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# Global Jihad Monitor

March 15-21, 2006

## The Big Picture

- Coalition military forces launched “Operation Swarmer” in an attempt to retake areas of Iraq that have been used as bases by terrorists and insurgents. [[Full Story](#)]
- The U.S. released documents captured in Iraq after the fall of Baghdad that indicate a pre-war al-Qaeda presence in the country. [[Full Story](#)]
- Israeli officials thwarted an attempted suicide bombing by Islamic Jihad. [[Full Story](#)]

## Regional Briefs

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### North America

**Prosecutor Says 'Book of Jihad' Found in Lodi Terror Suspects' Home** ([AP](#)) - A prosecutor says publications promoting jihad and a Pakistani militant group were found in the home of a Lodi father and son who are standing trial on terror-related charges. The prosecutor told jurors Wednesday (3/15) that FBI agents found the items while searching the family home two days after the men were arrested last June.

**Canada Agrees to al-Qaeda Suspect Extradition Hearing** ([Reuters](#)) - The Ontario Superior Court agreed on Thursday (3/16) to hold an extradition hearing for a Canadian man who is wanted in the United States on charges of buying weapons for al-Qaeda and conspiring to kill Americans abroad. Abdullah Khadr, 24, could face a life sentence and a \$1 million fine if convicted in the U.S.

**Roommate Told FBI of Moussaoui Interests** ([AP](#)) - Al-Qaeda conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui told a roommate in Oklahoma that fighting a holy war was the only way to get to paradise, according to testimony Tuesday (3/21). A videotaped deposition of Hussein al-Attas, who roomed with Moussaoui before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, was played for the jury in Moussaoui's death penalty trial.

### Middle East

**Some U.S. Officials Fear Iran Is Helping al-Qaeda** ([L.A. Times](#)) - U.S. intelligence officials, already focused on Iran's potential for building nuclear weapons, are struggling to solve a more immediate mystery: the murky relationship between the new Tehran leadership and the contingent of al-Qaeda leaders residing in the country.

**Iran's Secret Talks with Militants Spark Fears of Proxy War** ([Telegraph \(UK\)](#)) - Iran held secret talks with Shia militant leaders from Iraq and Lebanon only days before the country's nuclear negotiators threatened America with "harm and pain", independent sources in Teheran have revealed. The Iraqi firebrand cleric, Moqtadr al-Sadr and the chief of Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hassan Nasrallah, held separate consultations with leading officials in Teheran.

**Gunbattle Erupts in Jenin, Israelis Shot in West Bank** ([Reuters](#)) - Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen fought each other in the West Bank city of Jenin on Thursday (3/16), hours after gunmen shot and wounded two Israeli motorists near a Jewish settlement.

**Hamas Leader Puts Resisting Israel Before Politics** ([Reuters](#)) - Running the Palestinian Authority will not deflect Hamas from its overriding goal of pursuing a long-term struggle with Israel, the leader-in-exile of the militant Islamist movement said in Damascus. "Being in power is only a means to an end for Hamas," Khaled Meshaal told a memorial gathering for a deceased Palestinian politician on Thursday (3/16) night.

**Hamas, Failing to Find Partners, Proposes Cabinet** ([New York Times](#)) - Hamas delivered its proposed cabinet list to the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, on Sunday (3/19) night. Hamas is expected to control the most important government ministries after weeks of negotiations failed to persuade other Palestinian parties to join its government.

**Gunmen Besiege Gaza Ministries, Three Wounded** ([AFP](#)) - Palestinian gunmen from the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades laid siege to two government ministries in the Gaza Strip in shootouts Monday (3/20) with police officers that left three people wounded.

**Israeli Security Forces Foil Suicide Bombing in Central Israel** ([Jerusalem Post](#)) - Jerusalem police on Tuesday (3/21) intercepted a van on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway transporting a Palestinian suicide bomber on his way to carry out a bombing in the center of the country, Jerusalem police chief Ilan Franco said. The van was stopped with ten Palestinians inside and a bag containing between five and seven kilograms of explosives. The would-be bomber is affiliated with the Islamic Jihad, Franco said.

**Slain al-Qaeda Leader Vowed to Attack U.S** ([AP](#)) - The slain leader of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia vowed in his final testament that his group would overthrow the royal family and stage more attacks against the kingdom and Americans in the region, according to a video released Saturday (3/18). The video showed Fahd Faraaj al-Juwair wearing a white headscarf and robes as he read his will in front of a map of Saudi Arabia with the slogan, "Expel the infidels from the Arabian Peninsula."

