

# Periodical Review: Summary of Information from Jihadi Forums - The Second Half of February 2013

This report summarizes notable events discussed on jihadist Web forums during the second half of February 2013. Following are the main points covered in the report:

- Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaish, the mufti of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), urges Muslims not to relinquish implementing shari'a [Islamic law], and to withstand Western attempts to thwart their efforts. Despite the high cost and many martyrs that this will exact, continued commitment to da'wa and jihad for this sacred purpose will guarantee its success. Al-Rubaish also urges Sunni Arabs, especially those under existential threat from Iranian-backed Shi'ites, to arm themselves and prepare for imminent battle.
- Nigerian jihadist group Boku Haram takes responsibility for kidnapping French citizens from Cameroon – to protest the French-led campaign against jihadists in northern Mali. Ansar Al-Muslimin in the Lands of the Black Africans admits to kidnapping seven foreign citizens in northern Nigeria for the same reason.
- Gazan Salafi-jihadist media center Ibn Taymiyyah urges Muslims to abduct Israeli soldiers and use them as "bargaining chips", and to storm prisons in Israel and the Palestinian Authority so as to release Muslim prisoners.
- The Islamic State of Iraq launches a new jihadist media center: Al-'Itisaam.
- For a limited time only, jihadist media outlet Fursan Al-Balagh welcomes to its ranks new recruits who wish to promote the mujahideen and Islam.
- The jihadist media center Dawat Al-Haq proposed a plan for increasing and strengthening the presence of jihadists in Syria after the fall of the Syrian regime.
- Salafi-jihadist Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) launches its first English-language magazine: *Alrashideen [The Righteous]*.

## New Publications

### *Ideology*

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Raya, which functions under the auspices of The Army of the Nation of Islam in Jerusalem, a Salafi-jihadist group active in the Gaza Strip, published a transcript of a lecture by its emir, Sheikh Abu Hafs al-Maqdisi, on the "Qualities of the Muslim Commander". The lecture itself concerned the characteristics essential to a leader, among them knowledge, patience, wisdom, generosity, determination, rhetorical finesse, and integrity.<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqdisi has spent several stints in Hamas prisons.
- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi posted an article titled, "The Ten Commandments of Zionism". According to the article, the Zionist entity is the only political entity that maintains its integrity by seeking the dissolution of other [entities], the only one that draws its power from the weakness of other peoples, the only country that thrives on dispute, corruption, and ethnic divisiveness. It is no wonder, then, according to the author, that the The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) has concluded that Tel Aviv [sic] cannot cope with challenges and threats without formulating a joint strategy with Washington.

The author claims that the INSS iterates what the American-Israeli strategy must include, if Israel is to continue to rule the Middle East and prevent Islamist movements from coming to power in Arab countries:

1. Reinforce strategic ties and deepen security cooperation between Washington and Tel Aviv; maintain transparent relations, and refrain from taking steps without informing the other party.
2. Prevent Iran from producing an atomic bomb by increasing economic sanctions against it.
3. Prevent Syria from using chemical and biological weapons or transferring them to Hezbollah and other Islamist extremists.
4. Strengthen Israel's peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan.
5. Washington should not insist that construction cease in Jerusalem, and Israel must agree to the policy governing construction in the settlement blocs while returning to the negotiating table with the Palestinians, without any preconditions.
6. If efforts to make peace with the Palestinians fail, Israel will have to take unilateral steps to withdraw from the territories that it believes have no security importance, while maintaining its right to conduct military actions throughout the West Bank.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://vb.beit-almagdes.net/> (Arabic).

7. The Gaza Strip will remain outside of any agreement with the Palestinians, as long as Hamas refuses to accept the conditions of the International Quartet.
  8. Aid should be given to the Hashemite Kingdom [of Jordan], which is economically fragile and unstable, because it supports Israel and the US.
  9. In order to strengthen Syria after [the fall of] Assad, Israel must agree to the American effort and apologize to Turkey.
  10. Actions speak louder than words in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup>
- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum snam-s posted an item on the use of weapons of mass destruction, titled: "Islamic Law and the Disaster of Maintaining Nuclear Weapons". According to the item, many unprecedented disasters have been visited upon this generation, and especially on the Muslim Nation because of weapons of mass destruction – chemical, biological and nuclear weapons – which never before existed, and so were never addressed by [Islam's sages].  
Nevertheless, the item offers religious justification for the prevention of using or having nuclear weapons, which is grounded in the prohibition against destruction and against killing children, women, sheikhs, monks, the disabled and animals. The item further notes that, clearly, weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, are the most dangerous weapons humanity has ever known as they threaten all of humanity, and not only soldiers on the battlefield. Experts warn against nuclear energy meant even for peaceful purposes, since a technical error, a leak in a nuclear reactor, an explosion or an earthquake could lead to total destruction. Moreover, nuclear waste is no less dangerous than are nuclear weapons.  
The item further notes that, according to the true Islam, war should be limited to armies and should not involve the innocent and the weak. Weapons of mass destruction do harm the innocent – for generations, because radioactivity lingers for decades. The item notes that the Muslim declaration of jihad bears no intent to destroy humanity or harm the weak and innocent.<sup>3</sup>
  - In response to publications in the press about an American soldier who claimed to have killed Osama bin Laden, the Islamic press agency Al-Haq published an article titled, "False Heroes". In an interview with *Esquire Magazine* on February 11, 2013, the soldier, who refused to divulge his name, described the capture of Bin Laden.<sup>4</sup> According to "False Heroes", America has the largest military arsenal in the world, but its soldiers lack morale and a willingness to fight. The American soldier is armed with equipment that should be able to crush the enemy, who hasn't one-tenth of the American arsenal; yet, in reality, this is not what happens, as evidenced in

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<sup>2</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.snam-s.net/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>4</sup> For the full interview with the soldier, see [http://www.esquire.com/features/man-who-shot-osama-bin-laden-0313?click=main\\_sr](http://www.esquire.com/features/man-who-shot-osama-bin-laden-0313?click=main_sr) (English).

Afghanistan and Iraq. This is why America – for example, Hollywood – uses Stallone and Schwarzenegger to paint a picture that differs from the truth.<sup>5</sup>

### *Strategy*

- A prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums who goes by the name Abdallah bin Muhammad often analyzes the geo-strategic arena in the Middle East. He recently posted the following two analyses:

- “The Strategy of Inter-Ethnic War in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula”: On the eve of the First World War, a French soldier sent a letter to his son, in which he expressed his fear at what was to come. He ended his letter by advising his son not to bother learning the geography of Europe, which he believed would soon change. According to Bin Muhammad, this is exactly what is happening in the [Persian] Gulf today, given the proximate and, perhaps, approaching wars: a serious war rages in Al-Sham [Greater Syria]; revolution is intensifying in Iraq; civil war threatens Yemen and Lebanon; the riots in Bahrain have yet to be quelled; the political situation in Kuwait is unstable. Bin Muhammad adds that Iran sits amidst this devastation, fanning the flames of war and waiting for developments that will enable it to expand its activities beyond inciting the region’s Shi’ites. This frightening situation is made worse by the indifference of the Gulf’s ruling regimes, which either do not see, or do not want to see, what is happening.

Moreover, and more frightening still, is the tendency of these regimes to foment internal tension. According to Bin Muhammad, this is the first time since these regimes first appeared in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that they face such regional danger, or that their prestige has suffered. This is exacerbated by doubts about the American commitment to protecting the area, now that the US Army has withdrawn from Iraq and decreased its presence in the Gulf, in general, and by fear lest the regime in Saudi Arabia collapse if a succession dispute arises after the king’s death.

Bin Muhammad urges discussion of the cautions that must be taken to protect the peoples of the Gulf the dangers around them. The Jordanian king has described this situation as the prologue to regional war, and Kissinger has described it as the beginning of World War III. Bin Muhammad feels certain that the number of soldiers in the armies of the Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, is insufficient.

Consequently, popular movements that wish to confront a military force [from without] will not be able to rely on local regimes or armies, but rather must

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

amass their own power and knowledge. This is why it is necessary to identify the approaching danger which, according to Bin Muhammad, lies in Iran, which has a foothold in Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Bin Muhammad sees the weakest area of the Arabian Peninsula as being the Gulf coast across from Iran, which is vulnerable to incursion by sea, and which natural resources.

Bin Muhammad recommends avoiding mounting a resistance on the coast, but rather doing so in the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. The forces on the coast could not vanquish an invading force – especially a sizable one like that of Iran. Moreover, they lack a military culture, such that any military conflict in the Gulf states, especially a religious war, would become an improvident adventure.

In fact, before entering such a conflict, it is important to answer key questions such as, What type of political leadership is most suited to this type of conflict? Who forms the most talented military leadership for a popular war against the Shi'ites of the Arabian Peninsula? The political leadership must be completely independent, according to Bin Muhammad, yet an examination of the Arabian Peninsula reveals that the only thing that influences its peoples are tribal allegiances. In the absence of a state, only religious leaders will be able to motivate people, outside of their tribal framework. It is therefore imperative, he states, to unite around clerics who have no ties to the [previous] regime.

According to Bin Muhammad, the only Sunni entity that is waging a professional guerilla war is Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Because AQAP has branches throughout the Islamic world, it is the only group that can confront the Shi'ite alliance: AQAP's presence in Afghanistan places it near the Iranian border in Baluchistan, an area rich in jihadists; its presence in Iraq puts it at the center of the Shi'ite alliance; its presence in Syria distracts the Alawites, who are allies of the Shi'ites; its presence in Lebanon will help spark a war against the parties of Satan; its presence in Yemen will help curtail the plans of the Houthis, preventing them from moving toward Abyan and Al-Jawf and eliminating their most prominent leaders such as Badreddin al-Houthi [a spiritual leader of the Houthi movement]. As proof, Bin Muhammad notes that while the Houthi movement has outlasted the Yemeni Army in six consecutive wars, it is not able to overcome the jihadist tribal alliance, which has managed to contain it in Dammaj and elsewhere.

