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FORMER TALIBAN COMMANDER ALLEGES UK SUPPORTS TALIBAN, REGRETS JOINING GOVERNMENT

A former Taliban commander who, after his defection, was appointed Governor of the Musa Qala district of Helmand Province told an independent Afghan TV station that he now regrets his choice and foresees at least another five years of warfare in Afghanistan (Tolo TV, June 22). Mullah Abdul Salam Hanafi, a chieftain in the Alizai tribe, has been speaking openly lately of his distaste for the Karzai government and his conviction that the UK is behind all the problems experienced by the people of Helmand Province. Since his defection to the government, Mullah Abdul Salam has survived several assassination attempts, including a concentrated attack on his house and a rocket fired at a British Chinook helicopter in which he was flying (*The Nation* [Islamabad], May 18, 2006).

Last March, Abdul Salam complained that UK troops had urged Afghan police to abandon their post in the Mullah's nearby hometown of Shah Karez during a battle with the Taliban rather than come to their aid (Afghan Islamic Press, March 17; Geo TV, March 17). The 50 officers, mostly drawn from the Mullah's private militia, were eventually forced to withdraw from their post with losses (The Scotsman, March 24, 2010). In his latest interview, the Mullah now claims that British forces landed helicopters with Taliban troops and provided military support to the Taliban during the battle.

Mullah Abdul Salam cites several reasons for “British duplicity” in Helmand Province:

- The British are seeking revenge for their defeat at the 1880 Battle of Maiwand during the Second Afghan War. The 66th Berkshire Regiment and a number of Indian native regiments were virtually destroyed in a Pashtun victory that also cost thousands of Afghan lives.
- The British are “probably involved” in opium production, based on what the Mullah describes as UK opposition to his attempts to eradicate the drug trade and insistence that drug producers be released after having been arrested by the Mullah. He says he has heard that opium is being flown out of the military airport.
- The British are also interested in possessing potential mineral riches in the province.

The Mullah’s relations with Britain appear to have declined rapidly during the posting of the 5th Battalion (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) of the Royal Regiment of Scotland in Musa Qala. He was gravely offended by the arrest of his 15-year-old son (one of 27 children by five wives) by a Scottish officer in July 2008 and also complained loudly that the British had failed to fill his “war chest,” intended, he says, to be used for bribing Taliban commanders. In turn, British forces have accused the Mullah of taxing opium producers and permitting his militia to be engaged in criminal activities (*Sunday Times*, July 9, 2008; *Independent*, November 12, 2008).

Mullah Abdul Salam mocked ISAF efforts to take control of the Marjah district of Helmand in a large offensive involving 15,000 troops last February, saying that the Afghan troops left there were surrounded in the bazaar (see *Terrorism Monitor*, June 17). “If they give me 600 policemen today, I will capture Kajaki District in Helmand and ensure security there immediately.”

The Mullah also had harsh words for Pakistani authorities, claiming they are the Taliban’s “main support” in what he alleges is a larger plan to “kill Pashtuns.” The Mullah says that all insurgent operations in Afghanistan are organized and authorized by the movement’s Quetta-based leadership, adding that Pakistani intelligence devises the plans and implements them through Mullah Omar in Quetta. He describes Mullah Omar as being like a “prisoner of the intelligence

networks in Pakistan.” Since Islamabad believes Afghan president Hamid Karzai is close to India, Mullah Abdul Salam predicts at least another five years of warfare.

At almost the same time as the Mullah made his statement, Iran’s Foreign Ministry said they have observed British security services cooperating with terrorist groups in Afghanistan (Islamic Republic of Iran News Network, June 22). Taliban spokesman Qari Yusuf Ahmad also suggested that the heroism of British troops in Afghanistan has not benefitted their country and that the UK should expect more casualties as it marks the death of 300 troops in Afghanistan (Afghan Islamic Press, June 21).

