



## **The Rise of the Caliphate II**

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### **Executive Summary**

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- \* August and early September 2015 have been a major turning point in the ascent of the Caliphate and the evolution of the entire Islamist-Jihadist trend.
- \* The Islamist-Jihadist world was shocked on 29 July when the Taliban leadership acknowledged that the venerable Mullah Omar actually died back in April 2013.
- \* In mid-August, Zawahiri attempted to both narrow the gap between al-Qaida and the Islamic State, and to reiterate his commitment to al-Qaida's long-term maximalist strategy now pursued by the Caliphate.
- \* The Caliphate's response to the al-Qaida challenge began in late August with preparations for the unleashing of waves of "lone wolf" attacks throughout the West and other non-Muslim states. The Islamic State is exploiting the tidal wave of migrants into Europe in order to bolster its ranks there.
- \* On September 9, Zawahiri conceded that the al-Qaida-affiliated forces lost their predominance in the Jihadist trend. To survive, the al-Qaida-affiliated forces must ally with the rising Jihadist forces affiliated with the Islamic State/Caliphate.
- \* Concurrently, the Islamic State/Caliphate continued to articulate their vision of the challenging road ahead. The immediate objective is to surge when the time is right through victories in the Muslim World and debilitating terrorism at the heart of the enemy states.

### **About ISPSW**

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## Analysis

August and early September 2015 have been a major turning point in the ascent of the Caliphate and the evolution of the entire Islamist-Jihadist trend.<sup>1</sup>

The Islamist-Jihadist world was shocked on 29 July 2015 when the Taliban leadership acknowledged, after a campaign of rumors and pressure, that the venerable Mullah Omar - the Emir of the Faithful - actually died of tuberculosis back in April 2013. This means that numerous decrees and messages attributed to Mullah Omar in the previous couple of years were falsely issued in his name, and that the bay'ah of several Jihadist senior leaders were given to a dead man even though such practice is forbidden by Islam.

The Taliban's acknowledgment was inevitable if belated given a pressure campaign building by the rising leaders affiliated with the Caliphate in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater of Jihad. The process peaked in mid-July when issue 10 of the Caliphate's Dabiq published a Fatwa analyzing the viability and validity of bay'ah's given to Mullah Omar. The article indirectly raised doubts about Mullah Omar's existence and leadership. Although the Dabiq article did mention the name of the author - the Fatwa was written and issued by Osman Ghazi. He is the chief of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and once one of the closest allies of Osama bin Laden. In Fall 2014, Ghazi became one of the strongest advocates of the Islamic State/Caliphate in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater, and is now the leader of the Caliphate's Wilayat Khorasan in northern Afghanistan and the adjacent Fergana Valley that is responsible for the Jihad in the greater Central Asia - from the Caspian Sea to the heart of China. The Fatwa issue rose from Ghazi's decision to transfer his bay'ah from Mullah Omar to Baghdadi.

The question that prompted the Fatwa was whether one can give his bay'ah to Caliph al-Baghdadi having originally given his bay'ah to Mullah Omar in his capacity as the Emir of the Faithful. "If the Emir is still present," the question goes, then there exists the issue of duality of bay'ah's. "But now if we suppose he was killed, isn't it a condition that it be confirmed with certainty, so that the people know about the appointment of a new Imam and thereby they fulfill the duty upon them. ... It is necessary to find a solution for this."

In his response, Ghazi ignored the question whether Mullah Omar was still alive - even though, given his seniority, he must have known that Mullah Omar had already died. Instead, Ghazi discussed the issue of the qualifications for the Caliph in absolute terms. To be eligible for the thrust and allegiance of the Believers - the Caliph must be the leader and guide for the entire Muslim Ummah worldwide. "This leader, due to his status and the nature of his Imamah, has general influence; obedience to him is obligatory upon all the Muslims. This kind of Imamah is the default by which the obligation upon the whole Ummah to appoint a Khalifah is fulfilled and through him, the obligation is established," Ghazi explains. "If this is understood and the difference between these realities becomes obvious, the answer to the question posed becomes clear through the just and precise description of the Imamah of Sheikh Abu Bakr al-Husseini al-Baghdadi and the leadership of Mullah Omar, since one cannot decide on a matter until the whole picture is understood."

