<u>Abu'l-Walid al-Masri: A Biographical Sketch</u>

<u>Early Life</u>

The veteran al-Qa'ida strategist and erstwhile journalist best known as Abu'l-Walid al-Masri (ابو الوليد المصري) was born Mustafa Hamid (مصطفى حامد) in Minya al-Qamh in the northern Egyptian state of Sharqia in 1945, to a family of the Banu Hilal clan. Now in his sixties, he has been intimately involved in jihadi movements throughout the world for the past four decades. Though little known to the public, Abu'l-Walid has been a leading strategic thinker for al-Qa'ida since its earliest beginnings and has also been its fiercest and most prolific internal critic.

Little is known about Abu'l-Walid's childhood and adolescence in Egypt, though he does record some reminiscences in his diaries and battle memoirs from later years. Many of these refer to typical childhood sentiments; in one place he writes of his happiness as a child when school was suspended because of political unrest, and of his delight whenever his math teacher was absent from class.[1] At the age of six his elder brother, who frequented Muslim Brotherhood training camps in the desert surrounding their village, enrolled him in that organization's youth section, and Abu'l-Walid would later write that the core of his belief system as an adult was instilled in him in those early years.[2] The leader of the Muslim Brotherhood youth section, Brother Sa'd, who was a close friend of Abu'l-Walid's older brother, taught him about the life of the Prophet Muhammad and told him stories about the battles of early Islam. In early adolescence Abu'l-Walid became involved with Muslim Brotherhood activism, but left it after only a few years and appears to have drifted away from interest in Islam and Islamist political action.[3] Though he doesn't say what caused him to break with the Muslim Brotherhood at that time, he refers later in a letter to the al-Qa'ida leadership to a divisive and extreme fundamentalist tendency in Egyptian Islamism that he found distasteful:

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[1] AFGP-2002-600092, p. 36.
[2] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 12. Abu'l-Walid writes that his vision of Islam is the same as that which was formulated by the Muslim Brothers' founder Hassan al-Banna and taught to him as a boy: "God is our aim, the Prophet our example, the Qur'an our constitution, jihad our path, and death in path of God the summit of our faith."
[3] AFGP-2002-600087, and Mustafa Hamid, "Chatting on the Rooftop of the World," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 26, 2006.

> What happened to us in Egypt was that different organizations formed for Upper and Lower Egypt – I even heard about specific organizations for neighborhoods. These organizations would start out around a "fatwa section," i.e., some genius suffering from juridical diarrhea who deemed himself capable of resolving any issue in heaven or earth.[4]

Abu'l-Walid recalls that on Egypt's Teachers' Day holiday in December of 1960 he went with his class from his junior high school to hear an address by Zahir Shah, the former king of Afghanistan, at Cairo University. He writes that the speech was so boring that the assembled students heckled and ridiculed the king, to the extent that the king was unable to finish his address, and that he and his class were nearly expelled from school for their disruptive behavior.[5] It was his first real exposure to Afghanistan, and at the time he considered it an insignificant backwater.

Abu'l-Walid went on to attend the University of Alexandria in southern Egypt, where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 1969.[6] Around the same time he married his wife Wafa'; their first child was a son – Walid – and they went on to have five other children.[7] After witnessing the many defeats and reverses weathered by the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups in the early 1970s Abu'l-Walid felt increasingly estranged from Islam and says that he found his personal beliefs tending towards Marxism.[8] At some point prior to 1975 Abu'l-Walid moved to Kuwait and then Abu Dhabi, ultimately working in the latter as a reporter. According to his cousin and sister-in-law Safiyah al-Shami, who gave an interview to *al-Sharq al-Awsat* in February of 2007, Abu'l-Walid also worked as a Mercedes Benz mechanic in Kuwait and later owned an auto repair shop in Abu Dhabi. His primary interest was in journalism, however, and he would continue to work in that capacity until his alleged arrest in Iran.

Radicalization and Jihad in Lebanon

In 1975, while living in Abu Dhabi, Abu'l-Walid had a conversion experience and began to seek out Islamist groups. He writes that his return "to the shores of Islam" was occasioned by thinking about the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. In the next few years he twice made the pilgrimage to Mecca and actively sought out representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Abu Dhabi, though for a while he was unable to make any such contacts.[9] When a group from Tablighi Jama'at visited his

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[4] AFGP-2002-600053, p. 31. Abu'l-Walid would struggle against extreme *shari'a* legalism throughout his career as a jihadi leader. In 1994 he wrote in a personal memoir, "I still don't understand why tactical measures on the battlefield or the strategic plans of army commanders need *shari'a* proof-texts attesting to their correctness, so long as such plans or measures do not contravene any well-known tenet of Islamic law" (AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 26, 2006).

[5] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," October 27, 2006.

[6] Mustafa Hamid (Hashim al-Makki), *Salib fi sama' Qandahar*, p. 3. Downloaded as a PDF file from http://www.4shared.com/file/15220171/c1e49341/___.html (November, 2007).

[7] Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Arab Afghan Ideologue Al-Masri, Son-in-Law Sayf-al-Adl said Detained in Iran," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, February 3, 2007. Abu'l-Walid had a further two children with a second, Pakistani wife.

[8] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 13.

[9] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 24 and 26, 2006.

mosque he was at first very excited by their call to carry out "jihad" by "traveling in the path of God," and thought that this might have been what he was searching for. He invited the group to his home to hear more but was frustrated to find out that they were calling for a non-violent "jihad" of itinerant preaching and revivalism.[10]

Soon thereafter Abu'l-Walid was reunited with a childhood friend whom he hadn't seen since junior high school. Referred to in Abu'l-Walid's writings simply as 'Abd al-Rahman, this man was working at the time in one of the Gulf states as an aeronautics engineer and had also recently experienced a renewed interest in Islamic activism; they would become comrades-in-arms for the following decade, until 'Abd al-Rahman was killed fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan. In Abu Dhabi in the late '70s, they joined one another in looking for an outlet for their increasingly radical views. 'Abd al-Rahman, who had begun to study *shari'a* law a few years previously, argued against going to fight alongside the PLO in south Lebanon, since the PLO was full of communists and other non-religious nationalists. They argued back and forth on the issue until a decisive meeting in *circa* 1977 with Shaykh 'Abd al-Badi' Saqr, whom Abu'l-Walid had met once before in Dubai in 1973. The Shaykh had been a personal secretary to Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, for ten years, and had fled persecution from the Egyptian government in 1954. He advised Abu'l-Walid to join the jihad in Lebanon, even if the leadership there was largely secular, since jihad was an individual duty and he would perhaps find Islamist comrades in the ranks of Fatah.

