

# CTC WORKING PAPER

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## Zarqawi's Jihad

Inside the Mind of Iraq's  
Most Notorious Man

BRIAN FISHMAN

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Combating Terrorism Center at West Point  
607 Cullum Road  
United States Military Academy  
West Point, NY 10996

<http://www.ctc.usma.edu>

To obtain additional information on this working paper,  
contact Mr. Brian Fishman at [brian.fishman@usma.edu](mailto:brian.fishman@usma.edu)

*“Killing is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It is more congenial to our hearts that the people should be guided to Islam than that we should have to kill them.”*

**-ABU HAMZAH AL-BAGHDADI,  
ZARQAWI’S CHIEF SPIRITUAL ADVISOR-**

## **BACKGROUND**

In the three years after September 11, Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi transformed from a small-time jihadist leader at odds with Osama bin Laden into the most notorious Al Qaeda leader in Iraq. He has terrorized everyday Iraqis, targeted U.S. troops, and threatened to spread violence across the Middle East. But Zarqawi’s significance in the multifaceted Iraqi insurgency remains unclear.

The revelation of an ongoing U.S. information campaign to inflate Zarqawi’s role in the insurgency angers critics, even as U.S. officials argue that it is a successful program to isolate Zarqawi and build relationships with native Iraqis.<sup>1</sup> Critics counter that American citizens are the campaign’s real targets, and that magnifying Zarqawi’s role in the insurgency is a political maneuver to tie the Iraq invasion to Al Qaeda.

Meanwhile, the Arabic press is full of provocative, but unverifiable, claims that the U.S. focus on Zarqawi before and after the invasion empowered his recruiting efforts and ultimately made him more dangerous.

This article does not attempt to answer any of those arguments. It is not an operational assessment of Zarqawi’s relative importance in the Iraqi insurgency. Neither is it an apology for nor an indictment of the Administration’s handling of Iraq. This article is not specifically about the brutal things Zarqawi does with his hands; the bombings and the beheadings. Rather, this article is about the ideas that drive that behavior. Understandably, but unfortunately, Zarqawi’s brutal tactics often cloud our ability to understand his ideas—and thereby his strategy and goals. This article provides some of the tools to do so.

# Zarqawi's Jihad

Brian Fishman\*

This study examines Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's ideas in order to discover doctrinal weaknesses that can be exploited. It is important to understand that Zarqawi's approach to ideology is different than most violent salafist leaders because he lacks an extensive formal education. He compensates for this weakness by depending on theological advisors more than other salafist leaders. Four scholars stand out—Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Abdallah al-Muhajir, Abu Anas al-Shami, and Abu Hamzah al-Baghdadi. Zarqawi worked with al-Maqdisi in Jordan, al-Muhajir in Afghanistan, and al-Shami in Iraq. Al-Baghdadi still advises him today.

At different points in Zarqawi's development, these men have both introduced Zarqawi to new ideas and justified his brutal tactics. For example, al-Muhajir convinced Zarqawi that suicide bombings are theologically acceptable; al-Shami embodied the ideal mix of soldier and scholar; and al-Maqdisi prioritized unflinching confrontation with Arab governments.

Zarqawi's advisors provide critical context for understanding his ideological and strategic statements. A study of every major statement he has released since entering Iraq reveals six key ideological elements that should be understood and, if possible, exploited by U.S. policymakers. They are:

- *Embracing social, political, and religious isolation*, which is characterized by Zarqawi's nickname "*al-gharib*," —the stranger;
- *Enmity toward the Shi'a*, which informs both Zarqawi's goals in Iraq and his strategy for achieving them;
- *Applauding suicide terrorism*, which heralded Zarqawi's use of the tactic;

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\* Brian Fishman is an Associate in the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy.

- *Focus on the 'Near Enemy,'* rather than the 'Far Enemy' favored by Al Qa'ida;
- *Rejection of traditional notions of combatants and civilians; and*
- *Antipathy for scholars* who advocate jihad but do not fight themselves.

These ideological positions reflect both Zarqawi's intellectual heritage and his operational experiences. It is not always clear whether Zarqawi's ideology is driving strategy or his ideological positions are mere justifications of his military behavior. This distinction may even have become clouded in Zarqawi's mind. It is clear, however, that Zarqawi's approach to ideology is often very pragmatic, particularly on tactical issues.

For example, Zarqawi's alignment with Al Qa'ida does not reflect ideological alignment between the two groups. Rather, theirs is a political relationship enabled by the U.S presence in Iraq, which reduced the functional implications of Zarqawi's historical disagreement with Al Qa'ida over whether to prioritize attacks on the "near" or "far" enemy. Despite this relationship, Zarqawi's political strategy is failing in Iraq. This failure will likely compel him to disperse his veteran forces outside of Iraq, which is good news for Iraqis, but extremely dangerous because it means distributing veteran fighters around the region and the world. Zarqawi will attempt to anticipate and capitalize on events, including a possible U.S. strike against Iran. Although he will remain flexible, Zarqawi's most likely target is Syria.

The U.S. has plausible policy options for dealing with Zarqawi. For example, the U.S. can exploit Zarqawi's ideological disagreements with Al Qa'ida by increasing the functional implications of those differences. This can be achieved primarily by publicly distancing itself from Arab governments, including Iraq's. Ideology kept Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida separate once before; it may again. Further, U.S. information campaigns should be carefully designed to weaken the internal ideological bonds in Zarqawi's organization rather than unintentionally strengthen them. The U.S. should also aim to support and strengthen Arab civil society. Strong civil institutions are critical for democratic development, will strengthen social resistance to extremism, and provide a basis for allies should Zarqawi challenge another regional government.

## INTRODUCTION

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi is the most notorious terrorist leader in Iraq, but he is very different from many of Al Qaeda's prototypical shaykhs. Most importantly, he lacks the academic pedigree of most salafist leaders. To compensate, Zarqawi depends heavily on ideological mentors for the theological guidance that informs his strategies and tactics. Those advisors are important sources of information on Zarqawi's ideological outlook and his strategic perspective. This article explores the influence of those mentors on Zarqawi's strategy, explains the significance of Zarqawi's ideology on his strategic perspective, and prescribes policy responses that exploit the weaknesses that Zarqawi's ideology creates for his organization and the global jihadist movement.

