



**SITUATION ROOM, AMERICAN MORNING AND OTHER CNN PROGRAMS
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CNN: Said Ali Shari did hard time at Guantanamo Bay. Released in 2007, he's now being looked at for possible links to the failed bombing attempt aboard Northwest Flight 253. That's according to U.S. officials who caution that Shari may not be linked directly to the Christmas Day incident. But he has touted himself as a leader of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which has claimed responsibility for the airline attempt.

He's also been through the Mohammed bin Nayef Center for Counseling and Care. Named after Saudi Arabia's deputy interior minister, it's a rehab center near Riyadh for captured militants who the Saudi government tries to turn around.

KEN BALLEEN, TERROR FREE TOMORROW: The Saudi program gives them a full presentation in Islam. The Saudis give them art therapy. They give them psychological counseling. They give them money after they go through the program and are released.

Once released, they help them find a wife. They help them find a job.

CNN: Ken Ballen of the research group Terror Free Tomorrow has spent more than four weeks at the center and interviewed many inmates, including some who he says knew Said Ali Shari. To critics who say giving accused terrorists art therapy is a joke, **Ballen** and other experts respond...

BALLEEN: On the whole, the Saudi program has been relatively effective, particularly for politically radicalized sympathizers, less so with hard-core, dedicated al Qaeda members.

CNN: It's those hard-core militants, **Ballen** says, who expose the weakness of this rehab program. It can't turn everyone, and apparently didn't turn Said Ali Shari. Did he con his way through the program?

BALLEEN: He absolutely conned his way through the program. Here you see on the screen, this is the religion class where the Sheikh is teaching those in the program how to be better Muslims and what's a good understanding of Islam.

Said Ali Shari sat through a classroom just like this and told the Saudis that he had reformed himself. He also told the American authorities at Guantanamo that bin Laden was a traitor to Islam.

All the while, he was conning the authorities, American and Saudi alike, at the same time remaining loyal to al Qaeda. He confided in other inmates that he remained steadfast for al Qaeda, and as soon as he got out he would join the jihad again against the United States.

CNN: Said Ali Shari, according to **Ballen** and other experts, represents about 10 percent of the more than 100 former Guantanamo detainees who have gone through that rehab program and are believed to have returned to the battlefield. Now, that compares favorably to overall recidivism figures for Guantanamo detainees released by the Pentagon this year. That report said about 14 percent of all detainees released from Guantanamo are believed to have engaged in terrorism activity afterwards.

According to **Ballen**, other countries have similar rehabilitation programs, but they are not nearly as comprehensive as the Saudi program. **Ballen** has also reported that Indonesia and Libya make individual efforts to rehabilitate individual militants and they've had some success with that. As a matter of fact, Moammar Gadhafi's son is heavily involved in those efforts.