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Intel: Attack by al-Qaida westerners possible

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Information recently obtained by the Mossad and Military Intelligence indicates that global jihad elements are working to recruit European and American nationals who have been indoctrinated with radical Islamic ideology to carry out attacks inside Israel, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

On Wednesday, the security cabinet convened to discuss the growing global jihad threat against Israel and heard assessments from MI chief Maj.-Gen. Amos Yadlin as well as representatives from the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) and the Mossad.

The ministers were briefed on the growing presence of global jihad elements in Lebanon, Jordan and Sinai as well as attempts by al-Qaida to infiltrate harmless looking people into Israel to carry out attacks.

There are a number of cases of American and European nationals who have undergone radical Islamic indoctrination and tried to perpetrate attacks. One example is Adam Yehiye Gadahn, an American of Jewish descent who recently appeared in an al-Qaida videotape, as well as Richard Reid, a British national known as the "shoe bomber" who was recruited into al-Qaida and is currently serving a life sentence in the US for planning to destroy a commercial airliner with plastic explosives hidden in his shoes.

The concern within the defense establishment is that al-Qaida will try to use the Westerners to enter Israel inconspicuously and then connect with local terror infrastructure that will help them carry out attacks.

Before the cabinet meeting, deputy head of the National Security Council Col. (res.) Shaul Shay said the threat al-Qaida posed Israel was mainly overseas and not from within the country or the Palestinian territories.

"I think that if al-Qaida will operate one day from Gaza I don't see a dramatic change in capabilities compared to Hamas," Shay said at a conference on "Evaluating the struggle against al-Qaida" at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv.

Shay said previous attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad - in Turkey and Kenya - were indicative of the organization's capabilities around the world.

"If I look at the northern theater I don't know if al-Qaida knows how to do something better than Hizbullah," he continued. "Al-Qaida's strength is mainly abroad against Israeli and Jewish targets. They have infrastructure and experience and it is easier for them to work in these theaters."

Government officials said the security cabinet meeting on Wednesday was called to give the ministers a briefing of the current situation, and was not linked to any particular intelligence warning.

According to a communiqué issued after the meeting, Mossad, Shin Bet and Military Intelligence officials briefed the ministers, and reported that global jihad organizations, led by al-Qaida, "pose a

significant threat" to Israel, Israeli citizens and Jews around the world.

In addition, the officials said global jihad also were a threat to the Western world, democratic regimes and moderate Arab elements, and that there was concern that global jihad would cooperate with extremist elements in the region such as Hizbullah and Hamas.

The ministers, according to the communiqué, were told that global jihad elements were using the Internet and other information transfer technologies to coordinate, recruit and operate terrorists.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert directed the officials to continue their information-gathering and counterterrorism efforts and to coordinate with other countries that were partners in the war on terror.

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