In 1978, at the age of 33, Abu'l-Walid joined the Fatah movement of the PLO and fought against Israel in southern Lebanon.[11] He traveled from Abu Dhabi to Beirut with another longtime friend and fellow Egyptian, a man whom Abu'l-Walid only ever refers to as Isma'il and who later died in Afghanistan in the same year as his friend 'Abd al-Rahman. He and Isma'il did not share their plans with the PLO offices in Abu Dhabi and were careful to avoid detection by the Egyptian consular authorities, as the former were believed to have been infiltrated by Israeli intelligence and Egypt was then pursuing peace talks with Israel. At the Syrian-Lebanese border, Abu'l-Walid and the rest of the group he was traveling with were processed by Syrian intelligence; they and their passports were photographed. Nearly ten years later Abu'l-Walid learned that his and Isma'il's names appeared one after the other on a Syrian blacklist of Islamist terrorists.[12]

Once in Beirut Abu'l-Walid unsuccessfully sought out members of the Muslim Brotherhood working within Fatah, though it was rumored that Yasir Arafat led an Islamist, Brotherhood-linked wing inside Fatah. To his disappointment, the PLO that Abu'l-Walid volunteered with was a "big tent" operation, and in the months that he worked with the organization he met "all kinds of communists and Arab nationalists and Sunni, Shi'i and Druze Muslims. There were people of many nationalities, Islamic, European and even American."[13] Though he was disappointed in the relative secularism of Fatah and yearned for a more "Islamic" jihadi opposition to Israel, he would later often

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[10] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 26, 2006.

[11] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 24, 2006.

[12] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 17, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 26, 2006; Abu'l-Walid had this information from relatives of Isma'il's Syrian wife, whom Isma'il married some years after this incident.

[13] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 26, 2006.

remark in his writings how much better organized and efficient were the Palestinian groups compared to the mujahidin organizations in Afghanistan, including al-Qa'ida.[14]

After a brief period in Beirut Abu'l-Walid and Isma'il were sent to a training camp in the al-Damur village in southern Lebanon. There for the first time they found Fatah volunteers taking part in prayer gatherings and discussing jihad in religious terms. Abu'l-Walid was very encouraged by this and thought to settle in the area and bring his family there from Abu Dhabi. However, one morning a fight broke out between two of the volunteers and during the brawl one of the men uttered what Abu'l-Walid regarded as blasphemous curses against god. He felt it was his religious duty to kill the man on the spot, but instead Abu'l-Walid restrained himself and immediately packed up and returned to Abu Dhabi.[15] Upon his return from Lebanon Abu'l-Walid ceased working as a mechanic and got a job as a reporter for *al-Fajr*, a small magazine where he would work off and on for the next six years.[16]

Fighting and Writing in the Anti-Soviet Jihad, 1979-'89

Back in Abu Dhabi, Abu'l-Walid and Isma'il agreed that their experience with the PLO had not satisfied their ambition for jihad, and they approached representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood in the emirate to find out if there were any Islamist jihadi groups operating in Lebanon that they could join up with. These leaders demurred, however, and said that they were attempting to unite the Muslim Brotherhood movement and did not want to risk a crippling government crackdown before they had managed to consolidate their resources. Though disillusioned by this response, it was not long after this that Abu'l-Walid and Isma'il were introduced to the idea of jihad in Afghanistan.[17]

The two had begun attending a small mosque in Abu Dhabi in which the imam was a certain Muhammad Tahir, a shaykh from Herat, Afghanistan. Shaykh Tahir and his son, Sayyid Ahmad, told the young Egyptians about their people's recently-born struggle against communism, which also began to receive wide coverage in the international media at this time. In early spring of 1979, Abu'l-Walid met a delegation of mujahidin clerics from Afghanistan's Paktia Province at Shaykh Tahir's mosque, and soon thereafter he and Isma'il began to make arrangements to travel there by that summer. Sayyid Ahmad went to Paktia later that spring and returned with pictures and letters of invitation from Jalaluddin Haqqani, the mujahidin leader who was then the second-in-command in Yunus Khalis' Hezb-e Islami organization. Thus began Abu'l-Walid's long-standing relationship with Haqqani, a leader about whom Abu'l-Walid writes with obvious admiration and with whom he eventually developed a close friendship.[18]

Abu'l-Walid left for Afghanistan via Pakistan in the summer of 1979, traveling with his friend Isma'il and a number of fellow Egyptians that they'd met in Abu Dhabi in the meantime. They flew to Karachi and proceeded to Peshawar and then Miranshah, from whence they were escorted by an Afghan named Muti'allah to Haqqani's location in

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[14] See, e.g., Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 25 and 26, 2006.

[15] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 26, 2006.

[16] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 28.

[17] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 26, 2006.

[18] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 27, 2006.