Ghazi asserts that by the most basic criteria, Mullah Omar simply failed to qualify as the Emir of the Faithful. He points out that any analysis of "the declarations, statements, conducts, and nature of Mullah Omar's leadership shows without a doubt that it is a nationalist, territorial leadership not fulfilling the meaning of the

<sup>1</sup> This paper builds on the author's previous up-date "The Rise of the Caliphate" (Issue 358, June 2015) and the comprehensive analysis "After Osama bin Laden and in the Aftermath of the Khorasan Pledge" (Issue 359, June 2015).



general Imamah concerning rules, responsibilities, and liabilities.” Although Mullah Omar officially ruled the Emirate of Afghanistan, he failed to exercise some of the quintessential tenets of Takfiri Jihadist jurisprudence such as the rejection of state boundaries - in Mullah Omar’s case Afghanistan’s and Pakistan’s - and the irreconcilable enmity toward Shiite Iran. Any close examination of Mullah Omar’s policies “confirms that this state [Mullah Omar’s Emirate] was created to govern Afghanistan only and that it takes into consideration the international standards by not getting involved in any disputes with neighboring countries [that is, Iran]. And this contradicts the purpose of the general Imamah, which attempts to unify the ranks of the Muslims all around the world and has concern for all their affairs and causes, and it directly gets involved [in the affairs of all Muslims] for their betterment and rectification in accordance with the prophetic methodology and announces that it does so.” Therefore, Ghazi concludes, since Mullah Omar never qualified as a Caliph - no bay’ah given to him is valid anymore. “It is [therefore] obligatory upon everyone who gave bay’ah to Mullah Omar and his emirate to know that this pledge has been overtaken by a more authorized and obligatory pledge, and that is the bay’ah to the Khalifah of today” - that is, al-Baghdadi.

Although the question posed to Ghazi focused on Mullah Omar - it was impossible not to notice a wider issue. By Summer 2015, the Jihadist world was wondering about the disappearance of Zawahiri and the rest of the al-Qaida supreme leadership. For example, Zawahiri was not heard from since September 2014 and the declaration of the Al-Qaida of the Indian Subcontinent. He did not react to, and did not publish condolences after, the martyrdom of some of his closest friends in Yemen and Afghanistan-Pakistan. In late July, these whispered questions burst into the open after the Taliban’s acknowledgment of the concealment of Mullah Omar’s death while they kept accepting unwarranted bay’ah’s in his name.

In mid-August, the al-Qaida media finally posted a lengthy audio message from Ayman al-Zawahiri on account of the belated announcement of Mullah Omar’s death and the nomination of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour as the new Emir of the Taliban. The goal of the new posting is to announce that Zawahiri swore allegiance to Mullah Mansour. A no less important objective is to reassure the rank and file of al-Qaida that Zawahiri is still alive. “We pledge our allegiance ... [to] our lord, Emir of the Faithful, Mullah Mohammad Akhtar Mansour, may God protect him,” Zawahiri announced. He stressed that his Bay’ah is in the tradition of fealty started by Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar. “As Emir of the al-Qaidat Jihad group, I pledge to you our allegiance ... following the path of Sheikh Osama [bin Laden] and his martyred brothers in their allegiance to ... Mullah Omar,” Zawahiri explained.

Given the theological turmoil within the ranks of al-Qaida and the grassroots’ questioning of the supreme leaders, Zawahiri used the occasion of the recorded message to both narrow the gap between al-Qaida and the Islamic State/Caliphate, and to reiterate his commitment to al-Qaida’s long-term maximalist strategy now adopted and pursued by the Islamic State/Caliphate.

Initially, Zawahiri repeatedly stated that in offering his bay’ah to Mullah Mansour he was following the path set by Osama bin Laden, “his martyred brethren,” and all the “good martyrs” of the Jihadist movement. Significantly, Zawahiri counted both Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (the founder of al-Qaida in Iraq from which the Islamic State/Caliphate has evolved) and his immediate successor Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (who anointed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as a future leader) among the more important “our brothers” and “martyrs” in this category.

