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[This is a response from Raja to Brother Abu al-'Abbas, deputy of Abu 'Abdallah al-Shafi'i, emir of al-Ansar; included with this response is the original letter of Abu al-'Abbas.]

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Dear Brother Abu al-'Abbas, God protect and keep you.

Peace and the blessings of God be upon you.

Greetings to you and to the noble brother Abu 'Abdallah al-Shafi'i, God reward him.

I received your letters that are included in a file containing: A scanned letter from Abu Hamzah to al-Shafi'i, and al-Shafi'i's response to it; a statement issued by your group; and a private letter for me. May God reward you.

Allow me to write some of my answers and comments between the lines of your nice letter so as to simplify the discussion and to explain my position and opinion. Then, I will follow them with some other points. I will write my comments in blue font and between brackets, preceded by the letter 'Ayn:

"My dear brother, I wanted to clarify some of the important issues for you, may God open the doors of goodness for us all. Regarding the current events on our end, they are making our hair turn grey, there is no power or might save in God. Everything you hear in the media about the confrontations between the brothers in the State and all the rest of the groups is true (except for us, of course). Perhaps you haven't heard a lot. The matter has reached a level of complexity in some areas in that the general public from the Sunni population clashed with them due to some of their behaviors to which we can't find an explanation in the law. For example, seizing people's property (from Muslims of course), such as their vehicles, on the pretext that they don't wage jihad. [It is our right, of course, to ask - as I always insisted on doing with the late Abu Sa'd - : Is this an individual incident that happened once, twice, or three times, for example? Or are there many events that are happening daily, for example? Is this happening with the knowledge and order of the senior leadership in the State, or is this the action of some of the junior officers in specific sectors and areas? The reason we are asking these questions is

because we know these incidents are contrary to the method and way of thinking of our brothers, such as the late Abu Mus'ab previously, Abu Hamzah currently, and the rest of their senior brothers. We are in continuous contact with them and we understand their overall thoughts and disciplines, and we know their religion, knowledge, morals, and level of piouness. If I had doubts in myself, for example, by God, I would never doubt "al-Zarqawi," for I know him well. You mention that you had informed us of these happenings and complaints in al-Zarqawi's time, thus this is not something new but something that happened before. We trust you and we trust your intention behind mentioning them. We don't doubt you and we only think good things of you, may God care for you. However, we feel that there is some exaggeration in the accounts, and we feel that the stories lack accuracy. After inquiring about them - and we are of course far from the field - we find that there is some deficiency in the assumed answers to our questions. In addition to all of that, we consulted with our brothers and put in a request for verification, accountability, and advice. I personally corresponded with al-Zarqawi based on what Abu Sa'd and Abu Muhammad had told me. A while back, I corresponded with Abu Hamzah regarding some of those things that you and others mentioned. I find that my brothers are making sure to follow up on and hold accountable those who are at fault. They relate to me some of the same events differently, confirming they didn't make a mistake or the mistake is limited to a specific side, person, or people, and that the matter has been resolved or they are following up on it This is the best that we can do since we are far away. This is why I always insist that the solution is in your hands foremost, and we will support you from afar. Therefore, you must meet and get together continuously and solve the problems, and so on. Some comments from me will follow on this matter, God willing]

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Arresting people and torturing them just because they are suspicious of them. [This is possible, and perhaps it is happening more than the thing mentioned previously. This thing happens a lot in the fields of jihad in general. We will take this into serious consideration and write the brothers regarding this matter, God willing, even though we frequently send them general instructions.]

Issuing a judgment against those who abandon their ranks by way of apostates [As for this, it is very unlikely, and in fact false and undoubtedly not true, because it is a contradiction to

the understanding, opinion, and method of our brothers, unless the judgment is being presented as a reality concerning some members of the organization, and their number is small. If this is true, then it is wrong and they are deviating from what is right, and you must condemn this and put a stop to it.] and implementing the death penalty against them, as I had written you a while back about the incident concerning brother Tariq, the legal officer here in the al-Karmah area, in addition to other matters for which there is not a place to discuss it here. [As for the killing, our brothers confirmed for us publicly and privately that they don't believe this is true, that they are not doing it, and they are not ordering it. God forbid! They are trustworthy and credible with us. If something like that did happen, then perhaps it is presented as an individual case or a mistake on the part of some members, and it is not attributable to the entire group, or there is more to the story and it needs to be investigated. God is the All-Knowing. Here is a question as an example for you, Brother Abu al-'Abbas: Can you count the number of events of this kind with their dates since the establishment of the State, substantiated by true and reliable testimonies? This is so we can look into this matter in terms of how often it happens, which level it happens on, and what needs to be done...]