Paktia. Abu'l-Walid joined Haqqani's mujahidin forces and would spend much of the next eleven years fighting communist armies in Paktia Province, mostly around the strategically important city of Khost.[19] Having arrived months before the Soviet invasion and given his relatively old age (for an Arab volunteer in Afghanistan), Abu'l-Walid was something of a senior member of the so-called Arab Afghan contingent, and he came to know many of the other leading figures in that milieu over the years, including what would eventually become the entire senior leadership of al-Qa'ida. He also gained a reputation as a skilled and pragmatic strategist and battlefield tactician, and in his writings he quotes and refers to important works on guerrilla warfare, ranging from Mao and Lenin to Sun Tzu's *Art of War*.[20]

Throughout the anti-Soviet jihad Abu'l-Walid continued to work as a journalist and also initiated propaganda work for Haqqani's mujahidin group. He was friends with the Arab journalist Basel Muhammad, whom Abu'l-Walid met with several times in Peshawar and Abu Dhabi in the 1980s and '90s.[21] By coincidence Abu'l-Walid met a fellow mujahid in Pakistan who had relatives working at *al-Ittihad*, a United Arab Emirates government-run daily newspaper with a large circulation throughout the Arabic-speaking world, and this man made inquiries on Abu'l-Walid's behalf.[22] Abu'l-Walid began writing for *al-Ittihad* in the early 1980s, though at the beginning he wrote anonymously, since he was technically "on leave" from – but still an employee of – the *al-Fajr* magazine. In 1985 Abu'l-Walid wrote an article for *al-Ittihad* critical of the mujahidin party Ittehad-e Islami, led by 'Abdu'l-Rasul Sayyaf, and according to Abu'l-Walid Sayyaf then sought to have him killed in retaliation.[23] By 1986 Abu'l-Walid reached what he calls the apex of his journalistic career, serving briefly as the director of *al-Ittihad*'s Islamabad bureau.[24] The paper closed its Islamabad offices soon thereafter, following the opening of diplomatic relations between the UAE and the Soviet Union.[25] He continued to write for *al-Ittihad* until 1990, however, and states that most of his submitted pieces were published by the paper. He mentions two exceptions: *al-Ittihad* refused to publish a critical article he wrote on the Afghan mujahidin political parties, in which he included a famous photograph of Ronald Reagan warmly embracing the female Afghan anti-communist activist Nahid Mojadidi; and the paper demurred again in 1986 when Abu'l-Walid wrote about the infamous Battle of Zhawar, in which a massive Soviet force was deployed near Khost and overran the mujahidin base there, which was defended by Haqqani.[26]

Abu'l-Walid first met 'Abdullah 'Azzam, the de facto spiritual leader of the Arab mujahidin in Afghanistan, in 1984 in Peshawar. Though happy to finally meet an Arab

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[19] Abu'l-Walid's references to Paktia are to the traditional borders of that province, now known as Loya Paktia ("Greater Paktia"); this area is currently divided into the three administrative districts of Paktia, Khost and Paktika. I follow Abu'l-Walid and use "Paktia" in the sense of Loya Paktia, inclusive of Khost.

[20] See, e.g. AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 29, 2006; and AFPG-2002-600053.

[21] See AFGP-2002-600090, p. 10; AFGP-2002-600092, p. 4; and AFGP-2002-600970, p. 24. Basel Muhammad was working for Radio Abu Dhabi when Abu'l-Walid met him in Peshawar in 1990.

[22] AFGP-2002-600087, pp. 27f.

[23] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 58.

[24] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 28.

[25] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 28; see also John Kifner, "Soviet Heightens Persian Gulf Role," *The New York Times*, February 7, 1987.

[26] AFGP-2002-600087, p. 28.

mujahid of the same generation in South Asia, Abu'l-Walid did not share many of 'Azzam's views – especially 'Azzam's high opinion of the leaders of the mujahidin political parties – and at times Abu'l-Walid was highly critical of 'Azzam in the reports he wrote for the Gulf press as a "war correspondent." Yet they shared, according to Abu'l-Walid, a mutual respect for one another.[27] Indeed, Abu'l-Walid would later write of 'Azzam's 1989 assassination as one of the greatest setbacks to the Arab Afghan mujahidin.

In May and June of 1985 Abu'l-Walid took part in an attack on the Khost airstrip, along with the future al-Qa'ida leader Abu Hafs al-Masri and Abu'l-Walid's old friend 'Abd al-Rahman.[28] While leading a later siege of the same airport in 1990, Abu'l-Walid several times records nostalgic reminiscences in his diary about the events of 1985. They had extremely limited supplies and could fire only two rockets at the landing strip in any given day, but this often forced the Soviet supply planes to take off without unloading their supplies. In his later memoirs Abu'l-Walid writes that when he and his fellow mujahidin would return to their camps after firing their rockets on the landing strip they would sing songs and "laugh like children."[29]

Abu'l-Walid writes that in late 1986 the American FIM-92 "Stinger" surface-to-air missiles were introduced to the Afghan arena as part of the American military assistance to the mujahidin.[30] He admits that the availability of this weapon dramatically improved the mujahidin's capacity to defend themselves from Soviet air power, but he is vehement in discounting the often-made claim that the Stinger turned the tide of the war against the Soviets, a claim he dismisses as "lies of American propaganda."[31] Abu'l-Walid insists that the truly decisive advantage that the mujahidin's victory hinged upon was their religious faith, which contrasted sharply with the ever-declining morale of the communist troops.[32] Also in 1986 Abu'l-Walid made a brief visit to Abu Dhabi for the graduations of the children of his cousin and sister-in-law Safiyah al-Shami.[33]

In what would turn out to be an historic contribution to the modern history of jihad, Abu'l-Walid arranged the first meeting between Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, the man who would become Zarqawi's mentor while the two were imprisoned together in Jordan in the 1990s. According to an interview given to al-Jazeera in July 2005, Maqdisi first met Zarqawi in Abu'l-Walid's Peshawar home at the end of the anti-Soviet jihad (probably in late 1989); Abu'l-Walid introduced Zarqawi "as a youth who wanted to return to Jordan and devote himself to the call for God."[34] Maqdisi, of course, helped to set Zarqawi on a decidedly less peaceful path.

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[27] AFGP-2002-600087, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 24, 2006.

[28] AFGP-2002-600092, pp. 8, 71.

[29] AFGP-2002-600092, p. 71. Abu'l-Walid often romanticizes the early years of the anti-Soviet jihad into an idyllic period, when the jihad was "pure" and not yet sullied by the creation of the mujahidin parties and the influx of money from the U.S. and the Gulf states.

[30] On the introduction of the Stinger, see Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (New York: Penguin, 2004), pp. 149f.

[31] AFPG-2002-600092, and Hamid, "Chatting," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 29, 2006.

[32] Abu'l-Walid mentions this "principle" (that jihadis' faith gives them real battlefield advantages) repeatedly in his writings, and is one of the few instances where he contradicts his usual tendency for military pragmatism.