Section One explains Zarqawi's historical relationship with four scholars—Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Abdallah al-Muhajir, Abu Anas al-Shami, and Abu Hamzah al-Baghdadi. Their theological beliefs, behavior, and attitudes about violence shape Zarqawi's thinking and contribute to the terrorist he is today. In some cases Zarqawi explicitly credits these scholars with introducing him to new concepts that affect his operations in Iraq and beyond.

Section Two describes Zarqawi's relationship with Al Qaeda, both in Afghanistan and during his tenure in Iraq. This is important because Zarqawi's doctrinal stances suggest that his alliance with Al Qaeda is not based on ideological synergy, but is a result of a realpolitik assessment of aligned interests.

Section Three describes six key ideological concepts that inform and motivate Zarqawi's strategic choices, including his alliances, his tactics, and, ultimately, his understanding of who and what threatens his ability to achieve his goals.

Section Four applies the lessons learned in the first three sections to develop realistic conclusions and policy prescriptions to mitigate Zarqawi's effectiveness and improve U.S. national security. The most important are:

1. Divide Zarqawi from Al Qaeda and the wider jihadist movement.
2. Exploit Zarqawi's ideological extremism.
3. Prepare for Zarqawi to refocus his energy outside of Iraq.
4. Zarqawi will exploit any military action against Iran.
5. The United States should empower and strengthen Arab civil society.
6. Zarqawi's political strategy is failing, but his military strategy is still being employed.

## SECTION ONE: ZARQAWI'S MENTORS

### *ZARQAWI'S BIOGRAPHY*

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi was born Ahmad Fadil al-Khalayilah on October 30, 1966 in the city of Zarqa, which sits among Palestinian refugee camps northeast of Amman, Jordan.<sup>2</sup> Zarqawi was a Bedouin born into the Bani-Hasan tribe, one of Jordan's largest. Exposed to the writings of Abdallah Azzam, Zarqawi decided to go on jihad in Afghanistan just as the Mujahidin were completing their victory over the Soviets. Although he saw only limited action, it was there that he met his first mentor.

### *ABU MOHAMMAD AL-MAQDISI*

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, after meeting at a mutual friend's home in Pakistan, formed *Bay'at al-Imam* in order to extend the call of Islam in their home country of Jordan.<sup>3</sup> Al-Maqdisi was a widely known scholar that championed the concept—now commonly held among salifists—that democracy represents a form of polytheism. Zarqawi was a man of action eager to be an operational leader.

The two were ultimately jailed in 1994 after they were caught with explosives. Their time in prison is often considered critical for Zarqawi's ideological development because he had the opportunity to study under al-Maqdisi, who advocated unflinching confrontation with apostate governments in the Mid East—a focus on the “near enemy” that Zarqawi maintains today.

Although less focused on violence than some, Al-Maqdisi's approach was controversial even among salafists. Publicly excommunicating government officials claiming to be Muslims is an extreme tactic. Al-Maqdisi claims it was so controversial that even Osama bin Laden refused to use his texts regarding the Saudi regime because they would have alienated Al Qa'ida's constituency within the kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

After Zarqawi and al-Maqdisi were released from prison in 1999 their relationship deteriorated dramatically. Indeed, since 2004 they have carried on a very public feud in which al-Maqdisi has repeatedly criticized Zarqawi's tactics in Iraq.<sup>5</sup> This feud provides some of the context for the now famous letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Zarqawi in the summer of 2005. In it, al-Zawahiri repeated many of al-Maqdisi's criticisms. Zarqawi adamantly criticized al-

Maqdisi for advising him despite al-Maqdisi failing to go on jihad himself. Ultimately, Zarqawi explicitly rejected this model of leadership when he argued that scholars far from the battlefield have no authority to lead.<sup>6</sup>

*ABU ABDALLAH AL-MUHAJIR*

After being released from prison, Zarqawi returned to Afghanistan. Unwilling to submit to Al Qaeda's direct authority because of doctrinal differences (discussed in Section 2), Zarqawi organized his own jihadist training camp outside of Herat, Afghanistan and called the group *Jund al-Sham*—Soldiers of the Levant.<sup>7</sup> While there, Zarqawi met Shaykh Abu-Abdallah al-Muhajir, who convinced him that suicide bombings were acceptable. Previously, Zarqawi had followed al-Maqdisi's teaching that suicide attacks were unacceptable in Islamic law. This change of heart facilitated Zarqawi's campaign in Iraq and underscores the impact ideology has on terrorist behavior.

Little is known about al-Muhajir, but postings on Al Qaeda linked websites claim that al-Muhajir opposed Osama bin Laden's association with the Taliban during the 1990s because of the Taliban's willingness to engage the international community.<sup>8</sup> It is not surprising that Zarqawi was drawn to a cleric similarly critical of Osama bin Laden's organization.<sup>9</sup> Today, al-Muhajir's whereabouts are unknown, though Zarqawi mentioned him in a 2005 polemic regarding attacks against non-combatants.

*ABU ANAS AL-SHAMI*

Zarqawi fled Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, during which his camp was targeted by U.S. forces. Reports that Shi'a militias helped drive him out are uncorroborated, but they may help explain his anti-Shi'a rhetoric in Iraq.<sup>10</sup> After a brief stop in Iran, Zarqawi crossed into the Kurdish dominated areas of Northern Iraq and began to organize for an expected U.S. invasion. Some observers, including Sayf al-Adl (Al-Qaeda's former number three leader) claim he was also motivated by a desire to follow in the footsteps of his hero, Nur al-Din. Al-Din was a Muslim hero of the crusades that was originally based near Mosul and eventually liberated Damascus.<sup>11</sup>

He was joined there by a Jordanian cleric named Abu Anas al-Shami. For Zarqawi, al-Shami typified the soldier/scholar that Zarqawi believes should lead the violent salafist movement. Al-Shami was a theologian willing to put himself at risk in battle. This attitude probably helped him smooth over apparent

ideological differences with Zarqawi. Al-Maqdisi, for one, believed that Zarqawi's relationship with al-Shami meant he was moderating.

*I was happy when I learned this (Zarqawi had accepted al-Shami) since I knew how much Abu-Mus'ab was in need of a knowledgeable scholar to support and offer him advice under the complicated circumstances in Iraq, and the war declared against him and every mujahid... I was happy for Abu-Mus'ab's flexibility. In the past, his inflexibility prevented him from merging with Al-Maida under the leadership of Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin, may God Almighty protect him. I hope that Abu-Mus'ab made this decision as result of moderation and not because he was forced to.<sup>12</sup>*

Al-Shami served as the first chief of Zarqawi's legal committee in Iraq. His role was to provide theological context and justification for Zarqawi's operations, which required a level of theological sophistication that Zarqawi—the savvy street thug—did not have.

