

## Jihadi Ideological Viewpoints Regarding Western Democracy

### Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi's Book: "Democracy is a Religion"

Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, whose real name is Isam Muhammad Tahir Al-Barqawi, is a Jordanian-Palestinian Islamic writer, who was apparently born in 1959 in Nablus. He is known as the spiritual guide of the late Jordanian terrorist, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, the Al-Qaeda leader in Iraq. However, an ideological dispute broke out between the two in 2004, due to Zarqawi's aggressive approach towards the Shiites in Iraq. Al-Maqdisi adopted a more cautious approach to attacking Shiite targets. He is considered to be one of the most influential existing Jihadi theorists. Al-Maqdisi, who is at present in Jordan under government surveillance, operates an internet website called "Minbar Al-Tawhid W-Al-Jihad".<sup>1</sup>



**Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi**

Following is a summary of his book "Democracy is a Religion", from which extensive chapters are quoted on many Jihadi forums:

This is a very basic text leaning on the best known medieval sources modern-day Islamists draw on—Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Kathir. There are only infrequent references to medieval Islamic scholars outside the scope of Islamist

<sup>1</sup> <http://ctc.usma.edu/atlas/Atlas-ExecutiveReport.pdf>,  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu\\_Muhammad\\_Asem\\_al-Maqdisi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Muhammad_Asem_al-Maqdisi)

writing such as Ibn Hibban. There are a number of Qur'anic citations, but very few hadith references.

The text is very similar to a letter Ayman Al-Zawahiri wrote to Sheikh Abd Al-Aziz Bin Baz, the former Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia. This text begins by stressing the importance placed by Islam on resisting tyrants. This, however, is a corruption of the historical Islamic tradition which counseled obedience to wayward rulers (see Mawardi and Al-Ashari as well as Q 2:182, 214). This takes us into a discussion of tyrants and their characteristics. They set themselves up as equal to Allah. Democratic legislators do much the same. By legislating man-made laws rather than divine ones, they challenge the sovereignty of the Deity. This of course is shirk (polytheism) and is the most severe of the sins that one can commit against Allah.

Because these legislators disbelieve in Allah and His divine law, it is the duty of every Muslim to fight them through jihad. We then move to a discussion of democracy. Democracy is disbelief in Allah and shirk. It is the rule of tyrants or people, but not Allah. When the author says democracy is a sin, he does not mean it is a religion per se, but a political philosophy that draws adherents to it, much like socialism and communism. In this way it competes with true religions such as Islam. In fact, democracy is greater than the cogs that put it to work, for if the people would demand of their representatives to inject the law with a more Islamic flavor, they would be told it contradicts democracy.

Then the author spends a few pages discussing how the biblical Josef did not participate in a tyrannical regime. After that he examines whether the Abyssinian Negus applied laws that were not in accordance with divinely revealed statutes.

The book closes with a discussion of democracy and shura. The author claims that the difference between democracy and shura is that democracy is based on the rule of the majority, whereas shura is based on Allah's given law. Democracy came from atheistic Europe where church was separated from state; after socialism, it is now the turn of democracy to seduce the Muslims and to divert them from the true path—the path of the Sharia. The author condemns those Muslims who claim that democracy and shura are the same. He then continues to refute the liberals' claims according to which Muhammad's participation in the alliance of the fudul is proof of the legality of democracy. Finally he refutes the claim that entering the democratic process is for the benefit of the Muslim

community (maslaha), stating Allah's law is the only possible path which will benefit the Muslims. The author brings as proof of his views the parliamentary experience of Ahmad Ibrahim Khadir, who as a parliament member had tried to color legislation with a more Islamic hue. However, realizing he could not change the system, he decided it was futile to try and change society by playing the democratic game.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Al-Qaeda leader in the Arabian Peninsula expresses his opinion regarding democracy**

On January 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, Al-Jazeera's television channel internet website published an interview conducted by Abdul Ela Haydar Sha'i with the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula, Nasir Abd Al-Karim Al-Wahishi, a.k.a. Abu Basir.

