



## Open Source Assessment

### 19 December 2010

### Attempted VBIED Attack at a Military Recruiting Center [Baltimore, Maryland]



*"We gonna hit 'em where it hurts...We are gonna go...to their stations, to their bases, to everywhere a soldier is. Every soldier that we see in uniform will be killed on the spot, Insha'Allah...They will be killed until they stop waging war against...Islam...we won't stop, Insha'Allah, until they kill us or lock us up...this is for Allah...Jihad is not only in Afghanistan or Pakistan, but also in the United States"<sup>1</sup> --Muhammad Hussain*

On 8 December 2010, 21 year old Antonio Martinez [aka Muhammad Hussain], a recent convert to radical Islam, was arrested after he attempted to blow up a military recruiting center in Catonsville, Maryland, using what he believed was a vehicle borne improvised explosive device [VBIED]. According to the criminal complaint, Martinez came to the attention of the FBI after a confidential source informed them of the following statement he had made on his Facebook page, *"Any 1 who ALLAH and HIS Prophet PEACE .Be.Upon. Him I hate u with all of my heart"*.<sup>2</sup>

In Facebook communications, Martinez stated that *"it was his dream to be among the ranks of the mujahideen and that he hoped Allah would open a door for him because all he thinks about is jihad."*<sup>3</sup> Martinez approached the confidential source about targeting the US military "where they live" by attacking recruiting centers or anything military in retaliation for the continued killing of their "Muslim brothers and sisters".

#### SUGGESTED TACTICS

Before choosing to utilize a VBIED for his planned attack against the recruiting center, Martinez suggested several other methods of attack:

- Obtaining weapons and getting on the roof of the recruiting center to gain access to the facility. Then he would wait for the military members to arrive and "shoot everybody in the place"
- He suggested "short, small attacks or ambushes", similar to those used by Chechen militants
- Using gas or propane tanks if he could learn how to "rig it"



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- Burning the building down which he felt would “instill fear” and send a message that “whoever joins the military, they would be killed”
- Throwing “cocktail bombs” into the recruiting center and shooting military personnel as they run out of the building
- Martinez also mentioned needing a “big petroleum truck full of gasoline” and the possibility of blowing up Andrews Air Force Base [he suggested starting “small” and “taking over their bases and their homes”]

### ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Having knowledge about Islam is no longer necessary to become an activist for the cause. Many are now becoming radicalized simply from reading and listening to militant propaganda shown on the news, internet and Islamic forums, which allows for a much shorter time period between radicalization and participation in an attack, as seen with Martinez’s arrest. Martinez’s criminal complaint indicates that he had accounts on popular social networking sites such as YouTube and Facebook, both of which have been used by other subjects arrested on similar charges over the last couple of years.

The criminal complaint also makes reference to some specific individuals and websites that Martinez frequented or spoke of during the investigation:

- Yemeni-American, Anwar Awlaki, is an inspirational cleric and leading English language al Qaeda internet recruiter and propagandist who advocates for American Muslims to commit Jihad against the U.S. and other western countries. Anwar al-Awlaki has become a religious icon who has inspired others, particularly in the West, to pursue violent jihad. Over the last several years, Awlaki has transformed his role from spiritual leader and mentor to active recruiter and advocate for Al-Qa’ida in Yemen.

*“...Nidal Hasan is a student of mine, and I am proud of this...I support what he did, and I call upon anyone who calls himself a Muslim, and serves in the U.S. Army, to follow in the footsteps of Nidal Hasan...”* –Anwar Awlaki

- Omar Bakri Muhammad, a Syrian born cleric who helped develop radical organizations Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun. His lectures are widely available on the internet and during 2010 live lectures were available on the ‘Authentic Tawheed’ website, along with live lectures from other radical clerics such Abdullah Faisal and Anjem Choudary.

*“We don't make a distinction between civilians and non-civilians, innocents and non-innocents. Only between Muslims and unbelievers. And the life of an unbeliever has no value. It has no sanctity”.*<sup>4</sup> –Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad

- Revolution Muslim (RM) / Authentic Tawheed - Since its inception, Revolution Muslim, a radical Islamic website based out of New York, has been recognized for its controversial statements. In 2010, several UK extremists with ties to al-Muahajiroun, a British Islamist organization which has been designated as a terrorist organization by the UK in 2010, began posting to the RM site on a regular basis which has helped RM expand their audience. In July

2010, RM announced the creation of a new website entitled “Authentic Tawheed”. The site was created to provide live 24-7 PalTalk discussions with contributors to the Revolution Muslim website, along with interactive lectures with radical clerics such as those mentioned earlier (Muhammad, Faisal, & Choudary).

Revolution Muslim’s popularity has increased dramatically over the last several months due to media attention surrounding controversial statements listed on their site. Since June 2010, at least four people with ties to Revolution Muslim have been arrested in the US on terrorism charges (ex. Zachary Chesser, Carlos Almonte, Mohammed Alessa, and Abdel Hameed Shehadeh) and at least two have been arrested in the UK (Roshonara Choudhry and Bilal Z Ahmed). This group, along with others like them, will continue to play a pivotal role in the radicalization of “would be jihadists” such as Antonio Martinez.

I’m ready, man...it ain’t like you seein’ it on...the news...You gonna be there. You gonna hear the bomb go off. You gonna be, ah, shooting, gettin’ shot at. It’s gonna be real...we gotta prepare our minds...and ask Allah...to give us peace of mind and the heart and courage to go...I’m excited, man.  
-Antonio Martinez (aka Muhammad Hussein)

IMPLICATIONS

Military facilities and personnel continue to be a primary target at home and abroad. After the Fort Hood shooting, blog chatter on Islamic forums indicated that attacks carried out against the US military were acceptable. Over the last few months there have also been several statements released by al-Qa’ida and its affiliates advocating more ‘lone wolf’ style attacks like the Fort Hood shooting.

The Central Florida Intelligence Exchange (CFIX) is unaware of any specific threats; however, increased vigilance is warranted, as military facilities and personnel continue to be the target of violent encounters and threats. Region 5 partners are encouraged to remain observant and report any suspicious activity to the Central Florida Intelligence Exchange at 407-858-3950.

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<sup>1</sup> Criminal Complaint | United States of America v. Antonio Martinez | Page 8 | 8 December 2010

<sup>2</sup> Criminal Complaint | United States of America v. Antonio Martinez | Page 4 | 8 December 2010

<sup>3</sup> Criminal Complaint | United States of America v. Antonio Martinez | Page 4 | 8 December 2010

<sup>4</sup> Online Publication | International Analyst Network | “Moving Beyond 9/11: Now, Do We Finally Understand Islamic Terrorism?” | 11 October 2006 | [http://www.analyst-network.com/article.php?art\\_id=540](http://www.analyst-network.com/article.php?art_id=540)