

The Caliphate Attempted

by Nibras Kazimi

IN HIS FIRST SPEECH AFTER THE ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, OSAMA BIN Laden provided a list of grievances that in his mind compelled and justified Islamist terrorism against the West. Among other things, he alluded to the West's role in dethroning the last Ottoman caliph and abolishing the Ottoman Caliphate.¹ Ever since March 4, 1924, when Caliph Abdul Mejid II was sent packing—by Turkish nationalists, not by Europeans—many Islamists have maintained that resurrecting the caliphate would allow them to roll back centuries of Western encroachment upon Islamic lands, and to recapture Islam's early purpose, might, and glory. However, early efforts at reestablishing the caliphate after the fall of the Ottomans routinely failed, the victim of doctrinal disagreements and other political obstacles created by Muslim disunity and weakness. Subsequently, many Islamic scholars came to the view that the task of actually selecting the next caliph needed to be deferred pending a spiritual revival that would unite Muslims. But a new crop of jihadists doing battle in post-2003 Iraq decided that such a revival was indeed taking place in the territories under their control. In their view, the time for the selection of a new caliph and the caliphate's rebirth had arrived. Their vehicle for this new-born venture would be called the "Islamic State of Iraq."

The Islamic State of Iraq was to be the first incarnation of the resurrected caliphate. The newly established state's leader, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, would be the caliph. The Islamic State of Iraq was conceived as the third stage of a three-phase process begun by Abu Musab Zarqawi. Zarqawi's first move, in October 2004, was to link his Iraq-based Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad Group) to bin Laden's worldwide al-Qaeda franchise by adopting the name "al-Qaeda fi Bilad ar Rafidayn," commonly referred to in Western circles as "al-Qaeda in Iraq." Next, in January 2006, Zarqawi made a bid to bring all the other jihadist organizations operating in Iraq under his control by expanding the al-Qaeda in Iraq into the umbrella-like Majlis

Shura al-Mujahidin (Shura Council of the Mujahidin). The third stage in this process was reached five months after Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. air strike, in October 2006, when his successors made a bid to supersede the worldwide al-Qaeda network by actually forming the Islamic State of Iraq.

The creators of the Islamic State of Iraq understood it as the most ambitious jihadist venture to date. They could, they believed, lay claim to the leadership of the global jihadist movement, since they had surpassed in scope, purpose, and martial triumph the generation of jihadists that came before them, including bin Laden. Among other things, they believed that their state would elevate the Islamic struggle against the West to a new level of confrontation: rather than have disparate groups of jihadists retaliating against Western targets by terrorist means, the Islamic State of Iraq would confront its foes as would an emerging empire—and in the same fashion as the early Islamic conquests. Moreover, defeating the United States, the world’s mightiest military and economic power, on the battlefield of Iraq was to be the harbinger of even greater victories for Islam.

The doctrinal premises upon which the Iraq jihadists justified the formation of their state and selected their caliph were the same premises developed by medieval Muslim jurists such as al-Mawardi (d. 1058) and al-Juwaini (d. 1085). These foundational principles were put forth in a book released in January, 2007, by the Islamic State of Iraq’s so-called Ministry of Sharia Commissions under the title *Elam al-Anam bi Milad Dawlat al-Islam (Informing the People About the Birth of the State of Islam)*.² Published almost three months after the Islamic state’s creation was declared, this book became a manifesto of sorts for the Zarqawist wing of the global *jihad* movement. The ambition and bravado of the Zarqawists are reflected in the words of *Elam al-Anam*. The book’s unidentified author quotes President George W. Bush:

Those radicals want to terrorize the moderates and intellectuals, and they want to overthrow their governments [to] establish the state of the caliphate. [So] leaving Iraq is very dangerous, because it means abandoning a part of the region to the radicals who will glorify [their] victory over the United States, and this region will give them the opportunity to conspire and plan to attack America, and manipulate the resources to enable them to expand the state of the caliphate.

The author asserts that “the liar [Bush] was right about that!”³ In this boisterous vein, the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq went so far as to appropriate for themselves Mohammed’s personal standard, the “Banner of al-Uqab,” under which the Muslims had fought the enemies of Islam while the prophet was still living.



The Banner of al-Uqab: The emblem of the Islamic State of Iraq

Taking the prophet's flag as their own was not the only way in which the jihadists sought to emulate Mohammed. They also adopted his nascent state in Medina as the blueprint for the Islamic State of Iraq. This was a revolutionary step that contrasted sharply with positions taken by other modern Islamists and jihadists, from the Muslim Brotherhood to the first generation of al-Qaeda. These modern movements had cautiously deferred selecting a caliph not only because of their general military and political weakness in the twentieth century, but also to avoid the disputes that had erupted over the ill-defined caliph selection process and other matters in the past. Such disputes had crippled earlier generations of Islamists. But the insurgents' victories in post-2003 Iraq invigorated the jihadist movement with a new sense of strength and unity, and enabled the jihadists to move forward with efforts to resurrect the caliphate.

To the extent that we can speak about a Sunni doctrine on the caliphate, it is based exclusively on precedent. However, the practices and principles of caliphal rule—including everything from the method and criteria by which a caliph is chosen, to how a caliph chooses to exercise his prerogatives—have fluctuated widely over the course of Islamic history. Precedent, as such, can be an unreliable guide for political action, and the search to find a stable precedent has rarely been without controversy or dispute.

It appears, however, that the jihadists in Iraq may have had an intellectual guidebook to help them avoid these disagreements: a groundbreaking tome on the caliphate authored in the early 1980s by the Saudi cleric Abdullah ibn Umar ad-Dumaiji under the title *al-Imamah al-Udhmah inda ahl ul Sunna Weljamaah* (*The Grand Imamate According to Sunnis*).⁴ This work offers a user-friendly manual for choosing a caliph. While reflecting on the various arguments for and against any given stipulation for caliph selection, the book authoritatively recommends the most suitable guiding principles, from a doctrinal perspective, for choosing a caliph.⁵ It thus charts the way beyond the problematic historical issues that had impeded efforts to select a new caliph in the past. The book was republished by the Global Islamic Media Front—an important jihadist propaganda outlet—a month after *Elam al-Anam's* release, seemingly to complement its publication.

In the pages that follow, I analyze the various arguments made by the author of *Elam al-Anam*, along with the ideological framework laid out in ad-Dumaiji's study in light of historical precedents. My aim is to provide insight into the motivations of jihadists in Iraq, and to understand what prerequisites they considered necessary in their leader, the candidate caliph, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi. I conclude by examining what the collapse of the *jihad* in Iraq implies, how it will affect the attempted caliphate, and how it may weaken overall jihadist morale in the short term.

Who Selects the Caliph?

SINCE THE DEATH OF MOHAMMED, THE SUCCESSION OF POWER AND AUTHORITY in Islam has remained a source of great dispute and division among Muslims. In keeping with medieval Sunni treatises on the subject of succession, ad-Dumaiji argues that the procedures for selecting an imam or caliph for the *umma* (Muslim Nation) must replicate the precedents set by the Four Righteous Caliphs who succeeded Mohammed. But it is sufficient, he adds, to adhere only to the example set by the first two caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar.⁶ In narrowing his focus to the precedents of the first two caliphs, ad-Dumaiji may have been motivated by a desire to minimize controversy in the selection process. But if that was his intention, he miscalculated. Even the examples of the first two caliphs are fraught with controversy: Abu Bakr's appointment as caliph is disputed to this day, and Umar's reign—like that of the two caliphs that followed him—was cut short by assassination. Thus the first two caliphs can hardly be cited as optimal precedents for the selection process.

Nonetheless, in treating Abu Bakr as the preferred precedent, ad-Dumaiji understands the process of caliph selection as one in which a group of the *umma*'s most influential leaders—a group called the “*ahl ul hel wel aqd*” (literally, “those who loose and bind”)—are empowered as representatives to either appoint or to sack the caliph. Based on his understanding of Abu Bakr's model, and after considering numerous arguments about how many influential delegates are required to actually appoint a single candidate, ad-Dumaiji concludes that a simple majority of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* is adequate for a caliph's selection to stand.⁷ Ad-Dumaiji additionally recommends, citing al-Mawardi's eleventh century treatise on the caliphate, that the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* should be careful to select the caliph best qualified to address the challenges of the times. The bravest candidate, for instance, should be chosen during a time of war, and the most erudite candidate during a time of doctrinal dissonance.⁸

Moreover, the situation discussed by the medieval scholars, whereby a ruler seizes the caliphate by force, is rejected by ad-Dumaiji as involving a usurpation of the title that does not reflect the authentic traditions of selection.⁹ Hence such a ruler is not

a “true imam” or a “true caliph.” Ad-Dumaiji’s dismissive tone—he even likens this process to modern day military coups—shows his departure from earlier jurists, who made allowances for Muslim rulers who came after the Righteous Caliphs (i.e., for those who had seized power over Muslims and awarded themselves the hallowed titles of Islam despite not having followed acceptable precedent).¹⁰

Like ad-Dumaiji, the author of *Elam al-Anam* stresses the importance of following the proper historic examples, and he rehearses the three ways by which an imam can be chosen. These processes were established by al-Mawardi in his *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya* (*Ordinances of Government*), and al-Juwaini in his *Ghiath al-Umam fi Tiyah al-Dhulem* (*Rescuing the Nations Lost in the Darkness*).¹¹ These methods include a majority of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* pledging allegiance, or an imam choosing his successor, or a commander establishing his rule through the use of force during a time marked by *fitna* (sedition) and conflict among various Muslim factions.¹² But in addition to these precedents, *Elam al-Anam* also allows for practical considerations:

The starting point that the *mujahidin* employed in their declaration of [the Islamic State of Iraq] was a compounded mixture of religious facts derived from the [Quran] and the *sunna* [together] with realistic and political outlooks borne out by experience and practice.¹³

This emphasis on “realistic” represents a revolutionary point of departure in jihadist thinking. The author concludes that none of the established methods for choosing a caliph is appropriate in the contemporary era, since a unique situation has arisen whereby the lands of Islam have been temporarily taken over by the “infidel” enemy (whether directly, as in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq; or through surrogate “apostates,” as in the rest of the Muslim territories). Thus it is impossible to attempt a resurrection of the caliphate based on these traditional methods, and another avenue must be found.

The way out of this quandary, the author argues, is to suppose that the jihadists fighting for the restoration of Islam and its precepts—those who view themselves as the “victorious faction” that was prophesied by Mohammed¹⁴—deserve the designation of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*. The author quotes a point made by al-Juwaini: if “the [electors] held back and delayed putting forward an imam and the period extended and the hardship expanded to the periphery of the realm and the elements of imbalance arose,” the imamate can then be legitimately passed on to those who take the initiative to correct the situation by appointing an imam.¹⁵ This task has not been seriously attempted since the caliphate was abolished in 1924.

Like ad-Dumaiji, the author of *Elam al-Anam* discusses the numbers of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* that are necessary to secure a legitimate quorum and a binding decision. He

concludes, with ad-Dumaiji, that a simple majority of those who can be gathered at any given time or place is enough, ascribing such a convenient remedy to Ibn Khaldun, al-Nawawi, and Ibn Taymiyya, among others.¹⁶

The contemporary instance of such a quorum is described as follows:

Allah has helped the brothers in the Hilf al-Muttayyebin (Alliance of the Muttayyebin)¹⁷ succeed, for it represents the majority of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*, since it [consists] of the Shura Council of the Mujahidin, which is an organization that comprises seven jihadist groups, with renowned names and *emirs* and soldiers....

The advice of over sixty percent of the Sunni tribal shaykhs in the areas where the *mujahidin* are present [was] taken,¹⁸ and we saw enthusiasm and elation over this matter...

We also sought ... the counsel of some of the other large jihadist groups and we tried to meet their leaders ... but some wouldn't enable us to do that under the excuse of the security situation, so it was necessary for us to decide with [those] of the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* we could bring together in these difficult times....¹⁹

The author expands upon al-Juwaini's point about seizing the initiative by arguing that no other body claims to represent the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* at the present time.²⁰

The Islamic State of Iraq was declared on October 15, 2006, three days after the Alliance of the Muttayebbin was formed. The official spokesman of the newly formed Ministry of Information announced, in a video bearing the logo of the Shura Council of the Mujahidin, that the Alliance of the Muttayebbin had decided to establish the so-called "Islamic State of Iraq." The new head of state would be someone called Abu Umar al-Baghdadi—a name previously unknown. The spokesman called upon Iraqi Sunnis to pledge their allegiance to al-Baghdadi. He also called upon Sunni Muslims everywhere to support the nascent state—an entity that would act as the precursor to the caliphate, which would be resurrected in Baghdad.

The official spokesman further declared that the territory the jihadists currently controlled in Iraq was roughly equal to the territory of the state of Medina founded by the Prophet Mohammed, and that, as Medina had been, it was threatened internally and externally. By seeking to associate the Islamic State of Iraq with Mohammed's nascent state at Medina, the Shura Council of the Mujahidin was attempting to claim that—after three years of fighting in Iraq and after "important leaps in jihadist performance in its political, administrative, media and political fronts"²¹

—it was able to govern a population in the land of Iraq (since the *raison d'être* for founding an Islamic State is its ability to implement *sharia*).²²

There is no relevant text in the Quran or the *sunna* that specifies the amount of territory needed for an Islamic state to exercise *sharia*. But by drawing a parallel with Medina under Mohammed, the author intended to show that the Islamic State of Iraq was starting off with better odds: only seventy men from Yathrib (later Medina) pledged allegiance to Mohammed before his flight from Mecca, and they were unknown youths, certainly not the most influential of Medina's townspeople.²³ The author argues that Mohammed's grip on the political affairs of Medina was not solid: there were large groups of Jews with military and economic capabilities who later sparked "disturbances,"²⁴ there was no sense of security,²⁵ and Medina was built without the aid of technocrats or lavish funds.²⁶

In his first speech, delivered on December 22, 2006, al-Baghdadi developed this parallel. He quoted three verses from the *Isra surah* of the Quran that pertain to Mohammed's flight to Medina, and he cited a symbolic *hadith* whereby Mohammed predicted victory for Islam at the time of its darkest hours.²⁷ Al-Baghdadi also presented a leaked U.S. Marine intelligence report published in November, 2006, as evidence that the jihadists controlled Anbar Province, which he said was far larger in territory than Medina and its environs during Mohammed's time.²⁸

As for the timing of the declaration of the Islamic State of Iraq, the author of *Elam al-Anam* offers an explanation. There was an immediate need to administer *sharia*, provide judicial arbitration, and maintain basic services.²⁹ Furthermore, the political vacuum was leading some Sunnis to join the political process in Baghdad, so much so that certain prominent jihadist factions had openly stated they would negotiate with the Americans.³⁰

In designating the role of *ahl ul hel wel aqd* to the jihadists in Iraq, *Elam al-Anam* suggests the jihadists' superiority to the more established Islamic scholars, even though the jihadists tended to be younger and of lesser scholarly stature. Eminent scholars are dismissed as staid and stodgy, usually in the service of tyrants, and afraid of roughing it on the battlefields of *jihad*. This brash and ambitious style was inherited by the jihadists who established the Islamic State of Iraq from their slain leader Zarqawi. He, in turn, was heavily influenced by Abu Mohammed al-Maqdisi, a scholar deeply affected by Saudi radical Juhayman al-Utaybi, leader of the Mecca insurrection of November 1979.³¹ The latter was dismissive of the reformist Saudi scholars of the 1960s and 1970s who shaped the early thinking of Osama bin Laden, seeing them as insufficiently confrontational and unwilling to violently break with the ruling religious establishment.³² In the eyes of the jihadists, engaging in actual battle on behalf of Islam was a higher calling than ruling on archaic formulas for Muslim ritual.