ALGERIA INTRODUCES NEW COUNTERTERRORISM MEASURES IN OPERATION ENNASR

At a meeting in Oran attended by the Algerian military’s top commanders and leaders of Algeria’s National Gendarmerie, Armed Forces chief-of-staff Major-General Ahmad Gaid Salah explained the next phase of Operation Ennasr (“Victory”), a nation-wide counterterrorist offensive (see *Terrorism Monitor*, April 23).

Commanders of various military sectors were ordered to pursue terrorists belonging to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) directly into their well-concealed camps. Saying, “We are determined to put an end to the terrorist groups via the mobilization of all legal means,” the General demanded greater cooperation between the various geographically-based military commands of Algeria’s Armée Nationale Populaire (ANP) and improved coordination with national intelligence services (*La Liberté* [Algiers], June 24). Since Operation Ennasr began, a large number of AQIM commanders have been captured or surrendered, with Algerian intelligence already benefitting from information gleaned from interrogations (see *Terrorism Monitor*, June 24).

Though AQIM has experienced difficulty recruiting suicide bombers, Algeria’s security forces are determined to prevent a repeat of the devastating suicide bombings that struck Algiers in 2007. One of the AQIM commanders seized in Boumerdès revealed the existence of a plot to carry out a suicide bombing in Algiers on June 17 or 18, but was unable to name the would-be bomber or the exact site of the bombing – under AQIM

protocol, these details would be known only to the bomber and his handler. Drivers entering Algiers were subjected to extensive searches and examinations of papers at two separate roadblocks on roads entering the city – the first run by the Gendarmerie and the second run by the local police. Surveillance cameras, sniffer dogs and explosives detectors were all deployed at the checkpoints, which subjected commuters to hours-long traffic jams (*El Watan* [Algiers], June 21).

The Ministry of Defense has also announced a significant expansion of the National Gendarmerie (al-Dark al-Watani), which plays an important role in finding and eliminating terrorist cells in rural areas. Before the end of the year, 9,000 new gendarmes of various ranks and academic backgrounds will be added to the present 60,000 man paramilitary. A new security communications network called Ronital is being introduced to Algiers, Blida Province and the Tizi Ouzou region of the Kabyle Mountains, areas where counterterrorism efforts are most active. The unified network will ensure effective transfers of sound, images and electronic messages with the central command even in difficult conditions and terrain (*El-Khabar* [Algiers], June 24).

Reconciliation or Extremism?: Tracking the Divisions among Egypt's Jihadi Leaders

By *Hani Nasira*

Some time has passed since the May 30 death of al-Qaeda's chief of operations in Afghanistan and third-in-command Mustafa Abu al-Yazid. Surprisingly, however, no eulogy has been issued by al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. Al-Yazid and al-Zawahiri shared the same cell in Egypt for being involved in the plot to assassinate President Anwar Sadat in 1981. His death similarly went unremarked by former and current jihadis still in Egypt.

Al-Zawahiri's silence after al-Yazid's death triggered questions within jihadist internet forums, not only because of the historic relations between the two

Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) leaders, but also because of al-Yazid's status and important role within al-Qaeda for over 22 years. Al-Yazid was a member of al-Qaeda's Shura Council, responsible for many of the group's largest operations, such as the 9/11 plot in which he was actively involved. Al-Yazid was also directly involved in the planning of the December 30, 2009 suicide bombing of the CIA's forward operating base in Khost, an operation that killed seven CIA officers and a senior Jordanian intelligence officer (see *Terrorism Monitor*, June 12).

