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them “to be useful again in spreading the Jihad across other lands.”<sup>5</sup> Likewise, between 2002 and 2003, an elite group of distinguished, mid-level Saudi Al-Qaida commanders abandoned their posts in the Afghan mountains and quietly returned to the Arabian Peninsula. Afterwards, an online Al-Qaida publication printed by senior Saudi Al-Qaida members would explain, “in its war with America, the Al-Qaida network adopted a strategy of expanding the battlefield... This strategy has priceless advantages; the enemy who had only his own country to defend realizes that he now must defend his enormous interests in every country.”<sup>6</sup>

## **PART II: SHAYKH YOUSEF AL-AYYIRI**

Perhaps the most important figure in the new terror sub-network in Saudi Arabia was Shaykh Yousef al-Ayyiri, the first commander of Al-Qaida’s newly established military network in the Arabian Peninsula. Known to his supporters as “the Swift Sword,” Al-Ayyiri (a.k.a. Abu Mohammed, Abu Maryam, “Al-Battar”) was a popular and well-liked figure in the international Al-Qaida network who reportedly first joined the Arab mujahideen fighting in Afghanistan at age 18. Impressed by his enthusiasm and skills as a combatant, Al-Qaida claims to have granted Al-Ayyiri a position of high importance within the organization as the commander of a training camp in Afghanistan—and also as a personal bodyguard to Usama bin Laden.<sup>7</sup> Arabic-language news sources suggest that Al-Ayyiri was handpicked in 1993 to travel to Somalia with Al-Qaida’s most senior military commander at the time—Abu Hafs al-Masri—in order to help instruct Islamic militants on how to shoot down U.S. helicopters with rocket-propelled grenades.<sup>8</sup>



**Yousef al-Ayyiri**

Al-Ayyiri was also responsible for writing and publishing important Al-Qaida propaganda materials, including the infamous “Institute for Islamic Studies and Research” (a.k.a. “Al-Neda”) Internet website. He was appointed to this latter position because Al-Qaida viewed him as a “seasoned military man... a genius and theorizer who served jihad... He is an inspired genius and a miracle of the age. Had he been in another nation, they would not have made him walk on the ground. They would have carried him on their heads.”<sup>9</sup> The lessons taught by al-Ayyiri were memorialized on audio recordings distributed openly on the Internet. In one such lesson, al-Ayyiri advises:

“In the first stage, the stage of attrition and engaging the enemy in battle, you need to make your enemy tired more than you need to kill a large number of its members. You need to scatter the enemy, demoralize it, spread it out over a large area, and cause it to get tired. If the enemy is spread out, it will need supply armies and a lot of other things. You need to make the enemy reach this stage. In this stage, you should strike, run, and disappear. Strike at the weak points. If you see your enemy modest, you must make it arrogant. You must appear weak in front of your enemy for some time to make it become arrogant. This is what the brothers in Afghanistan managed to do very skillfully.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Louis Bruguiere and Jean-Francois Ricard. “Requisitoire Definitif aux Fins de Non-Lieu. De Non-Lieu partiel. De Requalification. De Renvoi devant le Tribunal Correctionnel, de maintien sous Controle Judiciaire et de maintien en Detention.” Cour D’Appel de Paris; Tribunal de Grande Instance de Paris. No. Parquet: P96 253 3901.2. Page 169.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.faroq.org/news/news.php?id>. September 2003.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.page4free.biz/freepage/vnew>. December 2003.

<sup>8</sup> “Fundamentalists Comment on Death of Saudi Running al-Qa’ida’s ‘Alneda’ Website.” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London). June 4, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.page4free.biz/freepage/vnew>. December 2003.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cybcity.com/suondmag/index.htm>. October 2003.



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Al-Ayyiri authored several notable theoretical works on terrorism, including “Sacrifice Operations: Suicide or Martyrdom?” and “The Moscow Theater Operation and Its Benefits for the Mujahideen.”<sup>11</sup>

Al-Ayyiri was briefly imprisoned by the government of Saudi Arabia in 1996 in the wake of terrorist attacks on Western targets in Riyadh and Khobar. He was eventually released and returned to Afghanistan prior to September 11, 2001. Al-Qaida’s “Voice of Jihad” Magazine provided a narration for the next series of events in al-Ayyiri’s life:

