist camps and make decisions regarding which trainees would receive additional instruction (in assassinations, urban warfare, bomb and poison making, etc.) after their initial training. He also hand-picked the operatives who would take part in suicide attacks, as well as the bodyguards for bin Laden.<sup>79</sup> Abu Hafs paid special attention to Western converts, Muslims from Western European countries, and non-Arab trainees as they possessed freedom of movement through their home countries that other members did not. He met with Jose Padilla several times, tasking him first with exploding apartment buildings in the US.<sup>80</sup> Abu Hafs also met with John Walker Lindh and sent Zacarias Moussaoui to Malaysia to work with Jemaah Islamiah.<sup>81</sup> Lastly and most ominously, Abu Hafs was one of the most adamant members concerning the group's procurement, production, and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Although it probably did not take too much effort, he eventually convinced Osama bin Laden to pursue the procurement and production of WMD agents.<sup>82</sup>

In mid-1996, Abu Hafs and Osama bin Laden met with Khalid Sheikh Muhammed (KSM) in Tora Bora, Afghanistan. Although he was not an "official" al-Qa'ida member at the time, KSM discussed several possible plots, including using

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<sup>75</sup> Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104.

<sup>76</sup> Harmony, AFGP-2002-600110; Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597.

<sup>77</sup> Bergen, pp. 211, 214-215, 221; Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, eds., *Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East*, p. 211; *USA vs. bin Laden et al.*

<sup>78</sup> Rubin, p. 209.

<sup>79</sup> Bergen, p. 264.

<sup>80</sup> Remarks of Deputy Attorney General James Comey Regarding Jose Padilla, June 1, 2004, <http://www.usdoj.gov/dag/speech/2004/dag6104.htm>.

<sup>81</sup> Bergen, p. 277; *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 151.

<sup>82</sup> Wright, p. 304.

airplanes as missiles, to attack targets inside the United States. KSM's ideas must have struck a cord with Abu Hafs, who two years later, would push Osama bin Laden to act on KSM's vision. This plan, obviously, became the 9/11 attacks. In fact, Abu Hafs, Osama bin Laden, and KSM were the only al-Qa'ida members to be involved in target selection for 9/11.<sup>83</sup>

Fortunately, Abu Hafs was killed in an al-Qa'ida safehouse in Kabul, Afghanistan, in November of 2001, when it was bombed by coalition aircraft. This was a significant blow to al-Qa'ida, as they lost one of their most stalwart and capable members. Moreover, it was a huge loss to bin Laden who lost not only his senior military commander, but also a close companion who had been with him since the very beginning of the al-Qa'ida organization.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, pp.148-150; Wright, pp. 307-308; Bergen, pp.300-301.

<sup>84</sup> Other Harmony documents that contain information on Abu Hafs: AFGP-2002-003677 and AFGP-2002-800573.

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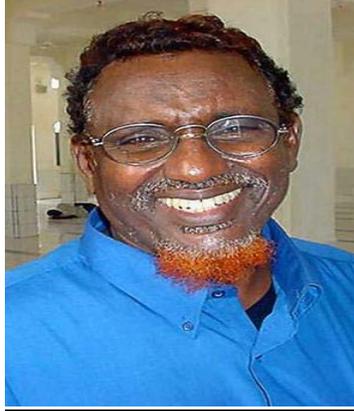
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### III. Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys



Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys was born in the Galgaduud region of Somalia between 1935 and 1943. He is a member of the Ayr sub-clan of the Habargadir group of the Hawiye clan. Although not the most powerful sub-clan in Somalia, Ayr is reportedly one of the most powerful clans in Mogadishu.<sup>85</sup>

Aweys began preaching Wahhabi ideology in the late 1970s, but he first achieved notoriety as a Somali colonel decorated for bravery in 1977 during Somalia's war with Ethiopia.<sup>86</sup> Several sources indicate that he was a "prisons Colonel,"<sup>87</sup> although his citation for bravery and his later position as Military Chief of al-Ittihad al-Islami suggest that he assumed an operational role during wartime.

Al-Ittihad al-Islami (Islamic Unity, AIAI), established in the early 1980s, was one of several Islamist organizations that sought to overthrow Siad Barre, Somalia's dictator of 22 years. The organization began its ascent in the Gedo region of Somalia, a crossroads for Islamic fundamentalists.<sup>88</sup> In the absence of effective government services, AIAI offered protection for businesses and localities, established schools, and provided rule-of-law in a country ravaged by warlords. Sheikh Hassan Aweys served as both a spiritual and military leader for the increasingly profitable and powerful organization. In both of his roles, Aweys promulgated AIAI's ultimate goal of establishing an Islamic caliphate in the horn of Africa governed exclusively by *sharia* law.

