# Modus Operandi of Al-Qaeda

# in the Arabian Peninsula

## Introduction

During 2014, the Al-Malahem media institution, belonging to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published a series of eight recorded lectures about military strategy and combat methods. The lectures – which were produced and presented by a senior official in the organization, Nasr bin Ali al-Ansi – were featured in the framework of publications by the "Jihadist Military Academy". In order to make the lectures more approachable, in November, 2014 a 26 page document was published, briefly summarizing the main points of each lecture.

The introduction to the lectures indicates that "military strategy" is only one of many (33) topics covered in over 60 lessons, about a wide variety of military issues – in the areas of history, tactics, training, naval warfare, military engineering, and more (see appendix) – which the AQAP transmits to its students in lectures at the "Jihadist Military Academy". In addition, the introduction clarifies that the target audience of the videos is the fighters with battlefield experience who "are qualified for taking responsibility for commanding, guiding, and planning". This sits well with the fact that most of the principles detailed in the lectures apply more to management of the combat system in the battlefield, and not to attacks carried out by lone terrorists or small cells.

After the document was dedicated to the Jihad and Ribat fighters throughout the Islamic world, as well as to the former and current leaders of Jihad (including Abdullah Azam, Osama bin Laden, and Ayman al- Zawahiri), the titles of each lecture were listed:

*Chapter 1: Direct and Indirect Strategy*

*Chapter 2: The Importance of a Grand Strategy*

*Chapter 3: The Strategic Principle: "To Win in a War or Not Lose It"*

*Chapter 4: The Powerful Countries and Elements of Force*

*Chapter 5: Military Technology: Push-button Warfare vs. Traditional Warfare*

*Chapter 6: Maneuvers and the Principles of Warfare*

*Chapter 7: Elements of War*

*Chapter 8: For Commanders Only*

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

2

# Contents

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

3

## Chapter 1: Direct and Indirect Strategy

This chapter explains the differences between direct and indirect strategies. While the direct strategy aims to destroy the enemy in a swift battle, indirect strategy involved a patient war of attrition with the goal of undermining the enemy's security and stability, and crumbling the enemy both materially and mentally at once, with the main goal being to break the commander's spirit. For example, direct strategy is liable to include an attack on a sensitive site under the enemy's control - an attack with the goal of sending a message and causing mental damage to the enemy – and not specifically with the intention of killing a large number of soldiers. Al-Ansi emphasizes that it is important to create for the enemy a sense of being pursued, which will cause him to constantly feel like a "hunted animal". Al-Ansi quotes the British strategist Liddell Hart, who was convinced that there are two types of attacks: a physical attack that harms the enemy's forces, and a mental attack which targets the "thought center" of those forces in an attempt to silence them. In other words, indirect strategy does not aim to eliminate the enemy's soldiers, but focuses on destroying the "nerve centers" of the enemy, and on damaging the morale of the commanders. Al-Ansi explains that the highest goal is to defeat the enemy with indirect strategy, without causing any bloodshed.

Al-Ansi offers historical examples of the use of indirect strategy, both from European history (Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1939), and Arab history (Khaled bin al-Walid, one of the Prophet Mohammad's companions, who was known for his military tactics). In the context of jihad, al-Ansi emphasized that the United States has started to change and went from tactic struggles against the mujahideen to a strategic struggle which includes, among other things, an attempt to distort the image of the mujahideen and to cause discord between them and the people.

Al-Ansi added that one of the main characteristics of indirect strategy is the freedom of the attacker to decide whether to take action or cease activity in accordance with its specific time frame and plans.

Al-Ansi concluded that indirect strategy advances the emotional weakening of the enemy on the one hand and the deep belief of the fighter in the justification of his goals on the other hand. Al-Ansi ends his lecture by asking his students to consider: "What is the value of modern weapons in hands of a soldier who does not believe in the goal he is sent to fight for, or if he does not fully trust his commanders?"

