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The Columbus Mall Plot

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A NEFA analysis of U.S. v. Abdi
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U.S.-Based Plotters

On May 1, 2003, Lyman Faris (a.k.a. Mohammed Rauf), a Columbus, Ohio truck driver and naturalized U.S. citizen, was indicted for providing material support to Al-Qaida.¹ Faris pled guilty and, on October 28, 2003, received a twenty-year prison sentence.²

Then, on June 10, 2004, one of Faris' alleged co-conspirators, Nuradin Abdi, a Somali national living in Columbus, Ohio, was indicted for providing material support to Al-Qaida and obtaining and using fraudulent travel documents.³ On July 31, 2007, Abdi pled guilty to conspiring to provide material support to terrorists and agreed to serve ten years in prison.⁴

And, on April 11, 2007, Christopher Paul (a.k.a. Abdulmalek Kenyatta), a U.S. citizen born in Columbus, was indicted and charged with conspiring to provide material support and resources to terrorists.⁵ Paul, who attended an August 2002 meeting with Abdi and Faris at an Upper Arlington, Ohio coffee shop during which the plot was hatched, reportedly dismissed the plan as "a stupid idea."⁶ Notably, Paul has not been charged in connection with the mall plot; authorities instead allege he targeted "European tourist resorts where American citizens are known to vacation" and U.S. government facilities in Europe.⁷

¹ U.S. v. Faris, (E.D. VA.), No. 03-189-A, Indictment, Filed May 1, 2003.

² "Lyman Faris Sentenced for Providing Material Support to Al Qaeda," Department of Justice Press Release, October 28, 2003,

<http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/FarisSentenced.pdf>.

³ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Indictment, Filed June 14, 2004.

⁴ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Plea Agreement Under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)c, Filed July 31, 2007. Note: Although he originally pled not guilty, authorities revealed that Abdi signed a written confession on November 30, 2003. In that confession, Abdi "admitted that he had falsified his U.S. asylum application in its entirety. Abdi had originally been granted asylum even though the FBI suspected he had entered the U.S. illegally from Mexico on October 10, 1998. See: U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Response to Motion of Defendant to Suppress All Statements Allegedly Made by the Defendant and All Evidence Seized in Violation of the Fourth Amendment, Filed July 1, 2005.

⁵ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

⁶ Kevin Mayhood, Jodi Andes, and John Futty, "Muslim Convert Plotted with Foreigners in Town, Unsealed Indictment Says," *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 13, 2007.

⁷ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

Media reports have asserted that the conspiracy was even wider and may have involved as many as ten individuals,⁸ including two men who worked as truck drivers with Faris.⁹

In August 2007, David Smith, who served as Faris' attorney, said, "A lot more than three performed in their jihadist group."¹⁰ That same month, Assistant U.S. Attorney Dana Peters commented on the possibility of additional indictments, remarking, "I wouldn't be surprised." Peters added, "some have left the country. The investigation continues."¹¹

The Target – A Columbus Area Shopping Mall

When announcing the charges against Abdi, then-Attorney General John Ashcroft stated, "the American heartland was targeted for death and destruction by an al Qaeda cell."¹²

In a court filing, the Department of Justice asserted that Abdi, "along with co-conspirators, including admitted al Qaeda member, Ayman Faris, initiated a plot to blow up a Columbus area shopping mall..."¹³ A different court filing cited a conversation between Faris and Abdi in which "Abdi told Faris that 'things were heating up'" and that they "need to do something." When asked what they should do, Abdi responded, "take an AK-47 to a mall and start shooting."¹⁴

The government noted that "at the very time Abdi made the threat," Faris "was conducting ongoing al Qaeda target selection in the U.S. for Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM), supposed mastermind of the 9/11 terror attacks." Faris has admitted his involvement in a plot, directed by KSM,¹⁵ to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge by severing its suspension cables.¹⁶ Additionally, KSM tasked Faris to "obtain the necessary tools" for a plot to derail trains in Washington D.C. that would coincide with the Brooklyn Bridge operation.¹⁷

In this context, according to court documents, it was thus "reasonable...to believe that Mr. Abdi's comment...was incitement or solicitation to Faris." What's more, the

⁸ "Lawyers: Ohio Terror Probe Could Grow," *Associated Press*, August 5, 2007.

