

Global Jihad – The Shift from Hierarchical Terrorist Organizations to Decentralized Systems

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The development of Al-Qaeda in general can be divided into four main sub-periods: A. **Establishment and Consolidation** – 1988-2001 (until the September 11 terrorist attacks); B. **Strategic Defense** – 2001-2011; C. **Revival** – 2011-2014; D. **Internal and External Struggle** – 2014 and on. Developments during these periods took place along four axes that complemented one another synergistically, and allowed the global jihad leadership maximum flexibility in formulating policy and putting it into practice: the organizational axis; the ideological axis; the strategic axis; and the operative axis.

Al-Qaeda was established as a heirarchal organization. Its founding idea, which was shaped over time into a strategic master plan ("the seven steps"), was to re-establish the Islamic caliphate, apply shari'a, and predicate the supremacy of Islam in the world.

In the mid-1990s, Al-Qaeda's heirarchal structure began to crystallize into an organized pyramidal system that included sub-components under the full/partial, direct control of the headquarters in Afghanistan. This included the dawah system, Al-Qaeda branches and partners around the world, local groups and sleeper agents. This structure allowed Al-Qaeda flexibility in recruiting operatives, training them and preparing them to carry out their missions. In 1998, bin Laden declared the establishment of the "World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders", thus expanding the arena of battle against the United States far beyond the borders of the Middle East.

In the late 1990s, Al-Qaeda's structure included several organizational functions that enabled the leadership to control and manage the organization's activity in the global arena. Among the prominent functions were the Shura Council, the military committee that was responsible for the arenas of jihad, a unit for special operations that maintained cells and operative networks around the world, the dawah and recruitment system, the religious committee, the finance committee and the media committee. All of these were controlled by the organization's leader and deputy.

The global spread of Al-Qaeda required the organization to build communication channels between the leadership and the organization's branches and partners. The global system was built on the basis of training and personal acquaintances developed

during the First Afghan War. Bin Laden dispatched representatives on his behalf to sensitive arenas in order to establish infrastructure for operational activities. These representatives were sent to Africa, Europe, Indonesia, the Philippines and arenas of jihad that had just begun to awaken, such as Chechnya, Bosnia and Kashmir.

As the organization became established and the technologies developed, the channels of communication between the leadership and the branches of the organization expanded. The classic patterns of operation and control that were based on physical meetings, the dispatch of emissaries, letters or telephone calls became dangerous. Al-Qaeda sought new and faster available channels of communication. The development of mass media dramatically changed organizational behavior and led to the development of a new arena of operation - the virtual arena - which was used by terrorist groups for a variety of activities: recruiting members, making contact, obtaining publicity, raising funds and supporting the organization. The organization's messages were designed in a highly sophisticated way for internet distribution and were adapted to various target audiences.

Bin Laden's declarations of war in 1996 and 1998 translated into strategic attacks against American targets in the Middle East and beyond that culminated in the September 11th terrorist attacks. Two action patterns characterized Al-Qaeda's attacks during this period. First, **a strategic attack led by Al-Qaeda's leadership**, such as the 1998 embassies attack and the September 11 attack. This action pattern, by its very nature and complexity, required long planning and preparation time, including: recruitment of terrorists, training, intelligence, operational capability, and command and control capabilities. Due to its importance, the organization's leadership was involved in determining and approving the targets and date of each attack, allocating resources to carry it out, and preparing to deal with expected responses.

The second action pattern that developed in the training camps in Afghanistan was the **lone terrorist or lone cell** that operates under the organizational, ideological umbrella but is detached from it. Its aim is to create a series of "small" attacks that are difficult to thwart, and whose sequence of successes will have a cumulative effect on

the enemy, exhaust it and make it easier to defeat. This action pattern expanded after the September 11th attacks.

Al-Qaeda – Post-September 11

The September 11th terrorist attacks created a new reality. The United States led an international campaign against terrorism. Organizational flexibility, containment ability and high survivability allowed Al-Qaeda to traverse the period, although it paid a high price. The organization's freedom to operate and organize itself under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan ended. The new reality forced the organization's leadership to go underground (some fled to Iran) and created a disconnect between the leadership level and the operatives. Many operatives, including senior officials, were killed or arrested, the recruitment system and training camps collapsed, and the organization was forced to find alternative solutions.

