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Global Jihad Monitor

December 14-20, 2005

The Big Picture

- Germany paroled Hezbollah terrorist Mohammed Ali Hamadi after 19 years in prison. Hamadi had been convicted for the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847 and murder of U.S. naval diver Robert Dean Stethem. [[Full Story](#)]
- Iraqis voted in parliamentary elections with little violence from terrorists or insurgents. [[Full Story](#)]
- Police in Spain and France arrested suspected Islamic extremists with alleged ties to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and al-Qaeda in Iraq. [[Full Story](#)]

Regional Briefs

North America

Alleged al-Qaeda Suspect Arrested ([Boston Globe](#)) - Canadian national Abdullah Khadr allegedly armed al-Qaeda with bullets, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, and explosive chemicals that were used against US troops fighting in Afghanistan, according to a criminal complaint filed by Boston-based federal prosecutors. The U.S. attorney's office in Boston announced Sunday (12/18) that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had arrested Khadr, 24, Saturday in Toronto, at the request of the U.S. government.

Canadian Suspect Confessed to al-Qaeda Weapons Purchase ([AP](#)) - A Canadian terror suspect confessed to buying guns and rocket launchers for al-Qaeda to use against U.S. forces in Afghanistan, according to a court filing Monday (12/19). In a court affidavit in Toronto, where Abdullah Khadr appeared at a preliminary hearing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Corp. Richard Jenkins wrote that Khadr admitted ties to senior al-Qaeda members and confessed to buying guns and rocket launchers for them in Afghanistan. Khadr also admitted to a role in an unspecified plot to assassinate Pakistan's prime minister.

Middle East

Israeli Attack Kills 4 in Gaza ([New York Times](#)) - An Israeli airstrike on Wednesday (12/14) killed four Palestinian militants near the eastern edge of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military said that the Palestinians' car was packed with explosives and that they were on the way to carry out an attack.

Hamas Says Will Step Up Attacks if Israel Hits Iran ([Reuters](#)) - Hamas will step up its attacks on Israeli targets if the Jewish state attacks its key ally in the region, Iran, Hamas chief-in-exile Khaled Meshaal said on Thursday (12/15). "If Israel attacks Iran

then Hamas will widen and increase its confrontation of Israelis inside Palestine," Meshaal told reporters in Tehran, where he has held three days of talks with top political and security officials.

Blast in Southern Gaza Kills Militant ([AP](#)) - An explosion in the southern Gaza Strip killed a militant who fired homemade rockets at Israel on Saturday (12/17) and wounded three other people, Palestinians said. Palestinian security officials said the explosion was the result of an Israeli airstrike. But the Israeli army said it was not involved.

Gunmen Storm City Hall in Biblical Bethlehem ([Reuters](#)) - Palestinian gunmen briefly seized Bethlehem city hall, overlooking the Church of the Nativity, on Tuesday (12/20) in a jarring interruption to Christmas preparations in the traditional birthplace of Jesus. The incident, five days before Christmas, was another sign of growing lawlessness in Palestinian territories and the turmoil within Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah faction ahead of a January parliamentary election.

Zarqawi Gets Third Death Sentence in Absentia ([Reuters](#)) - Jordan's state security court on Sunday (12/18) handed al-Qaeda leader in Iraq Abu Musab al-Zarqawi his third death sentence in absentia for planning a failed suicide attack at the border post with Iraq. A three-man military court also handed Saudi-born Fahed Fuheiqi, 24, who is now in police custody, a death sentence by hanging, while Jordanian Darar Abu Oudeh, who is a fugitive militant, was given a death sentence in absentia.

Jordan Forces Sweep for Militants ([Reuters](#)) - Hundreds of Jordanian security forces conducted a manhunt on Sunday (12/18) for suspected Islamist militants in the second city of Irbid after a tip-off about a possible car bomb, officials and witnesses said. They said the authorities cordoned off an area near the main state university of the northern city, close to a hotel frequented by Israelis.

Jordan Names Anti-Terror General, Cabinet ([AP](#)) - Jordan named a tough anti-terrorism general to replace the country's top intelligence operative and approved a new Cabinet on Tuesday (12/20), part of a political and security overhaul since last month's deadly hotel bombings. The new Cabinet, called for by King Abdullah II following the Nov. 9 attacks that killed 60 people in Amman, won a landslide parliamentary vote of confidence.

