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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF SOCIAL, HUMAN AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

School of Social Sciences

Strategic Culture and Violent Non-State Actors: A Comparative Strategic Cultural Analysis of Al-Qaida and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

by

Edward David Last

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL, HUMAN AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

Politics and International Relations

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND VIOLENT NON-STATE ACTORS: A COMPARATIVE STRATEGIC CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF AL-QAIDA AND AL-QAIDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB

Edward David Last

While strategic culture has traditionally been applied to states, this work adds to the emerging literature applying strategic cultural approaches to VNSAs. This analysis goes beyond these ideational approaches by also incorporating the concept of practices. In contrast to Alastair Johnston's (1995a; 1995b) conception of strategic culture I concur with Colin Gray (1999b) that behaviour cannot be disentangled from culture. Indeed, narrative and behaviour, in the form of practices, are mutually constitutive of strategic culture (Lock 2010; Neumann and Heikka 2005). This study consists of a comparative strategic cultural analysis of two Salafi-Jihadist violent non-state actors: Al-Qaida-central and its franchise, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), employing concepts of strategic narrative and strategic practices.

AQIM, formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat or GSPC, rebranded as an Al-Qaida franchise in 2007, leading to speculation of a change from its Algeria-centric agenda to an anti-Western agenda. However, this has not been the case. Rather, AQIM has undergone a process of regionalization, expanding its operations beyond Algeria into Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Indeed, the study finds that while their strategic narratives share a number of common themes they are expressed in differing strategic practices. As such, the two organizations have distinct strategic cultures and differing strategic priorities. Al-Qaida prioritizes the battle against the far enemy, i.e. the West, whereas AQIM prioritizes the struggle against the near enemy, i.e. local regimes, deemed apostate, in the Maghreb-Sahel, primarily Algeria and Mali. Indeed, Al-Qaida primarily employs strategic practices of terrorism against Western civilians, whereas AQIM primarily employs guerrilla practices targeting local security forces.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Edward David Last declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Strategic Culture and Violent Non-State Actors: A Comparative Strategic Cultural Analysis of Al-Qaida and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signed: _____

Date: _____May 2018_____

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Definitions and Abbreviations

4GW – Fourth Generation Warfare

AIS – *Armée Islamique du Salut* / Islamic Salvation Army

ALN - *Armée de Libération Nationale* / National Liberation Army

AML – *Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté* / Friends of the Manifesto and of Liberty

AQI - Al-Qaida in Iraq / *Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn* (literally Al-Qaida in the Land of the Two Rivers)

AQIM – Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

ARC – Advice and Reform Committee

AST – Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia

AUMA – *Association Des Ulama Musulmans Algeriens* / Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama

BKA – *Bundeskriminalamt* / Federal Criminal Police Office

CDLR - Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CRUA – *Comité Révolutionnaire d'Unité d'Action* / Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action

DRS – *Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité* / Department of Intelligence and Security

DTRA - Defense Threat Reduction Agency

EIJ – Egyptian Islamic Jihad

FEI – *Fédération des Elus Indigènes* / Federation of Elected Natives

FIS – *Front Islamique du Salut* / Islamic Salvation Front

FLN – *Front de Libération National* / National Liberation Front

GLD – *Groupes de Légitime Défense* / Legitimate Defence Groups

GI – Gamaa al-Islamiyya

GIA – *Groupe Islamique Armé* / Armed Islamic Group / *al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallaha*

GIGN – *Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale* / Intervention Group of the National Gendarmerie (French police tactical unit)

GJM - global jihadist movement

GPS – Global Positioning System

GSPC - *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* / Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat / *al-Jama'ah al-Salafiyyah lil-Da'wa wal-Qital*

GTD – Global Terrorism Database

HDS – *Houmat Al-Dawa al-Salafiyya* / Guardians of the Salafi Call

IED - improvised explosive device

IRGC – Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force

ISI – Islamic State of Iraq (formerly AQI)

ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (the Levant)/ *ad-Dawla al-Islamiyah fī al-Iraq*

wash-Sham (formerly ISI)

LIDD – *La Ligue Islamique pour le Da'wa et le Djihad* / Islamic League for Preaching and Jihad

LIFG – Libyan Islamic Fighting Group

LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam

MAK – *Maktab al-Khidmat lil-Mujahidin al-Arab* / Office of Services for the Arab Mujahideen

MANPADS – Man-Portable Air Defense System

MDJT – *Mouvement pour la democratie et la justice au Tchad* / Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad

MEI – *Mouvement pour l'Etat Islamique* / Movement for the Islamic State

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

MIA – *Mouvement Islamique Armé* / Armed Islamic Movement

MNLA – *Mouvement Nationale pour la Libération de l'Azawad* / National Movement for the Liberation of Azwad

MUJWA – Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa

NSA – National Security Agency

OS – *Organisation Spéciale* / Special Organization

PLFP – Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PPA – Parti du Peuple Algérien / Algerian Peoples' Party

PSI – Pan-Sahel Initiative

RPG – Rocket Propelled Grenade

RDWTI – RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents

SAM – Surface to Air Missile

SIGINT – Signals Intelligence

SIT – *Syndicat Islamique du Travail* / Islamic Labour Union

SJVNSA – Salafi-Jihadist Violent Non-State Actor

SVBIED – suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device

TSCTP – Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership

TTP - Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Pakistani Taliban)

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VBIED – vehicle-borne improvised explosive device

VNSA – Violent Non-State Actor

ZZA – Zone Autonome d'Alger / Automous Zone of Algiers

Chapter 1: Introduction

For a decade Al-Qaida was seen as the primary security threat to the West, subsequently eclipsed by its former franchise and now rival—previously known as Al-Qaida in Iraq—Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS). J.M. Long contends the threat is no longer Al-Qaida, but multiple "Al-Qaidas" (2009 pp201, 214), illustrated by the rise of ISIS. There has been a steady rise in the global prevalence of Salafi-Jihadist Violent Non-State Actors (SJVNSA) since the end of the 1980s. Seth Jones estimates the number increased by 58% between 2010 and 2013, particularly in North Africa and the Levant (2014b p26).

News reports divide Salafi-Jihadist into those affiliated to ISIS or Al-Qaida. These affiliates are often conflated as simply 'Al-Qaida' or 'ISIS' as though homogenous organizations (Cronin 2006 pp41-46). Al-Qaida's network consists of three levels: Al-Qaida-central responsible for 9/11; its affiliates and franchises (the latter adopting Al-Qaida's 'brand-name'); and allied Islamist organizations, like the Taliban. Outside this network are 'imitators', leaderless jihadis, 'lone wolves' and 'autonomous cells' inspired by Al-Qaida's narrative (Kaplan *et al.* 2014; Sageman 2008 pp30-32).

In 2007 the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) rebranded as an Al-Qaida franchise: Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), spawning speculation it may imitate Al-Qaida; switching from a local to a global agenda, focusing on the West, particularly Europe (Khalaf and Fidler 2007). This comparative case study analysis of Al-Qaida-central and AQIM explores the extent the latter's rebranding precipitated a change in the group's agenda; and the extent to which it threatens the West. Employing a strategic cultural approach to compare the two Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs) provides insight into reasons for AQIM's rebranding and whether it was merely for instrumental reasons.

The primary research question is to what extent Al-Qaida and AQIM share common strategic cultures? Has AQIM implemented the strategic culture promulgated by Al-Qaida-central, into its local context (Long 2009 p202); and if not, how do they differ? Divisions within the Al-Qaida and Salafi-Jihadist movements matter because they potentially undermine their self-representation of a cohesive front with a shared ideology, revealing differences in goals, strategy, ideology and motivations (Fishman and Moghadam 2011 pp247-252).

1.1 Violent Non-State Actors

Conflict in the post-Cold War era frequently involves contentions between states and non-state armed groups (Shultz et al. 2004 p1). Since World War Two intra-state conflicts involving Violent Non-State Actors have surpassed inter-state ones, killing, injuring and displacing thousands of people each year (Miodownik et al. 2013 p1; Thompson 2014 p7).

VNSAs are armed groups organizationally independent from sovereign states, their structures and machinery; intergovernmental organizations and inter-state alliances. They use violence in pursuit of ideological, political or economic goals (McHugh and Bessler 2006 p6; Mulaj 2010 p3; Wallace and Josselin 2001 p3). VNSAs are "coherent, autonomous non-state actors" that threaten and/or use violence to accomplish certain goals, and have organizational sophistication and persistence over time. Coherence does not mean these actors have a united voice or an absence of internal disagreements, rivalries and factionalism (Thompson 2014 pp4-5).

VNSAs are largely clandestine organizations often operating illegally (Thompson 2014 pp55-59), encompassing an array of organizations: from pirates and other organized criminal groups, mercenaries and private security firms motivated by profit; to ideologically and politically motivated guerrillas, terrorists, militias and

warlords; all capable of employing violence (Mulaj 2010 pp3-6; Norwitz 2008 xv-xvi; Schneckener 2006; Thomas *et al.* 2005 p122; Underwood 2008 p25).

VNSA is preferable to these more specific terms since terrorism, guerrilla warfare and organized crime are strategies designed to accomplish certain objectives, which may be employed alternately or in combination (Thomas et al. 2005 p122). They represent strategic choices made within unique contexts for specific goals (Crenshaw 1995 p5; Mulaj 2010 p21).

While some have political ambitions, others are more interested in illicit business than politics (Davis 2009 pp221-223). Nonetheless, VNSAs need money to fund their activities, blurring this distinction between political and economic motivations, since their violence all has "political effect" (Thompson 2014 p19).

Despite falling beyond the formal structures of states, some VNSAs may have informal ties with certain states; perhaps sponsored by states domestically or abroad, in foreign conflicts or wars by proxy, allowing 'plausible deniability' (Thompson 2014 p10). Nevertheless, VNSAs frequently constrain state policies, challenging their supposed monopoly on violence, the security of their people and potentially constitute an existential threat to weaker states (Thompson 2014 pp2-5).

VNSAs are a major source of instability, threating security on national, regional and global levels (Davis 2009 p221; Thompson 2014 p9). Globalization allows VNSAs greater opportunities to operate and communicate transnationally, and broadcast to global audiences; make profits from organized crime, procure weaponry and move people and goods across borders (Hanlon 2008).

Salafi-Jihadist VNSAs are an intractable contemporary phenomenon, engaged in doctrinal conflicts "to assert principles and advance a cause" (Wight 1999 p139). Salafi-Jihadist doctrine posits an *Islamic state* or 'Caliphate' ruled according to

sharia law is the ideal society. SJVNSAs bifurcate the world into *near* and *far enemies*: Muslim regimes considered *apostate*; and the US and its allies—including Israel—and Russia, respectively, blamed for supporting un-Islamic regimes and oppressing Muslims (Gerges 2009). Al-Qaida's innovation or '*norm entrepreneurship*' in adopting a *far enemy* strategic culture culminated in the September 11 2001 attacks.

The 'war of ideas' is a major aspect of conflict in the information age (Betz 2008). The struggle between SJVNSAs and states is both "semiotic" and "military" (McGovern 2010 p81). Twenty-first century conflict encompasses both military engagements (or strategic practices) and information warfare, where actors compete through "words and images", manufacturing "strategic narratives" (Betz 2008 p510). Terrorism itself can be seen as a form political communication (Crenshaw 1995 p8). According to current Al-Qaida leader, Ayman az-Zawahiri:

> "More than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. …a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our *umma*" (GlobalSecurity 2005).

1.2 Strategic Culture

Traditionally, strategic culture has been applied to states, however, J.M. Long intimates it may be more easily applied to VNSAs like Al-Qaida (Lantis and Howlett 2010 p98; Long 2011). The term was coined by Jack Snyder (1977) in a study on the Soviet Union. A strategic cultural approach is based upon the assertion that ideas and beliefs impact upon strategic behaviour (Gray 2003 p291); linking the influence of various factors including history, culture, religion, key texts and ideology to strategy and political violence.

Walter Laquer asserts the importance of "the historical and cultural context" behind terrorism (1977 p120). Analyses must situate political violence in its proper

context (Crenshaw 1995). This is what a strategic cultural approach does. VNSAs' behaviour is "culturally predicated". Strategic culture allows "deeper understanding of the culture that shapes strategic choices" (Gross-Stein 2012 p59). Strategic cultures shape the "ends and means" VNSAs employ to achieve their goals. Strategic culture is the frame of reference within which VNSAs develop and employ violent and non-violent strategic practices (Godson and Shultz 2010b pp8, 11).

As strategic actors, VNSAs make calculations and choices based upon an amalgamation of internal factors: ideology, objectives, resources, organizational constraints, internal debates and rivalries; and external perceptions of their strategic environment, their opponents' interests and intentions. Strategic cultural approaches hold that actors' are influenced by their unique contexts, therefore the strategic cultures of Al-Qaida and AQIM will likely differ somehow. Despite being clandestine organizations about which much remains secret, analysis of VNSAs' public statements, intercepted communications and strategic practices provides insight into these factors and perceptions (Thompson 2014 pp16-17). These can be synthesized into strategic cultural analyses. Moreover, the threat, use and psychological impact of VNSA violence serves to spread their narrative (Thompson 2014 p36). The conception of strategic culture employed here consists of narrative and practice (Neumann and Heikka 2005 pp8-11).

1.3 AQIM

The GSPC-AQIM makes a useful case study because of its roots in Algeria's history of insurrection under the banner of Islam dating back through the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s and War of Independence (1954-1962) to the French invasion of 1830. The group is a successor of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) which wreaked havoc and terror during the Civil War, leading Bin Laden to disassociate himself from the group (Le Sueur 2009 pp128-129). More recently,

AQIM has gained notoriety following a series of high profile kidnappings of Western nationals and its involvement in the Islamist takeover over of northern Mali in 2012, leading France to intervene. AQIM is one of the "most vocal and active" VNSAs in northern Africa (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 p3).

Both Al-Qaida and AQIM are exemplars of the transnationalization of Salafist political violence. Al-Qaida adopted a *far enemy* agenda, striking Western targets across the globe, while AQIM regionalized its operations, transitioning from an Algeria-centric strategy to a broader regional one, striking targets across the Maghreb-Sahel region. The nature of the GSPC-AQIM relationship with Al-Qaida is therefore an interesting one, both before and after rebranding as an Al-Qaida franchise in 2007.

Despite rebranding AQIM has not fully implemented Al-Qaida's strategic culture. While the strategic narratives of Al-Qaida and AQIM share many core themes, their strategic practices demonstrate differing agendas. Al-Qaida displays a *far enemy* strategic culture, whereas AQIM exhibits a *near enemy*, revolutionary-jihadist strategic culture (Gerges 2009; Hegghammer 2009 p28). This indicates AQIM's rebranding was largely for instrumental reasons. Jihadist strategic cultures are not simply drawn from a homogeneous Islamist ideology but "novel blends" of ideas and practices (Snow and Byrd 2007 p130). Labelling them simply 'Al-Qaida' is a misconception.

1.4 Contribution

Since September 11 2001 interest in Violent Non-State Actors in Global Politics, particularly Security and Strategic Studies, has increased. This study moves beyond the dominant state-centric approaches to Global Politics by applying the concept of strategic culture, usually reserved for analysing states, to VNSAs

(Thompson 2014 pp2-3). It provides an original contribution to the literature on strategic culture, political violence and VNSAs, in five ways:

1. It contributes to the literature on strategic culture in general, particularly the debate over whether behaviour is distinguishable from strategic culture (Gray 1999b; Johnston 1995b; 1999). It rejects Alastair Johnston's positivist conception that strategic culture is separable from behaviour; concurring with Colin Gray that behaviour is constitutive of strategic culture, as discussed in chapter two. Indeed, political violence constitutes a cultural practice (Klein 1988 p135; 1994 pp3-7).

   Existing conceptions of strategic culture are inadequate, largely failing to acknowledge the role of human agency in the constitution and evolution of strategic culture. Adopting Bradley Klein's argument, strategy is a cultural practice. Strategic culture and strategic practices are mutually constitutive (Lock 2010 p698). Culture is created, reproduced and altered through agency in the form of practices (Risse 2000 p5). Strategic culture is "an inherently dynamic structure that is repeatedly reconstituted through the very practices that it enables and constrains"; strategic practices are key to the construction of "the collective identities of security communities" (Lock 2010 pp701-703).

   Similarly, Neumann and Heikka conceive of strategic culture as a "dynamic interplay between discourse and practice" (Neumann 2002; Neumann and Heikka 2005 p6-9). This avoids the essentialism of other conceptions by allowing for strategic cultural change (Howlett and Glenn 2005 p129).

   The conception of strategic culture employed here is based on the ideas of Neumann and Heikka (2005) and Lock (2010), contending that strategic culture consists of a dynamic interaction between culture and behaviour. It consists of two concepts, strategic narrative and strategic practices, outlined

in chapter three. This is more consonant with conceptions of culture in contemporary anthropology and sociology (Neumann and Heikka 2005). Unlike Johnston's approach, this allows for a more dynamic relationship between ideas and behaviour which develop in tandem; one feeding into the other.

2. It contributes to the literatures on VNSAs and Salafi-Jihadism in general.
3. By applying a strategic cultural approach to VNSAs rather than states, as the vast majority of studies, this is more particularly an original contribution to the small, limited literature relating strategic culture to VNSAs. Indeed, strategic culture has only been applied to VNSAs within the past decade or so (Gross-Stein 2012; Johnson 2007; Long 2006; 2009; Shultz 2012; Smith 2008). There have been very few studies employing a strategic cultural approach to VNSAs in general or Al-Qaida and its franchises, in particular (Long 2009; Shultz 2012; Smith *et al.* 2008). I am not aware of any strategic cultural analyses of the GSPC-AQIM.

   Alastair Johnston (1995a; 1995b) identifies three generations of strategic culture, discussed in chapter two. Perhaps, the literature applying strategic culture to VNSAs could constitute a fourth. While the focus of this study is on the strategic cultures of VNSAs, it also gives insight into any differences there may be between the strategic cultures of states and VNSAs. As we shall see, VNSAs are more prone to strategic cultural change than states.

4. Just like the ideational focus of state-centric studies, existing strategic cultural studies of VNSAs have been limited, largely, to discourse or narrative conceptions of strategic culture, with little regard for behavioural aspects (chapter two). It is within this narrative that their strategies and strategic practices emerge, and are in turn used to frame or justify this violence. By employing concepts of strategic narratives and strategic

practices, this approach develops strategic cultural analyses of VNSAs beyond purely narrative conceptions, analysing the link between ideas and behaviour. It:

A. Builds on Long's (2009) thematic narrative approach to VNSA strategic culture by also incorporating the literary narrative approaches employed by Halverson et al (2011) and Bernardi et al (2012) in their analyses of Islamist extremist narratives. This approach borrows concepts including *character/archetype*, *story-forms* and *master narratives* from the latter authors, outlined in chapter three. It uses communiques from Al-Qaida and the GSPC-AQIM to construct these thematic narrative analyses.

B. Develops this narrative approach by combining it with a 'practice' approach, based upon the works of Adler (2008), Adler and Pouliot (2011) amongst others, in social sciences; linking these narratives with the behaviour of SJVNSAs. As such, it also contributes to the literature on practices in Political Science, applying practice theory in the context of VNSAs and political violence. It also uses descriptive statistics of terrorist and guerrilla attacks

5. Finally, as a comparative strategic cultural analysis of two Salafi-Jihadist Violent Non-State Actors (SJVNSAs), namely Al-Qaida and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), this study constitutes a unique contribution to the literature on VNSA strategic cultures. I am not aware of any comparative case study analyses of VNSAs using a strategic cultural approach.

1.4.1 Aims

Despite their clandestine nature, this study seeks to demonstrate strategic culture is a useful approach, among others, for understanding VNSAs and their actions. It

will not test strategic culture against rational actor or other potential theoretical approaches.

This comparative case study analysis, firstly, identifies the strategic narratives of Al-Qaida (chapters 4) and AQIM (chapters 6), and their respective strategic practices (chapters 5 and 7). In so doing, it aims to demonstrate whether the two groups possess identifiable and coherent strategic cultures. Secondly, it explores the relationship between narratives and practices and vice-versa.

Third, it examines how, if at all, particular Al-Qaida affiliates adapt the strategic culture of Al-Qaida-central into their local contexts (Long 2009 pp201, 214). This brings us to the primary research task. By comparing and contrasting the strategic cultures of Al-Qaida-central and AQIM, chapter 8 seeks to uncover the extent to which they share a common strategic culture; how, if at all, they differ; and the influences behind any similarities and differences.

