



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 7, 2013

## Yemen Says It Has Foiled al-Qaeda Plot

Rajeh Badi, press advisor to Yemeni Prime Minister Mohammed Salem Basindwa, announced on August 7 that government security forces thwarted a plot by al-Qaeda to seize oil and gas export facilities and a provincial capital in eastern Yemen.

Reuters news cited Badi's statement that the plot called for dozens of al-Qaeda militants dressed in Yemeni army uniforms to storm the energy facilities on the 27th night of the Muslim month of Ramadan, which was this past Sunday.



"The plot aimed to seize the al-Dabbah oil export terminal in Hadramout (province) and the Belhaf gas export facility, as well as the city of Mukalla," Badi told Reuters. [Al Mukalla](#) is a main seaport and the capital of the Yemeni governorate of [Hadramout](#).

Badi said the government prevented execution of the plot by deploying additional troops around the targeted facilities and barring anyone from entering them.

Yemen is a primary base (along with Saudi Arabia) for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which is considered by many to be the most active branch (or "franchise") of the terrorist network originating with Osama bin Laden.

A [New York Times](#) report noted:

Disclosure of the foiled plot provided the first indication as to why Western nations had been increasingly concerned for the safety of their citizens. Intercepts of secret correspondence between [Ayman al-Zawahri](#), the leader of Al Qaeda, and [Nasir ul-Wuhayshi](#), the leader of the Qaeda affiliate [AQAP] in Yemen, inspired deep concern inside the American government about a possible terrorist plot by the group.

As noted in our article posted on August 6, the U.S. State Department announced on August 4 that U.S. embassies and consulates in 19 Muslim nations would remain closed at least until the end of the week. We wrote in that article:

A CNN report of August 3, citing several U.S. officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity, identified the source of information related to the threat as "chatter" among al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula [AQAP] that had been detected for weeks but had increased in the days preceding the heightened security alerts. Yemeni officials also provided a warning to the United States that contributed to the decision to close embassies in the region. While no exact target was ever mentioned, the U.S. embassy in Sanaa, Yemen, was regarded as particularly vulnerable.

Meanwhile, noted the [BBC](#) and other news sources, there have been reports that the United States is preparing special operations forces for use against al-Qaeda in Yemen.

BBC also reported that "suspected U.S. drone strikes" have killed seven alleged al-Qaeda militants in Yemen on August 7. The strikes, the fifth in less than two weeks, also destroyed two vehicles in Nasab,



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in the Yemeni governorate of Shabwa.

An AP report carried by [Fox News](#) also noted that the United States has “dramatically stepped up its use of drone strikes in Yemen in its covert fight against Al Qaeda’s branch there.” The report continued:

Washington also has been backing a Yemeni military campaign to uproot Al Qaeda militants and their radical allies who had taken over a string of southern cities and towns. The militants have largely been driven into the mountains and countryside, and Yemeni intelligence officials say the current threat may be retaliation for that offensive.

Another term for such retaliation is “blowback,” a term that first appeared in print in the *Clandestine Service History — Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran — November 1952-August 1953*, published in March 1954, which was the CIA’s internal history of U.S. involvement in the 1953 coup in Iran that deposed the government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and replaced it with the Shah.

Former Rep. Ron Paul and his son Sen. Rand Paul have repeatedly warned about the dangers of blowback resulting from U.S. intervention overseas, particularly in the Muslim world. For example, in his book *The Tea Party Goes to Washington*, Sen. Paul wrote: “Consider this: Has Islam changed much since the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s when there was virtually no Islamic threat to the United States? Has America’s involvement and policies toward the Middle East changed significantly since that time?”

The answer to that rhetorical question is obvious.

Rep. Paul also weighed in on this phenomenon, including during the 2012 Republican presidential debate in South Carolina. During that debate, when he criticized the interventionist foreign policy of the United States, Dr. Paul stated about 9/11 that U.S. foreign policy was a “major contributing factor. Have you ever read the reasons they attacked us? They attacked us because we’ve been over there; we’ve been bombing Iraq for 10 years. We’ve been in the Middle East — I think Reagan was right. We don’t understand the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics.”

Paul continued, when asked if our actions had fueled the 9/11 attacks: “I’m suggesting that we listen to the people who attacked us and the reason they did it, and they are delighted that we’re over there because Osama bin Laden has said, ‘I am glad you’re over on our sand because we can target you so much easier.’ ”

After New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani said, “That’s really an extraordinary statement,” Paul defended his position by continuing: “I believe very sincerely that the CIA is correct when they teach and talk about blowback. When we went into Iran in 1953 and installed the shah, yes, there was blowback. A reaction to that was the taking of our hostages and that persists. And if we ignore that, we ignore that at our own risk. If we think that we can do what we want around the world and not incite hatred, then we have a problem. They don’t come here to attack us because we’re rich and we’re free. They come and they attack us because we’re over there. I mean, what would we think if we were — if other foreign countries were doing that to us?”

Once again, the United States has reacted to a legitimate problem — the existence of a terrorist operation in Yemen — with a solution that is all but certain to fuel resentment and help al-Qaeda recruit more militants. It is a difficult Catch 22 and, given our level of involvement in the region, not one likely to be solved in the near future.

Related article: [U.S. Embassies Close Due to Al-Qaeda Threat](#)



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