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<sup>85</sup> "Somalia Government Tries to Confirm Terrorist's Death," *Voice of America*, January 10, 2007.

<sup>86</sup> Winter, "Profile: Somalia's Islamist Leader," *BBC News*, June 30, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5120242.stm>.

<sup>87</sup> Sii'arag, "The Birth and Rise of Al-Ittihad Al-Islami in the Somali Inhabited Regions in the Horn of Africa," Nzwili, "Terrorism Focus: Leadership Profile: Islamic Courts Union."

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

AIAI rose to prominence in the early 1990's upon Siad Barre's ouster. The organization claimed responsibility for two fatal attacks in 1996: the shooting of two Ethiopian businessmen in Somalia and the bombing of a hotel in Addis Ababa that killed 4 and injured 20 civilians.<sup>89</sup> AIAI has also been implicated in a second 1996 bomb attack in Ethiopia, the assassination and attempted assassination of Ethiopian cabinet ministers, support of al-Qa'ida's 1998 embassy bombings, and a suicide-bomb attack on the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa in 2002.<sup>90</sup>

While serving as AIAI's Military Chief in the 1990's, Aweys maintained a relationship with Adan Hashi Ayro. Ayro was trained in Afghanistan, served as a militia commander in AIAI and later in the Council of Islamic Courts, and reportedly sustained direct ties to al-Qa'ida.<sup>91</sup> The exact nature of Aweys' relationship to Ayro is unclear; the Jamestown Press reports that Aweys mentored Ayro, planned military operations in conjunction with him, and organized terrorist training camps with him.<sup>92</sup> Although Ethiopian military strikes reduced AIAI's size and potency in 1997, both Aweys and Ayro continued to play prominent leadership roles through the establishment of Islamic courts and their associated militias.

Sheikh Hassan Aweys established the first Islamic court in the southern region of Mogadishu following AIAI's retreat from Gedo. In 1999, he became the head of the Southern Mogadishu Islamic Courts, and used the courts to promote Islamist goals similar to those of AIAI.<sup>93</sup> On June 24, 2006, Sheikh Hassan Aweys was appointed to the senior leadership role in the Council of Islamic Courts (formerly referred to as the Islamic Courts Union), a collection of previously disassociated courts.<sup>94</sup> The Council of Islamic Courts has two administrative bodies: an executive committee of 8 persons recently headed by the more moderate Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, and an 80 person shura, or decision-making body, led by Aweys.<sup>95</sup> In this position, Aweys was one of the most influential individuals in Somalia. He used his position to contest the transitional government in Somalia, prior to the Ethiopian-backed military intervention which expelled the Islamists from Mogadishu in December.

With the status of the Council of Islamic Courts in flux, and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys' personal future in jeopardy, his next role is uncertain. In February, 2006, on a jihadi website, Aweys purportedly authorized the use of suicide terrorism to attack targets in Ethiopia and Kenya.<sup>96</sup> More recently, however, Aweys has consistently disavowed any personal links to al-Qa'ida or terrorism. It is difficult to predict whether or not

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<sup>89</sup> MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Group Profile: al-Itihaad al-Islami, <http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4329>.

<sup>90</sup> Rabasa et. al, *Beyond Al Qaeda*, p. 132.

<sup>91</sup> On January 7, 2006, a U.S. Special Operations-coordinated air strike targeted and killed Ayro in Somalia near the Kenyan border. Gordon and Mazzetti, "US Used Base in Ethiopia to Hunt Al Qaeda."

<sup>92</sup> Nzwili, *op.cit*

<sup>93</sup> Sii'arag.

<sup>94</sup> "Somalia's Islamic Courts name Radical Cleric as Head of New Parliament."

<sup>95</sup> Shinn, "Somalia: US Government Policy and Challenges."

<sup>96</sup> "Somali Islamists threaten suicide attacks in Kenya, Ethiopia."

Aweys will overtly support jihad in the near future, but he is unlikely to back down from his vocal pursuit of an Islamic state.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Harmony documents concerning Aweys are: AFGP-2002-600114, AFGP-800611, and AFGP-2003-001293H.

