

The Ogaden file

The meritorious journey

In the name of Allah the great and merciful

Operation Holding (al-Msk; represent by the Arabic letters MSK, which is an acronym that means “holding” or “grabbing”)

Introduction:

On Wednesday evening of January 20, 1993 (26th of Rajab, 1413), Brother Abu Hafs summoned us to his house in Peshawar after the evening prayer. He told us to cancel all of our personal plans, such as marriage, travel, and other things, and to prepare for a mission to travel to Kenya and Somalia. The mission (Mahema) to travel to Kenya represents the first letter of MSK.

All of the Brothers attended this meeting:

Sayf al-Adel

Abu Qutaybah al-Maghrebi

Abu Jihad al-Noubi

Abu Yusef al-Maghrebi

Abu Thammam

Abu Islam al-Saghir

Abu Khaled al-Masri

Sayf al-Islam

Abu Hafs

The mission was given to me, Sayf al-Islam, to travel with these Brothers because Brother Sayf al-Adel was going to stay in Pakistan. A number of orders were given, among them:

- 1: Keep the group in an isolated house where we can undertake the requested measures to prevent unwanted meddling, even from people with good intentions. This is so we could shave our beards, buy European-style clothing, and travel a number of times to Islamabad to reserve tickets to travel by ourselves.
- 2: A quick training session was given by Brother Haydarah al-Argentini on Transportation Routine and Travel Procedures, and a second training session on Reconnaissance Strategy was given by Brother Abu Walid, in English.
- 3: This enabled the individual to perform every travel procedure on his own.

Abu Hafs noted his appreciation and agreement with these training sessions, and the next day, he began classes on Relying on Allah and Personal Effort for every brother. After about a week, both Zakariyya al-Tunisi and Abu Fadhel al-Qamari joined the team after being released from detention, which brought the final traveling team to nine members. Praises to God, we were able to get visas for most of them, and as for the last one, we deliberately left him at the embassy so as not to attract attention. Then we divided the team into twos and threes, so that in each group, there was one person who knew English

and could help the others. Then reservations were made for a week later on different flights on the PIA GULF airline.

The first trip was on Thursday, February 4, 1993 (Shaban, 1493). I was on this flight so that I could receive the brothers and take care of affairs for them in Nairobi. On Tuesday, February 9th, after two groups of the Brothers arrived, there was a meeting with Brother Abu Ubaydah in Nairobi at Salim and Tawfiq's beautiful country home outside the city. While we were there, the brothers talked about the region and the importance of our being there. He also talked about his first meeting with Uthman al-Sini and Hamad, and outlined our three goals for the region:

- 1 – Find a location for military operations that would replace Afghanistan
- 2 – The location must be near the Arab region
- 3 – Attempt to help the brothers in Somalia and Ogaden

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He told us that the agreement was made with the General Islamic Union to establish two locations for training. The first would be in Bussaso (Northeast of Somalia) while the second would be in the village of Luuq (Southwest of Somalia). Also, a separate agreement was reached with the Ogaden branch of the Islamic Union to establish a military camp in the interior in a location of their choosing.

Basically, they requested a training crew for Somalia, and another one for Ogaden. There was a long meeting between me and Abu Ubaydah during the evening about the benefit of conducting operations in Ogaden, which is a closed-off region, dangerous, and difficult to get to. It was my opinion that the matter required a general plan and an inclusive program for the Horn of Africa region. But Abu Ubaydah had promised the people, and it was necessary to execute what had been agreed upon. It was stipulated that we, the Green Team, would go to Ogaden. And thus began the most glorious experience of our lives.

In the remaining days that we spent in Nairobi, we developed a training program to form supported guerilla platoons. (The program is found in a special file.) During this time, the brothers arrived from Pakistan, and two others came from Sudan, named Sulayman and Abd al-Sabur, to join our Green Team. The group prepared to leave on the 16th, 17th, and 18th of February.

The meritorious journey

At 5:10 in the evening, on Thursday, February 18, 1993, on a hardball runway, a small dual-prop plane landed (model Y5-15) with no prior notice or indication. There was room for seven passengers, but nine men got off the plane. This was at the small village named Luuq, located on the banks of the Juba River which flows around the village in a semi-circle. This was a new adventure for the nine men, none of whom had ever

imagined or seen anything like this before. The small plane took off from the Wilson Airport in Kenya at 1425, and the flight lasted 2 hours and 45 minutes. We crossed Kenyan airspace into the ravaged country of Somalia, where there was no air traffic control or even communications. The pilot turned off the communications device when he crossed the border, and he had to look for the location of the village with his own eyes. There was a clearing near the Juba River, and he asked us to help him look for it. Then the plane landed at a low altitude. A man appeared at the airport, and Sayf al-Islam and Abd al-Islam went to go ask him about anyone from the Islamic Union. But suddenly, an Italian Bekaso military vehicle armed with medium-sized machine guns (called SK 43 Greenhoff) appeared. It was carrying a group of guys wearing military uniforms, and it kept going until it got to the place where the plane landed. Men of varying ages got out of their vehicle to greet our nine men, and began to get acquainted with them. They were represented by two men. One of them was named Abd al-Rahman al-Zayla'i, and he spoke Modern Standard Arabic as well as a dialect that was similar to that of the Arabian Peninsula. He was in his early forties and of medium height. His position was Head of Purchasing for the Islamic Union in Ogaden.

The second man was Sheikh Abdullah Ahmed, who was in his fifties and who spoke Modern Standard Arabic, but not as well as al-Zayla'i. He was skinny, but physically fit. He was responsible for transportation for the Islamic Union in Ogaden. We quickly thanked the pilot who was busy filling the plane's tanks with fuel, and we gave him 5000 Kenyan shillings. We got into the vehicle and headed toward the village of Luuq, which we passed through quickly and in secrecy.

