



Policy Paper

No 4

24 May 2011

SALAFI
JIHADISM

VS

Or How Osama Bin Laden might have Saved “Jihad”

ARAB
SPRING

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Osama is dead. Seemingly, there couldn't be a worst time for al-Qaeda. The death of a leader in the midst of confusing and challenging developments is never good news for a militant “vanguard” organization like Al Qaeda, who together with the Salafi-jihadi current in general, found themselves up against the wall by the untimely winds of the Arab Spring. Nevertheless, by one of those twists of history, the death of Osama may turn into a very timely development for the survival of “Jihad”.

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Within the context of the “IRAKLEITOS II Programme” which is part of the NSRF operational programme “Education and Lifelong Learning” (2007-2013), co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund).



There is a heated debate underway regarding the impact of the Arab Spring on the jihadist militants. One side of the argument relates to the character of the uprisings and their participants. There seems to exist a consensus on this point. The protesters are secular-minded and they are demanding more freedom, more democracy and better economic conditions. Religion is absent or at least it takes the back seat; it is rather more of an individualized socio-cultural background.¹ However, this discourse of non-ideological, peaceful and successful demonstrations often misses two points. The praised notion of pragmatic, non-ideological demonstrators² obscures the weakness that this presents; not only the weakness of political participation stemming from lack of prior structure or previous political experience but also the organizational weakness created by the lack of a minimum programmatic coherence, usually granted by ideology.

Accordingly, the image of Gandhi-like peaceful demonstrations overlooks the fact that violence was always in the air even when there was none on the ground. This becomes more evident as the wave of uprisings has reached more troubling cases, such as Libya and Syria. These two cases illustrate that beside the constant presence of state violence, the demonstrators signaled their readiness to resort to violence if need be; from Tunisia's insurrectional violence to Egypt's advanced self-defence, to Syria's lightly armored counter-attack and Libya's armed conflict. Al-Zawahiri in 2007 was just repeating the self-evident: "Whatever its form, method and means, force remains a necessary element for bringing about change ... after all paths to peaceful change have been blocked".³

Furthermore, the Tunisian paradigm failed the subsequent tests that would make it a copycat model to be replicated throughout the Arab world, the same way the Cuban paradigm failed in the Latin American revolutions it inspired. Bahrain's uprising has witnessed a silent suppression, regionally sanctioned. The situation in Yemen is stalled. In Syria it is too early to tell. The Libyan outcome is rather ambivalent. Even in the seemingly positive cases of Tunisia and Egypt, success is in the eye of the beholder. These countries are not even half-way through their quest, even if that is narrow-spectrum reforms. Promises can still be broken, expectations can be frustrated and freedoms can be reversed; counter-revolution in full formation may break cover.

So what is in it for Salafism-jihadism? First and foremost, regardless of how and by whom, the jihadis are spared from a couple strong representatives of the corrupted and repressive Arab rulers, the "near enemy". However, the Salafis were overwhelmingly fixated on the Western supporters of local dictators, or the "far enemy", who were not in the Arab Spring's agenda. The redefinition of the near and far enemy nexus, both on a propaganda and an operational level, is the main question in the jihadis role and stance on the events, rather than the violence or

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non-violence question.

If al-Qaeda and the Salafi-jihadis in general are framed as the “vanguard” of political Islamism, then in the light of the recent events, they have to answer the mainstream-reformist challenge. They can claim to have inspired the “revolutionary fervor” and the determination to stand up against injustice, but it is now or never for them to engage the masses.⁴ In order to remain relevant, the “jihadi fish” have to reach, in Mao’s words, the “water”; the elitist “propaganda by deed” has to meet the social struggles. The developments on the near enemy front are indeed not that bleak for the jihadists. They can hope for a future hike in recruitment, when and if the regimes strike back or simply fail to honor their promises. This will breed a new generation of jihadists hardened in state prisons, who won’t mind the old generation’s condescending “I told you so”.

This recruitment potential is available in the Islamist ranks and the more or less secular. For the former, what is crucial is the performance of mainstream Islamist formations like the Muslim Brotherhood in the time to come. Too much participation, too soon, may alienate the Brotherhood’s hard-liners. A second important issue, particularly in the case of Egypt, is the position of the local Salafis and the repentant militants of Islamic Jihad and Gama’a Islamiya in the new setting. The relatively apolitical Salafis, centered in Alexandria, have been vocal since Mubarak’s fall but their wrath is directed mostly against the Copts. However, they hold a large proselytizing (da’wa) potential that can turn in the long term into Salafis-jihadis benefit. Regardless of how apolitical this da’wa is, it will bring Salafi ideas to the socio-political discourse.