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## IV. Saif al-Adel



[Saif al-Adel, used in US wanted posters]

### Life in Egypt

Saif al-Adel (سيف العدل; also spelled Sayf al-`Adl, Seif al-Adil)<sup>98</sup>, often called the third-ranking official of al-Qa`ida, is a man about whom there is extremely little that is known with certainty.<sup>99</sup> His date of birth is April 11, 1960 or April 11, 1963. Since the identity behind his *nom de guerre* is unknown, it is impossible to say anything about his family or childhood. There is some indication that he did not have a traditional Islamic education, or if he did that it was not very extensive; in his 2005 memoir about Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, Saif writes that he is partly using an abundance of free time to memorize the Qur`an, a task to which primary Islamic education is almost exclusively devoted.<sup>100</sup> In the same memoir, Saif writes that “God guided me to comprehend pure Islam in the early 1980s,” an indication that his turn to radical Islamism occurred in his early twenties.

At that time Saif had probably already begun his career in the Egyptian army, since by 1987 he had achieved the rank of colonel in the Special Forces.<sup>101</sup> In the Spring of 1987 Saif was arrested and charged in Cairo in what was called National Security Case

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<sup>98</sup> Though sometimes conflated, Saif al-Adel is *not* the same person as Sayf al-Islam al-Misri or Sayf al-Din al-Ansari. The former is an al-Qa`ida colleague of Saif al-Adel and the author of a 1994 report on al-Qa`ida operations in Somalia and Ethiopia called “The Ogaden File,” Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, in which Sayf al-Islam mentions attending a meeting at which Saif al-Adel was also present. Sayf al-Din al-Ansari is a jihadi ideologue and part of the circle of Saudi jihadi authors that includes Abu Sa`d al-`Amili, Abu `Ubayd al-Qurashi and Abu Ayman al-Hilali; his specific relationship with al-Qa`ida is unclear. One of the more prominent conflations of these individuals appears in the MSNBC profile of Saif al-Adel, where his full name is given as “Saif al-Din al-Ansari al-Adel” (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8336988/>).

<sup>99</sup> For the purposes of this profile, “known” refers to what is available in open source documents and in declassified documents from the Harmony database; some of the latter used in this profile are not currently available to the public.

<sup>100</sup> Saif al-Adel, “Detained Al-Qa`ida Leader Sayf al-Adl Chronicles Al-Zarqawi’s Rise in Organization,” hereafter “Zarqawi memoir.” The Arabic original of this memoir can be found at numerous websites and was published in Husayn, *al-Zarqawi al-jil al-thani li’l-Qa`ida*. An English translation can be found here: <http://atc2005.blogspot.com/2006/06/al-zarqawi-second-generation-of-al.html>.

<sup>101</sup> According to his Zarqawi memoir.

401, in connection with which thousands of Islamist activists were arrested, and was charged with the crime of attempting to revive the Jihad Organization (*tanzim al-jihad*), which six years earlier had been responsible for the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and of attempting to assassinate former Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Basha and journalist Makram Muhammad Ahmad.<sup>102</sup> It was also claimed at the trial that he had been involved in a plot to destroy the Egyptian Parliament building by simultaneously driving a bomb-laden truck into the building and crashing a hijacked airplane into it as well. On May 6, with more than 400 others charged in the case, Saif was sent to prison; in his Zarqawi memoir he states that one of his fellow inmates was Major Muhammad al-Baram of the Special Forces and Special Guard.

Already at this point in his jihadi career Saif exhibited a tendency toward independence of mind and divisiveness. He writes that, at the time of Case 401,

“I found that the brothers at the Al-Jihad movement and the Islamic Group lacked practical experience that could enable them to achieve the desired change [of society]. In my opinion and the opinion of some brothers, this was due to over-enthusiasm that resulted in hasty action or recklessness at times.”<sup>103</sup>

This disagreement with the Egyptian Islamist groups, along with the growing success of Egyptian and Jordanian security services in infiltrating such groups, led Saif to leave Egypt for Saudi Arabia in 1988, travelling from there to Pakistan.<sup>104</sup>

#### 1990s: Military Trainer for al-Qa’ida

Soon after travelling to South Asia Saif became directly involved in the activities of the nascent al-Qa’ida movement. In the first two years of the 1990s he was based in Peshawar, Pakistan, making trips across the Afghan border to serve during this period as a trainer at the Jihad Wal camp, near Khost, Afghanistan. L’Housseine Kherchtou testified to having received explosives training from Saif there in 1991 or ’92.<sup>105</sup> At some point in 1992, Saif travelled to Khartoum and conducted explosives training at the Damazine Farm.<sup>106</sup> In late 1992 Saif told Mohammed Odeh that, as the war in Afghanistan was winding down, al-Qa’ida was going to “move the jihad to other parts of