[33] Shafi'i, "The Story of Abu Walid," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, February 11, 2007.

[34] "Salafi-Jihadi Leader 'Differs' with Al-Zarqawi on Killing Civilians in Iraq," OSC trans. of an Al-Jazeera interview between Yasir Abu Hilala and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, 5 July 2005. An Arabic

Al-Qa'ida Trainer, Strategist and Critic, 1989-'96

In early spring of 1989 Abu'l-Walid's had his first encounter with Usama bin Ladin, and from the very beginning there was a great deal of friction between the two jihadi leaders. Bin Ladin, along with his lieutenants Abu Hafs al-Masri and Abu 'Ubayda al-Banshiri, had emerged as the military leader of the disastrous spring attack on Jalalabad, a city in eastern Afghanistan held by the communist forces. Abu'l-Walid was strongly opposed to this attack, which was staged out of Pakistan and which Abu'l-Walid believed was being orchestrated by the CIA and the ISI, Pakistan's intelligence service. The Syrian jihadi ideologue Abu Mus'ab al-Suri was also critical of the Jalalabad siege, one of many occasions on which he and Abu'l-Walid would agree in their opposition to Bin Ladin.[35] Much to Abu'l-Walid's dismay, 'Abdullah 'Azzam had been using his international fame to draw foreign volunteers to the battle in large numbers.[36] Abu'l-Walid wrote articles criticizing the planning and execution of the attack for *al-Ittihad* and other Gulf media outlets.[37] When Abu'l-Walid learned that a number of his old mujahidin colleagues had been killed in the fruitless attack, he let it be known that "had I been in charge, I would have court-martialed Abu 'Abdullah [Usama bin Ladin], Abu 'Ubayda and Abu Hafs and sentenced them to death."[38] Though they'd not yet met in person, word of Abu'l-Walid's comments made it to Bin Ladin, who, not surprisingly, became very angry. During the siege Abu'l-Walid met with Abu Hafs and Abu 'Ubayda and asked them to convey a written assessment of the Jalalabad fiasco to Bin Ladin. They delivered his report and Abu 'Ubayda returned with the news that "Abu 'Abdullah wished it torn to pieces and scattered to the wind, since his men were achieving victories."[39] From then on Abu'l-Walid would remain suspicious of Bin Ladin's leadership abilities and would frequently clash with him and Abu Hafs al-Masri over al-Qa'ida's strategic decisions.[40]

In December of 1989 Abu'l-Walid traveled briefly back to Abu Dhabi. He was finalizing the first issue of *Manba' al-Jihad*, a magazine that he had put together in Pakistan and which was published out of the UAE. Abu'l-Walid wrote most of the articles for the first issue, including pieces on the assassination of 'Azzam and the death of the latter's deputy, Tamim al-Adnani, as well as of the major mujahidin battles of the previous months. He was planning to stay on in Abu Dhabi until the magazine was published but returned in haste when he learned from Haqqani's representative in Abu Dhabi that the mujahidin were staging a large-scale attack on the communist bases in the

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transcript of the original interview is available online here:
http://www.aljazeera.net/channel/archive/archive?ArchiveId=129776.

[35] AFGP-2002-600088, p. 12. For details of Abu'l-Walid and Abu Mus'ab's conflicts with the al-Qa'ida leadership, see Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*, passim.

[36] AFGP-2002-600088, p. 2.

[37] Abu'l-Walid included the text of one of his articles in AFGP-2002-600088, pp. 2-9; this article was published in *al-Ittihad* on May 11, 1989.

[38] AFGP-2002-600088, p. 2.

[39] AFGP-2002-600088, p. 14. Despite Bin Ladin's optimism, the attack on Jalalabad was a total failure; the city was not captured and the mujahidin lost more than 10,000 fighters.

[40] For a full account of these disputes, see Vahid Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in al-Qa'ida from 1989-2006*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2007.

mountains of Torghar.[41]   In January of the following year Abu'l-Walid had *Manba' al-Jihad* published by a press in Islamabad.[42]

Abu'l-Walid suffered a number of personal losses in the first half of 1990. His son Khalid; an un-named orphan that he and his wife had adopted in 1988; and his long-time friends and fellow mujahidin Isma'il, 'Abd al-Rahman and 'Abd al-Manan all died of illness or battle wounds during this time. Coming soon after the death of his mother-in-law, who died in 1988 in Peshawar, these losses weighed heavily on Abu'l-Walid and his wife Wafa'; in his diary for this period, Abu'l-Walid wrote that Afghanistan had begun to seem to him "like a huge cemetery just waiting for corpses," and he frequently recorded his fears for his and his family's future.[43] Yet in the same period Abu'l-Walid was working on plans to conquer the town of Khost that included such ruthless ideas as poisoning the town's water supply in order to provoke a "civilian medical crisis" and force the populace to surrender.[44]

In early 1990, after another meeting with his old colleague Abu Hafs, Abu'l-Walid was invited to address al-Qa'ida's Jihad Wal training camp in Khost as well as another camp across the border in Miranshah, North Waziristan.[45] At Jihad Wal he lectured on the political situation in Afghanistan with Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, who, like Abu'l-Walid, would go on to hold a position in al-Qa'ida's Shura Council. Their class was a disaster; according to Abu'l-Walid, the audience, which included "all of the important cadres of the al-Qa'ida organization, including Usama bin Ladin," broke into arguing factions and began declaring different parties infidels (*takfir*).[46] However, from this point on both Abu'l-Walid and Abu Mus'ab al-Suri would frequently provide training of various kinds at al-Qa'ida training camps.

In the middle of February a British journalist from the BBC whom Abu'l-Walid refers to simply as "Tim" arrived at Jalaluddin Haqqani's camp near Khost to interview the mujahidin commander. Being the only other English speaker Abu'l-Walid served as interpreter during the interviews.[47] Tim stayed with the group for several days, during which time Haqqani led a successful campaign to win control of Torghar from the communist forces entrenched there. Abu'l-Walid explained the strategic importance of Torghar and predicted that, if they took control of it, Khost would fall within a month. Though the mujahidin did take Torghar it took more than a year to conquer Khost. Abu'l-Walid met Tim in Peshawar several months after the Torghar victory and the latter asked Abu'l-Walid about his false prediction; Abu'l-Walid blamed the failure to take Khost on U.S. and Pakistani interference.[48]

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[41] AFGP-2002-600090, pp. 10f.