The members of Islamic Jihad and Gama’a Islamiya, who were released under Mubarak’s re-integration-of-repentant militants program, or during the recent release of political prisoners, play a distinct role in both the recruitment potential and in defining the operational space Salafi-jihadis can claim. Under threats of renewed jail time and torture, the Salafi-jihadis half-heartedly supported Mubarak in the face of anti-government demonstrations. However, they have since abandoned their fears and have started agitating once more. But the regime is closely monitoring them to avert any “misconduct”. In Egypt for example several ex-militants have been released and Gama’a Islamiya’s declared intention to form a political party⁵ was met mildly by the new establishment; however, in a typical show of force, the Egyptian regime rearrested Islamic Jihad’s Mohamed al-Zawahiri, brother of al-Qaeda’s Ayman al-Zawahiri, three days after he was released, to be charged on another open case.⁶ The Jordanian regime tried to deliver a similar message to Jordan’s Salafis of the dangers of crossing the line.⁷

The effect of the local –reintegrated- Salafis on international jihadism in terms of recruitment is dependent on the level of state violence; an overly harsh crackdown will boost the ranks of

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In their effort to counter the propaganda challenge posed by the events and the reversed near enemy-far enemy nexus, the jihadis put in use a whole battery of arguments: the initial denial syndrome, frustration and excuses were later complemented with congratulations, cautions against being fooled into secularism, general directions, calls to weapons, “next stop al-Aqsa” rhetoric, and of course, the West parameter.

the latter. On the contrary, a relative self-restraint that condones the local Salafi presence on the margins of the political system and legality will provide a valve to let off steam from the socio-political system. This potential will stem recruits to the international jihadis, as frustration will be funneled through semi-legal channels. With the secular elements of the uprisings, the recruitment potential takes a slightly different form. The acclaimed lack of an encompassing ideology to guide the majority of the protesters may lead the more determined of them towards groups who know how to exercise violence against the state, when frustration over unfulfilled aspirations takes over.

In their quest to take advantage of this potential, the Salafis-jihadis will have to make use of their existing operatives⁸ that are nationals of the particular country, whether they are residents or not. The local sleeping cells can be swelled by the return of the exiled operatives who may take advantage of the increased freedom in Egypt and Tunisia, or the security vacuum in Yemen or Libya that will emerge in the post-uprising environment. In other words, during this readjustment process, the jihadis will go through increased regional decentralization. Noman Benotman, former head of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), a repentant jihadi par excellence, notes that “with the weakening of security services in some Arab countries, the greatest future opportunities may lie for jihadist groups with a narrow regional agenda”.⁹ However, going local can be only one part of the global Salafist-jihadists’ answer to the recent events. They cannot betray the international perspective of their outlook, which is spearheaded by their perceived grievances against the West.

If one goes through a sample of the Arab Spring-related forum posts and official announcements, he or she will see that after an initial period of numbness, jihadis around the world have been trying to interpret the cataclysmal events. In their effort to counter the propaganda challenge posed by the events and the reversed near enemy-far enemy nexus, the jihadis put in use a whole battery of arguments: the initial denial syndrome, frustration and excuses¹⁰ were later complemented with congratulations, cautions against being fooled into secularism,¹¹ general directions,¹² calls to weapons,¹³ “next stop al-Aqsa” rhetoric,¹⁴ and of course, the West parameter.

Western hypocrisy is lambasted at every occasion. According to this narrative, the West is afraid of losing “their most important agents” in the region and when saving them is impossible, the Western powers try to set the stage for their new clients.¹⁵ At the same time these same powers relentlessly continue their “war against Islam”. Beyond the old conflicts that drag on in Iraq and Afghanistan,¹⁶ Libya offers a propaganda relief to jihadis and that is why they are more confident discussing the uprising there. But those are only the open wars; a covert war attacks Islam culturally by spreading immorality and corruption