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

4

## Chapter 2: The Importance of a Grand Strategy

In this chapter Al-Ansi clarifies that it is extremely important for there to be a Grand Strategy: a master plan and a clear vision which will determine the way the warfare is handled. Al-Ansi quotes Carl von Clausewitz, one of the fathers of modern strategic study, who defined war as an act of violence in which one attempts to compel his opponent to fulfill his will. In this context, al-Ansi explains that wars are started due to a sense of hostility and loathing towards the enemy, and a desired to annihilate him, even if the wars are based on intellectual principles, and not emotional ones. Al-Ansi clarifies that in order to conduct effective warfare, it is necessary to negate among the soldiers their hesitation or fear of violence and a show of force. He offers examples from several verses from the Quran of why enemies must be treated harshly. Al-Ansi adds that the attacking party must inform the enemy that it is not a passing danger, but that it will continue to wage battle against him for generation after generation. In addition, al-Ansi emphasizes that it is important for a strategy to be a "grand strategy" with regard to many areas, including politics, economics, society, and the army, while adapting mission-related tasks to every given situation. Al-Ansi explains that the Grand Strategy doesn't add mere steps but is rather an all encompassing perspective that takes into account all possible positions and risks, and also provides a standpoint for times of peace that will arrive after the war. With regard to the importance of a clearly defined vision, al-Ansi recalls bin Laden, who was accustomed to telling his followers that if he was killed they should turn to Abu Hafs for leadership (bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammad Ataf, who was killed in November 2001), because he knew the organization's plans even "for the period after the downfall of the United States". According to al-Ansi, a uniform political position must be taken (for there can't be a strategy without political contents), and the enemy's "center of gravity" must be discovered (military, economic, a powerful ally, etc.). Al-Ansi emphasizes that hitting the main enemy is preferable, since that will lead to the downfall of the secondary enemies (for example, in the eyes of many countries, the United States is the "center of gravity", and hurting the US will also hurt them.)

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

5

With regard to the necessity for avoiding secondary battles, al-Ansi relates a story about how one of the fighters suggested to Osama bin Laden to hijack an American plane and to use it as a "trading card" in negotiations for the release of six members of Al-Qaeda imprisoned by the United States. To that suggestion, bin Laden responded that despite the importance of releasing the prisoners, an act like that – if it was even successful – would only cause the United States to take more captives, and to drag Al-Qaeda into a "vicious circle" which would wear it down and would not advance any of its goals.

## Chapter 3: The Strategic Principle: "To Win in a War or Not Lose It"

In this chapter, al-Ansi explains that alongside a victory or a defeat, there is a third situation: Avoiding combat while waiting for a propitious time. That is to say, sometimes a strategist must avoid combat that will lead to his defeat and the deaths of all his forces. In that respect, al-Ansi presents as an example the wars of "the few against the many", and explains that also when small groups are not able – at least theoretically – to completely overcome a larger and more powerful enemy, they can at least "not lose in the war" and prevent the enemy from wiping them out. Strategists must always place before themselves the balance of forces, to make estimations, and to find alternate goals while engaging in a constant war of attrition against the enemy forces, all in an effort to convince the enemy of the futility of its attacks. In addition, al-Ansi notes that it is important to know and be familiar with the environment of the combat region, in order to enlist the general public to siding with the cause you are fighting for. Al-Ansi clarifies that every society has its own motives which can cause it to go to war, and therefore it is important to know and to play on the right emotions in order to create public enthusiasm and popular support for the cause (al-Ansi offered as an example the situation in which the AQAP exposed a contract purportedly signed between the American Embassy in Yemen and the Yemenite Ministry of Health with regard to supplying prostitutes for the American soldiers. The leak of this information caused local tribal population to get very angry at the Americans.)

In this context, al-Ansi emphasizes that true diplomacy is always achieved through force – diplomacy without force is no more than a superficial attempt at persuasion. Al-Ansi elaborates, saying how important it is for the diplomacy to include means for applying pressure: "True diplomacy is diplomacy that is able to instill fear in the opponent's ranks when a decision is made to

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

6

employ force." It should be remembered that politics motivate the battles, and they define the risks for the commanders in the field. In our day and age, a soldier can go to battle only with total cooperation of the diplomats – each in his turn - who are responsible for the level of expertise of the fighting forces, and their training. In order to demonstrate this principle, al-Ansi notes that the AQAP was able to acquire the means of applying pressure on the enemy (instilling fear and economic threats), and was even able to infiltrate the enemy ranks with agents.

In this lecture, al-Ansi devotes some of his time to the subject of policy. Al-Ansi clarifies that the policy and the general vision should be what directs the military activity. A differentiation must be made between significant and insignificant issues, with the knowledge of how to choose the right goals according to the plan outlined by the policy. In this context, public opinion should always be taken into account, and before taking any action an assessment must be made regarding whether the public will view that action in a positive or negative way. In addition, the leaders must know what their military capabilities are, and what they can implement and what they cannot.

