

Video message claims victory for Islam

Al-Qaida No. 2 welcomes U.S. troop reductions

By OMAR SINAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO, Egypt

Al-Qaida's No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahri, said in a videotape aired Friday that the United States' decision to withdraw some troops from Iraq represented the victory of Islam and called on Muslims to attack oil sites.

Al-Zawahri, wearing a white turban and gray robe and seated next to an automatic rifle, waved

"Regarding your withdrawal timetable ... you have to admit, Bush, that you have been defeated ..."

Ayman al-Zawahri
Al-Qaida terror leader addressing President Bush on a videotaped message aired by Al-Jazeera

his finger for emphasis as he spoke in the two-minute excerpt aired by Al-Jazeera.

"I congratulate (the Islamic nation) for the victory of Islam in Iraq," he said.

Al-Zawahri apparently was referring to comments last month by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who said President Bush had authorized new troop cuts below the 138,000 level that prevailed for most of last year.

Rumsfeld did not reveal the exact size of the cut, but the Pentagon said the reductions would be about 7,000 troops, about the size of two combat brigades. The Pentagon has not announced a timetable for the reductions, but indications are that the force could be cut significantly by the end of this year.

"You remember I told you more than a year ago that the American withdrawal from Iraq is only

a matter of time, and here they are now ... negotiating with the mujahedeen," al-Zawahri said.

"Bush was forced at the end of last year to announce that he will pull out his forces from Iraq, but he was giving excuses for his withdrawal ..."

Bush has not offered concrete details about bringing troops home but said Wednesday that possible adjustments would be discussed with Iraqi leaders if progress continued on security and political efforts.

A U.S. counterterrorism official, speaking on condition of anonymity in compliance with office policy, said that while the video appears to be authentic, it has not been determined with certainty that it is al-Zawahri.

However, officials often note that no message has ever been fraudulently attributed to al-Qaida's leadership.

Al-Zawahri said the American forces "with their planes, missiles, tanks and fleets are mourning and bleeding, seeking for a getaway from Iraq."

"Regarding your withdrawal timetable ... you have to admit, Bush, that you have been defeated in Iraq and are being defeated in Afghanistan and will be defeated in Palestine," he said.

In comments quoted on Al-Jazeera's Web site but not yet broadcast, al-Zawahri urged supporters to attack oil sites in Muslim countries.

"I call on mujahedeen to focus their attacks on Muslims' embez-

zled oil. Most of its revenues go to the enemies of Islam; meanwhile most of what is left is taken by the thieves who are ruling our countries," he said.

Al-Jazeera said the videotape was dated from December but gave no specific date. Network spokesman Ayman Gaballah said the tape, about 20 minutes long, was acquired through a special source, but he would not elaborate.

In the videotape, the terror leader, an Egyptian, claimed al-Qaida was growing and that Bush's claims that the group was nearly destroyed were "nonsense merely in his own head."

"We want to tell all the Muslims that the mujahedeen al-Qaida, thank god, is expanding and increasing in strength."



AP PHOTOS

Angry Shiites chant slogans during a march denouncing recent attacks against Shiites after Friday prayers in Baghdad, Iraq. Thousands protested after two days of violence that left more than a hundred dead.

Shiites rally after violence in Iraq kills at least 136

Military says six additional U.S. troops dead in spree

By PATRICK QUINN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

A spree of bloodshed that killed nearly 200 people in two days, including 11 U.S. troops, threatened to provoke a backlash from Shiite militias. Iraq's largest religious group rallied thousands Friday against what it claimed was American backing for some Sunni Arab politicians they say have supported insurgents.

Military officials announced the deaths of six more U.S. troops in the recent violence that has swept Iraq, bringing to 11 the number of Americans killed on the same day.

In Baghdad's Sadr City slum and in its northern Kazimiyah suburb, thousands of angry Shiites rallied to condemn twin suicide attacks Thursday that killed at least 136 people, including the U.S. troops.

The protesters also denounced what they claimed was American backing for Sunni Arabs politicians who have supported insurgent groups and are now protesting that December's elections were tainted by fraud.

Final results from the Dec. 15 elections could be released next week, and they are expected to show the religious Shiite United Iraqi Alliance with a strong lead. The Shiites will, however, need to form a coalition government with



A woman mourns over the coffin of a victim of Thursday's Shiite shrine bombing during a burial service Friday in the holy city of Najaf, Iraq.

support from Kurdish and Sunni Arab political groups.

The rallies and threats by the Iraq's largest Shiite religious party to react with force if the militant attacks continue have renewed fears that paramilitary militias, now thought to make up part of some elite police units, would take to the streets and carry out reprisals.