In so doing, it debunks the notion of Al-Qaida and its franchises as a homogeneous movement. It uses a strategic cultural approach to explore the ideational basis for Salafi-Jihadist political violence, how these ideas are expressed in strategic practices and the sources of these ideas in Islamist political thought.

More broadly, the study is interested in Violent Non-State Actors that assert political ambitions of a doctrinal, revolutionary nature, specifically those professing a Salafist politico-religious ideology dedicated to military 'jihad', including Al-Qaida and related groups. The case studies used in this project demonstrate that strategic culture is indeed appropriate for analysing VNSAs such as Al-Qaida and its affiliates. The goal is to understand why Salafi-Jihadist Violent Non-State Actors (SJVNSAs) such as Al-Qaida and affiliated groups do what they do. More specifically it is a study into the ideational basis of their violence and modus operandi. It ties together what VNSAs say and what they do using conceptions of narrative and practices. These ideas are exhibited in the form of

narrative, the story they tell about the world, and manifested in their strategic practices.

1.5 Outline

Chapter two discusses the strategic culture literature and outlines the conception to be employed, consisting of two elements: narrative and practices. Chapter three expands upon these and other key concepts whilst outlining the research design, further developing the conception of strategic culture used in the comparative analysis of Al-Qaida and AQIM. Chapters four and five consist of thematic narrative and strategic practice analyses of Al-Qaida respectively. This is repeated for AQIM in chapters six and seven. Chapter eight compares and contrast the strategic cultures, strategic narratives and strategic practices of Al-Qaida and AQIM.

The study concludes, in chapter nine, that there are similarities and differences between the two groups. However, despite rebranding as an Al-Qaida franchise, AQIM has failed to fully adopt the *far enemy* strategic culture of Al-Qaida. Instead, the GSPC-AQIM has evolved from a nationalistic SJVNSA committed to a *near enemy* agenda of Islamic revolution in Algeria to a regional actor operating across a broader region of Maghreb-Sahel.

Chapter 2: Strategic Culture

2.1 Introduction

This comparative strategic cultural analysis seeks to identify and compare the strategic cultures of Al-Qaida and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM). Before this we must establish that strategic culture is an appropriate concept for analysing Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs), and indeed it is. This chapter reviews the literature on strategic culture broadly, then regarding VNSAs particularly.

Traditionally, strategic cultural approaches have been confined to analyses of states. Few studies have applied strategic culture to VNSAs. This chapter argues existing conceptions of strategic culture are largely inadequate in failing to satisfactorily account for the role of agency or the relationship between culture and behaviour. It rejects Alastair Johnston's positivist conception, concurring with Colin Gray that strategic culture cannot be disentangled from behaviour. Similarly, existing strategic cultural analyses of VNSAs primarily focus on ideational aspects; confined largely to narrative approaches. To overcome these inadequacies the study adopts the conception of strategic culture advocated by Lock (2010) and Neumann and Heikka (2005) consisting of discourse and practices. This study represents a significant, in-depth contribution to the literature on strategic culture and VNSAs.

This chapter first explores the concept of culture before an exposition of strategic culture, its origins and history, before critiquing the existing literature, particularly the work of Alastair Johnston. It then explores how strategic culture relates to behaviour before examining and critiquing the limited literature on strategic culture and VNSAs. Finally, the chapter explores the sources of VNSA strategic cultures and strategic cultural change.

2.2 Culture

Before proceeding to 'strategic' culture, culture at a more basic level must be briefly explored. Culture is the sum of all knowledge held by a society, such that each idea is multiplied by the proportion of members who know it and their "leverage" or importance within the community (Glenn *et al.* 1970 p41). Culture need not be tied to states or nations (Long 2009), but can be applied to non-state actors. Tribes have cultures; shared ideas vis-à-vis inter and intra-communal relationships and their environment. Cultures are collections of interrelated ideas or conceptions and practices shared within ethnic, social, religious, political or other groups (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p14; Swidler 1986 p273), which incline members towards certain perceptions and responses to particular scenarios (Johnson et al. 2009 pp5-6).

Neumann and Heikka argue conceptions of culture employed in strategic cultural studies are inadequate, outdated and contrary to those used in contemporary anthropology and sociology (2005 pp6-9). Sewell identifies two conceptions, of culture as a system of symbols and meanings, and culture as practice. These conceptions complement each other, interacting dialectically. Culture as a system of ideas cannot exist without agency, created, reproduced and transformed through practice (Sewell 1999 pp43-47). Similarly, Neumann and Heikka distinguish the ideational and behavioural elements of culture. Accordingly, "discourse and practices are mutually constitutive" of culture (Neumann and Heikka 2005 pp8-11). The study builds upon this notion of culture.

2.3 Strategic Culture

Strategic culture acknowledges that ideas shape and are shaped by behaviour (Gray 1999a p4; 2003 p291). Strategic culture refers to the culture of goal orientated

organizations including states and non-state actors shaping their strategic aims and behaviour. It explores the origins and influences behind "the threat or use of force for political purposes" (Gray 1999b p50). Strategic culture need not apply solely to states for other political actors may employ military strategy (Klein 1988 p133). For this thesis strategic culture will be applied to specific Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs) referring to their narratives and practices.

Strategic cultural approaches dispute accounts of strategic choice negating historical and cultural contexts (Johnston 1995a p3). Strategic culture posits that particular states, their elites or VNSAs display enduring patterns regarding how they perceive the application of force for achieving political objectives. Different actors have unique prevailing strategic preferences founded in their, or predecessors, "early" or "formative" military histories and influenced by cultural, political, philosophical and cognitive traits, as they evolve over time (Johnston 1995a p1). Strategies or strategic preferences and priorities of the past are learnt, reproduced and absorbed into strategic cultures (Johnston 1995a p39). Strategic culture is effectively the reverse-side of neorealist international relations theory where historical and cultural, rather than so-called 'objective' variables such as technology, capabilities and threat levels, are the primary explanatory factors. These 'objective' variables are interpreted through the "lens of strategic culture" (Johnston 1995a p1).

Alastair Johnston distinguishes strategic culture from behaviour defining it as "an ideational milieu" limiting "behavioural choices". It is:

> "an integrated system of symbols (i.e., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting grand strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force…" (1995a p36).

Other definitions reject this distinction between behaviour and strategic culture, as do I. Macmillan and Booth incorporate behaviour defining strategic culture as "a nation's traditions, values, attitudes, *patterns of behaviour*, *habits*, symbols, achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems" regarding "the threat and use of force" (1999 p363). For Colin Gray, it encompasses enduring "socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and *preferred methods of operation*" that are particular to distinct security communities with unique histories (Gray 1999b).

Similarly, the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) defines strategic cultures as "shared beliefs, assumptions, and *modes of behavior*, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups" determining "appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives" (Johnson et al. 2009 p4). Such definitions, including ideational and behavioural elements are more consonant with conceptions of culture in contemporary anthropology and sociology. This study, thus adopts a conception of strategic culture consisting of both narrative and practices (Neumann and Heikka 2005 pp6-9).

2.3.1 National Character and Political Culture

Alastair Johnston identifies three waves of strategic culture since Jack Snyder coined the term in 1977 (Gray 1999b; Johnston 1995a p51). However, cultural approaches to International Politics precede 1977. Studies of "ways of war", still a synonym for military or strategic culture, emerged during the inter-war period with Basil Liddell Hart's *The British Way in Warfare* (1932) identifying "a distinctively British practice of war". Later volumes on American (Weigley 1973), Chinese (Kierman and Fairbank 1974) and Soviet (Baxter 1986) ways of warfare followed from the 1970s onwards (Sondhaus 2006 pp1-3).

From the 1930s cultural and psychological approaches were also applied to discern the "national character" or "modal personality" of different societies (Almond and Verba 1989 p11). Studies of national characters found their roots in "language, religion, customs, socialization, and the interpretation of common memories" (Lantis 2009 p34). National character was of particular interest to the US government during World War Two, to better understand the cultural attributes of its enemies; and how these may influence their political and military-strategic behaviour (Desch 1998 p144; Haglund 2009 p21; Lantis 2009 p34).

In *The Civic Culture* Almond and Verba refer to "political culture" rather than "national character" or "modal personality" (1963/1989 p11). Political culture being that subset of culture relating to the political (Johnston 1995a p34). Almond and Verba defined political culture as "the particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among the members of the nation" (1989 pp12-14, 16). Political culture is about the "nature of the political game being played, on proper modes of conduct, and on goals and strategies" (Elkins and Simeon 1979 p127-128). Johnston describes political culture as "political codes, rules, recipes, standard operating procedures, and routines that impose a rough order on perceptions of the political environment" (1995a p35). Political culture influences strategic culture as the political milieu within which the latter is constructed. The two are mutually reinforcing, strategic culture being a subset of political culture dealing with foreign policy, military strategy, and "the threat and use of force" (Macmillan et al. 1999 pp8-9).

2.3.2 Ethnocentrism

With *The Soviet Strategic Culture* (1977) Snyder reintroduced culture into Cold War strategic studies, building on the concept of political culture. Strategic culture reaffirmed a truth seemingly forgotten by American Cold War strategists—fixated on rational choice and game theory models—of the importance of cultural insights into the distinctive character of political and military actors (Gray 1981 p21;

Macmillan et al. 1999 p5). Hedley Bull opined the strategic actor of rational choice strategic models were devised by professors with "unusual intellectual subtlety" (1961 p48).

In the late 1970s scholars increasingly acknowledged the role of culture in strategic studies, as Snyder's report was supplemented by Ken Booth's *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (1979). Booth cautioned of the "fog of culture"; how it influences and obscures strategy (Macmillan et al. 1999 p5). This "fog" clouds strategic analysis of other countries with "ethnocentrism"—judging other societies by the standards of one's own—and "cultural blind spots"—where others' worldviews are overlooked or seen as incomprehensible. They can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding where similar terms, like deterrence, are assumed to have common meanings, when they may not. Moreover, threat assessments may confuse what an enemy is militarily capable of and their probable behaviour (Booth 1980 p218-219), based on policy objectives, historical and cultural factors.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s ethnocentrism had become increasingly obvious. To Colin Gray, the USSR appeared not "to share many of the beliefs and practices" of American strategists. American defence analysts had assumed Soviet strategic thought lagged behind, lacking the intellectual sophistication of the Americans, but would eventually catch-up. They failed to acknowledge their own unique strategic culture, which differed substantially from that of the USSR, due to their unique histories and cultures. Gray contended that American "national style" meant a failure to think truly strategically (1981 pp21-25, 38-42).

Bernard Brodie advised that "good strategy presumes good anthropology and sociology" (cited Gray 1981 p24). Many analysts, like Gray, had become dissatisfied with abstract, ahistorical and unchanging realist theories, following Brodie's advice, embracing strategic cultural approaches: recognizing states' distinctive historical, geographical and political contexts, and insights from area

studies. Over the following decades the concept of strategic culture was applied to further states, including Britain, China and India (Macmillan et al. 1999 p6).

In *The Soviet Strategic Culture* (1977) Snyder was pessimistic about the possibility of limited nuclear war between the USA and USSR, whilst avoiding mutual assured destruction, due to their differing strategic cultures:

> "Neither Soviet nor American strategists are culture-free, preconception-free game theorists. Soviet and American doctrines have developed in different organizational, historical, and political contexts, and in response to different situational and technological constraints."

They asked different questions and came to different conclusions regarding nuclear strategy. The Soviets were not irrational, but differently rational from their American counterparts (Snyder 1977 v-vi), employing "different assumptions" (Booth 1980 p218). Strategic culture contextualizes rationality within a cultural perspective (Johnson et al. 2009 p6). Rationality may be perceived differently across cultures and "moral reasoning" may diverge from rational-choice assumptions (Hudson 2013 p124). Actors may perceive "material realities" according to ideas and beliefs shaped by local contexts leading to behaviour which is incomprehensible or illogical amongst other cultures (Gray 2003 p291). Differences in rationality between cultures are often down to "value preferences" (Johnson et al. 2009 p7).

Snyder defined strategic culture as a "perceptual lens" through which military institutions perceive nuclear strategy, influencing—though not necessarily wholly determining—their actions (Snyder 1977 v-vi):

> "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other…" (Snyder 1977 p8).

Snyder includes behavioural elements in his definition such that socialization within a particular strategic culture "a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and *behavioural patterns*" gains "semi-permanence" reaching a position of "culture" over "policy" (1977 v-vi). Indeed, Soviet decision-making happened within a unique "political and cultural milieu" different from Washington's (Booth 1980 p229). According to Snyder:

> "…unique historical experiences, distinctive political and institutional relationships, and a preoccupation with strategic dilemmas different from those that have preoccupied the United States have combined to produce a unique mix of strategic beliefs and a unique pattern of strategic behavior…" (Snyder 1977 p38).

For Snyder, strategic culture is rooted in geo-strategic, historical, political and organizational factors, and constrained by circumstantial and technological factors, predisposing actors to act in certain ways and not others. Based upon its unique strategic circumstances Soviet strategic culture was determined by its geography, numerical superiority in conventional weapons, particularly in Europe, and the legacy of its strategic nuclear inferiority (Snyder 1977 pp.v, 23-25).

2.3.3 First generation

Alastair Johnston delimits three generations of strategic culture literature (Johnston 1995a). First generation theorist, Colin Gray, argued American history created "modes of thought and action with respect to force" and "dominant national beliefs" about strategy and thus a unique American style in nuclear strategy that viewed nuclear war as unwinnable (1981 pp22, 26). Soviet strategists thought differently about nuclear strategy from their American counterparts, that victory may be possible (Johnston 1995b p36), as Snyder had found.

Gray argued the US did not plan for the possibility of fighting and winning nuclear war (Johnston 1995 p36). Snyder's paper on the possibility of limited

nuclear war, however suggests American strategists were asking the question whether nuclear victory was possible (Snyder 1977).

David Jones outlined a greater number of factors influencing a nation's strategic culture at three different levels. At the macro-level were geography, history and culture; at the meso-level were political, economic and social structures; and at the micro-level military structures and civil-military relations. These factors affected everything from military tactics to grand strategy. Jones concluded that Soviet strategic culture emphasized offence over defence (Johnston 1995b p37).

Johnston was critical of first generation strategic culturists, like Gray and Jones, for incorporating too many potential inputs into strategic culture, each of which alone could provide an explanation for strategic decisions. This broad spectrum of factors made conceptions of strategic culture difficult to test or falsify leaving little room for non-strategic cultural factors since each input could create contrasting strategic cultures. Johnston also criticized them for not separating strategic culture from behaviour. He claimed they confused inputs and outcomes by including behaviour or 'modes of action'; using outcomes of strategic culture as inputs. Johnston (1995b) concluded that these "amorphous" conceptions of strategic culture were simplistic, reductionist and overly deterministic, emphasizing a single American and a single Soviet strategic culture, when as Snyder had suggested a country may have multiple "strategic subcultures" (Johnston 1995b pp36-38; Snyder 1977 pp10-12).

Colin Gray defends first generation analysts arguing they were employing a more modest concept than the positivist version Johnston is trying to develop, whereby "culture shapes the process of strategy-making, and influences the execution of strategy, no matter how close actual choice may be to some abstract or idealised cultural preference". They were merely reminding policy-makers that the USSR was not some generic superpower—simply a unit in the international system—but

distinctly Russian, emphasizing the cultural dimension of the Cold War (Gray 1999b p55).

2.3.4 Second generation

The focus of the second generation of strategic culture literature during the mid-1980s was on the potential disjuncture between strategic discourse and actual behaviour and decisions (Johnston 1995b pp39-41). It questioned the implication that there are necessarily enduring patterns of strategic behaviour amongst states (Lock 2010 p701). Accordingly, strategic culture can be used instrumentally, justifying political elites' and decision-makers' strategic decisions and legitimating their authority. It is based upon the assertion that "what leaders think or say they are doing and the deeper motives for what in fact they do" may differ. Strategic cultures, according to this instrumental conception, can operate as myths manipulated by elites; essentially propaganda. Elites thus frame their strategic language within the distinctive narrative of national historical experiences, utilizing symbolism and myths with national, historical or cultural resonance. Decisions may be made and constrained by elite rather than strategic interests. The link between strategic culture and behaviour, if there is any, may be weak or ambiguous (Johnston 1995a; 1995b pp39-40). The implication of this second generation literature is that strategic culture can be used and manipulated by elites to justify their actions.

Snyder rejected the idea that Soviet strategic statements were largely instrumental or "propaganda" with little impact on behaviour. Articulating strategic doctrines is a necessary part of strategy formation (1977 p7). However, in *Myths of Empire*, Snyder argues that strategic myths may be fostered by political elites. Such myths are particularly dangerous in "cartelized" political systems and certain dictatorships where power is concentrated amongst "parochial" interest groups. The state effectively becomes captive to their narrow economic or bureaucratic interests (1991 pp31-32).

Myth-makers can become entrapped by their own propaganda. These myths are used to justify the policies and rule of political elites who may otherwise lose power (Snyder 1991 p17). Yet, the instrumental value of these myths may be lost over time and become accepted truths amongst later leaders. He argued these myths led to the overexpansion of Germany in both World Wars and Japan in the Second (Snyder 1991 pp31-32, 107). Thus, some second generation literature does link strategic cultural factors with behaviour in certain circumstances.

Johnston criticizes Bradley Klein's instrumental notion of strategic culture whereby America had both an instrumental "declaratory" strategy and an actual operational strategy (Johnston 1995b pp39-40). Unlike Gray's argument that American strategic culture could not imagine limited nuclear war, Klein argued that since Eisenhower, this was US policy. Klein distinguished this policy from an instrumental public narrative justifying nuclear weapons as a defensive, retaliatory, deterrent against Soviet aggression. Rather, containment or "extended deterrence" was an instrument of American hegemony; maintaining a liberal economic order (1988 pp138-144).

For Johnston, this implies that strategy-makers can step outside of strategic culture, negating its constraints, making links with behaviour questionable (Johnston 1995b pp39-40). Yet, it is not very different from Johnston's argument that Ming China had a dominant "parabellum" and subordinate "Confucian-Mencian" strategic culture with little operational impact (1995a p58-59).

Like the first-generation scholars, Klein includes behaviour in his conception of strategic culture, arguing "military strategy" is "a cultural practice" (1988 p135). Culture cannot be divorced from behaviour, but is constituted through practices. While strategic culture is a country's "war-making style" including "accumulated strategic traditions", arising from "a web of international practices"; it also includes discursive aspects: what is considered legitimate and justified use of military force, enabling and constraining strategic violence. However, operational

codes may differ from how violence is justified to the public (Klein 1988 p136). Similarly, SJVNSAs may have differing private and declared strategic narratives.

A similar conception of strategic culture incorporating strategic discourse (narrative), strategic practices and traditions will be employed to analyse Al-Qaida and AQIM. Indeed, AQIM follows a guerrilla tradition. This study is open to the notion that strategic narratives may be used instrumentally. It will attempt to overcome this by conceiving of strategic culture as an interaction between narrative and practices. If a narrative is not or rarely enacted in an actor's practices it can be seen as an instrumental, weak or subordinate strategic culture whereas a stronger correlation between narrative and practices suggests a more dominant strategic culture.

2.3.5 Third generation

Beginning during the 1990s, the third generation views ideational factors, strategic, military, political and organizational cultures as explanations for strategic behaviour which deviates from structural realist predictions of how states ought to behave (Johnston 1995b p41). Some of these explanations could be characterized as "defensive" or "neoclassical realism", like Snyder's *Myths of Empire* (1991). Indeed, the works of Jack Snyder seem to cross all three generations of strategic culture.

Johnston praises the third generation, particularly Elizabeth Kier and Jeffrey Legro, for avoiding the determinism of the first, by excluding behaviour from culture. They use positivist methodologies, testing alternative explanations against one-another (Johnston 1995b pp41-42). However, divorcing ideas from behaviour discords with contemporary conceptions in anthropology and sociology which argue they are mutually constitutive of culture (Bloomfield 2012 p449; Neumann and Heikka 2005 pp6-9).

Unlike the first generation, Kier and Legro do not root culture in a long history, but rather in the rapidly changing domestic political context (Johnston 1995b pp41-42). Including only, either recent history or the longer, deeper, even ancient, historical trajectory seems mistaken, for both may influence strategic cultures and consequently behaviour to some degree. Thus, it is necessary to incorporate both the recent 'surface' historical and contemporary context, and the deeper history or narrative in any cultural or historical analysis of states or VNSAs. Long employs this concept of narrative in his analysis of Al-Qaida (2009). This includes not pure history, but historical interpretations, including myths and legends. Al-Qaida's narrative is their idiosyncratic interpretation of Arab and Islamic history.