According to Bin Muhammad, the decade-long world war being waged against Al-Qaeda by the US and other nations under the guise of a "war on terrorism" has not changed or influenced Al-Qaeda's principles. Despite eliminating

many of Al-Qaeda's leaders, including Osama bin Laden, this war has not succeeded in eradicating Al-Qaeda. In contrast, Al-Qaeda, which entered this international war on September 11 [2001], has expanded its initially small foothold in Afghanistan to Al-Sham [Greater Syria], Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Algeria and Mali, and has established networks of alliances in Nigeria, the Sinai Peninsula and the Caucasus.

In summary, Bin Muhammad urges Sunnis in the Gulf think seriously entering the strategic heartland of the Arabian Peninsula, and uniting around religious and jihadist leaders, especially former prisoners and AQAP's mujahideen at their base in Yemen or in the Najd, Hejaz or Asir.<sup>6</sup>

- "The Program to Destroy Jihadist and Popular Activism in the Arabian Peninsula": Abdallah Bin Muhammad begins this analysis by noting that Saudi Arabian Minister of the Interior Muhammad bin Naif has recently been emulating his grandfather, Abd al-Aziz, who exploited the presence of the Ikhwan to evict those who opposed him. The Ikhwan were a religious militia composed of Bedouin tribes, which was established by Ibn Saud and which constituted his principal military force. According to Bin Muhammad, this militia fell apart when Ibn Saud betrayed it during the massacre at Sabilla in 1929, and following related fatwas [Islamic-legal rulings] issued by certain religious clerics.

Bin Naif and others in the Saud family are playing a game of "musical chairs", writes Bin Muhammad: that is, everyone is plotting and circling the throne in an attempt to sit in it before anyone else can. Since Bin Naif, as minister of the interior, also heads Saudi Arabia's security apparatus, he is using security methods in this game, and exploiting information about the death of Said al-Shihri, a prominent member of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), to generate an atmosphere that will serve him in the future.

Moreover, this was part of an intelligence program meant to force the old guard leaders of jihad to establish a new organization, on the pretext that the alliance between the mujahideen of Saudi Arabia and Yemen had ended. This plan not only served the aspirations of Bin Naif, but also met the shared goals of the US and Saudi Arabia, which wish to dismantle AQAP in Yemen by isolating it and turning it into a local Yemeni organization only. According to Bin Muhammad, this is ironic: Muhammad bin Naif, who succeeded in

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<http://strategy.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AC-%D9%88;> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/> (both in Arabic).

eliminating the jihadist movement in Saudi Arabia several years ago, is now trying to breathe new life into it.

In 2011, America ranked AQAP as the most dangerous of Al-Qaeda's branches, not because it had succeeded in entering America [the planned attack in Detroit], or because it had taken control of Abyan Governorate within days, or because it had succeeded in surviving the American offensive in Abyan and Shabwa, but rather because it has a balanced, flexible policy that enables it to meet every challenge. This is why the US treats AQAP as a constant danger; it is why the US has established two air bases for drone flights, in Djibouti and Saudi Arabia, and placed their largest command center in the Middle East at Al-Anad in southern Yemen. These military steps were contrary to America's stated policy of not engaging in any conflict after withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan, especially in light of the economic crisis. However, the difficulty of eradicating Al-Qaeda in Yemen had forced the Americans to continue to fight.

In response, the Yemenis had begun supporting Al-Qaeda, for example by raising its banner in Bayda Governorate following American drone attacks on civilians. Also, citizens had begun participating in military skirmishes alongside AQAP, for example in the battle at Rada', considered the first popular movement that Al-Qaeda had managed to organize in its war against the US and its agents. At the same time, Al-Qaeda promotes a quiet movement in Saudi Arabia, proving the balanced wisdom of its leadership. The US and the regimes in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Oman, for example, are trying to eliminate Al-Qaeda's leadership through assassinations, attempts to buy the loyalty of jihadist groups and to divide or isolate elements not affiliated with the state. However, events have proved that AQAP can withstand such plots, under the harshest conditions. In fact the recent announcement of the death of Al-Shahri did not affect AQAP or its ties to Al-Qaeda central or global Al-Qaeda's branches.

In conclusion, Bin Muhammad states that the region is on the brink of war and significant events that will redraw the political map of the Arabian Peninsula. He urges "everyone" to preserve their stamina and invest it in the time and place appropriate to preventing the Saud Family from exploiting it as had their forefathers. According to Bin Muhammad, all parties in Syria and the Gulf should collaborate with their brothers in Yemen to prepare for the coming conflict, of which AQAP is the spearhead.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

- In Mali, fragments of a notebook were discovered under a pile of papers and trash in a building in Timbuktu that had been controlled by mujahideen for nearly a year. The notebook, issued by the leadership of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its Majlis Al-Shura [advisory council], contains guidelines on fighting in the Sahara and the future of the jihadist endeavor in Azawad. The notebook was signed by AQIM's leader, Abu Musab 'Abd al-Wadud, aka Abd al-Malik Droukdel.<sup>8</sup>

The notebook's fragments comprise four sections. The first of these is three pages long; although effaced in part, the information in it appears to address strategic aspects of jihad, which are essential to the administrative and operative leadership of Al-Qaeda.

The analysis of strategy presented in the notebook forecasts that various international forces will interfere – militarily, politically, economically and through propaganda – in the jihadists' attempt to establish an Islamic state in Azawad. This suggests that the notebook was written before the military onslaught in Mali.

The writers of the notebook opine that the time is not yet ripe to establish an Islamic state. They recommend that jihadists minister to the needs of the residents of Azawad, so as to tether them to the Islamic project. Not only will this bridge social gaps among the residents – Arabs, Tuareg, blacks, various resistance fighters – but it will also ensure the success of the Islamic project in the future. Furthermore, building bridges among the residents of Azawad will improve the standing of the mujahideen; it will relieve their isolation and integrate them into the fabric of society. Even if the Islamic project fails, the writers claim, it is nevertheless worthwhile to engage residents' hearts and minds, as it is always worthwhile to plant and tend seeds, which may grow rapidly in the future.

The writers of the notebook comment on what they called "erroneous policies" for implementing shari'a [Islamic law] in Azawad, which had been attempted too quickly, without considering the locals' entrenched ignorance of Islam – a result of the failure to implement shari'a for hundreds of years. The writers of the notebook note that experience had taught them that, in the absence of the proper religious orientation, people were liable to react [to attempts to implement shari'a] with anger and hatred toward the mujahideen, and to reject Islam, signalling the failure of the project. They therefore recommend preparing the ground for the implementation of shari'a, by using da'wa [proselytizing] to educate and persuade the public. They then give examples reflecting what they saw as the undue haste used in implementing shari'a in northern Mali: the enforcement of the Qur'anic laws of Al-Had, which mandate the whipping of adulterers and prohibit women from leaving their homes. They clarify that such conduct, even at the individual level, contradicts Al-Salaf [Salafism]. Those

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<sup>8</sup> <http://h-azawad.com/> (Arabic).

in charge should “control themselves”, they write, and see to it that their underlings do, too.

The writers then discuss the interesting point that consolidating the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad and the Arab Islamic Front of Azawad would help the war effort, and share the responsibility, with Al-Qaeda, for the Islamic project, such that if it failed, Al-Qaeda and its allies would not be forced to bear the blame alone. Moreover, they add, despite Al-Qaeda’s importance, it does not have the financial or military wherewithal to meet regional and international challenges alone; consequently, the success of the Islamic project necessitates engaging the residents of Azawad.

The second section of the notebook covers one page only, such that its relationship to the original document is fragmentary. This section addresses Al-Qaeda’s attempts to collaborate with its Salafist-jihadist affiliate, Ansar Al-Din, while maintaining global jihad and continuing to fight in Azawad. Doing both, they write, is “a true dilemma”; the writers stress that this dilemma must be treated most seriously, and consult on it to the extent possible. They then present two alternatives, at which they arrived in consultation with prominent jihadist leaders such as Ansar Al-Din Emir Iyad Ag Ghaly, aka Abu al-Fadl. The notebook records these alternatives as follows:

1. The first alternative, preserved in part only, may be understood as a proposal that Al-Qaeda share hierarchy with Ansar Al-Din thus: (a) the emir of Al-Qaeda would defer to and support the emir of Ansar Al-Din on all matters of joint “internal activity” related to the liberation of the territories [of Azawad]; (b) Al-Qaeda would act independent of Ansar Al-Din on all matters relating to global jihad.
2. The second alternative stated that some of Al-Qaeda’s mujahideen would be “lent” to Ansar Al-Din, fighting under its emir and sharing the administration of liberated cities. In time, these fighters would be allowed to become part of the nation of Azawad, whose constitution (if there were one) would grant them citizenship and a sense of belonging. Other mujahideen of Al-Qaeda fighters would fight independent of Ansar Al-Din, primarily outside the areas controlled by Ansar Al-Din.

The third section of the notebook, which is also fragmentary, is apparently meant to convince the reader that gradual actions are best. For example, the section begins by comparing the Islamic project in Azawad to a new-born baby who faces many challenges on the way to maturity and so must have his way eased. The text suggests that this is a metaphor for the pressure that is being exerted on Al-Qaeda to increase its activity; this impression is further reinforced later on, by the statement that Al-Qaeda must adopt a plan of action devoid of rivalries and

provocations, and in fact must strive to gain allies and to maintain flexibility as necessary to the overall effort. To this end, the writers recall the historic precedent of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, a ceasefire agreement signed by the Prophet Muhammad with the idolaters of Mecca and maintained until the Muslims had gathered enough strength to defeat them by force (as is commonly interpreted). The writers stress the lesson of this precedent: giving in does not necessarily mean giving up, or surrendering to something prohibited or heretical. In effect, the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah ultimately enabled the Muslims to gain more than they had lost, by wisely balancing a temporary alliance and jihad. The leadership of Al-Qaeda appears to draw inspiration from this precedent, which it sees as a shining example of how to confront challenges, such as those it faces today.

The third section also hints at disagreement within the leadership of Al-Qaeda regarding collaboration with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad. The writers make clear their feeling that battling the Movement, with which negotiations had almost culminated in agreement, is an immense mistake which will damage the Islamic project. They insist that it is possible to resolve crises in relationships by means other than war.

