



# TRC TWW Report

Terror Web Watch Report



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**Graphic:** Image of US hostage Ronald Schulz (source site imbedded in image). Arabic text on left and that in red lettering reads: "Islamic Army in Iraq." The black lettering reads: "The seizure of the American security official."



## Orientation/Introduction:

Please review the introduction to the Terror Web Watch at [Intel Report](#).

# Item 1: Salafist Militants: Complementing Incitement with Video Instruction

Osama bin Laden's primary goal always has been to incite Muslims to oppose and attack the United States ([Country Profile](#)), its allies, and Arab tyrannies. But within that overarching goal, he has likewise said that "repelling the aggressive enemy is done by means of a very small part of the [Islamic] nation. ... I say to you, do not let your small numbers and few weapons discourage you. Do not let the strength of your enemy and his numbers frighten you." The key to victory, bin Laden argues, lies in well-trained and religiously motivated mujahedin. "The difference between us and our adversaries," bin Laden writes,

In terms of military strength, manpower and equipment is very huge. But, for the grace of God, the difference is also very huge in terms of psychological resources, faith certainty, and reliance on the Almighty God. The difference between us and them [on these matters] is very, very huge and great.

Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and other Salafist militants clearly have supplied the religious motivation for serving and would-be mujahedin, but they are not simply trusting to God to provide them victory. Following bin Laden's frequent exhortation that victory cannot come by "sitting and giving lectures" but only by "sacrificing lives and heads," al-Qaeda ([Group Profile](#)) and other Salafist groups have turned to the Internet to provide a system of martial instruction for those willing to sacrifice their "lives and heads."

Since August 2005, Salafist websites have carried a series of video tapes offering lessons in how to make and use various explosives and explosive devices (see past Terror Web Watch editions). The tapes have a uniformly high production quality, suggesting that they are all made by the same group or individual. None of the tapes, however, contain any information that identifies the sponsoring organization, the lecturer giving the instruction, or the date when the tape was made. In terms of location, some of the tapes appeared to have been made in garages and kitchens, while others were made in a laboratory environment with the instructor wearing a lab coat and rubber gloves. The language of instruction on each tape is Modern Standard Arabic and is spoken in a way that betrays no national or regional dialect. Because the tapes are language neutral, the producers avoided the chance of stoking ethnic resentments—such as a Saudi taking offense from being taught by an Egyptian—and made them useable across the Arab-speaking world.

Each tape offers simple but detailed instructions on the construction and use of explosives. The instructor speaks slowly and very clearly, and all of his words are printed in Arabic text at the bottom of the screen. The instructor provides a careful demonstration of each step in the process; he remains calm and professional throughout the film. He also stresses that materials needed for the devices are readily available across the Muslim world. To date, the tapes have covered the building of an explosive charge filled with ball bearings; the making of black powder, and fulminate of mercury; the production of nitric acid for use in making TNT and nitroglycerine, and advice on how to find the needed ingredients in local markets; the conversion and filling of cooking-gas canisters for use as bombs; the construction of a simple detonator, using such things as a soda pop can and a pen; and the making of PETN explosive ([Terror Web Watch](#)). The tapes detailing the ball-bearing-laced explosive and the converted canister bomb also include film of their use and the destruction they caused. Interestingly, the instructor offers almost no advice for the safe handling of ingredients while the device is being assembled. These do-it-yourself instruction tapes fit perfectly with what al-Qaeda insurgent commander Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi described as the need for "the self-sufficiency of each combat group" and for the groups to be able to "scatter his [the enemy's] efforts with a few primitive methods."

Adding to the professional quality of the tapes is their lack of any propaganda content. Unlike most Salafist tapes, these contain no religious proselytizing, no provocative rhetoric, no aggrandizing for any specific group or groups, and no background film of US or Israeli ([Country Profile](#)) "attacks" on Muslims. The instructor likewise offers no suggestions about where or against which targets the explosives should be used. Background music was recognizable on only one tape. That tape featured the score from the film "The Last of the Mohicans," quite appropriate music for a lesson meant to train men for insurgent-type operations.



While a speculation, these instructional tapes may be meant to complement other Salafist instructional material that is appearing on the Internet. Al-Qaeda, for example, has published a long series of articles—over the signature of Sayf al-Adl, the group's operations chief—on how to conduct intelligence-gathering operations in urban environments, as well as instructions for kidnapping, assassination, and bombing operations in urban settings. Perhaps not coincidentally, Al-Adl's instructional essays explain and detail modes of operation that have been used by Islamic militants in operations in Istanbul ([Terrorist Incident](#) and [Terrorist Incident](#)), Madrid ([Terrorist Incident](#)), and London ([Terrorist Incident](#)).