The third generation still has a number of shortcomings for Johnston. Firstly, there is not a standard neorealist model to test ideational and cultural explanations against. According to Kenneth Waltz's neorealist model "beyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied"; from global conquest to being "left alone" (1979 p91).

Secondly, as the first generation, it assumes that ideational or cultural factors "have an observable effect on behaviour". The question of whether strategic discourse is instrumental or has real impact on "operational doctrine", or behaviour, remains unresolved. Finally, the definition of strategic culture changed little between the first and third generations. If strategic culture is a perceptual lens influencing but not determining behaviour, as Snyder contended, limiting policy options, what explains the choices actually made? (Johnston 1995b pp42-43)

2.3.5.1 Cultural Realism

According to Alastair Johnston an actor's strategic culture can be identified from "strategic-cultural objects", i.e. key texts, which is similar to my narrative approach (1995a p32). He attempts to develop a positivist, "testable" and "falsifiable" conception by disaggregating strategic culture from non-strategic-

cultural inputs—creating a narrow conception of culture—and their output as strategic behaviour, to test strategic culture against behaviour. For Johnston, strategic culture creates a ranked, "uniquely ordered" assortment of "strategic choices" from which states' behaviour can be predicted (1995a pp32, 35-36).

Johnston poses an important initial question: Does strategic culture persist over time in a specific context, i.e. China, such that it influences decision making and behaviour? In short, is there a coherent and persistent strategic culture? If there is not a persistent, shared, coherent strategic culture, but various, contradictory "strategic preferences" over time actual choices may merely reflect the idiosyncrasies of particular "decision makers." For Johnston the concept should provide the ability to trace the transference of strategic culture over time (1995a pp32, 35-36). This risks portraying strategic culture as immutable, rather, it should trace its evolution as strategic cultures may change over time.

For Johnston, strategic culture is "an ideational milieu that limits behavioural choices" allowing one to "derive specific predictions about strategic choice" (1995a p36). As noted previously, Johnston finds Ming China had two strategic cultures; a dominant "parabellum paradigm" and an idealized symbolic or instrumental "Confucian-Mencian paradigm" having no real impact on strategic choice. As such "Chinese 'strategic culture' does not embody a set of preference rankings that would make unambiguously different predictions from those of the realpolitik-dynastic cycle model. Chinese strategic culture essentially shares a realpolitik-preference ranking" (1995a p58-59).

2.3.5.2 Critique

Johnston's positivist conception of strategic culture is unworkable as the influence of culture on strategic behaviour is essentially untestable and changeable. Unlike Johnston's narrow conception, culture is a "fuzzy entity" without clear

boundaries, overlapping with related concepts like behaviour (Neumann and Heikka 2005 p10).

Strategic culture concerns humans' subjective perceptions which reside within the minds of individuals and members of strategic actors—be they states or Violent Non-State Actors—responsible for strategic behaviour or political violence, and therefore cannot be objectively quantified or tested. Strategic culture cannot be seen to have law-like effects on behaviour, as positivism supposes, which can be proved or disproved. The relationship between culture and behaviour is subtler than positivism allows for. Cultural studies are "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973 p5). Strategic culture inclines actors towards certain behaviours over others, but is not determinative (Duffield 1999 p772).

Existing conceptions of strategic culture are inadequate, largely undervaluing the role of human agency in the construction, transference or (re)shaping of strategic culture over time within organizations. They posit strategic culture emerges during formative periods way back when (Gray 1999b p52; Johnston 1995a p1), and thus slow to change. Indeed, strategic culture cannot exist without agency (Sewell 1999). These 'formative periods', however, may form historical narratives reconstructed in the present—sometimes for political purposes—like Snyder's Myths of Empire—taking the form of myths; imagined rather than 'real' (Campbell 1998 pp83-86).

Although Gray acknowledges the constructed nature of strategic culture, refusing to distinguish between culture and behaviour since people "make culture", he fails to develop this notion further (1999b p50). Yet Gray, as Johnston argues, relies on a somewhat deterministic relationship between culture and agency. Neither Johnston nor Gray account for the transmission of the assumptions and preferences underlying strategic cultures, to and amongst policy-makers. This is

problematic for Johnston's separation of culture and behaviour, identifying no mechanism linking the two.

Johnston assumes a one-way relationship between strategic culture and strategic behaviour. This ignores the reality that the texts Johnston analyses are themselves products of human agency; and "experiential legacies" the product of human experiences from which legacies are constructed. Waldron questions Johnston's translations and interpretations of key Chinese texts, noting his predisposition towards realist interpretations over alternate readings (1996 p963). Similarly, Esherwick cautions of Johnston's inclination to assess any restraint as "purely contingent", based on an adverse military balance, dismissing the possibility the Ming deliberately kept their forces weak causing restraint. Moreover, Johnston's interpretation of the phrase "active defence" i.e. attacking Mongol forces within Ming territory, which he codes as offensive rather than defensive use of force, raising uncertainty about the link between his "parabellum" strategic culture and Chinese strategic behaviour (1997 p771).

Interpretation is an act of human agency. If these texts can have multiple interpretations an interpretivist methodology is more appropriate than Johnston's positivism. Ideas cannot be objectively measured. Supposing people are responsible for the transmission and perpetuation of culture undermines this one-way relationship between culture and behaviour. This model assumes that people are influenced by strategic culture with no ability to reshape it. Therefore, Johnston's approach denies the possibility of a more reflexive relationship between strategic culture and strategic practices whereby practices feed back into culture (Lock 2010 p691-693).

This feedback may take the form of strategic traditions—as new strategies and tactics are adopted, adapted, emulated, innovated and accrued—and experiential legacies are accumulated over time. As such strategic culture is subject to evolution and change. Human agency can precipitate strategic cultural change,

particularly amongst VNSAs, through personnel and leadership change, norm entrepreneurship, innovation, emulation and secession; all important sources of strategic cultural changes, discussed later.

"Strategic culture and collective identity are (re)produced through the practices of those engaged in strategic affairs". It is "an inherently dynamic structure that is repeatedly reconstituted through the very practices that it enables and constrains" (Lock 2010 pp700-701). I thus adopt Neumann and Heikka's conception of strategic culture consisting of the interaction between discourse and practices (2005 pp8-11). Indeed, strategic culture operates at three levels: strategic narratives feed into the strategic practices, which in turn feed back into that narrative. Despite the clandestinity of VNSAs, this approach allows us to identify both narratives and behaviour, positing some relationship between them while acknowledging they both constitute strategic culture.

If strategic culture is *semi*-permanent (Snyder 1977 v-vi), gradual evolution or sudden shifts, which may only become apparent in hindsight, make any predictions questionable. Both internal and external stimuli may lead to strategic cultural change or adjustments, discussed later. Strategic culture can be used to understand and explain, but not to predict strategic behaviour. Johnston fails to create a predictive model of strategic culture (Smith 2008 p2), as his study is based on medieval Chinese history. One cannot predict the past.

Alastair Johnston's *Cultural Realism* has been accused of being overly analytical and "descriptively bloodless"; "strategic culture without the culture" containing only "thin description". His cultural approach to International Relations provides no more insight than structural realist predictions (Dittmer 1997 pp193-194), paradoxically concluding Chinese strategic culture is indistinguishable from "realpolitik" strategies (Graff 1997 p451).

Strategic cultures must be expounded using "thick description and insight" instead of "measuring independent cultural variables" like Johnston (Poore 2003 p283). Given its untestable and changeable nature the fantasy that strategic culture can be used to predict future behaviour is absurd. Consequently, I adopt an interpretivist conception of strategic culture within a constructivist framework, using concepts of narrative and practice, outlined in the following chapter.

Alastair Johnston argues that current conceptions of strategic culture are both "under-determined", with an overly deterministic relationship with behaviour, and "over-determined", incorporating a combination of variables each of which explain strategic behaviour by themselves (1995b p33). Johnston seems to misunderstand that these conceptions of strategic culture provide insight into the perceptions of strategic actors, and understanding and explanations of strategic behaviour rather than determining it. Concurring with Colin Gray, "strategic culture provides a context for understanding, rather than explanatory causality" (1999b p49). As Geertz claims "culture is not…something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described" (1973 p14). This thesis will not outline a set of limited, ranked strategic options as per Johnston's (1995a p37) method, but set out an account of the strategic narrative and strategic practices of Salafi-Jihadist Violent Non-State Actors (SJVNSAs).

Ideas are "reasons for" rather than "causes of action" (Ruggie 1998 p869). Behaviour is not only influenced by strategic culture but also by "situational temptations and constraints", responses to which are "influenced, but not wholly determined" by strategic culture (Snyder 1977 vi). Strategic culture predisposes actors to behave in certain ways, adopting certain policies and strategies, not determining but shaping behaviour (Macmillan et al. 1999 p12). Strategic culture does not entail a "one-for-one relationship" between culture and "operational choices" (Gray 1999b p55).

Johnston is attempting to separate strategic culture from other factors which may affect strategic behaviour in order to create a testable model, praising third generation competitive theory testing. However, culture is often expressed and observable in behaviour and vice versa. Culture must be conceived of in observable practices—discursive and behavioural—if is to be analysed objectively (Swidler 2001 pp83-85). Culture provides a "repertoire" of practices from which "strategies of action" can be constructed (Swidler 1986).

Johnston admits relating strategic culture to specific strategic choices is "extremely complex" (1995a p37). Proving any causal link with either strategic culture or materialist theories is extremely difficult but, he argues, the different models are not necessarily mutually exclusive and can make similar predictions (Johnston 1996 pp256-268). If as Snyder contends, behaviour is influenced by both strategic culture and situational contexts, then separating strategic culture from other factors becomes problematic. Indeed, context shapes strategic culture. Other factors, such as material variables, which feature in alternative theories, are themselves interpreted through the lens of strategic culture. Strategic culture cannot be "offset by other influences" on strategic behaviour because strategic actors are themselves "encultured" (Gray 1999b p55).

Longhurst posits that strategic culture is comprised of the "unobservable", "foundational level" of ideas and values and their "observable" output i.e. practices, policies and narratives. These two elements form a "dynamic relationship" adjusting to new readings of culture and changing external stimuli. New ideas and practices which are compatible with the existing strategic culture are absorbed and others discarded (2000 p305). Strategic culture may be divided into practices and narrative (Neumann 2002 p632; Neumann and Heikka 2005 p10).

Johnston subsequently concedes "strategic culture is a prism through which changes in relative capabilities are interpreted" else they be interpreted differently

(Johnston 1996 pp258-259). With regard to Johnston's claim that strategic culture is "over-determined", strategic culture provides the context behind behaviour (Gray 1999b). It "continually constitutes and gives meaning to material factors" (Poore 2003 p282).

Strategic culture is the "ideational milieu" within which strategic narratives are created and practices adjusted, but subject to evolution such that it does not determine behaviour. Strategic culture is a bricolage of ideas and practices feeding into one-another which can be used to understand why certain strategic actors behave as they do.

Like Alastair Johnston, Duffield (1999 p769) argues that culture and behaviour must be separated into distinct categories. Conceiving strategic culture as consisting of narrative and practices allows a distinction between ideational and behavioural elements while acknowledging they are interactive and mutually constitutive. This conforms with conceptions of culture in contemporary sociology and anthropology, over outdated conceptions in strategic studies (Bloomfield 2012 p449; Neumann and Heikka 2005 pp6-9).

Strategic culture predisposes actors to behave in certain ways and not others and narrows the range of actions likely to be adopted in any given set of circumstances, but does not determine behaviour. It is the milieu which shapes strategic actors' behaviour in four ways:

Firstly, defining their aims or "a range of desirable ends", and consequently their interests (Duffield 1999 pp771-772); and enemies who impede their fulfilment. Interests often "depend on a particular construction of self-identity in relation to the conceived identity of others" (Jepperson et al. 1996 p60). VNSAs have "sharp 'we-they' distinctions" (Elkins and Simeon 1979 p132). The identities and strategic cultures of VNSAs are shaped around an "adversarial relationship", determining their "strategic rationality" (Smith 2008 p3). This adversarial relationship feeds

back into the groups' internal cultural identity, which is in part, defined against the enemy 'other'. Their strategic cultures are more closely moulded around an adversarial, us and them mentality, or "antisystem frame" (Hafez 2004).

Secondly, strategic culture moulds how actors perceive their "external environment" This cultural purview selectively shapes what issues are noticed, scrutinized and "magnified"; which are ignored or overlooked, and how they are interpreted (Duffield 1999 pp771-772).

Thirdly, given these aims, interests and perceptions, strategic culture defines the choice of what behaviours or strategic practices (instruments, policies, strategies, tactics etc.) are conceived to be available, inconceivable or not thought of at all; and judged acceptable, expedient, justifiable and defensible (Duffield 1999 pp771-772). It provides a "tool-kit" of practices from which "strategies of action" can be constructed (Swidler 1986).

Finally, it influences which options are chosen given their perceived consequences, costs and benefits (Duffield 1999 pp771-772).

This strategic cultural milieu is expressed in the strategic narrative and strategic practices of VNSAs. Strategic culture is amenable to change to accommodate new ideas, narratives and practices.

For VNSAs, narratives and practices interact at three levels: First, the organization's goals are articulated through its strategic narrative, around which, secondly, its strategic practices are chosen, as 'the ends justify the means'. Finally, further narratives are constructed to justify these chosen practices. As such, the narrative influences the practices which, in turn, inform the narrative.

2.4 Strategic Culture and Violent Non-State Actors

Who are the keepers of strategic culture? Traditionally, strategic culture has been applied to explain the behaviour, policies or doctrines of states or their institutions (Lantis 2002 pp106-109). Yet, there is debate over where this strategic culture originates. Within the state itself, or the nation or society it governs (Macmillan *et al.* 1999 p8)? Long argues nations are a more appropriate unit of analysis for strategic culture; 'state' only being useful to the extent it coincides with a 'nation' since many states incorporate multiple 'nations', ethnic or tribal divisions, with varying degrees of national unity. Other cultural groupings or subcultures form around religious or other institutions (Long 2009 p203; Macmillan *et al.* 1999 p8). These groupings may or may not share cultural narratives.

Moreover, states may contain "strategic subcultures" as Snyder suggested of the Soviet Union: split between the civilian government and military (1977). So, if strategic culture resides within the state, is it the state per se or its politico-military decision-makers in foreign and defence ministries or armed services that possess strategic culture? By this logic, it can also be applied to paramilitary organizations. Statehood is not prerequisite for strategic culture.

While strategic culture has traditionally focused on external security concerns, it can be applied to internal security issues (Macmillan et al. 1999 pp8-11). Just as state security forces adopt particular attitudes and strategies in dealing with insurgents, terrorists and organized criminal VNSAs within and beyond their borders; VNSAs also adopt attitudes and strategies to counter those security forces and achieve their aims. VNSAs' strategic cultures are merely the reverse of the coin.

Since strategic culture need not be restricted to states, a small number of works on the strategic cultures of Violent Non-State Actors have appeared in Strategic Studies; notably by J.M. Long (2007b; 2009), James Smith (2008), Thomas Johnson

(2007) and Richard Shultz (2012). Long suggests that strategic culture may be more easily applied to VNSAs, such as Al-Qaida, than states (Lantis and Howlett 2010 p98), but this seems unfounded.

For Long, 'nation' is an amorphous concept characterized as "a group of people who strongly identify with an overarching, shared cultural narrative", akin to Violent Non-State Actors. He claims "violent non-state, national actors"—armed groups whose goals are bound to particular national territories—like the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) the Moro Islamic Liberation Front or local Al-Qaida affiliates, may be amenable to being analysed like "nations", at least to the extent that they share a national context or "heritage" (2009 pp202-203; 2011). However, while nations may encompass those sharing cultural narratives, unlike states their militaries or VNSAs, they are not themselves strategic actors, able to implement strategic cultures. Secessionists groups, like the LTTE are not nations, but nationalist Violent Non-State Actors—for an unrealized nation-state. As strategic actors, it is VNSAs that implement strategic cultures. A collective need not be a nation to have culture. Moreover, Al-Qaida franchises like AQIM have become regional entities crossing national borders.

"Violent non-state, non-national actors"—transnational armed groups—like Al-Qaida-central, Long continues, can also be compared to nations. VNSAs are nation–like to the extent they share a narrative (2009 pp202-203). He claims Al-Qaida has "pronounced characteristics" of a nation including a "shared religious history, strong in-group/out-group demarcation, shared narrative of contemporary events, and…a shared language" (2011). Al-Qaida is "a tangible expression" of the Islamic Umma (nation or community). It is nation–like to the extent it shares a narrative:

> "The brilliance of Osama and others is in the crafting of a religious narrative that gives a thick account of this nation, the *ummah*, and thus

makes it a cultural reality for which men and women are willing to die" (Long 2009 pp202-203).

However, a collective need not be a nation to have shared culture. While Al-Qaida appeals to an 'imagined community' of Sunni Muslims and desires the creation of an *Islamic state* or Caliphate, it is not itself a nation. Anderson argues the notion of religious solidarity predates nations (2006 pp12-36). A similar issue besets Godson and Shultz's definition of strategic culture, as shaping states or non-state actor's "ends and means for achieving national security objectives". Non-state actors cannot have "national" security objectives being neither nations nor states (Godson and Shultz 2010a p35; Shultz 2012 p5).

Whether VNSAs are nation-like is largely irrelevant. The 'nation' is not an appropriate unit for an analysis of the strategic narratives and strategic practices of specific VNSAs. Their strategic narratives are "*deliberately constructed* or reinforced out of the ideas and thoughts that are already current" (Freedman 2006 pp22-23). Long himself, more helpfully, conceives of strategic cultures as 'meta-narratives' amalgamating cultural ideals, perceived threats to those ideals and the use of violence to implement or defend them. He likens Al-Qaida to authors of an "epic" narrative, building upon history and legend; "re-narrat[ing] traditional materials for a contemporary audience" (2007b pp272-274; 2009 p204-205). Similarly, their strategic practices are devised, emulated and adapted by VNSAs themselves, to achieve certain objectives.

It is, thus, more appropriate to see Al-Qaida's strategic culture as a system of ideas and practices; an ideology or religio-political doctrine expressed through narrative and practices. Theirs is a particular reading of Islamic scriptures and history, influenced by a succession of key texts and religious ideologues, forming the basis of Al-Qaida's narrative and strategic culture.

Any organization able to employ violence may have strategic culture (Longhurst 2000 p306) so long as they are strategic actors. While VNSAs' violent acts may seem irrational, they are generally calculated, well planned (Hoffman 2013 p229) and "rationally purposive" (Neumann and Smith 2008 p6). Like states and their militaries, VNSAs must be seen as rational, strategic, goal orientated actors with shared purposes, specific objectives, identities, ideologies and grievances whether engaged in political violence or in organized crime (Springer *et al.* 2009 pp16-19; Thompson 2014 p55; Williams 2015). Modifying Snyder's observation, VNSAs are not irrational but differently rational. Their violent acts make sense when placed in their "strategic context". Strategic culture is, thus a useful tool for analysing terrorist, insurgent and other armed groups using "a distinctly cultural lens" (Smith 2008).

Thus, strategic culture is "more insightful" of VNSAs' behaviour than rational choice models, placing their rationality in its historical, religious and cultural contexts. From a rational actor perspective, suicide bombers do not maximize utility (Long 2009 p202), yet suicide bombing has a rational, "strategic logic" (Pape 2005). When viewed in a cultural context, the bombers' sacrifice becomes "explicable and consistent" (Long 2009 p202).

This study builds upon the thematic narrative approaches to strategic cultures Long (2007b; 2009) and Thomas Johnson (2007) apply to Al-Qaida and the Taliban respectively. Long's (2009) approach involves identifying key themes of Al-Qaida's narrative and linking them to key thinkers. Similarly, Johnson (2007) undertakes a thematic narrative analysis of Taliban "night letters" (*shabnamah*): written tracts pasted in prominent public places after dark, relying on literate people reading them aloud. The technique, with origins in Persian and Afghan history, utilized during the Afghan-Soviet War to coordinate resistance, has been employed by the Taliban to spread their message, instruct their supporters and intimidate others into following their demands. Analysing these communiques

provides "insights into who and what the Taliban represent." These narratives are framed to "resonate" with their audience's "collective historical memory", or *master narratives*, to justify their fight.

