

al-Qaeda Vows 'Back-Breaking' Strike, Magazine Says

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DUBAI (Reuters) -- A London-based Arab magazine said Friday that al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has vowed to launch a "back-breaking attack" on the United States by February, confirming an earlier message by the militant network.

The weekly al-Majalla said it received an e-mail from Abu Mohammed al-Ablaj, a little known al-Qaeda member, saying bin Laden would release a video tape in which he affirms his group's determination to fight the United States.

"A messenger of bin Laden informed him (Ablaj) that the al-Qaeda leader will appear on a televised tape after the execution of an operation which bin Laden described as back-breaking and which would change the order of things," al-Majalla said in a report in its latest edition, a copy of which was sent to Reuters.

"They (Americans) should prepare ... their coffins, hospitals and graves. The coming days will be full of surprises and great events which will make them a historic example," the magazine quoted Ablaj as saying.

The report came after U.S. officials ordered their color-coded alert system raised to orange, the second highest level, citing possible year-end attacks.

Air France canceled Christmas flights to Los Angeles on Wednesday after U.S. officials relayed information that extremist groups were planning "near-term simultaneous attacks that would rival September 11."

al-Qaeda is believed responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks on U.S. cities.

In the e-mail, which could not be immediately authenticated, Ablaj echoed his previous statement carried by al-Majalla in November saying the attack would take place before a Muslim feast which is celebrated on the last days of January or the first days of February.

The e-mail did not say what type of weapons would be used in the attack which Ablaj hinted would involve a series of strikes on the United States and other countries, the magazine reported.