Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

Read the full report here: Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula **(PDF).**

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), described by the U.S. government as "the most active and dangerous" branch of Al Qaeda, is the terrorist organization's wing in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The growth of AQAP has led American officials to indicate that Yemen could become Al Qaeda's next operational and training hub for the group's militants from around the world.

Formed in early 2009, AQAP has attempted to carry out multiple attacks against the United States, including at least three failed attacks involving U.S.-bound aviation, most recently in 2012. Not limited to foreign targets, AQAP has also plotted attacks against regional leadership, including a failed assassination attempt on a Saudi prince serving as Deputy Minister of the Interior. These plots, though unsuccessful, have garnered the group substantial media attention and a reputation as one of the gravest terrorist threats.

A key component of AQAP's operational strategy entails reaching out to English-speaking audiences with its messages and propaganda in order to recruit new members. This material encourages Western audiences to adopt its ideology and carry out attacks against Western interests in the Arabian Peninsula and abroad.

The driving forces behind AQAP's English-language propaganda machine were Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born cleric, and Samir Khan, an American blogger and propagandist, both of whom were killed in a September 30, 2011 drone strike.

The U.S. designated AQAP as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in January 2010 and has pursued a drone campaign against AQAP while providing assistance to the Yemeni military in its efforts to combat the group.

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