



Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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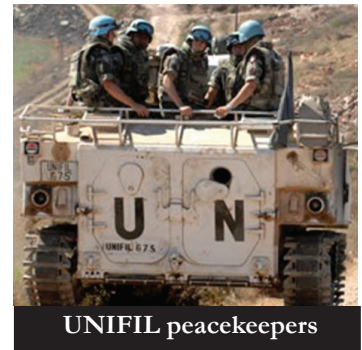
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1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320
Washington, DC • 20036
Tel: (202) 483-8888
Fax: (202) 483-8337

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RESURRECTED BOKO HARAM CHIEF THREATENS UNITED STATES

As the first anniversary of a bloody five day Islamist rebellion in northern Nigeria approaches, Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno State, is awash in heavily armed riot police and intelligence officials. Their presence is in reaction to spreading rumors of an imminent rebellion to be led by a man police still insist is dead – Imam Abubakr Shekau. Formerly deputy leader of the radical Boko Haram movement, Shekau was declared dead following vicious street fighting last year between movement members and Nigeria’s security forces (AFP, July 31, 2009).

Boko Haram has existed under various names since 1995. Mallam Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf took control of the group in 2002 when its founder left to pursue religious studies in Medina. Yusuf led the group in a more militant direction, and by 2004 it had begun attacks on police outposts (*Vanguard* [Lagos], August 4, 2009). The movement broke into open rebellion last July in fighting that spread over four states, killing nearly 800 people. Security forces dealt with the rebels ruthlessly. Mallam Yusuf was captured by the army on July 30, 2009 and turned over to the police, who later dumped his naked and mutilated body in the street, still wearing handcuffs (al-Jazeera, February 9). Police were videotaped executing suspected members of Boko Haram, leading to the March arrest of seventeen policemen identified from the footage (*Daily Independent* [Lagos], March 1, al-Jazeera, March 1; *Guardian* [Lagos], March 4; see *Terrorism Monitor*, March 26).

A new video was posted to jihadi websites last week in which Shekau directed the movement's wrath at a new target – the United States (Ansar al-Mujahideen, July 11). Describing Americans as “infidels, hypocrites and apostates” in his Hausa language address, Shekau warns “Do not think jihad is over. Rather, jihad has just begun... America, die with your fury.” The Boko Haram leader announced he has taken the leadership of Boko Haram and used part of the video to eulogize Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the late leaders of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Qaeda in Iraq, respectively.

Police first learned last December that videos of Shekau threatening revenge on security forces were circulating through mobile telephones, but declared the images were digitally manipulated (*Daily Independent* [Lagos], July 3; *Nigerian Tribune*, July 7). Police believed Shekau was killed in an exchange of fire at Boko Haram's Ibn Taymiyah compound, but there were no indications his body had been recovered. Shekau claims he was indeed shot in the leg, but was rescued by “fellow believers” (*Daily Trust* [Abuja], July 1).

A journalist provided an Abuja daily with a video he shot of Shekau in April after being driven, while blindfolded, to Shekau's hideout. Despite his movement's opposition to Western civilization and education (“boko”), Shekau rationalized Boko Haram's use of firearms in stating, “Guns are not products of boko... we also can make guns, we even made and used guns” (*Daily Trust*, July 1).

Rumors that Shekau will return to Maiduguri this month to take revenge on police have filled the streets with security forces. Numerous flags believed to indicate allegiance to Boko Haram are reported to have appeared throughout the city, but Borno Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Abdu, says they are of no concern, as they differ from flags flown by the movement last year (*Daily Independent*, July 3; *Nigerian Tribune*, July 7). The police, however, are reluctant to begin raids to take the flags down, as this might ignite an already volatile situation. Rumors already claim the flags are actually being raised by the Borno State government to create an atmosphere of insecurity (*Daily Independent*, July 3).

While radical Islamist groups in northern Nigeria such as Boko Haram and Kala Kato have traditionally focused on attacks on the Nigerian federal and state governments in their attempts to establish an Islamic

caliphate, Shekau's praise of al-Qaeda and commitment to the global jihad represents a new direction for the militants.

