



Dossier: Shaykh Mustafa Abu al-Yazid (a.k.a. "Shaykh Saeed")

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Mustafa Ahmed Mohammed Uthman Abu al-Yazid (a.k.a. "Sheikh Saeed al-Masri") is an Egyptian national born in 1955 in the eastern Nile Delta region. In his youth, he was reportedly active in student groups linked to Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri's Islamic Jihad movement and allegedly involved in the conspiracy behind the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981. Tried before a military court in Egypt, al-Yazid managed to avoid the death penalty, and was instead sentenced to three years imprisonment. During his incarceration, his personal relationship with Dr. al-Zawahiri grew stronger and al-Yazid continued his activities with the Islamic Jihad movement following his release.¹

According to the As-Sahab Media Foundation (the official media wing of Al-Qaida's central leadership in Pakistan and Afghanistan), Mustafa Abu al-Yazid first came "to Jihad in Afghanistan in 1988. He took part in founding al-Qaida in 1989, and is a member of the Shura council of Qaida al-Jihad."² This information was confirmed during sworn testimony by former Al-Qaida member Jamal al-Fadl during United States v. Usama Bin Laden et al. (SDNY, 2001). Al-Fadl recalled that al-Yazid had served on Al-Qaida's Shura Council from an early point in the organization's history, and that—while in exile in the Sudan in 1991—al-Yazid even had his office in the same building as Usama Bin Laden in the city of Khartoum.³ During direct examination by federal prosecutors, al-Fadl was asked to describe al-Yazid's role as chief "treasurer" for Al-Qaida and Bin Laden (herein, he is referred to by his pseudonym, "Sheikh Sayyid"):



"Q. And what was that salary for?

A. That salary for from the al Qaeda members.

Q. And where did you go to get that salary?

A. I go to Sayyid el Masry office and he give it to me.

Q. That was in the same McNimr Street office?

A. Yes.

Q. And how much were you paid per month for your work for al Qaeda?

A. It's around \$300.

Q. And how often would you be paid for al Qaeda work?

A. Monthly...

Q. And if you took a business trip from the Sudan to someplace else, who would pay the expenses of the trip?

A. The al Qaeda membership, the al Qaeda committee money.

¹ <http://www.alshabah.net/v/showthread.php?t=166823>. February 6, 2008.

² <http://www.alshabah.org/v/showthread.php?t=130663>. May 26, 2007.

³ United States v. Usama bin Laden, et al. S(7) 98 Cr. 1023 (LBS). United States District Court, Southern District of New York. Trial Transcript, February 6, 2001. Pages 205, 249.

Q. And what if you were sent on a business trip for Taba Investments?

A. We got same thing. Sometime you got some money from Khalid Ali Waleed and you got extra Sheikh Sayyid el Masry...

Q. And why would you also get money from Sheikh Sayyid?

A. Because the al Qaeda tried to help the members for extra."⁴

Al-Fadl also acknowledged that he had actually worked for a time as an assistant to Mustafa Abu al-Yazid at his business office in Khartoum. Again, under examination by federal prosecutors:

"Q. Did you ever become involved in actually helping to pay people the al Qaeda salary?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell us what you did?

A. I help Sheikh Sayyid for the al Qaeda members, when they came, each one he write file, and we check his file and if he created money, we add it and we give him whatever money left..."

Q. Now, can you tell us more specifically what you would do when you helped Sheikh Sayyid with the payroll? What files were you given access to?

A. Some members, they came and I just checked their file and I sign, and I give it to Sheikh Sayyid and he gives them the money... we have different salary for al Qaeda members from Khalid Ali Waleed and from me and Sheikh Sayyid el Masry and we give them the files and all the papers."

Q. And what did the files look like?

A. The files, each person he got his own file and his nickname and his salary and if he created money, it go in that file."⁵

Likewise, several sources have also reported that Mustafa Abu al-Yazid assisted in providing the 9/11 suicide hijackers with some of their financial arrangements.⁶

After years in hiding, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid finally reappeared in May 2007—featured in an official video recording released by Al-Qaida's As-Sahab Media Foundation and identified as "the overall head of al-Qaida Organization in Afghanistan."⁷ Among other questions, al-Yazid was asked by an unidentified As-Sahab interviewer, "What are the current needs of the Jihad in Afghanistan?"—to which he responded:

"As for the needs of the Jihad in Afghanistan, the first of them is financial. The Mujahideen of the Taliban number in the thousands, but they lack funds. And there are hundreds wishing to carry out martyrdom-seeking operations, but they can't find the funds to equip themselves. So funding is the mainstay of Jihad. They also need personnel from their Arab brothers and their brothers from other countries in all spheres: military, scientific, informational and otherwise... And here we would like to point out that those who perform Jihad with their wealth should be certain to only send the funds to those responsible for finances and no other party, as to do otherwise leads to disunity and differences in the ranks of the Mujahideen."⁸

A remarkably similar theme was revisited in another original audio recording of Mustafa Abu al-Yazid released by As-Sahab in March 2008.

⁴ United States v. Usama bin Laden, et al. S(7) 98 Cr. 1023 (LBS). United States District Court, Southern District of New York. Trial Transcript, February 6, 2001. Pages 252-255.

