



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on December 29, 2009

## American-born Cleric Associated With Abdulmutallab

As has been widely reported, al-Qaeda's Yemeni branch is proudly claiming responsibility for the attempted bombing of Northwest Flight 253 on Christmas Day in Detroit. The alleged attempted perpetrator and therefore al-Qaeda co-conspirator, Umar Abdulmutallab, is a well-born Nigerian educated in London with an expressed affinity for another advocate of terrorism against America, the radical American-born imam, Anwar al-Awlaki.



A self-obsessed man like Awlaki must be pleased to read his name in the press everyday since November 5. On that fateful day, another of his extremist acolytes, Army Major Nidal Hasan, murdered 12 of his fellow soldiers and one civilian while screaming the Islamic takbeer, "Allahu akbar" or "God is Great." The ties between Hasan and Awlaki have been well documented in *The New American*, but details of Abdulmutallab's association with the controversial cleric are just beginning to surface.

According to published reports, Abdulmutallab was an avid follower of Awlaki's blog, infamous for having described Ft. Hood shooter Hasan as a "hero" and proclaiming that only those willing to follow in Hasan's footsteps should feel justified in serving in the American armed forces. FBI investigations into Abdulmutallab's web activity has revealed frequent visits by the accused attempted terrorist to both the website and a companion blog maintained and authored by Anwar al-Awlaki.

Awlaki fled to Yemen, the country of his parents' birth, after suspicions of his possible allegiance to al-Qaeda arose after details of his association with two of the 9/11 hijackers surfaced during an FBI investigation into the attacks. Feeling the heat from the probe into his affiliations, Awlaki set up domicile in Yemen and almost immediately started a blog and began publishing anti-American, Islamic radicalism, fomenting violent jihad against Western interests worldwide.

The erstwhile spiritual leader's electronic call to arms may have resulted in his adopted homeland's incurring of the airborne wrath of the United States military and cost him his own life in the bargain. As reported earlier, America in cooperation with the Yemeni Air Force launched a pre-dawn airstrike against a location in the northern outskirts of the Yemeni capital targeting al-Qaeda leaders operating in the nation. As of Tuesday, it is unknown (or unverified) whether Awlaki was among the 30 people killed in the attack.

While Awlaki's ability to survive a bombing is unclear, his ability to inspire hate and violence is



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unquestionable. The examination into Abdulmutallab's past and possible provocations has uncovered the young Nigerian's electronic footprints all over Awlaki's web presence, principally the aforementioned blog and a website wherein Awlaki uploads videos and audio recordings that have become popular among young, disaffected Muslims, many of whom are inexplicably drawn to the violent fringes of their religion. In these hinterlands of hate, the peripatetic paths of many recent converts converged, and Anwar al-Awlaki lived virtually in the intersection, passing out his tracts of terror.

While there are no known links between Awlaki and the central command of al-Qaeda, his association with al-Qaeda in Yemen is clear. The psychological reasons undergirding Hasan and Abdulmutallab's interest in and devotion to Awlaki's cyber screeds may be inscrutable, but al-Qaeda's interest is easier to discern. "[Awlaki] is seen as effective in communicating with and radicalizing Western jihadis and wannabe jihadists and his is a very effective and charismatic communicator," said Georgetown University professor George Hoffman, an expert on terrorism. Basically, al-Qaeda welcomes and endorses Awlaki's freelance evangelism, especially if the fruits of his labors are young, alienated, and agitated Muslim men — the perfect recipe for terrorist trainees dedicated to perpetuating the murderous mission that is the core of the organization's purpose.

Although diligent follow-up from American officials may have prevented not only the Ft. Hood massacre, but the attempted bombing of the Northwest Christmas Day flight, the outcry since these bureaucratic blunders has resulted in increased scrutiny of the intelligence establishment that in turn may produce more effective cooperation among the various branches of the departments charged with protecting American interests at home and abroad from attacks like the one attempted by Abdulmutallab. As of Tuesday, the FBI and Interpol were collaborating to track Abdulmutallab's whereabouts and activities in the days and months preceding plot thwarted on Christmas Day.

Sources tell Fox News that Abdulmutallab traveled to Yemen sometime near the end of last year, but he was already "radicalized" by that time, the source claims. Investigators in the United Kingdom suspect that while studying at the University College London Abdulmutallab came under the influence of radical Islamists trolling for impressionable young Muslims likely to lap up the terrorist Kool-Aid. British government officials indicate that Abdulmutallab probably had accomplices in England that facilitated his contact with those capable of carrying out the Christmas Day plot. These alleged co-conspirators likely arranged for Abdulmutallab to obtain further instruction in a country that has developed into a haven for international terrorists ever since America initiated armed conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

While in Yemen, says the well-placed informant, Abdulmutallab met influential and instructive members of al-Qaeda, and from this criminal coterie, he likely received follow up training for his upcoming task and was "vetted for the mission," most likely by senior members of the local al-Qaeda leadership.

Also subject to intense examination are "flats or apartments of interest" where Abdulmutallab lived or visited while in London, Amsterdam, Nigeria, and Togo. Among the items seized by law enforcement were SIM cards, the small electronic chips that a cellphone uses to store all the in-coming and out-going phone numbers. Officials hope to discover proof of Abdulmutallab's communication with al-Awlaki or other known members of al-Qaeda in Europe, Africa, or the Middle East. Such points of contact would corroborate the prevalent theories being promoted by officials eager to assuage the fears of Americans by illuminating the trail of terror walked by Abdulmutallab, and by association, Hasan and others.

So far, beyond the evidence released to the public of Abdulmutallab's frequent visits to Awlaki's website, there is no proof of any more direct communication between the two men, neither via



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telephone nor email.



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