However, it should be noted that the September 11th attacks afforded Al-Qaeda prestige and unprecedented exposure in the international media arena and in the Muslim arena. It was used to increase recruitment efforts and propaganda on the internet that continued to develop in the first decade of the 21st century. Al-Qaeda garnered support among Islamic communities in the Middle East and beyond, and some of them even joined the jihad effort. However, it appears that the international campaign against the organization's centers of activity made it difficult for it to translate operative success into mass mobilization for jihad.

As the counter-terrorism campaign continued, global jihad organizations internalized the constraints of the new operational reality and adopted organizational solutions to cope with it. For example, in 2004, Al-Qaeda began to establish branches in various arenas of jihad, mainly in the Middle East and Africa: in 2004, Al-Qaeda established a branch in Iraq (AQI); in 2007, it established a branch in the Maghreb (AQIM); and in 2009 it established a branch in Yemen and Saudi Arabia (AQAP). Meanwhile, the organization continued the trend of forging ties with local jihad organizations that characterized the organization in the 1990s in the Middle East and beyond.

The accelerated development of the internet and technology made things easier for Al-Qaeda, and a significant portion of its activity in all categories (ideology, propaganda, recruitment, training, operations, defense and attack) was copied to this arena. This period ended with two formative events: the first was the end of the bin Laden era in Al-Qaeda (May 2011), and the second were the “Arab Spring” revolutions (2011 and on).

The principles of Al-Qaeda’s strategy during this period are also evident from documents seized at bin Laden's hiding place. For example, a document apparently written at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century was uploaded to the CTC website in 2013, revealing the principles of Al-Qaeda's strategy and the method for its implementation. ¹The strategic approach that emerges from the document reveals the global perception of its authors. The idea of the "Islamic nation" weaves like a thread throughout the document. The document notes that the "nation" is simultaneously fighting against corrupt regimes from within and against the "distant enemy", namely the United States. At the same time, the significant threat to the "nation" is from the United States and, therefore, the focus should be on action against it. Even in the arena of the “close enemy”, effort should be focused on action against the “distant enemy” settled on Muslim lands. In this case, it seems to be referring to the United States, which is operating in the Middle East, with emphasis on Iraq and Afghanistan.

The second component of Al-Qaeda’s strategy during this period included the need to mobilize popular support which, according to the author, is the key to the success of jihad and the establishment of the Caliphate. Resistance without popular support is destined to fail. Therefore, the heads of Al-Qaeda affiliates and its leadership must find ways to recruit the Sunni tribes to jihad and avoid the mistakes that were made in the past against the tribes in the Anbar region of Iraq. Now, effort must be focused on jihad in order to create the conditions necessary for the establishment of the Caliphate.

¹ <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Letter-Regarding-Al-Qaida-Strategy-Translation.pdf>

The ability to identify opportunities, organizational flexibility and survivability were some of the characteristics of global jihad's operational axis after September 11th. The change from a hierarchical organizational structure to a decentralized, multi-network structure created a situation in which the control and initiation of operative activities passed from the leadership rank to the intermediate ranks, the heads of the branches, networks and affiliated organizations. The jihad leadership focused on defining strategy, formulating and disseminating the concepts of jihad, establishing new branches and opening channels of cooperation with new organizations. Dozens of terrorist attacks and attempted terrorist attacks were carried out during this decade (2001-2011) by global jihad organizations in the international arena and hundreds more in the various arenas of jihad (Iraq, Afghanistan, North Africa, Yemen), almost all of which were planned and carried out by intermediate levels, terrorist networks and lone terrorists.

New action patterns developed during this period, some of which were an improvement on Al-Qaeda activities in the 1990's: one, the lone terrorist/cell or the network; second, the strategic attack led by Al-Qaeda branches/affiliated organizations; third, medium-intensity warfare.