Al-Shami's risk-taking ultimately caught up to him when he was killed by an U.S. airstrike in the fall of 2004. In a eulogy posted on Al Qa'ida related websites, Zarqawi is quoted as saying, "I have never been influenced by a scholar in my life, as I was influenced by Shaykh Abu Anas al-Shami and Shaykh Abu Abdallah al-Muhajir."<sup>13</sup>

*ABU HAMZAH AL-BAGHDADI*

After al-Shami's death, Abu Hamzah al-Baghdadi was promoted to be Zarqawi's chief legal advisor in Iraq, a role he maintained at least until the creation of the Mujahidin Shura Council. In June 2005, al-Baghdadi published a long treatise entitled *Why Do We Fight, And Whom Do We Fight?* in which he systematically justifies the Iraqi jihad in religious terms. According to al-Baghdadi, the purpose of jihad is to ensure that:

*Islamic shari'ah and the justice of Islam should have the final and supreme word on the earth (and) to eliminate the causes of corruption from the world, including idols and houses of infamy, to silence the advocates of falsehood and prevent them from influencing the people, and to destroy all powers that protect these infamous institutions.<sup>14</sup>*

It is notable that al-Baghdadi focuses on cultural rather than political goals. Al-Baghdadi does not point to the destruction of Israel or the liberation of the

Arabian Peninsula, like Al Qa'ida polemics. For him, the purpose of violent jihad is a means to fill minds with his understanding of Islam. For al-Baghdadi, jihad is proselytizing.

Al-Baghdadi was also an important force criticizing elections in Iraq. His argument, common among salafists, is that democracy is a religion that takes sovereignty away from God and puts it in the hands of men. This argument, which was made famous by Zarqawi's first mentor al-Maqdisi, enables al-Baghdadi to sincerely argue that the U.S. is fighting a religious crusade in Iraq:

*We conclude, therefore, that democracy imparts divinity to humans by giving them an absolute right to legislate. In this way, democracy turns man into a god and a partner with God in making laws for the people. This is undoubtedly disbelief...Now the West wants the Muslims to embrace its new religion, the religion of democracy, because that would bring it more gains and benefits than it had obtained from the church's religion.<sup>15</sup>*

## SECTION TWO: ZARQAWI AND AL QA'IDA

### AFGHANISTAN

When Zarqawi traveled to Afghanistan after being released from prison in Jordan, he did not seek to join Al Qa'ida because he disagreed with Al Qa'ida on doctrinal issues. Sayf al-Adl, Al Qa'ida's number three at the time, explained the most critical disagreement:

*The controversial issues with Abu-Mus'ab were neither new nor uncommon. We used to have some disagreements with hundreds of other fraternal brothers who came from various regions in the world regarding certain issues...The most important issue with Abu-Mus'ab was the stance regarding the Saudi regime and how to deal with it in light of the Islamic laws that pertain to excommunication and belief.<sup>16</sup>*

That Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida disagreed over Saudi Arabia is interesting because it suggests that Zarqawi was still heavily influenced by al-Maqdisi, who advocated direct confrontation with Arab regimes, particularly Saudi Arabia, and the excommunication of apostate leaders. Although Al Qa'ida was certainly no friend to the Saudi regime, Zarqawi and al-Maqdisi's blunt religious approach did not suit their more nuanced political strategy. This disagreement also reflects Zarqawi's focus on the "near enemy" and Al Qa'ida's spotlight on the U.S. "far enemy," a disagreement that is discussed at length in Section 3.

### IRAQ

Understanding Zarqawi's disagreements with al-Qa'ida's leadership is important because of the alliance Zarqawi ultimately formed with al-Qa'ida in 2004. If ideology kept them apart in 1999, did it bring them together five years later? This question is significant because a union based on ideological alignment between Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida would suggest a much more stable, robust long-term relationship than one based on the realpolitik of circumstantial convenience.

In October 2004, Zarqawi swore allegiance—*bay'at*—to Osama bin Laden, but only after eight months of deliberation and negotiation. Further, Zarqawi claimed that he had signed on with Al Qa'ida only after it had come "to understand the strategy of the *Tawhid wal-Jihad* organization in Iraq, the land of the two rivers and of the Caliphs, and their hearts warmed to its methods and

overall mission.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, Zarqawi submitted to Al Qa’ida’s authority only after being convinced that they respected and supported his methodology, which included publicly claiming responsibility for bloody attacks on Shi’a targets and non-combatants. This is important because these tactics have since caused friction between Zarqawi and Al Qa’ida, most famously in Ayman al-Zawahiri’s 2005 letter, which chastised Zarqawi for publicly attacking Shi’a targets and non-combatants. Although Zawahiri is not squeamish about killing, Al Qa’ida’s ideology does not advocate targeting the Shi’a as a central component of jihad.<sup>18</sup> Zarqawi’s does.

Rather than ideological synergy, Zarqawi and Al Qa’ida’s relationship was likely a function of strategic convenience. For al Qa’ida, attaching its name to Zarqawi’s activities enabled it to maintain relevance even as its core forces were destroyed or on the run. Zarqawi, meanwhile, used the Al Qa’ida brand to facilitate recruiting. Zarqawi’s suggestion that his relationship with Al Qa’ida was cemented only after it accepted his strategy implies that he felt free to continue targeting Shi’a targets and non-combatants.

Nevertheless, the summer 2005 letter from Zawahiri shows no recognition that bold attacks on the Shi’a are central to Zarqawi’s ideology and strategy.<sup>19</sup> Instead, Zawahiri treats these attacks as if they are a tactical response to events on the ground, and complains that claiming credit for such attacks alienates the general public. This implies that Zawahiri does not fully comprehend how important attacking the Shi’a is to Zarqawi’s Iraq strategy, is reticent to directly challenge Zarqawi’s ideology, or is honestly more concerned with Zarqawi’s public relations element of Zarqawi’s strategy. Either way, this disconnect can be exploited by U.S. policymakers to disrupt Zarqawi’s strategy in Iraq and his relationship with Al Qa’ida.