The argument over al-Zawahiri's silence regarding Abu al-Yazid's death deepened when al-Qaeda's number two appeared in early June in a video broadcast by As-Sahab Media addressing Egyptians and the family of Khaled Saeed, a 28-year old Egyptian killed in Alexandria allegedly at the hands of members of the Egyptian police a few days earlier (*al-Masry al-Youm*, June 27). Members of Muslim.net Forum compared al-Zawahiri's statement about the previously unknown young Egyptian man to his absolute silence regarding the death of al-Yazid, his life-long companion and fellow member of al-Qaeda's core leadership. [1]

Al-Qaeda's supporters on jihadi websites further asked those who were left wondering to wait for a few weeks to see if al-Zawahiri issued a statement eulogizing his friend al-Yazid, noting a similar situation happened when his eulogies of al-Qaeda in Iraq leaders Abu Omar al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi and fellow Egyptian Abu Ayyub al-Masri (a.k.a. Abu Hamza al-Muhajir) were issued a month after their deaths in April due to the difficulty of communications. This point illustrates the weakness of the group's media arm in Afghanistan, such as As-Sahab Media Production, due to security and intelligence-generated pressures that made movement difficult and communications slower.

Al-Hakaymah – The Forgotten Founder of al-Qaeda in the Levant and Egypt

This is not the first time, however, that al-Zawahiri and the remaining jihadis in Egypt have failed to eulogize one of their own. Al-Zawahiri did not eulogize Muhammad Khalil al-Hakaymah (a.k.a. Abu Jihad al-Masri), founder and leader of the "Abdullah Azzam Brigades of al-Qaeda in The Levant and Egypt" and veteran member of al-Gama'a al-Islamiya (GI), who was killed in late September 2008. His death was only confirmed last May during an interview with his Saudi in-law Saleh al-Qaraawy, a field commander of the

Abdullah Azzam Brigades (al-Fajr Media Network, May, 2010). Al-Zawahiri has made several internet appearances since al-Hakaymah's death but al-Qaeda's number two has never mentioned him, despite the fact that al-Hakaymah appeared with al-Zawahiri in a 2006 video to announce al-Hakaymah's joining of al-Qaeda instead of accepting GI's "revisions."

Which of al-Qaeda's Egyptian Jihadis Still Has Influence in Egypt?

There is a noticeable decrease in the number of Egyptian jihadist leaders that draw attention inside or even outside Egypt, following the launch of the GI's revisions and the recent dominance of an Islamist current that prefers reconciliation with the Egyptian regime, abandoning the use of arms and becoming involved in local public service.

Naturally, al-Zawahiri tops the list of those who continue to make headlines in Egypt, due to his status and his statements criticizing Egypt's foreign and domestic policies. In addition, the GI sometimes engages in critical arguments with al-Zawahiri, either rejecting his initiatives or refuting his accusations. Al-Zawahiri is unable to exercise any influence over the GI's revisionists.

However, activists running jihadist forums abroad, such as Abu al-Harith al-Mihdar of the Madad al-Suyuf Forum and Egyptian Hani al-Siba'i of the al-Maqrize Center for Historical Studies, still treat al-Zawahiri's messages seriously. We can see the following trends regarding the current state of Egyptian jihadism:

- There is a noticeable separation between jihadist groups inside and outside Egypt. While there is consensus among Egyptian-based jihadists (except for a small group behind bars) on the revisions and involvement in political activities, most Egyptian jihadists abroad insist on joining al-Qaeda's ranks.
- The appearance of a jihadist group in Egypt that seeks a third current, rejecting both the revisions of Dr. Fadl as well as the globalization of the armed jihad represented in al-Qaeda's strategy. Within this context are the revisions made by former Islamic Jihad leader Aboud al-Zumor (coordinator of the Sadat assassination), called "The Third Alternative." These currents of thought can also be seen in the criticism of Dr.

Fadl's revisions by UK-based Egyptian jihadist Ahmed Al Abdul Ghani. [2]

- The appeal of leaders is weak among the Egyptian jihadis still inside Egypt. Even the interest in al-Zawahiri is mostly critical. No single Egyptian-based jihadist has Egyptian al-Qaeda leaders such as al-Yazid, al-Hakaymah or Muhammad Atef.