The Attempted Caliphate That Failed

TODAY'S JIHADISTS ARE PROBABLY MINDFUL OF THE ROLE INDECISIVE ISLAMIC scholars played the last time they sought solutions to the problems entailed in reestablishing the caliphate, and their own boldness and willingness to act decisively is usefully understood in the context of the General Caliphate Congress, held in Cairo in 1926. At this congress, the problem of vague and conflicting precedents was compounded by scholars who were promoting claims to the title by competing Arab sovereigns. (Ayman al-Zawahiri's grandfather, Shaykh Mohammed al-Ahmadi al-Zawahiri [d. 1944], was King Fuad of Egypt's man.³³)

Before the congress, the pioneering Salafist thinker Rashid Ridha (d. 1935) asserted his credentials for speaking out on the caliphate. Writing in his influential monthly magazine *al-Manar*, he explained that he had written a book about the caliphate, had published deliberations on the nature of the caliphate in his magazine, and had participated in the planning committees for the congress.³⁴ Ridha questioned the benefit of electing yet another caliph with no authority, especially at a time when there were three men alive who had once carried the title: the deposed Ottoman sultan Mohammed Wahid ud-Din (r. 1918–1922, who died in exile three days after the conference commenced),³⁵ the last Ottoman caliph Abdul Mejid II (r. 1922–1924, the 101st Sunni ruler to have carried the title); and King Hussein (d. 1931), formerly of the Hejaz, to who, Ridha wrote, “many of the people of Palestine and Syria had pledged allegiance ... willingly, and ... the people of Hejaz unwillingly.”³⁶

Ridha's advice to the would-be congregants at Cairo on how to choose a caliph was to first identify the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* in every Islamic nation and incorporate them into a functioning body. Clearly he did not view the scholars who would be attending the congress as legitimate representatives of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*. Ridha further advised the congregants to establish a religious school that would prepare candidates for the caliphate and train others to serve as suitable members of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*. He emphasized that this approach was generational: the process of renewing the caliphate might require several decades, given that the institution's collapse had been centuries in the making. However, Ridha optimistically maintained that the caliphate could likely be renewed in a few years' time.³⁷

The original intent of the congress, as it was conceived in 1924 immediately following the dissolution of the Ottoman caliphate, was to declare a new caliph.³⁸ However, in response to widespread resistance to King Fuad's ambitions, both from inside and outside Egypt, the goal of the congress was downgraded by the preparatory committee to one of discussing the question of the caliphate without actually picking a candidate for the job.³⁹

The General Caliphate Congress convened on May 13, 1926, at an al-Azhar University facility. It lasted barely a week, and held only four sessions.⁴⁰ It drew together notables and scholars from the Levant, the Maghreb, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula, along with representatives from far-flung Muslim communities in such places as South Africa and Poland. However, the important factions in the Indian subcontinent that had sought a reinvigorated caliphate decided to boycott the proceedings, partly over fears that Egypt's Fuad would try to steer the delegates towards declaring him caliph.⁴¹ The Congress formed two committees to ponder classical and modern questions pertaining to the caliphate. The first, which studied the doctrinal underpinning of the caliphate, was composed of three scholars representing each of the three dominant Sunni schools (Hanafi, Shafii, and Maliki) with a single Hanbali scholar accorded a lesser observer status among them. Al-Zawahiri was chosen as the head of Shafii group, as well as the speaker for the committee. The second committee was tasked to consider modern impediments to the caliphate.

The congress, however, was bogged down from the very beginning over arcane debates concerning its Articles of Association, which were followed by arguments over the transcript and word parsing, and by distracting calls to denounce French actions in Syria. The undercurrents of dissent seem to have been motivated by factionalism and by concern over whether the votes of individual Muslim nations would be weighted relative to their populations. The dissent was led by the representatives of Iraq, who were backed by the Palestinians, seemingly to thwart Egyptian ambitions of playing host to the institution of the caliphate in Cairo.

The second committee ended up agreeing with Ridha: a proper caliphate, that is, one in which a caliph exercised authority over Muslims, was an impossibility at a time of such Muslim weakness. It suggested that similar conferences should be held until a caliphate became practicable. In his memoirs, Zawahiri claimed credit for quickly winding up the congress on the pretext that not all Muslim nations were represented. He did so after realizing that there would be no way of proclaiming Fuad as caliph.⁴²

From Where Does the Caliph Rule?

INTERESTINGLY, NEITHER THE AUTHOR OF "ELAM AL-ANAM" NOR THE CONGREGANTS at Cairo ever argued that a sitting caliph must possess the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. That notion, in fact, seems to have been first raised by retired British bureaucrats and adventurers.

The idea that possession of Mecca and Medina was central to the caliphate seems closely related to the idea of service to Islam as a legitimizing requirement for a

caliph. This idea came into vogue when the office of the caliphate lost its luster with the waning of the Abbasids' dynastic authority. At the same time, ambitious potentates sought to bolster their own populist credentials by ascribing to themselves the ultimate pious deed of maintaining the holy sanctuaries.⁴³ Ottomans in the sixteenth century enthusiastically adopted the idea that the caliph guaranteed the safety of the annual Hajj pilgrimage, even though not a single Ottoman sultan ever performed the pilgrimage throughout six centuries of rule.⁴⁴

The British writers who weighed in on this issue were primarily preoccupied with the fear that the Ottoman sultan would be able to influence India's Muslims during the pilgrimage season, a fear that set in after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. A pliable caliph, propped up in Mecca under British protection, would insure that the office of the caliphate would not be used to agitate against British imperial rule—a rule over Muslim populations that far exceeded in numbers the size of Muslim populations under the Ottoman sultan's direct authority.⁴⁵

Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909, d. 1918) sought to use the theoretical authority of his office as a bargaining chip to fend off further European encroachments on his empire. He played up his role as “Servant of the Two Holy Sanctuaries” and took an active role in appointing loyal *sharifs* in Mecca.⁴⁶ He extended his authority's physical reach, and his claim of providing more services to pilgrims, by building the Hejaz Railway, an expensive venture that was substantially funded by contributions from Indian Muslims.⁴⁷

Over many centuries, of course, the spiritual and political center of Islam has shifted with the ebb and flow of power, and the seat of authority has migrated from Medina to Damascus to Baghdad. These shifts have been most obvious during transitional periods of the caliphate, and have been justified by ad hoc rationalizations rather than formal precepts tethered to landmarks.

Thus during Abdul Hamid's reign, when proto-Arab nationalists and political enemies were agitating for an Arab caliph, Mecca was designated the spiritual center of the Islamic world where the caliph would sit in residence.⁴⁸ Another advantage of Mecca was its geographical remoteness and distance from colonial expansion: its predominately Muslim population and lack of natural resources made European meddling unlikely.⁴⁹ In King Fuad's day, Cairo was touted as a center of learning, with al-Azhar University its shining beacon.⁵⁰ There remained the fear, however, that Cairo was subject to British influence and to the spread of vice and secularism.⁵¹ For his part, Ridha was flexible on the caliphate's location, considering at one time Ankara or Mosul.⁵²

Obstacles to the Caliphate

IN THE DECADES THAT FOLLOWED THE CAIRO CONGRESS, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE 1950s, radical Muslim ideologues were vague about resurrecting the caliphate.⁵³ Their circumspection was due, in part, to a reluctance to raise this controversial issue. The necessity for *jihād* was itself particularly controversial. Many argued that a sitting caliph was not necessary to a call for a *jihād*, or at least did *not* argue that a sitting caliph *was* necessary. Abdul Munim Mustafa Halima, for example, the Syrian-born jihadist ideologue based in London and better known by his pseudonym Abu Bassir al-Tartousi, offers little by way of methodology in his 2000 book, *The Path Towards Resuming an Islamic Life and the Resurrection of the Righteous Caliphate that is Guided by the Quran and the Sunna (Al-Tareek ila Istinaf Hayat Islamiyyah Wa Qiyam Khilafah Rashidah ala Dhaw al Kitab wal Sunna)*.⁵⁴ “The just sultan is Allah’s shadow on earth,” writes al-Tartousi, citing an alleged *hadith*.⁵⁵ Instead of presenting his own formula for selecting a caliph, he lashes out in a diatribe against Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), the transnational caliphate movement that claims today to have tens of thousands of members in over forty countries. Since its founding by radical Palestinian clerics in 1953, HT has managed to corner the ideological market in advocating for a resurrected caliphate. Yet al-Tartousi accuses HT—which largely began, and in many respects still operates, as an intellectual movement—of burdening the process of caliph selection with difficult stipulations that, in practice, make selection impossible.⁵⁶

Against HT’s intellectualized approach, al-Tartousi introduces the vague idea that jihadist action itself will somehow lead to the caliphate by selecting and preparing a “vanguard or elite of monotheist believers” who will eventually be qualified to lead the *umma*.⁵⁷ Indeed, this line of thinking seems to have influenced the jihadists in Iraq, who regard themselves as the elite representatives of the Islamist movement. The jihadists in Iraq also seem to have been influenced by al-Tartousi’s fierce attack on the idea that *jihād* requires an imam at the stage before an elite is gathered.⁵⁸ He claims that groups such as HT, having suspended *jihād* pending the election of a caliph, are no better than the “heretical” Qadianis (as the followers of the Ahmadiyya movement are derogatorily called).

Al-Tartousi ridicules HT’s reliance on the precedent of Mohammed’s “seeking aid” in Mecca before leaving for Medina: whereas it took Mohammed two years, al-Tartousi writes, HT is still “seeking aid” fifty years after its launch.⁵⁹ Hizb ut-Tahrir is stuck in a perpetual Meccan mode, he claims, and has thus impeded progress toward Mohammed’s Medina model. Al-Tartousi is in a hurry to see the prophecies that foretell the Islamic conquest of Rome and India fulfilled—events that will be realized

only through waging *jihad*.⁶⁰ Even five years after authoring *al-Tareek Ila Istinaf Hayat Islamiyyah*, al-Tartousi was comfortable writing about issues of Islamic government such as *shura* (consultation), justice, oversight, social liberties, and security, but he did not touch upon a method for electing a leader.⁶¹

For its part, HT argues that electing the caliph through *ahl ul hel wel aqd* is necessary only when there is a short period of transition—not more than three days—between caliphs. Because many decades have elapsed since the last caliph was deposed, there are two alternative ways a new caliph can be chosen. One is for a group of Muslims to take the initiative upon themselves, subject to four conditions: 1) the territory in which the election takes place must be under Muslim authority; 2) Islam must have full sovereignty there; 3) *sharia* must be implemented; and 4) the newly appointed caliph must fulfill and meet all the conditions of eligibility and duty.⁶² The other and preferred method is that a provisional *emir* be appointed to manage the affairs of state while a council of the *umma* narrows down all candidates for the caliphate to two. By then requiring a general election involving the entirety of the Muslim world, this method seemingly implies Islamic unity as a precondition for electing a caliph.⁶³

Hizb ut-Tahrir also suggests that the pledge of allegiance by *ahl ul hel wel aqd* should take place in the abode of the last ruling caliph. Presumably, this is because the influential leaders of the community would be congregated in the capital of Islam, but it is unclear whether this prescription applies only to short periods of power transfer that do not exceed three days.⁶⁴ Ad-Dumaiji addresses this issue directly: citing al-Mawardi, he argues that holding the pledge of allegiance in the capital of the last caliph is customary but not mandatory, and that modern transportation has rendered this custom unnecessary.⁶⁵ Depending on where one sees the end of the “proper” imamate, the last capital could be Kufa (the fourth Righteous Caliph Ali moved here from Medina), Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, or Istanbul.

The author of *Elam al-Anam*, meanwhile, makes the case for Iraq, not by extolling Baghdad’s association with Abbasid grandeur, but by highlighting its strategic location at the center of the Arab world. Iraq also has ample resources that could sustain a new state.⁶⁶

However, in a precedent the jihadists would have wanted to avoid, ambitious Arab *mujahidin* in Peshawar declared a caliph in 1993. This embarrassing affair lasted for a year and resulted in infighting and recriminations. The idea originated with a jihadist known as Abu Uthman—a Palestinian with Pakistani and U.S. citizenship—at a time when the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan created disorientation and ideological turmoil among the *mujahidin*. He nominated a Jordanian with British citizenship, Mohammed Eid ar-Rifai, also known as Abu Humam, to be caliph. Ar-Rifai was given allegiance by a number of *mujahidin* and began asserting his

authority. He even resorted to taking punitive actions, including abducting children, against those who refused to pledge allegiance to him.

The caliph conveniently made hashish smoking legal in an initially successful bid to win the patronage and funding of drug cultivators and smugglers operating in Pakistan. However, this endeavor ended with clashes between his disciples and the smugglers, and led to the murder of the caliph's deputy. Ar-Rifai eventually escaped to Konar in Afghanistan, and then returned to London. In May 2006 he suffered a stroke while in British custody.⁶⁷ There is some indication that Osama bin Laden knew about this episode, since ar-Rifai had called upon him to pledge allegiance when bin Laden returned to Afghanistan from Sudan in 1993. Al-Zarqawi may also have been aware of these events, and hence probably understood that choosing the wrong man under the wrong circumstances could turn the selection of the caliph into a farce.⁶⁸

What's in a Pedigree?

INTERESTINGLY, AR-RIFAI'S CHIEF QUALIFICATION FOR CALIPH SEEMS TO HAVE been his claim of descent from the Quraysh tribe, to which Mohammed also belonged.⁶⁹ In discussions of who should rule the caliphate, this matter of tribal pedigree has never been taken lightly. Attiyet Allah, a prolific jihadist writer, posted a mildly critical essay on several jihadist forums in which he argued that the *mujahidin* of the Islamic State of Iraq had exercised *ijtihad* (initiative) by choosing to name their new creation a *dawla* (state) rather than an *imara* (emirate), and by awarding the exalted title of *Emir al-Mumineen* (Commander of the Faithful) to its leader Abu Umar al-Baghdadi. This implied that while the jihadist's intent may have been well-meaning, they had nevertheless, in Attiyet Allah's view, overreached. Allah seemed especially uncomfortable with the jihadist's use of certain terms that tended to bestow upon them greater power and authority than they actually had. As he wrote:

Regarding the term of "State" or "Emirate": probably our brothers [in Iraq] chose this particular term for reasons that they saw fit and that are unseen by us who are far away, even though my initial opinion is that the choice of some other [title] would be better and more proper, and I said as much when giving my opinion on [awarding the title of] the "Prince of the Faithful" [to] Mullah Mohammed 'Umar, may Allah preserve him.