⁹ "Investigators: Mall Plot May Have Involved 5 People," *NewsNet5*, June 18, 2004.

¹⁰ "Lawyers: Ohio Terror Probe Could Grow," *Associated Press*, August 5, 2007.

¹¹ Jodi Andes, "Somali Man Pleads Guilty to Plot," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 1, 2007.

¹² "Prepared Remarks of Attorney General John Ashcroft: Abdi Indictment Announcement," Department of Justice Press Release, June 14, 2005,

http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Columbus/AG_Indictment.pdf.

¹³ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Motion to Detain Defendant and Memorandum in Support, Filed June 14, 2004.

¹⁴ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Response to Motion of Defendant to Suppress All Statements Allegedly Made by the Defendant and All Evidence Seized in Violation of the Fourth Amendment, Filed July 1, 2005.

¹⁵ "Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024," U.S. Department of Defense, Revised as of March 15, 2007,

<http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Columbus/KSMGitmo.pdf>.

¹⁶ "Ayman Faris Sentenced for Providing Material Support to Al Qaeda," Department of Justice Press Release, October 28, 2003,

<http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/FarisSentenced.pdf>.

¹⁷ U.S. v. Faris, (E.D. VA), No. 03-189-A, Statement of Facts, Filed June 19, 2003.

government argued it was reasonable "to believe Abdi's words were the beginning of a plan by Abdi to carry out violent acts in response to U.S. foreign policy that...Abdi found disagreeable."¹⁸ The U.S. government's assessment of Abdi was supported by the fact that Abdi told FBI agents that the Columbus group, including Abdi himself, was "willing to conduct acts of violence in the United States."¹⁹

Faris, Abdi, and Paul - Training for Jihad

According to federal prosecutors, Faris, who became a United States citizen in December 1999, attended an Al-Qaida training camp in late 2000, where he "was introduced to Osama bin Laden."²⁰

Abdi similarly attempted to procure military training. According to his indictment,

"on April 27, 1999, Abdi applied to the Immigration and Naturalization Service...for a travel document, wherein he concealed his destination by representing that he intended to visit Germany and Saudi Arabia for the purpose of 'Umrah (Holly[sic] - Mecca) and visit my relative,' when...he allegedly planned to travel to Ogaden, Ethiopia, for the purpose of obtaining military-style training in preparation for violent jihad."²¹

Elaborating on Abdi's "preparation for violent jihad" in a separate court filing, federal prosecutors noted that Abdi sought "to ready himself to participate in violent Jihadi conflicts overseas and any activities his al Qaeda co-conspirators might ask him to perform here in the United States."²² At the camp in Ethiopia, Abdi specifically wanted "to obtain military-style training in radio usage, guns, guerilla warfare, bombs, and 'anything to damage the enemy.'"²³ Although Abdi did not make it to the camp,²⁴ court filings asserted that when he returned "he became a more trusted member" of the Columbus group.²⁵ (Notably, Abdi's trip was partially financed by one of the unindicted co-conspirators.)²⁶

Moreover, the government alleged that Abdi "accepted bomb-making instructions from a co-conspirator;"²⁷ press reports indicate those instructions were on

¹⁸ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Response to Motion of Defendant to Suppress All Statements Allegedly Made by the Defendant and All Evidence Seized in Violation of the Fourth Amendment, Filed July 1, 2005.

¹⁹ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Opposition of the United States to Defendant's Motions *In Limine* (#104) to Exclude Computer Images, Dissertation Text "Pillar of the Preparing for Jihad," "Mall Bomb" and "Missile Plot" Statements and Physical Evidence, Filed September 12, 2005.

²⁰ U.S. v. Faris, (E.D. VA.), No. 03-189-A, Statement of Facts, Filed June 19, 2003.

²¹ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Indictment, Filed June 14, 2004.

²² U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Motion to Detain Defendant and Memorandum in Support, Filed June 14, 2004.

²³ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Motion to Detain Defendant and Memorandum in Support, Filed June 14, 2004.

²⁴ "Terrorism Suspects Often Seem Far from al-Qaeda's 'A' Team," *USA Today*, May 13, 2007.

