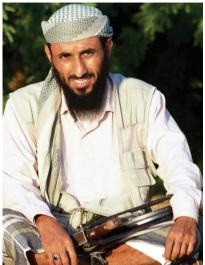
Nasser al-Wuhayshi, Yemen's Al Qaeda chief

Nasser al-Wuhayshi, a former secretary to Al Qaeda's late founder Osama bin Laden, dug his way out of prison in 2006 to become head of the Yemen-based Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)



Nasser al-Wuhayshi, also known as Abu Basir, pictured in 2012

- 1976: Born in southern Yemen. Spends time in religious institutions before travelling to Afghanistan in 1998 to join Al Qaeda
- 1998-2001: Serves as personal secretary to *Osama bin Laden* until U.S. invasion of Afghanistan
- 2001: Fights at battle of *Tora Bora* before escaping to Iran. Eventually arrested by Iranian authorities

- 2003: Extradited to Yemen and imprisoned. Escapes by tunnelling out of Sanaa jail in 2006
- 2007: Becomes leader of Al Qaeda in Yemen, then head of AQAP in 2009 when terror network's Yemeni and Saudi wings merged
- 2008-2012: AQAP blamed for string of attacks against West and inside Yemen, including foiled 2009 plot to blow up U.S.-bound airliner. U.S. steps up drone strikes against AQAP in Yemen
- Aug 2013: Fears of new AQAP plot prompts closure of U.S. embassies in 19 countries. Al-Wuhayshi vows to free jailed Al Qaeda members