Taken together, the instructional tapes and articles are another step in preparing fighters for what al-Qaeda and other Salafist groups describe as "a long-term war of attrition on all levels and in all aspects of military, economic, social, psychological, and security life." They again emphasize the high value bin Laden and his allies have always attached to educating and training jihadis. "The tree of training," al-Qaeda strategist Salim al-Makki warned the West in the journal *Alneda* in October 2002, "the seedling of which the al-Qaeda organization planted in its camps in Afghanistan [[Country Profile](#)], has grown in the hearts of Muslim youth and has yielded fruit in all parts of the world."

## Item 2: The Saudi Maginot Line

The US government, mainstream media, and the American public in general have spent a great deal of time and energy since September 11, 2001 ([Terrorist Incident](#)) evaluating our allies' commitment to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). In particular, significant attention has been paid to the Al-Saud's, the ruling family of Saudi Arabia ([Country Profile](#)), commitment to this endeavor. Conventional wisdom indicates that the Saudis were somewhat indifferent to the threat presented by al-Qaeda ([Group Profile](#)) prior to the May 12, 2003 suicide bombings in Riyadh ([Terrorist Incident](#)). It is widely believed that in the aftermath of these attacks the Saudis dramatically stepped up their efforts in the battle against al-Qaeda. The countrywide manhunt for suspected terrorist suspects and collaborators is often used as hard evidence to support the claim that the Al-Saud is taking its commitment to battle al-Qaeda seriously. While the 'body count' statistics are one helpful measure, they are certainly not the only measure of Saudi Arabia's commitment to stemming the flow of the jihadi tide.

One frequently overlooked measure is the Saudis' commitment to countering al-Qaeda's propaganda campaign in the Kingdom. A simple way to measure the efficacy of the Saudis' campaign against jihadi propaganda is to test whether the average Saudi citizen can connect to known al-Qaeda websites. The Saudi government operates an extensive Internet filter that effectively prevents its citizens from visiting websites that "contain content in violation of Islamic tradition or national regulations." According to a study conducted in 2001 by Jonathan Zittrain and Benjamin Edelman, the Saudi filters blocked websites to the following content: non-Islamic religions, woman's issues, homosexuality, pornography, illicit drugs, gambling, and anti-Saudi propaganda. This study illustrates that the Saudi content filters are robust enough to ban websites deemed hostile to the Kingdom's interests. It would, therefore, seem to reason that the Saudis would block jihadi websites—especially after the Riyadh bombings highlighted the jihadist threat to the Kingdom.

However, a study conducted by TRC has demonstrated that Saudi filters do not always block known jihadi websites. The study utilized multiple open proxies in Saudi Arabia as a means of establishing an Internet connection there. The use of the proxies enabled TRC researchers to simulate how an average Saudi citizen would connect to the Internet and allowed TRC researchers to test the robustness of Saudi Internet filters. Three types of known jihadi websites were identified in this study. The first group of sites promoted jihadi ideology in general or al-Qaeda ideology in particular. The second group of sites promoted jihad in Palestine or other regions. The final group of sites focused on the overthrow of the Saudi monarchy.

From one available proxy within the Sahara network, a Saudi ISP, all of the selected websites were accessible—including the website for the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights, a London-based Saudi dissident group run by Mohammed Al Masari. Not only does this site contain propaganda directed against the Al-Saud family, but it also helps raise funds via links to PayPal. In order to further test this proxy from the Sahara network, TRC attempted to connect to series of gambling and pornographic websites. It is important to note that all of these websites were blocked, indicating the requests through Sahara network were, in fact, subject to Saudi filters.





From another available proxy with the Vodatel network, another Saudi ISP, the results were inconsistent. For example, a site used by the insurgency in Iraq was blocked by Saudi filters. Additionally, out of five general jihadi websites selected Saudi filters blocked three. Out of three sites dedicated to promoting jihad in Palestine and Europe, Saudi filters only blocked one. Finally, unlike the Sahara network proxy, the Vodatel proxy blocked access to the Al Masari's Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights website.



It is unclear why there are apparent discrepancies in Saudi Arabia's Internet filters as demonstrated by the test results above. One possible explanation is that Saudi Arabia's Internet filters might be distributed to each of the Kingdom's ISPs. Therefore, each ISP may choose to filter additional sites above and beyond the baseline of sites blacklisted by the government. However, an analysis of the Saudi Arabian network indicates that all outbound Internet requests are filtered through the Saudi Network Information Center, Internet Services Unit at King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology. It would, therefore, be somewhat redundant and perhaps unnecessary to implement filters at the local ISP level when all outbound requests are routed through a single chokepoint.