The fourth section of the notebook, most of which appears to have been erased or torn out, offers little useful information. It appears to address the details of the above-noted agreement between Ansar Al-Din and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad – although the principles of the agreement, which apparently originally appeared in full, are missing.

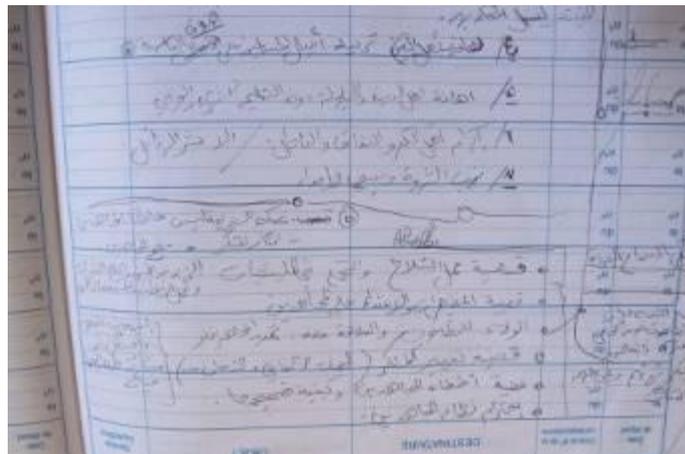
In addition to these four sections of the notebook, two additional, “obscure” fragments were found. According to the first fragment, Al-Qaeda had intended to encompass all men and women of Islam, as part of its dream of establishing an Islamist regime founded on Islamic law [shari’a]. The writers stress the unique role in realizing this dream of the mujahideen, whom they describe as “the beating heart of the Muslim nation”.

More importantly, this fragment covers what is described as “foreign policy”. Although the partial nature of this fragment makes it difficult to understand, it appears that the formulated important rhetorical guidelines for their colleagues in the Sahara. These include an exhortation to act with caution and moderation, reassuring and convincing their audience [of the rightness of their path]. The fragment states that it would be best, rhetorically and otherwise, for the mujahideen to “sit quietly” and pretend to be a local movement with local goals and concerns, and not to identify themselves as having a jihadist orientation or an affiliation with Al-Qaeda.

The intended audience of the second fragment – colleagues in the Sahara, sources of authority in Al-Qaeda, or both – addresses the shaping of Muslim opinion worldwide.

Instead of engaging in accusations of takfir [accusing someone else of heresy], divisiveness, and other matters that will be lost on the young guard, it is better to engage in dialog about the defense of the Muslims against those who would martyr them. The fragment suggests doing this by expanding the front of conflict with the enemy to the maximum. This clearly indicates that any incitement emanating from Al-Qaeda is dictated by its leadership.

In parts, the second fragment is also very similar to sections of the notebook discussed above, and so may be seen as a draft of the notebook. This fragment does also recommend how activists should behave: they are instructed to blend into society, especially with the most upstanding members of society.



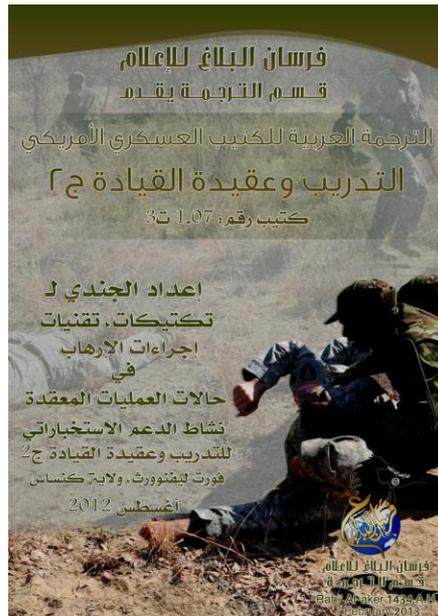
**A page from the notebook**

#### *Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets*

- The jihadist media outlet Fursan Al-Balagh published the second part of a US Army guide, translated from the original English into Arabic: "US Army Training and Doctrine Command" (103 pp.). The guide provides information about Islamist terrorism and how to confront it. The current edition of the English-language guide is dated 2012.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).



### The cover of the Arabic translation of "US Army Training and Doctrine Command"

- A visitor to the forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi uploaded an instructional video from YouTube on how to easily prepare a homemade bomb.<sup>10</sup>
- A supervisor of the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen announced the opening of an online course in using Photoshop to design banners and other graphic media promoting jihad.<sup>11</sup>

### Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- The propaganda arm of the Emirate of Dagestan announced the death of the Emir of Khasavyurt and Northern Dagestan, his deputy, and several other prominent leaders in clashes with Russian forces on February 16-17, 2013.<sup>12</sup>



Recently martyred jihadist leaders of Dagestan

<sup>10</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

- A woman visitor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam eulogized a Sudanese mujahid named Abu Hazem al-Sudani, who had fought in multiple arenas of jihad, including Afghanistan in the 1980s, the Philippines and Chechnya. She claimed that al-Sudani had spent time in a Sudanese prison, where he was interrogated by the CIA, and that he was killed in Mali while fighting France and its allies.<sup>13</sup>
- The jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam published a list of 39 martyrs from Kuwait, who were killed in skirmishes with the Alawite regime in Syria.<sup>14</sup>
- On its Facebook page, Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia eulogized several of its members who fell in armed clashes against the regime in Syria, among them Muhammad Sharif, who was killed in Aleppo on February 17, 2012,<sup>15</sup> and Ayman Lahkiri.<sup>16</sup>



**Muhammad Sharif (l.) and Ayman Lahkiri (r.)**

- Liwa Al-Mujahideen, a Salafist-jihadist group active in Latakia, Syria, produced a video clip in memory of Abdallah al-Shishani, who was killed in a battle against the Syrian Army on January 20, 2013. The clip shows al-Shishani relating his experiences as a mujahid and describing his role training infantrymen for Katibat Al-Muhajireen [Brigade of Immigrants], which is fighting the Assad regime.<sup>17</sup> The clip offers additional evidence that Chechens are fighting alongside Islamist rebels and contributing their experience to the revolt against the Syrian regime.
- The jihadist propaganda group Masami' Al-Kheir lil-Inshad and the jihadist media outlet Al-Malahem, an affiliate of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published a collection of hymns titled, "Martyrs' Spring".<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <http://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>14</sup> <http://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=533009283389305&set=a.532439016779665.112987.532410310115869&type=1&theater> (Arabic).

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<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=497635750271924&set=a.495104693858363.13818350.495094603859372&type=1&theater> (Arabic).

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsYXy\\_0t0Qc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsYXy_0t0Qc) (Arabic).

<sup>18</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).



#### Downloadable odes to the martyrs of jihad

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab, which serves as a platform for Al-Qaeda, published a eulogy by Ustad Ahmad Farooq, who is in charge of da'wa [proselytizing] for Al-Qaeda in Pakistan, in memory of the engineer Ahsan Aziz, a senior member of the Kashmir Liberation Movement who had fought jihad against the US in Afghanistan. On August 18, 2012, Aziz and his wife were killed by a US drone missile while eating in Shuwedar, a village on the northern border of Afghanistan. Farooq's eulogy revealed new details about the status of Aziz, who had apparently played a pivotal role in Al-Qaeda, and had founded a jihadist media outlet in Urdu.<sup>19</sup>



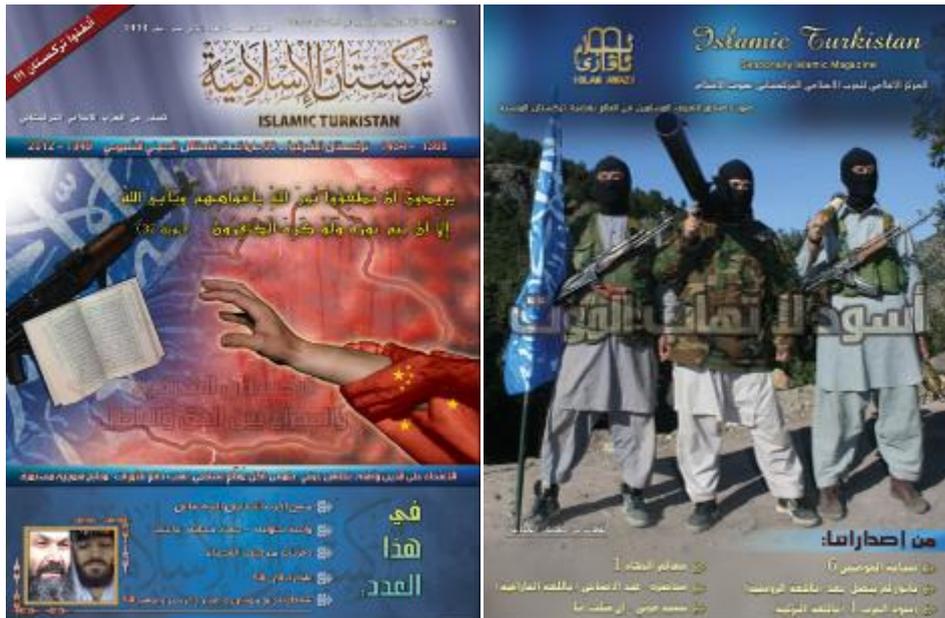
From the video eulogy of Ahsan Aziz

#### Magazines

- Issue No. 12 was published of the magazine *Islamic Turkistan* (56 pp.) by the Turkistan Islamic Party.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



The front and back covers of the latest issue of *Islamic Turkistan*

- On February 28, 2013, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), a Pakistani Salafist-jihadist group, launched an English-language jihadist magazine titled, *Alrashideen* [*The Righteous*].<sup>21</sup>



The cover of the maiden issue of *Alrashideen*

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.jhuf.net/showthread.php?17500> (English); see also the Web site of the magazine, <http://alrashideen.weebly.com> (English).

