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# Global Jihad Monitor

January 11-17, 2006

## The Big Picture

- A U.S. strike in Pakistan aimed at al-Qaeda's number two, Ayman al-Zawahri, killed at least four or five foreign terrorists. It is not clear whether Zawahiri was amongst the dead, though reports indicate that al-Qaeda's master bomb maker and chemical weapons expert, Midhat Mursi, might have been killed in the strike. [\[Full Story\]](#)
- At least 27 people were killed in two suspected suicide bombings in southern Afghanistan. [\[Full Story\]](#)
- Spanish police arrested the suspected leader of two Islamic terror cells. [\[Full Story\]](#)

## Regional Briefs

### North America

**Guantanamo Prisoner Rejects U.S. War Tribunal** ([Reuters](#)) - A Yemeni accused of being a bodyguard for Osama bin Laden went before a U.S. military tribunal on Wednesday (1/11) and said he would boycott his war crimes trial because he did not recognize the tribunal's authority. Yemeni Ali Hamza al Bahlul, who has acknowledged that he is "from al-Qaeda," is one of only nine Guantanamo prisoners charged with crimes. A separate tribunal also began on Wednesday for Canadian Omar Khadr, who is accused of killing a U.S. Army medic in Afghanistan when he was still 15.

**U.S.: 'Very high' Chance of WMD Terror Strike** ([AP](#)) - There is a "very high" probability that a terrorist group will strike using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, a senior U.S. counterterrorism official said in comments published Tuesday (1/17). "I rate the probability of terror groups using (weapons of mass destruction) as very high," U.S. State Department counterterrorism coordinator Henry Crumpton was quoted as saying by the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper. "It is simply a question of time."

**Surge in Sale of Disposable Cell Phones May Have Terror Link** ([ABC News](#)) - ABC News reports that federal agents have launched an investigation into a surge in the purchase of large quantities of disposable cell phones by individuals from the Middle East and Pakistan. The FBI is closely monitoring the potentially dangerous development, which came to light following recent large-quantity purchases in California and Texas, officials confirmed.

## **Middle East**

**Hamas Bomb Mastermind Gets 35 Life Terms ([UPI](#))** - An Israeli court sentenced a Palestinian terror group commander to 35 consecutive life sentences for two suicide bombings. The Tel Aviv District Court sentenced Abbas el-Sayid, the mastermind of the 2002 bombing of Netanya's Park Hotel, to 35 consecutive life sentences for the murder of 30 victims in that attack and five more in a 2001 suicide bombing at the Sharon Mall in the same city. He was the head of Hamas in Tulkarm on the West Bank, the *Jerusalem Post* reported Wednesday (1/11).

**Attacks in West Bank Heighten Tension Before Vote ([CNN](#))** - A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up Thursday (1/12) in Jenin and, in a separate attack, Palestinian gunmen fired on the Ramallah home of Palestinian Interior Minister Nasser Yousef. The suicide bomber killed only himself, and the gunmen injured two of Yousef's bodyguards, sources said.

**IDF Shells Gaza After Rocket Launch, Arrests 28 in West Bank ([Haaretz/ITIM](#))** - Late on Sunday (1/15), IDF heavy artillery shelled areas in the northern Gaza Strip used for launching rockets and mortar shells, after Palestinian gunners launched a projectile at Israeli territory. Israeli forces also arrested 28 wanted militants from Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah across the West Bank late on Sunday.

**Gaza Gunmen Reject Storing Arms for Vote ([Reuters](#))** - Militants in Gaza have rejected a Palestinian Authority plan to put their weapons in storage during next week's parliamentary election, the Interior Minister said on Monday (1/16). Palestinian Interior Minister Nasser Yousef said a proposal had been made for factions in Gaza to collect their own weapons just before the ballot and put them into a storage area to which they would have one key and the Palestinian Authority another. Khader Habib, an Islamic Jihad leader, confirmed the proposal was rejected, but denied that the group's weapons contributed to Gaza's "chaos and anarchy" or threatened security during the elections.

**IDF Kills Senior Hamas Militant ([Haaretz/Reuters](#))** - Israel Defense Forces troops killed a senior Palestinian militant during an exchange of fire in the West Bank on Tuesday (1/17), witnesses and the army said. Witnesses said soldiers surrounded a hideout used by Thabet Ayyadeh, 24, leader of the Hamas military wing in Tulkaram, and shot him dead in the ensuing clash.