U.N. Investigator Names Syria in Murder ([AP](#)) - The chief U.N. investigator into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said in remarks published Saturday (12/17) that he believed Syrian authorities were behind the killing. It was the first time that Detlev Mehlis has unequivocally accused Syria of responsibility for Hariri's assassination since opening the U.N. probe in June.

Iraq

Bomb Kills Two Policemen ([Fox News](#)) - Scattered reports of violence across the country Wednesday (12/14) in the lead up to the election included a roadside bomb in Mosul that went off as a police patrol passed, killing two officers and wounding four

others, a hospital official said. Also, near Fallujah, police said gunmen shot up four polling stations but there were no reports of casualties.

Three Killed in Sporadic Iraq Violence ([AP](#)) - The level of violence around Iraq appeared to be low Thursday (12/15) during parliamentary elections, with bombs killing three people despite promises by major insurgent groups not to attack polling places. An Islamic insurgent group, the Victorious Sect Army, claimed responsibility in an Internet statement.

Zarqawi 'Captured and Released' ([BBC](#)) - Iraqi police captured and mistakenly released Abu Musab al-Zarqawi last year, the Iraqi deputy interior minister said Friday (12/16). Hussein Kamal told reporters that Zarqawi was arrested in the central Iraqi town of Falluja, but was released when nobody recognized him.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq Claims Election Attacks ([AP](#)) - Al-Qaeda in Iraq denied in an Internet statement Saturday (12/17) that it had intentionally curbed violence during this week's elections, saying it carried out multiple attacks on U.S. and Iraqi forces. Election violence was low in what was perceived as an attempt to avoid harming members of the Sunni Arab community, who voted in large numbers. The militant Ansar al-Sunnah Army, which has ties to al-Qaeda in Iraq, issued a statement on the same website Saturday suggesting it halted operations during Thursday's polls but resumed them with a purported attack on a U.S. Humvee in Tikrit, 80 miles north of Baghdad.

Video of U.S. Hostage Killing Posted on Internet ([AKI \(Itlay\)](#)) - The Islamic Army in Iraq has released a video which it says shows the killing of Ronald Schulz, a 40-year-old American security consultant taken hostage in Iraq earlier this month. It had already announced that he had been killed in a statement issued on 8 December, which said pictures of the killing would be released later.

Jordan Embassy Driver Abducted in Iraq ([Reuters](#)) - A Jordanian driver for his country's embassy in Baghdad was kidnapped when he left his home on Tuesday (12/20), Iraqi police and Jordan's state news agency said. Gunmen in three cars pulled up at the Jordanian's home in the south of the Iraqi capital and seized Mahmoud Saadat, who was described by Jordan's Petra news agency as a driver for the embassy and by police as the ambassador's personal driver.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

G.I. Killed; 47 'Combatants' Freed in Amnesty ([New York Times](#)) - An American serviceman was killed and another wounded in a firefight with insurgents in southern Kandahar Province, the United States military reported Thursday (12/15). In Kabul, the American military released 47 detainees from the detention center at Bagram Air Base under a program intended to encourage Taliban fighters to give up their armed opposition.

Pakistan Envoy Sees No Major Taliban Resurgence ([Reuters](#)) - Pakistan's ambassador acknowledged on Thursday (12/15) that "remnants" of Taliban and al-

Qaeda continue to operate in Afghanistan and his country's border, but insisted they are not resurging significantly. Jehangir Karamat said Osama bin Laden has lost effectiveness, that his al-Qaeda organization has no overarching leadership capable of directing attacks worldwide and that it would be unwise to become "obsessed" with capturing the Islamist militant who directed the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Europe

Police Arrest More in Zarqawi-Linked French Probe ([Reuters](#)) - French police seized weapons and arrested two people as part of a probe into an Islamic militant group said to have indirect links to al-Qaeda's leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, officials said on Thursday (12/25). The two arrests, on Wednesday, followed a string of dawn raids in the Paris region on Monday, when police arrested 25 people suspected of financing Islamic militancy by staging armed robberies.