But then, Zawahiri challenged the criteria by which al-Baghdadi was declared Caliph - although he did not mention al-Baghdadi by name. Zawahiri explained that he was pledging his bay’ah to Mullah Mansour in order “to establish the Islamic Caliphate that rises on the selection of the Muslims and their approval, and spreads



justice and consultation, and achieves security, removes injustice, restores rights, and raises the banner of Jihad.” The theological luminaries of al-Qaida have been challenging the right of al-Baghdadi to become Caliph on the basis that he was never selected and approved by recognized Jihadist judicial authorities such as the Shurah Kabirah in Afghanistan-Pakistan. Significantly, neither Zawahiri nor other al-Qaida luminaries address or challenge Ghazi’s definition of the all-Islamic prerequisites for a Caliph.

Zawahiri further stated that giving the bay’ah to Mullah Mansour will enable him to consolidate and unify all Jihadists in order to wage the Jihad establishing the “Sharia - until it rules the lands of [all] the Muslims” and until the Jihadists “liberate every inch of the stolen, occupied lands of the Muslims from Kashghar [in China] to Andalusia [Spain], from the Caucasus to Somalia and Central Africa, from Kashmir to al-Quds [Jerusalem], from the Philippines to Kabul, and from Bukhara to Samarkand [in Uzbekistan].” Zawahiri added that he pledges to help Mansour lead the “Jihad against the rulers who have replaced the prescriptions of the religion, who have gained authority over the land of the Muslims, for they have obstructed the rulings of Sharia, and have imposed on the Muslims the rulings of the disbelievers, ... and make supreme the creeds and philosophies of the disbelievers, handing over the land of the Muslims and their wealth to their enemies.” Zawahiri’s list of the tasks of Jihad highlights the profound theological conflict with Baghdadi’s Takfiri Jihadism. On the one hand, the list of the geographic objectives of the Jihad that al-Qaida is committing to help liberating is identical to the list of sacred objectives advocated by the Islamic State/Caliphate. On the other hand, al-Qaida commits to helping the Jihad to impose Sharia on the governments of Muslim states when Baghdadi is committed to their total abolishment and replacement with Provinces of a global Caliphate.

The Caliphate’s response to the al-Qaida challenge began a couple of weeks later. On 29 August, the Islamic State challenged one of the key points of disagreement with Zawahiri’s Shurah Kabirah - namely, the acceptability of the modern state even if it is an Islamic State. The response was a new thesis titled “Loyalty to Islam, Not the Nation-State!” The text analyzed in detail why the notion of a nation-state was un-Islamic and therefore why the sole political entity permissible in accordance with the tenets of Islam was the Caliphate. In other words, the thesis asserted that to be loyal to Islam invariably means to be loyal to the Caliphate as the only viable social and political organization representing all Muslims. In a reference to Muslims living in the West and other states without Muslim majority or character, the study stressed that loyalty to these modern nation-states is forbidden and that as Believers they must be loyal only to Islam to the point of striking out in the places where they live.

The Islamic State/Caliphate also revived a major undertaking that started back in November 2014 - the minting of gold, silver and copper coins - in the context of challenging the economic tenets of the modern nation-state. Back in mid-November, Baghdadi ordered the minting of coins as a form of rebellion against, and liberation from, the West’s influence on the region’s economy. “Under decree of Caliph Ibrahim (May Allah bless him!), ruler of all faithful Muslims of the Islamic State, proclaiming the Islamic State to produce its own currency to prevent blind and tyrannical monetary system that was imposed on the Muslims and was a reason for their enslavement, impoverishment and the wasting of national wealth, making it easy prey in the hands of the Jews and Christians. For this purpose the Islamic Financial House has examined the issue and developed a project (Praise be to Allah!) dedicated to minting gold and silver coins according to the domestic value of these metals,” the Decree reads.



The first coins were circulated in the Raqqa area and the Mosul area in late June 2015. These coins were modeled after the original dinar coins used during the Caliphate of Uthman in 634 AD. The coins also carried the inscription: "The Islamic State - A Caliphate based on the Doctrine of the Prophet". The Caliphate's coins are the gold Dinar, the silver Dirham, and the copper Fulus. The coins are produced in a mint that was opened in Mosul.