among the Muslims.¹⁷

In this sense, al-Qaeda's and Salafi-jihadi paradigm is still deemed relevant and thus the global struggle must go on. However, not long after al-Awlaki was confident enough to directly counter-argue Western analysts in his article "The Tsunami of Change",¹⁸ the Salafis-jihadis were hit by a second wave. At first sight, the loss of Osama Bin Laden, at a time of urgent need for guidance,¹⁹ seems to be the final blow for the Salafis-jihadis. However as Max Boot notes,²⁰ not all militant organizations wilt after a leadership decapitation; in fact some manage to flourish. The crucial element here is whether the organisation was "built around a cult of personality" or it has a more diffuse decision-making and ideology. Osama Bin Laden was beyond dispute an emblematic figure with an aura of demagogue charisma and invincibility. But he was just a man; and that is what the jihadis keep repeating. In its official announcement on Laden's death, the al-Qaeda Central stated: "Usama bin Laden was not a prophet sent for the twentieth century. Rather, he was a Muslim man from this noble Muslim Ummah who took the Book firmly with strength and sold this life for the next, striving as it deserves."²¹ And an article on Anṣār al-Mujāhidīn Forum recited the many jihadi leaders who have perished over the years with no negative effect on the jihadi cause.²² What is claimed instead is that the West can kill the man but not the idea.²³ Most of the Western analysts also agree that the end of bin Laden is not the end of al-Qaeda. Osama bin Laden had said in 2001: "My life or death does not matter. The awakening has started".²⁴ And with the awakening the early organizational decentralisation intensified too, turning "al-Qaeda" into the loose network that it is today that arguably kept bin Laden alive for more than expected.

That is why it won't matter much whether al-Zawahiri, Sayf al-Adel or anyone else from the contenders takes over.²⁵ All of them in the end will accept, perhaps the former guardedly and the latter more eagerly,²⁶ the inevitable reassessment of the near enemy-far enemy balance.²⁷ In this sense, in Machiavellian terms, it could be said that bin Laden's death suits the Salafis-jihadis because it accelerates the process that will enable a better positioning in the post-Arab Spring environment.

The al-Qaeda leadership and operatives in the Af-Pak region will lay low to ascertain and control the damage done to their operational security and communication channels from the intelligence gathered in the raid at Laden's compound and to settle its scores with Pakistan.²⁸ This introversion will allow the regional branches to take the initiative and accordingly, to enable the wannabe leaders to let their star rise. This way, salafism-jihadism may manage in the long-term to answer the Arab Spring challenges. At the same time, Laden's death combined with the uprisings' turmoil may help safeguard to some extent the necessary "territory",²⁹ especially in places like

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Yemen³⁰ , Afghanistan and Pakistan. The sense of “mission accomplished” will provide the US with the pretext to quietly leave Afghanistan to halt further losses,³¹ under an ill-fated Karzai-Taliban agreement. There is little chance for serious counterinsurgency in Pakistan³² and the rest of the region.³³ Amidst the general climate of sizing down US involvement in the Middle East, the West will also have to reassess its relations in the region and even go ahead with some kind of redeployment in the face of the uprisings.³⁴ Drone attacks and occasional special operations are not enough to face such challenges.

Nevertheless, beyond those slight alterations that will fully unfold in an extended time span -interesting only to those involved and their close observers- the Arab Spring and Bin Laden’s death will have more immediate effects of a general interest. As a post in Shumoukh Al-Islam forum summed up: “We are determined, Allah willing, [to take] revenge, revenge, revenge. If he is alive, we will take revenge, and if he is a martyr, we will take revenge”.³⁵ Revenge will actually facilitate organizational survival since it will smooth out possible frictions among leading figures out of conflicting personal ambitions, or longtime self-suppressed criticism. However, due to the decentralization and heavy investment in coping with local issues, revenge attacks will have to be locally conceived and executed and for this reason cheap, but with a large cost/benefit margin.³⁶

Of course “revenge” is not only the privilege of Middle Eastern groups; their Western-based supporters will have their part in it. Besides, revenge is easier when targets are nearby and abundant. So a hike in attacks on the West should be expected. The pro-jihadis in the West are not directly affected by the Arab Spring and that means that they are not in contact with the Arab Spring ideas. The death of Bin Laden at the hands of the West will resonate with them and their everyday life more than the distant battles of their brethren in the Middle East. The death of a symbol is expected to enhance the “jihadi cool” role model. However, the Western revenge-seekers will be expected to operate more or less independently, with selective funding from the core groups based in the Middle East. For this reason, “lone-wolf style” will most probably predominate but more sophisticated attacks are possible in the mid-term. It is naïve to believe that the Western Muslims’ multifaceted grievances will disappear into thin air. On the contrary, they will intensify as thousands of new immigrants flood the coasts of Europe, a direct or indirect by-product of the Arab Spring.³⁷ And it is also naïve to believe that they will keep quiet as Europe and the West in general turns increasingly insecure, xenophobic and violent.

