

From Shaykh ((Mahmud))/(TN: Report on) Senior shaykhs and other issues pertaining to the Arabian Peninsula

(TN: In red lettering) This file contains messages from one of the trusted brothers who is a middleman for me in the Arabian Peninsula and is a religious student with ties to the senior shaykhs and clerics.

My Dear Shaykh ((Abu 'Abd-al-Rahman)),

Peace be upon you, and God's grace and his blessings. I met with a group of well-known senior shaykhs who signed on to the recent Statement of Victory of the Sunnis in Iraq over the Safawis (TN: derogatory reference to the Shi'a-majority government). I asked them their impressions of your latest statement and of the statement by the brothers in the Islamic State of Iraq (TN: ISI). I also showed your message to them to all but one person, and I have begun building bridges with them. I met other people, as well, and showed them the statement.

The senior shaykhs with whom I met included Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman al-((Barrak)) (who was very moved by your message to him); Shaykh ((Abu Zafr)); Shaykh Sa'id Al ((Zu'ayr)); Shaykh Muhammad al-((Habdan)); Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-((Jalil)); Shaykh Yusuf al-((Ahmad)); and Shaykh Muhammad al-((Farraj)) (I went to his home twice and prayed at his mosque, but it was unable to meet with him).

They shared with me important information and their reflections on current events. The most important thing of value pertained to Shaykh Abu Zafr; we agreed to meet together over several sessions to determine the structure of several reports about certain matters that must be brought to your attention after I return from the pilgrimage, God willing.

There are many details that I will share with you regarding the statement about supporting the Sunnis in Iraq and the story behind it, as well as what precisely took place during the meeting, and who wrote it. I will also tell you about who wanted to have a statement issued about the attacks against the ISI saying it's not a legitimate organization, etc.

Page 2

I have indeed begun writing the report and I've finished the main point in it and the beginning of it. All that remains is writing the bulk of the details and drawing the connection

between what was said by the various shaykhs. I will begin wrapping up the report after my return from the pilgrimage, because I'm traveling tomorrow, God willing.

There is an urgent piece of information that Shaykh Abu Zafr asked me to relay to you: He wants you to ask your friend, whom you will send to Abu Zafr, to stop demanding the report about the senior shaykhs in the Arabian Peninsula. This is because the shaykh says that the courier that you use is good, and we consider him a good man, but he cannot be trusted with such secret information because he is weak when he is in custody. The shaykh asked around about him, and was told that when that brother was in jail, he gave up all the brothers' secrets in no time. He cannot keep secrets, and with the slightest bit of pain, he gives up everything he has. There may be someone in Medinah who could be called upon for a favor and the blessings of whose worthy prayers would be sought, but the person who told this story would not allow them to be spoken of. So the shaykh doesn't mind if the brother comes, but he is not to be given any secret information of any importance. Many casualties resulted from this brother having been in jail in the past, and from his many confessions and his having revealed the secret of our activity. So ask him quit asking the shaykh for the report for the time being, because the shaykh is busy and doesn't have the time right now to write it, so he shouldn't keep insisting on it.

In general, Shaykh Abu Zafr and I agreed that we will prepare the complete report about the senior shaykhs and then they shaykh will put the final touches on the main points. I will then put it in its final wording. The shaykh mentioned to me his position regarding your statement and the statement from the brothers in the ISI. In general, the shaykh did not support their recommendation because they will be turned against you, particularly the statement from the brothers in the ISI, which included the general vouching that was at odds with your statement, in which you vouched for only two people who had no issues.

Naturally, the shaykh knows my true name and my home address. I agreed with him on a code word for communicating in the future. None of those senior shaykhs knows my alias, the one by which you know me. I am very careful to make sure neither side knows the other name, be it my true name or my alias. It's enough that each side knows one of the two, for reasons of security. There is currently no benefit in their knowing both names. I also met with someone close to Shaykh 'Abdallah al-

((Ghanayman)), who told me some new information about the shaykh.