It probably would have been better to call him "Emir" without adding "of the Faithful" so that the evident reference would be to

“Emir” of this “State,” because the term “Commander of the Faithful” gives the illusion that he is the Grand Imam, and gives the impression that our brothers may consider him so! And it has been accepted as a tradition among Muslims from the time of our master Umar bin al-Khattab, may Allah regard him well, that the title is synonymous with the “Grand Imam” who is also the Caliph.

And if it were added to that that he—may Allah preserve and aid him—is a Qurayshite and a Husaynite, then the illusion is strengthened.⁷⁰

Interestingly enough, even though al-Baghdadi was identified as the head of the state, there was no mention of his alleged Quraysh pedigree or of an exalted title for him in the communiqué that announced the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq on October 15, 2006. It was not until a few weeks later, on November 10, when Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (al-Zarqawi’s successor as head of al-Qaeda in Iraq, who was later appointed minister of war in the Islamic State of Iraq) pledged allegiance to “the Qurayshite and Hashemite, descendant of al-Hussein, the Emir al-Mumineen, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi,” that al-Baghdadi’s alleged Quraysh heritage was made public.

Al-Muhajir’s pledge of allegiance to “the Qurayshite” al-Baghdadi, made in his own name and that of the entire army of al-Qaeda,⁷¹ was the first hint that the leaders of al-Qaeda in Iraq who had succeeded al-Zarqawi in June 2006 were attempting to establish some legitimacy for their resurrected caliphate, and that they had gone as far as choosing a would-be caliph.⁷²

The author of *Elam al-Anam* does not directly discuss the role of Quraysh ancestry for a would-be caliph, though in a passing reference to the subject he seems to downgrade its importance and to emphasize instead the urgent necessity of picking a caliph.⁷³ This omission, if taken together with the omission of al-Baghdadi’s pedigree when his name was first mentioned, could be an indication of dissent among the jihadists over the extent to which they would emphasize the Quraysh issue, so as not to reinforce the impression that they were establishing a caliphate. However, al-Baghdadi’s pedigree and title were played up at the time of his inaugural address, which was released two weeks prior to the publication of *Elam al-Anam*.

The following February, the Global Islamic Media Front released ad-Dumajji’s thesis, first formulated twenty-four years earlier, which deals with the Quraysh issue extensively and concludes that Quraysh ancestry was a requirement for caliphal candidacy. Ad-Dumajji asserts that the “vast majority of Muslim scholars”—including al-Mawardi, Ibn Khaldun, al-Ghazali, and Rashid Ridha—made Quraysh ancestry a prerequisite for an elected caliph, and that the dissenters either were not to be taken seriously or were heretical naysayers.⁷⁴

The important point about ad-Dumaiji's treatment of the subject is that he makes Quraysh ancestry mandatory for any caliph chosen through a decision by the *ahl ul hel wel aqd*: "This condition ... [applies only] when the selection is made by the *ahl ul hel wel aqd*, but if the imam assumes the imamate in any other way then the Quraysh condition is not mandatory." A caliph who takes power by force or inherits power must still be obeyed "and he has the rights of a Qurayshite according to the prior *hadiths* that stipulate obedience ... even if he does not meet all the conditions."⁷⁵

A short treatise bearing the title "Hel al Qurashiyeh shartt fi al imamah?" ("Is Quraysh [descent] a condition for the imamate?"), signed by a certain Abu Abdullah al-Dhahabi, was also circulating on jihadist forums in early 2006, around the time that the Global Islamic Media Front released ad-Dumaiji's thesis. It seems that this treatise was initially posted serially before being compiled into a thirteen-page document.⁷⁶ But upon closer examination, it turns out that al-Dhahabi's treatise is a word-for-word copy of ad-Dumaiji's chapter on the topic of Quraysh, albeit with minor formatting and sequence changes. This is another indication that ad-Dumaiji's contribution to the topic of the caliphate has influenced jihadists.

Ad-Dumaiji began his book by explaining that Islamic authorities had always understood the terms "imamate" and "caliphate" to be interchangeable, and that the titles of "imam" and Emir al-Mumineen (Commander of the Faithful) were both prerogatives of the caliph. In choosing to emphasize al-Baghdadi's Qurayshite roots, the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq were drawing a distinction between their Emir al-Mumineen and another contemporaneous holder of the title. Mullah Umar had been named Emir al-Mumineen at an April 1996 ceremony where he symbolically adorned himself with a cloak that had allegedly belonged to Mohammed. A year and a half later, the Taliban regime was renamed the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. When asked whether Mullah Umar was still the Emir al-Mumineen after the Taliban collapsed in 2001, Kuwaiti cleric Hamid bin Abdullah al-Ali responded by citing the two methods by which an imam is to be chosen. One is by election, but the candidate must be of Quraysh lineage, implying that this method would not apply to the ethnic Pastun Mullah Umar. The other method is through force. Al-Ali suggests that Mullah Umar rose to the imamate by force, and that his authority over the people he governed made him imam over them but not over a divided Muslim world. Given that his regime was no more, Mullah Umar should be considered a leader of the *jihad* but not "an imam of authority and rule."⁷⁷

In *al-Imamah al-Udhma*, ad-Dumaiji considers the possibility of having two imams. He frowns upon this situation as improper and conducive to political strife, even though some jurists, such as al-Juwaini, allowed for multiple imams in two or more widely separated Islamic realms. Ad-Dumaiji suggests that if one of the imams was chosen in the same land where the last widely acknowledged imam was chosen, he

should be imam. Otherwise the imamate should be given to whoever claimed it first. Ideally, both would concede the title and allow the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* to reconvene and choose from among them. In a case where the second claimant had not heard of the earlier claim to the title, then the imamate would rightfully belong to the claimant who had earned a larger number of votes from the *ahl ul hel wel aqd*.⁷⁸

By associating the title of Emir al-Mumineen with Quraysh ancestry, al-Zarqawi's heirs were signaling to bin Laden and Zawahiri—who remain under obligation to follow Mullah Umar while he is alive—that al-Baghdadi was not merely the foremost commander among commanders, but was angling for a position more potent than that of *emir*. They were signaling as well that the Islamic State of Iraq was a grander achievement than the Emirate of Afghanistan, and that its head of state would have wider powers over Islam. Therefore, the Iraq-based *ahl ul hel wel aqd* would have proper authority to elect an imam without necessarily including the leaders of the Afghan Jihad—and their choice would have priority over Mullah 'Umar.⁷⁹

Earlier Considerations of the Quraysh Rule

MODERN SCHOLARS, JIHADISTS, AND WRITERS HAVE DIFFERED OVER THE SIGNIFICANCE of Quraysh ancestry. Juhayman al-Utaybi, the Saudi jihadist who led the 1979 takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, indirectly argued against the House of Saud by citing the stipulation that Muslim rulers must descend from Quraysh.⁸⁰ Although al-Maqdisi was deeply influenced by al-Utaybi—evident in the repeated references to al-Utaybi in al-Maqdisi's book denouncing the Saudi royals as “infidels”—he did not, at any point, elaborate on their lack of Quraysh credentials in arguing against them.⁸¹

In the view of Hizb ut-Tahrir, a caliph is not required to have a particular pedigree.⁸² When the current *emir* of HT addressed a question about Quraysh ancestry, his ruling ignored medieval Islamic sources on the topic, and instead applied the *emir's* own historical and rhetorical analyses to the original incident of Abu Bakr's investiture (when the issue of tribal affiliation was first raised). The *emir* concluded by reasoning that Quraysh ancestry was “favorable” but not mandatory.⁸³

Why had Abu Bakr held that Quraysh ancestry was mandatory? He did so to solve a unique political problem. Mohammed had left no clear-cut successor, and upon his death Medina's townspeople, who had hosted Mohammed after his flight from Mecca, wanted to reestablish control over their city, which had served as the political capital of the nascent religion. At the same time, the civil peace between the various Qurayshite clans of Mecca would be threatened if one clan attempted to monopolize power. Abu Bakr thwarted Medina's pretensions to succession by limiting rule to Quraysh; he cited a saying of the Prophet that maintained that “the imams are from

Quraysh.” But by securing the office for the whole of Quraysh, rather than for Mohammed’s immediate clan of Banu Hashim, Abu Bakr also won over the Meccans and cemented their interest in seeing the new religion succeed, since they had the most to gain as members of the ruling class.⁸⁴

However, Abu Bakr’s strategy—the arbitrary use of Mohammed’s alleged sayings in settling factional disputes—set a problematic precedent. Prophetic *hadiths* could henceforth be adapted and reinterpreted to suit the aspirations and circumstances of the claimants to the highest office in Islam. From that time on, there was no universally accepted doctrine for the caliphate, apart from its duty to impose *sharia* and defend the faith and the faithful.⁸⁵

Following the Quraysh dynasties of the Umayyads and Abbasids, such doctrinal elasticity was applied to the Quraysh rule by the Ottomans. The latter were determined to claim the title of caliph whenever it suited them to do so, particularly as their power waned and they had to search for new sources of legitimacy. The Ottoman case for the caliphate was made as early as the sixteenth century. Upon being challenged by the *ashraf* (descendants of Mohammed), Ali Lutfi Pasha (d. 1562) wrote a treatise arguing that the sultan who promotes Islam in the “important” heartlands of the religion, such as the Middle East, must be considered the imam in his territories, irrespective of his pedigree. In Lutfi Pasha’s view, stressing the uniqueness of Quraysh as the ruling class sounded suspiciously like a Shia argument. This had treacherous overtones, as it came at a time when the Ottomans had recently defeated a rising Shia power in Iran.⁸⁶

As their power diminished, the Ottomans found other loopholes in the rule specifying a caliph of Quraysh ancestry. One story relates that upon seizing Cairo in 1517, Sultan Selim was invested with the title of caliph by the last of the Abbasids, Mohammed XI al-Mutawakkil Ala Allah, who was the seventeenth in line of the Abbasid figurehead caliphs residing in Cairo.⁸⁷ Fanciful as this story may be, it was widely accepted.⁸⁸ Yet another approach was taken by Pirizade Mehmed Sahib (d. 1749), who argued that the Quraysh stipulation was superseded by another alleged saying of Mohammed: “After me the caliphate will endure for thirty years, thereafter will come the rule of kings.” In other words, the Quraysh rule was applicable only for thirty years, spanning the era of the Four Righteous Caliphs and the six months of al-Hasan bin Ali’s rule. Later Ottoman writers resorted to questioning the authenticity of the *hadiths* that specified Quraysh pedigree for the ruler.⁸⁹

The Ottomans’ stake in the title was heightened significantly during the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca in 1774, when the dynasty had to contend with the loss of Muslim Crimea to Orthodox Christian Russia. The Ottomans were also worried that dissident factions in Istanbul might champion the Crimean *khans* as nobler substitutes for the house of Osman.⁹⁰ Adopting the title of caliph, the Ottoman rulers reasoned,

would add luster to an otherwise faded regime—and provide immunity from charges of sedition by virtue of the caliphs’ “divine appointment.”

Yet try as they might to strengthen and legitimize their rule by propping up their caliphal credentials, the Ottomans were doctrinally vulnerable on the Quraysh issue, which was ceaselessly exploited by their enemies and rivals. British detractors of the Ottomans highlighted the Quraysh ancestry of the *sharifs* of Mecca or Emir Abdulqadir of Algeria, then in exile in Damascus, and suggested them as suitable successors should the dynasty in Istanbul collapse. Ismail Pasha of Egypt, deposed as khedive by order of the Ottoman sultan, funded dissident publications in Europe that exposed his enemy as a non-Qurayshite usurper of the caliphate.⁹¹ Arab dissidents such as Abdel Rahman al-Kawakibi and Sharif Hussein used the requirement of Quraysh ancestry as an argument both to undermine the Ottomans and to win back the caliphate for an Arab.⁹²

Quraysh ancestry was not as significant an issue among India’s Muslims, who were looking for an independent Muslim world power amenable to their position on the subcontinent, though some of them went so far as to concoct a genealogical tree linking the Ottomans to Quraysh.⁹³ Such loyalty to the Ottomans survived the latter’s collapse after World War I, when an influential group of early Indian enthusiasts for the caliphate denounced Sharif Hussein as a traitor. Indian Muslims continued, in Friday sermons, to invoke the name of a deposed Ottoman caliph, and issued a *fatwa* waiving the Quraysh rule.⁹⁴

The non-Arab royal family of Egypt, which had its roots in the Balkans, sought to deal with the Quraysh stipulation by sidestepping it. The earliest contemporary argument made against the Quraysh stipulation by an Egyptian came from Mohammed Mustafa al-Maraghi (d. 1945); it is unclear whether he was acting at anyone’s behest, but he later aligned himself with the Egyptian royals. Al-Maraghi’s interpretation was that at the time of early Islam, the Arab tribes would unite only under the banner of Quraysh, but since Islam’s expansion and incorporation of non-Arabs, the requirement of Quraysh leadership had lapsed.⁹⁵ Acting as King Fuad’s troubleshooter at the 1926 congress in Cairo, al-Zawahiri also attempted to question the Qurayshi requirement by referring to Ibn Khaldun’s citation of eleventh century Islamic scholar Ibn Baqillany in Ibn Khaldun’s own argument against the necessity of Qurayshite pedigree. However, al-Zawahiri grudgingly acknowledged that the majority of scholars mandated Quraysh ancestry.⁹⁶

The royal quest for the caliphate continued under Fuad’s son Faruq, who had been mentored by and was closely associated with al-Maraghi. During the last year of his reign (1952), and only a few years after al-Maraghi’s death, Faruq saw fit to appoint a committee tasked with identifying a family connection that would link him back to Quraysh.⁹⁷

Surely the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq were aware of all the historical deliberations on the Quraysh rule. Thus their emphasis on al-Baghdadi's ancestry was intended to make clear that he was indeed their caliph. Such was their enthusiasm that they put pedigree ahead of identity, opting to tell the *umma* that their leader was a descendant of Quraysh, from the Hashemite line through al-Hussein—but they did not reveal his name or his other qualifications for the job. The author of the *Elam al-Anam* defends the decision to keep the leader's identity anonymous, claiming that it is sufficient for the *ahl ul hel wel aqd* to know the candidate's identity and qualifications without having to reveal such details to the wider public. This ruling was especially pertinent given the precarious security situation of the jihadists in Iraq.⁹⁸

The Caliph's Authority Under the Last Ottoman Sultans

APART FROM THE RECENT ATTEMPT TO REINTRODUCE THE CALIPHATE IN BAGHDAD, the office of caliph itself underwent its last major historical reinterpretation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during the reign of Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid II. The sultan used the caliphate's religious aspect to fortify his grip over his Muslim subjects, and to manipulate a common European misconception that the caliphate was an approximation of the Roman Catholic papacy. By claiming to have spiritual authority over the Muslims living under European rule, Abdul Hamid was able to blackmail European powers, such as Britain and Russia, and win over others, such as Germany, with the notion that a call to *jihad* from him would send millions of Muslims worldwide rallying to his cause. This misconception was historically rooted, and it was mirrored on the Ottoman side with an earlier misunderstanding of the role of the papacy.⁹⁹ Abdul Hamid well knew the limits of his spiritual authority, but it was convenient for him to play to European misconceptions.¹⁰⁰ That they were misconceptions was demonstrated during World War I, when Abdul Hamid's successor, prodded by the Germans, announced a *jihad* against the Allies with much fanfare but little effect.¹⁰¹

Abdul Hamid employed the religious facets of the caliphate in facing very different internal realities within his empire. The loss of the Balkan and Caucasian territories, coupled with the inflow of refugees, had put Muslims in the absolute majority in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰² Within these numbers, the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of the Levant gained preponderant importance. Their loyalty to the Ottoman sultan was critical in facing off the strategic threat posed by further British-influenced encroachment from the direction of Egypt.