Arrests in Spain 'Linked to Iraq' ([CNN](#)) - Spanish police early Monday (12/19) arrested 15 people suspected of recruiting and indoctrinating others to be sent to fight against Western forces in Iraq, according to Spain's interior minister, Jose Antonio Alonso. The arrests included an Iraqi man Spanish authorities said was linked to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

E.U. May Cut Aid if Hamas Wins at Polls ([AP](#)) - Europe's top diplomat warned Sunday (12/18) the European Union might cut off aid to the Palestinian Authority if Hamas militants win next month's parliamentary election, reflecting international alarm over the Islamic group's strong showing in West Bank local voting. Javier Solana, the E.U.'s foreign policy chief, said during a tour of the region that European taxpayers would have a hard time supporting the Palestinian government if it included a party that supports violence and advocates Israel's destruction. The U.S. House of Representatives approved a similar declaration Friday.

Germany Paroles Terrorist ([AP](#)) - German authorities have paroled convicted terrorist Mohammed Ali Hamadi after he served 19 years of a life sentence for the 1985 hijacking of a TWA jetliner and the killing of a U.S. Navy diver, a law enforcement official said Tuesday (12/20). TWA flight 847 from Athens to Rome was hijacked on June 14, 1985, to Beirut, where the hijackers shot U.S. Navy diver Robert Dean Stethem, 23, and dumped his body on the tarmac. Stethem's parents later sued Iran in U.S. federal courts, saying that Iran had given support to the hijackers, believed to be from Hezbollah.

Germany: Hostage Leaving Iraq Soon ([AP](#)) - A German woman released after a three-week hostage ordeal is expected to leave Iraq soon but likely will not return immediately to her homeland, the German government said Monday (12/19). Officials left several questions unanswered about the kidnapping and release of Susanne Osthoff, a 43-year-old aid worker and archaeologist who was the first German to be taken hostage in Iraq. She was freed Sunday.

"Al-Qaeda Group" Claims Swedish Iraq Poll Attack ([Reuters](#)) - A failed fire bomb attack on a polling station in Stockholm used for Iraq's parliamentary election has been claimed by a group which says it has links to al-Qaeda, newspapers said on Thursday (12/25). Bottles of petrol were thrown at the polling station for Iraqi immigrants in the northern Stockholm suburb of Kista in the early hours of Thursday, but did not ignite. Sweden, which is neutral and has not supported the U.S.-led war in Iraq, has suffered no attacks and has not previously had any known al-Qaeda groups on its territory.

Britain Arrests 6th Man in London Bombings That Failed ([New York Times](#)) - British police arrested a new suspect Tuesday (12/20) after months of investigations into an attempt on July 21 to mimic the July 7 London bombings that killed 56 people, including the 4 attackers, two weeks earlier. The man, identified only as a 23-year-old with an address in Tottenham, North London, was seized as he flew into London's Gatwick airport at 5:00 a.m. on a flight from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the police said.

Belfast: Terror Plan Algerian Gets 6 Years ([AP](#)) - An Algerian man convicted of possessing information on making a bomb that could be used to blow up an airplane has been sentenced to six years in prison. Prosecutors said Abbas Boutrab was suspected of links to the al-Qaeda terrorist network, and cited telephone records and unspecified documents seized at his home in the Belfast suburb of Newtownabbey.

Asia

Bangladesh Uncovers Explosives Caches ([Reuters](#)) - Police in Bangladesh seized bombs and explosives and arrested four militants in the second major raid this week on radicals fighting for Islamic rule, officials said on Saturday (12/17). "Two hundred bombs, 2,000 detonators, 144 pieces of power gel explosives and bomb making materials were seized from two hideouts late on Friday," a spokesman for the Rapid Action Battalion said. On Wednesday, RAB arrested three militant leaders including operations commander Aaur Rahman Sunny and seized 120 kg (240 pounds) of explosives, 27 grenades, dozens of detonators and 24 revolvers in Dhaka and southeastern Chittagong.

Australia

Terror Suspect Met Osama bin Laden, Court Told ([Herald Sun \(Australia\)](#)) - A Melbourne terror suspect met Osama bin Laden while training at an al-Qaeda camp and may have pledged allegiance to him, a court heard Tuesday (12/20). Shane Kent, 29, who is accused of forming a terror cell with nine other men, allegedly accepted an invitation to meet the terrorist mastermind in the months before the September 11, 2001 attacks.

This report was compiled by Jonathan L. Snow, Manager of Research at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.