



A fully veiled woman walks past the heavily guarded office of the Yemeni prime minister in Sanaa yesterday. US military intervention in Yemen to help fight al-Qaeda militants could backfire and strengthen the network, Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister for Defence and Security Affairs Rashed Al-Aleemi said in a press conference.

Yemen warns US military intervention could strengthen Qaeda

US military intervention in Yemen to help fight al-Qaeda militants could backfire and strengthen the Jihadis believed behind the botched attack on a US airliner, a top Yemeni official said Thursday.

"Any intervention or direct (military) action by the United States could strengthen the al-Qaeda network and not weaken it," deputy prime minister for defence and security affairs Rashed Al-Aleemi told a press conference.

"Our position is clear; we will fight and chase the al-Qaeda group depending on Yemeni forces and security agencies (alone)," he said.

Aleemi however said that Yemen needs the United States to help in training Yemeni counter-terrorism units.

"Since al-Qaeda is a global organisation that threatens

international stability, all countries in the world, headed by the United States, must cooperate to confront them," he said.

"All we need from the United States is training and providing weapons and equipment to counter-terrorism units and they are capable of liquidating al-Qaeda and all terror elements," Aleemisaid.

He said Sanaa's security cooperation with Washington is based on the exchange of information. The same applies to Saudi Arabia, he added.

Long-standing concerns that Yemen, a country on the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula, has become a haven for Islamic terror groups were thrown into sharp focus when a Nigerian man allegedly trained in Yemen was charged with trying to blow up a US-bound jet.

Iran to try 5 'rioters' held over Ashura unrest

Iran will put on trial five people who were arrested in December following anti-government unrest during the Shia religious commemoration of Ashura, the ISNA news agency reported yesterday.

"Five people were indicted regarding the Ashura riots and their case files were sent to the revolutionary court," ISNA said, quoting a statement from the prosecutor's office.

"The crimes of the defendants will be soon dealt with in the presence of their lawyers and a representative of the prosecutor," it added.

On December 27, eight people were killed after clashes erupted between security forces and opposition supporters who staged fresh protests during the commemoration of Ashura.

Security forces arrested hundreds of people during the protests, at least 300 of whom are still being held in Tehran, police say.

Embattled Brown survives leadership challenge

Ministers rallied round embattled British Prime Minister Gordon Brown yesterday after he faced down a leadership challenge, but the failed coup dealt him a new blow months ahead of general elections.

In a deeply embarrassing challenge to his already-weakened authority, ex-ministers Geoff Hoon and Patricia Hewitt called Wednesday for a ballot of ruling Labour Party lawmakers on whether Brown should remain their leader.

"It is something we could have easily done without," admitted Justice Secretary Jack Straw, but insisted: "I think it will actually have the effect of bringing people behind the leadership even more."

Nigerian charged in plot to blow up plane

'Plotter' met radical Yemeni cleric al-Awlaki

A young Nigerian has been charged with attempted murder and trying to use a weapon of mass destruction aboard a US plane, as under-fire security chiefs vow to revamp intelligence services.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, was indicted Wednesday by a grand jury on six counts arising from a botched Christmas Day plot to blow up an airliner packed with 279 passengers and 11 crew as it approached Detroit, Michigan.

Michigan district court documents accused him of "carrying a concealed bomb" inside his clothing on board

Northwest Airlines Flight 253 from Amsterdam.

"The bomb consisted of a device containing Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate (PETN), Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP) and other ingredients," the charge sheet said, adding that both substances were highly explosive.

"The bomb was designed to allow defendant Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to detonate it at a time of his choosing, and to thereby cause an explosion aboard Flight 253," the documents added.

If convicted of trying to use a weapon of mass destruction, Abdulmutallab faces life imprisonment, the Department of

Justice said in a statement. The attempted murder charges carry a maximum sentence of 20 years, while two charges of possession and use of a firearm or destructive device carry a mandatory 30 years in prison.

Meanwhile, the alleged US plane bomber met radical Muslim cleric Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen, after being recruited in London, a senior Yemeni official has said.

Last week US security official John Brennan said there were "indications" of direct contact between the two men.

Awlaki was linked to an attack by a US Army major on the Fort Hood base in November, in which 13 people died.

140 killed in south Sudan violence, says UN

At least 140 people have been killed and 90 wounded in the remote troubled Wunduchi region of Warrap state in southern Sudan over the past week, a senior UN official said yesterday.