Meanwhile, the Levant's economic resurgence was a primary concern for keeping the empire's finances in order. Abdul Hamid surrounded himself with Arab advisors, many of them Sufi scholars, who told him that religiously-mandated obedience to the caliph would be to his benefit. They convinced him that his role as spiritual leader would sufficiently inoculate Syrian Muslims against the ethnic and linguistic nationalism that was eating away at the sultan's European domains.¹⁰³ For some Syrian Sufis, obeying the caliph was not enough of a religious duty: an apologist for Abdul Hamid made the case, using Sufi sources, that Muslims were obligated to glorify the imam, since he is a manifestation of God's rule.¹⁰⁴

Abdul Hamid was ultimately successful in using religion to solidify his domestic clout. But his notion of a duality in the nature of the caliphate—temporal and religious—later enabled his political enemies to strip him and his successors of effective authority. This left the caliph with an undefined spiritual role within the state's hierarchy. Abdul Hamid was deposed, and his successor served merely as a rubber stamp for the new regime led by the Committee of Union and Progress. A similar role was played by the last Ottoman sultan, Wahid ud Din, but in the service of the victorious Allies subsequent to Istanbul's occupation after WWI. In April 1920, he arranged for a *fatwa* to be issued declaring the actions of the Turkish nationalists under Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) in Ankara contrary to Islam. Thus began the process by which the Turkish National Assembly decided to annul the sultanate as a redundant vestige of the Ottoman past.

In November 1922, the Kemalists abolished the sultanate, retroactively dating their law to March 1920, thus rendering Wahid ud Din's earlier *fatwa* invalid. A counter-*fatwa* was issued to the effect that Wahid ud Din had forfeited the office of caliph by fleeing the country. Then the Turkish National Assembly did something very curious: it nominated and elected the sultan's cousin, Abdul Mejid II, as caliph.¹⁰⁵ Not only did the Turkish National Assembly appropriate for itself the role of *ahl ul hel wel aqd*, but its election of a caliph seems to have been the first since the fourth Righteous Caliph's death in 661 AD.

A study on the nature of the caliphate was commissioned to justify the Turkish National Assembly's actions and was published under the title *Hilafet ve Hakimiyet i Milliye* (*The Caliphate and National Sovereignty*) subsequent to the abolition of the sultanate. It was supervised by Seyyid Bey (d. 1925), a parliamentarian with a background in Islamic learning.¹⁰⁶ The study argued that the caliphate was a legal rather than a theological seat of power. It was not critically important to the integrity of the Islamic faith, since by the time of his death Mohammed had concluded his mission of delivering the new faith while leaving the matter of succession unresolved. Hence, the temporal issues relating to the management of the new Islamic state were left to the discretion of his successors. These successors, especially during the period of

the “real caliphate,” when the early caliphs were elected to office, had ensured that it was the caliph’s duty to secure the happiness of the Muslims—a goal that could be met through other forms of government.¹⁰⁷ The *ahl ul hel wel aqd* retained the power of attorney, on behalf of the people, to invest a candidate with the title of caliph.

Later, when arguing for the abolition of the caliphate itself in early March 1924, Seyyid Bey gave a seven-hour speech in which he noted that there was no ruling in the Quran or the *hadith*, nor any consensus among Muslim scholars, that explicitly prohibited a body of individuals, such as a modern parliament, from acting as a corollary to *ahl ul hel wel aqd* and omitting the election of a caliph in order to govern Muslims. A return to the “real caliphate” would be impossible, Seyyid Bey argued, since the noble qualities that were exhibited by the early Muslims were lacking in the contemporary *umma*. Other parliamentarians used a parallel argument for annulling the caliphate, citing the *hadith* that limited the “real caliphate” to thirty years; they added that the rationale behind the *hadith* was that a single ruling caliph could not possibly rule over an enormous and expanding Muslim territory.¹⁰⁸

After he sent the last caliph packing, Ataturk tried to offset Muslim indignation by offering the “spiritual caliphate” to Ahmad al Sharif al-Sanussi (d. 1933), a Libyan Sufi leader of Qurayshi descent, whose call for *jihad* had stimulated the Tripolitarians to fight against the Italians in 1911.¹⁰⁹ The offer to become a “Muslim pope” residing in a place other than Turkey was made twice, in 1924 and in 1925, but was turned down.¹¹⁰

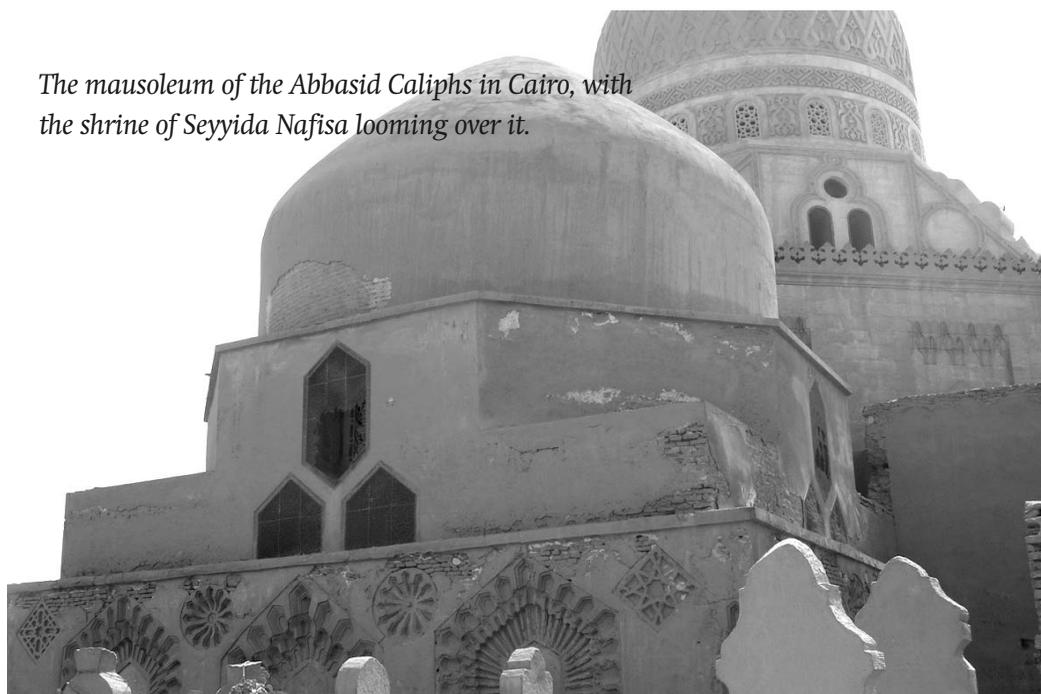
The prospect of an exiled Ottoman caliph was problematic for King Fuad’s aspirations for the title. This predicament, however, was neatly resolved by pliable Azhar shaykhs, who ruled that Abdul Mejid II’s title was not legitimate, and allegiance to his person was not binding since he had accepted the un-Islamic terms that were laid out for him by the Turkish government when he took the office.¹¹¹ But the liberal opposition to Fuad quickly took up the points made by Seyyid Bey’s study, and repackaged them as a book by Egyptian Shaykh Ali Abdel Razik in 1925. Abdel Razik further elaborated on these points by arguing that Islam had a role in theology, ethics, and ritual but not in government.¹¹²

Also in Cairo, Rashid Ridha vacillated on the nature of the caliphate. He seems to have concluded at one point that, since a temporal office could not be realized at a time of Muslim weakness, a “spiritual caliphate”—albeit with its political independence guaranteed—was better than no caliph at all.¹¹³ Another approach was taken by Abdel Razzak al-Sanhouri (d. 1971), then an Egyptian student in France. He wrote a doctoral thesis in 1926 that was posthumously published in 1988—with major parts excised—under the title *Fiqh al-Khilafeh (The Jurisprudence of the Caliphate)*. Al-Sanhouri went on to become a renowned jurist in the Middle East, and his book has been enthusiastically championed by moderate Islamists seeking to resurrect the caliphate.

In his thesis, al-Sanhouri set out to refute Abdel Razik by arguing that instead of adopting a fully secular form of government, Muslims can update early Islamic modes of governance, including the office of the caliph. Among other notions, al-Sanhouri fancifully envisioned joint Muslim and non-Muslim committees that would make *dhimma* rules conform to modern interpretations of citizenship, and imagined that Islamic unity could be achieved through the formation of a commonwealth of sovereign Muslim states.¹¹⁴

The tomb of the Abbasid Caliphs in Cairo is a visual affirmation that a caliphate, devoid of authority and relying on its supposed “spiritual” aspect, is not all that appealing to Muslims. The Abbasids in Cairo were figureheads, useful only in providing religious cover for succeeding Mamluk strongmen. In building a mausoleum for their earthly remains, the Abbasids seem to have picked a spot near the shrine of Seyyida Nafisa, a great-great-granddaughter of al-Hassan bin Ali, who was turned into a living saint by the people of Cairo. Throngs of the faithful still supplicate at Seyyida Nafisa’s shrine, a busy and bustling scene. However, reaching the Abbasid mausoleum requires walking through a dusty alleyway that opens up to the cemetery where the padlocked and decrepit structure stands, neglected and unvisited. When asked whether the cenotaphs inside the mausoleum legibly revealed the identities of the Abbasids interred there, a cemetery caretaker indicated that it has been the centuries-old habit of the lower-born townspeople of Cairo to bury their own dead within and around the mausoleum, thus erasing any trace of the Abbasids.¹¹⁵

The mausoleum of the Abbasid Caliphs in Cairo, with the shrine of Seyyida Nafisa looming over it.



The Duties of the Caliph According to the Jihadists

ARGUMENTS OVER THE CALIPHATE'S RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS continue to this day. For their part, the jihadists certainly do not acknowledge a spiritual aspect of the caliphate that can be separated from its temporal authority. Their concept involves a muscular defense of Islam in all fields, to be supervised by an active caliph. Neither ad-Dumaiji nor the author of *Elam al-Anam* considers the possibility that the caliphate should have jurisdiction over significant Muslim populations in formerly Islamic realms that are currently governed by non-Muslims. Such was the situation of Abdul Hamid II with regards to Russia and India. However, it seems that the jihadists view such concessions as temporary setbacks along the road to restored sovereignty over all of *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam).

Ad-Dumaiji summarizes the caliph's duties: He is to preserve the faith by proselytizing for Islam through "pen, [spoken] word, or sword," and by safeguarding the faith from erroneous misinterpretations. He is to protect the territorial integrity of the land of Islam by fortifying the borderlands so as to safeguard the lives, wealth, faith, and honor of Muslims. Furthermore, he is to enact *sharia*, collect taxes and other forms of payment owed to the treasury by Muslims and non-Muslims, divide and distribute these funds, equip armies, and appoint able deputies and judges. The caliph must maintain unity and justice, and develop the realms and increase their productivity.¹¹⁶ The caliph is not mandated to take *shura* (consultation) but would benefit from it; and excepting the case of a ruling by the religious scholars, he is not obligated to follow anyone's advice. If the caliph performs these duties well, then he is owed obedience by Muslims—for life.¹¹⁷ According to ad-Dumaiji, the caliphate is not an end in itself, but a means to promote the religion of Islam.¹¹⁸

For the author of *Elam al-Anam*, the jihadists had succeeded in fulfilling these duties even before declaring the Islamic State of Iraq. He writes: "Iraq has been transformed ... into one of the most monotheistic countries on the face of the earth ... no shrines are visited ... no magicians are [consulted]," and *sharia* has been returned to its divinely mandated place, to be "hegemonic over actions and persons and institutions and customs."¹¹⁹ Moreover, the jihadists were settling tribal disputes, appointing judges, helping fellow *mujahidin* break out of prisons, meting out punishments, pushing back invaders, collecting alms and taxes, appointing suitable administrators, and taking care of the families of martyrs and soldiers.¹²⁰ Yet if Islam was being promoted by the jihadists even before their declaration of the Islamic State, one wonders about their motivation for forging ahead with the caliphate venture any-

way. In a sense, the jihadists in Iraq had turned things around: the empowerment of Islam was the means to the state. The decades-long quest for the caliphate had turned the idea of the state, rather than its function, into something of a jihadist fetish, a longing that the jihadists were overeager to gratify.

Elam al-Anam's author concludes that it is precisely because the jihadists were successful in fulfilling these duties that the West marshaled its military might in a bid to stop them:

Without question, the new Islamic State will be fought [since] the Crusader [planner] declared his goals as not allowing any upcoming caliphate to arise.... But God is overpowering, for he had enabled his [followers], the *mujahidin*, [to win] and they smothered the Crusade's plans in the dust, and they declared their new project; this newborn state has knocked on the door, and has arisen from lethargy, and it is faced with a long journey that is not easy to bear, and it is the new gate of hope for the *umma*, and its forthcoming glory, and its brandished sword upon the necks of [the *umma's*] enemies.

Oh cavalry of Allah mount [your steeds], and oh Muslims come all of you to defend and protect your religion, and know this that Islam cannot be made to be apparent or victorious unless [Islam's] state is erected, and its might is made apparent and it confronts and clashes with [wrongness] on the field of battle, for all who think that Islam can be made apparent with a tape or a book or [by] proselytizing or [through] parliaments or election ballots, are ignorant of how this religion arose [at the beginning]; this religion arose on the skulls and corpses of the [first Muslims] and their sons.¹²¹

Following this logic, Islam can be defended only by an Islamic state, and such a state can come about only through *jihad*. The author of *Elam al-Anam* has put the Muslim world on notice that the Islamic state has arisen anew in Iraq, and that it is incumbent on Muslims to support it.