In the interview, Al-Wahishi explained his doctrine regarding democracy, and in effect expressed the view of Global Jihad towards this issue:

"We do not recognize the democratic regime, where elections are held. We are not against holding elections in principle, which is accepted by Islam, but we do not accept the democratic way (...) democracy is a new religion brought in by the United States and which was forced upon the Muslim nations (...) using it to tear the Muslim nation apart and to arouse resentment and hostility by cheap competition for this world's pleasures and seats in parliaments, through which they alone gain materialistic and personal privileges and benefits. It is also a well planned deception to drain the capabilities of the nations' youth. Instead of educating them, preparing them to defend the holiness of the Muslims and their homes from the external enemy and assisting the Muslims, they achieve victories in virtual polls, in futile ballot boxes, with the end result being a regime which does not go hand in hand with Allah's commandments and the suppression of the population in the name of the majority and the false claims in favor of democracy."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/atlas/Atlas-ResearchCompendium.pdf>, <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=22019&highlight=%CF%ED%E3%DE%D1%C7%D8%ED%C9>. See also: <http://www.tawhed.net/c.php?i=3>, for a translation of the book.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/50B5DB96-29CD-4071-B737-E4FAE57FC874.htm>



Abu Basir (right) during the interview

### Jihad's Position on Democracy in Iraq

The Iraqi Jihad group, "Jaysh Ansar Al-Sunna", also referred to the issue of democracy. The group was established in 2003 by former activists of the Kurdish terrorist group, "Ansar Al-Islam", which openly supported the September 11 terrorist attacks. The group is loyal to Al-Qaeda and frequently cooperates with the organization's activists in Iraq.<sup>4</sup>



The groups' insignia

In an announcement made by the group on November 2008, it was stated:

"Democracy is a call for heresy, as it supports raising a person to the level of God. It is not tied to the Islamic Sura, not in significance nor in

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2008/1/islamterror196.htm>,  
<http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/iraqreport0807.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/showthread.php?t=581&highlight=%C7%E1%CF%ED%E3%DE%D1%C7%D8%ED%C9>

composition (...) the laws which are phrased by man in Muslim countries and which are called 'a constitution', are heretic laws, which were legislated by Allah's partners in the government. Those who act according to these laws and those who approve them are heretics."<sup>5</sup>

### **Article in Global Jihad Magazine on Democracy**

The monthly Jihadi magazine "Sada Al-Jihad", published by the "Global Islamic Media Front", printed an article in its March 2009 edition, entitled "Spreading democracy is a victory for the United States and Israel". The article was written by Abu Tah Abdullah Al Miqdad. The writer makes use of the elections held in the United States and Israel, in order to refute the idea of democracy:

"The Americans and the Jews are proud of this democracy which satisfies them, instead of the laws which they should employ. They granted equality by voting and by standing for election (but they did this contrary to what is written) in the Bible and the New Testament they boast of in their rituals (...). For a long time, I have examined the position of the American agents, and I have discovered that they are democrats and are proud of this, whilst renouncing all connection to Islam and fighting against every call to employ Islamic religious law."

The writer then talks about the crimes of democracy and states that innocent people are being killed by the Americans and the Israelis in Afghanistan, Iraq and Gaza, in the name of democracy. The writer finally discusses the dangers of democracy and determines that it vilifies the monotheistic faith and exchanges Allah's religion with three entities. According to him, democracy separates people into groups and blocks, fanning the fire of rifts and hatred. He finalizes his words with the sentence: "Spreading democracy in our regions is a victory for the Jews and Christians, who waste money and shed blood in its dissemination."

## نشر الديمقراطية انتصار لأميركا وإسرائيل

وكنتم شاهدت مشهدا ماثلا في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية امتلات به الإذاعات وإذات الناس في أفواههم وأقصوا حول خيارات الأميركيين بشأن قيادتهم الجديدة : نعم إنهم واليهود يتفاجرون بهذه الديمقراطية التي رضوا بها بدلا عن الشرائع التي يعتقدون فيها وجوب الإتياع وسأوا في التصويت والترشح بين من لم تساو بينهم التوراة والإنجيل التي يتلونونها في طقوسهم.