²⁵ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Opposition of the United States to Defendant's Motions *In Limine* (#104) to Exclude Computer Images, Dissertation Text "Pillar of the Preparing for Jihad," "Mall Bomb" and "Missile Plot" Statements and Physical Evidence, Filed September 12, 2005.

²⁶ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Motion to Detain Defendant and Memorandum in Support, Filed June 14, 2004.

²⁷ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Motion to Detain Defendant and Memorandum in Support, Filed June 14, 2004.

computer disks.²⁸ And Christopher Paul reportedly taught Abdi how to use a laser range finder²⁹ and gave him a GPS watch.³⁰

Paul was well-equipped to train Abdi because he purportedly had extensive experience at Al-Qaida training camps. His indictment alleges that "in late 1990 or early 1991," he attended an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan, where he learned about "assault rifles, grenades, rocket-propelled grenades, small unit tactics, and hand-to-hand combat."³¹ Moreover, shortly after officially joining al Qaeda in mid-1991, he "was selected for and obtained advanced training in map reading, climbing, rappelling, military history, and explosive devices."³²

In an effort to share his knowledge, Paul "provided explosives training to fellow co-conspirators in Germany" in April 1999, "instructed individuals in martial arts" at a Columbus mosque, and "conducted hiking, camping, and other training operations in Burr Oak State Park in...Ohio with several co-conspirators."³³ While there is no direct evidence Faris or Abdi attended the training in Burr Oak park, Faris' lawyer told the press, "I remember Faris talked about how he and these other guys would go hiking. But according to him it was all recreational and social."³⁴

The Faris, Abdi, Paul Relationship

A number of examples highlight the nature of the relationship between Faris, Abdi, and Paul. Following Paul's April 2007 arrest, Paul's attorney told the media that the men "were buddies. They went to the same mosque and hung out together."³⁵ Reflecting these ties, Faris and Paul lived together following Faris' separation from his wife,³⁶ while in a February 2001 job application, Abdi cited Paul as a personal

²⁸ Kevin Mayhood, "Somali's Arrest Illegal, Statements OK, Judge Rules," *The Columbus Dispatch*, September 14, 2005.

²⁹ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007 and Kevin Mayhood, Jodi Andes, and John Futty, "Muslim Convert Plotted with Foreigners in Town, Unsealed Indictment Says," *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 13, 2007.

³⁰ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Proposed Exhibit List, Filed June 7, 2007. **Note:** Possibly reflecting his training, Abdi engaged in countersurveillance measures while under FBI physical surveillance; for example, he "would drive in an unsafe and erratic manner in order to escape surveillance." **See:** U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Response to Motion of Defendant to Suppress All Statements Allegedly Made by the Defendant and All Evidence Seized in Violation of the Fourth Amendment, Filed July 1, 2005.

³¹ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

³² U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

³³ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

³⁴ Kevin Mayhood, Jodi Andes, and John Futty, "Muslim Convert Plotted with Foreigners in Town, Unsealed Indictment Says," *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 13, 2007.

³⁵ Kevin Mayhood, Jodi Andes, and John Futty, "Muslim Convert Plotted with Foreigners in Town, Unsealed Indictment Says," *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 13, 2007. **Note:** Confirming this comment, a court filing, citing an informant, states that "the three often met after prayer service at their mosque." This source "was a national security concern in his own right" and "was ultimately deported." **See:** U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 05-4199, Appeal Before the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, Decided September 22, 2006 and U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Response to Motion of Defendant to Suppress All Statements Allegedly Made by the Defendant and All Evidence Seized in Violation of the Fourth Amendment, Filed July 1, 2005.

³⁶ Kevin Mayhood, Jodi Andes, and John Futty, "Muslim Convert Plotted with Foreigners in Town, Unsealed Indictment Says," *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 13, 2007.

reference.³⁷ Also in 2001, at Paul's request, Abdi provided Paul "with credit card numbers he stole from customers at his cell phone business," knowing that Paul "intended to use them to purchase sophisticated equipment"³⁸ to be sent to and used by al Qaeda."³⁹ Moreover, when Abdi was arrested in 2003, he immediately attempted to call Paul.⁴⁰