TURKEY TURNS TO ENHANCED INTELLIGENCE AND PROFESSIONAL ARMY TO FIGHT TERRORISM

Rather than rotating short-enlistment conscript troops in and out of a completely unfamiliar battlefield, soldiers of a new Turkish paramilitary counterterrorism force will live in the mountains of southeastern Turkey for the duration of their five-year enlistment. There, the soldiers will strike in accordance with real-time intelligence rather than man static positions in the government's campaign against Kurdish militants of the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK - Kurdistan Workers Party).

In a press interview, Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul tried to describe the concept behind this new paramilitary:

Think of it as a long-service, salaried military service specializing in counterterrorism. Right now the Gendarmes serve for four years. According to our ongoing studies, these personnel can also volunteer to do five years service and get a good salary. But when this period is up their ties with the state will end also. For example, they will not get a pension (*Radikal* [Istanbul], July 17).

While Gonul says it has not yet been decided whether to go with fresh recruits under 25 or to recruit older, more experienced men who have completed their military service, he made it quite clear that applicants should not expect a career in state service.

There has been some debate in the government as to whether the new force should come under the command of the police or the General Staff. Some reports suggest the Prime Minister favors a kind of joint command, such as that of the Gendarmerie, with some command functions under the General Staff and others under the newly created anti-terrorist Undersecretariat of Public Security (*Today's Zaman*, July 17).

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said efficiency will increase and losses will decrease by deploying a highly-trained force with knowledge of the local terrain and conditions: “Our aim is to designate only professional personnel at our borders” (*Journal of the*

Turkish Weekly, July 16). Deputy Premier Cemil Cicek insisted the new force would not be “a separate army or be under the responsibility of a separate commander,” but suggested a professional formation specializing in counterterrorism would be able to respond much more quickly to changes in terrorists’ methods, targets and rhetoric. Moreover, by spending the term of their enlistment on the border, they will be able to “differentiate between the terrorists and innocent people” (WorldBulletin.net, July 17). Though the exact size of the force has yet to be determined, it is expected to consist of six brigades including six commando teams, a total of roughly 30,000 troops (*Milliyet*, July 15).

By constantly rotating men out of the force after their enlistment term is up and returning them to the private sector, the government appears to be trying to avoid the establishment of unauthorized units like the Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terorle Mucadele (JITEM), which ran a vicious war of its own in southeastern Turkey within the official command of the Gendarmerie (see *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 28, 2009). This was one of the concerns expressed by Demokratik Sol Parti (DSP – Democratic Left Party) leader Masum Turker in a meeting with the Prime Minister (*Today’s Zaman*, July 16). The deputy chairman of the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP – Republican People’s Party), Akif Hamzacebi, warned that the new unit could develop into a parallel institution within the existing military (*Hurriyet*, July 14). Mehmet Sandir, the Deputy Chairman of the right-wing Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP – Nationalist Movement Party) – currently in the midst of a feud with the Prime Minister – described the new force as “a private army” and insisted that “Turkey’s efforts to build a professional army outside of the TSK and in line with EU demands are inappropriate, insincere and lacking seriousness” (*Today’s Zaman*, July 16). The pro-Kurdish Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi (BDP – Peace and Democracy Party) warned that the new unit would only repeat the mistakes of special operations units in the southeastern provinces in the 1990s (*Today’s Zaman*, July 17).

The United States has indicated through its ambassador that it is ready to “review urgently any new requests from the Turkish military or government regarding the PKK” (AFP, June 21). The United States, which controls airspace over Iraq, has already given Turkey permission to fly its new Israeli-built Heron unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over northern Iraq, providing the TSK with the type of real-time intelligence it complained it was not receiving on a steady basis from the United

States (*Today’s Zaman*, July 15). Turkey, however, is not neglecting its own intelligence capabilities. It is currently reassessing its intelligence network in the border region, with an eye to a new emphasis on the collection of human intelligence by the Milli Istihbarat Teskilati (MIT – National Intelligence Organization). The agency reportedly intends to deploy 2,000 agents in the region, many of them recruited locally (*Today’s Zaman*, July 15).