Similarly, this study undertakes a thematic narrative analysis of Al-Qaida and AQIM communiques and links these themes to key thinkers detailed in the appendix. However, since this study conceives of strategic culture as an interaction between narratives and practices, it links this thematic narrative analysis to the groups' strategic practices (Neumann and Heikka 2005). By acknowledging that strategic culture consists of two interconnected elements, which can be analysed separately, but together form a strategic cultural whole, takes a step towards overcoming the methodological dilemma of whether behaviour should be incorporated into concepts of strategic culture.

Despite their clandestine nature, analysing their public narrative and strategic practices allows VNSA strategic cultures to be identified (Thompson 2014 p17). Indeed, strategic practices can illustrate strategic narratives in action which may conversely be used to justify these practices or tactics. As such strategic narratives provide the context, narrative and justificatory framework within which VNSAs' strategic behaviour or "practices" occur. No causal mechanisms for how these strategic narratives shape behaviour will be sought, merely plausible explanations.

2.5 Sources of Strategic Culture

The sources of strategic culture usually examined in states are geopolitics, their historical experience and political culture. History should include both recent historical context and deeper historical influences or narratives. But are geopolitics, history and political culture the sole factors that should be included and what should be excluded? In what ways do these factors combine to form strategic cultures?

One cannot be "dogmatic" about which factors to explore for understanding the culture and behaviour of political actors (Macmillan et al. 1999 pp9-11) and must focus on those most relevant to specific actors' circumstances since no cultures are identical (Duffield 1999 p793; Smith 2008 pp4-5). This is true for VNSAs as for states, as the influences on states' strategic cultures vary from one to another.

The sources of VNSAs' strategic culture are similar to those of states and may include geography, resources and technology, religion, history, ideology, political culture and key thinkers or texts (Lantis 2009 p41; Macmillan and Booth 1999; Macmillan *et al.* 1999 pp3, 8-9; Smith 2008 p4). Amongst transnational or "internationally networked" groups, such as the Al-Qaida network the sources of strategic culture may vary significantly between different branches, affiliates and franchises in different countries or regions, leading to strategic cultural similarities and differences (Smith 2008 pp4-5). At the macro-level Salafi-Jihadist strategic cultures have many shared doctrines, influences and common themes expressed in their narratives, justifying their actions in religious, ethical and moral terms. However, at the micro-level different groups have different histories and circumstances, local influences, themes, traditions, goals and nuances in strategies and practices (Jackson 2007 p413; Springer *et al.* 2009 p6), and thus differing strategic cultures.

It is, therefore, pertinent to analyse these separate Al-Qaida "nodes" as distinct actors and products of their own specific national and regional histories and contexts. Questions remain about how, if at all, Al-Qaida's strategic culture is adapted by these groups in different national or regional contexts (Long 2009 p202; Springer *et al.* 2009 p6).

AQIM is not simply an Al-Qaida "clone" but a unique organization with a distinct strategic culture (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 p3). The connection between the "local and global" is often unclear. Al-Qaida has often been characterized as a monolithic, global movement blamed for attacks around the world, ignoring

regional or local specificities and organizational nodes. A "glocal" approach to its affiliates avoids conflating Al-Qaida-central's global ideology and agenda with local 'Al-Qaidas', allowing greater understanding of the dual nature of the latter groups, combining "localism" with "international solidarity". This averts the ambiguity of labelling what are often "local and specific" acts as simply the work of Al-Qaida. Contrary to claims that Al-Qaida is a global "de-territorialized" movement, its franchises are highly "territorialized" affected by contextual contingencies (Marret 2008 pp541-543, 549-550). According to Jackson "terrorism is always local" motivated by local issues and grievances (2007 p418).

SJVNSA strategic culture thus consists of strategic narrative and practices (Neumann and Heikka 2005) constructed from an amalgamation of common beliefs, ideas, values, goals and behavioural patterns, attitudes towards, justifications for, and use of violence for religio-political ends; influenced by factors including geography, religion, ideology, political culture, key thinkers and texts, technology, historical traditions, experiences, stories and master narratives; shaping their military strategies (Johnson *et al.* 2009 p9; Macmillan and Booth 1999 p363).

2.6 Strategic Cultural Change

The swiftness of strategic cultural change is subject to debate; generally seen as slow to change. Conceptions tend to assume "too much continuity" (Bloomfield 2012). Alastair Johnston argues culture is "learned, evolutionary and dynamic" but slowed by cultural inertia and "the weight of history". This dynamism potentially contradicts his claim that strategic cultural change is slow, trailing behind material changes (1995a p132; 1995b p34). Johnston claims Chinese strategic culture has endured, largely unchanged since the Warring States era (Bloomfield 2012 pp443-445). The notion of strategic cultures remaining "frozen" in time for long periods whilst all else is in flux (Dittmer 1997 p193), resisting political, social and economic pressures seems untenable (Berger 1996 p326).

Strategic culture is not immutable (Snyder 1977 p40), but learned and therefore open to change (Gray 2006 p88). Existing policies and practices evolve, but constrain wholesale "innovation from scratch" (Longhurst 2000 p305). Strategic culture is an "inherently dynamic structure that is repeatedly reconstituted through the very practices that it enables and constrains" (Lock 2010 p701).

While stable culture promotes behavioural continuity, lagging behind outside influences as conventional wisdom endures, it may also evolve or change abruptly and dramatically (Duffield 1999 pp772, 792-773). One must not over-emphasize passivity as strategic cultures "evolve and take on new meanings over-time" (Poore 2000 pp24-25). These changes occur through human agency.

VNSAs differ from governmental and other organizations in their clandestine nature. While states' and their militaries' strategic cultures generally change slowly, those of VNSAs' are more prone to change. Contrary to Long's supposition that VNSAs may be more amenable to strategic cultural analysis than states, their strategic cultures are more elusive due to their clandestine, flexible, adaptable and opportunistic nature which enables their survival, making it more difficult to apply (Lantis and Howlett 2010 p98; Thompson 2014 pp54, 65).

Military institutions, i.e. armies, navies, etc., act within the broader institution of, and restrictions imposed by, the state, whereas VNSAs are generally solely paramilitary organizations, armies set loose, answerable to no-one. States are large, unwieldy institutions whereas VNSAs have relatively small memberships. Due to their clandestinity, relatively small size and compartmentalized cell or zonal structures, VNSAs generally lack the formal hierarchical and bureaucratic decision-making structures and legal mechanisms, established rules and procedures, which hinder change and restrain certain behaviours within states. Decision-making is frequently dominated by a single or small group of, sometimes charismatic, and domineering individuals (Kenney 2009 p21; Thompson 2014 pp54-59).

VNSAs' secrecy is both an advantage, avoiding state infiltration and annihilation, and a disadvantage, creating sometimes weak, inefficient chains of command. This creates opportunities for norm entrepreneurship as well as insubordination within compartments. As such, VNSAs are prone to factionalism, internal rivalries and secession (Thompson 2014 p65). Moreover, VNSAs are prone to frequent changes of leadership, sometimes exacerbating factionalism as key leaders are targeted from without, or deposed or purged from within; all making VNSA strategic culture more susceptible to change. Thus, VNSA strategic cultures can be more difficult to pin down than those of states

The sources of organizational change include learning, leadership changes, "coalition dynamics", political or military pressures (Kenney 2009 p23). Strategic actors may possess multiple strategic cultures or sub-cultures whereby there are shifts in the dominance of one relative to the other(s) (Bloomfield 2012). Certainly, strategic narratives of *near* and *far enemy* exist amongst Salafi-jihadists (Gerges 2009).

Strategic cultural change refers to changes in goals, strategies or practices and military structures. It occurs through *innovation*, *adaptation* and *emulation*. Innovation is the development of new "technologies, tactics, strategies, and structures". Adaptation means modifying strategic practices, which itself can lead to innovation when "new means and methods" evolve through cumulative adaptations. Emulation involves imitating other military organizations, their "tools and ways of war" (Farrell and Terriff 2002 pp5-6). However, strategic narratives are also subject to these same processes.

Through *emulation*, organizations like VNSAs mimic similar organizations perceived to be more effective or successful (Farrell 1998 p412) a process known as "mimetic isomorphism" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). VNSAs learn through imitating tactics successfully deployed by other groups (perhaps via the media), or through co-operation and cross-training—processes sometimes referred to as

"contagion" or "diffusion" in the literature on terrorism—such as hijacking (Kenney 2009 p23) or suicide bombing (Bloom 2005 p122)—leading to changing strategic practices. Kenney argues that "terrorists learn through social networks, communities of practice", and online (2009 p31). VNSAs' strategic practices are more liable to change than their ideological underpinnings as strategy must adapt to changing exigencies, opportunities and reflecting their strategic priorities (Springer et al. 2009 p6).

All three factors are relevant to VNSAs as they adopt new technologies for instance in producing improvised explosive devices (IEDs), or acquire new weapons, like AQIM did in Libya; new tactics and strategies, such as suicide bombing; and restructuring as cells are broken-up or eliminated. They must adjust their resources and practices in order to adapt to changes in the strategic environment. Finally, VNSAs often emulate their counterparts, affiliates and perhaps rivals as illustrated by the proliferation of suicide bombing and the adoption of new bomb making techniques from Iraq and Afghanistan by AQIM. Indeed, culture shapes "the development and diffusion of military knowledge, producing indigenous adaptations that will be difficult to predict" (Goldman and Ross 2003 p390). Strategic cultural change also occurs through norm entrepreneurs, external shock and personnel change (Farrell 2005 p13).

2.6.1 Norm Entrepreneurship and Personnel Change

Norms can be defined in a similar way to narratives as an actor's shared ideas or understandings of identities, who they are, their social and natural environment and what can or should be done given these circumstances (Katzenstein 1996 p5). As such, strategic culture consists of norms making purposeful actions possible. Therefore, "cultural norms define the purpose and possibilities of military change" (Farrell and Terriff 2002 p7).

Strategic cultural change may be planned by mobilizing new ideas and beliefs regarding identity and legitimate behaviour, often by military leaders or political elites promoting a "new theory of victory" (Farrell and Terriff 2002 p8). Versions of Constructivism posit the adoption of new ideas rests upon the mechanism of 'persuasion' whereby "entrepreneurial carriers" innovate and/or promote new ideas to others (Parsons 2010 pp95-96). Planned or not, change often involves these "carriers" or "norm entrepreneurs" through whom new ideas or norms emerge. Norm entrepreneurs are people who reshape "social norms" (Sunstein 1996 p909) promulgating alternative interpretations and persuading others to adopt them (Parsons 2010 p95). A norm entrepreneur is a "master enabler of cultural change" (Farrell 2005 p13) who persuades "a critical mass" of followers to accept new norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998 p895). For Salafi-jihadist VNSAs these norm entrepreneurs could be global figureheads, like Osama bin Laden and Ayman az-Zawahiri, leaders of jihadist groups, cells or factions within, convincing their subordinates of new ideas and strategies. Indeed, "an entrepreneur's power or proximity to power is critical to success" (Farrell 2005 p13). Successful norm entrepreneurs create "norm bandwagons"—where "small shifts lead to large ones, as people join the 'bandwagon';" or "norm cascades" when "rapid shifts in norms" occur (Sunstein 1996 p909).

Personnel and leadership changes can lead to *norm entrepreneurship* and major changes in the norms, ideas and practices of strategic communities. Strategic cultures may be "vague", "incomplete" or "internally inconsistent", offering "conflicting diagnoses and prescriptions" in various situations, or contain cultural "cleavages". Behaviour may diverge with changing personnel in authority, causing shifts between competing subcultures within states or non-state actors. A community may have collective values and beliefs, but different attitudes regarding a subset of important matters (Duffield 1999 p778). Indeed, "the term culture may obscure fundamental differences and conflicts among the views held by members of the same group" (Duffield 1999 p773). Within VNSAs, turnover in

key individuals and members can be rapid (Farrell 2005 pp14-15) as leaders and subordinates, even whole cells, may be eliminated by security forces, rival groups, or surrender; and are replaced by other members and recruits. Alternatively, factional rivalry within VNSAs may also lead to personnel changes through purges or violence. Strategic practices are "variable and specific to individual jihadist leaders" particularly regarding "targeting doctrine" (Springer et al. 2009 p7).

2.6.2 External Shock and Strategic Environments

Strategic cultural change often involves "fine tuning", but occasionally fundamental change, usually following some kind of shock or trauma (Longhurst 2000 p306). Events beyond the control of states or VNSAs can lead to strategic cultural change including wars, revolutions and recessions, undermining existing norms and creating power shifts within these strategic communities or whole nations creating space for *norm entrepreneurs* and new ideas (Farrell 2005 p14). Significant changes in strategic culture may occur due to "dramatic" or "traumatic" events or shocks, discrediting old ideas and creating new ones to replace them (Duffield 1999 p770; Legro 2000 p254). Ameliorating for shocks or calamities may incline strategic cultures towards new interpretations, norms (Johnson et al. 2009 p6) and changing practices, through *norm entrepreneurship*, innovation, or emulation (Farrell and Terriff 2002 pp9-10).

Internal inconsistencies, disputes and outside pressures test strategic cultural beliefs against external realities. Surprises and setbacks may be interpreted to coincide with existing beliefs, or revaluated and altered. While "instrumental beliefs" may be quickly forgotten, more deeply valued ideas like religion or political ideology are more persistent. A complete failure of beliefs to meet expectations may create swift and dramatic cultural change when core beliefs are comprehensively discredited, even leading members to defect to "other cultural systems". Shocks or setbacks force social groups to "re-examine their old beliefs

and seek new ways of making sense of the world and new solutions to the problems confronting them" (Berger 1996 pp326-328). German and Japanese defeat during World War Two utterly discredited their militarist strategic cultures creating popular disillusionment with pre-war nationalism, subsequently adopting different beliefs (Berger 1996 pp326-328; Duffield 1999 p779).

Amongst VNSAs such 'shocks' may also include military or strategic setbacks and defeats or changes in state counter-insurgency strategies. Moreover, changes in the political and strategic environment mean that states and VNSAs confront new realities and opportunities to which they must adapt (Farrell and Terriff 2002 pp10-11). Indeed, changing strategic environments can open new opportunities and limit other avenues creating incentives for strategic cultural change.

2.6.3 Secession

Secession or 'splintering' from the organization is an effective way of affecting change within VNSAs, forming new groups. Factionalism is common within VNSAs and guerrilla movements. Whilst state institutions suffer from institutional lag, the less rigid structures of VNSAs, the absence of mechanisms to resolve internal conflicts and intolerance of insubordination means that breaking away is often the most effective way to resolve disputes.

2.7 Conclusion

Strategic culture has traditionally been applied to states, but is also appropriate for studying Violent Non-State Actors. An entity need not be nation-like to be studied through a strategic cultural lens, but merely a strategic actor with shared culture, narrative and practices.

Strategic culture allows greater understanding of VNSAs and how their cultural values differ from our own; their motivations, and perceptions of the world and their enemies. It provides insight into how VNSAs define victory, defeat and loss.

Such understanding potentially allows the countering of their propaganda and their possible defeat (Johnson et al. 2009 p7).

The sources of VNSA strategic cultures are much the same as those of states including history, geography, resources, technology, religion, ideology, political culture, key thinkers and texts, generally differing between individual actors. However, VNSAs differ from states in their clandestine, compartmentalized nature, enabling their survival. As such, VNSAs' strategic cultures are more elusive and prone to change than those of states, since they lack many of the formal bureaucratic and hierarchical structures of states; often compartmentalized, with domineering leaders, riven with factionalism and prone to secessionism. Contrary to Long's claim, this makes strategic cultural analysis of VNSAs more difficult than those of states.

Existing conceptions of strategic culture do not adequately account for human agency in the construction and transformation of strategic culture; or the relationship between strategic culture and behaviour. Strategic cultural change in both states and VNSAs occurs through human agency. Secession aside, many of the sources of strategic cultural change are similar as for states: changing perceptions of the strategic environment or strategic 'shocks', leadership and personnel change, emulation, innovation and *norm entrepreneurship*.

Because strategic cultures are open to change, Alastair Johnston's positivist and predictive model has been rejected in favour of an interpretivist approach; concurring with Gray, that behaviour cannot be disentangled from strategic culture. As such this study adopts Neumann and Heikka's (2005) conception of strategic culture as the interaction between discourse (or narrative) and practices. This reflects conceptions of culture employed in contemporary sociology and anthropology. A narrative and practice approach allows a more reflexive and dynamic relationship between ideas and behaviour, asserting a role for human agency in strategic cultural change. It allows us to analyse ideational and

behavioural elements while acknowledging they are interactive and mutually constitutive of strategic culture.

The following chapter expounds on these key concepts of strategic narrative and strategic practices, alongside other concepts employed in the analysis, including character, plot and story-form, narrative fidelity, master narratives, mobilizational narrative and communities of practice.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Despite not being states or nations and their clandestine nature, strategic culture is applicable to Violent Non-State Actors. Yet, VNSAs are more prone to strategic cultural change than states. Chapter two rejected Alastair Johnston's positivist conception divorcing culture from behaviour, instead adopting an interpretivist approach, arguing strategic narrative and strategic practices are interactive and mutually constitutive of strategic culture. Human agency is central to the construction and evolution of strategic culture.

According to Long, VNSAs affiliated to Al-Qaida will adopt and adapt Al-Qaida's strategic narrative into their own national or regional contexts, developing "specific national operational codes" (2009 p202). This comparative analysis explores this claim; aiming to discover the extent to which Al-Qaida-central and its franchise, AQIM, share a strategic culture and to what extent they differ.

Since strategic culture consists of strategic narrative and strategic practices, the study firstly, pieces together the narratives of Al-Qaida and AQIM, through thematic analysis of their public statements using concepts of character, plot and story-form (chapters 4 and 6). Secondly, in combination with this narrative, it uses descriptive statistics and concepts of social and strategic practices to identify how, if at all, these strategic narratives are expressed in the strategic practices of the two groups (chapters 5 and 7). Strategic practices both illustrate strategic narratives in action and may conversely be used to justify these practices. Finally, these strategic cultures will be compared and contrasted; examining the extent to which an Al-Qaida franchise, AQIM, shares common narratives, practices and strategic culture with the original Al-Qaida-core; and how local contextual factors may lead them to differ (chapter 8).

This chapter outlines a framework for the comparative analysis of the two case studies, including the key questions, before proceeding to the key concepts employed in this project. It begins with those of strategic narrative and related concepts of character, plot, story-form, narrative fidelity and mobilizational narrative; followed by those of social practices, communities of practice and finally strategic practices.

3.2 Comparative Analysis

This 'small-*n*' study focuses upon two SJVNSAs, at a low level of abstraction, pursuing "contextually specific" explanations grounded in the local contexts of the two groups. As such it is "intensive" though "less extensive" enabling greater focus on the nuances of each case (Landman 2003 pp24-29). The cases will be analysed in their specific contexts as "wholes", i.e. "complex combinations" of factors influencing the strategic cultures of both cases (Hopkins 2010 p301).

The case studies have been selected as two cases of SJVNSAs present within different regions; the Maghreb-Sahel and the Greater Middle East (incorporating Afghanistan and Pakistan). The case study on Al-Qaida was chosen because, for over a decade, it was considered the primary international terror threat and dominant SJVNSA in the world; leading a broader Salafi-jihadist movement, giving rise to a number of affiliate groups, including its subsequent rival ISIS.

AQIM was chosen as one of these Al-Qaida affiliates, allowing an exploration of the extent to which it shares a strategic culture with Al-Qaida-central. Moreover, the AQIM case study is useful in a context of increasing SJVNSA activity in northern Africa. Between September 11 2001 and 2009, SJVNSA attacks in the Maghreb (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia), adjacent Sahel countries (Chad, Mali, and Niger), Somalia and Nigeria have increased by 500% (Alexander 2012 p9).

3.2.1 Research Questions

Having established in chapter two that strategic culture is applicable to violent non-state actors (VNSAs) the primary research question consists of two parts:

A. What are strategic cultures of Al-Qaida-central and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)?

B. To what extent do Al-Qaida and AQIM share a common strategic culture?

Part A includes a number of sub-questions:

1. What are the strategic narratives of (i) Al-Qaida and (ii) AQIM?
2. How are these strategic narratives expressed in the strategic practices of the two groups'?
3. What factors influence the strategic cultures of Al-Qaida and AQIM?

Part B includes further sub-questions:

4. How do the strategic cultures of Al-Qaida and AQIM differ?
5. Do they share the same, similar or distinctive characters?
6. Do these narratives employ the same, similar or different plots and story-forms, and what are their nuances?
7. To what extent do these narratives incorporate shared or differing themes and how are they nuanced?
8. Finally, how do these narratives express themselves in similar or differing strategic practices?