The action pattern of the lone terrorist/cell or the network, which was formulated and shaped into an overall operational strategy of global jihad, enabled Al-Qaeda leadership to launch a wave of terrorist acts by encouraging young people to wage jihad in the countries where they live as part of a global jihad effort. Technological developments (the internet and social networks) enabled access to the information necessary to carry out a terrorist attack. Ideologists prepared the ideological basis for these actions, while recruitment and operations personnel provided vital information to the terrorists, including instructions on how and whom to recruit, which targets to select, how to gather intelligence, how to find budgetary sources, how to prepare the explosives, etc. Digital magazines that were published in English at the end of the decade, such as *INSPIRE*, also made such information accessible to people who were not members of jihadist forums. Inspiration and influence for the actions of lone terrorists/networks came from the Al-Qaeda affiliates who encouraged this activity.

The strategic terrorist attack led by Al-Qaeda branches/affiliated organizations –

Similar to the effort made by the Al-Qaeda leadership before and after September 11th, to carry out strategic attacks, the branches and organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda also carried out attacks with these characteristics. In this context, Al-Qaeda's branch in Yemen stands out, as it succeeded in carrying out three attempted terrorist attacks within a short period of its inception, which had long-term strategic impact, particularly on the area of civil aviation security. The first was the attempted assassination of Saudi Prince Muhammad bin Nayef in 2009. The second was the attempted underwear attack on a plane from Europe to the United States in 2009. The third was the attempted bombing of American cargo planes in 2010.

The modus operandi of medium-intensity warfare, the beginnings of which can be seen in this decade mainly in Somalia (Al-Shabab) and Yemen (AQAP), is taken from the field of military systems. Global jihad organizations use principles of force such as modern armies, including the assembly of an attack force (hundreds of fighters or more), the capture and control of territories, and the establishment of new civilian governmental systems (the Islamic Emirates); for example, the Islamic State of Iraq (2006), the Islamic Emirate in the Caucasus (2007), the Islamic Emirate in the Sahara (2010), and the Islamic Emirate in Yemen in the Abyan region (2011).

The eruption of revolutions in the Arab world (the Arab Spring) in 2011 changed, and is still changing, the face of the Middle East and North Africa. Its influence extends far beyond the immediate circle of countries in the region and is also evident in more distant places due to the wave of refugees that is sweeping the countries of the region and beyond (mainly Europe). The nation-state in its old form is gradually dissipating in the Middle East, and tribal or ethnic entities with a broad common denominator and control over territories are emerging in its place. They are the ones who dictate the agenda in their territory. One by one, the rulers of Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen fell. Syria itself has been in the midst of a civil war for over seven years, which has killed and injured hundreds of thousands of people, while millions of refugees have fled the

country. Egypt experienced two revolutions during this period and the regime is facing waves of violence, especially in Sinai.

Al-Qaeda was surprised by the revolutions and their intensity. For years it had tried to instigate them, unsuccessfully. The organization's leadership, which identified an opportunity, launched a media campaign aimed at defining the organization's policy on revolutions and, more importantly, at finding a way to ride the revolutionary wave to mobilize the masses and establish Islamic emirates until the conditions for the establishment of the Caliphate become ripe.

The killing of bin Laden and the Arab Spring necessitated a new organizational distribution, the main elements of which were strategy design, the establishment of forces in the various arenas of the revolution, mobilization of the masses for jihad activity, and the direction of organizational activity and its adaptation to the new circumstances, all of which coincided with the consolidation of al-Zawahiri's leadership and his acceptance as bin Laden's replacement.

The selection of al-Zawahiri by Al-Qaeda's leadership council, and the expression of loyalty by the heads of Al-Qaeda's branches, constituted the first step in creating the organization's command and functional continuity. However, it should be noted that the disengagement of Al-Qaeda's leadership (Afghanistan-Pakistan) from the arena of events in the Middle East and North Africa created difficulties in running the organization. In practice, during this period it seems that there was an increase in the status and operative freedom of operation of the branch commanders who did not always act according to al-Zawahiri's instructions. The most prominent case of this was when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of Al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq, rejected al-Zawahiri's orders outright, was expelled from Al-Qaeda (2014), and declared the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The organizational moves made by al-Zawahiri during this period included, among other things, the subjugation/establishment of new organizations or affiliates to Al-Qaeda in the arenas of jihad and in the arena of the revolutions. For example, Al-