### SECTION THREE: ZARQAWI'S IDEAS AND STRATEGY

Not a traditional scholarly jihadist leader, Zarqawi has always brought a street-fighter's practicality to ideology. He tends to be profoundly flexible on tactical questions, but consistently intransigent on strategic issues. He has a stubborn confidence in the validity of his own ideas and believes in the supreme importance of violence for purifying both a man's soul and the society he lives in. This outlook can be summarized in six defining ideological positions:

- *Embracing social, political, and religious isolation*, which is characterized by his nickname "*al-gharib*," – the stranger;
- *Enmity toward the Shi'a*, which informs both his goals in Iraq and his strategy for achieving them;
- *Applauding suicide terrorism*, which heralded his use of extraordinarily brutal tactics;
- *Focus on the 'Near Enemy,'* rather than the 'Far Enemy' favored by Al Qa'ida;
- *Rejection of traditional notions of combatants and civilians; and*
- *Antipathy for scholars who advocate jihad but do not fight themselves.*

#### *THE "GHARIB PARADOX"*

All terrorist groups face an important ideological paradox. Their ideas must appeal to a mass audience, but they also must be insular enough to facilitate internal group cohesion in difficult circumstances. The latter effect is often achieved by denigrating the masses that do not belong to the group, which, naturally, limits mass appeal. Zarqawi generally favors internal group cohesion over popular appeal. This tendency is reflected in Zarqawi's long-standing nickname, *al-gharib* ("the stranger"), which both reflects Zarqawi's ideological attempt to resolve this quandary and gives the paradox its name.<sup>20</sup>

Zarqawi's adoption of *al-gharib* in the late 1990s was his way of steeling himself for the isolation of the long fight that he embarked on at that time. The identity that the term reflects is a means of embracing and expropriating isolation from mainstream society so that, instead of a source of despair and weakness, seclusion becomes a source of unity and strength. The nickname even invokes an Arabic literary tradition that celebrates the lonely traveler longing for the simple comforts of home.<sup>21</sup>

The *gharib* identity continues to inform Zarqawi's activities. In October 2005 he quoted scholars and hadith to argue that God smiles upon "strangers" because they adhere to Islam even as the masses abandon God.

*"Shams al-Haqq Abadi, may God have mercy on his soul, said: Blessed are the strangers among my ummah. Here he means those who differ with their contemporaries...The strangers were also described as those who escape with their religion or those who adhere to their religion and flee from tribulations. They are the good few among the evil many. Those who oppose them are more than those who obey them, and they are the ones who reform people when they become corrupt...Sayyid al-Ubbadh quoted Uways Al-Qarni as saying: The call for the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice has left no friends to the believers. We ask them to be virtuous and they call us names. They are supported by the vicious ones...Islam will become a stranger as it began because those who adhere to its principles are the few and those who deviate from Islam are the many."*<sup>22</sup>

For Zarqawi, the *gharib* identity explains the disadvantaged political position of jihadists and suggests that isolation indicates their path is morally correct. It is a form of "the meek shall inherit the earth" notion common to the Judeo-Christian tradition, and is a framework for understanding the world that prevents discouragement and disillusionment among members of a small, widely criticized movement.

*Those who belong to the victorious group can tolerate the bleakness of their path and they are not alarmed when they see that only few men take such a path. They are only compared in this with the best of creation and the eminent prophets and messengers, May God have mercy on them.*<sup>23</sup>

Zarqawi's embrace of this exclusionary identity is important for two reasons: First, it gives his movement durability even in a hostile environment. And, second, it helps explain his willingness to take credit for extremely gruesome attacks. Zarqawi's approach to the "*gharib* paradox" has been to favor internal group cohesion vice popular appeal, which has made his movement resilient, but impeded his ability to build a social consensus strong enough to assert political control. An inflexible, extremist ideology that relishes violence and embraces criticism as an indicator of ideological correctness is always going to alienate people more than it appeals to them, a trend that is playing out as Iraq's tribal Sunnis reject Zarqawi.

## ENMITY TOWARD SHI'A

Zarqawi's tremendous hatred and enmity for the Shi'a sect and its practitioners is not unique among salafists, but his operationalization of that disdain is. Zarqawi believes that attacking Shi'a targets is worthwhile as a goal in itself and as a means to achieve other goals. Killing Shi'a is intended to punish them for theological offenses, to right historical injustice, and to penalize Shi'a collaboration with American forces. But it is also a means to unveil what he considers a Shi'a campaign against Sunnis that is guised as the Iraqi government consolidating control.

By provoking a Shi'a backlash against Sunnis, Zarqawi plans to demonstrate to moderate and tribal Sunnis how dangerous Shi'a actually are. This, he hopes, will compel secular Sunni groups to ally with Zarqawi and adopt his ideology and methods. Six months before joining Al Qa'ida, Zarqawi explained the strategy to its leaders:

*...targeting [Shi'a] in religious, political, and military depth will provoke them to show the Sunnis their rabies...and bare the teeth of the hidden rancor working in their breasts. If we succeed in dragging them into the arena of sectarian war, it will become possible to awaken the inattentive Sunnis as they feel imminent danger and annihilating death at the hands of the Sabeans.<sup>24</sup>*

Zawahiri criticized this strategy in the summer of 2005, claiming that attacks on Shi'a targets distort the image of jihadists and distract them from the most important enemy: the United States. Zarqawi is unlikely to be swayed by this argument. In his 2004 letter he anticipated the critique and replied that only sectarian war would "shuffle the cards" in Iraq enough to inspire moderate, tribal Sunnis to recognize the Shi'a plot.

At the time, Zarqawi believed that increased cooperation between Sunni tribal leaders and U.S. and Iraqi government forces left him with two options: One, attack the tribal chiefs despite the *probability* of alienating Sunnis in his base areas, or, two, abandon Iraq to fight elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> His only hope of making common cause with the tribal leaders was to instigate widespread Shi'a on Sunni violence. Fortunately, Zarqawi miscalculated. Even as sectarian violence has increased, Zarqawi's exclusionary ideology and brutal tactics have compelled tribal leaders to turn on him.