And labeling the contacts between Faris and Abdi "numerous," the U.S. government has concluded that the men had a "long-standing relationship."⁴¹ Federal prosecutors noted that when Abdi returned to the United States after receiving terrorist training in Africa in March 2000, Faris picked him up from the airport.⁴² Then, "in July 2001 Abdi...sent e-mail...to Faris suggesting he review several websites where he could purchase surveillance equipment, such as night-vision goggles, small cameras, and listening devices."⁴³ Months later, in October 2002, Abdi emailed Faris "exhorting jihad" and inquiring about the "status of UBL [Usama bin Laden] and Islamic extremist information."⁴⁴ What's more, when authorities searched Abdi's residence in 2003, they discovered Faris' phone billing records.⁴⁵

Additional Information – Jihadist Material on Abdi's Computer

When authorities searched Abdi's computer, they discovered an array of jihadist material, including a photo of Usama Bin Laden with writing stating "God is great...We love you Usama, America digs its grave with its right hand because Usama has paralyzed its left."⁴⁶ Additionally, according to court filings,

"other photos depict a young Arab male holding a handgun, the Koran and a rocket launcher slung over his shoulder, downloaded from www.geocities.com, a private website requiring membership and a password; a Kalashnikov assault rifle with tripod and spare magazines positioned on a table, downloaded from www.geocities.com; and a crest of the GSPC, a designated foreign terrorist organization, downloaded from www.geocities.love_taliban.com."⁴⁷

³⁷ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Proposed Exhibit List, Filed June 7, 2007.

³⁸ Such as a military range finder.

³⁹ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Opposition of the United States to Defendant's Motions *In Limine* (#104) to Exclude Computer Images, Dissertation Text "Pillar of the Preparing for Jihad," "Mall Bomb" and "Missile Plot" Statements and Physical Evidence, Filed September 12, 2005 and "Government, Terrorism Suspect Spar over Credit Card Allegations," *Associated Press*, July 6, 2007.

⁴⁰ Kevin Mayhood, Jodi Andes, and John Futtly, "Muslim Convert Plotted with Foreigners in Town, Unsealed Indictment Says," *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 13, 2007.

⁴¹ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Response to Motion of Defendant to Suppress All Statements Allegedly Made by the Defendant and All Evidence Seized in Violation of the Fourth Amendment, Filed July 1, 2005.

⁴² U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Motion to Detain Defendant and Memorandum in Support, Filed June 14, 2004.

⁴³ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 05-4199, Appeal Before the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, Decided September 22, 2006.

⁴⁴ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Proposed Exhibit List, Filed June 7, 2007.

⁴⁵ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Proposed Exhibit List, Filed June 7, 2007.

⁴⁶ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Opposition of the United States to Defendant's Motions *In Limine* (#104) to Exclude Computer Images, Dissertation Text "Pillar of the Preparing for Jihad," "Mall Bomb" and "Missile Plot" Statements and Physical Evidence, Filed September 12, 2005.

⁴⁷ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Opposition of the United States to Defendant's Motions *In Limine* (#104) to Exclude Computer Images, Dissertation Text "Pillar of the Preparing for Jihad," "Mall Bomb" and "Missile Plot" Statements and Physical Evidence, Filed September 12, 2005.

Still other photos seized from Abdi's computer stated "our war is with America" and "do not consult anyone in the killing of Americans." Abdi also possessed photos of armed Taliban members, a bombing in Turkey, as well as of the White House and Congress.⁴⁸

Searches further turned up a copy of "Voice of Jihad" ("Sawt al-Jihad"), an Al-Qaida publication, as well as a computer disk containing "The Reference Book for Preparing for Jihad for the Cause of God" by 'Abd-al-Qadir Bin-Ābd-al-Āziz'.⁴⁹ When analyzing the manual, federal prosecutors noted that it "exhorts the reader to prepare for Jihad against the 'infidels'" by "obtaining military training."⁵⁰

Additional Information – Information on Explosives Found in Paul's House

During multiple searches of Paul's Columbus residence, authorities found a night vision scope, a laser range finder, binoculars with a built-in camera, a military survival knife, a crossbow, and "books, literature, and manuals on how to make explosives...."⁵¹

Investigators also discovered:

- 1) The ISBN number for a book entitled, "Deathtrap! – Improvised Booby Trap Devices"
- 2) The ISBN number for a book entitled, "Guerrilla's Arsenal: Advanced Techniques for Making Explosives and Time-Delay Bombs"
- 3) The ISBN number for a book entitled, "Smart Bombs Improvised Sensory Detonation Techniques and Advanced Weapons System"
- 4) The ISBN number for a book entitled, "Home Made C-4: A Recipe for Survival"
- 5) The ISBN number for a book entitled, "Improvised Radio Detonation Techniques"
- 6) A book on improvised land mines.⁵²

Additional Information – Faris' Ties to Other Terrorists

According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), Majid Khan, a Pakistani national who lived in Baltimore, "recommended to KSM" that Faris "be tasked for an al-Qai'da operation."⁵³ The DNI notes that Khan, who is currently being held in

⁴⁸ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Proposed Exhibit List, Filed June 7, 2007.