NOTES

1. Olivier Roy, "This is not an Islamic revolution", *New Statesman*, (15/2/11), (Accessed on May 17, 2011), <http://www.newstatesman.com/religion/2011/02/egypt-arab-tunisia-islamic>
2. Ibid. See also Anno Bunnik and Peter Knoope, "Why people of Tunisia, Egypt confirm bankruptcy of al-Qaeda", *Hurriyet*, (6/2/11), (Accessed on May 17, 2011), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=why-the-people-of-tunisia-and-egypt-confirm-the-bankruptcy-of-al-qaeda-2011-02-04>
3. Originally a video address. The transcript is also featuring in the latest issue of *Inspire*, the English-language publication of AQAP. Ayman al-Zawahiri, "The short & long-term plans after protests", *Inspire*, no. 5, Spring 2011, p. 34, (Accessed on May 20, 2011), <http://info.publicintelligence.net/InspireMarch2011.pdf>
4. This necessity was acknowledged by Abu Mundhir al-Shanqiti who said "It is a dangerous mistake for the jihadists to separate from the peoples...We should forgive them, get closer to them and beg them to listen to us, because separating the jihadi movement from the popular Muslim movement is the end of this movement," AFP, "Arab revolts could strike huge blow to Qaeda: experts", *al-Arabiya*, (6/2/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/02/06/136507.html>
5. Hani Nasira, "After Mubarak: Egypt's Islamists Struggle to Adapt to the Egyptian Revolution", *Terrorism Monitor* Vol. 9 No. 12, Jamestown Foundation, (24/3/2011), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37689&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=26&cHash=a81e5debfd4374ceff8ba6493de2adfe](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37689&tx_ttnews[backPid]=26&cHash=a81e5debfd4374ceff8ba6493de2adfe). Feisal G. Mohamed, "How Frightening Is the Muslim Brotherhood?", *Dissent*, (4/4/2011), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/atw.php?id=419> and Al Masry al Youm, «Gamaa Islamiya makes first appearance in 20 years», (15/2/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/319745>
6. Al Masry al Youm, "Re-arrest of Zawahiri's brother for investigation in the case of 'Albania returnees'", (21/3/2011), (Accessed on May 19, 2011), <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/367842>
7. Dale Gavlak, "Jordan protests: Rise of the Salafist Jihadist movement", *BBC* (22/4/11), (Accessed on May 20, 2011), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13163870>
8. Thomas Hegghammer, commenting on the immediate effects of the Arab uprisings on the current supporters of salafism-jihadism, notes that "The removal of a grievance does not affect the motivation of the already mobilised." Thomas Hegghammer, "Al-Qaida after Mubarak", *Jihadica*, (22/2/2011), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.jihadica.com/al-qaeda-after-mubarak/> Moreover, as Nathaniel Patin adds "while Egyptians' main grievance may be repression by the Egyptian regime, al-Qaeda's narrative relies on a host of other grievances like the hostility of non-Muslims against Muslims in other parts of the world, and Western foreign policy". Nathaniel Patin, "MENA Revolutions: Implications for Al Qaeda", *Foreign Affairs Journal*, (Accessed on May 20, 2011), <http://www.foreignaffairsjournal.org/2011/04/03/mena-revolutions-implications-for-al-qaeda/> Both quotes are made in reference to Egypt but they are generally applicable.
9. Paul Cruickshank, "Analysis: Why Arab Spring could be al Qaeda's fall", *CNN* (21/2/2011), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-21/world/arab.unrest.alqaeda.analysis_1_zawahiri-al-qaeda-qaeda-style/4?s=PM:WORLD
10. The usual excuse is that they have been the primary target of state violence with the result that most of them are either in prison or in exile. See for example al-Shehata's (Egyptian Jihad member) effort

to explain the absence of the jihadists. Andrew McGregor, “We Wish to Be In the Front Lines With You: Islamist Radicals on the Lotus Revolution”, *Terrorism Monitor* Vol. 9 No. 6, Jamestown Foundation, (10/2/2011), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37485](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37485) and the similar reasoning used by Sheikh Abu Al-Walid Al-Maqdisi. International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, “Periodical Review: Fatwas – February 2011”, (10/4/11), p. 16, (Accessed on May 18, 2011), http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Periodical_Review_Fatwas_February_2011.pdf