⁵ United States v. Usama bin Laden, et al. S(7) 98 Cr. 1023 (LBS). United States District Court, Southern District of New York. Trial Transcript, February 6, 2001. Pages 252-253, 255, 259.

⁶ Whitlock, Craig and Munir Ladaa. "Al-Qaeda's New Leadership: Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, Liaison to Taliban." Washington Post. ©2006.

⁷ <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=130663>. May 26, 2007.

⁸ <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=130663>. May 26, 2007.

“The fields of the Jihad today are in need of men, and seek help from their heroes... So say to the noble-minded wherever they are – respond to Allah, woe unto you, respond! The infidels have hastened to fight you from faraway places on account of their religion, and they shall be killed and be wounded on account of Hell, and the Muslims are more entitled to go into battle and be patient because they are fighting on behalf of Allah, and are killed on account of paradise... We are delivering a special appeal to the scholars and the students: O brothers! You are learning in order to use the knowledge; for the benefit of learning is the use of the knowledge. It shall stay inside the head of the person and he will not understand its true meaning and its sweetness, until he shall use it... We are also delivering a special appeal to people of professions like doctors and electronics engineers due to the fact that the mujahideen need them desperately. The battle requests an integration of efforts and experience.”⁹

As a regular featured “talking head” in multimedia releases from the As-Sahab Media Foundation during 2007 and 2008, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid has become a key public spokesman for Al-Qaida and Usama Bin Laden—appearing in at least seven separate As-Sahab audio and video recordings. When, in February 2008, the U.S. military launched a targeted strike in northwestern Pakistan, killing senior Al-Qaida commander Abu al-Laith al-Liby, it was al-Yazid who stepped forward to offer an official eulogy on behalf of Al-Qaida: “Shaykh Abu al-Layth is but a shining star in a group of stars, and a jewel in a necklace of martyred champions and chiefs which adorns our noble Ummah’s neck. And he has been preceded in our recent past by many noble ones who drew with their blood the path of glory for the Ummah to restore its dignity, people like Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, Commander Abu Hafs al-Misri, Commander al-Khattab, the Commander of the Martyrdom-Seekers Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Commander Mulla Dadullah and others (may Allah have mercy on them all). And their blood only further illuminates the path and only adds to the insight and conviction of the marchers and their desire to join them and their determination to march on their path.”¹⁰

Shaykh Mustafa Abu al-Yazid is also responsible for publishing at least three text communiqués on behalf of Al-Qaida’s “General Command” in Afghanistan since December 2007:

- **December 24, 2007** – A statement “denying any role in recent blasts targeting mosques in the Pakistani border city of Peshawar... We do not attack targets in mosques or in public places where there are crowds of Muslims in order to safeguard Muslim blood and to respect the sanctity of mosques. This is our approach generally, and we inform all of our supporters in Pakistan—and everywhere else—about these facts.”¹¹
- **May 11, 2008** – A statement “carry[ing] news to the Islamic nation in general and especially to the mujahideen of the martyrdom of the mujahid Shaykh Abu Sulaiman al-Otaibi, may Allah have mercy on him. He was destined for an appointment with martyrdom in the land of Afghanistan after he came from Iraq and joined his brothers here approximately six months ago, following migration and jihad and knowledge and missionary work and scholarship... He was martyred in the Paktika province of Afghanistan with his comrade and brother Abu Dujanah al-Qahtani (may Allah have mercy on him)—the brother of Abu Nasser al-Qahtani (may Allah free him soon)—during clashes with the enemies of Allah from among the crusaders and apostates... May Allah have great mercy on them, accept them amongst his [martyrs], and grant them a high station. We offer our condolences to their families, to the mujahideen brothers, to all of our brothers in general, and especially to the brothers of Abu Sulaiman in Iraq and in the Arabian Peninsula. We ask Allah to bless the legacies of these martyrs...”¹²

⁹ <http://www.myhesbah.com/v/showthread.php?t=176696>. March 6, 2008.

¹⁰ <http://www.alhesbah.net/v/showthread.php?t=166760>. February 6, 2008.

¹¹ <http://www.alhesbah.net/v/showthread.php?t=158862>. December 27, 2007.

¹² <http://www.alhesbah.net/v/showthread.php?t=179569>. May 11, 2008.

- **June 4, 2008** – “This [event] comes in the context of our jihad [countering] the assault on our Islamic nation by the Crusaders, the Jews, and all the other tyrannical enemies of Islam, and it is in defense of our religion and the blood of the Muslims, their land, and their honor. And this comes in retaliation for what the infidels from the so-called state of Denmark have published: the insulting cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him—which they refused to apologize for publishing, even though they had many opportunities... One of the courageous heroes from Al-Qaida executed a martyrdom operation on the morning of Monday June 2, 2008 targeting the Danish Embassy in Islamabad, where they were ensconced behind their fortresses which they thought were safe from the retaliation of almighty Allah... This should serve as a warning to the infidel countries regarding their crimes against our Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him. They must apologize immediately, or else this will only be the first step in our struggle. We congratulate the Islamic nation on this successful blow against the enemies of Allah, the staff of the Danish Embassy. This operation also provides the major role being played by Pakistani mujahideen, who participated in preparing this operation. They have pride and enthusiasm for their faith.”¹³

¹³ <http://www.alhesbah.net/v/showthread.php?t=182159>. June 4, 2008.