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We then crossed a bridge to the western frontier. We were completely happy, and we crossed a distance of almost 10 km to get to the brothers' camp at Ogaden. This was located on the bank of the Juba River, which flows from Ethiopia, or to be more precise, from the country of al-Aromo, which the Muslims call al-Hebisha.

The strange people who received us brothers were lukewarm and wary towards us. I think this is because we were wearing European-style clothing and were clean-shaven. They directed us toward the leadership, and there on the west bank of the Juba River we met the rest of the leadership, like the good Sheikh Naseeb. He was second in command of the Ogaden branch of the Islamic Union. The leader was Abdul Salam Uthman, who had preceded us to the camp in the interior of Ogaden. We were also received by Abdullah Rabi, who was a graduate of the Islamic University in the al-Hadeeth department, yet still down-to-earth and kind. Also, Mohammed Hamed Omar was there, who is Foreign Relations Coordinator, as well as his brother Abd al-Weli.

A number of other guys were there, as well as other leaders of the effort. There were also a number of men injured from some of the battles with the enemies who govern Ethiopia. We stayed on the bank of the river for four days, and while we were there, Brother

Hamed al-Kuwaiti visited us. He was in charge of the other training crew, and he arrived there two days before us, by way of the Kenyan city of Mendira on the border. He traveled in a private plane. He crossed the border, and then arrived in Luuq to begin work at the Somali's camp there. He took Mohammed al-Saudi with us to complete his team, leaving us eight men. We departed after four days on foot, according to the restrictions of the blessed month of Ramadan. The journey lasted 23 days, during which we crossed a distance of 415 km. We arrived at the Reeramdan region north of the Shibli River. The location is called Quray Shighut, or Green Forest, near a well called Aghnaji, which is the name of one of the leaders of the nomadic tribes in the region.

To give a general picture, the caravan was composed of 80 men to protect us eight men, and seven camels to carry our food and supplies. All of us were armed with automatic rifles, sub-machine guns, and RPG-7s. We were transported by vehicle about 40-45 km north of Luuq to where the camels were, exactly 20 km from the border. The leader of the convoy was Captain Abd al-Wahed Mohammed Hareed, and he was supported by First Lieutenant Abd al-Razaq. After crossing the borders on the morning of the second day of Ramadan, Abd al-Razaq returned with some heavy loads on the camels. The convoy continued along its way, and there were so many wonders on it that there is not space in this report to describe them all. Eventually, we had to get our drinking water from jerry cans because the water in the river had become salty.

Then we arrived at Quray Shigut on a mountain overlook that faced to the north, directly from Luuq. The name of this place means Green Mountain, because it has trees that are green about half the year when the rain falls in the fall from September to December and from March to November. The hottest times of the year are from March to April, and the coldest times of the year are the two months of June and July, when the sun is in the first part of the (meaning unclear) and then when it is in the Tropic of Cancer. A general description of the region from north to south: thorny forests completely cover the ground from the 2nd parallel to the 8th parallel. Even though there are two rainy seasons, it doesn't rain much there, and in some years past, it didn't rain at all. Sometimes during seasons like these, there are clouds that cover the sky completely. Most of the people in the region depend upon wells scattered around the Juba River, and sometimes it isn't enough.

The area is poor in agriculture, and they depend about 90% upon rainfall. Even though the thorny trees I described have sap and gum, no one uses them for anything. All the people there prefer to subsist off wheat and camel milk, and because of this, they are stingy and greedy.

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(However, Allah was generous and good to the Brothers.) There are some stories so you can know about these people, such as the one about the man who left his wife to die of hunger because he wouldn't slaughter a camel from his herd of more than 100.

If they see a caravan of fair-skinned people approaching them, they will welcome them if the caravan looks rich. You would think that this is so they can offer the caravan some hospitality, but it is exactly the opposite. This is just because the people looked Muslim to them. Usually, in their eyes every fair-skinned person is an infidel.

Generally speaking, it is a poor country with a little development and little wealth, and one who passes through it sees many valleys leading up to the small mountains in the northwest. In summary, this land is covered with trees, but none of them bears any fruit. If there is fruit, then it is bitter. There are valleys everywhere, but none of them has any water. If there is water, then it is bitter and salty.

The people there are %100 Muslim, and they are descended from the original Arabs. Most of them are tribal people, and one of the names of the tribes is Ogaden. Their most important ancestor is called Jaberati, from Yemen. Their culture and identity is Somali, but they live in remote areas in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Northeast Kenya. The most well-known of the tribal sects is Abdullah, which lives in Jeddi, the local capital of the province, and Denan, and the tribe Abd al-Illileh, or as they say in broken speech, Abd al-Allah Ha. Also, there is the Reer Amadan tribe that lives in the region where we were. One of them, named Abdullah Saad, was the head of the local government in the region until mid 1993, then he was replaced by Abdullah Rabi, who we spoke about previously. And there is the leader Mustafa Arab who is second in command of the Jihad office. Also, there are some small tribes in remote regions to the north, Dejhebour Jekjiki, and a desert tribe called al-Zenouj in and around Yemi. And there is Auleihen in the south.

When we arrived there, we were greeted by Brother Abd al-Salam Uthman, who is the leader of the Islamic Union branch. We arrived in the middle of the forest at the Brothers' camp, which was about 300 meters from the river. The camp was in a primitive area, open on all sides, and surrounded by the administrative building, the mosque, and the mujahedeen barracks. There were no trenches or fortifications because the mujahedeen considered such things for cowards.