## Chapter 4: The Powerful States and Elements of Force

This chapter explains that a powerful state is a country which is able to create anything (strong manufacturing capabilities), or to destroy anything (military strength), while differentiating between defensive power (the ability to prevent your opponents from forcing their will upon you) and offensive power (the ability to force your will upon your opponents).The American geostrategist, Nicholas John Spykman, identified the elements of comprehensive national strength, as presented in the following list:

1. Territory
2. The state's characteristics and image
3. The size of the population
4. The presence or absence of raw materials (natural resources)
5. Economic and technological development
6. Financial power
7. National homogeneity (the extent of the loyalty of the residents to the state, and of social cohesion)
8. Social homogeneity/integration

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

7

9. Political stability

10. Public morale

Al-Ansi explains that the data that gives a state power and strength (for example, a large territory, access to the sea, and borders that are easy to monitor) also applies to territory conquered in a war or a military campaign.

Al-Ansi adds that along with the list above, there is another list that divides the components which form the power of a state into just three elements:

1. **Political elements:** the geographical status, the size of the country, the size and density of the population, organizational abilities, the cultural level, the nature of the borders, and the positions of neighboring countries.

2. **Psychological-human elements:** economic flexibility, creativity and inventive abilities, resilience, and adaptability.

3. **Economic elements:** fertility of the land, natural resources, industrial organization, technological levels, trade levels, and financial strength.

In this context al-Ansi notes that even if agreements between small countries and big ones demonstrate the subjugation of the latter to the former, there are also instances in which a little country can coerce its larger ally to forgo a certain interest, or to drag it into a show of force (this was demonstrated in the tactic employed by Charles De Gaul opposite the United States and Great Britain between the years 1940 and 1944). Al-Ansi concludes that intelligence countries know how to limit their aspirations, and not apply the full force of their power, because increasing strength and increasing aspirations will cause the other countries to ally against it.


## Chapter 5: Military Technology: Push-button Warfare vs. Traditional Warfare

In this chapter al-Ansi emphasizes that the most important thing for an army is the soldiers who are infused with faith and in good physical shape, while he criticizes the excessive reliance on technology, which characterizes modern armies. Al-Ansi claims that in the modern age, the importance of creativity was exchanged for technical routine, which transformed the combat soldiers from fighters to "operators of instruments and equipment". For those soldiers, explains al-Ansi, warfare is defined as "surveillance of different colored lights and pressing buttons". Al-Ansi clarifies that an excess of amenities and comfortable conditions for the soldiers makes them

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

8

spineless, lazy, or cowardly, and therefore it is crucial to maintain a balance between the technological requirements of the armies and the need to preserve the army as an army of true fighters.

In this respect, al-Ansi explains that the bigger and more encumbered the headquarters is, the lower the quality of the army's function. In al-Ansi's opinion, the technology has turned the soldiers into administrative figures who feel like they are playing a computer game and not really fighting, instead of transforming them into rough and tough warriors.

## Chapter 6: Maneuvers and the Principles of Warfare

**Introduction:** Al-Ansi defines the maneuvers as a sort of organization of forces, and moving them around a territory. Al-Ansi explains that the goal of this element of war in research is to understand a few purposes of maneuvers by relying on the following points:

- On what foundations is the maneuver based?
- Various acts of cooperation during implementation of the maneuver
- Conditions for implementation

**Characteristics of the maneuver:**

1. *Creativity.* The maneuver demands that the commander be creative and innovative – only then will he be successful in preventing the enemy from learning his methods of action.
2. *Interactivity.* The maneuver is implemented opposite an enemy that must be taken into account. After defining the goal, the means used for achieving it must be chosen.
3. *Realism.* The maneuver is not implemented on paper, in theory only. The maneuver must be implemented on the ground in order to achieve the desired result.

In this chapter al-Ansi differentiates between the principles (constant, unchanging basis of maneuvers) and the methods (change according to the circumstances and available means).

**Rules and Principles (the constant part):**

War is an art based upon knowledge and conducted on the basis of rules and principles. The rules of war which outline every act of war are quite permanent. Methods of maneuvering, on the other hand, change and develop.