Al-Baghdadi's View of His Role as the Head of the Islamic State of Iraq

AL-BAGHDADI CAST HIMSELF IN THE ROLE OF THE DEFENDER OF THE FAITH IN facing down internal and external threats to Islam. He began his first speech, which was released on December 22, 2006, by explaining that he was no more than “a soldier among the laypeople; fighting those who turned against Allah,” and by asserting that he was “never the *emir* of any of those [jihadist] groupings, but the people reached a consensus upon [me] and refused to let [me] go.” Al-Baghdadi relishes presenting himself as the reluctant ruler who had “repeatedly refused to take [upon myself] this matter, that is, the Emirate of the Muslims,” but was nonetheless called upon by destiny to lead. He explains that he was resolved to take decisions only after consulting the other *mujahidin* leaders; that he had formed a Majlis Shura Muwwesaa (Expanded Consultative Council) that included three members from each jihadist group supporting the Islamic State “regardless of the number of its soldiers and the volume of its operations;” and that a representative from each of the major tribes had also been included, together with religious scholars and notables. The Expanded Consultative Council was complemented by a Majlis Shura Mudhayeq (Narrower Consultative Council) that comprised five individuals who would take speedy executive decisions when required.¹²²

In a later speech, al-Baghdadi extols the virtues of the Islamic State of Iraq where *sharia* was being actively administered:

Iraq [is] today one of the greatest nations on the face of the earth in maintaining monotheism, for there is no polytheistic Sufism being propagated, or shrines being visited, or innovated festivals being celebrated, or candles being lit or a pilgrimage being made to a pagan totem, for the people of Iraq have destroyed these shrines with their own hands so that Allah will be worshiped alone....

Go and delve into the country, so that you will see that [there are no longer] places that encourage sordidness or corruption, and no [unveiled women] present to infatuate the young, and to tempt the old, or to be devoured by wolves.... Search and you will not find a dance party that angers Allah in His heavens.¹²³

The enforcement of such morality, it seems, has been brought about by some of

al-Baghdadi's measures, such as banning satellite dishes and ordering women to cover their faces when in public.¹²⁴

Alms are being collected, al-Baghdadi claims, even from “the herdsmen of the desert who willingly give what is owed to the *mujahidin*.” He also adds, “the Iraqi *jihad* has restored vitality to [other] jihadist locations that had fizzled out,” and that the time of the Islamic State has come; the jihadists did not “seek to pick the fruit before it ripened, but that they had simply caught the fruit, midair, as it fell off the tree.” They thus prevented the *jihad* in Iraq from suffering the same fate which befell the jihadists in Bosnia and Afghanistan, who did not have a clear plan for what came after the phase of waging *jihad*.¹²⁵

Referring to Iraqi Sunnis who have refused to offer their allegiance to him, al-Baghdadi accuses *mujahidin* holdouts among them of “recalcitrance.”¹²⁶ Other Sunni Islamists, such as the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood-oriented Islamic Party, who have participated in the political process, are castigated as “apostates,” together with lay Sunnis who join the government’s security or administrative services. Yet the charges of “apostasy” and “heresy” for laypersons are to be applied in a case-by-case basis pending a trial.¹²⁷ Al-Baghdadi’s bickering with fellow Sunnis and his wrath over their lack of enthusiasm for his Islamic State is a running theme throughout all his pronouncements. At times he offers dissenters amnesty and a negotiated settlement,¹²⁸ but more often he threatens them with annihilation.

In a telling departure from ritual, al-Baghdadi agrees with his soldiers that the price of sheep is too high to offer as alms during the ritual slaughter of Eid. Instead, he suggests the alternative of a human sacrifice: the jihadists can slaughter Sunni “renegades” who had joined the American-backed tribal Awakening Councils. Although it is favorable to offer the sacrifice before the advent of the lunar month of Muharram, he declares, one Islamic school of jurisprudence allows delaying the sacrifice until such a time as a Muslim is able to. Thus, taking the head of a renegade can be deferred.¹²⁹

Al-Baghdadi also approaches the subject of non-Muslim Iraqis in a most unusual way—he assigns to himself the right to renegotiate the Covenant of Umar with Christians. Inasmuch as the jihadists believe that such a pact between the second caliph and the Christians of the Holy Land was a historical occurrence, al-Baghdadi’s nullification is a significant transgression against what ad-Dumaiji calls the *sunna* of the Righteous Caliphs, to which Mohammed had instructed the faithful to adhere.¹³⁰ Al-Baghdadi claims that the non-Muslim minorities’ support of the “invaders” warrants a drastic break with accepted orthodoxy, and that non-Muslims must renegotiate their status with the Islamic State if they seek to enjoy those past protections:

We find that the sects of the people of the book and others from the Sabians ... in the State of Islam today are people of war who qualify

for no protection, for they have transgressed against whatever they agreed to in ... countless ways, and if they want peace and security then they must start a new era with the State of Islam according to [the Second Righteous Caliph] Umar's stipulations that they have annulled.¹³¹

Al-Baghdadi blames the Arab Christians of the Levant for introducing the ideas of ethnic and linguistic nationalism in order to break Muslim bonds and to replace Islam with Arab nationalism. According to al-Baghdadi, "this was their opportunity to destroy the Ottoman caliphate."¹³² He also takes credit for the gruesome attacks on the Yezidi minority of Iraq which resulted in hundreds of deaths; al-Baghdadi brands them as "devil-worshippers" and accuses them of preventing their own people from converting to Islam.¹³³

Whereas Abdul Hamid II hinted at declaring *jihad* against foreign powers but never did so, al-Baghdadi fervently and repeatedly declares *jihad*, even in retaliation for minor offenses. Given the immediacy of the American threat to the Islamic State of Iraq, al-Baghdadi devotes a portion of his inaugural speech to the terms of surrender he was offering to President George W. Bush:

We order you to withdraw your forces immediately. But the withdrawal must be via troop transport trucks and passenger planes whereby each soldier is allowed to carry his own weapon only. They may not withdraw any of the heavy military equipment and the military bases must be handed over to the *mujahidin* of the Islamic State and the duration of the withdrawal may not exceed a month.¹³⁴

Al-Baghdadi goes on to warn Bush not to waste this opportunity of safe passage for his troops, as he did when he declined a ceasefire offered by the "shaykh of the *mujahidin*" Osama bin Laden. Al-Baghdadi assumes that the Americans are so demoralized by the war that they will jump at his offer. In another instance, he asserts that the jihadists have killed "more than 75,000 [American] soldiers" with "many multitudes more" wounded and disabled.¹³⁵

As for the regional threats facing Islam, al-Baghdadi singles out Iran's alleged Shia expansionism across the Middle East—one of al-Zarqawi's chief concerns¹³⁶—as well as the supposed menace posed by Israel. In July 2007, al-Baghdadi threatens war against Iran if it does not stop interfering in Iraqi affairs, and sets a deadline of two months for the Iranian leadership to untangle itself from Iraq. He calls upon the Sunnis of Iran to prepare for war, and warns Sunni businessmen in the Arab world and the Persian Gulf to sever all business partnerships with Shia merchants; he uses the derogatory word "*rafidha*" to refer to the Shia, and uses "*majus*" when discussing the Iranians. He

also declares that all mercantile dealings between Iraq and Iran are to be suspended.¹³⁷

Al-Baghdadi promises the Palestinians that for now they will be resettled in the towns and villages of Iraq that have been cleansed of Shias,¹³⁸ but that eventually the Islamic State of Iraq will destroy Israel and liberate Palestine. He chooses the twelfth-century Zengid sultanate as the historical precedent upon which the Islamic State of Iraq will be modeled in this cause, and mentions the more timely possibility of providing training and aid for Palestinian jihadists:

As the state of Nouredin the Martyr was the cornerstone for the return of al-Aqsa [Mosque] back into the [fold] of the *umma* ... we ask of Allah and hope that the [Islamic State of Iraq] will be the cornerstone for the return of Jerusalem. The Jews and the Americans have realized that, and they have tried to thwart us by any means from [advancing towards] this goal, and the vicious campaign in Anbar [Province] and the excessive pride in [how it calmed down], is [due] to their knowledge that it is easy to fire medium-range missiles against Israel from some parts of [Anbar] as was done by Saddam....

But we are prepared to support you with all that we have of funds, even though it is little, and we are prepared to train your cadres, starting from [the manufacture of Improvised Explosive Devices] and ending with manufacturing missiles.¹³⁹

Al-Baghdadi's understanding of geostrategic balances is muddled and delusional, for at one point he sees common ground between the Islamic State of Iraq and the ambitions of the French, Russians, and Chinese in supplanting the United States. He even addresses the Communist leadership of North Korea, demanding some credit for allowing its nuclear program to go through because America was being distracted by Iraq and the actions of the jihadists there. Al-Baghdadi also seems to view Belgium as a world power to be reckoned with.¹⁴⁰

Yet al-Baghdadi's oddest foreign policy pronouncement to date would have to be his declaration of war on Sweden's economy during September 2007, in retaliation for a cartoon depicting Mohammed as a dog. He seems to be seizing on a new opportunity for Muslim indignation not unlike that which was triggered by the Danish cartoons lampooning Mohammed two years earlier:

Every sniveling scoundrel is daring to insult us, from the worshippers of the cross [Christians] to the worshippers of the devil [Yezidis], even the worshippers of the cow [Hindus], and our honor and our

blood have become the cheapest thing in this world, and when we strive to arise from our slumber to retrieve our glory and the dignity of our ancestors, these [renegades] stabs us in the back...

No, oh worshippers of money, no oh worshippers of the cross, we are a nation that Allah [had chosen] to glorify with Islam, and you will know oh worshippers of the cross how it will feel to kneel down in humiliation, and officially apologize for your crime against our Prophet.... And we know how we can force you to retract and apologize, for if you don't, then await the attacks on the economies of your giant corporations such as Ericsson, Scania, Volvo, Ikea, and Electrolux....¹⁴¹

Furthermore, al-Baghdadi announces a \$100,000 bounty for killing Lars Vilks, the Swedish cartoonist, and an extra \$50,000 if Vilks' neck is slit like a lamb's. Al-Baghdadi also sets aside another \$50,000 for the head of the editor of *Nerikes Allehanda*, the paper that ran the cartoon.

Al-Baghdadi foretells the imminent collapse of the West's decadent civilization. He wonders why it is that precisely now—a time when Islam, as represented by the Islamic State of Iraq which he heads, is poised to reap the fruits of this massive victory—that the Sunni “renegades” remain obstinate in refusing to pledge allegiance to him and continue to actively resist his authority:

Today, we are embarking on a new era, and a point of transformation for the region and the entire world; we are witnessing the end of that lie called Western civilization, and the rise of the Islamic giant, and this is exactly what Bush warned of in his latest speech in front of the veterans [August 22, 2007] saying: “the region is developing in a way that threatens the downfall of civilization” and by that he means the civilization of unbelief, the civilization of usury and prostitution, the civilization of oppression and humiliation. And he had this to say about the soldiers of the Islamic State of [Iraq]: “they seek to restore the caliphate from Spain to Indonesia” after [the Americans] made clear that [the soldiers of the Islamic State] are only Sunni danger threatening America and its civilization, and this is the truth as testified to by the enemies; doesn't this conflict with what the renegades have branded us?¹⁴²

What he does not explain is this: if President Bush himself is aware of the grand ramifications of the Islamic State of Iraq and its implications for a resurrected and

belligerent Islamic empire, then why have Iraq's Sunnis failed to recognize the import of this lofty jihadist venture? Why, instead, have they turned against it?

Implications for Counterterrorism

IN A "MESSAGE TO THE *Umma*" RELEASED ON MAY 19, 2008, ADDRESSING THE sixtieth anniversary of the state of Israel, Osama bin Laden lamented that "the Ottoman state, despite its immense flaws, had protected the *umma* from the wolves of the crusading West," and that as a result "Britain conspired with Arab leaders at the forefront of whom were Sharif Hussein and his sons, and King Abdel Aziz [Ibn] Saud, who colluded with [Britain] to fight and topple the Ottoman state." Thus for bin Laden, even a flawed caliphate is necessary to forestall the external and internal threats posed to Islam.¹⁴³

The al-Ekhlaas internet forum, one of the most important jihadist propaganda outlets, displays on all its main pages a continuously running ticker marking the founding of the Islamic State of Iraq. On June 6, 2008, this ticker read: "600 days have passed since the declaration of the State of Islam, the imminent hope of the *umma* ... and it shall remain by the grace of Allah." Clearly, while bin Laden grieves over the end of the caliphate decades ago, the jihadists and their sympathizers on al-Ekhlaas have high hopes for the new caliphate embarked upon in Iraq. Another fixture on al-Ekhlaas's main discussion forum highlights a thread that invites its patrons to pledge allegiance to "the Caliph of the Muslims, the Commander of the Faithful, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi." At last count, some twelve hundred individuals had done so.¹⁴⁴ There could be hundreds more jihadists in Iraq who still observe their pledge to al-Baghdadi, and possibly thousands of others dispersed around the Middle East.

Yet the Islamic State of Iraq is faltering, according to statements made recently by some of America's top military, diplomatic, and intelligence officials.¹⁴⁵ The Sunni Awakening Councils and "Sons of Iraq" militias, which had cast their lot with the Americans against al-Qaeda in Iraq, have been given much credit by media and regional analysts for bringing about this auspicious result. The recognition of these groups has not taken into consideration, however, the role of doctrinal dissonance which, as a direct result of the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq, set one jihadist group against another.¹⁴⁶ It was the spectacle of jihadists turning on jihadists, and the ensuing distraction and discord, that initially opened space for tribal leaders, as well as a few insurgent groups—exhausted and depleted by years of fighting—to begin rallying fellow Sunnis against al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Four months into the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq, an unknown but

seemingly authentic Iraqi jihadist leader, calling himself Jihad al-Ansari, published an extraordinary open letter (dated February 26, 2007) that was addressed to al-Baghdadi. In it al-Ansari references an unanswered earlier letter, dated December 4, 2006, that had sought some clarifications from al-Baghdadi regarding the timing and purpose of the Islamic State of Iraq. Al-Ansari now claims that “matters have deteriorated in this period” and have “damaged the jihadist corps and greatly tarnished the reputation of the *jihad* and the *mujahidin*.”

Al-Ansari decries the zeal of al-Baghdadi’s soldiers in seeking support for the new regime:

The worst that has come about because of your solitary step was the commencement of many of your groups and members of your organization, so as to show your authority over Muslims in Iraq, to attack and insult all people, and to agitate against those who refuse to pledge allegiance to you.... And in this most recent period, this pattern has been increasing, and many of your groups are capitalizing on the delicate situation, to peddle the idea of the State according to its beliefs, and to do so by attacking the people, and to harass every citizen, whether he was innocent or not.... Do you want to drive your organization towards collapse and dissolution, because of the sins of these sinners...?

Is it reasonable for you to squander the fighting effort towards assassinating and killing the *mujahidin* who refuse to pledge allegiance to you, or those from the general body of the Muslims, at these trying times, when the efforts of the infidels are coalescing against the Muslims in Iraq? A few days ago, one of the shaykhs of the mosques of Baghdad said to me: “We have started to fear the fighters of al-Qaeda more than we fear the Mahdi Army gang.” ... Since when has the threat of murder been the correct manner by which to extract a pledge of allegiance?!

Do you think that through this manner we will hurry to pledge allegiance? Don’t you know [as an Iraqi], that the Iraqi will give you [the shirt off his back] if you speak to his pride, but if you begin to threaten him, he will strive to avenge his dignity, not fearing death.¹⁴⁷

Al-Ansari goes on to declare that he will be “the first to publicly refuse to pledge allegiance,” but adds that the “al-Qaeda organization would be honored and respected

if it [adopted] justice and wisdom and fighting the infidel occupier and their Safavid agents as its guidance” and stopped trying to force people to succumb to its authority—in other words, if it dropped the venture of the Islamic State of Iraq.