Immediately upon our arrival on the morning of the 23rd of Ramadan, we felt the lack of comfort in the place. We told them that we saw mountains where we could dig tunnels for protection, to live in, and to store weapons and ammunition. These were not far from the water, just 1 km away. They agreed to this, so on the same day that evening, we went up to the nearest mountain with Mustafa Arab, Abd al-Salam, and Yusef Shilabu to choose a place. However, we decided to try again the next day, and after that we found a better place. This place seemed suitable to almost everyone, but the most important issue was still water. After three days, the Brothers found a location in a crescent [TC: most likely a saddle in the mountain shaped like a crescent] 1300 meters from the well. Nearby was an old road that could be opened up, which would make the distance just one km. We set up a security location at the highest point of the crescent, and we began making plans to dig a tunnel there inside the mountain.

We wrote down what we needed, like digging tools, and what we could do to help with training. I sent the first report to Brother Uthman after we had been there for about two

or three days, and then came Yom al-Aid on the 24th of March. The Brothers asked us to deliver a sermon for Aid al-Fitr. We agreed, and the subject was The Duty of Humility and the Duty of Honor. On Monday the 29th of March, we did some reconnaissance of the area, specifically the road, and choose a place to start our work on it. We arrived at the village of Jerisla, 34 km east of the camp, where the rest of the Brothers were. (There were two companies there, each composed of 130 brothers. The first was named Hamza, and the second was named Omar Bin al-Hetab, God bless them. They were with me on Ahmed al-Maghrebi's trip to draw the road because there was no map available. We finished drawing it, praise be to God.

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This was my first encounter with 36 year old Brother Abdullah Mohammed Irad from the Jihad Office center. He held a rank position comparable to a LTC, and he was a Recon officer with Ziyad Barri Army. He was very physically fit and he loved his work.

He had a strong personality, and for that reason, everyone was in awe of him at the time. He was very religious, a strict Salafist. He always performed his prayers, you always saw him in his military uniform. He wore a green pistol belt around his waist and had fastened a Russian pistol to it. This pistol was his war booty--he had taken it from a Tigray leader that he killed. He also wore a red beret made of cloth from Saudi Arabia. The Muslims were eager to follow his orders, and no one ever fired a shot without his personal permission. He argued with me over the significant number of rounds (about 10,000) I requested for the first training course, but after I convinced him, he agreed. He was even more convinced when he saw the good effect it had on the mujahedeen, especially after the first encounter with the enemy at the battle of Buali near Denan. The preparations for the training course lasted 16 days, during which the Brothers took the opportunity to prepare a training manual.

Not impossible, God willing.

When we entered the month of April, we found that a week had passed and the Brothers had not come as we had asked them to, and we discovered that they had not made the new camp ready. We hadn't decided to do it ourselves because the possibilities were limited. But it was announced that the first training course would begin on Saturday, April 3, 1992 (10 Shuwal 1414), so we went to build the camp quickly, using wood and trees that were available in the forest. We asked for a meeting with Brother Abd al-Salam Uthman and his two aides about the following issues:

- Determining specific responsibilities
- Showing the training program to them
- Determining the timing of the course and the number of trainees, and dividing them into soldiers and trainers

About determining responsibilities, we told them the following: Brother Abd al-Salam Uthman should advance his forces and take control of the forward region, so that we can establish our primary armed advanced perimeter. I also made it clear that we'll be uniquely responsible for the trainees for the time being, until the brigade is formed, and only then the true work would begin.

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The results of the training will be mentioned here in summary. The specific details are in a special file.

The complete training course lasts 10 weeks, about two and a half months, and with all the phases and holidays included, it's probably about 12 weeks. It's divided into three phases. The first phase lasts five weeks, and the soldiers are trained to use a number of different weapons very quickly. There is also a focus on discipline and adapting the trainees to military life. The second phase lasts 2-3 weeks, and during this phase the brothers are divided into different groups according to their capabilities, where they specialize in the following: rifles, anti-tank, light and medium machine guns, explosives, sniper rifles, mortars, radios, first aid, administrative affairs, recon, and leadership. The third phase lasts 2-3 weeks, and during this phase the soldiers are grouped into supported guerilla platoons, organized as follows: There are two infantry squads in each platoon, each composed of 10 personnel. 2 of them are anti-tank qualified, 1 shooter, and the other to help carry the rifle. Everyone else carries an AK-47, including the platoon leader and his aide. The third squad is called the support squad, and it is composed of 23 personnel: 4 in explosives, 4 in recon, 4 in mortars, 4 in administrative affairs, 2 radio operators, 2 medics, 2 snipers, 1 machine gun operator, and the Platoon Leader and his Platoon Sergeant.

The brothers are trained under our supervision in formations, movement, patrols, offensive movements, defensive movements, expulsion, retreat, living in the forest, choosing a target, and planning an ambush. Then our work with them is finished and they are ready to be self-sufficient units. Then we determine when the course will begin, and we separate them into soldiers and instructors. On April 2 (9 Shuwal) we separated the brothers into two groups: 126 soldier trainees and 40 instructor trainees (Saif al-Islam and Ahmed al-Maghrebi participated in this training as well.) We decided to transfer to the new camp to facilitate its building, since the planning was completed. The plan was to build the camp beneath one of the sides of the crescent. This gave us the opportunity to monitor the training from the mountain. We made two tents up there, one for the administrative center to protect papers from the rain, and the other to store food. We built a mosque in front of the administrative center. Then we built barracks for the trainees in the shape of an open semi-circle. These barracks consisted of huts made of wood—they kept out the rain, but they were also hot. The quarters for the trainers were on the right side of the mountain. The Islamic Union leaders and the radios were on the left side of the mountain.

There were huts for the soldiers...

