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# VICTORY

## From the Prism of Jihadi Culture

By JEFFREY B. COZZENS

**V**ictory in warfare, classically defined by Carl von Clausewitz, can be reduced to a simple formula: one protagonist forced to fulfill another's will. Though a straightforward maxim on the surface, when applied to the West's struggle with the global jihadi movement—the religio-social movement that gave rise to the al Qaeda strategy of attacking enemies “far” and “near”—the construct of victory begs demanding, complex, even soul-searching questions about metrics: How does the West know when it is winning? What does winning mean to our multi-echeloned, atomized foe? Addressing these queries holistically mandates excavating the layers of jihadi strategic theory and giving militant Islam's primary sources their due. In so doing, we find that the “will” of the global jihadi movement—insofar as one can speak of it in the singular—has not only strategic, instrumental components, but also a noninstrumental cultural or “expressive” side. Victory for the global jihadi movement is more complex and multifaceted than we might suppose.

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### Boys collect scrap metal in Kabul

UN (Eskinder Debebe)



Following cursory examinations of both Western victory metrics against al Qaeda and conflict's inherent duality, this article refers to primary jihadi sources to develop a more comprehensive understanding of what winning means from the perspective of the global jihadi movement. There have been few, if any, attempts to approach this issue through the prism of this adversary's culture. However, since the core of any religio-social movement comprises attitudes, values, and beliefs (the essence of culture), this methodology appears logical. In the end, the exponents of global jihad inform us that victory is more than simply holding territory or attaining clearly defined political objectives; a parallel and complementary strategic understanding of victory flows from the culture of global jihad. Defining and winning the "war of ideas" cannot be disassociated from understanding jihadi culture and its notions of victory.

### Our Victory, Jihad's Defeat?

There are multiple potential starting points for an analysis such as this. However, to evoke the desired contrast between Western security policy and global jihadi culture, distilling key Western counterterrorism policies advanced after 9/11 to illuminate victory metrics against al Qaeda appears a logical first step. In so doing, we find that success is generally measured by:

- killing or capturing terrorists
- denying safe haven and control of any nation
- preventing access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD)
- rendering potential targets less attractive through security
- cutting off resources
- in the long term, winning "the battle of ideas."

Few would question these objectives. Yet when turned on their heads, these metrics simultaneously illustrate how Western governments define victory for the global jihadi movement. The terrorists win if:

- they remain alive and free to plan operations
- their safe havens remain "safe"
- they capture a state
- they gain access to WMD
- they succeed in the war of ideas.

To these we could add the related goals of expelling Western forces from the Muslim world, toppling marginally Islamic regimes, and eventually, rebuilding the caliphate from Southeast Asia to Spain. A vast body of Western counterterrorism literature, policy statements, and al Qaeda pronouncements highlights many of the same metrics implicitly and explicitly.

However, warfare by its nature has multiple, often blurred and intangible fronts, enemies, and definitions and degrees of victory. This is even truer when combatants such as al Qaeda are motivated by simultaneously global and local grievances, and their enemies span the spectrum from worldliness, to apostate coreligionists, to worldwide conspiracies. As shall be demonstrated, we learn from the global jihadi literature that victory is synonymous with more than simply staying alive and free, controlling territories, gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, and so forth. For the West to effectively develop and chart its own metrics of victory against this existentially asymmetric foe—especially when it comes to fighting the war of ideas, which remains ambiguously defined—it needs to further excavate the global jihadi movement's version of winning. Just as al Qaeda refuses to play by Western rules of engagement, flaunts traditional just war doctrine, and, in the words of jihadi strategist Abu Ubeid al-Qurashi, "like a ghost, appears

and disappears"<sup>1</sup> in a blatant disregard for battlefield linearity, our understanding of their success or lack thereof is incomplete. Without exploring what winning means from *their* perspective—essential to deconstructing the culture of global jihad at its weakest points—Western bureaucratic, technical, and predominantly secular inclinations may give rise to tactical victories and strategic failures.