Violent operations by the Islamic State of Iraq have fallen ninety-four percent over the last year, according to a study prepared by a jihadist sympathizer on al-Ekhlāas that cites the Islamic State of Iraq’s own numbers. Just a year and half ago, al-Baghdadi’s organization credited itself with sixty percent of all violent attacks in Iraq, including the majority of the spectacular ones.¹⁴⁸ But nowadays most of the Islamic State of Iraq’s vengeance is directed against recalcitrant “renegades” who broke rank on doctrine.

While the resurrection of a robust and sovereign caliphate has been an oft-stated jihadist goal, jihadists and their detractors have long understood that such a goal, in its initial stages, would reveal the soft and doctrinally-vulnerable underbelly of their militant ideology.¹⁴⁹ In their overconfidence, in their zeal to force the hand of history by embarking on the venture of the Islamic State of Iraq as the embryonic caliphate, al-Zarqawi’s successors afforded their critics a golden opportunity to question the viability of their vision for the future—a vision in whose service they were willing to wreak havoc and destruction.

The American public was uncurious as to the identity, nature, and goals of its enemy in Iraq. And, unfortunately, U.S. leaders and commanders were mostly complicit in such willful unawareness. The lack of interest on the part of the public was partly due to bitter partisan recriminations over the Bush administration’s policy in waging the Iraq war, and over who in Washington was to blame for the insurgency that ensued. Consequently, the doctrines of the Bush administration regarding preemptive strikes and democracy in the Middle East came under incessant scrutiny from the administration’s domestic political foes. Meanwhile, the doctrines of the jihadists were overlooked or, in the few cases where they were considered, dismissed as esoteric. Fantastical as they may be, these doctrines do indeed motivate and inform the enemy’s actions and strategy, and their significance was not recognized.

As a result, the Islamic State of Iraq was played down by American officials, analysts, and journalists as an “al-Qaeda in Iraq affiliate” rather than its successor. Meanwhile, al-Baghdadi was trivialized as a “fictional character”—even though this assertion could have originated with jihadist disinformation. Would al-Qaeda in Iraq invite upon itself such an ideological backlash from fellow jihadist groups by announcing al-Baghdadi’s pedigree simply in a conventional bid to confuse coalition intelligence services about the make-up of its top leadership? It seems like a steep and wholly unnecessary price to pay for a security ruse, given that it incurred the wrath of so many fellow travelers in the cause of *jihad*, and exposed the Islamic State of Iraq’s organizers to questioning and criticism of their ventures’ implications.

Regardless of whether the Iraq War was justified or not, one post-invasion reality cannot be disputed: al-Zarqawi and his fellow jihadists chose to turn Iraq into a new battleground against the United States and its allies. Al-Zarqawi was not a member of al-Qaeda when he began his terrorist operations. In the course of garnering support and succor for the *jihad* in Iraq, under the name of the Monotheism and Jihad Group, he was able to turn that achievement around to negotiate with bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. His intention was to acquire the al-Qaeda franchise, principally for fund-raising and recruiting purposes in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Yet he did so on his own terms, without conceding the doctrinal idiosyncrasies that had prevented him from officially joining the al-Qaeda movement in Afghanistan years earlier. Even so, the al-Qaeda affiliation was useful for al-Zarqawi only for a year or so, for he moved on to expand his organization and append it to the Iraq-based Shura Council of the Mujahidin on January 15, 2006.

It has been the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that al-Zarqawi (who was killed in June 2006) and his successors not only determined to turn Iraq into a battleground on their own initiative, but that they subsequently chose Iraq as the incubator for their grand vision of a unified Islamic empire under the aegis of a ruling caliph. They did so without instructions from or consultations with the traditional leaders of al-Qaeda hiding out in the Hindu Kush Mountains. Rather, they presented the jihadist world with a *fait accompli*: the Islamic State of Iraq. They thereby captured the imagination of a new generation of jihadists who were already enthralled by the alleged victories of the Zarqawists in Iraq.

At the time when they declared their state, the Zarqawists believed that they were winning, taking the gloomy forecasts of an American “quagmire” and “defeat” in Iraq, as peddled by the U.S. media, as a sign that they were about to turn a corner in the war. As far as they were concerned, there was no greater service to Islam than theirs; not even “Servitude of the Two Holy Shrines” of Mecca and Medina could compare with what the jihadists were achieving in Iraq, a distinction that ranked them as the elite and vanguard of a victorious Islamic regeneration. In their eyes, the merit of a successful *jihad*, waged against the world’s greatest power, earned them the authority and responsibility for resurrecting the caliphate, since they alone were the rightful *ahl ul hel wel aqd* of their time.

The jihadists were mindful of the disarray and confusion that had enfolded the Muslim world before and after the last Ottoman caliph was deposed—the temporal and spiritual duality under Abdul Hamid II, the ceremonial caliphate that the Turkish nationalists experimented with right before annulling the office outright, the dithering at the Cairo Caliphate Congress, and the embarrassment at Peshawar. They leaped across centuries of precedent to go back to Mohammed’s nascent state at Medina. Their “Commander of the Faithful” would be of Quraysh stock, not some

ethnic Pashtun warlord. Their “state” would be the “real caliphate” once again, set to expand under Mohammed’s own banner from the very heart of the *Dar al-Islam*—ancient Baghdad and its environs. This venture was far more ambitious and daring than a marginal emirate within the remote folds of the Hindu Kush.

The Islamic State of Iraq was to be the shield and spear of Islam, facing down infidel foes from within and without. It would be the harbinger of glory and redemption, the “*umma’s* hope” for an avenger to its many humiliations. Should the jihadists meet some slight setbacks, “that too shall pass.” As al-Baghdadi said, explaining why the Islamic State of Iraq would persist: “We are certain that Allah will not break the hearts of the embattled monotheists and turn us into the object of ridicule by the oppressors.”¹⁵⁰

Yet the Islamic State in Iraq does not seem on the verge of a comeback. This is especially true since the Iraqi Sunnis that it claimed to be fighting for, and for whom its laurels would accrue in victory, apparently have irreversibly turned against it. Could it be, after all the bloodshed, treasure, and prayers that went into the Islamic State of Iraq, that Allah also turned His back on the jihadists?

The corollary to the military defeat now being experienced by the jihadists is the even more agonizing prospect of doctrinal collapse: the heralded caliphate is still-born, and the glorious vision of a reinvigorated Islamic state has been smashed. The anguish and demoralization brought about by this byproduct of battlefield victory cannot be overstated. To smash the dreams of a man who lives for a cause, who endures cruel deserts and damp caves while awaiting martyrdom, is a fate far worse than death. In a battle of wills, young men are able to summon the necessary willpower to press a button and to detonate themselves among innocent bystanders. They do so for the cause of *jihad*, and for the deferred utopia of a resurrected and avenging Islamic world power. Nothing breaks the will of the individual jihadist more than to see his ideology begin to bear fruit, only to watch that fruit rot away right before his eyes. Such has been the impact of the Zarqawist Islamic State of Iraq—the caliphate-to-be, under the Commander of the Faithful Abu Umar al-Baghdadi the Qurayshite—and such the bitter aftertaste of its ruinous downfall.

NOTES

1. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam* (Random House, 2004 [2003]), pp. xv-xviii.

2. Islamic State of Iraq—Ministry of *Sharia* Commission, *Elam al-Anam bi milad dawlet al islam* (Al-Furqan Institute for Media Productions, released on January 7, 2007) available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=4359>. This 101-page tract begins with an introduction from the “Ministry of Information” that is penned by the “Official Spokesman” of the Islamic State of Iraq, posthumously

identified as Muharib Abdel Latif al-Juburi, one of Al-Qaeda in Iraq's top native-born leaders (confirmed killed on May 1, 2007). In the introduction, the spokesman informs us that this tract was authored by "one of the sons of the *Sharia* Commission" who was "killed in an ambush with U.S. forces." The author is not identified, not even by a pseudonym, but the tract is described as one that was "prepared under the supervision of Uthman bin Abdel Rahman al-Tamimi, the head of the *Sharia* Commission." On April 19, 2007, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi named a certain Abu Uthman al-Tamimi—by all indications an Iraqi—as the Minister of *Sharia* Commission in the Islamic State of Iraq (see Nibras Kazimi, "Al-Baghdadi Names Pseudonyms—for ministerial portfolios," *Talisman Gate* blog [posted April 19, 2007] available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/04/al-baghdadi-names-pseudonymsfor.html>) but it remains unclear whether the supervisor of this tract (Uthman al-Tamimi) and the minister (Abu Uthman al-Tamimi) are one and the same. It should be noted that the Iraqi cadres of al-Qaeda in Iraq seem to have been enthusiastic supporters of the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq, probably reflecting a desire to secure the title of caliph for a fellow Iraqi.

3. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 55. Another variation on Bush's words came from al-Baghdadi in his first speech "Truth Has Arrived and Falsehood is Perished" that was released on December 22, 2006, where he claims that the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq "drove that enemy of Allah, Bush, to say after its emergence that the [jihadists] seek to establish an Islamic state from China to Spain, and thus he was truthful [in this instance] despite being a liar." See Nibras Kazimi, "Would-Be Caliph's Inaugural Address to the Islamic *Umma*," *Talisman Gate* blog (posted December 23, 2006) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2006/12/would-be-caliphs-inaugural-address-to.html>.
4. Abdullah ibn Umar ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma inda ahl ul sunna wel jamaah* (Global Islamic Media Front, February 2007), available at <http://www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=47906&highlight=%C7%E1%CF%E3%ED%CC%ED>. This 403-page book was published in 1987 (not specified by whom and where in the GIMF electronic version), and it was based on a Master's thesis presented by ad-Dumaiji at the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca during May 1983. Abdullah Umar Suleiman ad-Dumaiji, 51, currently teaches as an Associate Professor at the College of Islamic Creed at the King Abdul Aziz University in Mecca. He was one of thirty-eight signatories who had affixed their names to a controversial letter dated December 7, 2006, that called upon Muslims to confront alleged Shia and American designs on the Middle East region; see Nibras Kazimi, "38 Leading Saudi Clerics Incite Iraqi Sunnis Against Shias, Americans," *Talisman Gate* blog (posted December 11, 2006) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2006/12/38-leading-saudi-clerics-incite-iraqi.html>. *The Global Islamic Media Front* (GIMF) is considered one of jihadists' principle media outlets; it began to put out a video news bulletin called "Sawt al-khilafa" ("Voice of the Caliphate") in September 2005. The GIMF also publishes an electronic magazine called *Sada Al Jihad* ("The Echo of Jihad").
5. Ad-Dumaiji explains that Islamic authorities have always understood the terms "imamate" and "caliphate" to be interchangeable, and that the titles of "imam" and "*Emir al-Mumineen*" ("Commander of the Faithful") were prerogatives of the caliph. The significance behind the interchangeability of these terms becomes apparent in the Islamic State of Iraq's *Elam al-Anam*, since the term *imamate* is employed with greater frequency than *caliphate*, while in other publications released by the Islamic State of Iraq the head of state is called *Emir al-Mumineen*; such substitutes may have been a rhetorical ruse by the jihadists to offset any controversy engendered by their blatantly calling the venture a caliphate and their leader a caliph.
6. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al Imamah al udhma*, p. 70.
7. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 102.
8. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 89-97. Abul Hasan Ali bin Mohammed al-Mawardi was born in

Basra and died in Baghdad in 1058 AD. Al-Mawardi's works have been studied by western scholars as the definitive classic on Islamic governance. But as Gibb demonstrates, al-Mawardi was writing under unique circumstances during a time when Abbasid rule was humiliated by its subjugation to the Shia Buwaihidi dynasty, and there was hope for a restoration of a more muscular caliphate; these expectations colored al-Mawardi's outlook. The importance of al-Mawardi's contribution is that he maps out a doctrine for government based on precedence; the decisions taken by previous generations of the Muslim *jamaa* (community) were justified by divine guidance and hence had to be right, and it is these decisions that must inform how a present Muslim community goes about governing itself. Therefore, all precedents for choosing a caliph were correct and applicable where appropriate. Al-Mawardi's "rules" are summarized in nineteen points, see Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "al-Mawardi's Theory of the Caliphate," *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. S. J. Shaw (Princeton University Press, 1982 [1962]), p. 151-159.

9. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 125-126.
10. This is particularly true of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, which contended that the caliphate had only lasted for thirty years, beyond which Muslims have been ruled by dynasties. This line of thinking influenced the earlier Ottoman sultans, who adopted the Hanafi school of law, see Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (Barnes and Noble, 1966 [1924]), p. 163.
11. Abul Maali Abdul Melik bin Abdullah al-Juwaini was a native of Khurasan who died there in 1085 AD and rose to prominence as a cleric and a leader of prayer in Mecca and Medina. A summarized version of his book *Ghiath al umam fi tiyah al dhulem*, with a special emphasis on what the conditions for the election of an imam are to be when the Islamic world is in turmoil, was republished under the title *Al-Tariq ila al khilafah* (The Path to the Caliphate) by Abu Ammar Mohammed bin Hamid al-Hasani (dated April 1984) and is available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3905>. Clearly, al-Juwaini remains an important reference on the caliphate for the jihadists, seemingly more so than al-Mawardi, even though ten centuries have lapsed since his book on the subject was authored. Gibb did not have access to al-Juwaini's book, see Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, p. 142.
12. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al Anam*, p. 13
13. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al Anam*, p. 10
14. The concept of the *al-Taifah al-Mansourah* (Victorious Faction) is an important one for the jihadists, and has been enthusiastically adopted by those waging *jihad* in Iraq. One's allegorical membership in this faction entails the belief in forty-one tenets as laid out in a pamphlet by Abi al-Fadhl al-Iraqi, which were described and expanded upon by Abu Islam al-Ansari in *Ma alim al-Taifah al mansourah fi bilad al rafidayn* (The Features of the Victorious Faction in Iraq) dated December 2004 and available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3142>. Al-Ansari explains that the land of Islam can revert back to *Dar al-kufr* (Land of Unbelief) if occupied or subjugated by "infidel" forces. Tenet number thirty-five states that *jihad* is the way back to recommencing the caliphate; see p.47. The notion that one belongs to a faction negates the Sunni doctrine of *jamaa* since it is dismissive of majorities and the process of consensus. It could explain the willingness shown by the jihadists in Iraq to commit brutal atrocities since they are more interested in being right than in being popular—such schismatic impulses seemingly bring the jihadists closer to the style of sedition and heresy during the classical Islamic era. Such tendencies deserve further study that is beyond the scope of this paper.
15. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 15-16.
16. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 17-23.
17. "The Alliance of the *Muttayyebin*' was a new body announced on October 12, 2006 in a 5-minute propaganda video put out by the Shura Council of the Mujahidin; the alliance consisted of several jihadist

groups such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq that had allegedly formed a pact with several Sunni Iraqi tribal leaders. *Muttayyebin* refers to the gooey yellowish syrup called *tteeb* into which those who pledged allegiance to each other dipped their right hands. The video showed six masked men pledging allegiance to one another to establish *sharia*. The original “alliance of the muttayebein” refers to a pre-Islamic tribal alliance made by several Meccan clans and tribes to protect the Kaaba and to aid each other in war. It was attended by Mohammed, who was 20 years old at the time, and it was convened by his grandfather Abdul Muttalib.