Shabab Al-Mujahideen was added to the ranks of Al-Qaeda (2011).² Boko Haram has been cooperating with Al-Qaeda and its affiliates in North Africa since 2011.³ The Al-Nusra Front, which was established in Syria in 2012, declared itself to be a branch of Al-Qaeda in Syria in 2013 and received al-Zawahiri's support for the move.⁴ Local jihad organizations that were established in various arenas of jihad and operated under the umbrella of Al-Qaeda affiliates followed suit, including Ansar al-Sharia in Yemen⁵ and Ansar al-Din in Mali.⁶

In September 2014, Al-Qaeda announced the establishment of a branch in the Indian Subcontinent. The move was apparently intended to emphasize the organization's presence in the international arena and its entry into other areas of operation, as well as to counteract ISIS activity.⁷

Another organizational move by Al-Qaeda was the advancement of recruitment and radicalization processes among Islamic communities in the West, which constitute a reserve of manpower, in order to send them to new jihad fronts that were opened and to carry out terrorist attacks in the West. The campaign was carried out on every platform possible, from classic recruitment activity in the real world, to online recruitment through digital forums and magazines, and ending with recruitment through social networks. The technological platforms leveraged the capabilities of global jihad organizations and allowed them flexibility in recruiting, planning and initiating terrorist activities. The war in Syria is an example of the success of these recruitment efforts. Thousands of volunteers from all over the Islamic world and from Muslim communities in the West volunteered for jihad in Syria and elsewhere, some under the Al-Qaeda flag and some under the ISIS flag.⁸

The eruption of the revolutions and the rapid changes in this arena required the global jihad leadership to provide a quick, strategic response to the new challenges. The

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16979440>

³ <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2091137,00.html>

⁴ <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/20573/>

⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-17402856>

⁶ <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/437>

⁷ <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/resurgence-1.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/isis-vs-al-qaeda-jihadisms-global-civil-war/>

first component of the strategic policy was to be perceived as a partner to the revolutions, to show restraint and, at the same time, to establish an infrastructure that would enable it to take power.

Alongside the call for jihad in the arena of the revolutions, Al-Qaeda's leadership continued to encourage individual jihad in the West. Al-Sahab jihadist media institution published videos on the subject, visitors to jihadist Web forums were called upon to suggest targets and gather information, and they made various suggestions of possible target groups.⁹

The revolutionary changes in the Middle East and the creation of new opportunities dictated the management of the operative axis during this period. In the arena of the revolutions, jihad organizations were established on the basis of the local branches in Syria, Iraq, and North Africa with the branch in the Maghreb. These organizations began to wage medium-intensity warfare operations. For instance, Ansar al-Din, Al-Qaeda's branch in the Maghreb, captured the Azawad area in Mali and announced the establishment of an Islamic Emirate there (2012).¹⁰ With the intervention of a French force in 2013, the territory was re-captured and returned to the control of the Malian government.¹¹ Another force of the same branch (AQIM) attacked and captured the Amenas gas field near the Algerian-Libyan border and held dozens of people hostage for several days.¹² However, the greatest use of this capability was made by ISIS, which ran its own independent campaign against Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria.¹³ Mid-size operations were also waged in Yemen, led by AQAP, and in Libya with the overthrow of Gaddafi.

This period also saw the continuation of the trend of encouragement by the global jihad leadership for terrorist attacks by a lone terrorist/cell/network, such as the attempted attack in Birmingham (2011) and the attack in Boston (2013).¹⁴ The

⁹ https://www.ict.org.il/UserFiles/JWVG_6_1_2011.pdf

¹⁰ <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/northern-mali-conflict-2012>

¹¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/01/2013116101421991386.html>

¹² <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/01/19/world/africa/algeria-hostage-crisis/index.html>

¹³ For further details on ISIS, see below.