11. Best summed up in the al-Qaeda's Islamic State of Iraq statement which called on the Egyptians not to replace Mubarak regime with “un-Islamic ideologies, such as filthy and evil secularism, infidelic democracy, and putrid idolic patriotism and nationalism.” See Islamic state of Iraq, “To Our Muslim Family in Beloved Egypt”, (English translation), *Jihadology*, (9/2/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://jihadology.net/2011/02/08/al-fajr-media-presents-a-new-statement-from-the-islamic-state-of-iraq-al-qa%E2%80%99idah-to-our-muslim-family-in-beloved-egypt/>
12. Abū al-Mundhir al-Shanqīṭī (from Minbar at-Tawhīd wa'l-Jihād website) has been the most active in this area. See for example his Q/A with two jihadis concerned with what is the proper reaction to the events in Syria and Iraq. Joas Wagemakers, “Jihadi Dilemmas in Syria”, *Jihadica* (3/3/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.jihadica.com/jihadi-dilemmas-in-syria/> and International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, “Periodical Review: Fatwas – February 2011”, op.cit. p. 5-7, For more practical directions see for example Abu Muslim Al-Jazairi's (also from Minbar at-Tawhīd wa'l-Jihād) suggestions *Ibid*, p. 18
13. See for example the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) call to Tunisian youth to join their ranks. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, “Support and Affirmation for the Uprising of our People in Tunisia”, (13/1/11), (Accessed on May 15, 2011), http://www.globalterroralert.com/images/documents/pdf/1210/flashpoint_aqimtunisia0111.pdf The Shabakat Al-Mujahideen Al-Electroniya forum is more explicit in its call to “the youth to steal weapons and material for explosive charges from the Egyptian Army and Police...and to steal computers from the country's security forces for the purpose of gathering information on ‘soldiers who abandoned Islam’ and of destroying all intelligence and documents on Jihad operatives.” International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, “Periodical Review: Summary of Information from the Jihadi Forums, The Second Half of January 2011”, (9/3/11), p. 18-9, (Accessed on May 19, 2011), http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Periodical_Review_January_2011_No_2.pdf
14. The first paragraph of the editorial of the March issue of “Inspire” dedicated to the uprisings ended with the words: “Here we start and in al-Aqsa we'll meet”. Yahya Ibrahim, “Protest Focus”, *Inspire*, no. 5, Spring 2011, p. 5. See also Attiya Allah Abu Abd Al-Rahman's assessment that the uprisings have a negative effect on Israel, who feels deeply insecure about its borders, and for this reason priority should be given to Rafah, Sinai and Egypt in general. International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, “Periodical Review: Summary of Information from the Jihadi Forums, The Second Half of February 2011”, (15/4/11), p. 8-9, (Accessed on May 14, 2011), http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Periodical_Review_February_2011_No_2.pdf
15. See for example al-Shanqiti's points on the US foreign policy before and after Mubarak's fall. Brynjar Lia, “Jihadis Debate Egypt (1)”, *Jihadica* (4/2/11), (Accessed on May 15, 2011), <http://www.jihadica.com/jihadis-debate-egypt-1/> Similar reasoning has been used by Abu Yahya al-Libi and AQIM. See Abu Yahya al-Libi, “To Our People in Libya”, *Jihad* (12/3/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://ojihad.wordpress.com/2011/03/12/to-the-people-of-libya-abu-yahya-al-libi-delivers-message/> and International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, “Periodical Review: Summary of Information from the Jihadi Forums, The Second Half of January 2011”, (9/3/11), p. 14, (Accessed on May 14, 2011), http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Periodical_Review_January_2011_No_2.pdf
16. See statements by the “Islamic State of Iraq” and the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”. Also see Shanqiti's remarks on the US factor in the protests in Iraq. Institute for Counter-Terrorism, “Periodical Review: Fatwas – February 2011”, op.cit. p. 6