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<sup>102</sup> In an interview with the newspaper *al-Wasat* in November 1993 ([http://www.mettransparent.com/texts/makkawi\\_interview\\_november.htm](http://www.mettransparent.com/texts/makkawi_interview_november.htm)), Muhammad Makkawi stated that the group responsible for this assassination attempt was called al-Najun min al-Nar (“Saved from the Fire”). Saif may have been a member of this group. (The question of whether Saif is or is not Makkawi is controversial and involves much conflicting information.)

<sup>103</sup> Zarqawi memoir. Saif would later and on numerous occasions criticize the senior al-Qa’ida leadership for the same faults; see al-Shafi’i, “al-Usuliyun yuhasisun,” and “Al-Adl Letter,” [http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/Al%20Adl%20Letter\\_Translation.pdf](http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/Al%20Adl%20Letter_Translation.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> “al-Qa’id al-’askari al-jadid.” This is also said of Muhammad Makkawi, and it may be that this date and itinerary are true of the latter and *not* of Saif, who may very well have travelled to Pakistan in 1989 or ’90.

<sup>105</sup> *U.S. vs. Usama Bin Laden, et. al*, day 8, February 21, 2001, p. 1134

<sup>106</sup> *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.*, testimony of Jamal al-Fadl, day 2, February 6, 2001, pp. 244f.

the world,” and he directed Odeh to go to Somalia via Kenya.<sup>107</sup> This is a clear indication that Saif had attained a relatively high position within the organization by this time, and indeed Kherchtou testified that Saif was then already a member of al-Qa’ida’s military committee.<sup>108</sup> On January 20, 1993, along with seven other operatives, he was present at a meeting in the home of Abu Hafs to discuss a plan to establish training camps in Somalia and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.<sup>109</sup> Sayf al-Islam al-Misri was given the task of leading the first team into Somalia, while Saif al-Adel remained in Pakistan; Sayf al-Islam left for Africa on February 4.<sup>110</sup> Later that Spring Saif al-Adel journeyed there as well.

The first datable piece of evidence for placing Saif in Somalia is a letter by Abu’l-Walid addressed to him from Jihad Wal, dated 30 September 1993.<sup>111</sup> This letter mentions the fact that two prior letters from Saif in Somalia were received by Abu’l-Walid. The latter writes as Saif’s superior, refers to Saif as “young man,” and signs off “your uncle.” Abu’l-Walid, whose real name is Musatafa Hamid (مصطفى حامد), was joined to Saif by marriage at some point during the 1990s.<sup>112</sup> Abu’l-Walid opens his 1993 letter “greetings to you and to your dear family,” perhaps indicating that Saif’s wife and children<sup>113</sup> had accompanied him to Africa. Abu’l-Walid’s letter alludes to the fact that Saif’s earlier letters had dealt with matters of a “military aspect,” including the observation that there was a shortage of weaponry and ammunition in the region at the time. Abu’l-Walid refers to the recent arrival of U.S. forces in Somalia and urges Saif to strike at the “bald eagle.”<sup>114</sup>

In a report dated 17 January 1994 and signed “Saif al-Adel,” Saif describes some of his operations in Somalia, recommends that al-Qa’ida purchase a launch in order to unload materiel from an awaited ship, discusses the feasibility of establishing an operational and training camp in the al-Hadidiyah forest, and comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the local Islamist leadership that his cell was working with in the

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<sup>107</sup> *U.S. vs. Usama Bin Laden, et. al*, day 12, testimony of Special Agent John Anticev, pp. 1642f. Odeh went from Pakistan to Nairobi in March of ’93.

<sup>108</sup> *U.S. vs. Usama Bin Laden, et. al*, day 8, February 21, 2001, p. 1123.

<sup>109</sup> Sayf al-Islam, “The Ogaden file.” Also present at the meeting were Abu Qutayba al-Maghribi, Abu Jihad al-Nubi, Abu Yusuf al-Maghribi, Abu Thammam, Abu Islam al-Saghir and Abu Khalid al-Misri.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, the first of five letters to the Africa Corps.

<sup>112</sup> Shafi’i, “al-Zarqawi yukashif,” on the basis of information provided by Nu`man bin `Uthman, a Libyan Islamist and former jihadi based in London. See also al-Shafi’i, “al-Usuliyun yusahihun ma`lumat.”