### Duality of Warfare

Before discussing the global jihad's alternative victory metrics, it is necessary to touch upon the idea of duality in conflict—or as Christopher Coker describes, its "expressive" and "instrumental" components.<sup>2</sup> If warfare is multidimensional, victory must be as well.

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Writing about the nature of future conflict in *Warrior Politics*, Robert Kaplan observes that the "ancientness of future wars has three dimensions: the character of the enemy, the methods used to contain and destroy him, and the identity of those beating the war drums."<sup>3</sup>

UN (Yutaka Nagata)



Egyptian and Israeli generals discuss disengagement of forces, Egypt, January 1974

Conflict today—especially that shaped by socially reinforced notions of “Ultimate Concern”—is rarely reducible to politics instrumentalized by force. Identity, belief, and culture—the building blocks of expressive warfare—contrast the political ends and largely technical means of Western military campaigns, or instrumental war. As Coker argues in *Waging War without Warriors*:

*The problem is that we so want to understand violence primarily in utilitarian, rational terms, in terms of means and ends, that the question of what violence “signifies,” “says,” or “expresses” seems, at best, to be of secondary importance. . . . In instrumentalizing war as much as it has, the West has reached a point at which it no longer understands the expressive element. . . . But what the warrior is, is no less important than what he or she does. Expressive violence is not only aimed at an enemy but also affirms a way of life.<sup>4</sup>*

In other words, the violence of nonstate combatants such as al Qaeda cannot be disentangled from their culture—that is, their attitudes, values, and beliefs—even while it also includes strategic political goals. Bruce Hoffman and Gordon McCormick touched on this premise when they described suicide bombings in Iraq as “signaling,”<sup>5</sup> and Faisal Devji explored it in his multidisciplinary essay on jihadi culture.<sup>6</sup> If these theories are credible, then we should look not only at the instrumental components of the global jihadi movement’s definition of winning, but also at its parallel, expressive objectives. To do so, we must assess victory through the prism of jihadi culture.

### Jihadi Victory Metrics

The following (admittedly incomplete) list, distilled from the writings of some of the most popular militant writers,<sup>7</sup> outlines nine less apparent (though arguably no less important) jihadi conceptions of victory. The movement’s strategic goals mentioned earlier could be seen as tangible expressions of this parallel track.

**Metric 1: Victory Can Be Understood as the Perpetuity of Fighting.** The influential Saudi militant, the late Yusuf al-ʿUyayree, elucidates this long-term perspective in his works *Meanings of Victory and Loss in Jihaad* and *The Future of Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula*. This understanding is a cultural pillar of the global jihadi trend, which, based on its

interpretation of the sacred sources, sees itself as the true, victorious sect that will fight until the end of days.

This idea of victory is also apparent in the Creed of the Global Islamic Media Front, a primary outlet of the global jihadi movement:

*We believe that the victorious sect will be the sect of learning and jihad.*

*We believe that jihad will continue until the Day of Judgment, with every pious man or wrongdoer, in every time and place, with an imam or without an imam. It will continue with a single individual or more. No tyrant’s injustice or naysayer’s discouragement will halt it.*

*We believe that jihad in God’s way is the legitimate and sound way that will enable the Ummah to resume an Islamic life and establish a well-guided caliphate according to the program of the Prophet.<sup>8</sup>*

**Metric 2: Victory Is Found in Obeying the Obligation to Fight Islam’s Enemies, Not in the Outcome of Battle.** Anwar al-Awlaki—formerly associated with an Islamic center in Falls Church, Virginia, and a past chaplain at George Washington University<sup>9</sup>—delivered a lecture on al-ʿUyayree’s works in which he explained this understanding in poignant terms. In the transcription of his lecture, titled “Constants on the Path of Jihad,” al-Awlaki stated:

*Victory is not what we are accountable for; we are accountable for whether or not we are doing what Allah commands. We fight Jihad because it is fard [obligatory] on us; we are not fighting to win or loose [sic]. . . . If we broaden our perspective, we will come to realize that whoever rides the peak of Islam (Jihad) [parentheses and emphasis in original] can never loose [sic] and will always win but not always win in physical victory.<sup>10</sup>*

This definition has implications for jihadis at the collective and individual levels. At the collective level, adhering to this duty results in overt obedience to and therefore guidance by Allah.<sup>11</sup> When mujahideen (those who believe they are fighting in God’s path) embrace this obligation and absorb this guidance, tangible strategic success for the *ummah*—the global Muslim community—is believed to follow. The establishment of the state of Israel and regional regimes is generally viewed by jihadis as a byproduct of neglecting this obligation.