**Principles of war:**

1. Defining the goal (aspiration)

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

9

2. The ability to achieve the goal (ability)

3. Administration management

**First principle: Defining the goal (aspiration):**

Al-Ansi explains: "We must define what we want to achieve, and we must impose our will on the enemy while using all our force." Al-Ansi emphasizes the distinction between aspiration (focused ambition which can be realized by following a clear plan), and desire (the state of yearning, wishing) or persistence (to continue to act and grow weaker despite the knowledge that your chances of success are minimal). This requires fulfillment of the following conditions:

*Condition A*: A clear goal must be defined, and not deviation from that goal can occur. Without a clear goal there is no activity, but simply reaction to enemy provocations. It is important to choose a goal that can be achieved, and that can be evaluated in terms of the chances for success. What are the special traits that befit a goal?

1. The goal must be part of the larger maneuver. The goal can only be understood in the framework of the maneuver at the level of high command.

2. The result: The goal can be defined as the result we aim to achieve opposite the enemy, and against his will.

From an Islamic perspective, three conditions for choosing a goal must be investigated:

- Is the goal permissible and appropriate according to shari'a?

- Does the organization have the military capabilities for achieving the goal?

- What will be gained by achieving the goal (from a tactical perspective, and from political and PR perspectives)?

Al-Ansi emphasizes that action should be taken only if all three of the conditions mentioned above are met. Al-Ansi illustrates this with an example: While according to shari'a it is permitted to fight against the Turkish army, Al-Qaeda in Syria does not have the military capability to wage war against that army, and therefore is not initiating battle against the Turks.

Demonstration of the goal:

- In geographic space (the location): the area or areas that need to be conquered or defended.

- In time: the amount of time allotted to achieve the goal.

*Condition B*: The maneuver must be uniform with regard to command, the final goal, the planning,

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

10

and the implementation (the principle of uniformity).

**Second principle: The ability to achieve the goal:**

Defining the goal alone is not enough, for there must also be a certain level of freedom of movement which will enable implementation of the maneuver and achievement of the goals, despite the enemies own plans. This goal can be called "the security principle" and two effects can be attributed to it:

- Passive effect: not surrendering to the enemy's will

- Active effect: imposing our will on the enemy

**Third principle: Management (administration)**

The principle of uniformity of action contradicts the principle of security: according to the former, forces should be deployed and advanced, while the latter requires a concentrated and limited effort. The solution lies in the creation of coordination and balance between the two requirements while investing only what is necessary in security, but not more. A skillful commander is a commander who is able to combine the need for movement with the need for maintaining security, and who knows what must be sacrificed in order to achieve the goal.

In this context, al-Ansi addresses the need to reduce the number of secondary missions to a minimum, since failure on the part of secondary forces is liable to complicate matters for the primary forces. Therefore, there is no other option but to take intelligent and responsible chances while applying all of the means at hand against the relevant enemy, but not against any other enemy.

Al-Ansi emphasized that it is important to concentrate all efforts towards achieving one goal, and not to diverge. Al-Asni relates, in this context, that fighters from Europe once approached Osama bin Laden and suggested targets to attack in Italy or Spain, but bin Laden responded at the time that he was concentrating all of his efforts against the United States.

Al-Ansi concludes and clarifies that in war, the events precede the ideas, the actions precede the talks, and execution is preferable to theory. In order to succeed on the ground, theory alone is not enough, but meticulous preparation is also required.

In response to a question posed by one of the students, al-Ansi divides the maneuvers into tactical and strategic maneuvers. A tactical maneuver involves organization and movement of the forces in the field (an ambush, for example), while a strategic maneuver takes into account military action

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

11

alongside a public relations campaign, popular support, and the goal pursued.

**Maneuvering Methods (the development part)**

Al-Ansi explains that there are three factors which are likely to influence and change the maneuvering methods: the time (for example, day vs. night, winter vs. summer), the place (for example, city vs. forest), and the means. And since there are countless methods and endeavors, they can be categorized as follows:

1. *Coordination of Efforts*

   Maneuvering is after all, the primary effort[1] – whether it's a pre-planned effort, or whether there has been a change in the centers of gravity created in the course of fighting (in that case, an alternative hypothesis or new maneuver should be chosen to achieve the goal). In accordance with the principle presented above, in the event that the forces are concentrated and united, unexpected changes will have less of an effect on them.