“Afterwards, the greatest event in Afghan history occurred—the assassination of the despicable commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud, and there was no describing Shaykh al-Ayyiri’s joy. I remember asking him, ‘What happened?’ And he replied by saying that Shaykh Usama [Bin Laden] had asked the brothers: ‘Who will take it upon himself to deal with Ahmed [Shah] Massoud for me, because he harmed Allah and His sons?’ A few brothers volunteered to assassinate Massoud and be rewarded by Allah, and you heard the good news. Afterwards, the happy events took place in America [the September 11 attacks], the bastion of disbelief, and the Sheikh [al-Ayyiri] was so joyous he nearly floated on air.”<sup>12</sup>

### **PART III: TURKI NASSER AL-DANDANI**

Upon his return to Saudi Arabia following the setbacks on the Afghan battlefield in late 2001, al-Ayyiri was determined to establish a network of terrorist cells in Saudi Arabia capable of mounting sustained military operations. The network was composed of three to four primary cells all led by ranking Al-Qaida operatives who had previously fought in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The first cell inspired by al-Ayyiri was commanded by Turki Nasser al-Dandani, tasked by Al-Qaida leaders in Afghanistan with “land and maritime” attacks on Western interests throughout the Persian Gulf. Al-Dandani—who fought against U.S. forces in Afghanistan until the fall of the Taliban—reportedly was “close” to the admitted mastermind of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM).<sup>13</sup> According to an Al-Qaida propaganda tape released after al-Dandani’s death, he was considered to be “a brave man from the [Islamic nation] and one of its heroes... an audacious person who does not fear death. Through the unique military experience he acquired from jihad in the countries of the Muslims, he managed to form, along with his fellow mujahidin, a military strike force for jihad in our [Arabian] Peninsula.”<sup>14</sup>



**Turki al-Dandani**

According to an unnamed Saudi Interior Ministry official quoted by the Associated Press, al-Dandani and al-Ayyiri were jointly responsible for constructing and commanding “a number” of actual underground Al-Qaida terrorist training camps inside Saudi Arabia between early 2002 and mid-2003—some located “on farms and the like” in the desert region between the cities of Mecca and Medina.<sup>15</sup> Video footage released by Al-Qaida’s Committee in the Arabian Peninsula of one such camp—Al-Istirahat al-Amana (“The Guesthouse of Goodness”)—shows masked militants training with rocket-propelled grenades, anti-tank missiles, cellular-telephone-activated explosive devices, and a large cache of mobile surface-to-air missile launchers.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cybcity.com/suondmag/index.htm>. October 2003.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.cybcity.com/suondmag2/index.htm>. October 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Shannon, Elaine. “Al-Qaeda Seeks Canadian Operatives.” Time Magazine. July 8, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.page4free.biz/freepage/vnew>. December 2003.

<sup>15</sup> “Official: Saudi authorities discover militants’ camps.” Associated Press. January 15, 2004.



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### **Al-Qaida operatives train at an underground terrorist camp in Saudi Arabia in 2003**

Turki al-Dandani's first terrorist cell was allegedly responsible for carrying out daring and virtually unprecedented terrorist attacks in May 2003 on Western civilian housing compounds in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Hours before a scheduled visit by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell on May 12, a squad of Al-Qaida suicide bombers forced their way into three guarded residential compounds in a hail of gunfire, detonating massive car bombs and killing at least 34 people—including nine Americans.

In October 2003, Al-Qaida's Committee in the Arabian Peninsula released a video on the Internet featuring the "last will and testament" of several volunteer suicide bombers who had participated in the May 2003 terror attacks in the Saudi capital Riyadh.<sup>16</sup> The video includes an audio recording of the bombing itself, and Al-Qaida operatives can be heard shouting "Allahu Akhbar!" and "O' Allah, expel the polytheists from the Arabian Peninsula!" The audio recording ends with the clear sound of gunfire. According to the Al-Qaida memorial video, Mohammed Shazzaf al-Shehri (a.k.a. Abu Tarek al-Aswad)—a former math teacher—was the tactical commander of the May 2003 suicide bomb squad. The video also features lengthy recordings in Arabic and English by other Al-Qaida operatives who volunteered as suicide bombers in the May 2003 attacks in Riyadh. One of the men, Mohammed Hazem al-Kashmiri (a.k.a. Abu Umar al-Taifi)—the son of a retired top Saudi internal security officer—issued an open message to all Muslims:

