

AZAN Magazine – Profile Analysis

Introduction

AZAN is an English-language magazine that covers various jihadist-related topics and is published by the Taliban in Pakistan. The Taliban in Pakistan, otherwise known by its full name, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (“Taliban Movement of Pakistan”), is a jihadist group that was founded in 2007 as a result of the merger of 13 Pakistani militant groups into one umbrella organization. Today, the organization is led by the Islamist, Maulana Fazlullah, and its operations are focused on two main areas: terrorist attacks against the government of Pakistan and the enforcement of shari’a in areas under its control.

The Magazine

From March 2013 until the summer of 2014, six issues of AZAN magazine were published, with each issue containing an average of 50 pages. The name of the magazine is taken from the Arabic word “أَذَانٌ”, which means “a call to prayer”. The editors of the magazine are making a change to the original meaning of the word by adding the following sentence to the name of the magazine: “A Call to Jihad”.

Despite the fact that the magazine was not officially declared to be the product of a specific jihadist group, and the magazine banner does not display the flag of any particular organization, the magazine’s considerable focus on Pakistan-related issues suggests that it is a product of the Taliban in Pakistan. Among the articles that deal with Pakistan:

- An article criticizing Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani education activist who spoke out against the Taliban.¹
- An interview with a militant who carried out attacks against the former President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, and was freed from jail in a prison break carried out by the Taliban in Pakistan.²
- An article analyzing the change in doctrine taken by the Pakistani army (which began to devote more and more resources to combat the internal threat rather than to fight against India).³

¹ AZAN, March 2013, Issue 01, p. 24.

² AZAN, March 2013, Issue 01, p. 42.

³ AZAN, March 2013, Issue 01, p. 30.

- Articles regarding massacres attributed to the Pakistani army.⁴
- An article predicting a difficult future for Pakistan due to the strengthening of its two rivals, India and Afghanistan.⁵

AZAN drawn inspiration from *INSPIRE*, an English-language magazine published by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Similarities can be found between the two magazines, not only in terms of their target audience (Muslims in the West) or in their encouragement of readers to send in materials, but also in the common themes and issues that they cover, including: American drone attacks,⁶ criticism of President Obama and the US government,⁷ and quotes from late jihad figures (such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,⁸ Anwar al-Awlaki,⁹ and Abdullah Azzam¹⁰). However, unlike *INSPIRE*, the editions of *AZAN* that have been published thus far have not included articles providing instructions on “open source jihad”, such as proposed methods of attack or instructions on how to make bombs.

The magazine’s articles are authored by several regular writers who seemingly use fake names. Each writer generally writes about fixed issues, and sometimes the same topic appears in successive articles. For instance, most of the articles written by Jaffer Hussain deal with the use of drones by the US or an analysis of American politics, while the articles penned by Ikrimah Anwar mostly deal with spiritual Islamic issues.

⁴ *AZAN*, Winter 2013, Issue 05, p. 26.

⁵ *AZAN*, Summer 2014, Issue 06, p. 22.

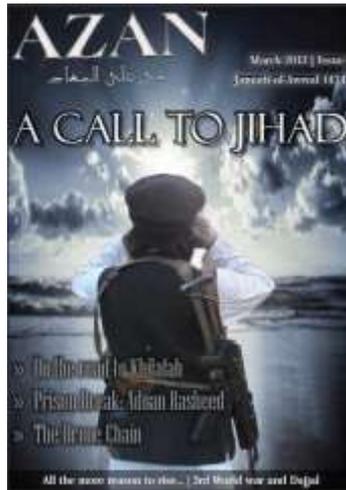
⁶ *INSPIRE*, Spring 2014, Issue 12, p. 28; *AZAN*, Winter 2013, Issue 05, p. 07.

⁷ *INSPIRE*, Spring 2014, Issue 12, p. 47; *AZAN*, April-May 2013, Issue 02, p. 33.

⁸ *AZAN*, March 2013, Issue 01, p. 60.

⁹ *INSPIRE*, Spring 2014, Issue 12, p. 17.

¹⁰ *AZAN*, Summer 2014, Issue 06, p. 24.



