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Contents

The Caliphate Attempted

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I**N HIS FIRST SPEECH AFTER THE ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, OSAMA BIN** Laden provided a list of grievances that in his mind compelled and justified Islamist terrorism against the West. Among other things, he alluded to the West's role in dethroning the last Ottoman caliph and abolishing the Ottoman Caliphate.[1] Ever since March 4, 1924, when Caliph Abdul Mejid II was sent packing—by Turkish nationalists, not by Europeans—many Islamists have maintained that resurrecting the caliphate would allow them to roll back centuries of Western encroachment upon Islamic lands, and to recapture Islam's early purpose, might, and glory. However, early efforts at reestablishing the caliphate after the fall of the Ottomans routinely failed, the victim of doctrinal disagreements and other political obstacles created by Muslim disunity and weakness. Subsequently, many Islamic scholars came to the view that the task of actually selecting the next caliph needed to be deferred pending a spiritual revival that would unite Muslims. But a new crop of jihadists doing battle in post-2003 Iraq decided that such a revival was indeed taking place in the territories under their control. In their view, the time for the selection of a new caliph and the caliphate's rebirth had arrived. Their vehicle for this new-born venture would be called the "Islamic State of Iraq."

The Islamic State of Iraq was to be the first incarnation of the resurrected caliphate. The newly established state's leader, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, would be the caliph. The Islamic State of Iraq was conceived as the third stage of a three-phase process begun by Abu Musab Zarqawi. Zarqawi's first move, in October 2004, was to link his Iraq-based Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad Group) to bin Laden's worldwide al-Qaeda franchise by adopting the name "al-Qaeda fi Bilad ar Rafidayn," commonly referred to in Western circles as "al-Qaeda in Iraq." Next, in January 2006, Zarqawi made a bid to bring all the other jihadist organizations operating in Iraq under his control by expanding the al-Qaeda in Iraq into the umbrella-like Majlis

Shura al-Mujahidin (Shura Council of the Mujahidin). The third stage in this process was reached five months after Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. air strike, in October 2006, when his successors made a bid to supersede the worldwide al-Qaeda network by actually forming the Islamic State of Iraq.

The creators of the Islamic State of Iraq understood it as the most ambitious jihadist venture to date. They could, they believed, lay claim to the leadership of the global jihadist movement, since they had surpassed in scope, purpose, and martial triumph the generation of jihadists that came before them, including bin Laden. Among other things, they believed that their state would elevate the Islamic struggle against the West to a new level of confrontation: rather than have disparate groups of jihadists retaliating against Western targets by terrorist means, the Islamic State of Iraq would confront its foes as would an emerging empire—and in the same fashion as the early Islamic conquests. Moreover, defeating the United States, the world's mightiest military and economic power, on the battlefield of Iraq was to be the harbinger of even greater victories for Islam.

The doctrinal premises upon which the Iraq jihadists justified the formation of their state and selected their caliph were the same premises developed by medieval Muslim jurists such as al-Mawardi (d. 1058) and al-Juwaini (d. 1085). These foundational principles were put forth in a book released in January, 2007, by the Islamic State of Iraq's so-called Ministry of Sharia Commissions under the title *Elam al-Anam bi Milad Dawlet al-Islam* (*Informing the People About the Birth of the State of Islam*).[2] Published almost three months after the Islamic state's creation was declared, this book became a manifesto of sorts for the Zarqawist wing of the global *jihad* movement. The ambition and bravado of the Zarqawists are reflected in the words of *Elam al-Anam*. The book's unidentified author quotes President George W. Bush:

> Those radicals want to terrorize the moderates and intellectuals, and they want to overthrow their governments [to] establish the state of the caliphate. [So] leaving Iraq is very dangerous, because it means abandoning a part of the region to the radicals who will glorify [their] victory over the United States, and this region will give them the opportunity to conspire and plan to attack America, and manipulate the resources to enable them to expand the state of the caliphate.

The author asserts that "the liar [Bush] was right about that!"[3] In this boisterous vein, the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq went so far as to appropriate for themselves Mohammed's personal standard, the "Banner of al-Uqab," under which the Muslims had fought the enemies of Islam while the prophet was still living.

The Banner of al-Uqab: The emblem of the Islamic State of Iraq

Taking the prophet's flag as their own was not the only way in which the jihadists sought to emulate Mohammed. They also adopted his nascent state in Medina as the blueprint for the Islamic State of Iraq. This was a revolutionary step that contrasted sharply with positions taken by other modern Islamists and jihadists, from the Muslim Brotherhood to the first generation of al-Qaeda. These modern movements had cautiously deferred selecting a caliph not only because of their general military and political weakness in the twentieth century, but also to avoid the disputes that had erupted over the ill-defined caliph selection process and other matters in the past. Such disputes had crippled earlier generations of Islamists. But the insurgents' victories in post-2003 Iraq invigorated the jihadist movement with a new sense of strength and unity, and enabled the jihadists to move forward with efforts to resurrect the caliphate.

To the extent that we can speak about a Sunni doctrine on the caliphate, it is based exclusively on precedent. However, the practices and principles of caliphal rule—including everything from the method and criteria by which a caliph is chosen, to how a caliph chooses to exercise his prerogatives—have fluctuated widely over the course of Islamic history. Precedent, as such, can be an unreliable guide for political action, and the search to find a stable precedent has rarely been without controversy or dispute.

It appears, however, that the jihadists in Iraq may have had an intellectual guidebook to help them avoid these disagreements: a groundbreaking tome on the caliphate authored in the early 1980s by the Saudi cleric Abdullah ibn Umar ad-Dumaiji under the title *al-Imamah al-Udhmah inda ahl ul Sunna Weljamaah* (*The Grand Imamate According to Sunnis*).[4] This work offers a user-friendly manual for choosing a caliph. While reflecting on the various arguments for and against any given stipulation for caliph selection, the book authoritatively recommends the most suitable guiding principles, from a doctrinal perspective, for choosing a caliph.[5] It thus charts the way beyond the problematic historical issues that had impeded efforts to select a new caliph in the past. The book was republished by the Global Islamic Media Front—an important jihadist propaganda outlet—a month after *Elam al-Anam's* release, seemingly to complement its publication.

In the pages that follow, I analyze the various arguments made by the author of *Elam al-Anam*, along with the ideological framework laid out in ad-Dumaiji's study in light of historical precedents. My aim is to provide insight into the motivations of jihadists in Iraq, and to understand what prerequisites they considered necessary in their leader, the candidate caliph, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi. I conclude by examining what the collapse of the *jihad* in Iraq implies, how it will affect the attempted caliphate, and how it may weaken overall jihadist morale in the short term.

Who Selects the Caliph?

SINCE THE DEATH OF MOHAMMED, THE SUCCESSION OF POWER AND AUTHORITY in Islam has remained a source of great dispute and division among Muslims. In keeping with medieval Sunni treatises on the subject of succession, ad-Dumaiji argues that the procedures for selecting an imam or caliph for the *umma* (Muslim Nation) must replicate the precedents set by the Four Righteous Caliphs who succeeded Mohammed. But it is sufficient, he adds, to adhere only to the example set by the first two caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar.[6] In narrowing his focus to the precedents of the first two caliphs, ad-Dumaiji may have been motivated by a desire to minimize controversy in the selection process. But if that was his intention, he miscalculated. Even the examples of the first two caliphs are fraught with controversy: Abu Bakr's appointment as caliph is disputed to this day, and Umar's reign—like that of the two caliphs that followed him—was cut short by assassination. Thus the first two caliphs can hardly be cited as optimal precedents for the selection process.

Nonetheless, in treating Abu Bakr as the preferred precedent, ad-Dumaiji understands the process of caliph selection as one in which a group of the *umma*'s most influential leaders—a group called the "*ahl ul hel wel aqd*" (literally, "those who loose and bind")—are empowered as representatives to either appoint or to sack the caliph. Based on his understanding of Abu Bakr's model, and after considering numerous arguments about how many influential delegates are required to actually appoint a single candidate, ad-Dumaiji concludes that a simple majority of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* is adequate for a caliph's selection to stand.[7] Ad-Dumaiji additionally recommends, citing al-Mawardi's eleventh century treatise on the caliphate, that the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* should be careful to select the caliph best qualified to address the challenges of the times. The bravest candidate, for instance, should be chosen during a time of war, and the most erudite candidate during a time of doctrinal dissonance.[8]

Moreover, the situation discussed by the medieval scholars, whereby a ruler seizes the caliphate by force, is rejected by ad-Dumaiji as involving a usurpation of the title that does not reflect the authentic traditions of selection.[9] Hence such a ruler is not

a "true imam" or a "true caliph." Ad-Dumaiji's dismissive tone—he even likens this process to modern day military coups—shows his departure from earlier jurists, who made allowances for Muslim rulers who came after the Righteous Caliphs (i.e., for those who had seized power over Muslims and awarded themselves the hallowed titles of Islam despite not having followed acceptable precedent).[10]

Like ad-Dumaiji, the author of *Elam al-Anam* stresses the importance of following the proper historic examples, and he rehearses the three ways by which an imam can be chosen. These processes were established by al-Mawardi in his *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya* (*Ordinances of Government*), and al-Juwaini in his *Ghiath al-Umam fi Tiyah al-Dhulem* (*Rescuing the Nations Lost in the Darkness*).[11] These methods include a majority of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* pledging allegiance, or an imam choosing his successor, or a commander establishing his rule through the use of force during a time marked by *fitna* (sedition) and conflict among various Muslim factions.[12] But in addition to these precedents, *Elam al-Anam* also allows for practical considerations:

> The starting point that the *mujahidin* employed in their declaration of [the Islamic State of Iraq] was a compounded mixture of religious facts derived from the [Quran] and the *sunna* [together] with realistic and political outlooks borne out by experience and practice.[13]

This emphasis on "realistic" represents a revolutionary point of departure in jihadist thinking. The author concludes that none of the established methods for choosing a caliph is appropriate in the contemporary era, since a unique situation has arisen whereby the lands of Islam have been temporarily taken over by the "infidel" enemy (whether directly, as in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq; or through surrogate "apostates," as in the rest of the Muslim territories). Thus it is impossible to attempt a resurrection of the caliphate based on these traditional methods, and another avenue must be found.

The way out of this quandary, the author argues, is to suppose that the jihadists fighting for the restoration of Islam and its precepts—those who view themselves as the "victorious faction" that was prophesied by Mohammed[14]—deserve the designation of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*. The author quotes a point made by al-Juwaini: if "the [electors] held back and delayed putting forward an imam and the period extended and the hardship expanded to the periphery of the realm and the elements of imbalance arose," the imamate can then be legitimately passed on to those who take the initiative to correct the situation by appointing an imam.[15] This task has not been seriously attempted since the caliphate was abolished in 1924.

Like ad-Dumaiji, the author of *Elam al-Anam* discusses the numbers of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* that are necessary to secure a legitimate quorum and a binding decision. He

concludes, with ad-Dumaiji, that a simple majority of those who can be gathered at any given time or place is enough, ascribing such a convenient remedy to Ibn Khaldun, al-Nawawi, and Ibn Taymiyya, among others.[16]

The contemporary instance of such a quorum is described as follows:

> Allah has helped the brothers in the Hilf al-Muttayyebin (Alliance of the Muttayyebin)[17] succeed, for it represents the majority of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*, since it [consists] of the Shura Council of the Mujahidin, which is an organization that comprises seven jihadist groups, with renowned names and *emir*s and soldiers....

> The advice of over sixty percent of the Sunni tribal shaykhs in the areas where the *mujahidin* are present [was] taken,[18] and we saw enthusiasm and elation over this matter...

> We also sought ... the counsel of some of the other large jihadist groups and we tried to meet their leaders ... but some wouldn't enable us to do that under the excuse of the security situation, so it was necessary for us to decide with [those] of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* we could bring together in these difficult times....[19]

The author expands upon al-Juwaini's point about seizing the initiative by arguing that no other body claims to represent the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* at the present time.[20]

The Islamic State of Iraq was declared on October 15, 2006, three days after the Alliance of the Muttayebbin was formed. The official spokesman of the newly formed Ministry of Information announced, in a video bearing the logo of the Shura Council of the Mujahidin, that the Alliance of the Muttayebbin had decided to establish the so-called "Islamic State of Iraq." The new head of state would be someone called Abu Umar al-Baghdadi—a name previously unknown. The spokesman called upon Iraqi Sunnis to pledge their allegiance to al-Baghdadi. He also called upon Sunni Muslims everywhere to support the nascent state—an entity that would act as the precursor to the caliphate, which would be resurrected in Baghdad.

The official spokesman further declared that the territory the jihadists currently controlled in Iraq was roughly equal to the territory of the state of Medina founded by the Prophet Mohammed, and that, as Medina had been, it was threatened internally and externally. By seeking to associate the Islamic State of Iraq with Mohammed's nascent state at Medina, the Shura Council of the Mujahidin was attempting to claim that—after three years of fighting in Iraq and after "important leaps in jihadist performance in its political, administrative, media and political fronts"[21]

—it was able to govern a population in the land of Iraq (since the raison d'être for founding an Islamic State is its ability to implement *sharia*).[22]

There is no relevant text in the Quran or the *sunna* that specifies the amount of territory needed for an Islamic state to exercise *sharia*. But by drawing a parallel with Medina under Mohammed, the author intended to show that the Islamic State of Iraq was starting off with better odds: only seventy men from Yathrib (later Medina) pledged allegiance to Mohammed before his flight from Mecca, and they were unknown youths, certainly not the most influential of Medina's townspeople.[23] The author argues that Mohammed's grip on the political affairs of Medina was not solid: there were large groups of Jews with military and economic capabilities who later sparked "disturbances,"[24] there was no sense of security,[25] and Medina was built without the aid of technocrats or lavish funds.[26]

In his first speech, delivered on December 22, 2006, al-Baghdadi developed this parallel. He quoted three verses from the *Isra surah* of the Quran that pertain to Mohammed's flight to Medina, and he cited a symbolic *hadith* whereby Mohammed predicted victory for Islam at the time of its darkest hours.[27] Al-Baghdadi also presented a leaked U.S. Marine intelligence report published in November, 2006, as evidence that the jihadists controlled Anbar Province, which he said was far larger in territory than Medina and its environs during Mohammed's time.[28]

As for the timing of the declaration of the Islamic State of Iraq, the author of *Elam al-Anam* offers an explanation. There was an immediate need to administer *sharia*, provide judicial arbitration, and maintain basic services.[29] Furthermore, the political vacuum was leading some Sunnis to join the political process in Baghdad, so much so that certain prominent jihadist factions had openly stated they would negotiate with the Americans.[30]

In designating the role of *ahl ul hel wel aqd* to the jihadists in Iraq, *Elam al-Anam* suggests the jihadists' superiority to the more established Islamic scholars, even though the jihadists tended to be younger and of lesser scholarly stature. Eminent scholars are dismissed as staid and stodgy, usually in the service of tyrants, and afraid of roughing it on the battlefields of *jihad*. This brash and ambitious style was inherited by the jihadists who established the Islamic State of Iraq from their slain leader Zarqawi. He, in turn, was heavily influenced by Abu Mohammed al-Maqdisi, a scholar deeply affected by Saudi radical Juhayman al-Utaybi, leader of the Mecca insurrection of November 1979.[31] The latter was dismissive of the reformist Saudi scholars of the 1960s and 1970s who shaped the early thinking of Osama bin Laden, seeing them as insufficiently confrontational and unwilling to violently break with the ruling religious establishment.[32] In the eyes of the jihadists, engaging in actual battle on behalf of Islam was a higher calling than ruling on archaic formulas for Muslim ritual.

The Attempted Caliphate That Failed

TODAY'S JIHADISTS ARE PROBABLY MINDFUL OF THE ROLE INDECISIVE ISLAMIC scholars played the last time they sought solutions to the problems entailed in reestablishing the caliphate, and their own boldness and willingness to act decisively is usefully understood in the context of the General Caliphate Congress, held in Cairo in 1926. At this congress, the problem of vague and conflicting precedents was compounded by scholars who were promoting claims to the title by competing Arab sovereigns. (Ayman al-Zawahiri's grandfather, Shaykh Mohammed al-Ahmadi al-Zawahiri [d. 1944], was King Fuad of Egypt's man.[33])

Before the congress, the pioneering Salafist thinker Rashid Ridha (d. 1935) asserted his credentials for speaking out on the caliphate. Writing in his influential monthly magazine *al-Manar*, he explained that he had written a book about the caliphate, had published deliberations on the nature of the caliphate in his magazine, and had participated in the planning committees for the congress.[34] Ridha questioned the benefit of electing yet another caliph with no authority, especially at a time when there were three men alive who had once carried the title: the deposed Ottoman sultan Mohammed Wahid ud-Din (r. 1918–1922, who died in exile three days after the conference commenced);[35] the last Ottoman caliph Abdul Mejid II (r. 1922–1924, the 101st Sunni ruler to have carried the title); and King Hussein (d. 1931), formerly of the Hejaz, to who, Ridha wrote, "many of the people of Palestine and Syria had pledged allegiance ... willingly, and ... the people of Hejaz unwillingly."[36]

Ridha's advice to the would-be congregants at Cairo on how to choose a caliph was to first identify the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* in every Islamic nation and incorporate them into a functioning body. Clearly he did not view the scholars who would be attending the congress as legitimate representatives of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*. Ridha further advised the congregants to establish a religious school that would prepare candidates for the caliphate and train others to serve as suitable members of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*. He emphasized that this approach was generational: the process of renewing the caliphate might require several decades, given that the institution's collapse had been centuries in the making. However, Ridha optimistically maintained that the caliphate could likely be renewed in a few years' time.[37]

The original intent of the congress, as it was conceived in 1924 immediately following the dissolution of the Ottoman caliphate, was to declare a new caliph.[38] However, in response to widespread resistance to King Fuad's ambitions, both from inside and outside Egypt, the goal of the congress was downgraded by the preparatory committee to one of discussing the question of the caliphate without actually picking a candidate for the job.[39]

The General Caliphate Congress convened on May 13, 1926, at an al-Azhar University facility. It lasted barely a week, and held only four sessions.[40] It drew together notables and scholars from the Levant, the Maghreb, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula, along with representatives from far-flung Muslim communities in such places as South Africa and Poland. However, the important factions in the Indian subcontinent that had sought a reinvigorated caliphate decided to boycott the proceedings, partly over fears that Egypt's Fuad would try to steer the delegates towards declaring him caliph.[41] The Congress formed two committees to ponder classical and modern questions pertaining to the caliphate. The first, which studied the doctrinal underpinning of the caliphate, was composed of three scholars representing each of the three dominant Sunni schools (Hanafi, Shafii, and Maliki) with a single Hanbali scholar accorded a lesser observer status among them. Al-Zawahiri was chosen as the head of Shafii group, as well as the speaker for the committee. The second committee was tasked to consider modern impediments to the caliphate.

The congress, however, was bogged down from the very beginning over arcane debates concerning its Articles of Association, which were followed by arguments over the transcript and word parsing, and by distracting calls to denounce French actions in Syria. The undercurrents of dissent seem to have been motivated by factionalism and by concern over whether the votes of individual Muslim nations would be weighted relative to their populations. The dissent was led by the representatives of Iraq, who were backed by the Palestinians, seemingly to thwart Egyptian ambitions of playing host to the institution of the caliphate in Cairo.

The second committee ended up agreeing with Ridha: a proper caliphate, that is, one in which a caliph exercised authority over Muslims, was an impossibility at a time of such Muslim weakness. It suggested that similar conferences should be held until a caliphate became practicable. In his memoirs, Zawahiri claimed credit for quickly winding up the congress on the pretext that not all Muslim nations were represented. He did so after realizing that there would be no way of proclaiming Fuad as caliph.[42]

From Where Does the Caliph Rule?

INTERESTINGLY, NEITHER THE AUTHOR OF "ELAM AL-ANAM" NOR THE CONGREGANTS at Cairo ever argued that a sitting caliph must possess the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. That notion, in fact, seems to have been first raised by retired British bureaucrats and adventurers.

The idea that possession of Mecca and Medina was central to the caliphate seems closely related to the idea of service to Islam as a legitimizing requirement for a

caliph. This idea came into vogue when the office of the caliphate lost its luster with the waning of the Abbasids' dynastic authority. At the same time, ambitious potentates sought to bolster their own populist credentials by ascribing to themselves the ultimate pious deed of maintaining the holy sanctuaries.[43] Ottomans in the sixteenth century enthusiastically adopted the idea that the caliph guaranteed the safety of the annual Hajj pilgrimage, even though not a single Ottoman sultan ever performed the pilgrimage throughout six centuries of rule.[44]

The British writers who weighed in on this issue were primarily preoccupied with the fear that the Ottoman sultan would be able to influence India's Muslims during the pilgrimage season, a fear that set in after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. A pliable caliph, propped up in Mecca under British protection, would insure that the office of the caliphate would not be used to agitate against British imperial rule—a rule over Muslim populations that far exceeded in numbers the size of Muslim populations under the Ottoman sultan's direct authority.[45]

Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909, d. 1918) sought to use the theoretical authority of his office as a bargaining chip to fend off further European encroachments on his empire. He played up his role as "Servant of the Two Holy Sanctuaries" and took an active role in appointing loyal *sharifs* in Mecca.[46] He extended his authority's physical reach, and his claim of providing more services to pilgrims, by building the Hejaz Railway, an expensive venture that was substantially funded by contributions from Indian Muslims.[47]

Over many centuries, of course, the spiritual and political center of Islam has shifted with the ebb and flow of power, and the seat of authority has migrated from Medina to Damascus to Baghdad. These shifts have been most obvious during transitional periods of the caliphate, and have been justified by ad hoc rationalizations rather than formal precepts tethered to landmarks.

Thus during Abdul Hamid's reign, when proto-Arab nationalists and political enemies were agitating for an Arab caliph, Mecca was designated the spiritual center of the Islamic world where the caliph would sit in residence.[48] Another advantage of Mecca was its geographical remoteness and distance from colonial expansion: its predominately Muslim population and lack of natural resources made European meddling unlikely.[49] In King Fuad's day, Cairo was touted as a center of learning, with al-Azhar University its shining beacon.[50] There remained the fear, however, that Cairo was subject to British influence and to the spread of vice and secularism.[51] For his part, Ridha was flexible on the caliphate's location, considering at one time Ankara or Mosul.[52]

Obstacles to the Caliphate

IN THE DECADES THAT FOLLOWED THE CAIRO CONGRESS, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE 1950s, radical Muslim ideologues were vague about resurrecting the caliphate.[53] Their circumspection was due, in part, to a reluctance to raise this controversial issue. The necessity for *jihad* was itself particularly controversial. Many argued that a sitting caliph was not necessary to a call for a *jihad*, or at least did *not* argue that a sitting caliph *was* necessary. Abdul Munim Mustafa Halima, for example, the Syrian-born jihadist ideologue based in London and better known by his pseudonym Abu Bassir al-Tartousi, offers little by way of methodology in his 2000 book, *The Path Towards Resuming an Islamic Life and the Resurrection of the Righteous Caliphate that is Guided by the Quran and the Sunna* (*Al-Tareek ila Istinaf Hayat Islamiyyah Wa Qiyam Khilafah Rashidah ala Dhaw al Kitab wal Sunna*).[54] "The just sultan is Allah's shadow on earth," writes al-Tartousi, citing an alleged *hadith*.[55] Instead of presenting his own formula for selecting a caliph, he lashes out in a diatribe against Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), the transnational caliphate movement that claims today to have tens of thousands of members in over forty countries. Since its founding by radical Palestinian clerics in 1953, HT has managed to corner the ideological market in advocating for a resurrected caliphate. Yet al-Tartousi accuses HT—which largely began, and in many respects still operates, as an intellectual movement—of burdening the process of caliph selection with difficult stipulations that, in practice, make selection impossible.[56]

Against HT's intellectualized approach, al-Tartousi introduces the vague idea that jihadist action itself will somehow lead to the caliphate by selecting and preparing a "vanguard or elite of monotheist believers" who will eventually be qualified to lead the *umma*.[57] Indeed, this line of thinking seems to have influenced the jihadists in Iraq, who regard themselves as the elite representatives of the Islamist movement. The jihadists in Iraq also seem to have been influenced by al-Tartousi's fierce attack on the idea that *jihad* requires an imam at the stage before an elite is gathered.[58] He claims that groups such as HT, having suspended *jihad* pending the election of a caliph, are no better than the "heretical" Qadianis (as the followers of the Ahmadiyya movement are derogatorily called).

Al-Tartousi ridicules HT's reliance on the precedent of Mohammed's "seeking aid" in Mecca before leaving for Medina: whereas it took Mohammed two years, al-Tartousi writes, HT is still "seeking aid" fifty years after its launch.[59] Hizb ut-Tahrir is stuck in a perpetual Meccan mode, he claims, and has thus impeded progress toward Mohammed's Medina model. Al-Tartousi is in a hurry to see the prophecies that foretell the Islamic conquest of Rome and India fulfilled—events that will be realized

only through waging *jihad*.[60] Even five years after authoring *al-Tareek Ila Istinaf Hayat Islamiyyah*, al-Tartousi was comfortable writing about issues of Islamic government such as *shura* (consultation), justice, oversight, social liberties, and security, but he did not touch upon a method for electing a leader.[61]

For its part, HT argues that electing the caliph through *ahl ul hel wel aqd* is necessary only when there is a short period of transition—not more than three days—between caliphs. Because many decades have elapsed since the last caliph was deposed, there are two alternative ways a new caliph can be chosen. One is for a group of Muslims to take the initiative upon themselves, subject to four conditions: 1) the territory in which the election takes place must be under Muslim authority; 2) Islam must have full sovereignty there; 3) *sharia* must be implemented; and 4) the newly appointed caliph must fulfill and meet all the conditions of eligibility and duty.[62] The other and preferred method is that a provisional *emir* be appointed to manage the affairs of state while a council of the *umma* narrows down all candidates for the caliphate to two. By then requiring a general election involving the entirety of the Muslim world, this method seemingly implies Islamic unity as a precondition for electing a caliph.[63]

Hizb ut-Tahrir also suggests that the pledge of allegiance by *ahl ul hel wel aqd* should take place in the abode of the last ruling caliph. Presumably, this is because the influential leaders of the community would be congregated in the capital of Islam, but it is unclear whether this prescription applies only to short periods of power transfer that do not exceed three days.[64] Ad-Dumaiji addresses this issue directly: citing al-Mawardi, he argues that holding the pledge of allegiance in the capital of the last caliph is customary but not mandatory, and that modern transportation has rendered this custom unnecessary.[65] Depending on where one sees the end of the "proper" imamate, the last capital could be Kufa (the fourth Righteous Caliph Ali moved here from Medina), Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, or Istanbul.

The author of *Elam al-Anam,* meanwhile, makes the case for Iraq, not by extolling Baghdad's association with Abbasid grandeur, but by highlighting its strategic location at the center of the Arab world. Iraq also has ample resources that could sustain a new state.[66]

However, in a precedent the jihadists would have wanted to avoid, ambitious Arab *mujahidin* in Peshawar declared a caliph in 1993. This embarrassing affair lasted for a year and resulted in infighting and recriminations. The idea originated with a jihadist known as Abu Uthman—a Palestinian with Pakistani and U.S. citizenship—at a time when the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan created disorientation and ideological turmoil among the *mujahidin*. He nominated a Jordanian with British citizenship, Mohammed Eid ar-Rifai, also known as Abu Humam, to be caliph. Ar-Rifai was given allegiance by a number of *mujahidin* and began asserting his

authority. He even resorted to taking punitive actions, including abducting children, against those who refused to pledge allegiance to him.

The caliph conveniently made hashish smoking legal in an initially successful bid to win the patronage and funding of drug cultivators and smugglers operating in Pakistan. However, this endeavor ended with clashes between his disciples and the smugglers, and led to the murder of the caliph's deputy. Ar-Rifai eventually escaped to Konar in Afghanistan, and then returned to London. In May 2006 he suffered a stroke while in British custody.[67] There is some indication that Osama bin Laden knew about this episode, since ar-Rifai had called upon him to pledge allegiance when bin Laden returned to Afghanistan from Sudan in 1993. Al-Zarqawi may also have been aware of these events, and hence probably understood that choosing the wrong man under the wrong circumstances could turn the selection of the caliph into a farce.[68]

What's in a Pedigree?

INTERESTINGLY, AR-RIFAI'S CHIEF QUALIFICATION FOR CALIPH SEEMS TO HAVE been his claim of descent from the Quraysh tribe, to which Mohammed also belonged.[69] In discussions of who should rule the caliphate, this matter of tribal pedigree has never been taken lightly. Attiyet Allah, a prolific jihadist writer, posted a mildly critical essay on several jihadist forums in which he argued that the *mujahidin* of the Islamic State of Iraq had exercised *ijtihad* (initiative) by choosing to name their new creation a *dawla* (state) rather than an *imara* (emirate), and by awarding the exalted title of *Emir al-Mumineen* (Commander of the Faithful) to its leader Abu Umar al-Baghdadi. This implied that while the jihadist's intent may have been well-meaning, they had nevertheless, in Attiyet Allah's view, overreached. Allah seemed especially uncomfortable with the jihadist's use of certain terms that tended to bestow upon them greater power and authority than they actually had. As he wrote:

> Regarding the term of "State" or "Emirate": probably our brothers [in Iraq] chose this particular term for reasons that they saw fit and that are unseen by us who are far away, even though my initial opinion is that the choice of some other [title] would be better and more proper, and I said as much when giving my opinion on [awarding the title of] the "Prince of the Faithful" [to] Mullah Mohammed 'Umar, may Allah preserve him.
>
> It probably would have been better to call him "Emir" without adding "of the Faithful" so that the evident reference would be to

"Emir" of this "State," because the term "Commander of the Faithful" gives the illusion that he is the Grand Imam, and gives the impression that our brothers may consider him so! And it has been accepted as a tradition among Muslims from the time of our master Umar bin al-Khattab, may Allah regard him well, that the title is synonymous with the "Grand Imam" who is also the Caliph.

And if it were added to that that he—may Allah preserve and aid him—is a Qurayshite and a Husaynite, then the illusion is strengthened.[70]

Interestingly enough, even though al-Baghdadi was identified as the head of the state, there was no mention of his alleged Quraysh pedigree or of an exalted title for him in the communiqué that announced the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq on October 15, 2006. It was not until a few weeks later, on November 10, when Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (al-Zarqawi's successor as head of al-Qaeda in Iraq, who was later appointed minister of war in the Islamic State of Iraq) pledged allegiance to "the Qurayshite and Hashemite, descendant of al-Hussein, the Emir al-Mumineen, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi," that al-Baghdadi's alleged Quraysh heritage was made public.

Al-Muhajir's pledge of allegiance to "the Qurayshite" al-Baghdadi, made in his own name and that of the entire army of al-Qaeda,[71] was the first hint that the leaders of al-Qaeda in Iraq who had succeeded al-Zarqawi in June 2006 were attempting to establish some legitimacy for their resurrected caliphate, and that they had gone as far as choosing a would-be caliph.[72]

The author of *Elam al-Anam* does not directly discuss the role of Quraysh ancestry for a would-be caliph, though in a passing reference to the subject he seems to downgrade its importance and to emphasize instead the urgent necessity of picking a caliph.[73] This omission, if taken together with the omission of al-Baghdadi's pedigree when his name was first mentioned, could be an indication of dissent among the jihadists over the extent to which they would emphasize the Quryash issue, so as not to reinforce the impression that they were establishing a caliphate. However, al-Baghdadi's pedigree and title were played up at the time of his inaugural address, which was released two weeks prior to the publication of *Elam al-Anam*.

The following February, the Global Islamic Media Front released ad-Dumaiji's thesis, first formulated twenty-four years earlier, which deals with the Quraysh issue extensively and concludes that Quraysh ancestry was a requirement for caliphal candidacy. Ad-Dumaiji asserts that the "vast majority of Muslim scholars"—including al-Mawardi, Ibn Khaldun, al-Ghazali, and Rashid Ridha—made Quraysh ancestry a prerequisite for an elected caliph, and that the dissenters either were not to be taken seriously or were heretical naysayers.[74]

The important point about ad-Dumaiji's treatment of the subject is that he makes Quraysh ancestry mandatory for any caliph chosen through a decision by the *ahl ul hel wel aqd*: "This condition ... [applies only] when the selection is made by the *ahl ul hel wel aqd*, but if the imam assumes the imamate in any other way then the Quraysh condition is not mandatory." A caliph who takes power by force or inherits power must still be obeyed "and he has the rights of a Qurayshite according to the prior *hadiths* that stipulate obedience ... even if he does not meet all the conditions."[75]

A short treatise bearing the title "Hel al Qurashiyyeh shartt fi al imamah?" ("Is Quraysh [descent] a condition for the imamate?"), signed by a certain Abu Abdullah al-Dhahabi, was also circulating on jihadist forums in early 2006, around the time that the Global Islamic Media Front released ad-Dumaiji's thesis. It seems that this treatise was initially posted serially before being compiled into a thirteen-page document.[76] But upon closer examination, it turns out that al-Dhahabi's treatise is a word-for-word copy of ad-Dumaiji's chapter on the topic of Quraysh, albeit with minor formatting and sequence changes. This is another indication that ad-Dumaiji's contribution to the topic of the caliphate has influenced jihadists.

Ad-Dumaiji began his book by explaining that Islamic authorities had always understood the terms "imamate" and "caliphate" to be interchangeable, and that the titles of "imam" and Emir al-Mumineen (Commander of the Faithful) were both prerogatives of the caliph. In choosing to emphasize al-Baghdadi's Qurayshite roots, the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq were drawing a distinction between their Emir al-Mumineen and another contemporaneous holder of the title. Mullah Umar had been named Emir al-Mumineen at an April 1996 ceremony where he symbolically adorned himself with a cloak that had allegedly belonged to Mohammed. A year and a half later, the Taliban regime was renamed the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. When asked whether Mullah Umar was still the Emir al-Mumineen after the Taliban collapsed in 2001, Kuwaiti cleric Hamid bin Abdullah al-Ali responded by citing the two methods by which an imam is to be chosen. One is by election, but the candidate must be of Quraysh lineage, implying that this method would not apply to the ethnic Pastun Mullah Umar. The other method is through force. Al-Ali suggests that Mullah Umar rose to the imamate by force, and that his authority over the people he governed made him imam over them but not over a divided Muslim world. Given that his regime was no more, Mullah Umar should be considered a leader of the *jihad* but not "an imam of authority and rule."[77]

In *al-Imamah al-Udhma*, ad-Dumaiji considers the possibility of having two imams. He frowns upon this situation as improper and conducive to political strife, even though some jurists, such as al-Juwaini, allowed for multiple imams in two or more widely separated Islamic realms. Ad-Dumaiji suggests that if one of the imams was chosen in the same land where the last widely acknowledged imam was chosen, he

should be imam. Otherwise the imamate should be given to whoever claimed it first. Ideally, both would concede the title and allow the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* to reconvene and choose from among them. In a case where the second claimant had not heard of the earlier claim to the title, then the imamate would rightfully belong to the claimant who had earned a larger number of votes from the *ahl ul hel wel aqd*.[78]

By associating the title of Emir al-Mumineen with Quraysh ancestry, al-Zarqawi's heirs were signaling to bin Laden and Zawahiri—who remain under obligation to follow Mullah Umar while he is alive—that al-Baghdadi was not merely the foremost commander among commanders, but was angling for a position more potent than that of *emir*. They were signaling as well that the Islamic State of Iraq was a grander achievement than the Emirate of Afghanistan, and that its head of state would have wider powers over Islam. Therefore, the Iraq-based *ahl ul hel wel aqd* would have proper authority to elect an imam without necessarily including the leaders of the Afghan Jihad—and their choice would have priority over Mullah 'Umar.[79]

Earlier Considerations of the Quraysh Rule

MODERN SCHOLARS, JIHADISTS, AND WRITERS HAVE DIFFERED OVER THE SIGNIFICANCE of Quraysh ancestry. Juhayman al-Utaybi, the Saudi jihadist who led the 1979 takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, indirectly argued against the House of Saud by citing the stipulation that Muslim rulers must descend from Quraysh.[80] Although al-Maqdisi was deeply influenced by al-Utaybi—evident in the repeated references to al-Utaybi in al-Maqdisi's book denouncing the Saudi royals as "infidels"—he did not, at any point, elaborate on their lack of Quraysh credentials in arguing against them.[81]

In the view of Hizb ut-Tahrir, a caliph is not required to have a particular pedigree.[82] When the current *emir* of HT addressed a question about Quraysh ancestry, his ruling ignored medieval Islamic sources on the topic, and instead applied the *emir's* own historical and rhetorical analyses to the original incident of Abu Bakr's investiture (when the issue of tribal affiliation was first raised). The *emir* concluded by reasoning that Quraysh ancestry was "favorable" but not mandatory.[83]

Why had Abu Bakr held that Quraysh ancestry was mandatory? He did so to solve a unique political problem. Mohammed had left no clear-cut successor, and upon his death Medina's townspeople, who had hosted Mohammed after his flight from Mecca, wanted to reestablish control over their city, which had served as the political capital of the nascent religion. At the same time, the civil peace between the various Qurayshite clans of Mecca would be threatened if one clan attempted to monopolize power. Abu Bakr thwarted Medina's pretensions to succession by limiting rule to Quraysh; he cited a saying of the Prophet that maintained that "the imams are from

Quraysh." But by securing the office for the whole of Quraysh, rather than for Mohammed's immediate clan of Banu Hashim, Abu Bakr also won over the Meccans and cemented their interest in seeing the new religion succeed, since they had the most to gain as members of the ruling class.[84]

However, Abu Bakr's strategy—the arbitrary use of Mohammed's alleged sayings in settling factional disputes—set a problematic precedent. Prophetic *hadiths* could henceforth be adapted and reinterpreted to suit the aspirations and circumstances of the claimants to the highest office in Islam. From that time on, there was no universally accepted doctrine for the caliphate, apart from its duty to impose *sharia* and defend the faith and the faithful.[85]

Following the Quraysh dynasties of the Umayyads and Abbasids, such doctrinal elasticity was applied to the Quraysh rule by the Ottomans. The latter were determined to claim the title of caliph whenever it suited them to do so, particularly as their power waned and they had to search for new sources of legitimacy. The Ottoman case for the caliphate was made as early as the sixteenth century. Upon being challenged by the *ashraf* (descendants of Mohammed), Ali Lutfi Pasha (d. 1562) wrote a treatise arguing that the sultan who promotes Islam in the "important" heartlands of the religion, such as the Middle East, must be considered the imam in his territories, irrespective of his pedigree. In Lutfi Pasha's view, stressing the uniqueness of Quraysh as the ruling class sounded suspiciously like a Shia argument. This had treacherous overtones, as it came at a time when the Ottomans had recently defeated a rising Shia power in Iran.[86]

As their power diminished, the Ottomans found other loopholes in the rule specifying a caliph of Quraysh ancestry. One story relates that upon seizing Cairo in 1517, Sultan Selim was invested with the title of caliph by the last of the Abbasids, Mohammed XI al-Mutawakkil Ala Allah, who was the seventeenth in line of the Abbasid figurehead caliphs residing in Cairo.[87] Fanciful as this story may be, it was widely accepted.[88] Yet another approach was taken by Pirizade Mehmed Sahib (d. 1749), who argued that the Quraysh stipulation was superseded by another alleged saying of Mohammed: "After me the caliphate will endure for thirty years, thereafter will come the rule of kings." In other words, the Quraysh rule was applicable only for thirty years, spanning the era of the Four Righteous Caliphs and the six months of al-Hassan bin Ali's rule. Later Ottoman writers resorted to questioning the authenticity of the *hadiths* that specified Quraysh pedigree for the ruler.[89]

The Ottomans' stake in the title was heightened significantly during the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca in 1774, when the dynasty had to contend with the loss of Muslim Crimea to Orthodox Christian Russia. The Ottomans were also worried that dissident factions in Istanbul might champion the Crimean *khans* as nobler substitutes for the house of Osman.[90] Adopting the title of caliph, the Ottoman rulers reasoned,

would add luster to an otherwise faded regime—and provide immunity from charges of sedition by virtue of the caliphs' "divine appointment."