18. Al-Baghdadi identified these tribes (he put the number of tribal sheikhs who had pledged allegiance at 70 percent) as “the Duleim, the Jebour, the Ubaid, Zobaa, Qais, Azzah, Tayy, the Janabis, the Hayyalis, the Mushahdeh, the Dayniyyeh, the Bani Zeid, the Mujammaa, the Shammar, the Anizeh, the Sumaydaa, the Nuaym, the Khazraj, the Bani Lheib, the Bu Hayyat, the Bani Hamdan, the al Saadoun, the al Ghanim, the Saideh, the Maadheeh, the Karabileh, the al Salman, and the Kubeisat,” and he had listed the areas in which the jihadists operate as Fallouja, al-Garmeh, Amiriyah, Ramadi, al-Gharbiyeh, al-Tarmiyeh, al-Sinniyyeh, Tikrit, Sammara, Baqouba, Al Udheim, Mosul, Kirkuk, Talafar, and Baghdad; see Nibras Kazimi, “Would-Be Caliph’s Inaugural Address.”
19. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 24.
20. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 32.
21. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 26.
22. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 30. The Medina analogy was taken up by others who sought to legitimize the Islamic State of Iraq such as pseudonymous author Attiyet Allah who posted a mildly critical article on several jihadist discussion forums on December 13, 2006 that nevertheless responds to some of the arguments made against the Islamic State of Iraq. In addition to citing the size of Mohammed’s state at Medina, Attiyet Allah also references Mohammed ibn Abdul Wahhab’s state in Diriyya. In response to the charge that the Islamic State of Iraq is dividing Iraqi territory, Attiyet Allah asks “Did [Mohammed] divide the Arabian Peninsula and Arab society by declaring his state in Medina?” see Nibras Kazimi, “Interesting Jihadist Critique of the Islamic State of Iraq,” *Talisman Gate blog* (posted January 11, 2007), available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/01/interesting-jihadist-critique-of.html>. The same point about Mohammed not dividing the Arabian Peninsula was made earlier in an audio tape by Abu Hamza al Muhajir in which he declares Al-Qaeda in Iraq’s allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and to Al-Baghdadi, see Nibras Kazimi, “Al-Qaeda in Iraq Supports US Elections Results,” *Talisman Gate blog* (posted November 10, 2006) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2006/11/al-qaeda-in-iraq-supports-us-election.html>. Another correlation between the Islamic State of Iraq and the Medina city-state was made by Abu Hureira al-Ansari, a jihadist allegedly based in Iraq, in a post that he authored on a jihadist discussion forum on August 18, 2007: just like Mohammed in Medina, the Islamic State of Iraq faces internal (tribal Awakening groups) and external enemies (the Americans and the Shias); al-Ansari also likens the flocking of the *mujahidin* to Iraq from all over the Islamic world to the early Muslim *hijra* (migration) from Mecca to Medina, available at <http://www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=75462>.
23. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 29.
24. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 30-31 and p. 77. The recalcitrant tribal Sunni “Awakening” groups are likened to these Jewish tribes.
25. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 68.
26. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 38-39.
27. The three verses are numbers 80, 81, and 83 from the *Israsura*. The various interpretations of these verses more or less say the same thing: Mohammed’s mission entered upon a new phase when he

embarked on the journey from Mecca to Medina, and it was here that Allah promised to render upon him the glories of the Persian and Roman empires. Mohammed then returned victorious to Mecca, which was a harbinger of more victories to come. The last verse makes the case that the Quran was revealed in stages, and so will victory arrive in stages, see Kazimi, "Would-Be Caliph's Inaugural Address."

28. Dafna Linzer and Thomas Ricks, "Anbar Picture Grows Clearer, and Bleaker," *Washington Post* (November 28, 2006).
29. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 40-42.
30. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 34. The author specifically refers to the Islamic Army of Iraq as one of the jihadist groups that were willing to negotiate with the Americans.
31. Nibras Kazimi, "A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 2 (Washington: Hudson Institute, September 2005), pp. 59-73.
32. Draft copy of Thomas Hegghammer and Stephane Lacroix, "Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al Utaybi Revisited," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 103-122, available at http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00093/Juhayman_Website_ver_93672a.pdf.
33. Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and other Middle-Eastern Studies* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1970 [2004]), p. 178. For Fuad's role in agitating for his claim to the title see pp. 183-190.
34. Mohammed Rashid bin Ali Ridha al-Husseini, "Muqademmeh ila mutamer al khilafah al am fi misir alqahirah," *Al-Manar Magazine*, Vol. 27 (Cairo, May 1926), p. 133-138 available at <http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3635.htm>.
35. Sultan Wahid ud Din cabled the Egyptian government from San Remo, Italy, where he was living out his exile a few days ahead of the congress insisting that only he had the authority to convoke such a gathering; see "Ex-Sultan Mehmed Khan Opposes Selection of a Caliph," *New York Times* (May 5, 1926). Wahid ud Din had earlier proclaimed that the decisions taken by the Ankara government to depose him and separate the sultanate from the caliphate were contrary to Islamic law, and that in fleeing Istanbul he was following the example of Mohammed in his flight from Mecca to Medina; see "Ex-Sultan Appeals to Moslem World," *New York Times* (April 16, 1923); Wahid ud Din died on May 16, 1926 in Italy, and was buried in Damascus.
36. Sharif Hussein (r. 1908-1917), later King of the Hejaz (r. 1917-1924), claimed the title of caliph in early March 1924, but the general reaction was hostile. He tried to garner wider Muslim recognition for his title a few months later at the Pilgrimage Congress that was held in Mecca during July 1924 but was rebuffed as the congregants agreed not to discuss the caliphate. By October of that year, Hussein abdicated in favor of his son Ali; see Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 84-85. In addition to the three claimants mentioned by Ridha, there were at least several others: the Sharif of Morocco (whose family claimed the title since the 16th century), five rulers in the Malay Archipelago, and a few more in Sumatra; see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 181-182.
37. Rashid Ridha went through many phases before arriving at these points: for example in 1922, following the victories of the Turkish Army, he considered the Turkish National Assembly in Ankara as a body that was representative of *ahl ul hel wel aq* and consequently was empowered to depose Wahid ud Din. Later, Ridha argued that *ahl ul hel wel aq* should be selected from among the leaders of the *umma* in both religious and secular affairs and he included in their ranks merchants, agriculturalists, managers, distinguished writers and professionals, who together would function as a parliamentary body. For a full reading of Ridha's many phases see Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab

- Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Ridha's Ideas on the Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 117, No. 2 (April 1997), pp. 253-277.
38. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 193, and Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 86.
 39. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 100. Also see a pro-royalist newspaper counseling against using the congress to appoint a caliph due to the political backlash in "The Egyptian Press on the Caliphate Congress," *The Moslem World*, Vol. 16, Issue 4 (October 1926), p. 410.
 40. The minutes of the General Caliphate Congress were republished in three parts in Ridha's *al-Manar*, see Mohammed Rashid bin Ali Ridha al-Husseini, "Muthekerat mu tamer al khilafah al islamiyyah," *Al-Manar Magazine* (Part 1, June 1926), pp. 205-208, available at <http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3646.htm>, (Part 2, July 1926), p. 275-280, available at <http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3656.htm>, (Part 3, August 1926), pp. 363-370, available at <http://islamport.com/w/amm/Web/1306/3668.htm>.
 41. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 93-94.
 42. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 193.
 43. Devotion to Mecca and Medina had become a way by which a Muslim potentate may distinguish himself among other aspiring princes. "Servant of the Holy Sanctuaries" was never considered a legitimizing attribute for the early caliphs running through the Abbasids, but it became coveted as the title of caliph inversely lost its dignity through over-use by minor rulers who based their authority on force. Control over the holy cities was tied to control over Egypt, which served as the granary of the Hejaz. It is interesting that Ottoman Sultan Selim acquired the title of "Servant of the Holy Sanctuaries" from his slain foe, the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, rather than from the "reigning" Abbasid caliph, see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 144-153.
 44. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 242-244.
 45. Tufan Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate in the Early Years of Abdulhamid II: 1877-1882.," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 36, Issue 1 (BRILL, March 1996), pp. 65-68. Also Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 247.
 46. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 248.
 47. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 253-255.
 48. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 32-33.
 49. Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era," p. 260, and Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman," p. 72 and p. 87.
 50. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 187.
 51. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 193, and Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 89-90.
 52. Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era," p. 275.
 53. Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (Yale University Press, 1985), p. 84.
 54. Abdul Munim Mustafa Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah wa qiyam khilafeh rashidah ala dhaw al kitab wel sunna* (International Center for Islamic Studies, London, May 24, 2000) available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=1453>.
 55. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 5.
 56. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 9.
 57. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, pp. 16-18.
 58. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 29.
 59. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 87.
 60. Halima, *Al-Tareek ila istinaf hayat islamiyyah*, p. 99.

61. Abdul Munim Mustafa Halima, *Rakaiz al hukm fi al dawlah al islamiyyah* (pamphlet, March 6, 2005) available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3904>.
62. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah* (2007) available at <http://www.khilafah.com/kcom/images/PDF/method%20to%20appoint%20a%20khaleefah.pdf>, pp. 25-26.
63. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah*, pp. 28-29.
64. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah*, p. 14.
65. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 94.
66. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 93.
67. The earliest published account available about this affair is from Mohammed Kheir Awadallah, "Fi al dhikra al rabia li ahdath sebtember [2-2]," *Al Sahafa* Newspaper, Issue no. 4418 (Sudan, September 21, 2005), in which he names Abu Uthman and Mohammed ar-ifai. In an email correspondence with this author during May 2008 Awadallah would not further identify his sources for this information or elaborate on the identity of Abu Uthman. The other account of the episode with more details, although providing no names, came in a book by Abul Walid al-Misri which was serialized in Mohammed al-Shafii, "Thartharah foqah saqf al alem," *Asharq al Awsat* Newspaper, Issue no. 10193 (London, October 25, 2006); the source of the book was identified as the HARMONY project. However, it turns out that Abul Walid al-Misri is former *al-Jazeera* correspondent in Afghanistan Mustafa Hamid, who had written a series of books on the experiences of the *mujahidin* from 1979-2001 under the title *Adeb al mattareed*. The reference to the caliphate episode was narrated on p. 41 in "Book 6" that bore the title "Salib fi sama Qandahar" in which he refers to the bin Laden encounter, available at <http://mafa.maktoobblog.com/?all=1>. News of ar-Rifai's arrest and coma were attributed to Yassir al-Sirri in "Khalifet al muslimen Mohammed Eid ar Rifai fi ghayboobah bi mustashfa Brittani," *Middle East Transparent* website (May 25, 2006) available at http://www.middleeasttransparent.com/old/texts/caliph_rifai_in_coma.htm. Some previously unreported biographical details were provided in the latter source, such as ar-Rifai's membership in the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1990s and his subsequent expulsion from its ranks before leaving Jordan for Afghanistan.
68. Although he was not present in Afghanistan at that time, al-Zarqawi would have probably heard about the Peshawar caliphate affair in detail from his brother-in-law (married to al-Zarqawi's sister) Salih al-Hami, also known as Abu Qudamah (real name could be Sati Qasrawi). Al-Hami writes about his antagonistic encounter with ar-Rifai, who he calls the "naïve caliph" and an "arrogant idiot," adding that the latter had declared al-Hami an infidel and called for his blood to be spilt. This aside was mentioned in a long tract that al-Hami had authored and that appeared under several titles and at different times online (last dated July 27, 2007, available at <http://www.gulfson.com/vb/t68205.html>), which was meant as a rebuttal to Fuad Hussein's biography on Zarqawi, *Alzarqawi: aljeel althani li Al Qaida* (Dar al-Khayal, Beirut, 2005).
69. The Rifais claim descent from Mohammed's grandson al Hussein bin Ali, and hence consider themselves members of the Banu Hashim clan of Quraysh.
70. Kazimi, "Interesting Critique," see n. 22.
71. Kazimi, "al-Qaeda in Iraq Supports US Election Results," see n. 22.
72. There had been much speculation as to the real identity of Abu Umar al-Baghdadi. In July 2007, the U.S. military announced, based on confessions made by a senior al-Qaeda in Iraq figure held in custody, that al-Baghdadi was a fictional character created as a ruse to confuse U.S.-led Coalition Forces. It would seem bizarre that the Islamic State of Iraq would embark on such a controversial endeavor as anointing the Commander of the Faithful, only to fill the position with a fictional character; the

unlikely of which is further underlined when considering that Islamic State of Iraq was trying to convince other jihadist groups to follow suit in pledging allegiance, and further when considering the very serious doctrinal implications of the move, and the effect the revelation of the supposed ruse would have on the standing of Islamic State of Iraq. Another speculative account has it that al-Baghdadi is the pseudonym of Khalid Khalil Ibrahim al-Mashhadani (Abu Zaid), see Nibras Kazimi, "More on Abu Omar al-Baghdadi's Alleged Identity," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted March 7, 2007 and updated on April 22, 2008) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/03/more-on-abu-omar-al-baghdadis-alleged.html>. Another possible suspect is Hamid Dawood Mohammed Khalil al-Zawi, according to a police chief in Anbar Province, see Nibras Kazimi, "Abu Omar al-Baghdadi Revealed?," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted May 7, 2008) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2008/05/abu-omar-al-baghdadi-revealed.html>. Both the Mashahdeh and Zawiyeen clans allege descent from al-Hussein bin Ali.