Issue no. 01 of AZAN magazine

Themes

The magazine articles can be divided into three central themes:

1. Strategy

- Incitement to jihad in India:

"Message to Muslims in India". The author laments the retreat of Islam in favour of paganism in India and wonders why jihad is not widespread in this arena. In the article, the author weaves together quotes by figures and role models throughout the history of Islam in India, including the Muslim King, Tipu Sultan. At the end of the article, the author calls on Muslims in India to wake up and heed the call of the mujahideen in Khorasan and Afghanistan, and carry the banner of the oneness of Allah against Paganism.¹¹

- Messages to Muslims in the West:

"To the Jihadis in the West". A message to Muslims in the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia from a militant who was born in the West and abandoned his life there for the sake of jihad. In the framework of the article, the author discusses several issues and questions that are likely to be of concern to Muslims in the West who want to leave in order to become jihad fighters (such as fear of death, dealing

¹¹ AZAN, June-July 2012, Issue 03, p. 41.

with family, studies, etc.) The article ends with a call on all Muslims in the West not to hesitate and wait, but rather to join jihad immediately.¹²



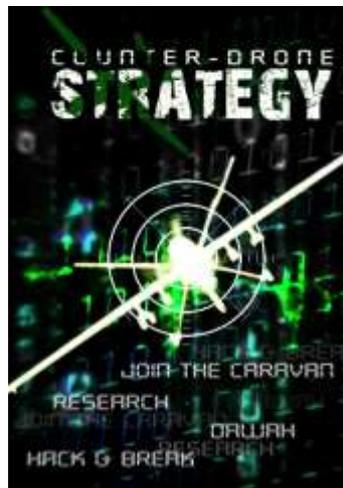
“To the Jihadis in the West” – the article banner

- *“Britain on Course for Disaster”*. An article about terrorist attacks that took place inside Britain, such as the murder of soldier, Lee Rigby, and the attempted assassination of British member of Parliament, Stephen Timms. The writer discusses the policies taken by the British government against Muslims and calls on Muslims to protest against those policies. The article ends with the following message: “We advise Muslims in Britain to join the ranks of jihad fighters. They must attack the infidels where it hurts in order to avenge the blood of their brothers and sisters in the Muslim world. If not, they must join jihad fighters overseas or at least make “hijra”, or migrate, away from the enemy and move to countries with the Muslim majority as the Islamic revolution is expanding across the Muslim world”.¹³
- Finding methods for dealing with drones:
“Counter-Drone Strategy”. The writer presents the US army’s two main methods of operation today against jihad fighters: raids and drones. The writer explains that, in order to combat drones, as much information as possible must be gathered. The writer asks readers to describe and photograph drones, and to provide information about operating bases and drone manufacturers. The writer calls on Muslim engineers, scientists and computer programmers to try to find a way to seize control

¹² AZAN, Autumn 2013, Issue 04, p. 25.

¹³ AZAN, Winter 2013, Issue 05, p. 16.

of a drone for jihad purposes, whether by taking over the communication between the drone and its operator or by breaching the Pentagon’s computers.¹⁴



“Counter-Drone Strategy” – article banner

- An analysis of the Pakistani military doctrine in order to counter it: *“On Pakistani Military U-Turns and Doctrine”*. The article presents the change in doctrine of the Pakistani military, which shifted its efforts from defending the country from polytheistic India to fighting against Muslim jihad fighters, a shift that caused the writer to conclude that the Pakistani army is not actually Muslim, but rather an infidel emissary of Western countries. At the end of the article, the writer calls on Muslims to wake up and put an end to the enslavement of the country to “terrorist America”.¹⁵

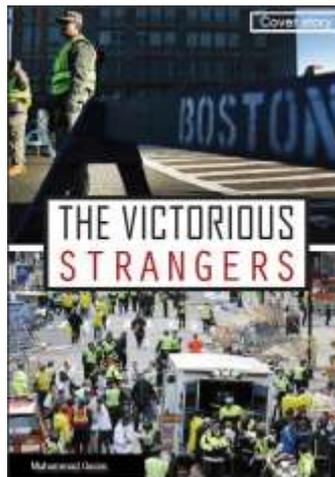
2. Promoting the Myth of the Terrorist

- Words of praise for terrorists, especially those who carried out “lone wolf” attacks: *“The Victorious Strangers”*. The article praises Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the perpetrators of the Boston Marathon terrorist attack that took place in April 2013. In the framework of the article, the two men are presented as heroes who saw the

¹⁴ AZAN, Winter 2013, Issue 05, p. 08.