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...a kitchen, and storage for food. There was room in each hut for 10 or 12 men, and each hut was completely hidden by the big trees, so they couldn't be seen from the air. We needed to build at least 16 huts. We got all the guys together in a group, and we told them that we only had one day, Friday, to build everything that we needed, because training was going to start the next day. Also, we didn't have any tools for digging or for cutting down trees. But God willing, it would not be impossible. We would cooperate with them, and God willing, the order would be easy to follow. We asked, don't you want us to come here and do this training in your poor country? You have no [other] opportunities here. They said yes. We asked them, is this order easy or not? They said that it would not be impossible, God willing. You should have seen it—they worked with all their might. We divided them into squads, and each squad built their own hut. Even I began to have doubts, and I thought that it might take at least a week, even though I wanted to push them to work faster. But to my surprise, most of the squads finished their huts in one day. They were able cut down the trees without any machinery. On the following day, they built the mosque, and the training camp was completely finished by Saturday. The Islamic Union leaders were astonished because they didn't believe that it would be possible when we were discussing the matter in the old camp. Then they hurried to build their own houses themselves, even the top leader. As for us, we refused any help to put up the tent and to prepare the ground. On Sunday morning, April 4th (11 Shuwal) we began the first phase of the training. Basic training began at the Khaled Bin al-Walid Camp near the mosque under the trees. There were 166 brothers in the first class, and we began that day with studying the Holy Koran, and with discipline, which was the most important part of the entire training course. Not impossible, God willing.

The studying continued, and Brother Ahmed al-Maghrebi and I took turns teaching Topography and Tactics. During the days that we spent teaching, I would go out and recon the surrounding area, and draw maps. The most important recon mission was when I went out to the mountainous regions to the north with Brother Arad Abdullah to find an alternate location for the camp that we could move to in times of danger. We also drew a defensive line to follow by studying all possible routes to our location. At this time, we visited an old camp that had been used at the beginning of the century by the Somalian jihadist Mohammed Abdullah al-Hasan. It was located on an aquifer, and there were a number of deep wells there. However, it was difficult to approach the camp, so we decided to use it as an alternate camp to move to in times of emergency.

During the first phase of the training, we established an outside perimeter 35 km from the center where we placed reserve forces at the roads that presented the biggest threat. We established the inner perimeter 7 km from the center, with hidden ambush locations. The

third perimeter was established just outside the camp, where guards were placed on the surrounding hills, at the wells, and at the roads and entrances to the camp. We trained them in case of any emergency. The first phase of training ended on the Thursday, May 6th (13th of Thay al-Qaeda). The second phase of specialized training began on Monday, May 10th (9th of Thay al-Hajja) and lasted until June 2nd

The third phase of training began on the 12th of Thay al-Hajja, and then the third phase was over and so was the entire training course. The name of this graduating class was the Badr Company, comprised of three platoons, and they graduated on Friday, June 18th (28th of Thay al-Hajja). There was the Salman al-Fasi Platoon, the al-Bara' min Malek Platoon, and the Sharhebil bin Hasna Platoon.

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We had a small celebration for the graduation, and all the Brothers attended, including Brother Abdullah Mohammed Irad. On that day, control of the troops was transferred to the leadership of the Khaled Bin al-Walid Battalion, which completed their graduation.

We rested for about a week, and then personnel for the next training course came. Brother Umar Taj al-Din (Abu Khadija al-Saudi) came to us on Thursday from the eastern front, and he also gave us news about Abu Fatima (Abu Hafs) from the southern front. He got there Saturday, 15th of July (21 Muharrem). And with him were the brothers Abu Ziad al-Iraqi, Abd al-Salam al-Yemeni, Abd al-Rahman al-Masri Abu Hani, Zakkariyya al-Tunisi, Abd al-Rahman al-Zila'i. They came by car, but they could only travel that way for 60 km. They had to go the rest of the way on foot, but it only took them nine days, coming from Luuq on the same road. They asked to participate in political affairs and on the Revolutionary Council to facilitate affairs in the correct direction.

It was decided upon to convene a session of the Revolutionary Council to decide upon new strategies for the area. This lasted for 15 days, and Abu Fatima (aka Abu Hafs) attended it. It appeared that the leaders of the Islamic Union wanted to have a discussion with Abu Fatima about building upon their strengths with the help of al-Qaeda. Abd al-Salam tried to get Abu Fatima to tell him specifically what we could give them, but he was not able to. Finally I told Abu Fatima that I wanted a firm answer in my hands that I could offer the Revolutionary Council.

One of the matters we agreed upon with Abd al-Salam was that I would have the right to represent al-Qaeda in political discussions with the Islamic Union, to coordinate military affairs, and to send the results to the brothers in al-Qaeda. But Abu Fatima had to travel to Abaqr in the south, about 100 km away, and I had to go with him. This lasted for three days. The session of the Revolutionary Council ended without them asking anything of the Brothers, and I told them that Brother Umar Taj al-Din was in charge. (Abd al-Salam al-Rahel was there also.)

Finally, on Sunday, July 25th, 1993 Abd al-Salam Uthman issued the three decrees from the session of the Revolutionary Council:

- We have decided to continue jihad until the violators get out of our country, and to form an Islamic government in Ogaden.
- We have decided to join the Islamic Solidarity Party with three stipulations:
 - o Follow the path of jihad
 - o Incorporate the name Solidarity and Union to make a new name
 - o Follow the Salafist ideology in the movement
- We decided to separate from the General Islamic Union in Somalia and we will write to them about that if they send a committee to assess the situation in the province, to determine whether training and fighting should continue or not. The reason for that are as follows:
 - o The decision of the General Islamic Union to abandon jihad for the pursuit of peaceful solutions
 - o They don't give us the money we deserve from the donations they receive
 - o They try to isolate us politically, and control us with orders from foreign countries. They were angry with us when we contacted you in Sudan and other things like that.
 - o They wanted us to shut down our military camps. Our problem with that is that our country is occupied with foreign infidel enemies, and we need to kick them out.