**Saudi Arabia Says Its War with al-Qaeda Not Over** ([Reuters](#)) - Saudi Arabia's interior minister said on Sunday (3/19) the kingdom's war against al-Qaeda was not over, even after the death of top leaders of the group's Saudi wing.

**Documents: Dubai Threatened by Extremists** ([AP](#)) - An Islamic extremist group warned Dubai and other sheikdoms of the United Arab Emirates that it would attack the crucial tourism industry if authorities persisted in arresting militants wanted by the West. The threat, contained in a letter dated 2002 and newly declassified by the U.S. military, shows the intimidation Arab countries face if they cooperate with the West.

**Suspect in al-Qaeda Bombings Disrupts Trial in Turkey** ([Washington Post](#)) - The al-Qaeda operative accused of organizing the 2003 Istanbul bombings and a botched attempt to sink an Israeli cruise ship appeared in a Turkish courtroom on Monday (3/20). Louai al-Sakka, 32, who by his own account worked beside insurgent leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq, is a Syrian described by Turkish officials as a senior figure in al-Qaeda. He is accused of providing other operatives with about \$170,000 from the group to carry out four truck bombings that killed 57 people over two days in November 2003.

## **Iraq**

**Released Saddam Papers Hint at Links to al-Qaeda** ([Sunday Times \(U.K.\)](#)) - Newly released documents seized in Iraq immediately after the American invasion in 2003 point to the presence of al-Qaeda members in the country before the war and moves to hide traces of "chemical or biological materials" from United Nations weapons inspectors.

**Iraqis Say U.S. Raid on Home Killed 11 Family Members** ([Reuters](#)) - Eleven members of an Iraqi family were killed in a U.S. raid on Wednesday (3/15), police and witnesses said. The U.S. military said two women and a child died during the bid to seize an al-Qaeda militant from a house.

**25 Bodies Found in Baghdad** ([CNN](#)) - Iraqi Emergency Police said 25 bodies were found throughout Baghdad Wednesday (3/15). According to police, all had been shot and stripped of identification.

**U.S. Forces in Big Assault Near Samarra** ([New York Times](#)) - The United States military announced Thursday (3/16) that it had begun a large-scale assault on insurgent bases outside Samarra, a city north of Baghdad where the bombing of a revered Shiite shrine last month sent sectarian violence soaring in Iraq. The military called the new operation the largest air assault since the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

**U.S.-Iraqi Assault Grabs Insurgents, Weapons** ([CNN](#)) - U.S. and Iraqi forces ferreted out insurgents and weapons caches in a rural area north of Baghdad on Friday (3/17), U.S. military officials said. Soldiers detained at least 31 people and found more than half a dozen weapons caches in a 10-mile-by-10-mile area outside Samarra, officials said.

**Another 22 Bodies Found in Baghdad** ([CNN](#)) - Iraqi police and soldiers found the bodies of 22 people in Baghdad on Saturday (3/18) who were shot in the head and

showed signs of torture, security forces said. The bodies were found in different neighborhoods and could not be immediately identified.

**Nine More Bodies Found in Baghdad** ([CNN](#)) - Nine bodies were found in Baghdad Monday (3/20) shot in the head, said an official. The discoveries bring the number of bodies found in Baghdad to 186 over eight days, the official said.

**Gunmen Kill 16 Iraqi Police Officers** ([AP](#)) - Gunmen ambushed a police station in the city of Muqadiyah north of Baghdad Tuesday (3/21), killing at least 15 police officers and a guard at a nearby courthouse, police said. The attack came a day after at least 39 people were killed by insurgents and shadowy sectarian gangs in Iraq.

## **Afghanistan and Pakistan**

**Blast Hits Pakistan Radio Station** ([BBC](#)) - Radio broadcasts were disrupted Sunday (3/19) in Pakistan's tribal region of South Waziristan after unidentified attackers blew up an antenna. Pakistan's military has been hunting al-Qaeda militants in the region. The station was a set up with the aim of publicizing the government's position on the ongoing military operations in the area.

**Pakistan Bomb Kills Seven** ([AP](#)) - Suspected Islamic militants triggered a bomb near a police van Sunday (3/19) in northwestern Pakistan, killing seven people and wounding four others, an official said.