   It is important to choose the primary penetration axis in order to eliminate the concentration of enemy forces, and the preferred point of engagement should be one that is least expected by the enemy (for example, via a flank that is not well protected, or from an area dividing between two enemy units). At the same time, the support forces should utilize the element of surprise in order to disrupt the movement of the enemy's reserve forces. The support force is therefore designated to fulfil one of the following goals:

- Making the main force's attack easier (the initial activity) – that is to say, the support force takes some of the burden off the primary force.

   Or

- Making the development of this effort easier (with assistance) – that is to say, saving the support force as a reserve force.

   Or

- Assisting with the success of the primary effort by connecting it to other efforts (link) – that is to say, using the support force to connect two areas that were conquered.

---

[1] The term "effort" is used to describe here a military force in action in the framework of a maneuver or war.

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

12

*2.  Coordination of Positions*

Coordination of positions is the result of coordination of efforts, and it is used as a central means of correct management of the forces. The two basic positions of the commander are offensive or defensive, in accordance with the means he has at his disposal.

In an offensive position: the attack front is defined according to the implemented effort – is this a principle or secondary effort? It should be noted that it is possible to coordinate between actions that require force and actions that require flexibility during defense, due to natural density or defense of a very large area of activity. In the event that the army is on the offensive, it needs engagement, support, flanking, encirclement, and communication forces.

In a defensive position: It is possible to coordinate between defense with the aim of stopping the enemy, defense in the form of a delaying action, and an activity that requires the use of force, even if that activity is intended to achieve a limited goal. The coordination between the positions makes it possible to conserve resources in certain parts of the front, and to concentrate them in other parts, while safeguarding reserve units. In the event that the army finds itself in a position of defense, it will need forces for cover, ambush, and delay operations. Defense forces can be used to stop or delay enemy forces.

Al-Ansi emphasizes that in any case it is important to be strict with regard to sparing reliance on the main force, while safeguarding a reserve force, whether the army is on the offense or on the defense.

*3.  Coordination of Directions*

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

13

First of all, two terms must be clarified, with a distinction made between them:

1. *Direction*: The ideal line, for which only the beginning and end are defined, designating where all forces should be concentrated. The commander is liable to distance the forces from the line in order to take advantage of the enemy's weak spots, but he must return to the line as soon as possible. And in any case he must reach the end of the line, as originally defined.

2. *Axis of advance*: The axis is different from the direction in that an axis of advance has designated points on the ground between the beginning and end, and the forces have to pass through each one of them. Thus, the direction allows for more freedom of movement on the part of the commander, since he is not obligated to pass through several stations, as in the case of the axis.

**Planning a maneuver according to the direction:**

The intention here is to use the influences and results caused by their geometric formations in relation to the enemy's formations. These timings make it possible to arrange for main and departmental maneuvers against the enemy's mode of transportation, and encirclement maneuvers outside of the field of this study.

*Directions of a maneuver*. Small tactical groups can be commanded in three directions:

Correspondence: The forces are arranged in correspondence to each other opposite the enemy. "Correspondence" is used in the event of a medium strength effort opposite an enemy that is well fortified in trenches, but not deeply. In this scenario a large breach is opened as well as a large number of routes, but then it is important to avoid creating too large of a distance between the fighting units.

Convergence: The forces assemble and meet when the geographical features on the ground obligate them to (for example, at a very narrow passageway). Convergence of the directions cannot be permitted, but the "base for departure" can be enlarged and therefore achieve a deeper breach. However, it is totally forbidden to expose the flanks to enemy counter-attacks. The convergence is expressed through an exchange of fire and movements.

Divergence: The forces distance themselves from each other, and divide themselves into small groups. Divergence of directions is always applied after a victory and penetration. The divergence gives the units a wider area to spread out in, in an arena they need in order to move easily and

carry out flanking activities against the enemy's side and rear.

In order to succeed in the maneuver, a combination of the three formations described above should be used, in accordance with the circumstances and conditions.

4. *Coordination of Pace (the force of momentum)*

   The intention here is to the planning of the speed of the maneuver by dividing it by space and time into parts or successive stages. This idea should be applied to every form of warfare (offensive, reactive, preventative). In the context of coordinating the pace, a schedule should be planned for implementing the tasks, and also the ranges of the weapons, how they will be positioned, and when they will be used should be calculated. Planning the pace is actually a sophisticated estimation of the speed of the activities of the means, and how long they will go on. It is important to keep in mind that speed is not careless haste that leads to the injury of people and munitions, but is simple planning and preparation.