At any rate, I will begin the report about the response from the senior shaykh to your message and the news they're hearing. These meetings lasted several hours, so I will try to summarize what was said as best I can.

(TN: new message)

My Dear Shaykh Abu 'Abd-al-Rahman,

Peace be upon you, and God's grace and his blessings. May God accept your best works along with ours.

(TN: in blue text) What is the brothers' assessment of Harith al-((Dari)) and the Association of Muslim Scholars?

Page 3

Thank you for your explanation about ((Fadl-al-Rahman)), the Politician and Ultimate Holy Warrior. I met a good brother from Sarhad who is a close friend of Fadl-al-Rahman, and I was going to meet The Politician during the pilgrimage, but I ran out of time and wasn't able to meet him. I was deceived by what I'd heard, and your explanation helped. Praise be to God that I didn't meet him. During the pilgrimage, I met two Shaykhs: Muhammad al-Hasan Ould al-((Dadu)) and Safr al-((Huwali)). These were quick meetings, not much more than greetings asking how things were, because circumstances weren't conducive to more. The reason for meeting The Ultimate Holy Warrior was to ensure coordination so that some brothers I know could join the father's group, because I'd heard he had some ties to them. He promised he would do that, but after winter. I wanted to go through you to make them religious students, or just new brothers through him. If you know any trusted brothers who could help them get there, that would be great. There is a group of brothers that want to join with the brothers in Khorasan. The best of them is a religious student in a European country who has wanted to join the brothers ever since things got more difficult for him in his country. The last one, I know only from the network, because he is a deputy of the Amir (TN: senior leader) of the Worldwide Islamic Media Front. Do you have a way to help in this matter for brothers with no experience?

Is there a trusted brother from among the Mujahidin who can record tapes of the brothers in the Arabian Peninsula in his own voice? They need to provide commentary to videos, but everyone is afraid to reveal his voice. So is there anyone suitable for this on your end whose voice is suitable for commentary during films and whose accent is that of the peninsula region?

I want to ask you a question about the veracity of what a very close friend of Shaykh Yusuf al-((Ayiri)) told me. He said that Shaykh Yusuf was expelled from al-Qa'ida, or to be more precise, that he was removed from al-Qa'ida leadership in the Arabian Peninsula after rejecting the bombings. I was told he sent a secret letter of counsel to ((Abu 'Abdallah)) about the matter. The decision to remove him was made by ((Sayf al-'Adl)), and news was handed down via the Doctor. Shaykh Yusuf's friend told me that this news reached him from Shaykh Yusuf via a middleman working between the two men. Do you have any information about this? He vehemently denied it.

How true is what I hear from people aligned with religious students, who may be biased, that Shaykh Ayman al-((Zawahiri)) is the most influential man in the organization, and that Abu 'Abdallah is like a puppet on his hand, and that Abu 'Abdallah has given authority to Zawahiri to run everything, though the former disagrees with some of Shaykh Ayman's behavior? (This is what some of the enemies or hated families in the peninsula and elsewhere are saying). This really has me agitated, and I don't accept it. But I wanted to verify with you the role of Shaykh Ayman. Has al-Qa'ida been tinged with his ideology and opinions, and is Abu 'Abdallah not the most influential man in the organization?

Thank you so much for the explanation about the senior shaykhs. If you don't mind, I would like you to include among them Shaykh 'Abd-al-Qadir (('Abd-al-'Aziz)) and Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-((Maqdisi)). I have been eager to ask you about this, because I recognize in you a balanced judgment of character, and I trust your opinion and think of you thus, though God is the ultimate judge, and my recommendation of you does not come before His.

While I was on the pilgrimage, God deemed that I should meet two people: Muhamamd al-Hasan Ould al-Dadu and Safr al-Huwali, but they were quick meetings that consisted of little more than greetings and small talk about goings on. I had wanted to meet a group of senior shaykhs during the pilgrimage, but I didn't get the chance.

Page 4

What is the truth in what is being said about Harith al-Dari having been targeted more than once by my brothers in the Mujahidin Shura Council? Is this only between Harith al-Dari and myself?