- There is a retreat to localism and a rejection of al-Qaeda's globalization of jihad, as jihadis inside Egypt now seek reconciliation with the regime and the people. This trend was emphasized by Dr. Kamal Habib (former leader of the GI and one of the accused in Sadat's assassination) when he said: "We do not seek consensus on our revisions among jihadists around the world, but we want to create a major current accepting the political process and the peaceful transfer of power, as a local stream keen on survival and vitality within the Egyptian society." [3]

There has been a general decline in the symbolism and status of the Egyptian element within al-Qaeda after the death of al-Yazid and other leaders who fell before him, including Abu Obaida al-Banshiri (a.k.a. Ali Amin al-Rashid), who drowned in Lake Victoria in 1993, and Abu Hafs al-Masri (a.k.a. Muhammad Atef Abu Sittah), who was killed in Afghanistan in November 2001. In addition, al-Zawahiri has failed to recruit Egyptian jihadists abroad other than al-Hakaymah, who seems not to have been accepted as one of the members of al-Qaeda's inner circle.

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Notes:

1. <http://www.muslm.net/vb/showthread.php?t=392288>
2. <http://www.tariqabelhaleem.com/book.php?cat=3>
3. Author's interview with Dr. Kamal Habib, former leader of the EIG, June 20, 2010.

Karachi Emerges as Pakistan's New Tinderbox of Violence and Extremism

By Tayyab Ali Shah

Two commanders of the Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP) were arrested in the Pakistani port of Karachi on June 11, charged with plotting suicide attacks in the city of 18 million people. Only days later, four militants attacked a Karachi court house with firearms and grenades to successfully free four members of the Sunni extremist group Jundallah. One policeman was killed when the four suspects produced their own pistols and grenades, apparently retrieved from a hiding place in the courthouse public washroom they had been allowed to use (AFP, June 11; *Dawn* [Karachi], June 21; *The News* [Islamabad], June 21). The four Jundallah members were on trial for their role in the brutal “Ashura bombing” that killed 43 Shiites on December 28, 2009. Beyond these dramatic events, a wave of sectarian murders and political assassinations continued unabated in Karachi throughout June.

Despite serving as Pakistan's financial hub, Karachi continues to be a tinderbox of violence due to a number of factors, including:

- Its diverse ethnic mix.
- A history of sectarian and ethnic conflict.
- Battles for turf and political influence.
- The complex dynamics of urban governance.
- Growing “Talibanization,” particularly in Pashtun neighborhoods like Sohrab Goth.
- The continuing growth and expanding influence of the Pashtun community as refugees from the fighting in northwest Pakistan continue to arrive.

The biggest ethnic group in Karachi is made up of six million Muhajirs, descendants of Urdu-speaking Indian Muslims who migrated from India in 1947. The Muhajirs are followed by three and a half million Pashtuns, two million Sindhis and Baloch, and several million immigrants from other countries such as Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran, Burma and elsewhere.

Ninety-six percent of the population is Muslim, with some 30% of those being Shi'a. During the last two to three years, approximately 200,000 displaced people have migrated to Karachi from the conflict zones in the northwest Pakistan due to ongoing military operations. Such a large movement of peaceful civilians along with thousands of armed militants has added to the fragility of an already frail and complex society (*Dawn*, January 14).

Karachi is no stranger to violence. In the 1980s and 1990s, Karachi was compared to the Beirut of the 1970s due to its ethnic-based violence. However, throughout most of the presidency of General Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008), Karachi remained largely peaceful until 52 people were killed in the May 2007 riots that followed the visit of then-sacked Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudri and the attack on former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's procession in October 2007 in which 139 people were killed. Since 2009 there has been an increase in violence - mostly targeted killings of individuals, except for the December Ashura bombing, which was followed by looting and arson attacks that destroyed most of Karachi's commercial center (see *Terrorism Monitor*, January 7). Since then the targeted killings have continued unabated.