As for the conflict with the resistance groups, for example in the Diyala region, an incident happened between them and the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade where the State took nearly 15 people and the Brigade took 10 people from the State. After a few days of negotiations, the Brigade released the detainees as a sign of good intention, but after their members were released, the State killed all of its detainees. Their response was a campaign against the State and they killed those that they arrested. The Brigade began cooperating with government entities and gave them a list of names of members of the State. Some were arrested and the rest left the region. After that, the Americans began building their bases in this area. This area called Shahraban is part of Diyala, and the American and Iraqi forces had been denied entry to this area because of the powerful presence of the mujahidin. [This is your side of the story and we trust you. However, mistakes happen in that you are perhaps relying on certain storytellers, whom you think are reliable but they aren't in this matter or for other reasons. It also is possible that all of this is true. We are in the process of verifying and investigating. Within a few days, God willing, I will send a message to Abu 'Umar, emir of the Faithful, and to Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir regarding these stories. (I will not mention they were sent to me from you to maintain confidentiality. But I will

say that I received them from a trusted brothers from your end in the jihadi battlefield of Iraq.) I will wait for the brothers' answers on the matter, for the brothers may have considerable answers. In any case, the status of the "1920 Revolutionary Brigade" is no longer a hidden secret. We have begun gathering information on them, and we conclude that if they have not yet become absolute enemy, they are at least close to the enemy. Indeed, we don't want to clash with them or with anyone else, and we are not ordering anyone to do so. Rather, we are ordering you to stay away from anyone who is fighting the crusaders during this phase, regardless of whether they are atheists, secular Ba'athists, or infidels.]

Also, in the Abu Ghurayb area, the situation has gotten to a point where the brothers in the State are carrying out martyrdom operations in areas where there are members of the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade, and even in mosques. [Do you mean the brothers are undertaking martyrdom operations against the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade? Or against the enemy in areas where the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade are present? Do you have any proof of this? And how many operations have they carried out? Which areas, on what date, etc.?)]

Dear Brother,

God is my witness that mentioning all these issues is causing us pain, but we thought of you because you care about Muslims and you witnessed their suffering and distress, as you had informed us via Abu Sa'd, God have mercy on him, about the Algeria experience. We ask God to protect you and us. We didn't want to only mention these issues as merely information. Rather, we wanted to take action to resolve them. We looked into the matter and we believe that the solution lies in submitting this information to the leadership on your end, and delivering directives to hold the wrongdoers accountable, if possible.

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[It is very possible, my brother, and I already did what your requested. I sent to the brothers everything that you and others have told me, and they have received them. I conveyed some parts verbatim and I summarized other parts, but I stayed true and honest to what you wanted me to deliver. However, you think the matter is easy and you want the brothers to act immediately upon your request, etc. And this is impossible to do, of course, and we had talked to you about this before. The brothers are following up on these matters and tried to send several people

to Iraq to investigate, but I swear that over the last year, two of our good brothers from the old al-Qa'ida members were imprisoned on two separate occasions back to back on their way to Iraq. As you know, Raja' had plans to go, but things got complicated and he wasn't able to go. The brothers (the leadership) are following up and putting lots of hard work into verifying and investigating. Also, they continue to provide general advice and instructions via correspondence. So, don't think that your brothers are being neglectful or that they are not aware of what's going on. They are doing all their best. Of course, nobody is perfect and everyone is prone to negligence, but rest assured that they are doing everything that they can. They look into every matter, exert every effort to get to the bottom of things, and deliver their instructions to the brothers. So I hope that you appreciate the efforts of the Shaykhs and that you don't talk bad about them or think or say that they don't know anything and that they have abandoned the people!]

Or at least issue a statement to clarify that those who are undertaking these actions are not from al-Qa'ida and do not represent the group. This will be a reason to redeem some of the trust that was lost. [In the arts and laws of politics, this suggestion is not possible, my dear brother. It's a pure error. Even if we knew that the brothers did some of the things that you and others mentioned, we must go through our internal chain of command to fix things and to deal with our brothers and our subjects (at any rate, there are better ideas), unless - God forbid - we are faced with a clear and evident matter of deviation from the path (take what happened with the GIA in Algeria for example, - may God shield our brothers from such things.) In this case, we must deny our involvement immediately and without any hesitation. For now, how could a wise, experienced, and intelligent person like you ask our brothers (al-Qa'ida leadership) to issue a statement like you've suggested? This is strange. And this is impossible because it will be futile. Rather, it will make things worse when our goal is to try to fix them. The greedy, the hypocrites, and the ill-hearted ones will try to exploit this opportunity, and you know what kind of people exist in the field. It is enough for you to imagine how this will be exploited by the "Iraqi Hamas" and the like, as well as by the al-Dari people, the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade, the failing party, and others, and even the Sururi Movement and the J.S. people and others, as well as by the obvious enemies: the Crusaders, the apostates, and their helpers primarily.]

