



Anwar al-Awlaki

Read the full report here: [Profile: Anwar al-Awlaki \(PDF\)](#).

Prior to his death in a U.S. drone strike in Yemen on September 30, 2011, Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born Muslim cleric living in Yemen, encouraged attacks against America and the West by propagating radical online lectures to English-speaking audiences. Al-Awlaki, described by government officials as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) "leader of external operations," has also contributed to most of the editions of Inspire, Al Qaeda's first-ever English-language magazine disseminated via the Internet.

In many of al-Awlaki's videos, he called on Muslims around the world to kill Americans. In a video released on November 8, 2010, titled "Make it known and clear to mankind," al-Awlaki said, "Don't consult with anybody in killing the Americans, fighting the devil doesn't require consultation or prayers seeking divine guidance," he said.

Al-Awlaki's materials have inspired several American Muslim extremists to carry out terrorist attacks in the U.S. and join terrorist groups overseas. The Yemeni-based cleric reportedly exchanged more than a dozen emails with [Nidal Malik Hasan](#), the alleged gunman who killed 13 people and wounded 32 others at the Fort Hood Army base in Texas in November 2009. In his May 2010 interview, al-Awlaki called Hasan "one of my students" and in an interview held a month after the Fort Hood attack, al-Awlaki explained that he first met Hasan nine years earlier when he served as the imam of a mosque attended by Hasan in the

Washington, D.C. area. In their subsequent e-mail communications, Hasan asked al-Awlaki if a Muslim soldier serving in the American Army was allowed to kill his fellow soldiers, expressed his support of killing Israeli civilians and mentioned various justifications for "targeting the Jews with rockets."

Al-Awlaki has also admitted that, in the fall of 2009, he met with [Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab](#), a Nigerian man who later attempted to detonate a bomb on a transatlantic flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day in 2009. American officials have indicated that al-Awlaki personally instructed Abdulmutallab to detonate his bomb over American airspace to maximize casualties.

For several years, al-Awlaki has used his now-defunct blog to spread his sermons, literature and other materials that encourage readers to carry out attacks against Western targets. [Several convicted terrorists in the U.S., Canada and Britain were found with al-Awlaki materials](#) at the time of their respective arrests.

While al-Awlaki's sermons and literature primarily focus on condemning the West, he also reviles Israel and Jews. In his audio recording released on March 17, 2010, Al-Awlaki used America's support for Israel as justification for attacks against American interests. "What benefit is it to the American people to suffer for the sake of supporting Israel?" al-Awlaki asked.

Al-Awlaki, born in New Mexico to Yemeni parents, previously served as the imam of mosques in Denver, San Diego and Falls Church, Virginia. Two of those mosques were attended by three of the September 11 hijackers. Al-Awlaki left the U.S. in 2002 after he was questioned by the FBI about the September 11 terrorist attacks.
Updated November 30, 2011