Yet try as they might to strengthen and legitimize their rule by propping up their caliphal credentials, the Ottomans were doctrinally vulnerable on the Quraysh issue, which was ceaselessly exploited by their enemies and rivals. British detractors of the Ottomans highlighted the Quraysh ancestry of the *sharifs* of Mecca or Emir Abdulqadir of Algeria, then in exile in Damascus, and suggested them as suitable successors should the dynasty in Istanbul collapse. Ismail Pasha of Egypt, deposed as khedive by order of the Ottoman sultan, funded dissident publications in Europe that exposed his enemy as a non-Qurayshite usurper of the caliphate.[91]Arab dissidents such as Abdel Rahman al-Kawakibi and Sharif Hussein used the requirement of Quraysh ancestry as an argument both to undermine the Ottomans and to win back the caliphate for an Arab.[92]

Quraysh ancestry was not as significant an issue among India's Muslims, who were looking for an independent Muslim world power amenable to their position on the subcontinent, though some of them went so far as to concoct a genealogical tree linking the Ottomans to Quraysh.[93] Such loyalty to the Ottomans survived the latter's collapse after World War I, when an influential group of early Indian enthusiasts for the caliphate denounced Sharif Hussein as a traitor. Indian Muslims continued, in Friday sermons, to invoke the name of a deposed Ottoman caliph, and issued a *fatwa* waiving the Quraysh rule.[94]

The non-Arab royal family of Egypt, which had its roots in the Balkans, sought to deal with the Quraysh stipulation by sidestepping it. The earliest contemporary argument made against the Quraysh stipulation by an Egyptian came from Mohammed Mustafa al-Maraghi (d. 1945); it is unclear whether he was acting at anyone's behest, but he later aligned himself with the Egyptian royals. Al-Maraghi's interpretation was that at the time of early Islam, the Arab tribes would unite only under the banner of Quraysh, but since Islam's expansion and incorporation of non-Arabs, the requirement of Quraysh leadership had lapsed.[95] Acting as King Fuad's troubleshooter at the 1926 congress in Cairo, al-Zawahiri also attempted to question the Qurayshi requirement by referring to Ibn Khaldun's citation of eleventh century Islamic scholar Ibn Baqillany in Ibn Khaldun's own argument against the necessity of Qurayshite pedigree. However, al-Zawahiri grudgingly acknowledged that the majority of scholars mandated Quraysh ancestry.[96]

The royal quest for the caliphate continued under Fuad's son Faruq, who had been mentored by and was closely associated with al-Maraghi. During the last year of his reign (1952), and only a few years after al-Maraghi's death, Faruq saw fit to appoint a committee tasked with identifying a family connection that would link him back to Quraysh.[97]

Surely the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq were aware of all the historical deliberations on the Quraysh rule. Thus their emphasis on al-Baghdadi's ancestry was intended to make clear that he was indeed their caliph. Such was their enthusiasm that they put pedigree ahead of identity, opting to tell the *umma* that their leader was a descendant of Quraysh, from the Hashemite line through al-Hussein—but they did not reveal his name or his other qualifications for the job. The author of the *Elam al-Anam* defends the decision to keep the leader's identity anonymous, claiming that it is sufficient for the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* to know the candidate's identity and qualifications without having to reveal such details to the wider public. This ruling was especially pertinent given the precarious security situation of the jihadists in Iraq.[98]

The Caliph's Authority Under the Last Ottoman Sultans

APART FROM THE RECENT ATTEMPT TO REINTRODUCE THE CALIPHATE IN BAGHDAD, the office of caliph itself underwent its last major historical reinterpretation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during the reign of Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid II. The sultan used the caliphate's religious aspect to fortify his grip over his Muslim subjects, and to manipulate a common European misconception that the caliphate was an approximation of the Roman Catholic papacy. By claiming to have spiritual authority over the Muslims living under European rule, Abdul Hamid was able to blackmail European powers, such as Britain and Russia, and win over others, such as Germany, with the notion that a call to *jihad* from him would send millions of Muslims worldwide rallying to his cause. This misconception was historically rooted, and it was mirrored on the Ottoman side with an earlier misunderstanding of the role of the papacy.[99] Abdul Hamid well knew the limits of his spiritual authority, but it was convenient for him to play to European misconceptions.[100] That they were misconceptions was demonstrated during World War I, when Abdul Hamid's successor, prodded by the Germans, announced a *jihad* against the Allies with much fanfare but little effect.[101]

Abdul Hamid employed the religious facets of the caliphate in facing very different internal realities within his empire. The loss of the Balkan and Caucasian territories, coupled with the inflow of refugees, had put Muslims in the absolute majority in the Ottoman Empire.[102] Within these numbers, the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of the Levant gained preponderant importance. Their loyalty to the Ottoman sultan was critical in facing off the strategic threat posed by further British-influenced encroachment from the direction of Egypt.

Meanwhile, the Levant's economic resurgence was a primary concern for keeping the empire's finances in order. Abdul Hamid surrounded himself with Arab advisors, many of them Sufi scholars, who told him that religiously-mandated obedience to the caliph would be to his benefit. They convinced him that his role as spiritual leader would sufficiently inoculate Syrian Muslims against the ethnic and linguistic nationalism that was eating away at the sultan's European domains.[103] For some Syrian Sufis, obeying the caliph was not enough of a religious duty: an apologist for Abdel Hamid made the case, using Sufi sources, that Muslims were obligated to glorify the imam, since he is a manifestation of God's rule.[104]

Abdul Hamid was ultimately successful is using religion to solidify his domestic clout. But his notion of a duality in the nature of the caliphate—temporal and religious—later enabled his political enemies to strip him and his successors of effective authority. This left the caliph with an undefined spiritual role within the state's hierarchy. Abdul Hamid was deposed, and his successor served merely as a rubber stamp for the new regime led by the Committee of Union and Progress. A similar role was played by the last Ottoman sultan, Wahid ud Din, but in the service of the victorious Allies subsequent to Istanbul's occupation after WWI. In April 1920, he arranged for a *fatwa* to be issued declaring the actions of the Turkish nationalists under Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) in Ankara contrary to Islam. Thus began the process by which the Turkish National Assembly decided to annul the sultanate as a redundant vestige of the Ottoman past.

In November 1922, the Kemalists abolished the sultanate, retroactively dating their law to March 1920, thus rendering Wahid ud Din's earlier *fatwa* invalid. A counter-*fatwa* was issued to the effect that Wahid ud Din had forfeited the office of caliph by fleeing the country. Then the Turkish National Assembly did something very curious: it nominated and elected the sultan's cousin, Abdul Mejid II, as caliph.[105] Not only did the Turkish National Assembly appropriate for itself the role of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*, but its election of a caliph seems to have been the first since the fourth Righteous Caliph's death in 661 AD.

A study on the nature of the caliphate was commissioned to justify the Turkish National Assembly's actions and was published under the title *Hilafet ve Hakimiyet i Milliye* (*The Caliphate and National Sovereignty*) subsequent to the abolition of the sultanate. It was supervised by Seyyid Bey (d. 1925), a parliamentarian with a background in Islamic learning.[106] The study argued that the caliphate was a legal rather than a theological seat of power. It was not critically important to the integrity of the Islamic faith, since by the time of his death Mohammed had concluded his mission of delivering the new faith while leaving the matter of succession unresolved. Hence, the temporal issues relating to the management of the new Islamic state were left to the discretion of his successors. These successors, especially during the period of

the "real caliphate," when the early caliphs were elected to office, had ensured that it was the caliph's duty to secure the happiness of the Muslims—a goal that could be met through other forms of government.[107] The *ahl ul hel wel aqd* retained the power of attorney, on behalf of the people, to invest a candidate with the title of caliph.

Later, when arguing for the abolition of the caliphate itself in early March 1924, Seyyid Bey gave a seven-hour speech in which he noted that there was no ruling in the Quran or the *hadith*, nor any consensus among Muslim scholars, that explicitly prohibited a body of individuals, such as a modern parliament, from acting as a corollary to *ahl ul hel wel aqd* and omitting the election of a caliph in order to govern Muslims. A return to the "real caliphate" would be impossible, Seyyid Bey argued, since the noble qualities that were exhibited by the early Muslims were lacking in the contemporary *umma*. Other parliamentarians used a parallel argument for annulling the caliphate, citing the *hadith* that limited the "real caliphate" to thirty years; they added that the rationale behind the *hadith* was that a single ruling caliph could not possibly rule over an enormous and expanding Muslim territory.[108]

After he sent the last caliph packing, Ataturk tried to offset Muslim indignation by offering the "spiritual caliphate" to Ahmad al Sharif al-Sanussi (d. 1933), a Libyan Sufi leader of Qurayshi descent, whose call for *jihad* had stimulated the Tripolitarians to fight against the Italians in 1911.[109] The offer to become a "Muslim pope" residing in a place other than Turkey was made twice, in 1924 and in 1925, but was turned down.[110]

The prospect of an exiled Ottoman caliph was problematic for King Fuad's aspirations for the title. This predicament, however, was neatly resolved by pliable Azhar shaykhs, who ruled that Abdul Mejid II's title was not legitimate, and allegiance to his person was not binding since he had accepted the un-Islamic terms that were laid out for him by the Turkish government when he took the office.[111] But the liberal opposition to Fuad quickly took up the points made by Seyyid Bey's study, and repackaged them as a book by Egyptian Shaykh Ali Abdel Razik in 1925. Abdel Razik further elaborated on these points by arguing that Islam had a role in theology, ethics, and ritual but not in government.[112]

Also in Cairo, Rashid Ridha vacillated on the nature of the caliphate. He seems to have concluded at one point that, since a temporal office could not be realized at a time of Muslim weakness, a "spiritual caliphate"—albeit with its political independence guaranteed—was better than no caliph at all.[113] Another approach was taken by Abdel Razzak al-Sanhouri (d. 1971), then an Egyptian student in France. He wrote a doctoral thesis in 1926 that was posthumously published in 1988—with major parts excised—under the title *Fiqh al-Khilafeh* (*The Jurisprudence of the Caliphate*). Al-Sanhouri went on to become a renowned jurist in the Middle East, and his book has been enthusiastically championed by moderate Islamists seeking to resurrect the caliphate.

In his thesis, al-Sanhouri set out to refute Abdel Razik by arguing that instead of adopting a fully secular form of government, Muslims can update early Islamic modes of governance, including the office of the caliph. Among other notions, al-Sanhouri fancifully envisioned joint Muslim and non-Muslim committees that would make *dhimma* rules conform to modern interpretations of citizenship, and imagined that Islamic unity could be achieved through the formation of a commonwealth of sovereign Muslim states.[114]

> The tomb of the Abbasid Caliphs in Cairo is a visual affirmation that a caliphate, devoid of authority and relying on its supposed "spiritual" aspect, is not all that appealing to Muslims. The Abbasids in Cairo were figureheads, useful only in providing religious cover for succeeding Mamluk strongmen. In building a mausoleum for their earthly remains, the Abbasids seem to have picked a spot near the shrine of Seyyida Nafisa, a great-great-granddaughter of al-Hassan bin Ali, who was turned into a living saint by the people of Cairo. Throngs of the faithful still supplicate at Seyyida Nafisa's shrine, a busy and bustling scene. However, reaching the Abbasid mausoleum requires walking through a dusty alleyway that opens up to the cemetery where the padlocked and decrepit structure stands, neglected and unvisited. When asked whether the cenotaphs inside the mausoleum legibly revealed the identities of the Abbasids interred there, a cemetery caretaker indicated that it has been the centuries-old habit of the lower-born townspeople of Cairo to bury their own dead within and around the mausoleum, thus erasing any trace of the Abbasids.[115]

The mausoleum of the Abbasid Caliphs in Cairo, with the shrine of Seyyida Nafisa looming over it.
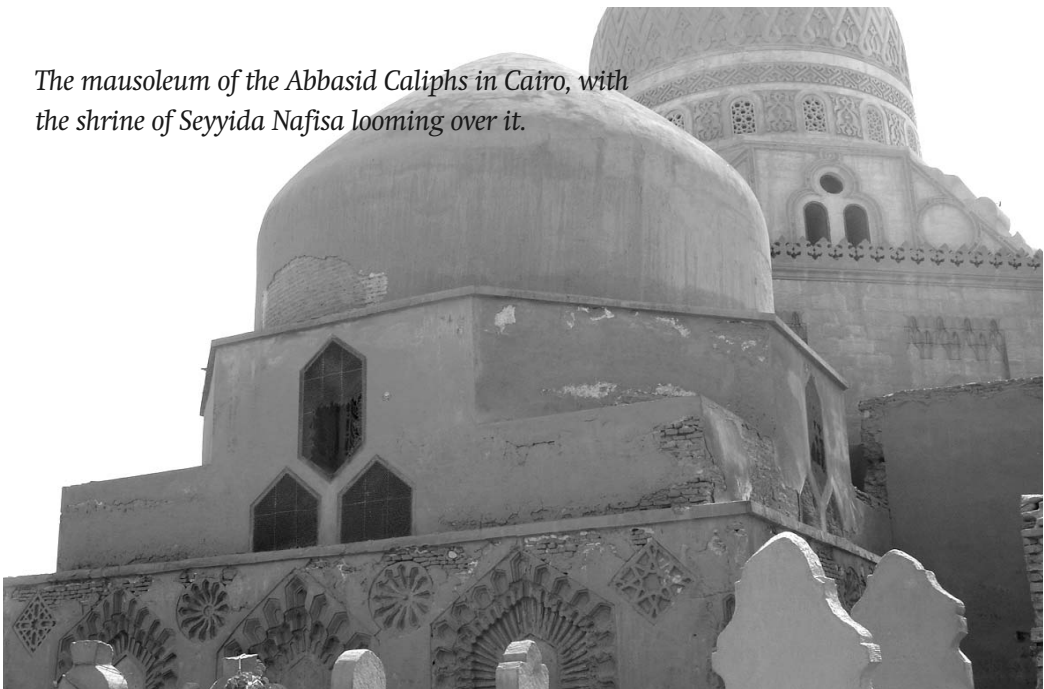
The Duties of the Caliph According to the Jihadists

ARGUMENTS OVER THE CALIPHATE'S RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS continue to this day. For their part, the jihadists certainly do not acknowledge a spiritual aspect of the caliphate that can be separated from its temporal authority. Their concept involves a muscular defense of Islam in all fields, to be supervised by an active caliph. Neither ad-Dumaiji nor the author of *Elam al-Anam* considers the possibility that the caliphate should have jurisdiction over significant Muslim populations in formerly Islamic realms that are currently governed by non-Muslims. Such was the situation of Abdul Hamid II with regards to Russia and India. However, it seems that the jihadists view such concessions as temporary setbacks along the road to restored sovereignty over all of *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam).

Ad-Dumaiji summarizes the caliph's duties: He is to preserve the faith by proselytizing for Islam through "pen, [spoken] word, or sword," and by safeguarding the faith from erroneous misinterpretations. He is to protect the territorial integrity of the land of Islam by fortifying the borderlands so as to safeguard the lives, wealth, faith, and honor of Muslims. Furthermore, he is to enact *sharia*, collect taxes and other forms of payment owed to the treasury by Muslims and non-Muslims, divide and distribute these funds, equip armies, and appoint able deputies and judges. The caliph must maintain unity and justice, and develop the realms and increase their productivity.[116] The caliph is not mandated to take *shura* (consultation) but would benefit from it; and excepting the case of a ruling by the religious scholars, he is not obligated to follow anyone's advice. If the caliph performs these duties well, then he is owed obedience by Muslims—for life.[117] According to ad-Dumaiji, the caliphate is not an end in itself, but a means to promote the religion of Islam.[118]

For the author of *Elam al-Anam*, the jihadists had succeeded in fulfilling these duties even before declaring the Islamic State of Iraq. He writes: "Iraq has been transformed ... into one of the most monotheistic countries on the face of the earth ... no shrines are visited ... no magicians are [consulted]," and *sharia* has been returned to its divinely mandated place, to be "hegemonic over actions and persons and institutions and customs."[119] Moreover, the jihadists were settling tribal disputes, appointing judges, helping fellow *mujahidin* break out of prisons, meting out punishments, pushing back invaders, collecting alms and taxes, appointing suitable administrators, and taking care of the families of martyrs and soldiers.[120] Yet if Islam was being promoted by the jihadists even before their declaration of the Islamic State, one wonders about their motivation for forging ahead with the caliphate venture any-

way. In a sense, the jihadists in Iraq had turned things around: the empowerment of Islam was the means to the state. The decades-long quest for the caliphate had turned the idea of the state, rather than its function, into something of a jihadist fetish, a longing that the jihadists were overeager to gratify.

Elam al-Anam's author concludes that it is precisely because the jihadists were successful in fulfilling these duties that the West marshaled its military might in a bid to stop them:

> Without question, the new Islamic State will be fought [since] the Crusader [planner] declared his goals as not allowing any upcoming caliphate to arise.... But God is overpowering, for he had enabled his [followers], the *mujahidin*, [to win] and they smothered the Crusade's plans in the dust, and they declared their new project; this newborn state has knocked on the door, and has arisen from lethargy, and it is faced with a long journey that is not easy to bear, and it is the new gate of hope for the *umma*, and its forthcoming glory, and its brandished sword upon the necks of [the *umma's*] enemies.
>
> Oh cavalry of Allah mount [your steeds], and oh Muslims come all of you to defend and protect your religion, and know this that Islam cannot be made to be apparent or victorious unless [Islam's] state is erected, and its might is made apparent and it confronts and clashes with [wrongness] on the field of battle, for all who think that Islam can be made apparent with a tape or a book or [by] proselytizing or [through] parliaments or election ballots, are ignorant of how this religion arose [at the beginning]; this religion arose on the skulls and corpses of the [first Muslims] and their sons.[121]

Following this logic, Islam can be defended only by an Islamic state, and such a state can come about only through *jihad*. The author of *Elam al-Anam* has put the Muslim world on notice that the Islamic state has arisen anew in Iraq, and that it is incumbent on Muslims to support it.

Al-Baghdadi's View of His Role as the Head of the Islamic State of Iraq

AL-BAGHDADI CAST HIMSELF IN THE ROLE OF THE DEFENDER OF THE FAITH IN facing down internal and external threats to Islam. He began his first speech, which was released on December 22, 2006, by explaining that he was no more than "a soldier among the laypeople; fighting those who turned against Allah," and by asserting that he was "never the *emir* of any of those [jihadist] groupings, but the people reached a consensus upon [me] and refused to let [me] go." Al-Baghdadi relishes presenting himself as the reluctant ruler who had "repeatedly refused to take [upon myself] this matter, that is, the Emirate of the Muslims," but was nonetheless called upon by destiny to lead. He explains that he was resolved to take decisions only after consulting the other *mujahidin* leaders; that he had formed a Majlis Shura Muwwesaa (Expanded Consultative Council) that included three members from each jihadist group supporting the Islamic State "regardless of the number of its soldiers and the volume of its operations;" and that a representative from each of the major tribes had also been included, together with religious scholars and notables. The Expanded Consultative Council was complemented by a Majlis Shura Mudhayeq (Narrower Consultative Council) that comprised five individuals who would take speedy executive decisions when required.[122]

In a later speech, al-Baghdadi extols the virtues of the Islamic State of Iraq where *sharia* was being actively administered:

> Iraq [is] today one of the greatest nations on the face of the earth in maintaining monotheism, for there is no polytheistic Sufism being propagated, or shrines being visited, or innovated festivals being celebrated, or candles being lit or a pilgrimage being made to a pagan totem, for the people of Iraq have destroyed these shrines with their own hands so that Allah will be worshiped alone....

> Go and delve into the country, so that you will see that [there are no longer] places that encourage sordidness or corruption, and no [unveiled women] present to infatuate the young, and to tempt the old, or to be devoured by wolves.... Search and you will not find a dance party that angers Allah in His heavens.[123]

The enforcement of such morality, it seems, has been brought about by some of

al-Baghdadi's measures, such as banning satellite dishes and ordering women to cover their faces when in public.[124]

Alms are being collected, al-Baghdadi claims, even from "the herdsmen of the desert who willingly give what is owed to the *mujahidin*." He also adds, "the Iraqi *jihad* has restored vitality to [other] jihadist locations that had fizzled out," and that the time of the Islamic State has come; the jihadists did not "seek to pick the fruit before it ripened, but that they had simply caught the fruit, midair, as it fell off the tree." They thus prevented the *jihad* in Iraq from suffering the same fate which befell the jihadists in Bosnia and Afghanistan, who did not have a clear plan for what came after the phase of waging *jihad*.[125]

Referring to Iraqi Sunnis who have refused to offer their allegiance to him, al-Baghdadi accuses *mujahidin* holdouts among them of "recalcitrance."[126] Other Sunni Islamists, such as the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood–oriented Islamic Party, who have participated in the political process, are castigated as "apostates," together with lay Sunnis who join the government's security or administrative services. Yet the charges of "apostasy" and "heresy" for laypersons are to be applied in a case-by-case basis pending a trial.[127] Al-Baghdadi's bickering with fellow Sunnis and his wrath over their lack of enthusiasm for his Islamic State is a running theme throughout all his pronouncements. At times he offers dissenters amnesty and a negotiated settlement,[128] but more often he threatens them with annihilation.

In a telling departure from ritual, al-Baghdadi agrees with his soldiers that the price of sheep is too high to offer as alms during the ritual slaughter of Eid. Instead, he suggests the alternative of a human sacrifice: the jihadists can slaughter Sunni "renegades" who had joined the American-backed tribal Awakening Councils. Although it is favorable to offer the sacrifice before the advent of the lunar month of Muharram, he declares, one Islamic school of jurisprudence allows delaying the sacrifice until such a time as a Muslim is able to. Thus, taking the head of a renegade can be deferred.[129]

Al-Baghdadi also approaches the subject of non-Muslim Iraqis in a most unusual way—he assigns to himself the right to renegotiate the Covenant of Umar with Christians. Inasmuch as the jihadists believe that such a pact between the second caliph and the Christians of the Holy Land was a historical occurrence, al-Baghdadi's nullification is a significant transgression against what ad-Dumaiji calls the *sunna* of the Righteous Caliphs, to which Mohammed had instructed the faithful to adhere.[130] Al-Baghdadi claims that the non-Muslim minorities' support of the "invaders" warrants a drastic break with accepted orthodoxy, and that non-Muslims must renegotiate their status with the Islamic State if they seek to enjoy those past protections:

> We find that the sects of the people of the book and others from the Sabians ... in the State of Islam today are people of war who qualify

for no protection, for they have transgressed against whatever they agreed to in ... countless ways, and if they want peace and security then they must start a new era with the State of Islam according to [the Second Righteous Caliph] Umar's stipulations that they have annulled.[131]

Al-Baghdadi blames the Arab Christians of the Levant for introducing the ideas of ethnic and linguistic nationalism in order to break Muslim bonds and to replace Islam with Arab nationalism. According to al-Baghdadi, "this was their opportunity to destroy the Ottoman caliphate."[132] He also takes credit for the gruesome attacks on the Yezidi minority of Iraq which resulted in hundreds of deaths; al-Baghdadi brands them as "devil-worshippers" and accuses them of preventing their own people from converting to Islam.[133]

Whereas Abdul Hamid II hinted at declaring *jihad* against foreign powers but never did so, al-Baghdadi fervently and repeatedly declares *jihad,* even in retaliation for minor offenses. Given the immediacy of the American threat to the Islamic State of Iraq, al-Baghdadi devotes a portion of his inaugural speech to the terms of surrender he was offering to President George W. Bush:

> We order you to withdraw your forces immediately. But the withdrawal must be via troop transport trucks and passenger planes whereby each soldier is allowed to carry his own weapon only. They may not withdraw any of the heavy military equipment and the military bases must be handed over to the *mujahidin* of the Islamic State and the duration of the withdrawal may not exceed a month.[134]

Al-Baghdadi goes on to warn Bush not to waste this opportunity of safe passage for his troops, as he did when he declined a ceasefire offered by the "shaykh of the *mujahidin*" Osama bin Laden. Al-Baghdadi assumes that the Americans are so demoralized by the war that they will jump at his offer. In another instance, he asserts that the jihadists have killed "more than 75,000 [American] soldiers" with "many multitudes more" wounded and disabled.[135]

As for the regional threats facing Islam, al-Baghdadi singles out Iran's alleged Shia expansionism across the Middle East—one of al-Zarqawi's chief concerns[136]—as well as the supposed menace posed by Israel. In July 2007, al-Baghdadi threatens war against Iran if it does not stop interfering in Iraqi affairs, and sets a deadline of two months for the Iranian leadership to untangle itself from Iraq. He calls upon the Sunnis of Iran to prepare for war, and warns Sunni businessmen in the Arab world and the Persian Gulf to sever all business partnerships with Shia merchants; he uses the derogatory word "*rafidha*" to refer to the Shia, and uses "*majus*" when discussing the Iranians. He

also declares that all mercantile dealings between Iraq and Iran are to be suspended.[137]

Al-Baghdadi promises the Palestinians that for now they will be resettled in the towns and villages of Iraq that have been cleansed of Shias,[138] but that eventually the Islamic State of Iraq will destroy Israel and liberate Palestine. He chooses the twelfth-century Zengid sultanate as the historical precedent upon which the Islamic State of Iraq will be modeled in this cause, and mentions the more timely possibility of providing training and aid for Palestinian jihadists:

> As the state of Noureddin the Martyr was the cornerstone for the return of al-Aqsa [Mosque] back into the [fold] of the *umma* ... we ask of Allah and hope that the [Islamic State of Iraq] will be the cornerstone for the return of Jerusalem. The Jews and the Americans have realized that, and they have tried to thwart us by any means from [advancing towards] this goal, and the vicious campaign in Anbar [Province] and the excessive pride in [how it calmed down], is [due] to their knowledge that it is easy to fire medium-range missiles against Israel from some parts of [Anbar] as was done by Saddam....
>
> But we are prepared to support you with all that we have of funds, even though it is little, and we are prepared to train your cadres, starting from [the manufacture of Improvised Explosive Devices] and ending with manufacturing missiles.[139]

Al-Baghdadi's understanding of geostrategic balances is muddled and delusional, for at one point he sees common ground between the Islamic State of Iraq and the ambitions of the French, Russians, and Chinese in supplanting the United States. He even addresses the Communist leadership of North Korea, demanding some credit for allowing its nuclear program to go through because America was being distracted by Iraq and the actions of the jihadists there. Al-Baghdadi also seems to view Belgium as a world power to be reckoned with.[140]

Yet al-Baghdadi's oddest foreign policy pronouncement to date would have to be his declaration of war on Sweden's economy during September 2007, in retaliation for a cartoon depicting Mohammed as a dog. He seems to be seizing on a new opportunity for Muslim indignation not unlike that which was triggered by the Danish cartoons lampooning Mohammed two years earlier:

> Every sniveling scoundrel is daring to insult us, from the worshippers of the cross [Christians] to the worshippers of the devil [Yezidis], even the worshippers of the cow [Hindus], and our honor and our

blood have become the cheapest thing in this world, and when we strive to arise from our slumber to retrieve our glory and the dignity of our ancestors, these [renegades] stabs us in the back....

No, oh worshippers of money, no oh worshippers of the cross, we are a nation that Allah [had chosen] to glorify with Islam, and you will know oh worshippers of the cross how it will feel to kneel down in humiliation, and officially apologize for your crime against our Prophet.... And we know how we can force you to retract and apologize, for if you don't, then await the attacks on the economies of your giant corporations such as Ericsson, Scania, Volvo, Ikea, and Electrolux....[141]

Furthermore, al-Baghdadi announces a $100,000 bounty for killing Lars Vilks, the Swedish cartoonist, and an extra $50,000 if Vilks' neck is slit like a lamb's. Al-Baghdadi also sets aside another $50,000 for the head of the editor of *Nerikes Allehanda*, the paper that ran the cartoon.

Al-Baghdadi foretells the imminent collapse of the West's decadent civilization. He wonders why it is that precisely now—a time when Islam, as represented by the Islamic State of Iraq which he heads, is poised to reap the fruits of this massive victory—that the Sunni "renegades" remain obstinate in refusing to pledge allegiance to him and continue to actively resist his authority:

Today, we are embarking on a new era, and a point of transformation for the region and the entire world; we are witnessing the end of that lie called Western civilization, and the rise of the Islamic giant, and this is exactly what Bush warned of in his latest speech in front of the veterans [August 22, 2007] saying: "the region is developing in a way that threatens the downfall of civilization" and by that he means the civilization of unbelief, the civilization of usury and prostitution, the civilization of oppression and humiliation. And he had this to say about the soldiers of the Islamic State of [Iraq]: "they seek to restore the caliphate from Spain to Indonesia" after [the Americans] made clear that [the soldiers of the Islamic State] are only Sunni danger threatening America and its civilization, and this is the truth as testified to by the enemies; doesn't this conflict with what the renegades have branded us?[142]

What he does not explain is this: if President Bush himself is aware of the grand ramifications of the Islamic State of Iraq and its implications for a resurrected and

belligerent Islamic empire, then why have Iraq's Sunnis failed to recognize the import of this lofty jihadist venture? Why, instead, have they turned against it?

Implications for Counterterrorism

IN A "MESSAGE TO THE *Umma*" RELEASED ON MAY 19, 2008, ADDRESSING THE sixtieth anniversary of the state of Israel, Osama bin Laden lamented that "the Ottoman state, despite its immense flaws, had protected the *umma* from the wolves of the crusading West," and that as a result "Britain conspired with Arab leaders at the forefront of whom were Sharif Hussein and his sons, and King Abdel Aziz [Ibn] Saud, who colluded with [Britain] to fight and topple the Ottoman state." Thus for bin Laden, even a flawed caliphate is necessary to forestall the external and internal threats posed to Islam.[143]

The al-Ekhlaas internet forum, one of the most important jihadist propaganda outlets, displays on all its main pages a continuously running ticker marking the founding of the Islamic State of Iraq. On June 6, 2008, this ticker read: "600 days have passed since the declaration of the State of Islam, the imminent hope of the *umma* ... and it shall remain by the grace of Allah." Clearly, while bin Laden grieves over the end of the caliphate decades ago, the jihadists and their sympathizers on al-Ekhlaas have high hopes for the new caliphal state embarked upon in Iraq. Another fixture on al-Ekhlaas's main discussion forum highlights a thread that invites its patrons to pledge allegiance to "the Caliph of the Muslims, the Commander of the Faithful, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi." At last count, some twelve hundred individuals had done so.[144] There could be hundreds more jihadists in Iraq who still observe their pledge to al-Baghdadi, and possibly thousands of others dispersed around the Middle East.

Yet the Islamic State of Iraq is faltering, according to statements made recently by some of America's top military, diplomatic, and intelligence officials.[145] The Sunni Awakening Councils and "Sons of Iraq" militias, which had cast their lot with the Americans against al-Qaeda in Iraq, have been given much credit by media and regional analysts for bringing about this auspicious result. The recognition of these groups has not taken into consideration, however, the role of doctrinal dissonance which, as a direct result of the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq, set one jihadist group against another.[146] It was the spectacle of jihadists turning on jihadists, and the ensuing distraction and discord, that initially opened space for tribal leaders, as well as a few insurgent groups—exhausted and depleted by years of fighting—to begin rallying fellow Sunnis against al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Four months into the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq, an unknown but

seemingly authentic Iraqi jihadist leader, calling himself Jihad al-Ansari, published an extraordinary open letter (dated February 26, 2007) that was addressed to al-Baghdadi. In it al-Ansari references an unanswered earlier letter, dated December 4, 2006, that had sought some clarifications from al-Baghdadi regarding the timing and purpose of the Islamic State of Iraq. Al-Ansari now claims that "matters have deteriorated in this period" and have "damaged the jihadist corps and greatly tarnished the reputation of the *jihad* and the *mujahidin*."

Al-Ansari decries the zeal of al-Baghdadi's soldiers in seeking support for the new regime:

> The worst that has come about because of your solitary step was the commencement of many of your groups and members of your organization, so as to show your authority over Muslims in Iraq, to attack and insult all people, and to agitate against those who refuse to pledge allegiance to you.... And in this most recent period, this pattern has been increasing, and many of your groups are capitalizing on the delicate situation, to peddle the idea of the State according to its beliefs, and to do so by attacking the people, and to harass every citizen, whether he was innocent or not.... Do you want to drive your organization towards collapse and dissolution, because of the sins of these sinners...?

> Is it reasonable for you to squander the fighting effort towards assassinating and killing the *mujahidin* who refuse to pledge allegiance to you, or those from the general body of the Muslims, at these trying times, when the efforts of the infidels are coalescing against the Muslims in Iraq? A few days ago, one of the shaykhs of the mosques of Baghdad said to me: "We have started to fear the fighters of al-Qaeda more than we fear the Mahdi Army gang." ... Since when has the threat of murder been the correct manner by which to extract a pledge of allegiance?!

> Do you think that through this manner we will hurry to pledge allegiance? Don't you know [as an Iraqi], that the Iraqi will give you [the shirt off his back] if you speak to his pride, but if you begin to threaten him, he will strive to avenge his dignity, not fearing death.[147]

Al-Ansari goes on to declare that he will be "the first to publicly refuse to pledge allegiance," but adds that the "al-Qaeda organization would be honored and respected

if it [adopted] justice and wisdom and fighting the infidel occupier and their Safavid agents as its guidance" and stopped trying to force people to succumb to its authority—in other words, if it dropped the venture of the Islamic State of Iraq.

Violent operations by the Islamic State of Iraq have fallen ninety-four percent over the last year, according to a study prepared by a jihadist sympathizer on al-Ekhlaas that cites the Islamic State of Iraq's own numbers. Just a year and half ago, al-Baghdadi's organization credited itself with sixty percent of all violent attacks in Iraq, including the majority of the spectacular ones.[148] But nowadays most of the Islamic State of Iraq's vengeance is directed against recalcitrant "renegades" who broke rank on doctrine.

While the resurrection of a robust and sovereign caliphate has been an oft-stated jihadist goal, jihadists and their detractors have long understood that such a goal, in its initial stages, would reveal the soft and doctrinally-vulnerable underbelly of their militant ideology.[149] In their overconfidence, in their zeal to force the hand of history by embarking on the venture of the Islamic State of Iraq as the embryonic caliphate, al-Zarqawi's successors afforded their critics a golden opportunity to question the viability of their vision for the future—a vision in whose service they were willing to wreak havoc and destruction.

The American public was uncurious as to the identity, nature, and goals of its enemy in Iraq. And, unfortunately, U.S. leaders and commanders were mostly complicit in such willful unawareness. The lack of interest on the part of the public was partly due to bitter partisan recriminations over the Bush administration's policy in waging the Iraq war, and over who in Washington was to blame for the insurgency that ensued. Consequently, the doctrines of the Bush administration regarding preemptive strikes and democracy in the Middle East came under incessant scrutiny from the administration's domestic political foes. Meanwhile, the doctrines of the jihadists were overlooked or, in the few cases where they were considered, dismissed as esoteric. Fantastical as they may be, these doctrines do indeed motivate and inform the enemy's actions and strategy, and their significance was not recognized.

As a result, the Islamic State of Iraq was played down by American officials, analysts, and journalists as an "al-Qaeda in Iraq affiliate" rather than its successor. Meanwhile, al-Baghdadi was trivialized as a "fictional character"—even though this assertion could have originated with jihadist disinformation. Would al-Qaeda in Iraq invite upon itself such an ideological backlash from fellow jihadist groups by announcing al-Baghdadi's pedigree simply in a conventional bid to confuse coalition intelligence services about the make-up of its top leadership? It seems like a steep and wholly unnecessary price to pay for a security ruse, given that it incurred the wrath of so many fellow travelers in the cause of *jihad*, and exposed the Islamic State of Iraq's organizers to questioning and criticism of their ventures' implications.

Regardless of whether the Iraq War was justified or not, one post-invasion reality cannot be disputed: al-Zarqawi and his fellow jihadists chose to turn Iraq into a new battleground against the United States and its allies. Al-Zarqawi was not a member of al-Qaeda when he began his terrorist operations. In the course of garnering support and succor for the *jihad* in Iraq, under the name of the Monotheism and Jihad Group, he was able to turn that achievement around to negotiate with bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. His intention was to acquire the al-Qaeda franchise, principally for fund-raising and recruiting purposes in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Yet he did so on his own terms, without conceding the doctrinal idiosyncrasies that had prevented him from officially joining the al-Qaeda movement in Afghanistan years earlier. Even so, the al-Qaeda affiliation was useful for al-Zarqawi only for a year or so, for he moved on to expand his organization and append it to the Iraq-based Shura Council of the Mujahidin on January 15, 2006.