This chapter will first outline the concepts and methods used in my narrative analysis, before moving on to the concepts relating to social practices which will also be employed in the study.

3.3 Strategic Narrative

Narratives are discourse taking the form of a story, or "storied ways of knowing and communicating". Through narratives, storytellers interpret and experience the world, telling "moral tales" about how things ought to be (Riessman 2005 p1). Narratives plot events into stories acquiring "a structure" and "order of meaning" absent in a chronological recounting of events (White 1987 pp4-6) creating cognitive links between them.

Humans are naturally inclined to narrate stories providing consistency in human experiences and a means for communicating with others (Lieblich et al. 1998 p7). Narrative is central to human culture, allowing us to "translate knowing into telling"; fashioning human experiences into "structures of meaning" which are not culture-centric but "transcultural". It is far easier to understand stories than culturally specific patterns of thought (White 1980 pp5-6). Stories are translatable and can be summarized without distortion (Barthes 1975 p269).

Narrative is not simply one cultural code amongst many to provide meaning to human experience, but a "metacode"; a universal basis for communicating about the shared human experience (White 1980 p6). Narrative provides the capacity to see the world through others eyes (Delgado 1989 p2439) allowing easier and better understanding of Salafi-jihadist Violent Non-State Actors. Narratives are "powerful resources for defining cultures and framing actions" and are vital for understanding Salafi-Jihadism in the "war of ideas" (Halverson et al. 2011 p1). A narrative approach provides "a window on the mind" of individuals and in the case of "specific group[s] of tellers", like VNSAs, "a window on their culture" (Cortazzi 2002 p2).

Strategic narratives are constructed by political actors to shape the responses and actions of others (Freedman 2006 pp22-23), for "strategic purposes" in order to justify their policies, actions and purposes, and to express their identities. VNSAs

"construct narratives with the instrumental aim to influence the opinions and behavior of others" (Miskimmon *et al.* 2013 p4-7).

Strategic narratives constitute socially constructed filters forming an "interpretive" or "perceptual" lens (Johnston 1995a p1; Snyder 1977 v-vi), through which strategic actors, such as VNSAs, perceive the world, influencing their behaviour.

Narrative is "the foundation of all strategy, upon which all else—policy, rhetoric and action—is built" (Vlahos 2005). Strategic narratives link means to ends, by providing actions with meaning. Strategic narratives provide an explanation of the actions of a party in an armed conflict, expressing a framework within which actions or 'strategic practices' can be understood, linking them back to goals; expressing "policy aims in narrative form" (Simpson 2012 pp179-181). They "justify and explain" the strategies employed by political actors (Cawkwell 2016 p10); to persuade audiences of the legitimacy of their actions. Strategic narratives are a form of 'strategic communication' designed to articulate, and persuade audiences, to support specific goals (Halverson et al. 2011 p179).

Strategic narratives give meaning to practices; relating them to strategy (Scartozzi 2015 p317). They express a "cause, purpose, and mission" (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001 p328), communicating an actor's strategic goals. Strategic narratives enable those conducting a strategy to understand their objectives and explain them to their audiences (Cawkwell 2016 p187-188). They "provide a framework of understanding that can bind a fighting force together" (Freedman 2006 p90). Strategic narratives of SJVNSAs take the form of a story providing a justificatory framework for their strategic actions.

Actors may also be constrained by the strategic narratives they construct. Strategic narratives are constructed and constrained within the existing political context, "communication environment" and in relation to certain political objectives. Political actors use strategic narratives to give meaning to the "past, present and

future", articulating political goals and the means to achieve them (Miskimmon et al. 2013 pp4-5). The strategic aims of an actor are at the core of strategic narratives, formed around certain long and/or short-term goals (Miskimmon et al. 2013 pp8-9).

"Compelling" narratives, even if factually inaccurate, provide "a plausible, internally coherent story that resonates with the audience" (Jamieson 1992 pp36, 41). Convincing strategic narratives must provide "clarity of purpose", articulating "a clear and compelling mission purpose." They must provide "consistent", "coherent" and "unambiguous" explanations of the necessity of political violence. Strategic narratives must also portray a strong "prospect of success". Fluctuating, inconsistent narratives induce doubt about a campaign's strategic purpose and the likelihood of victory (Ringsmose and Børgesen 2011 pp513-514). A persuasive strategic narrative "ties events together in a meaningful way." Effective strategic narratives benefit from a lack of persuasive counter-narratives. However, a persuasive strategic narrative may be undermined if it is inconsistent with cultural values or norms (Ringsmose and Børgesen 2011 pp514-515).

> "A successful narrative will link certain events while disentangling others, distinguish good news from bad tidings, and explain who is winning and who is losing" (Freedman 2006 p23).

Miskimmon *et al* conceive strategic narratives, in relation to the international system, as "a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics." They are a form of soft power designed to persuade and shape the behaviour of other actors (2013 pp2, 8-9) making others "want what you want" and "do what you want them to do" (Nye 2008 p29). As such, international actors, primarily states, use strategic narratives to shape international society and influence other actors and domestic audiences. Yet they also acknowledge the use of strategic narratives by non-state actors and their adroit use by Al-Qaida (Miskimmon et al. 2013 pp42-43).

In international politics, they argue, strategic narratives operate at three levels: system, identity and issue narratives (Miskimmon et al. 2013 p7). System narratives depict the international stage, its key characters or actors and how it functions. Identity narratives outline a political actor's story, values and goals, be it a state or non-state actor. Issue narratives are used to justify why certain actions and policies, as opposed to others, are necessary in relation to certain issues or problems. As such, strategic narratives put certain actions or policies in context setting out why they are necessary or desirable, for what ends and how they can be accomplished (Miskimmon et al. 2013 p7; Roselle et al. 2014 p76). These narratives are "inextricably linked" as they interact with narratives at the other levels (Roselle et al. 2014 pp76-77), since an actor's identity shapes, and is shaped by, its view of international society, which in turn shapes how it aims to achieve its goals and portrays its action.

At the systemic level, Al-Qaida's strategic narrative portrays a hostile international environment of *near* and *far enemies*; of *apostate* regimes supported by the West, oppressing the Muslim nation or *umma*. In terms of identity, Al-Qaida depicts itself as the vanguard of the *umma*, following Salafist values, fighting to restore its *honour* following centuries of injustice and implement its solutions of *Islamic revolution* and restoration of the *Caliphate*. Its issue narrative sets out why its violent strategic practices are necessary for achieving these goals and how they can be justified in Islamic terms, revealing how Al-Qaida frames its actions. VNSAs like Al-Qaida use strategic narratives to provide legitimacy to their cause and violence. Al-Qaida has been able to tie contemporary events into its own strategic narrative (Miskimmon et al. 2013 pp22, 42-23).

For SJVNSAs strategic narratives are threefold in expressing a shared interpretation of the world or "rhetorical vision" (Bormann 1972); seeking to persuade audiences and potential recruits of the legitimacy of their cause; and framing their actions by imbuing them with meaning.

3.3.1 Narrative Methods

The thematic narrative analysis utilizes literary concepts of *character*, *plot* and *story-forms* in order to bring the story to the fore. Narrative methods consist of a range of approaches to texts which have a storied form (Riessman 2005 p1).

Mishler distinguishes between "the told", the real sequence of events, and "the telling", the plot as retold or narrated (1995 pp90-92). These concepts correspond to '*fabula*' and '*sjuzhet*'; the "events as they occurred" and "the plot or narrative as told", respectively (Cortazzi 2002 p88). They distinguish between "what is being told" and "the manner in which it is told" (Herman 2009 p27).

Frequently, narratives are not bound to single texts but must be "pieced together" from multiple sources (Baker 2006 p148). This project first pieces together the narratives of the VNSAs in question from multiple "tellings". This utilizes the double hermeneutic involving the interpretation of actors' interpretations of the world (Furlong and Marsh 2010 p185). As Geertz notes, "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (1973 p9). This reconstructive method is appropriate as the study uses texts (interview scripts, statements and propaganda) authored by a variety of people within, or on behalf of, VNSAs, and discourse from without, upon which they rely. People do not find, but make stories; researchers are themselves storytellers. As such, the story is "co-authored" in our representation of the texts and discourses of others (Mishler 1995 pp117-118).

This thematic approach compares the stories told by Al-Qaida and AQIM, identifying key themes within the narratives. Unlike grounded theory and other approaches to discourse the text will not be broken-down into codes and removed from their context, but rather the story will be kept "intact" (Riessman 2008 p53). This is appropriate for 'small-*n*' projects involving a small number of case studies.

3.3.2 Key Concepts

This narrative approach will analyse the strategic narratives of SJVNSAs using literary concepts of *character*, *plot* and "*story-form*"; identifying the key *characters*, *plots* and "*story-forms*" of the narratives in question (Halverson et al. 2011; Jacobs 2002). Other key concepts to be employed are those of narrative fidelity, master narratives and mobilizational narrative, outlined below.

3.3.2.1 Character

Stories need characters; protagonists and antagonists, victims and villains, arranged in oppositional roles (Jacobs 2002 pp216-217; Jamieson 1992 p25). Strategic actors "engage in competitive and conflictual narrative struggles", portraying themselves as on the side of good and their opponents as forces of evil. Actors use narrative to laud themselves and discredit their opponents (Jacobs 2002 pp216-217). These character oppositions are a "strategic resource" for social and political actors. Collective mobilization needs more than discontent. It requires identifying an adversary: identifying friends and enemies, and the antagonism between them "understood within a recovered past and a projected future" which often affect the behaviour and consequences of social movements (Jacobs 2002 p218).

Halverson et al (2011) identify a number of "standard characters" or *archetypes* in Islamist extremist narratives: *barbarian*, *champion*, *crusader/colonizer*, *deity*, *imposter*, *martyr*, *pagan*, *prophet*, *sage*, *saviour*, *traitor*, *trickster* and *tyrant*. Important *archetypes* in the strategic narratives of Al-Qaida and AQIM include the *deity*, God or Allah, and his messenger, the Prophet Muhammad. In monotheist religious narratives, *prophets* are human agents of God who reveal his message or perform his commands. *Champions* are heroic figures or movements capable of affecting great change or fighting for the Islamic cause, frequently characterized as *mujahideen*

(fighters of jihad or holy warriors). *Martyrs* are heroes who sacrifice their lives in pursuit of the cause.

Countries and their leaders can be seen as characters in Salafi-jihadist narratives. Authoritarian and oppressive regimes are considered *tyrants*, or *taghut* in Arabic, and rulers and regimes in Muslim countries which fail to rule according to Salafi principles are portrayed as *hypocrites*, *apostates*, *tyrants* (or *Pharoahs*) and *agents* of the West. These portrayals follow a *near enemy* narrative (Gerges 2009). Indeed, regimes allied with the *crusaders*/*colonizers* are portrayed as *hypocrites* or *traitors* who have *betrayed* Islam and their people, and are therefore *apostates*. *Traitors* are characters who betray their allies or break their promises for gain or expedience, including jihadists who have surrendered, such as Hassan Hattab of the GSPC. *Hypocrites* or *munafiqin* are fake Muslims who have abandoned Islam, betraying their faith and perhaps family, tribe or *umma*, as those in Medina during Muhammad's time who appeared to practice Islam but did not truly believe (Bernardi et al. 2012 pp28-30; Halverson et al. 2011 pp21-22, 207-208). *Apostates* or *murtadin* in contrast are those who have "openly and knowingly" done or said something which makes them no-longer Muslims (Leaman 2014 p131) who, according to Mawdudi's interpretation of Islam adopted by jihadists, can be killed. Infidels or *kuffar* are unbelievers who unlike *apostates*, were never Muslims (Mawdudi 1994).

In contradistinction, the *far enemy* narrative (Gerges 2009) depicts Western countries as *crusaders* and *colonizers* or *imperialists*, as well as *masters* propping-up *apostate*, *agent* regimes. These *archetypes* have great historical resonance for Muslims, referring to the Medieval Christian invaders of Muslim lands; and the *colonialists*, *imperialists* and now *neo-colonialists*, of Europe, and North America who, from the nineteenth century onwards, plundered the resources of Muslim countries for economic gain. These *archetypes* are often conflated into a narrative of

centuries of oppression of Muslims by the West (Bernardi et al. 2012 pp28-30; Halverson et al. 2011 pp21-22, 207-208).

Imposters and *tricksters*, appear particularly in the narrative of the GSPC-AQIM, as those who calculatedly misrepresent their identities and intentions; and those who purposefully fool others into disaster, respectively. They are often infiltrators from the military or intelligence agencies alleged to have penetrated jihadi groups (Bernardi et al. 2012 pp28-30; Halverson et al. 2011 pp21-22, 207-208). *Deviants* or "*Kharijites*" also appear in the narratives, those who have strayed from the righteous path of Salafism into extremism (sometimes deceived by *imposters* and *tricksters*), like the GIA in Algeria, committing violent excesses against Muslims (Kohlmann 2005i). Similarly, Al-Qaida has disowned ISIS for its savagery against civilians and other jihadists (Jones and Daragahi 2014). Another important character in the strategic narratives of SJVNSAs is the *umma* or global Muslim community, who are oppressed, and on whose behalf they fight.

The study will identify, compare and contrast the key characters and *archetypes* in the strategic cultural narratives of Al-Qaida and AQIM.

3.3.2.2 Plot and Story-form

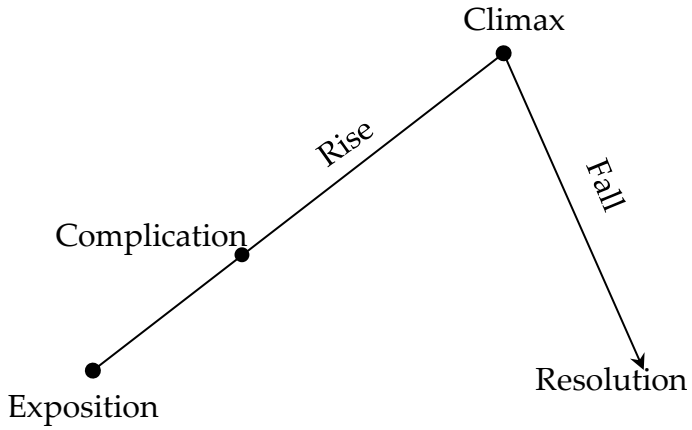
Strategic narratives outline a political actor's story, values and goals, be it a state, nation or non-state actor. This is essentially the plot of the narrative (Roselle et al. 2014 p76). Al-Qaida depicts itself as a *vanguard* of the *umma*, following Salafist values, fighting to restore its *honour* following centuries of injustice and its solutions of *Islamic revolution* and restoration of the *Caliphate*.

Figure 1: Aristotle's Model

Narratives are simply stories "with a beginning, middle, and end; with a plot; with main characters, scoundrels and paragons; and with background settings" (Hart 1992 p634). This follows Aristotle's (1895 VII) conception of plot shown above.

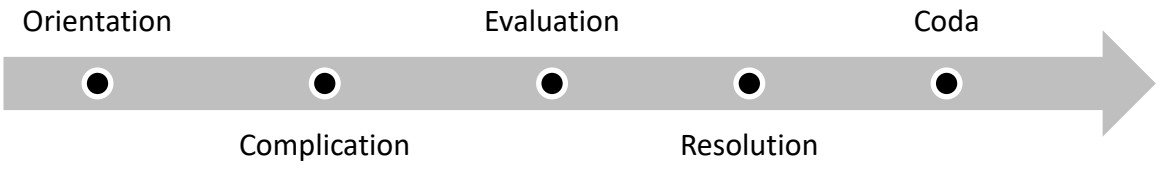
Gustav Freytag divided plot of tragic drama into several parts: the introduction or exposition, the rise where the story develops out of some complication or conflict, until it reaches its climax, followed by the hero's inevitable fall and finally the resolution or denouement of the tale in catastrophe (Freytag 1900 pp114-140; Martin 1986 p81).

Figure 2: Freytag's Dramatic Pyramid



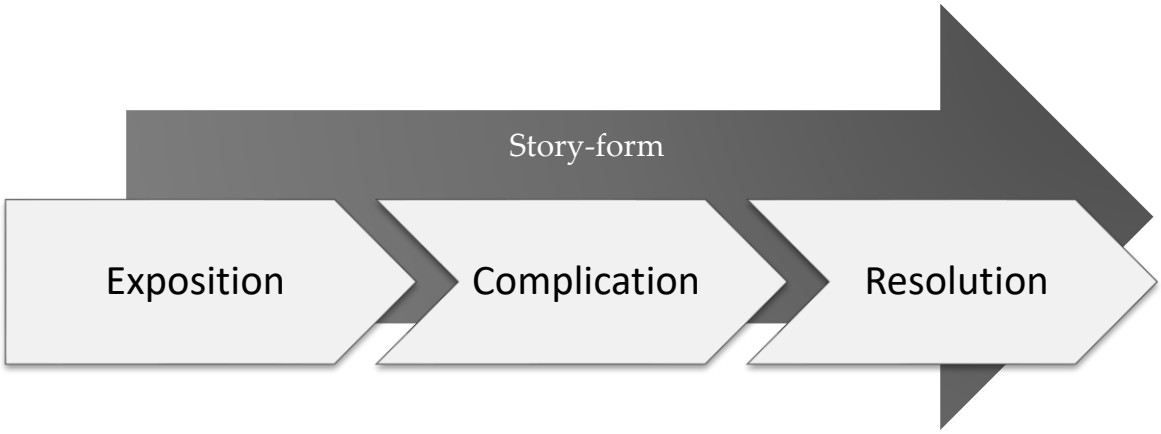
Labov and Waletzky find that narrative plots of personal experience can be divided into up to five sections: orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda.

Figure 3: Representation of Labov and Walezky's Narrative Model



For simplicity, my concept of plot will be divided into three sections, illustrated below. Salafi-jihadist narratives tend to be resolved at some point in the future with the achievement of their goals in delivering Muslims from their oppression, establishing *Islamic states* ruled according to *sharia* law.

Figure 4: Plot and Story-Form



Narrative is key to the construction of meaning by arranging events into plots. Plot pertains to the storyline linking events, creating a relational framework, assembling occurrences into a meaningful totality (White 1987 p9). Devising a plot makes "the intelligible spring from the accidental" (Ricoeur 1984 p41). Narrative is more than a mere succession of events; it plots meaning from "scattered" incidents (Ricoeur 1981 pp278-279). It pieces together an interpretation rather than veritable truth from this "scattered, and profoundly meaningless debris…" (Kellner 1989 p10).

Emplotment consists of selecting, and designating meaning to these events. Plot can be used rhetorically to construct a particular version of events and vision of the world by selecting and focusing on certain events and away from others—creating linkages between them and assigning causality. Different plots can emerge from the same series of events creating multiple 'tellings' of the same story. There is always more than one side to every story, creating competing and conflicting narratives (Jacobs 2002 pp214-217; 2004 p21). The study will identify,

compare and contrast the plot of the strategic cultural narratives of Al-Qaida and AQIM.

Narrative genre relates to the type of story and how it is told, be it epic, tragedy, romance, comedy or irony (Abbott 2008 p49; Jacobs 2002). These genres often incorporate or closely resemble certain generic plots or "masterplots" (Abbott 2008 pp46-49); stories of vengeance, quests, rags-to-riches, etc. These archetypal plots are also known as "*story-forms*"; recurring storylines with stereotypical characters, incidents and trajectories (Halverson et al. 2011 p20).

A *story-form* follows a progression from one event to another, towards an anticipated resolution of the plot. When used rhetorically, these *story-forms* may represent stories or plots in progress which portray a conflict with a favoured, or hoped for, outcome, which may never be realized in actuality. Indeed, "the allure of a preferred ending" can be a major impetus to realize it in any way possible (Halverson et al. 2011 p21). Narratives frequently incorporate one or more of these generic plots or sub-plots.

Halverson et al identify a number of more specific *story-forms* in Islamist extremist narratives: *betrayal*, "*conflict with God*", *deliverance*, *invasion*, *martyrdom* and *ruse* (2011 pp20-21, 207-208). *Deliverance story-forms* occur where a *champion* saves the ill-fated from jeopardy (Polti 1924). *Deliverance story-forms* are prominent in jihadist narratives where Muslims are in a perilous position. The protagonist, i.e. jihadists, must deliver them from their predicament, leading to a *resolution* of the *story-form* (Bernardi et al. 2012 p32; Halverson et al. 2011 207-208). This aim of *resolution* is ultimately to be achieved by overthrowing *apostate* regimes, creating an *Islamic state*—or restoring of the *Caliphate*—ruled by *sharia*, and lifting the oppression of Muslims by the *tyrants* and the *crusaders*.