Praise be to God, we began to address the issues they brought up in the following manner:

- As for continuing jihad, we agree to that completely, and we will not retreat from this path.

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-As for the second point, we agree that the Sharia should be implemented, and that we should go back to the fundamentals of Islam. This is good, and God agrees.

-As for the third decision, I have an important comment to make. Maybe you are right about that, but I have one important request of you before you make the announcement [to separate from the General Islamic Union].

In your jihad, you need a base of operations, a remote location, supply lines, and water for your people. All of this is available in Somalia. Al-Qaeda members are in Somalia. Because of this decision, you have the opportunity for a significant benefit.

The General Islamic Union's decision to stop practicing jihad is not in their best interest, and their constituents will not be satisfied with this. The GIU will regret this decision, and maybe they will change their minds. Some of their guys are in your military camps, and that means that the leadership would change.

So we're not cutting off communications with GIU leadership, because that might isolate Somalia.

Your hopes for independence will be explained to the GIU. We want them to reach an agreement with you because this is in everyone's best interest.

As for financial support, jihad brings a lot of money from charities, and for this reason, the GIU will need you one day [since you practice jihad].

At the very least, don't be the ones to initiate the separation, because in reality, there are political problems in the provinces right now, and a separation could occur anyway. They might allow you to maintain your differences with them, but without actually separating from them.

As for the conference that they will be inviting you to, go ahead and accept the invitation, because God willing, we might be able to make them change their minds about their country.

Then their leader said "I can't tell the Revolutionary Council all that, even though I agree with what you say, because there are people who are going to insist that we still separate." I told him to keep an open mind so that we could come to a solution, and I gave him my advice. I was able to convince most of them, but there were still two men who didn't agree. One of them, Abdullah al-Rabi, was very angry. I think that the other one was Ali Jaz or Mohammed Ahmed. There was much discussion among them, and finally, we decided to call it off for a time. After that, when they went to Jerisli and met a second time, they decided to cancel their decision. This is because they found a lot of guys from the Islamic Union in Somalia who came to them, saying that they wanted to participate in jihad, praise be to God.

Then Abd al-Salam Uthman met with me to inform me that he wanted to get away from the shitty political situation in Somalia so that he could explain the situation abroad and collect donations. He asked me my opinion about that matter, and I gave him my advice. I told him, If you do that right now, then you're like a head without a body. No one will pay attention to this issue in your country because it is an Islamic issue. Usually, people are distracted by the heated debate about these issues that is perpetuated by the media, and Muslims and Arabs don't even take notice when blood is being spilled. They only notice after it has happened. In my opinion, you should get your house in order from the inside, especially from the administrative and political standpoint. Wait until the battalion is complete, and then make your official announcement of jihad. Then the media and the rest of the people will pay attention to you because you will have many other people standing with you. They will pay attention to the issue of jihad in Ogaden, and battles and martyrs. They will wonder who the Islamic Union is, and who represents them. Then when you travel, you will get real support from everywhere, and people will have trust in the work that you are doing. This is the perseverance of jihad and the shadow of the spear.

But Egypt was on his mind, so he arranged a trip and he left with Abdullah al-Rabi. He left Sheikh Tayib in charge as his representative. The results of the trip were what I told him they would be. They were not satisfying.

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Also, he did not leave his affairs in good order when he left, and we discovered a big administrative inadequacy while he was gone. It was so bad that there were some people who were asking to appoint another leader.

Al-Fateh Class

On Monday, July 26th (8th Safar) the al-Fateh class began their Basic Training phase at the Khaled Bin al-Walid camp. There were 300 trainees and they were divided into 10 platoons. Each instructor was in charge of one platoon because the three who had come with Abu Hafs (aka Abu Fatima) had joined us: Abd al-Salam, Abd al-Hadi al-Musuli, Zakaria al-Tunisi. Umar Taj al-Din was there also.

I now had a break from the administration and the politics in the Islamic Union, and in the middle of August, we received the news that the enemy would be moving with troops through the Union's area, and supply routes had been cut. A platoon was in the Sejej area 150 km north of the camp. There was also a platoon in Abaqro 100 km south of the camp. We heard there were troop movements from the west of the Bali province, in Lamoro. There were discussions about what the next phase should be. Should we stop training and hold our ground against the enemy's blows, so that he goes to a new place and we have to expel him from there also? But praise be to God, my mind was set that we should continue training on the basics: small tactics, especially patrols, recon, raids, ambush, and movements. And in the same way, each platoon had 30 brothers in the basic course. This training lasted a week, and patrols were sent in each direction. We divided our perimeter into five axes, with each axis having two platoons responsible for it, and guarding all the paths and roads that led to the camp. The sectors around the camp were named for the hours on the military clock (1300, 1500, 1700, 2100, 2300, etc). Recon of each area was performed in the shape of a fan, and the necessary lines of defense were placed along the roads. Hidden ambush locations were maintained at the ready, and the personnel in each one continued to train to make the defense of their sector more complete.

The reconnaissance reports were compiled and the lines of defense in each sector were ready. The general plans were put in place, such as getting [the cooperation] of the tribes in the surrounding area, which was a semi-circle about 40 km across. As a result of this action, the enemy's activity was completely stopped, and basic training was able to continue. The lines of defense became further entrenched and even more prepared. Also, alternate locations for the camp were chosen. Weapons and munitions were transported to a hidden cache underground and maps of the locations were prepared. This was so we could evacuate the camp quickly without suffering any losses. After ensuring that the sectors around the camp were secure, I decided to move to Camp Hanji 30 km east of Camp Aghnaji. I left Brother Umar Taj al-Din in charge of the training camp.

