

SECURITY ADVISORY SA0109251736

ROUTINE
DTG/RELEASE TIME: 251736Z SEP 01
TO: ALSEC

U N C L A S
SUBJ: (U) SOMALIA (SO) AL-ITIHAAD AL-ISLAMIYA
REF(S): IR 2 1 042 0716 012 01

SUMMARY: (U) THIS ADVISORY FORWARDS INFO ON SOMALIA-BASED ISLAMIC GROUP AL-ITIHAAD AL-ISLAMIYA (AIAI) AL-QAEDA CONNECTIONS AND IDENTIFIED ACTIVITIES SOMALIA

NARR/ 1. (U) AL-ITIHAAD AL-ISLAMIYA (AIAI) IS A HARD-LINE FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION BASED IN SOMALIA WITH IDENTIFIED CONNECTIONS TO USAMA BIN LADEN / AL-QAEDA. AIAI IDENTIFIES ITSELF AS A CHARITY ORGANIZATION. ITS KNOWN OBJECTIVE IS TO REMAKE SOMALIA UNDER STRICT ISLAMIC SHARIA LAW. AIAI WAS INITIALLY INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING SOMALIA'S ISLAMIC COURT SYSTEM, CONTROL OF WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CEDED TO THE TRANSITIONAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT (TNG).

2. (U) IN 1996-97 AIAI WAS DESTROYED MILITARILY BY AN ETHIOPIAN MILITARY CAMPAIGN INTO EASTERN ETHIOPIA / WESTERN SOMALIA DESIGNED TO ELIMINATE PERCEIVED THREATS TO ETHIOPIA'S SECURITY FROM AIAI CLANDESTINE SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. LATER AIAI WAS ALSO DEFEATED MILITARILY BY THE SOMALIA SALVATION DEMOCRATIC FRONT (SSDF) BASED IN AUTONOMOUS PUNTLAND IN THE NORTHERN SEPARATIST REGION OF SOMALILAND. SSDF MOSTLY CONTROLS NORTHERN SEPARATIST SOMALILAND, BUT AIAI IS KNOWN TO BE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE SSDF.

3. (U) AIAI IS CONSIDERED TO BE AL-QAEDA'S PRIMARY SUPPORT BASE IN SOMALIA. FORMER AIAI COMMANDER HASSAN DAYER AWEIS IS NOW A "BUSINESSMAN" OPERATING THROUGHOUT THE RED SEA AND PERSIAN GULF REGION AND THOUGHT TO BE CONNECTED TO AL-QAEDA. ADDITIONALLY, "FORMER" AIAI SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN GRADUALLY INTEGRATING INTO THE TNG.

4. (U) APPROXIMATELY 15 - 18 MONTHS PRECEDING THE BOMBING OF THE USS COLE IN YEMEN, AGENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF AL-QAEDA WERE TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED IN NORTHERN SOMALIA.

5. (U) AIAI ONCE MAINTAINED TRAINING CAMPS AT RAS KAMBONI ON THE COAST SOUTH OF KISMAYO NEAR THE BORDER WITH KENYA, AND LAS QUOAY NEAR THE PORT OF BOSASSO IN THE NORTHEAST. THESE CAMPS ARE CURRENTLY THOUGHT TO BE IN USE IN SOME CAPACITY BY AIAI. AIAI IS ALSO KNOWN TO BE HEAVILY INVOLVED IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SOMALIA AND POSSIBLY OTHER BUSINESS PROJECTS.

BT

(This document originally posted at SECNET on 25 SEP 2001)