**Lebanese Nab Terrorists Headed for Gaza ([Jerusalem Post](#))** - The Lebanese army caught a boat on its way to Israel that was loaded with weapons, including long-range missiles, Israeli's Channel 1 revealed Thursday (1/12) night. Government officials speculated that the boat was funded by Iran or Syria and that the weapons were meant to reach either the Hamas or the Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip.

**Thousands of Lebanese Protest Against U.S. ([AP](#))** - Thousands of pro-Syrian Lebanese chanting "Death to America" protested Tuesday (1/17) near the U.S. Embassy against what they called American meddling in the country's affairs. Students and political activists from 18 pro-Syrian groups, including Hezbollah, chanted in unison

"Death to America!" and "Beirut is free! Free! America get out!" Police estimated the crowd at 17,000. A Hezbollah official put the number at 25,000.

**Lebanon Nabs 11 al-Qaeda Militants Planning Attacks** ([Haaretz \(Israel\)](#)) - A Lebanese newspaper reported Friday (1/13) that Lebanese authorities arrested 11 al-Qaeda militants suspected of intentions to carry out terror attacks. The *al-Safir* newspaper reported that the militants were of Saudi, Jordanian, Lebanese and Palestinian origin.

**Five al-Qaeda Suspects Arrested** ([AKI \(Italy\)](#)) - Saudi police on Tuesday (1/17) announced they had arrested five members of a suspected al-Qaeda linked terror cell in the capital, Riyadh. The police carried out a number of raids in the capital on Sunday and Monday, seizing 12 hand-grenades, material for the preparation of explosives and the equivalent of 250,000 dollars in the local currency during the operation.

## **Iraq**

**Ambush Traps Iraqi Patrol; 2 G.I.'s Die in Copter Crash** ([New York Times](#)) - Insurgents hiding in a roadside farmhouse ambushed a police patrol on Monday (1/16) northeast of Baghdad, killing 5 officers and a child and wounding 19 people, police officials said. Two American soldiers were also killed when their AH-64 Apache helicopter crashed north of Baghdad, apparently after being shot down by insurgents. Insurgents also carried out attacks in the capital on Monday that left at least two people dead, Interior Ministry officials said.

**Al-Qaeda, Iraq Groups Claim Downed U.S. Helicopter** ([Reuters](#)) - An al Qaeda-led group and two less-known Iraqi insurgent organizations issued separate claims for Monday's (1/16) downing of a U.S. helicopter and one issued a video which it said showed the attack, according to Web postings. The three statements' authenticity could not be verified.

**Captors Threaten to Kill U.S. Journalist** ([CNN](#)) - An American journalist's kidnappers threatened to kill her unless the United States releases all female Iraqi prisoners within 72 hours, the Arabic-language TV network al-Jazeera said after it aired a video showing her Tuesday (1/17). The Qatar-based network said the abductors identified themselves as members of a previously unknown armed group called the "Brigades of Vengeance." Journalist Jill Carroll, 28, a freelance writer on assignment for the *Christian Science Monitor*, was kidnapped January 7 in western Baghdad. Her Iraqi interpreter was killed, but her Iraqi driver escaped unharmed.

## **Afghanistan and Pakistan**

**Suicide Car Bomb Hits Canadian Troops in Afghanistan** ([CNN](#)) - Two Afghans and a Canadian soldier were killed and 13 people, including three Canadian troops, were wounded when a suicide car bomb struck a military convoy in Kandahar on Sunday (1/15), military officials and police said.

**27 Killed in Afghan Suicide Blasts** ([CNN](#)) - At least 27 people were killed in two suspected suicide bombings in southern Afghanistan Monday (1/16). In the border town of Spin Boldak, 22 people were killed and another 20 wounded when an attacker drove a motorbike into a crowd in the downtown area. The Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency quoted a Taliban spokesman claiming responsibility for the blast. Earlier Monday, a suicide bomber killed three soldiers and two civilians in southern city of Kandahar, Reuters reported.