5. *Coordination Influenced by the Means*

   The word "means" is used here to refer to weapons - whether in the form of rifles and artillery, or explosive devices. The intention here is to become familiar with the impact made by every type of weapon, and coordination between the different weapons in order to achieve the best and most desirable end result. This can be achieved by creating groups composed of every type of corps, use of reserve units, and implementing fire maneuvers (artillery and aircraft).

   These means should be defined after taking into account the desired impact against the enemy. The means include, fire, strikes, movement, and appropriate logistical and administrative resources at different levels.

   Al-Ansi concludes that the commander must define a goal and not deviate from it, must coordinate between the forces, most take note of all dimensions of the arena, must pay attention to the distribution of the weapons, and must consolidate the combat arrangements.


## Chapter 7: Elements of War

Al-Ansi explains that the physical elements of warfare are defense, weaponry, and movement. The

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

15

goal is to the hit the enemy without being hit back, and to be able to move freely. There are three types of movement: by foot, on horseback, and in a vehicle. Vehicles are divided into three types: land, sea, and air. And movement has three dimensions:

One dimensional movement: for  example, movement on a road or on train tracks.

Two dimensional movement: movement on the ground or on water

Three dimensional movement: for example, a submarine in the water or an airplane in the sky

**Attack tactics:**

1. Frontal assault (frontal penetration)
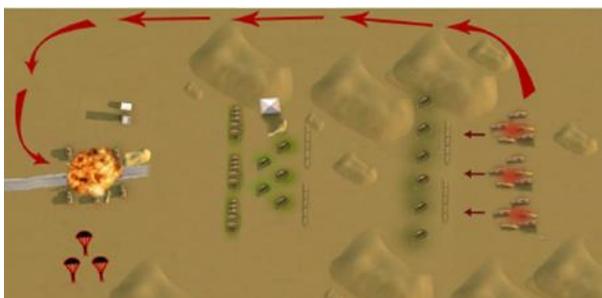


2. Integrated attack with encirclement on one side, holding the front, and a flanking maneuver from the sides.



3. Integrated attack with encirclement from two sides, a pincer movement, holding the front, and encirclement.

4. An attack from the rear (encirclement)

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

16

In the first tactic, the goal is penetration. In the second and third tactics, the goal is penetration, and in the fourth the goal is to hit the enemy from the rear.
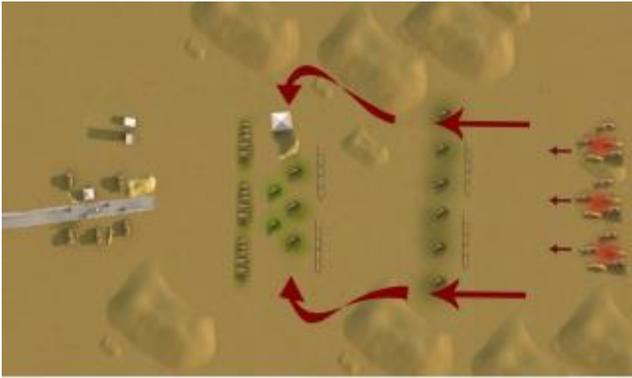
**Wedge maneuver:**

The wedge maneuver can be described as entry of a group of armed vehicles, foot soldiers, mechanics, artillery, and anti-aircraft units via an opening breached in the enemy's line of defense. The wedge maneuver relies on a concentration of forces opposite weak fronts, infiltration beyond enemy lines, and deployment by fanning out or a pincer formation. The fanning out method is applied when there is one strong wedge spread out in the area within natural borders. In the event that one of the sides of the fan encounters powerful resistance that prevents it from advancing, it is referred to as a "half-fan". The pincer method is applied when there are two wedges – the attacking forces, in this scenario, advance to a distance of 120 – 200 kilometers deep into the enemy's rear. In the event that the attacker uses three wedges, the advance of the middle wedge will be by fanning out, while the two side wedges are used as pincers. The faster and more forceful the forward progress is after the wedge maneuver is applied, the more the strategic order of the enemy will be disrupted, and in a more powerful way – in order to allow for a better victorious outcome.



