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Title: Al Adl Letter

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### **Synopsis**

Al Adl's letter to an individual named Mukhtar, presumably a commander in charge of international operations, is an appeal to temporarily suspend all foreign operations and to rethink al-Qa'ida strategy in light of the increasingly hostile international security situation facing the organization's cells. This letter also provides insight into al-Qa'ida's internal debate over strategy and interpersonal conflicts among senior al-Qa'ida leaders.

### **Key Themes**

Al-Adl's begins his letter by reminding Mukhtar of recent defeats suffered by al-Qa'ida groups worldwide. Specifically, in the past six months, cells have been captured or destroyed in East Asia, Europe, America, the Horn of Africa, Yemen, Morocco, and the Persian Gulf. He blames the losses on a "new hand" managing affairs (possibly a prevailing attitude among senior leadership or a single powerful figure), which is eager to complete operations but lacks understanding and awareness of the international security situation and hurries the groups to conduct operations, causing them to proceed without proper preparation or caution.

In light of the heavy losses al-Adl first advises Mukhtar to stop and think about his plans instead of bowing to pressure from uninformed leaders. The reference to the "new hand" illustrates the existence of a rift within the al-Qa'ida organization itself. The internal split consists of disagreements between what al-Adl calls the "interior" (senior leadership, which does not understand the international security situation) and the "exterior" (international cells that are operating overseas). His assessment of the internal conflict clearly shows evidence of interpersonal conflicts and debate over strategy at high levels of al-Qa'ida leadership. He places Bin Laden squarely in the center of the uninformed "interior" and accuses him of being oblivious to the real situation of the international groups, clinging to his own opinions and totally disregarding those around him rather than considering alternate opinions.

Whether or not the "new hand" comment refers to a general attitude or a specific person within al-Qa'ida it is evident that al-Adl is in disagreement with Bin Laden on the proper way to conduct international operations. After advocating caution earlier in the letter he proceeds to advise Mukhtar to temporarily halt all international operations until a full assessment of al-Qa'ida's security situation can be conducted. Extraordinarily, al-Adl instructs him to stop regardless of what orders he receives from bin-Laden, justifying his opposition on the basis of building confidence among the organizations followers who have lost confidence in al-Qa'ida's ability to manage the jihad.

The letter is concluded with al-Adl's personal remarks and encouragement to Mukhtar.