

Psychological Assessment of  
Zain al-'Abedin al-Abideen Muhammad Hassan, a.k.a. Abu Zubaydah

The following psychological assessment of Zain al-'Abedin al-Abideen Muhammad Hassan, (a.k.a. Abu Zubaydah) is based upon the results of direct interviews with and observations of the subject, and from information obtained from collected sources such as intelligence and press reporting.

[REDACTED]

Background Information. For at least a decade, subject has lived and worked within an environment that has condoned, nurtured, intensified, and rewarded his radical beliefs. The following is a partial list of responsibilities that the subject has held (no particular order). Subject is currently 31 years old.

Abu Zubaydah worked from very low-level mujahidin (called courier by some) by age of 11 to third or fourth man in al-Qa'ida. No one rises to that level in such a short period of time without being dedicated, trusted, and strong.

Alleged to have written al-Qa'ida's manual on resistance techniques and lectured on the topic.

Involved in every major al-Qa'ida terrorist operation; served as the operational planner for the millennium plot (2000), the Paris embassy (2001) and a planner of the 11 September hijackings which killed and maimed thousands of Americans.

Served as senior Usama Bin Ladin lieutenant and played a key role in the movement and training of operatives on behalf of al-Qa'ida, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and other terrorist elements inside Pakistan and Afghanistan. He was a key player in the Millennium threat last year and appears to be engaged in ongoing terrorism planning against US interests. Zubaydah is wanted in Jordan for his role in the Millennium plot.

Directed the start-up of a Bin Ladin cell in Jordan that was disrupted in Amman in December 1999 for plotting terrorist acts against US and Israeli targets during the Millennium celebrations in Jordan. Two central figures of the plot, under arrest, identified Abu Zubaydah as being the primary supporter of this cell and the plot.

Managed a network of training camps, safehouses, and *mujahedin*-related offices in Peshawar and Afghanistan, assisted in other extremist networks, by moving men, money and materials in support of various *jihads*.

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Served as Deputy Camp Commander for al-Qa'ida training camp in Afghanistan.

Personally approved entry and graduation of all trainees [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] circa 1999-2000. From 1996-1999, approved all individuals going in and out of Afghanistan to the training camps. No one came in and out of Peshawar, Pakistan without his knowledge and approval. Served as al-Qa'ida's coordinator of external contacts, or foreign communications.

Acted as al-Qa'ida's CI officer and was trusted to find spies in their midst.

Relevant History: Subject reported that he persisted for a few years in holding onto the possibility that he could eventually transition from jihad life back into college and pursuit of his traditional educational, career, and family goals. As time passed he appeared to find a special niche for himself. He became increasingly integrated into the jihadist ideology and lifestyle. He periodically felt pangs of homesickness, longed for the company of family, and fantasized about a future as a computer expert or engineer. However, overtime, the frequency and intensity of these thoughts and feelings diminished. He began to think of any activity outside jihad as "silly". Eventually, he understood that his mind and heart were devoted to serving Allah and Islam through his jihad. He asserted that he has had "no" doubts or regrets about choosing to pursue and devote himself to jihad since the mid-1990's.

Personality: Subject is a highly self-directed individual who prizes his independence. He seeks to express his independence by doing things his own way and having his own style to the extent that he can within the structure of radical salafist environments. When he makes concessions, it is within the context of his ideological and religious convictions. He has narcissistic features that are evident in his attention to his appearance and in his obvious "efforts" to demonstrate that he is really a rather "humble and regular guy." Subject clearly possesses an air of confidence, self-assurance, and authority. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He is somewhat compulsive in how he organizes his environment and conducts his business. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He conceded that he still wrestles with issues regarding the killing of civilians and how to determine who is "innocent." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He acknowledged that he celebrated the destruction of the World Trade Center.

He is intellectually curious, skeptical and wary of others' intentions, possesses excellent self-discipline and readily sets aside his own interests to meet his responsibilities. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Subject is perfectionistic [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] persistent [REDACTED]

private (highly cautious regarding opening up to others), and highly capable in interactions with others from a variety of backgrounds. Not surprisingly, he possesses the discipline, drive, creativity and pragmatism that characterize effective leaders.

Social Skills and Relationships: Subject has excellent social skills and social [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He is highly socially perceptive and quick to recognize and assess the moods and motivations of others. He is alert and keenly observant of others' interactions. He is strongly inclined to carefully gauge a situation before voicing opinions or revealing feelings. He is adept at choosing to conceal or convey a particular attitude or emotion depending on the context and immediate utility. Subject tends to be a very private person who is skeptical of others' intentions and alert for ulterior motives. He is markedly vigilant and tends not to trust others easily. [REDACTED]

Emotional/Mental Status/Coping Skills: Overall, subject's background as revealed by self-report (including diaries and interview) does not indicate that he has a history of mood disturbance or other psychiatric pathology. Indeed, his reported and known history indicates that he is remarkably resilient and confident that he can overcome adversity. During the occasions that he experiences increased stress and/or low mood, he may become somewhat more withdrawn, melancholy, and reflective. However, this shift in mood will likely last a relatively short time. He denies and there is no evidence in his reported history of thought disorder or enduring mood or mental health problems. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Subject is generally self-sufficient and relies on his understanding and application of religious and psychological principles, intelligence, and discipline to avoid and overcome problems. His faith, the blessings of religious leaders, and camaraderie of like-minded mujahedin brothers have provided him with a reliable and durable support system.