**Wedge maneuver**



**Fanning out of the troops**

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

17

**Pincer formation**

## General Principles for utilizing Airborne Troops

1. Total aerial supremacy.

2. Going out on night missions when the aerial supremacy is not ensured**.**

3. Intelligent use of these forces in light of their importance, and sending them only on crucial missions.

4. Coordination between aerial and land attacks.

5. Surprise in downing and collecting.

6. Congruence between the mission and the means.

7. A simple plan that is easy to implement.

## General Principles for Defense against Air Strikes:

1. Defence of the entire country with control and warning centers.

2. Setting up different obstacles (stakes, explosives, barbed wire, etc.) in areas where forces are likely to land.

3. Forces must be available for immediate intervention.

4. Gathering points of airborne troops must be hit before they take off.

5. Integration of a defensive fire plan against the fronts, with attack of the landing areas.

6. The importance of the forces should not be underestimated, especially when the landing occurs at night.

### Expected developments:

Even when aerial supremacy is total, a war cannot be won without a land operation.

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

18

## Chapter 8: For Commanders Only

This chapter deals with "The Art of War", by the Chinese military strategies, Sun Tzu, and in the useful ideas the work has to offer. Al-Ansi explains that the book contains advice and guidelines for kings and army commanders on the topic of military strategy and war tactics. The book discusses different types of maneuvers, the extent of their affect on the battlefield, and the nature and results of the battles themselves. Later, this chapters features a selection of excerpts from the book under different titles, such as "Five things you should know in order to win at war", "If you know the following things, you will know what the concept of victory is", and "Taking advantage of the enemy commanders' weaknesses".

Under the title "Sun Tzu's strategies opposite the enemy", al-Ansi notes that the best method of warfare is to take control of all of the enemy's land with minimal damage to the area conquered, and taking enemy forces captive instead of crushing them. The military skills can be divided into levels:

*Level One*: Foiling the enemy's plans by engaging in a pre-emptive strike.

*Level Two*: The ability to destroy the connections and alliances the enemy has made, in order to isolate him.

*Level Three*: A direct attack on the enemy. The general goals chosen must be ones that are deciding factors in the campaign, and the ratio of forces must be examined in order to decide whether or not to attack.

The rest of the document includes additional excerpts from Sun Tzu's book, including advice about the battle field (for example, the location of camp, avoiding spreading out the troops in insignificant fronts, concentrating the forces in areas where there are resources, etc.), as well as principles of the art of war.

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

19

# Appendix: Curriculum for the AQAP Jihad Academy

| 6 – Lectures Table | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Length in minutes | Subject number | Category | Subject | Learning Stage | | |
| | | | | beginners | advanced | experts |
| 60 | 001 | History | Military history | beginners | | |
| 60 | 002 | Geography | The importance of learning geography | beginners | | |
| 60 | 003 | Development and Usage | Military land configurations | beginners | | |
| 90 | 004 | Tactics | Introduction to Guerilla Warfare | beginners | | |
| 90 | 005 | Tactics | Guerilla Warfare | beginners | | |
| 180 | 006 | Training | Methods for preparing combat groups for activity as guerilla units | beginners | | |
| 45 | 007 | Tactics | Support Forces | beginners | | |
| 45 | 008 | Tactics | Anti-Guerilla Force tactics | beginners | | |
| 45 | 009 | History | Military policy during the time of the Prophet | beginners | | |
| 60 | 010 | History | The Battle of Badr (discussion after assigned reading) | beginners | | |
| 45 | 011 | Strategy | Defining National Security | beginners | | |
| 60 | 012 | Headquarters Obligations | Introduction to Headquarters Obligations | beginners | | |
| 45 | 013 | Headquarters Obligations | A notebook for comments by the Headquarters Officer | beginners | | |
| 120 | 014 | Administration Issues | Administration, supply, and equipment | beginners | | |
| 60 | 015 | Military engineering | Tasks and obligations of military engineering | beginners | | |
| 120 | 016 | Military engineering | Mine warfare | beginners | | |
| 60 | 017 | Navy | Naval Forces | beginners | | |
| 45 | 018 | Navy | Naval Tactics | beginners | | |
| 45 | 019 | Air Force | "Joint" air defense | beginners | | |
| 45 | 020 | Air Force | "Joint" air defense and defense tactics and air strikes | beginners | | |
| 45 | 021 | Development and utilization | Combat use of air defense means | beginners | | |
| 45 | 022 | Artillery | Types of artillery | beginners | | |
| 45 | 023 | Artillery | Artillery in the field opposite the first tank in the battle | beginners | | |
| 60 | 024 | Chemical Warfare | Historical uses of weapons of mass destruction | beginners | | |
| 120 | 025 | Chemical Warfare | Chemical weaponry, and how to handle it | beginners | | |
| 90 | 026 | Communication | About military communication, and the uses of it | beginners | | |
| 90 | 027 | Training | Combat training | beginners | | |
| | 028 | Responsibilities of the Headquarters | Authority and training of the commander | beginners | | |
| | 029 | Military studies | Scientific military research | beginners | | |