[42] AFGP-2002-600090, p. 26.

[43] AFGP-2002-600092, pp. 1-5.

[44] AFGP-2002-600090, p. 27.

[45] AFGP-2002-600090, pp. 2 and 28. The Jihad Wal course was given in January of 1990; the date of the course in Miranshah is not mentioned but was probably during the same month, as Abu Hafs communicated Usama bin Ladin's anger at the content of Abu'l-Walid's lectures (as well as for Abu'l-Walid's writings about the Jalalabad disaster) during a meeting with Abu'l-Walid in early February.

[46] AFGP-2002-600090, p. 2. For more on this incident see Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*, pp. 6f.

[47] AFGP-2002-600090, p. 32.

[48] AFGP-2002-600090, p. 36. Abu'l-Walid obviously disliked Tim and was especially put off by the latter's reserved bearing. After one occasion where Tim remained visibly unmoved by an incident that Abu'l-Walid found particularly moving, Abu'l-Walid wrote that he hoped that "a cluster bomb kills every journalist from has-been Britain" (ibid., p. 38).

During this same period Abu'l-Walid met several times with Abu Hafs to outline his plan to stage a continuous month-long rocket attack on the critically important Khost airstrip, a three-kilometer long landing area that had been an essential part of the Soviet supply line and remained so during the civil war against Najibullah. Abu'l-Walid convinced al-Qa'ida to provide support while he would serve as the field commander for the operation, but, as he detailed at great length and in daily diary entries during the operation, al-Qa'ida proved to be an utterly incompetent collaborator, forcing Abu'l-Walid throughout the airport attack to rely on his long-standing relationships with Haqqani and Abu'l-Harith to obtain needed supplies and logistical support.[49]

On 10 August 1990, a week before the attacks on the Khost airstrip began, Abu'l-Walid was taken for the first time to al-Qa'ida's Khallad Camp in the Bari region of the Pak-Afghan border area between Miranshah and Khost. This camp hosted advanced training courses in explosives. As he was driven into the area of the camp, explosions and gunfire erupted all around the vehicle, and Abu'l-Walid and his companions, thinking it was an ambush, flung themselves to the floor of their truck. It turned to be a training session that they'd interrupted, however, and soon thereafter the trainer emerged from a stand of trees, laughing at the visitors' reactions. This was Saif al-Adel, the Egyptian jihadi and a senior member of al-Qa'ida's military committee, whom Abu'l-Walid then met for the first time.[50] He described Saif in his diary at the time as "thin, strong and full of energy," with "narrow Asian eyes that showed intelligence and cunning." A year and a half later Abu'l-Walid gave his daughter Asma' – fifteen years old at the time – in marriage to Saif al-Adel.[51]

Following his meeting with Saif al-Adel at the Khallad Camp, Abu'l-Walid proceeded directly to the hills above Khost to begin his assault on the Khost airstrip, moving from position to position and cooperating with the various Afghan and Arab factions operating in the area, including al-Qa'ida. He received several visits and communications from Abu Mus'ab al-Suri during the middle weeks of August.[52] During one of these meetings Abu'l-Walid and Abu Mus'ab discussed the need for a magazine for the Arab mujahidin in Afghanistan that could disseminate useful ideological and tactical information.[53] Though it is not clear whether they pursued such a venture at that time, in subsequent years they would collaborate in producing such literature for the Taliban.

Towards the end of August Abu'l-Walid was summoned back to Miranshah, Pakistan by Jalaluddin Haqqani, and Abu'l-Walid found that his wife and children had unexpectedly returned there from Islamabad. His wife Wafa' had moved their children to

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[49] More than eighty pages in length, the account of the Khost airstrip operation consists largely of excerpts from Abu'l-Walid's daily diaries that were compiled by him, with connecting narrative obviously written after the operation was over, in March of 1999; AFGP-2002-600092.

[50] For an in-depth profile of Saif al-Adel, see the Combating Terrorism Center's *Al-Qa'ida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*, Appendix B: IV, available online at http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/pdf/Saif.pdf.

[51] AFGP-2002-600092, p. 13. In late 2003 Salim al-Balushi, a businessman from the United Arab Emirates with ties to al-Qa'ida, was arrested in Saudi Arabia and revealed that he'd been tasked by Saif al-Adel at some point in the past with buying jewelry in Dubai for his wife, Abu'l-Walid's daughter ("Former Arab Afghan Fighter with Links to Al-Qa'ida Arrested in Saudi Arabia," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 7, 2003, Open Source Center [OSC] trans. GMP20031207000133.)

[52] AFGP-2002-600092, pp. 36ff., 45, 52.

[53] AFGP-2002-600092, p. 45.

the Pakistani capital in order to enroll them in a Saudi school there, but members of the school administration had allowed Saudi officials to interrogate the children about their father, asking about his whereabouts, activities and associates. Wafa' visited the Saudi Consulate in Islamabad to protest this but ultimately decided to withdraw the children and return to Miranshah. Abu'l-Walid writes that he began at this point to have increased security problems.[54]

The rocket attacks on the Khost airstrip began on 16 August and continued until 11 September 1990. According to Abu'l-Walid, the Najibullah government forces lost dozens of AN-32 aircraft to the rockets – fourteen on 10 September alone.[55] His diaries during this period record precise and extensive details for each day of the operation, which in the end was a qualified success.[56] His attacks succeeded in forcing the communist supply planes to abandon the use of the airstrip, but the latter were soon thereafter able to begin using an alternative landing zone nearby that the mujahidin were unable to easily target. It would be another year before the city of Khost was captured by the mujahidin.

