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Synopsis

A series of letters from various authors that discuss al-Qaeda's operations in Africa, specifically Somalia and Ogaden. In the first and fourth letters, the authors discuss their failure to get from Nairobi to Luuq and Mendira. The author of the third letter offers his help with African travel document. In the second letter, the author negatively assesses the current state of the Islamic Movement in Somalia, and in the fifth letter, Saif al-Islam gives a status report on his efforts in Ghar Shaigut camp.

Key Themes

The first letter, to Abu AbdAllah, is a report of an operative's arrival and activities in Nairobi in support of al-Qaeda's operations in Somalia and Ogaden [Ugadin]. The trip itself was expensive, and the author delivered \$2500 to Abu Tariq, who handled expenses and logistics. The al-Qaeda team met with Ugadin allies, and tried and failed to get to Mendira or Luuq, Somalia via plane – it was stymied by government regulations and inappropriate facilities in Luuq.

The second letter is a report of the state and history of the Islamic movement in Somalia. In southern Somalia, Algamaa Al-Islamiah, led by Mahmud Isa, broke off from al-Ahl, led by Abdelqadir Shaikh Edris. In the north, the Islamic Youth Group. The structure of the Islamic movement mirrors that of the Muslim brotherhood, with national and local executive councils and advisory councils, although many decisions are made in the mosques and streets. The Afghan Jihad-influenced youth of the movement rose up to defend Kismayo from Aideed's advancing forces, but were defeated, and driven back. The author blames the movement for bad planning and preparation, little money, and little connection between the leaders and the base.

The third letter is from Abu Abd-Allah Althani Alfa Ibrahim to Abi Ab-Allah Saad Alsaad. The author regrets that circumstances prevent him from making a trip to Africa, but since he's free at the moment, he would be happy to help African brothers obtain documents from Guinea, Liberia, Ivory Coast, or Sierra Leone.

The fourth letter, to Abu Abd-Allah, is similar to the first letter in describing the failure to get to Luuq or Mendira. The author provides intelligence on the movement of US forces to meet with Somali leaders in Luuq, and lists concerns he has about the operation, such as the airport, time for more training, establishing more training center, and relations and coordination with the Ugadin tribes, as well as other operatives.

In the fifth letter, dated 19 March 1993, Saif al-Islam, the main al-Qaeda operative in Ugadin, writes to Brother Othman, and describes the situation in Ghar Shaighut, the training camp he helped to establish. Camp resources are low, food, weapons and ammunition must be purchased in nearby villages, and the brothers are weak. Nonetheless, Saif al-Islam judges the time good to collect weapons and train as the enemy is weak and non-confrontational. The local allies (under Abd al-Salam Othman Abd al-Salam) are in charge of political, administrating and daawi operations, but al-Qaeda has assumed responsibility for training. Saif al-Islam ends with a discussion of the monetary needs of the local allies, and puts forward

with his estimated required budget, which totals \$64000 for three months' supply of the camp force alone, and \$130,000 per month for 600 people to be trained.