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

20

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 030 | Military studies | Group research | beginners | | |
| **Total hours** | | | **End of beginners level** | | | |
| 90 | 031 | Geography | Geo-military study on military planning | | advanced | |
| 120 | 032 | Geography | Special geographic patterns | | advanced | |
| 360 | 033 | Strategy | Military strategy | | advanced | |
| | 034 | Headquarters responsibilities | Responsibilities of the Commander and the General Headquarters, and its organization | | advanced | |
| | 035 | Headquarters responsibilities | Guidelines for military writing | | advanced | |
| | 036 | Headquarters responsibilities | Liaison | | advanced | |
| | 037 | Headquarters responsibilities | Working methods with maps | | advanced | |
| | 038 | Headquarters responsibilities | Aerial photography | | advanced | |
| | 039 | Military engineering | Armor engineering | | advanced | |
| 60 | 040 | Military engineering | Demolition | | advanced | |
| | 041 | Development and Use | Organization and use of armored formations | | advanced | |
| | 042 | Administration Affairs | Organization and use of Administration Affairs units | | advanced | |
| 90 | 043 | Tactics | The basics and principles of offensive combat | | advanced | |
| 45 | 044 | Tactics | The principles of marching and confrontational battles. | | advanced | |
| 45 | 045 | Artillery | The principles of artillery use while marching and during confrontational battles | | advanced | |
| 120 | 046 | Tactics | The basics and principles of artillery combat | | advanced | |
| 45 | 047 | Tactics | The basics of using artillery during defensive combat | | advanced | |
| 60 | 048 | Tactics | Withdrawal - blockade | | advanced | |
| 60 | 049 | Tactics | Withdrawal - retreat | | advanced | |
| | 050 | Tactics | Breaking a siege | | advanced | |
| | 051 | Tactics | Passage through combat lines | | advanced | |
| 45 | 052 | Tactics | Mountain warfare | | advanced | |
| 60 | 053 | Navy | Tactical marine landing | | advanced | |
| 60 | 054 | Navy | "Joint" push for marine landing | | advanced | |
| 60 | 055 | History | The Normandy Campaign (discussion after assigned reading) | | advanced | |
| 45 | 056 | Development and Use | Development of naval weaponry | | advanced | |
| 45 | 057 | Development and Use | "Joint" development of air force weaponry | | advanced | |
| 60 | 058 | History | Battle of El Alamein (discussion after reading assignment) | | advanced | |
| 60 | 059 | Training | Preparation and management of a | | advanced | |

| | | | tactical training column | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 120 | 060 | Tactics | Urban Warfare | | advanced | |
| | 061 | Military Research | Personal research | | advanced | |
| **Total hours** | | | **End of Advanced Level** | | | |
| 45 | 062 | Military Strategy | Pre-emptive Strikes | | | experts |
| 45 | 063 | Military Strategy | Strategic Reconnaissance | | | experts |
| 180 | 064 | Military Strategy | Tactical-operational Resilience | | | experts |
| | 065 | Military Strategy | Tactic Deception | | | experts |
| 60 | 066 | Tactics | The principles of using Special Forces, and their activities | | | experts |
| | 067 | Foreign armies | The principles of warfare in the Israeli land formations | | | experts |
| 45 | 068 | Requirements | How does a commander make decisions in the modern battle field? | | | experts |
| | 069 | Military research | Graduate research | | | experts |
| **Total hours** | | | **End of Experts Level** | | | |

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

22

## ABOUT THE ICT

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

## ABOUT THE JIHADI MONITORING GROUP

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

[Click here for a list of online JWMG publications](#)

For tailored research please contact us at [JWMG@ict.org.il](mailto:JWMG@ict.org.il).

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il

23