Zarqawi's ideological advisors do not comment on the instrumental element of his Shi'a strategy, but they do justify attacks against the Shi'a on theological grounds. In a taped lecture distributed in July 2004, Abu Anas al-Shami developed some of the hallmarks of Zarqawi's polemic against the Shi'a. His list of offenses is long: from Ibn Taymiyah's ancient charge that Shi'a leaders assisted in the Mongol sacking of Baghdad in 1258 to the suggestion that the Hezbollah's presence in Southern Lebanon is in fact an Israeli plot to insulate itself against more dangerous Sunni groups.<sup>26</sup>

Zarqawi's current advisor, al-Baghdadi, creates a grander moral typology. For al-Baghdadi, there are three kinds of people in the world: those who accept Islam in its entirety, those who accept some Islamic practices but not all, and those who refuse to embrace Islam. The worst are apostates—those who accept only part of Islam:

*...those who believe in some parts of Islam and turn away from the rest should be fought until they accept all of Islam and refrain from suspending its laws and obvious rites...religion signifies obedience. If some people accept religion partly and devote the rest of religion to other gods, war against them becomes obligatory...they might refuse to fight the infidels, refrain from taking tribute from the People of the Book, or abandon various other Islamic duties. All these should be fought until all of religion is God's religion alone.<sup>27</sup>*

#### PRIORITIZING THE "NEAR ENEMY"

Al-Baghdadi's three categories also reflect Zarqawi's long-standing focus on the "near enemy" rather than the "far enemy." This focus is important for two reasons: one, it provides clues to Zarqawi's future plans and, two; it stands in stark contrast to Al Qa'ida's focus on the "far enemy."

*Fighting against the apostates who decline to perform some shari'ah duties takes precedence over fighting against the original infidels. Apostasy is a greater transgression than original disbelief, and the apostate is a greater enemy...the enemy who is close to the Muslims is more dangerous. When you fight him, you avert his evil and the evil of those who stand behind him. If the Muslims occupy themselves with fighting the far enemy, the near enemy will seize the chance to hurt the Muslims.<sup>28</sup>*

It is important to understand that Al-Baghdadi makes two distinct arguments. First, abandoning elements of Islam is a greater theological transgression than

original disbelief. Second, the “near enemy” is *more dangerous* than the “far enemy.” The first issue is interesting but unsurprising; the second, however, is intriguing. Zarqawi’s “far enemy” —the United States—is far more powerful, in both military and economic terms, than his “near enemy” —apostates and the Shi’a. If these capabilities do not create a dangerous enemy for Zarqawi, what does?

It is important to remember that Zarqawi’s fundamental purpose is to purify the practice of Islam. Although he fears American military might and despises Western culture, neither threaten to undermine social conviction in his version of Islam. Apostates and the Shi’a, on the other hand, do.

*They, i.e., the Shi’a, have declared a secret war against the people of Islam. They are the proximate, dangerous enemy of the Sunnis, even if the Americans are also an archenemy. The danger from the Shi’a, however, is greater and their damage is worse and more destructive to the [Islamic] nation than the Americans, on whom you find a quasi-consensus about killing them as an assailing enemy.<sup>29</sup>*

Essentially, Zarqawi believes the United States is less dangerous because it is widely distrusted within the Islamic world. The U.S. simply does not have the legitimacy to undermine what he deems “Islamic” culture. Shi’a and “apostate” Sunnis on the other hand, because of their close geographic, cultural and political relationships with Zarqawi’s “true Muslims,” pose a greater threat to the cultural system for which Zarqawi fights.

U.S. policymakers should take note: Zarqawi believes legitimacy is more dangerous than military capability. A United States respected in the Mideast and around the world is much more dangerous to Zarqawi and his ilk than a United States despised, but feared for its military prowess. A poor U.S. public image in the Mid East is as crippling a problem for the war in Iraq and the war on terror as ill-trained troops, poorly maintained equipment, and un-fit officers would be in a conventional conflict.

While Zarqawi identifies U.S. weaknesses, Abu Anas al-Shami identifies our strengths. Although he also deemphasizes the threat posed by traditional military tools, al-Shami argues that the U.S. does have some dangerous weapons, the most important of which is the ability to manipulate the media.

*The media war’s effect is deadlier and its danger greater, because it covets hearts and minds, and targets doctrine and principles. With me here are the words of*

*some of today's experts. They say: 'If the greater nations were given a choice between their nuclear arsenals and deadly weapons, and their conventional and non-conventional weapons, and between the news agencies, they would choose the latter, because this war, and I mean the media war, mobilizes for itself whole people, and enslaves entire nations, through which it can implement its objectives, and upon which it can achieve its ambitions, without losing a soldier or spilling a drop of blood.'*<sup>30</sup>

Al-Shami likely credits the United States with more control over the media than it deserves. The important lesson is that a man like al-Shami fears a U.S. public relations campaign more than American weapons. Al-Shami's fears reflect his understanding of his own weaknesses, which he will know far better than U.S. analysts. This suggests that information campaigns should be at the center of the U.S. strategy for the "long war."

One aspect of such a campaign would exploit divisions within the jihadi movement. Zarqawi's organizational prioritization of the "near enemy," even after cementing the relationship with Al Qa'ida in October 2004, puts him at odds with bin Laden and Zawahiri, who prioritize attacks on the "far enemy."

Essentially, this is a disagreement within the salafist terrorist movement over what the center of gravity of its enemy is. Zarqawi believes it is disbelief in the Islamic world, while Bin Laden and company identify American power supporting corrupt Arab regimes. This fundamental disagreement is what drives the two parties to identify different warfighting strategies even as they have relatively compatible goals.

Al Qa'ida believes that U.S. support for Arab governments—with funding, legitimacy, and weapons—and concludes that it is the source of apostate political power and should therefore be attacked first. Zarqawi is more concerned with apostate cultural influence, and sees that as relatively independent of U.S. political power.

Unfortunately, overt U.S. support for "apostate" regimes, such as in Iraq, conflates the "near enemy" with the "far enemy" and reduces the functional implications of the ideological gap between Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida. For jihadis, the U.S. presence in Iraq ties the "far enemy" and the "near enemy" together very closely, which enables them to more easily agree to disagree on doctrine, but cooperate on operations. This paradigm facilitated Zarqawi's integration with Al Qa'ida in 2004.

## APPLAUDING “MARTYRDOM” OPERATIONS

Zarqawi’s use of suicide attacks has been the hallmark of the Iraqi insurgency and transformed Zarqawi into one of the central strategic threats to the U.S. mission. These attacks reflect an ideological position adopted during Zarqawi’s second jihad in Afghanistan when he was shedding some of the teaching of Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi and studying the work of Abu Abdallah al-Muhajir.