Betrayal story-forms involve a supposed ally forsaking or deceiving the protagonist or their people for reasons of selfishness or expedience. *Invasion* or *occupation*

story-forms are where a foreign force, matching the *crusader* and *colonizer* archetypes, invades or occupies Muslim territory and must be vanquished and ejected by the protagonists. This also relates to *ruse story-forms*, including conspiracy theories, where *imposters*, *tricksters* and *traitors* plot to deceive, hiding their true intentions (Bernardi et al. 2012 p32; Halverson et al. 2011 207-208). *Ruse story-forms* include infiltrators from military or intelligence services and Western plots against Muslims. For instance, Western forces in Afghanistan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have been portrayed as having ulterior motives of *colonization*, weakening Muslim states and stealing their resources. Expelling these 'occupiers' fulfils a *deliverance story-form*.

The *martyrdom* story-form involves a protagonist—even *champion* or *hero*—who fulfils the *martyr archetype*, sacrificing their life for a just cause, including those killed in battle and suicide missions against the *tyrants* or *crusaders*, for the benefit of the cause. *Conflict with God story-forms* are where the antagonists are at odds with the *deity* and must be humbled (Bernardi et al. 2012 p32; Halverson et al. 2011 207-208). This *story-form* is frequently employed in reference to the *tyrannical* and *apostate* regimes in Muslim countries which are in conflict with Allah for failing to rule according to Islamic principles or implementing *Sharia* law. It is the protagonists' (i.e. SJVNSAs) duty to fight, humble and overthrow these regimes and impose Islamic states. This study will identify, compare and contrast the *story-forms* used in the strategic cultural narratives of Al-Qaida and AQIM.

3.3.2.3 Narrative Fidelity

According to Walter Fisher narrative fidelity relates to the "truth qualities" of stories; whether they adhere to those a certain audience believes or knows are true (Fisher 1987 pp314-317). Snow and Benford (1988 pp208-211) distinguish narrative fidelity from empirical credibility and experiential commensurability, though all form part of Fisher's conception. Empirical credibility relates to whether purported facts are true or reliable, what has been excluded or distorted, and

whether its reasoning is sound; whether a narrative or frame is a credible or verifiable description of reality. Is there supporting evidence? Experiential commensurability refers to whether it is consistent with one's values and experiences (Fisher 1997 p317; Snow and Benford 1988 pp208-210). For Snow and Benford, narrative fidelity is specifically the extent to which narratives "resonate" with extant cultural stories and myths (Snow and Benford 1988 pp208-210). Does it have "cultural resonances"? *Cultural resonance* makes themes or frames "appear natural and familiar" utilizing language and ideas which "resonate with a broader political culture" (Gamson 1992 p135).

3.3.2.4 Master Narratives

Master narratives are "stock stories" (Espino 2008 p67) which are well-known and retold repeatedly within a given cultural setting. Halverson *et al* define *master narratives* as a "transhistorical narrative…deeply embedded in a particular culture" (2011 p14). They are "historically grounded stories" expressing the shared identity, experiences, hopes, fears and aspirations of a given community. They are an interpretive frame through which communities perceive "who they are and where they come from, and how to make sense of unfolding developments around them" (CSCC 2011 p4). Through repetition over time these narratives achieve a degree of status and reverence within given societies becoming ingrained within that culture such that they are "taken-for-granted" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p182). *Master narratives* can be employed, created and modified by political communities including governments and Violent Non-State Actors, in order to convince audiences to support certain political agendas, discard counterviews or incite violence. VNSAs "promulgate their own *master narratives* in an attempt to discredit adversaries while attracting new recruits" (CSCC 2011).

Halverson *et al* identify thirteen master narratives used by Islamist extremists which resonate with Muslims, generally based on religious texts, employed by

SJVNSAs in their own narratives to justify and legitimate their cause and actions (2011 pp14, 24, 182).

Master narratives are employed in contemporary SJVNSA narratives using a process of *vertical integration* whereby these stock stories are assimilated with contemporary narratives at local and personal levels, such that—perhaps historical—*master narratives* are used as analogies for contemporary events (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 p4; Bernardi *et al.* 2012 p27; Corman 2013). These historical analogies link the past and present.

Master narratives can be invoked by simply citing certain characters. These stories from Islamic history are so well-known amongst the target audiences of Salafi-jihadists they can be conjured through key words and phrases without a retelling (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 p5). Denouncing a leader as a *Pharaoh*, for instance, designates them a *tyrant* who is in conflict with God, without necessitating retelling the story of Moses (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p182). Simply declaring the West '*Crusaders*'—a common theme amongst Salafi-jihadists—invokes *master narrative* of the *Crusades* with no need for further explanation (Bartolucci and Corman 2014).

Master narratives are not in themselves strategic, but may instead be invoked rhetorically to persuade their audience to support a cause (Halverson et al. 2011 p182). Strategic narratives are not necessarily analytical, experience or evidence based but emotional appeals incorporating—perhaps tenuous—metaphors or historical analogies (Freedman 2006 pp22-23). This study will identify where certain *master narratives* are employed in SJVNSAs strategic narratives.

3.3.2.5 Mobilizational Narratives

Strategic narratives are a form of strategic communication constructing meaning and disseminating messages to gain support for and achieve certain goals (Bernardi *et al.* 2012 p6; Halverson *et al.* 2011 p179). They are "mobilizational narratives" (Hart 1992); aiming to create and galvanize support and solidarity

around shared values (Hart 1996 p50). Mobilizational narratives are stories or themes, designed to "persuade potential adherents" to take certain courses of action (Hart 1992 p637).

Snow and Benford prefer the term "motivational frames", providing calls to arms and rationales, "inducements" or "prods" to engage in action, since mobilizing consensus around a diagnosis of a problem and its solution does not necessarily translate into "action mobilization" or recruitment to a cause or organization (Snow and Benford 1988 pp202-204). Mobilizational frames inspire supporters to surmount their fears and proclivity to 'free-ride', and participate in potentially risky activities. Accordingly, Islamist movements frequently present involvement in the cause as a religious obligation or jihad and those who die for the cause assigned the status of *martyrs* promised heavenly rewards (Snow and Byrd 2007 pp128-129).

3.4 Strategic Practices

Social practices are "arrays of activity" performed by humans, consisting of the actions of individuals or 'communities of practice', which form the component parts of social phenomena (Schatzki 2001 p11). According to Adler and Pouliot:

> "practices are socially meaningful patterns of action which, in being performed…simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world" (2011 p6).

Similarly, for Theodore Schatzki practices are "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding." They are "embodied" in the sense of involving the human body and exist amongst collectives or organizations, i.e. communities of practice. Yet, practices may also refer to the activities involving machines, instruments and

objects, natural or man-made which may mediate, shape or even propagate practices (2001 pp11-12, 20).

Narratives are "preconditions for action" whereas practices are "socialised patterns of action", together forming a "concept of culture" (Neumann 2002 p631). Practices are where narratives meet social action. Practices consist of the "know-how" where narrative encompasses the "know-why" of strategic culture. Practice refers to "actual conduct" invoking "practical knowledge" (Kratochwil 2011 pp36, 42-44) whereas narrative refers to the justificatory framework for this conduct.

Practices are based on shared understandings and skills; where "mind and activity" meet (Schatzki 2001 p12). Practices are "performances"; "a process of doing something", which only exist "in their unfolding" (Adler and Pouliot 2011 p6). The performance of a practice is a "knowledgeable, informed and goal-directed enactment" (Barnes 2001 p29). Practices interweave "discursive and material worlds." Practices express beliefs and narratives (Adler and Pouliot 2011 p7). Strategic practices may or may not be justified by, and/or illustrate, strategic narratives. Although ideas are "invisible entities", residing in the mind, they are made manifest in practices being both "public and visible". Practices, simultaneously, combine both thought and action creating "embodied theory" (Barnes 2001 pp25, 28), or perhaps embodied narratives.

Communities of practice are collectives of people who wish to learn and apply shared practices (Snyder 1997). Indeed, "common socialization" leads to "common solutions to problems" (Collins 2001 p119). For Adler, communities of practice are "intersubjective social structures that constitute the normative and epistemic ground for action", but also collectives affecting "political, economic, and social events." They incorporate shared interest, knowledge, identity and discourse associated with a certain practice. The concept is more comprehensive than that of 'network' which involves the transfer of information between groups, adding "processes of social communication and identity formation through which

practitioners bargain about and fix meanings, learn practices", etc. (2008 pp199-200). Practices are learnt from others and those skills developed through participating in that practice. Learning and enacting shared practices are part of the same process, hence shared practices are subject to change and evolution (Barnes 2001 p33).

Practices may be carried in traditions, the rationale behind which may be unknown or long forgotten. The reason for their continuance may simply be because they have proven effective in the past or 'because this is how we have always done it'. The strategic practices of military units or VNSAs may follow—perhaps national or organizational—traditions embedded in their strategic cultures with the continuation of certain strategies and tactics from the past. This can be exemplified by the continuities in the guerrilla tradition of Algerian VNSAs.

According to Ronald Akers, criminal and militant behaviour is often "learned within social collectives", i.e. communities of practice such as VNSAs, espousing "values and norms conducive to criminality and violence" (Kenney 2009 p22). VNSAs are strategic communities engaged in practices of political violence and, as such, communities of practice (Kenney 2009 p22). They are:

> "social communities formed by veterans and novices that interact on a regular basis, creating and re-creating experiential knowledge expressed in shared narratives, practices, and routines" (Kenney 2009 pp19).

In participating in these communities of practice, Islamist militants not only expand their practical knowledge of jihadist tradecraft, but also confirm their identity as dedicated Muslims engaged in a righteous jihad against *tyrannical apostates* and *infidel crusaders* (Kenney 2009 p32).

The tactics, weapons employed and targeting practices employed by SJVNSAs are shaped by their ideology, motivations and goals, resources, capabilities,

organizational dynamics and personalities of prominent members (Hoffman 2013 p229), which together, as narrative and strategic practices, constitute its strategic culture. SJVNSA strategic practices also reflect their target audiences (Hoffman 2013 p229) at whom their narratives are aimed.

Adler and Pouliot distinguish practices from behaviour and action. According to this typology, behaviour refers to acts or things that are done—deeds "performed in and on the world"—whereas actions are deeds infused with meaning which occur at a particular time and place. Practices, however, are "patterned actions"; actions repeated across space and time. Practices consist of actions that are learnt, "socially developed", repeated and entrenched within "organizational contexts" (2011 p6). They are "objectified meanings", the expression of narratives in reality (Adler 2008 p199). Indeed, practices are "patterned" forming routines, repeated with regularity over space and time or at least reproducing similar behaviour with common meanings whilst still allowing a degree of agency in repetition (Adler and Pouliot 2011 p7).

Strategic violence and political-military strategy constitute social and cultural practices (Klein 1988 p135; 1994 pp3-7). Political violence has meaning and purpose. VNSAs engage in violent practices corresponding to specific ideologies or religious beliefs, narratives and values. These narratives provide rationale and justifications for VNSAs' strategic practices (Long and Wilner 2014 p128).

Strategic practices combine the concept of practice with strategy. Strategy is "the use of available resources to gain any objective" (Howard 1983 p36); relating means to ends, "intentions to capabilities, objectives to resources" (Gaddis 1982 viii). For military actors, strategy coordinates political aims with military capabilities. It is the use and threat of force for political ends (Gray 1999a p5). Tactics are the realm of "armed forces" or "any instrument of power in action" whereas, strategy directs these "instruments" towards political goals (Gray 1996 xiii). Tactics refers to the realm of battlefield deployments, military manoeuvres,

fighting techniques and engagements with the enemy; "the orchestration of men and weaponry in order to conduct a direct exchange of violence" (LeFavor 2013 p168). For Clausewitz, tactics were methods for winning a military engagement or battle whereas strategy involved using those engagements to win a war (Neumann and Heikka 2005 p12). The aim of strategy is to produce "strategic effect" in order to create "political change" (Gray 1999a p8).

Tactics repeated systematically according to a plan attached to some broader political agenda constitute a strategy; therefore insurgency, terrorism and guerrilla warfare can be considered both tactics and strategies. The performance of a tactic by a paramilitary force in a specific engagement for a specific military purpose and supported by a justificatory framework or narrative, accords with Adler and Pouliot's (2011 p6) definition of actions as a particular enactment of behaviour imbued with meaning. When forming "practiced routines" (Barnes 2001 pp28-29)—actions repeated over space and time—tactics constitute strategic practices. Strategic practices differ from habits in requiring multiple participants not necessarily doing the same thing but "complicated interactions involving continued cooperation" (Kratochwil 2011 p54).

According to Lock, strategic behaviour is "a practice that represents both the site at which strategic culture operates and the site at which strategic culture is produced" (2010 p687). As practices are where narratives meet social action, strategic culture is where strategic practices and strategic narratives entwine. The connection between narrative and practice is central to my conception of strategic culture.

While tactics and strategies which are not supported by explicit narratives could be considered behaviour—according to Adler and Pouliot's (2011 p6) definition—or simply mindless violence, they may simply be supported by narratives to which we are not privy. Moreover, as a community of practice, a VNSA's behaviour may still enact tacit or background knowledge and shared understandings, thus still

imbued with meaning constituting military actions, and strategic practices when practiced or repeated over space and time (Adler and Pouliot 2011 p6).

Since VNSA strategic culture is open to change through human agency, their strategic practices evolve over time as they are innovated, adopted, adapted or emulated from other organizations (Farrell and Terriff 2002 p6). Emulation and cross-training has led to the diffusion of strategic practices such as suicide bombing amongst VNSAs across much of the world (Bloom 2005 p122).

3.5 Conclusion

Rejecting Johnston's positivist and predictive conception which divorces strategic culture from behaviour, this study employs an interpretivist conception consisting of two elements, strategic narratives and strategic practices, which are interactive and mutually constitutive. This chapter has outlined my methodology for the analysis of the strategic narratives and strategic practices of Violent Non-State Actors. Strategic cultures consist of a bricolage of narrative themes—often incorporating *master narratives*—formed out of *plots*, *story-forms* and *characters* or *archetypes*—and practices. Strategic narratives tell a story about SJVNSA's worldview and purpose, manifested in an assortment of strategic practices. They attempt to justify their jihad and strategic practices. Through human agency, strategic cultures are subject to change as new strategic practices are innovated, adapted and emulated over time; and new narratives are devised to accommodate or justify these changing practices. When brought together strategic narratives and strategic practices form a strategic cultural whole, overcoming the issue of disentangling culture from behaviour.

This conception of strategic cultures will be employed for analysing the two case studies on Al-Qaida and its franchise, AQIM. The strategic cultures will subsequently be compared. The following chapter consists of a narrative analysis of Al-Qaida.

Chapter 4: Strategic Narrative of Al-Qaida

4.1 Introduction

While strategic culture has traditionally been applied to states, this study applies it in a comparative strategic cultural analysis of Violent Non-State Actors through concepts of strategic narrative and strategic practices, outlined in chapter three. This is one of two chapters on Al-Qaida-central, covering the period from the 1990s to Bin Laden's death in 2011, identifying its strategic narrative. It starts with an overview of the historical context and origins of Al-Qaida, before moving on to the narrative analysis, identifying its key characters or archetypes, basic plot and key themes of the narrative. Al-Qaida sees the contemporary world through the lens of its strategic narrative, particularly, Islamic history—through vertical integration—and religious law. The subsequent chapter presents an analysis of Al-Qaida's strategic practices and how its strategic narrative, discussed below, is expressed in these practices.

4.2 Historical Context

VNSAs are more prone to strategic cultural change than states. The history of Al-Qaida and Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) illustrates the factionalism, squabbling and domineering leaders seemingly endemic within SJVNSAs and the broader Salafi-Jihadist movement. Al-Qaida formed in Afghanistan when Bin Laden seceded from Abdullah Azzam's Office of Services for the Arab Mujahideen (MAK), establishing *al-Masada* military base at Jaji, Paktia in October 1986 (Bergen 2006b pp49-52).

Around this time Ayman az-Zawahiri arrived in Afghan exile to reconstitute EIJ for a renewed campaign against Mubarak's regime (Gerges 2009 pp120-121). Azzam's *irredentist* strategy trained Arabs in guerrilla warfare to fight under the Afghan *mujahideen* leadership, aiming to move on to liberating Palestine following

victory. Bin Laden, however, wanted to create a foreign legion also trained in terrorist tactics, not only to fight the Soviet invaders of Afghanistan, but also, initially, the *near enemy*, and subsequently the West (Brown 2011). Bin Laden transitioned from the Islamic *irredentism* advocated by Azzam (appendix A3.12.1), through revolutionism to global jihad (Hegghammer 2009).

Bin Laden was a *norm entrepreneur* who affected a radical break with jihadist tradition in adopting a *far enemy* strategy targeting the West, despite opposition within Al-Qaida (Gerges 2009 pp121-129). Al-Qaida and EIJ had shared membership, notably Muhammad Atef and Abu Ubaidah al-Banshiri, military chief of both organizations, as they became increasingly enmeshed (Hamid and Farrall 2015 pp116-117). Zawahiri signed up to Bin Laden's 1998 '*World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders*', apparently without consulting EIJ's council, and formally merged his diminished EIJ contingent in exile with Al-Qaida in June 2001; both to the dismay of its members (Brooke 2008 pp212-219; Wright 2006 p336).

In May 1987, Bin Laden's forces defeated attacking Soviet forces at the Battle of Jaji, before moving to new training bases (*al-Qaida al-Askariya*) in Khost. The nascent Al-Qaida suffered a devastating defeat by Afghan government forces at Jalalabad in July 1989. Consequently, Al-Qaida refocused on training Arab fighters (Bergen 2006b pp49-88; Gerges 2011 pp49-50; Hamid and Farrall 2015 pp89-117, 134).

Bin Laden soon returned to Saudi Arabia, his attention shifting to battling Marxists in Yemen, before fleeing to Pakistan in spring 1991, having fallen-out with the Saudi monarchy, following American forces' deployment in the kingdom in August 1990. This '*occupation*' led Bin Laden to turn against the West. In 1992 he arrived in Sudan, where Al-Qaida as we know it formed (Esposito 2003g pp11-13; Wright 2006 pp153-161). Al-Qaida returned to Afghanistan in 1996 when, under Saudi and American pressure, Sudan expelled Bin Laden (Esposito 2003g p14).

4.3 Characters and Plot

The antagonists in Al-Qaida's narrative fall into categories of *near* and *far enemies* (Gerges 2009). The *near enemy* characters consist of regimes considered *apostate* across the Islamic world, including Algeria and Yemen, which fail to adhere to *sharia* law and must be overthrown and replaced with *Islamic states*, to form a new *Caliphate*. The writings of Bin Laden and Ayman az-Zawahiri frequently frame the regimes of their native countries, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, with this *apostate* archetype. Taliban Afghanistan (1996-2001) was closest to the genuine *Islamic state* ruled in strict accordance with *sharia* envisioned by Al-Qaida.

These regimes are portrayed with *hypocrite* (*munafiq*) or *apostate* (*murtadin*) and *taghut* (*tyrant* who defies Allah) archetypes for failing to implement *sharia*. These characterizations serve to portray these regimes as un-Islamic, since jihad against Muslims is forbidden. They are furthermore portrayed with the *agent* and *traitor* archetypes; puppets of the *far enemy*, allied with the *enemies of Islam*, due to close links with the West (Bar 2006 pp28-33; Long 2009 pp205-206).

The *far enemy* antagonists in the narrative include, the West led by the Americans, including their Western allies particularly the *treacherous* British for the Sykes-Picot agreement with France (appendix A1.3), as well as Russia: portrayed with *crusaders* and *infidel* (*kufr*) archetypes. These countries are portrayed as *masters* of the *near enemy*, propping up *apostate*, *agent* regimes across the Islamic world. The *far enemy* also includes "the Jews" or "Zionists" meaning Israel. Together these *infidels*—the West and Israel—form the "*Zionist-Crusader alliance*", led by the Americans, against Muslims.

The protagonists are the *umma* (global Muslim community), the heroic *mujahideen* who defeated the Soviet Union and *al-qaida al-sulbah*, "the solid base" (Gunaratna 2003 p3) or "the *vanguard* of the strong" (Burke 2004) conceptualized by Abdullah Azzam (appendix A3.12.1). Al-Qaida is the *vanguard* of Islamic revolution Qutb

(appendix A3.9) envisioned, galvanizing the *umma* into fighting their antagonists and *oppressors* and sparking Islamic revolution (Burke 2007 p2). Al-Qaida considers itself, and other Salafi-Jihadists, *mujahideen* and therefore champions of the Islamic cause. All those killed in pursuit of this cause are considered *martyrs* (Bernardi et al. 2012 p30). Osama Bin Laden presented himself as a humble Muslim carrying out his religious duty (Miller 1998).