Clashes, apparently between rival tribal groups, occurred some time since the beginning of the year but reports emerged only after a UN security team visited the remote area by aircraft two days ago.

"Local sources on the ground said that at least 140 people had been killed, 90 wounded and 30,000 head of cattle had been stolen," said Lise Grande, the UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in south Sudan.

Grande said a military team of UN peacekeepers had left Thursday by vehicles to ascertain the exact situation on the ground.

"This is a matter of deep concern," GrandetoldAFP.

The dead were from the Dinka people common in the area. Local sources suggested that a rival group from the Nuer people were responsible, but the report could not be immediately confirmed.

Clashes between rival ethnic groups in south Sudan erupt frequently -- often sparked by cattle rustling and disputes over natural resources, while others are retaliation for previous attacks.

However, a string of recent raids has shocked many, with an apparent sharp increase in attacks on women and children, as well as the targeting of homesteads.

In September, more than 100 people, including South Sudanese troops, were killed in weekend clashes in the Jonglei state after Nuer raided a Dinka village where the troops had a base.

More than 2,000 people have died and 250,000 have been displaced in inter-tribal violence across southern Sudan since January, according to the United Nations, which says the rate of violent deaths now surpasses that in the war-torn western region of Darfur.

Attack on CIA 'revenge' for drone killings: al-Qaeda

al-Qaeda hailed the suicide bombing that killed seven CIA agents in Afghanistan as "revenge" for the deaths of top militants in US drone strikes, the monitoring group SITE said yesterday.

A Jordanian doctor who was said to be a triple agent blew himself up at the US Pakistani border on Khost near the 30 in the deadliest attack against the CIA since 1983.

The head of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, said the bomber wrote in his will that the attack was revenge for "our righteous martyrs" and named several

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Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki (L) and Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari take part in a joint press conference at the Foreign Ministry in Baghdad yesterday. Iraq and Iran will hold meetings from next week to formally mark their disputed border Mottaki said, following a stand-off between the two countries last month.

Anti-terror chief among 7 killed in Iraq blasts

Co-ordinated bombings early yesterday shattered the homes of four police officers in the western Iraqi town of Heet, killing seven people including the town's anti-terror chief, an official said.

Six people were wounded in the blasts.

Attackers planted explosives around the bedrooms of the policemen in the town, 60 kilometres (35 miles) west of the Anbar provincial capital of Ramadi, said Lieutenant Colonel Fadhil Nimrawi, the head of the town's emergency response unit.

"At 3:00 am, men planted bombs around the bedrooms of four houses belonging to members of the police force, including Major Walid al-Heeti, the head of Heet's anti-terror department," he said.

"The bombs killed seven people, including the anti-terror chief, and wounded six others, including women and children from the four families."

The dead also included Heeti's wife and mother, a child, and three other police officers, Nimrawi said.

The four houses were in different neighbourhoods across the centre of Heet, and no vehicles are being allowed in or out of the town as part of ramped up security.

More Eurostar misery as icy chill brings mayhem

Eurostar passengers faced new winter misery when another high-speed train broke down in the Channel Tunnel on Thursday as heavy snow brought down powerlines, leaving thousands without electricity in Britain.

As the rest of Europe braced for more snow, one of the most brutal winters in decades caused more travel mayhem with scores of flights cancelled and many roads proving impassable.

Temperatures overnight dropped to minus 18 degrees Celsius in Woodford outside Manchester, northwest England, and in Benson, southern England. Glasgow saw minus nine degrees Celsius, while London fell to minus three.

No major British airports reported closures Thursday, with runways open following a day of disruption Wednesday.

But budget airline easyJet scrapped around 80 flights "as a result of severe weather conditions", largely due in and out of London Gatwick airport south of the British capital.

Flights to and from Budapest, Paris Orly, Milan Linate and Geneva were also affected.

"There are delays but also cancelled flights due to the snow," a spokesman for Aeroports de Paris told AFP about the situation at Orly. "Return flights are also being diverted towards Charles de Gaulle or other airports."

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The incumbent would be B.Sc. Engineer (Electrical & Electronics) from reputed institution having 5 to 7 years of hand on experience in leading a team of competent technical personnel & personal expertise in trouble shooting of electronic products, refrigerators, air conditioners and other white products. Age preferably not exceeding 35 Years.

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*** Only short listed candidates will be called for interview.**