*I believed that such operations (suicide bombings) were inadmissible when I was in Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion and before having met Al-Maqdisi. When I met him, my conviction was compatible with his utterances. When we left jail and returned to Afghanistan again I met Shaykh Abu Abdallah al-Muhajir. We discussed Islam’s position on martyrdom operations, and the shaykh used to approve of them. I read a valuable research (sic) and listened to cassettes by him in this connection that pleased me. Not only was I of the opinion that such operations are admissible, but I also preferred them. By God, this is the blessing of knowledge and the meeting of scholars.<sup>31</sup>*

Zarqawi’s change of heart illustrates the impact that ideas have in the jihadi movement. Adopting al-Muhajir’s ideological position on suicide bombings transformed Zarqawi from a troublemaker into a man capable of terrorizing Iraq. All of Zarqawi’s strategic triumphs in Iraq, from the assassination of Shi’a leader Mohammad Baqir Hakim, to recent attacks on Samarra’s Askariya mosque, have been committed by suicide bombers. There is a lesson here for U.S. policymakers. The long-term fight against violent salafism requires identifying and neutralizing ideas rather than simply men.

Zarqawi’s ideological switch demonstrates his flexibility on tactical issues as a response to the operational demands of jihad, and his willingness to disregard the teachings of supposedly senior scholars such as al-Maqdisi. Ultimately, Zarqawi arranged for al-Muhajir to teach at his camp in Herat.<sup>32</sup> This was a logical step. Zarqawi’s embrace of suicide bombings was useless unless he could convince others that the tactic is legally acceptable in Islam.

Suicide bombings are not Zarqawi's only calling card. He has also widely targeted civilians rather than regime elements. Justifying these attacks has been a core element of his ideological advisors' efforts in Iraq.

Repeating an argument common in jihadi circles, Abu Anas al-Shami argues that if infidels use Muslims as shields it is permitted to fire on their captors. This principle enables mujahidin in Iraq to attack targets with civilians present, especially if the alternative is not fighting at all.

*Therefore, the imams agree that if the unbelievers shield themselves with the Muslims, how would it be for the Muslims if they did not fight? Thus it is permissible to fire upon them, and we mean the disbelievers.<sup>33</sup>*

Al-Shami went on to argue that a similar principle enables attacks that kill women and children, and justified this position based on the Prophet's use of a catapult, a weapon that kills indiscriminately, during the siege of Al-Ta'if.<sup>34</sup>

Al-Shami's historical and theological arguments were not enough for Zarqawi. He expanded on al-Shami's justification in May 2005 by discussing the operational environment in Iraq and arguing that practical considerations do not leave the mujahidin plausible tactical options that do not threaten civilians.

- 1. The opinions expressed by the early scholars and imams pertained to the primitive weapons used before the discovery of black powder. Obviously, these old weapons were easier to use in a more discriminate way compared to modern weapons in order to prevent the killing of Muslims.*
- 2. We are required under Islamic law to use the most lethal weapons against the enemies of God whenever possible. The disparity between us and our enemy makes this even more pressing than ever.<sup>35</sup>*

Zarqawi's argument for updating Islamic principles to account for modern war stands in stark contrast to his fundamentalist understanding of Islam's teaching on the core purposes of jihad. This ideological opportunism can be understood through the western just war theory concepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bellum*, which refer, respectively, to the acceptable circumstances for initiating conflict and acceptable behavior for waging the war. Zarqawi is unwilling to compromise on the source and purpose of conflict, *jus ad bellum*, but his understanding of *jus in bellum* is much more malleable. For Zarqawi, the

purpose of jihad is determined by God, but the process must reflect the demands of the modern world.

Zarqawi's argument regarding civilians became more sophisticated in the fall of 2005 when he released a five-lecture comprehensive vision of jihad more refined than any released in the past. In the fourth lecture Zarqawi argued that those fighting in the name of God should be careful to use Islamic legal language to frame their arguments.<sup>36</sup> The adoption of any other form of terminology represents "intellectual subservience" to the West. This is an attempt to differentiate Zarqawi's group from other resistance organizations inside Iraq and convince them that not all forms of resistance qualify as "jihad." Whereas he fights for "jihad in God's cause" the other groups "replaced it (jihad) with the words of 'resistance' and 'right to self-defense' and such words that were enacted and approved by the charters of the United Nations and others."<sup>37</sup>

*When the word Jihad is uttered, everyone who does not fight in the cause of God is excluded, whether he fights for tribalism, nationalism, patriotism, post, or prestige, even if that is falsely rendered in Islamic slogans.<sup>38</sup>*

One of the most important aspects of Zarqawi's lexicographic argument is his approach to civilians and combatants. Zarqawi argues that the distinction between civilians and combatants is false because it is not based on Islamic idioms. The utterance of such terms reflects intellectual subservience to a Western mode of thinking that betrays Islam. He uses this perspective to supplement previous arguments justifying attacks against civilians, arguing that Islamic law does not have a category of "non-combatants" that may not be attacked.

*Perhaps the best example of what these imams have mentioned with what people nowadays call non-military infidels and polytheists as civilians. To them, it is impermissible to kill or attack them. This term and the rules based on it have nothing to do with God's shari'ah and religion in letter and spirit because Islam does not distinguish between civilian and soldier, but between Muslim and infidel. Every infidel on the face of the earth, who does not make peace with Islam and Muslims through custody, truce, or safe conduct, is warrior infidel. There is absolutely no protection for him, unless his killing is forbidden to start with, such as children and women.<sup>39</sup>*

Zarqawi is likely motivated by events on the ground in Iraq. For Zarqawi, the prevalence of secular resistance groups is a victory for the United States because

those insurgents reflect an intellectual perspective bounded by colonial borders and Western notions of self-defense rather than Islamic law. This is an important defeat from Zarqawi's perspective. The purpose of his fight is to purge such ideas from the minds of Sunnis and fill them with a "true" conception of Islam. Groups that accept "intellectual subservience" to Western ideas but oppose the occupation of Iraq militarily have already conceded what Zarqawi is fighting for. Nevertheless, Zarqawi's denouncement of these groups reflects his simplistic approach to the "gharib paradox" explained above.