**15 Killed in Pakistan Gunbattle** ([CNN](#)) - A remote-controlled landmine tore through a Pakistani military vehicle in the country's restive Baluchistan province Wednesday (1/11), killing three soldiers and sparking a gunbattle that left at least 12 militants dead. Pakistan's military has actively sought out Taliban and al-Qaeda remnants in Baluchistan, where many fled following the 2001 U.S.-led war that ousted the hard-line Islamic Taliban regime in neighboring Afghanistan.

**Caller Threatens al-Qaeda Attack on U.N.** ([AP](#)) - A threatening phone call that forced the United Nations to temporarily close offices in southwestern Pakistan said al-Qaeda would attack the world body's offices there, the top U.N. official in Pakistan said Tuesday (1/17). The phone call was received Monday by the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, and the United Nations closed all offices in the province of Baluchistan that day and Tuesday, said Jan Vandemoortele, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan.

**Pakistan Says U.S. Strike Killed 4 or 5 Terrorists** ([AP](#)) - Four or five foreign terrorists died in the purported U.S. airstrike aimed at al-Qaeda's No. 2 leader in a Pakistani border village, the provincial government said Tuesday (1/17). The statement issued by the administration of Pakistan's semiautonomous tribal regions bordering Afghanistan also said that between 10 and 12 foreign extremists had been invited to the dinner at the village hit in Friday's attack. It was the first official confirmation by Pakistani authorities that foreign militants were killed in the attack on the village of Damadola. Pakistani intelligence officials have said Ayman al-Zawahri, Osama bin Laden's top lieutenant, had been invited to a dinner in the targeted village of Damadola to mark an Islamic holiday but did not show up and sent some aides instead.

## **Europe**

**Alleged Terror Cell Leader Held** ([CNN](#)) - Police in Spain on Thursday (1/12) arrested the suspected leader of two alleged Islamic terrorist cells broken up earlier in the week in Spain, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. The suspect, Omar Nakhcha, a 23-year-old Moroccan, led the two cells, which recruited so-called "holy warriors" to fight in the Iraqi insurgency, the statement said. Twenty suspects from those cells were arrested on Tuesday in Spain, it said.

**7 Terrorist Suspects to Remain in Spain Jail** ([CNN](#)) - A Spanish judge ordered seven Islamic terrorist suspects who were arrested this week to remain in jail on charges of recruiting an Algerian suicide bomber who later killed 19 Italians in Iraq, a National Court spokeswoman told CNN Saturday (1/14).

**7 Years for Iraqi Who Aided al-Qaeda** ([AP](#)) - A German court on Thursday (1/12) convicted an Iraqi national of aiding militants in his home country and sentenced him to seven years in prison. Amin Lokman Mohamed, 33, was convicted of membership in a foreign terrorist organization and human trafficking for helping Ansar al-Islam, a group linked to al-Qaeda. The case is one of several in Germany and elsewhere exploring how Islamic radicals draw on logistical and financial support from sympathizers in Europe.

**Cleric 'Urged Children to Fight'** ([CNN](#)) - The jury in the trial of Abu Hamza al-Masri heard recorded sermons Friday (1/13) of the Muslim cleric telling followers to "join the front line" in the fight against infidels and calling for children to be trained for a violent struggle. Egyptian-born Hamza, former head preacher at the Finsbury Park Mosque in north London, faces life in prison if convicted of inciting murder and stirring racial hatred in speeches recorded on nine video and audio tapes made for supporters.

**Man Held Over Failed London Bombs** ([CNN](#)) - A 27-year-old man was arrested by anti-terror officers in west London in connection with the attempted bombings on the London transit system on July 21 last year, Scotland Yard said in a written statement on Tuesday (1/17). Police sources said the man is believed to have been involved in providing support to the alleged failed bombers after they carried out their attacks. A total of 16 people have already been charged in connection with July 21 attacks.

## **Asia**

**15 Years Over Bangladesh Bombs** ([Reuters](#)) - A Bangladesh court sentenced a member of an outlawed Islamist group, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, to 15 years in prison for involvement in serial bomb attacks across the country in August, a police officer said on Monday (1/16). Two people were killed and almost 100 wounded when 500 bombs went off on August 17, blamed on Islamist militant groups fighting to turn Bangladesh, a mainly Muslim democracy, into an Islamic sharia state.

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