## Reports from the Field

### *Afghanistan-Pakistan*

- During the latter half of February 2013, the jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab, a the trumpet for Al-Qaeda, published the following:
  - Parts I and II of the new video series “Shari’a or a Republic?”, in Urdu.<sup>22</sup>
  - A sermon titled, “In the Name of Honesty” by Sheikh Ahmad Farooq, who oversees da’wa [missionary activity] for Al-Qaeda in Pakistan.<sup>23</sup>
  - Another sermon by Sheikh Ahmad Farooq, titled, “Guarding the Heart”.<sup>24</sup>
- During the latter half of February, 2013, the jihadist media outlet Umar, which functions under the auspices of the Pakistan-Taliban, published a video clip titled, “The Blow of the Believer (Part III): Actions and Victories of the Mujahideen in Mahsud”.<sup>25</sup>
- The translation department of the Urdu-language jihadist Web forum Ahya’ Al-Islam Network published an English translation of the video clip, “Sniper Operation Against the Apostate Afghan Army”. Produced by the jihadist media outlet Badr Al-Tawheed, which functions under the auspices of the Islamic Jihad Union, the video was issued because it records the first live event filmed in 2013.<sup>26</sup>

### *Iraq*

- During the latter half of February 2013, the Islamic State of Iraq published an announcement taking responsibility for a series of terrorist attacks against Shi’ite security installations in Baghdad, in response to the Shi’ite government’s persecution of the city’s Sunni population.<sup>27</sup>
- Shumukh Al-Islam, a prominent jihadist Web forum, published an interview conducted by Al-Tayyeb al-Ansari, a human rights activist on behalf of prisoners being held in Iraq, with a prisoner who had immigrated [to Iraq] from Saudi Arabia. The two discussed the danger to the lives of Sunni prisoners in Iraqi prisons run by Shi’ites.<sup>28</sup>
- Shumukh Al-Islam published an audio file containing verses of an ode to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq. Written by a mujahid imprisoned in Iraq, the ode urges al-Baghdadi to liberate the Sunni prisoners from the prisons of Iraq’s Shi’ite infidels.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb>; <http://aljahad.com/vb> (both in Arabic).

<sup>23</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>24</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>25</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>26</sup> <http://ahyaislam.com/vb> (English).

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



**The banner advertising the ode to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**

- On February 21, 2013, the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) launched a new jihadist media outlet, Al-'Itisam, which will function under the auspices of the Islamic State of Iraq. The GIMF further announced that it had been authorized to disseminate Al-'Itisam's publications on the Internet. According to the GIMF, the official publications of the Islamic State of Iraq would now be issued through two media outlets: (a) Al-Furqan, which is run by the Al-Fajr Center; and (b) Al-'Itisam.<sup>30</sup>



**The logo of the new jihadist media outlet Al-'Itisam**

- During the latter half of February 2013, the Islamic State of Iraq uploaded a position paper was uploaded to the Web forum Shabakat Al-Jihad Al-'Alami [Global Jihad Network]. The position paper stated unequivocally that the mujahideen of the Islamic State of Iraq would perpetrate attacks in Baghdad, the capital, in retaliation for the recent crimes of the so-called Safavid government against the Sunni minority. "Safavid" was used as an epithet to disparage the Shi'ite government of Iraq, and is often used in this way by Iraq's Sunni minority. It derives its negative connotation from the Iranian-Shi'ite Safavid Dynasty, which ruled a vast expanse of territory, most of it Persian, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as certain territories in the Caucasus and Asia (including much of present-day Iraq and Afghanistan). This position paper illuminates relations between the Sunni minority and the Shi'ite

<sup>30</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

majority in Iraq, and evidences the situation of Sunnis and their resistance activists in general, and particularly in Baghdad.

According to the position paper, the leadership of the Islamic State of Iraq in Baghdad has decided to return fire against the oppressive policies of the Shi'ite regime. The Sunnis claim to be prey to surprise attacks by the Shi'ite gangs that roam their neighborhoods; to imprisonment and exile; to murder and humiliation; to withheld wages; and to general neglect. The Islamic State of Iraq expressed its willingness to violently re-infiltrate Shi'ite areas of Baghdad, despite the harsh response of the Shi'ite rulers to even moderate displays of protest, such as the demonstrations that have been continuing for long weeks throughout Iraq.

The position paper also directly addressed the Sunnis of Baghdad, stating that jihadist had for years warned against just such a situation. In fact, the Sunni minority had a hand in the current situation, because it had allowed the rise of democracy, under whose guise the Shi'ites had exposed the Sunnis to attack, desecrated their honor, stolen their money and imprisoned their sons and daughters. Much of the position paper was devoted to citing the comments of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi (d. 2010), who is known to have headed the Mujahideen Shura Council, a Salafi-jihadist umbrella organization, as well as the Islamic State of Iraq. Al-Baghdadi's approach and that of the position paper, especially concerning Shi'ite crimes against Sunnis, are quite similar. One of the most interesting claims against democracy made by al-Baghdadi echoes the result of research into the impact of the Bible and the Qur'an and Sunna on the formulation of the religious ethos of the Middle East.<sup>31</sup> Al-Baghdadi compared the myth of the golden calf – which is discussed in extremely negative terms in Islamic religious discourse – to democratic rule: both seem to sparkle and glitter with gold, to tinkle with bells, yet both are equally hollow, making a meaningless noise. Since Muslim religious discourse against the worship of the golden calf has been taken up by jihadist discourse, it is not surprising that al-Baghdadi found it comparable to democracy, which is often portrayed in radical Islamist discourse as a form of idolatry.<sup>32</sup>

In this context, members of the jihadist Web forum Hanein uploaded a video eulogy to YouTube, which praised a member of the Islamic State of Iraq who fell in late February; the video received accolades, support and empathy.<sup>33</sup>

- The Sunni-Shi'ite conflict continues to engage visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein, who discussed pamphlets distributed by members of the Shi'ite organization

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<sup>31</sup> Rubin, Uri (2001). "Traditions in Transformation. The Ark of the Covenant and the Golden Calf in Biblical and Islamic Historiography," *Oriens* 36:196-214.

<sup>32</sup> <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXOONBp2yTU> (both in Arabic).

'Asa'ib 'Ahl Al-Haq,<sup>34</sup> which instructed Sunni residents of Diyala Province to leave their homes within 48 hours lest they and their families wished to face mortal danger. Some forum visitors commented that this was just one more in a series of acts by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's gangs; others wondered why the pamphlet used the word nawasib, which refers to members of the Prophet's family.<sup>35</sup>



**The pamphlet distributed by 'Asa'ib 'Ahl Al-Haq, calling for the expulsion of all Sunnis from Iraq**

#### *The Arabian Peninsula*

- During the latter half of February 2013, the jihadist media outlet Al-Malahem, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published the following:
  - Announcement No. 63, denying the spread of Shia Islam throughout Hadramaut Governorate, Yemen reported by the Web portal Aden Online on February 24, 2013.<sup>36</sup>
  - An audio statement titled, "Who Will Pay the Price of Implementing Shari'a [Islamic Law]?" by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaish, the mufti of AQAP.<sup>37</sup> Citing the importance of implementing shari'a, al-Rubaish noted that it was this that the West feared, and not the prayer and fasting that Islam commands. If shari'a is fully implemented, the West will no longer be able to rule Muslim lands and plunder their resources – this is why it is trying so hard to thwart shari'a's implementation. Surely, Muslims would oppose any effort by the West to prevent them from fasting during Ramadan. Why then do they not fight the West's efforts to impede the implementation of shari'a? According to al-

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.almoslim.net/> (Arabic).

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>37</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

Rubaish, every Muslim is obligated to promote the passage of shari'a, through propaganda or da'wa [proselytizing]. At the same time, the Muslims must prepare for battle, as the implementation of shari'a will have victims: if the secular reality is to be changed, and a regime based on shari'a founded, the Muslims will have to pay with their blood. Even though many will die in the effort, shari'a is dearer than gold, and is implemented for Allah's sake. Shari's implementation will exact the same price as did evicting the US from Iraq, and as will eliminating the Jews from Palestine.



#### **Ibrahim al-Rubaish on the sacrifices necessary for implementing shari'a**

- A video clip of an interview with AQAP Mufti Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaish, in which he discusses Obama's unfulfilled promise to free all prisoners from Guantanamo; Muslim rage against the US and its embassies, which was unleashed by American desecration of the Prophet Muhammad; America's battle against the mujahideen in Yemen; the Shi'ite threat to Yemen and the entire region; and the obligation to wage jihad against the Alawites in Syria. Al-Rubaish also sent two messages to the Muslims. One reminded Muslims that their support for the mujahideen, who defend the Muslim Nation against its enemies, is very important. The other exhorted Muslims facing an existential threat from Shi'ites to wage jihad against them. To this end, he noted, they must arm and train even their women and children to use weapons. He urged them to establish armed militias under the leadership of experienced mujahideen, so that they might protect themselves if chaos erupted. Al-Rubaish then addressed the recent release of Islamist prisoners from Saudi Arabian prisons.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).



**From a videotaped interview of AQAP Mufti Ibrahim al-Rubaish**

- An article by Ibrahim al-Rubaish criticizing Islamic legal scholar 'Abd al-'Aziz Fawzan for denouncing Al-Qaeda and the mujahideen in Mali on Al-Jawab Al-Kafi [The Sufficient Answer], a program aired on the Al-Majd television network.<sup>39</sup>
- AQAP member Abu Bashar praised all those who promulgate jihad on Web forums and in video and audio clips. He added that jihad is obligatory for all Muslims.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Al-Sham [Greater Syria]*

*Chechen jihadists continue to fight alongside the Al-Nusrah Front against President Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. For example, the Muhajireen Brigade, which comprises members of the Caucasus Emirate and is led by Abu Omar al-Chechen, a commander from the Russian Caucasus,<sup>41</sup> has been involved in several attacks on Syrian military targets during the past year.<sup>42</sup>*

- During the latter half of February 2013, the Al-Nusrah Front published the following:
  - Announcements 246-258, taking responsibility for various military and terrorist attacks against Syrian regime forces.<sup>43</sup>
  - Two video clips, Parts VII and VIII of a series of publications titled, "The Beginning of the End". Part VII documents a suicide attack against Syrian regime forces as revenge for the latter's massacre of residents of the village Al-Mastuma. Part VIII documents a suicide attack against the main office of the Syrian Ministry of the Interior and Internal Security Services.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/02/chechen\\_commander\\_le.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/02/chechen_commander_le.php) (English).