It has been the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that al-Zarqawi (who was killed in June 2006) and his successors not only determined to turn Iraq into a battleground on their own initiative, but that they subsequently chose Iraq as the incubator for their grand vision of a unified Islamic empire under the aegis of a ruling caliph. They did so without instructions from or consultations with the traditional leaders of al-Qaeda hiding out in the Hindu Kush Mountains. Rather, they presented the jihadist world with a fait accompli: the Islamic State of Iraq. They thereby captured the imagination of a new generation of jihadists who were already enthralled by the alleged victories of the Zarqawists in Iraq.

At the time when they declared their state, the Zarqawists believed that they were winning, taking the gloomy forecasts of an American "quagmire" and "defeat" in Iraq, as peddled by the U.S. media, as a sign that they were about to turn a corner in the war. As far as they were concerned, there was no greater service to Islam than theirs; not even "Servitude of the Two Holy Shrines" of Mecca and Medina could compare with what the jihadists were achieving in Iraq, a distinction that ranked them as the elite and vanguard of a victorious Islamic regeneration. In their eyes, the merit of a successful *jihad*, waged against the world's greatest power, earned them the authority and responsibility for resurrecting the caliphate, since they alone were the rightful *ahl ul hel wel aqd* of their time.

The jihadists were mindful of the disarray and confusion that had enfolded the Muslim world before and after the last Ottoman caliph was deposed—the temporal and spiritual duality under Abdul Hamid II, the ceremonial caliphate that the Turkish nationalists experimented with right before annulling the office outright, the dithering at the Cairo Caliphate Congress, and the embarrassment at Peshawar. They leaped across centuries of precedent to go back to Mohammed's nascent state at Medina. Their "Commander of the Faithful" would be of Quraysh stock, not some

ethnic Pashtun warlord. Their "state" would be the "real caliphate" once again, set to expand under Mohammed's own banner from the very heart of the *Dar al-Islam*— ancient Baghdad and its environs. This venture was far more ambitious and daring than a marginal emirate within the remote folds of the Hindu Kush.

The Islamic State of Iraq was to be the shield and spear of Islam, facing down infidel foes from within and without. It would be the harbinger of glory and redemption, the "*umma's* hope" for an avenger to its many humiliations. Should the jihadists meet some slight setbacks, "that too shall pass." As al-Baghdadi said, explaining why the Islamic State of Iraq would persist: "We are certain that Allah will not break the hearts of the embattled monotheists and turn us into the object of ridicule by the oppressors."[150]

Yet the Islamic State in Iraq does not seem on the verge of a comeback. This is especially true since the Iraqi Sunnis that it claimed to be fighting for, and for whom its laurels would accrue in victory, apparently have irreversibly turned against it. Could it be, after all the bloodshed, treasure, and prayers that went into the Islamic State of Iraq, that Allah also turned His back on the jihadists?

The corollary to the military defeat now being experienced by the jihadists is the even more agonizing prospect of doctrinal collapse: the heralded caliphate is still-born, and the glorious vision of a reinvigorated Islamic state has been smashed. The anguish and demoralization brought about by this byproduct of battlefield victory cannot be overstated. To smash the dreams of a man who lives for a cause, who endures cruel deserts and damp caves while awaiting martyrdom, is a fate far worse than death. In a battle of wills, young men are able to summon the necessary willpower to press a button and to detonate themselves among innocent bystanders. They do so for the cause of *jihad*, and for the deferred utopia of a resurrected and avenging Islamic world power. Nothing breaks the will of the individual jihadist more than to see his ideology begin to bear fruit, only to watch that fruit rot away right before his eyes. Such has been the impact of the Zarqawist Islamic State of Iraq—the caliphate-to-be, under the Commander of the Faithful Abu Umar al-Baghdadi the Qurayshite—and such the bitter aftertaste of its ruinous downfall.

NOTES

1. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam* (Random House, 2004 [2003]), pp. xv-xviii.
2. Islamic State of Iraq–Ministry of *Sharia* Commission, *Elam al-Anam bi milad dawlet al islam* (Al-Furqan Institute for Media Productions, released on January 7, 2007) available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=4359. This 101-page tract begins with an introduction from the "Ministry of Information" that is penned by the "Official Spokesman" of the Islamic State of Iraq, posthumously

identified as Muharib Abdel Latif al-Juburi, one of Al-Qaeda in Iraq's top native-born leaders (confirmed killed on May 1, 2007). In the introduction, the spokesman informs us that this tract was authored by "one of the sons of the *Sharia* Commission" who was "killed in an ambush with U.S. forces." The author is not identified, not even by a pseudonym, but the tract is described as one that was "prepared under the supervision of Uthman bin Abdel Rahman al-Tamimi, the head of the *Sharia* Commission." On April 19, 2007, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi named a certain Abu Uthman al-Tamimi—by all indications an Iraqi—as the Minister of *Sharia* Commission in the Islamic State of Iraq (see Nibras Kazimi, "Al-Baghdadi Names Pseudonyms—for ministerial portfolios," *Talisman Gate blog* [posted April 19, 2007] available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/04/al-baghdadi-names-pseudonymsfor.html) but it remains unclear whether the supervisor of this tract (Uthman al-Tamimi) and the minister (Abu Uthman al-Tamimi) are one and the same. It should be noted that the Iraqi cadres of al-Qaeda in Iraq seem to have been enthusiastic supporters of the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq, probably reflecting a desire to secure the title of caliph for a fellow Iraqi.

3. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 55. Another variation on Bush's words came from al-Baghdadi in his first speech "Truth Has Arrived and Falsehood is Perished" that was released on December 22, 2006, where he claims that the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq "drove that enemy of Allah, Bush, to say after its emergence that the [jihadists] seek to establish an Islamic state from China to Spain, and thus he was truthful [in this instance] despite being a liar." See Nibras Kazimi, "Would-Be Caliph's Inaugural Address to the Islamic *Umma*," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted December 23, 2006) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2006/12/would-be-caliphs-inaugural-address-to.html.

4. Abdullah ibn Umar ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma inda ahl ul sunna wel jamaah* (Global Islamic Media Front, February 2007), available at http://www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=47906&highlight=%C7%E1%CF%E3%ED%CC%ED. This 403-page book was published in 1987 (not specified by whom and where in the GIMF electronic version), and it was based on a Master's thesis presented by ad-Dumaiji at the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca during May 1983. Abdullah Umar Suleiman ad-Dumaiji, 51, currently teaches as an Associate Professor at the College of Islamic Creed at the King Abdul Aziz University in Mecca. He was one of thirty-eight signatories who had affixed their names to a controversial letter dated December 7, 2006, that called upon Muslims to confront alleged Shia and American designs on the Middle East region; see Nibras Kazimi, "38 Leading Saudi Clerics Incite Iraqi Sunnis Against Shias, Americans," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted December 11, 2006) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2006/12/38-leading-saudi-clerics-incite-iraqi.html. *The Global Islamic Media Front* (GIMF) is considered one of jihadists' principle media outlets; it began to put out a video news bulletin called "Sawt al-khilafa" ('Voice of the Caliphate') in September 2005. The GIMF also publishes an electronic magazine called *Sada Al Jihad* ('The Echo of Jihad').

5. Ad-Dumaiji explains that Islamic authorities have always understood the terms "imamate" and "caliphate" to be interchangeable, and that the titles of "imam" and *Emir al-Mumineen* ("Commander of the Faithful") were prerogatives of the caliph. The significance behind the interchangeability of these terms becomes apparent in the Islamic State of Iraq's *Elam al-Anam*, since the term imamate is employed with greater frequency than caliphate, while in other publications released by the Islamic State of Iraq the head of state is called *Emir al-Mumineen*; such substitutes may have been a rhetorical ruse by the jihadists to offset any controversy engendered by their blatantly calling the venture a caliphate and their leader a caliph.

6. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al Imamah al udhma*, p. 70.

7. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 102.

8. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 89-97. Abul Hasan Ali bin Mohammed al-Mawardi was born in

Basra and died in Baghdad in 1058 AD. Al-Mawardi's works have been studied by western scholars as the definitive classic on Islamic governance. But as Gibb demonstrates, al-Mawardi was writing under unique circumstances during a time when Abbasid rule was humiliated by its subjugation to the Shia Buwaihid dynasty, and there was hope for a restoration of a more muscular caliphate; these expectations colored al-Mawardi's outlook. The importance of al-Mawardi's contribution is that he maps out a doctrine for government based on precedence; the decisions taken by previous generations of the Muslim *jamaa* (community) were justified by divine guidance and hence had to be right, and it is these decisions that must inform how a present Muslim community goes about governing itself. Therefore, all precedents for choosing a caliph were correct and applicable where appropriate. Al-Mawardi's "rules" are summarized in nineteen points, see Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "al-Mawardi's Theory of the Caliphate," *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. S. J. Shaw (Princeton University Press, 1982 [1962]), p. 151-159.

9. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 125-126.

10. This is particularly true of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, which contended that the caliphate had only lasted for thirty years, beyond which Muslims have been ruled by dynasties. This line of thinking influenced the earlier Ottoman sultans, who adopted the Hanafi school of law, see Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (Barnes and Noble, 1966 [1924]), p. 163.

11. Abul Maali Abdul Melik bin Abdullah al-Juwaini was a native of Khurasan who died there in 1085 AD and rose to prominence as a cleric and a leader of prayer in Mecca and Medina. A summarized version of his book *Ghiath al umam fi tiyah al dhulem,* with a special emphasis on what the conditions for the election of an imam are to be when the Islamic world is in turmoil, was republished under the title *Al-Tariq ila al khilafah* (The Path to the Caliphate) by Abu Ammar Mohammed bin Hamid al-Hasani (dated April 1984) and is available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3905. Clearly, al-Juwaini remains an important reference on the caliphate for the jihadists, seemingly more so than al-Mawardi, even though ten centuries have lapsed since his book on the subject was authored. Gibb did not have access to al-Juwaini's book, see Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, p. 142.

12. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al Anam*, p. 13

13. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al Anam*, p. 10

14. The concept of the *al-Taifah al-Mansourah* (Victorious Faction) is an important one for the jihadists, and has been enthusiastically adopted by those waging *jihad* in Iraq. One's allegorical membership in this faction entails the belief in forty-one tenets as laid out in a pamphlet by Abi al-Fadhl al-Iraqi, which were described and expanded upon by Abu Islam al-Ansari in *Ma alim al-Taifah al mansourah fi bilad al rafidayn* (*The Features of the Victorious Faction in Iraq*) dated December 2004 and available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3142. Al-Ansari explains that the land of Islam can revert back to *Dar al-kufr* (Land of Unbelief) if occupied or subjugated by "infidel" forces. Tenet number thirty-five states that *jihad* is the way back to recommencing the caliphate; see p.47. The notion that one belongs to a faction negates the Sunni doctrine of *jamaa* since it is dismissive of majorities and the process of consensus. It could explain the willingness shown by the jihadists in Iraq to commit brutal atrocities since they are more interested in being right than in being popular—such schismatic impulses seemingly bring the jihadists closer to the style of sedition and heresy during the classical Islamic era. Such tendencies deserve further study that is beyond the scope of this paper.

15. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 15-16.

16. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 17-23.

17. 'The Alliance of the *Muttayyebin*' was a new body announced on October 12, 2006 in a 5-minute propaganda video put out by the Shura Council of the Mujahidin; the alliance consisted of several jihadist

groups such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq that had allegedly formed a pact with several Sunni Iraqi tribal leaders. *Muttayyebin* refers to the gooey yellowish syrup called *tteeb* into which those who pledged allegiance to each other dipped their right hands. The video showed six masked men pledging allegiance to one another to establish *sharia*. The original "alliance of the muttayyebin" refers to a pre-Islamic tribal alliance made by several Meccan clans and tribes to protect the Kaaba and to aid each other in war. It was attended by Mohammed, who was 20 years old at the time, and it was convened by his grandfather Abdul Muttalib.

18. Al-Baghdadi identified these tribes (he put the number of tribal sheikhs who had pledged allegiance at 70 percent) as "the Duleim, the Jebour, the Ubaid, Zobaa, Qais, Azzah, Tayy, the Janabis, the Hayyalis, the Mushahdeh, the Dayniyyeh, the Bani Zeid, the Mujammaa, the Shammar, the Anizeh, the Sumaydaa, the Nuaym, the Khazraj, the Bani Lheib, the Bu Hayyat, the Bani Hamdan, the al Saadoun, the al Ghanim, the Saideh, the Maadheeh, the Karabileh, the al Salman, and the Kubeisat," and he had listed the areas in which the jihadists operate as Fallouja, al-Garmeh, Amiriyah, Ramadi, al-Gharbiyeh, al-Tarmiyyeh, al-Sinniyeh, Tikrit, Sammara, Baqouba, Al Udheim, Mosul, Kirkuk, Talafar, and Baghdad; see Nibras Kazimi, "Would-Be Caliph's Inaugural Address."

19. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 24.

20. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 32.

21. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 26.

22. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 30. The Medina analogy was taken up by others who sought to legitimize the Islamic State of Iraq such as pseudonymous author Attiyet Allah who posted a mildly critical article on several jihadist discussion forums on December 13, 2006 that nevertheless responds to some of the arguments made against the Islamic State of Iraq. In addition to citing the size of Mohammed's state at Medina, Attiyet Allah also references Mohammed ibn Abdul Wahhab's state in Diriyya. In response to the charge that the Islamic State of Iraq is dividing Iraqi territory, Attiyet Allah asks "Did [Mohammed] divide the Arabian Peninsula and Arab society by declaring his state in Medina?" see Nibras Kazimi, "Interesting Jihadist Critique of the Islamic State of Iraq," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted January 11, 2007), available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/01/interesting-jihadist-critique-of.html. The same point about Mohammed not dividing the Arabian Peninsula was made earlier in an audio tape by Abu Hamza al Muhajir in which he declares Al-Qaeda in Iraq's allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and to Al-Baghdadi, see Nibras Kazimi, "Al-Qaeda in Iraq Supports US Elections Results," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted November 10, 2006) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2006/11/al-qaeda-in-iraq-supports-us-election.html. Another correlation between the Islamic State of Iraq and the Medina city-state was made by Abu Hureira al-Ansari, a jihadist allegedly based in Iraq, in a post that he authored on a jihadist discussion forum on August 18, 2007: just like Mohammed in Medina, the Islamic State of Iraq faces internal (tribal Awakening groups) and external enemies (the Americans and the Shias); al-Ansari also likens the flocking of the *mujahidin* to Iraq from all over the Islamic world to the early Muslim *hijra* (migration) from Mecca to Medina, available at http://www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=75462.

23. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 29.

24. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 30-31 and p. 77. The recalcitrant tribal Sunni "Awakening" groups are likened to these Jewish tribes.

25. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 68.

26. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 38-39.

27. The three verses are numbers 80, 81, and 83 from the *Israsura*. The various interpretations of these verses more or less say the same thing: Mohammed's mission entered upon a new phase when he

embarked on the journey from Mecca to Medina, and it was here that Allah promised to render upon him the glories of the Persian and Roman empires. Mohammed then returned victorious to Mecca, which was a harbinger of more victories to come. The last verse makes the case that the Quran was reveled in stages, and so will victory arrive in stages, see Kazimi, "Would-Be Caliph's Inaugural Address."

28. Dafna Linzer and Thomas Ricks, "Anbar Picture Grows Clearer, and Bleaker," *Washington Post* (November 28, 2006).

29. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 40-42.

30. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 34. The author specifically refers to the Islamic Army of Iraq as one of the jihadist groups that were willing to negotiate with the Americans.

31. Nibras Kazimi, "A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 2 (Washington: Hudson Institute, September 2005), pp. 59-73.

32. Draft copy of Thomas Hegghammer and Stephane Lacroix, "Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al Utaybi Revisited," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 103-122, available at http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00093/Juhayman_Website_ver_93672a.pdf.

33. Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and other Middle-Eastern Studies* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1970 [2004]), p. 178. For Fuad's role in agitating for his claim to the title see pp. 183-190.

34. Mohammed Rashid bin Ali Ridha al-Husseini, "Muqademmeh ila mutamer al khilafah al am fi misir alqahirah," *Al-Manar Magazine*, Vol. 27 (Cairo, May 1926), p. 133-138 available at http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3635.htm.

35. Sultan Wahid ud Din cabled the Egyptian government from San Remo, Italy, where he was living out his exile a few days ahead of the congress insisting that only he had the authority to convoke such a gathering; see "Ex-Sultan Mehmed Khan Opposes Selection of a Caliph," *New York Times* (May 5, 1926). Wahid ud Din had earlier proclaimed that the decisions taken by the Ankara government to depose him and separate the sultanate from the caliphate were contrary to Islamic law, and that in fleeing Istanbul he was following the example of Mohammed in his flight from Mecca to Medina; see "Ex-Sultan Appeals to Moslem World," *New York Times* (April 16, 1923); Wahid ud Din died on May 16, 1926 in Italy, and was buried in Damascus.

36. Sharif Hussein (r. 1908-1917), later King of the Hejaz (r. 1917-1924), claimed the title of caliph in early March 1924, but the general reaction was hostile. He tried to garner wider Muslim recognition for his title a few months later at the Pilgrimage Congress that was held in Mecca during July 1924 but was rebuffed as the congregants agreed not to discuss the caliphate. By October of that year, Hussein abdicated in favor of his son Ali; see Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York; Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 84-85. In addition to the three claimants mentioned by Ridha, there were at least several others: the Sharif of Morocco (whose family claimed the title since the 16th century), five rulers in the Malay Archipelago, and a few more in Sumatra; see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 181-182.

37. Rashid Ridha went through many phases before arriving at these points: for example in 1922, following the victories of the Turkish Army, he considered the Turkish National Assembly in Ankara as a body that was representative of *ahl ul hel wel aq* and consequently was empowered to depose Wahid ud Din. Later, Ridha argued that *ahl ul hel wel aq* should be selected from among the leaders of the *umma* in both religious and secular affairs and he included in their ranks merchants, agriculturalists, managers, distinguished writers and professionals, who together would function as a parliamentary body. For a full reading of Ridha's many phases see Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab

Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Ridha's Ideas on the Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 117, No. 2 (April 1997), pp. 253-277.

38. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 193, and Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 86.

39. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 100. Also see a pro-royalist newspaper counseling against using the congress to appoint a caliph due to the political backlash in "The Egyptian Press on the Caliphate Congress," *The Moslem World*, Vol. 16, Issue 4 (October 1926), p. 410.

40. The minutes of the General Caliphate Congress were republished in three parts in Ridha's *al-Manar*, see Mohammed Rashid bin Ali Ridha al-Husseini, "Muthekerat mu tamer al khilafah al islamiyyah," *Al-Manar Magazine* (Part 1, June 1926), pp. 205-208, available at http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3646.htm, (Part 2, July 1926), p. 275-280, available at http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3656.htm, (Part 3, August 1926), pp. 363-370, available at http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3668.htm.

41. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 93-94.

42. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 193.

43. Devotion to Mecca and Medina had become a way by which a Muslim potentate may distinguish himself among other aspiring princes. "Servant of the Holy Sanctuaries" was never considered a legitimizing attribute for the early caliphs running through the Abbasids, but it became coveted as the title of caliph inversely lost its dignity through over-use by minor rulers who based their authority on force. Control over the holy cities was tied to control over Egypt, which served as the granary of the Hejaz. It is interesting that Ottoman Sultan Selim acquired the title of "Servant of the Holy Sanctuaries" from his slain foe, the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, rather than from the "reigning" Abbasid caliph, see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 144-153.

44. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 242-244.

45. Tufan Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate in the Early Years of Abdulhamid II: 1877-1882,," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 36, Issue 1 (BRILL, March 1996), pp. 65-68. Also Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 247.

46. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 248.

47. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 253-255.

48. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 32-33.

49. Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era," p. 260, and Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman," p. 72 and p. 87.

50. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 187.

51. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 193, and Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 89-90.

52. Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era," p. 275.

53. Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (Yale University Press, 1985), p. 84.

54. Abdul Munim Mustafa Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah wa qiyam khilafeh rashidah ala dhaw al kitab wel sunna* (International Center for Islamic Studies, London, May 24, 2000) available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=1453.

55. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 5.

56. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 9.

57. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, pp. 16-18.

58. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 29.

59. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 87.

60. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 99.

61. Abdul Munim Mustafa Halima, *Rakaiz alhukm fi al dawlah al islamiyyah* (pamphlet, March 6, 2005) available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3904.

62. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah* (2007) available at http://www.khilafah.com/kcom/images/PDF/method%20to%20appoint%20a%20khaleefah.pdf, pp. 25-26.

63. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah*, pp. 28-29.

64. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah*, p. 14.

65. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 94.

66. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 93.

67. The earliest published account available about this affair is from Mohammed Kheir Awadallah, "Fi al dhikra al rabia li ahdath sebtember [2-2]," *Al Sahafa* Newspaper, Issue no. 4418 (Sudan, September 21, 2005), in which he names Abu Uthman and Mohammed ar-ifai. In an email correspondence with this author during May 2008 Awadallah would not further identify his sources for this information or elaborate on the identity of Abu Uthman. The other account of the episode with more details, although providing no names, came in a book by Abul Walid al-Misri which was serialized in Mohammed al-Shafii, "Thartharah foqah saqf al alem," *Asharq al Awsat* Newspaper, Issue no. 10193 (London, October 25, 2006); the source of the book was identified as the HARMONY project. However, it turns out that Abul Walid al-Misri is former *al-Jazeera* correspondent in Afghanistan Mustafa Hamid, who had written a series of books on the experiences of the *mujahidin* from 1979-2001 under the title *Adeb al mattareed*. The reference to the caliphate episode was narrated on p. 41 in "Book 6" that bore the title "Salib fi sama Qandahar" in which he refers to the bin Laden encounter, available at http://mafa.maktoobblog.com/?all=1. News of ar-Rifai's arrest and coma were attributed to Yassir al-Sirri in "Khalifet al muslimeen Mohammed Eid ar Rifai fi ghayboobah bi mustashfa Brittani," *Middle East Transparent* website (May 25, 2006) available at

http://www.middleeasttransparent.com/old/texts/caliph_rifai_in_coma.htm. Some previously unreported biographical details were provided in the latter source, such as ar-Rifai's membership in the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1990s and his subsequent expulsion from its ranks before leaving Jordan for Afghanistan.

68. Although he was not present in Afghanistan at that time, al-Zarqawi would have probably heard about the Peshawar caliphal affair in detail from his brother-in-law (married to al-Zarqawi's sister) Salih al-Hami, also known as Abu Qudamah (real name could be Sati Qasrawi). Al-Hami writes about his antagonistic encounter with ar-Rifai, who he calls the "naïve caliph" and an "arrogant idiot," adding that the latter had declared al-Hami an infidel and called for his blood to be spilt. This aside was mentioned in a long tract that al-Hami had authored and that appeared under several titles andat different times online (last dated July 27, 2007, available at http://www.gulfson.com/vb/t68205.html), which was meant as a rebuttal to Fuad Hussein's biography on Zarqawi, *Alzarqawi: aljeel althani li Al Qaida* (Dar al-Khayal, Beirut, 2005).

69. The Rifais claim descent from Mohammed's grandson al Hussein bin Ali, and hence consider themselves members of the Banu Hashim clan of Quraysh.

70. Kazimi, "Interesting Critique," see n. 22.

71, Kazimi, "al-Qaeda in Iraq Supports US Election Results," see n. 22.

72. There had been much speculation as to the real identity of Abu Umar al-Baghdadi. In July 2007, the U.S. military announced, based on confessions made by a senior al-Qaeda in Iraq figure held in custody, that al-Baghdadi was a fictional character created as a ruse to confuse U.S.-led Coalition Forces. It would seem bizarre that the Islamic State of Iraq would embark on such a controversial endeavor as anointing the Commander of the Faithful, only to fill the position with a fictional character; the

unlikelihood of which is further underlined when considering that Islamic State of Iraq was trying to convince other jihadist groups to follow suit in pledging allegiance, and further when considering the very serious doctrinal implications of the move, and the effect the revelation of the supposed ruse would have on the standing of Islamic State of Iraq. Another speculative account has it that al-Baghdadi is the pseudonym of Khalid Khalil Ibrahim al-Mashhadani (Abu Zaid), see Nibras Kazimi, "More on Abu Omar al-Baghdadi's Alleged Identity," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted March 7, 2007 and updated on April 22, 2008) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/03/more-on-abu-omar-al-baghdadis-alleged.html. Another possible suspect is Hamid Dawood Mohammed Khalil al-Zawi, according to a police chief in Anbar Province, see Nibras Kazimi, "Abu Omar al-Baghdadi R vealed?," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted May 7, 2008) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2008/05/abu-omar-al-baghdadi-revealed.html. Both the Mashahdeh and Zawiyeen clans allege descent from al-Hussein bin Ali.

73. It is only referred to once to make an indirect point about how the power to impose one's will and authority is sufficient for a caliphate or an imamate to stand, see Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 74-75. The rules for the head of the state can also be tweaked to take into consideration circumstances, pp. 83-84.

74. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 152. The author does acknowledge that al-Juwaini leaned towards not making it mandatory, and he included him among the minority of Ashaarite scholars who took this stance, see p. 153. Even though ad-Dumaiji agrees with the "majority of scholars" that he cites, he takes issue with the arguments made by Ibn Khaldun, Wali Allah al Dehlawi and Ridha as to the wisdom behind it, see pp. 161-164. The author also makes the anti-Shia case of why this stipulation was not limited to the Banu Hashim clan of Quraysh by claiming that the Hashemites were small in number and hence the pool of qualified caliphs would be limited as a result, and that the elite of the early Muslims was not exclusive to Banu Hashim, see p. 164. Contemporary writers had made arguments that it was not mandatory; Ad-Dumaiji cites these views and refutes them, see pp. 154-160.

75. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 165.

76. Abu Abdullah al Dhahabi, "Hel al Qurashiyyeh shartt fi al imamah?" (undated) available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=2939. The indication that it was posted or discussed in installments is a reference to "today we continue what we started in the past episode."

77. *Fatwa* by Hamid bin Abdullah al-Ali (undated) available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=4277. Al-Ali, 42, is an Islamist professor and preacher based in Kuwait who comments regularly on current events, and whose writings are popular among jihadists. In a later *fatwa* dated April 4, 2007, al-Ali delivered a long and scathing critique of the Islamic State of Iraq, concluding that al-Baghdadi's imamate was not legal since the presumed imam's identity was unknown, and that he was in hiding and did not enjoy any real authority over a stretch of territory. Al Ali further decried al-Baghdadi's insistence on the pledge of allegiance and his denouncement of those who withheld it with "recalcitrance" as unlawful, available at http://www.h-alali.net/f_open.php?id=1a55240a-3422-102a-9c4c-0010dc91cf69. As a result of this latter *fatwa* al-Ali incurred the wrath of the supporters of the Islamic State of Iraq who vehemently accused him of betraying the jihadists in Iraq.

78. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al-imamah al udhma*, pp. 309-310.

79. The rivalry among al-Zarqawi's successors and the traditional leaders of al-Qaeda may have been reflected by Ayman al-Zawahiri's response to a question concerning the legitimacy of the Islamic State of Iraq and its leader al-Baghdadi, for he seems to minimize the significance of the Islamic State as a "step towards the caliphate" rather than the caliphate itself, and that "al-Baghdadi is [one of] the leaders of the Muslims and the *mujahidin* of this era" rather than a caliph. Al-Zawahiri describes the Islamic

State of Iraq as a project that forestalled sedition rather than resulted in it, further implying that he views it as a local Iraqi affair without larger implications for the cause of global *jihad*. In defending the Islamic State of Iraq against other accusations, al-Zawahiri defers to and quotes statements made earlier by Osama bin Laden rather than mounting a vigorous defense of his own, see al-Sahab Media, *al liqa al maftouh maa al sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri,* Episode Two (released April 22, 2008) available at http://www.aekhlaas.net/ forum/ showthread.php?t=141671&highlight=%C7%E1%D9%E6%C7%E5%D1%ED.

80. Juhayman bin Saif al Utaybi, "*Risalet al imarah wel baya ah wel ta ah wa hukm talbis al hukam ala talabat al ilm wel ameh*" (undated), pp. 10-12, available at http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=4243.

81. Abu Mohammed al Maqdisi, *Al kawashif al jaliyyah fi kufr al dawlah al Saudiyyah* (2000 [1989]) available at www.tawhed.ws. Al-Maqdisi makes a passing mention of the Quraysh question on p. 195.

82. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah*, pp. 16-19.

83. Ata bin Khalil Abul Reshteh, "Jawab su aal fi mawdhoo al neseb al Qurayshi wa shuroott al khilafah," (August 27, 3003) available at http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/arabic/index.php/HTAmeer/QAsingle/452/. Abul Reshteh was chosen *emir* of Hizb ut Tahrir in April 2003.

84. Madelung, *The Succession to Mohammed*, pp. 31-50.

85. Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, p. 66-67, and Gibb, "Some Considerations on the Sunni Theory of the Caliphate," p. 148.

86. Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "Lutfi Pasa on the Ottoman Caliphate," *Oriens*, Vol. 15 (December 31, 1962), pp. 287-295.

87. This tale originates in a late eighteenth century account written by a local-born interpreter employed by the Swedish Consulate who provides no historical sources. This account later gained currency among European historians and filtered back into Ottoman accounts. As early as Murad I's reign in Edirne, the Ottoman sultans had adopted, or were described in their correspondence by, the title of caliph. This merely reflected customary practice at the time, when the title became yet another term of ornate flattery for a potentate, see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 128-147. Selim would not have been eager to acquire so empty a title; his attitude would have been more affected by the distinctly Turkic sense that the Ottomans were descended by blood from world conquerors as a source for legitimacy rather than being elected to eminence by an alleged inheritor of an enfeebled Abbasid legacy that another Turkic race, the Mongols, had put an end to in Baghdad, see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 109.

88. Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate," p. 63.

89. Tufan Buzpinar, "The Question of the Caliphate under the Last Ottoman Sultans," *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in honour of Butrus Abu Manneh*, Ed. By Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (IB Tauris, 2005), p. 29.

90. Buzpinar, "The Question of the Caliphate," p. 18.

91. Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate," pp. 65-89. Emir Abdulqadir and the *sharifs* of Mecca claim descent from al-Hassan bin Ali.

92. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 33/80-85.

93. Azmi Oczan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain 1877-1924* (BRILL, 1997), p. 123.

94. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924* (BRILL, 1999), pp. 96-103.

95. Maraghi's letter was written during World War I to the British Governor General of the Sudan at a time when Britain was at war with the Ottoman Empire. The letter is reproduced in full in Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, pp. 208-212.

96. Al-Husseini, "*Muthekerat mu tamer al khilafah al islamiyyah*," see part 1. Ad-Dumaiji discounts Ibn Baqillany by arguing the latter had mandated the Quraysh requirement in his book *Al insaf* but later did not make it mandatory in his later book *al-Tamheed*, see ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 153.

97. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 207. The attempt was made to link Faruq back to Quraysh through the female line, see Sylvia Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate and its Aftermath," in Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 244.

98. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-anam*, pp. 86-88. This same argument was made by Osama bin Laden in his speech about the Islamic State of Iraq in which he responded to criticism that al-Baghdadi was an unknown figure; bin Laden stated that it was enough that al-Baghdadi was recommended to him by al-Zarqawi and al-Muhajir, and that it was prudent to keep such matters secret during conditions of war, see Osama bin Laden, *Al sabeel li ihbatt al mu amerat* (al-Sahab Media, December 30, 2007) available at www.alekhlass.net/forum/showthread.php?t=110962.

99. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 167-175. See also Appendix B in the same book, pp. 189-200.

100. Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, pp. 50-51.

101. For an in-depth presentation of the role played by German intelligence in manipulating the office of the caliph as a religious weapon in agitating against the Allies, see Tilman Ludke, *Jihad Made in Germany: Ottoman and German Propaganda and Intelligence Operations in the First World War* (LIT, 2005).

102. Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 44.

103. See pp. 141-146 in Butrus Abu Manneh, "Sultan Abdulahamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (May 1979), pp. 131-153. In courting Arab public opinion, Abdul Hamid went as far as to consider making Arabic the official language, see Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 48.

104. Itzchak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (BRILL, 2001), p. 129.

105. Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," pp. 208-210.

106. Michelangelo Guida, "Seyyid Bey and the Abolition of the Caliphate," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (March 2008), pp. 275-289.

107. Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," pp. 210-218. Haim relies on the Arabic version of the study as published in Cairo's *al-Ahram Newspaper* in 1924.

108. Guida, "Seyyid Bey," pp. 282-284.

109. Ludke, *Jihad Made in Germany*, p. 86.

110. Kedouri, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 189. A few years later, Ataturk claimed that the Muslims of India and Egypt had beseeched him to take on the title of caliph himself, see Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," p. 223. Ataturk would have been mindful of the potential for worldwide Muslim indignation even ahead of abolishing the caliphate after receiving a letter from the Aga Khan that implored him not to detract further from the office of caliph following the annulment of the sultanate, the letter is reproduced in full in "Letter of Aga Khan, Criticizing It, Resented by Angora Government," *New York Times* (January 6, 1924). See also Andrew Mango, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Overlook Press 2002 [1999]), pp. 400-405. Ad-Dumaiji, reflecting a common Islamist opinion on the man who ended the caliphate, includes a brief biographical note about Ataturk in which he castigates him as a crypto-Jew, a Mason, pro-British and an alcoholic "who died an infidel," see ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 67 n. 2.

111. Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," p. 241. Abdul Mejid's election was supported by India's Muslims, who at the time, after Turkey's war against the invading Greeks, looked upon the nationalists in Ankara as Islamic heroes (p. 240). Upon being deposed, Abdul Mejid waited until he crossed into Bulgaria to issue a proclamation that his removal was null and void, see Mango,

Ataturk, p. 406. Abdul Mejid's claims to the title were again brought up by the Indians ahead of the Jerusalem Congress in 1931, see Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," p. 242, also "Indian Group Seeks to Restore Caliph," *New York Times* (October 30, 1931). Reflecting this association with India, Abdel Mejid gave two of his daughters in marriage to the Nizam rulers of Hyderabad, see "Struggle For Hands of Caliph's Kin Bared," *New York Times* (January 1, 1932); he died in Paris on August 23, 1944, and was buried in Medina.

112. Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," p. 235-237. For the political dimensions and associations that may have motivated Abdel Razik, see Kedouri, *The Chatham House Version*, pp. 190-193.

113. Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era," pp. 276-277.

114. Al-Sanhouri's arguments are quoted in detail and refuted in Mohammed Said al-Ashmawi, *Al khilafah al islamiyyah* (Al-Intishar Al-'Arabi, 2004 [1989]), p. 394-416. A brief Arabic biography on al-Sanhouri is available at http://www.islamonline.net/arabic/contemporary/Arts/2000/article35.shtml.

115. Author's visit to the Tomb of the 'Abbasid Caliphs in the al-Qarafah al- Kubra district of Cairo on July 17, 2006.

116. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 187-188.

117. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 209-220, and pp. 251-256. For the caliph's right to rule for life, see p. 232.

118. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 311.

119. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 46.

120. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 47-54.

121. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 91.

122. Al-Baghdadi's first speech, see n. 3.

123. Al-Baghdadi's fourth speech "Harvesting the Years for the State of the Monotheists," released on April 16, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "Abu Omar al-Baghdadi's Fourth Speech: the 'State of the Union' is Iffy," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted April 17, 2007) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/04/abu-omar-al-baghdadis-fourth-speech.html.

124. Al-Baghdadi's third speech "Say I Am Made Certain By My God," released March 13, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "Al-Baghdadi's Third Speech—Sounding Worried," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted March 14, 2007) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/03/al-baghdadis-third-speech-sounding.html.

125. Al-Baghdadi's fourth speech.

126. Al-Baghdadi's second speech "Glory from Allah and an Imminent Victory,," released on February 2, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "al-Qaeda is Losing It," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted February 3, 2007) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/02/al-qaeda-is-losing-it.html.

127. Al-Baghdadi's third speech.

128. Al-Baghdadi's tenth speech "The Compact Structure," released on April 13, 2008, see Nibras Kazimi, "Back to Al-Baghdadi's Speeches," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted April 18, 2008) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2008/04/back-to-al-baghdadis-speeches.html.

129. Al-Baghdadi's eighth speech "Humble Towards Believers, Stern Towards Unbelievers," released on December 28, 2007, see Kazimi, "Back to Al-Baghdadi's Speeches."

130. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 70.

131. Al-Baghdadi's third speech.

132. Al-Baghdadi's eighth speech.

133. Al-Baghdadi's sixth speech "They Plot, But Allah Also Plots," released on September 15, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "What is al-Baghdadi Up To These Days?," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted September 23, 2007) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/09/what-is-al-baghdadi-up-to-these-days.html.

134. Al-Baghdadi's first speech.

135. Al-Baghdadi's second speech.

136. Nibras Kazimi, "Zarqawi's Anti-Shia Legacy: Original or Borrowed?," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 4 (Hudson Institute, 2006), pp. 53-72.

137. Baghdadi's fifth speech "Should You Desist Then That is Better for You," released on July 9, 2007, see Kazimi, "What is al-Baghdadi Up to These Days?

138. Al-Baghdadi's second speech.

139. Al-Baghdadi's ninth speech "Religion is Advice," released on February 14, 2008, see Kazimi, "Back to Al-Baghdadi's Speeches."

140. Al-Baghdadi's second speech.

141. Al-Baghdadi's sixth speech.

142. Al-Baghdadi's sixth speech.

143. Al-Sahab Media, "A Message from the Lion of Islam Osama bin Laden to the Islamic *Umma*," (May 19, 2008) available at www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=148375. Bin Laden's apparent nostalgia for the Ottoman Empire is deeply frowned upon by the wider body of Wahhabis who consider such romanticized reminiscences about the Sufi-patronizing and westernizing Ottomans, even if such sentiments issue from well-meaning individuals, to be "arrogant" and misguided, see Nassir al-Fahd, *Al dawlah al Uthmaniyyah wa mawqif daawet al sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab minha* (undated) available at www.tawhed.ws.

