



IntelCenter



al-Qaeda Wave Attack Assessment
v1.0
17/18 May 2003
19:37:19 EST / 00:37:19 GMT

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

by Ben Venzke (bvenzke@intelcenter.com)
<http://www.intelcenter.com>

Voice: (703) 370-2962 Fax: (703) 370-1571
Email: info@intelcenter.com Web: www.intelcenter.com
PO Box 22572, Alexandria, VA 22304-9257 USA

Page 1 of 7 - v1.0 – 17 May 2003
Copyright © 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



IntelCenter

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>ASSESSMENT</i> _____	3
<i>INTRODUCTION</i> _____	3
<i>AL-QAEDA'S THINKING</i> _____	4
<i>TARGETS</i> _____	4
<i>TACTICS</i> _____	5
<i>FALL 2002</i> _____	5
<i>SPRING 2003</i> _____	6

Voice: (703) 370-2962 Fax: (703) 370-1571
Email: info@intelcenter.com Web: www.intelcenter.com
PO Box 22572, Alexandria, VA 22304-9257 USA

Page 2 of 7 - v1.0 – 17 May 2003
Copyright © 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



IntelCenter

Questions or comments can be directed to Ben Venzke at bvenzke@intelcenter.com or bvenzke@leo.gov.

ASSESSMENT

Al-Qaeda no longer believes that single, large-scale attacks not employing CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) have enough of an impact for its core series of operations. Consequently, al-Qaeda and its affiliates are actively pursuing a strategy of “wave attacks” designed to hit multiple targets and target classes around the world using a variety of tactics over the course of concentrated 7-9 week periods. The recent attacks in Chechnya, Riyadh and Casablanca point to the beginning of the second such wave of attacks. Additional small and large-scale attacks can be expected around the world during the next 6-8 weeks.

INTRODUCTION

Conventional thinking on al-Qaeda has always led us to believe that the group would typically attempt to execute one major operation per year. Al-Qaeda successfully managed to do so every year since 1998, with the exception of 2000 when its attempts were foiled. While there were times during this period when it can be concluded al-Qaeda would have executed more than one operation if it had been able to, there appears to be no point where the group attempted to conduct a wave of small and large attacks during a concentrated period.

Security postures and assessments routinely reflect the very real threat posed by sympathizers and individual actors executing attacks in the immediate aftermath of a major al-Qaeda operation. The potential, however, that al-Qaeda would conduct multiple, large-scale operations within days or weeks of each other seemed unlikely.

The events of the fall of 2002 and the spring of 2003 appear to indicate a shift in thinking by al-Qaeda and its affiliates. The period running from 6 October 2002 to 28 November 2002 marked the highest concentrated period ever of successfully executed large and small-scale operations by al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Rather than ride out the “afterglow” period following the Limburg operation, al-Qaeda and its affiliates continued to strike.

Voice: (703) 370-2962 Fax: (703) 370-1571
Email: info@intelcenter.com Web: www.intelcenter.com
PO Box 22572, Alexandria, VA 22304-9257 USA

Page 3 of 7 - v1.0 – 17 May 2003
Copyright © 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



IntelCenter

The events of the past five days indicate the beginning of a similar trend. No fewer than four significant attacks have been executed in Chechnya, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Casablanca, Morocco. Additional small and large-scale attacks can be expected around the world during the next 6-8 weeks.

AL-QAEDA'S THINKING

Al-Qaeda has always sought to execute operations on a scale and in a manner never before seen. This approach, while increasing the difficulty, has put al-Qaeda on the map like no other terrorist group before it. Al-Qaeda feels that this position is of importance to achieving its objectives and continues to evolve its operational thinking in order maintain this status.

It is al-Qaeda's great attention to operational security, training and the development of an extensive global network that has allowed it to execute these types of operations around the world. While recognizing its past successes, it is not the type of organization to grow complacent and let itself fall into an operational rut where it simply repeats what worked before. Al-Qaeda continually pushes the envelope on what is possible and evolves its thinking even when succeeding. Threat assessments and security measures cannot simply rely on what al-Qaeda did before.

The "wave attack" concept appears to be a natural evolution of what al-Qaeda feels is necessary to ensure the impact of its strikes.

TARGETS

The targets of the wave of attacks, which occurred in the fall of 2002, spanned the full spectrum from civilian to government to corporate. The overall targeting theme at that time fit with al-Qaeda's focus on striking US allies.

The recent attacks of the past five days were primarily directed at civilian targets with a Western or Jewish connection. There is no reason that additional attacks in the same series will necessarily remain focused on civilian sites. Recent al-Qaeda messaging does strongly point to al-Qaeda's desire to strike targets in Arab countries seen as betraying al-

Voice: (703) 370-2962 Fax: (703) 370-1571
Email: info@intelcenter.com Web: www.intelcenter.com
PO Box 22572, Alexandria, VA 22304-9257 USA

Page 4 of 7 - v1.0 - 17 May 2003
Copyright © 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



IntelCenter

Qaeda and its objectives. The attacks in Saudi Arabia and Morocco bear this out. Future strikes in Arab states are highly likely but attacks could occur anywhere, including in the US and Europe.