<sup>113</sup> In the Harmony document known as the “Al Adl Letter”

([http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/Al%20Adl%20Letter\\_Translation.pdf](http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/Al%20Adl%20Letter_Translation.pdf)), probably by Saif though signed ‘Abd al-Halim al-`Adl and dated 13 June 2002, he refers to a private letter addressed to Abu’l-Walid in which he asks the latter to pass on “greetings and kisses to my children.” This letter was posted to the Internet in early 2002, but is no longer online. I was unable to locate a cached or archived copy of that letter at the time of writing, but according to the “Al Adl Letter” it included the names of Saif’s children.

<sup>114</sup> Kherchtou’s testimony corroborates Saif’s presence in Somalia during this period; he testified that Saif was among those “from al-Qaeda who were working in Somalia and that were traveling through Nairobi,” and that it was Saif who informed the members of the cell in Kenya about the drowning of Abu Ubayda al-Banshiri in May of 1994 (*U.S. vs. Usama Bin Laden, et. al*, day 8, February 21, 2001, pp. 1173 and 1264-6).

area.<sup>115</sup> In an undated letter written in the same period and signed “Omar al-Sumali, formerly known as Saif al-Adel,” he provides a detailed geographical and ethnographic description of the Nairobi-Kamboni route and of the southern region of Somalia, including the tribal structure, briefly describes six small-scale terrorist operations carried out in the area, and ultimately recommends that al-Qa’ida establish a lasting presence in the area.<sup>116</sup> This letter also evidences some degree of friction between Saif and his addressee, inasmuch as he asks toward the end of the letter that his correspondent “not delay, as you usually do, in making the appropriate decisions” regarding his recommendation to establish an al-Qa’ida base in the area.

The next piece of evidence for Saif’s whereabouts puts him in the Gulf; Khalid Sheikh Muhammad claims to have met with Saif in Yemen in 1995.<sup>117</sup> There is a letter from Saif to “Qari Saahib” dated 19 November 1997, asking for help in getting four people out of prison, but it does not mention where Saif is writing from.<sup>118</sup> We next find him in South Asia, and he appears to have operated out of Afghanistan until the U.S.-led invasion in late 2001. Khalid Sheikh Muhammad admitted to having met with Saif and Muhammad Atef a number of times in Afghanistan in 1997 and ’98, “assisting them with computer and media projects.”<sup>119</sup> In 1999, Saif worked as a trainer at the Mes Aynak training camp near Kabul, which had begun operations in the same year. Saif offered an advanced commando training course there.<sup>120</sup>

It was also in 1999 that Saif began his—and al-Qa’ida’s—relationship with Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi (d. 6/7/2006). In his Zarqawi memoir Saif writes that he had learned about Zarqawi from articles by Abu Qatada al-Filistini in the latter’s London-based magazine *al-Minhaj*, and that he subsequently followed the news of the court case and imprisonment of Zarqawi and other Jordanian and Palestinian militants. Upon his release from Jordanian prison in 1999 Zarqawi moved to Peshawar, and soon thereafter travelled to Kandahar, Afghanistan to meet with al-Qa’ida officials. After meeting with Zarqawi and finding that he was a “hardliner” and in disagreement with certain aspects of al-Qa’ida’s ideology and practice, Saif asked Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri for the task of liaising with Zarqawi and overcoming their differences. The two al-Qa’ida chiefs appointed him to this task, and it was later agreed that al-Qa’ida would provide support for Zarqawi to establish an independent but al-Qa’ida-associated training camp in Herat, Afghanistan.<sup>121</sup> This location was chosen because of its proximity to Iran, since it had become easier by that time for mujahidin to enter Afghanistan through Iran than

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<sup>115</sup> Harmony, AFGP-2002-600114.

<sup>116</sup> Harmony, AFGP-2002-600113; though not dated, it is very probable that this was written prior to the letter dated 17 January 1994, since the latter assumes a commitment on al-Qa’ida’s part to set down stakes in the area, while in the former Saif recommends that they do so.

<sup>117</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 489n. 9. Khalid disclosed neither the nature of their meeting nor whether he had any knowledge of Saif’s purpose in being in Yemen.

<sup>118</sup> Or at least the English summary of the letter does not mention this; see p. 9 of Harmony, AFGP-2002-003677.

<sup>119</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 149.

<sup>120</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 157.