#### MILITARY COMMAND AND LEADERSHIP

One of the most important arguments Zarqawi made during his lecture series last fall concerns the qualifications a jihadist leader should have. In a lecture entitled, "It is Allah Whom ye Should More Justly Fear" Zarqawi lambastes Islamic scholars that, unlike Abu Anas al-Shami and Abu Hamzah al-Baghdadi, do not actively engage in jihad. Although Zarqawi does not point directly to al-Shami or al-Baghdadi in this lecture—preferring to reference early Islamic scholars—their influence is clear.

*The theoreticians of the jihadist current were the ones who carried the Book and sword in their hands and took the front line. They led the masses and abandoned the transient pleasures of life. They preferred the reward of eternal life. They abandoned their palaces and houses and chose to live in caves and mountains. They did so to protect their religion and couple their words with deeds.*

Zarqawi is no longer willing to take advice from scholars, primarily al-Maqdisi, that preach from the sidelines. Only the crucible of war leaves a man with the qualities necessary for leadership. This is critically important because by restricting the potential sources of ideological advice, Zarqawi elevates the importance of his own experience and minimizes his great weakness in terms of credibility—lack of formal education. By establishing a new metric for leadership that emphasizes operational experience more than academic credentials, Zarqawi hopes to elevate his own importance within the jihadi movement.

## KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a number of steps the United States should take against the Zarqawi network, both inside and outside of Iraq. Some of these prescriptions will create tension with traditional U.S. partners. U.S. policymakers should think holistically about American interests before embarking on these—or any other—initiatives.

### *KEY FINDINGS*

- **Zarqawi’s political strategy is failing.** The recent spate of attacks on Shi’a cultural sites, including the Askariya mosque, and the development of the Mujahidin Shura Council are likely last ditch efforts to forge a relationship with tribal Sunnis.<sup>40</sup> This effort will fail. Although sectarian violence will continue to increase, Zarqawi’s ideological extremism and continued attacks on tribal leaders will continue to alienate the tribes.
- **Zarqawi’s military program has been successful and is still being employed.** The accuracy of Hudayfa Azzam’s claim that Zarqawi has been removed from political leadership in Iraq is still unclear, but it is apparent that Zarqawi’s basic military strategy is still being employed. Whether Zarqawi is still in direct command is less relevant than that his vision informs insurgent behavior.
- **Zarqawi will increase attacks outside of Iraq, probably in Syria.** Despite the strategic failure of the Amman hotel bombings, Zarqawi will increase operations in countries neighboring Iraq as pressure from tribal leaders compels him to spread his forces. Zarqawi’s focus on the “near enemy” suggests he will prioritize Arab states rather than the United States or European targets. (An attack on the “far enemy” would indicate more increased submission to Al Qa’ida and bin Laden.) Zarqawi will likely refocus on Syria, though he will pragmatically adjust to changing circumstances. Besides Zarqawi’s historical focus on the Levant, Syria’s historical and social terrain is favorable to Zarqawi. He will look for a place with established support networks, a large Sunni population, historical Sunni-Shi’a tension, and an unpopular apostate government. Syria has the best combination of factors, though Jordan and Lebanon are also possible targets. A cadre of Zarqawi supporters will likely remain in Iraq to stoke sectarian tensions, likely through intermittent large-scale attacks such as the Askariya mosque bombing and targeted assassinations of Shi’a leaders.

- **Zarqawi's increased ideological sophistication means that he does not physically have to be in Iraq.** The same exclusionary ideology that limits Zarqawi's popularity with Sunni tribes in Iraq makes the organization durable in difficult times. This durability, and Zarqawi's advancement as an ideologue, will be increasingly important for effectiveness as the organization operationalizes in multiple theatres.<sup>41</sup> Zarqawi's ideology suggests he will locate himself in a city close to actual operations, but as the theatre of operations expands and Iraqi tribal leaders turn on him, that city may not be in Iraq. There is nothing special about Iraq for Zarqawi except that it is *currently* the best place to kill apostates and infidels.
- **Zarqawi will attempt to exploit any U.S. military action against Iran.** Although Iran is not a good arena for jihad, Zarqawi will welcome and try to exploit any U.S. attack there. For Zarqawi, an attack on Iran will "reshuffle the cards" and compel the United States and the Shi'a to fight—a goal he has been trying to achieve for three years. In the case of an attack on Iran, Zarqawi will actively attempt to heighten the tension in Iraq and regionally, perhaps by staging dramatic attacks in Syria or Lebanon and blaming the United States.

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Exploit the ideological differences between Zarqawi and al Qa'ida.** The U.S. should increase the distance between the "near" and "far" enemies by minimizing public support—military, economic, and moral—for "apostate" Arab regimes, including Iraq's. A large U.S. force in Iraq decreases the functional implications of the ideological disagreement between Zarqawi and Al Qaeda and enables them to cooperate despite divergent ideological perspectives. To divide the violent salafist movement, we should increase the functional implications of the ideological disagreement and disengage from Iraq as much as possible.
- **Exploit the "gharib paradox."** Events are increasingly forcing Zarqawi to struggle with the "gharib paradox." As Zarqawi's organization disperses from Iraq, ideological homogeneity within the group becomes increasingly important for group cohesiveness.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, however, Zarqawi's inclusion in the Mujahidin Shura Council suggests he wants to project a less doctrinaire image in order to bolster his public image, especially inside Iraq. Indeed, because the MSC is a conglomeration of groups—and therefore less ideologically unified—it requires a more bureaucratic structure for effective

command and control. U.S. strategy in this new environment should be twofold: One, undermine Zarqawi's attractiveness within Iraq by publicizing his radical ideas. Make it harder for Zarqawi to soften his ideological image. Two, the U.S. should avoid inadvertently tightening the internal ideological solidarity of the group by directly criticizing its ideology. U.S. information campaigns should not explicitly judge Zarqawi's ideology, but rather highlight the most extreme elements and the differences with Al Qa'ida.

