

## Qaedat al-Jihad:

### New Name on the Road to Palestine

May 6, 2002



Brief Analysis

**W**ithin the last month, the remaining members of al-Qaeda have begun to issue new electronic pamphlets through the websites of their supporters under the name of "Qaedat al-Jihad" (base of jihad). Usage of the internet by radical Islamists is not unprecedented, but after al-Qaeda's defeat in Afghanistan, it has become a vital modus operandi. This trend has also led to the establishment of dozens of websites by radical Saudi, Egyptian, and Palestinian scholars that grant Islamic legitimacy to al-Qaeda's cause.

More Involvement in Palestinian Issues?

In December, several articles in the Egyptian press attacked Osama bin Laden for ignoring the Palestinians while instead focusing on Afghanistan. An apologetic reply, entitled "Bin Laden and the Palestinian Issue," came from the Saudi Abu Ayman al-Hilali, who recently became the "official" interpreter of bin Laden. In the reply, he explained that bin Laden "serves the Palestinian issue by attacking American interests, since Israel is one of America's allies in the Muslim world, and there is no distinction between America and Zionism." He went on to openly criticize Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad for cooperating with national Palestinian elements as distinct from Islamist radical groups.

The Saudi plan that was discussed and approved at the Beirut Arab summit in March 2002 gave bin Laden and his followers the opportunity to attack several birds with one stone -- the Saudi royal family, Arab governments, American support for Israel, and public support for Palestinians. In a fatwa issued in late March this year, one of bin Laden's prominent Saudi supporters, Shaykh Hamed al-Ali, ruled that the Saudi plan has no validity. According to this ruling, "the so-called peace agreements with the Jews are false, corrupted, have no value in the nation of Islam, since they contradict the book of Allah. The Jews that kill Muslims will have no remains. Whoever gives them his hand for peace while they react by shedding the blood of his Muslim brothers, is a coward, an ignorant, has no value towards the brothers of monkeys and pigs."

Announcements Attributed to bin Laden and Qaedat al-Jihad

In the same month, an announcement with bin Laden's handwritten signature appeared on <http://66.78.6.55/~jihad/osama-alquds.htm>. Of course, there is no way to know if this document was in fact written by bin Laden. Bearing the date of early Muharram 1423 (the third part of March 2002), the announcement called for "the revolt against the rulers of heresy and killing them; and the killing of the Americans and the Jews, by shooting, stabbing, or even by throwing stones at them." This directive marked a more intensive use of the internet by al-Qaeda and its followers to comment on recent developments in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

Three announcements have also appeared on the main websites of al-Qaeda supporters (e.g., [www.azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com), [www.jihad.net](http://www.jihad.net)) under the new name of Qaedat al-Jihad. On April 9, the first Qaedat al-Jihad announcement was released on the website "Platform of Tawhid and Jihad," which belongs to Palestinian Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi ([www.almaqdese.com/afghanistan/fatwa/resalah.html](http://www.almaqdese.com/afghanistan/fatwa/resalah.html)). The announcement says, "First of all and above

anything else, we should emphasize that regarding Shaykh Osama bin [Laden] Allah protects him, is safe, enjoys good health, and prepares with his companions the next stage. We wish to tell our Muslim nation that with the blessings of Allah we are preparing for a Jihadi plan to meet the circumstances of the present stage." It repeats the promise of bin Laden in one of his videotapes following the September attacks that "America and its inhabitants cannot dream of peaceful and safe life before the Palestinians are safe; the withdrawal of American troops from Saudi Arabia; the release of the Muslim prisoners in Cuba; and before the restoration of the Muslim glory and power, when the banner of Tawhid [unity] is raised to control the world and direct it, with no resistance."

The second electronic Qaeda al-Jihad pamphlet, which appeared on April 24, was entitled "Announcement of Qaeda al-Jihad on the Wills of the Heroes and the Legitimacy of the Attacks in Washington and New York" ([www.alneda.com/print.asp?id=566&ty=pr&img=no](http://www.alneda.com/print.asp?id=566&ty=pr&img=no)). The main theme of this interesting and detailed document is that the United States and Israel are one entity. Therefore, suicide operations against the United States, including the killing of innocent civilians, is as legitimate as killing Israelis and Jews. The reasoning behind this is spelled out in two books found on [www.alneda.com](http://www.alneda.com). One book, by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, is called *The Essence of the New Crusader War*. The other book is written by Shaykh Abd al-Aziz bin Saleh al-Jarbou, one of the prominent Saudi scholars who support al-Qaeda. Entitled *The Basis for the Legitimacy of the Destruction that Occurred in America*, it is the most detailed analysis thus far attempting to religiously justify the September attacks.

The third electronic announcement of Qaeda al-Jihad was published on April 26 under the title "Al-Haznawi: Why the Tape [Was Released] Now" ([www.alneda.com/print.asp?id=581&ty=pr](http://www.alneda.com/print.asp?id=581&ty=pr)). It includes the following justification:

"The issues of al-Qaeda are those of the Islamic nation in Afghanistan, Somalia, Bosnia, and Chechnya. The main motive of these operations is the defense of the Islamic sacred places, the Haramain and the blessed al-Aqsa. The last operations were meant to support the Jihad in Palestine against the Jewish enemy. We said at the time that the operation against [USS] Cole was the first serious attack in support for the Palestinian uprising, and it would be followed by sister operations. Then came the September 11 blessed operation to support this promise. The attack was against the World Trade Center, the largest financial center in support for the Jews. The Pentagon was the main source of the military Jewish machine on one hand, and its main supporter on the other. Just its name terrorizes the Arab leaderships."

The announcement ends by taking responsibility for the attack against the Jewish synagogue in Jerba, Tunisia, which was carried out by Nizar Sayf al-Din al-Tunisi: "There are operations we took responsibility for, and others we shall do so in the proper time."

## Conclusion

The remains of al-Qaeda's central core seem to have regained some confidence in recent weeks as they continue to spread their anti-American sentiments through the internet. Some of this confidence might come from the growing influence of radical Saudi Islamist scholars. Indeed, there has been a prominent shift among these scholars toward justification of a global jihad against the United States -- citing the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia, the campaign in Afghanistan, and America's support for and alliance with Israel -- which has brought no real reaction from the Saudi government.

Reuven Paz is director of the Project for the Research of Radical Islam in Haifa, Israel, and the author of the forthcoming book *Tangled Web: International Networking of the Islamist Struggle* (The Washington Institute).

## RECOMMENDED

---



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [Bennett's Bahrain Visit Further Invigorates Israel-Gulf Diplomacy](#)

Feb 14, 2022



Simon Henderson

(/policy-analysis/bennetts-bahrain-visit-further-invigorates-israel-gulf-diplomacy)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [Libya's Renewed Legitimacy Crisis](#)

Feb 14, 2022



Ben Fishman

(/policy-analysis/libyas-renewed-legitimacy-crisis)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [The UAE Formally Ceases to be a Tax-Free Haven](#)

Feb 14, 2022



Sana Quadri,  
Hamdullah Baycar

(/policy-analysis/uae-formally-ceases-be-tax-free-haven)

## TOPICS

Terrorism ([/policy-analysis/terrorism](#))

## REGIONS & COUNTRIES