(TN: in red text) Very important explanation about the statement in support of the Sunnis in Iraq against the Safawis, for which I praised you:

The statement was adopted by the senior shaykhs of al-Qasim, led by Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ghanyman. It was written in approximately ten pages that have been abridged to roughly four. The part about denouncing differences and arguments and the importance of closing ranks was written by Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Jalil, as he himself told me (this portion was supposed to appear in a separate statement, but because of the disagreement about the wording, they decided to add it to this statement). The statement was signed during the meeting that takes place every four months that included the most well-known of the peninsula's senior shaykhs. 70 senior shaykhs attended the meeting, where they were presented with the statement. Only 38 agreed to the statement; the rest refused to sign it for various reasons, including an objection to the wording or fears that it would lead to greater pressure on them, along with other reasons, despite the shared apprehensions regarding the State's fears about Iran's intentions. The statement had included four lines containing an attack against the ISI, saying it was an illegitimate state, that sort of thing. A group of the senior shaykhs, chief among them al-Barrak, were adamant that the lines be removed, and the rest of the shaykhs were forced to oblige their wishes because of the importance of the signatures from the dissenting group, especially that of al-Barrak.

In truth, there was much talk from the shaykhs in these meetings because they lasted for so many hours. I will give you a heavily abridged presentation of the finer points:

The shaykhs with whom I met included:

1. Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Barrak
2. Shaykh Sa'id Al Zu'ayr
3. Shaykh Bashr al-((Bashr))
4. Shaykh Muhammad al-Habdan
5. Shaykh Yusuf al-Ahmad
6. Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Jalil

7. Shaykh Muhammad al-Farraj (I wasn't able to meet with him; I prayed in his mosque and went to his home several times, but he wasn't there)

They all welcomed further contact and each read the message, with the exception of one to whom I did not show the message or bring up its subject because the situation wasn't appropriate for it. This is a positive indication, in addition to what al-Jalil and al-Habdan both said about how happy they were with your statement and the statement from the brothers in the ISI.

1. Al-Barrak: The shaykh was quite moved by the message and said, "May God keep you well, Brother 'Atiyah. Really, you have lifted me above my home, and I am but a lowly worshipper." He prayed for victory and ability for the ISI, which is being hounded by worshippers of the cross and their lackeys, and he said he will work on the matter of Shaykh (('Umar)) as much as he can.

Page 5

2. Bashr al-Bashr: He was pleased with your message and appeared comfortable when he was dealing with me. He said, "I would recommend that Shaykh 'Atiyah and the ISI not post a statement praising those men. They will turn on you. They are generally against you, as is a majority of the Senior Shaykhs in the Arabian Peninsula. Shaykh (('Atiyatallah))'s statement is better because it praises al-Barrak and al-Ghanayman, unlike the other, more general one that praises those undeserving of praise." I have a lot of important, secret information that the Shaykh will record, and which I will send to you, God willing. He will give me the main points, and I will take care of the wording. He mentioned that there is a wicked campaign to have a statement issued against the ISI laying bare its practices, and saying that it is expanding its takfir and killings and that you issued a fatwa to the nation unilaterally announcing them to the State, etc. However, this campaign met failure, praise be to God, as both he and Shaykh Sa'id bin Zu'ayr informed me. Several senior shaykhs in Riyadh are taking over developing the campaign, along with representatives of the factions in Riyadh. I will send you a report explaining this matter further, with exactly what was said, etc.

Tell me everything you want me to relay to al-Bashr, because I'm going to go see him soon, God willing.

The two most watched people in Riyadh are al-Bashr and Abu Malik 'Abdallah al-((Rays)). The latter is the biggest supporter of the Jaysh al-Islami (TN: Islamic Army), and his opinion of al-Qa'ida is well-known: Shaykh al-Bashr was assigned full time to secret work roughly a year ago.

Shaykh al-Bashr told me that three senior shaykhs - 'Abdallah al-((Sa'd)), Yusuf al-Ahmad, and Muhammad al-Habdan - supported the Mujahidin, but he doesn't think they are able to be of much benefit to the Mujahidin at present in consultations, etc., because some of them are more concerned with accountability, denouncing vice in the marketplace and the media, and other such things.