17. Ayman al-Zawahiri, "The overlooked backdrop", *Inspire*, no. 5, Spring 2011, p. 37 (Accessed on May 19, 2011), <http://info.publicintelligence.net/InspireMarch2011.pdf>
18. Anwar al-Awlaki, "The Tsunami of Change", *Inspire*, no. 5, Spring 2011, p. 50-3, (Accessed on May 19, 2011), <http://info.publicintelligence.net/InspireMarch2011.pdf>
19. The need for guidance is partially supplemented by Bin Laden's message that came out after his death. For an English translation of the "To the Muslim Ummah" message see <http://jihadology.net/2011/05/18/as-sa%E1%B8%A5ab-media-presents-a-new-video-message-from-usamah-bin-laden-to-the-muslim-ummah/> (Accessed on May 21, 2011),
20. Max Boot, "Al Qaeda's Prognosis: Can terrorist Groups Live without their Leaders?", *Foreign Affairs*, (5/5/11), (Accessed on May 16, 2011), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67832/max-boot/al-qaedas-prognosis>
21. Al-Qaeda General Command, "You Lived a Praised Life and You Died as a Martyr", (3/5/11) (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://theunjustmedia.com/Islamic%20Perspectives/May11/Al-Qaeda%20Statement%20Concerning%20the%20Defiant%20Battle,%20and%20the%20Martyrdom%20of%20Sheikh%20Usama%20bin%20Laden.htm>
22. Jihadology, "New article from a member of the Anṣār al-Mujāhidīn English Forum: "Shaykh Usāmah Bin Lāden Between Jihād and Martyrdom for the sake of Allah", (4/5/11), (Accessed on May 15, 2011), <http://jihadology.net/2011/05/04/new-article-from-a-member-of-the-an%E1%B9%A3ar-al-mujahidin-english-forum-shaykh-usamah-bin-laden-between-jihad-and-martyrdom-for-the-sake-of-allah/>
23. Al-Qaeda General Command, "You Lived a Praised Life and You Died as a Martyr", op.cit. see also Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, "The Martyrdom of Sheikh Osama Will not Benefit America", (11/5/11), (Accessed on May 18, 2011), http://shahamat-english.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7232:the-martyrdom-of-sheikh-osama-will-not-benefit-america&catid=2:comments&Itemid=3
24. Mentioned in Jason Burke, "Al-Qaida leadership battle: who can replace Osama bin Laden?", *Guardian* (2/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/02/al-qaeda-leadership-osama-bin-laden>
25. The speculations around who will be the next leader have brought up several names. For a sample of these contenders, their pros and cons see Bill Roggio, "After bin Laden: who will lead al-Qaeda?", *Long War Journal*, (4/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/05/after_bin_laden_who.php BBC, "Al-Qaeda's remaining leaders", (2/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11489337> and Clint Watts, "AQ's Leadership After Bin Laden: Poll Results #3", *Selected Wisdom*, (Accessed on May 21, 2011), <http://selectedwisdom.com/?p=277> According to Leah Farral, there exists actually a protocol that defines the chain of succession in case the leader is captured or killed. Leah Farral, "Wanted: Charismatic Terror Mastermind. Some Travel Required", *Foreign Policy*, (3/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/05/03/wanted_charismatic_terror_mastermind_some_travel_required?page=full However, confusion has been created since the emergence of some reports suggesting that Sayf al-Adel has been nominated as the interim leader of al-Qaeda. For the meaning and significance of this development, if accurate, see Peter Bergen, "Egyptian Saif al-Adel now acting leader of al Qaeda, ex-militant says", *CNN* (17/5/11), (Accessed on May 20, 2011), <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/05/17/mideast.al.qaeda.appointee/index.html> and Vahid Brown "Sayf al-Adl and al-Qa'ida's Historical Leadership", *Jihadica* (18/5/11), (Accessed on May 21, 2011), <http://www.jihadica.com/sayf-al-adl-and-al-qaidas-historical-leadership/>
26. There are no big differences between the two regarding the far-enemy near-enemy relationship. However, al-Adel has shown openness to self-criticism which him more flexible compared to al-Zawahiri. See for example the series of letters attributed to al-Adel that have appeared during the last months. Vahid Brown, "Al-Qa'ida Revisions: The Five Letters of Sayf al-'Adl", (10/2/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.jihadica.com/al-qa%E2%80%99ida-revisions-the-five-letters-of-sayf-al-%E2%80%98adl/> and Will McCants, "Crowdsourcing the Revolution", *Jihadica*,

(9/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.jihadica.com/crowdsourcing-the-revolution/>