At the individual level, a rational decision to exchange love for worldly comforts for the love of battle and to overcome Satan and those who hinder one from fighting represents more than simple obedience: it is a purifying, ennobling act. One hour of jihad in Allah’s path, according to a famous *hadith* beloved by Abdullah Azzam, architect of the Afghan jihad, is better than 60 years of praying.<sup>12</sup> As case studies of jihadis in the United Kingdom and elsewhere attest, some young Islamists also see jihad as a social rite of passage.<sup>13</sup>

**Metric 3: The Institutionalization of a Culture of Martyrdom Is a Victory.** According to exponents of global jihad such as Abu Ayman al-Hilali, martyrdom is the greatest victory a mujahid can have. Al-Hilali and others argue that martyrdom operations offer a direct route to Paradise, the most effective means to strike adversaries, and the loftiest form of witness.<sup>14</sup> And as illustrated by West Point’s Sinjar Records, a collection of nearly 700 foreign fighter biographies from Iraq, the idea that martyrdom is synonymous with victory for many jihadis goes well beyond theory.<sup>15</sup> When al Qaeda in Iraq “bureaucrats” queried foreign fighters as to why they came to Iraq, or what duty they hoped to perform, 217 of the 389 who responded (56.3 percent) indicated a desire for martyrdom, whereas 166 projected their roles as “fighter” (or something similar).<sup>16</sup>

**Metric 4: Victory Comes by Pinpointing Islam’s Enemies through the Refining Process of Jihad, and Thus Maintaining Its Identity.** Sayf-ad-Din al-Ansari, another online jihadi strategist, argued this point explicitly in a 2002 essay on the 9/11 attacks:

*Our Islamic community has been subjected to a dangerous process of narcosis. As a result, it has lost the vigilance that comes from faith and fallen into a deep slumber. The most dangerous consequence of this is that most Muslims can no longer distinguish between their enemies and their friends. The fallout from choosing peace and normalization . . . has caused a great confusion of ideas. The resultant situation poses a genuine threat to our very identity.*

[The 9/11 attacks] came to move this war from the shadows out into the open, to make the community aware of the enemy. It revealed the perils that surround us in a way that everyone can understand. The . . . attacks succeeded in laying bare the enemy’s soul and . . . talk of a new crusade with all the historical baggage the phrase entails. It became clear to everyone that this is a campaign against Muslims more than

... a war against the mujahidin. ... Islam itself is the target.

The raid showed just how fragile is the supposed coexistence of Muslims and Crusaders.<sup>17</sup>

Fighting, al-Ansari argues, is equivalent to maintaining the *ummah*'s identity against internal and external threats; it is the ultimate means to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. As the ever-popular jihadi author Muhammad al-Maqdisi contends in *The Religion of Abraham*, it is simply not enough to renounce tyrants verbally.

**Metric 5: Establishing Pride, Brotherhood, and Unity in the Face of Threats to the Ummah Is a Form of Victory.** Abu Ubayd al-Qirshi, another popular militant "strategist" who wrote a pseudo-scholarly essay complete with notes, "The Impossible Becomes Possible," advances this point forcefully:

*With the New York and Washington raids, al-Qa'ida established a model of a proud Islamic mentality. This outlook does not view anything as impossible.*

*Al-Qa'ida embodies Islamic unity. Blood from all the countries of the Islamic community has mixed together in the jihad that al-Qa'ida leads with no distinction between Arab and non-Arab. In and of itself, this is a step on the road to Islamic unity and the destruction of the ... colonialist treaties that have torn the body of the Islamic community apart.*