I also would like to let you know that many of the mujahidin and people who see the injustice from members of the State remain quiet about their injustice because of their love and respect for the shaykhs with you. [Praise be to God, this is good. We will make use of this in the comment coming at the end of the letter.]

We heard from more than one person at the leadership level that they are claiming to be an independent state and to have no ties with al-Qa'ida and the Shaykh, God save him, which has confused and bewildered the brothers even more. [This also is strange. My brother, all of these strange stories are unfounded and unreliable and they contradict what we are already certain of. How can they be true when Abu 'Umar and Abu Hamzah and their military and legal committees continue to send us with pleasure their letters of allegiance and loyalty? So, don't bother yourself with such stories, my brother. Even if these stories were true, they were probably issued by people who only represent themselves; or maybe the stories are wrong about the people to whom they are referring; or maybe there are other reasons. O how abundant are these stories in times of conflict, sedition, and strife! Nevertheless, I would like to make an observation: The brothers preferred to deny their affiliation with Shaykh Usama and Mullah Muhammad Omar, except to their close associates and trusted brothers, by way of policy and nothing more, and they did this overtime and gradually. So perhaps what you were referring to is based on this. God only knows. This is only between you and me, God bless you. Please keep this a secret between you and me.]

Regarding us, our brother Abu Hamzah sent a handwritten letter to our brother Abu 'Abdallah. Abu 'Abdallah also sent a letter to Abu Hamzah, and I'm sending you copies of the two letters with this letter.

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[Yes brother, I read the two letters. The scanned letter (letter of Abu Hamzah) was difficult to read because of the poor quality of the image in the Word file. It would be better in the future if you sent pictures like these in a .jpg picture file. Gather them all in a compressed WinZip file, or WinRar, and secure it with a password known only to us, this is to make it easy for us, and God bless you for all your efforts. I would like to make a comment on the reply letter of brother Abu 'Abdallah. He didn't address in his letter what was the main topic in Hamzah's letter, about him not being able to meet with him to discuss the

issue of creating and establishing the State. Why is that? Unless it is wise not to do so. But it didn't appear that way to me, God knows best. He focused on the same things that you mentioned, things that happened a while back during the days of Mus'ab, such as accusing our brothers (from the time of Abu Mus'ab of course, and not now) of being the source of the mistakes that piled up and led to alienation. He said that his group were patient despite being subjected to our brothers' cruelty. Also, he didn't address the statement by the person in charge of you, who is mentioned in the letter of Abu Hamzah, "We are convinced that your group is on the verge of breaking down," and this is something important, of course, because if you believe it's true, it will make an impact on any endeavors or talks.

When we investigated many of these things since the time when Abu Mus'ab sent the delegation nearly a year ago - our investigation did not stop after that - we found different stories regarding the brothers. We found that Abu Hamzah, since his appointment until now, is eager to establish friendly relations and reconcile the issues with you. He even told me - I'm quoting him and I take all responsibility for this statement, "O brothers of Ansar al-Sunna group, may God bless you. Let's come together and become one by joining the Islamic State of Iraq. You can cling to the conditions of your religion and beliefs as much as you want, as long as you're not doing anything that will contradict the Book and the Sunnah." My brothers, what better method for reconciliation than this do you want? The offer is on the table for you and those brothers are the closest one to you. Do not be misguided by mistakes, problems, and some disorder that might happen. A big organization differs from a small one. When you lead large masses or population or thousands of people that are spread out across a wide area, you should expect that mistakes will happen and some people might falter in their discipline. This is normal, but the lesson from this is that the leadership should remain consistent in doing the right thing and sticking to its principles. The best way to conduct reform and to serve our jihad mission is for you to join your brothers and make amends. You have the choice to present your conditions to be part of the Emirate and the leadership that everyone can agree upon. For example: We will join and merge with our brothers on the following conditions: According to the Salafi method; according to the Book and the Sunnah; according to the ways of our righteous Prophet, his companions, and his followers; according to the ways of our trusted senior shaykhs and leaders; if we notice any deviation or corruption, we will take matters into

our own hand... The important thing is to draft stipulations like these that are clear. God willing, this is a feasible matter. This is our opinion and the opinion of our shaykhs. This is better than the complaints you are mentioning and better than the solutions you are proposing. Many of your solutions are not feasible in our current circumstances. Therefore, we all must strive together to do the best and the right thing,]