73. It is only referred to once to make an indirect point about how the power to impose one's will and authority is sufficient for a caliphate or an imamate to stand, see Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 74-75. The rules for the head of the state can also be tweaked to take into consideration circumstances, pp. 83-84.
74. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 152. The author does acknowledge that al-Juwaini leaned towards not making it mandatory, and he included him among the minority of Ashaarite scholars who took this stance, see p. 153. Even though ad-Dumaiji agrees with the "majority of scholars" that he cites, he takes issue with the arguments made by Ibn Khaldun, Wali Allah al Dehlawi and Ridha as to the wisdom behind it, see pp. 161-164. The author also makes the anti-Shia case of why this stipulation was not limited to the Banu Hashim clan of Quraysh by claiming that the Hashemites were small in number and hence the pool of qualified caliphs would be limited as a result, and that the elite of the early Muslims was not exclusive to Banu Hashim, see p. 164. Contemporary writers had made arguments that it was not mandatory; Ad-Dumaiji cites these views and refutes them, see pp. 154-160.
75. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 165.
76. Abu Abdullah al Dhahabi, "Hel al Qurashiyyeh shartt fi al imamah?" (undated) available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=2939>. The indication that it was posted or discussed in installments is a reference to "today we continue what we started in the past episode."
77. *Fatwa* by Hamid bin Abdullah al-Ali (undated) available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=4277>. Al-Ali, 42, is an Islamist professor and preacher based in Kuwait who comments regularly on current events, and whose writings are popular among jihadists. In a later *fatwa* dated April 4, 2007, al-Ali delivered a long and scathing critique of the Islamic State of Iraq, concluding that al-Baghdadi's imamate was not legal since the presumed imam's identity was unknown, and that he was in hiding and did not enjoy any real authority over a stretch of territory. Al Ali further decried al-Baghdadi's insistence on the pledge of allegiance and his denouncement of those who withheld it with "recalcitrance" as unlawful, available at http://www.h-alali.net/f_open.php?id=1a55240a-3422-102a-9c4c-0010dc91cf69. As a result of this latter *fatwa* al-Ali incurred the wrath of the supporters of the Islamic State of Iraq who vehemently accused him of betraying the jihadists in Iraq.
78. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al-imamah al udhma*, pp. 309-310.
79. The rivalry among al-Zarqawi's successors and the traditional leaders of al-Qaeda may have been reflected by Ayman al-Zawahiri's response to a question concerning the legitimacy of the Islamic State of Iraq and its leader al-Baghdadi, for he seems to minimize the significance of the Islamic State as a "step towards the caliphate" rather than the caliphate itself, and that "al-Baghdadi is [one of] the leaders of the Muslims and the *mujahidin* of this era" rather than a caliph. Al-Zawahiri describes the Islamic

- State of Iraq as a project that forestalled sedition rather than resulted in it, further implying that he views it as a local Iraqi affair without larger implications for the cause of global *jihad*. In defending the Islamic State of Iraq against other accusations, al-Zawahiri defers to and quotes statements made earlier by Osama bin Laden rather than mounting a vigorous defense of his own, see al-Sahab Media, *al liqa al maftouh maa al sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri*, Episode Two (released April 22, 2008) available at <http://www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=141671&highlight=%C7%E1%D9%E6%C7%E5%D1%ED>.
80. Juhayman bin Saif al Utaybi, "*Risalet al imarah wel baya ah wel ta ah wa hukm talbis al hukam ala talabat al ilm wel ameh*" (undated), pp. 10-12, available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=4243>.
 81. Abu Mohammed al Maqdisi, *Al kawashif al jaliyyah fi kufr al dawlah al Saudiyyah* (2000 [1989]) available at www.tawhed.ws. Al-Maqdisi makes a passing mention of the Quraysh question on p. 195.
 82. Hizb ut Tahrir, *The Method to Appoint a Khaleefah*, pp. 16-19.
 83. Ata bin Khalil Abul Reshteh, "Jawab su aal fi mawdhoo al neseb al Qurayshi wa shuroott al khi-lafah," (August 27, 3003) available at <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/arabic/index.php/HTAmeer/QASingle/452/>. Abul Reshteh was chosen *emir* of Hizb ut Tahrir in April 2003.
 84. Madelung, *The Succession to Mohammed*, pp. 31-50.
 85. Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, p. 66-67, and Gibb, "Some Considerations on the Sunni Theory of the Caliphate," p. 148.
 86. Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "Lutfi Pasa on the Ottoman Caliphate," *Oriens*, Vol. 15 (December 31, 1962), pp. 287-295.
 87. This tale originates in a late eighteenth century account written by a local-born interpreter employed by the Swedish Consulate who provides no historical sources. This account later gained currency among European historians and filtered back into Ottoman accounts. As early as Murad I's reign in Edirne, the Ottoman sultans had adopted, or were described in their correspondence by, the title of caliph. This merely reflected customary practice at the time, when the title became yet another term of ornate flattery for a potentate, see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 128-147. Selim would not have been eager to acquire so empty a title; his attitude would have been more affected by the distinctly Turkic sense that the Ottomans were descended by blood from world conquerors as a source for legitimacy rather than being elected to eminence by an alleged inheritor of an enfeebled Abbasid legacy that another Turkic race, the Mongols, had put an end to in Baghdad, see Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 109.
 88. Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate," p. 63.
 89. Tufan Buzpinar, "The Question of the Caliphate under the Last Ottoman Sultans," *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in honour of Butrus Abu Manneh*, Ed. By Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (IB Tauris, 2005), p. 29.
 90. Buzpinar, "The Question of the Caliphate," p. 18.
 91. Buzpinar, "Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate," pp. 65-89. Emir Abdulqadir and the *sharifs* of Mecca claim descent from al-Hassan bin Ali.
 92. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 33/80-85.
 93. Azmi Oczan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain 1877-1924* (BRILL, 1997), p. 123.
 94. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924* (BRILL, 1999), pp. 96-103.
 95. Maraghi's letter was written during World War I to the British Governor General of the Sudan at a time when Britain was at war with the Ottoman Empire. The letter is reproduced in full in Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, pp. 208-212.

96. Al-Husseini, “*Muthekerat mu tamer al khilafah al islamiyyah*,” see part 1. Ad-Dumaiji discounts Ibn Baqillany by arguing the latter had mandated the Quraysh requirement in his book *Al insaf* but later did not make it mandatory in his later book *al-Tamheed*, see ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 153.
97. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 207. The attempt was made to link Faruq back to Quraysh through the female line, see Sylvia Haim, “The Abolition of the Caliphate and its Aftermath,” in Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 244.
98. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-anam*, pp. 86-88. This same argument was made by Osama bin Laden in his speech about the Islamic State of Iraq in which he responded to criticism that al-Baghdadi was an unknown figure; bin Laden stated that it was enough that al-Baghdadi was recommended to him by al-Zarqawi and al-Muhajir, and that it was prudent to keep such matters secret during conditions of war, see Osama bin Laden, *Al sabeel li ihbatt al mu amerat* (al-Sahab Media, December 30, 2007) available at www.alekhlass.net/forum/showthread.php?t=110962.
99. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 167-175. See also Appendix B in the same book, pp. 189-200.
100. Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, pp. 50-51.
101. For an in-depth presentation of the role played by German intelligence in manipulating the office of the caliph as a religious weapon in agitating against the Allies, see Tilman Ludke, *Jihad Made in Germany: Ottoman and German Propaganda and Intelligence Operations in the First World War* (LIT, 2005).
102. Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 44.
103. See pp. 141-146 in Butrus Abu Manneh, “Sultan Abdulahamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (May 1979), pp. 131-153. In courting Arab public opinion, Abdul Hamid went as far as to consider making Arabic the official language, see Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 48.
104. Itzchak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (BRILL, 2001), p. 129.
105. Haim, “The Abolition of the Caliphate,” pp. 208-210.
106. Michelangelo Guida, “Seyyid Bey and the Abolition of the Caliphate,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (March 2008), pp. 275-289.
107. Haim, “The Abolition of the Caliphate,” pp. 210-218. Haim relies on the Arabic version of the study as published in Cairo’s *al-Ahram Newspaper* in 1924.
108. Guida, “Seyyid Bey,” pp. 282-284.
109. Ludke, *Jihad Made in Germany*, p. 86.
110. Kedouri, *The Chatham House Version*, p. 189. A few years later, Ataturk claimed that the Muslims of India and Egypt had beseeched him to take on the title of caliph himself, see Haim, “The Abolition of the Caliphate,” p. 223. Ataturk would have been mindful of the potential for worldwide Muslim indignation even ahead of abolishing the caliphate after receiving a letter from the Aga Khan that implored him not to detract further from the office of caliph following the annulment of the sultanate, the letter is reproduced in full in “Letter of Aga Khan, Criticizing It, Resented by Angora Government,” *New York Times* (January 6, 1924). See also Andrew Mango, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Overlook Press 2002 [1999]), pp. 400-405. Ad-Dumaiji, reflecting a common Islamist opinion on the man who ended the caliphate, includes a brief biographical note about Ataturk in which he castigates him as a crypto-Jew, a Mason, pro-British and an alcoholic “who died an infidel,” see ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 67 n. 2.
111. Haim, “The Abolition of the Caliphate,” p. 241. Abdul Mejid’s election was supported by India’s Muslims, who at the time, after Turkey’s war against the invading Greeks, looked upon the nationalists in Ankara as Islamic heroes (p. 240). Upon being deposed, Abdul Mejid waited until he crossed into Bulgaria to issue a proclamation that his removal was null and void, see Mango,

- Ataturk*, p. 406. Abdul Mejid's claims to the title were again brought up by the Indians ahead of the Jerusalem Congress in 1931, see Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," p. 242, also "Indian Group Seeks to Restore Caliph," *New York Times* (October 30, 1931). Reflecting this association with India, Abdel Mejid gave two of his daughters in marriage to the Nizam rulers of Hyderabad, see "Struggle For Hands of Caliph's Kin Bared," *New York Times* (January 1, 1932); he died in Paris on August 23, 1944, and was buried in Medina.
112. Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate," p. 235-237. For the political dimensions and associations that may have motivated Abdel Razik, see Kedouri, *The Chatham House Version*, pp. 190-193.
 113. Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era," pp. 276-277.
 114. Al-Sanhouri's arguments are quoted in detail and refuted in Mohammed Said al-Ashmawi, *Al khilafah al islamiyyah* (Al-Intishar Al-'Arabi, 2004 [1989]), p. 394-416. A brief Arabic biography on al-Sanhouri is available at <http://www.islamonline.net/arabic/contemporary/Arts/2000/article35.shtml>.
 115. Author's visit to the Tomb of the 'Abbasid Caliphs in the al-Qarafah al- Kubra district of Cairo on July 17, 2006.
 116. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 187-188.
 117. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 209-220, and pp. 251-256. For the caliph's right to rule for life, see p. 232.
 118. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 311.
 119. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 46.
 120. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, pp. 47-54.
 121. Islamic State of Iraq, *Elam al-Anam*, p. 91.
 122. Al-Baghdadi's first speech, see n. 3.
 123. Al-Baghdadi's fourth speech "Harvesting the Years for the State of the Monotheists," released on April 16, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "Abu Omar al-Baghdadi's Fourth Speech: the 'State of the Union' is Iffy," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted April 17, 2007) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/04/abu-omar-al-baghdadis-fourth-speech.html>.
 124. Al-Baghdadi's third speech "Say I Am Made Certain By My God," released March 13, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "Al-Baghdadi's Third Speech—Sounding Worried," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted March 14, 2007) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/03/al-baghdadis-third-speech-sounding.html>.
 125. Al-Baghdadi's fourth speech.
 126. Al-Baghdadi's second speech "Glory from Allah and an Imminent Victory,," released on February 2, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "al-Qaeda is Losing It," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted February 3, 2007) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/02/al-qaeda-is-losing-it.html>.
 127. Al-Baghdadi's third speech.
 128. Al-Baghdadi's tenth speech "The Compact Structure," released on April 13, 2008, see Nibras Kazimi, "Back to Al-Baghdadi's Speeches," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted April 18, 2008) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2008/04/back-to-al-baghdadis-speeches.html>.
 129. Al-Baghdadi's eighth speech "Humble Towards Believers, Stern Towards Unbelievers," released on December 28, 2007, see Kazimi, "Back to Al-Baghdadi's Speeches."
 130. Ad-Dumaiji, *Al imamah al udhma*, p. 70.
 131. Al-Baghdadi's third speech.
 132. Al-Baghdadi's eighth speech.
 133. Al-Baghdadi's sixth speech "They Plot, But Allah Also Plots," released on September 15, 2007, see Nibras Kazimi, "What is al-Baghdadi Up To These Days?," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted September 23, 2007) available at <http://talismangate.blogspot.com/2007/09/what-is-al-baghdadi-up-to-these-days.html>.

134. Al-Baghdadi's first speech.
135. Al-Baghdadi's second speech.
136. Nibras Kazimi, "Zarqawi's Anti-Shia Legacy: Original or Borrowed?," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 4 (Hudson Institute, 2006), pp. 53-72.
137. Baghdadi's fifth speech "Should You Desist Then That is Better for You," released on July 9, 2007, see Kazimi, "What is al-Baghdadi Up to These Days?"
138. Al-Baghdadi's second speech.
139. Al-Baghdadi's ninth speech "Religion is Advice," released on February 14, 2008, see Kazimi, "Back to Al-Baghdadi's Speeches."
140. Al-Baghdadi's second speech.
141. Al-Baghdadi's sixth speech.
142. Al-Baghdadi's sixth speech.
143. Al-Sahab Media, "A Message from the Lion of Islam Osama bin Laden to the Islamic *Umma*," (May 19, 2008) available at www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=148375. Bin Laden's apparent nostalgia for the Ottoman Empire is deeply frowned upon by the wider body of Wahhabis who consider such romanticized reminiscences about the Sufi-patronizing and westernizing Ottomans, even if such sentiments issue from well-meaning individuals, to be "arrogant" and misguided, see Nassir al-Fahd, *Al dawlah al Uthmaniyyah wa mawqif daawet al sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab minha* (undated) available at www.tawhed.ws.
144. The varying forms of the *bayaah* ("pledge of allegiance"), and what their different wordings signify, deserve further study that is beyond the scope of this paper. Ad-Dumaiji addresses these issues in *Al imamah al udhma*, pp. 112-123, also see Abdel Hakim Hassan, *Al bayaa suwaruha wa wujub al wafa biha* (undated), available at www.tawhed.ws. The al-Ekhlaas thread for pledging allegiance to al-Baghdadi begins at <http://www.aekhlaas.net/forum/showthread.php?t=47428>. The first pledge to the "caliph of the Muslims" was made on February 22, 2007 by the pseudonymous Muhibb al Irhab' ('Lover of Terrorism') who is tagged as the 'Deputy General Supervisor' of al-Ekhlaas. Muhibb al Irhab claims to be posting from "the land of the caliphate." By June 16, 2008, the number of responses to this thread had reached 1,214 posts.
145. Central Intelligence Agency director General Michael Hayden in Joby Warrick, "U.S. Cites Big Gains Against al-Qaeda," *Washington Post* (May 30, 2008); U.S. ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker in Adrian Croft, "al-Qaeda in Iraq Never Closer to Defeat—US Envoy," *Reuters* (May 24, 2008); acting CENTCOM chief Gen. Martin Dempsey in Robert Burns, "Commander: al Qaida in Iraq at its weakest," *Associated Press* (May 21, 2008).
146. For a discussion on the secondary role played by the Sunni tribes and militias in bringing about the improved security situation in their areas, see Nibras Kazimi, "Let Beast Devour Beasts," *New York Sun* (June 19, 2007) and Nibras Kazimi, "Of Tribes and Men," *New York Sun* (September 23, 2007).
147. Nibras Kazimi, "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted February 28, 2007) available at <http://talismanigate.blogspot.com/2007/02/oh-brother-where-art-thou.html>.
148. Nibras Kazimi, "Fascinating: the Jihadist Admit Defeat in Iraq," *Talisman Gate blog* (posted May 15, 2008) available at <http://talismanigate.blogspot.com/2008/05/fascinating-jihadists-admit-defeat-in.html>.
149. Nibras Kazimi, "Calling All Caliphs," *New York Sun* (October 12, 2005)
150. Al-Baghdadi's fourth speech.