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Minneapolis Man Sentenced for Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Al-Qaeda

WASHINGTON - A 35-year-old Minneapolis man was sentenced today in federal court on one count of conspiring to provide material support and resources to al-Qaeda.

David Kris, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, and Frank J. Magill, U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota announced that on July 9 in Minneapolis, U.S. District Court Judge John Tunheim sentenced Mohammed Abdullah Warsame to 92 months in prison and three years of supervised release.

Warsame, a naturalized Canadian citizen of Somali descent, was charged with one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization – al Qaeda – in a Jan. 20, 2004, indictment returned in the District of Minnesota. A June 21, 2005, superseding indictment also charged Warsame with one count of providing material support to al-Qaeda and three counts of making false statements to the FBI. Warsame pleaded guilty to the material support count of the superseding indictment on May 5, 2009. The government has agreed as part of a plea agreement to dismiss the remaining charges.

"I applaud the many agents, analysts and prosecutors whose tireless efforts led to this sentence. This case serves as a reminder of the continuing threats we face as a nation and our resolve to meet those threats," said David Kris, Assistant Attorney General for National Security.

"Today's sentence marks the culmination of many years of painstaking investigative and prosecutorial work, and all those involved in this case, particularly the Joint Terrorism Task Force, deserve our thanks," said U.S. Attorney Magill. "Mr. Warsame has admitted to providing material support to the al-Qaeda terrorist organization. Mr. Warsame's actions demonstrate that he was a member of the organization, that he believed in its cause, and that he was willing to violate United States law in support of al-Qaeda. The sentence imposed today shows that our battle against terrorism continues, including right here in Minnesota, and that those who knowingly provide support to terrorists will be held accountable for their actions."

According to the plea agreement, Warsame admitted that from about March 2000 through at least December 2003, he conspired with others to provide material support to al-Qaeda in the form of personnel, training and currency.

According to court documents, in March 2000, Warsame traveled through the mountains from Pakistan to Afghanistan, where he attended an al-Qaeda training camp outside Kabul. For the next three to five months, Warsame received training in physical fitness, the use of weapons and martial arts. Warsame also traveled to the front lines with the Taliban and observed combat between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.

In the summer of 2000, he then traveled to the al Faruq training camp, where he received further military training and met Osama Bin Laden. Warsame described Bin Laden as "very inspirational." At this camp, Warsame was trained in the use of AK-47 rifles, Uzis and other weapons, as well as training in tactics and navigation. During this time, Warsame again fought for the Taliban and said he was exposed to heavy fighting.

Warsame returned to Pakistan, and while there, he was in contact via e-mail with al-Qaeda associates he had met in Afghanistan. In one of those e-mails, Warsame described his time spent at the camps as "one of the greatest experiences of my life. I will be going back there very soon."

In another e-mail dated Dec. 6, 2000, Warsame wrote, "If you have any news or important information please let me know, because I don't want to be late for the action, you know what I mean. We hear there might be an attack soon."

After a few months in Pakistan, Warsame returned to Afghanistan and to an al-Qaeda guesthouse. The guesthouse was used as a place of rest for people attending Bin Laden's camp. Warsame was assigned to guard the guesthouse and later met a variety of individuals who have been indicted and convicted of terrorism-related offenses in the United States, including Zacarias Moussaoui and Richard Reid.

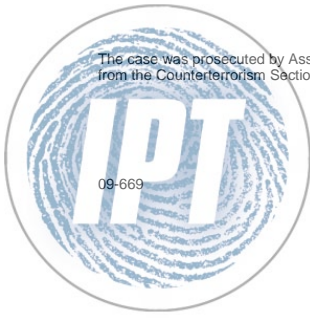
Warsame attended an Islamic institute near the guesthouse that taught radical Islam and preached jihad to students and said, according to court documents, the institute's leader was a high-ranking al-Qaeda member. Warsame admitted that he approached this individual for money in order to bring his family from Canada to Afghanistan.

Warsame admitted that in March 2001, he traveled from Pakistan via London to Canada and continued his e-mail contacts with the al-Qaeda associates he had met in Afghanistan. In addition, he sent approximately \$2,000 (Canadian) to one of his former training camp commanders. Warsame also provided information to an individual he met in Afghanistan about the process for entering Canada.

Warsame then relocated to Minneapolis. Throughout 2002 and 2003, he continued to exchange e-mail messages with and provide information to several individuals associated with al-Qaeda.

This case was the result of an investigation by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). The JTTF is a multi-agency effort combining the resources of federal, state and local law enforcement. In addition to the FBI, the investigation was conducted with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Minneapolis Police Department, the St. Paul Police Department, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys W. Anders Folk, Tom M. Hollenhorst and Michael Ward, of the District of Minnesota, and Trial Attorney Joseph N. Kaster from the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.



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