144. The varying forms of the *bayaah* ("pledge of allegiance"), and what their different wordings signify, deserve further study that is beyond the scope of this paper. Ad-Dumaiji addresses these issues in *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 112-123, also see Abdel Hakim Hassan, *Al bayaa suwaruha wa wujub al wafa biha* (undated), available at www.tawhed.ws. The al-Ekhlaas thread for pledging allegiance to al-Baghdadi begins at http://www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=47428. The first pledge to the "caliph of the Muslims" was made on February 22, 2007 by the pseudonymous Muhibb al Irhab' ('Lover of Terrorism') who is tagged as the 'Deputy General Supervisor' of al-Ekhlaas. Muhibb al Irhab claims to be posting from "the land of the caliphate." By June 16, 2008, the number of responses to this thread had reached 1,214 posts.

145. Central Intelligence Agency director General Michael Hayden in Joby Warrick, "U.S. Cites Big Gains Against al-Qaeda," *Washington Post* (May 30, 2008); U.S. ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker in Adrian Croft, "al-Qaeda in Iraq Never Closer to Defeat—US Envoy," *Reuters* (May 24, 2008); acting CENTCOM chief Gen. Martin Dempsey in Robert Burns, "Commander: al Qaida in Iraq at its weakest," *Associated Press* (May 21, 2008).

146. For a discussion on the secondary role played by the Sunni tribes and militias in bringing about the improved security situation in their areas, see Nibras Kazimi, "Let Beast Devour Beasts," *New York Sun* (June 19, 2007) and Nibras Kazimi, "Of Tribes and Men," *New York Sun* (September 23, 2007).

147. Nibras Kazimi, "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted February 28, 2007) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/02/oh-brother-where-art-thou.html.

148. Nibras Kazimi, "Fascinating: the Jihadist Admit Defeat in Iraq," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted May 15, 2008) available at http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2008/05/fascinating-jihadists-admit-defeat-in.html.

149. Nibras Kazimi, "Calling All Caliphs," *New York Sun* (October 12, 2005)

150. Al-Baghdadi's fourth speech.

Vigilante Islamism in Pakistan: Religious Party Responses to the Lal Masjid Crisis

by Joshua T. White

THE YEAR PRECEDING PAKISTAN'S FEBRUARY 2008 GENERAL ELECTIONS was one of the most tumultuous in the country's history. Along with the political upheavals associated with the judicial crisis, the military government's suspension of the constitution and imposition of emergency rule, and the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the year brought with it an upsurge in violence following the Pakistan Army's siege of the radical Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in the capital city of Islamabad. More than any other event in recent years, the Lal Masjid crisis led to an important new debate amongst the country's various religio-political movements over the legitimacy and efficacy of vigilante Islamism—that is, over the permissibility of a non-state actor to take unilateral action, through violence if necessary, to enforce the *sharia* apart from the hand of the state. This debate is likely to have continuing implications for Pakistan's internal stability, as well as the future shape of its Islamist discourse.

Pakistan is home to a wide array of Islamist actors and movements, nearly all of which have a stake in this discussion about vigilantism. These actors fall roughly along a spectrum that extends from mainstream, right-of-center parties which place a strong emphasis on the role of religion in politics, such as Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N); to expressly Islamist parties such as the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI);

to localized insurgent movements in the tribal areas; and ultimately to transnational movements such as al-Qaeda. While these disparate groups often seem to profess the same generalized set of grievances in their respective struggles with state authority, they have pursued starkly different agendas, adhering to widely divergent conceptions about Islamization's desired objectives and the proper methods for achieving them.

Among the groups at the "peripheries" of this spectrum, attitudes toward vigilantism are relatively well-defined, and very much at odds: Mainstream parties like the PML-N clearly reject vigilantism in favor of Islamic reform through engagement in electoral politics, whereas groups like al-Qaeda embrace violent *jihad*, rejecting modern politics and the authority of the state as un-Islamic. But as important as the competition between these peripheries may be to shaping Islamist discourse overall, it is the religious parties and localized insurgent movements that occupy the middle part of the spectrum which are today driving the most important debates regarding Islamic political norms within Pakistan. While parties like the PML-N are clearly invested in electoral politics in their efforts to reform the state, and while al-Qaeda terrorists reject politics and are clearly striving to overturn the state, Pakistan's leading religious parties—most notably, the JI and the Deobandi Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI)—have attempted to walk a fine line between the embrace of politics and the embrace of anti-state violence.

On one hand, parties like the JI and the JUI-F have ideologically and operationally supported vigilante activities in pursuit of a variety of Islamist causes. In some instances, these parties are able to provide real financial and human capital to militant groups, and they have sometimes sought to employ these groups to achieve their own political ends in their struggles to reform the state according to their party objectives. Simultaneously, these parties have for decades embraced politics; until recently, they were party to the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) coalition that governed the restive North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). As political actors, these parties have used their power to shape public discourse and perceptions regarding vigilante activities and insurgent groups—sometimes championing their causes. The fact that these parties engage in both vigilante activities and formal politics has contributed significantly to one of the more worrisome dynamics of post-9/11 Pakistan: the blurring of the line that should demarcate the realm of formal politics from anti-state violence.

At the same time, the issue of vigilantism—including its legitimacy and efficacy in promoting Islamic reform—remains a hotly disputed topic *within* religious parties like the JI and the JUI. These parties have with some success positioned themselves as key "swing votes" in the state's ongoing competition with religiously-oriented insurgencies such as that of the neo-Taliban. In this context, the issue of vigilantism represents a crucial ideological boundary marker, clarifying the increasingly blurred

line between formal *persuasive* politics and a *compulsive* politics of insurgency.[1] By exploring the responses of the JI and JUI to the dramatic events of the Lal Masjid in the summer of 2007, the following review seeks to shed light on factors that cause religious parties to traverse this critical line and reject state authority.

Religious Parties and Vigilante Islamization

THERE ARE TWO LEADING BLOCS OF "DEMOCRATIC ISLAMIST" ACTORS IN PAKISTAN. The first are the Deobandis, who trace their roots to the revivalist and educational movement that emerged from the Dar-ul Uloom at Deoband (a *madrasa* located in modern-day Uttar Pradesh, India) following the failed Indian uprising against the British in 1857.[2] In 1919, a group of politically active Deobandis formed the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (Assembly of Indian Clerics) in India, which, after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent, produced a Pakistani branch known as the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Assembly of Islamic Clerics). Like most Pakistani parties, the JUI has had a fractious history; today, the dominant faction, known as the JUI-F, is led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman and is predominantly ethnically Pashtun in composition.[3] The JUI-F's religio-political agenda exhibits a sort of syncretism between conservative Deobandi religious values and the traditional Pashtun social code known as *Pashtunwali*. Its constituent base is located in the rural and largely Pashtun areas of the North-West Frontier Province and its active membership are largely drawn from the clerical religious class. While the JUI has attempted to portray itself since Pakistan's founding as a strictly political movement, it has also cultivated a host of informal connections with insurgent groups focused on the Kashmir struggle as well as the Afghan-Pakistan border.[4] In fact, it was from the JUI's network of *madaris* that the original Taliban leadership emerged in the mid-1990s.[5]

The second major bloc of democratic Islamists is the JI, a movement whose origins, like the Deobandis', also predates the formal establishment of Pakistan. Founded by Maulana Abul Ala Mawdudi in 1941, the JI movement is distinctively modernist in its organization and ideology, recruits technocrats rather than clerics into its ranks, and draws its support predominantly from the "devout middle classes" of Pakistan's urban centers.[6] The JI emphasizes reforming the state and the legal apparatus along Islamic lines. Its focus on political transformation is, in important ways, akin to the ideas of Arab Muslim Brotherhood intellectuals such as Hassan al-Banna and Said Qutb.[7] The party has a long history of advocating for the implementation of the *sharia* into virtually every arena of Pakistani political and civic life, from law to banking to education. Unlike the JUI-F and other Deobandi groups, which have developed a diffuse organizational structure in keeping with its diffuse

network of *madaris*, the JI is known for its unusually strict party discipline and pursues its agenda with centralized bureaucratic efficiency.[8]

Throughout Pakistan's history, elements within both the JUI and JI have shown an opportunistic willingness to take up vigilante action in pursuit of Islamization. Given the different organizational structures and ideological orientations of these groups, however, the level and focus of their involvement in vigilantism has been quite different.

The Deobandi JUI-F has generally taken a less direct approach than the JI in its pursuit of Islamization. The JUI-F as a whole tends to be loosely managed, with its organizational center of gravity in the Deobandi *madrasa* networks rather than within a formal bureaucratic apparatus. As such, vigilantism usually has not been sanctioned at the highest levels by established Deobandi scholars; it has emerged from local *madrasa*-based groups. The JUI-F's signature contribution to extra-legal Islamization has been its indirect support of militant Deobandi groups. It is widely acknowledged, for instance, that some Deobandi clerics open their *madaris* to recruitment by violent sectarian (i.e., anti-Shia, anti-Barelvi, and anti-Ahmadi[9]) organizations such as Sipah-e-Sahaba (an offspring of the JUI), as well as to anti-Western insurgent groups such as the Pakistani neo-Taliban.[10] Because of overlap in membership in the JUI-F and various insurgent groups—particularly at the level of junior operatives—the party has been able to indirectly engage in vigilante activities, allowing its elites to retain a measure of plausible deniability. It is suspected, for example, that some of the Taliban "night letters," which in 2007 threatened the Christian minority in Charsadda, NWFP, were planted by a local JUI-affiliated cleric, perhaps with the support of lower-level Taliban operatives from outside the district. Meanwhile, in the heartland of central Punjab, several prominent JUI leaders are openly known to have direct ties to anti-Shia groups.[11]

In recent years, the JI has been more visibly involved in vigilante activities than the JUI. From 2002-2007, when the provincial government in NWFP was led by the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), a coalition of six Islamic parties dominated by the JUI-F and the JI was reported to have undertaken a coordinated campaign against what it deemed as "vulgarity" in and around the frontier's capital of Peshawar. This campaign included tearing down billboards that displayed women's faces, threatening music stores, and destroying cable television transmission equipment. In mid-2003, these vigilante activities of the JI's youth wing Shabab-e-Milli were so egregious that Islamabad recalled two senior officials from the NWFP government for failing to deal with the situation.[12] For many years, the JI has also been implicated in vigilantism in other parts of parts of Pakistan, most notably in Punjab province, where it has threatened mixed-gender marathons and attacked movie theaters.[13]

The JI's inclination to participate in vigilantism can be explained by several factors.

In part, it may be due to the fact that JI's base is a predominantly urban one, and that the population density in urban areas is likely to make urban vigilante agitation more attractive and politically effective than in rural settings. The Jamaat's vigilantism must also be seen, however, in light of the entrenched historical and organizational biases of the party. The JI's student wing, the Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT), has a long history of organized vigilantism on college campuses. Several of the senior Jamaat politicians who now lead the party once operated as *de facto* mob leaders at public universities in Lahore and Peshawar, where they were groomed for JI leadership posts. IJT cadres regularly disrupt mixed-gender gatherings at universities, sometimes violently. They have come to dominate so completely the campus of Lahore's Punjab University that administrators have been practically helpless to reassert control.[14]

In many ways, the JUI-F's and the JI's attitudes toward vigilantism are shaped by their basic religious and ideological perspectives. Broadly speaking, the JUI-F ideology of Islamization is less radically revisionist than that of the JI. Since its early days, the JI has articulated a comprehensive vision of reformulating the state along Islamist lines, and considers extra-legal confrontation to be a vital part of that broader struggle to reform society.

The JUI-F, by contrast, has sought a process of Islamization that fuses Muslim religious identity with traditional Pashtun tribal values. Although JUI-F leaders enthusiastically supported the efforts of the first-generation Taliban in the mid-1990s, the party's leadership has shown little interest in replicating within Pakistan itself the more revolutionary social or political aspects of Mullah Omar's stark Islamist vision.[15] Remarkably, the JUI-F has been by and large oriented toward the preservation of the status-quo. Political rhetoric aside, its posture has been consistently attuned to reinforcing conservative social norms. It has also sought state patronage for (or at the very least, resisted state oversight of) Deobandi *madrasa* networks. Thus the party leaders have tended to outsource to local actors the more confrontational aspects of their struggle. This allows them to maintain deniability while continuing to cultivate their relationship with state authority.[16]

Lal Masjid: Allies and Antagonists

WHILE THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE LAL MASJID IN THE SUMMER OF 2007 catalyzed debate within the JI and the JUI-F over the legitimacy of vigilantism, the mosque itself had not always been a symbol of anti-state agitation. In the 1980s, Lal Masjid's former head, Maulana Muhammad Abdullah, was the beneficiary of President Zia ul-Haq's program of state-directed Islamization. He also developed close ties to the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) bureaucracy headquartered nearby.[17]

Following Abdullah's assassination in 1998, his sons Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid Ghazi assumed control of the mosque. Affiliated with the mosque were male and female *madaris*—the Jamia Faridia and Jamia Hafsa, respectively—which drew a large number of students from the Pakistani frontier.

The crisis was triggered by a series of provocations by the *madrasa* students that included a campaign protesting the demolition of an illegally constructed mosque in Islamabad; the takeover of a nearby children's library by heavily-armed female students; the kidnapping of alleged prostitutes from a Chinese acupuncture clinic; the abduction of police officers; the attacking of music shops; the stockpiling of weapons; and the burning of a nearby government building.[18] In addition, Abdul Aziz Ghazi established a parallel *qazi* court in Islamabad and soon thereafter began issuing *fatwas* against local purveyors of vulgarity, including a female federal minister whom he accused of obscenity for being photographed hugging a paragliding instructor in Paris.[19]

In short, the Ghazi brothers decided that if the state would not act against public "indecency," they would do so themselves. Their intentions seemed, to begin with, limited in scope. As Faisal Devji has noted, "their kidnappings and forcible closing of immoral businesses were attempts to court publicity that resulted not so much in the meting out of any Islamic punishments as in the almost Maoist 're-education' and subsequent release of alleged prostitutes."[20] Gradually, however, the Lal Masjid leaders lost confidence in the state to carry out their vision of an Islamic reformation. The Ghazi brothers had retained close linkages to the Taliban and to experienced militant groups like the Jaish-e-Muhammad. Combined with the Ghazis' own self-amplified cult of martyrdom, these ties ultimately resulted in a full-scale confrontation with the state.[21]

Eventually, the state lost confidence in the Ghazi brothers. After negotiations had dragged on for several months, the government acted in early July, seizing the mosque and *madaris* in an effective but bloody army operation in which Abdul Rashid Ghazi and hundreds of students were killed.[22] In reaction to the army's siege, which was dubbed "Operation Silence," a wave of protests and suicide bombings was unleashed that continued throughout the summer and fall of 2007.

The involvement of the JI and Deobandi religious parties in the lead up to and during the Lal Masjid crisis is complex and, to this day, not entirely clear. In early 2007, as the Jamia Hafsa students began their vigilante campaign in Islamabad, both the JI and the JUI-F responded to these vigilante provocations in somewhat the same manner. They both affirmed the general goals of the movement's Islamist agenda. They counseled the state to negotiate with the activists, and blamed the government for targeting Islamic *madaris* and seeking their reform in order to curry favor with the West. At the same time, the JI and JUI-F leaders criticized the students for

attacking local houses (such as massage parlors), noting that "such things [are] not allowed in civil society" and that only the state had the authority to determine which citizen to apprehend for which crime.[23]

Soon thereafter, however, the JI's leadership began to qualify its criticism of the students. Knowing that taking a harsh stand against *burqa*-clad, *sharia*-promoting female students would likely prove unpopular among the rank-and-file, one JI spokesman declared that his objection was not simply to the students' actions *as such*. His objection, instead, was that the vigilante campaign against vulgarity was being led by *women*—which (he claimed) was clearly forbidden by Islam.[24]

It was not long before the official JI and JUI-F positions regarding the *madrasa*-based vigilantism began to diverge. By mid-April, the JI's Amir, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, had begun to come out more forcefully in favor of the Jamia Hafsa. Although he re-iterated that "the MMA does not want to implement *sharia* by force," he described the Ghazi brother's new *qazi* court a "positive" step and lent his support to the Lal Masjid's administration.[25] The JUI-F, by contrast, was more reserved about endorsing the Ghazi brothers. While blaming the intelligence agencies for fomenting conspir-acies to create "a pretext for taking... action against seminaries across the country," the JUI-F also urged the Lal Masjid's administration to avoid being manipulated by the state.[26]

In hindsight, it appears that this statement from JUI-F was meant to signal to the Lal Masjid that the party did not approve of its actions, and would not agree to agi-tate on its behalf. In fact, as the crisis unfolded, the JUI-F's close associates within the Deobandi *madrasa* community openly began calling for greater restraint, particu-larly on the part of Jamia Hafsa. In April, many of the leaders of the Wafaq-ul-Madaris al-Arabia, the leading Deobandi *madrasa* board in Pakistan, voiced concerns over the escalation of vigilante violence from the Jamia Hafsa. The Wafaq-ul-Madaris then took the highly unusual further step of revoking the *madrasa's* certification. The board's secretary general, Qari Hanif Jalandhri, tried to insert himself as a mediator in the talks between Abdul Aziz Ghazi and the Pakistan government.[27] Jalandhri em-phasized the Deobandi leadership's delicately balanced position, arguing that, "We are against a policy of taking on the government in a head-on fight, as such a policy can only lead to damage," but noting in the next breath that he supported Abdul Aziz's demands "one-hundred-and-one percent."[28] Another leading Deobandi cleric, Mufti Rafi Usmani, tried a similar balancing act: "We should continue the struggle that they have started... [but their path] leads to violence and fighting, which we do not at all condone or permit."[29]

The JUI-F's ambivalence about the Jamia Hafsa took many observers by surprise. After all, as one up-and-coming JUI-F politician put it, "the *madaris* are our number one priority," and many expected that this meant the party would strive to defend

the Lal Masjid.[30] But as it turned out, the Deobandis were making a second, parallel political calculation: they were afraid that one high-profile case of vigilantism-turned-violent would tarnish the reputation of Deobandi *madaris* throughout the country. Much of this fear was articulated by the Wafaq-ul-Madaris' leadership, along with former politicians such as the esteemed Maulana Hassan Jan in Peshawar, rather than by JUI-F officials.[31] Interviews in Islamabad and Peshawar with party leaders in the summer of 2007 confirmed that the position of Wafaq-ul-Madaris leaders, like Jalandhri's, were in fact broadly representative of the party's own thinking, especially as it concerned the risks associated with appearing too supportive of the Ghazi brothers. As if reading from talking-points (a practice seemingly at odds with the otherwise chaotic nature of Deobandi politics), one party leader after another declared, "Ghazi's objective is right, but his path is wrong."

The JUI-F supported Islamization in Pakistan, but wanted to appear to do so only within the bounds of the formal political space. In addition to the party's preoccupation with protecting its *madaris* network, its position toward the Ghazi brothers was driven by other high-level political concerns. Five years after its founding, the MMA alliance was fraying, with the JI taking an uncompromising stance against President Pervez Musharraf, and the JUI-F pursuing a more conciliatory approach. This split, in turn, had its origin in a number of factors, including the varying political styles of the party's leadership, and the JUI-F's somewhat greater reliance on state patronage to perpetuate its political future. (The JI, perhaps due to its consistent middle-class urban support base, historically has been more willing to confront the government in power.)

But an even more specific trend drove the JUI-F to oppose Abdul Aziz's vigilante agenda. The party, in brief, appears to have concluded that support for the Lal Masjid administration might redound negatively on its *own* ability to carry out its governance agenda in the NWFP, where it was still the leading and most visible party of the MMA government. On the one hand, the JUI-F could not openly oppose the Jamia Hafsa's establishment of *qazi* courts, since the MMA itself had proposed a similar arrangement in its ill-fated *Hisbah* bill—a signature piece of provincial *sharia* legislation that had been blocked three times by the federal Supreme Court for being unconstitutional.[32] On the other hand, the party was concerned that if it was seen as legitimizing vigilante Islamism against the federal government, it would have no credible reason for opposing those same activities perpetrated against its *own* government in the Frontier.

This was more than an academic concern. In April 2007, the Islamist government in Peshawar was dealing with a vigilante Islamist of its own—Maulana Yousaf Qureshi of the Muttahida Shariat Mahaz. Qureshi was threatening to close music shops and to launch a unilateral *jihad* against brothels in Peshawar. When faced

with Islamist threats to the security of his own jurisdiction, the Peshawar district *nazim* (mayor) Haji Ghulam Ali, a son-in-law of Maulana Fazlur Rahman, argued, "I have to protect the legitimate and legal businesses of the people.... we cannot allow [Qureshi] to indulge in vigilantism."[33] The JUI-F-affiliated Chief Minister of the NWFP similarly pleaded, "Some people are violating the law in the name of 'religious sentiment' because they want to topple my government. I ask these clerics: what they want to do through force—can it not be done through democracy?"

That of course was an eminently reasonable question to ask, but it was also one that could just as easily have been posed by President Musharraf's government in Islamabad to the leaders of the Jamia Hafsa. In addition to its desire to protect its *madari* networks and to secure state patronage, it was arguably the stake which the JUI-F held in the NWFP government—its stake in participatory governance—that encouraged it to moderate its position on the legitimacy of vigilantism.

The Crisis and Beyond

AS THE CRISIS CAME TO A PEAK IN EARLY JULY, BOTH PARTIES BEGAN TO RECALIBRATE their language, emphasizing their support for the Lal Masjid movement. After a clash between *madrasa* students and police on July 3 which left several students dead, JI Amir Qazi Hussain declared the state "wholly responsible," and Maulana Fazlur Rahman of the JUI thundered that the government was playing a "game of blood and fire."[34]

This rhetoric notwithstanding, the JUI-F was in practice quietly working to defuse the situation by assisting the central government as a go-between, with Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani meeting clerics from the Wafaq-ul-Madaris, as well as representatives of the Ghazi brothers, at the secluded Frontier House in Islamabad.[35] For a moment, it looked as though a compromise agreement might be reached: The Jamia Hafsa would be transferred to the control of the Wafaq-ul-Madaris, thus satisfying both government concerns in rolling back the Ghazi brothers as well as the Deobandis' concerns over state interference in the *madrasa* system. But the agreement soon fell apart—apparently for reasons of mutual inflexibility, as Jalandrhi has implied—and the Pakistani army proceeded with its siege of the Lal Masjid.[36]

By the time the dust settled, political realities had clearly begun to change, and the JUI-F did not waste much time further revising its earlier position. While in theory it remained opposed to the vigilantism of the Jamia Hafsa students, it was forced to distance itself from the government and it accede to the hagiographical narrative regarding the Lal Masjid that had was being promulgated by the JI and other Islamist groups. Abdul Rashid Ghazi, who was killed in the operation, was hailed as a *shaheed*

(martyr) by the JI Amir Qazi Hussain, and Fazlur Rahman praised the Lal Masjid fighters as "*mujahideen* who fought for enforcing Islam in its true spirit."[37]

In a very real way, Operation Silence transformed the place of the Lal Masjid in the debate over vigilante Islamism. Gone was the symbol of Ghazis-as-vigilantes that had proved so vexing for the JUI-F. In its place emerged a picture of the Ghazis-as-martyrs that provided a much more potent symbolic weapon for the religious parties to use against the government.

On one level, Operation Silence came as a welcome relief for the JUI-F: The public's attention was diverted away from illicit activities of Deobandi *madaris* and toward the heavy-handed and widely condemned actions of the government. And if the Deobandis were relieved, the JI was ecstatic. Sensing a political opening against President Musharraf, the JI tacked heavily in support of the Lal Masjid movement, stoking public anger against the government's handling of the crisis. Unfortunately for the JI, the feeling was not entirely mutual. Prior to the army operations, the relationship between the Lal Masjid leadership and the JI had been mutually advantageous; the Ghazi brothers used the JI to amplify their political voice, and the Jamaat used the Lal Masjid crisis to impugn President Musharraf. But after the military intervention and the dead from Lal Masjid were hailed as martyrs, the JI found that it was no longer "needed" by the very movement that it was trying to defend and lionize.

Several weeks after Operation Silence, when the government attempted to re-open the Lal Masjid for Friday prayers, it again was confronted by mobs of young *madrasa* students. As police looked on, the students promptly re-took the mosque, hoisted the black flag of *jihad*, repainted the dome of the mosque a vibrant red, and yelled from the roof, "Ghazi, Ghazi, from your blood the revolution will come!"[38] Perhaps most tellingly, when two senior members of the JI attempted to enter the mosque and lead prayers in Ghazi's honor, they were forcefully rebuffed by angry students, and pressed to retreat to the courtyard, where they prayed and then hosted a news conference.

It was a stirring scene, not only for the JI's political theatrics, but because it threw into relief the boundary line separating the legitimate political sphere and the realm of anti-state activity. The JI, after trying to defend and champion the Lal Masjid movement for its own political gain, found itself unexpectedly and forcefully rebuffed by the Lal Masjid movement; it was no longer operating within its preferred terms of reference. (The students, for their part, argued that the JI was simply trying to gain political mileage on their behalf, and had not fully supported the agenda of the Ghazi brothers.) It was a moment in which both groups appeared to recognize that there exists only a narrow political window in which vigilantism can serve both electoral and insurgent ends, and that that window had closed.

The Deobandi political leadership faced its own conundrum in the wake of Oper-

ation Silence and was forced to confront deep internal rifts over its relationship to vigilante groups. These rifts erupted into view during the Wafaq-ul-Madaris meetings in early August 2007.[39] The *madaris* board was split. Some, like JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rahman and Qari Hanif Jalandhry, wanted to downplay the Lal Masjid issue. Others, like Maulana Sami-ul Haq of the JUI-S and JUI-F politician Hafiz Hussein Ahmed from Balochistan, wanted to launch a mass protest against the Lal Masjid operation and agitate in support of Maulana Abdul Aziz, who was by that time in government custody.[40]

In one respect, the JUI-F's position on Lal Masjid turned out to be precisely the inverse of the JI's. The JI leadership, by supporting the Jamia Hafsa, was testing the limits of religious party *support* for insurgent action against the state. The JUI-F, by contrast, seemed to be actively testing the limits of religious party *rejection* of vigilantism—that is, the degree to which religious parties might be able to disassociate themselves from *madrasa* students who take the law into their own hands. By not aggressively throwing his support behind the actions of the Ghazi brothers, it appears that Maulana Fazlur Rahman risked exposing himself and his party to attacks from other Islamist groups as well as to internal dissent. Indeed, press reports suggest that the Deobandi Wafaq-ul-Madaris received threats from a Taliban leader in the South Waziristan tribal agency (most likely from the insurgent leader Baitullah Mehsud) warning of severe punishments if the board continued to "compromise with the government."[41] The meeting of the Wafaq in early August was itself so contentious on this point that when one JUI-F senator criticized the Lal Masjid administration, reports claimed that he was "thrashed by enraged clerics amid calls for his death."[42]

Patterns of Islamist Interaction

THE RESPONSE OF THE JI AND THE JUI-F TO THE LAL MASJID CRISIS IS IN SOME WAYS a microcosm of the ways in which religious actors in Pakistan's formal political space are forced to interact with insurgent vigilante groups. The parties' responses to the crisis reveal that these interactions occur along three important vectors. First, at a structural level, it is clear that both religious parties and insurgent groups often profess very similar goals, such as the enactment of a vaguely specified *sharia*. However, continual competition drives them to manipulate each other to gain advantage vis-à-vis third parties. Religious parties seek to use insurgent movements to gain leverage over the state (e.g., the JI's use of the Lal Masjid as a platform to oppose Musharraf), and also seek to use the state to consolidate influence over these same movements (e.g., the JUI-F's attempt to convince the government to bring the Jamia

Hafsa under the management of the Wafaq-ul-Madaris). Insurgent groups, in turn, may use religious parties indirectly to influence state behavior (e.g., the Ghazi brothers welcoming Qazi Hussain Ahmad to the Jamia Hafsa to lend credibility to their demands), or try to convince the state to bypass the religious parties and instead confer legitimacy on a new generation of religious leaders (e.g., a process which has arguably taken place with the Taliban's negotiations with the state in Waziristan and Swat).[43] Religious parties are, moreover, quite vulnerable to state pressure, and have to operate in a macro political environment in which support for vigilantism may result in attempts by the state to circumscribe their electoral agenda.[44]

Second, at a systemic level, religious parties are aware that they operate within a closed system, and that their support for particular forms of vigilantism have a precedent-setting function that may prove detrimental to their future success in the formal political space. More specifically, parties like the JUI-F which seek to benefit from the state patronage afforded to them as "insiders" are likely to be wary of indirectly legitimizing groups like the Taliban or the Lal Masjid clerics for fear of eroding their own constituent base. While neither the JI nor the JUI-F face a zero-sum politics with respect to these other groups, their recruiting pools are indeed limited and relatively inelastic. This is especially the case for the JUI-F, which draws heavily from ethnic Pashtun areas and competes with a spectrum of more radical Islamist groups for *madrasa* students as well as entry-level political operatives.

Third, the parties' responses to vigilante Islamism are shaped by their respective ideological orientations and organizational roots. Though it would not admit it, the JI is statist in orientation and disposed toward challenging the state structure on its own terms. Its predominantly urban constituency and tightly managed organizational structure facilitate focused acts of protest against the state. (In fact, the party, lacking a secure ethnic base, engages in these protests in order to set itself apart from its electoral rival the PML-N.) And in spite of its bureaucratic cohesiveness, it has grown adept at segmenting the activity of its youth and student wings from the main party apparatus so as to gain some measure of plausible deniability for vigilante activities. The JUI-F, by contrast, is both more organizationally diffuse than the JI, and more concerned with protecting its *madrasa* networks than forcing the hand of the state in areas of public morality. Direct participation in vigilantism militates against the party's desire to be seen—both within Pakistan and abroad—as legitimate, mainstream political actors. To the extent that vigilantism has utility for the JUI-F, it most effectively serves their purposes when it is quietly outsourced to insurgent or sectarian groups.

If there is a lesson to be found in these patterns of Islamist response to the Lal Masjid crisis, it may be that the line between persuasive and compulsive Islamism is likely to remain blurred in Pakistan for some time. The emergence of new vigilante

Islamist movements—such as that of the Ghazi brothers, and now the neo-Taliban operating throughout Pakistan's north-west frontier—puts new pressures on parties like the JI and the JUI-F to demonstrate that they too can provide decisive action to advance the cause of *sharia.* In such an environment, even subtle shifts in Islamist rhetoric about vigilantism can serve to illuminate the ways in which religious parties relate to state authority, and pursue their Islamization agenda.

In late July 2007, Qari Abdul Bais Siddiqui, a JUI-F member of the national assembly and long-time *madrasa* leader from the Swat valley, gave an interview regarding the crisis of the Lal Masjid. When asked about the vigilantism carried out by students of the Jamia Hafsa, he said, predictably, "I told Abdul Rashid Ghazi, 'you have the right objective, but your path is wrong.'" He then went on to offer a compelling analogy drawn from personal experience: "If," he said, "I ran a *madrasa*, and one of my students was caught stealing, the proper punishment is to cut off his hand." He paused. "But that is not for me to do. That is something for the state to do. There are conditions and procedures which must be followed."[45]

Many observers would be troubled to hear a teacher state so matter-of-factly that his student would deserve so cruel a punishment. But situated within the context of Pakistan's debates over vigilantism, the Qari's comment can also be understood as implicitly accepting state authority. In spite of his reading of the Islamic tradition's views on just punishment, he was articulating a basic dividing line between his own agency as a religious and political leader and that of the state, suggesting that the latter has a legitimate monopoly over the use of violence. Such a distinction may not, by the standards of modern political principles, seem like the ideal marker by which to determine who constitutes a "moderate" or legitimate political voice. But in an environment of increased contestation between religious parties and Islamist insurgent movements, the Qari's distinction—unsatisfying as it might be— may indeed be the most important dividing line in Pakistan's shifting Islamist space, and will likely be a critical factor in determining whether Pakistan will be able to rein in vigilante violence.

NOTES

1. This is arguably a more interesting boundary marker for classifying Islamist actors than, say, the legitimacy of suicide bombing, which, although more deadly in its effects, is almost uniformly rejected by Pakistan's religio-political elite as it applies to the Pakistani context. Statements by Pakistani religious leaders are famously ambiguous when it comes to the legitimacy of suicide bombing in foreign theaters like Afghanistan or the Palestinian areas. But with respect to its legitimacy within Pakistan or against Pakistani targets, there is a broad consensus (even among very conser-

vative Deobandis) that suicide bombing is *haram* (forbidden). For a broad statement against suicide bombing which took place in the context of the lead-up to the Lal Masjid crisis, see Zulfiqar Ali, "Ulema convention opposes '*sharia* by force,'" *Dawn,* April 18, 2007. For the debates within the Deobandi establishment about the legitimacy of the practice, see, *inter alia,* "Suicide attacks are un-Islamic: clerics," *Daily Times,* February 24, 2007; "Editorial: Our clerics favour suicide-bombing!" *Daily Times,* February 25, 2007; Zakir Hassnain, "Clerics worried by lack of respect for fatwas on suicide," *Daily Times,* May 7, 2007; and Aoun Sahi, "Religious edict bars terrorism," *The News,* March 9, 2008.

2. For an overview of the early Deobandis, see Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

3. Other Deobandi political parties exist, most notably the JUI-S, led by Maulana Sami-ul Haq.

4. For an overview of the clerical class' involvement in the political space in Pakistan, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

5. For background on this point, see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 88-94.

6. This phrase is borrowed from Gilles Kepel. See, e.g., Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam,* tr. Anthony F. Roberts (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002).

7. It was in fact through Sayyid Qutb that many of Mawdudi's ideas made their way to the Arab world.

8. For a rich analysis of the JI's party structure, see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

9. Compared to the more austere Deobandi Sunni tradition, the Barelvi Sunni sect is closely associated with Sufi practices. Particularly in the last century Deobandi-Barelvi competition has often times been intense.

10. Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan is a militant anti-Shia group which broke away from the JUI. The term "neo-Taliban" refers broadly to the collection of self-described Taliban groups which emerged in the tribal and settled areas of the frontier following 9/11. These groups often have tenuous connections—or none whatsoever—to the original Taliban movement led by Mullah Muhammad Omar.

11. Author interviews with U.S. officials in Lahore and Washington, 2007.

12. See, e.g., *Daily Times,* "Vigilante action against cable operators continues in Peshawar," January 11, 2003; and Mohammad Shehzad, "MMA-Islamabad preparing to slug it out?" *Friday Times,* June 6, 2003.

13. In Gujranwala, for example, the JUI-F's Qazi Hamidullah led an attack on a circus in 2003 and a marathon in 2005 in which both JUI-F and JI members participated; in both cases, it was in fact the local JI cadres who most forcefully defended the action, and organized follow-on events to amplify the protests. See Adnan Adil, "The Obscene Obsession," *Newsline,* July 2003; and Dilshad Azeem, "MMA clash in NA," *The Nation* (Lahore), April 12, 2005.

14. The IJT uses its network of students and sympathetic professors and administrators to dominate university politics and intimidate potential rivals. See David Montero, "Islamist voices rise on Pakistani campuses," *Christian Science Monitor,* March 22, 2006; and Aryn Baker, "The Battle for Punjab U.," *Time,* October 8, 2006.

15. Mullah Omar's bleak Islamism should not be taken as representative of Deobandism at large; even when the JUI-F was given the opportunity to lead the MMA government in the NWFP from 2002-2007, it showed little appetite for implementing the kind of harsh policies that characterized the short-lived Taliban state in Afghanistan.

16. The JUI-F leadership has been known, in quiet ways, to refer interested parties to more radical Sunni

organizations. Author interview with Muhammad Amir Rana, Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, August 8, 2008, Islamabad.

17. It was the Ghazi brothers' father, Maulana Muhammad Abdullah, who founded the Lal Masjid in the 1960s.

18. See, *inter alia,* Shakeel Anjum, "Lal Masjid seizes four cops," *The News,* May 19, 2007; Declan Walsh, "Army ready to storm mosque as conflict grows," *The Guardian,* July 4, 2007; and "Chronology of Lal Masjid clashes," *The Times of India,* July 10, 2007.

19. Syed Irfan Raza, "Fatwa against Nilofar issued," *Dawn,* April 09, 2007.

20. Faisal Devji, "Red Mosque," *Public Culture* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 20.

21. Journalist Nicholas Schmidle, who interviewed Abdul Rashid Ghazi on multiple occasions, has noted the important catalyzing influence of more hardline militant groups like Jaish in shaping Ghazi's approach to the state. Author's discussions with Nicholas Schmidle, May 2008, Washington.

22. The best estimates put the number killed at about 200, though the religious parties have claimed that the true number was several times higher.

23. JI leader Liaquat Baloch, quoted in "Jamia Hafsa and MMA's reprimand," *Daily Times,* April 6, 2007. See also "Qazi demands withdrawal of warning notices," *Daily Times,* February 16, 2007; and "Qazi blames govt for Jamia Hafsa issue," *The Nation,* April 8, 2007.

24. Nauman Tasleem, "MMA raps capital clerics," *Daily Times,* April 5, 2007.

25. This statement was provided by Qazi Hussain on behalf of the MMA, but does not appear to have been representative of opinion within the alliance as a whole. "JUI-F, JI differ over Jamia Hafsa issue," *Daily Times,* April 12, 2007.

26. See Nisar Mehdi, "Jamia Hafsa issue called a conspiracy," *The Nation,* April 13, 2007; and "Agencies behind Hafsa standoff: Fazl," *Dawn,* April 10, 2007.

27. "No compromise on *sharia*, says Ghazi," *Daily Times,* April 12, 2007.

28. "No Wafaqul Madaris support for Jamia Hafsa," *Daily Times,* April 15, 2007.

29. Ibid.

30. Author interview with Maulana Shuja-ul Mulk, JUI-F member of the national assembly, July 26, 2007, Islamabad.

31. Maulana Hassan Jan, a fiercely conservative Deobandi cleric who was perhaps the most respected religious leader in the NWFP, came out forcefully against Maulana Abdul Aziz. He was assassinated in September 2007 by unknown assailants believed to be associated with the Waziri Taliban. See Akhtar Amin, "Govt engineering Jamia Hafsa crisis," *Daily Times,* April 8, 2007; and "Noted religious scholar Maulana Hassan Jan gunned down," *Associated Press of Pakistan,* September 15, 2007.

32. For a cursory overview of the Hisbah bill and its history, see "Text of Hasba bill," *Dawn,* July 16, 2005; Senator Khurshid Ahmad, "Revival of the hisbah system in frontier province: Why all this hulla-baloo?" *Tarjuman Al Quran,* August 2005; Mohammed Riaz, "Govt to table Hisba bill on Monday," *Dawn,* November 12, 2006; "Short order of the Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan, Opinion on His-bah Bill, 2006," Supreme Court of Pakistan, February 20, 2007.