<sup>121</sup> It was at this camp that Zarqawi established his *Jund al-Sham*, a jihadi militia composed of people drawn from Jordan, Syria, and other central Arab lands traditionally know as al-Sham; this group was infiltrated by Jordanian intelligence and scattered before the U.S. invasion.

through Pakistan. Saif established connections with sympathetic parties in Iran and set up way stations in Tehran and Mashhad for mujahidin bound for Afghanistan. Saif made frequent trips from Kandahar to Herat to observe and assist with Zarqawi's operations. He also used these opportunities to deepen his contacts in Iran, though he says that these were with "virtuous people" in Iran and not with the Iranian government.<sup>122</sup>

### 2000s: 9/11 and the Iranian Refuge(?)

According to the Australian Federal Police, Saif was involved in early 2000 in the development of a plot to assassinate Australian mining magnate and orthodox rabbi Joseph Gutnick.<sup>123</sup> As he notes in his Zarqawi memoir, Saif and the rest of the al-Qa'ida leadership were also engaged in planning the 9/11 operation throughout the final years of the '90s and during the beginning of the new millennium. The planning was not always a harmonious process, however. In July of 2001, after it became known to the al-Qa'ida leadership that Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad `Umar was opposed to al-Qa'ida carrying out a direct attack on the United States, a split emerged between a number of the senior leaders. According to interrogations of several al-Qa'ida detainees, Saif was among those who agreed with Mullah `Umar and opposed Bin Laden.<sup>124</sup> Abu'l-Walid was also opposed to Bin Laden in this matter, according to writings of his discovered by the U.S. military in Kandahar.<sup>125</sup>

Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October of 2001, Saif initially took a leading role in directing al-Qa'ida human resources in fighting the U.S. and Coalition forces. The Australian jihadi David Hicks—who was screened by Saif and Muhammad Atef in the Spring of 2001 before training at Tarnak Farms—reported to Saif in Kandahar in the immediate aftermath of the invasion and was directed to fight at the Kandahar Airport.<sup>126</sup> According to his Zarqawi memoir, it was soon decided that al-Qa'ida personnel should evacuate from Kandahar and go into hiding. While some of the leadership fled to the mountains on Afghanistan's eastern border, some went over the western border into Iran. Saif was in charge of this contingent, and he was assisted in Iran by members of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami.<sup>127</sup> Using money provided by supporters from the U.A.E., Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Saif rented apartments in Iran for al-Qa'ida members and their families.

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<sup>122</sup> Saif al-Adel, Zarqawi memoir.

<sup>123</sup> Symons, "Brigitte link to Gutnick death plot."

<sup>124</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 251. He was apparently joined in this opposition by Abu Hafz the Mauritanian and Shaykh Sa'id al-Misri.

<sup>125</sup> Shafi'i, "Shaqiqa zawja."

<sup>126</sup> "Charge sheet: Allegations against Hicks." See also the U.S. press release regarding its case against Hicks (available here: <http://cryptome.quintessenz.org/mirror/usa-v-hicks.htm>), where it is stated that Saif "was assigning individuals to locations where they were to fight alongside other al Qaida associates against U.S. and Coalition forces."

<sup>127</sup> Saif al-Adel, Zarqawi memoir. Hekmatyar had gone into exile in Iran in 1996 and was there until the Iranian government shut down the offices of Hezb-i Islami and expelled him in February of 2002, around the same time that it began to arrest al-Qa'ida membership then in the country.

Soon thereafter Saif reestablished contact with the al-Qa'ida leadership in Afghanistan and began to organize groups of fighters to return there and support the insurgency. Zarqawi and his group of Palestinian and Jordanian jihadis—the remnants of his Jund al-Sham—planned to make their way to Iraq, where the Ansar al-Islam group had offered support.<sup>128</sup> In the first months of 2002, however, under pressure from the United States, the Iranian authorities began to detain some members of these groups, causing Saif to abort his activities and leading to the arrest of “up to 80 percent of Abu Mus`ab’s group.”<sup>129</sup> Zarqawi managed to make his way to Iraq, and, writing in 2005, Saif stated that he had “not met Abu Mus`ab since he left Iran,” one of several indications that Saif remained in that country.