27. So inevitable that it can be traced even in Bin Laden's last message in which the references to the far enemy are counted on the fingers of one hand. Instead, there are calls for a refocus on the near enemy.
28. Since Bin Laden's death the jihadi forums are full with assertions of Pakistani government complicity and calls for revenge. See Institute for Counter-Terrorism, "Special Report: The Death of Osama Bin Laden", (4/5/11), <http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/ICT%20SPECIAL%20REPORT%20-%20THE%20DEATH%20OF%20OSAMA%20BIN%20LADEN.pdf> For more official statements see Al-Qaeda General Command, "You Lived a Praised Life and You Died as a Martyr", (3/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://theunjustmedia.com/Islamic%20Perspectives/May11/Al-Qaeda%20Statement%20Concerning%20the%20Defiant%20Battle,%20and%20the%20Martyrdom%20of%20Sheikh%20Usama%20bin%20Laden.htm> and Reuters, "Pakistan Taliban threaten attacks after bin Laden's killing", (2/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/02/us-pakistan-taliban-binladen-idUSTRE7412X620110502>
29. Max Boot, "Al Qaeda's Prognosis: Can terrorist Groups Live without their Leaders?", op.cit.
30. For the AQAP's effort to gain a footing in Yemen by taking advantage of the ongoing protests and the north Yemen tribes' disenchantment with the central government see Erik Stier, "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Protests in Yemen", *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 9, No. 10, Jamestown Foundation, (10/3/11), (Accessed on May 15, 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37626&cHash=70a1eef1605c5bb3230b77b04809fcc2](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37626&cHash=70a1eef1605c5bb3230b77b04809fcc2)
31. In a 2008 interview with the Al-Somood Magazine, Jalaluddin Haqqani had compared the US "involvement in the Afghanistan...[with] someone who is losing at gambling. He keeps playing hoping to win but, in the end, rather than achieving anything he loses everything he owns." A translated version of the interview can be found on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan site http://shahamat-english.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6995:the-defeat-of-america-in-afghanistan-will-be-swifter-than-the-defeat-of-the-collapsed-soviet-union&catid=7:interview&Itemid=17 (Accessed on May 20, 2011),
32. The government of Pakistan is in an extremely difficult situation. As Pervez Hoodbhoy said "Osama's killing is now a bone stuck in the throat of Pakistan's establishment that can neither be swallowed nor spat out. To appear joyful would infuriate the Islamists who are already fighting the state. On the other hand, to deprecate the killing would suggest that Pakistan had knowingly hosted the king of terrorists". The latter will make the already strained relations with the US even worse. In any case, Pakistan will be more adamant in protecting its sovereignty. Pervez Hoodbhoy, "The curious case of Osama bin Laden", *Express Tribune*, (3/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://tribune.com.pk/story/160658/the-curious-case-of-osama-bin-laden/>
33. The recent speech of the US President Obama on the Middle East is the first sign of this reassessment. US State Department, "Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa", (19/5/11), (Accessed on May 20, 2011), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa>
34. Al-Awlaki has even claimed that the developments in the Middle East will force the already exhausted US to spread further thin. Anwar al-Awlaki, "The Tsunami of Change", *Inspire*, no. 5, Spring 2011, p. 53, (Accessed on May 19, 2011), <http://info.publicintelligence.net/InspireMarch2011.pdf>
35. See MEMRI, "Reactions to News of OBL's Death on Jihadi Websites Voice Disbelief, Call for Revenge; OBL Commemorated on Facebook", (2/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://www.memritv.org/report/en/5240.htm>
36. See for example the *Inspire* magazine which published a whole issue dedicated to the attempted attacks with printer cartridges packed with plastic explosives and sent overseas on cargo airplanes. The issue is titled "\$4,200" signifying the cost of the operation. It is repeatedly stressed that although the attack apparently failed and there was no human loss, the mere disparity between the

cost of the plan and the expected cost for the West in matters of increased security measures, makes it a success. Inspire, "Special Issue: \$4,200", November 2010, (Accessed on May 14, 2011), <http://info.publicintelligence.net/InspireNovember2010.pdf>

37. The Arab Spring has caused immigration from the countries that have witnessed uprisings but it also destabilized countries that acted as a transit point and had until recently, in coordination with European officials, controlled their borders. Raffaello Pantucci, "Europol Identifies Security Threat to Europe from North Africa's Arab Spring", *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 9, No. 19, Jamestown Foundation (12/5/11), (Accessed on May 14, 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37920&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=381&cHash=a2986bd43f45b0a65818d29764d74316](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37920&tx_ttnews[backPid]=381&cHash=a2986bd43f45b0a65818d29764d74316)



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