



U.S. Immigration
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**BABAR AHMAD INDICTED ON TERRORISM CHARGES IN CONNECTION WITH
SUPPORT TO CHECHEN MUJAHIDEEN, THE TALIBAN, OTHER GROUPS
-- Charges Follow Three-Year Investigation by ICE --**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Michael J. Garcia, the Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Kevin J. O'Connor, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that a federal grand jury sitting in BRIDGEPORT, Connecticut late today returned a four-count indictment charging BABAR AHMAD, age 30 (D.O.B. 5/4/74) of Fountain Road, London, England, with the following offenses:

- * Conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, namely the Taliban, the Chechen Mujahideen, and related groups, an offense that carries a maximum possible penalty of life imprisonment;
- * Providing material support to terrorists, an offense that carries a maximum possible penalty of life imprisonment;
- * Conspiring to kill persons in a foreign country, an offense that carries a maximum possible penalty of life imprisonment; and
- * Money Laundering, an offense that carries a maximum possible penalty of twenty years imprisonment.

"Today's Indictment is a significant development in our efforts to target those alleged to equip and bankroll terrorists via the internet. The charges are the result of roughly three years of investigative work by ICE agents in New Haven and at the ICE Cyber Crimes Center, in conjunction with our law enforcement partners at home and overseas," said Michael J. Garcia, the Department of Homeland Security Assistance Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

AHMAD was arrested on August 5, 2004, by British law enforcement authorities in London on an arrest warrant and criminal Complaint issued by United States Magistrate Judge William I. Garfinkel in the District of Connecticut on July 28, 2004. At that time, U.S. Government officials requested that British law enforcement authorities execute the arrest warrant for AHMAD in England. An official extradition request from the U.S. Government has been transmitted to British authorities, and is expected to be served upon Ahmad today.

The Indictment against AHMAD alleges, among other things, that from at least 1997 through and until August 2004, AHMAD provided and conspired to provide material support and resources to persons engaged in acts of terrorism in Afghanistan, Chechnya and elsewhere. The Indictment alleges that AHMAD provided - through the creation and use of various internet websites, email accounts, and other means - expert advice and assistance, communications equipment, military items, lodging, training, false documentation, transportation, funding, personnel and other support designed to assist the Chechen mujahideen, the Taliban and associated groups. The Indictment alleges that AHMAD sought to provide assistance to, and raise funds for, violent jihad in Afghanistan, Chechnya and other places.

The Indictment alleges that one of the means that AHMAD used in this effort was the operation, through an entity known as Azzam Publications, of a series of pro-jihad (or holy war) web sites, which, for a period of time, were operated through an Internet Service Provider (ISP) headquartered in the State of Connecticut.

According to documents filed with the Court, the two main Azzam Publications web sites were www.azzam.com, which utilized an ISP in Nevada and one headquartered in Connecticut, and www.qoqaz.net, which was operated primarily from outside of the United States.

Postings on the web sites expressly stated that the Azzam Publications sites were set up "to propagate the call for Jihad, among the Muslims who are sitting down, ignorant of this vital duty," and further stated that "the purpose of Azzam Publications [was] to 'Incite the believers' and also secondly to raise money for the brothers." Moreover, from February 29, 2000, through December 17, 2001, both www.azzam.com and www.qoqaz.net carried the message " . . . Muslims must use every means at their disposal to undertake military and physical training for jihad."

Among other things, it is alleged that the Azzam sites published Usama bin Laden's 1996 Declaration of War against the United States, and posted various manuals and articles on how to train for jihad before traveling abroad to fight, including instructions on obtaining physical, martial arts, survival and firearms training.

It is alleged that the web sites also provided specific guidance on how to support jihad and the mujahideen, which included overt efforts to recruit individuals to physically fight in lands of jihad; requests to raise, collect and donate money to support the jihad; and solicitations to join or otherwise support the organization. The sites also set forth postings extolling the virtues of martyrdom; and described a female's role in jihad as including raising funds; obtaining physical and firearms training; and raising mujahid children by obtaining for them martial arts training, target shooting and camping/survival training.

According to Court documents and the allegations of the Indictment, AHMAD's conduct was not limited to cyberspace. Evidence collected during this lengthy investigation also includes e-mails to and from certain Azzam Publications e-mail accounts linked to AHMAD. Through those email accounts, it is alleged that AHMAD and Azzam Publications engaged in efforts to assist those who responded to the websites' calls for support. According to Court documents, recovered emails include discussions regarding donations; shipments of gas masks; procurement of night vision goggles; safe routes into Afghanistan and the type of personnel needed to support the jihad.

The Indictment also alleges that, from in or about 1998 through 2002, AHMAD and others caused the production and distribution of videotapes and compact discs depicting fighters in Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere, and the eulogizing of dead fighters, for the purpose of recruiting individuals and soliciting donations to support the mujahideen in Afghanistan and Chechnya.

"This Indictment alleges serious criminal conduct and promotion of terrorism, including the conspiracy to murder persons living abroad," U.S. Attorney O'Connor stated. "This Office will vigorously prosecute this case, and we will not rest until Mr. Ahmad is given a fair trial in a federal courtroom in Connecticut."

"This case is the result of the superior investigative efforts of many federal law enforcement agencies working together, and with our partners in the United Kingdom," U.S. Attorney O'Connor continued. "Everyone in law enforcement plays a role in fighting terrorism, and we in Connecticut are committed to fighting terror both in Connecticut and beyond our borders. In order to dismantle terrorist organizations, we must attack them at their roots, so it is critical that we uncover and sever the financing stream and communication that supports the terrorists' violent intentions."

U.S. Attorney O'Connor emphasized the investigation is continuing and stressed that the allegations of the indictment are only charges and not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the Government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is being investigated by a Task Force in Connecticut comprised of Special Agents of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division, the IRS-CI Electronic Crimes Program, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

U.S. Attorney O'Connor also praised the substantial efforts of law enforcement authorities from New Scotland Yard whose efforts and assistance have been essential in the investigation in this case.

The case is being prosecuted by a team of federal prosecutors including Supervisory Assistant United States Attorney Robert M. Appleton and Assistant United States Attorney Stephen B. Reynolds from the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut, and Trial Attorney David B. Deitch from the Counter-Terrorism Section of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.