Another possible explanation of the uneven performance of Saudi Arabia's Internet filters is the migratory nature of the jihadi sites. Jihadi sites are known to move around the Internet on a regular basis. These sites will often change hosting providers, change IP address, and register new domain names. It may, therefore, be difficult for Saudi Internet filters to keep up with the migratory patterns of these jihadi websites. However, this does not explain why the proxy from the Vodatel network filtered a subset of jihadi sites, while the proxy from the Sahara network did not. Moreover, Internet filters do not necessarily need to have a specific URL defined in order to block a site. The filters can be set up to block sites on a dynamic basis—by looking for keywords in the websites' metadata and content. Therefore, it is unlikely that the frequent migration of jihadi websites can consistently defeat Saudi Internet filters.

A final explanation of the uneven performance of Saudi Arabia's Internet filters is the loosening of restrictions on political speech with the Kingdom. For example, for each proxy, western media sites such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* were accessible. Additionally, sites that were previously blocked, during the Zittrain and Edelman study, such as the Israeli Defense Force's website, were accessible. It is, therefore, possible that Saudi Arabia is slowly loosening its restrictions on on-line political speech. However, this does not explain why certain jihadi websites were available for one ISP and not the other.

In conclusion, there are demonstrable holes in Saudi Internet filters. It is unclear why these holes exist and further study is required to resolve these discrepancies. The holes in Saudi Arabia's Internet filter undermine efforts to block access to jihadi websites, as a savvy Saudi citizen could simply connect to an available proxy without restrictive filters. These holes, therefore, allow potentially dangerous propaganda to slip into the Kingdom and, still worse, they allow material support, particularly funds, to flow out of the Kingdom.

### **Item 3: Translation and Content Analysis of Ronald Schulz's video**

On December 6, 2005, *Al-Jazeera* broadcast a hostage video from the terrorist group, Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI) ([Group Profile](#)). The video showed Ronald Schulz—an American citizen—seated on a chair, apparently with his hands bound behind his back. The video identifies Schulz by filming both his passport and Arab identification card. The group told *Al-Jazeera* representatives that all IAI detainees in American and Iraqi prisons must be released within 48 hours and that the residents of Anbar province receive monetary compensation or Schulz would be executed.

The following is a translation of the statement read by an off-camera narrator during the Schulz hostage video.

[begin translation]

In the name of God, the compassionate and the merciful, the Lord for those who know, and the prayer and peace on the prophet of the epic Mohammed, and on all of his family and friends.

This is a short emergency message sent to Bush in the occasion of his pretend victory strategy [National Strategy for Victory in Iraq] that he introduced to his listeners. He betrayed them with it instead of viewing reality.

President Bush: I wanted to converse with you and in my possession is proof of what I want to say to you. Indeed, we are accustomed to presenting action before words. Indeed, you are waiting for an absence that will never come. Don't ever count on victory. If victory was destined to come, indeed it will belong to the worshipers



of Allah, the mujahideen. Do not think you are leaving soon. It is dear to us that we do not find American blood flowing and money spent corruptly in our land. You have to take this direction, to harvest what your hands have sown. You have stolen peace and security from our land, so you will never feel it. You showed your tyranny and you have to leave in defeat, God willing. Do not count on the protection of your workers that you brought from the cheap market because they cannot save themselves.

So how will they protect you? And how will they receive a country and rule it by proxy? I am advising you not to sleep a lot so that you won't carry out fictitious dreams. I advise you to wake up and see the reality as it is. The path of jihad continues with the permission of God and the path of martyrdom continues, martyr after martyr.

[end translation]

It is unlikely that the IAI expects their demands and deadlines to be met. Instead, the terrorist group is using the exposure and notoriety to express their views, rebutting the Bush administration's *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* ([source](#)). First, the group challenges the idea that American and Iraqi forces are in control by holding the American security contractor hostage. Second, because the Iraqi government and security forces are highly vulnerable to insurgency attacks, the IAI narrator states the American plan to rely on Iraqi exile leaders and Iraqi cooperation with Coalition forces will fail.

On December 8, 2005, the IAI posted a statement on the Internet that they had executed Schulz. The terrorist group stated they would present photographs confirming the execution. Thus far, no such evidence has been posted on the Internet or via the *Al-Jazeera* network.

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