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Press Statement

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Washington, DC

December 28, 2004

Addition of Al-Manar to the Terrorist Exclusion List, New Designation of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and Amended Designation of the Zarqawi-led Foreign Terrorist Organization Jam'at al Tawhid wa'al-Jihad to Reflect new Aliases

On December 17, 2004, the Federal Register published information on the following: the addition of Al-Manar to the Terrorist Exclusion List, the new designation of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), and the amended FTO designation of the Zarqawi-led organization known as Jam'at al Tawhid wa'al-Jihad to reflect new aliases of the organization. Designations of Foreign Terrorist Organizations and additions of groups to the Terrorist Exclusion List, part of ongoing U.S. efforts against terrorism, enhance our ability to isolate and take appropriate action against terrorist organizations.

On December 14, 2004, the global satellite television operation, Al-Manar, was designated under section 212(a)(3)(B)(vi) (II) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, placing it on the Terrorist Exclusion List. As a result of this designation, aliens are inadmissible to the United States if they engage in a range of statutorily specified activities involving Al-Manar. The Deputy Secretary of State made the decision to designate Al-Manar in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security.

The FTO designation of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and amended designation of the Zarqawi-led FTO Jam'at al Tawhid wa'al-Jihad to reflect new aliases will enhance the United States' ability to take action against these organizations in accordance with U.S. law. U.S. law makes it illegal for persons in the United States, or persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction, to provide material support to FTOs. It permits the U.S. Government to require U.S. financial institutions to block assets held by them, and makes aliens inadmissible to the United States if they engage in a range of statutorily specified activities involving the organization. After a thorough review of these groups' terrorist activities, and from the basis of law and from the basis of evidence, the Deputy Secretary of State made the decision to make these designations in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury.

On December 8, 2004, the Deputy Secretary of State designated the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended. The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) emerged in 1995 among Libyans who had fought against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Originally organized to overthrow the Qadhafi regime and install a Shari'a-based government, the LIFG has subsequently embraced the global jihadist agenda of al-Qaida. Its leadership has had a close association with al-Qaida. Some senior members of LIFG are believed to be or have belonged to al-Qaida's senior command structure, and now are part of the support network of the broader international jihadist movement. LIFG members have been directly or indirectly implicated in a number of terrorist activities, particularly in North Africa. LIFG actively targets Libya and is believed to have been involved in planning and facilitating the May 2003 bombings in Casablanca, Morocco. The LIFG constitutes the most serious threat to U.S. interests and personnel in Libya.

The Zarqawi-led FTO, Jam'at al-Tawhid wa'al Jihad, was initially designated as an FTO on October 15, 2004. Two days later on October 17, the group's leader Abu-Mus'ab al-Zarqawi pledged his group's allegiance to al-Qaida and its leader, Usama bin Laden. Following this pledge, Zarqawi's group issued statements on October 20 on jihadist websites claiming responsibility for recent anti-U.S. attacks in Iraq. In these statements, the group used a new name, TANZIM QA'IDAT AL-JIHAD FI BILAD AL-RAFIDAYN, which is understood to mean the base of organized jihadist operations in Iraq. Under the leadership of Zarqawi, the organization continued to engage in terrorist activities and claimed responsibility for the October 24th massacre of 49 unarmed, out-of-uniform Iraqi soldiers and the October 26th kidnapping and beheading of Japanese citizen Shosei Koda. We have accordingly amended the FTO designation to add the new alias and other related aliases.

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