



(TS//SI//REL) Intercepted: Letter for Zarqawi from al-Qa'ida Senior Leaders

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(TS//SI//REL) Targeting of courier pays off -- al-Qa'ida facilitator arrested and message for top terrorist in Iraq is intercepted.

(TS//SI//REL) For the first time ever, SIGINT has identified a message originating from al-Qa'ida Senior Leadership (e.g. Usama Bin Laden or his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri) and tracked it to its destination. Specifically, SIGINT helped bring about the intercept of a message with "strategic guidance" from Zawahiri to al-Qa'ida's chief operative in Iraq, Abu Mussab al Zarqawi. Here's how the story unfolded:

[REDACTED] (U) Usama bin Laden and second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri (Reuters) [REDACTED] (U) al-Qa'ida's chief operative in Iraq, Zarqawi (Reuters)

(TS//SI//REL) Counterterrorism analysts in the Counterterrorism PPC (S2I), knowing that Zarqawi is very COMSEC aware, decided to target Zarqawi's access agents and couriers in hopes of achieving a breakthrough. **They zeroed in on those key couriers who link al-Qa'ida seniors in Pakistan with Zarqawi's subordinates in Iraq.** Although they did not have a complete picture of all courier waypoints, they had amassed enough information on the loose courier network operating between Iraq, Syria, Iran and Pakistan to allow for a focused effort.

(TS//SI//REL) In August 2005, analysts ascertained from email intercepts that one [REDACTED] had two very important messages originating from al-Qa'ida number two, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and destined for al-Zarqawi in Iraq. [REDACTED] has served as a virtual "human bridge" between representatives for AQSL in Pakistan and Zarqawi's organization in Iraq. As [REDACTED] queried his contacts on the best way to send these messages, he stressed his need to dispatch the messages quickly, as they were "important and dangerous." An associate and fellow facilitator, [REDACTED] suggested [REDACTED] send the messages to him through a newly established email address. This email address was immediately tasked in order to monitor future exchanges and, if given the opportunity, intercept the message in transit.

(TS//SI//REL) As this situation developed, analysts were in regular contact with the U.S. forces in Iraq. In conjunction with GEO analysts and field units, CT analysts were able to narrow down the location in Baghdad where [REDACTED] and his traveling partner, [REDACTED] were accessing their accounts. **Field units identified [REDACTED] outside of an Internet café and apprehended him as he was about to access the account and retrieve the message.**

(TS//SI//REL) Collection indicated that **we successfully obtained Zawahiri's message intended for Zarqawi in its entirety.** The SIGINT contributions to this operation led to the identification and capture of a Zarqawi courier, but more importantly the acquisition of a **15-page document outlining al-Qa'ida's strategic vision for Iraq.** [REDACTED]'s haste to deliver the letter to Zarqawi produced a unique opportunity, which allowed an intimate view into the senior levels of Al-Qa'ida leadership with direct implications for the future of the Global War on Terrorism.

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