Egyptian Islamic Militants Deny Any Tie to New York Bombing

EGYPT'S most militant Islamic movement Monday denied involvement in the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and warned against using "extreme" actions for accusations against its spiritual leader living in the United States.

The statement by the Islamic Group was its first comment on the bombing, which last week by anonymous U.S. law enforcement officials that a suspect arrested in the case had worshipped at a New York mosque where the group's spiritual mentor, Omar Abdel Rahman, sometimes preached.

"Shiek Omar Abdel Rahman, may God preserve him, has no link whatsoever with the blast in the World Trade Center," the statement read.

"Urgently defaming Imams Omar Abdel Rahman will under no circumstances concern the Islamic Group or his followers and supporters in the world," the statement said.

"Doctor Omar has not been, and will not be and never will be a scapegoat." It was unclear whether the new threat came from an individual zelie or group that may represent a split within the movement.

In any event, it has prompted increased security at many companies, hotels and offices buildings in Cairo.

A telephone number on the fax indicated it was sent from Penawther, Pakistan — a center during the 1980s for training young Muslim volunteers fighting against Afghanistan's Islamic resistance movement against the government there.

The statement said that targeting Abdel Rahman — who last week "uniquely denounced" the bombing — "aims at disfiguring the image of faithful Muslim scholars in the world, which could leave hearses on relations between Muslims and the West in the future."

The group also said it "would like as clearly to its policy "does not believe in the use of violence at all.""

This latest communication from the Islamic Group illustrates some of the Paradoxes faced by officials here in assessing the clandestine organization's activities and strategies.

A House member of Congress who has been monitoring the group and activity of the group that has attacked tourism because, one of them said, "We want them to leave."

British Telecom Seeks Entry To U.S. Phone Market

Global communications giant British Telecommunications PLC Monday asked the U.S. government for permission to enter the American market via a national telephone network linking businesses in the United States and other countries.

But British Telecom's pursuit of that goal might be challenged by U.S. telephone companies complaining that they do not have an equal right to a national system to communicate across the United States.

"The U.K. does provide equal treatment," said Jim Graf, a British Telecom executive.

Hankinson and other British Telecom officials said they do not know the size. We don't know the size, they said, in response to a question about the estimated size of the American market.

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