Disappointed in the many delays involved in delivery of the Israeli Herons, Turkey has commissioned Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) to build its own medium-altitude long-endurance UAVs. The first TIHA (Turksansız Hava Aracı – Turkish UAV) was completed on July 16 and delivery to the military will begin in 2011 (*Hurriyet*, July 15; *Today’s Zaman*, June 30). The ten meter long UAV has advanced surveillance equipment, a ceiling of 30,000 feet and can remain in the air for 24 hours (TAI.com). There are also reports that Turkey is looking to purchase Predator and Reaper UAVs from the United States (*Today’s Zaman*, July 15).

The creation of the new counterterrorist force may be seen as one phase in the TSK’s gradual transition into a leaner, more professional force from its existing Cold War model of an oversized conscript army.

South Lebanon’s Shiites Clash with French Peacekeepers – A Hezbollah Strategy?

By Ronan McGee

A series of clashes in southern Lebanon between peacekeeping troops of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and local residents have raised concerns that hostilities may escalate along the Israeli-Lebanese border. Tensions have been running high in the Levant since Israel accused Syria in April of providing Hezbollah with Scud missiles (see *Terrorism Monitor*, April 23). The Lebanese army reportedly plans to send between 3,000 and 5,000 more soldiers to southern Lebanon to maintain the calm (*The*

Daily Star [Beirut], July 9). France, a major contributor to UNIFIL, has also called for an emergency UN Security Council meeting in order to reaffirm both UNIFIL's freedom of movement and Security Council Resolution 1701, which set the conditions for ending the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah.

The most recent exchange between UNIFIL soldiers and residents of southern Lebanon occurred last week when civilians – outraged after UNIFIL arrested a local youth – attacked two vehicles belonging to the French contingent near the village of Kabrikha (Press TV [Tehran], July 4). The patrol was attacked a second time in the village of Tuline. Locals reportedly punctured the vehicles' tires, smashed the windows and attempted to seize mounted weapons, despite warning shots being fired by the soldiers. UNIFIL reinforcements and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) subsequently intervened, recovering stolen weapons and restoring peace (*Jerusalem Post*, July 3). The incident came several days after another UNIFIL patrol was attacked during a “maximum deployment exercise” (Ya Libnan, July 7).

The events prompted a string of meetings last week between high-level Lebanese officials (including Prime Minister Saad Hariri), various top Lebanese army officers, UNIFIL commanders, and UN Special Envoy to Lebanon Michael Williams. UNIFIL Force Commander Major-General Alberto Asarta Cuevas met with Israeli military officials as well as local villagers.

Local residents maintain the attacks against UNIFIL occurred because the peacekeeping unit's French contingent has become increasingly “provocative” and “suspicious” over the past three months by conducting intrusive village searches and taking culturally insensitive photographs (Reuters, July 9).

A likelier scenario, however, is that Hezbollah orchestrated the backlash, a belief shared by some security sources (al-Jazeera, July 4; *An-Nahar* [Beirut], July 8; *The National* [Abu Dhabi], July 8). The group enjoys wide support in southern Lebanon, and reports that some protests were “clearly organized” suggest Hezbollah had a hand in mobilizing the people (al-Jazeera, July 4).

Both Hezbollah and local villagers deny such allegations, but some analysts believe the group is concerned about recent UNIFIL exercises. According to an unnamed Hezbollah military commander, French troops entered several villages around Kabrikha in June to photograph

and investigate possible Hezbollah military outposts (*The National*, July 8). Specifically, Hezbollah accuses the peacekeepers of seeking to “modify the rules of engagement” by conducting such missions without the accompaniment of the Lebanese army – a violation of Resolution 1701 (*Dar Al Hayat* [Beirut], July 8).

More critical, however, is Hezbollah's suspicion that some UNIFIL troops are carrying out espionage activities for Israel. According to Elias Hanna, a retired Lebanese army general, Israel has been spying on Hezbollah at the “micro-level” since the 2006 war (al-Jazeera, July 4). Israeli defense officials on July 7 provided surveillance photos purportedly showing Hezbollah weapons deposits in the village of Khiam and published maps showing arms stockpiles in 160 other villages in southern Lebanon (*Haaretz* [Tel Aviv], July 8). The Israeli government stated its intention to destroy these villages if war breaks out (*Asharq al-Awsat*, July 14).