33. Iqbal Khattak, "Durrani denounces 'Islamisation' drive against his government," *Friday Times,* April 20-26, 2007.

34. Muhammad Anis, "Use of force against Lal Masjid flayed," *The News,* July 5, 2007.

35. Ismail Khan, "A Marriage on the rocks," *Dawn,* October 10, 2007.

36. Naveed Butt, "Ulema blame govt for sabotaging talks," *The Nation* (Lahore), July 11, 2007.

37. See Dilshad Azeem, "1000 killed in operation, claims MMA," *The Nation* (Lahore), July 13, 2007; and "Suicide attacks, Lal Masjid raid mar NA session," *The Nation* (Lahore), July 31, 2007.

38. Author's notes, July 27, 2007, Islamabad.

39. Nadeem Shah, "Wafaq-ul-Madaris faces split," *The News,* August 8, 2007.

40. Hafiz Hussain Ahmed was interested in leveraging Abdul Aziz's situation in order to shame President Musharraf and thwart what he believed to be malicious American designs on Pakistani sovereignty. Author interview with Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, August 7, 2007, Islamabad.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. At least in the abstract (if not always in practice) the state is aware that in its negotiations in Waziristan, Swat, and elsewhere, it must take care to ensure that its concessions are not used by insurgents as a tool through which to displace more traditional, pro-government leadership structures and reify a new generation of leaders hostile to state authority.

44. The federal government, for example, holds tremendous leverage over the JUI-F by threatening to disqualify holders of *madrasa* certificates for political office. The Musharraf government also regularly imprisoned members of the JI and worked to dilute its influence in Karachi through support of the rival Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). The Supreme Court, at the behest of the ruling PPP-led coalition, eventually overturned in April 2008 the requirement which held that a B.A. or equivalent degree was necessary to stand in an election. See Salman Masood, "Pakistan: College Degree Requirement for Lawmakers Struck Down by Court," *New York Times,* April 22, 2008.

46. Author interview with Qari Abdul Bais Siddiqui, July 31, 2007, Islamabad. Paraphrased from the Urdu.

Islamic Revival in Azerbaijan

by Altay Goyushov

I N RECENT YEARS, THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM societies that were once part of the Soviet Union has attracted increasing attention from international scholars. This is particularly so in light of contemporary Islamic revivalism. New scholarship has determined that many assumptions about Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus have been wrong. For instance, an increasing number of scholars have come to the conclusion that in these societies Islam was far from subsumed or displaced during the Soviet era by atheism and other communist ideals as [was once assumed]. Instead, it continued to thrive in "underground mosques," in much the same way as Christianity endured in communist-controlled Europe. Furthermore, new research indicates that the Islamic revivals currently underway in some post-Soviet countries, to a greater extent than previously appreciated, have been driven by dynamics internal to these societies, rather than having been largely or exclusively generated "from the outside" by Islamic missionary movements emanating from such countries as Saudi Arabia, Iran, or Turkey.[1] This new scholarship helps us to think more accurately about the Islamic revivals in Central Asia, the Northern Caucasus, and even the Volga Basin. It is not so clear, however, that it applies to the unique case of Azerbaijan. Instead, the Islamic revival in Azerbaijan can be thought of not as a return or re-assertion of a previously suppressed religion, but as an adaptation to a new religion that has been imported largely—if not entirely—from the outside.

Despite their similar histories under Russian rule dating back to the tsars, a number of factors distinguish Azerbaijan's religious life from that of other former Soviet Muslim-majority countries. In particular, as one scholar has put it, Azerbaijan is distinguished "from the rest of the former USSR by the fact that it is the most secu-

larized Muslim country."[2] The Azeri secular tradition is in fact indigenous to the country. In this respect, it doesn't have a counterpart in other former Soviet Muslim countries whose own traditions of secularism, which are today being significantly challenged by the Islamic revival, were imposed on them from the outside during the Soviet era.

Perhaps the most important factor that distinguishes Azerbaijan from the societies of Central Asia is the dominance of Shiism. Shiism has shaped Azeri society's intellectual development, including its secular tradition, and has distinguished it from other former Soviet Muslim countries in a variety of important ways. For example, the modernist Jadidi reform movement had a long-lasting impact on the predominantly Sunni Muslim societies of the Volga Basin and Central Asia. However, Shiism limited Jadidism's influence among Azeris. Because of Shiism's less restrictive approach to *ijtihad* (independent interpretation), Azeri society found little use or appeal in the Jadidists' "new methods" of Quranic interpretation.

For these reasons, the Jadidist "enlightenment movement" that swept through Central Asia and the Volga Basin during the early twentieth century had only a minimal impact on Azeri intellectual life. In fact, the Azeri intelligentsia's ideas about modernization in the years preceding the Bolshevik takeover in 1920 demanded far more radical change and societal transformation than anything that the Sunni Jadidi scholars had proposed. Not bound by the precedents of the *ijtihad* discussions, these Azeri thinkers were highly successful in promoting secularism and an anticlerical agenda that minimized Shiism's political influence.

By the beginning of the 20th century, Azerbaijan's secular intelligentsia had defeated the clerical establishment. This took place after a long-fought struggle for leadership, when the intelligentsia managed to place itself in the forefront of Azeri society. Within this emergent society, the Azeri clerical establishment gradually lost out to the secularizing ideology of Turkish nationalism. As this became the dominant political ideology, ordinary people's attachments to Islam began to fade. Jeyhun Hajibeyli, a prominent member of the pre-Bolshevik Azeri intelligentsia, observed that while ordinary Azeris continued to identify themselves as Muslim believers and viewed Islam as an important element of their identity, they were not especially observant of *sharia*.[3]

All of these factors became more visible after the tsarist monarchy's collapse, when the Muslim world's first parliamentary democracy was established in Azerbaijan (1918-1920). During this period, Islamic political ideologies had some influence, but they never grew powerful enough to become a dominant political force. As such, the modernist Islamist Ittikhad party conceded parliamentary leadership to a coalition of nationalists and liberals, which was united in its support of adopting secular courts and in its rejection of forming a government on the basis

of *sharia*.[4] This stands in contrast to the Sunni societies of the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia, where *sharia* courts continued to function until the late 1920s.

Furthermore, unlike in Central Asia, Azeri nationalist leaders introduced a series of bold reforms intended to minimize the political influence of the powerful Muslim Spiritual Boards that had been established throughout Central Asia and the Cauacasus in the 1870s by tsarist Russia. In Azerbaijan, these reforms included forcibly combining the previously separate Sunni and Shia boards. This helped to subordinate the shaping of religious doctrine to national political authorities, and to lessen the influence of foreign religious authorities and their propoganda over Azeri Islam. The leadership of these boards frequently protested their treatment by the nationalist government, but with little effect.[5] Partly as a consequence of the pre-Bolshevik intelligentsia's successful efforts to neutralize religious propaganda, mainstream Azeris to this day have little knowledge of or connection to the age-old Sunni-Shiite rivalry, and still view the simple public pronunciation of the words "Shia" and "Sunni" as impolite.

All of these realities encouraged the Bolshevik Party, after Sovietization occurred in the 1920s, to design a special policy toward Islam in Azerbaijan. Differing from their policy in other Muslim regions of the Soviet State, the Bolsheviks aggressively imposed restrictive measures on Islam in Azerbaijan almost immediately after seizing power.[6] In the Bolshevik view, the pre-existence of a secular Azeri state, combined with the Azeri intelligentsia's anticlerical proclivities, produced an environment that seemed exceptionally conducive for promoting the anti-Islamic communist agenda.

How Successful Were the Soviets?

THE LATE FRENCH SCHOLAR ALEXANDRE BENNINGSEN, FAMOUS FOR HIS STUDIES of Islam in the Soviet Union, once confessed how perplexed he was by the fact that the total volume of anti-Islamic literature in Azerbaijan lagged far behind that of Uzbekistan, Tatarstan, or neighboring Dagestan. While this observation could plausibly suggest the overwhelming success of Soviet anti-religious policies, Benningsen reached a different conclusion. He argued that the paucity of anti-religious publications in Azerbaijan suggested that the Azeri intelligentsia, unlike that of other Soviet Muslim socieities, was unwilling to collaborate with Soviet anti-religious propaganda.[7]

One of the first targets of Soviet anti-Islam strategy in Azerbaijan in the 1920s was the Shiite holiday of Ashura. Internal Soviet documents described their campaign against Ashura as part of the "global fight against the religious drug."[8] However,

they introduced this campaign to the Azeri public intending "to get rid of superstition and fanaticism for the sake of purity of the Muslim religion."[9] This campaign never met the Bolsheviks' expectations, and during a 1937 local Communist Party gathering, the Stalinist ruler of Azerbaijan, Mir-Djafar Bagirov, acknowledged the existence of a "confusing reality" in Azeri religious life: before the Bolshevik takeover in 1920, students of Azeri state schools never participated in Ashura commemorations. In fact, the students viewed the ceremonies as shameful and backward. However, under Soviet-implemented anti-religious state policy, those students actively participated in Ashura commemorations.[10]

Indeed, in many ways, the Azeri intelligentsia's efforts at secularizing society before the Bolshevik takeover had a more profound impact on Azerbaijan than did the militantly atheist policies of the Soviets. For this reason, the Soviets, after trying to repress the pre-Bolshevik Azeri intellectual legacy, eventually tried to revive it. But this effort didn't produce the desired results, and in fact created far more instances of what Stalinists would have described as "confusing realities." For example, in Soviet secondary schools, the works of the pre-revolutionary playwright Sultan Majid Ganizade were taught and praised as examples of Azeri atheism. Little did the Bolsheviks know, however, that Ganizade was a leader of the pan-Islamist Ittikhadi-Islam movement (1917-1920) prior to the Bolshevik Revolution.

For the mainstream intellectuals of pre-Bolshevik Azerbaijan, anti-clericalism had never meant or developed into atheism. These intellectuals had, in fact, never explicitly proclaimed their intention to suppress Islam as a religion, culture, or national identity. And since the intellectuals didn't seem to be promoters of an anti-Islamic agenda to the wider public, this contributed to their success in secularizing Azeri society. This was true because most of the leading intellectuals of the time had received both a basic Islamic education at local religious schools (*madrasas* and *mektebs*) as well as a secular, Western education in Russian and European universities. By harshly criticizing clerics, they were eventually able to reduce the latter's influence on mainstream society. In so doing, the intelligentsia also emerged as both a representative and an interpreter of Islam, and managed to reduce the role of religion as the unchallenged authority in Azeri society.

It is important to note that the intelligentsia had no obligations to the government and, in many cases, vociferously opposed the encroachment of Russian imperial power. This contributed even more to the trust they enjoyed among the population. Moreover, they voluntarily and continually re-created and implemented their own agenda. Not surprisingly, the "cult of intelligentsia" had long-lasting effects, despite its position of relative compromise during the Soviet rule.

During the Soviet era, however, this independence was lost, as intellectual culture was forced to become avowedly atheistic, and the intelligentsia was transformed into

a key pillar of the *nomenklatura*. Within a generation's time, the Azeri scholars' lack of skill in religious matters rendered them useless in the dissemination of atheistic propaganda. This inability to intervene in religious matters created major problems for Azeri society during the religious awakening that occurred prior to the socialist regime. Soviet atheistic education, which had almost completely eliminated religious knowledge, was not able to destroy the country's deeply-embedded Muslim identity.

From time to time this Islamic identity would give rise to what the Soviet media described as "mysterious appearances," or outbursts of Shia religiosity amongst the larger population. The first wave of these incidents shook Azerbaijan in the beginning of the 1930s, when dozens of religious uprisings took place as news of the appearance of Shia imams—believed to have been in hiding—spread throughout the country. More recently, in 1983—only a few years after the Iranian Revolution—reports spread that the shadows of Shia imams had been sighted in Baku. For several days, thousands of people thronged Sovetski Street hoping to observe this miracle. Perhaps the most popular mysterious happening during Soviet rule was the appearance of Mir Mohsun Aga during WWII. Azeri society was electrified by rumors about this man with physical disabilities; he allegedly was the descendant of the Prophet Mohammad, and was able to cure incurable diseases. To this very day, Mir Mohsun Aga's grave on the outskirts of Baku attracts tens of thousands pilgrims every year.

During Soviet rule circumcision, Shia funeral ceremonies (*ihsan*), and so-called graveyard clerics (*qebiristanliq mollasi*) continued unabated nationwide, and even increased as Soviet influence began to fade. Mosque attendance, especially during Ashura, had been increasing considerably since the late 1970s. Meanwhile, alcohol consumption and celebrations during the Muxarram month of the Muslim calendar have continued to drop significantly, even in modernized urban areas such as Baku. Finally, Shaykh Allahshukur Pashazade, the head of the Spiritual Board of Transcaucasian Muslims (Zaqafqaziya Müsəlmanlarının Ruhani İdarəsi)—the official Soviet Islamic religious institution for the Caucasus region—became instantly famous in January 1990 as a resistance hero when Soviet troops marched into Baku to suppress mass street protests.

The subsequent collapse of the USSR opened the way for the revival of various identities that had been marginalized during communist rule. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the vast majority of Azeris lacked even the most elementary understanding of Islamic practice, including such basics as the Ramadan fast or daily prayers. At the same time, however, average Azeris continued to identify themselves as Muslims and insisted that they believed in God. And yet, despite the public revival of Islam after the USSR's demise, Islam was not the most powerful identity in Azerbaijan, nor was it especially politically influential. Indeed, at first, the country as a whole was more attracted to pan-Turkic nationalist ideals. The dominance of secular

pan-Turkism over Islamism in Azeri society presented a range of obstacles to the revival of Shiism, which the Soviets had succeeded in stigmatizing as a subversive teaching of "Persian design." These attitudes slowed the pace of Islamic revival in Azerbaijan. Nonetheless, there was also a visible rivalry between Turkism and re-emerging Islamist trends after the Soviet collapse.

The Stillborn Revival

DURING SOVIET RULE, A LARGE PORTION OF THE AZERI POPULATION RETAINED deep linkages to their Shia origins. This explains in part why Shiism showed active signs of revival in the late 1980s. But there was simultaneously a powerful anti-clerical tradition in Shiite Azerbaijan, thanks in part to the legacy of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia. This deepened during the Soviet era and remained embedded in popular consciousness. For one thing, Azeri clerics were unable to provide basic Islamic knowledge to the public, since Shiite clerical traditions had been completely interrupted by the Soviet regime. As a result, the secular Azeri population regarded Shia clerics with great suspicion, seeing them as sources of untruth, or at best, of ignorance. As a result, after the Soviet Union's fall, the official clerical establishment (represented by the Muslim Spiritual Board and its leader Pashazade) found itself unable to gain widespread authority and support. This prevented Azeri Shia clerics from assuming a leadership role in the post-USSR Islamic revival. It also considerably hindered the efforts of radical Iranian outreach in the early 1990s.

Pashazade and the established clerical class were publicly accused of collaborating with the Soviet regime. These accusations emanated most strongly not from secular elites, but from a new crop of independent Islamist preachers and emerging religious organizations. Pashazade himself was labeled a "colonel of the KGB" by one of the most popular of these new religious activists, Haji Abdul. Pashazade's authority also was challenged by one of his own deputies, the charismatic and popular Haji Sabir (who today is president of Baku Islamic University).

Eager to regain the public's trust, Pashazade tried to establish better relations with these independent preachers and organizations, and occasionally made pronouncements in support of what he believed to be the more popular aspects of the Islamist agenda. For example, he announced a proposal to replace the Cyrillic alphabet with Arabic.[11] But these kinds of initiatives, in fact, only further worsened Pashazade's image in the public's eye, thanks mainly to the rising Azeri pan-Turkic movement and its charismatic leader, Abülfaz Elçibay, who became president in 1992.

An outspoken opponent of Iran, President Elçibay regarded Azeri Shia clerics with deep suspicion and as potential agents of the Iranian regime. Elçibay's commitments

to Turkism and regional nepotism inspired him to replace Pashazade, although he was ultimately dissuaded of this course by Speaker of Parliament Isa Gambar.[12] Pashazade's reputation improved slightly during Heydar Aliyev's presidency (1993-2003). However, allegations of Pashazade's support for ethnic separatism in Azerbaijan's south did little to remove the Azeri government's suspicions of him.

In an effort to offset his declining influence in Azerbaijan, Pashazade sought international support, with some success. By gaining the confidence of the popular Chechen separatist Dzhokhar Dudayev, Pashazade was able to position himself as a leading promoter of the latter's so-called Caucasus Confederation. In 1992, Pashazade renamed the Spiritual Board of Transcaucasian Muslims as the Caucasus Muslims' Board, and attempted to establish himself as the leading religious authority over the northern areas of the Caucasus region.[13]

After Russian President Vladimir Putin's crackdowns on the Chechen Republic in 1999 and 2000, Pashazade's relations with the Russian authorities paradoxically improved. In 2001, Pashazade felt growing pressure on his position from the leadership of the Azeri Republic's newly-established State Committee for Work with Religious Communities. In this crucial situation, Pashazade again sought outside help and was well-received by both Putin and Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. He also threatened to move the Muslim Board's headquarters to Tbilisi because of continuing governmental pressures, and even suggested that he had obtained Georgian permission to do so.

Pashazade's internal political position improved somewhat after Heydar Aliyev's son Ilham assumed the presidency in 2003. However, this did not enlarge his religious influence over Azerbaijan's growing number of independent religious communities. These communities continued to challenge Pashazade's religious legitimacy, and they were soon joined by larger segments of the Azeri public.

The waning influence of established scholars in Azerbaijan is indicative of the general crisis and disputed nature of religious authority and knowledge that has developed in the post-Soviet era. Islamic knowledge remains in increasingly high demand, and every book title with the mere mention of the word "Islam" has been a bestseller. For a time, however, the general public preferred to obtain knowledge about Islam from Western or Russian orientalist scholars such as Henry Masse or Yulian Krachkovskiy, rather than from the writings of Azeri clerics whose books appeared toward the end of the 1980s. Morevover, since mainstream secular society did not trust the clerical establishment, the intelligentsia rushed to fill the gap. Well-known orientalists like Vasim Mamedaliyev, Nariman Gasimoglu, and Rafig Aiyev, relying on their knowledge of Arabic to translate the Quran and other major religious texts into Azeri, became the first widely-accepted and trusted instructors in basic Islam, and their works became very popular overnight.

The so-called "Repentance" or "Tawba" movement, founded in 1989 by former prisoners under the leadership of the aforementioned Haji Abdul, became contemporary Azerbaijan's first homegrown independent religious organization. A number of similar organizations sprang up in a very short period of time. However, while Tawba received widespread national attention, its influence remained limited and confined to certain locales. This was due in part to the highly secular education that many of these organizations' preachers lacked, and which made it difficult for them to increase their influence beyond their communities.

Imported Islam

THE INABILITY OF BOTH ESTABLISHMENT SHIA CLERICS AND HOMEGROWN independent preachers to provide satisfactory information on Islam further encouraged the public to look elsewhere for Islamic knowledge. After Azerbaijan became independent in 1991, foreign religious organizations and preachers poured into the country from the outside. This effectively brought to an end the era in which homegrown Azeri movements and factors played the dominant role in the Islamic revival. Since that time, groups that have been largely inspired and funded from abroad have dominated the revivalist movement in Azerbaijan, and independent religious communities have grown much more rapidly than official government-sponsored mosques.[14]

Iran became especially influential in Azeri religious life. Once Iranian clerics appeared on the scene, Azerbaijan's establishment clerics and homegrown independent Shia preachers and intellectuals found it increasingly difficult to compete with them. In many ways, the Iranians simply outsmarted the Azeris, employing their greater religious knowledge alongside their firm determination to promote their political agenda and attract a growing number of followers. Before long, Azeri Muslims began to cooperate with their foreign counterparts. Some, like the soon-to-be head of the Azeri Islamic Party, Haji Alikram, eagerly embraced Iran's brand of political Islam. In a shocking turn of events, even Pashazade ultimately tried to persuade Shias to accept the political (*velayat-e-faqih*, or the "rule of the jurisprudent") and the spiritual (*marja-al-taqlid*, or "source of emulation") leadership of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.

By 1992, the Iranian hold on Azeri religious life had begun to strengthen. Dozens of Iranian preachers and organizations were actively engaged in religious preaching in Azerbaijan and more than 150 *madrasas* were established in different parts of the country. While some of these schools were influenced by the Iranian government, not all were Khomeinist: some of them were established independently by promi-

nent *marjas*, including some of whom were openly (like Ayatollah Ruhani) or tacitly (like late Ayatollah Tebrizi) opposed to the principle Khomeinist principle of *velayat-e-faqih*. Not all Azeri Shia preachers found common cause with the Iranians. Facing the risk of losing their hitherto unchallenged authority in loyal communities, some of them made rather unique decisions. For example, the notorious Haji Alesker, who was operating in Amiradjan on the outskirts of Baku, declared himself a prophet (*rasulallah*). That decision, as it turned out, cost Aleskar most of his supporters.[15]

Despite the Iranians' initial success at spreading their religious teachings within certain Azeri communities, their political agenda, and in particular the Khomeinist concept of *velayat-e-faqih*, resonated poorly amongst the Azeri public at large. Adoption of Khomeinism meant accepting the political superiority and/or rule of Iranian religious leaders. It also meant reopening the Shia-Sunni disputes, and both of these propositions were widely unpopular amongst ordinary Azeris. This contributed to a general public mistrust of Iran.

Secular Kemalism's influence amongst the Azeri people obstructed Iranian political propaganda. The discourse of Iranian *mullahs* was, to say the least, unattractive to the secularly-educated population. As an alternative, Elçibay's pan-Turkic Popular Front government invited official Turkish religious organizations to promote their version of Islam in Azerbaijan. The government also implemented the country's first state law on religious freedom.

The Azeri government's promotion of official Turkish Islamic institutions under the supervision of Turkey's own Ministry of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) also proved unsuccessful. Most scandalously, official Turkish Sunni clerics, such as the former religious attaché Abdukadir Sezgin, launched a thinly-veiled criticism of Shiism that was categorically rejected by the Azeri public. Sezgin had published an introductory textbook about Islam, very sharply criticizing some basic Shia traditions and beliefs. This inflamed many Azeris—not because of the criticism of Shiism *per se*, but because of the implicit distinction drawn by Sezgin between Sunni and Shia.

The promoters of other versions of Islam that had no direct connection to the state performed more impressively. For example, in the Absheron peninsula, one of the main strongholds of Shiism in Azerbaijan, a large number of followers of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani of Iraq did not accept the Khomeinist concept of *velayat-e-faqih*.

Having learned from its previous failures promoting revolutionary Shiism in Azerbaijan, Iran began to correct its methods in the mid-1990s. The most successful innovation was the promotion of Grand Ayatollah Fazil Lenkerani as the primary *marja-al-taqlid* in southern Azerbaijan's Shia stronghold. In spite of his loyalty to the leadership of Iran, Lenkerani was not viewed as a promoter of official political aspirations. His strong reputation as a great scholar and the fact that his ancestors were

from southern Azerbaijan also played a significant role in his growing popularity. He soon became virtually the only spiritual leader of Shias in that part of Azerbaijan.

Non-official Turkish movements also made some impressive inroads into Azeri society. These included the Naqshbandi Sufi order of the Mahmud Hudai Foundation, as well as Fathullah Gulen's version of Nur. (Nur was an educational movement whose stated purpose was the breeding of a new generation of pious Muslims.[16]) With considerable experience in proselytizing in their secular native Turkey, Gulen's followers have had significant success winning converts and gaining influence, especially in larger cities where the bonds of tradition are weaker than in rural areas. Thanks to the efforts of these Turkish religious organizations, several thousand young urban Azeris of Shia origin began adopting Sunnism in the mid-1990s. By contrast, conversions among Azerbaijan's Sunni minority to Shiism have been negligible so far.

Another source of conversions to Sunnism was an assortment of Salafi preachers from the Gulf States that first appeared in 1993. By 1994, fifteen Arabic charities had opened branches in different parts of the country. These charities were officially invited to provide urgently-needed humanitarian aid to refugees from the Nagorno-Karabakh war. However, Salafism gained a foothold in the traditionally Sunni north, particularly among ethnic minorities, as well as in such big cities as Baku and Sumgait.[17] The rate of Salafism's spread within these communities is striking, especially since Salafism was largely unheard of within Azerbaijan twenty years ago.[18] However, the Salafists' attempt to extend their activities into traditionally Shia regions has failed.

Unlike Turkish groups that relied on religious propaganda, the achievements of foreign Salafis and Shias have been primarily due to the success of several brilliant preachers. Among them the most prominent Shia was the Iranian cultural attaché Hoccatulislam Ahmedi Odjag Nedjat. The most successful Salafist was Shaykh Salem Zakharna, the Jordanian head of the Azeri Branch of the Kuwaiti Society for the Revival of Islamic Heritage.

The growing influence of these foreign Islamist influences—and the fear of losing control over the situation—forced the government to take a number of steps in the mid-1990s to reduce the dependence of Azeri believers on outside figures. First, Azeri law enforcement agencies began to expel Iranian preachers from the country. Then, in 1996, leaders of the pro-Iranian Islamic Party were linked to Tehran and convicted of espionage.[19] Nedjat was forced to stop his Friday sermons in the historical Juma Mosque of Baku, and the Salafi preacher Zakharna had to flee the country. During this period, the only religious movements that were not subjected to the pressures of law enforcement and increasing scrutiny were those of Turkish origin.

The most important policy the government implemented was an amendment to

the law on religious freedom prohibiting relations that subordinated Azeris to foreign Muslim religious organizations. This new amendment also demanded that Azeri Muslim groups only submit to the spiritual authority of the Caucasus Muslim Spiritual Board and its leadership. While adopting this amendment was a natural response to growing anxieties about security issues, its implementation was almost impossible. In order to be accepted as the leader of any single Shia community, a cleric was required to belong to the Shia hierarchy and to possess the appropriate religious title of *marja-al-taqlid* or at least local *mujtahid*. The Spiritual Board's incumbent Pashazade possessed none of these qualifications. Furthermore, demanding that Sunni communities accept a Shia cleric as their spiritual leader was even less likely to be successful.

Despite the government's crackdown on certain foreign preachers, the growth of foreign influence on Azeri religious life has not slowed down. In 1997, the first Azeri students who had gone abroad for religious education after independence returned and successfully replaced the foreign preachers. Since the early 1990s, thousands of Azeris have obtained religious educations at various kinds in *madrasas* and universities in Iran, Turkey, the Middle East, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Dagestan. The most impressive achievements have been gained by a graduate of Medina University, Haji Gamat, who became the unofficial leader of Azeri Salafis. Gamat transformed the Abu-Bakr Mosque in downtown Baku into the largest gathering place for Muslim believers in the city.[20] Equally significant was Haji Ilgar—a graduate of Iran's Qazvin International University—who successfully replaced the Iranian cleric Odjag Nedjat as a preacher in the historical Juma Mosque of Baku.

In 2001, the government attempted to gain more leverage over Azeri religious life by establishing the State Committee for Work with Religious Communities and appointing the Soviet-trained scholar Rafig Aliyev as its head.[21] One of the first measures taken by the committee was to impose regulations on the pursuit of religious education abroad, a move which effectively closed down all official exchange programs with foreign religious institutions.[22] But this too has had little impact on the situation, as only a handful of Azeri students who travel abroad for religious education do so using official channels.

Thus, since the end of the 1990s, the pace of Azerbaijan's re-Islamization has increased significantly. The State Committee has been largely ineffective at reining in these trends or in making any significant changes to the religious life of the country. During his time as the committee's head, Rafig Aliyev became best known for a bitter and ultimately unsuccessful five-year public rivalry with Pashazade. In 2006 he was sacked by President Aliyev, who in turn granted Pashazade strong support.

The Shia Renaissance

ESPECIALLY SINCE THE END OF THE 1990S, SUNNI ISLAM, AND PARTICULARLY Salafism, has continued to make inroads in the minority communities of north Azerbaijan and in urban centers. Out of fear of losing the competition with Sunnis for the hearts and minds of Azeri youth, Shia leaders have tried to compensate by becoming ideologically involved in Azeri political life and activism. Though this tactic has clashed with the long-standing Azeri tradition of viewing religious propaganda with disdain, it has so far proved to be a successful tactic as far as Shia leaders are concerned.

In 2001 and 2002, the first mass Shia protests erupted in Baku's suburban Nardaran village, historically a Shia stronghold, and gained notoriety after independence as the primary place near Baku where Azeri believers accepted Khamenei's authority. Although the protesters didn't make any expressly religious demands, and although the main reasons for the protests were poor social conditions and high unemployment rates, religious slogans and Shiism's role as a politically unifying force were evident. Only after nine months of mediation by Pashazade did the protests end.

During the 2003 presidential elections, some Shia religious organizations registered their support for oppositional political groups. In December 2003, the pro-Khomeinist Haji Ilgar of Baku's Juma Mosque was arrested. While released from prison several months later, this arrest weakened Ilgar's position as the leader of Shia politics in Baku. Ilgar's Juma Mosque was replaced by the Meshedi Dadash Mosque. Under the leadership of Haji Shahin, former leader of the Khomeinist youth movement Ikmal, the mosque became the unofficial center of the Shia community.[23] However, the arrest of Ilgar and the forced disbursement of his following increased his stature as a religious figure in the eyes of a variety of activist groups.

While Azerbaijan's Shia communities have become increasingly activist, organizing protests to demonstrate their discontent with a wide range of domestic and foreign political issues, Sunnis have actually continued to shun unwanted publicity. This is in part because the Sunnis appear to be chastened by the rising belligerence of Shiite activists. The state-controlled media has published a range of anti-Sunni propaganda, and leading Shia clerics, including Pashazade and his former rival Haji Ilgar, have lent their voices.[24] Pashazade identified both the Salafi and Nur movements as extremely radical, and called for restrictions on their activities. Haji Ilgar held off on attacking Nur, although he criticized the Wahhabi movement by arguing that the "success of this radical group" in Azerbaijan was only possible because the government imposed restrictions on the "right" Islamic propaganda. (Ilgar later retreated from this rhetoric, as it appears to have damaged his reputation as a religious-freedom activist.)

In fact, since the early 2000s, Shiism—and Islam as a whole—has become an increasingly powerful force in Azeri public life. Several prominent secular opposition activists began to shift their rhetoric in favor of political Islam following the 2003 presidential elections. Some of them, like Panah Husseyn, the former prime minister of Elçibay's government, started publicly endorsing the importance of applying Islamic principles to politics. Religion's growing influence was also on display in the 2005 parliamentary elections. For the first time in recent Azeri political history, all the major secular oppositional parties made special televised appeals to Muslim voters.

The growing number of those participating in the Hajj (the pilgrimage to holy sites in Mecca) during the last few years also clearly indicates the increase of Islam's influence on Azeri society. Almost completely restricted during the Soviet era, the pilgrimage was resumed in 1991 when only 200 pilgrims went to Mecca. In 1996 this number rose to 800, and then fluctuated for the next several years between 800 and 1000. Only a portion of these pilgrims were actually Azeri citizens, however; the Caucasus Muslim Board sold vacancies not filled by Azeris to Iranians and Muslims from the northern Caucasus. This situation has dramatically shifted since 2003, when the number of Azeris wishing to participate began to rise significantly. Four thousand applicants were turned down in 2006; by 2007, nearly 5700 Azeris participated.

Since the 2007 death of the revered Grand Ayatollah Fazil Lenkorani, a number of new dynamics have shaped Azeri Shiite religious life. Many of Lenkorani's followers have been leaning toward the spiritual leadership of hardliners like the Grand Ayatollah Makarem Shirasi (a Khomeini appointee to Iran's Supreme Religious Council [*Majlis-e-Khobregan*]). Meanwhile, Khamenei has already become the most-followed *marja-al-taqlid* among young Azeri Shias. Interestingly, the once-shunned Iranian preacher Odjag Nedjat also has resumed his Friday sermons in Baku. Officially, he presides over religious service for Iranians living in Baku, but in fact the largest portion of his audience is Azeri. Nediat has also managed to increase his influence amongst Azeris living in nearby Georgia and in Russia (particularly Moscow). In fact, during the last two or three years, Shiite leaders—thanks to their increasing political activism—have managed successfully to reverse the decline of Shiism amongst Azeri youth, and Shiism appears to be enjoying a renaissance.

An Uncertain Moment

THE REVIVAL OF ISLAM AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION DURING THE LAST several years has triggered a major government crackdown. Since the last quarter of 2006, many religious TV and radio shows, mosque-run Quranic teaching courses, and several religious book stores have been shut down. Both Shia and Sunni litera-

ture are subject to seizure. In some northern Sunni regions police have launched a "hunt on beards," and have forcibly shaved off the beards of believers. There were also attempts to impose restrictions on the number of daily prayers in regional mosques and on the proclamation of the *Azan,* or call to prayer, from loudspeakers in Baku. Surprisingly, the Sunni Nur and Salafi communities, who in the past have been loyal and quiescent to the ruling elite, have now become primary targets of the government. After a terrorist attack on August 17, 2008, on the Abu Bakr mosque (which, according to government sources, was committed by a rival Salafi group), the government officially closed the mosque during the subsequent investigation and didn't reopen it during Ramadan. Police forces have further restricted access to other Sunni mosques during Ramadan by allowing worshippers to gather only inside the mosques, prohibiting prayers in the outside yard area.

These strict governmental measures have created an environment of fear in Azerbaijan that has, to some extent, retarded the growth of the Islamic revival. But it should be taken into account that, in recent history, Islamic revival in Azerbaijan has witnessed several periods of stagnation or even backsliding. These phases didn't last long, and in their aftermath interest in Islam reemerged stronger than ever.

Taken together, the Islamic revival in Azerbaijan should be seen largely as the adaptation of Azeri society to a new religion rather than as a return to older, more secularized Azeri religious traditions. There is no doubt that the Islamic movements that have been most successful in independent Azerbaijan since the collapse of USSR—Salafism, Nur, and Khomeinist Shiism—are relatively new to the Azeri environment. Yet despite the accomplishments of these foreign Islamic movements and the striking pace of their spread in Azerbaijan, they still have had a relatively small impact on Azeri society compared to other Muslim societies elsewhere. The secular characteristics of Azeri society remain very strong and continue to dominate public life. The general population appreciates the Islamic aspect of their identity but does not yet seem prepared to give up on their secular achievements, or on the promise of a secular future. At the same time, there can be little doubt that Azerbaijan's re-Islamization is far from finished.

NOTES

1. Sebastian Peyrouse. "The Rise of Political Islam in Soviet Central Asia," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 5, 2007, pp. 40-54.
2. Bayram Balci, "Le Renouveau Islamique en Azerbaidjan entre Dynamiques Internes et Influences Exterieures," *Les Etudes du CERI*, no. 138, October 2007, p. 2.

3. Dj.Hadjibeyli, *Izbrannoye*. Baku, 1993, p. 84.

4. Only northern Sunnis in the Zakatala region managed to preserve *sharia* courts after the appeal of the Local National Committee to the Central Government. Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv, *Azerbaydjanskoy Respubliki*, Fond 894, Opis 2, *Yedinitsa Khraneniya* 9, list 37; Fond 894; Opis 1, *Yedinitsa Khraneniya* 19, list 15.

5. R. Huseynli. Azerbaycan Ruhaniliyi. (Baki: "Kur" Neshriyyati, 2002), p.131-139.

6. Alexandre A. Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

7. Benningsen et H. Carrere D'encausse, "La literature Anti-Religieuse dans les Republique Sovietiques Musulmanes," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 1958, p. 77.

8. Gosudardtvenniy Arkhiv, "Politicheskikh Partiy i Obshestvennikh Dvijeniy Azerbaydjanskoy Respubliki," Fond 1, opis 235, *Yedinitsa Khraneniya* 146, list 525.

9. Gosudardtvenniy Arkhiv Politicheskikh Partiy i Obshestvennikh Dvijeniy Azerbaydjanskoy Respubliki fond 1, opis 74, yedinitsa khraneniya 180, list 25.

10. Gosudardtvenniy Arkhiv Politicheskikh Partiy i Obshestvennikh Dvijeniy Azerbaydjanskoy Respubliki fond 1, opis 74, yedinitsa khraneniya 465, list 162-217.

11. Newspaper "Islam" (Official Media outlet of the Muslim Board), December 20th , 1990.

12. Interview with Isa Gambar, June 2002.

13. Once, when the low-profile *Azeri Etimad* newspaper published a humiliating caricature of Pashazade, a Dagestani Shia cleric threatened to punish the chief editor. Today, this newspaper is one of Pashazade's most trusted media outlets.

14. "Azerbaijan: Independent Islam and the State," Report of the International Crisis Group—Europe Report no. 191, March 25, 2008,http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/caucasus/191_azerbaijan_independent_islam_and_the_state.pdf

15. Raoul Motika. Islamskiye Seti v Azerbaidjane 90-x godov. "Mir, Progress, Prava Cheloveka," Publikatsiya Muzeya i obhsetvennogo centra imeni Andreya Saxarova. Vipusk 4, Azerbaidjan I Rossiya: Obshestva i Gosudarstva, May 2001, http://www.sakharov-center.ru/publications/azrus/az_010.html.

16. The Nur ("light") movement was founded by Said Nursi (also known as Bediuzzaman), a Turkish thinker of Kurdish background. Nur is generally considered one of the most important Islamic reformist currents to have appeared in Turkey in the past century.

17. Salafism became very popular among the Russian-speaking, well-educated, more modernized Azeri youth of Baku.

18. "Azerbaijan: Independent Islam and the State," Report of the International Crisis Group—Europe Report no. 191, March 25, 2008.

19. Quite popular in the beginning of the 1990s, the Islamic Party was transformed into a small and marginalized group after the disclosure of the pro-Iranian agenda of its leadership.

20. In one of his recent interviews given to an Azeri web resource, Gamat Suleymanov estimated that every Friday seven to eight thousand believers pray in his mosque, and that this number exceeds twelve thousand during annual holiday prayers. See http://www.day.az/news/society/57685.html

21. After 9/11, the government began expelling almost all the Arabic charity organizations from Azerbaijan.

22. "Interview with the Head of the State Committee for Work with Religious Communities," *Azeri Newspaper*, «525-ci q=zet», August 16, 2003.

23. Since 1992 Haji Shahin led the active religious youth organization "Ikmal," whose official registration was cancelled in 2001 by a court decision after an appeal by the Ministry of Justice.