Sunni Arabs have complained that often brutal methods used by Interior Ministry forces have already pushed Iraq to the brink of sectarian war.

In Sadr City, more than 5,000 demonstrators chanted slogans in favor of the Interior Ministry and against U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and moderate Sunni Arab leaders. But they reserved most of their ire for hard-liners such as Saleh al-Mutlaq, the outspoken head of the Sunni Arab National Dialogue Front.

"We're going to crush Saleh al-Mutlaq with our slippers," they chanted, many armed with automatic weapons. "No, no to Zalmay. No, no to terrorism." It is an insult in Arab culture to touch someone with shoes, which are considered unclean.

Al-Mutlaq denounced what he called irresponsible statements and condemned terrorist attacks.

"No government post is worth a single drop of Iraqi blood," he said. "Our decision to join the political process means that we reject terrorism."

The demonstration was organized after Friday prayers by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, one of two religious parties that makes up the governing Alliance.

Robert Ford, the U.S. Embassy's political counselor, said the recent attacks were a sign that the political process was drawing Sunni Arab groups into politics and away from insurgency, which has angered radical militants.

Expect more from a used furniture store!
Save money with "like new" famous brands for a fraction of their original price.
• Thomasville • Bassett • LaZBoy • Ashley • Ethan Allen • and many more!

Home Place

Used Furniture Warehouse

There's No Place Like Home Place.

1729 US 31 South
(south of Stop 18, next to Enterprise)
882-0840

Mon. - Sat. 10-6

Franklin Heritage, Inc. Presents

Classic Cinema on A Classic Screen

At The Historic

ARTCRAFT Theatre

1 Block north of Johnson County Courthouse
Downtown Franklin

Admission
\$5.00 Adults
\$4.00 Seniors
\$3.00 Children under 12

Classic Film
January 13th & 14th
at 7:30 pm

Lawrence of Arabia

Starring
Peter O'Toole

Sponsored By:
Franklin Insurance

The fun starts at 7:30

Warm up with the most energy efficient furnace around.

\$2,800 Installed
complete Heating & A.C. system
cannot be combined w/any other offer. Must present coupon. Expires 1/31/06

\$29.00
Furnace Clean & Check
cannot be combined w/any other offer. Must present coupon. Expires 1/31/06

FREE Service Call w/repair
cannot be combined w/any other offer. Must present coupon. Expires 1/31/06

Reliable COMFORT INC.
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
The Name Says It All!

Whiteland • Franklin • Greenwood
317-535-7717
Toll Free: 1-866-524-9994
www.reliablecomfort.com

Carrier
Turn to the Experts

New models are designed to save energy dollars by running more efficiently.
Let our Comfort Consultant show you how.
Call today to get savings all year long!

When you're shopping for higher priced purchases that require maintenance and operating costs, remember, spending less can cost you more. Call the company that guarantees **reliable comfort!**

40 MILLION drivers TRUST STATE FARM.

Personal service and competitive rates are why more people trust State Farm® for car insurance than the next three companies combined. Contact me today.

Clint Wilson, Agent
337 Western Blvd., Suite B
Greenwood, IN 46142
Behind Burger King at the corner of SR 37 and Fairview
(317) 888-AUTO

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR, STATE FARM IS THERE.
Providing Insurance and Financial Services

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company (not in NJ) • Bloomington, IL • statefarm.com®
PC04185 11/04

www.thejournalnet.com

"I was scared I wouldn't live to see my kids grow up."

JENNIFER GALLOWAY, Elizabethtown

Jennifer had always been an optimistic person. But her lifelong battle with weight had created more health problems than she could ignore. "Food had always been my best friend," she says, "and my best friend was killing me." Bariatric surgery at Johnson Memorial was a life-saving intervention for Jennifer. "They told me it wasn't a quick fix. They said I'd have to change my lifestyle. But they treated me like a human being. They really took care of me, body and soul."

Read Jennifer's story at www.johnsonmemorial.org/jennifer. Or call our Bariatric Surgery Coordinator, Eileen Williams, toll-free at 866-837-0531 to register for one of our free seminars. A bariatric success story herself, Eileen will give you a first-hand account of what you can expect from our program.

TWO SPECIAL SEMINARS
January 10 from 6pm-8pm and
January 26 from 10am-noon
Attend a seminar led by Eileen and featuring our own Bariatric Specialist, Dr. Dana Lindsay.
Call 866-837-0531 to register.

The Bariatric Care Center
Johnson Memorial Hospital
1125 West Jefferson St. | Franklin, Indiana 46131