Hezbollah said that Israel's release of these photos and the recent clashes between UNIFIL and locals are connected and part of an “international move” against the group (Press TV, July 10). Israel maintains that Hezbollah is actively deterring UNIFIL from entering villages where weapons are hidden. A Hezbollah arms cache blew up last year in a home in the village of Hirbeit Sleim, where residents have also held recent protests against the UNIFIL patrols (*Jerusalem Post*, July 10).

Hezbollah's international relations chief indicated that the recent events were blown out of proportion and UN envoy Williams stated that there was no crisis of trust between UNIFIL and Hezbollah (Lebanese News Agency, July 11; *al-Akhhbar* [Beirut], July 13). Furthermore, Hezbollah's political coalition faction, Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc, also maintained its support for UNIFIL (*The National*, July 8).

Regardless, there is still considerable cause for concern, as Lebanon again risks being manipulated as a theater for the rivalry of regional interests. It is possible that Iran, in an attempt to punish countries such as France for recent international sanctions, has encouraged Hezbollah to pressure UNIFIL. Similarly, Syria, in its pursuit of legitimization as a regional power, has an interest in being asked by the international community to mediate such a crisis.

Another issue is that Resolution 1701 requires the disarmament of Hezbollah. Israel has openly criticized UNIFIL for not doing enough to combat the flow of

weapons to the group, whereas the UN insists that this is the responsibility of the LAF. Hezbollah, however, will not jeopardize its ability to stockpile weapons close to the border in the event of another war with Israel. At the same time, Israel will not continue to accept Hezbollah's arms build-up. If UNIFIL's ability to move freely continues to be compromised by Hezbollah, or if Israel believes the peacekeepers continue to fall short on issues related to its national security, there is potential for another war along the border.

Ronan McGee is an M.A. candidate in Middle East Studies at George Washington University. He studied Arabic in Yemen in 2007 and in Lebanon in 2010. He works for a global risk consultancy in the Washington, D.C. area.

Uyghurs Convicted in East Turkestan Islamic Movement Plot in Dubai

By Raffaello Pantucci

On June 29, a court in Dubai found two ethnic Uyghurs guilty of plotting to attack a massive shopping mall made up of 400 shops selling Chinese-made goods (*The National* [Abu Dhabi], June 30). This attempted attack was not only the first terrorist plot to be disrupted in Dubai, but also the first time that a cell tied to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) has taken aim at a Chinese target outside of China and Central Asia. In what appears to have been intended as a largely symbolic attack, the Uyghurs' target was not the mall itself, but a statue outside the mall of a dragon wrapped around a large globe.

According to court documents, key plotter Mayma Ytiming Shalmo, 35, was first recruited by ETIM in Mecca in 2006. [1] While in Saudi Arabia, possibly on Hajj, Shalmo met the deputy leader of ETIM, with whom he discussed the "premise of jihad in China." Having agreed that he was interested in doing something about the Uyghurs' plight, Shalmo traveled with the deputy leader to Pakistan's Waziristan region and was

trained in weapons and how to manufacture explosives from easily available materials. He was then introduced to ETIM's electronics expert, who taught him how to make detonators. Shalmo claims to have spent a year at the mujahideen camps.

After his year of training, Shalmo was given orders from the head of ETIM, relayed through the deputy, to target the Dragon Mart mall in Dubai. He flew from Islamabad to Dubai on July 28, 2007 and spent autumn in Dubai, twice visiting the mall on what were presumed to be scouting missions. He then left the country and went back to Saudi Arabia before re-entering the UAE on December 22, 2007 by bus. At this point, his co-conspirator, Wimiyyar Ging Kimili, 31, also an ethnic Uyghur, entered the picture, giving Shalmo a place to live upon his return to Dubai. At some point during this period, the men entered into discussions about China and jihad, and Kimili agreed to help Shalmo in his operation.

From a practical perspective, Kimili's assistance appears to have been essential. Shalmo apparently spoke neither Arabic nor English, and thus would have been completely reliant on Kimili to go with him to purchase the necessary materials from pharmacies and paint supply shops. When police captured the men, they had in their possession alcohol, potassium permanganate, aluminum, chloride acid, nitric acid, hydrochloric acid, sulfur, acetone and other "tools to be used in the preparation of explosives."