He mentioned that he met the Amir of the Jaysh al-Islami in Iraq on two occasions, and that he also met with a delegation from the Islamic Courts, whom he advised to crush the transitional government in Baidoa before Ethiopian support could arrive.

Shaykh Bashr is with you, heart and soul, and he told me that he would inform me of any updates he had, which I will send to you.

The name of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman al-((Mahmud)) was recommended to me by al-Jalil, and Shaykh Bashr agreed to go see him. He told me not to go to Abu Malik al-Rays because of his well-known position, which I had not known of.

Meeting with one of al-Ghanayman's students: I met with a student of Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ghanayman, and he told me that the shaykh was in good health and was one of those who had tried to hasten the dissenting statement. The shaykh relies on the students close to him for help, as he is an elderly man and needs people to move him. The biggest problem facing al-Ghanayman is that his students aren't devoted to their shaykh. Otherwise, if this weren't the case, I would have seen something else, and the shaykh's signature would have been put on it. The shaykh had promised himself that his books wouldn't be printed until after his death, but his students recommended to him that the books be printed, and all the money be sent to the Mujahidin. The shaykh was really happy with this suggestion, and said that if the money was going to be sent to the Mujahidin, then he would recent his earlier position. It is said that he had refused to welcome Shaykh Salih al-((Fawzan)) into his home, but I think that's unlikely. But perhaps he didn't welcome him in the usual way, or not in a way suitable to man of al-Fawzan's notoriety, because Shaykh 'Abdallah thinks

that al-Fawzan has gotten more involved with the Sultans than is necessary. On a sidenote, I asked one of Shaykh

Page 6

Salih al-Fawzan's students about the shaykh's relationship with the State, and he told me that the shaykh was terribly afraid of the Salul family. I told him that was strange, and that the shaykh was a man of conviction, particularly when it comes to the Mujahidin and the Islamic groups, and to sticking to the Salafist path. What he was saying about matters of jihad was completely unacceptable, and he was supposed to be a man who stood firm in confronting the Sultans. The student said I was right, but the reality was that the shaykh was totally unable to confront the State.

Perhaps I will have a private meeting with Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ghanayman, God willing, about matters, and maybe I'll also meet with students of Shaykh 'Ali al-((Khudayr)). There is a famous quote from Shaykh Nasir al-('Aql), who is well-known for his knowledge of doctrine. He said he didn't know anyone under the sun who knew more about Salafist doctrine than did Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ghanayman.

3. Sa'id Al Zu'ayr: He prayed for Shaykh 'Umar, and he said to me, "Tell Shaykh 'Atiyah that the reason the brothers have stopped is the lack of a practical means on the horizon to achieve victory for the shaykh, and statements do no good." The shaykh was advising consulting the senior shaykhs of the Arabian Peninsula because most of their hearts were not with the Mujahidin, and because those who are sitting should be sending their questions to the Mujahidin.

It was strange when he told me a bit of information that differs from what I know. He told me that there is a need for Mujahidin in Khorasan and Iraq, and that no one says there isn't a need except for the failures. The shaykh told me there are representatives from Khorasan and Iraq that he meets with regularly.

He also said that there are many religious students on the front lines in Iraq; Shaykh Bashr had mentioned this same point to me, and had advised that I doggedly peruse the volumes of fatwas and true believers.

He said there are three pieces of advice that he thinks are very important for the brothers in the ISI: The first one is to be

very wary of newly-joined members. No matter their status or capabilities, they must not be placed in leadership positions in the shura council, as there are many dangers lurking. Victory lies ahead, so one must remain on the lookout for penetrations and be extremely wary of newcomers. Benefit from them, but just don't put them on the shura council, for example.