It is unclear whether Saif remains in Iran to this day, and if he is there, what his level of freedom of movement might be. In early 2003, Iran publicly admitted that it had numerous al-Qa'ida members, including members of the leadership, in custody, but it would not publicly name any of these people.<sup>130</sup> In May of 2003, when directly asked in an ABC News interview whether Iran was holding Saif, Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Javad Zarif would neither confirm nor deny it, saying that Iran held more al-Qa'ida personnel in captivity than any other country and that because these people generally had multiple passports Iran was unable at the time to positively identify them.<sup>131</sup> In early February 2007, however, a number of U.S. government officials, speaking on the condition that they not be identified, told a reporter at the Washington Post that American intelligence did know the precise identities of those held in Iranian custody, and that Iran had provided U.S. intelligence with their names, photographs and fingerprints before 2003.<sup>132</sup> In early 2005 the German journalist Bruno Schirra claimed to have been shown by a Western intelligence service a list of the al-Qa'ida operatives held in Iran; the list included Saif.<sup>133</sup> According to a “former senior U.S. counterterrorism official,” Saudi intelligence detected communication in early 2003 between al-Qa'ida leaders in Iran and an al-Qa'ida cell in Saudi Arabia and, after demanding that Iran do something about this, Iranian authorities went on to detain 20 to 25 al-Qa'ida officials under house arrest.<sup>134</sup> It is said that they were detained at two locations, both guarded by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards: one in villas in the Namak Abrud region on the Caspian coast and the other in Lazivan, a region northwest of Tehran that houses a large military complex.<sup>135</sup> In February of 2007 a woman claiming to be the sister-in-law of Abu'l-Walid stated that her sister—Abu'l-Walid's wife—had recently

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<sup>128</sup> The details of this account, as given by Saif in his Zarqawi memoir, are corroborated in `Abd al-Rahim `Ali, “al-Muqatilun al-`arab fi'l-`Iraq,” though in that article Saif is referred to as Colonel Makkawi.

<sup>129</sup> Saif al-Adel, Zarqawi memoir.

<sup>130</sup> La Guardia, “Iran holding ‘big time’ members of al-Qa`eda”; “Iran: We’ve got Qaeda Bigs.” In his letter to Zarqawi dated 9 July 2005, Ayman al-Zawahiri rhetorically asks: “do the brothers forget that we have more than one hundred prisoners - many of whom are from the leadership who are wanted in their countries - in the custody of the Iranians?”

<sup>131</sup> “Ma bish az har keshvar-i digar al-qa`ida ra asyar kardim.” This is a Persian translation of the ABC interview, an English transcript of which does not appear to be available online.

<sup>132</sup> Linzer, “Al-Qaeda Suspects.”

<sup>133</sup> Schirra, “Wie gefährlich ist Iran?”

<sup>134</sup> Windrem, “Al-Qaida reportedly finds safe haven in Iran.”

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

telephoned her from Tehran and told her that Abu'l-Walid's family, Saif and others were under house arrest there, in the custody of the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>136</sup>

Whatever his whereabouts, Saif did not cease his al-Qa'ida activities during this period. It is believed that in April of 2002 Sa'd bin Laden, who was part of the al-Qa'ida contingent in Iran led by Saif at the time, organized from inside Iran the truck bombing of a synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia.<sup>137</sup> In June of 2002, Saif apparently wrote a letter to "brother Mukhtar" under the name 'Abd al-Halim 'Adl, in which he bemoans the losses that al-Qa'ida had incurred since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, expresses strong disapproval of Osama bin Laden and his leadership, and mentions a private letter which he'd tried to send to Abu'l-Walid but which was instead posted on a jihadi web forum.<sup>138</sup> The contents of the letter make clear that Saif was still very much involved in the day-to-day operational affairs of the organization at that time. In 2003, according to Saudi and U.S. intelligence, Saif was in communication with the al-Qa'ida cell in Riyadh that carried out the bombings of the Dorrat al-Jadawel compound in Riyadh on May 12 of that year.<sup>139</sup> During the same spring Saif was in touch with the Arabic-language newspaper al-Sharq al-Awsat, telling them that he believed that around 350 "Afghan Arabs" had been killed in Afghanistan since the U.S. invasion, and that around 180 of them had been captured.<sup>140</sup> December of 2003 saw the inception of "Mu'askar al-Battar," a jihadi magazine published under the auspices of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula; in every issue Saif contributed an article in the section "al-Amn wa'l-istikhbarat" ("Security and Intelligence Operations").<sup>141</sup> In 2004 a diary of Saif's was recovered during a raid in Saudi Arabia.<sup>142</sup> He was last heard from in 2005, when he contributed the already-cited memoir on Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi upon the solicitation of the journalist Fu'ad Husayn.