On September 5, 1990, Abu'l-Walid met al-Qa'ida leaders Abu Hafs al-Masri and Abu Usama al-Masri at one of the mujahidin command centers above Khost. They discussed the future of the jihad in Afghanistan.[57] The prevailing view among al-Qa'ida's leadership at this time was that Afghanistan was not a suitable headquarters for the organization and Abu'l-Walid vehemently opposed this conclusion, arguing that al-Qa'ida should stay and support a decisive victory over the communist government and the establishment of an Islamist state.[58] The following year Bin Ladin relocated his base to Khartoum, Sudan, and Abu'l-Walid stayed on in Afghanistan and continued to operate some of al-Qa'ida's training camps, though at a diminished capacity and with fewer human and material resources. He was extremely critical of Bin Ladin's decision to quit South Asia, accusing the leader of "abandoning al-Qa'ida's foundational objectives."[59]

On 20 January 1993 a team of al-Qa'ida operatives was assembled at the home of Abu Hafs al-Masri in Peshawar, to be tasked with a mission to Kenya and Somalia.[60]

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[54] AFGP-2002-600092, p. 42.

[55] AFGP-2002-600092, p. 22.

[56] See AFGP-2002-600090 and AFGP-2002-600092; his diaries also record his frequent frustrations with al-Qa'ida, whose performance in supporting the operation "gave me no reason to have any confidence in them whatsoever" (AFGP-2002-600092, p. 22).

[57] AFGP-2002-600092, pp. 61f. For more on this meeting see Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*, pp. 8f. This Abu Usama is quite possibly Ali Mohamed, the Egyptian jihadi who joined the U.S. Army in the 1980s and attempted to infiltrate the FBI (on whom see the in-depth profile at http://ctc.usma.edu/harmony/profile_pdf/Ali-Mohammed.pdf). According to testimony by Khaled Ibrahim, Ali Mohamed used the pseudonym "Abu Usama" while working as a trainer in an al-Qa'ida camp near Khost in 1992 (*U.S.A. v. Omar Abdel Rahman et al.*, S(5) 93 Cr. 181 (MBM), July 13, 1995, pp. 14291-14293), and he was a close associate of Abu Hafs throughout the early 1990s. Writing in 2002, Abu'l-Walid heaped praise on Ali Mohamed as "the Egyptian-American army officer who did so much to train the Arabs. He introduced them to skills no one needed at the time, such as hijacking places and assassination" ("Summary of Book on 'Arab Afghans,'" GMP20021018000145).

[58] See Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*, pp. 8f.

[59] AFGP-2002-600053, p. 31.

[60] "The Ogaden File," AFGP-2002-600104; known by the acronym MSK, the mission's purposes were to establish a base for training and operations in the Horn of Africa that could replace Afghanistan and to then extend training and support services to violent Islamist groups in the region. Al-Qa'ida failed on both counts, though the mission did enable al-Qa'ida to participate to some extent in the 1993 battle in

According to the report of that meeting written by Sayf al-Islam al-Masri, the person chosen to lead the mission, Abu'l-Walid gave a training session that evening to those present on reconnaissance strategy; interestingly, Abu'l-Walid delivered the training in English.[61] Later that year Abu'l-Walid wrote a series of five letters to this team of operatives and to the al-Qa'ida leadership in Africa generally. His letters are very critical of the latter, pointing out "a chronic error regarding political guidance" that plagued al-Qa'ida's activities in Afghanistan and continued to do so in Somalia.[62] He warns that "waging jihad like a rhinoceros is stupid and futile" and reminds his addressees of "one your fatal mistakes, which is the hasty changing of strategic targets, whereby now every action is tactical and improvised. Despite whatever success some of these operations may have, the general lines of the course of action will vanish, lose their direction, and ultimately all of the gains that were made could be forfeited. This is an oppressive burden on our already afflicted *umma*."[63]

By this time Abu'l-Walid was directing a training program for Central Asian jihadis that was partially funded and staffed by al-Qa'ida, called the "Furqan Project," and his five letters to the Africa Corps include lengthy analyses of Central Asian politics and of the prospects for militant Islamist successes in the region. His trainees included cadres from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as well as members of Tajikistan's Nahda Party (also known as the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan), an Islamist political party that fought alongside other anti-government groups in the 1992-1997 Tajikistan civil war.[64] The Furqan Project used the existing training camps near Khost – Jihad Wal and al-Faruq[65] – as well as an additional center established in the northern Afghan province of Kunduz.[66] In two letters written from the Jihad Wal camp near Khost, al-Qa'ida operative Abu 'Ata al-Sharqi kept the al-Qa'ida leadership in Khartoum abreast of his activities in Afghanistan. He refers several times to Abu'l-

Mogadishu famously known as the "Black Hawk Down" incident. On the MSK operation and its failings see the Combating Terrorism Center, *Al-Qa'ida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*, available online at http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/aqII.asp.

[61] AFGP-2002-600104, p. 1.

[62] AFPG-2002-600053, p. 1. All five of the letters in this Harmony document were unmistakably written by Abu'l-Walid, though in four of them he uses the pseudonym Hassan al-Tajiki. He appears not to have been too concerned about hiding his identity, however, since in the third letter, which is signed Hassan al-Tajiki, he encloses a letter addressed to the Nahda leadership which is signed Abu'l-Walid, clearly identifying both letters as having one and the same author. In the fifth letter, "Hassan al-Tajiki" refers to his age and Egyptian origins as well.

[63] AFGP-2002-600053, p. 14. (The *umma* is the global Muslim community, irrespective of national borders.)

[64] Jamal al-Fadl also testified to al-Qa'ida's training and support of the Nahda movement; *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.,* S(7) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y., February 7, 2001, pp. 354f.

[65] There were two al-Qa'ida camps by this name; the one near Khost was the earlier of the two, and was established during the anti-Soviet jihad; the second al-Faruq camp was established near Kandahar after al-Qa'ida relocated to Afghanistan from Sudan. See Hamid, "The Story of the Afghan Arabs from the Time of their Arrival in Afghanistan until their Departure with the Taliban," part 4, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 11, 2004.

[66] AFGP-2002-600053, p. 18. Abu'l-Walid wrote the memoir "Chatting on the Rooftop of the World" in 1994 while working on the Furqan project at the al-Faruq camp. For the text of the memoir see AFGP-2002-600087, AFGP-6000088 and AFGP-2002-600970; lengthy excerpts were published in seven installments by Muhammad al-Shafi'i in *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 24-30, 2006, and were subsequently translated by OSC (formerly known as FBIS).