Of particular note has been subject's ability to manage his mood and emotions during captivity. Being circumspect, calm, controlled, and deliberate is likely characteristic of subject's demeanor under pressure prior to capture. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In addition, he showed strong signs of sympathetic nervous system arousal (possibly fear) when he experienced the initial "hard" dislocation of expectation intervention following session 63. Due to his incredibly strong resolve, expertise in civilian warfare, resistance to interrogation techniques (the latter two which he trained hundreds of others on) this experience was one of the few that led to him providing significant actionable intelligence. As has been observed throughout his recent detainment, he was able to quickly bounce back from these most disconcerting moments and regain an air of calm confidence and strong resolve in not parting with other threat information.

Future Worldview: According to the subject, the jihad will ultimately be victorious over American and the west. [REDACTED]

Motivations. Subject's primary motivations are (in no particular order): status/prestige, power, influence, serving the Ummah, serving the prophet and Allah, pursuing a "pure jihad", contributing to the establishment of Shari'a among Muslim countries, contributing to the "lifting up" of Muslims throughout the world, and contributing to the restoration of the Palestinian homeland.

Primary Strengths. (in no particular order) Ability to focus, goal-directed discipline, intelligence, emotional resilience, street savvy, ability to organize and manage people, ability to delegate tasks, keen observation skills, fluid adaptability (can anticipate and adapt under duress and with minimal resources), capable of assessing and exploiting the needs of others, ability to adjust goals to emerging opportunities [REDACTED]

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Captivity and Interrogation. Subject recognizes that his duty as a soldier/warrior/mujahid is to delay, mislead, and lie to protect what is most critical to the success of his cause. He assumes that we understand this. Thus, he is not likely to be intimidated or weakened by being "caught" in lies. His job is to lie. During interview he explained that he lied to his neighbors, to shopkeepers, to bankers, travel agents, airport personnel, and many others in order to protect his people and activities. He said, "I lie, lie, lie, lie, lie, and lie." He prides himself in regard to past deceptions he managed with great success.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He acquired a United Nations refugee identification card by persistently telling the same lie over a period of several weeks or months. He has learned that the combination of skillful deception and lying pays off.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He has talked with Ayman al-Zawahiri and it is likely that Zawahiri talked about his experience as a captive of the Egyptians and Russians. In addition, subject is familiar and probably well versed regarding al-Qa'ida's captivity and resistance training materials. Thus, one would expect that subject would draw upon this fund of knowledge as he attempts to cope with his own captivity.

[REDACTED]

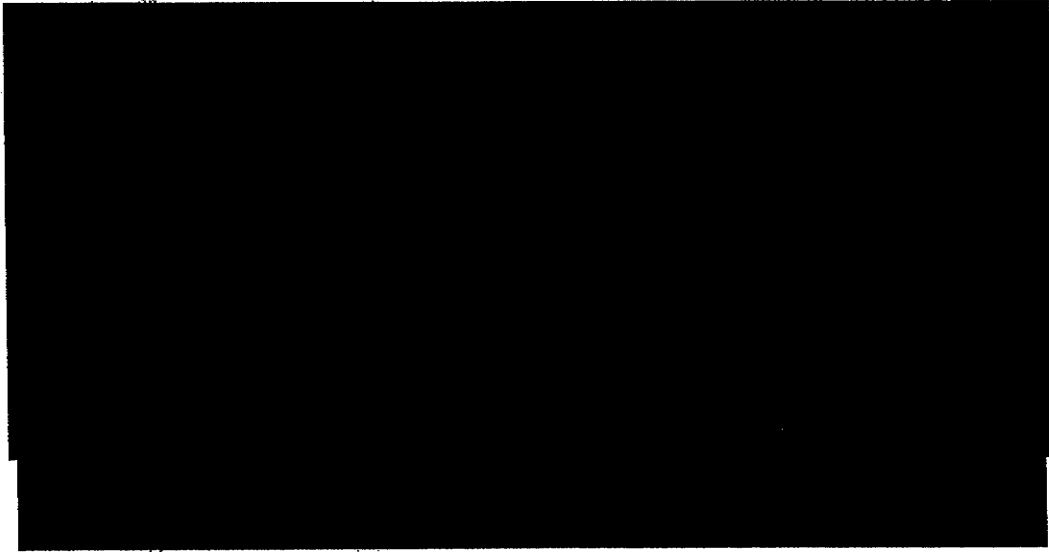
[REDACTED] Subject believes in the ultimate destiny of Islam is to dominate the world. He believes that global victory is inevitable. Thus, there is the chance that he could rationalize that providing information will harm current efforts but represent only a temporary setback.

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