It is unclear exactly when or why the local police started watching the men. According to one report, they were first alerted by the local Chinese Embassy, which was monitoring the men due to their ethnicity. The same report, however, also highlights that in court documents released in January, the men were first noticed after they made a 50,000 Dirham (\$13,600) wire transfer to China, which was then forwarded to Saudi Arabia (*The National*, June 30). The implication is that this was funding for the attack, though the purpose of these transfers remains unclear, as is who first noticed the money movement. In court documents released at the end of the trial, Kimili describes Shalmo receipt of \$10,000 via a hawala network from Turkey to fund the plot.

The same court documents released at the conclusion of the trial highlight the fact that local security services were first alerted to the men in early June 2008 after receiving information that Shalmo was a known ETIM

member who was planning an operation in the UAE. They appear to have wasted little time in obtaining a court order to search his property, and on June 28, 2008 they raided his house in al-Ain, discovering the chemicals and other equipment. During his interrogation, Shalmo admitted Kimili's role in the plot and his help in obtaining the bomb making materials. On July 16, 2008, police arrested Kimili.

Kimili claimed during the trial that, fearing for his family, he had a change of heart about the attack and told Shalmo of his concerns. At this point, he claimed that Shalmo "told him he wanted the chemicals only to use them for black magic" (*The National*, July 9).

Casting a shadow over the case was the allegation that the men's initial confessions had been coerced "through fear," though the court ultimately dismissed this claim, saying fear alone does not constitute coercion. Furthermore, the trial was delayed while the courts sought out relevant interpreters – in the end translations had to be made first from Arabic into Mandarin and then into Uyghur (and vice versa). Translators were apparently provided by the Chinese Embassy, which also sent representatives to attend the duration of the trial (*The National*, June 30).

The men were ultimately given sentences of ten years each, with the court noting the attack was ultimately aimed at the UAE, as the mall is government owned. The death penalty, the usual tariff for terrorism charges in Dubai, was dismissed by the court since the plot was still in its "preliminary stages" (*The National*, June 30). However, upon release both men are to be deported, presumably to China, where they will likely face further punishment as admitted members of ETIM.

Raffaello Pantucci is an Associate Fellow at the International Center for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR).

Note

1. Unless otherwise indicated, the information is based on court documents released by the courts at the conclusion of the trial. The ETIM leader and deputy leader went unnamed in those documents.

Tawhid al-Hakimiyah - A Jihadi Achilles Heel?

By Jack Barclay

Salafism, the Islamic reformist current that first appeared in the Middle East in the 19th century, is a more diverse movement than many observers initially assume. Like other Islamic movements, it now encompasses a wide variety of distinct sub-sets, each with its own scholars and emphasis on the study and practice of particular concepts.

It will surprise few readers that doctrinal disagreements often occur between the various schools of Salafism. Of particular interest in counterterrorism terms, however, are the rifts between followers of the more apolitical, "establishment" schools and those of a violent offshoot of Salafism, Salafi-Jihadism. What is perhaps more surprising is that these disagreements persist over interpretations of some of Islam's most fundamental concepts, on which, it might be assumed, virtually all Muslims agree. Such fissures may have wider counterterrorism implications.

One particular area of perpetual disagreement concerns the application of the concept of Tawhid, or the "oneness" of Allah. As a monotheistic religion, Tawhid is intrinsically accepted by virtually all Muslims. When a Muslim makes his or her shahadah, or declaration of faith, they state their belief in one God, who is without partner, and that there is nothing else which is to be worshipped, followed, or obeyed besides him. [1]. The Salafi-Jihadi interpretation of Tawhid's practical obligations remains one of a number of potential doctrinal vulnerabilities in the ideology of the global Salafi-Jihadi movement, including its justification for declaring Muslim governments and individuals apostate (takfir). A deeper understanding of the intra-Salafi debates on the core issues underpinning the Islamic legitimacy of groups such as al-Qaeda and their choice of targets offers an opportunity for the counterterrorism community to increase the effectiveness of their response to Islamist radicalization.