Regarding our position on the current events and how to deal with them, the leadership sent a private letter to the mujahidin brothers, and this letter is also attached. We tried to extend the olive branch as much as possible in the areas where there are problems. This is what we were able to do to defend jihad and the reputation of the mujahidin in spite of the fact that we incurred a lot of damage and were the first ones harmed. [In any case, God bless you. Overall, your position is good, and you and our brothers are people that we love and are very happy with. However, we expect a lot more from you, as I mentioned previously. Overall, your statement was good. However, people might read between the lines and think that you are badmouthing our brothers in some of your comments and paragraphs. You know very well that your words will not settle well with the brothers, especially that our brothers never badmouthed you, not even once. I pray that God will make amend between us.]

Be certain that if, God forbid, this jihadi experience fails in Iraq and we lose our reputation among the people, we will never again see another experience like this one.

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[I am certain that the life of the jihadi movement will never expire. It will continue to develop, increase, and intensify by the Grace of God, whether we completely triumph in Iraq, as we hope, or fail. The road is long, and we already accomplished many good things. We are only at one stage in our life, and we must please God the Almighty by implementing the righteousness and the true religion that he revealed to us. We should make amends and become closer. Iraq is not the end of the road. If we look at the condition of our Ummah today, we see that we are still far from achieving complete and satisfactory victory, even though we are getting closer with each day by the grace of God. The condition of the jihadi movement is a reflection of the condition of the Ummah in general and to some extent. Suppose that al-Qa'ida is defeated in Iraq, God forbid, it will without a doubt be a catastrophe. We pray that this will never happen. We ask God to keep us safe and to grant us victory. May God

enable us to be victorious over our enemy. But we must always prepare ourselves for anything that might happen and we will never deviate from the right path. May God strengthen our determination. Jihad will continue with us or without us. All the signs indicate that things are happening in our favor, corroborating what I mentioned earlier that the jihadi movement is intensifying every day. Praise be to God, Lord of the universe.

Observation:

1) My dear brother, remember when we met with each other and I mentioned a bunch of issues to you. You said at the time that you were going to act on the subject, but I don't know what happened with this subject. [I gave you my response within my previous comments.]

2) We heard our brother Abu Yahya's speech regarding the merger. He believes that the only solution to the present problems is to merge. We say to our beloved brother Abu Yahya, as we had previously told him via brother Abu Sa'd, that the problem cannot be resolved merely by theoretical unity and recommendations. The issue is bigger than that, as we are dealing with peculiar mentalities and methods. Besides, we have yet to see on the real ground any change to the issues that the Ummah unanimously described as grave mistakes (we mentioned them earlier). So how do you expect to unify two opposites?

[We ask God to reform all of our conditions, I already told you what our thoughts and opinions are, and God knows best. The unity that we are calling for is not theoretical in my opinion. This is not a good description for it. Rather, it is a real and practical unity with clear, proclaimed, and fixed conditions! It is an opportunity for you and for the victory of our project and the project of the Islamic nation. Our beloved brothers, if you continue to pursue your current curriculum, we fear that you will end up isolating yourselves. The world is full of strife and we, humans, have weak souls. Wouldn't you like to cut the path of the contentious and corrupt ones and make amends in the best way possible? All the peculiar methods and mentalities that you mentioned can be fixed by the will of God, because God's goodness trumps everything that you mentioned. The high leadership is good, understanding, and aware of what's going on, praise be to God. It practices the utmost moderation and balance, and you will never find anyone like them. This is an opportunity for you and for our Ummah. Regarding the mistakes that the Ummah has unanimously described as grave mistakes, my

answer and explanation to some of those mistakes was stated earlier. We must hold the wrongdoers accountable, and we must take the initiative to collaborate and merge together.

May God grant us success. There is no god but Him and no lord but Him...peace be upon you and the blessings of God. Your beloved. Thursday, 17 Rabi' al-Awwal 1428 Hijri corresponding with 05 April 2007. Please stay in touch and continue to write us. It is good to cooperate and communicate, trusting in God, asking the Almighty in His best names and His great attributes to guide us and lead us to heaven. May God keep us true to our faith and may He conclude our lives with Shahadah for His cause. Amen.]

Finally, we ask God the Almighty to grant success for all who love and please him.

Peace and blessings of God be upon you.

Your brother, Abu 'Abbas