



Iraqi Insurgency Group Utilizes 'Google Earth' for Attack Planning

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[Corrected Version: Correcting web display]

On 14 July, The Islamic Army in Iraq, a Salafi jihadist group that conducts a large number of attacks against US forces, posted a video to a jihadist website showing the use of Google Earth for tactical planning of rocket attacks against US military targets in Iraq. Although the Open Source Center (OSC) has detected discussions about the use of Google Earth on monitored forums in the past, this is the first time that OSC has located footage of insurgency groups utilizing the program.

"Murasil al-Shabakah" provided a link on the *Islamic Muhajirun Network* to a 19-minute, 58-second video ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#)) containing [footage of a computer monitor display of Google Earth](#) as well as other operational footage from The Islamic Army in Iraq. A 44-second portion of the video presents a three-dimensional, graphic of the Earth on a computer monitor. The image then begins to zoom-in on Iraq and reveals location markers across the world including "St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City" and "Former Republican Palace, Baghdad, Iraq." As the graphic nears Iraq the labels of more specific locations appear such as "Al-Taji Airport," and "Rasheed Airport." This segment ends by focusing in on a series of buildings near the label "Rasheed Airport" and rotating the view around the buildings. The browser identifies the application as being "Google Earth" and the Arabic-language caption reads "Islamic Army in Iraq/ The Military Engineering Unit--Preparations for Rocket Attack." The corner of the video displays the date of recording as "5 1 2006."

(For a copy of the video, please contact the Open Source Center VSD at 1-800-205-8615.)



Screenshot from video of Google Earth demonstration. Arabic language captions translate as "Islamic Army in Iraq/ The Military Engineering Unit--Preparations for Rocket Attack."

Background of Known Jihadist Use of Google Earth

Prior to the release of the video demonstration of Google Earth, there had been some discussion of Google Earth on jihadist websites monitored by OSC.

- On 5 August 2005, "Al-Illiktrony" posted a [message](#) entitled "A Gift for the Mujahidin, a Program To Enable You To Watch the Cities of the World Via Satellite" to the *Islamic Renewal Organization* forum. In it, the author dedicated "Google Earth" to "the mujahidin brothers and to Shaykh Muhammad al-Mas'ari." "Al-Illiktrony" provided links to a free web-hosting site where "Google Earth" can be uploaded.
- "Al-Mushtaq al-Jannah," another forum participant, [responded](#) to "Al-Illiktrony" by warning forum members that "Google programs retain complete information about their users."
- On 3 October 2005, "Almuhammad" [posted a link](#) to a site that provides a free download of "Google Earth" in response to a posting by "Saddam al-Arab" on the *Baghdad al-Rashid* forum. "Saddam al-Arab" requested the identification of a roughly sketched map. "Almuhammad" suggested that the satellite imagery from "Google Earth" could help identify the sketch.

Technical Info

- The *Islamic Muhajirun Network* at www.mohajroon.com/vb/ was established in February 2005 and has until recently remained fully password protected. The website recently removed the password restriction from its

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"Statements Forum" where the statements of various jihadist groups are posted.

- According to the Google Earth homepage (<http://earth.google.com/index.html>) "Google Earth combines satellite imagery, maps, and the power of Google Search to put the world's geographic information at your fingertips." The site offers a free version of the Google Earth application as well as more advanced versions for sale. Google Earth has been available since 28 June 2005.

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Note: 44-second clip of Google Earth demonstration is located on Part 2 of the video from 4:29-5:13.

Attachments:

[Video: Islamic Army in Iraq Launches Attacks in Baghdad, and Other Cities \(Part 1\)](#)

[Video: Islamic Army in Iraq Launches Attacks in Baghdad, and Other Cities \(Part 2\)](#)

[Video: Islamic Army in Iraq Google Earth Demonstration](#)

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