Tawhid and its Categories

To assist in the clear and comprehensive instruction of Muslims in the various aspects and obligations of Tawhid and to bolster the religion against doctrinal innovation, classical Islamic scholars divided the concept into a

number of categories. While there is much diversity of opinion on the validity of these classifications, three of the most widely-accepted are:

- Tawhid al-Rububiyah: Oneness of Allah's lordship, or the belief that there is only one God (Allah) and that nothing else is equal to him.
- Tawhid al-Uluhiyah: Allah is the only One God who is worthy of worship, and that there is nothing to be worshipped, followed, or obeyed except Allah.
- Tawhid al-Asma wa'l-Sifaat: Oneness of Allah's many names and attributes, without deviation, alteration, or similitude.

Salafists stress that these terms will not be found in either the Quran or Sunnah, but that they are merely tools to aid the most accurate and complete teaching of Tawhid possible.

Oneness of Legislation and Jihadi Ideology

A controversial issue relating to the study and application of Tawhid has re-surfaced with the growth of the Salafi-Jihadi movement, which emphasizes one aspect in particular: Tawhid al-Hakimiyah, or oneness of Allah's judgement and legislation. The debate over the validity of this concept has typically taken the form of a fatwa (religious judgement) issued by leading scholars of the Saudi religious establishment, and opposing fatwas by the shaykhs of the Salafi-Jihad. More recently, the debate has turned to the internet.

The term Tawhid al-Hakimiyah is derived from the Arabic word "hukm" (legislation or law), and in this context refers to the obligation to rule only by what Allah has revealed, and associating no other forms of legislation with it. Some Salafi scholars sub-divide Tawhid al-Hakimiyah into four categories:

- Al-Futiyah – the issuance of Fatwa
- Al-Qa'dthaa' – judicial rulings
- Management of public affairs in accordance with Shari'a
- Adoption of rulings, or the adoption of divine laws as dictated by the Quran and Sunnah

It should be stressed that the controversy is not over the basic principle of the oneness of Allah's legislation, but rather its characterization as a separate category of Tawhid. For many Salafists, it is thought unnecessary to create a separate category of Tawhid to specifically educate Muslims in the importance of the oneness of Allah's legislation. Most of the leading contemporary Salafi scholars of Saudi Arabia have refuted as an innovation (bida) any attempt to classify Tawhid al-Hakimiyah as a fourth category of Tawhid, with the largely agreed-upon three categories being judged sufficient to fully explain Tawhid's many aspects and obligations. [2] Those scholars willing to acknowledge the classification typically claim that the concept is a sub-category of Tawhid al-Uluhiyah, though others argue it falls under Tawhid ar-Rububiyah. Still others believe it falls under both these definitions as well as under Tawhid al-Asma wa'l-Sifaat. A survey of fatwa, books, articles, and interviews with shaykhs on this issue suggests that the consensus is toward oneness of legislation falling under Tawhid al-Uluhiyah.

Political Agendas

Such introspective debates over classification are driven by a more serious fissure, however. Of greater concern to many Salafi scholars is that the prominence given by Salafi-Jihadists to Tawhid al-Hakimiyah belies political motives, not a commitment to the most complete practice of Tawhid possible. They argue that categorizing the oneness of Allah's legislation is an attempt by Salafi-Jihadists to provide clearer theological justification for their belief that modern Muslim governments, such as that in Saudi Arabia, are un-Islamic. This provides the driver with a doctrinal narrative which de-facto ends in the declaration of these governments as apostate and their legitimization as targets in a violent Jihad. According to Shaykh Muhammad Salih al-Uthaimeen, one of the 20th century's leading Saudi religious ideologues:

Whoever claims that there is a fourth category of tawhid under the title 'Tawhid al-Hakimiyah' is to be counted as an innovator [mubtadi]. So this is an innovated categorization which emanates from an ignorant person who does not understand anything of the affairs of aqidah [creed] and the din [religion]. [3]

Another leading Saudi Salafi shaykh, Abdullah ibn Ghudayyan, warned of the true designs of those seeking to elevate the status of Tawhid al-Hakimiyah when he remarked:

The follower of truth will reflect and see the harm caused by those who raised the banner of al-Hakimiyah, intending by it purely political agendas and what is attached to it of violent and bloody revolutions and a destructive jihad against the Muslims themselves, let alone the non-Muslims. [4]

The doctrinal narrative used by Salafi-Jihadists to underpin ‘Jihad against the rulers’ essentially runs as follows:

- Tawhid mandates that there is nothing that should be worshipped, followed, or obeyed other than Allah.
- Tawhid al-Hakimiyah clarifies that legislation is only for Allah and that establishing a system of governance or legislation other than what Allah has revealed is a sin.
- Establishing such systems is in effect an attempt to associate partners with Allah. This is an act of shirk akhbar (major polytheism) which takes a Muslim outside the fold of Islam.
- The Quran and Sunnah mandate a Muslim to excommunicate such apostates and to fight them until Tawhid is established. Many of the rulers of Muslim countries and the governments they have established are based on man-made legislation and not Shari’a, which they refuse to fully implement. Their disobedience of Shari’a makes these governments apostate and it is obligatory (fard) for Muslims to overthrow them.

Jihadist Scholars Respond

The refutations of establishment scholars have been dismissed by Salafi-Jihadists, who typically argue that pro-state clerics have labelled them innovators as part of an agreement with their apostate paymasters to mask the full extent of a Muslim’s obligations to fully implement Shari’a. They list scores of verses from the Quran as proof of the prominence given by Allah to Muslims striving to implement his rule on earth. They also cite a range of classical and contemporary scholars who

have stressed the importance of Tawhid al-Hakimiyah in making Muslims aware of the need to eliminate all forms of legislation in favor of Shari’a. [5] Even those who concede that it cannot officially be classified as a fourth pillar of Tawhid are suspicious of scholars who relegate it to a sub-category. This, they believe, is often an attempt by pro-establishment “palace scholars” to conceal Tawhid al-Hakimiyah’s importance from Muslims.

Abu Qatada al-Filistini, the Salafi-Jihadi ideologue once described as “al-Qaeda’s spiritual ambassador in Europe,” has written and spoken at length on the Salafi-Jihadi interpretation of Tawhid al-Hakimiyah. [6] Abu Qatada has argued that Tawhid al-Hakimiyah is a valid classification of Tawhid and rejected the claim that it is an innovation; all classifications of Tawhid, he argues, are matters of ijthihad (interpretation) and are not categorizations based on solid proof from the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore, he says, they cannot be innovations. Abu Qatada claims that, as with other classifications of Tawhid, Tawhid al-Hakimiyah is used in order to educate Muslims on the various aspects and obligations of Tawhid, and nothing more. However, he adds, given the current state of governance across the Muslim world, Tawhid al-Hakimiyah is a valuable and important tool to counter those Muslims who argue against full implementation of Allah’s laws.

Another leading Salafi-Jihadi ideologue, Shaykh Abu Basir al-Tartusi, describes Tawhid al-Hakimiyah as a sub-division of Tawhid al-Uluhiyah, but argues that it is an important and necessary classification. [7]

Significance and Implications

From a counterterrorism perspective, it may initially be difficult to appreciate how seemingly esoteric theological debates, refutations, and counter-refutations such as those discussed above could have even an indirect bearing on national security. However, the outcome of such debates between Salafi-Jihadists and their opponents within the Salafi community may have a longer-term strategic affect on the mobilizing potential of the jihadi message, and in turn the survival and growth of the movement as a whole. To be characterized by leading clerics as religious deviants in their interpretation of the most fundamental cornerstone of Islam challenges the Jihadists’ perceived legitimacy, which rests in large part on their claims to be the only contemporary sect practicing Islam in full accordance with the example

of the Prophet Muhammad and the Companions. One of the harshest criticisms meted out by Salafi-Jihadists against adherents of other Islamic sects is that their belief and practice has become polluted by innovation and polytheism – to be accused of the same sin by rival Salafists (including many of Salafism’s most respected ideologues), therefore has the potential to severely damage the appeal of Salafi-Jihadism.