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/02/chechen\\_commander\\_le.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/02/chechen_commander_le.php) (English).

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



**Banners for Parts VII (l.) and VIII (r.) of "The Beginning of the End"**

- A contributor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi published an article titled, "How the Al-Nusra Front is Winning Hearts". According to the article, in the midst of the divisiveness and anarchy in Syria, the men of the Al-Nusra Front work quietly and conscientiously, while the fighters of the Free Syrian Army wield their weapons and mobile phones to commandeer the media and public support. The mujahideen of the Al-Nusra Front draw on their experience in Iraq and Yemen in fighting and in serving the people, and it is this that captures people's hearts and forges strong local ties.

The article also cites lessons learned from the jihad in Iraq, which the author would like to see implemented in Syria: avoiding accusing people of apostasy [takfir] in public, appointing foreign commanders and emirs and using suicide attacks – unless absolutely essential. The Al-Nusra Front, the article states, has earned "brownie points" because its young members, carefully selected for their commitment and diligently trained, fight to their last breath. In fact, the Al-Nusra Front is considered the best of "schools"; the sons of officers and leaders flock to it. The article quotes someone named Abu Bakri as saying that, thanks to the Al-Nusra Front, his son Bakri "is learning what it really means to fight. He is developing a strong character and has even stopped smoking. These are things that we, as fathers and commanders, cannot do".<sup>45</sup>

- The Islamic press agency Al-Haq, which is identified with global jihad, quoted comments made by former Muslim Brotherhood leaders Haytham Abu Khalil on his Facebook page. Abu Khalil had launched a petition on Facebook, and hoped to gather one million signatures, to convince the Brotherhood's Ministry of Guidance to physically join jihad in Syria and not let rhetoric suffice. If it did so, the Muslim Brotherhood would earn historical credit for being at the forefront of the fray.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



**Haytham Abu Khalil**

- Ahrar Al-Sham published a video clip and photographs documenting its members liberating Al-Jerah Airport, near Aleppo.<sup>47</sup>



**An advertisement for the video clip posted by Ahrar Al-Sham**

- In mid-February 2013, an anonymous post appeared on the global jihad Web forum [Al-Jihad Al-'Alami] in support of the Salafi-jihadist Al-Nusra Front.<sup>48</sup>

The post claimed that while Syria was sunk in military chaos and civil anarchy, Liwa' Al-Tawhid, the fighting force of the Free Syrian Army, which heads several armed brigades in the vicinity of Aleppo,<sup>49</sup> is trying to correct the sorry situation, albeit belatedly. The Al-Nusra Front, a Salafi-jihadist group suspected of having ties to Al-Qaeda, is also part of the chaos. However, while Liwa' Al-Tawhid's fighters carry on with braggadocio, ostentatiously waving their cordless telephones and wielding a brazen violence, the fighters of the Al-Nusra Front keep a low profile, cognizant as they are to the effectiveness of silence and secrecy. According to the post, the Al-Nusra Front was engaged not only in battle but also in providing social services and forging strong ties with the residents of Aleppo and environs, whose trust they had earned. The leaders of Liwa' Al-Tawhid complained that they lacked money and weapons, and that their fighters lacked discipline – especially during their allegedly brief (20 days) training period. In contrast, men who wished to join the Al-Nusra Front had to pass admissions tests and be able to perform strict military exercises, thanks to the assignment of commanders to well-defined areas of command, allowing for simple and clear coordination.

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>48</sup> <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>49</sup> <http://lewaaltawheed.com/> (Arabic).



**The logo of Liwa' Al-Tawhid (l.) and the banner of the Al-Nusra Front (r.)**

Much of this post was devoted to addressing the Al-Nusra Front's contribution to social welfare. For example, the Front's fighters lived in special camps on the outskirts of villages, and made sure that residents received basic goods, through the Front's distribution centers. According to the post, such work was integral to jihad, which begins with the distribution of loaves of bread and ends with martyrdom for Allah. According to the post, the Al-Nusra Front had succeeded in taking control of such essentials as bakeries, oil refineries, and the border with Turkey. Although the fuel produced by the Front is not good enough to be used in cars, the writer admitted, it can at least be used to heat homes in areas where there is no electricity. The writer noted that if the Al-Nusra Front could succeed in taking control of most of the bakeries in the country, citizens would not rebel against it; he added that a guard had been set to watch over one bakery in Aleppo's Tarik Al-Bab neighborhood, to block malefactors and insurgents. According to the post that, one advantage of commandeering these bakeries lay in the ability of the Al-Nusra Front to sell a loaf of bread at only 24 Syrian pounds a loaf, compared to 250 pounds during the great crisis or 150 pounds a loaf in areas controlled by the regime. The post also reported that residents were volunteering to help the Al-Nusra Front to fairly distribute food, so that each family received what it needed, based on the number of people in the family.

The writer of the post also praised the Al-Nusra Front for learning from others' bitter experience: it guarded against public takfir [accusing others of being apostates]; it rarely appointed foreign commanders; and it used suicide attacks only when they were essential. The writer added that the Al-Nusra Front did not need charity from anyone, as it succeeded in obtaining weapons and funding on its own.

The post also discussed the relationship between the Al-Nusra Front and other forces fighting in Syria. The post noted that, ideologically, the Al-Nusra Front shared a common denominator with Ahrar Al-Sham, a Salafi-jihadist group fighting to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Operationally, the Al-Nusra Front is cooperating and coordinating its activities with Liwa' Al-Tawhid. The post also

favorably cited Liwa' Al-Nasr, a more secular group whose members nevertheless seem to be just and honest, such that there is no reason for them not to be included in The Front for the Liberation of Islamic Syria [Jabzhat Tahrir Suriyya Al-Islamiyya], an umbrella organization which, in January 2013, joined forces with Liwa' Al-Tawhid.<sup>50</sup>



**The relationship between Liwa' Al-Tawhid and other groups**

The increased concern with Liwa' Al-Tawhid's relationship with the other groups fighting in Syria, and its presentation as cumbersome and unprofessional compared to the Al-Nusra Front, may indicate a certain rivalry between the two, given that both aspire to hegemony in leading the coalition that is struggling to topple the Assad regime. In fact, the writer later notes that Abu Tawfik, who heads Liwa' Al-Tawhid, treats the Al-Nusra Front "like a lover" – that is, he courts it and spurns it by turns.

It appears that this post was written by a member of the Al-Nusra Front – or perhaps by someone ideologically affiliated with it. The post consequently provides some insight into the Front's relationship with Syrian civilians, as well as into the balance of power between the Front and the other fighting forces, chiefly the Free Syrian Army and its satellites. The post does seem to suggest a rivalry between the

<sup>50</sup> <http://bit.ly/WWqmVx> (Arabic).

Front and the Free Syrian Army; if the Assad regime does indeed come to an end, the civil war in Syria may enter a new phase, in which the various groups now fighting the regime will have to find a way form a new regime encompassing all of their varied ideologies.<sup>51</sup>

- A prominent member of the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida who goes by the moniker Abu Mohamed quoted a tweet in which a journalist named Abd al-Razaq al-Jamal suggested that the Al-Nusra Front establish a press agency to cover its activities and publish a weekly bulletin and monthly announcements and video clips. In so doing, the Al-Nusra Front would be following in the footsteps of Ansar Al-Sharia in Yemen, which runs the media outlet Madad, and the mujahideen in Mali, who maintain a media agency named Eye on Azawad.<sup>52</sup>
- The Al-Haq Center for Study and Research published a program for strengthening the mujahideen in Syria, especially their leadership. The writer stressed that his comments were meant not as a political analysis but as a plan of action for the leaders and decision-makers of Islamist fronts, movements, groups, brigades and platoons of mujahideen in Syria. The plan is meant to ensure that the fall of the Assad regime does not leave a vacuum to be filled by opportunistic politicians and military commanders previously associated with the regime.

Now that the struggle between the mujahideen and revolutionaries, on one side, and the nuseiri<sup>53</sup> [sic] regime, on the other, is intensifying, it is clear that the collapse of the regime is only a matter of time. This is why the Western Crusader forces headed by the US and France and their Arab allies are preparing for an alternative Syrian regime.

The Crusader West and Arab regimes want to thwart the Muslim mujahideen, the true victors, the ones who uprooted the Syrian regime and who must continue to lead the Muslim Syrians and establish an Islamic regime, just as they led the struggle against the enemy. The writer added that his plan would require the leaders of Islamic mujahideen to cooperate, and aid and consult one another to reach their goal, which cannot be reached by any one group alone. His program for political reinforcement is as follows:

1. The mujahideen must administer the liberated territories by appointing and publicly naming a political leadership. These territories will be divided among the leaders of the mujahideen, who will form a political decision-making body. The

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<sup>51</sup> <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>52</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>53</sup> "Nuseiri" is used as a negative epithet for the Alawite sect in Syria. Taken from the Arabic root from which the word for "Christian" is derived, "nuseiri" is used to imply the Christian origin of some Alawite beliefs.

leaders will consult one another in choosing a chairman of this body, who will be considered the legitimate representative of the Syrian people.

2. When establishing the political leadership, care should be to ensure that every group active in the field is represented.
3. The political body will take responsibility for preparing, organizing and supervising the reconstruction of Syria's government, constitution and society.
4. When making political speeches recorded by the media, it will be necessary to maintain a certain indistinctness, and not say anything specific.

The program for strengthening the military:

The West is training a political leadership that will be its ally, and is overseeing the reconstruction of a Syrian Army, composed primarily of defectors from the current Syrian Army, that will be putty in the hands of the political establishment. To ensure its strength in the face of the mighty mujahideen, after the fall of the regime, the new army will also incorporate soldiers who are currently fighting the people.

The mujahideen and their revolutionary allies will have to form a new armed body to occupy every area that is liberated, and to establish an administrative-military body that will block the entry of pro-Western agents. The mujahideen will also have to establish a police force in all areas.

