

Who is Ali Mohamed?

By J.M. Berger (INTELWIRE)

Ali Abdelsaoud Mohamed is an Egyptian national, who served in that country's military for more than a dozen years, including stints with its special forces and intelligence branches. In 1984, he was purged from the army for his increasingly radical Islamic beliefs and associations.[i]

Around the same time, Mohamed was recruited into Egyptian Islamic Jihad by Ayman Al-Zawahiri. He was initially assigned to surveil the Cairo airport, study its security and suggest strategies for hijacking airplanes from the facility. He impressed Zawahiri, who subsequently assigned him to infiltrate U.S. intelligence.

After making an allegedly unsuccessful run on the CIA, Mohamed moved to the United States in 1986 and joined the U.S. Army, eventually being posted to the prestigious John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, where America's elite Green Berets are trained. During his tour of duty, he copied and removed military training manuals and other sensitive documents, which he translated and distributed to terrorists in New York and Afghanistan.

While still in the Army, Mohamed trained several terrorists who later took part in the World Trade Center bombing and a thwarted plot to bomb other New York City landmarks.[ii]

After leaving the army in 1989, he worked for al Qaeda at training camps in Afghanistan, while building a terrorist infrastructure back in the U.S. from his home base in California.

During the early 1990s, Mohamed attempted to infiltrate the FBI on multiple occasions, and served as an occasional informant starting no later than 1993.

Mohamed also bears the apparent distinction of being the first individual to disclose the existence of al Qaeda to the United States government, in a detailed 1993 conversation with the FBI and in a follow-up debriefing by U.S. intelligence agents. The FBI was not even permitted to know what agency questioned Mohamed.

Even as he was talking with the FBI, Mohamed helped plan and carry out a series of al Qaeda operations culminating in the 1998 East African embassy bombings, the lethal terrorist attack for which he was finally arrested.

In 2000, Mohamed struck a deal with federal prosecutors. In exchange for sentencing considerations, he agreed to provide information on al Qaeda to the authorities and pleaded guilty to several counts of conspiracy to murder Americans and attack U.S. targets in relation to the embassy bombings.

After September 11, Mohamed was locked away in a prison cell at an undisclosed location. His sentencing has been deferred without explanation by the government, and he remains in a state of legal limbo.

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J.M. Berger was lead researcher for a September 2006 National Geographic Channel documentary on the life of Ali Mohamed.

[i]The following information is summarized from National Geographic Presents Triple Cross, bin Laden's Spy in America, original air date Monday, August 28, 2006.

[ii]He may have done more than that. See INTELWIRE Special Report, Who Called The Shots In WTC '93?, September 11, 2006.