Al-Qaida's narrative is a story of the moral decline of Islam from the *golden age* of the Prophet Muhammad and his successors, the Rashidun (rightly guided) Caliphs; and his companions who ruled according to his example. These are the *salaf* (pious ancestors) Salafists wish to emulate. It is a tale of Islamic decline in the balance of power relative to the West incorporating *master narratives* of the fall of the Ottoman Empire—carved up by Britain and France following World War One—and abolition of the *Caliphate*; and *al-nakba*, 'the catastrophe' of the founding of Israel (appendix A1.3-A1.7.2). Assimilating these *master narratives*, Al-Qaida promulgates a *ruse story-form* of a *Zionist-Crusader* conspiracy against Islam continuing into the present. Today, they claim, the West and Russia support *tyrannical*, *apostate* regimes across the Islamic world, *oppressing* their people and disregarding *Sharia* law. On-going Western support for Israel, by the US in particular, is a major grievance in Al-Qaida's narrative.

Referencing the *crusades*, Al-Qaida depicts a Western 'war with Islam' and the opposing jihad as "fundamentally religious": a clash between Islam and the West for the survival of Islam against a *Zionist-Crusader conspiracy* to undermine it. Bin Laden cites Surah 2:120, framing the conflict in religious terms: "Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion." The American-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 was just the latest in "a long series of *crusader* wars" against Islam. "It is a question of faith, not a war against terrorism, as Bush and Blair try to depict it" (BBC 2001b). Here, *Christians* and *crusaders* are conflated.

Al-Qaida's struggle is portrayed as a *defensive jihad* for the *crusades* never really ended: "The *Crusade* has been ongoing" since "the first crusade during the era of Saladin and Richard the Lionheart" (Al-Adel 2009).

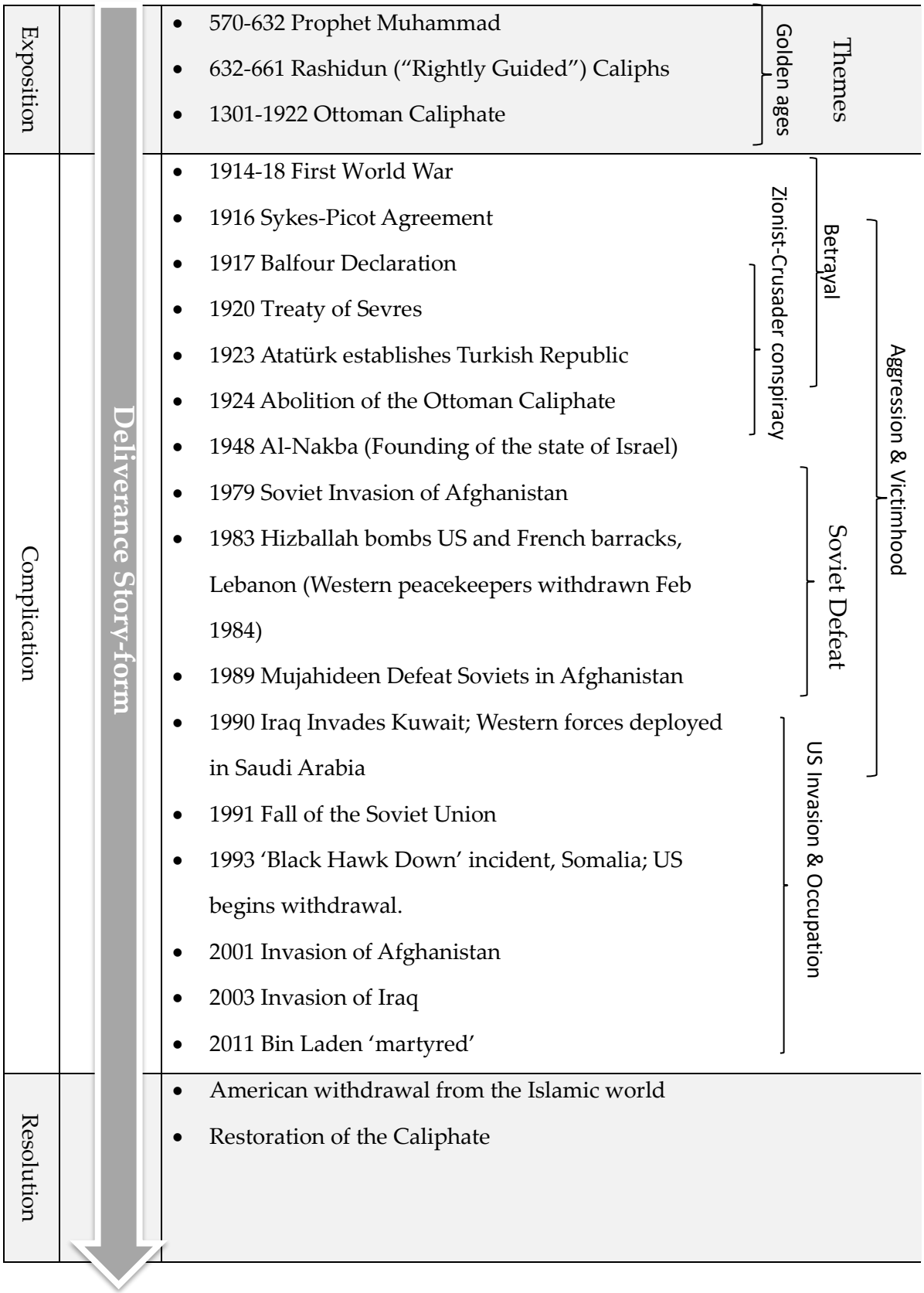
Al-Qaida's strategic narrative portrays a perpetual struggle between good and evil; belief and infidelity. Islamic doctrine formalized under the Abbasid caliphate divided the world into *dar al-Islam*, the domain of those who submit to Islam; *dar al-Harb* (abode of war)—the domain of *heathens*—and *ahl al-kitab*: people of the book; Jews, Christians and other monotheists. Al-Qaida merges *ahl al-kitab* with the *infidels* of *dar al-harb* and subdivides them into categories not present in the classical formulation: Western *Crusaders*, *Zionist* Jews and *apostate* regimes (Long 2009 pp204-206). Following September 11, Bin Laden declared:

> "These incidents divided the entire world into two regions—one of faith where there is no hypocrisy and another of infidelity, from which we hope God will protect us" (Bin Laden 2001b).

The following June, Abu Gheith (2002) declared "…now there is 'only a trench of belief' and 'a trench of heresy'". Using vertical integration Abu Gheith is likening this struggle to the Battle of the Trench (appendix A1.1), tying Al-Qaida's war against the West to battles fought by the Prophet against unbelievers.

Al-Qaida sees itself as the *vanguard* of *Islamic revolution*, its goal to create Islamic states. Al-Qaida's narrative includes a *deliverance story-form*; a solution to deliver the *umma* from its predicament.

Figure 5 Plot of Al-Qaida's Narrative



As figure 5 shows, this plot of *deliverance* will be resolved with the *restoration* of a Caliphate ruled by *sharia* law, halting the moral and political decline of the Islamic

world. Islam is ultimately destined to "triumph" over the forces of unbelief (Abu Gheith 2002).

4.4 Themes

Having briefly outlined its history, key characters and basic plot, Al-Qaida's narrative will be elaborated, by identifying its key themes, below.

4.4.1 Colonialism and Victimhood

Al-Qaida's narrative is one of victimhood citing a long history of "aggression, iniquity and injustice" against Muslims by a "*Zionist-Crusader alliance* and their *collaborators*" (Bin Laden 1996). These themes cite Franco-British colonialism and Arab *betrayal* by the British during the First World War including Sykes-Picot and the Balfour Declaration (appendix A1.3-A1.4):

> "…our wounds have yet to heal from the *Crusader* wars of the last century against the Islamic world, or from the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 between France and Britain, which brought about the dissection of the Islamic world into fragments" (Bin Laden 2003a).

Following 9/11, Bin Laden declared: "Our nation has been tasting this *humiliation* and *contempt* for more than 80 years" (Bin Laden 2001b). Besides Balfour and Sykes-Picot, this '80 years' reference suggests World War One's aftermath and division of the Ottoman Empire, perhaps the 1920 Treaty of Sevres (appendix A1.5; Robbins 2001). In November 2002, Bin Laden cited the British Mandate over Palestine:

> "You [America] attacked us in Palestine…which has sunk under military *occupation* for more than 80 years. The British handed over Palestine, with your help and your support, to the Jews, who have *occupied* it for more than 50 years…" (Bin Laden 2002b).

Ultimately, with American co-operation, Balfour, where Britain "promised to cut off a piece of Palestine and give it to the Jews" (IntelCenter 2008 p378), led to "al-Nakba" (the Catastrophe): the foundation of Israel on 15 May 1948 (Halverson et al. 2011 pp149, 158; appendix A1.7.2). For Bin Laden the existence of Israel "is one of the greatest crimes" sustained by "American support". It is "a crime which must be erased". Those who have contributed to this "crime", primarily Britain and America, must "pay…heavily" (Bin Laden 2002b). Outlining Al-Qaida's *far enemy* logic, Al-Adel (2009) declared there can be "no liberation" of Palestine without weakening Israel: "Israel would not be weakened unless Arab regimes were undermined and unless Western support for Israel and these regimes came to a halt".

Al-Qaida rejects the Zionist narrative of Israel as the Jewish Promised Land as "fabricated lies that the Jews have a historical right to Palestine, as it was promised to them in the Torah". Accordingly, Muslims are the rightful heirs to the Old Testament Prophets: Muslims "are the inheritors of Moses and…the real Torah…" As "followers of Moses", Muslims are due Palestine as promised by the Torah:

> "When the Muslims conquered Palestine and drove out the Romans, Palestine and Jerusalem returned to Islam, the religion of all the Prophets… Therefore, the call to a historical right to Palestine cannot be raised against the Islamic *Ummah* that believes in all the Prophets of Allah…" (Bin Laden 2002b).

Besides *colonialism*, Al-Qaida's narrative of victimhood cites a long history of Western injustices against Muslims, bringing *humiliation* and *dishonour* upon the *umma* (appendix A2.3). Muslims suffer "oppression and aggression" at the hands of the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance (Bin Laden 2002b). America "attacked" Muslims in Iraq and Somalia and is responsible for the deaths of Muslims in Palestine and Lebanon through its support for Israel, and thousands of Iraqis as a result of UN sanctions:

> "The youths hold you responsible for all of the killings and evictions of the Muslims and the violation of the sanctities, carried out by your Zionist brothers in Lebanon; you openly supplied them with arms and finance. More than 600,000 Iraqi children have died due to lack of food and medicine and as a result of the unjustifiable *aggression* (sanctions) imposed on Iraq and its nation. The children of Iraq are our children. You, the USA, together with the Saudi regime are responsible for the shedding of the blood of these innocent children" (Bin Laden 1996).

According to Bin Laden, "…Muslim's blood became the cheapest and their wealth as loot in the hands of the enemies" (Bin Laden 1996). This mirrors the words of conservative Saudi preacher, Salman al-Auda (appendix A3.14) who, criticizing America's pro-Israeli policy, says: "Our [Muslim] blood in Palestine is seen as the cheapest blood" (Fandy 1999 p106).

Besides supporting Israel, Bin Laden (2002b) alleges America supported aggression against Muslims by India in Kashmir, Russia in Chechnya and the Philippines in Mindanao.

The United Nations is simply an "instrument" of the *Zionist-Crusader alliance* for its conspiracy against Muslims; "to exterminate and rob the wealth of Muslims." It "humiliated the Muslims of Somalia" and played "a devious role in handing Palestine to the Jews", whilst ignoring "massacres committed by the Hindus against Muslims in India and Kashmir" (Bin Laden 1994c). The Bosnian arms embargo was part of a deliberate "global *crusader* conspiracy" against Muslims to stop them from "defending themselves":

> "Enormous crimes and massacres were committed against the Muslim people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. …This all occurred through the sword of the United Nations" (Bin Laden 1994c).

4.4.2 Apostates and Agents

In August 1990 Iraqi forces occupied Kuwait before advancing to the Saudi border threatening the Kingdom. King Fahd spurned Bin Laden's offer of military assistance from the *heroic* 'Afghan-Arab' *mujahideen* who 'defeated' the *infidel* USSR in Afghanistan (Esposito 2003g pp11-12). The *deployment* of Western military forces in Saudi Arabia, land of Islam's holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, was deeply offensive to many Muslims, including Bin Laden, who turned against the Saudi regime and the West.

The Gulf War was a pivotal moment for Al-Qaida leading it to adopt a *far enemy* narrative and strategy, and denounce the Saudi monarchy. For Bin Laden, it revealed the regime's military weakness and dependence on American *infidels* as guarantors of Saudi security; the woeful state of the Saudi military, its lack of "preparedness", manpower and "ineptitude of its leadership" despite billions spent on defence (Bin Laden 1994a; 1996). This reflects the notion of *al-wala wal-bara* (A2.5) whereby the Saudi regime is pledging loyalty to American *infidels* when it should disavow them, making themselves also *infidels* or *apostates* and American *agents*. Zawahiri argues that through Western military alliances, Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf Emirates similarly demonstrate loyalty to *Crusaders*, and thus *infidelity* and *agency* (2002 pp101-103).

Bin Laden, alleges, ironically, the Saudi monarchy squandered $25bn supporting Saddam Hussein's war with Iran, before spending $60bn funding Western forces fighting Iraq (Fisk 1996a).

Allowing *infidel* military forces into the Kingdom destroyed the Saud's Islamic credentials in Bin Laden's eyes; condemned as corrupt and impious. Saudi reliance upon the US was "an act against Islam"; essentially *apostasy* (CNN 1997):

> "Any government that sells its peoples' interests and *betrays* its people and takes actions that removes it from the Muslim nation will not succeed" (Miller 1998).

He claimed the regime no-longer ruled according to Islamic law; "suspended" in the judiciary, "replaced by temporary laws", and the Ulama calling for reform, were being "marginalized and persecuted" (Bin Laden 1994a): It "…stopped ruling people according to what God revealed" and has committed "many other contradictory acts" (CNN 1997). In disregarding "the *Shari'ah*", imposing "manmade civil law" and allowing usury, the monarchy became *illegitimate* and *apostate*. This is influenced by the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, Sayyid Qutb, and Wahhab's Ten Voiders of Islam, declaring those who fail to rule according to Islamic law *apostates* (appendix A3.4; A3.6; A3.9). Bin Laden declared:

> "…to use man made law instead of the *Shari'a* and to support the *infidels* against the Muslims is one of the ten 'voiders' that would strip a person from his Islamic status. …and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are the unbelievers' (Surah 5:44; Bin Laden 1996);

> "…these temporary laws or policies have resulted in support for the *infidels*. Also, this behavior is against Islamic law. This has been stated by the ulema, among them the late Shaykh Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab…" (Bin Laden 1994a).

Bin Laden's criticisms concur with Mawdudi's thought that an *Islamic state* ruled according to *sharia* is the ideal state (appendix A3.8.1). This denunciation of the Saudi regime's lackadaisical attitude to *sharia* illustrates Al-Qaida's Salafist narrative of restoring true Islam. King Fahd was not only an *apostate* but a *tyrant* who ignored the ulama:

> "Let the unjust continue to state their threats and promise punishment. These despotic, shattered approaches have proven their lack of usefulness in every battle between faith and despotism" (Bin Laden 1994b).

The regime is accused intimidating scholars, tribal leaders and merchants, misinformation, human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and poor provision of social services and utilities. Bin Laden lauds ulama such as Auda and Hawali (appendix A3.14) as champions of Islam for standing up to the *tyrannical* regime:

> "We have no choice but to praise these great stands with which the scholars confirmed the rise of the people, holding truth over the *despotism* of the unjust, and despising the power of the *despots*" (Bin Laden 1994b).

This *apostasy* was retrospective. Ibn Saud united his people under the banner of Wahhabism, "applying Islamic law". This ceased once Saudi Arabia was established in 1932, revealing Ibn Saud's nepotism and *betrayal* of his people: "Abdulaziz did not apply Islamic law; the country was set up for his family" (Fisk 1996b). Under his successors, the monarchy continued to break its promise of implementing *sharia*, whilst allowing America "to westernise Saudi Arabia and drain the economy" (Fisk 1996a). Moreover, Ibn Saud *betrayed* Palestine causing the loss of Jerusalem:

> "In 1936 the awakened Muslims nation of Palestine started their great struggle, Jihad, against the British *occupying* forces. Britain was impotent to stop the *Mujahideen* and their Jihad, but their devil inspired that there is no way to stop the armed struggle in Palestine unless through their *agent* King Abdulaziz, who managed to deceive the *Mujahideen*. King Abdulaziz carried out his duty to his British *masters*" (Bin Laden 1996).

Bin Laden is referring to the Arab Uprising (1936-1939; appendix A1.7.1). Allegedly, Ibn Saud "*tricked*" the Palestinian Mufti into ending the Uprising,

neglecting his promise to mediate with the British (Aburish 2012 p198). He thus "…joined the *crusaders* against the Muslims and instead of supporting the *Mujahideen* in the cause of Allah, to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque, he disappointed and *humiliated* them" (Bin Laden 1996).

By "inviting" the American crusader's "*occupation*" (Fisk 1996b) of the land of the two holy places, Fahd, like his father *betrayed* Islam, and "forfeited Al-Haramien, the holy shrines, to Jews and Christians" (Bin Laden 1996). According to tradition, on his deathbed Muhammad said "Let there not be two religions in Arabia." Caliph Umar expelled Christians and Jews from Arabia in 641 (Lewis 1998 p16): "Allah ordered us in this religion to purify Muslim land of all non-believers, and especially the Arabian Peninsula where the Ke'ba is." This *occupation* was a conspiracy by which Fahd had forsaken Mecca and Medina, just as Abdulaziz lost Jerusalem to the *crusaders* (Bin Laden 1996).

Bin Laden claimed the monarchy is "an *agent* of the US", accused of depressing oil prices by increasing production on behalf of America (CNN 1997). As an *agent* of the *enemies of Islam*:

> "the Saudi government has used all the witchcraft powers it has and the full deception powers of the media to justify its shameless stand against Islam and its preachers, while supporting the *unbelievers* and their guardians" (Bin Laden 1994b).

The regime is also derided as an *agent* of Israel: "a tool to carry out the policy of the *American-Israeli alliance*" (Bin Laden 1996). According to this *agent* archetype "the country's foreign policy actually works against the interests of Muslims";

Fahd wrongfully supported the 1994 Gaza and Jericho Agreement[1] and Algeria's battle against Islamism, making his regime complicit with the enemies of Islam.

Bin Laden is seemingly influenced by Salman al-Auda's critique of corruption in Saudi Arabia (appendix A3.14). For Bin Laden it is the regime's deviation from Islamic principles led to corruption across Saudi society:

> "When this main foundation was violated, other corrupt acts followed in every aspect of the country, the economic, the social, government services and so on" (CNN 1997).

The Kingdom racked-up huge debts caused by the "wastefulness of government officials" leading to tax rises and economic hardship for Saudis (Bin Laden 1994a). They were slaves to money:

> "…let the servant of the Dinar, and the ones who sold their religion for a life of power, be miserable" (Bin Laden 1994b).

These economic woes were "a curse" from Allah for Saudis complying with "the oppressive and illegitimate behaviour" of the monarchy, neglecting "divine "*Shari'ah* law" and incarcerating critical clerics (Bin Laden 1996). This led to economic problems including inflation, foreign and personal debt.

The themes of *apostate* and *agent* regimes across the Muslim world follow a *near enemy* narrative:

> "The *atheism* of the regimes and governments ruling our Arab and Islamic world is obvious. Everyone knows that these regimes first, govern in violation of God's *Shari'ah*; second, support the Israelis and *polytheists* who

[1] Part of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO.

have been the nation's enemy throughout history; and third, the animosity of these regimes to Islam and Muslims is very obvious" (Al-Adel 2009).

Prior to his 1996 Declaration of War, Bin Laden's public narrative focused on criticizing the Saudi monarchy, subsequently shifting to an increasingly anti-Western, *far enemy* narrative. However, from around 2003 Al-Qaida increased its *near enemy* rhetoric, undergoing a degree of "hybridization" in its strategic narrative with increasingly explicit accusations of *apostasy* against Muslim regimes (Hegghammer 2009 p33).