On 30 August, the Caliphate released a lengthy video explaining the issuance of the coins in the context of Islamdom's on-going delinking from Western economy and ultimately punishing Western economy and the hard currencies for their transgressions against Islam. The Caliphate hailed the "dawning of a new age" characterized by the replacement of Western hard currencies with precious metal coins. Coming in the wake of the traumatic impact of 9/11 on the American economy and society, the emergence of the new Muslim fiscal system will soon deliver "the second blow to America's capitalist financial system of enslavement ... casting into ruins their fraudulent dollar note." The Caliphate accused the US of "heading a capitalist financial system of enslavement underpinned by a piece of paper called the Federal Reserve dollar note which they alone printed and imposed on the rest of the world."

Consequently, Islamdom and the rest of the world are victims of America's "satanic financial system" that is based on "fraudulent" paper bills. "One of the great forms of corruption that the world came to witness was the dark rise of banknotes borne out of the satanic conception of banks which mutated into a fraudulent ... financial system of enslavement orchestrated by the Federal Reserve in America, a private corporation and system that would, through the use of deceit and force, deprive people of their due by imposing on them the usage of the piece of paper that came to be known as the dollar bill," the communique said. "It is the Federal Reserve banknote that they alone print and would go on to replace gold and silver which Allah created as the standard mediums of exchange for the purchase of goods and services."

The Caliphate is in the process of reintroducing precious metals as the foundation of global economy as created by Allah. The communique further explained that the Caliphate's coins are imprinted with Islamic symbols and "are completely void of human and animal images in accordance with Sharia law." The reverse side of one coin has seven wheat stalks "representing the blessing of spending in the path of Allah." Another coin is imprinted with a map of the world "representing the extent of territory Muhammad's reign would reach, including Constantinople, Rome and America." A third coin is imprinted with a spear and shield "showing that the source of provision of Muhammad were from Jihad in the name of Allah."

The next day, 31 August, the Hizb ut-Tahrir of Britain embraced the Caliphate's economic principles as the key to resolving the economic woes of the West. Hizb ut-Tahrir endorsed the returning to the old Gold Standard in order to "resolve the sovereign debt crisis threatening the Eurozone" instead of the "printing counterfeit money on keyboards" by Western governments.

Meanwhile, the Islamic State/Caliphate continues to intensify preparations for the unleashing of waves of "lone wolf" attacks throughout the West and other non-Muslim states. In early September, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani briefed West European Jihadist commanders that the Caliphate would soon issue "a call to Muslims in Europe, the infidel West, and everywhere [else] to target the Crusaders in their home countries and wherever they find them," he said. Ominously, Adnani warned that the Jihadists of the Islamist State would be instructed to also purge Muslim communities in foreign lands if they refuse to participate in the new Jihadist campaign. "We will be enemies, in front of God, to any Muslim who can shed a drop of blood of a Crusader and abstains from doing that with a bomb, bullet, knife, car, rock or even a kick or a punch," Adnani asserted.



Significantly, the Islamic State is exploiting the tidal wave of migrants into Europe in order to bolster its ranks there. Indeed, the majority of the migrants flooding Europe are predominantly Muslim young men. According to UN data, 72% of the migrants are young men, only 13% are women and 15% children. Since early 2014, close to three quarters of a million refugees reached Europe and the pace of migration keeps rising. There are more than six million dislocated people in Lebanon-Syria-Iraq-Jordan alone, and there are over three million dislocated people in the Sahel and western Africa. They have all set their eyes on Europe.

In both Turkey and Libya - the main springboards of migration into Europe - Islamist-Jihadist entities affiliated with the Islamic State/Caliphate organize the migrants in order to provide cover for the infiltration of their own operatives. One Syrian operative in Turkey, a former Mukhabarat officer who had joined the ranks of the Jihadists, boasted in early September about their success to-date. He claimed that there are already more than 4,000 covert operatives "ready" throughout the European Union. These operatives are the first round of clandestine infiltration among the refugees. Their objective is to unleash revenge attacks at the heart of the West. "If someone attacks me then for sure I will attack them back," he explained. "I'm sending some [European] fighters who want to go and visit their families. Others just go to Europe to be ready." The Syrian operative emphasized that the ultimate objective of the clandestine infiltration of Jihadists is to contribute to the rise of the Caliphate. "It's our dream that there should be a Caliphate not only in ash-Sham but in all the world," he said, "and we will have it soon, God willing."