وراجعت الذاكرة فوجدت أن دولة اليهود منذ نشأتها وهي ديمقراطية فإنهم عقدوا انتخابات لبرلمانهم المسمى الكنيست في ٢٥ كانون الثاني/يناير ١٩٤٩ أي بعد احتلالهم لأرض فلسطين بنحو ستة شهور وهذه إشارة دالة على أفكار العدو ويسعى بحاربنا من أجلها ويسعى إلى استبدالها بعقائدها الثابتة.

ونظرت مليا في أحوال وكلاء الأميركيين فوجدتهم ديمقراطيون ويجعلون ذلك أمرا يتفاجرون به بينما يتصلون من أي انتماء للإسلام ويحاربون أي صوت يدعو إلى إنفاذ أحكام الشريعة الإسلامية ويفتحون أبواب مالكتهم لبعثات الأمم المتحدة، وتكثر في بلدانهم المؤسسات التي تدعو بشكل سافر إلى الديمقراطية.

فهذا جلال الخاليفي وحامد كرزاي وأصف زرياري ومحمود عباس وصلوا إلى الحكم عن طريق صناديق الانتخابات وعبر الاحتكام إلى الديمقراطية والتفكير للشريعة الإسلامية ؛ وما يعمق إرهاب معالم الصورة حرص الوفود الأجنبية من دول الكفر الأوروبية والولايات المتحدة على مراقبة الانتخابات وتوفير الأموال اللازمة لإجرائها.

**جرانم الديمقراطيون**  
ولم يعرف تاريخ البشر مذابح بشعة مثلما عرفها

أبو طه عبد الله الحضار :  
الحمد لله رب العالمين مذل الشركين ومخزي الكافرين ، والصلاة والسلام على محمد بن عبد الله بعثه الله رحمة للعالمين بالسيف بين يدي الساعة لمعد الله وحده لا شريك له ؛ وبعد : لا تزال الحوزات الإعلامية وغيرها تنطرق إلى الانتخابات المرشحة الأخيرة التي جرت في دولة اليهود المسماة إسرائيل ، وتناجها وتعكاساتها والخيارات المتوقعة في الأفق ، ويتسع التحليل السياسي في مساحات من البث واسعة بغرض التوصل إلى توقعات دقيقة بعض الشيء لما سيكون عليه الحال لدى تقلد وجه من وجوه اليهود لرئاسة حكومة التصهاينة أو آخر لإسداء التصانح كما يقول المجللون السياسيون.

ويفرط البعض في التفاؤل بشأن حرب يهودي والتشاؤم بشأن آخر في محاولة لإثارة البلبلة والتخليط على جماهير الأمة وأنه بالإمكان الحصول على شخصية يهودية تؤيد حقوق المسلمين في أرض فلسطين وتقدمها على طيق من ذهب على الرغم من الدماء الغزيرة التي بذلها اليهود في حربهم الإجرامية التي خاضوها ضد المسلمين.

ولكنني أنظر إلى تلك الانتخابات من جهة أخرى لمعرفتي المسبقة وبقيتي الراسخ بأن أشد الناس عداوة للذين آمنوا اليهود والذين أشركوا، قرأيت وأنا أنظر رجالا يهودا ونساء يتوجهون إلى مراكز الاقتراع للتصويت بشأن الأشخاص الذين جعلوا منهم أندادا لله عز وجل يشترعون لهم شرائع هي أنفذ عندهم من توراتهم التي يعتقدون فيها القدسية والتنزيل من لدن رب العالمين سبحانه وتعالى.



مجلة صدى الجهاد، السنة الرابعة، العدد الثالث والثلاثون، ربيع أول ١٤٣٠هـ

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### Sada Al-Jihad, March 2009

## A supervisor in one of the prominent Jihadi forums expresses his views on democracy

At the end of May 2009, one of the supervisors in the "Shabakat Al-Mujahdeen Al-Electroniya" forum, protested against the torture in Iraqi prisons, after it became a liberated and democratic country, and after the United States prided itself that it had come to liberate and set the country free from the "dictatorship".<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mojahden.net/vb/showthread.php?t=23137>

### A new book published in 2009 attacks democracy

A book written by Sheikh Muhammad bin Abd Al-Qadir Al-Murshidi from Yemen was attached as an appendix to the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the monthly magazine "Sada Al-Malahim", published by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which was published for the first time in 2009. The title of the book is "The Exposure of the Democrats' Dubious Issues and Breaking the Tyrant of Yemen". The book, 194 pages long, has a preface written by Al-Qaeda's leader in the Arabian Peninsula, Abu Basir Nasser Al-Wahishi, as well as by Abu Al-Zubayr 'Adel Al-'Ibab, who is responsible for the religious laws in the organization. The two praise Sheikh Al-Murshidi for writing the book and for his contribution in exposing the injustices caused by democracy in Islamic countries. The writer explains that he hastened to publish the book, as he feared he would be arrested or killed, and he promises to publish a second edition.



The book "The Exposure of the Democrats' Dubious Issues and Breaking the Tyrant of Yemen"

Al-Murshidi brings the Yemenite constitution as an example and demonstrates how democracy is absolutely unfounded.

He determines that the democracy practiced in Yemen, negates Islam and the principle of the uniqueness of the Lord. The constitution, the parliament and the legal system belong to the regime of a tyrant and are not God's. He enumerates the constitution's clauses and explains that they are not based on Islamic religious law and therefore contradict the Islamic religion. He then invalidates 17 "dubious things" which are used to ostensibly justify that their use is legitimate. He demonstrates how these ideas actually show democracy as a disease, basing himself on the Quran, the Hadith, books interpreting the Quran, books written by Muslim religious clerics of traditional law, and books written by a number of Jihadi theorists, such as Abu Qatada Al-Filastini, Abu Musab Al-Suri and Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi.

For example, he states that the regime in Yemen is not a traditional Muslim one, but a regime of tyranny governed by the Yemenite president. Democratic elections to Parliament or local councils are in total contradiction to the principle of God's uniqueness, as in such elections, the person becomes a partner of God and therefore a heretic. Only elections according to Muslim traditional law are permissible.

He stresses that democracy is a "Jahili" regime and not an Islamic one, it is a regime of laws legislated by man. Those who make the laws are the people, via their representative in Parliament, and not the Lord, and this is definite heresy. Democratic laws are those of the people and not in the name of the Lord. Therefore, the people have been placed instead of the Lord and the person has become God himself. This regime exists with the Jews and Christians, but also with the Muslims, there are those who govern in accordance with heretic laws and claim to be governing according to Islamic Shura. But they form parliaments fraudulently and achieve a majority through false ballots. He explains that democracy is a foreign word which does not exist in the Arabic language in contrast to Shura, which is the regime of God. Democracy is the rule of the people and the tyrant. The Shura determines that governing is in the hands of the Lord, whilst democracy determines that the regime is in the hands of the people and their decisions. The Shura was written by the traditional law clerics, whilst democracy belongs to all the people and they all can influence the

decision, whether there are heretics or believers amongst the people, the uneducated or the learned. Therefore, it is forbidden to compare the Shura to democracy, between the word of God and the commandment of the tyrant, between the Lord's religion and the new futile religion.

He recommends explaining to the Muslim community the dangers and wickedness of democracy and the elections held in its shadow, to call on them to boycott it and not to take part for example in the elections which are held by a democratic regime, as both the voters and those elected are heretics.

The writer reviews the background of the democratic regime and arrives at the French Revolution. He deduces that democracy is a rebellion against the governance of the Lord in heaven on earth, and it is this which gives the ruler the power to rule over man and force upon him the series of man-made rules without any limitations. Democracy is part of the trio: secularism, nationalism and democracy. These three complement each other and they are the cause of all the problems in the world. He also explains that democracy is America's religion and the democratic regimes established in the world, enable America to interfere with ease in these countries' internal affairs.