*[W]ith absolute trust in God, a willingness to die in God's path, patience, and generosity of spirit ... these qualities ... undoubtedly lead to victory.<sup>18</sup>*

While generally a pragmatic author concerned more with "jihadi strategic studies" than theology, al-Qirshi's view of brotherhood and unity echoes the perspectives of many *salafis*, militant or otherwise: preserving the integrity and purity of Islam in the face of contemporary intra-Islamic strife (*fitnah*), syncretistic practices, and external threats is of paramount importance. None of these can be confronted apart from a unified and self-sacrificial methodology (the latter of which al-Qirshi and al-Qaeda believe to be associated with violence and martyrdom).

**Metric 6: Creating a Parity of Suffering with Islam's Enemies—Especially the Jews and Crusaders—Is a Victory.** According to Saudi cleric Nasr al-Fahd and al-Qaeda spokesman Suleiman Abu Geith (among others), upholding the *shari'a* principle of "repayment in kind" (*al-mu'amala bil-mithl*) not only justifies but also demands the murder of millions

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of al-Qaeda's enemies to avenge the millions of Muslims killed at their hands.<sup>19</sup> Al-Fahd—whose well-known *fatawa* (religious opinions) concerning the "legitimacy" of the Taliban regime and the destruction of the Buddha statues in Afghanistan were widely circulated online—published on May 21, 2003, a *fatwa* justifying the use of nuclear weapons (as well as other weapons of mass destruction) against the "enemies of Islam."<sup>20</sup> Al-Fahd wrote:

#### Tribal leaders in Iraq are turning away from extremist agendas



982/ Combat Camera Company (Alni) (Bronco Suzuki)

*The attack against it by WMD [which al-Fahd explicitly defined as “nuclear, chemical, or biological”] is accepted, since Allah said: “If you are attacked you should attack your aggressor by identical force.” Whoever looks at the American aggression against the Muslims and their lands in recent decades concludes that it is permissible. . . . They have killed about ten million Muslims, and destroyed countless lands. . . . If they would be bombed in a way that would kill ten millions of them and destroy their lands—it is obviously permitted, with no need for evidence.*

Terrorism—including that involving WMD—is seen by authors such as Abu Geith and al-Fahd as being among the most expedient methods for achieving the reciprocal suffering (and thus, victory) for which their reading of Islamic law calls.

**Metric 7: Victory Is Seen in the Maladies Afflicting God’s Enemies, Especially Economic Recession and Natural Disasters.** Al-ʿUyayree writes that economic hardships among Allah’s enemies are sure signs of His favor upon the mujahideen and harbingers of their impending victory.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, we see in the writings of other extremists that natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina are believed to foreshadow the imminent collapse of the West and victory for the Islamic vanguard over the unbelievers.<sup>22</sup>

**Metric 8: The Presence of Miracles in Jihad Foretells of Victory for the Mujahideen.** Abdullah Azzam’s book on miracles in the Afghan jihad, *The Signs of Rahman in the Jihaad of the Afghan*—a “most viewed” publication on the extremist-leaning Makhtabah.net online bookseller—illustrates this point, as does a mountain of online jihadi writings covering the “miraculous events” of the battle of Fajujah, and the supernatural in contemporary Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

**Metric 9: The Promotion of the Heroic Template Is Itself Victory.** The jihadi literature reminds us ad nauseam that victory does not depend on individual leaders; those who trust in men rather than Allah will eventually suffer moral, if not material, defeat.<sup>24</sup> Instead, victory comes by emulating the “heroes” of fighting—those who leave everything behind to make their blood cheap for the *ummah*—and by enduring the temporary and refining trial of their absence.<sup>25</sup> We are reminded that jihadi leaders themselves aspire to martyrdom when Allah wills it. As a testament to this notion, we see the wills, elegies, and eulogies of jihadis published and distributed on

an almost industrial scale. Their message is consistent: Obey Allah as I did, avenge the *ummah*, and enter Paradise.