Walid, identifies him as the commander of the Furqan Project, and conveys a number of requests and criticisms from Abu'l-Walid to leadership in Sudan.[67] In early fall of 1994 the al-Qa'ida leadership in Africa directed the remaining operatives at camps in Afghanistan to pull up stakes and proceed to Khartoum. In his second letter, dated 4 September 1994, Abu 'Ata thanks al-Qa'ida's military commander (probably either Abu 'Ubayda al-Banshiri or Abu Hafs al-Masri) for pulling them out of Afghanistan but conveys Abu'l-Walid's deep dismay at this decision and his request for a reconsideration. Abu'l-Walid refers to this in a letter of his own, in which he asks "that you temporarily freeze your decision to withdraw the cadres until you have the opportunity to discuss the entire matter once more with a representative that will come to you specifically for this purpose."[68] It was not to be, however, and Abu'l-Walid and the rest of the camp leaders left for Khartoum by the beginning of 1995. Less than a year later they were back in Afghanistan, along with Bin Ladin and the rest of the al-Qa'ida leadership, who had been ordered to leave Sudan and had no other choice but to take refuge with the newly-ascendant Taliban.

Between al-Qa'ida and the Taliban, and the Iranian Detention, 1996-2007

When al-Qa'ida returned to Afghanistan in 1996 the Taliban appeared to have accomplished what Abu'l-Walid had lobbied for in the early 1990s: the final rout of all communist forces and the establishment of an Islamist state. It is thus not surprising that Abu'l-Walid's loyalties were divided from this point on between Bin Ladin and the Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad 'Umar, with whom Abu'l-Walid became increasingly close. For the next six years Abu'l-Walid would wear several hats: Taliban propagandist, foreign correspondent, and al-Qa'ida trainer and strategist.

Along with his longtime associate Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Abu'l-Walid became a member of Mullah 'Umar's inner circle soon after the relocation to Afghanistan. The two writers were responsible for publishing the Taliban's official propaganda organ, *al-Imarah*. Abu'l-Walid and Abu Mus'ab issued the Arabic-language version of the magazine, and Abu'l-Walid remained the editor until a few days before the collapse of the Taliban in the wake of the American invasion of 2001.[69] Abu'l-Walid was also involved in an English-language version, entitled *The Islamic Emirate*, which like the Arabic version was issued out of Kandahar. On 1 December 2000 Abu'l-Walid published a lengthy issue of *The Islamic Emirate* dedicated to Mullah 'Umar's recent ban on opium production, in which he authored a long article questioning the lack of international support for this ban and suggesting that an international conspiracy led by the United States was behind it.[70]

Beginning in 1998 Abu'l-Walid also worked as a foreign correspondent for al-Jazeera, the Qatar-based satellite television network, a position he appears to have held

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[67] AFGP-2002-600106 and AFGP-2002-800581.

[68] AFGP-2002-600053, p. 31.

[69] Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Al-Qa'ida's Sayf al-Adl Recalls US Bombardment, Accuses Taliban of Betrayal," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 29, 2003.

[70] This issue was picked up by FBIS (now OSC) and redistributed as "Afghanistan: Journal Condemns US, Russian Role in World Narcotics Trafficking," IAP20010302000022.

until late 2001.[71] He reported on both the Taliban and the increasingly famous Bin Ladin. In a telephone interview in January 2001, Abu'l-Walid (credited as "Mustafa Hamid, Kandahar correspondent") discussed Bin Ladin's son's recent marriage and answered questions about the relationship between Bin Ladin and the Taliban at that time. While he said that Bin Ladin and Mullah 'Umar had intimate personal and social relations, he noted that the al-Qa'ida leader was banned by Mullah 'Umar from all political and military activities.[72]

During this same period Abu'l-Walid worked as a leading trainer in al-Qa'ida's al-Faruq Camp on the outskirts of Kandahar. In February of 2001, Abu'l-Walid submitted a long hand-written list of questions posed by camp trainees over the course of several recently held training sessions; many of these training sessions were held during the summer of 2000.[73] The list of questions was submitted to the supervisory leadership committee for al-Faruq, which consisted of Usama bin Ladin, Abu Hafs al-Masri and Abu'l-Walid himself. The questions demonstrate the growing anxieties during this period among al-Qa'ida's foot soldiers-in-training about the organization's relationship with the Taliban and Bin Ladin's stated enmity for the United States. Many trainees feared an imminent attack from the American military, despite the fact that many of these same trainees give clear indications of their ignorance of the unfolding 9/11 plot.[74] In the accompanying notes, Abu'l-Walid raises some of his own concerns about these matters and refers again to his perennial frustrations with al-Qa'ida's administrative problems.[75]

Following the 9/11 attacks, a project which Abu'l-Walid had strongly and consistently opposed, the United States invaded Afghanistan and Abu'l-Walid, along with a contingent of al-Qa'ida leaders that included his son-in-law Saif al-Adel, fled south to Iran; eventually this entire group was reportedly put under house arrest by Iranian authorities and remains so to this day.[76] For much of 2002 Abu'l-Walid wrote for a variety of newspapers and media outlets, using the pseudonym Hashim al-Makki. Much of what he wrote was devoted to condemning Bin Ladin's "catastrophic leadership."[77] A number of his articles written as Hashim al-Makki were published by *al-Sharq al-Awsat* in early 2002, and he gave that paper an interview using this name as

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[71] The present author sent a number of inquiries to al-Jazeera about Abu'l-Walid's employment with them but received no response. The *al-Sharq al-Awsat* reporter Muhammad al-Shafi'i, in a profile of Abu'l-Walid written for that newspaper in February of 2007, wrote that *al-Sharq al-Awsat* had also made numerous inquiries to al-Jazeera about Abu'l-Walid but "to no avail" (Shafi'i, "The Story of Abu Walid al-Masri").

[72] "Al-Jazirah Correspondent Interviewed on Wedding of Bin-Ladin's Son," *Al-Jazeera*, "Today's Harvest" program, 9 January 2001, OSC trans. GMP20010109000220.

[73] AFGP-2002-801138, pp. 195ff.