The program for strengthening the economy and administration:

In the areas they have liberated, the mujahideen are gradually taking control of state financial institutions and the organizations trained by them to run these institutions. Particular attention must be paid to running the airports, the ports and the border crossings; to controlling the oil and energy markets, and to administering electricity, water and industrial and agricultural production.

The mujahideen are also establishing service provision agencies, which will play a significant role in the future, including in aiding the families of martyrs and the wounded.

The program to deal with the nuseiris:

Today, while the fighting rages, criminals are punished without discrimination between nuseiris and Muslims. However, once the regime falls, each will be punished as he deserves to be punished – regardless of the crime he has committed. In addition, the nuseiri clerks who held senior positions under the old regime will be treated based on whether they supported the regime – in which case they will be evicted from their jobs – or not – in which case they will be demoted in rank, never again to hold a position above a Muslim.

In areas with a nuseiri majority, the people will be disarmed and forced to convert to Islam and become devout. It will be necessary to establish a special body that will be responsible for their conversion.

The program for dealing with the media:

It will be necessary to negotiate with the media and hold press conferences to update them on events and topics that require clarification and explanation, or to inform them of decisions that have been made. The mujahideen must participate in the management of the media. It will be necessary to establish a national television station, a regional/satellite station (فضائية), a radio station, and a magazine or newspaper.

The program for dealing with secular people:

Whether the mujahideen wish it or not, some people are secular, especially in a country that was ruled by a secular party for more than 40 years, in which religious and Islamic-legal conceptions faded. Caution must be exercised in dealing with secular people, as long as they have not shown any enmity toward Islamic law.

The Crusader enemy and his Arab agents will count on these secular people to destabilize the new regime, especially if it is an Islamist-jihadist regime. It is important not to let them achieve their goal.

This applies to minorities such as Christians and Kurds.

The program for overcoming the dilemma of democracy, which contravenes Islamic law:

If the mujahideen do not wish to encounter problems, they must distinguish between two things:

1. The freedom to choose representatives is an Islamic-legal concept based on the concept of shura [consultation]. This is how things were done in the time of the Prophet and the first caliphs. Therefore, nothing prevents people from voting for their representatives.
2. Democracy is based on the rule of the people of and for itself, by itself; in democracy, the people have the right to make laws. It is possible to circumvent this concept, if the forces of jihad declare their indissoluble commitment to shari'a [Islamic law]. If this declaration is made soon enough, no one will dare challenge it, lest he be accused of interfering with Islam. This will enable the mujahideen to establish all of the country's political institutions, including election and appointment processes.

The program for dealing with the Zionist enemy:

Like Salah al-Din, the mujahideen must first and foremost organize and arrange internal affairs.

The program for dealing with neighboring countries:

Syria's neighbors may be divided into those that are close to the mujahideen and those that are not. Some oppose the revolution and some support it. Again, the first

order of business for the mujahideen is to get their own house in order. Caution must be exercised before becoming tied up with nations whose intentions are unknown.

Will the mujahideen accept the presence of the embassies of hostile nations such as America and Russia?

Today, embassies are like a nest of intelligence [agents], and should not be allowed to exist. However, embassies that allow the transmission of messages and facilitate trade and tourism should be allowed to exist.<sup>54</sup>

### The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

*For the first time in three months, militants in the Gaza Strip fired a rocket into Israel, disrupting the cross-border truce reached after Israel's Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012. Militants linked with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades took responsibility for the rocket fire, from which the Hamas government dissociated itself. The militants reportedly launched the rocket in retaliation for the death of a Palestinian prisoner held in Israel.<sup>55</sup> The rocket attack coincided with the confiscation by Egyptian authorities of two trucks carrying anti-tank missiles from Libya to the increasingly lawless Sinai Peninsula, from which weapons have frequently been smuggled into the Gaza Strip.<sup>56</sup>*

*Concurrently, in a show of increasing Egyptian concern over the destabilization of the Sinai, an Egyptian court ordered the government to destroy all tunnels between the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip. Although Egypt's ruling party, which is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, has close ties to Hamas, the government fears that the two-way flow of arms through the tunnels poses a risk to Egypt's security.<sup>57</sup>*

- During the latter half of February 2013, the jihadist media outlet Ibn Taymiyyah, which is affiliated with the Salafi-jihadist movement in the Gaza Strip, published the following:
  - An announcement titled, "Hamas's Internal Security Services Kidnap Two Salafists, Brothers, from the Central Gaza Strip".<sup>58</sup>
  - An announcement titled, "Hamas's Internal Security Services Torture and Break the Bones of Salafist Prisoners".<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>55</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323384604578328181899968660.html> (English).

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/egyptian-authorities-seize-anti-tank-missiles-smuggled-from-libya-bound-for-sinai/2013/02/27/c1463850-80dd-11e2-a671-307392de8de\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egyptian-authorities-seize-anti-tank-missiles-smuggled-from-libya-bound-for-sinai/2013/02/27/c1463850-80dd-11e2-a671-307392de8de_story.html) (English).

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4350462,00.html> (English).

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

- A video clip titled, “The Series of Oppression [sic] Continues”. The clip shows a speech by the engineer Abdallah al-Ashqar, aka Abu al-Musab al-Maqdisi, a Salafi-jihadist sheikh active in the Gaza Strip.<sup>60</sup> Al-Maqdisi denounces the recent wave of arrests of Salafi-jihadists by Hamas, claiming that, of late, the Salafists in the Gaza Strip have been quiescent, preserving the peace to a fault. Nevertheless, the Hamas government continues to persecute them.



**A video clip featuring a speech by Abu al-Musab al-Maqdisi**

- A video clip documenting a rally of mujahideen in Syria in support of their “oppressed” brothers in Hamas prisons in the Gaza Strip.<sup>61</sup>
- A call that Muslims concentrate on liberating Muslim prisoners from prisons in Israel. Israel is responsible for the death of Arafat Jaradat, a Palestinian prisoner who died on February 23, 2013 in Megido Prison. According to the announcement, Jaradat died because he was tortured, not of a heart attack as Israel claimed. The Ibn Taymiyya Center urged Muslims in Israel to help Islamist prisoners escape from the prisons of the Jews and their allies in the Palestinian Authority. The Ibn Taymiyya Center also asked Muslims to consider liberating these prisons by adopting the tactics of the Islamic State of Iraq, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the Taliban-Pakistan – that is, storming the prisons, an act that has been successful elsewhere. The Ibn Taymiyya Center also suggested abducting soldiers and using them to negotiate for the release of Muslim prisoners.<sup>62</sup>
- The jihadist media outlet Al-Raya, which functions under the auspices of The Army of the Nation in Jerusalem, a Salafi-jihadist group active in the Gaza Strip, published a video clip titled, “The Dawn of Victory”. The video salutes the mujahideen who are fighting the Assad regime in Syria, and lauds jihad against the tyrant Assad.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>63</sup> <http://vb.beit-almaqdes.net/> (Arabic).



**The banner advertising a video clip praising jihad in Syria**

- The Islamic press agency Al-Haq, which is affiliated with global jihad, reported that the Salafi-jihadist movement in the Gaza Strip severely denounced Hamas's Internal Security Services for arresting and torturing Salafists in Ansar and Deir Al-Balah Prisons.

The Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center added that these comments might have an adverse effect on Hamas, and anticipated that the Salafists would respond to these arbitrary arrests by once again fighting the Jews, after maintaining a period of calm at Hamas's request. The Ibn Taymiyyah Center noted that, in any case the Jews appear not to be obligated to this supposed cease-fire, but Hamas lacks brains and sense, and so acts in haste.<sup>64</sup>

## **Africa**

### The Maghreb [North Africa]

*Weapons from Libya continue to flow unchecked into the hands of jihadists across the Maghreb. The flow of arms, including heavy weapons, has accelerated since the ouster of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. According to Western officials, most of the weapons have ended up in the possession of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which is equipping and training jihadist fighters in North Africa, especially in Mali. Terrorism experts claim that poor security conditions in North Africa and the availability of a massive stockpile of weapons from Libya have enabled Al-Qaeda-linked groups in the region to turn from ill-equipped guerilla groups into small armies.<sup>65</sup> The large, lawless expanse and permeable borders of the Sahel have made it difficult for intelligence analysts to track the arms leaving Libya.*

<sup>64</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>65</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/20/libyan-weapons-al-qaeda-north-africa\\_n\\_2727326.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/20/libyan-weapons-al-qaeda-north-africa_n_2727326.html) (English).

- During the latter half of February 2013, Al-Bayareq, a media outlet that functions under the auspices of Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, published several video clips documenting its humanitarian activities for the residents of Tunisia. For example, on February 17, 2013, Ansar Al-Sharia distributed medical equipment and aid packages to the needy in the city of Mateur, following a procession there in honor of Abu al-Bara' Mukrin al-Majiri, a member of the organization who was martyred in Iraq in 2010. Al-Majiri is said to have left his wife, and a life of luxury, to sacrifice himself for Islam.<sup>66</sup>



**Members of Ansar Al-Shari'a in procession (r.), and handing out aid packages**

- A contributor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi wrote an article addressed to the Muslims of Tunisia. In it, he asked them to stand with the oppressed and disadvantaged and to remember that, although the first part of the popular revolution against oppression had ended, they must not let discrimination against some people continue.

He added that the religious, and rational, approach to the new government would be for people to turn their back on it, boycott it and refuse to cooperate with it until it sloughs off heretical democracy and declares its fealty to the law of Allah [shari'a]. This it can do at any time, and if it does so, it will find that Tunisia's Muslims stand with it.

The writer then wondered, "Who are the people who seek to curry favor with and fawn on the tyrants even as this government is fighting to the death against our brothers, demolishing their homes, killing them, issuing baseless prohibitions against them, and persecuting their sheikhs....this approach is reminiscent of the attitude of the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip toward our united brothers there".

The writer then asked his "beloved brothers, followers of tawheed [monotheism]" to adhere to the following directives:

- Draw close to the people, blend in with them, feel their problems and concerns, and win their trust so that they may hearken to your sermons and join your ranks, taking responsibility for the victory of their religion.