Depending on their affinity, politicians from different spectrums of the political divide have blamed each other for the current mayhem. While the Muhajir-dominated Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) has mainly blamed Pashtuns, the Pashtun nationalist Awami National Party (ANP) and the Talibanization of Karachi for the current violence, Interior Minister Rehman Malik has pointed to an illusory third force and sometimes “non-state actors” as the problem. Pashtun nationalists have in turn blamed MQM for the violence, claiming that most of those killed are Pashtuns. This line was supported even by an arch-rival of the ANP, Jamaat-i-Islami provincial chief Siraj ul-Haq, when he pointed out that more than 17,000 people have been killed in Karachi since the creation of MQM in 1987 (*The News* [Islamabad], June 1). The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the biggest party in the federal government coalition and the Sindh provincial coalition government, has remained mostly silent because of its dependence on MQM as part of the uneasy Sindh coalition government and because the MQM and ANP are its partners in the federal coalition. However most observers of the scene contend that the unrest in Karachi is multi-causal, with ethnic tensions, the convoluted politics of the city, the quest for control by “land mafias” and the nexus

these various vested interests have with political parties constituting most of the reasons.

There is no doubt that Taliban fighters are moving to the city in increasing numbers. However, it is unlikely that the Taliban would be involved in the current spat of targeted killings, as Karachi is a sanctuary where they can hide, take rest, receive medical treatment and raise money through donations, ransom and extortion. They would not like to create a situation in which they are the main focus of law-enforcement agencies. Nevertheless, the involvement of sectarian anti-Shi'a organizations who are closely allied with the Taliban cannot be ruled out, as most of the killings during the last four to five months have targeted Shi'a professionals. Interior Minister Rehman Malik, however, has said that "some third elements were involved in the sectarian violence" without naming them (*The News*, June 20).

In the responsibility for the current mayhem, local land and water mafias cannot be overlooked. There is a chronic shortage of housing and water in Karachi while demand continues to grow due to the extremely rapid increase in population. There are currently five million people who are living in illegal slums and squatter settlements. A huge lucrative underground economy has grown around fulfilling the housing and water needs of these people. Rival mafias have marked their turf, consolidated their businesses and kept law enforcement agencies at arms length by sharing their revenues with them. The inability of the government to provide basic facilities and services to people has strengthened local dependence on these mafias. During the last two years, turf wars between criminal organizations have increased sharply (BBC, December 28, 2009). Seventeen real estate agents were killed during the last six months of 2009, victims of the land mafias and other gangs (*Dawn*, December 28, 2009). There are also gang wars over narcotics smuggling operations in the Lyari area of Karachi (*Dawn*, January 14). Provincial Youth Affairs Minister Faisal Subzwari suggested that "These are targeted killings by criminals, drug and land mafias who want to fan ethnic violence in the city" (AFP, April 30, 2009).

It is not yet clear how the government will deal with this situation. Karachi's fragile law and order situation is causing jitters to many because of its strategic location as a primary port for supplies heading to U.S. and NATO troops in neighboring Afghanistan. Karachi is also important because it is home to Pakistan's central bank and its largest stock exchange, and generates 68%

of the government's revenue and 25% of the country's gross domestic product (Reuters, December 2, 2009). Its destabilization would on one hand translate into a massive disruption to NATO's Afghanistan supply chain and on the other undermine the already weak economy of Pakistan. Moreover, Karachi's urban chaos could provide cover for even more Taliban and al-Qaeda militants who are looking for hide-outs away from army operations in Pakistan's northwest frontier region.

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Can al-Qaeda Use Islam to Justify Jihad in the United States? A Debate in Progress

By Jack Barclay

Having committed itself to the battle against the "far enemy," al-Qaeda's leadership issued in March its most explicit call yet to Muslims living in the United States to independently plan and execute terrorist attacks on American soil. In a video entitled "A Call to Arms," al-Qaeda spokesman Adam Yahyeh Gadahn claimed such attacks are a religious obligation on all able-bodied Muslims living in the "Zionist-Crusader countries, and the United States in particular" (As-Sahab Media Productions, March 7). Adam Yahyeh Gadahn (real name Adam Pearlman) is a U.S. national who is thought by U.S. government and media sources to be an important personality in al-Qaeda's propaganda operations. He is believed to be in hiding somewhere in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

Gadahn seized upon the example of Major Nidal Malik Hassan, the Muslim U.S. Army officer who last November shot dead 13 fellow service personnel at Fort Hood, Texas, as a "role model" to be emulated by Muslims in the United States:

Nidal Malik Hassan is a pioneer – a trailblazer and role model who has opened the door...and

showed the way forward for every Muslim who finds himself amongst the unbelievers and yearns to discharge his duty to Allah and play a part in the defense of Islam and Muslims.