### Implications

Victory, as defined by the global jihadi movement, has expressive components that flow from its culture. Analyses of the movement’s trajectory devoid of this recognition are incomplete and will set the West up for failure in the war of ideas. As Al-ʿUyayree, the former leader of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, observed, “Many . . . people squeeze the meanings of victory into victory on the battlefield, and this is an error; for there is no doubt that all meanings and types of victory must be understood along with this one.”<sup>26</sup> The following discusses some of the implications of these culturally defined jihadi victory metrics for Western militaries and intelligence communities.

The identification of these metrics illuminates many of the very ideas we must counter in the war of ideas—an epochal proposition worthy of an analysis far exceeding the scope of this article. Indeed, the West cannot contend effectively in this “war,” let alone define victory against the global jihadi movement, if it does not fully understand (or deem worthy of consideration) this adversary’s metrics.

Moreover, not only do the metrics pinpoint where Western and non-Western influence efforts need to be directed—for example, at jihadi notions of brotherhood, unity, altruism, selflessness, a love of martyrdom, and so forth—but they also indicate that the nexus of global jihadi beliefs, their social reinforcement, and their influence on jihadi strategic thought ought to constitute the primary target matrix. In other words, this all-encompassing effort must extend far beyond pedestrian notions of countering “jihadi ideology.” Applying this logic reformulates our current understanding of victory metrics against the global jihadi movement in the so-called long war. Therefore, in addition to the instrumental objectives noted earlier, securing holistic victory against this adversary will also entail:

- dissuading individuals of the individual obligation to fight, or alternatively, refining and restricting the “zones of jihad”
- deinstitutionalizing the appeal of martyrdom operations
- revealing alternative identity-upholding adversaries—especially Muslims who kill other Muslims

- attacking the historical and normative bases for generating reciprocal suffering
- fighting mystical narratives by harnessing the power of belief itself
- discrediting the “heroes” of global jihad.

Naturally, many caveats must be inserted here, although a robust discussion of the means is best left for a different work.

First and foremost, liberal democracies are ill equipped to combat beliefs. The combination of domestic political pressures, bureaucratic inertia, and foreign policy imperatives—let alone the guarantee of freedom of worship—frustrates most Western efforts in this respect. At worst, these characteristic features of Western democracies create unavoidable friction that reinforces the prescience of belief-based adversarial narratives when the former rallies against the latter. Combating militant Islam is an archetypal case study in this regard. Furthermore, because global jihadism is largely an outgrowth of a multifaceted battle raging within Sunni Islam, the West should accept *prima facie* that *ultimate* solutions must come from within Islam itself. Moreover, the West must be prepared to accept that the above objectives may never be met in their entirety. The challenges associated with dislocating jihadi culture from its religious moorings (that is, Sunni Islam), however appealing, are beyond the capabilities (and arguably the purview) of the state, and possibly Islam itself. Managing public

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*terrorism is seen as the most expedient method for achieving reciprocal suffering (and thus, victory)*

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expectations, balancing operations, choosing clandestine options whenever possible to avoid direct narrative confrontation, working quietly with a great variety of nonstate actors, and perfecting *ultimate management* of the problem as opposed to seeking ultimate solutions may be the West’s best options.

Second, it is difficult to quantify the importance of the global jihad’s expressive definitions of victory. However, we know from studies such as West Point’s *Militant Ideology Atlas* that many of the militant authors cited herein are among the most popular within the global jihad’s online milieu. We also have

empirical evidence in the form of martyrs' wills, the existence of which demonstrates the resonance of these ideas within jihadi circles. Viewed differently, we see from the recent defensive posturing of global jihadi ideologues that the rhetorical attacks and networking efforts of anti-al Qaeda jihadis and Islamists on the cultural fabric of the global jihadi movement are beginning to erode its cohesion.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the very effectiveness of these sources and means illustrates the importance of the movement's expressive universe, even if assigning a quantitative variable is difficult.