Throughout, Ayman al-Zawahiri's Shurah Kabirah knew of the major undertakings of the Islamic State/Caliphate. There are constant contacts between Jihadists of pro-al-Qaida and pro-IS/KHI entities in Syria-Iraq, the North Caucasus and Western Europe. Hence, it should come as no surprise that Zawahiri released on September 9 an audio-communique alluding to the decisions of the Caliphate's leadership and advising his followers how to cope with the new developments. Significantly, the message was recorded several months ago - no later than January 2015 - but not released until September when Zawahiri and his coterie realized they had no other option.

One of the catalysts was the highly publicized suggestion by former General and CIA Director David Petraeus to co-opt the ostensibly non-Jihadist components of Jabhat al-Nusra and other al-Qaida-affiliated Jihadist entities in order to fight the Islamic State. The Jihadist reaction to Petraeus' initiative started with the affirmation of the obvious and inevitable - namely, the preeminence of the Islamic State/Caliphate throughout the Jihadist trend. Al-Qaida-affiliated leaders urged the closing in of Jihadist ranks against common enemies both in the Middle East against all enemies and at the heart of the West in the form of "lone wolves".

Most important was the reaction authored by Abu Abdullah al-Shami, a member of Jabhat al-Nusra's Sharia Committee. "This suggestion from Petraeus is evidence of the failure, bankruptcy and stumbling of the American administration in its old-new alliance. The technical term 'moderates' in the American dictionary is a technical term equivalent to traitors to their religion and Ummah in our dictionary." The enmity of Jabhat al-Nusra toward the Islamic State is based on profound disagreements over the Bid'a (unwarranted religious-jurisprudence innovation) by the Caliphate's leader. Such a difference "does not mean we will align with America against them, but nothing more than reflecting on that question. For our hostility to America is the hostility of faith against disbelief. As regards the khawarij [extremists], it is hostility to whoever goes outside of Islam to Bid'a, while remaining within the general fold of Islam. ... Then indeed America is an enemy, not only in religion, but also an enemy bringing enmity upon us at dawn and dusk in ash-Sham and elsewhere." Hence, Abu Abdullah al-Shami concluded, there can be no "shared enemy ... between Jabhat al-Nusra and America."





There can be no possibility of any of the Jihadists joining the US against their misguided brethren-enemies of the Islamic State.

This observation set the tone for the release, on 9 September, of Ayman al-Zawahiri's own policy declaration from January that made the change in attitude toward the Caliphate official. Zawahiri started by reiterating al-Qaida's objection to the Caliphate. "My dear brothers, I want to emphasize an important point, we don't recognize the Caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This Caliphate was forcibly established, contrary to Islamic law, and the Muslim people are not obligated to it," Zawahiri said. "We don't recognize Baghdadi as the head of the Caliphate."

Zawahiri then outlined his real complaints against Baghdadi - namely, the worldwide ascent of the Islamic State/Caliphate at the expense of al-Qaida. Zawahiri accused Baghdadi of causing Fitna (schism or discord) among the Jihadist forces in Yemen, Waziristan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Gaza and Somalia by urging them to switch their allegiance to the Islamic State/Caliphate. "Baghdadi did everything he could to convince Jihadis to betray their allegiance [to Zawahiri] and pledge allegiance to him [Baghdadi]," Zawahiri complained. "Baghdadi left them no choice."

Nevertheless, Zawahiri explained, he decided to tone down al-Qaida's rhetorical challenges to Baghdadi and the Caliphate because he - Zawahiri - did not want to further aggravate the Fitna that plagues the ranks of the Jihadists. Instead, Zawahiri stressed, he was yearning for genuine reconciliation with Baghdadi.

Zawahiri concluded by urging all al-Qaida-affiliated Jihadists - and particularly those in Syria-Iraq - to establish coalition with the forces of the Islamic State/Caliphate against the common enemies of the Jihadist trend. "Despite the big mistakes [of the Caliphate], if I were in Iraq or ash-Sham I would cooperate with them in killing the Crusaders and secularists, the Nusayris and Safavids, even though I don't recognize the legitimacy of their state, because the matter is bigger than I and their claim to establish the Caliphate. It is a matter for the Ummah to oppose the vicious Crusader campaign, and it is obligatory on all the mujahedin to support each other and come together to resist it," Zawahiri stressed.