24. HYPERLINK "http://azerbaijan.news.az/index.php?Lng=aze&Pid=17470"
http://azerbaijan.news.az/index.php?Lng=aze&Pid=17470
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Islam, Islamism and Jihadism in Italy

by Lorenzo Vidino

THE PRESENCE OF ISLAM IN ITALY HAS MORE THAN 13 CENTURIES OF history, beginning with the June 827 landing on the Sicilian coast by Arab forces led by Asad ibn al-Furat and the subsequent conquest of large parts of today's southern Italy. This first phase of Islamic history in Italy came to a close between the end of 12th and the beginning of 13th century, as popular insurrections, Norman troops, and Frederick II forced the Arabs out of the region. The second phase in Islam's history within Italy began in the 1980s, with the unprecedented influx of Muslim immigrants in the country.

Immigration itself is a new phenomenon in Italy. In the first three decades after World War II, when most other European countries were receiving thousands of extra-European immigrants, Italy was still a country of emigration, not immigration. Only by the 1970s did Italy begin to attract small numbers of workers, coming mostly from the Philippines and Latin America. The Muslim presence was limited to the diplomatic personnel from Muslim countries, a few businessmen and some students. Those numbers increased significantly in the 1980s, when immigrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa began to choose Italy as their initial or final destination in their migration to Europe. Immigration has peaked since the mid-1990s, and, according to Italy's official census bureau (ISTAT), as of December 2006 there were 2,670,514 foreign citizens residing in Italy.[1] While no exact data on the number of Muslims living in Italy exist, most estimates put their number at around 1 million, corresponding to almost 2% of the population.[2]

An analysis of the data available leads us to some observations on the Muslim community in Italy in comparison to that of other European countries. Firstly, most European countries received the bulk of their immigrant Muslim population from

countries with which they had strong historical ties. North Africans (particularly Algerians) constitute the majority of Muslim immigrants in France, as do Pakistani and Indian Muslims in Great Britain and Turks in Germany. Italy's Muslim community, on the other hand, possesses a significant diversity in the countries of origin of its members, and most of them come from countries with no historical ties to Italy. Only a small percentage of Muslims living in Italy, in fact, come from former Italian colonies in the Muslim world (Libya, Somalia, and Eritrea). The two countries that have contributed the largest number of Muslim immigrants to Italy are Morocco (28.5%) and Albania (20.5%).[3] Most other Muslims living in Italy come from Tunisia, Senegal, Egypt, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Algeria, Bosnia and Nigeria, contributing to the image of an extremely diverse community. Only in the sectarian aspect is Italy's Muslim community quite homogeneous, since 98% of it is Sunni.[4]

Equally typical of the Italian experience of Muslim immigration in comparison with that of other European countries are the higher number of non-citizens and irregular immigrants, the higher percentage of men, and the higher level of geographic dispersion.[5] Italian citizenship laws are very strict and, while obtaining work and residency permits is not very difficult, in many cases even immigrants who have lived in the country for decades cannot obtain Italian citizenship. A 2001 study suggested that only 10,000 Muslims living in Italy had Italian citizenship.[6] Large numbers of immigrants—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—live in Italy illegally, often employed in the country's large submerged economy. The situation might change in the near future, as more Muslims marry Italian citizens and if and when one of the many proposals to change citizenship laws is adopted. In any case, many point to the difficulty of obtaining Italian citizenship as an obstacle to better integration into Italian society.

Since immigration is a recent phenomenon and laws allowing legal residents to bring their spouses into the country have been passed only over the last few years, most immigrants are still first-generation. While this is true for all immigrant groups, Muslim immigration presents another peculiar characteristic in its composition. Unlike most other groups, the number of Muslim men living in Italy is significantly higher than that of Muslim women, as there are 227 men for every 100 women.[7] This characteristic is markedly different from the reality in most other European countries, where immigration waves and family reunifications have taken place for some time and, consequently, the imbalance between the number of males and females is much smaller.

Finally, another difference between the Muslim presence in Italy and that in most European countries is geographic dispersion. Since immigration in Italy began in the 1980s—when the post-industrial era had already begun and large factories were no longer hiring thousands of workers—Muslims did not concentrate in certain areas

as they did in most European countries. With possibly the exception of two neighborhoods in Turin, Italy has no Muslim ghettos, which are an unfortunate reality in industrial areas such as the British Midlands or the suburbs of various French cities.

A Leaderless Community

ITALY'S MUSLIM COMMUNITY IS CONDITIONED BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS: ITS relatively recent appearance in the country, its broad spectrum of the countries of origin, its small number of citizens, its high number of illegal residents, and its high geographic dispersion within Italy. All these characteristics, combined with Islam's intrinsic lack of clerical hierarchy, cause a weak internal cohesion and a poor level of organization, which reverberate in the inability to produce a unified leadership that can effectively represent the community when dealing with the Italian state, particularly at the macro level. Twenty years after the first massive wave of Muslim immigration, Italy's Muslim community is characterized by the presence of many Muslim organizations, none of which can legitimately claim to represent more than a fraction of it. Moreover, the relationships among these organizations are often characterized by sharp disagreements and even personal hatreds, leaving the country's Muslim community deprived of a unified leadership.

One of the oldest Muslim organizations in Italy is the Islamic Cultural Center in Rome, which is based out of Rome's Grand Mosque, Europe's largest. Rome's Grand Mosque is a quintessential example of institutional Islam, as it was built in over 20 years with funds coming from the governments of various Muslim countries and the ambassadors of the major contributing countries sit on the mosque's board. Positions of prominence are held by Saudi Arabia and Morocco, the two largest donors.[8] Mario Scialoja, a former Italian ambassador to Saudi Arabia and a convert to Islam, plays a key role in the mosque's relations to the Italian state.[9] Despite its ample means and ambitions, its geographic limitation to the Rome area and its close relation to foreign governments prevent the Grand Mosque from being a nationally representative Muslim organization.

Two smaller organizations are also aiming at becoming interlocutors of the state and representing the country's Muslim community: Coreis (Islamic Religious Community) and AMI (Italian Muslim Association). Both organizations embrace a moderate and progressive interpretation of Islam but consist of just a few members, many of them Italian converts. Even smaller is UMI (Italian Muslim Union), an organization that has often drawn the attention of Italian media for the deliberately provocative statements of its leader, Italian convert Adel Smith.[10] The presence of converts at the helm of several Italian Muslim organizations is a possible conse-

quence of the fact that only few Muslim immigrants have Italian citizenship and, consequently, many of them experience difficulties in attending to the legal and bureaucratic duties involved in heading an organization. Nevertheless, many Muslim immigrants do not feel duly represented by Italian converts and it is precisely the converts' overrepresentation that could be seen as one of reasons of the lack of legitimacy of most Muslim organizations.

A myriad of other minor entities dots the map of Italy's organized Islam. Many operate independently from any organization and act only at the local level. Others operate nationwide, such as the Moroccan Association of Italy, but can be defined Islamic only in the loose sense of the word, since they are based on ethnicity rather than religion. Sufi orders and brotherhoods also have a small presence, generally limited to small groups of Italian converts or communities such as the Senegalese or the Turkish. An array of unaffiliated makeshift mosques, often little more than garages or abandoned country houses, completes the panorama of Italian Islam.

In this fragmented scenario, where no organization can legitimately claim to represent a sizeable part of the country's Muslim population, a seemingly leading role has been taken by an Islamic revivalist organization called UCOII (Union of the Islamic Communities and Organizations of Italy). UCOII traces its origins to USMI, a small organization of Muslim students that, at the end of the 1960s, was created in Perugia and other university cities.[11] Composed mostly of Jordanian, Syrian and Palestinian students, USMI was close to the positions of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic revivalist movement that, from its origins in the 1920s in Egypt, has spread worldwide.[12] By the second half of the 1980s, when the first massive wave of North African immigrants arrived in Italy, a student organization such as USMI could no longer satisfy the needs of the new, large Muslim population. In January 1990, representatives of USMI, six mosques from six Italian cities, and 32 individuals incorporated into UCOII.

Since its foundation, UCOII has been extremely active on the political scene, attempting to become the main, if not the only, interlocutor of the Italian state. UCOII has managed to achieve an important position within the Muslim community, thanks to its large control over Italian mosques. While its claim to control 85% of Italy's mosques is difficult to independently verify, it is undeniable that UCOII plays a predominant role in the life of Italy's practicing Muslim community and that a large number of mosques are, more or less directly, linked to it.[13]

UCOII has often been accused of being an extremist organization with ideological and/or organic links to the Muslim Brotherhood. Such links, sometimes proudly admitted, sometimes vehemently denied by UCOII, are not illegal *per se*, since the Muslim Brotherhood is not considered a terrorist organization nor is banned in Italy or in any Western country.[14] Their existence is nevertheless important to better under-

stand UCOII's actions and aims, and in order to do so it is important to briefly analyze the presence in Europe of networks related to the Muslim Brotherhood. Over the last 50 years the Muslim Brotherhood has established offshoots in various European countries that today, thanks to their activism and foreign funding, have managed to carve an important space for themselves within European Muslim communities. Revivalist organizations such as the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) or the Union of Islamic Organizations of France (UOIF) have become the *de facto* representatives of the Muslim communities of their countries, controlling a large number of mosques and interacting with government institutions as preferential partners.[15]

Most of these organizations have severed all formal ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, which they understood could taint their reputation. When dealing with the media and governments they often show a moderate façade, publicly supporting integration and democracy. Yet, in their mosques, revivalist organizations espouse a diametrically different rhetoric, still embracing the ideology of the organization to which they trace their origins. Their aim, according to many of their critics, is the radicalization of European Muslim communities and the creation of what Israeli scholar Reuven Paz defines "non-territorial Islamic states"—separate Islamic states within the state, in which Muslims would have separate social spaces (from schools to swimming pools) and separate jurisdiction.[16] Unlike other Islamist groups operating in Europe, Muslim Brotherhood-linked organizations do not resort to or advocate violence to achieve these goals, but have chosen to work within the system and the legal framework.

UCOII is the Italian branch of this informal European-wide network, adopting the same *modus operandi* of its counterparts in other countries. UCOII views Islam as a complete ideology, without distinction between religion and politics, private and public spheres.[17] Its rhetoric is sometimes filled with encouraging statements favoring integration and tolerance, sometimes marred by endorsement of suicide bombings and strong anti-Semitism.[18] As all other Brotherhood-linked organizations throughout Europe, UCOII aims at swaying the Muslim population to its strict interpretation through the activities of its capillary network of mosques. Given the lack of other structures on the Italian territory, many Muslim immigrants seeking the comfort of familiar faces, languages and smells congregate in mosques, which are often seen more as community centers rather than simply places of worship. UCOII seeks to use its virtual monopoly over mosques to spread its ideology and exercise what Italian expert on Islam Renzo Guolo has defined as a "diffuse cultural hegemony" over the country's Muslim community.[19]

Most Italian Muslims do not seem to share UCOII's politicized view of Islam and favor a more personal interpretation of it. According to polls, only 5 to 10% of Muslims living in Italy regularly attend Friday prayers at a mosque.[20] Even though the

percentage would probably be higher if there were more mosques throughout the territory, the data square with the analysis of most sociologists, who believe that the majority of Muslims living in Italy are not practicing ones. Most of them fast for Ramadan and celebrate Eid al Fitr, but are not significantly more practicing than Italian Catholics.[21] Yet, taking advantage of its extreme fragmentation, UCOII has become the most visible, vocal and organized voice of Italy's Muslim community. It can be said that the control of the Italian Muslim community has been conquered by an active minority, which has easily prevailed over an unorganized silent majority.[22]

Criticism of UCOII is widespread in all quarters and particularly within the Muslim community. Mario Scialoja, the abovementioned former Italian ambassador to Saudi Arabia and a leader at the Rome Grand Mosque, is clear in stating what the problem with UCOII is. "Even if it is indeed so rooted in the territory," says Scialoja, "UCOII pursues the agenda of an international movement. Hence it does not represent a positive factor for the development of an Italian Islam."[23] Others have called for a ban of UCOII, given its extremist positions and its support of violence against Israel. Yet, despite all the criticism, UCOII is a reality that cannot be ignored and all actors on the political scene have to interact with it in one way or another.

The Legal Recognition of Islam

THE PREDOMINANCE OF UCOII AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL HAS STRONG repercussions on the relationship between the Italian state and the Muslim community and the legal recognition of Islam, a source of major political controversies. The Italian Constitution (Article 19) gives all citizens the right to freely practice and proselytize for any religion (unless its rites are deemed to be against morality). All religions are free to organize themselves and, according to Article 8, their relationship with the state is regulated by law, based on agreements signed by the state with the representatives of each religious community. The Catholic religion enjoys a separate and privileged treatment, which was negotiated by the Vatican and the Italian state in 1929 and then incorporated in the republican Constitution of 1948. In order to be recognized and receive legal and financial benefits similar to those of the Catholic religion, all other religions have to sign an agreement (known in Italian as *intesa*) with the government, which regulates mutual rights and obligations.

Over the last 25 years various religious communities (such as Jewish, Protestant and Buddhist) have done so. Even churches such as the Adventists and the Assemblies of God, which consist of only a few thousand members, have managed to sign an *intesa*. Islam, which is *de facto* the country's second religion (if not among Italian citizens, unquestionably among individuals living in the country), has not yet been

recognized by the Italian state as a religion. While the opposition of some political forces to the recognition of Islam has in some cases interfered with the process, the main reason for this seemingly paradoxical situation is to be found in the lack of a unified leadership in the Italian Muslim community.

In order to sign the *intesa*, in fact, the Italian government needs to find a representative of the Muslim community, something the Italian Muslim community has thus far been unable to produce." Various groups have submitted *intesa* proposals over the years: Rome's Islamic Cultural Center did so in 1993, AMI in 1994, and Coreis in 1996. All these proposals have been rejected by various Italian governments because the proponents were not considered representative enough. While all these organizations enjoy excellent relations with Italian institutions and their drafts were considered quite reasonable, none was deemed able to legitimately claim to represent the majority of Italian Muslims.[24]

Conversely, the Italian state has experienced the opposite problems when dealing with the proposals of *intesa* submitted by UCOII since 1990. UCOII seems to be *prima facie* the Muslim organization with the largest following and with characteristics that make it the closest of all Italian Muslim organizations to the notion of representation that Italian authorities are looking for. On the other hand, the contents of the proposals submitted by UCOII are what have stopped Italian authorities from reaching an agreement. UCOII's drafts are, in fact, quite ambitious, as they ask for the recognition of Islamic festivities, the introduction of Islamic education in public schools, the extension of legal values to weddings celebrated in mosques and the creation of "informational spaces" for Muslims on public television.[25] According to its *intesa* drafts, the state would recognize UCOII as the sole representative of the country's Muslim community, granting it all the powers that come with the *intesa*. UCOII claims to be entitled to such status since it represents the vast majority of Italian Muslims and refers to its control over the majority of Italian mosques as proof of its position of predominance.

The Italian state has cited two reasons for turning down all of the *intesa* drafts submitted by the UCOII."[26] The first is that some of the requests advanced by UCOII are incompatible with the legal framework and/or excessive. Moreover, it has understood that, if such an agreement were to be signed by the state, UCOII would achieve unchallenged power within the Muslim community. Only UCOII, for example, would choose the curriculum for the teaching of Islam in public schools, appoint imams serving in hospitals, prisons and the military, and celebrate weddings according to the Islamic rite that would have legal value. This position of virtual monopoly that UCOII would gain from such an agreement would not be accepted by minority groups within Italian Islam (such as Shia, Sufis, or Ahmadiyya), nor by all those Sunni Muslims—and they seem to be the majority—who do not share UCOII's conser-

vative interpretation of Islam. Strong pressures on the Italian authorities to turn down UCOII's proposals have come, in fact, from various members of the Italian Muslim community and from the Muslim governments whose ambassadors sit on the board of the Rome Grand Mosque and whose ideological and political rivalry with UCOII has always been one of the main challenges to the creation of a unified Muslim leadership in Italy.[27]

The *Consulta*

THE LACK OF UNIFIED LEADERSHIP IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY HAS LED ITALIAN authorities to the conclusion that it is too early to sign an *intesa*. The fragmentation and infighting have been perceived as a sign that the community is not yet mature and that the best option, despite the urgency of reaching an agreement that would regulate many aspects of Islam's presence in the country, is to wait until the community is better rooted and has proper representation.

Since 2001, given the increased attention devoted to Islam, Italian authorities have attempted to come up with new solutions. Even though the *intesa* was still considered premature, in 2004 then Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu decided to take a proactive role in favoring the creation of a unified leadership in the Muslim community. Months of intense consultations and research efforts led to the creation in late 2005 of the *Consulta per l'islam italiano* (Council for Italian Islam), an advising body for the Islamic faith composed of 16 members of the Muslim community selected by the Ministry of Interiors. The *Consulta* is supposed to research and advise the Ministry on all issues involving the Muslim community, with a stated goal of developing the dialogue between the Italian government and the Muslim community and the harmonious integration of the latter in Italian society.[28] The *Consulta* meets when convened by the Minister of Interiors and at least three times a year, working on an agenda that is set by the Minister himself.

Aside from criticism from the Lega Nord party, which at the time was a part of the coalition government, Pisanu found little political opposition to his initiative. The major challenge he faced was in selecting the 16 members of the *Consulta*. Some had suggested that the members should have been elected through a voting process by Italian Muslims, following the example of the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (CFCM), the elective body created by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2003. Pisanu instead opted for a solution similar to the *Conseil de réflexion sur l'Islam en France* (Corif), the body that had preceded the CFCM and that had been created by then French Minister of Interiors Pierre Joxe by appointing six known community figures.[29] Pisanu so explained his decision: "I could have followed the path of the French Council. But

French Islam is more consolidated, it has more than one hundred years of life. The Italian reality is still, on the other hand, very fragmented and indefinite. Islam is much more pluralistic and diverse than what we think and it does not have hierarchies, so it is difficult to find interlocutors. So I say: let us first try to get to know it, then let us find a way to make it express itself in the most democratic fashion possible."[30]

The 16 individuals Pisanu selected for the *Consulta* originally came from 12 countries, mirroring the diversity of the Italian Muslim community. Several of them are North Africans, the largest regional group in Italy, but there is also a Senegalese, a Somali and an Albanian, representing communities that traditionally have had only a small voice within Italian Islam. Four of the members are women, also a novelty in the male-dominated panorama of Italian Muslim organizations. Some of the members of the *Consulta* are religious and represent the so-called "Islam of the mosques." Others are representatives of the so-called "cultural Islam," secular Muslims that, even though they might occasionally frequent a mosque, believe in a firm separation of religion and politics and that Islam should not shape all aspects of their lives.

The most controversial issue faced by Pisanu in selecting the members of the *Consulta* was whether members of UCOII were to be included. Some of Pisanu's advisors noted that, while the organization is unquestionably one of the best represented throughout Italy, its extremist positions should disqualify UCOII from being part of a government-appointed body whose stated goal is the development of a Muslim community that respects Italian laws and national identity.[31] Others pointed out that UCOII had repeatedly and publicly denounced terrorism, condemning various terrorist attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda and affiliated groups in Europe and elsewhere. On the other hand, UCOII seems to maintain that attacks carried out by Palestinians against Israel, no matter what the target, constitute legitimate resistance and not terrorism. The debate spilled from the corridors of government buildings to the editorial pages of major Italian newspapers. At the end, Pisanu decided to include UCOII's president Nour Dachan in the *Consulta*. Some wondered whether including UCOII in the *Consulta* granted undue legitimacy to an organization whose positions are contrary to Italian moral values and, possibly, Italian laws. Khaled Fouad Allam, a sociologist and an influential journalist with *La Repubblica*, saw UCOII's inclusion in the *Consulta* as a sound *realpolitik* move. "UCOII," said Allam, "has an important control over Italy's mosques. It's better to have them inside [the *Consulta*] than outside, otherwise their exclusion would have further radicalized their positions.[32]"

The problems generated by UCOII's inclusion in the *Consulta* have only grown as the body held its first meetings in 2006. On most issues the *Consulta* has been divided in two: on one side, generally the majority, secularists and moderates led, respec-

tively, by the president of the Association of Moroccan Women in Italy, Souad Sbai, and COREIS vice-president Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini, and on the other side conservatives led by Dachan. In February 2006, for example, the *Consulta* signed a document expressly recognizing Israel's right to exist, but two of its members, Dachan and Salerno-based imam Rachid Amadia, did not sign it.[33] Similarly, Dachan refused to sign the so-called Charter of Values of Citizenship and Integration, a general document approved by the majority of members of the *Consulta* which condemned Islamic fundamentalism and stated Italian Muslims' commitment to the country's secular laws.[34] According to the initial intentions of the Ministry of Interiors, those who refused to sign the document, a basic declaration based on principles taken from the Italian constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, would have been removed from the *Consulta*.[35] No such measure has been officially taken against Dachan and Amadia, but their refusal brought the activities of the *Consulta* to a standstill and the body has been mostly inactive since the end of 2006.[36]

The intense discussions within the *Consulta* were probably inevitable and could be optimistically viewed as a necessary step toward the formation of an understanding among Italy's Muslim leadership. The *Consulta* does not have the authority to make any binding decision, but it is mostly a platform where Muslim leaders can discuss their issues and from which Italian authorities can gather suggestions. Most members of the *Consulta* have stated that they see the *Consulta* simply as the first step towards the signing of the *intesa*. Whether this will happen or not is to be seen. But, in any case, the *Consulta* can be a useful experience for Italy's Muslim community, as it can make it mature and find a way to reconcile its internal differences in order to reach some form of unified leadership, the necessary first step towards a better recognition of Islam in the country.

Nevertheless, as the *Consulta* faced its problems, some of its most moderate members decided to pursue separate negotiations with the Interior Ministry and create a new organization called the Federation of Italian Islam.[37] In open opposition to UCOII and its refusal to sign the Charter, the Federation aims at becoming the body that will eventually sign the *intesa* with the Italian state.[38] The Federation, which was launched in April 2008, has received substantial backing from the Italian government, which seems to have abandoned the idea of working with UCOII (despite UCOII's recent statements that it is now ready to adhere to the Charter of Values[39]). On the other hand, authorities still have doubts on the representativeness of the Federation, whose members have only limited clout inside Italian mosques.

The Jihadist Threat

A SEPARATE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE PRESENCE OF JIHADIST activities in Italy. While attracting only a small minority of Muslims living in the country, Salafi ideology has had a relatively long history in Italy and is espoused by a growing number of mosques throughout the territory. As a virtually inevitable direct byproduct of the spread of Salafi ideology, over the last fifteen years Italian authorities have monitored and, often times, dismantled, several networks involved in terrorist activities. The majority of these cells limited their actions to providing various forms of logistical support to jihadist outfits operating throughout the world. Nevertheless, over the last few years, some dismantled networks had planned attacks inside the country, indicating Italy's shift from a convenient base of operation to a potential target.

The role of the city of Milan and of one of its mosques in the spread of Salafism and jihadism in Italy cannot be overemphasized and must be analyzed in order to understand their history in the country. The Milan area has traditionally been Italy's financial engine and, since the 1970s, has attracted a disproportionately high number of immigrants from various countries, becoming the main hub for, among other groups, Egyptian and Moroccan immigration in Italy. In 1977, a small group of Middle Eastern and North African students and immigrants affiliated with Muslim Brotherhood-linked USMI founded the Islamic Center of Milan and Lombardy, which grew progressively more active as immigration fluxes brought more Muslims to Milan.

By the mid-1980s several members of various Egyptian jihadist groups had also made their way to Milan, either receiving asylum or living illegally in the Italian city.[40] Soon the men, mostly members of the Gamaa Islamiya, the notorious Egyptian terrorist organization that has killed hundreds of Egyptians and Westerners in its attempt to overthrow the country's secular government, became increasingly dissatisfied with the strain of Islam that was preached inside the Islamic Center. In 1988, with the financial support of a wealthy Milan-based Eritrean Muslim businessman, Ahmed Idris Nasreddin, the Egyptians broke with the Islamic Center and founded their own mosque inside a former garage on the northern outskirts of Milan.[41] The mosque, which was incorporated as the Islamic Cultural Institute (ICI), immediately became the main headquarters for the European operations of the Gamaa.[42]

Unlike other European mosques, such as London's Finsbury Park, which were founded by moderates and then taken over, often with violent means, by more radical forces, the ICI was created as a jihadist mosque. The ICI focused its activities on providing false documents, safe haven, and financing to Egyptian militants as well as on spreading the group's radical ideology. From Milan, Gamaa militants kept in

close contact with other Egyptian radicals in the Middle East, Europe, and even the United States, where they communicated with the group's spiritual leader, Omar Abdel Rahman (the so-called Blind Sheikh).[43] The ICI became crucially important in 1992 as the conflict in Bosnia broke out. Along with the Sahabah mosque in Vienna, another major bastion of the Gamaa, the ICI became the headquarters for Muslims who wanted to fight in the Balkans.[44] The Institute provided documents, money, transportation and all other forms of logistical support for Arab volunteers, while its imam—Anwar Shabaan, one of Gamaa Islamiya's most important leaders—became the commander of the Mujahideen Battalion, a paramilitary unit made up of Arab fighters that fought against Serbs and Croats.[45]

Nineteen ninety-five proved to be a difficult year for the Institute. Shabaan was killed in an ambush by Croatian police and, in what was Europe's first suicide bombing, Gamaa militants attempted to retaliate for his death with a car bomb attack against a police station in the Croatian city of Rijeka (the only victim was the suicide bomber, a Milan resident of Egyptian descent).[46] Moreover, the developments of a routine crime investigation led Italian authorities to focus on the Institute. An Egyptian butcher, in fact, had told authorities that individuals linked to the ICI had organized a racketeering scheme against the city's *halal* slaughterhouses, alleging that local Muslim butchers were forced to buy the meat from a distributor linked to the Institute, and that those who refused were threatened with arson.[47] The inquiry into the ICI, which soon developed into a full-fledged counterterrorism investigation, ended with a dramatic raid on the mosque in June 1995 and the indictment of seventeen militants—only a fraction of those investigated.[48] Inside the Institute, police found hundreds of false documents, radical magazines, tools for forging documents, and documents proving its ties to extremists worldwide.[49]

Despite these blows, the ICI continued its activities throughout the 1990s. The Institute established various businesses, which provided money and the possibility to sponsor visa applications for several radicals that were hired as employees.[50] Radical preachers of global stature occasionally visited at the Institute, which kept close contact with other extremist mosques throughout Europe.[51] The imams' sermons and the literature available at the Institute spread Salafi ideology to the growing number of Muslim immigrants that frequented the mosque.[52] ICI militants also developed a strategy of concentric circles to expand their influence beyond Milan, setting their sights on mosques and Islamic centers in Lombardy and in other regions. Relying on their charisma and, when they found opposition, on the use of violence, ICI affiliates established or took over mosques in Lombardy cities such as Como, Cremona, Gallarate and Varese, and in other northern Italian regions (mostly Piedmont, Emilia Romagna, Veneto and Tuscany).[53]

While the leadership of the Institute remained Egyptian, militants from other

countries began to congregate there, turning the ICI into a hub for radical networks spread throughout northern Italy. Mirroring immigration patterns, by the mid-1990s Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan networks began to operate in Italy, generally gravitating around the ICI.[54] At the end of the 1990s, the Institute, together with its satellite mosque strategically located in the southern outskirts of Milan, was one of the key neuralgic centers for jihadist activities in Europe, leading U.S. authorities to dub it "the main al Qaeda station house in Europe."[55] The intersection with Milan's immigrant criminal underworld made the ICI particularly important. Hundreds of documents forged by a cluster of Moroccan ICI worshippers were used by al Qaeda militants worldwide.[56] Money made by members of Milan's networks through drug smuggling, petty thefts and other minor criminal activities was sent, along with *zakat* funds, to jihadist outfits in North Africa and Afghanistan.[57] Moreover, as the Institute had been a hub for recruitment for the Bosnian *jihad*, by the late 1990s it started sending volunteers from various European countries to Afghanistan.[58]

Between 2000 and 2002 authorities dismantled various networks of Milan-based militants. While listing all of them would be tedious and pointless, some general observations on them should be made. All the individuals arrested were first-generation immigrants from Tunisia, Morocco, Libya or Algeria. Many of them had started their activities to support groups fighting in their home countries, but later switched their focus to supporting al Qaeda's efforts worldwide, and many of them had been trained in the organization's Afghan camps. While the wiretapped conversations introduced by Italian authorities at the various trials clearly showed their deep disdain towards Italy, the clusters were not planning attacks in the country, but limited their activities to providing logistical support to the global al Qaeda network.[59]

The arrest and subsequent conviction of dozens of ICI-linked militants did not halt the activities of ICI-based networks, which displayed a remarkable ability to regenerate themselves. Months before the war in Iraq began, the remnants of Milanese networks that had recruited for Afghanistan for years began to send volunteers to Iraq, where they joined forces with the Kurdish Islamist group Ansar al Islam.[60] Two waves of arrests in 2003 dismantled at least part of the network, but Italian officials estimate that the men had recruited no fewer than 200 militants throughout Europe, 70 of them from Italy alone.[61] Forged Italian documents, the trademark of Milan's ICI, have been found on foreign fighters in Iraq.[62] And, more disturbingly, Muslims recruited in northern Italy are believed to have carried out brazen suicide operations in Iraq. One of them, Milan resident Lotfi Rihani, reportedly died in September 2003 when he, along with two other Tunisian passengers, struck U.S. forces with a car laden with explosives.[63] Algerian national Fahdal Nassim died in the August 2003 bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad that killed 22 people, including UN special envoy to Iraq Sergio Vieira de Mello.[64] Kamal Morchidi,

a 24-year-old Moroccan who had served on the board of an ICI front company, died in October 2003 during an attack against Baghdad's Rashid Hotel.[65]

By 2004 the continuous waves of arrests and the realization that the ICI was under strict surveillance from authorities led many militants to take their activities away from the ICI. The "rendition" of Abu Omar, the Egyptian imam of the ICI's satellite mosque abducted by the CIA while walking near the ICI in February 2003, also contributed to an outward moderation of the Institute's leadership.[66] The Institute still openly preaches a strict Salafi ideology, which is also preached at the Farj al Islam, the unauthorized grade school for hundreds of Muslim children operated by the ICI's satellite mosque on the southern outskirts of Milan.[67] Nevertheless, while still serving as a gravitational pole for various jihadist networks, the ICI has partially changed its ways in that recruitment and most criminal activities, previously held inside the ICI with the consent of the Institute's leadership, have been mostly moved to other mosques or to private gatherings.

If the ICI is no longer the undisputed beacon of jihadism in Italy, many of the mosques and networks that have partially filled the gap trace their origins back to the Institute. That is the case of various radical mosques in Lombardy, the Italian region with the highest number of Muslim immigrants. Over the years, radical networks composed mostly of North African militants have been uncovered around mosques that had been created by or kept subordinate relations with the ICI. Particularly noteworthy is the cluster of Moroccans and Tunisians that developed around the mosque of the quiet rural town of Cremona. Born out of the initiative of members of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, since the mid-1990s the Cremona network had been active in recruiting, fundraising and spreading propaganda for various jihadist outfits. The cluster's leader, Ahmed el Bouhali, reportedly died under American bombs in Tora Bora in 2001, but the network continued its operations until 2004, when most of its members were convicted of various terrorism-related crimes. The network had also allegedly planned attacks against Cremona's cathedral and Milan's underground system.[68]

Most northern Italian regions host radical mosques and networks, albeit to a much lower degree than Lombardy. The Turin area, for example, has also seen the presence of Salafi networks, facilitated by the fact that the Piedmontese city is home to Italy's only two "Muslim neighborhoods," Porta Palazzo and San Salvario.[69] Algerian militants linked to the GIA had created a base in Turin already in the early 1990s, taking advantage of the city's proximity to the French border, and Safe Bourada, one of the masterminds of the 1995 Paris bombings, settled in Turin in 1994.[70] But the bulk of militants operating in Turin is composed of Moroccans, who gravitate around the mosques of Porta Palazzo. Bouiriqi Bouchta, the imam of the most famous of Porta Palazzo's mosques, was considered a "danger to the security of the

country" and deported to Morocco in September 2005 with an emergency decree issued by the Ministry of Interiors.[71] Bouchta's right hand man and successor, Moroccan imam Mohammed Kohaila, was expelled in January 2008 for similar reasons.[72] Salafi networks and preachers linked to the Moroccan movement Justice and Charity are also active in Turin and in various cities throughout Piedmont where Moroccan immigration is high.[73]

Several cities in Emilia Romagna have also seen the presence of jihadist networks. A Bologna-based network of militants played an important role during the war in Bosnia, while during the second half of the 1990s a network of Tunisians linked to the Tunisian Islamic Combatant Group operated in various cities of the region.[74] All these networks and a Parma-based Kurdish cluster that was dismantled in 2003 for recruiting volunteers to fight in Iraq held close links to Milan's ICI.[75] The influence of Milan's Islamic Institute is also deeply felt in Tuscany, where most of the region's radical mosques have been taken over by imams affiliated with the ICI. While several mosques in the region belong to this ICI-dominated network, the main hub of jihadism in the region is the al Salam mosque, located in the Florence suburb of Sorgane. Confirming the radicalism of the al Salam mosques, two of its imams have been recently arrested for terrorism. Moroccan national Mohammed Rafik was arrested in 2003 for his role in the Casablanca suicide bombings, while Algerian national Rashid Mahamri was arrested the following year for his alleged role in a network that was recruiting for Iraq.[76]

Naples has also been an important pole of radical activities in Italy. In the early 1990s top members of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) established a branch of the organization's executive committee in Naples and, since then, the southern Italian city has been a crucial node in the European logistical network of all Algerian groups. Djamel Lounici, the historical leader of such networks, over time switched his support from FIS to the GIA and finally to the GSPC, swaying large segments of Naples' radical community to his increasingly militant views.[77] Naples, a port city with a global reputation for its criminal activities, is the ideal base for the operations of the Algerian networks, and close links to local crime syndicates have allowed them easy access to weapons and forged documents that have often been sent to Algeria or to other Algerian clusters operating in northern Italy and throughout Europe.[78] Some of the leaders of the Naples-based Algerian network have been arrested (including Lounici, who has been sentenced to eight years in prison) or deported over the last few years, but militants close to the GSPC are still operating in both Naples and its metropolitan area.

Radical networks also operate in Genoa, Rome and various cities of Veneto (Padua, Verona, Vicenza and Motta Livenza). A common trend seems to be the de-localization of jihadist networks, as clusters seem to be forming increasingly outside of mosques

and in small urban centers. Italy has not yet seen homegrown networks of the kind seen in most other European countries, which are characterized by the fact that most of their members are second generation immigrants and converts. The vast majority of individuals that have been arrested in Italy over the last few years are still first generation immigrants from the Maghreb region. Yet several recent police operations have shown that, unlike in the past, an increasing number of clusters operate independently from any group. And, unlike many of their predecessors, such networks have shown an intention to carry out attacks in Italy. A perfect example of this new trend is the independent cluster dismantled by authorities near Perugia in the summer of 2007, which had accumulated chemical substances for a possible attack inside the country.[79]

Despite the small resources they have to work with, Italian authorities have been quite successful in dismantling jihadist networks operating in the country and almost a dozen of them have been uncovered since 9/11. Most networks limited their activities to supporting groups operating in other countries (mostly in Algeria, but also Morocco and Tunisia). Three large waves of arrests crippled, but not completely dismantled, various networks that were recruiting volunteers in Italy and in various European countries to fight in Iraq.[80] While several individuals over time have been taped by authorities discussing attacks in the country, it appears that in most cases no specific plan was made and, in fact, only few individuals have been charged with planning attacks inside Italy.

To conclude, it is necessary to mention other organizations that, while not directly or publicly endorsing violence, have been monitored by Italian authorities for their radicalism. Hizb ut-Tahrir has a presence but is not as active as it is in most other European countries. Authorities are more worried about the activities of Tabligh Jamaat, the peaceful Islamic missionary movement that intelligence agencies worldwide suspect of having been infiltrated by radicals.[81] The Moroccan movement Justice and Charity has a significant influence on several mosques of northern Italy and authorities fear the effects that its radical teachings can have on the local population.[82] Finally, two Shia organizations, Naples-based Ahl al Bayt and its Rome-based spin off Imam Mahdi, have attracted the attention of authorities because of their radical positions and because many of their members are Italian converts with a past in militant right wing groups.[83]

Prospects for the Future

THE PROBABILITY OF A TERRORIST ATTACK IN ITALY, WHILE STILL ELEVATED, SEEMS to have decreased over the last two years. Italy is a close ally of the United States and, while it has withdrawn its troops from Iraq, it still has almost 2000 soldiers in

Afghanistan. Moreover, the country's deep Christian roots hold a symbolic value that is not lost on jihadists. "Rome is a cross," are the words of famed jihadist theoretician Abu Qatada, "the West is a cross and Romans are the owners of the cross. Muslims' target is the West. We will split Rome open."[84] Yet, the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and aggressive counterterrorism efforts seem to have made Italy less vulnerable to a terrorist attack than two years ago.

Nevertheless, prevention of terrorist attacks, while crucially important, is only one of the issues that authorities have to deal with when confronting radical Islam. Another issue that, in a way, is more problematic to confront is the spread of Salafism and other extremist interpretations of Islam. As all other Western countries, Italy finds itself with very few practical options to make sure that its mosques are not taken over by radical elements. The battle that takes place on a daily basis for the control of Islamic places of worship is something that Italian authorities can only watch from afar, as they rarely possess the legal tools to intervene. To what extent radical currents, whether Salafi or the Brotherhood's, will take hold inside Italian mosques and Italy's Muslim community is something that will become clear only in the years to come.

