



PHOTO: AFP

An image grab taken from a videotape broadcast yesterday by the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya news network shows Jordanian Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi (R), who blew himself up in Afghanistan, reading a statement as he sits next to Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud at an undisclosed location. Balawi, who killed seven CIA agents and his Jordanian handler, said in the video broadcast the act he was planning was for revenge.

CIA base bomber calls for attacks on US in video

AP, Cairo

The Jordanian doctor who killed seven CIA employees in a suicide attack in Afghanistan said all jihadists must attack US targets to avenge the killing of the Pakistani Taliban leader, according to a video that appeared posthumously yesterday on an Arabic news channel.

Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi appeared next to the new leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Hakimullah Mehsud, and explained how the "emigrants" Muslim jihadists from abroad were given shelter by the Pakistani Taliban and so should exact revenge for US attacks.

In August, Baitullah Mehsud, the supreme commander of the Pakistani Taliban was killed by a CIA missile strike.

"We will never forget the blood of our emir Baitullah Mehsud, We will always demand revenge for him inside America and outside," he said, addressing the "enemies of God" and Jordanian intelligence. "It is an obligation of the emigrants who were welcomed by the emir."

Al-Balawi, wearing traditional Afghan dress, spoke in Arabic during the minute-and-a-half video. Several extremist Islamic Web sites linked to the Jazeera video.

Sanction can't deter Iran from its nuke plan

Says Ahmadinejad

AFP, Tehran

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said yesterday that further UN Security Council sanction will not deter Tehran from pursuing its controversial nuclear programme.

The hardliner also vowed that Iran will not back down "one iota" in the face of international pressures over the atomic work, which the West fears may be a cover for weapons development despite Iran's persistent denial.

"They issued several resolutions and sanctioned Iran ... They think Iranians will fall on their knees over these things but they are mistaken," Ahmadinejad said in a speech in southern Iran carried live on state television.

"We are not interested in conflicts (but) you are continually demanding things," he said to world powers, led by the United States, which

are seeking to curb Iran's atomic ambitions.

"They should not think they can put up obstacles in Iran's way ... I assure the people ... that the government will wholeheartedly defend Iran's rights and will not back down one iota," he said.

Iran is already under three sets of UN Security Council sanctions over its defiance and refusal to suspend enrichment, which lies at the heart of international fears about its nuclear programme.

The process that makes nuclear fuel can also be used to make the fissile core of an atomic bomb.

World powers gave Iran until the end of 2009 to accept a UN-brokered deal to ship most of Iran's low-enriched uranium (LEU) abroad to be further refined into reactor fuel by Russia and France.

Palestinians snub US call, demand settlement freeze

AFP, Ramallah

The Palestinians yesterday insisted on a full Israeli settlement freeze before renewing peace efforts, putting a damper on a US call to revive talks with no preconditions.

"A resumption of peace talks requires the complete halt of settlements" in the occupied West Bank, chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat told AFP.

Erakat also demanded that Israel comply with its commitment under the 2003 peace roadmap, which calls for a "halt to all settlement activity

including natural growth and Jerusalem."

Erakat also said negotiations should be picked up from the point they were left when they broke down in December 2008.

So far, there has been no reaction from the Israeli government.

On Friday, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged Israelis and Palestinians to resume the peace talks without preconditions, in Washington's latest bid to return the sides to the negotiations table.

Clinton backed the key

Palestinian aim of creating a state along the borders that existed before the 1967 Israeli-Arab war, but said the lines would be modified through mutually agreed land swaps, presumably to account for some Israeli settlements that would remain.

The Palestinians have insisted the borders of their promised state encompass all of their land Israel occupied in 1967, including mostly Arab east Jerusalem -- which Israel later annexed in a move not recognised by the international community -- as their capital.

Europe shivers as cold snap hits transport, power links

AFP, Berlin

Europe faced weekend weather misery with scores of flights cancelled Saturday as snow blanketed swathes of the continent, severing key highways and disrupting rail and electricity links.