However, ignoring the practical operational challenges facing those with a potential interest in emulating Nidal Hassan, the theological basis for such attacks remains contentious even among Salafi-Jihadist supporters and is thus an issue worthy of greater appreciation by counterterrorism officials. In light of the 9/11 attacks and several subsequent foiled terrorist conspiracies in the United States, it may seem surprising that such debates have not already been concluded within militant Islamist circles. However, these continued doctrinal fissures offer an opportunity for authorities if they can be harnessed as part of strategic communication initiatives contributing to a wider strategy of domestic terrorism risk mitigation.

Gadah's Sales-Pitch

Speaking in English, Gadaffi reminded Muslims in the United States that it was their individual obligation to wage jihad against the United States and that lack of connections to jihadist groups should not deter them from action. He reminded his viewers; "Jihad is not the personal property, nor the exclusive responsibility of any single group, organization or individual. Instead it is the personal duty of every able-bodied Muslim on the face of the earth."

He encouraged Muslims to use whatever means were at their immediate disposal to carry out terrorist attacks synchronous with al-Qaeda's aims and objectives, stressing that prior instruction at foreign training camps was not necessary. He reminded viewers that individuals such as Major Hassan carried out their attacks with the weapons they had at hand and the knowledge and expertise they developed through self-study. He also praised Mir Imal Khasi, who shot dead two CIA employees and wounded three others in Virginia in 1993, and Mohammed Bouyeri, who murdered controversial Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in a knife and gun attack in 2004, as further examples of individuals who had recognized their duty as Muslims and independently decided to take direct action in accordance with these obligations.

Perhaps in an attempt to reduce the perceived threshold for an operational "success" and overcome a would-be jihadist's fear that their limited, lone-wolf actions might

have little strategic consequence, Gadaffi said; "We must keep in mind that even apparently unsuccessful attacks on western mass transport systems can bring many cities to a halt, cost the enemy billions and send his companies into bankruptcy." Gadaffi also states:

He [Nidal Hassan] has reminded us of how much pride and joy a single act of resistance and courage can instill in the hearts of Muslims everywhere. That's why I am calling on every honest and repentant Muslim in the countries of the Zionist-Crusader alliance and the United States in particular to prepare to play his duty and role in responding to and repelling the aggression against the enemies of Islam. Unsheathe your sharpened sword and rush to take your place among the defiant champions of Islam.

Loyalty and Disavowal

While Gadaffi does not address in detail the theological imperative for domestic "individualized jihad," he certainly alludes to some of the important doctrinal concepts involved, concepts discussed more fully elsewhere by his al-Qaeda associates and Salafi-Jihadist supporters.

At the heart of the Salafi-Jihadi movement's doctrinal justification for such attacks, and indeed much of the violence it advocates in the name of defending Islam and Muslims, is their interpretation of the concept of Tawhid, or the oneness of Allah. At the outset, it should be emphasized that Tawhid is a core element of Islam as a monotheistic religion and one intrinsically accepted by virtually all Muslims. It does not explicitly advocate or encourage violence.

However, it is the manner in which Tawhid is not just believed but practiced which is where Muslims of various sects disagree, and it is here that Salafi-Jihadists believe that violence is often obligatory in order to defend Tawhid's supremacy. For many Salafi Muslims it is impossible to be a true Muslim unless one's belief in Tawhid is turned into action. However, adherents of more militant interpretations of Salafism contend that the concept requires them to oppose both by word and deed (with violence if necessary) any attempts by Muslims or non-Muslims to establish "partners with God" or systems of governance other than that decreed in the Shari'a. This means that followers of the Salafi-Jihadi manhaj (methodology) are fundamentally opposed to any and all non-Muslim political and legal

systems including liberal democracy.