Such debates are firstly a reminder for counterterrorism analysts and policy-makers of the potential fragility of this movement’s ideological undercarriage. A recent brief survey of postings on Salafi-Jihadi internet forums suggests the movement is painfully conscious of such vulnerabilities, and is hence eager to refute its detractors whenever it is the target of doctrinal criticism. For example, many members of the more committed Salafi-Jihadi forums have cautioned forum participants to identify and shun anyone posting suspected “bait comments” designed to draw them into a potentially damaging doctrinal spat. Nevertheless, these same participants in many cases find it almost impossible not to refute at length those who start discussions on contentious issues such Tawhid al-Hakimiyah, not to mention other perceived doctrinal weaknesses. As academics such as Dr. Jarret Brachman have noted, the jihadists’ own discourse is often the counterterrorism community’s best guide on the areas of Salafi-Jihadi doctrine most open to attack. [8]

Remote observation of this important discourse, though its relevance in counterterrorism terms may at times appear tenuous, firstly equips analysts and strategic communications practitioners with deeper insight into their adversaries’ ideology and worldview. It may also help them identify contentious aspects of that ideology that might be vulnerable to targeted communications designed to expose weaknesses in the Salafi-Jihadi message.

Jack Barclay is an independent consultant on the use of strategic communication to counter violent extremism. He is based in the United Kingdom, where he holds a Fellowship in Strategic Communication at the UK Defence Academy.

Notes

1. A useful English-language reference work on Tawhid is the Dr. Salih al Fawzan’s *Concise Collection Creed and Tawhid*, Al Maiman Publishing House (2009). The Collection includes an abridged version of the classic Salafi study of Tawhid, *Kitab al-Tawhid*, by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

2. Examples of such refutations include that of Saleh al-Fawzan, a leading Saudi Salafi Shaykh. See: <http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=MNJ07&articleID=MNJ070005&articlePages=1> . Similar refutations were issued by Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani, a hugely influential Salafi ideologue from Albania who died in 1999. See: <http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=MNJ07&articleID=MNJ070002&articlePages=1> . A further refutation of Tawhid al-Hakimiyah as a fourth category of Tawhid was written by Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Saleh al-Uthaimen, one of the most prominent Salafi scholars of the last century (d. 2001). See: <http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=MNJ07&articleID=MNJ070004&articlePages=1>

3. “Shaykh Muhammad bin Saalih al-Uthaymeen: Tawhid al-Haakimiyyah As a Fourth Category Comes from an Ignorant Muftadi,” <http://www.themadkhalis.com/md/articles/prtli-shaykh-muhammad-bin-saalih-al-uthaymeen-on-tawhid-al-haakimiyyah-as-a-fourth-category.cfm>

4. “Shaikh Salih al-Fawzaan on Tawheed ul-Haakimiyyah,” <http://abdurrahman.org/tawheed/haakimiyyahFawzaan.html>

5. Classical scholars often cited by jihadists who have written at length on this issue include Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the ideological founder of the Wahhabi movement. Contemporary Salafist ideologues that have written and spoken on this subject include Abu Qatada al-Filistini, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Basir al-Tartusi, and Abdul Qadir Ibn Abdul-Aziz.

6. Abu Qatada al-Filistini (real name: Omar Mahmud Othman) is one of the most influential and widely respected living Salafi-Jihadi ideologues. He is currently in detention in the UK, where he is fighting extradition to his native Jordan on terrorism charges. For a summary of Abu Qatada’s position on Tawhid al-Hakimiyah, see the following interview at: http://salafiyyah.jadeedah.tripod.com/Hakimiyah/Divisions_of_Tawheed.htm

7. Shaykh Abu Basir al-Tartusi (real name: Abd-al Mun’em Mustafa Halima) is a Syrian Salafi-Jihadi ideologue residing in London. He is considered by many of his supporters to be one of the pre-eminent contemporary thought-leaders of the global Salafi-Jihad. A summary of Abu Basir al-Tartusi’s position on this issue can be found on the English language version of his web site: <http://www.en.altartosi.com/haakimiyyah.htm>

8. See Jarret Brachman, *Global Jihadism; Theory and Practice* (London, 2009).