<sup>66</sup><http://www.hanein.info/vb/>; <http://aljahad.com/vb/> (both in Arabic).

- Do not emulate Egypt’s Salafists, who fill the world with words, slogans and sermons about their leaders, about heretical laws, but then change only the figureheads in the system and not the system itself, and are quick to participate in the political game on the pretext of protecting national interests.
- Do not for any reason associate yourselves with this tyranny, with its institutions, its palaces or offices – not even on the pretext of reform.
- Know that your blood, your wounds, and your work are not in vain – rather, they are in preparation for the coming victory.<sup>67</sup>

## Mali

*In a joint operation with Chadian troops, French forces delivered a heavy blow to Islamist rebels in Mali by killing Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, an AQIM commander reported to be one of Al-Qaeda’s most influential leaders in North Africa.<sup>68</sup> The French operation occurred in a remote town near Mali’s border with Algeria, to which many Islamist fighters backed by Al-Qaeda had retreated after France entered Mali in January, 2013.<sup>69</sup> In addition, as part of a new operation based in the Adrar des Ifoghas mountain range near the Algerian border – considered the French troops’ “center of gravity” – French, Chadian and Malian soldiers killed several Islamist rebels.<sup>70</sup>*

*Despite reports that France planned to withdraw from Mali and hand over control of the fighting to an African force in March, French officials have recently stated that French troops would remain in Mali at least until July. This announcement came after French forces had encountered surprisingly strong resistance from Al-Qaeda rebels.<sup>71</sup> Concerns have been raised that militants who are hiding in the mountains may turn to suicide bombings and other guerilla tactics. Experts report that Al-Qaeda has vowed to continue fighting in Mali, so as to drag down North African governments and embroil Western militaries in an Afghanistan-style crisis.<sup>72</sup>*

- The jihadist media outlet Fursan Al-Balagh published a pamphlet titled, “Mali and the Flames of Freedom” by Sheikh Dr. Eyad Qunaibi, a Salafi-jihadist active in Jordan. In the pamphlet, Qunaibi states that in Mali, as in Afghanistan and other Muslim countries, the struggle is between those who wish to sanctify shari’a [Islamic law]

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<sup>67</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>68</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/03/01/world/africa/mali-al-qaeda-leader/> (English).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/officials-france-mali-july-18622016> (English).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/02/27/malian-mountains-provide-perfect-anctuary-for-al-qaeda-report-finds/> (English).

and those who would extinguish it – in other words, between the mujahideen and France and its allies.<sup>73</sup>

- The daily *Al-Hayat* reported that sources in Khartoum had confirmed the death of Abu Hazem al-Sudani, leader of Al-Qaeda in Sudan, during the French bombing of Mali. Al-Sudani's real name is Imad Mahmud; he was born in 1964 and was a member of a group known as Jama'at Al-Kitab wal-Sunna [Group of the Qur'an and the Sunna]. Mahmud had previously fought with the mujahideen against the Russians, and then in Chechnya and the Philippines. Sometime after 2001, he returned to Afghanistan to fight the Americans; from there he continued on to the jihad in Iraq, where he was captured and imprisoned. He succeeded in escaping from prison in Iraq, and from there reached Khartoum. With the outbreak of fighting in Mali, he traveled there via Chad and Niger. He commanded 200 Sudanese and other armed groups in Mali, until his death.<sup>74</sup>

### Egypt

- On February 18, 2013, the jihadist media outlet Al-Bayyan, which functions under the auspices of the Salafi Fighting Vanguard – Ansar Al-Sharia, published an article titled, "Ahmad Lutfi Al-Sayed: Pioneer of Secularism and Godfather of Apostasy". The article is one in a series titled, "The Disgrace of the Secular People in Egypt", authored by Hazem al-Masri, a Salafi-jihadist publicist and editor of the blog, The Mujahideen in Egypt. Al-Masri has written a dialectic on Egyptian intellectual Ahmad Lutfi Al-Sayed's theory of secularism, pointing out the social and political aspects of what he sees as the disadvantages and detriments of secularism. Al-Masri has also written about the symbols of Egyptian secularism, presenting secularists as traitors to their people and nation and harbingers of imperialism and slavery.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> <http://ww.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>74</sup> <http://alhayat.com/Details/485520> (Arabic).

<sup>75</sup> <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).



**The cover of the article by Hazem al-Masri**

### Nigeria

- Ansar Al-Muslimin in the Land of the Black Africans took responsibility for breaking into the residence compound of Setraco, a Lebanese company located in northern Nigeria, and kidnapping seven foreign citizens: one citizen each of Great Britain, Italy and Greece, and four Lebanese workers. According to Ansar Al-Muslimin, the foreigners were kidnapped in retaliation for the aggression of European nations against the Muslims in Afghanistan and Mali.<sup>76</sup>

In a related item, discussion arose on the jihadist Web forum Hanein of the abduction in Cameroon of seven members of one French family by the Nigerian Salafi-jihadist terrorist group Boku Haram. One of the few visitors to the site who addressed the event asked about jihadist groups' strategic motives for abducting foreign citizens in Islamic Arab countries. The visitor asked for Islamic-legal clarification of the matter, out of concern lest "the tables be turned against the Muslims" living by the millions "in the infidel lands". In other words, this contributor feared that Muslims living in non-Muslim countries might be abducted in retaliation for the kidnapping of non-Muslims in Muslim lands.<sup>77</sup>

In response to this question, contributors to Hanein discussed at length the justification for abduction, based on fatwas [Islamic legal rulings] issued by sheikhs identified with Al-Qaeda, for example. One contributor likened the use of abduction in Nigeria to that in the Philippines; he shared the comments of Sheikh Yusuf al-'Iri, the first commander of Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia,<sup>78</sup> on the arrival in Saudi Arabia of representatives of the Philippine Salafi-jihadist Abu Sayyaf movement to consult with Sheikh Muhammad Ibn al-Uthaymeen,<sup>79</sup> a scholar of Islam. It was not unusual for

<sup>76</sup> <https://shamikh1.invo/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>78</sup> <http://bit.ly/YLp777> (Arabic).

<sup>79</sup> <http://arislamway.net/scholar/50> (Arabic).

Salafists to seek the counsel of al-Uthaymeen, who was respected for his reliance on the Qur'an and Sunna in formulating his analyses. Quoting Sheikh Yusuf al-'Iri, the contributor reported that representatives of Abu Sayyaf had asked al-Uthaymeen to issue a fatwa [Islamic-legal ruling] permitting the abduction of Christians, something they believed would promote their struggle against the Philippine government. When al-Uthaymeen recommended that they abduct Philippine Army soldiers, the representatives of Abu Sayyaf related that the Philippine government negotiates for the release of its soldiers less vigorously than it does for the release of [foreign] Christians. In response, Sheikh al-Uthaymeen ruled that that if the Muslims could only defend themselves, their religion and their honor by using abduction – then they should use it; however, they should avoid taking women and children as hostages. It is worth noting that this fatwa was never written down in its entirety; according to anecdotal evidence, Sheikh al-Uthaymeen died before he could do so. Even if inexact, this story reflects the legitimacy granted to abductions by jihadists – in their discourse and behavior. The late Sheikh al-Uthaymeen supported the abduction of Christians in the Philippines when there was no other choice; and jihadists applied his approach to the situation in Nigeria.<sup>80</sup>

## Somalia

*Terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings, have continued to rock Mogadishu and other areas of Somalia, with Somali officials accusing Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, an affiliate of Al-Qaeda, of the attacks.<sup>81</sup> Although Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen were driven out of Mogadishu in 2011, they nevertheless still control areas of Somalia's southwest, from which they continue to launch roadside bombings, suicide attacks and assassinations in the war-torn capital.<sup>82</sup>*

- During the latter half of February 2013, the jihadist media outlet Al-Kataeb, which functions under the auspices of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published the following:
  - A video clip documenting members of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen desecrating a sacred grave in the village of Al-Kareem by pounding it with hammers.<sup>83</sup>
  - A video clip titled, "Mujahideen Moments", in which a group of mujahideen sings in praise of jihad.<sup>84</sup>

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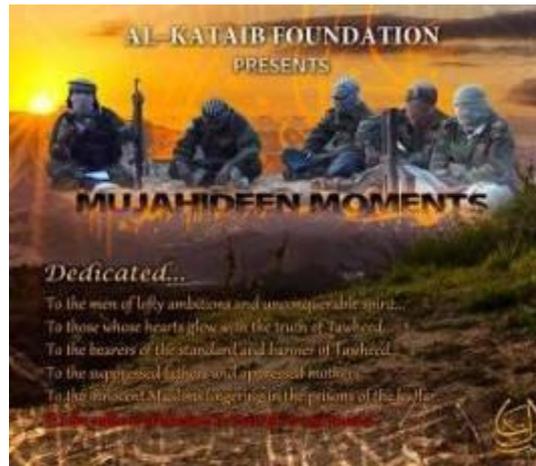
<sup>80</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.rzaxanreeb.com/2013/02/somalia-car-bomb-kills-one-in-mogadishu-liido-beach/> (Somali and English).

<sup>82</sup> [http://allafrica.com/stories/201303011499.html?aa\\_source=slideout](http://allafrica.com/stories/201303011499.html?aa_source=slideout) (English).