However, to more fully understand the doctrinal basis for Nidal Hassan's actions, appreciation of a further important Islamic concept is necessary. One of the concepts which gives life to Tawhid in a Muslim's everyday affairs is "Loyalty and Disavowal" (al-wala w'al-bara - loyalty [towards the believers] and disavowal [of the disbelievers]). This is given particular emphasis in Salafism and a unique interpretation by Salafi-Jihadists. Loyalty and Disavowal teaches a Muslim to show obedience to Allah's word and disobedience to, and separation from, anything that deviates from it or challenges it. In Major Nidal Hassan's case, this is likely to have included the U.S. military hierarchy of which he was a part as well as the many non-Muslim service personnel with whom he would have worked.

The Loyalty and Disavowal concept is emphasized indirectly by Gadahn in his video when he says, "This is why I believe that defiant Brother Nidal is the ideal role-model for every repentant Muslim in the armies of the unbelievers and apostate regimes who, like him, has come to the correct conclusion that true Islam isn't in a name or a set of rituals but in fact is in *total submission and obedience to Allah and total disobedience to and disassociation from the unbelievers* [author's emphasis]."

The importance of Loyalty and Disavowal in guiding Nidal Hassan's actions was also alluded to in statements and discourse by supporters of the Salafi-Jihadi movement in the West. One noteworthy statement to emerge from this constituency was issued on November 24, 2009 by members of the Salafi-Jihadi web forum Ansar al-Mujahideen (www.ansar1.info). [2] In addition to praising Major Nidal Hassan's attack, the statement argues that the Quran makes it clear that Muslims should disassociate themselves from "unbelievers" and that in most cases they should leave the United States if they are unable to fully and freely practice their religion. They emphasize that this must include being able to fulfill an obligation to Loyalty and Disavowal. Yemeni-American Salafi-Jihadi ideologue Anwar al-Awlaki said in an interview with Salafi-Jihadi media organization al-Malahim that one of the reasons he left the United States was that the post-9/11 security environment had made it more difficult for Muslims scholars there to preach practices such as Loyalty and Disavowal (Islamicawkening.com, May 23).

Essentially, Salafi-Jihadists argue that Nidal Malik Hassan's attack was not only a declaration of his devotion

to Tawhid but also a practical demonstration of Loyalty and Disavowal, in that he decided to abandon allegiance to all others except Allah, fulfilling in the process what Gadahn and others maintain was his obligation to wage jihad at home as long as his co-religionists were under attack abroad.

A Covenant of Security?

An issue not explored by Gadahn in his video, but which is relevant to the permissibility of domestic jihad in the United States, is the applicability of the Islamic "Covenant of Security" (aqd aman). Many Salafi-Jihadists argue that acts of domestic terrorism by U.S. Muslims are permissible because U.S. policy toward Muslims at home and abroad negates the mutual non-aggression enshrined within that Covenant. However it is here that evidence of some theological disagreement exists.

In this context, the non-aggression pact enshrined in a Covenant of Security relates to the agreement between Muslims living in non-Muslim countries and the governments of those countries. There are rules concerning a Muslim's behavior under a Covenant of Security but Islamist scholars differ on the specific details, in particular the conditions under which a Covenant should be considered void.

It is most commonly agreed that a Covenant of Security between Muslims living in the West and their non-Muslim hosts applies when:

- A Muslim identifies himself as such in his host country.
- The Muslim maintains Western forms of identification.
- The Muslim receives government benefits.
- A Muslim has entered the country officially, for example on a work or study visa.

In return, the Muslim is forbidden to fight his host or take his host's money or goods as booty.