¹⁴ <http://theconversation.com/since-boston-bombing-terrorists-are-using-new-social-media-to-inspire-potential-attackers-94944>

expansion of the battle in the arena of the revolutions, especially in Syria, led to the creation of new power centers in Al-Qaeda and to the transfer of the organization's center of gravity from the leadership to the branch commanders. The most prominent expression of this was the management of Al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq, headed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In 2012, al-Baghdadi identified the potential for expansion into Syria and established Al-Nusra Front on the basis of Syrian jihad fighters who took part in the battle in Iraq. In the beginning of 2013, al-Baghdadi unilaterally declared the merger of both branches under his leadership. The leader of Al-Nusra Front opposed the merger and declared his organization to be an independent branch directly subordinate to the Al-Qaeda leadership. After several months during which attempts were made to bridge the gaps, and in light of al-Baghdadi's total public rejection of al-Zawahiri's orders, al-Zawahiri declared the removal of the Iraqi branch from the ranks of Al-Qaeda in early 2014.

During the second half (June) of 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate in Iraq (ISIS). The rivalry between ISIS and Al-Qaeda did not remain on the propaganda level, but rather spread to competition and bloody clashes on the ground until the areas of activity under the control of Al-Nusra Front became stabilized in comparison to those under the control of ISIS. The competition exacted, and continues to exact, a heavy death toll on both organizations. The lack of cooperation has made it difficult for them to expand their control in the Syrian arena. The competition between the two organizations spread beyond the borders of Syria and Iraq since the beginning of 2015, when ISIS's sophisticated propaganda and publication machine, combined with its successes on the ground and sophisticated branding, led to the defection of jihad groups from Al-Qaeda to ISIS. One by one, jihad groups began to swear allegiance to the Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, including Boko Haram, global jihad groups in Sinai, Abu Sayyaf, and jihad groups in Libya, Pakistan, Afghanistan and more. At this point in time, the struggle between these two organizations continues in the Middle East and beyond.

In June 2014, ISIS launched a large-scale military campaign in Iraq and Syria aimed at conquering and consolidating territorial control, and establishing an Islamic

caliphate. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, led the campaign. According to various estimates, ISIS's military manpower ranges from 17,000 to 40,000 fighters, of which approximately 15,000 are foreign volunteers from the Arab-Muslim world and approximately 5,000 arrived from western countries, especially the European continent.¹⁵ Another fact that helped ISIS succeed was its ability to form alliances with the local tribes in Syria and Iraq based on a broad ethnic/territorial common denominator/shared opposition to the existing regime.

The success of the ground operation by ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and the establishment of the Caliphate in the second half of 2014, served as a magnet for youth in Syria and Iraq, as well as from the Arab and Muslim world. Thousands of them flocked to join the ranks of ISIS, which required the organization to build a rapid recruitment and absorption system for volunteers, prepare them for combat, and integrate them into the various arenas of battle. The scope of the battle, its intensity and the price it exacted, especially from when the coalition against ISIS was formed, made the task of recruiting and training manpower much more complex. All of this led to the cessation of the campaign of conquests and the operational momentum that had characterized ISIS in June-August 2014.

The spread of ISIS' control in terms of territory and population (about one-third of Iraq's territory and more than a quarter of Syria's territory) posed challenges of control, both against the backdrop of counter-attacks by its domestic rivals (Kurds, the Iraqi army, rival organizations) and coalition forces, and against the backdrop of the organization's need to manage and control the population in the cities and areas that it captured. These challenges required ISIS to establish a control and management infrastructure based on the systems and mechanisms that operated in these areas, and to develop the ability to maintain public order and enforce shari'a.

The leading action strategy adopted by ISIS in this area was the enforcement of shari'a through brutal means, alongside the provision of basic services to civilians and encouragement for maintaining a normal life in the territories of the Caliphate. The

¹⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/islamic-state-50000-fighters-syria-2014819184258421392.html>; <https://www.rt.com/news/183048-isis-grow-expand-jihadist>

organization's financial capabilities, estimated at over one billion dollars in the organization's coffers at the start of 2015 as well as fixed sources of income based on state-owned infrastructure that it captured, such as oilfields, grainreserves, banks, industrial facilities, military bases and arms depots, enabled it to establish its control on the ground.