"I swear by Allah that the Jews and the Christians will not leave the Arabian Peninsula unless by Jihad, as our ancestors expelled them. Do not denigrate yourselves and do not underestimate your abilities. Grasp your weapon and kill the Jews and the Christians wherever they are to be found. You are the offspring of the companions of the Prophets... who broke the noses of the Jews and the Christians, and stepped with their feet on the kings of Persia and Byzantium... [I have a] message to the American soldiers [in English]: for the American soldiers we say [to them], you have to know that your government had become a big evil, killing innocent people, destroying homes, stealing our money, and holding our sons in jail. We promise that we will not let you live safely, and you will not see from us anything else—just bombs, fire, destroying homes, cutting your heads. Our mujahideen is coming to you—very soon—to let you see what you didn't see before."<sup>17</sup>

A second operative featured in the Al-Qaida video, Ashraf bin Ibrahim al-Sayyed (a.k.a. Abu Tamim al-Madani), repeatedly urged all Muslims "to kill the Americans, and not to protect them... If you are a pilot, you must, my brother, try to attack the aircraft carriers in the Gulf or attack any American settlement within the Arabian Peninsula or outside it... By Allah, if only I had a thousand souls so that I could sacrifice them all

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.cybcity.com/image900/index.htm>. See also: <http://1.anwar-islam.com/V/L/>. October 2003.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.cybcity.com/image900/index.htm>. See also: <http://1.anwar-islam.com/V/L/>. October 2003.



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cheaply for the sake of Allah and kill with each soul a thousand thousand Americans, a thousand thousand tyrants, a thousand thousand Jews.”<sup>18</sup>

The Riyadh attacks—targeting civilians (including women and children) in the heart of an Islamically-ruled country—were controversial, even among those who supported Usama Bin Laden’s mission elsewhere. On Yousef al-Ayyiri’s website Al-Neda, Al-Qaida’s Committee in the Arabian Peninsula explained the logic behind the May bombings:

“Many of those who esteem jihad and the mujahideen were amazed at and even condemned the Riyadh bombing, although they support bombings against America and American interests in other countries. Therefore, we would like to answer the question that [was] on the lips of many: Why Riyadh? Anyone who asks this question must recall the religious texts that command fighting all polytheists. Allah said: ... ‘When the four months in which fighting is forbidden have passed, fight the polytheists everywhere you find them...’ We found the Americans in Riyadh, and killed them in Riyadh.”<sup>19</sup>

#### **PART IV: SHAYKH NASSER BIN HAMID AL-FAHAD**

The daring attacks carried out by Turki al-Dandani’s Al-Qaida cell in Riyadh found support elsewhere in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia among several radical Muslim clerics who openly advocated jihad against America and its allies. Al-Qaida’s “Voice of Jihad” Magazine quotes Shaykh Nasser bin Hamid al-Fahad: “I examined at length the history of Islam; I turned its pages; and I looked at the enemies of Islam, their wars against it, the Crusaders, and the idol-worshippers, in the East and the West, over more than 10 generations—and I found no enemy more hostile and abhorrent than America.”<sup>20</sup> Al-Fahad—a graduate of the Saudi Al-Imam Islamic University—issued several other notable fatwahs (religious edicts) at this time endorsing Al-Qaida terrorist operations targeting Americans worldwide. Only days after the May bombings engineered by al-Dandani, Nasser al-Fahad signed a fatwah with two other clerics urging faithful Muslims to offer protection to most wanted Al-Qaida terrorist suspects in Saudi Arabia:

“We know some of these suspects... They are of the most courageous and pious Mujahideen; they sacrificed their fortune and their bloods for the sake of Allah, and they participated in the Jihad against the American Crusaders in Afghanistan. They carried out heroic operations in the battles of ‘Tora Bora’ Mountains in December 2001. They were considered criminals and terrorists because they fought the enemies of Allah... It is an Islamic obligation to support shelter and defend these Mujahideen.”<sup>21</sup>

Then, al-Fahad individually issued a second fatwah regarding the use of weapons of mass destruction—i.e. chemical, biological, or radiological—as tools against the enemies of Al-Qaida. Though Al-Fahad pointed out the desire to avoid the unnecessary killing of non-combatants, he repeatedly emphasized:

“Anyone who considers America’s aggressions against Muslims and their lands during the past decades will conclude that striking her [with weapons of mass destruction] is permissible merely on the basis of the rule of treating as one has been treated... If a bomb that killed ten million of them and burned as much of their land as

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.cybcity.com/image900/index.htm>. See also: <http://1.anwar-islam.com/V/L/>. October 2003.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.faroq.org/news/news.php?id>. September 2003.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.cybcity.com/suondmag/index.htm>. October 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Khodeir, Ali Bin, Nasser bin Fahad, Ahmed al-Khalidi. “A Statement to Aid the Mujahideen.” <http://www.alkhoder.com/nnn/article.php?sid=36&mode=thread&order=0>. May 2003.