The second piece of advice is to remain eager to draw in the largest number possible of soldiers from other factions to the Promised State. Honor their arrival and know that the base of jihadist groups wants what God has, and wants martyrdom. These groups have no particular ambitions or special opinions. So honor their arrival and the arrival of any of their commanders that come, so that we might not lose victory. Whoever of the senior shaykhs of Riyadh tries plainly to ruin this will see their efforts met with failure, praise be to God.

The third piece of advice is to not consult the senior shaykhs of the Arabian Peninsula. There is no good in consulting them. They rest on your victory, and they let you down. It is a sinister person who lowers the necks of the Mujahidin for someone sitting around to ride upon them. Put the affairs of the Jaysh al-Islami in order now with Safr al-Huwali and Nasir al-'Umar, who got in trouble when their necks were lowered.

4. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Jalil: He really responded when we started communicating, and he asked me a bunch of questions to be sure of me. He prayed for Shaykh 'Umar and for Muslim prisoners, and he said that they had reached the stage in which they hope there will be a brother with whom they can meet to confirm some things, and so they can convey some things. I was supposed to meet him in Muna, as well, but things didn't work out then, either.

Page 7

5. Muhammad al-Habdan: He responded when we started communicating and told me that he has an open channel with al-Barrak at a moment's notice to stay in touch with him, and he is prepared to serve you as he is able.

6. Yusuf al-Ahmad: He is the one person I didn't show your message to because circumstances didn't allow, and it wasn't a suitable time. But I did ask him about the dissenting statement, and he told me some of the information I mentioned above, which I gathered from the senior shaykhs to better explain the issue of writing the statement.

He said that there are representatives from some of the factions that attended the meeting, or more precisely some senior shaykhs who support well-known factions and have close contact with their representatives. They told them some stories against the ISI, saying they did this and that, and that Abu Hamzah al-((Muhajir)) is the problem and ((Zarqawi)) is heaven compared to him. They said Abu Hamzah is much more bloodthirsty and more enthusiastic about takfir, is tyrannical in his dealings with others, and has no patience for anyone who disagrees with him, etc. The stories say that they kill shaykhs and proselytizers who disagree with them, be they from different factions, brothers, or what have you. Unfortunately, the ISI messenger did not come to respond. On a separate note, Shaykh, the brothers have a representative and he went to several of the senior shaykhs like al-Barrak and al-Bashr. But to the pro-ISI shaykhs, any word they say can be counted against them. So the Jaysh al-Islami or the 1920's Revolutionary Brigades, etc., are not like the ISI. The accusation of supporting al-Qa'ida is there.

In order to better illustrate the position of some senior shaykhs who support jihad but oppose al-Qa'ida, I give you an article written by one such shaykh who follows this approach. May God help you as you read this; it will require effort and patience. The words will raise your blood pressure and arouse your anger; in fact, a draft of the article before the final copy even included an unconfirmed accusation that takfir book used by the Taliban and Bin Laden was written by Zarqawi, and to which ((Abu Qatadah)) responded. It was supposed to be published in Mufakkirat al-Islam, and they agreed to do so, but then they decided against publishing it before the Eid holiday, saying that the ISI would kill all the publication's correspondents if it published it (this is the essay that was called the Essay on the Family of Perversion).

Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz (('Abd-al-Latif)) was recommended by one of the brothers as a good person to visit.

For your benefit, here are the links to the web pages of senior shaykhs mentioned in this secret report:

Al-Barrak:

<http://www.islamway.com/?iw_s=Scholar&iw_a=lessons&scholar_id=166>

Al-Bashr

<http://www.islamway.com/?iw_s=Scholar&iw_a=lessons&scholar_id=194>

Muhammad al-Habdan

<http://www.islamway.com/?iw_s=Scholar&iw_a=lessons&scholar_id=177>

Page 8

Sa'id al-Zu'ayr

<http://www.islamway.com/?iw_s=Scholar&iw_a=lessons&scholar_id=106>

Yusuf al-Ahmad

<http://www.islamway.com/?iw_s=Scholar&iw_a=lessons&scholar_id=242>

Al-Farraaj

<http://www.islamway.com/?iw_s=Scholar&iw_a=lessons&scholar_id=244>

Your student and admirer in God.