ISIS marketed itself in the Iraqi-Syrian arena as a successful and leading brand in order to recruit additional manpower to its ranks, create group cohesion, and create deterrence and psychological terror against its enemies. It took several steps in the framework of these efforts: A. It maintained an array of media institutions and groups in the various provinces under the organization's authority. B. It used various media channels as platforms for sending messaging, such as social networks. C. It disseminated messages of success, such as documentation of oaths of allegiance by fighters from competing organizations. For example, at the end of December 2014, the organization distributed a filmed review of the "repentance" by a group of Al-Nusra Front fighters who swore allegiance to the Islamic State. D. It presented a pastoral image of the life of the civilian population in the areas under the organization's authority.

The Military Campaign from the Strategic Offensive to the Collapse of the Caliphate

The military campaign developed on two parallel planes simultaneously, sustained one another and influenced the nature of the campaign, the direction of its development and its results. **The first plane was the combat arena** on which the battle was waged. The first months of the campaign (July-August 2014), the breakthrough stage, were characterized by rapid and significant successes on the battlefield. Central Iraqi cities were captured by ISIS, including Mosul and Tikrit. ISIS seized control of strategic facilities, such as the Mosul Dam and facilities used in the oil refining industry. At the same time, ISIS began the ethnic cleansing of minority groups, such as the Yazidis. Since the beginning of the campaign, ISIS' actions were characterized by extreme violence that included mass executions, rapes and beheadings. This action

pattern also continued in the following stages, with the purpose of continuing to influence the psychological arena as a means of assisting the combat arena.

The second plane is the psychological domain - The sequence of successes in the campaign, the deliberate cruelty and the pace of military operations were exploited for the purposes of recruitment, propaganda, psychological warfare and deterrence. The sophisticated media system established by ISIS, including professional photography crews, directors and production assistants, enabled it to maximize all of the benefits of media. The mass executions carried out by the organization achieved a level of deterrence and anxiety among ISIS rivals in Iraq and Syria that helped the organization continue its series of victories.

ISIS's campaign of conquests was halted in late 2014. It prepared for a strategic defense and strengthened its hold on vast areas in Iraq and Syria. It established the city of Mosul as its center of control in Iraq and the city of Raqqa as its center of control in Syria. At its peak, the Islamic Caliphate controlled a population of approximately eight million people. In 2015, ISIS worked to preserve and consolidate its achievements, including deepening control over the civilian population through the administrative system that it established. With its weakening in the combat arena (2015 and on), the organization was forced to be more creative in its visual messages in order to continue "terrorizing" its rivals, and to maintain order and discipline among the "subjects" of the Islamic Caliphate.

ISIS' ability to wage a prolonged military campaign stemmed from the existence of sources of manpower and weapons available to the organization. Most of the weapons were plunder from the civil war in Syria and from the conquests in Iraq in June 2014.

Parallel to its establishment in the Iraqi arena, and against the backdrop of the first signs of its strategic distress, ISIS began establishing provinces in the Middle East and beyond on the basis of groups or organizations that defected from Al-Qaeda and swore allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Toward the end of 2016, the final stage of the campaign to topple the Islamic Caliphate in Iraq and Syria began. It lasted about a year, during which Mosul and Raqqa were captured from ISIS and the Caliphate collapsed. As previously stated, since 2015, ISIS has been working to establish secondary centers of gravity and spheres of influence in various locations in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the Philippines, while building terrorist networks and encouraging individual terrorist activity in the West. The organization's method of operation resembles that of Al-Qaeda after September 11. This includes the fall of the Caliphate, the retreat underground, the move to a decentralized system based on organizational branches (provinces) on the one hand, and terrorist networks and lone terrorists on the other hand. The recruitment, support, operation and financing of the various components of the new-old entity, ISIS, is carried out through social networks, which the organization has been able to utilize for its needs since its establishment.

Even after the fall of the Caliphate, ISIS continues its activity from the secondary centers of gravity that it established. It competes with Al-Qaeda over manpower, territory, and sources of funding.

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