<sup>83</sup> <http://al-fiada.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



### Mujahideen sing hymns in praise of jihad...

- During the latter half of February 2013, a number of items were posted on the jihadist Web forum Hanein, which covered the clashes between the Salafi-jihadist Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen and Somali and Ethiopian armed forces and militias. Reports were also posted about the tens of soldiers killed fighting to reign in terrorism in the Bay,<sup>85</sup> Bakool and Shabeellaha Hoose<sup>86</sup> provinces, many of them soldiers of AMISOM, an organization established by the African Union to keep peace in Somalia. 'Abd al-'Aziz Abu Mus'ab, who heads the military wing of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, confirmed the deaths of 25 African Union forces during a violent attack on a military center; he added that his men had caught the soldiers by surprise.<sup>87</sup> In addition, Hanein reported the death of 'Abd al-Qader Nur Farah, the mufti of Puntland, who was murdered by an assassin while praying at a mosque. The president of Puntland accused Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen of planning and carrying out the assassination, and asked people to show restraint and avoid hurting anyone who was not involved in the assassination, especially in light of incitement by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, which claimed that Farah was murdered as part of an inter-tribal dispute.<sup>88</sup>

#### *The Caucasus*

- For the first time, the jihadist propaganda group Sada Al-Kawkaz published an audio file of an interview conducted on February 12, 2000 with Ibn Khatab (1969-2002), a leader of Chechen rebels who was suspected of having ties to Al-Qaeda. Al-Khatab discussed the movement of mujahideen from Grozny to the mountains.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>86</sup> <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>87</sup> <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>88</sup> <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

- On February 24, 2013, the jihadist propaganda organ of Dagestan published a video clip titled, "Are We Khawarej?" justifying its actions against the Russian regime.<sup>90</sup> The Khawarej were Muslims who seceded from the Party of Ali, a cousin of the Prophet Muhammad, because of internal disagreements. Ever since, "Khawarej" has been used to disparage Muslims suspected of isolationism or exclusivity or a tendency toward physical violence against perceived opponents.

#### *The Indian Subcontinent*

- An item published on the jihadist Web forum Hanein reported that a Buddhist plot exists to exterminate the Muslims in Burma within one year. These Muslims are Rohingya, natives of Burma [Myanmar] who are ethnically and linguistically related to the Indo-Aryan peoples of India and Bangladesh; in Burma's majority Sino-Tibetan society, they are a minority. In recent years, the media have been filled with reports of clashes between Muslims and Buddhists in Burma; comments by senior Burmese leaders regarding the expulsion or elimination of Muslims; and horrific, disturbing photographs of pogroms against men, women and children.<sup>91</sup> The Rohingya are perceived as the most persecuted minority in the world – and apparently not without cause. The item posted on Hanein apparently reveals just the tip of the iceberg, as the Rohingya of Burma are purportedly hounded by gangs supported by the regime who suddenly descend on their homes, arresting the Rohingya men and boys and raping the women. Nevertheless, the item posted on Hanein did not draw much attention. This reflects the limitations of jihadist discourse in attending to events in Burma or acting on behalf of Muslims in the Far East in a time of crisis.<sup>92</sup>

#### *Iran*

- A news item posted on the jihadist Web forum Hanein reported that the Shi'ite cleric Mehdi Tayeb had declared Syria the 35<sup>th</sup> province of Iran. Tayeb added that Syria was more important than Al-Ahvaz, the main city of Khuzestan Province in western Iran – even though the latter is the site of 90% of Iran's oil.



<sup>90</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>91</sup> [http://arab-worlds.blogspot.co.il/2012/07/blog-post\\_330.html](http://arab-worlds.blogspot.co.il/2012/07/blog-post_330.html) (Arabic).

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

**Mehdi Tayeb: "Syria is more important than Al-Ahvaz, and were we to lose it, we would [also] lose Teheran"**

Tayeb, who heads the Ammar Strategic Base for the Soft War,<sup>93</sup> with which Iran is coping, reiterated that "Syria is the 35<sup>th</sup> province and we see it as a strategic area. If the enemy attacks with the aim of capturing Syria or Khuzestan, first we would defend Syria". After discussing Syria's strategic importance relative to Teheran, Tayeb addressed the needs of the Syrian regime for quelling the fighting in the cities, stating, "The Syrian regime has control of the army, but needs to wage war in the cities; the Iranian government has therefore suggested calling up the reserves...which comprise 60,000 fighting men, to take over the war in the streets from the Syrian Army". Members of the forum cursed Tayeb in response.<sup>94</sup>

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen posted photographs of members of Jaysh Al-'Adal [Army of Justice], a Salafi-jihadist group fighting the Iranian regime in Baluchistan.<sup>95</sup>



**Baluchistan Muslims against the Iranian regime**

*The Philippines*

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida posted a call by a Salafi-jihadist group called Foreigners in the Southern Philippines to Muslims in the southern Philippines to join the effort to raise the banner of monotheism [tawheed] and wage jihad against the Philippine regime. He also posted a photograph of members of this group.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> <http://bit.ly/YDwTBd> (Arabic).

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb>; see also the group's blog, <http://jaishuladl.blogspot.co.il/> (both in Arabic).

<sup>96</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).



**Fighters of the Salafi-jihadist group, Foreigners in the Southern Philippines**

### Miscellaneous

- The jihadist media outlet Fursan Al-Balagh invited all those interested in becoming involved in propaganda on behalf of the mujahideen to join its ranks. “Unlike the other media outlets, which leave interested parties to seek ways to join them,” it stressed, “we have decided to come to you, and extend an open invitation to make it easier for you to join a media outlet”. Fursan Al-Balagh added that, to join its ranks, one must be honest, serious and dedicated, and have technical expertise. It added that one could join via the jihadist Web forums Al-Fida, Shumukh Al-Islam or Ansar Al-Mujahideen.<sup>97</sup>
- The Shumukh Al-Islam virtual workshop published a video clip titled, “Mujahideen without Weapons”. The clip extols propaganda on behalf of the mujahideen and praises all those who contribute to it.<sup>98</sup>



**The banner for the video clip, “Mujahideen without Weapons”**

- A prominent contributor to the Dawat al-Haq Center for Study and Researchs named Abdallah Muhammad noted that supporting the Spanish football (soccer) teams Real Madrid and Barcelona is akin to supporting Israeli football (soccer) teams such as Maccabi Haifa and Maccabi Tel Aviv, since Spain is occupied Muslim land no less than Palestine. Muhammad chided the Muslims for not duly remembering that Spain was

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.as-anasr.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.as-anasr.com/vb> (Arabic).

once under Muslim rule, and that the Christians who conquered it forced its Muslim residents to convert to Christianity, or face exile or death. According to the contributor, these deeds are no different from those of the Zionists.<sup>99</sup>

- A visitor to the forum *snam-s* posted an item from the daily *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*,<sup>100</sup> in which Khalid al-Johani, a former member of Al-Qaeda, claimed that Bin Laden's fight against the US was the trigger for the first split within Al-Qaeda. Even before September 11, 2001, he added, there had been disagreements among the fighters, especially the Arabs, and between Bin Laden and his supporters. Bin Laden wanted to limit fighting to the US, while the former wanted to expand it. This led several individuals and groups to secede from Al-Qaeda, among them Yemenite Hamza al-Qaiti, a senior leader of Al-Qaeda who was killed by Yemeni security forces on August 11, 2008. Initially, Al-Qaiti established another group with outside assistance, but ultimately returned to Al-Qaeda when his dispute with Bin Laden was resolved. This was not the case with other groups that seceded.

Al-Johani added that leaders of Al-Qaeda had advised Bin Laden not to attack the US or Afghanistan, which could not withstand reprisals by the US. Bin Laden rejected this advice, however, and threatened to attack the World Trade Center. He added that the leader of Al-Qaeda had not suffered from chronic illnesses or health problems of any kind.

One visitor to the forum responded by asking whether Al-Qaeda had a central authority that gave orders, trained fighters, prepared attacks and planned for the future, or whether each [branch of Al-Qaeda] managed its own affairs?

Another visitor responded that he believed Al-Qaeda no longer had a central authority that everyone obeyed. As this was not the case when Osama bin Laden headed Al-Qaeda, it appears that Al-Qaeda now suffers from a lack of control and authority, he added.

Another visitor to the forum wrote, "It's true that there were disagreements and military and religious disputes over the actions of September 11...however what you say, my brother, is not helpful, on the contrary, it hurts us and divides our ranks. I don't know why this brother chose to speak now, unless he wishes to hurt the brothers".

Yet another visitor to the site confirmed that there were disagreements among the mujahideen, but added, "I am telling you my brother that this topic does not help us and you are not serving the interests of the mujahideen".<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>100</sup> For the full interview, see <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=717830&issueno=12502#.UU2TshdQZqE> (Arabic).

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.snam-s.net/vb> (Arabic).

- The jihadist Web forum Hanein underwent a “face lift” in late February, 2013.<sup>102</sup>
- On February 20, 2013, a visitor to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen uploaded a jihadist computer game in Html5, which he claimed to have programmed himself. The game approximates a dogfight between a fighter jet of the mujahideen in Mali and French fighter jets.<sup>103</sup>



**From the computer game approximating war games in Mali**

### **Facebook and Twitter**

- “Issues of the Nation”, a Facebook page focusing on reports and publications related to jihad, was launched on February 20, 2013. This is the ninth time this page has been (re)launched: the administration of Facebook has closed it eight times.<sup>104</sup> The page was shut down in March this year.



**The logo of the Facebook page, “Issues of the Nation”**

- A visitor to the forum snam-s announced the launching of a Facebook page titled, “The Salafi-Jihadists in Khan Yunis”. The announcement added that many people, the Hamas government, and all of the apostate Arab governments see believers in the pure path of jihad as infidels and terrorists. According to the announcement, this Facebook page was meant to introduce Muslims to the pure path, the path of the victors, insha’Allah [with Allah’s help]. It was also meant to show the Muslims their obligation to implement pure Islamic law [shari’a] and wage jihad against the infidels, hypocrites, traitors and Shi’ites, and to free Muslim men and women from the Jews and worshippers of the cross everywhere. The visitor noted that all Muslims

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Qdayalommah> (Arabic).

are brothers, and there is no factionalism among them. He added that the Facebook page does not represent any of the Salafi-jihadist groups active in the Gaza Strip, which he asked Allah to unify under one banner and one emir He then gave an email address [abw\\_kfhh@hotmail.com](mailto:abw_kfhh@hotmail.com), and a url for the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Salafi.kh>.<sup>105</sup>



**The banner of the Facebook page of The Salafi-Jihadists in Khan Yunis**

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi announced the opening of an official Arabic-language Twitter account for the mujahideen in Dagestan on September 28, 2012. Its url is: [https://twitter.com/VDagestan\\_Ar](https://twitter.com/VDagestan_Ar).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> <http://www.snam-s.net/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).