⁴⁹ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Proposed Exhibit List, Filed June 7, 2007.

⁵⁰ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Opposition of the United States to Defendant's Motions *In Limine* (#104) to Exclude Computer Images, Dissertation Text "Pillar of the Preparing for Jihad," "Mall Bomb" and "Missile Plot" Statements and Physical Evidence, Filed September 12, 2005.

⁵¹ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

⁵² U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

⁵³ According to the Department of Defense, "In mid-2001, Lyman Faris (Faris) had dinner and spent the night at the detainee's family residence in Baltimore, Maryland. Faris stated during this visit the detainee spoke to him about the fighting and struggle in Afghanistan. On a subsequent visit the detainee told Faris he met Khalid Shaykh Mohammed (KSM) in Pakistan and referred to KSM as his uncle. The detainee told Faris of his desire to martyr himself against President Musharaff of Pakistan by detonating a vest of explosives inside a building." See: "Summary of Evidence for Combatant Status Review Tribunal – Khan, Majid," Department of Defense, Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants at U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, March 28, 2007,

http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/Gitmo_Khan.pdf.

Guantanamo Bay after being transferred from CIA custody, had gained access to KSM "because of his excellent English and extensive knowledge of the United States."⁵⁴

Faris also had a long-standing relationship with an individual he knew to be "Osama bin Laden's 'right foot' – a man who serves a critical leadership role in providing supplies and material needed by al Qaeda."⁵⁵ What's more, in 2000, Faris met with "one of bin Laden's men," and, following that meeting, researched "ultralight" airplanes, turning over his findings "for use by al Qaeda."⁵⁶ Finally, according to the Department of Justice, "Faris...admitted accompanying his friend to a factory to order sleeping bags for al Qaeda, and visiting a travel agency at the request of his friend to obtain extensions on several airline tickets for use by members of al Qaeda."⁵⁷

Additional Information - Abdi's Ties to Other Terrorists

A federal appeals court ruling noted that when monitoring Abdi's phone calls between June and November 2003, the FBI determined that Abdi had "placed calls to approximately forty different phone numbers...associated with terrorism-related activities." What's more, these "forty numbers were almost all associated with different terrorism suspects"⁵⁸ linked to investigations inside the U.S.⁵⁹

Additional Information – Paul's Ties to Other Terrorists

Searching Paul's residence, authorities discovered "a thermal fax containing names, phone numbers, and contact information for key al Qaeda leadership and associates." They also found a postcard from Karim Medhi, who was sentenced to nine years in prison in October 2006 for planning a terror attack on Reunion Island, a popular tourist destination in the Indian Ocean. During Medhi's trial, authorities revealed that Medhi had contacts with 9/11 plotter Ramzi Binalshibh and 9/11 hijacker Ziad Jarrah.⁶⁰

At his home, Paul also had a scanner addressed to Ababri Abdelilah, "a member of a radical Islamic terrorist group in Germany..."⁶¹ And, during his time in Pakistan in the early 1990's, Paul met bin Laden's former personal pilot.⁶²

⁵⁴ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Majid Khan, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/DNI_Khan.pdf. Note: Khan also assisted KSM in probing the feasibility of blowing up gas stations in the U.S. and poisoning U.S. reservoirs.

⁵⁵ U.S. v. Faris, (E.D. VA), No. 03-189-A, Statement of Facts, Filed June 19, 2003.

⁵⁶ "Lyman Faris Sentenced for Providing Material Support to Al Qaeda," Department of Justice Press Release, October 28, 2003, <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/FarisSentenced.pdf>.