Third, this analysis raises several points with which the West must contend. For instance, how can we create strategic equilibrium between our continued presence in Afghanistan and Iraq and simultaneously engage some of the most potent weapons available in the fight against al Qaeda—that is, those Islamists and former jihadis who once stood alongside al Qaeda's leaders? These strategic linchpins in the battle against the global jihadi movement occupy thankless but critical roles. They are caught, on one hand, between a movement they decidedly rejected and, on the other, a perceived crusade against lands historically associated with their faith. Many virulently support jihadi activism in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or the Occupied Territories, yet they stridently oppose terrorism in the West. Yet another pressure point for those who live in the West—invariably a sticking point for their efforts against al Qaeda—is their perception of “oppressive” domestic antiterrorism operations and policies. Divining pragmatic pathways between coddling threatening ideologies, prosecuting conflicts in “Muslim” lands, and combating the culture of global jihad is the proverbial tough row to hoe. We must consistently reach out to these individuals without tainting or alienating them, just as we have to nefarious foreign intelligence agencies when our mutual interests coincide.

Finally, are Western efforts to be thanked for the current instability we see in al Qaeda, or are Muslim communities and activists doing it on their own? How do we measure these conclusions, and what do they tell us about the effectiveness of our many initiatives? And at the grand strategic level, can Western militaries and intelligence communities incubate and maintain within their traditions of secular humanism and scientific analysis a perspective that gives credibility to the rationality of belief and its influence on strategic agendas? As Quintan Wiktorowicz and Karl Kaltenthaler

note in one of the most lucid assessments of this issue, we are struggling mightily with reconciling these traditionally countervailing forces in our assessments of the global jihad.<sup>28</sup> If we fail in this respect, we risk seeing al Qaeda and other emerging adversaries through our eyes, not theirs. **JFQ**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>“Bin Laden Lieutenant Admits to September 11 and Explains Al-Qaida's Combat Doctrine,” *The Middle East Media Research Institute* (MEMRI), Special Dispatch No. 344, February 10, 2002, available at <[www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sd&ID=SP34402](http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sd&ID=SP34402)>.

<sup>2</sup>Christopher Coker, *Waging War without Warriors* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

<sup>3</sup>Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 118.

<sup>4</sup>Coker, 6.

<sup>5</sup>Bruce Hoffman and Gordon McCormick, “Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27, no. 4 (July 2004), 243–281.

<sup>6</sup>Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd, 2005).

<sup>7</sup>These authors—an admixture of militants, theorists, and online strategists—include (among others) the late Yusuf al-'Uyayree; Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (also known as “Dr. Fadl”); Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi; Abu Yahya al-Libi; Ayman al-Zawahiri; Abu Basr at-Tartusi; Abu Ayman al-Hilali; Abu Qatada al-Filistini; Muhammad al-Hakaymah; Sayf-ad-Din al-Ansari; and Nasr al-Fahd.

<sup>8</sup>“Creed” (2004) in author's possession (URL unavailable).

<sup>9</sup>“Understanding Ramadan: The Muslim Month of Fasting,” *The Washington Post* Online, November 19, 2001, available at <[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/liveonline/01/nation/ramadan-awlaki1119.htm](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/liveonline/01/nation/ramadan-awlaki1119.htm)>.

<sup>10</sup>Anwar al-Awlaki, “Constants on the Path of Jihad” (audio lecture series based on the works of Yusuf al-'Uyayree), accessed at <[http://islambase.co.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=308&Itemid=120](http://islambase.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=308&Itemid=120)>. Available as a transcript at <[www.scribd.com/doc/2407141/Constants-on-the-Path-of-Jihad](http://www.scribd.com/doc/2407141/Constants-on-the-Path-of-Jihad)>.

<sup>11</sup>Shaykh Yusuf al-'Uyayree, “Meanings of Victory and Loss in Jihaad,” available at <[www.maktabah.net/store/images/35/Meanings%20of%20Victory%20and%20Loss%20in%20Jihaad.pdf](http://www.maktabah.net/store/images/35/Meanings%20of%20Victory%20and%20Loss%20in%20Jihaad.pdf)>.