[74] Ibid. For discussion of these camp questionnaires, the al-Qa'ida/Taliban relationship and the controversy in the organization caused by Bin Ladin's decision to target the American homeland, see Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*.

[75] See Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*, p. 13.

[76] Saif al-Adel, "Detained al-Qa'ida Leader Sayf al-Adl Chronicles Al-Zarqawi's Rise in Organization," *al-Quds al-`Arabi*, May 21-22, 2005, OSC trans. GMP2005060637100. The nature of the "detention" of the al-Qa'ida leaders held by Iran is unclear; both Abu'l-Walid and Saif al-Adel have been able to publish lengthy works from their location(s) in Iran; see the Harmony profile of Saif al-Adel, available online at http://ctc.usma.edu/harmony/profile_pdf/Saif.pdf.

[77] See Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*, for a discussion of this criticism.

well, discussing the rivalry between Bin Ladin and Mullah 'Umar.[78] In May of 2002 "Hashim al-Makki" reported on the death of Abu Hafs al-Masri and on the course of the war in Afghanistan.[79] He also reported in that month that the son of 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, the "Blind Sheikh" of the Egyptian Islamic Group, survived an American air strike on his home in Kandahar.[80] On the first anniversary of 9/11 "Hashim al-Makki" released a lengthy critical history of al-Qa'ida and the Taliban, from the end of the anti-Soviet jihad to the fall of the Taliban in the wake of the American invasion, entitled "A Cross in the Sky over Kandahar" (*Salib fi sama' Qandahar*).[81] Parts of this work were serially published by *al-Sharq al-Awsat* as "The Story of the Afghan Arabs from their Arrival in Afghanistan to their Departure with the Taliban."[82] The book is not only extremely critical of Usama bin Ladin and his lieutenants Abu Hafs al-Masri and Abu 'Ubayda al-Banshiri; it also brought into the open for the first time many of the internal debates and divisions that had riven the al-Qa'ida organization over the years.[83]

The publication of these details created a storm of controversy in the Islamist community. Usama Rushdi, former leader of the Egyptian Islamic Group (*al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*) and operator of *al-Mahrusa*, which first published "A Cross in the Sky over Kandahar," published criticism of "Hashim al-Makki" on his website and in response to Dutch calls for his deportation.[84] The Egyptian lawyer and author Muntasir al-Zayyat, said that "despite the feeling inside me that al-Makki wants reform, he has to follow the right channels to convey his advice, and observe the rules of *shari'a* when he gives it."[85] Hani al-Siba'i, the Egyptian Islamist director of the London-based al-Maqreze Center for Historical Studies, accused Abu'l-Walid of having "exaggerated the issue of self-criticism and turned it into a personal issue."[86]

Abu'l-Walid was last heard from on 6 December 2002, when he published in *al-Mahrusa* a lengthy appeal to Bin Ladin, whom Abu'l-Walid had heard may have fled to

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[78] This interview was published in a 24-page supplement in a *al-Sharq al-Awsat* special issue on the first anniversary of 9/11, September 11, 2002.

[79] Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Fundamentalist Website Cited on Death of Al-Qa'ida's Abu Hafs in Afghanistan," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 7, 2002, OSC trans. GMP20020507000060.

[80] "Islamic Group Spiritual Leader's Son Reportedly Survives US Attack," *al-Quds al-Arabi*, May 7, 2002, OSC trans. GMP20020508000041.

[81] Originally posted to a (now defunct) London-based Islamist website, *al-Mahrusa* (www.elmahrosa.net), the Arabic text can currently be downloaded from various file sharing sites and online discussion fora. For summaries of the work see Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Al-Qa'ida 'Ideologue' Reveals Years-Long Controversy on Using WMD Against US," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 12, 2002; and "Summary of Book on 'Afghan Arabs'," FBIS report GMP20021018000145.

[82] *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 8-14, 2004.

[83] For details see Brown, *Cracks in the Foundation*, passim.

[84] Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Former Egyptian Islamic Group Official Views Expulsion Calls," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 9, 2002. The Dutch Justice Ministry was at the time re-evaluating Rushdi's application for political asylum in the wake of charges that he had links with al-Qa'ida.

[85] Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Disputes Among Fundamentalists over 'Afghan Arab' Ideologue's Criticism of Bin Ladin's 'Unwise' Action," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 9, 2002. In the same article Ahmad Musallam, an Egyptian Islamist living in London, had harsher words for Abu'l-Walid, saying "God spare us the evils of al-Makki."

[86] "More than One Opinion," *al-Jazeera TV*, December 13, 2002; transcript of episode translated by FBIS, GMP20021214000130.

Yemen.[87] If he was in Yemen, Abu'l-Walid urged him to gather his supporters and launch an offensive against the United States from Yemen. The article also repeats a number of the points of criticism against Bin Ladin that Abu'l-Walid had published earlier that year. At that point Abu'l-Walid was apparently put under stricter confinement in Iran, whose government has tacitly admitted to holding Abu'l-Walid under house arrest.[88] Abu'l-Walid's wife Wafa' was able to call her sister Safiyah al-Shami in early 2007 and confirmed that she, her husband, their eight children and five grandchildren were all being held in Iran and that they lacked any personal documentation or passports; they did have Iranian ID cards, however, and were allowed some freedom of movement within the country.[89] Abu'l-Walid's extended family in Egypt have sought through various agencies to have him moved to Egypt, and have been vocal in their criticism of the *al-Jazeera* network for not working to secure Abu'l-Walid's release. Given the extent of his involvement in al-Qa'ida, involvement that he has repeatedly described in his own writings, even if Iran were to extradite him to another country it is extremely likely that Abu'l-Walid will spend the rest of his life in detention.

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[87] "Fundamentalist Site Attacks Bin Ladin, Defies Him to Launch Offensive via Yemen," FBIS report GMP20021206000099.

[88] The evidence for this is discussed in the Harmony profile of Saif al-Adel, available online at http://ctc.usma.edu/harmony/profile_pdf/Saif.pdf.

[89] Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Arab Afghan Ideologue Al-Masri, Son-in-Law Sayf-al-Adl said Detained in Iran," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, February 3, 2007.