If there is one certainty about the future of Islam in Italy, it is that its presence will only grow. The influx of immigrants from North and Sub-Saharan African seems to be virtually unstoppable, given migration patterns and socio-economic conditions in Africa. Moreover, in the next few years Italy will start to see second generation Muslim immigrants, like most other European countries already have. Many of them will hold Italian citizenship and, furthermore, the number of Muslims carrying an Italian passport will also increase through marriages and conversions. It seems clear that Islam is destined to have a more visible and stable presence in the country and this is already evident in the impressive increase of mosques throughout Italy. According to a report of the security services, Italy had 351 mosques in 2000, 696 in 2006 and 735 in the first semester of 2007. The report also indicates that 39 new mosques and Islamic organizations were set up just between January and May 2007, an average of one every four days.[85]

Some problems would be resolved if the Muslim community could find a leadership that was, at the same time, widely representative and moderate. The lack of representative leadership constitutes one of the biggest problems for the Italian Muslim community, which finds itself unable to negotiate and obtain rights that the Italian state is, for the most part, willing to give. Things work better at the local level, where cooperation is facilitated by the fact that it is easier to identify an interlocutor. But at the national level there is the need to find a leadership that would include all voices of Italy's Islam, not only the most vocal. It is necessary for this representative leadership to include not only the "Islam of the mosques," but also "cultural Islam,"

because, as Italian citizen of Pakistani descent and *Consulta* member Eyaz Ahmed explained, "Islam is not only inside the mosques, but also in the social and cultural life of those who live in Italy."[86]

The next ten years appear to be crucial for the future of Islam in Italy. As the first large generation of Italian-born Muslims comes of age, it will dictate the community's direction. If it finds a legal, political and social environment that it can consider open and receptive, it will be more likely to seek full integration, maintaining its religious identity while becoming a full-fledged part of the increasingly multicultural Italian society. If the new generation perceives that Islam is still considered a foreign and, by some, even an inimical religion, its incentives to become part of Italy's social fabric will be limited and more likely to embrace radical messages.[87]

NOTES

1. ISTAT population findings for the year 2006.
2. Stefano Allievi, "I musulmani in Italia: chi sono e come ci vedono," *Limes*, Issue 3/2004, page 97. The 2007 annual report by Caritas/Migrantes puts the number at 1,202,052.
3. Federico Di Leo, "Il nostro Islam in cifre," *Limes*, Issue 3/2004, page 123.
4. Stefano Allievi, "Islam in Italy," in Shireen T. Hunter, ed., *Islam, Europe's Second Religion*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publisher, 2002), p. 82.
5. Stefano Allievi, "Islam in Italy," in Shireen T. Hunter, ed., *Islam, Europe's Second Religion*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publisher, 2002), pp. 79-80.
6. *Enciclopedia delle Religioni in Italia*, study by the Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni, 2001.
7. Federico Di Leo, "Il nostro Islam in cifre," *Limes*, Issue 3/2004, page 123.
8. Stefano Allievi, *Musulmani d'Occidente*, (Rome: Carocci, 2002), page 56.
9. Stefano Allievi, "I musulmani in Italia: chi sono e come ci vedono," *Limes*, Issue 3/2004, page 101.
10. Smith has repeatedly and publicly asked the Pope to convert to Islam, led a campaign to remove crucifixes from public buildings (claiming that "those small cadavers" frighten Muslim children), and sued Italian writer Oriana Fallaci for vilifying Islam.
11. History of UCOII, available at: http://www.islam-ucoii.it/artcomuni.htm
12. Stefano Allievi, "I musulmani in Italia: chi sono e come ci vedono," *Limes*, Issue 3/2004, page 100.
13. History of UCOII, available at: http://www.islam-ucoii.it/artcomuni.htm
14. It is noteworthy that, in the September 2007 decree denying UCOII's claim to sue for defamation, Shaykh Abdul Hadi Palazzi, the leader of the Italian Muslim Association (AMI) who had accused UCOII of being linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, Milan Public Magistrate Gaetano Ruta openly stated that "historically documented circumstances" prove UCOII's links to the Brotherhood.
15. Lorenzo Vidino, "Aims and Methods of Europe's Muslim Brotherhood," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Volume 4.
16. Reuven Paz, "The Non-Territorial Islamic States in Europe," paper published by the Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM), Herzliya, Israel.

17. Renzo Guolo, *Xenofobi e Xenofili: Gli Italiani e l'Islam*, (Bari: Laterza, 2003), page 10.

18. Nour Dachan and Roberto Piccardo, respectively UCOII's president and spokesman, have been indicted for incitement to racial hatred for a strongly anti-Israeli and possibly anti-Semitic insertion published by UCOII in various newspapers during the summer of 2006.

19. Renzo Guolo, *Xenofobi e Xenofili: Gli Italiani e l'Islam*, (Bari: Laterza, 2003), page 11.

20. Maurizio Stefanini, "Le forme degli Islam nostrani," *Limes*, Issue 3/2004, page 116.

21. A survey conducted by the Veneto Region at the local level revealed that 38% of polled Muslims considered themselves practicing, while 36% considered themselves believing but not practicing. 81% said they fasted during Ramadan and 84.5% celebrated Eid al Fitr.

22. Renzo Guolo, *Xenofobi e Xenofili: Gli Italiani e l'Islam*, (Bari: Laterza, 2003), pp. 5-6.

23. Elena Dusi, "Il fantasma della Consulta," *Limes*, Issue 4/2007, page 150.

24. Elena Dusi, "Il fantasma della Consulta," *Limes*, Issue 4/2007, page 155.

25. UCOII's *intesa* draft, available at: http://www.islam-ucoii.it/intesa.htm

26. Interviews with Italian government officials and Muslim community leaders, Rome, February and July 2007.

27. Renzo Guolo, *Xenofobi e Xenofili: Gli Italiani e l'Islam*, (Bari: Laterza, 2003), pp. 20-1. UCOII and Rome's Grand Mosque had once created together an organization (the Islamic Council of Italy, founded in 1998), which was supposed to act as a unified interlocutor with the Italian government. The experiment failed due to ideological differences and internal power struggles.

28. La Consulta per l'Islam Italiano, website of the Ministry of Interiors. Available at: http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/temi/religioni/sottotema003.html

29. Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2006), page 146.

30. Elena Dusi, "Il fantasma della Consulta," *Limes*, Issue 4/2007, page 154.

31. Interviews with Italian government officials and Muslim community leaders, Rome, February and July 2007.

32. Mostafa El Ayoubi, "Una Consulta per l'islam italiano," *Confronti,* undated. Available at: http://www.confronti.net/SERVIZI/una-consulta-per-lislam-italiano

33. Magdi Allam, "Consulta islamica, il compromesso impossibile," *Corriere della Sera*, March 16, 2006.

34. Text of the "Manifesto dell'Islam in Italia," March 7, 2006.

35. Elena Dusi, "Il fantasma della Consulta," *Limes*, Issue 4/2007, page 150; Interviews with Italian government officials and Muslim community leaders, Rome, February and July 2007.

36. Hamza Boccolini, "La Consulta sull'Islam Bloccata dall'UCOII," *Libero*, October 21, 2007.

37. Interior Ministry's website: http://interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/15/0678_SINTESI_DELLA_RELAZIONE_SULLxISLAM.pdf

38. Interior Ministry's website: http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/15/0679_DICHIARAZIONE_DI_INTENTI.pdf

39. Andrea Morigi, "Anche l'islam radical cede, 'Si alla Carta dei Valori'," *Libero*, April 24, 2008.

40. DIGOS, report on the searches at the ICI, September 15, 1997 and DIGOS memorandum on the ICI, May 20, 1994.

41. Nasreddine was also one of the founders of Bank al Taqwa, which was designated by the U.S. Treasury Department in November 2001. Nasreddine was also designated as terrorism financier in August 2002, but his designation was revoked by the Treasury Department in November 2007.

42. Divisioni Investigazioni Generali e Operazioni Speciali (DIGOS), note on ICI, November 9, 1996.

43. Divisioni Investigazioni Generali e Operazioni Speciali (DIGOS), note on ICI, November 9, 1996; Paolo Biondani, "Alla Sbarra gli Estremisti Islamici," *Corriere della Sera*, December 13, 1995.

44. Divisioni Investigazioni Generali e Operazioni Speciali (DIGOS), note on ICI, November 9, 1996.

45. Evan F. Kohlmann, *"Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe; The Afghan-Bosnian Network,"* (Oxford, Berg, 2004). Pp. 19-23.

46. DIGOS, report on the searches at the ICI, September 15, 1997.

47. DIGOS memorandum on the ICI, May 20, 1994.

48. Fabrizio Gatti, "Islamici della Sfinge, Tutti a Casa," *Corriere della Sera*, January 3, 1996.

49. DIGOS, report on the searches at the ICI, September 15, 1997.

50. DIGOS memorandum on the ICI, May 20, 1994.

51. Some of the known visitors included Moroccan preacher Mohammed al Fizazi, Gamaa leader Abu Talal al Qassimy, and Ansar al Islam founder Mullah Krekar.

52. See, for example, the book by Marcella Andreoli, *Il Telefonista di Al Qaeda*, (Milan, Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2005).

53. Interview with Italian security official, Milan, June 2007.

54. See, for example, the indictment of Mohamed Ben Belgacem Aouadi and others, Tribunal of Milan, April 4, 2005 (N.5236/02 R.G.N.R.).

55. David S. Hilzenrath and John Mintz, "More Assets on Hold in Anti-Terror Effort; 39 Parties Added to List of Al Qaeda Supporters," *Washington Post*, October 13, 2001.

56. Indictment of Tarek Maaroufi and others, Tribunal of Milan, April 2, 2001.

57.i See, for example, the indictment of Lased Ben Heni and others (Tribunal of Milan, October 1, 2001), or verdict against Essid Sami Ben Khemais and others (Tribunal of Milan, May 13, 2002).

58. Indictment of Abdelhalim Hafed Remadna and others, Tribunal of Milan, November 21, 2001.

l59. For an overview of the arrests between 2000 and 2002 see DIGOS reports Muhajiroun 2 (October 5, 2001) and Muhajiroun 3 (November 21, 2001).

60. Indictment of Radi Abd El Samie Abou El Yazid El Ayashi and others (Tribunal of Milan, March 31, 2003) and indictment of Muhamad Majid and others, (Tribunal of Milan, November 21, 2003).

61. Victor L. Simpson, "European Militant Network Shut Down," *Associated Press*, December 19, 2003.

62. Stefano Dambruoso, *Milano Bagdad: Diario di un magistrato in prima linea nella lotta al terrorismo islamico in Italia*, (Milan: Mondadori, 2004), p. 63.

63. Indictment of Muhamad Majid and others, Tribunal of Milan, November 21, 2003.

64. Paolo Biondani, "Pestaggi dei Camorristi contro i Detenuti Islamici," *Corriere della Sera*, December 10, 2004.

65. Indictment of Muhamad Majid and others, Tribunal of Milan, November 21, 2003; DIGOS report, March 27, 2001; interview with Italian security official, Milan, June 2007.

66. Indictment of Osama Mostafa Hassan Nasr, Tribunal of Milan, April 4, 2005.

67. Magdi Allam, "Mediatori e Burattinai nella Scuola della Discordia," *Corriere della Sera*, October 6, 2005.

68. For the history of the Cremona network, see indictment of Kamel Ben Mouldi Hamraoui and Nourredine Drissi, Tribunal of Brescia, 2006.

69. Augusto Tino Negri e Silvia Scaranari Introvigne, *Musulmani in Piemonte: in moschea, al lavoro, nel contesto sociale*, (Milan, Guerini, 2005).

70. Interview with Italian security official, Milan, June 2007.

71. "Antiterrorismo, Espulso l'Imam di Torino," *Corriere della Sera*, September 7, 2005.

72. Massimo Numa, "Espulso l'Imam che voleva la *jihad*," *La Stampa*, January 10, 2008.

73. See, for example, the indictment of Abdellilah Kaflaoui and others, (Tribunal of Turin, May 7, 2005).

74. Magdi Allam, *Bin Laden in Italia*, (Milan, Mondadori, 2002). Pp. 73-96.

75. Indictment of Radi Abd El Samie Abou El Yazid El Ayashi and others (Tribunal of Milan, March 31, 2003) and indictment of Muhamad Majid and others, (Tribunal of Milan, November 21, 2003).

76. Indictment of Kamel Ben Mouldi Hamraoui and Nourredine Drissi, Tribunal of Brescia, 2006; indictment of Abdallah Abdel Ben Maatallah and others, Tribunal of Florence, May 7, 2004.

77. For an overview of the Algerian networks in Naples see, for example, the report by the ROS Carabinieri to the Tribunal of Naples, May 10, 1995.

78. See, for example, the indictment of Yamine Bouhrama, Mohammed Larbi and Khaled Serai, (Tribunal of Naples, December 23, 2005), and the indictment of Yacine Gasry, (Tribunal of Naples, January 24, 2004).

79. Indictment of Mostapha El Korchi and others, Tribunal or Perugia, July 16, 2007.

80. See the indictment of Muhamad Majid and others (Tribunal of Milan, November 21, 2003) for the first two waves and the indictment of Kamel Abbachi and others (Tribunal of Milan, October 29, 2007) for the third wave.

81. 59th Report of CESIS (Executive Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services) to Parliament, page 71.

82. Interviews with Italian government officials and Muslim community leaders, Rome, February and July 2007.

83. "*Pulsioni antimondialiste e vecchio antisemitismo*," GNOSIS (official journal of the Italian intelligence agency SISDE), Issue 4, 2005.

84. Philip Webster and Richard Ford, "Extremists Clerics Face Prosecution for Backing Terror," *The Times*, July 14, 2005.

85. 59th Report of CESIS (Executive Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services) to Parliament, page 71.

86. Mostafa El Ayoubi, "Una Consulta per l'islam italiano," *Confronti,* undated. Available at: http://www.confronti.net/SERVIZI/una-consulta-per-lislam-italiano

The Case of the Bavarian Taliban

by Stefan Meining and Ahmet Senyurt

O N MARCH 3, 2008, A TOYOTA VAN APPROACHED THE NATO SEBARI military compound near the village of Khost on the Afghan side of the restive Afghanistan-Pakistan border. At the entrance to the base the van, packed full of explosives, detonated in a furious fireball. Numerous civilians, as well as two young American soldiers, were killed in the attack. Dozens of other soldiers managed to survive after being buried under the rubble.

Video recorded by at least two cameras and later published on the Islamist website sehadetvakti.com shows the preparations for the attack, the long drive to the military base, and the tremendous explosion with the column of smoke rising into the sky. Voices in the background repeat in Arabic "*Allah hu Akbar*!": "God is great!"

The driver of the van can be seen and heard in one of the video recordings. The young man appears well-groomed, wearing a long white shirt, white pants, and a brown *taqiya*, or knitted cap. Smiling continuously, the fully-bearded man exudes self-confidence. Squatting and relaxed in the yard of a simple Afghan farm, he appears reserved but happy as he speaks to the camera. In Turkish, he explains: "I am ready for death. When I press this button, eternal life in paradise will fill me with God's reward. There, God willing, I will meet the companions of the Prophet and the martyrs and those who live wholly by the example of the Prophet." Then the young man reiterates: "God has led us here and, God willing, He will reward us. Hopefully the enemy will be weakened at our hands and receive just punishment. I hope, God willing, to become a martyr."[1]

Not long after the young man detonated himself, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), a terrorist organization whose origins are in the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan,

claimed responsibility for the attack.[2] In an online "press release" published in Turkish, the IJU stated that the operation in Khost "was successfully carried out by Cüneyt Ciftci (Saad Ebu Furkan), who is of Turkish background, who came from Germany and who exchanged his luxurious lifestyle for a place in heaven."

When word reached Germany that a German-Turk had perpetrated a suicide attack in Afghanistan, the public was shocked. Some initially even doubted the credibility of the IJU's claims. How, after all, did a German-born Turk, who was raised in normal German circumstances and was himself the father of two, get caught up in the network of an Islamist terror organization? Despite the video evidence, the Federal Criminal Office (BKA)—Germany's equivalent of the FBI—was itself reluctant to make any definitive statement on the matter, saying only that there was a "high probability" that the person shown in the video was Cüneyt Ciftci. But then, in May 2008, nearly two months after the attack, BKA president Jörg Ziercke announced that the identity of the suicide bomber had been confirmed by DNA analysis, and that the attacker was in fact Cüneyt Ciftci.[3]

This news created a considerable stir in Germany: never before had a German-born person of Turkish descent been involved in a case of terrorism. Of course, the threats posed by radical Islam in Germany received worldwide attention after the 9/11 attacks, when it was revealed that some of the attackers had been based in Hamburg. But the Hamburg cell consisted of young Arab men—not Turks—and those men had only lived in Germany for a short period of time. By contrast, Germany's large Turkish population—a population that, according to unofficial estimates, totals over 2.4 million legal residents and citizens—was either German-born or their families had lived there for decades. Moreover, this population had a well-known reputation for religious and political moderation, and few informed observers ever foresaw that the jihadist movement could find recruits within this particular demographic.

Today, however, it is not Arabs, but those with Turkish backgrounds, who are more frequently drawing scrutiny from German counter-extremism investigators, and there is growing concern that Ciftci's case may not be the last case of its kind. The 2007 annual report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, or BfV—the intelligence agency set up after the Second World War to counter domestic threats to Germany's free and democratic political order) has revealed that of the estimated 33,170 persons in Germany identified by security services as harboring Islamist tendencies, 27,920 of them were followers of movements or ideologies whose provenance was Turkey.[4] German security services stress that only a small minority within this group of extremists can be classified as either actual or potential terrorists. However, as more details about Ciftci's path towards radicalization come to light, they suggest that the boundary line separating

an ideological Islamist and an actual jihadist is not, in some cases, as clear-cut as some would like to think.

The purpose of this article is to examine what is publicly known about Ciftci's journey into radical Islam. In the course of researching this paper, we've consulted a variety of public sources and interviewed a range of Ciftci's acquaintances as well as others, including German government officials, familiar with his case.[5] At the moment, there is a lot about Cüneyt Ciftci that remains unknown—and that may never be known. However, we believe that a close look at Ciftci's transformation from an ordinary German-Muslim family man to suicide bomber helps shed some light on the process of Islamist radicalization, and especially on how that process operates within the broader German context. Indeed, compared to West European countries, the prospects for radicalization among Germany's Muslims have received relatively less analytical and policy attention in the German-, Turkish-, and English-speaking worlds. Today, we believe that the case of Cüneyt Ciftci requires us to study these prospects more closely and seriously.[6]

The Bavarian Taliban

AFTER CIFTCI'S NAME APPEARED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUICIDE BOMBING in Afghanistan, many German journalists seemed to presume that Ciftci's rage and radicalization probably stemmed from the social alienation and economic deprivation he had experienced while growing up in Germany. But what they discovered about Ciftci's early life was far different than what they expected.

Cüneyt Ciftci, the son of Turkish immigrants, was born on July 14, 1979, in Freising, a prosperous Bavarian community located some twenty miles north of Munich. At the age of ten, Cüneyt moved with his family to nearby Ansbach, where he attended school, grew up, and eventually found employment. Located about twenty five miles southwest of Nuremberg, Ansbach is a prosperous city of 40,000 inhabitants and home to a number of flourishing companies. In July of 2008, the unemployment rate for the Ansbach area was only 3%—far below the national average of 7.7%. Ansbach and its surrounding area are not afflicted by massive social problems; there are no inner-city neighborhoods with high concentrations of non-German inhabitants, and no run-down high-rises such as those in the French suburbs (*banlieues*). The city's center is dominated by baroque architecture that was largely spared damage in the Second World War, and it is surrounded by gentle hills, fields, meadows, forests and picturesque Bavarian villages.[7]

According to one correspondent for the *Deutsche Presse Agentur* (DPA), Germany's largest news service, Ansbach is filled with "attractive new apartment buildings

with curtained windows and solid middle-class cars parked out front." The reporter concluded, "the area in which Ciftci lived up until one year ago ... appears to be anything but a nest of violent Islamist extremists."[8]

Ciftci's early life in Ansbach might be described as fairly typical for second-generation Turkish immigrants in Germany. As in other German cities, Turkish families have settled in Ansbach since the 1960s, when the German federal government began actively recruiting unskilled laborers from Turkey to fill the numerous job vacancies in the country's factories. Numerous Turkish guest workers brought their families with them, and in time these families put down new roots in Germany. But because of Germany's rigid citizenship laws, many of them remained Turkish citizens. When these families had children, even this new generation of German-born Turks—including Cüneyt Ciftci—were not granted citizenship. (Under a new law passed in 2000, it is now easier for newborn children of foreigners who legally reside in Germany to acquire German citizenship.)

Since the majority of Germany's Muslims are Turks, the life of Germany's Muslim community has remained by and large a reflection of the Islamic currents prevalent in Turkey. Ansbach is no exception. The city has two small mosques, both of which have a largely Turkish membership.

The Hilal Mosque belongs to the Turkish Islamic Community of Ansbach, a legally registered society affiliated with the Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion. This organization was established in 1984 and is linked to the Turkish government's Presidency for Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), or what is commonly referred to simply as the "Diyanet." The imams who serve in the Diyanet-affiliated mosques receive their salaries from the Turkish state, and within Germany, these places of Islamic worship primarily serve the more lay-oriented Muslims of Turkish descent.

Not far from the Hilal Mosque in Ansbach is a mosque affiliated with the Milli Görüs, a Turkish Islamic revivalist movement. The members of Milli Görüs mosques tend to be more religiously conservative than those of the Diyanet mosques; they are quite critical and more often stridently reject the relaxed form of Islam long upheld and promoted by the Diyanet. Because Milli Görüs has been classified by the German government as an extremist organization, the mosque remains under observation by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution.[9]

Cüneyt Ciftci's father is among the more prominent personalities of the Turkish community in Ansbach. Acquaintances describe him as orthodox, and he was a founding member of the Ansbach Milli Görüs mosque society. For this reason, he is no stranger to the authorities at the Bavarian-based Office for the Protection of the Constitution (LfV).[10]

At the age of twelve, Cüneyt Ciftci was sent by his father to a state-run religious

school in Turkey, where he learned, among other things, to recite the Quran from memory. He also began to use the name "Hafiz." After studying for three years in Turkey, Ciftci returned to Ansbach, where he spent the next period of his life trying to find his place among the mosque communities there. He apparently did so without much success, because he subsequently turned away from the Islamic faith and began to occupy himself with more worldly matters.

But Ciftci also encountered great difficulties trying to adapt to secular German life. He dropped out of school and broke off a masonry apprenticeship. He worked for a while as an interior decorator and also as a McDonald's employee. He was clearly torn between his German homeland, his Turkish-Muslim roots, and his strict father. Yet similar problems in integrating into Germany's success-oriented society are not uncommon among young second-generation German-Turks. This can hardly be seen as a driving force behind his later turn to terrorism.

Unlike some other German-Turks who have struggled to integrate into German society, Ciftci was spared the descent into joblessness. Ansbach had plenty of jobs to go around, even for the unskilled, and in 1998, Ciftci found employment in the Ansbach warehouse of Bosch, an international technology company. This job provided Ciftci with a dependable income, paid vacation, health insurance and other benefits. He seemed to have found a new lease on life, and during his employment at Bosch, he was regarded, as one company spokesman told the DPA, as a "normal employee" whose conduct at work was "orderly and level-headed."[11]

In 2000, Ciftci had been granted an unlimited right of residence in Germany, but his application for German citizenship was repeatedly turned down. The authorities in Ansbach conducted several so-called "security conversations" with Ciftci, a procedure carried out in Germany with all foreigners who apply for citizenship but whose loyalty to the German constitution is in question (presumably, Ciftci was questioned because of his affiliation with the Milli Görüs mosque in Ansbach). Ciftci would eventually withdraw his application for citizenship.

According to his acquaintances, at this time Ciftci was not thought of as a religious fanatic, or for that matter, as especially religious. Rather, he was seen as "modern" and "Western." He went to restaurants and admired fast cars. He played soccer in a local club, and his fellow players and former coach later described him as very quiet and reserved. Ciftci met a woman in a döner kebab restaurant, and in 2001, against the will of Cüneyt's father, they were married. The bride came from a secular Turkish family in Ansbach, and she did not wear a headscarf. At first, the two seemed like any other young married couple in Germany.

Four years after the wedding, however, the young family moved in with Ciftci's parents, and Ciftci's wife suddenly began to wear a headscarf. The young bride gradually became estranged from her own mother, whom Ciftci regarded as too

"western." Moreover, under his influence, contact between his wife and her mother was broken off entirely in 2005. Ciftci's own outward appearance also changed dramatically during this time, as he began wearing Islamic clothing and a beard.

According to intelligence sources, in late 2004 Ciftci began to frequent the Milli-Görüs mosque in Ansbach and even to preach there. His knowledge of the Quran and his beautiful, clear voice were highly regarded, but his sermons stirred up controversy. For instance, when commenting on the conflict in Iraq, after quoting from the Quran, Ciftci concluded that it "is the duty of every individual Muslim to support the uprising against the occupiers and to kill the Americans." Following this incident, the board of the mosque society prohibited Ciftci from continuing to preach.

Indeed, as early as 2004, because of his involvement with the Milli Görüs mosque, Ciftci was kept under observation by the Bavarian LfV office. Although he was not designated as particularly dangerous, suspicions from security officials persisted. On April 2, 2007, Ciftci left Germany with his wife and two children and headed for Pakistan. Bavaria's interior minister Joachim Herrmann later explained at a press conference in March, 2008, that Ciftci was probably well aware "that he was in the focus of the German security authorities."[12]

In any case, it cannot be said that Ciftci simply slipped underground at this point. On the contrary, he gave proper notice to his employer and submitted the required documents to the registration authority in March, 2007. He did not, however, provide a new address. After settling with his family in Pakistan, Ciftci proceeded to a training camp run by the IJU.[13]

Islamic Radicalism in Pappenheim

IT IS POSSIBLE TO RECONSTRUCT THE PATHS THAT JIHADISTS LIKE CÜNEYT CIFTCI follow on their way to their martyrdom operations, but it is difficult to determine precisely why they choose these paths in the first place. What persuades a husband and father of two to leave his family behind? How does a person come to desire martyrdom? German security authorities believe that Ciftci's radicalization may have begun in 2001-2002 through his involvement with the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ), a transnational Islamic missionary movement founded in India in 1926.

TJ has been the subject of increased scrutiny by German authorities in recent years, and the movement remains under observation by the BfV. In a report for the first half of 2008, the Bavarian Interior Ministry stated that TJ represents "a strictly orthodox form of Islam with roots in India, the goal of which is the Islamization of society and, with this, the establishment of an Islamic state. Although the movement itself officially rejects violence, its common ideological base with militant groups

presents the danger that the worldwide TJ structures may be used by terrorist networks."[14]

In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Herbert L. Müller, a high-ranking official with the Baden-Württemberg branch of the LfV, described TJ as a "flow-through heater" that "boils" people's ideological temperatures, and places them, in many cases, on a path toward terrorism. Other investigators have described TJ as a "gateway" to jihadism; they also have compared the group to a "sieve" through which the potential believers are shaken and their commitment to Islam is screened and assessed. Those who get caught up in this sieve are thought to be ready to join the *mujahidin* and to become candidates for martyrdom.[15]

TJ missionaries have in fact become increasingly active in Germany, particularly in the country's rural areas. Recognizable by their beards and distinctive white clothing, they move as wandering preachers from mosque to mosque. In their efforts to proselytize, TJ missionaries are said to visit private residences whenever they discover apparently Muslim names on mailboxes or doorplates. Though few in number, TJ missionaries have been remarkably successful in their recruiting endeavors. A striking example of this can be found in Pappenheim, where numerous young men of Turkish background have been successfully won over to the goals of the TJ's largely secretive community.[16] According to the Bavarian LfV, there are twelve TJ circles in Germany, one of which is centered in Pappenheim, which is located about forty miles south of Ansbach.[17]

Pappenheim, a small town with a population of 2,500, is located in the Weissenburg-Gunzenhausen district. Life in Pappenheim reflects many of the trends that are dramatically reshaping Germany's small cities. As in Ansbach, the unemployment rate in Pappenheim (3.3% in July, 2008) is far below the national average, and there is an acute shortage of skilled workers. The consequences of this are particularly visible in the historic city center, where, for the sake of weekend tourists, the magnificent facades are well-maintained. But the apartments behind the stately, historic walls are often empty. There are no discotheques, no youth clubs, and no modern stores. Real estate prices are tumbling, and it is not uncommon for the city government to purchase empty and otherwise unwanted historic buildings in order to prevent further decay. While the German population that remains in the city is growing older, families with young children move to nearby middle-sized cities or to metropolitan centers such as Munich and Nuremberg.

For a number of reasons, Pappenheim's demographic composition has been shifting with increasing speed over the last decades. Since the 1960s, Pappenheim has been home to a small but growing Turkish community. The many quarries and auto parts manufacturers in the region provide employment for unskilled Turkish immigrants. But the demographic changes are also due to lower German birth rates, and

especially to the exodus of younger families. Another phenomenon is a dramatic drop in the city's church affiliations. The Evangelical community, for example, experienced fifty funerals in the year 2004 but only four baptisms.

Currently nine percent of Pappenheim's residents are not German citizens and seventeen percent have what is referred to as an "immigrant background." Meanwhile, the percentage of elementary school children with a mainly Turkish background ranges between thirty and fifty percent. These numbers provide a clear prediction of Pappenheim's future demography. Meanwhile, as in other German cities, Pappenheim residents with a Turkish-Muslim background tend to have a much lower level of education, while the proportion of welfare recipients among this group is measurably higher.

Pappenheim's government representatives and local church leaders point out that the integration of immigrants in their community was for a long time successful. However, in recent years the trend towards integration has shifted into reverse. This is attributed to a lack of willingness on the part of immigrants to learn the German language or to participate in the city's social life beyond that of the immigrant group itself. Civic leaders note that girls who have worn Western attire for years now wear head coverings in public, and parents forbid their daughters to take part in physical education classes. Men frequently wear *tshalvar*, or traditional Turkish trousers.

Illustrative of these problems is the Islamic Association of Pappenheim, a registered society founded in 2001 that is, according to the Bavarian LfV, connected with TJ.[18] The association maintains a small mosque in a house at the edge of the historical city center, opposite the Catholic church. This mosque is the only known Islamic institution in the town, and an Evangelical-Lutheran deacon has estimated that about half of the Muslims in Pappenheim sympathize with the association.

In the last few years, a series of anti-Christian incidents in Pappenheim have brought the city to national attention. First, a brochure, bearing the non-idiomatic German title "Exhortation to Righteous Direction and True Salvation" was placed in the mailboxes of members of both the local Catholic and Evangelical churches. The pamphlet called on its readers to convert to Islam, and warned Christians and Jews that they will "most certainly" have to face the "grave consequences of your faith, of your errors" in the hereafter.[19] It is not known who distributed the brochure.

Later, during Easter Week in 2005, Muslim youths tore down a wooden cross in the market square. In 2006 the Catholic Palm Sunday procession was so loudly and aggressively disrupted by men from the mosque that the parish priest cancelled it and called the police. A week later, young men disrupted the Easter Saturday service with loud Islamic religious music. The police were called once again. The Islamic Association of Pappenheim later apologized for the "embarrassing incident" during the procession.[20] Since then, the Palm Sunday procession has been carried out with

a police escort. In 2006, two TJ hate-preachers from Bosnia-Herzegovina, who had been active in Pappenheim as well as the neighboring city of Treuchtlingen, were expelled from Germany.[21] All of these developments have created a profound sense of insecurity among the residents of Pappenheim. But the problems haven't stopped there.

According to information gathered from security authorities, until 2002 TJ missionary groups repeatedly visited the Milli Görüs mosque in nearby Ansbach. After 2002, the Milli Görüs mosque apparently became more wary of the TJ missionaries, and they seem to have been blocked them from proselytizing in the area. But meanwhile, in 2001 and 2002, authorities believe that Cüneyt Ciftci first came into contact with the TJ through family relations. Although the details remain obscure, German security authorities assume that the TJ helped to put Ciftci on the path toward extremist Islam.

These contacts alone are, of course, insufficient to explain Ciftci's choice to follow a path into terrorism. Tens of millions of Muslims around the world have joined TJ and embraced its puritan teachings, and the vast majority of them have not turned to violence. But for some—including John Walker Lindh, the infamous "American Taliban" captured in Afghanistan in 2001—involvement with TJ appears to have been an important step on their path of radicalization. The Bavarian Administrative Court in Ansbach has itself come to the conclusion that no "serious doubt" remains "that numerous persons who have carried out terrorist attacks in various countries were recruited from the ranks of the TJ or were in contact with the TJ."[22]

The Sauerland Group and Beyond

IN RECENT MONTHS, NEW INFORMATION HAS COME TO PUBLIC LIGHT THAT WOULD suggest that Cüneyt Ciftci was part of a larger network of Islamic radicals. Although many details remain obscure or classified, German investigators had observed "close contacts" between Ciftci and a Turkish-born man named Adem Yilmaz. Yilmaz was among those who had connections to TJ's center in Pappenheim. According to the German security services, he is also a central figure in recruiting for IJU and facilitating the travel of new recruits to IJU's training camps in South Asia. It has yet to be established whether Yilmaz recruited Ciftci to join the IJU, or whether a third person recruited both.

Like Ciftci, Yilmaz came from a small town environment in southern Germany. After dropping out of a German school, Yilmaz worked for a time at a security company belonging to the German Railroad, and was then assigned to the Frankfurt International Airport. Yilmaz, whose conduct was described in an internal German

police report as "highly conspiratorial," first came to the attention of the police when one of his acquaintances was discovered participating in the suspicious surveillance of the U.S. Army base in Hanau on December 31, 2006.

It has further been established that Yilmaz was present at an IJU training camp near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in March, 2006. On September 4, 2007, five months after Ciftci left for Pakistan, Yilmaz was arrested together with two German converts to Islam, Fritz Martin Gelowicz and Daniel Martin Schneider, in the town of Medebach-Oberschledorn. This group became publicly known as the "Sauerland Group." These three young men, together with five others and a further number of unidentified persons, were placed under investigation on suspicion of membership in and support for a terrorist association.[23] One year later, on September 2, 2008, the German Federal Prosecutor indicted Yilmaz, Gelowicz, and Schneider on charges of membership in a terrorist organization.

Two weeks after these initial arrests, the BKA took two more young men into custody—a German and a Turkish citizen. One of these men, according to the prosecutor's classification, was a sympathizer of the IJU, and the other, an active member of the IJU. On September 25, 2008, the BKA added to its list of most wanted persons two other men—the German convert Eric Breininger, and Houssian al-Malla. It has been established that both of these men had relationships with Sauerland Group member Schneider.

Beyond these wanted or indicted young men, there appears to be yet another connected group of Islamists. An internal police report listed the names and biographies of eight suspects. The suspected persons were all men and born between 1978 and 1985. The group included two Turkish citizens, one stateless person born in Beirut, and five German citizens. However, two of those listed as German citizens had Turkish backgrounds, and one of them an Iranian background. Moreover, seven of the eight suspects listed weren't from large cities like Hamburg or Berlin, but came from rural or small-town environments in the south or southwest of Germany.

Germany has clearly emerged as a recruiting ground for international jihadism. As security authorities grapple with this new reality, the cases of Ciftci and the Sauerland Group strongly suggest that de-radicalization efforts not only need to focus on urban centers, but also, and perhaps especially, on the small communities of Germany's countryside. Indeed, continuing investigations suggest that the Islamist structures and networks that have arisen in those localities are characterized by excessive religious zealotry that, for some, translates into a readiness to commit violent acts. Yet, from the outset, virtually all of these structures have emerged from legal, often officially registered, and in many cases, socially accepted and recognized Muslim organizations.

In the view of security authorities, Cüneyt Ciftci was for a long time merely a

"figure on the margins of extreme Islamism." As Wolfgang Weber, the director of the Bavarian LfV, put it in March, 2008, Ciftci's potential as a jihadist "was not recognized."[24] A closer analysis, however, reveals that Ciftci had been in contact with a network of Islamists willing to resort to violence. But what led to Ciftci's final transformation from an average German-Turkish resident of Ansbach into a suicide bomber in Afghanistan? The precise catalyst has not yet been identified. While investigators are looking for the key to explain the phenomenon of young men from rural Germany becoming radicalized and desiring to kill others and become martyrs, fear increases that Cüneyt Ciftci will not be the last to walk the path to terrorism.

NOTES

1. Ahmet Senyurt, Mike Lingenfelser, "'Ich werde Martyrer.' Die erschütternden Videobekenntnisse des bayerischen Taliban Cüneyt C." German Public Television, ARD, "Report-München," April 14, 2008. See also: http://www1.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-prop.html.

2. The "Islamic Jihad Union" was formed in 2002 as a splinter group of the "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan." Although the IJU appears to have little influence in its Uzbek homeland, it fights on the side of the Taliban in Afghanistan and supports al-Qaeda internationally. Guido Steinberg, "Die Islamische Jihad-Union. Zur Internationalisierung des usbekischen Jihadismus," SWP-Aktuell 2008/A March 23, 2008. http://www.swp-berlin.org/produkte. For an excellent report on the IJU, see Ronald Sandee, "The Islamic Jihad Union," (NEFA Foundation, October 14, 2008) at http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefaijuoct08.pdf.

3. Reuters report quoted in: "Anschlag verhindert. Bundeswehr entschärft Sprengsatz in Afghanistan," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 23, 2008.

4. Federal Ministry of Interior, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2007, Berlin 2008, Federal Ministry of Interior Printing Office, pp. 185-186.

5. In addition to publicly accessible documents and press publications, this article is based on the records of police investigations and court cases. Conversations with Cüneyt Ciftci's relatives and acquaintances, as well as with experts—not all of whom can be mentioned here by name—were also important sources. Unfortunately, requests for information from various Islamic organizations were mostly refused or went unanswered. A well-known activist of the Islamist movement Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) in Germany wrote a long letter to Stefan Meining. According to this letter, TJ denies having organized structures or even mosques in Germany. Also, TJ strongly rejects any connections to terrorists or suspects of terrorism.

6. Karin Brettfeld, Peter Wetzels, *Muslime in Deutschland. Integration, Integrationsbarrieren, Religion sowie Einstellungen zu Demokratie, Rechtstaat und politisch-religiös motivierter Gewalt. Ergebnisse von Befragungen im Rahmen einer multizentrischen Studie in städtischen Lebensräumen* (Hamburg 2007: Federal Ministry of Interior Printing Office).

7. Despite its small size, Ansbach is also an international city. This is due in part to its small but highly-regarded technical college with 1,250 students, and also to a strong American presence. From 1971

to 1992, Ansbach was the home of the U.S. First Armored Division; in recent years an average of nearly 6,000 Americans have been stationed in two locations near Ansbach, including about 2,000 soldiers, 600 civilian employees, and 3,200 dependents, as well as a number of retirees.

8. DPA report: "Angeblicher Attentäter: Unauffälliges Leben hinter Neubaufassaden," dpa - Landesdienst Bayern, March 17, 2008.