**Roadside Bomb Wounds Two Pakistani Soldiers** ([Reuters](#)) - A roadside bomb wounded two Pakistani army officers on Monday (3/20) in North Waziristan, a tribal border region where security forces are battling pro-Taliban and al Qaeda militants, security officials said. The bomb was detonated by remote control as a military convoy passed through Mubarak Shahi, the main town in North Waziristan.

**Afghan Christian Could Get Death Sentence** ([AP](#)) - An Afghan man is being prosecuted in a Kabul court and could be sentenced to death on a charge of converting from Islam to Christianity, a crime under this country's Islamic laws, a judge said Sunday (3/19). The trial is believed to be the first of its kind in Afghanistan and highlights a struggle between religious conservatives and reformists over what shape Islam should take here four years after the ouster of the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime.

**'Iraq Influence' on Afghan Fighters** ([CNN](#)) - Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used by anti-coalition forces in Afghanistan appear similar to those used by insurgents in Iraq, a U.S. commander has said on Thursday (3/16). "We're trying to figure out how the technology is transferred," Maj. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, the U.S. commander in charge of security operations in Afghanistan, said.

**14 Dead in Afghan Attacks** ([Reuters](#)) - Taliban gunmen killed a powerful former governor of an Afghan province and four of his guards on Saturday (3/18), and hours later tried to kill the province's current governor. The violence in Ghazni province came

a day after nine policemen were killed in a blast as they were bringing back the bodies of four Macedonians kidnapped and killed by the Taliban and dumped in a valley.

## **Europe**

**32 Charged in Failed Spain Bombing** ([CNN](#)) - A Spanish judge has indicted 32 suspected Islamic extremists in a failed plot to attack the National Court in Madrid, which tries terrorism cases, with a truck bomb. The indictments were issued March 13, according to the court order, but were only made public Monday (3/20).

**Five Held Over U.K. Cartoon Protests** ([Reuters](#)) - British police said they had arrested five men on Wednesday (3/15) over angry protests held in London last month about the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed by European media. Police said Wednesday's action came after detectives had studied footage of the London protest and consulted with prosecutors over whether there was enough evidence to press charges.

**Nine Years for U.K.-Based Terrorist** ([Reuters](#)) - A British man, who bought equipment which might have been used in attacks on coalition troops in Afghanistan, was jailed on Friday (3/17) after he admitted being a "terrorist quartermaster," U.K. police said. Mohammed Ajmal Khan, 31, bought material that was sent to and used by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a Pakistan-based militant group fighting in Indian-ruled Kashmir and that Britain says has links to al-Qaeda.

**7 on Trial Over U.K. Bomb Plot** ([CNN](#)) - A gang of terrorists was planning a major bombing campaign when they were foiled, a court in London was told Tuesday (3/21). The alleged terrorists, all British citizens who deny the charges, had gathered the ingredients to make a bomb or bombs and had only to agree a target, a jury at the Old Bailey court in central London was told at the opening of the prosecution's case.

**E.U. to Sign Aid for Palestinians** ([AP](#)) - The European Union signed a deal Monday (3/20) with the United Nations granting euro64 million (US\$78 million) in urgent aid for Palestinians, but much more in future funding is under threat after the formation of a government by Hamas, a group the Europeans consider a terrorist group. The E.U. foreign ministers will debate the impact of a Hamas government, as will the 25 E.U. leaders at a Brussels summit later this week.

## **Asia**

**Militants Kill Six in Southern Thailand** ([UPI](#)) - Islamic militants on motorbikes opened fire Thursday (3/16) on a government office in Thailand's southern province of Pattani, killing six men attending a council meeting. The victims were a Buddhist local official and five Muslim government employees, local reports said.

**Bali Suspects are 'Ready to Die'** ([AP](#)) - Three militants awaiting trial for their alleged role in last year's Bali bombings said Wednesday (3/15) they considered themselves martyrs and are ready to die. They are accused of sheltering Noordin Top, an alleged

leader of the al Qaeda-linked terror group Jemaah Islamiyah, ahead of the October 1, 2005 suicide bombings that killed 20 people.

## **Africa**

**Sudan Forecasts Peace by April's End** ([Reuters](#)) - Sudan said on Friday (3/17) it was optimistic it would reach a peace deal next month with two main rebel groups in Darfur. Civil war has raged in Darfur since February 2003, pitting the rebels against government forces and Arab militias. Tens of thousands have been killed and 2 million made homeless.

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