⁵⁷ "Ohio Truck Driver Pleads Guilty to Providing Material Support to Al Qaeda," Department of Justice Press Release, June 19, 2003, <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/FarisGuiltyPlea.pdf>.

⁵⁸ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 05-4199, Appeal Before the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, Decided September 22, 2006.

⁵⁹ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Government's Response to Motion of Defendant to Suppress All Statements Allegedly Made by the Defendant and All Evidence Seized in Violation of the Fourth Amendment, Filed July 1, 2005.

⁶⁰ "Moroccan Sentenced to 9 Years in Bomb Plot," *Reuters/Associated Press*, October 26, 2006.

⁶¹ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

⁶² U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

Additional Information – Other Plots Discussed by Abdi et al.

According to press reports, Abdi told government investigators that, in 2002, Faris, who was angered by the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, proposed to Abdi and Paul that they fly a plane into Hoover Dam. Abdi, who was similarly angered by the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the planned Iraq invasion, dismissed this idea, instead suggesting they attack a mall.⁶³ Nonetheless, the Paul indictment states that "beginning in 2006," Paul conducted research on "flight-simulator computer programs, including how to fly large, commercial passenger aircraft."⁶⁴

Furthermore, Abdi "volunteered his services as a go-between for individuals who were preparing" to "shoot missiles at various landmarks"⁶⁵ in Washington D.C., to include the Capitol, Pentagon and White House.⁶⁶ The plot was reportedly canceled because, in the words of Lyman Faris, the "guys in Virginia" said it was not feasible.⁶⁷

Finally, Abdi and Paul had contact with an associate in Pittsburgh with whom Paul discussed attacking a U.S. military base in Qatar.⁶⁸

Additional Information - Strategic Location in the American Heartland

Commenting on Faris' decision to live in Columbus, Ohio, James Turgal, a Supervisory Special Agent with the FBI in Cincinnati, told the press, "If you wanted to assist al Qaeda, would you live in D.C. or New York...Why not live in the heartland? This is the perfect place to be."⁶⁹

In fact, terrorists have consistently gravitated toward lower profile locations while planning their operations. For example, on September 10, 2001, Ali al-Marri, identified by the U.S. as "an al Qaeda 'sleeper agent' sent to the United States for the purpose of engaging in and facilitating terrorist activities subsequent to September 11, 2001,"⁷⁰ traveled to Peoria, Illinois to purportedly pursue graduate studies at Bradley University.⁷¹ Similarly, another al Qaeda operative, Zacharias Moussaoui, took flight lessons in Norman, Oklahoma and Eagan, Minnesota while preparing to launch a terrorist attack.⁷² And the cell that carried out the March 11, 2004 Madrid train bombings assembled its bombs in a farmhouse roughly twenty miles southwest of Madrid.⁷³

⁶³ Kevin Mayhood, "Somali's Arrest Illegal, Statements OK, Judge Rules," *The Columbus Dispatch*, September 14, 2005.

⁶⁴ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

⁶⁵ U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Opposition of the United States to Defendant's Motions *In Limine* (#104) to Exclude Computer Images, Dissertation Text "Pillar of the Preparing for Jihad," "Mall Bomb" and "Missile Plot" Statements and Physical Evidence, Filed September 12, 2005.

⁶⁶ Kevin Mayhood, "Terror Suspect Says He Wasn't a Player," *The Columbus Dispatch*, June 15, 2007 and Jodi Andes, "Somali Man Pleads Guilty to Plot," *The Columbus Dispatch*, August 1, 2007.

⁶⁷ Kevin Mayhood, "Terror Suspect Says He Wasn't a Player," *The Columbus Dispatch*, June 15, 2007.

⁶⁸ "Lawyers: Ohio Terror Probe Could Grow," *Associated Press*, August 5, 2007.

⁶⁹ R. Jeffrey Smith and Amy Depaul, "'Scout' Had Low Profile," *The Washington Post*, June 21, 2003.

⁷⁰ "Declaration of Mr. Jeffrey N. Rapp, Director, Joint Intelligence Task Force for Combating Terrorism," 2:04-cv-02257-HFF-RSC, Filed April 5, 2006.

⁷¹ U.S. v. Al-Marri, (C.D. IL.), 03-CR-1044, Complaint, Filed May 22, 2003.

⁷² The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 272.