Germans were urged to buy enough food and medicines to last for up to four days in the face of a blizzard. The government said all non-essential travel should be avoided.

More than 200 flights were cancelled at Frankfurt, Europe's third largest airport, on Saturday, spokesman Juergen Harrer said, adding many more had been delayed.

Traffic on the A5 highway between Germany and France was paralysed Saturday after French police blocked off the border road to trucks due to heavy snow, German traffic police said.

With much of Britain already shivering through the worst spell of bad winter weather for more than 30 years, a further blanketing was expected. Forecasters say up to 20 centimetres (seven inches) could settle in the east.

The conditions hit weekend sports games -- five English Premier League football matches were called off and five out of the six Premiership rugby union fixtures were also cancelled.



PHOTO: AFP

A Delta Airline plane is deiced on the tarmac at Frankfurt international airport yesterday as temperatures are at about minus four degrees Celsius. Germany braced for a blizzard and heavy snowfall and authorities warned people to stock up on food and drinking water. The government said all non-essential travel should be avoided.

Terror watch lists have limited uses: Experts

AP, Jakarta

A month before a Nigerian man whom American intelligence suspected of terrorist ties tried to blow up a Detroit-bound jetliner, Indonesian authorities successfully used a US watch list to pick out an arriving passenger.

The arrest of Filipino Abdul Basir Latip, a suspected al-Qaeda-linked militant, is an example of effective counterterrorism intelligence-sharing at a time when the aviation community is examining security failures that enabled Umar Farouk

Abdulmutallab to board a plane on Christmas Day with explosives-laden underwear.

President Barack Obama has ordered new terror watch list guidelines in the wake of the attempted attack though Abdulmutallab was in an intelligence database, he was not on a no-fly list but analysts say such lists are only one small part of successful counterterrorism. Information-sharing and proper analysis of data is key.

"Lists are valuable in making sure governments around the world are able to track individuals," said Dr. John

Harrison, an aviation security specialist at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. "But you don't want to put too much emphasis on these lists. It's an overstatement to say: 'OK, now we are safe.'"

While lists are a valuable intelligence tool, they cannot be solely relied upon to prevent terrorists from boarding flights, Harrison said. Even though Abdulmutallab, 23, was not on a watch list, his behavior should have triggered alarms that would have led to his capture anyway, he said.

Italians evacuate migrants, bring in police after clashes

AFP, Rome

Italian authorities sent in extra police and evacuated migrants yesterday from a southern Italian town after residents violently attacked African farm workers protesting against their conditions.

The clashes which began late Thursday left 67 people injured in the Calabrian town of Rosarno, latest reports said, but calm was generally restored Saturday, with barricades erected by locals dismantled and shops open.

Police said the 18 injured included 31 foreigners, the latest of whom was fired at with a shotgun on Saturday, 19 policemen and 17 locals.

Nine buses with police escorts evacuated 320 immigrants early Saturday to a reception centre at Crotona, some 170km from Rosarno, as locals applauded.

Astronomers spot 'super-Earth' 80 light years away

AFP, Washington

US astronomers have detected the second smallest exoplanet ever discovered with a mass just four times heavier than the Earth, adding to a growing number of low-mass planets dubbed "super-Earths."

"This is quite a remarkable discovery," said Andrew Howard, an astronomer at the University of California at Berkeley.

"It shows that we can push down and find smaller and smaller planets," he said in a presentation at the 215th meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Washington DC this week.

The exoplanet, named after planets outside our solar system, has been dubbed HD156668b, and is located around 80 light years from Earth in the direction of the Hercules constellation.

A light year is roughly 9,460 billion kilometres.

The planet orbits around its parent star in just over four days.

Employment Opportunities

A large advertisement for employment opportunities from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It lists various roles such as Assistant Disbursement Analyst, Project Implementation Officer (Resettlement & Social Development), Reporting Arrangement, and Project Implementation Officer (Urban Infrastructure). Each role includes a reference number, a brief description of duties, and selection criteria. The advertisement also provides contact information for the ADB and a link to their website for more details.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

A logo for the Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative (NARI) Consulting Services for Socio-Economic Assessment. The logo features a globe and the text 'Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative (NARI) Consulting Services for Socio-Economic Assessment The World Bank Office, Dhaka'.

The Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative (NARI) is a US\$27 million project that the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) will prepare and implement, with support from the World Bank. NARI's objective is to facilitate access to employment opportunities in the garment sector for poor and vulnerable women from Bangladesh's poorest region by providing information, technical, and "life skills" training, transportation, housing and other support to obtain jobs and adjust to urban life and employment.

A Socio-Economic Assessment (SEA) is needed to inform the design of NARI and other GOB initiatives that aim to link lagging areas to economic drivers in Bangladesh. The World Bank intends to finance the assignment described below under trust funds provided by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Bank's Gender and Development Unit. The SEA requires a Consultant to conduct rigorous diagnostics and identify supportive interventions along the entire labor supply chain from the Northern munga-prone region to receiving areas in the garment sector to align the needs of labor supply with those of labor demand, while minimizing risks to a vulnerable pool of labor. The Consultant will receive about US\$150,000 and must complete the assignment by June 15, 2010.

The SEA will produce technical reports on the following: (i) a plan of interventions that mitigate risks posed to project beneficiaries and other stakeholders; (ii) a participatory process in which stakeholders inform the risk management plan and NARI project design; (iii) an analysis of labor demand in the garment sector, with attention to factories in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in Dhaka, Karnaphuli and Ishwardi; (iv) a mechanism to ensure transparent targeting and selection of beneficiaries; and (v) an information and communication campaign for target populations. Draft technical reports must be shared with stakeholders and final versions submitted with a Recommendations Report for project design.

The qualifications required for the assignment include, but are not limited to: (i) research and operational experience relevant to Bank-supported operations and other large-scale development projects; (ii) an active presence and good reputation in Bangladesh; (iii) a sound knowledge of the garment industry and, preferably, of migration and the northern munga areas; (iv) a long track record in operations-oriented quantitative and qualitative research on poverty reduction; (v) experience in conducting participatory and consultation processes involving a broad range of stakeholders; (vi) experience in social mobilization around labor and gender issues; (vii) a proven track record of coordinating and producing deliverables for complex research assignments; and (viii) a cadre of staff capable of supporting the above requirements.

The World Bank is inviting Expressions of Interest (EOI) from firms (consulting companies, educational institutions and any other organization) with the capacity to plan, execute and deliver the above outlined assignment. Interested consultants must describe their qualifications, and assignments they have executed that qualify the firm for the proposed assignment. These, among others, will include (i) firm's consistency of the appropriate professional and expert staff, and mastery of particular approaches, methods or solutions relevant to the assignment; (ii) firm's listing of executed assignments similar or closely related to the proposed tasks, and (iii) firm's detailed information including availability of resources.

Applicants will be selected according to the Consultant's Qualification method as per the procedures set out in the current edition of the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers. In accordance with the CQ method of the above Guidelines, based on the submissions of EOI, the Bank will select the firm with the most appropriate qualifications/ experience and references as described above. Only the selected firm shall be asked to submit a combined technical-financial proposal and then be invited to negotiate the contract.

Interested organizations may obtain further information, including detailed Terms of Reference for the assignment and background information on NARI at the address below, between 09:30 AM and 5:00 PM.

EOI must be delivered through WBG eConsultant (www.worldbank.org/wbgeconsultant) by January 21, 2010. In case the consultant is unable to submit EOI through WBG eConsultant due to technical difficulties (i.e. eConsultant system down, unable to upload applications etc.), then they may submit EOI to the address below through hardcopy or electronic submission (i.e. email).

Attn: Fabio Pittaluga, Sr. Social Development Specialist (SASDI) Shirin Jahangeer; The World Bank; Plot E32, Agargaon, G.P.O. Box 97, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh. Tel: (880-2) 815-9001, Fax: (880-2) 815-9029; email: fpittaluga@worldbank.org, sjahangeer@worldbank.org