TACTICS

Al-Qaeda has already laid out the religious justifications necessary for its use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. It has dedicated extensive resources towards the procurement, development and planning for future use of these weapons, as well as expressed its intent to utilize them. When al-Qaeda feels it is ready to do so, it is highly likely it will. In the meantime, we can expect to see traditional terrorist tactics, such as suicide bombings, vehicular bombings and hijackings, employed in ways never before seen and with great effect for its core series of operations.

During the wave of attacks seen last fall, al-Qaeda did not constrain its operations to only large-scale attacks but rather mixed both. While employing surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), a waterborne improvised explosive device (IED) and other sophisticated operational techniques, the group also made use of simple low-level shootings. If we are currently experiencing another wave of attacks by al-Qaeda and its affiliates, we can expect to see the same blend of both sophisticated and low-level strikes.

FALL 2002

During the eight-week period between 6 October 2002 to 28 November 2002, al-Qaeda and its affiliates executed no fewer than six significant attacks. The strikes spanned six countries and included civilian, military and commercial targets. The longest period between the attacks was 27 days and the shortest was one day. Al-Qaeda made direct claims of responsibility for three of the operations. A listing of the attacks is below.

- 6 October 2002 - Piloted Vehicular Assault – The Limburg (French oil tanker) – Mukalla, Yemen – al-Qaeda claimed responsibility
- 8 October 2002 – Shooting – US Marines – Failaka, Kuwait – al-Qaeda claimed responsibility

Voice: (703) 370-2962 Fax: (703) 370-1571
Email: info@intelcenter.com Web: www.intelcenter.com
PO Box 22572, Alexandria, VA 22304-9257 USA

Page 5 of 7 - v1.0 – 17 May 2003
Copyright © 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



IntelCenter

- 12 October 2002 – Vehicular Bombing – Sari and Paddy’s nightclubs – Bali, Indonesia
- 24 October 2002 – Hostage Taking – Theater – Moscow, Russia
- 28 October 2002 – Assassination, Shooting – Lawrence Foley (US Executive with USAID) – Amman, Jordan
- 28 November 2002 – Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) Attack – Israeli Arkia Flight 582 – Mombasa, Kenya
- 28 November 2002 – Vehicular, Suicide Bombing – Kikambala Paradise Hotel (Israeli-owned) – Mombasa, Kenya

SPRING 2003

During the four days between 12 May 2003 to 16 May 2003, al-Qaeda and its affiliates conducted four significant operations. The strikes spanned three countries and included civilian, government and commercial targets. The longest period between attacks was one day. A listing of the attacks is below.

- 12 May 2003 – Vehicular, Suicide Bombing – Chechen Nadtarechnyy District administration building – Znamenskoye, Chechnya
- 13 May 2003 – Vehicular, Suicide Bombing – Jedawal Compound – Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – al-Qaeda claimed responsibility
- 13 May 2003 – Vehicular Bombing – al-Hamra Compound – Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – al-Qaeda claimed responsibility
- 13 May 2003 – Vehicular, Suicide Bombing – Cordoval Compound – Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – al-Qaeda claimed responsibility

Voice: (703) 370-2962 Fax: (703) 370-1571
Email: info@intelcenter.com Web: www.intelcenter.com
PO Box 22572, Alexandria, VA 22304-9257 USA

Page 6 of 7 - v1.0 – 17 May 2003
Copyright © 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



IntelCenter

- 13 May 2003 – Bombing – Saudi Maintenance Company (Siyanco) – Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- 14 May 2003 – Assassination, Suicide Bombing – Chechen Administration leader Akhmad Kadyrov – Iliskhan-Yurt, Chechnya
- 16 May 2003 – Suicide Bombing – Restaurant (Israeli ownership) – Casablanca, Morocco
- 16 May 2003 – Suicide Bombing – Spain House (Spanish social club/restaurant) – Casablanca, Morocco
- 16 May 2003 – Suicide Bombing/Vehicular Bombing (unconfirmed) – Israeli Alliance Circle Club – Casablanca, Morocco
- 16 May 2003 – Suicide Bombing – Farah Maghreb Hotel – Casablanca, Morocco
- 16 May 2003 – Suicide Bombing – Jewish Cemetery – Casablanca, Morocco

Copyright 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC, All Rights Reserved – Permission to redistribute this report in its complete form, including this notice, with proper attribution to IntelCenter (<http://www.intelcenter.com>) may be obtained by emailing info@intelcenter.com. Permission must be obtained in writing before redistributing the entire report or any portion of it.

Voice: (703) 370-2962 Fax: (703) 370-1571
Email: info@intelcenter.com Web: www.intelcenter.com
PO Box 22572, Alexandria, VA 22304-9257 USA

Page 7 of 7 - v1.0 – 17 May 2003
Copyright © 2003 IntelCenter/Tempest Publishing, LLC
All Rights Reserved

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE