

Israel through the Prism of a Re-evaluation of the “Seven Stage Plan”

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Introduction

Abdullah Azzam (1949-1989), the founding father of global Jihad and one of the initial founders of Al-Qaeda, believed that, following the end of the war in Afghanistan, focus should shift to Palestine as the next theater of Jihad. This notion reappears throughout his ideology and was expressed in a famous saying he repeated in his many lectures: "The road to the liberation of Jerusalem runs through Kabul". This aspiration did not come into fruition in his lifetime and not in the two decades following his death due to Sheikh Osama bin Laden's preference, as well as that of his partner Ayman Al-Zawahiri, to act against the "distant enemy", the US.

The American led Western invasion of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) only contributed to Al-Qaeda's increasing focus, along with that of other Jihad organizations in these arenas, while pushing Israel to the sidelines of the Jihadist discourse. However, it is important to emphasize that Israel has continued to be a target for Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks, though of secondary importance. In November 2005, for example, several Al-Qaeda operatives from the Iraqi infrastructure, led by Al-Zarqawi, launched several missiles at the city of Eilat from the neighboring Jordanian city of Aqaba.

It seems that Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip in January 2009 contributed to the escalation in the Jihadist discourse regarding Israel. In 2010, threats to attack strategic targets in Israel increased in Jihadist forums.

In January 2009 the Jihadist forums published an audio tape of **Osama bin Laden** calling to carry out Jihad operations against Israel, following Israel's military actions in the Gaza Strip. Bin Laden condemned the Arab regimes for preventing their people from acting "for the liberation of Palestine. Serious action

and preparation are required for Jihad, in order to achieve the truth and bring down the bad. The way to liberate Al-Aqsa requires leadership that is true, dedicated, independent, strong, and mindful of the ideas of reality and the ideas of Islamic Sharia". In March 2009 another audio tape by Bin Laden was released regarding Israel's attack on Hamas' leadership in the Gaza Strip. According to him, this was "an important historic event and a one of a kind catastrophe and it illustrates how important it is for Muslims to root out from among themselves the hypocritical leaders".

In October 2010 the English language Jihadist **Inspire** magazine (second issue) published a past speech of Osama bin Laden condemning Israel. Bin Laden stressed that his organization will never recognize the State of Israel as well as the various peace initiatives, such as the Riyadh Initiative, the Annapolis Initiative etc. The only way to deal with Israel is Jihad.¹ In the eve of 2010, **Inspire** magazine (fourth issue) published answers given by Sheikh Adil Al-Abab, a Yemeni Salafist-Jihadist Sheikh, to various questions. In one answer, he stated that Mujahideen are instructed by Bin Laden to occasionally launch missiles towards Israel. However, he noted that the Mujahideen find it very difficult to fight Israel more intensely in face of the obstacles placed by Arab countries, saying that "If someone says that the armies of the Arab states were established with the objective of fighting Israel, then that is a lie and the one who says that is a liar. It is the Mujahideen who are fighting America which is supporting Israel and are fighting their way to get through to Israel and the ones that are standing in the way of the Mujahideen and fighting Israel are the Arab states. Allah has blessed the Mujahideen from Ahl Al-sunnah to strike rockets at variant times at Israel under the instruction of Sheikh Osama".²

¹ Inspire, issue no. 2, fall 2010, page 10.

² Inspire, issue no.4, winter 2010, page 22.



also reassure our people in Palestine in particular that we will expand our jihad – Allah permitting – and will neither recognize the borders of Sykes-Picot nor the rulers whom colonialism put in place.¹ We – by Allah – haven't forgotten you after the events of the 11th, for can the man forget his family? But following those blessed raids which struck the head and heart of global unbelief and the biggest ally of the Zionist entity, America, we are today occupied with attacking and fighting it and its agents, especially in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Islamic Maghreb and Somalia. And if it and its agents are defeated in Iraq – Allah permitting – then it won't be long before the armies of the mujahidin set out, brigades followed by brigades, from Baghdad, al-Anbar, Mosul, Diyala and Salahuddin to bring back to us Hittin, Allah permitting.

¹ (The Open Meeting with Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri, 2008)

Inspire | Al-Malahem Media

And we won't recognize any state for the Jews, even if on one hand span of the land of Palestine, the way all the Arab rulers did when they adopted the governor of Riyadh's initiative a few years ago. And it wasn't enough for them to commit that major catastrophe until the people recently saw the shepherdess of surrender herd them in flocks to Annapolis, doing with them what the Americans did with their forefathers before, but not for them to be sold: no, for them to sell, and sell what? Sell Jerusalem, al-Aqsa Mosque and the blood of the martyrs, and there is neither power nor strength except with Allah. May Allah do to them as they deserve. And with this, it was confirmed to the people who is trustworthy, who is a traitor, and who is it who is moved by Zionist hands:

*The wound of al-Quds continues
To irritate my side
The burning of its tragedy is like fire
Flaring in the gut
I didn't betray the covenant of Allah
When the states betrayed it*

In addition, we shall not respect the international charters which recognize the Zionist entity on the soil of Palestine, the way the leadership of HAMAS respect them, or the way some of the leaders of the Muslim Brothers stated that. Rather, it is jihad to liberate all of Palestine from the river to the sea, Allah permitting, placing our hands in the hands of the truthful mujahidin there from the foundations of HAMAS and the other factions who condemned their leaders for their deviation from the truth. So blood for blood and destruction for destruction, and I repeat the oath: **by Allah, we shall help you even if we have to crawl on our knees, until we taste what Hamza bin Abd al-Muttalib tasted.**[1]

**Osama Bin Laden's speech against Israel
as quoted in the Inspire Magazine**

In early 2009, Sheikh Ayman Al-Zawahiri called upon Muslims everywhere to attack Israel following events in Gaza. In August 2010 an audio tape by Sheikh Ayman Al-Zawahiri was published, reproaching the Turkish government, mainly for its participation, alongside Western forces, in the war on Islam in Afghanistan and other Islamic lands, but also for having relations with Israel, especially following the siege the latter placed on Gaza. Al-Zawahiri demanded that Turkey sever its ties with Israel in all aspects; military, commercial and political and said that "we must stop this humiliating situation [...] but this change will not come even if several trucks are sent to Gaza. It will not matter if we demonstrate here or there, it will not help, the change will come when the Turkish people ask its government to sever its ties with Israel and not to recognize it [...]. In Palestine your government claims to be pro-Palestinian, the government bandies about words supporting Palestine but without backing them up, they send aid to the Palestinians, but officially, the Turkish government recognizes Israel, there are commercial ties between them and armies carry out maneuvers together and they share intelligence."

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), waging an all-out war against the Yemeni government, has also earned a reputation thanks to its attempts to execute terrorist attacks in Europe and North America. In 2010 the organization raised its attention to events in Israel. From a series of letters that reached Ha'aretz newspaper in April 2010, the existence of ties between Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Palestinian Salafist organizations in the Gaza Strip was exposed. An analysis of the correspondence revealed that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula examined the possibility of sending terrorists from the organization into Israel, posing as immigrants from Ethiopia or as refugees

crossing the border between Israel and Egypt, saying that “we wish to know what are the possibilities in smuggling explosives into Israel, and also what are the possibilities of detonating them by whoever you are in contact with in Israel's occupied lands, as you mentioned to us that you have ties there. We further wish to know if there is a possibility of kidnapping a Jewish soldier like Hamas did, what it entails and how much it should cost. Is there a possibility to smuggle brothers from Somalia to Tel-Aviv posing as immigrants from Ethiopia? You told us there are Jews from Africa that immigrate to Israel through the Egyptian border”. This correspondence was accompanied by a spying manual published by AQAP, detailing the tasks and the manner in which the organization's Intelligence personnel must act. Later on in the letter, the Palestinian Salafists were asked to update Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula of their military and organizational capabilities as well as the arsenal they have succeeded in accumulating:

“As for the subject you mentioned in your messages to us we wish to stress an important matter and that is that your brothers in Yemen do not forget the matter of Al-Aqsa and our brothers in Palestine, all of Palestine and there is no difference between the regions. We wish to receive from you details on several matters: what is your military capability, what are the weapons you require and the way the weapons are stored in the event there is a war with the Jews or you are persecuted by the Hamas”.

Furthermore, the organization apparently attributes great importance to building a Jihad infrastructure in the Sinai Peninsula, which the Mujahideen can use to attack Israel: “We ask of you that your presence in Sinai will be greater than your presence in Gaza without publicizing the fact at all and without reporting on

what you do in Sinai. However it is vital you document your actions so that we can publish them at the right time".³

In an interview given by Sheikh Abu Sufyan, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's Deputy Emir, to Al-Malahem, the organization's Jihadist propaganda institute, he stressed that the Mujahideen continue to carry out operations against Israel since "in Al-Sham, Israel wants to destroy the Mosque and build in its place the Temple of Solomon and they have their plans for establishing a greater Israel. But the Ummah is working on lifting the siege on Gaza and the Mujahideen would continue their work against Israel".⁴

It remains to be seen whether the increase in the number of statements made by Al-Qaeda's leadership and especially by the Jihadist forums regarding Israel are a response to the events and an attempt to demonstrate some understanding and sympathy with the sentiments of the Muslim world, as has occurred following the siege Israel placed on the Gaza Strip; an Al-Qaeda strategic master plan in which Israel is the target or a combination of both. This paper aims to examine the awakening seen in the Jihadist discourse regarding Israel on Jihadist forums and among global Jihad organizations towards the end of 2010 and will try to examine whether there was a change in the strategic plan of global Jihad organizations towards Israel.

³ Zvi Barel, "Al-Qaeda to its supporters in Gaza: We will smuggle terrorists into Israel under the guise of immigrants from Ethiopia", Ha'aretz, 26.4.2010: <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/1165374.html>

⁴ Inspire, issue no.2, fall 2010, page 44.

The Seven Stage Plan: Background

In 2005 the Jordanian journalist Fu'ad Husayn published a book titled "Al-Zarqawi: Al-Qaeda's Second Generation". Although the book itself focused on Al-Zarqawi's biography, it also revealed for the first time a structured strategic action plan for Al-Qaeda with a defined timetable meant to eventually establish Islamic caliphates. The plan is based on seven stages and spans a period of twenty years, from the years 2000 to 2020, with every stage limited to a number of years.⁵

It is important to note that even though Al-Qaeda cannot meet the timetable it has set for itself due to various constraints; attempts to adhere to this outline have recently become apparent in the Jihadist discourse on Jihadist forums. If one is meticulous, one finds that this discourse tries to focus attention on the State of Israel as a target against which Jihad activities should be increased, in accordance with Al-Qaeda's strategic plan, as will be demonstrated later on. At the same time, an effort to focus attention on the countries surrounding Israel, especially on Egypt and Lebanon and to a lesser extent on Jordan and Syria, can also be seen. This stems from the belief that weakening the countries surrounding Israel will harm the *Modus Vivendi* along Israel's borders and will enable the creation of more convenient bases of operation for the Mujahideen to carry out attrition activities against Israel.

It should be noted that President Obama's declaration on his intention to withdraw US forces from Iraq by the end of 2011 also fueled the discourse on the

⁵ Husayn learned of the plan from a series of interviews he conducted with Al-Zarqawi, Al-Qaeda's leader in Iraq, while they were incarcerated together in a Jordanian prison and with Saif Al-Adel, a former senior military member in Al-Qaeda. This strategic plan was published extensively in the media. For Al-Qaeda's detailed strategic plan see: "Al-Qaeda's Operational Strategies –The attempt to revive the debate surrounding the Seven Stages Plan", JWMG Insights, 12.7.2009, http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWMG_Al-Qaeda_Operational_Strategies.pdf

Jihadist forums, considering the reevaluation of the Jihad theaters on the day following the retreat from Iraq, while focusing on the countries surrounding Israel. The popular revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt on early 2011 and the prediction that a "domino effect" may occur in other Arab regimes, such as Libya, Syria, Yemen *etc.* also fueled the Jihadist discourse wishing to exploit the momentum created to bring down the "near enemy", *i.e.* the reigning Muslim regimes and to create an Islamic state instead. However, one should first consider the third and fourth stages of the "Seven Stage Plan", in which Israel is mentioned explicitly, as presented by the journalist Husayn.

Israel in the Prism of the Seven Stage Plan

Israel first appears as a target on the Seven Stage Plan in the third stage. According to the original plan, this stage has already begun in 2007, as will be demonstrated below.

The Third Stage: The Arising and Standing-Up Stage – this stage starts in early 2007 and ends in early 2010.

The leading effort at this stage is moving the focal point of Jihadist activity from Iraq to its neighbors, at first to the Al-Sham region, *i.e.* Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel. The selection of the Al-Sham region was not arbitrary but made due to Al-Qaeda's ideologues' beliefs in prophetic hadiths given by the Prophet Muhammad, pointing to the surrounding of this region after Iraq. This evidence is corroborated by "the Jews' plan to divide the Al-Sham [region] – Syria, Lebanon and the north of Jordan to ethnic countries, as well as the American-European-Jewish attack on the current Syrian regime, with the aim of shattering any power neighboring Israel" for the sake of Israel's security

interests. "This attack", according to Al-Qaeda, "will weaken the Syrian government causing it to lose the ability to continue ruling internal [affairs]".

Al-Qaeda's view is based on an opportunistic outlook, according to which any event in which there is a loss of control over security should be exploited, knowing that it has at its disposal fighters returning from the war in Afghanistan to Iraq, Syria and Jordan, and are ready to volunteer for the realization of this view as has occurred in Lebanon and as is about to happen in Syria.

At the end of this stage and after the conclusion of the preparations, **a direct confrontation with the Jews will be held inside Palestine and at its borders**. The attack against the Jews is not meant to be limited to Palestine alone, but also to areas where there is great influence over Muslim countries, "meaning Turkey". Striving for the end of Jewish control of the Turkish army and economy "will give back to the Islamic nation the ability to take over a military and material power that must not be underestimated". At this point Al-Qaeda will gain popularity and will resonate with the educated youth, which will constitute a source of power and with this power the fourth stage can begin.

The Fourth Stage: The Convalescing and Accumulation of Power for a Change Stage – this stage is expected to begin in early 2010 and end in early 2013.

At this stage efforts will focus on toppling governments by way of a direct and aggressive confrontation. Al-Qaeda's ideologues realize that the American policy as far as the Arab region is concerned "will expose all the cards of the ruling regimes" and in this exposure the latter's' image will be tarnished, meaning "the [Arab] regimes will lose all justification for their existence, they will gradually become weaker in face of Al-Qaeda and Islamic Jihad's rise in strength".

However, a prolonged attrition war against the Americans will prevent them from supporting all the current regimes at once "as is the case today", at which point Al-Qaeda will also have the ability to sabotage the oil industry, which will undermine one of the Americans' most important economic foundations. This will add to the weakening of the regimes mainly relying on oil. Furthermore, the possibility of Al-Qaeda waging an electronic war will reach fruition and could be utilized to further weaken the US economy. The objective of weakening the US economy was conceived by the "Hizb Al-Tahrir Al-Islami"⁶ and was adopted by Al-Qaeda ideologues.

According to Al-Qaeda's point of view, attacking the American economy will create antagonism on the part of the American people towards American Jews, following the understanding that the Jews contributed greatly to the dire state of the American economy. This situation will cause American public opinion to exert pressure on the American government to reduce its support of Israel. Stopping or reducing support given to the Jews will in turn weaken Israel.

The results of this stage will serve Al-Qaeda's interests; the campaign of attrition against the US and its weakening will make it difficult for it to serve in the capacity of gatekeeper for the world order; **Israel will weaken, due to the armed confrontation waged against it by the Jihadist movement in the area**; following the US' weakening and the change in its position, the regimes will lose their readiness and ability to defend themselves.

⁶ The Islamic Liberation Front was founded in east Jerusalem in 1953 by Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, a senior Palestinian religious cleric. The party's goal is to reestablish the Islamic Caliphate (abolished in 1924) and to instill the Sharia on its people. This is to be achieved by a revolution of the elite (for example, military officers) against secular regimes or by assassinating those heading these regimes. See: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/html/final/sp/sib2_04/is_02_04.htm

An Estimation of Al-Qaeda's Successes and Defeats With Regards to the Seven Stage Plan As Seen on Jihadist Forums

On mid-October 2010, a member of the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum posted a correspondence titled "Al-Qaeda's strategy after 10 years; share your thoughts". The writer noted that Al-Qaeda's strategy is well known and has already been published in detail on many Jihadist forums over the past years and according to this strategy there is a well structured seven stage plan, spanning the years 2000 – 2020. According to him, now on the eve of 2010, the following questions have to be asked: what are Al-Qaeda's strategic targets for the New Year; what were the achievements thus far; has the schedule it has set for itself been met; what is the stage the Islamic nation is supposed to experience now, *etc.*

The writer expressed his belief that Al-Qaeda's style has changed recently as was proven by Osama Bin Laden's two latest speeches, in which he no longer called for Jihad or for killing crusaders, asking "what has changed? Is victory nearing?" The writer also raised questions regarding the various Jihad theaters such as the Afghan theater, "The Islamic emirate in Afghanistan is on the brink of a world victory, crushing both the US and NATO countries. What do you have to say to the heretic West and what await them in their countries?" In light of these developments forum members were asked to participate in this discussion and to contribute their opinion. The discussion was limited to a month.

In response, one of the surfers noted that "if Al-Qaeda could move the campaign to US and European soil and there carry out suicide attacks such as the terrorist attack in Bombay, it will have a devastating effect on the economy and a psychological [effect] on the degenerate people in the West and fear would come at them from all around".

Another surfer, participating in an online course for Jihadist propaganda on behalf of the aforementioned forum, noted that Al-Qaeda has succeeded in meeting its schedule sooner than planned. For example, it succeeded in dragging the enemy into a campaign, to drain its strength and weaken it from an economic standpoint. It has also succeeded in opening several additional Jihad theaters, thus turning Jihad into global Jihad. It has succeeded in rekindling the hopes of the Islamic nation "and to break the myth that the Islamic nation cannot face the global forces and especially the US".

In his opinion, **the next stage will manifest in the tightening of the noose around Israel, beginning with the Israelis and Shiites going to war.** At the same time, this stage will witness "the great escape" of US forces from Afghanistan in the same manner as in Iraq. This will enable Al-Qaeda to tighten its hold on Iraq. **Furthermore, the Mujahideen in the Al-Sham region will strengthen their ranks and prepare for a direct confrontation with Israel. Iraq will constitute a strategic base from which the Mujahideen will depart to strike at Israel. The Jihad theaters in Africa, such as Morocco, Somalia, Nigeria and Egypt will also contribute their share to the effort of closing in on Israel.** As for the Jihad Theater in the Arabian Peninsula, Al-Qaeda will be ready to generate a revolution against the Saud dynasty. In his estimation, **Israel and the Saudi regime will fall quickly and Jerusalem will be returned to the bosom of the Islamic nation and will become the capital of the Islamic caliphate in six to ten years.**

In the following years, the writer predicted that the Al-Sham region and the Arabian Peninsula will witness many revolutions and it is possible that the North African region will also be prone to disaster. As for the Islamic emirate in Afghanistan, the writer noted that in the event it will succeed in taking over the

government and survives the Arab-American-Israeli-Turkish alliance's attempts to overthrow it; it will be required to protect the Mujahideen from Iran. Somalia will continue to be a base for strengthening the front in Yemen, whether by arms or manpower. Despite all of the above, the writer predicted that the next conflict in the region Al-Qaeda will be involved in will be in opening a front against the Shiites. According to him, Iran may enter into an alliance with the US, enabling the former to strike in the Gulf region and the Arabian Peninsula in return for supplying oil to Western markets.

Another surfer recommended that Al-Qaeda strives to bring down the regimes in weak countries where social order is weak, such as in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mali, Nigeria, East Somalia and Yemen.⁷

Another surfer compared Al-Qaeda's many achievements with the very meager achievements of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The comparison is enhanced by the fact that the former has been operating for a relatively short period of time compared to the long term activity of the latter in the Islamic expanse. Thus, for example, Al-Qaeda has succeeded in instilling the Sharia both directly and indirectly in Afghanistan, establish an Islamic state in Iraq, establish an Islamic emirate in the Caucasus, secure regions in Somalia ruled under the Sharia, defeat the US in Iraq and Afghanistan, open new Jihad fronts and carry out retaliatory terrorist attacks on the Norwegian and Danish embassies in Pakistan for their attack on the Prophet's honor and more.

Another surfer agreed that **the next step in Al-Qaeda's strategy is a confrontation with the Jews and opening new Jihad fronts in the Al-Sham region, Sudan, Egypt and especially in Palestine.**⁸

⁷ 13.10.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=75313>

⁸ 13.10.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=75313&page=2>

Yet another surfer agreed that **a direct confrontation with Israel will not take more than 10 years and that in six to ten years the Mujahideen will succeed in returning Jerusalem to the Muslims.**

Another surfer, participating in an online course for Jihad propaganda conducted by the forum, noted that **Lebanon will serve as a country of confrontation with the Zionists due to the fact that Israel's other borders, meaning with Egypt and Jordan, are well secured and prevent the Mujahideen from striking inside Israel's territory.**⁹

Another surfer, also participating in an online course for Jihad propaganda conducted by the forum, noted that one of Al-Qaeda's greatest achievements is the destruction of the US economy and the attrition of its forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. Alongside these achievements the surfer stresses that **"the true battles" which are on the brink of starting will be "in Al-Sham and the Arabian Peninsula"**. Al-Qaeda's congregation in Yemen and its overt retreat from Saudi Arabia means it intends to establish a core that constitutes the basis for the establishment of an Islamic state in Yemen, much like the establishment of the Islamic state of Iraq. This step may enable Al-Qaeda to act more efficiently in deposing the Saudi regime.

In addition, the Al-Sham region is viewed as "the mother of all campaigns" or "the mother of all contemporary problems". He stressed that **a campaign should be fought against Israel, eventually leading to its elimination and to the liberation of Jerusalem. This campaign should be led by a strong Islamic state,**¹⁰ which **"will be able to cope with the**

⁹ 20.10.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=75313&page=4>

¹⁰ It is very likely that he is referring to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Islamic state to be founded in Yemen. This is corroborated by a senior surfer on the the Al-Mujahideen Electronic Network Jihadist forum who referred to similar statements found in a correspondence titled "Al-Qaeda's strategy, the latest achievements and the expectations for the future". <http://majahden.com/vb/showthread.php?t=10146>

world's heretic forces directly or indirectly. Therefore, this war in Afghanistan and Iraq is in preparation for the bigger wars in the Al-Sham region and in the Arabian Peninsula, for the liberation of the holy places".¹¹

In another correspondence posted on 26.11.10, a member of the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum raised a question, supposedly on the mind of many Muslims, as to **why does Al-Qaeda not strike Israel and the Jews** who are killing Muslims and attacking the sanctity of the places holy to Islam. This is especially troubling in light of its success in attacking other regions around the world, such as the World Trade Center and the terrorist attacks in Madrid. The writer assumed this question originated with Intelligence elements in Muslim countries which at first spread a rumor as to why Al-Qaeda has not attacked Iran.

According to him, this rumor was unfounded as there are many examples of Al-Qaeda's actions against Iran, such as the attack on the Iranian embassy in Iraq, attacking Iranian diplomats, the elimination of collaborators with the Iranian authorities in Iraq, the founding of a division for assassinating members of the Shiite militias in Iraq and more. The same goes for anything pertaining to Israel.

According to him, **in reality Al-Qaeda carried out many terrorist attacks against Israeli targets but the media covers it up.** For example, Al-Qaeda in Iraq succeeded in attacking:

1. A hotel where Iraqi Intelligence elements, rabbis and collaborators with the Israeli Mossad reside, as well as CIA agents and heads of security companies.¹²

¹¹ 23.10.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=75313&page=4>

¹² The same surfer added a link to a video segment documenting the detonation of the hotel, as well as to a video of Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir, former head of the Islamic State of Iraq, claiming responsibility for the terrorist attack and explaining how it was executed.

2. Plans to attack several hotels in Amman, where heads of the Israeli Mossad and of the Jordanian and Palestinian Authority's Intelligence Services resided.
3. An attack on a synagogue in Tunisia.
4. The attack on an Israeli hotel in Mombassa, Kenya.
5. The bombarding of Eilat and Aqaba with Katyusha rockets. An attack for which Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi claimed responsibility.

The surfer himself explained why Al-Qaeda does not operate in the Gaza Strip. According to him, the reason lies with Hamas' policy towards the Salafist organizations in the territories under its rule, which eventually brought about the massacre of Sheikh Abu Al-Nur Al-Maqdisi and of his group,¹³ merely because they wished to instill Sharia and for their support of Osama Bin Laden.¹⁴

Another manifestation of the attempt to focus the attention on Israel can be seen in the official announcement made by the **Taliban** on December 22nd 2010, stating that another Salah Al-Din Al-Ayubi is needed to liberate Al-Aqsa Mosque from Jewish occupation. This statement is highly uncharacteristic for an organization whose main focus is on the Afghan and Pakistani arenas. This may point to another attempt to focus attention on Israel.¹⁵

¹³ In August 2009, Hamas Security Forces killed members of the Army of Islam Salafist group, identified with Al-Qaeda, at the Ibn Tamiya Mosque in Rafah.

¹⁴ 26.11.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=82217>

¹⁵ It should be noted that Al-Somood magazine, published on behalf of the Afghan Taliban on May-June 2010, already featured the issue on the liberation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque from the hands of the Jews. See: Al-Somood, issue no. 47, May-June 2010, pages 6 – 11. However, this current statement is part of a rising trend of threats against Israel, made on Jihadist forums.

The Countries Surrounding Israel in the Prism of the Jihadist Discourse on the Jihadist Forums

Egypt

Egypt received considerable attention on Jihadist forums even before the popular revolution of late January 2011. In the beginning of November 2010, a member of the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum posted correspondence titled: "A review and suggestions surrounding the issue of the revival of Jihad in Egypt", receiving many positive responses. According to the writer, the ailments of the Egyptian population lie in the Egyptian regime that is run according to a faulty moral code and upholding a government not based on the Sharia: "We are ruled by a worthless heretic gang fighting Islam day and night, meaning that essentially Islam does not exist". Clear proof of the inadequate management of the country is apparent in its ignoring of the "abduction" of two Coptic Christian women, Wafa Kustantin and Kamilia Shehata, by the Coptic Church in Egypt, as a means to pressure them to reconsider their conversion to Islam. Moreover, the state itself agrees with the Church's attempts to make them recant their conversion to Islam and return to the folds of the Christian faith. Furthermore, the Egyptian state enforces high taxation on its people and torments its citizens with its security forces, shedding the blood of many Muslims. Secularism is spread and it is apparent it has taken over the Egyptian press. Drugs, drunkenness and adultery are rampant everywhere and the police does not lift a finger to cope with these phenomena. Instead, they display aggression towards women. If the country were to instill the laws of the Sharia, none of these phenomena would have existed.

Therefore, the cure for the ailments of the Egyptian society depends on the revival of Jihad for Allah. Sheikh Abu Basir Al-Tartusi, a Syrian Salafist Sheikh

residing in London and identified with Al-Qaeda, said on more than one occasion that Jihad is the legal way to reinstate the rights of the oppressed people. Any other way or solution will not succeed in bringing a victory for the nation. Although Da'awa at the mosques, the teaching of the Salafist faith and adherence to the Sharia are in themselves welcome and important, they are no substitute for Jihad, which is considered to be an important tool in achieving a change in the existing state of affairs and it attaining victory.

Although the writer expressed interest in promoting Jihad in Egypt, he admitted that the revival of the Jihad commandment in Egypt is a difficult task as is the task of laying out its strategy. Despite the fact that several attempts were made to revive it, they all failed for various reasons and have a zero success rate. However, despite the existing limitations he believed the task can be completed. Before bringing a proposal for an action plan, he wished to examine five suggestions made in the past by various Islamists, mainly on the part of the Jama'a Al-Islamiya, an Egyptian Jihad group, as to the way Jihad should be revived in Egypt. Furthermore, he estimated their chances of success:

1. Infiltrating the army: recruiting yet-to-be enlisted youth and integrating them in the military, taking over heavy equipment and tanks and taking them out to the streets. According to him, the Egyptian police and central security forces will be powerless in the face of such a display of force. This opinion is also advocated by Azzam Al-Kamari,¹⁶ a senior officer with the Egyptian Armored Corps, and by Ayman Al-Zawahiri himself, who believed that infiltrating the Egyptian army ranks is very possible.
2. Focusing on Da'awa and Jihad in certain regions, training the manpower there and declaring an Islamic state in these areas. The writer claimed that the

¹⁶ Al-Kamari was jailed in Egypt following an attempt on the life of President Anwar Sadat and after his involvement with Jama'at Al-Jihad, Ayman Al-Zawahiri's group, has been exposed. He was killed by the Egyptian security forces following an attempted escape.

- Egyptian Jihad group, the Jama'a Al-Islamiya, held this outlook and suggested the Asyut, Al-Minya and Suhaj regions as locations for implementing this plan. However, according to the writer, this outlook is lacking due to the possibility of surrounding these regions, which may enable the elimination of the Mujahideen there.
3. Establishing an armed organization that hoists the banner of Jihad and wages a war of nerves in Egypt. The writer believes that this proposition has utterly failed, as evidenced in the fact that most of the Muslims maintaining the same opinion were arrested. Abu Musab Al-Suri, one of Al-Qaeda's most prominent strategists, also claimed that this outlook has failed.
 4. Waging a Jihad campaign outside of Egypt's borders. This outlook is attributed to Dr. Fadl, Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiya's spiritual leader. According to the writer, this outlook is inapplicable as it is unlikely that any army will succeed in conquering Egypt. However, he believes that Sudan is the exception in this regard as the love of Islam is embedded in the Sudanese people and many Sudanese were influenced by the idea of Jihad and many of them escaped to Somalia and experienced Jihad firsthand. The writer contended that "the Somali front can significantly help [Sudan]". Furthermore, the Sudanese government is weak and moving across its territory is relatively easy for the Mujahideen.¹⁷ Therefore, conquering Sudan is preferable as there the people of Egypt will be able to take part in the war there against the crusaders directly and to establish Egyptian headquarters that will influence the Egyptian people. The writer further predicts that the appearance of Mujahideen in Sudan will cause the Egyptian army to intervene there and lead to "a true conflict between the Mujahideen and the Egyptian regime in a campaign that

¹⁷ The writer claimed that Jihadist organizations in Sudan are currently preparing for the upcoming war, in view of the intent to divide Sudan into two countries following a referendum conducted there.

will be difficult to justify to the Egyptian people". The occupation of Sudan will enable the Mujahideen to infiltrate Egypt through the extensive Sudan-Egypt border and to establish an Islamic state in the south of Egypt. However, in the absence of the occupation of Sudan, this is very difficult and likely impossible.

5. Individual terrorism, not subject to a hierarchical organization. This concept is supported by Sheikh Abu Musab Al-Suri, one of Al-Qaeda's most prominent ideologues, currently in prison. According to the writer, this strategy produced many accomplishments for global Jihad despite the fact that Abu Musab Al-Suri did not see Egypt as a convenient theater for Jihad.

At the end of the analysis the surfer offered his opinion as to how Jihad should be revived in Egypt.¹⁸ He believes that two main phases are involved in this matter:

Stage A: weakening the crusader campaign by putting up as much resistance as possible. Anyone who cannot join the Jihad campaign is required to engage in the propaganda aspect of it by spreading the belief in the Oneness of God, in education, guidance, raising funds, weapons *etc.* At this stage a confrontation with traitorous Muslims should be avoided "due to inability and the misunderstanding of most people regarding this type of warfare" and to settle for propaganda that exposes their failures and tie the crises of the Muslim nation to the fact the Sharia is not implemented.

Stage B: fighting the Egyptian regime. This warfare should be based on the concept of individual terrorism laid down by Sheikh Abu Musab Al-Suri and on Al-Qaeda's strategy. This means that everyone must form small groups of Mujahideen "in one place only" and train its members for Jihad. This way, when there are many independent terrorist cells in various regions in Egypt with no

¹⁸ According to the writer, his suggestion is based on Abu Musab Al-Suri's outlook, *i.e.* on individual terrorism and on Ayman Al-Zawahiri's ideology, which suggests that the Egyptians join the various Jihad theaters or focus on Da'awa and propaganda for the Mujahideen and against the corrupt Muslims regimes.

connection between them, the Egyptian security forces will find it difficult to respond. Furthermore, their members are required to attack crusader and **Jewish** targets. In the waging of this war of attrition, by, for example, eliminating Egyptian security commanders, or what he termed Jihad against the government, the Egyptian regime will weaken. According to the writer, the propaganda aspect is also important, which is why a media institute must be established, focusing on Egypt and coordinating the claiming of responsibility for various terrorist attacks there, that will operate under the name "*Al-Qaeda in Egypt*". In this regard the writer expressed his willingness to show initiative and establish such a media institute with some friends and supervise it for a short while until the circumstances mature and a senior Jihadist propaganda expert will take over.

Finally, the writer asked the Mujahideen leaders and the propaganda leaders to show overt and clear involvement as to the pattern of operation that should be adopted in order to revive Jihad in Egypt.¹⁹

It should be noted that the wave of popular protests spreading over the Middle East since early January 2011 and is still threatening the stability of other regimes in the area, received a positive response from Al-Qaeda's leadership and Jihad organizations, even though they were mixed with some disappointment for not having an Islamic nature or agenda, alongside references to Israel, albeit a marginal one. In their view, the loss of security and stability in the region in light of the downfall of Hosni Mubarak's government succeeded in instilling a deep fear in Israel as to the security of its borders. It is interesting to see that the Sinai Peninsula, mentioned at the beginning of the document, is mentioned prominently by several global Jihad leaders who try to attribute to it a strategic

¹⁹ 1.11.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=79038>

value for Jihadist consolidation. Thus, for example, in mid February 2011, Sheikh Atiyyat Allah Abi Abd Al-Rahman, one of Al-Qaeda's leading leaders and ideologues, referred to the recent events in the Middle East while at the same time called upon the Mujahideen to focus on building an appropriate infrastructure in Rafah, in Sinai and in Egypt as a basis for future Jihadist activity.²⁰

Lebanon

A manifestation of the attempts to strengthen the organizational infrastructure of Jihad organizations does not neglect the Lebanese theater. The Jihadist forums, for example, systematically highlight the threat to Lebanon from a Shiite takeover on the part of Hezbollah and Iran. This is done to prepare the ground for the recruitment of Al-Qaeda operatives in Lebanon and to encourage the Sunni community in the country to prepare for the launching of a future campaign against the Shiites. An indirect criticism of the government is also seen for not preparing to face this evil. This issue was discussed extensively by a surfer on the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum, in a correspondence titled "Lebanon: the Big Bang Scenario".

According to him, a great danger threatens the future of the Lebanese state due to the fear of its imminent fall into Shiite Iranian control through its protégé, Hezbollah. Iran wishes to export its Shiite ideology to the Al-Sham region while receiving help from the US. Hezbollah is deemed to be an advance guard in this front and in the Islamic world. For example, Hezbollah was found to be the main culprit in Rafiq Al-Hariri's assassination in 2005. However, due to great concern over civil war in Lebanon, as of now, no charges were made against it. Once the

²⁰ *The People's Revolution and the Fall of the Corrupt Arab Regime: Smashing the Idol of Stability and the New Point of Departure*, Al-Fajr, 16.2.11: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=96442>

latter realized that the courts intend on charging it with Al-Hariri's elimination, it tried to blame Al-Qaeda. However, eventually it decided to accuse Israel of the assassination.

Following the intent to prosecute Hezbollah, the writer estimated that it will repeat the May 7th scenario, *i.e.* Hezbollah operatives trying to take over Beirut and other regions in Lebanon with the aim of deterring those wishing to prosecute it for its involvement in Rafiq Al-Hariri's murder. This will follow its attempts to claim that it tried to resolve the issue peacefully so as to gain the support of all Shiites. The most likely scenario is that Hezbollah operatives will take over the state institutions in Beirut including the prime minister's office, among other things, by way of demonstrations meant to conceal this intent and by armed force. Hezbollah will take over West Beirut and the international roads between Beirut and Damascus and between Beirut and the South. This will be done after isolating the Sunni pockets in the Al-Harub region and the Western Bekaa valley. In the meantime, East Beirut and the Christian areas will be passed over to the responsibility of Hezbollah's allies, including Aoun's supporters and the National Syrian Party, with the aid of Shiite fighters and military officers supporting Michel Aoun. Tripoli, its suburbs and Akkar will remain under Sunni control.

The writer believes Hezbollah has a plan to disrupt the roads used for the passage of Alawi forces and of Sunni groups loyal to it, as a lesson learned from the street wars in Tripoli in 2008 between Hezbollah and the Sunni and Alawi neighborhoods, when Syria defended the Alawis from Sunni radicals. The writer neglects to provide answers to a series of questions such as whether it is likely

that the Arab countries and world powers will intervene if such a war erupts, whether Israel will launch another war against Hezbollah, *etc.*²¹

The **Abdullah Azzam Brigades**, a Salafist Jihadist organization identified with Al-Qaeda and operating in Lebanon, pointed on more than one occasion to the Lebanese Hezbollah as an Iranian operational branch striving to take over Lebanon. It believes that Hezbollah has made a commitment to the Jews to maintain a peaceful border with Israel as part of its plan to take over Lebanon. Therefore, the organization sees itself as being forced into an all-out war, mandating it to face this danger and cope with the Shiite threat. According to the organization, the Sunnis themselves are required to confront the Shiites and repel the Shiite threat.²²

Another statement made by the group emphasized the process Lebanon is undergoing, turning it into a Shiite country due to actions taken by Hezbollah. According to the statement, Hezbollah has succeeded in infiltrating the Lebanese Army and take over its leadership. Thus, those with actual control of the Lebanese Army are Hezbollah and the Shiites, who use it to systematically eliminate the Sunni community in Lebanon. Heading this plan is Abas Ibrahim,²³ who is guided by dictates of the Shiite community in Lebanon. For example, he is secretly leading the Lebanese Army towards Sunni refugee camps in Lebanon while purposely distancing Shiite soldiers from the campaign so as to prevent loss of life from among their ranks and in such a way increase their relative number in the army. Ostensibly, it seems there is a struggle between the Christians and Sunnis or between the "Christian" Lebanese Army and Sunni terrorists; a perception for which the biased propaganda in the country is partly responsible.

²¹ 2.10.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=73969>

²² 14.10.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=75906>

²³ Deputy Director of Lebanese Army Intelligence.

The group stressed that it has no intention of carrying out any operation inside Lebanon or to fight the Lebanese Army, **but rather continue its activities against the Jews**. However, the existing trend to taint its name is the result of false propaganda spread by the Shiites in Lebanon. This is why the Sunnis in the country must sober up and realize that the Shiites are leading the army against them. According to the group, this trend will not continue for long and all those oppressing the Sunnis, headed by Abas Ibrahim, will pay for their crimes. The group also approached the other communities in Lebanon, urging them to wake up and realize that the Lebanese Army's leadership and that of the country's security forces is in the hands of the Shiite community. Furthermore, the group blamed Hezbollah and the Shiites for the disgraceful living conditions of the Sunni prisoners in the country; this is due to the military courts administration and the state institutions being in Shiite hands.²⁴

A more explicit reference to Israel was evident in statements made by Salah Al-Qar'awi, leader of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, who claimed that the brigades have a military force called "the Ziad Al-Jarrah Battalion", meant to operate from Lebanon against Israel. He also noted that the nature of operations in Lebanon is not limited to launching rockets towards Israel and that the organization is working on diversifying its activity and "surprising the enemy".²⁵ It should be noted that during Operation Cast Lead as well as after its conclusion, the organization launched several rockets towards Israel. For example, the organization claimed responsibility for the launching of several rockets towards Israel on September 11th 2009 and on October 29th 2009.

²⁴ 25.12.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=85873>

²⁵ Al-Faloja, 4.4.2010

Syria

Following popular protests in the Arab World, the Jihadist forums stood out in their attempt to ignite a wave of protest against the Alawi regime in Syria. For example, on February 5th 2011, a surfer on the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum posted a request made by Sheikh Hussein bin Mahmud, the nickname of one of the most popular writers on the Jihadist forums, to publish the book written by Sheikh Abu Musab Al-Suri titled **"The Sunni in Al-Sham in Conflict with the Nusayriyyah,²⁶ the Crusaders and the Jews"** on every forum, website and any other place as soon as possible, as well as to pay special attention to the part discussing the Alawi community. One of the above mentioned Jihadist forum managers responded to the request and announced the opening of a virtual workshop for surfers to publish the book in the form of banners containing select quotes from it.²⁷ Two days prior, on February 3rd 2011, a surfer on the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum posted 29 reasons as to "Why it is the obligation of the people of Syria to rebel against Bashar the Dictator?", such as preventing true education, dispersing obscene material etc.²⁸



**A banner demonstrating the campaign led
by the Shumukh Al-Islam forum**

²⁶ A synonym for the Alawi community in Syria which the Syrian elite are a part of, including Syrian President, Bashar Al-Asad.

²⁷ 5.2.11: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=92695>

²⁸ 3.2.11: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=92877>

On February 13th 2011 the Al-Masada Jihadist media institute, operating on behalf of the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum, published a book titled "Valuable Research: Will the Popular Demonstrations in Syria be Successful?", by Sheikh Abu Al-Zuhara Al-Zubaydi, a Salafist author whose real identity is unknown but who is very active in pro-Mujahideen propaganda.²⁹

According to Al-Zubaydi, the Syrian government is very successful in misleading Muslim public opinion and professing to be a moderate regime wishing, for example, to reconcile with the Sunni community or having good relations with Palestinian resistance organizations such as Hamas and Palestinian Jihad. However, in reality, this is an illusion. To illustrate, there is an unsigned agreement between Syria and Hamas that the latter will not carry out any terrorist attacks within Israel. Furthermore, many Salafist Jihadist operatives are incarcerated in Lebanon and Syria. Al-Zubaydi believes that protests and demonstrations such as those carried out in Egypt and Tunisia, are unlikely to occur in Syria for three reasons:

- The Syrian regime is good at misleading public opinion and depicting itself as the only Arab government withstanding the Jewish-American plan.
- The Syrian regime is prepared for any popular Intifada and is aided by support forces from Iran and Hezbollah in order to deter the Sunni demonstrators from following in the footsteps of the Tunisian and Egyptian people.
- The lack of opposition parties that inflame the Syrian street.

In view of all of the above, Al-Zubaydi believes that change in Syria can only come about through Jihad movements who place Syria at their top priority, as most of its population is Sunni and only a minority is Alawi; as opposed to

²⁹ 13.2.11: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=94484>

Lebanon where there is a Shiite majority and a Sunni minority and where there is concern that the latter will be overwhelmed. **“It is important that Syria be the spearhead of the people of the Oneness of God and Jihad, as it is close to Palestine** and as it is the gate to Iraq and food for Lebanon, where wars will take place”. Therefore, Al-Zubaydi claimed that there is a need to outline a propaganda plan that exposes the web of lies spun by the Syrian government and the Alawis, for example by mentioning the Hamat massacre of 1982 etc.



The cover of the essay: “Valuable Research:

Will the Popular Demonstrations in Syria be Successful?”

Jordan

Jordan's place in the Jihadist discourse is insignificant but one can point to several correspondences in regards to it. For example, correspondence was posted as to the corruption prevalent in the Hashemite dynasty. A surfer on the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum posted a correspondence titled “The Son of an Englishwoman, the King of Jordan and His 'Documented' Truth”. In this post, the surfer gathered reports depicting Jordan as providing Israel's strategic depth and as a central base for activity against the Mujahideen.

The Palestinians

A growing trend of increased propaganda on the part of Palestinian Salafist Jihadist groups against Israel has been detected recently on Jihadist forums, such as threats to attack strategic targets within Israel. On December 31st 2010, A prominent Palestinian Salafist Jihadist group, **the Mujahideen's Lion's Den in Palestine** (Ma'asadat Al-Mujahideen fi Filastin), declared an open war against Jews everywhere. According to the group, its members are behind the fire set to the Carmel Forests, the fire set to a train car and to an Israeli ship. It also called upon Israeli Arabs, especially to the Arab citizens of Jerusalem, to help the group against the Jews through financial aid, men and arms.

According to the group, its activity was meant to rouse the Arab people in Israel from their slumber, encouraging them to join the struggle against the Jewish occupier. Furthermore, the group demanded the Jihadist forums increase the scope of propaganda in its favor.³⁰

Another Palestinian Salafist Jihadist group, the **Jama'at Ansar Al-Sunna fi Aknaf Bayt Al-Maqdis**, published an audio tape titled "Release the Sufferer: An Audio Message from the Jewish Prisons" by Sheikh Yasri bin Atiyya Al-Salih, also known as Abu Hajir Al-Filastini.³¹ According to him, the efforts to release Muslim prisoners from "heretic" jails, including Jewish and Christian jails, should be increased, especially by fighting them but also by ransoming them for money, while taking great care and in accordance with the laws of Sharia.

In December 2010, a surfer on the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum, Abu Sulayman Al-Nasir, addressed the Muslims in the West Bank and Israel, asking

³⁰ 31.12.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=86743>

³¹ Born in Gaza on March 23rd 1983, he is Palestinian Salafist Sheikh incarcerated in an Israeli prison since June 2010. Graduate of the Al-Aqsa University, the English Language Department at the Faculty of Education. 13/12/10: <http://shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=84466>

them to establish Jihadist battalions, to join global Jihad and to slaughter Jews.³²

He suggested three ways to do so:

1. To establish "Jew Slaughtering Brigades" whose members must display good physical fitness while attacking, defending and in general. They should meticulously plan terrorist attacks against security targets, to assign in a defined manner appropriate roles to the group members, such as Intelligence gathering. It is mandatory to maintain secrecy before carrying out a terrorist attack so as to preserve the safety of the group's members.
2. Establishing "Sniper Brigades". Good sharp shooting capabilities should be displayed. This possibility can spread fear among the enemy.
3. Establishing "The Silencer Lions": "The best way to kill the enemy" is to approach the target to be eliminated, after a preliminary planning and combing of the region, attack one of the security inspection officers and then quickly evacuate the location.

In December 2010 a surfer on the Shumukh Al-Islam Jihadist forum, participating in an online course of Jihadist propaganda given by the forum, posted a correspondence titled "Know Your Enemy, Israel, From Within". The correspondence provided basic information on Israel's demographics, the scope of its military force, the deployment of its bases throughout the country, its weaknesses, etc.³³ Another senior surfer active on that same forum posted a call to the Mujahideen to attack the Israeli Railway system. He provided a link to the Israeli Railway Authority's website in order to provide more information that may help the Mujahideen.³⁴

³² 6.12.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=83508>

³³ 1.12.10: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?p=1058158983>

³⁴ 3.1.11: <http://www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?p=1058177647>



Summary

In 2010 and especially in its second half, a rise in the number of posts pertaining to Israel can be seen on the Jihadist forums. The most prominent messages in this discourse encourage forum members to take more action against Israel. One should remember that the Palestinian Salafist Jihadist organizations leading the dialogue also receive aid from external Jihadist organizations such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The completion of the American forces' withdrawal from Iraq planned for the end of 2011 marks the beginning of the next phase in Al-Qaeda's strategic plan to increase activity against Israel and the surrounding countries. This plan specifically mentioned that the next region that should be

focused on after Iraq is the Al-Sham region which encompasses Syria, Lebanon Jordan and Israel.

The loss of security, stability and political order in several Arab countries following the wave of popular protests starting in January 2011 constitutes an opportunity for the Mujahideen to strengthen their strongholds in the countries surrounding Israel, all the while promoting the objectives of deposing the governments in these countries while increasing Jihad activities against Israel. The derived meaning from this is the expansion of the Jihadist infrastructure, both surrounding the centers of government in the Arabian countries and in regions bordering with Israel such as the Sinai Peninsula or Southern Lebanon, as bases of operation for terrorist attacks within Israel. All the while efforts to expand the global Jihadist propaganda among the Palestinians are intensified, on the basis of the Salafist organizations and amongst Israeli Arabs.

It should be noted that the discourse does not deal merely with the theoretical strategic aspect but already displays signs of the expansion of the infrastructure of knowledge regarding Israel by the publication of information including satellite photos and photographs of strategic targets in it based on information gathered online.