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Abstract: This is a series of papers that translate and analyze articles, reports, religious decrees, and other documents, written primarily in Arabic by Islamist scholars, clerics, operatives, or intellectuals.

Rakan ben Williams:
The Next Generation of Jihadi Terrorists in Europe
By Reuven Paz

Introduction

In October 31st 2005, the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) published in Jihadi web sites an interesting threatening analysis of Al-Qaeda's strategy in planning its attacks and choosing the operatives that carries them out. An imaginary person writes the analysis—Rakan ben Williams—or Wilyamz, as the name mistakenly or deliberately is written. The threatening analysis is titled "The next Al-Qaeda soldier."¹

We don't know who has in fact written the message, but the name chosen for the "Jihadi super hero"—Rakan—reminds us of a legendary Islamic hero of the Middle Ages, who was born in Arabia, and fought against the Mongols in Iraq and Persia. Recently he became a hero of a Middle Eastern comic series as Rakan the "lone warrior."²

¹ See on-line in: <http://www.al-farouq.com/vb/showthread.php?t=3769>

² See his "profile" in: <http://www.akcomics.com/Profiles/RakanUniverse/profilerakan.htm>



The Evolution of Al-Qaeda Warriors

The analysis is quite simple, yet sarcastic, and attempts to present a very clear and well-organized strategic plan of the attacks against Western targets:

- The September 11 attacks were carried out by a group of mostly Saudi Arabians. The Western response was to limit the entry of Saudis, search and follow them, until the Islamists had no choice but plan another attack.
- Following the September 11 attacks, while the United States was thinking that it was going to win the war against terrorism, Al-Qaeda targeted Bali. The attack was carried out by Indonesians, and against Australians. There were no Saudis and the CIA could not uncover the plot in advance. Therefore, they started to follow Indonesians in addition to Saudis.
- The next phase was the simultaneous operations in Casablanca and Istanbul. The two locations were chosen as the two extremes of Europe—to the east and west—and on the border with the Muslim world. The attacks meant to declare that Al-Qaeda was directing its attacks against Europe and has reached its borders. This was a warning sign, which the Europeans ignored.
- Then Al-Qaeda hit Madrid to tell Europe “we are here.” The attack in Madrid brought about the withdrawal of the Spanish troops from Iraq and the Spanish support for the United States. The attackers in Madrid were North Africans, which made Europe think that the Arab emigrants in Europe were the most dangerous threat for it. Following the attack in Madrid, Osama bin Laden declared his offer for truce with Europe, stating that Al-Qaeda is capable of hitting everywhere, whenever it likes to, and by which method it chooses. This offer was ignored as well.
- The European countries tried to guess who is next in the line of attacks by Al-Qaeda, and the group did its best to create the impression that Italy was the one. The impression was promoted by threats made by “Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades in Europe.”
- While Europe was expecting an attack in Italy by Arabs, Al-Qaeda attacked in an unexpected place—London—and by British citizens of Pakistani origin. Once again the West was surprised by the Mujahidin, and started planning the deportation of all extremist or illegal Muslims from Europe.

The response of Al-Qaeda to the steps taken by Europe against its Muslims is therefore, to use European citizens—Christian converts to Islam who support global Jihad--in the next attacks. The model is “Rakan ben Wilyamz”—born and raised in the West; has studied in its educational system; prayed in their churches; drank alcoholic beverage; ate pork, and hated Muslims. But then he secretly became a devoted Muslim, adopted



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the philosophy of Al-Qaeda, and now he and his alike are wandering in Europe and the United States, gathering information and planning their next attacks. “Is the West ready for them?” asks Rakan Ben Wilyamz from Europe, who is “thirsty for martyrdom.”