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they have burned Muslims’ land were dropped on them, it would be permissible, with no need to mention any other argument. We might need other arguments if we wanted to annihilate more than this number of them!”<sup>22</sup>

## **PART V: ALI ABDELRAHMAN AL-FAQASI AL-GHAMDI**

Turki al-Dandani was not the only notable terror cell commander in Yousef al-Ayyiri’s Al-Qaida sub-network in Saudi Arabia during 2003. The second active sleeper cell loyal to Al-Qaida’s Committee in the Arabian Peninsula was led by Ali Abdel Rahman al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi (a.k.a. Abu Bakr al-Azdi). Al-Faqasi is a 31 year-old native of Riyadh who was formerly an economics student at King Abdelaziz University before dropping out. In the late 1990s, he left his homeland for Chechnya in search of jihad. However, after failing to successfully reach the jihad in Chechnya, Faqasi was instead “diverted” to alternate Arab mujahideen training camps in Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

While in Afghanistan, al-Faqasi trained at Al-Qaida’s prestigious Al-Farooq military camp near the southern Afghan city of Kandahar. At the time, the camp specialized in training courses on firearms, heavy weapons, explosives, and topography. At least seven Saudi nationals who later served as suicide hijackers in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks received “basic training” at the Al-Farooq camp. According to the Congressional 9/11 Commission final report, “[t]his particular camp appears to have been the preferred location for vetting and training the potential muscle hijackers because of its proximity to Bin Ladin and senior al Qaeda leadership.”<sup>24</sup> Al-Faqasi’s wife Ayida al-Sayyad later admitted that “[i]t is true that he traveled to Afghanistan and talked to me about his battles there.”<sup>25</sup>



**Ali al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi**

While in Afghanistan, Ali al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi attracted the attention of key 9/11 recruiters, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—the top operational mastermind of the 9/11 attacks.<sup>26</sup> Rather using al-Faqasi in September 11, however, Usama Bin Laden held him “in reserve... for a later, even larger operation.”<sup>27</sup> Allegedly on the direct orders of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, al-Faqasi fled the Tora Bora complex before the battle even began in order to help plot a renewed wave of terrorist attacks on Americans and their allies.<sup>28</sup> Returning home to Saudi Arabia, Ali al-Faqasi joined other ranking Al-Qaida members in efforts to establish underground sleeper cell networks capable of launching global military operations.

Al-Faqasi’s chief deputy in Saudi Arabia was another Afghan-trained Al-Qaida operative named Sultan Jubran al-Qahtani (a.k.a. Zubayr al-Rimi). The 29-year old al-Qahtani was reportedly studying physical education in Abha in southwestern Saudi Arabia when he “adopted extremism” and abandoned his studies in

<sup>22</sup> Al-Fahad, Nasser bin Hamid. “A Fatwah on the Legal Status of Using Weapons of Mass Destruction Against Infidels.” May 2003. <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/static/npp/fatwa.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 525.

<sup>24</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 234.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Mutawaa, Badr. “Al-Faqasi Not Sent to Guantanamo Bay, Wife Says.” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London). August 4, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> “Saudi attackers ‘must surrender.’” *BBC News*. June 27, 2003. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3025848.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3025848.stm)

<sup>27</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. July 22, 2004. Page 525.

<sup>28</sup> Shannon, Elaine. “Al-Qaeda Seeks Canadian Operatives.” *Time Magazine*. July 8, 2003.