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<sup>136</sup> al-Shafi'i, "Shaqiqa zawja."

<sup>137</sup> Windrem, "Al-Qaida reportedly finds safe haven in Iran."

<sup>138</sup> "Al-Adl Letter," [http://www.ctc.usma.edu/aq/AI%20Adl%20Letter\\_Translation.pdf](http://www.ctc.usma.edu/aq/AI%20Adl%20Letter_Translation.pdf). Apparently Saif's children were with Abu'l-Walid at that time, since he asked in the letter that Abu'l-Walid pass along his affectionate greetings to them. The letter was posted to alneda.com, though I have as of yet not been able to locate it on the Internet Archive ([www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)).

<sup>139</sup> Sherwell, "Teheran 'providing refuge'"; according to un-named U.S. intelligence officials cited in Linzer, "Al-Qaeda Suspects," "there are suspicions, but no proof" that such communication took place.

<sup>140</sup> "Al-mas'ul al-'askari li'l-qa'ida."

<sup>141</sup> Available at various internet sites; what looks like a complete run of the journal can be found here: <http://www.qa3edoon.com/BattarFullWEB/contents.htm>. Some analysis of Saif's writings in "Mu'askar al-Battar" can be found in Ulph, "Al-Qaeda's Online Publications" and Scheuer, "Assessing London and Sharm al-Sheikh."

<sup>142</sup> "Verbatim Transcript," p. 4.

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## **V. Lesser Members/Affiliates of al-Qa'ida**

### **A. Aden Hashi Farah Ayro**

Ayro, a member of the Ayr clan and thought to be 29 or 30 years of age, is one of the most violent Salafi militia leaders and a protégé of Aweys. His extremism seems similar to that of the late al-Qa'ida leader Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, in that he alienated his fellow clansmen by the specter of violence he created. He also lacks serious religious credentials and, which combined with his youth, make it unlikely for him to inherit the leadership of a major Salafi organization in Somalia.

Ayro was appointed by Aweys to head the Hizb al-Shabab, or youth wing of the Islamic Courts Union, and is also the leader of other militias, although it is not entirely clear what groups he heads within Somalia or what their political agendas are. His group has been linked to the killings of four foreign aid workers and a dozen or more Somalis who had been working with Westerners. He received military training in Afghanistan prior to the U.S.-led invasion and has ties to al-Qa'ida operatives Abu Talha al-Sudani and Ahmed Abdi Godane. He was also among the Somali delegation of mujahidin that traveled to Lebanon in July 2006 to fight Israeli forces.

### **B. Gouled Hasan Dourad**

Dourad was born in Somalia in 1974 and is currently detained by the United States in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He lived in refugee camps in Germany following civil war in Somalia and eventually received asylum from Sweden. According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Gouled was the head of a division of al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI) that supported al-Qa'ida members in Somalia, working for the leader of al-Qa'ida's East African cell, Abu Talha al-Sudani. In this capacity, he procured safe houses and weapons for al-Qa'ida militants, and did reconnaissance for a proposed suicide attack on the U.S. base Camp Lemonier in Djibouti.

The imam of his mosque in Sweden put him and an associate in touch with individuals who sent him to Afghanistan, where he trained in explosives and weaponry at al-Qa'ida's Khaldan camp. He returned to Somalia in 1996 and joined the fighting against Ethiopians in Ogaden, working with both AIAI and al-Qa'ida members. He continued these activities as al-Ittihad was becoming defunct, although its leaders remained active and attempted to continue operations.

### **C. Abu Talha al-Sudani (Tariq `Abd Allah)**

Abu Talha is an al-Qa'ida operative with extensive explosives training, and alleged to be close to bin Laden. He was born in Sudan and married a Somali woman, and they resided in Somalia beginning in 1993. He is also an associate of Gouled Hasan Dourad, working with the Mogadishu cell of AIAI that was responsible for supporting al-Qa'ida members.

He, along with Fazul and Salih `Ali Salih Nabhan were the targets of the American air strikes on Somalia in January 2007. According to the testimony of Jamal al-Fadl, he received explosives training from Hizbollah in southern Lebanon in the early 1990s. He is believed to have assisted Fazul in the car bombing and attempted attack on the Israeli airliner in Kenya in 2002.

Following the 1998 embassy bombings, a number of the East African cell members involved in the attack were arrested. The remaining members at large, including Fazul, were assisted financially by Abu Talha, who was traveling frequently between Somalia and the United Arab Emirates at the time.

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