⁷³ "Suspected Madrid Bombing Ringleader Killed," *CNN*, April 4, 2004.

Additional Information – Terrorist Exploitation of Camping

As mentioned above, Paul "conducted hiking, camping, and other training operations in Burr Oak State Park in...Ohio with several co-conspirators."⁷⁴ Paul may have been following the guidance of a now-defunct al Qaeda website (Azzam Publications) which advised that "the majority of the time spent in Jihad is learning to cope with harsh, physically and mentally demanding living conditions...The best way to learn these [survival] skills is to go camping into the outdoors with a small group of brothers."⁷⁵ In recent years, Islamic extremists have consistently used camping and other outdoor activities as training vehicles.⁷⁶ The official British government report on the 7/7 bombings states,

"Camping, canoeing, white-water rafting, paintballing and other outward bound type activities are of particular interest because they appear common factors for the 7 July bombers and other cells disrupted previously and since... It is worth noting that for some extremist activities – e.g. fighting overseas – physical fitness and resilience are essential. They [such trips] may also be used to help with bonding between members of cells already established, or for more direct indoctrination or operational training and planning."⁷⁷

Paul's involvement in martial arts training is also notable because al Qaeda literature has similarly emphasized that activity. For example, Azzam Publications noted, "It is vital to join a martial arts club as part of the training for Jihad. In addition to teaching you how to defend yourself and strengthen your body, martial arts develop self discipline and controlled aggression."⁷⁸

Additional Information – Faris' Cooperation with the U.S. Government

According to press reports, Faris began cooperating with the U.S. government in March 2003⁷⁹ to avoid being declared an enemy combatant.⁸⁰ Working from a safe

⁷⁴ U.S. v. Paul, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:07-cr-00087-GLF, Indictment, Filed April 11, 2007.

⁷⁵ "How Can I Train Myself for Jihad?" Azzam Publications, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Columbus/Azzam_Training.pdf.

⁷⁶ For example, in April 2006, federal prosecutors alleged that three Georgia men conducted military training exercises in the Georgia mountains. Court papers assert that two of those men, Syed Ahmed and Ehsanul Sadequee, both of whom have been indicted on federal charges, "discussed strategic locations in the United States suitable for a terrorist strike, to include oil refineries and military bases." See: U.S. v Sadequee, (E.D. NY), No. 1:06-mj-00335-JMA, Affidavit in Support of Arrest Warrant, Filed March 28, 2006.

⁷⁷ Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005, House of Commons, May 11, 2006.

⁷⁸ "How Can I Train Myself for Jihad?" Azzam Publications, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Columbus/Azzam_Training.pdf. Note: In May 2005, federal agents indicted Tarik ibn Osman Shah, a martial arts expert from Bronx, NY, and charged him with conspiring to provide material support to Al Qaeda. According to court papers, Shah told a confidential informant that he had trained many "brothers" and had even done so at a mosque in Beacon, New York in 2001. Labeling himself a "professor" of the "martial arts" and expressing his desire to "pass" knowledge on to "brothers," Shah scouted a Long Island warehouse to determine its suitability as a training facility for Al Qaeda operatives. Shah has pled guilty. See: U.S. v. Shah, (E.D. N.Y.), No. S1 05 Cr. 673, Complaint, Filed May 27, 2005.

⁷⁹ Daniel Eisenberg, "The Triple Life of a Qaeda Man," *Time*, June 22, 2003.

⁸⁰ Daniel Eisenberg, "The Triple Life of a Qaeda Man," *Time*, June 22, 2003 and R. Jeffrey Smith and Amy Depaul, "'Scout' Had Low Profile," *The Washington Post*, June 21, 2003.

house in Virginia, he reportedly made calls and sent emails to his contacts under the supervision/direction of government agents.⁸¹

However, in July 2007, Nuradin Abdi's attorney indicated that Faris would testify in Abdi's trial that Abdi was merely upset about U.S. foreign policy and was not collaborating with terrorists.⁸² As noted above, Abdi pled guilty prior to trial.

⁸¹ Daniel Eisenberg, "The Triple Life of a Qaeda Man," *Time*, June 22, 2003.

⁸² U.S. v. Abdi, (S.D. OH.), No. 2:04CR88, Writ of Habeas Corpus Ad Testificandum, Filed July 23, 2007.