However, some Salafi-Jihadi scholars contend that the Covenant is voided when one or more of the following occurs:

- A Muslim in that country is prevented from freely and fully practicing his religion, including the practice of Loyalty and Disavowal.
- A Muslim in that country is subject to harassment, imprisonment, torture, degrading treatment, or unfair levels of intrusive surveillance.
- The Muslim Ummah is threatened by the foreign policies of that country.

The Ansar al-Mujahideen statement specifically mentions this:

No covenant exists between Muslims in the United States and the U.S. government and army. If there was initially some covenant, that covenant is now void due to the various crimes the United States has committed to break it, from engaging in war with the Muslims, imprisoning Muslims and by the rape and abuse of Muslim men and women, to name but a few.

While many Salafi-Jihadist supporters in the United States and other countries such as the UK would doubtlessly agree that any such Covenant of Security had been voided years ago, there remain significant opposing voices. One point of contention is that, in the view of some scholars, even if an attack is permissible it can only be carried out by an expeditionary group of mujahideen from abroad arriving in the country for such a purpose. In doing so, they would have to act in a clandestine manner which does not require them to adhere to any Covenant – in other words those Muslims already resident in the country are not permitted to participate directly. Some highly respected Salafi-Jihadist scholars such as the UK-based Syrian Shaykh Abu Basir al-Tartusi have issued important judgments stating this point.

Some radical scholars disagree with al-Tartusi's position, arguing that under present conditions where Muslims are under attack worldwide and when Muslims living in the West are now subject to perceived persecution, it is now obligatory for all Muslims to fight regardless of where they are. Shaykh Omar Bakri Muhammad, former spiritual leader of the UK-based group al-Muhajiroun (The Émigrés) said in early 2005 that new anti-terrorism legislation which he claimed was designed to restrict Muslims' right to freedom of expression was among the reasons why the Covenant of Security between the UK

and the Muslims living there should be considered void (See Times Online, July 24, 2005; Asia Times, June 12, 2008).

However, this widely-held opinion within Salafi-Jihadist circles regarding obligatory jihad is contradicted by scholars such as al-Tartusi. In his book *On the Covenant of Security in Islam*, al-Tartusi lists extensive proofs from the Quran and Hadith to underscore what in this context is a critical ruling – namely that it is possible for Muslims to live under a Covenant of Security in a non-Muslim country even if the government of that country is engaged in transgressions against other Muslims abroad. [3]

Significance for Counterterrorism

While the depth of such doctrinal disagreements may appear slight in some cases, they nevertheless represent a potential wedge issue that might be exploited by strategic messaging to cast doubt on the religious permissibility of the types of attacks al-Qaeda is now directly encouraging. For groups motivated primarily by a radical religious imperative, doctrinal legitimacy of a proposed action is critical.

Gadahn spends a notable amount of time attempting to persuade viewers to shun the opinions of U.S. Muslim scholars who argue that jihad in present circumstances is illegitimate. He warns; “No fatwa in this world can possibly justify breaking the clear and unambiguous and agreed upon laws of the Shari’a like the law forbidding the killing of Muslims or the law ordering loyalty to the believers and disloyalty to the unbelievers.”

Both Gadahn and Western Salafi-Jihadist supporters appear to acknowledge in their statements that Muslims considering waging a domestic jihad are likely to encounter resistance from their co-religionists and rulings against such actions by Muslim scholars. They claim that carrying out such attacks is a religious obligation that no amount of fatwas (Islamic legal rulings) can overturn – perhaps a tacit acknowledgement that competing religious rulings still have enormous potential to damage al-Qaeda's theological justification for such attacks and frustrate their attempts to galvanize considerable numbers of U.S. Muslims to raise arms against their government.

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Notes

1. For Gadahn, see U.S. Department of State; <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/index.cfm?page=gadahn&language=english>
2. A copy of the statement regarding the Fort Hood shootings can be found at http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefa_ansar1109.pdf
3. A copy of translated excerpts of this book can be found at the web site <http://www.en.altartosi.com/>