



“Al-Qaeda” Hijacked – Jihad on the Rise?



Reviewing twenty-years of Jihadi movements since the inception of *Al Qaeda* in 1988, political analyst *Khalil Al-'Anani*, writing yesterday in the London based newspaper *Al-Hayat*, predicts a new and disturbing transformation of these movements during the coming year.

In his analysis, *Al'Anani* describes the makeover that *Al-Qaeda* underwent ten years ago with the launching of “The Islamic Front to fight the Christians and Jews.” That first transformation moved *Al-Qaeda* away from its “defensive” posture during the Afghani Jihad to a “preemptive – attacking” initiative which produced the 1998 bombings in Dar Al-Salam and Nairobi and culminated in the horror of 9/11.

The result was the gradual disintegration of *Al-Qaeda's* pyramid structure, which was capable of controlling its members logistically and financially and establishing a simple ideology for all those who would like to resuscitate “the absent duty”¹ of Jihad.

According to *Al-'Anani*, present indications suggest that a second transformation of *Al-Qaeda* is in process, which is the emergence of smaller groups ideologically more radical and extreme than the “mother” movement. These factions, such as those in Iraq or Algeria, lack uniformity in their strategies because their agendas correspond to their individual situations. The author suggests that for these groups *Al-Qaeda* represents a transitory Jihadi phase leading towards their dream of “establishing an Islamic Caliphate” and “destroying the Imperialist and Zionist forces.”

The author presents three different manifestations of this present transformation. First, he contends that, in contrast to *Al-Qaeda's* previous goal of fighting the Christians and Jews, the new goal of establishing this Islamic Caliphate at any price has led to Islamic fratricide. He cites as an example the Iraqi situation in which the *Al-Qaeda*-leaning groups failed to heed *Bin Ladin's* advice to close ranks with other Sunnis and antagonized Sunni tribal leaders who originally supported them. That led to the establishment (with U.S. support) of the “Awakening Councils” and the ensuing internecine warfare among Sunnis.

Second, *Al-'Anani* contends that the methods applied by these groups are radically different. The use of women and the elderly in suicide bombings suggests total moral bankruptcy in these movements. The author makes an interesting connection, however, between these actions and what he sees as the psychological and social sense of defeat that characterizes the Arab population.

Third, the author criticizes the intellectual and doctrinal authority guiding the movements, which he considers unenlightened. Rather, they pursue their goal of worldwide jihad on the basis of ideology and political considerations. *Al-'Anani* signals that most of the members of these groups fall into two categories. They are either criminals with limited education as in Algeria and Morocco, or what he terms as “repentant members” who engage in extreme violence as in Saudi Arabia and Algeria.

Al-'Anani notes that, in an attempt to counteract the retreat the Jihadi movement experienced in Egypt², the emerging Jihadi groups have moved further to the right and are more zealous than the original *Al-Qaeda* members. He predicts that they will adopt local *Qaeda*³ (Lebanon, Mauritania, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia). The author concludes

¹ “The Absent Duty” refers to the Jihad duty. The term was coined by *Muhammad 'Abd-el-Salam Farag* in his 1981 booklet bearing that title in which he advocated violence. *Farag* was executed following his conviction in connection with the assassination of Egyptian president *Anwar Al-Sadat*.

² See series on Dr. Fadl (PI Online PI 902 to 906).

³ *Al-Qaeda* means “the base/foundation” – the author suggests therefore that instead of one “base,” there will be many.

by stating that there may be a struggle between all these groups to acquire and monopolize the legacy of the “*Al-Qaeda*” trademark in order to prepare for a new round of Jihad.

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<http://www.alhayat.com/opinion/01-2008/Item-20080115-7e8a700d-c0a8-10ed-01ae-81ab2a3e9333/story.html>

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