Conclusion

Between the lines of the sarcastic message of GIMF, one can feel above all a strong sense of self-confidence by the anonymous author. The attacks against Western targets were not aimed at occupying the West or liberating the Muslim world, but in order to highlight the Western lack of understanding of the Muslim mind; and hence, its inability to wisely respond to the Muslim challenges; the flexibility and wisdom of Al-Qaeda in finding solutions to every situation; and the advantages of the “new generation of Muslims” vis-à-vis the ideological stagnation of the West and its “corrupted culture.” The message was not written just for Western eyes, but for Muslim supporters of global Jihad as well. Rakan Ben Wilyamz is not only the “new secret weapon” of global Jihad, but also a model of “super-hero” for Islamic youth. The fact that the name might have been taken from a comic series, colors it with the heroism of an imaginary figure. Rakan is the Jihadi answer to Superman, Batman, and their colleagues.

There is a question of how we should react to this message. How serious is it, beside the propaganda? Do they really plan to use new Muslim converts in their future attacks, especially on Western soil? The message has lot of internal logic of a well-organized plan. The planned strategy of Al-Qaeda is also juxtaposed with the spread of the Muslim empire in the Middle Ages—from Arabia to Indonesia and Europe—through the conversion of many nations to Islam. The publication of the message by GIMF—an integral organ of global Jihad—authenticates its serious nature.

So far we have several examples of Westerners who, as Muslim converts joined Al-Qaeda, underwent trainings, and participated in terrorist attacks or attempted attacks. Several others were arrested in Afghanistan, Iraq, the United States, or Europe. Religious converts have in many cases been more radical. Moreover, Al-Qaeda has “kept its promises” very adequately, so far. Therefore, intelligence and security services and Western publics should regard the message, despite its arrogant nature, carefully, and take it seriously. The population of Western converts to Islam is not too big to handle for Western security services.

Apart from the operational implications of the message we should also note a significant rise in the intensive activity of GIMF. In addition to a growing number of



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new messages, articles, or written and videotaped lectures, the main apparatus of global Jihad is busy circulating old material from recent years. From time to time they publish articles that emphasize the importance of the profound indoctrination of Muslim youngsters by Al-Qaeda—“the organization, state, and university for Jihad studies,” as published in an article by the Saudi Ahmad al-Watheq bi-Allah, deputy director of GIMF.³ Another recent article, by the Saudi Abu Mus`ab al-Najdi, titled—“Al-Qaeda’s war is economic, not military”⁴—emphasizes the need for indoctrination of Muslims, stating:

“We should direct some of these efforts to other targets that could serve another goal, namely to promote the glory of the Muslims, especially the youth, who are swimming in the oceans of pleasures and lust. Those youth are in fact unused petrol, while many efforts are dedicated to confront those clerics who are selling their minds to the dictatorships, and who are useless too. These moral attacks would leave in the souls of the defeated youth a tremendous impact. Many idle youngsters were motivated to join the Jihad by a photo or a video such as of the USS Cole, or Badr al-Riyadh, or by watching the crash of the planes into the high buildings. Those youngsters, even though they were not fully aware of the impact of the attacks upon them, turned their minds and bodies towards the Jihad. Here comes the role of indoctrination and developing the thinking of these people. It is a mistake to leave these youngsters with their superficial understanding of the nature of the war. Whoever listens to the calls of Osama bin Laden senses in his words his care for the indoctrination of the supporters of the Jihadi current, like for example in the Gulf States, in order to target the oil fields. The Sheikh, I think, could direct the Mujahidin by personal messages. Yet, he wanted to do it in public, in order that the crowds of people, who wait for the speeches of the Sheikh through the TV channels or the Internet, would internalize his targets and follow them.”

The endocrinal nature of these messages is not less important than the threats against the West. In Al-Qaeda’s eyes it is a vital combination.

³ Al-Qaeda University for Jihad Studies.

See on-line in: <http://www.al-farouq.com/vb/showthread.php?t=2682>

⁴ See on-line in: <http://www.al-farouq.com/vb/showthread.php?t=3383>