¹⁵ AZAN, March 2013, Issue 01, p. 30.

reality of Islam under attack. The article concludes with quotes from Muslim tradition regarding “foreigners”, those who detach themselves from their families and improve the reality at a time when their environment has become corrupt. In addition, the article praises Mohammed Merah, who carried out the terrorist attack in Toulouse in 2012, and Nidal Hasan, the US Medical Corps officer who carried out the 2009 shooting attack on an army base.¹⁶



“The Victorious Strangers” – article banner

3. Interviews with Jihad Fighters on Various Topics

- *“An Exclusive Interview with the German Jihadi, Brother Abu Adam”*. An interview with a German militant of Moroccan origin, who joined the ranks of jihad in Khorasan. In the framework of the interview, Abu Adam discusses how he became close to the world of jihad, his time spent in Yemen and his meeting with Anwar al-Awlaki. In addition, Abu Adam discusses American drone attacks and the potential migration of additional jihad fighters from Germany.¹⁷

4. Ideological Attack

- A criticism of Western principles, including: nationalism, democracy and secular

¹⁶ AZAN, April/May 2013, Issue 02, p. 13.

¹⁷ AZAN, June-July 2012, Issue 03, p. 59.

education.

- Articles mocking the United States.

5. Religious Issues (concerning the end of days, resurrection of the dead and the afterlife).

6. Around the World (a review of events from various arenas of jihad, including: Mali, Iraq, Afghanistan and Russia).

7. Muslim History (a review of events in ancient and modern Islamic history).

Target Audience

The range of articles covered by the magazine indicates that it seeks out two main target audiences: Muslims in the West and Muslims in various arenas of jihad around the world.

The articles addressing Muslims in the West include the following:

- *“To Jihadis in the West”*
- *“Britain on Course for Disaster”*
- *“An Exclusive Interview with the German Jihadi, Brother Abu-Adam”*

The articles addressing Muslims in various arenas of jihad around the world include the following:

- The main editorial in the magazine’s first issue, in which the magazine serves as a platform for passing news among jihadis from various arenas of jihad regarding the battle in their area.¹⁸
- *“Counter-Drone Strategy”*.
- *“Message to Muslims in India”*.

Media

The magazine encourages its readers to keep in touch. At the end of each of the first five issues appears a ‘Contact Us’ section, which includes detailed instructions on how to contact the magazine. Among other things, the magazine explains that one may only contact it by email by

¹⁸ AZAN, March 2013, Issue 01, p. 03.

using the Asrar-ul-Mujahideen (version 2) program, similar to how the magazine, *INSPIRE*, keeps in touch with its readers. In addition, at the end of each issue appears an email address and public key that change from issue to issue in order to secure the communication as much as possible.¹⁹



The contact page that appears at the end of each issue of AZAN

Summary

AZAN is a new magazine that draws inspiration from the magazine, *INSPIRE*, and shares common themes but has not managed to reach the same level in terms of the presentation of its operational content (guidelines on how to carry out terrorist attacks, instructions on how to make bombs, etc.). In addition, like *INSPIRE*, AZAN encourages its readers to keep in touch with the magazine and send it feedback.

AZAN's articles indicate that the magazine seeks out two key target audiences: Muslims in the West and Muslims in various arenas of jihad around the world. In terms of article topics, the magazine material on both the strategic level (for instance, how to deal with drones) and on the conceptual-ideological level (for instance, attacking Western values and mocking the US). If the magazine will continue to be published, it remains to be seen if it will continue along the same lines in coming issues or if it will find a unique voice of its own, separate from that of *INSPIRE*.

¹⁹ AZAN, March 2013, Issue 01, p. 79.

ABOUT THE ICT

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism. ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defense policy. ICT is a non-profit organization located at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel which relies exclusively on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.

ABOUT THE JIHADI MONITORING GROUP

The Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group (JWMG) is a specialized research and analysis team at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT). Composed of researchers fluent in Arabic, the JWMG monitors websites that support and serve the Global Jihad organizations. The unique characteristic of JWMG publications is the team's integration of diverse materials from a wide variety of Arabic sources. JWMG connects each source to larger trends, providing a complete understanding of events on both a local and a global scale.

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