On the August 30th at camp Hanji, I met with Sheikh Abdullah Umar, who was representing the Islamic Union. I asked him for some written materials or documents about his organization, and I was surprised to see that he didn't have anything like that with him. The Revolutionary Council met, ended, and everyone went to their homes without making any political plans. And we had Abd al-Salam [in the Revolutionary Council], who had taken \$20,000 from Abu Fatima (aka Abu Hafs) on behalf of the council! As for military affairs, they didn't even have any maps with enemy locations and movements.

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Page 21: Because of this, there were no good choices for locations or defense planning, and even worse, they had put all their ammunition in a tent in middle of the camp.

The Sufi vs. Salafist Problem

On the day that I arrived at Camp Hanji, I found Abdullah Umar busy listening to the news on the radio from the village of Jarbo. He was waiting for Abdullah Irad and Ali Jaz to arrive. They had gone to attempt to reconcile a problem that had arisen in Jarbo, and they were able to form good relations with the local people, as well as the Sheikh of the tribe, Owjas Nur. [They were able to come to an agreement] over food supplies and movement on the highway for communication with the outside world. The Sheikh seemed confused, and he didn't know what to do about the problem [of Sufi vs. Salafist]. In the past, it wasn't necessary for him to think about who was trying to control the province and implement an Islamic government there.

This problem [of Sufi vs. Salafist] was beginning to chafe me—I had heard about it before--and the day began in a very unsatisfactory way for me. That same day, two men from the Revolutionary Council had gone to Jarbo to contain the problem. Their names were Sheikh Hussayn Khalif and Sheikh Hussayn Takhri, and they were responsible for the Shar'ia Da'wa. When they got there, they saw a 1988 double-cab Toyota belonging to the Timawin Sufis. These Sufis had long hair, and they were joking around and smoking cigarettes, and dealing with the enemy like they do in our country, where we call them "Big Hairs". They have a lot of hostility for the members of the Islamic Union, who they say are Wahabbis and agents for foreign countries. The Sheikhs decided to take the Toyota from the Timawin. The two sheikhs fired up some of the young men and they put pressure on the military leader Major Mustafa Arab. He agreed, and the fired-up young men went to the Union to get the Toyota from the Sufis in the Union. The young men rode roughshod over the Sufis. No one thought to go against the young men's wishes, even though the Sufis had many reasons why they needed the Toyota. But they took it lying down and didn't say a word in their own defense.

The ONLF (Ogaden National Liberation Front) party helped the young men get this car, and they decided to try to abscond with another car belong to an aid organization. It is said that the general chaos throughout the country came about after the WSLF (Western Somalia Liberation Front) overthrew the whites and the EBRDF was driven out. The

local leadership for the ONLF was Abdullah Sa'ad from Reer Amadan, and the local WSLF leader was Abd al-Rahman Jali from Reer 'Aulayhen in the south. (This was in June 1993).

But stranger than that was the behavior of the Sunnis. They showed a level of cunning and hatred that surprised us, and I think it was the businessmen who gave them the idea. They said that our car that was taken in Jarbo actually belonged to a holy man from the Ojus Koshen tribe, and that we were from the Haroon tribe in Dajhaboor in the south. They said that we would cut off trade and take their cars until they were giving our cars to us as presents and we expelled the Islamic Union from their country.

A man came from Jarbo with money to distribute to the people, especially the tribal Sheikhs. He said that "we don't want political parties in our countries, and weapons either. Our best interests are not being followed because the Islamic Union is here." The mudslinging just got worse, and he made a speech with these kinds of words from the pulpit during the Friday prayer. He demanded that the people kick the Islamic Union and its army out of Jarbo. He said that Jarbo is the only village who is offering support to the Islamic Union and that it is a wasteful expense. The people were on the verge of rioting, and this is the exact reason why the enemy and its forces interfere and occupy their country under the slogan of reconciling the warring tribes.

On the evening of the same day, Abdullah Irad and Ali Jaz arrived in Jarbo and a meeting was convened where we discussed this issue in detail. I asked Abdullah Irad: "By your own admission, you are the chief of the Office of Jihad. Did you order this action, or even know about it before it happened?" He said no, and that he was becoming increasingly displeased with this kind of behavior. He asked me my opinion, so I told them that this [car stealing] had resulted in the following:

1. New battle fronts have opened up adjacent to us, in addition to the main enemy.

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2. The people are considered hostile now, and we should attempt to win them over step by step, especially the Sufis.
3. We've given the enemy a golden opportunity to exploit, to show up here, right next to us, because of the need for reconciliation and keeping the peace.
4. This operation exposed a lack of organization in our military operations. How is it that military force is employed by order of civilians and the military commander doesn't even know about it?

I also told them the following:

- Give back the car to its rightful owners so this issue can be settled, and we can sabotage the enemy's plans. But to save face, we will do the following: we exploit the previous request of the Sheikh of the Ogas Koshen tribe in Jarbo to return the car, and we tell him we will do it for him, but with the following stipulations:

- The Timawin rebuild the school that they tore down for the Islamic Solidarity Party.
- They promise not to infringe upon Muslim interests after that.
- Dealing with the enemy (the businessmen) is objectionable. Write this down and disseminate it. Discuss it with the people. We'll use this to get the support of the Solidarity people. It will convince people and we'll get the tribe and the sheikh of the tribe on our side. We must act quickly. Start with this tomorrow.

In the morning, Abdullah Irad and Ali Jaz went to Jarboo and returned the car to the tribe's sheikh, as had been agreed upon previously. Thus ended the problem, praise be to God.

Then I spoke with Abdullah Irad about the proposed new Office of Jihad. I also spoke with Sheikh Abdullah Umar about implementing political and military strategy, and about the administrative system to facilitate affairs in the next phase.