Democracy separates between religion and state, it gives a person the ability to do whatever he chooses and thereby harm the religion. Democracy is not the rule of the majority, as it pretends to be, but just the opposite – it creates absurd situations of the rule of the minority over the majority. Democracy and the elections are presented as an alternative to the way of Jihad for God, and therefore the supporters of democracy are the ones who fight with all their strength against the use of force or against any realistic Jihadi idea.

He explains that wherever real democratic elections are held, without the interference of the authorities, the Islamists will win owing to the Islamic revival and the awareness of the regime's corruptness and its attempts to erase the signs of religion from the Muslims' way of life. This happened in Turkey and Algeria.

**Abu Musab Al-Suri refers in his famous book to democracy**

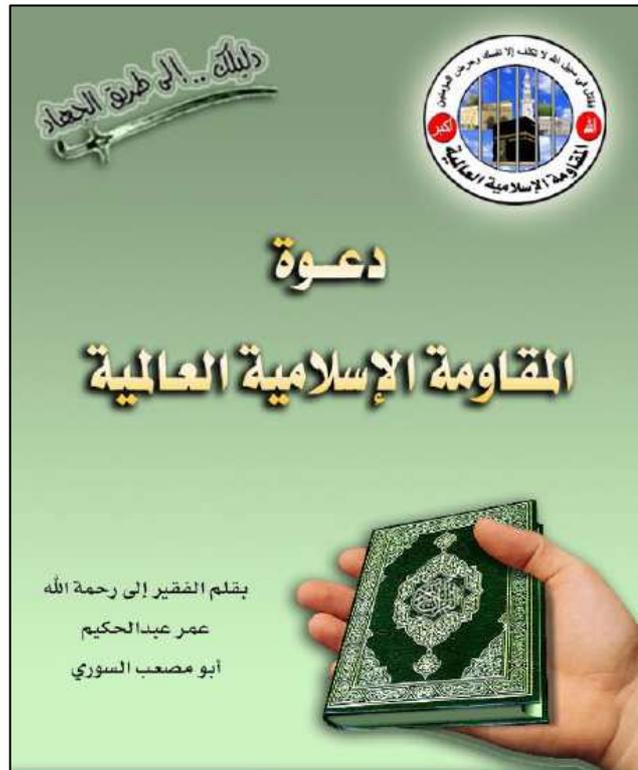
Abu Musab Al-Suri, one of the greatest intellectuals of the Global Jihad, refers in his famous book "Da'wat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah Al-'Alamiyyah" – The Global Islamic Resistance Call, which is 1,600 pages long, to the issue of democracy.

At the beginning of the book, he speaks about the paths along which the resistance is conducted, including the military path. In this connection, he writes, that the empty impression of democracy, which the U.S. brings to the Islamic countries, facilitates the establishment of associations and non-governmental organizations which operate in order to educate, teach, and obtain knowledge. According to him, the mosques and other religious centers must play a central role in this respect. In addition, Al-Suri explains that the false democracy enables distribution of texts and demonstrations in favor of the idea of civil disobedience.

Al-Suri contends that democracy has become a religion and he attacks the parties which refer to themselves as "Islamic", whose political platform is a merger of Islamic origins and Western democratic principles. He believes that this is how corruption spread to every sphere of life: in politics, religion, economics, society, culture, morality etc. Al-Suri adds that in Muslim countries there are Pharaoh-like regimes, controlled by the United States and its allies, through which the United States invades the Middle East.

According to Al-Suri, the capitalistic-economic concept, the secular permissive philosophy and the political system included in democracy, are on a decisive collision course with Muslim culture. Al-Suri also determines that the Crusader west and the Zionist leaders have raised the banner: "Democracy without Islamists in Muslim countries".

The book continues to demonstrate Al-Suri's rationale through examples from Algeria, Yemen, Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries, where Islamists participate in the false democratic game. According to Al-Suri, the Jihadists see democracy as a philosophy, religion and heretic regime, which totally contradicts the Islamic religion. Al-Suri perceives democracy's principles as sacrilege against Allah, and all those who support this system – are heretics.



Abu Musab Al-Suri's book - The Global  
Islamic Resistance Call