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search of jihad in Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup> Like other senior members of Yousef al-Ayyiri’s Al-Qaida network in Saudi Arabia, al-Qahtani reportedly was a veteran of the battle for Tora Bora in Afghanistan who returned to Saudi Arabia shortly thereafter and went into hiding.<sup>30</sup>

The Al-Qaida sleeper cell led by al-Faqasi and al-Qahtani was strikingly similar to others within the al-Ayyiri network. At least four of the cell’s operatives in Saudi Arabia were known to have either trained or fought in Afghanistan alongside Usama Bin Laden and Al-Qaida.<sup>31</sup> Ahmed Omar Abu Ali—a Jordanian-American recruited by al-Faqasi—conceded that though there was never an “explicit” agreement that he had become “a member in the Al-Qaeda organization... this matter was understood by me by the evidence. They were in Afghanistan and so forth.” Abu Ali added, “Sultan [al-Qahtani] told me once, ‘Now, you have become one of us. You can now speak [on] behalf of Al Qaeda.’”<sup>32</sup>



**Sultan al-Qahtani**

As per the mission priorities of Usama Bin Laden and regional Al-Qaida commander Yousef al-Ayyiri, Ali al-Faqasi and Sultan al-Qahtani considered terrorist operations both inside and beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia. During questioning by Saudi law enforcement officials, Ahmed Omar Abu Ali explained how the two Al-Qaida commanders sought to use his established access to the United States as a gateway for terrorist strikes against the American homeland. Abu Ali discussed how Sultan al-Qahtani had “asked... about the locations of large crowds in America” and that Ali al-Faqasi “would talk to me about killing Bush one time and another time about [suicide hijacking] operations by planes that take off from Britain and Australia that transit America. This way, the passenger will not need an American visa. The plane would then crash in America.” At the request of al-Faqasi, defendant Ali “did a search on flights websites and found that there were many trips. So I told [al-Faqasi] there were many flights and asked him to give me a specific date.”<sup>33</sup>

Other potential terror plots discussed by al-Faqasi and al-Qahtani with Abu Ali included “crashing airplanes leaving from [Latin] America,” “striking nuclear stations in America”, “assassinating members of Congress”, “assassinating members of the American Administration and the American Army,” “rescuing prisoners at Guantanamo or inside America”, “blowing up military airplanes on the ground at their bases”, “bombing nightclubs and public gathering places in America”, and a plot “like the [U.S.S.] Cole operation, but at American ports against American warships.” In order to kill President Bush, Abu Ali would use either snipers or volunteer suicide bombers dispatched to him by Ali al-Faqasi.<sup>34</sup>

As with the suicide bombers responsible for the May 2003 attacks in Riyadh, the terror cell headed by Ali al-Faqasi and Sultan al-Qahtani likewise had contact with the notorious extremist cleric Shaykh Nasser al-Fahad. According to the admissions of the Jordanian Abu Ali, “Once [Ali al-Faqasi] took me on a ride with

<sup>29</sup> “Terrorist Killed in Jizan was on FBI Wanted List.” [Arabnews.com](http://www.arabnews.com). September 25, 2003. <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1&section=0&article=32545&d=25&m=9&y=2003>.

<sup>30</sup> Saudi General Directorate for Investigation interview of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali. June 11, 2003. [United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali](#). United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Case No: 1:05CR53. Government Exhibit 25S.

<sup>31</sup> Saudi General Directorate for Investigation interview of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali. June 11, 2003. [United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali](#). United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Case No: 1:05CR53. Government Exhibit 25S.

<sup>32</sup> Saudi General Directorate for Investigation interview of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali. June 11, 2003. [United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali](#). United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Case No: 1:05CR53. Government Exhibit 25S.

<sup>33</sup> Saudi General Directorate for Investigation interview of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali. June 11, 2003. [United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali](#). United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Case No: 1:05CR53. Government Exhibit 25S.

<sup>34</sup> Saudi General Directorate for Investigation interview of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali. June 11, 2003. [United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali](#). United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Case No: 1:05CR53. Government Exhibit 25S.



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Shaykh Nasir al-Fahad... I sat with Shaykh Nasir, who urged me to carry out Jihad. Specifically, he encouraged me to kill Bush. Afterward, I purchased some books for the Shaykh.” When asked by interviewers to expand on the substance of the meeting, Abu Ali narrated:

“[al-Fahad] mentioned to me that he wanted to kill Bush... He mentioned that the events of September [11] caused the [Islamic] nation to wake up and that if had been consulted by the mujahidin about the September operation prior to that, he would not have supported it. But after he saw the result and how it generated hatred in the hearts of Muslims against the non-believers, he now thought it was well-guided.”<sup>35</sup>