Simply put, Zawahiri conceded that the al-Qaida-affiliated forces have lost their predominance in the Jihadist trend. To survive and count, Zawahiri instructed, the al-Qaida-affiliated forces must join hands and ally themselves with the rising and expanding Jihadist forces affiliated with the Islamic State/Caliphate. The timing of the release of Zawahiri's message strongly suggests that Zawahiri and the Shurah Kabirah are desperate to be part of the forthcoming Jihadist eruption prepared by Baghdadi and the Islamic State/Caliphate.

Concurrently, the Islamic State/Caliphate continued to articulate their vision of the challenging road ahead. A very important and intriguing analysis can be found in the latest issue of the Caliphates Magazine - Dabiq issue 11 - that was also published in early September. The cover story of Dabiq is a major article titled "From the Battle of al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions". The article revisits the earliest battles of Prophet Muhammad as the key to understanding the near future of both the Caliphate and global Islamdom.

The Caliphate's analysis starts with the preparations for the battle of al-Ahzab in Medina in 627 AD. By then, Muhammad and a small number of followers had been evicted of Mecca and forced to find shelter in Medina. Two coalitions of Arab tribes - both Jewish and pagan - converged on Medina in the hope of finishing off the nascent Islamic movement. "Their numbers reached ten thousand fighters and they held al-Madinah under siege for a month, while the Muslims were greatly outnumbered. But the patience they endured in the face of war, fear, hunger, and weather, led to the Muslims' victory and the good prophetic news that henceforth they



would be on the offense and the mushrikin on the defense.” From the moment of al-Ahzab, the Muslim forces were on the victorious offensive - ultimately creating a huge empire and defeating the greatest powers of the day.

The ability of the Prophet to hold off against vastly superior forces besieging Medina before exploiting the opportunity to launch a decisive offensive - the battle of al-Ahzab - is the key to comprehending Baghdadi’s current doctrine. “Just as the Companions had to face coalitions of various Jewish, pagan, and hypocrite parties in the battle of al-Ahzab, the Muslims of the Islamic State face various coalitions of kuffar [infidels] having a common interest in seeing the Khilafah destroyed. And just as the Companions’ reaction to the parties was one of faith ... so too should the reaction of the Muslims be when seeing these numerous coalitions gathering and mobilizing.”

Unlike the days of the Prophet, when the entire community of Muslims was with him under siege in Medina, presently there are large communities of Believers in the foreign countries that are members of the “coalitions of kuffar” waging war against, and laying siege to, the Caliphate. In the new battle of al-Ahzab, these Believers can alleviate the suffering of the Caliphate by striking hard at the hearts of their own countries and societies. “As for the Muslim who is unable to perform hijrah [emigration] from dar-ul-kufr [land of disbelief] to the Khilafah, then there is much opportunity for him to strike out against the kafir enemies of the Islamic State. There are more than seventy crusader nations, taghut [apostate] regimes, apostate armies, rafidi [Shiite] militias, and sahwah [sinful Sunni] factions for him to choose from. Their interests are located all over the world. He should not hesitate in striking them wherever he can. In addition to killing Crusader citizens anywhere on the earth, what, for example, prevents him from targeting Rafidi communities, [or] targeting Saudi diplomats. ... If one is held back from hijrah for whatever reason, he is not excused from performing Jihad against the enemies of Islam near him.”