The new politics

While Abdullah Irad and Ali Jaz went to deal with the problem according to what we had agreed, I met with Sheikh Abdullah Umar, and we agreed to put a new plan in place for political and military work in the next phase. This was regarding the fast-approaching graduation of the basic training class, and the troubling news about enemy movements nearby. I met with what remained of the revolutionary committee. (I mention a few of them here: Abd al-Qadr Haj Teqni from Reer 'Aulayhen south of the River Shibli, Mohammed Hassen Terar.) We discussed the following issues:

- The enemy: its troops, its weapons, its distribution, its military history, its decisions, and possible developments.
- Our troops: weapons and supplies, our decisions, possibilities, developing our levels, and the balance between our troops and the enemy's.
- The land: climate, topography, its resources, its suitability for guerilla warfare.
- The people: their history, their position on the issue, their position with the Islamic Union, and the possibility of getting them on our side.

We even discussed the possibility of retreating from the jihadist line, perhaps returning to missionary work [or propaganda]. We concluded that we could not retreat from the jihadist line because no one would show us any mercy if we did. The results of our discussion were positive and it was necessary that we rely upon God and implement the new politics: political, military, administrative, and missionary work [or propaganda].

Then we discussed the priorities of the jihadist effort:

- Specify the primary enemy (the businessmen), and postpone [efforts against] other groups.
- Determine responsibilities and separate politics from military in the effort.
- Write a statement announcing jihad, with the cooperation of Sheikh Abdullah Umar.

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Then on Tuesday morning August 31st, I convened a meeting with the new leader of Camp Hanji, Mohammed Sheikh Hassan Terar, to organize the camp:

Organize the brothers in the camp and divided them into platoons according to the sectors of the perimeter.

Organize efforts on the gun trucks, and their respective weapons, and train from fixed positions and on the move.

One the following day, September 1st, we implemented this program.

On the second day, Thursday, we visited Jerisli to find a place to hide the ammunition. We arrived at the basic training camp, which was 2.5 km from the village in the Tesmani Valley. When we arrived, we found trenches with 26 brothers in them, most of them young. They only had 8 AK-47s, and basically, this location was a weak point. If the enemy were to strike, there would be grave losses, especially if it became possible for the enemy to advance along the road. I was very troubled by this situation. This trip was in the evening, and the next morning, when I was writing the statement announcing jihad, I discovered that the sheikh was not moving forward with this issue.

The statement included the following thoughts:

Jihadists verses [from the Koran]-quotes from the Hadith-words from the theologians

The history of the country's colonization beginning with the English and the Italians

The colonizers' deeds-and the native people's jihad

Characterizing the Islamic Union and its goals

The announcement of jihad

Our roots in jihad

A message for Muslims of the world to unite

On Friday morning I returned with two guards (from the mujahedeen), and we walked to Aghnaji. On Saturday September 4th, the platoons that graduated read the reports, and drew the maps and divided the perimeter into five sectors. Then there was a meeting before noon with the brothers in training to discuss the latest developments and to prepare the basic training class for the al-Fateh class. The meeting finally took place on Wednesday the 8th [of September] and lasted from 6:00 am to 11:00 am. Then there was a meeting with the Revolutionary Council Office of Jihad. Then the news came on Thursday morning September 9th that the enemy had advanced to the village of Da'rduur 30 km west of the camp. This news came from our troops that had gone out in the same direction where Sa'id Bin Zayd's platoon had been out on a recon patrol out toward my location under the leadership of Abd al-Nur.

Sa'd Bin Abu Weqas went to Da'rduur to meet with Sheikh Hussayn Rabi and they declared a state of emergency. He also convinced Doctor Hamdi from the university to lead the Sa'd platoon, and also prepared the al-Zebir platoon with the leadership of Ahmed al-Maghrebi to strengthen the defense in this direction. This was in support of the Camp Deputy Commander Umar Taj al-Din, with recon on all fronts, especially the roads leading up to the camp.

I relocated with the al-Zebir platoon and a radio to create a Tactical Operations Center and an Administrative Affairs point in the mountains of Da'duur, and we kept a squad

there. Then the al-Telha platoon pushed out to the southwest in the direction of 2100 under the leadership of Abd al-Sabur. When we got there, we found that 14 enemy personnel had attacked and crossed one of the recon perimeters. Sa'id Bin Zaid's platoon pushed them back to the river, but did not overtake them. The enemy was waiting for Sa'id's platoon to return. There was magnificent coordination between communications and supply in this operation. On Monday September 13th we returned to the camp and recorded in my notebook with a red pen about the following news: "A new peace treaty for self-government has been signed by the Jews and Yassir Arafat. Shimon Perez and Mahmoud Abbass signed it in Washington." On Tuesday morning September 14th a new basic training course began, which was what the enemy was trying to keep us from doing with their recon patrols. But we had completed our preparations before they got there, and this operation was met with a great show of force from our troops, and imparted fear of us to the enemy.

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They weren't going to ever cross the river, unless we went to them to finish the job. On the following day, the news discussed the role King Hussein played in aiding the Jews with the return of Yitzhak Rabin to Morocco, and his attendance at the Jewish New Year celebration. [They also discussed] Hussein's secret friendly visits to Israel.

On the same day, I returned to Hanji to complete the administrative and political reforms, and to continue teaching Islamic politics and law to the platoons. Every platoon that graduated would have an Islamic politics representative and an Islamic law representative. The first would allow the people to govern by their religion, and the second would allow them a political position in the Islamic Union. Every platoon was also taught some literature so that they would be literate, and none of their rights would be taken from them. They were also given papers that had the names of the heads of the tribes written on them, and documents saying that they were members of the Islamic Union. The results were magnificent. When a tribal delegation from the Islamic Union came the following week, they joined the mujahedeen.