- **Build relationships now to mitigate future challenges.** The United States chose the timing of the war in Iraq; we probably will not have that luxury next time. The United States should quietly support tribal and civil society groups throughout the region. By empowering the groups that Zarqawi fears most—moderate (“apostate”) Sunnis and the Shi’a—the U.S. can support a social bulwark against radicalization and a cadre of future allies if instability spreads. Governments are no longer the center of gravity in the Middle East.
- **Support apolitical civil society.** In the struggle against violent salafism, Arab and Muslim civil society is the center of gravity. U.S. support for political and religious liberalization is important, but it is not sufficient. The U.S. should support the development of apolitical and non-religious civil society groups to insulate societies against both political and religious extremists. Some of these groups will be at least nominally religious, which is fine. Soccer clubs, literary circles, and social business organizations are as important for building social resistance to extremism as explicitly political and religious organizations. Policymakers should be cognizant that strengthening tribal groups and civil society may weaken governmental allies of the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> Ricks, Tom “Military Plays Up Role of Zarqawi” *The Washington Post* 10 April 2006 P. A1

<sup>2</sup> Husayn, Fu’ad. “Al-Zarqawi...the Second Generation of Al-Qa’ida” *Al Quds al-Arabi* Various Dates May 2005

<sup>3</sup> Al-Maqdisi, Abu Mohammad “Abu-Mohammad al-Zarqawi—Support and Advice, Hopes and Pains” Posted in fall 2004 on numerous jihadist websites. Dated July-August 2004

<sup>4</sup> Abu Hilalah, Yasir. “Interview of Abu-Muhammad al-Maqdisi” *Al-Jazirah*. 5 July 2005

<sup>5</sup> Even during their prison time, Zarqawi and al-Maqdisi's disagreed over tactics. Zarqawi tended to favor direct action whereas al-Maqdisi preferred propaganda and excommunication. Zarqawi, though less ideologically sophisticated, was able to attract followers because of his passion, speaking ability, and physical presence. For more information, see: Yehoshua, Y. “Dispute in Islamist Circles over the Legitimacy of Attacking Muslims, Shi’a, and Non-combatant

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Non-Muslims in Jihad Operation in Iraq: Al-Maqdisi vs. His Disciple Al Zarqawi" *Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies*. 11 September 2005

<sup>6</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu Mus'ab. "It is Allah Whom ye Should More Justly Fear" Video originally posted on [www.world-news-network.net](http://www.world-news-network.net). 14 October 2005. (The world-news-network.net site has been down since November 2005.)

<sup>7</sup> Husayn, Fu'ad. "Al-Zarqawi...the Second Generation of Al-Qa'ida" *Al Quds al-Arabi* Various Dates May 2005

<sup>8</sup> <http://almahdy.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=200> Anonymous posting to Islamic web forum. Accessed 12 January 2006. (This site has been inaccessible since March.)

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, during al-Muhajir's tenure as spiritual director at the Khaldan Camp, it was led by Shaykh al-Libi, the Al Qa'ida leader that later provided false information to U.S. sources regarding Saddam Hussein's relationship with Al Qa'ida. Jehl, Douglas "Qa'ida-Iraq Link U.S. Cited Is Tied To Coercion Claim" *The New York Times*. December 9, 2005

<sup>10</sup> Al-Adl, Sayf. Printed in "Al-Zarqawi...the Second Generation of Al-Qa'ida" by Fu'ad Husayn

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Maqdisi. "Support and Advice"

<sup>13</sup> Abu Anas al-Shami Eulogy. Zarqawi quoted by individual calling himself Commander Abu Azzam. Jihadist websites—30 November, 2004

<sup>14</sup> Al-Baghdadi, "Why Do We Fight, And Whom Do We Fight?" Posted on Jihadist websites June 2005

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Pool, Jeffrey, "Zarqawi's Pledge of Allegiance to Al-Qa'ida: From Mu'Asker al-Battar," Issue 21. *Terrorism Monitor* Vol. 2, Issue 24. 16 December 2004

<sup>18</sup> Rapheali, Nimrod "The Sheikh of Slaughterers" *MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis Series-#231*, 1 July 2005

<sup>19</sup> Al-Zawahiri, Ayman. Letter dated 9 July 2005. Released by the Director of National Intelligence 11 October 2005

<sup>20</sup> "Gharib" is a common nom de guerre among violent salafists.

<sup>21</sup> *The Book of Strangers* though not widely read is one of the best examples of this tradition. Al-Isfahani, Abu 'L-Faraj "The Book of Strangers" Markus Wiener, Princeton. 2000. Transl. by Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh

<sup>22</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu Musab. Audio lecture. Jihadist websites--30 September, 2005. From the Sahih Hadith 'The Book of Faith' 0001 0001 Chap. 66

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu-Mus'ab. "Al-Zarqawi letter." February 12, 2004. Released by the Coalition Provisional Authority. <http://www.cpa-iraq.org/transcripts/>

<sup>25</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu-Mus'ab. "Al-Zarqawi letter." February 12, 2004. Released by the Coalition Provisional Authority. <http://www.cpa-iraq.org/transcripts/>

<sup>26</sup> Abu Anas al-Shami lecture. No title. Posted on Jihadist Websites – July 2004

<sup>27</sup> Al-Baghdadi

<sup>28</sup> Al-Baghdadi

<sup>29</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu-Mus'ab. "Al-Zarqawi letter." February 12, 2004. Released by the Coalition Provisional Authority. <http://www.cpa-iraq.org/transcripts/>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu-Mus'ab. Statement criticizing Abu-Mohammad al-Maqdisi. Jihadist Websites--12 July 05

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Abu Anas al-Shami. Video lecture. Jihadist Websites – August 2004

<sup>34</sup> This argument was made first by the Saudi cleric Shaykh Abd Al-'Aziz bin Saleh Al-Jarbu' in his book "Basing the Religious Legitimacy of Destroying America" published in November 2001. MEMRI. "Contemporary Islamist Ideology Authorizing Genocidal Murder" Special Report #25 January 27, 2004

<sup>35</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu-Mus'ab. Audio Tape. Jihadist Websites— May 2005. These arguments are reminiscent of those made by Osama bin Laden regarding the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Zarqawi, Abu Mus'ab "Do Ye Know Better Than Allah" Audio Recording. Jihadist Websites –Oct 2005

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Zarqawi's inclusion of *Al Qa'ida in Mesopotamia* within the *Mujahidin Shura Council*—a collection of Islamic resistance groups in Iraq—suggests his role is already changing. First, Zarqawi's presence is less visible, as the MSC is led by Iraqis. Second, Zarqawi's decreased operational role in Iraq—the MSC is led by a former Zarqawi deputy—enables him to devote more time outside of Iraq. Zarqawi originally believed he could provoke a decision point in Iraq in the fall of 2004.

<sup>41</sup> "Harmony and Disharmony" *The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, 14 February 2006. Available at [www.ctc.usma.edu](http://www.ctc.usma.edu)

<sup>42</sup> See "Harmony and Disharmony" for more information.