<sup>12</sup>See Abdullah Azzam, *The Defence of Muslim Lands*, available at <[www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam\\_defence\\_8\\_end.htm#](http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_defence_8_end.htm#)>.

<sup>13</sup>The accounts of the July 7, 2005, United Kingdom bombing cell and the 2006 United Kingdom “airliner plot” cell are instructive, among many others.

<sup>14</sup>Abu Ayman al-Hilali, “The Real Story of the Raids on New York and Washington,” available at

<[www.why-war.com/files/qaeda\\_celebrate\\_911.txt](http://www.why-war.com/files/qaeda_celebrate_911.txt)>.

<sup>15</sup>See Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, “Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, December 2007, available at <[www.ctc.usma.edu/harmony/pdf/CTCForeignFighter.19.Dec07.pdf](http://www.ctc.usma.edu/harmony/pdf/CTCForeignFighter.19.Dec07.pdf)>.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>17</sup>Sayf-ad-Din al-Ansari, “The raid on New York and Washington: A generic description,” available at <[www.why-war.com/files/qaeda\\_celebrate\\_911.txt](http://www.why-war.com/files/qaeda_celebrate_911.txt)>.

<sup>18</sup>Abu Ubayd al-Qirshi, “The 11 September Raid: The Impossible Becomes Possible,” available at <[www.why-war.com/files/qaeda\\_celebrate\\_911.txt](http://www.why-war.com/files/qaeda_celebrate_911.txt)>.

<sup>19</sup>See, for example, Suleiman Abu Geith, “In the Shadow of Lances,” quoted in MEMRI, “Why We Fight America,” Special Dispatch No. 388 (June 12, 2002).

<sup>20</sup>See Reuven Paz, “Yes to WMD: The first Islamist Fatwah on the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *Prism Special Dispatches* 1, no. 1 (May 2003), available at <[www.e-prism.org/images/PRISM%20Special%20dispatch%20no%201.doc](http://www.e-prism.org/images/PRISM%20Special%20dispatch%20no%201.doc)>.

<sup>21</sup>Al-'Uyayree.

<sup>22</sup>This point was raised on the al Qaeda in Iraq-linked *Sout al-Khilafa* (“Voice of the Caliphate”) television broadcast following the U.S. hurricanes in autumn 2005. See “Move over CBS: Al-Qaeda Moves into the News Business,” *September 27, 2005*, accessed at <<http://mypetjawa.mu.nu/archives/122982.php>>.

<sup>23</sup>For example, “Special Reports—Through the eyes of the mujahideen,” *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst* (December 1, 2004).

<sup>24</sup>See, for example, As-Sahab, “Al-Zawahiri Message Pays Tribute to Abu al-Layth al-Libi,” *Open Source Center* video transcript, February 28, 2008.

<sup>25</sup>See, for example, the video “Al-Sahab Media Organization presents ‘Light and Fire in Eulogizing the Martyr’ by Shaykh Abu-Yahya al-Libi,” July 30, 2006.

<sup>26</sup>Al-'Uyayree.

<sup>27</sup>Ayman al-Zawahiri's 2008 tome, *Exoneration*—a response to the recantation of Sayyid al-Imam, one of the architects of al Qaeda's ideology—and his two laborious question-and-answer sessions from April 2008 reflect his awareness of a growing need to protect the culture of global jihad from potentially lethal setbacks. For more on these setbacks, see Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, “The Unraveling: the jihadist revolt against bin Laden,” *The New Republic*, June 11, 2008, available at <[www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=702bf6d5-a37a-4e3e-a491-fd72bf6a9da1](http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=702bf6d5-a37a-4e3e-a491-fd72bf6a9da1)>.

<sup>28</sup>See Quintan Wiktorowicz and Karl Kaltenthaler, “The Rationality of Radical Islam,” *Political Science Quarterly* 121, no. 2 (Summer 2006), 295–319.