The position on arresting spies

On October 2nd, the third phase of training began.

The brothers in training were divided into two companies as follows:

The al-Fateh Company, under the leadership of Ahmed Nur, and composed of the following:

A – Abu Bakr al-Sadiq Platoon, God keep him

B – Hamza Platoon, God keep him

C – Abu Abida Platoon, God keep him

The al-Yarmuk Company, led by Sheikh Hussein Rabi and composed of the following:

A – Umar Ben al-Khatib Platoon, God keep him

B – Sa'd Bin Abu Weqas Platoon, God keep him

C – al-Zebir Bin al-'Awam Platoon, God keep him

“Sunday was bloody and Monday was sad. A devil was slain in Moscow and Parliament was destroyed, making the final conclusion to the communist regime, and this was done by hand of the Russian, Boris Yeltsin. And evil was slain in Mogadishu, [in an attack] against the Americans. Two planes crashed, killing 18 and wounding 84. In addition, seven soldiers were missing, including the pilot. This destroyed a special unit that had come to oppress Somalia, and was executed at the hands of young Muslims. In one day, the bear and the elephant was destroyed, praise be to God.

“Also, the results of the Egyptian referendum are in, and of course, it was a crushing victory for the third time for the Mubarek administration, despite the refusal of the opposition, and 94% negative ratings.”

On Tuesday morning and Wednesday night, there was a turbulent meeting with the members of the Office of Jihad, where we prepared them for our implementation of the battle plan in the next phase, after the platoons graduate in the coming days. The following people attended the meeting:

Abd al-Irad, Commander of the Office of Jihad, and Mustafa Arab, Deputy Commander Abdul Rahman Hussein, [meaning unclear] Khaled, Ahmed Nur, Qas al-Fateh. Mohammed Sheikh Hassan Terar, [meaning unclear] the northern sector, Umar Taj al-Din

The distribution of the platoons was explained in this meeting, in the region of Ogaden and the military sectors for each company.

The plan for operations was for us to strike first in the north at the Sejej location, and at the southern location at the Abaqro location. In order to provide camouflage for these operations, the other platoons will move in an open manner to the east first. The leadership of the platoons was there to watch the planning so they could execute operations for each platoon.

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Here a storm was released, and they [the members of the Office of Jihad] refused, especially Abdullah Irad, and there was fear that the supply lines would be cut, and that there would be a negative effect on the morale of the brothers. But after much trying and convincing, the trip was satisfactory. We achieved a consensus and drafted a plan. The three brothers Umar Taj al-Din, Zakariyya, and Abd al-Sabur all agreed. Their authority was clearly outlined, and copies were distributed to them. I took a copy with me also.

On Thursday October 7th, after arranging all the affairs and distributing food and ammunition, as well as the missions to the platoons, al-Yarmuk Company pushed out to the east and the north. This began the execution of the plan, the first step on the operational timetable. (Operation al-Fateh)

Wednesday October 13th was the first operation in Sejej, performed by al-Zebir Platoon under the leadership of Umar Taj al-Din. They killed 23 enemy soldiers and injured the rest of the platoon. They confiscated 6 weapons, a radio and a sum of money. Six

brothers were killed and two were injured. The enemy withdrew completely. On Thursday October 14th the al-Fateh Company began movements toward the south. On Friday afternoon they crossed the river safely with ropes and a rubber raft, at the village of Quuni. On Saturday afternoon, they advanced toward the enemy and surrounded them in the night at Abaqro. We spent Sunday night in negotiations with the people of the village and the enemy, and we hid in their homes. The leader of the campaign, Abd al-Rahman Sheikh Hussein, decided to pull away from the enemy for the sake of our safety, and to return later with snipers and a road blockage. We had pulled out before dawn, and after that long, sad story of the night we spent there, I left feeling sick.

We withdrew to the south with two platoons, and the Abu Abida Platoon remained there a distance of 15 km away, under the leadership of dear brother Abd al-Rahman Bedi, who was martyred in an ambush a few days later that he executed against the enemy with his platoon. We knew by looking at his face that he harbored a complete love for the Koran.

Then we moved to the south with the Abd al-Weli Platoon and Abd al-Rahman al-Hussein, and the trip lasted 12 days. We reached Abu Fatima in Beled Huwa' at dawn on Friday (5:15 am October 29th). A carload of brothers and Abd al-Razaq received us on Ethiopian soil at Ogaden on the borders. They took us to Luuq at night, and then we went to Huwa' in the same night. On Saturday October 30th there was a meeting with Abu Fatima and the Green Team. Another travel mission began in Somalia that lasted until the last day in 1993.

On this occasion, I began to keep a diary of this phase. I was actually there the whole time, since Brother Saif al-Adel began [the mission], and the details of it are kept in a special notebook with the Brothers.

Notices and Investigations

1. Completing translations for some of the people, such as Abd al-Salam Uthman, al-Sheikh al-Tayib, Abd al-Rahman Hussein, al-Sheikh Abdullah Umar, Abd al-Rabi, al-Sheikh Yusef Hussein, Mustafa Arab, Ahmed Nur, Mohammed Hassen Terar, Abd al-Razaq, Abd al-Wahed.
2. Concentrating on some of the battles so we can learn from them.
3. Forming the leadership and their operational schedule.
4. Shaping the region and the possibility of its liberation.
5. The core group of people who went to Muslim Africa in the appendix of the report.

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The trip to Muslim Africa [a poem]

The brown forest is oppressed by the colors of pain and suffering.
Darkness spreads its wings over the hills and mountains.

From the darkness of the laws of wolves... (etc.)

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Page 33: Poem continues.

(signed)

Saif al-Islam

Khartoum, August 1994

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