Due to renewed counterterrorism efforts by Saudi authorities in the wake of the Riyadh bombings, the cell led by al-Faqasi and al-Qahtani was successfully intercepted by security forces before it could carry out any significant terrorist attacks. Between May 27-28, 2003, Saudi officials arrested nearly a dozen terrorist suspects in the city of Medina, confiscating false identification documents and a huge cache of weapons.<sup>36</sup> The Saudis discovered six of the men in a hideout on a nearby farm, along with bomb-making manuals, electronic bomb components, weapons, ammunition, industrial tools, and digital communication devices. Shortly thereafter, on June 26, 2003, the Saudi ambassador to the United States announced the surrender of commander Ali Faqasi al-Ghamdi following negotiations with local authorities.<sup>37</sup> Al-Faqasi was questioned by law enforcement officials and subsequently incarcerated in Saudi Arabia; however, his deputy Sultan al-Qahtani remained at large for almost two more months. On September 5, 2003, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued a worldwide bulleting seeking information on the whereabouts of al-Qahtani in connection “with possible terrorist threats against the United States.” Eighteen days later, al-Qahtani was killed during a shootout with Saudi security forces 600 miles south of Riyadh. Al-Qaida’s Committee in the Arabian Peninsula later released an official full-length propaganda video titled “The Martyrs of the Confrontations in Bilad al-Haramain” paying tribute to several “martyred” Saudi Al-Qaida operatives, including Sultan al-Qahtani.<sup>38</sup> The video was subsequently authenticated and translated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency’s Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).<sup>39</sup> According to the video, al-Qahtani was considered as a venerated member of the “convoys of heroic martyrs... [his] blood will always remain a torch that lights the way for those behind them. Indeed the person who said that the blood of a martyr is light and fire has uttered the truth.”<sup>40</sup>

## **PART VI: ABDELAZIZ AL-MUQRIN**

By the end of the summer of 2003, both Yousef al-Ayyiri and Turki al-Dandani also had been killed during fierce clashes with Saudi security forces. This sudden leadership vacuum was quickly filled by the commander of the third terror cell loyal to al-Ayyiri’s Al-Qaida network: Abdelaziz al-Muqrin (a.k.a. Abu Hajer), a 33-year old Al-Qaida operative with over 15 years of experience as an Al-Qaida military commander.

<sup>35</sup> Saudi General Directorate for Investigation interview of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali. June 11, 2003. United States v. Ahmed Omar Abu Ali. United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Case No: 1:05CR53. Government Exhibit 25S.

<sup>36</sup> “2004 Public Statement: Saudi Arabia’s progress in the War on Terrorism.” Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia; Washington, D.C. June 2, 2004. <http://www.saudiembassy.net/2004News/Statements/StateDetail.asp?cIndex=422>. See also: “Saudi police nab Riyadh bombings mastermind: report.” Agence France Press (AFP). May 28, 2003.

<sup>37</sup> “Riyadh suicide blast arrest.” The Guardian (London). June 27, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.page4free.biz/freepage/vnew>. December 2003.

<sup>39</sup> World News Connection (WNC). “The Martyrs of the Confrontations in Bilad al-Haramayn (Saudi Arabia). Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). December 3, 2003.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.page4free.biz/freepage/vnew>. December 2003.



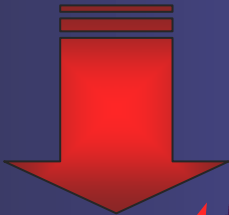
# Al-Qaida's Committee in the Arabian Peninsula: 2002-2003



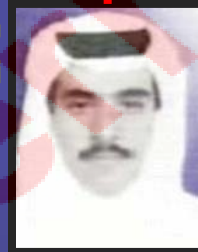
Yousef al-Ayyiri  
(a.k.a. "Al-Battar")



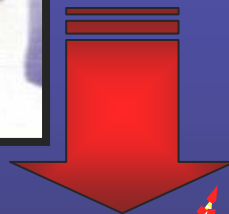
Turki  
al-Dandani



**First Cell: May 2003  
Suicide Bombings**



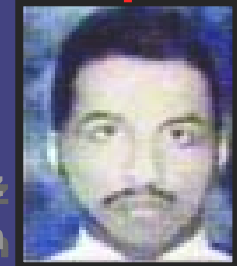
Sultan  
al-Qahtani



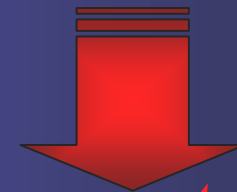
**Second Cell:  
INTERCEPTED**



Ali al-Faqasi  
al-Ghamdi



Abdelaziz  
al-Muqrin



**Third Cell: Nov. 2003  
Suicide Bombings**