Meanwhile, the mujahedin in and around the Caliphate should consider the current fighting as the initial phase of an historic breakout of the kind that led to the dramatic ascent of Islam in the days of the Prophet. “The patience and perseverance of the Muslims in the Battle of al-Ahzab meant they were a force to be reckoned with, and coupled with their numerous military victories, their enemy would soon have to admit defeat and concede to a truce, as occurred in al-Hudaybiyah, the violation of which by the mushrikin of Quraysh led to the eventual Conquest of Makkah.” [In reality, the Treaty of Hudaybiyah was reached in March 628 AD when the Muslim forces could not reach Mecca because of the vastly superior enemy forces led by the Jewish tribes of Quraysh. Muhammad signed a ten-year Hudna (interim cease-fire agreement) that forbade either side from moving forces and changing the posture of Mecca. However, more than a year later, with the Muslim armies recovered and enlarged, Muhammad exploited tribal infighting to accuse the Quraysh of provocation and insult to Islam. Muhammad then launched a major surprise offensive that culminated in the Muslim occupation of Mecca in December 629 AD.]

As in the days of al-Ahzab, the Caliphate argues, contemporary Jihadist forces must demonstrate “patience and perseverance” until they become superior to their foes - capable of sustaining the offensive and delivering a crushing blow. It is only then, as was the case with the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, that the Jihadist forces should exploit and capitalize on the slightest excuse in order to wage war under their own terms. Indeed, the Dabiq author stresses, “[Hudaybiyah] came at a time the Muslims were a powerful force, no longer threatened by annihilation at the hands of Quraysh. It came at a time when Quraysh feared the Muslims as a formidable





adversary. ... It was in the achievement of consolidation by which their signing of a truce came from a position of power not weakness, and thereby its stipulations ultimately only served the interests of the Muslim body.”

The immediate objective of the Caliphate is therefore to not only endure and withstand the challenge and pressure during the current War of Coalitions, but rather to prepare and surge when the time is right. In the meantime, the rest of the non-Muslim world will be coerced into an interim treaty that will permit the rise and build-up of the Islamic State until they are ready to surge anew and establish a global Caliphate. This interim treaty will be achieved through victories in the Muslim World and debilitating terrorism at the heart of the enemy states. “Finally, it is not the apostasy and deviance of the weak-hearted and the hypocrites that will lead to the truce with the Romans before the Hour, rather it is the patience and perseverance of the mujahedin on their way to further consolidation and greater expansion in the face of the international Crusade against Islam that will achieve such.”

Meanwhile, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi finally reappeared on September 8-9, 2015, after weeks of consultations and policy formulation in seclusion and great secrecy. The upper-most theological and operational leadership of the Islamic State/Caliphate spent the previous few weeks in seclusion - moving between special camps in the vicinity of Raqqah in the Euphrates Valley. They formulated the strategy for the new Jihadist global surge that will erupt all over the world - from American cities to the heart of China. Toward this end, Baghdadi and his closest commanders also inspected several specialized training camps for foreign Jihadists.

On September 8-9, Baghdadi arrived in a special forces and intelligence facility near Mosul, in the northern parts of Ninawa (Nineveh) province, Iraq. He arrived from Raqqah in a small convoy of all-terrain vehicles. They traveled with little security in order not to attract attention. Baghdadi was accompanied by a group of Arab and foreign leaders that hold key positions in the uppermost leadership of the Islamic State/Caliphate. The Ninawa facility includes a secret compound that serves as a launching site for clandestine travel outside the Islamic State. The travelers are smuggled by road into southern Turkey and onward to Armenia and Georgia. From there, these commanders can travel safely to all major cities in both east and west. Thus, it is safe to assume that Baghdadi arrived in the Ninawa facility with very senior foreign commanders and leaders who are about to travel clandestinely to their home countries. It should not be difficult to surmise the type of Jihadist commanders deserving a farewell and goodbye from Baghdadi in person.

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**Remarks:** Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.



### About the Author of this Issue

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Yossef Bodansky has been the Director of Research at the International Strategic Studies Association [ISSA], as well as a Senior Editor for the *Defense & Foreign Affairs* group of publications, since 1983. He was the Director of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare at the U.S. House of Representatives between 1988 and 2004, and stayed on as a special adviser to Congress till January 2009. In the mid-1980s, he acted as a senior consultant for the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of State.

He is the author of eleven books – including *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America* (New York Times No. 1 Bestseller & Washington Post No. 1 Bestseller), *The Secret History of the Iraq War* (New York Times Bestseller & Foreign Affairs Magazine Bestseller), and *Chechen Jihad: Al Qaeda's Training Ground and the Next Wave of Terror* – and hundreds of articles, book chapters and Congressional reports.

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