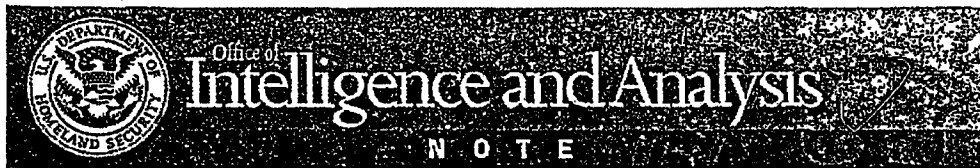


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(U//FOUO) Countering Radicalization: Somali Extremists Target U.S. Muslims for Recruitment

3 November 2008

(U) Prepared by the Extremism and Radicalization Branch, Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division.

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This product is one of a series published by the Extremism and Radicalization Branch that identifies the media and other propaganda efforts by al-Qa'ida and affiliated extremist organizations to influence Muslims in the United States with their radical ideology. The series is intended to inform Federal, State, and local government organizations of foreign attempts to radicalize U.S. citizens. DHS/Office of Intelligence and Analysis has prepared this assessment consistent with its authority to provide information analysis and intelligence related to terrorist threats to the United States.

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(U) Key Findings

(U//FOUO) The Somali militant group Shabab al-Mujahidin Movement (Mujahidin Youth Movement)—allied with al-Qa'ida, according to its online statements—released a video in October 2008 to recruit U.S. Muslims for attacks against U.S. interests and to join the group's fight in Somalia. The English-language video features young Somali fighters pleading for Muslims to either enlist in the movement or fight the United States Government.

(U//FOUO) This video is the most aggressive attempt to date by Somali extremists to recruit U.S. Muslims. The video is evidence of their growing worldwide recruitment efforts and may well presage an expanded campaign to target U.S. Muslims.

(U) Video Targets U.S. Muslims

(U//FOUO) The video may persuade some U.S. Muslims because the speakers use American English and promote popular germane Islamist concerns. The statements may appeal particularly to U.S. Muslim youth because the speakers appear to be young, frontline fighters.

- *(U//FOUO) The speakers ask viewers to join the fight in Somalia and worldwide against the U.S. Government and its allies. The video contains no religious diatribes, specialized religious language, or complicated ideas or terms.*
- *(U//FOUO) The speakers accuse the United States and its allies of oppression and claim Somali extremists are in line with populist Islamist sentiments against perceived Western aggression in predominantly Muslim countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The video also condemns the publication in Denmark in 2005 of a cartoon depicting the Prophet Muhammad, which sparked violent protests abroad and sharp criticisms online in the United States.*
- *(U//FOUO) The video's use of frontline Somali fighters also may resonate with young Muslims susceptible to supporting or executing violence in the name of religion—in contrast to widely disseminated English-language videos from al-Qa'ida's top leadership who are older and not seen actually fighting on the battlefield. The Somali extremists exhort young U.S. Muslims to join their ranks, not to fight under them.*

(U) Links to Al-Qa'ida Media Campaigns

(U//FOUO) This video is the latest effort by Somali militants to expand their ranks by recruiting Muslims worldwide, including in the United States. Their use of al-Qa'ida propaganda and al-Qa'ida Internet media outlets appears to be part of this campaign.

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- ~~(U//FOUO)~~ A September 2008 Shabab al-Mujahidin Movement video showing militants' military training features excerpts from speeches by al-Qa'ida figures Usama Bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Yayha al-Libi to promote attacks against the United States and its allies. The al-Qa'ida-affiliated al-Hisbah website posted the video.

~~(U)~~ Outlook

~~(U//FOUO)~~ DHS/Office of Intelligence and Analysis has no evidence of this video resulting in U.S. Muslims traveling overseas to join Somali militants or support violence against the U.S. Government or U.S. interests. The video, however, may result in increased financial contributions to Somali militants from the large Somali diaspora in the United States, some of whose members may empathize with family, tribal members, and friends who are militants in Somalia.

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