9. Bayerisches Staatsministerium des Innern (ed.), *Die Verfassungsschutzinformationen Bayern für das 1* (München: Halbjahr 2008) pp. 4-5. Compare: Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.), *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2007*. (Berlin: Vorabfassung, 2008), pp. 194-205. A note to the English reader: BfV is the German abbreviation for Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution); LfV stands for Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz (State Office for the Protection of the Constitution). Each German federal state has an independent State Office or a department in the State Ministry of Interior for the Protection of the Constitution.

10. Ahmet Senyurt, Mike Lingenfelser, "'Ich werde Martyrer.' Die erschütternden Videobekenntnisse des bayerischen Taliban Cüneyt C.," German Public Television, ARD, Report-München, April 14, 2008.

11. DPA report: "Angeblicher Attentäter: Unauffälliges Leben hinter Neubaufassaden," *dpa* - Landesdienst Bayern, March 17, 2008.

12. Sebastian Fischer, "Bayerns Innenminister warnt vor Islamisten - und Lafontaine," http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland.

13. Annette Ramelsberger, "Selbstmord-Attentäter aus Bayern," in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 17, 2008.

14. Bayerisches Staatsministerium des Innern (ed.), *Die Verfassungsschutzinformationen Bayern für das 1* (München Halbjahr 2008) p. 6. Compare: Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.), *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2007*. (Berlin: Vorabfassung, 2008), pp. 208-209.

15. Holger Stark, "Missionare des Dschihad," *Der Spiegel*, January 10, 2005.

16. According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, there were not more than 700 members of the TJ in Germany in 2007. Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.), *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2007* (Berlin:Vorabfassung, 2008), p. 208.

17. Bayerisches Staatsministerium des Innern (ed.), *Die Verfassungsschutzinformationen Bayern für das 1* (München: Halbjahr 2008), p. 6.

18. Court record: Amtsgericht Ansbach, Registergericht, Islamische Vereinigung Pappenheim e.V., VR 30687.

19. Anonymous, "Die Aufforderung zur Rechtleitung und wahren Errettung," Ankara, Turkey 2004.

20. Author's archive: Islamische Vereinigung Pappenheim e.V. an den Pfarrer der katholischen Gemeinde Pappenheim, April 18, 2006.

21. Birgit Kappel, Ulli Hesse, et al, "Im Fadenkreuz des Terrors – wie bedroht ist Deutschland?" German Public Television, ARD, "Report-München," August 28, 2008.

22. Court record: AN 19 K 05.02682, Urteil Bayerisches Verwaltungsgericht Ansbach, January 15, 2008. Compare: 5 B 05.1449 VGH Regensburg, March 5, 2008. B 1 S 05.763 VG Bayreuth, November 24, 2005. See also: Alex Alexiev, "Tablighi Jamaat: Jihad's Stealthy Legions," in: *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2005. http://www.meforum.org/article/686.

23. See the book of the well-know German journalist Annette Ramelsberger, Der deutsche Dschihad. Islamistische Terroristen planen den Anschlag, Berlin 2008, Econ, pp. 18-44.

24. Alexander Kain, "Deutschland im Visier der Islamisten," in: *Passauer Neue Presse*, March 25, 2008.

The Muslim Brotherhood's Concept of Education

by Ehud Rosen

A CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSITION IS MADE BY THE MUSLIM BROTHER-hood and by others on its behalf. The claim is that the Brotherhood represents a moderate version of Islam and as such has a vital role to play in countering terrorism and extremist ideology. One of the principal ways in which the Brotherhood claims it is able to counter extremism is by offering religious education to those Muslims who are at-risk for radicalization. This is especially the case in Western countries, where the Brotherhood and its allies have sought to persuade authorities that they have far more credibility and influence with at-risk Muslim youth than any non-Muslim ever could, and that as Muslims, they know how best to deal with Islamist extremism by teaching Muslims properly about their religion.[1]

A forceful argument can be made that the basic premise of this proposition—that the Muslim Brotherhood is a voice of moderation and a potential bulwark against jihadism—is false. The history of the Brotherhood movement shows, in fact, that it has operated by and large not as a firewall against jihadism, but as a fertile incubator of radical ideas in a variety of locales.[2] The roots of many, if not most, of the violent Islamist movements of Sunni Arab provenance—from Hamas to al-Qaeda—can be traced to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Despite this well-established history, the Brotherhood routinely dismisses its connections to violence, stating that Islamists who have engaged in violence have formally left the Brotherhood and often renounced it prior to their embrace of jihadism. (Perhaps the most frequently cited example of this latter point is the one-

time Brother and now leading al-Qaeda ideologue Ayman al-Zawahiri, who famously criticized the Brotherhood in his 1991 book *The Bitter Harvest* [*al-Hisad al-murr*] for forsaking the Islamic obligations of *jihad*.) Moreover, others will point out that research on the Brotherhood has concentrated—unduly, perhaps—on the movement's past political activism and proclivities toward *jihad*, while giving short shrift to the Brotherhood's purportedly "non-political" work as a social welfare provider, as a religious missionary organization, and as an educational movement. Due in part to these apologetics, a new conventional wisdom has emerged holding that the Brotherhood may have once been radical and violent, but has since moderated and is now largely a civil society movement interested in political engagement and dialogue.

Considering the Brotherhood's continued support of terrorism in Middle Eastern conflicts, it is difficult to be persuaded by these claims of moderation. But it is also crucial to examine the merits of the Brotherhood's additional claims that it can be a force for moderation through religious education. This short paper aims to consider these claims in light of the educational concepts and methods first articulated by Hassan al-Banna, the Brotherhood's founder, and the ways in which his contemporaries and subsequent generations of Brotherhood activists have attempted to implement these theories in practice.

Educating a New Society

IN THE 1920S, A NEW MIDDLE CLASS OF YOUNG AND EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS known as the "new *effendiyya*" was becoming increasingly active and influential in Egypt. The aspirations and political sensibilities of this largely urban class had been deeply shaped by European ideas. But as the global economic recession set upon Egypt in the 1930s, bringing with it a drastic reduction in living standards and growing unemployment rates, many within the *effendiyya* soon became disenchanted with modernist ideals. The young Egyptian parliamentary system, ineffective at dealing with the economic turmoil, was perceived as corrupt and hopelessly sectarian, and the public's impatience and disillusionment with the existing order began to rise.[3]

The members of the new *effendiyya* aspired to create a new movement aimed at strengthening and unifying the Egypt nation and the Arab and the Islamic world as a whole. When their leaders addressed the public, they began to stress the importance of Egypt's Islamic heritage and culture, and sought to promote a revival of Islam as a substitute to western principles. They railed against the injustices and cruelties of European imperialism and began organizing protests against the British. Meanwhile, a new religious revival was sweeping through Egypt, spurring on the

rapid growth of an assortment of new *salafiyya* reform movements. These religious activists protested both the influence of western culture as well as Egypt's traditional Muslim authorities, who were blamed by some for failing to prevent Egypt's colonial domination in the first place. In the salafi view, traditional Muslim scholars provided little direction in coping with the great political challenges facing modern Muslim societies, including their backwardness and weakness relative to western nation-states.

The Society of the Muslim Brothers began as one of these salafi movements, and gradually became the largest and most important of them all. Many of the society's early leaders and thinkers did not come from traditional Islamic backgrounds, but instead emerged from the ranks of the new *effendiyya*. They had been reared on western culture and ideas, but had ultimately found little social or spiritual fulfilment in them. As Richard Mitchell's seminal study *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* has demonstrated, the intellectual inspiration for the early brothers were salafi revivalists like the pan-Islamist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh (the rector at al-Azhar University who originally coined the term "*salafiyya*"), and perhaps most importantly Rashid Rida, who through his career gave salafi reformism as a whole a decidedly more reactionary direction.

While all of these revivalists have been credited as the intellectual architects of modern salafism, it was the Egyptian schoolteacher Hassan al-Banna who, through his creation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, emerged as the organizational genius by first providing the salafi movement with a vehicle for implementing its agenda.[4] That agenda was described by al-Banna in expressly revolutionary terms: He understood the Brotherhood's call to return to Islam as a call for a "greater revolution" that was more significant than the modern French or Russian revolutions because Islam combined radical political change with sweeping reforms of the nation's economic, mental, and spiritual life.[5]

According to Abbas al-Sissi, a prominent early member of the Brotherhood, the society sought thorough-going Islamist reform in at least six areas. These consisted of the following: First, in the field of knowledge, the society would seek to re-interpret the Quran and the *sunna* in ways appropriate to the present time, thus correcting absurdities and doubts, and purging Islamic belief of impurities that, in the Brotherhood's view, had made the Muslim Nation weak. Second, the society would seek to unite the Egyptian nation and other Islamic states around common principles, creating an Islamic bloc that could struggle against foreign cultural and political dominance in a joint fashion. Third, in the economic field, the society would fight corruption, and assist in bringing about a national revolution in agriculture, industry and trade. Fourth, in the social field, the Brotherhood would raise the standard of living, seeking to achieve a balance between various social classes while fighting

disease, poverty and illiteracy. Fifth, in the national field, the Brotherhood would seek to liberate Egypt from British colonial rule, and would contribute in the struggle to release all Arab and Muslim countries from foreign occupation. While strengthening Arab unity, the society would strive towards Islamic unity. Sixth, in the international field, the society would participate in establishing world peace on the basis of Islam, and set in place a new world order founded on the Islamic principles of brotherhood and justice.[6]

In al-Banna's view, the key to achieving this radical reform and establishing Islam as a "comprehensive order" (*nizam shamil*) lay in education. Of course, he also spoke about the equally important and necessary activities of armed *jihad* and of *dawa*, or of spreading the movement's message through preaching and mission so as to prepare and mobilize the people to implement the movement's revolutionary agenda. But at a basic level, the very success of *jihad* and *dawa* required men and women with the desire and abilities to conduct both of them well; the basis of any successful movement or society, al-Banna clearly understood, were the individuals and groups of people that comprised it.

And yet, among his contemporaries, he found the drive and capacity needed to transform society along Islamic lines to be in woefully short supply. Creating this new society therefore required a strategy of formal and informal education (*tarbiyah*) to nurture a new generation of Muslims committed to reviving and implementing Islam in all realms of human activity.[7] By developing a system for cultivating new Muslims for a new society, al-Banna believed that Egypt at large could be transformed, and that the Muslim Nation (*umma*) as a whole would eventually be restored to its lost power and glory.[8]

Al-Banna's Educational Method

AL-BANNA'S FAITH IN THE POWER OF EDUCATION TO BRING ABOUT RADICAL social change formed the core of his teaching. In his earliest writings, he signed himself as a professional "educator," and his first published pamphlet—which was entitled "A Memorandum on Religious Education" and published in 1929, only months after the Brotherhood movement itself was created—provided an outline of his educational theory.

The purpose of education, as al-Banna saw it, wasn't simply to impart knowledge, whether religious or secular. Rather, he sought in education the achievement of a comprehensive moral edification (*tahdhib*) and the shaping of fully Islamic personalities whose manners, way of thinking and sense of moral duty were defined entirely in accord with the Brotherhood's religious and political *dawa*.[9] Al-Banna

contrasted this ideal of a fully formed Muslim personality who possessed a "sincere faith" with the light-hearted or weak belief that he perceived in his contemporaries, and which he tirelessly professed to despise.

Al-Banna was a staunch critic of Egypt's educational system, citing it as a principal reason for his country's modern woes, backwardness, and weakness relative to the West. He observed that graduates of Egypt's schools lacked very basic knowledge of their cultural traditions, and most importantly, left them with no burning sense of obligation for the welfare of their fellow Muslims, to the Muslim Nation, and to God.[10] To remedy this, he felt that these schools required a complete curricular and spiritual overhaul. He sought to create an educational method that would develop Muslims into sincere believers, equipped mentally, physically and spiritually to carry out the work of Islamic reform and revival.[11]

A leading purpose of the Brotherhood since the movement's creation has been the development and implementation of this educational theory. Mahmud Abd al-Halim, one of the movement's founders and key early intellects, underscored this idea when he said that the basis of the Muslim Brotherhood's *dawa* is education.[12]

The influence on al-Banna's thinking of early salafi reformers like Afghani and Rida has been widely acknowledged and discussed. What scholars have often overlooked, however, is the influence on al-Banna's teachings of Western ideas, and in particular, of European educational methodologies. Al-Banna was himself a graduate of the Dar al-Ulum school for teachers in Cairo. Dar al-Ulum was established in 1871 as a modern alternative to the traditional Islamic education offered by al-Azhar University and similar institutions at the time. Its curriculum aimed to provide its students with both religious as well as secular education using Western pedagogical methods. As a young man, al-Banna became attracted to cutting-edge European theories of holistic education, and he sought to incorporate these concepts into his system of religious education, albeit with an Islamic aim. In his memoirs, for instance, al-Banna recalled the experience of opening the Brotherhood's first official school, which was established in 1931 in the town of Isma'iliyya, above the society's first mosque. He expressed deep appreciation for holistic educators like Maria Montessori and Friedich Froebel, saying that he could actually picture them teaching in their own schools. In the Brotherhood's new school, he added, the tools of these Western educators would be employed in a new Islamic framework that "coincides with the current Islamic tendencies and hopes... [that are] fed by the [Brotherhood's] *dawa*."[13]

The curricular basis of al-Banna's instruction in sincere faith was, naturally, the Quran and the *sunna*. A student was expected not simply to memorize the Quran, but taught to internalize its lessons and principles, at least as these were understood by the Brotherhood, so that he applied the *sharia* in everything he did. Al-Banna's successor as the society's general guide, Hasan al-Hudaybi, explained in his book *Our*

Constitution (*Dusturina*) that the Quran provides detailed practical commandments and regulations concerning each and every aspect of daily life, including the proper relationships that people should have with others in their home and community.[14] As such, by working to implement the *sharia* in all aspects of his life, the sincere believer transforms the community around him; in time, a collective of believers transforms the Muslim Nation as a whole.

Al-Banna also stressed the importance of teaching patriotism and love for one's homeland and for the Muslim Nation.[15] This meant instilling in youth a sense of civic responsibility, a desire to combat the ills of poverty, illiteracy, disease and crime, and to build in modern society's place a new exemplary society based on Islamic social justice and fraternity.[16] To accomplish this, education needed to inculcate in each Muslim a sense of obligation toward other Muslims, before all others, and to teach them how to cooperate with each other for the achievement of larger purposes.[17] Physical education also figured prominently in al-Banna's educational method. He felt that athletic training served to balance body and soul, and that involving youth in sports and physical competition served to build their self-confidence and strengthen their sense of camaraderie and spirit of cooperation.[18] He also believed physical training was a vital component in preparing young souls for armed *jihad* in the way of Islam.[19]

From very early on, the training of teachers was a top priority for the movement. Al-Banna was especially concerned, even anxious, to ensure that teachers were properly trained, since they were the cornerstone of any program of education, and had the special responsibility of nurturing the new generation.[20] The qualities that make a good teacher became a recurrent theme in the society's educational literature. According to Said Hawwa, a key educationalist theorist who led the Brotherhood's Syrian branch from 1978-1982, the teacher should demonstrate a number of character traits, and should be held to the highest of moral and intellectual standards. The teacher should, among other things, be content with little material wealth and comfort and never be jealous of others. He should see his duties to God and to the Muslim Nation as paramount, and also that these obligations are best fulfilled through selfless work on behalf of the Islamic revival movement. He should be able to explain and instruct others in the Brotherhood's *dawa* in a clear and persuasive manner.[21] A teacher should also be compassionate and tolerant towards students, be interested in educating children and youth, and able to gain the students' trust.[22]

Inspired by al-Banna's holistic educational theories, soon after its creation the Brotherhood began establishing an informal network of schools and prayer circles throughout Egypt. For the most part, these schools conducted classes in the evenings or on Fridays. The focus was on memorizing the Quran and the Hadith and learning salafi doctrine. Students were also encouraged to develop their oratory skills, which

were seen as vital for *dawa*, and to engage in athletic activities. In 1935, during the society's third conference, al-Banna claimed that the Brotherhood was operating over 300 *kutab* classes devoted to Quranic study across Egypt.[24]

In 1931, the Brotherhood established its first formal school offering a range of classes for boys in Isma'iliyya. Two years later the movement established a school for female students to teach them Islam and to prepare them for their future roles as wives and mothers. Teachers in each of these schools were tutored by other teachers who had a higher rank than themselves in the Brotherhood's hierarchy.[25]

By the 1940s, the society's educational program had become increasingly standardized, much like modern curricula in the West. It included instruction in practical subjects such as writing, reading, mathematics, rhetoric, personal health and hygiene.[26] But the primary emphasis of the Brotherhood curricula was on the study of Islam, and students were encouraged to master a variety of fields of Islamic knowledge. These fields included the Quran and Quranic interpretation; the *sunna*, including different schools of Islamic thought; jurisprudence, including its historical development and the works of outstanding Muslim scholars; the Islamic principles of social work and social justice, with a focus on Egypt; the Prophet's biography (*Sira*).[27] Unsurprisingly, the syllabus used in this program was heavily laden with the works of classical revivalist scholars like Ibn Taymiyya and with the Brotherhood's own luminaries.

A paramount concern of the society's educational program was with training and equipping people with the skills to spread the society's religious and political message of Islamic reform and revival. The number of books written by Brotherhood members on the subject of *dawa* attests to its early importance for the society.[28] In al-Banna's view, only a comprehensive educational system could produce such competent preachers (*dai*). Al-Banna stated that the preacher's faith needed to be pure and that he needed to inspire his audience with the Islamic spirit so that they would collectively advance the society's *dawa* "like an iron wall." In 1951, the society's general guide Hassan al-Hudaybi called for the establishment of at least one school in every administrative office of the society, devoted entirely to training people in the Brotherhood's *dawa*; and in 1953, the society also founded a *dawa* academy in its Cairo headquarters.[29] These new institutions aimed primarily at the cultivation of competent preachers (*du'a*) who could compete directly with both traditional and government-employed religious scholars for the hearts and minds of ordinary, and especially young, Egyptians.

Preparing the Way

DURING THE REIGN OF KING FAROUK, THE BROTHERHOOD SENT HASSAN AL-BANNA'S early writings and other important pamphlets by society authors to the king, to relevant ministers and to clerks, in an attempt to persuade the government to adopt the movement's educational plan. On occasion, the Brotherhood also co-operated with the government on anti-illiteracy campaigns and other national initiatives.[30] Even Said Qutb—who began his career as a teacher in the Egyptian Ministry of Public Instruction—followed in al-Banna's footsteps, calling on the government to bring all of Egypt's schools under governmental supervision, so they could implement the movement's educational ideas.[31]

The Brotherhood collaborated with the Free Officers when the latter seized control of the Egyptian state in 1952. The society had hoped to implement an Islamic order by positioning itself as the "moral guide" of the nationalist revolution and the ultimate source of religious authority over the new government's policies. But under the rule of the nationalist and secularist President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Brotherhood's opportunities to implement their educational plan from the top-down evaporated.

During the late 1950s, many Brothers who fled from Nasser's brutal repression found their way to Saudi Arabia, where they had been granted positions in Saudi schools by Saudi rulers sympathetic to their cause. Saudi Arabia provided refuge to prominent Brotherhood intellects like Said Qutb's brother, Muhammad, who both taught and was free to publish important works written by himself, his brother, and other important Brotherhood ideologues. It was in exile from Egypt that the Brotherhood was perhaps most successful at implementing its educational ideas in a formal way. Some Brotherhood refugees obtained posts at the Islamic University at al-Madina, which was founded in 1961. With the Brotherhood's help, Saudi Arabia hoped this university would be an alternative to Cairo's al-Azhar University, which by 1961 had come under strict Nasserist control.[32] Another important institution in this vein was the King 'Abd al-'Aziz University in Jeddah, established in 1967. Thanks to this relative freedom afforded to the Brotherhood in exile, as well as an infusion of Saudi petro-dollars, we know in hindsight that Saudi Arabia was one of the main platforms from which the Brotherhood's *dawa* started to spread internationally.

In Egypt, the society's *dawa* may have been obstructed by Nasser's repressive policies, but it nevertheless continued to spread through the informal educational organizations and networks that the Brotherhood's founding generation had created. The first initiatives in this regard came with the formation of the Ranger Squads (*firaq al rihlat*). Created by al-Banna himself, the purpose of the squads was to prepare

young men for spreading the *dawa* and engaging in *jihad*. In 1935, the squads were transformed and re-named the Rover Scouts Division, and its regulations were put in writing shortly thereafter. All members had to be at least 17 years of age (later the minimum age was lowered to 15). The organization's stated objective was to instil in young men a spirit of healthy competition, to learn discipline and to have a sense of responsibility for themselves and for the Muslim Nation.[33]

The establishment of the Rover Scouts was a critical development in the Brotherhood's public educational efforts; by canvassing villages and disseminating the Brotherhood's various publications, the scouts became an effective vehicle for spreading the society's *dawa* throughout the country. The scouts also served as a social welfare corps, delivering basic health and other services to poor and rural communities. In this way, the Brotherhood began to enlarge its base to include the countryside. The Brotherhood also founded the Muslim Sisters as a framework for recruiting and training female activists. In 1947 the Sisters published their first pamphlet describing their organization's goals. These included taking part in social *jihad*, or struggle aimed at the establishment of Islamic social justice, and ensuring that families retained values based on Islam.[34] The Sisters, which by 1948 included at least 5,000 members,[35] also played an important role tending to detainees' families during Nasser's campaign to suppress the society and maintained lines of communication between society members in and out of prison.[36]

The Norwegian scholar Brynjar Lia has demonstrated that al-Banna had been deeply impressed by the militaristic youth groups established in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. With the creation of the Rover Scouts, he sought to implement an Islamic version of these European youth movements that would instil in young Egyptians an ethos of chivalry (*futuwa*) and martial honor.[37] In 1938-9, the Rover Scouts were formally registered in the Egyptian National Scouts Movement.[38]

The scouts organized sporting events, and starting in 1938, began to host summer camps. Al-Banna himself took part in the first camp, which included religious education, a range of social activities, and physical and military training.[39] Each member was to be educated in such a way that he became consumed with the concept of *jihad*. The Rover Scouts organized marches and parades; their songs and anthems were saturated with religious themes, and celebrated *jihad* and martyrdom.[40] With time, the Rover Scouts became gradually radicalized, and some scouts joined the Brotherhood's paramilitary wing known as the "Secret Apparatus" (*al-Nizam al-Khas*).[41]

As part of a new overall strategy for the movement, al-Banna introduced the battalion (*katiba*) system in 1937. The battalions were comprised of 10-40 people between the ages of 18 and 40. These were not military organizations *per se*, but they would meet for one night every week to pray, to eat, and to sleep together in a communal

and almost barracks-like atmosphere. The battalions also organized excursions into the countryside (*rihla*) and youth camps (*muaskar*) that involved study of the Quran and salafi doctrine and physical fitness training.[42] The founding purpose of the battalions, according to Abd al-Fattah el-Awaisi, was to strengthen "the ranks [of the Brotherhood] through becoming acquainted and socializing with others, through harmonizing souls and spirits, through [providing members with group support for] resisting usual habits, and through practicing the forging of the best of bonds with God, to draw victory from Him."[43] It was to a battalion audience that Banna delivered his famous lecture detailing the psychological, spiritual and practical formation of the Muslim activist.[44]

From 1938 onwards, the battalions and scouts operated in a complementary fashion with each other, and in most cases, an adult battalion member would have previously been a scout. In 1940, the Rover Scouts were reorganized, and they assumed new control over youth education, which had previously been the battalion's responsibility.[45]

In 1943 both the battalions and scouts were incorporated into a broader network of cells that were individually referred to as a family (*usra*).[46] Each family was made up of a cell of five and later more activists who maintained close personal contacts with one another. Each family chose a *naqib*, or group leader, to represent it before the administrative council of the society's local branch. Four families were linked together into what was called a clan (*ashira*); five clans constituted a group (*raht*), and five groups formed a battalion (*katiba*). Among other things, this family system provided an educational framework for preparing its members for the Rover Scouts as well as for the Special Apparatus.

The whole system of families was in turn supervised by a central committee that was originally chaired by al-Banna and based at the Brotherhood's Cairo headquarters. Each family member was charged with fulfilling a range of duties. These included the personal obligation to maintain the Islamic character in one's conduct and home; social obligations, which included forming fraternal bonds with other Muslims, attending weekly meetings, and partaking in other group activities such as fasts, prayers and Quranic study; and financial obligations, which included contributing a portion of one's income to a "solidarity fund" that was used to help other family members in need. A portion of this money also went to the Brotherhood's headquarters, where it funded an Islamic social welfare company.[47]

These informal educational networks have proven to be remarkably resilient, cohesive, and effective over time in building the capacity to spread the Brotherhood's *dawa*. Mustafa Mashhur, who served as the Brotherhood's fifth General Guide in Egypt from 1996-2004, has stated that this cellular network remains the primary organizational basis of the Brotherhood's operations to this day.[48] El-Awaisi has further

stated that the families presently operate within Egypt, and in much the same way as al-Banna had originally intended. The family, el-Awaisi argues, citing al-Banna, remains essential for rearing activists committed to Islamic reform; the family "defines sincere brothers, making it easy to contact them and to direct them towards high ideals. It will strengthen the bond that unites them and raises their fraternity from the level of talk and theory to the level of actions and operations. It will soon yield capital—for the Muslim Brothers—out of nothing."[49]

Onward, Brotherhood Teachers

SINCE THE BROTHERHOOD'S FOUNDING, HASSAN AL-BANNA'S VISION FOR fostering a new Islamic society through education and other initiatives has indeed produced considerable capital for the Islamist movement. As the French scholar Gilles Kepel (among others) has written, the Brotherhood's *dawa* has evolved an "ideological universe" that is currently, in important respects, a "dominant cultural force in the Arab Middle East."[50] The society has also given rise to major political movements in key Middle Eastern countries, and thanks to the various institutions it has established—including its formal and informal networks of educational institutions—the Brotherhood has managed in many locales to form a parallel 'society within a society,' or what has also been described as the basic "infrastructure of an Islamic republic" within already existing nation-states.[51]

It is also clear that Hassan al-Banna's original educational concepts and methodologies are still operative within these networks in a variety of contexts—including in the West.[52] In his 1999 book *The Muslim Brotherhood*, Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi—who is perhaps the most prominent contemporary devotee and interpreter of Hassan al-Banna's thought, and who is immensely influential in the Middle East and in Europe—celebrated the society's "seventy years of *dawa*, education (*tarbiya*), and *jihad*."[53]

Throughout this book as well as in his other works, Qaradawi frequently returns to the theme of education, stressing the special role that education has and must continue to play in the Islamist revival and reform movement. For example, he describes the continued propagation of the Brotherhood's *dawa* around the world as an urgent necessity (*darura muliha*) whose fulfilment is in part dependent on the further development and success of religious education.[54] In addition to the practical necessity of training the next generation of activists and preachers, he explains, the Brotherhood must seek to inspire in Muslims everywhere a belief in the Islamic movement's final victory, and a belief that the achievement of the society's founding vision of establishing a new Islamic world order is a requirement imposed on all Muslims by God. This belief, he adds, should properly be understood as an integral

and indispensible part of sincere Islamic faith.[55] As such, education in the right belief (*tarbiya imaniyya*) is vital to the Islamic movement's efforts to transform contemporary socio-political realities and create a new Islamic order.[56]

Moreover, Qaradawi explains that the Brotherhood's holistic approach to education has been centrally concerned with *jihad*. Like al-Banna, Qaradawi affirms that *jihad* is a legitimate and important part of Islam and thus of Islamic education. While physical training is an important element of this, he points out that a proper jihadi education doesn't simply involve training for combat or terrorism. A jihadi education focuses on the formation of Muslims who are committed entirely to Islam, and seeks to inculcate in the younger generation a spirit of courage, unflinching obedience and self-sacrifice to the cause of Islam.[57] Qaradawi explains that the cultivation of this jihadi spirit among the young was one of the key priorities in Hassan al-Banna's educational strategy, adding that, "each individual of this generation [tutored by al-Banna] is a soldier of belief, not a soldier for reward; [the properly educated activist is] interested in giving without receiving, and sacrificing with no [expectation of personal] gain."[58]

Qaradawi maintains that an educational plan to ensure that the younger generation possesses both right belief and a jihadi spirit is vital to the Islamic movement's future. Education, in this respect, is essential to the fullest implementation of Islam in all realms of human knowledge and action, in both *dawa* and *jihad*.[59] Education remains "the single way to change society, to build the people, and to achieve [the Brotherhood's] aspirations" of transformation and the establishment of an Islamic socio-political order.[60]

Unfortunately, an exhaustive critical study of Brotherhood educational ideals and actual practice in the contemporary world has yet to be undertaken. But as the history of the movement shows, the Brotherhood's militancy and radical activism cannot be readily separated from its purportedly "non-political" activities in the realm of education. Moreover, as the statements of Qaradawi among others make clear, the radical vision and agenda of Islamic reform upon which the Brotherhood was founded remains very much operative to this day, including and perhaps most especially in the movement's educational philosophy and practice. In light of this, the claim that a Brotherhood education can be a potential force for moderation should be seriously questioned.

NOTES

1. In the U.K., this approach is supported by some British officials as well as by non-government groups such as the Conflicts Forum (http://conflictsforum.org/what-we-offer/). The forum, whose members

include former U.K. and U.S. intelligence and government officials, aims at "listening to political Islam, and recognizing resistance" by, among other things, holding dialogues with a variety of Islamist groups, including those that use terrorism. Additionally, organizations such as Anas Altikriti's Cordoba Foundation have received U.K. government funding for media and public relations training for young Muslims in the U.K. Altikriti, who is the son of the Iraqi Brotherhood leader Usama al-Tikriti, was the second president of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), which is widely acknowledged as the British branch of the Brotherhood.

2. See for example, Hassan Mneimneh, "The Islamization of Arab Culture," in Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani, and Eric Brown, eds., *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* vol. 6 (2008), pp. 48-65.

3. Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 1.

4. Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 321.

5. Hasan al-Banna, *Ahadith al-Juma* (Beirut: Manshurat al-asr al-hadith, 1972), "*Thawrah,*" pp. 121-126.

6. Hasan al-Banna, *Al-Imam al-shahid hasan al-banna yatahadath ila shabab al-alam al-Islami* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam), pp. 26-27); Abbas al-Sisi, *Hasan al-Banna: mawaqif fi-al-dawah wa-al-tarbiya* (Alexandria, Dar al-Dawah, 1982), pp. 138-139.

7. Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun, *Qanun al-nizam al-asasi li-hay' at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin al-amah* (Cairo: Dar al-Ansar, undated), pp. 10-11.

8. Anne Sofie Roald, *Tarbiya: Education and Politics in Islamic Movements in Jordan and Malaysia* (Lund, Sweden: Religionshistoriska Avdelningen, Lunds Universitet, 1994), p. 113.

9. Hasan Ahmad al-Banna, Ahmad Muhanmmad al-Sukari and Hamid Abduh Askariyya, *Mudhakkira fi al-talim al-dini*, (Egypt: al-Matbaa al-Salafiyya, 1928), p. 3.

10. Ibid, pp. 7-8.

11. Ibid, p. 10; Hasan al-Banna, "*Al-Imam al-shahid hasan al-banna yatahadath ila shabab al-alam al-Islami*", pp. 179-180.

12. Mahmud Abd al-Halim, *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun: ahdath sanaat al-tarikh* (Alexandria: Dar al-Da'wah, 1979), p. 136.

13. Hasan al-Banna, "*Mudhakkirat al-dawahh wa al-daiyah* (1966), pp. 85-86.

14. Hasan al-Hudaybi, *Dusturuna* (Cairo: Dar al-Ansar, 1978), pp. 6; 9-10

15. Ahmad Rabi, Abd al-Hamid Khalaf Allah, *Al-Fikr al-tarbawi wa-tatbiqatuhu lada Jamaat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Egypt: Al-Azhar University, 1981) p. 139.

16. Hasan al-Banna, *Majmuat al-rasail li-al-Imam al-shahid, Hasan al-Banna* (Beirut: Muasast al-Raisala, 1965), "Bayna al-ams wa-al-yaum," pp. 250-255.

17. Utman Abd al-Muiz Raslan, *Al-Tarbiya al-siyasiyyah ind Jamaat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi-al-fitra min 1928 ila 1954 fi Misr* (Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi wa-al-Nashr al-Islamiyya, 1990), p. 429.

18. Ibid, p. 440.

19. Hasan al-Banna, "*Mudhakkirat al-dawah wa al-daiyah,*" p. 122.

20. Abd al-Halim, pp. 229-230.

21. Said Hawwa, "*Al-Madkhal ila da'wat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun,*"(Beirut: Dar Amar, 1988) p. 174.

22. Rabi and Khalaf Allah, pp. 166-168.

23. Hasan al-Banna, *Mudhakkirat al-dawah wa-al-daiyah*, pp. 85-86; Rauf al-Shalabi, *Al-Shaykh Hasan al-Banna* (Cairo, 1978), pp. 140-145.

24. Hasan al-Banna, *Majmuat rasail - Risalat al-mutamar al-khamis*, pp. 270-271; 274.

25. Rabi and Khalaf Allah, p. 164.

26. Ibid, pp. 23-25.

27. Raslan, pp. 498-499.

28. Al-Banna wrote the forward to the book *How Do We Proselytize People?* (*Kayfa nad'u al-nas*) written by a Brotherhood member, saying he is glad that such a book has been written; another book, *The Preachers' Card* (*Tadhkirat al-dua*), by al-Bahi al-Khuli acquired al-Banna's dedication.

29. Raslan, pp. 501-502.

30. The Muslim Brotherhood is seen today as a leading opposition organization in many countries. However, in its formative stage the movement made an effort to cooperate with the Egyptian government on a range of educational policy matters. In 1935, for example, it sent a delegation to Najib al-Hilali, Minister of Education, which succeeded, among other things, to moving Islamic studies to the beginning of the school day. In 1946 the society was officially invited by Muhammad Hasan al-Ashmawi, Minister of Education, to participate in the governmental program to fight illiteracy. Moreover, important Brotherhood pamphlets, among them "Toward the Light" (1946), were sent to the king and important figures.

31. Sayyid Qutb, "*Naqd kitab mustaqbal al-thaqafah*," pp. 36; 44-45.

32. Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), p. 90.

33. Rifat al-Said, *Hasan al-Banna: Mata ... kayfa ... wa-limadha* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbuli, 1977), p. 510.

34. Muhammad Shawqi Zaki, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun wa-al-mujtama' al-Misri* (Cairo: Dar al-Ansar, 1980), pp. 195-198.

35. Mitchell, p. 201.

36. Rifat al-Said, p. 73.

37. Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998), p. 167.

38. Ibid, p. 168

39. Raslan, pp. 517-518.

40. Ibid, p. 406, refers to "Risalat al-anashid" (1935); Abd al-Halim brings the words of their anthem, pp. 165-166.

41. Brotherhood leaders and ideologues today see the Palestinian struggle in the 1930s and 1940s as the ultimate expression of the education towards *jihad*. But it appears that they exaggerate the role played by the Brotherhood in this struggle. This has probably been influenced by the activities of Hamas, the Brotherhood's Palestinian branch, which was established in the 1980s.

42. Roald, p. 118.

43. Abd al-Fattah M. El-Awaisi, "Jihdi Education and the Society of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers: 1928-49," *Journal of beliefs and values*, (vol. 21 no. 2), October 2000, p. 216

44. Hasan al-Banna, "*Mudhakkirat al-dawah wa-al-daiyah*," pp. 150-151.

45. Awaisi, p. 218.

46. Ibid, p. 215.

47. Khalaf Allah, pp. 188-189.

48. Mustafa Mashhur, "*Al-Imam Hasan al-Banna ... wa-maalim ala al-tariq*" in Hasan al-Banna, *Fiqh al-waqi* (Cairo: Dar al-Kalimah, 1999), p. 244.

49. Awaisi, pp. 220-221

50. Gilles Kepel, "The Brotherhood in the Salafist Universe," in Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani, and Eric Brown, eds., *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 6 (2008), p. 24.

51. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Jordan Feels Change within as Muslims Pursue Agenda," *New York Times*, December 26, 1992.

52. In her 1994 book on Islamic education in Jordan and Malaysia, the Swedish scholar Anne Sofie

Roald discovered that the formal educational program of the Brotherhood's Jordanian branch was especially well-developed. This was due in part to the relative openness of the state to the Brotherhood, as well as to the Brotherhood's involvement in the educational ministry. In addition to the Quran and the Hadith, the syllabus of this program includes significant works of Brotherhood ideologues and other prominent figures known to have influenced the Brotherhood doctrine over the years. In addition to Hasan al-Banna, Said Hawwa, and Said and Muhammad Qutb, Roald cites such names as Fathi Yakan, Abd Allah Azzam, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the South Asian revivalists Maulana Mawdudi (founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami) and Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi. Many of the books she particularly refers to are actually known for their anti-Western and pro-Jihadi views. These include Said Qutb's remarkable interpretation of the Quran, *In the Shade of the Quran* (*fi zilal al-Quran*), as well as *Milestones* (*Maalim fi-al-tariq*). Roald also identifies Fathi Yakan's *What is Meant by Belonging to Islam?* (*Madha yani intimai li-al-Islam*) as an important work. In this treatise, Yakan explains, among other things, that a Muslim's obligation to God can only be fulfilled by belonging to an Islamic movement that struggles to make Islam the dominant social and political force in the world. See Anne Sofie Roald, *Tarbiya: Education and Politics in Islamic Movements in Jordan and Malaysia* (Lund, Sweden: Religionshistoriska Avdelningen, Lunds Universitet, 1994)

53. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun: 70 'amman fi al-da'wah wa-al-tarbiyah wa-al-jihad: bi-munasabat murur sab'in 'aman 'ala tasis Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin wa-khamsin 'aman 'ala istishhad muassis al-Jama'ah Hasan al-Banna* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1999).

54. Ibid, p. 11.

55. Ibid, p. 78.

56. Ibid, pp. 73; 75.

57. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Al-Tarbiya al-Islamiyya wa-madrasat Hasan al-Banna* (Cairo, Maktabat Wahbah, 1979), pp. 39-40.

58. Ibid, p. 76.

59. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Awlawiyat al-Harakah al-Islamiya fi-al-marhalah al-kadimah* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1991), p. 16.

60. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Al-Tarbiya al-Islamiyya*, p. 6

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