4.4.3 Occupation and Neo-colonialism

The deployment of US forces in Saudi Arabia was Bin Laden's *casus belli* for jihad against the US. While his public narrative focused on Saudi Arabia and its relations with America in the early 1990s, Bin Laden privately agitated for jihad against the Western coalition's "military *occupation*" of Saudi Arabia in a 1992 fatwa, and lectured on the imperative of attacking the US: "The West is evil but the head of the snake is America" who "we should smash" (9/11 Commission 2011; CIA 1997a). This anti-Western strategic narrative became public and dominant with Al-Qaida's 1996 *Declaration of War* against America, articulating a *far enemy* strategy:

> "Today your brothers and sons, the sons of the two Holy Places, have started their Jihad in the cause of Allah, to expel the *occupying* enemy from the country of the two Holy places…and to liberate its *occupied* sanctities" (Bin Laden 1996).

Here, Al-Qaida employs an *occupation story-form* portraying the West with *crusader* and *colonizer* archetypes. Framing the Americans as *occupiers*, alongside the themes of Western *aggression* and Muslim *victimhood*, enabled Al-Qaida to portray its jihad as *defensive*:

> "First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples" (Bin Laden 1998).

This *occupation* theme continues Al-Qaida's narrative of *victimhood* whereby Saudi Arabia served as a base for "the Americans' continuing *aggression* against the Iraqi people using the Peninsula as a staging post…" (Bin Laden 1998). This mirrors Hawali's depiction of the Western deployment as a conspiracy to *occupy* Saudi Arabia and oppress Muslims; part of a "new Christian crusade" (appendix A3.14).

America's crimes include the destruction of Iraq's infrastructure, including "baby formula factories, all civilian factories, bridges and dams that help planting food", causing its people to suffer (Miller 1998).

Bin Laden criticized the military-economic sanctions regime imposed on Iraq following the Gulf War. Abu Gheith (2002), claimed that "Due to the American bombings and siege of Iraq, more than 1,200,000 Muslims were killed in the past decade". He specifically refers to the Al-Amiriya bunker sheltering Iraqi civilians bombed by the USAF during Desert Storm:

> "The latest and the greatest of these *aggressions*, incurred by the Muslims since the death of the Prophet is the *occupation* of the land of the two Holy Places—the foundation of the house of Islam, the place of the revelation, the source of the message and the place of the noble Ka'ba, the Qiblah of all Muslims—by the armies of the American *Crusaders* and their allies" (Bin Laden 1996).

Bin Laden also threatened Britain and France "to take their troops out" of Saudi Arabia or suffer like the Americans in the Riyadh and Khobar bombings (Fisk 1996a). Ending the *occupation* of Muslim lands is amongst Al-Qaida's primary

goals including the liberation of Palestine. Yet Al-Qaida's strategic narrative is more than merely a narrative of resistance to *occupation* and *neo-colonialism*, but a deeper sense of *humiliation* of Muslims by the West over decades. The prolonged Western military presence of forces after the Gulf War exacerbated the grievance:

> "The King said '…the American and the alliance forces will leave the area in a few months'. Today it is seven years since their arrival and the regime is not able to move them out…" (Bin Laden 1996).

This exposed the Saudi government as an *agent* of its American *master*, too weak-willed to make its forces withdraw. This serves to portray the Americans as *occupiers*, outstaying their welcome:

> "The regime made no confession about its inability and carried on lying to the people claiming that the Americans will leave" (Bin Laden 1996).

Al-Qaida's primary goal at this time was to force the Americans to end their '*occupation*' of Saudi Arabia through a strategy of coercive punishment. More broadly, it wanted to end the Israeli *occupation* of Palestine and return Islamic *irredenta* to Muslim control:

> "Your forces *occupy* our countries; you spread your military bases throughout them; you corrupt our lands, and you besiege our sanctities, to protect the security of the *Jews* and to ensure the continuity of your *pillage* of our treasures" (Bin Laden 2002b).

Here, Al-Qaida's narrative incorporates a *neo-colonial* theme of economic exploitation as *agent* regimes "*steal* our wealth and oil at paltry prices because of your international influence and military threats." It is "the biggest *theft* ever witnessed by mankind in the history of the world" (Bin Laden 2002b).

The US and its allies oppress the *umma* by supporting *tyrannical* and *apostate* regimes—*agents* of the Western *Crusaders*—across the Islamic world. "Under your

supervision, consent and orders, the governments of our countries which act as your *agents*, attack us on a daily basis". For Al-Qaida, like Faraj and Azzam previously (appendix A3.11-A3.12), jihad is an "*obligation*" to liberate "the *Ummah*" making "the *Shariah* the supreme law…". Since these regimes are *agents* of their American *master*, "our fight against these governments is not separate from our fight against you" (Bin Laden 2002b); illustrating Al-Qaida's *far enemy* narrative:

> "We place the complete responsibility on the American government of any attacks against Muslims and its support of regimes in our countries against the best interest of the people."

US foreign policy dictates these *agent* regimes support Israel. They "surrendered to the Jews, and handed them most of Palestine" recognizing Israel to the detriment "of their own people" (Bin Laden 2002b). The US government is itself an "*agent*" of Israel, supporting their *occupation* and construction of settlements in the "holy land" of Palestine: "…Jews have the first word in the American government, which is how they use America to carry out their plans in the world and especially the Muslim world." Americans should elect a "nationalistic government" that supports their interests and not those of "the Jews" (Miller 1998). This anti-Zionist narrative has an anti-Semitic tone, referring not only to Israel in particular but "the Jews" in general:

> "The Jews are a people who Allah cited in his holy book the Koran as those who attacked prophets with lies and killings, and attacked Mary and accused her of a great sin. They are a people who killed Allah's prophets…" (Miller 1998).

For Al-Qaida, the Americans are the modern Mongols—of whom Ibn Taymiyyah was so critical. In his November 2002 statement concerning the Gulf War, sanctions regime and forthcoming war against Iraq, Bin Laden declared:

> "Cheney and Powell killed and destroyed in Baghdad more than Hulegu of the Mongols" (Bin Laden 2002a).

Hulegu, Genghis Kahn's grandson, conquered the Abbasid capital, Baghdad in 1258. Thus, the invasion and occupation of Iraq in spring 2003 has historical resonance for Al-Qaida, mirroring the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols. Again, Baghdad was overrun by *infidels* (Haqqani 2003). This invasion was part of a *neo-colonial* policy driven by greed:

> "[T]his war brings billions of dollars in profit to the major companies, whether it be those that produce weapons or those that contribute to reconstruction, such as the Halliburton Company…." (Bin Laden 2004b p1).

4.4.4 Islamic State

Influenced by Rida, Mawdudi and Qutb (appendix A3.7-A3.9), Al-Qaida's ultimate goal is establishing *Islamic states* ruled by *sharia* across the Muslim world, or a reunified '*Caliphate*'. Since existing Muslim regimes are '*apostate*', one of Al-Qaida's long-term goals, following Qutb, is to restore Islamic rule based on Salafist principles and *sharia* law through revolution in these countries:

> "All Muslims would love to live under true *Sharia*… A guilty man would only be happy if he was justly punished" (Fisk 1996b).

The first step toward this objective is the expulsion of Western forces from Arabia as they, and the *agent* regimes they support, prevent the establishment of *Islamic states*:

> "We are confident, with the permission of God…that Muslims will be victorious in the Arabian Peninsula and that God's religion…will prevail [and] the revelation unto Muhammad…will be resorted to for ruling" (CNN 1997).

For Al-Qaida the period of the *Caliphate* was a golden age for Islam and Muslims:

> "When we used to follow Muhammad's revelation…we were in great happiness and in great dignity, to God belong credit and praise" (CNN 1997).

Al-Qaida's purported Constitutional Charter, dating prior to the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, states the organization follows a Salafists ideology: "The belief of the Sunnite and the assembled people in general and in detail, and following the traditions of the noble ancestors [Salaf]." The group's stated goal is "The victory of the mighty religion of Allah, the establishment of an Islamic Regime and the restoration of the Islamic *Caliphate*…" (DIA 2002).

Al-Qaida follows a Salafi-jihadist doctrine, defining itself as "a religious group of the nation of Mohammad… whose faith is the faith of the believers in Sunna and Jama'ah [consensus]" whose stated purpose is Islamic revolution "so that the 'Word of God' becomes supreme" through jihad. Their strategy is one of preparation for, fighting and provocation of jihad. The group "are working to provoke Jihad, prepare for it, and exercise it by whatever means possible". It aims to ferment holy war by spreading its Salafi-Jihadist ideology: "To spread the feeling of Jihad throughout the Muslim nation." It aspires to "agitate" and propagate "support for jihad" in Muslim countries; "to be the fuel for the battle" and to train *mujahideen* to fight this jihad. Its purpose is combat, not "relief and aid operations or anything similar" (CTC 2002).

Al-Qaida is opposed to *democracy*, desiring a *Caliphate* ruled by Islamic law along Salafist principles, through military jihad. For Al-Qaida, like Faraj, "al-jihad" is "every Muslim's duty by religious law" (DIA 2002):

> "…you strive to bring out the *caliphate* and that you are fighting so that the word of God would have the upper hand and so that the entire religion will be for God" (Zawahiri 2007).

The organization seeks to restore this Islamic empire by liberating "every *occupied* inch" of Islamic *irredenta* from *occupation* by *far enemies* including the US and its allies in Arabia, Andalusia in Spain, Chechnya in Russia and Palestine by Israel. Following a theme of Islamic unity and solidarity, these struggles to "liberate" these unredeemed territories are "one jihad for one Muslim nation against one *Crusader-Zionist* enemy" (Zawahiri 2007).

As *master* of *agent* regimes American support for *apostate* states prevents Islamic revolution and the establishment of *Islamic states*:

> "Bring to an end to supporting your *agents* in our countries. Don't interfere in our life, education and politics. Leave us alone or else you will find us in New York and Washington" (Bin Laden 2002c).

The group demands the West cease supporting these *near enemies* because "these governments prevent our people from establishing the Islamic *Shariah*, using violence and lies…" These *tyrannical* regimes oppress their people, inflicting "*humiliation*" in a "prison of fear and subdual" (Bin Laden 2002b). Al-Qaida fights to put an end to these unjust policies. Western support for these regimes makes the West itself an enemy:

> "The removal of these governments is an obligation upon us, and a necessary step to free the *Ummah*, to make the *Shariah* the supreme law and to regain Palestine. And our fight against these governments is *not separate from out fight against you*" (Bin Laden 2002b).

4.4.5 Defensive Jihad

Al-Qaida perceives its violence as morally justified opposition to Western victimization of Muslims globally (Long 2009 p210). To Western eyes Bin Laden instigated a war on the West, but from Al-Qaida's perspective this war was

initiated long ago by the West (Al-Qaida 2002 p2). Al-Qaida attacks are merely reprisals for decades of Western *aggression* and injustice:

> "All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on Allah, his messenger, and Muslims. And *ulema* have throughout Islamic history unanimously agreed that the jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries" (Bin Laden 1998).

The American "*occupation*" of Saudi Arabia, its support for Israel and "*aggression*" against Muslims particularly in Iraq and Palestine, constituted a declaration of war against Muslims; the latest episode in a long-running *war against Islam* dating back to the *Crusades*. The *Zionist* occupation of Palestine and American support for it represents an attack on Islam. Al-Qaida frames its struggle against the *Crusader* West as a *defensive jihad*: "you attacked us and continue to attack us." It is self-defence in resisting this "*aggression*" and "*occupation*" of Muslim lands, like attacks perpetrated by Palestinian militants against Israel:

> "Terrorising you, while you are carrying arms on our land, is a legitimate and morally demanded duty" (Bin Laden 1996).

Al-Qaida rejected the counter-narrative adopted by other Salafists that the American presence in Saudi Arabia was not an *occupation* since they were invited into the Kingdom, party to agreements made with the Saudis, therefore, their presence does not constitute a military *occupation* and jihad was unjustified. The USA is part of the abode of treaty, *dar al-sulh* (Esposito 2003a). Attacks against the West are unwarranted since treaties exist between Muslim countries and Western countries. In Islamic law it is illegal to kill a treaty partner (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 p85). A hadith from Bukhari's collection narrated by Abdullah bin Amr, Muhammad said "Whoever kills a *muahid* shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise…" (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 p85).

In some interpretations of Islamic law treaties can be revised every ten years according to changing circumstances. Any treaty is invalidated if the non-Muslim party violates a treaty first. Al-Qaida argues no viable agreement ever existed between the US and Muslims. Had a treaty existed, American *aggression* has violated it. Any agreements made by *apostate* regimes on behalf of Muslims are illegitimate (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 p85).

> "Truly, America is not, nor has it ever been, a land of treaty or alliance. If we were to line up with the other side and say that it is a land of peace, we would say that it has turned into a land of war. That occurred with its violation of the treaty and its help to the Jews for more than fifty years in *occupying* Palestine, banishing its people, and killing them" (Al-Qaida 2002 pp3-4).

American forces were withdrawn from Saudi Arabia in April 2003 (BBC 2003d) but were now occupying Afghanistan and Iraq (Bin Laden 2004c), where the enemy had again entered Muslim lands making jihad an *individual duty* incumbent on all Muslims. This demonstrates the influence of Azzam (appendix A3.12.2).

Portraying their struggle as *defensive* allows Al-Qaida to appeal to the classical Islamic jurisprudence, corroborated by Ibn Taymiyyah, that *defensive jihad* constituted an individual obligation, *fard ayn*, incumbent on all Muslims who are able to defend the Islamic community (appendix A3.4.2; Long 2009 p208; Wiktorowicz 2005 p84). Invoking Ibn Taymiyyah, Bin Laden claimed this duty is incumbent upon practising and non-practising Muslims alike:

> "Ibn Taymiyyah…emphasised the importance of dealing with the major threat at the expense of the minor one. …even the military personnel who are not practising Islam are not exempted from the duty of Jihad against the enemy" (Bin Laden 1996).

Al-Qaida justifies global terrorism, claiming: "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it…" (Bin Laden 1998). For Al-Qaida, like Faraj (appendix A3.11), jihad is a neglected duty "No other duty after Belief is more important than the duty of jihad" (Bin Laden 1996).

Jihad against the *far enemy* is justified as a *defensive jihad* against Crusaders—a term full of historical resonance linking their struggle to that against Medieval Christian invasions:

> "If the Americans refuse to listen to our advice…you will lose this *Crusade* Bush began, just like the other previous *Crusades* in which you were humiliated by the hands of the *Mujahideen*…" (Bin Laden 2002b).

In order to support the claim that their jihad is *defensive* Al-Qaida portrays the "*Crusader* West" and its leader, the USA, as an *aggressor* fighting a war against Muslims, and the September 11 attacks not as a declaration of war, but a reprisal against America for a war it initiated: "…the *tyrannical* enemy is not in need of directives or justifications in order to continue its *war against Islam* and Muslims which it began many decades ago". This war against Muslims is exemplified by American support for Israel and its *oppression* of Palestinians; support for "the *Crusader* regime in the Philippines in order to remove our Muslim brothers"; American intervention during the Somali Civil War and Australian-led intervention in East Timor; the regime of military enforcement and sanctions on Saddam Hussein's Iraq; and (in a gross distortion of facts) support for Serbia during the Bosnian War, giving "free rein…to annihilate and remove the Muslim people from the area under the cover of the United Nations". The war in Afghanistan is also cited in "*The Mandate of the Heroes*", despite being a direct consequence postdating September 11, and cannot therefore be a justification for it (Al-Qaida 2002 p2).

Al-Qaida's jihad was couched as a war of last resort because the US continued its "*occupation*" of the land of the two holy places, ignoring repeated threats made against them and refusing to withdraw:

> "America knows only the language of force. This is the only way to stop it and make it take its hands off the Muslims and their affairs. America does not know the language of dialogue!! Or the language of peaceful coexistence!! America is kept at bay by blood alone..." (Abu Gheith 2002).

This *occupation* does not merely constitute a war between American and "the Saudi people" but a global jihad "against all Muslims everywhere. Resistance against America will spread in many, many places in Muslim countries" (Fisk 1996b).

4.4.6 Retribution and Reciprocity

Al-Qaida's jihad is a *retaliatory* war to *avenge* decades of Western aggression and injustice imposed on the Islamic world in order to restore its honour (appendix A2.3): "We would have no *honor* if we did not *avenge* the blood of our brothers in Palestine, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and everywhere" (Abu Gheith 2002). Al-Qaida attacks against the West are framed as acts of *retribution*:

> "Why should fear, killing, destruction, displacement, orphaning and widowing continue to be our lot, while security, stability and happiness be your lot? This is unfair. It is time that we get even. You will be killed just as you kill, and will be bombed just as you bomb" (Bin Laden 2002a).

This punishment is designed to force the US and its allies to change their ways: to end the *occupation* of Muslim countries and cease support for Israel and *apostate*, *agent* regimes in the Arab and Muslim world:

> "I swear by Almighty God…that neither the United States nor he who lives in the United States will enjoy security before we can see it as a reality in

> Palestine and before all the *infidel* armies leave the land of Mohammed…" (Bin Laden 2001b).

While tying with that of *defensive jihad*, Al-Qaida's theme of *retribution* appeals to Arab-Islamic conceptions of *honour*, humiliation and masculinity which have cultural resonance (appendix A2.3):

> "They want to deprive us of our manhood. We believe that we are men, Muslim men who must *defend* the greatest place in existence, the Holy Ka'aba. We want to have the *honour* of *defending* it. We do not want …American, Jewish, and Christian women soldiers defending the grandchildren of Muslim leaders Sa'd, Al-Muthanna, Abubakr and Omar" (Bin Laden 2001a).

Al-Qaida's logic is an "eye for an eye" (surah 5:45), known as *qisas* in Islamic law (appendix A2.2). This theme of *reciprocity* is used both to justify the jihad against the West and targeting Western *infidel* civilians. *Reciprocity* is legitimated by surah 2:194: "And one who attacks you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you". Al-Qaida has crafted this into a vendetta, whereby Western citizens bear collective responsibility for their countries' *colonialism*, *aggression* and *victimization* of Muslims making Western civilians legitimate targets. The West has *humiliated* the Islamic *umma* and sullied Arab *honour* making *retaliation* necessary to restore their *honour* and absolve its shame (Long 2009 p209).

Al-Qaida argues the US is directly and indirectly responsible for the deaths of Muslim civilians in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan; and through its support for Israel—implicating the US in the deaths of Palestinians—as well as other regimes including the Philippines (Abu Gheith 2002; Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 pp77-87). Muslims must take *revenge* in equal measure. Zawahiri says:

> "Allah has made *Qisas* [retribution] an observed law. So, it is our right to attack whoever attacks us, and destroy the towns and villages of those who

> destroy ours, and destroy the economy of those who plunder our wealth, and kill the civilians of the country that kills our civilians" (Moghadam 2011 p75).

In Peter Arnett's CNN (1997) interview, Bin Laden claimed although "American civilians are not targeted in our plan, they must leave [Saudi Arabia]. We do not guarantee their safety…" In an ABC interview the following year, Bin Laden had changed his position, no-longer distinguishing between American civilian and military targets (Bergen 2001 p20). Here, it seems the strategic narrative was informed by a perceived need for escalation by employing more brutal practices—rather than practices following the narrative—as Bin Laden sought to justify violence against civilians.

Bin Laden was acutely aware of the dangers and counter-productivity of unnecessary deaths of Muslim civilians killed intentionally or otherwise, tarnishing Salafi-Jihadism and the Al-Qaida name, unlike the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and Al-Qaida in Iraq (Lahoud et al. 2012 pp1-3). However, Al-Qaida (2002) argues Islam has no unconditional prohibition on killing civilians and civilians are legitimate targets under certain conditions which are presently met. On grounds of *reciprocity* Western *infidel* civilians are legitimate targets (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 pp77-80, 86-87):

> "It is allowed for Muslims to kill protected ones among *unbelievers* as an act of *reciprocity*. If the *unbelievers* have targeted Muslim women, children, and elderly, it is permissible for Muslims to respond in kind and kill those similar to those whom the *unbelievers* killed" (Al-Qaida 2002).

Abu Gheith argued Muslims have a right to get even: "We have not reached parity…." He calculated the US was "directly or indirectly" responsible for so many Muslim deaths that, following the principal of *reciprocity*, Al-Qaida had a right to kill "4 million Americans" (half children) and "exile twice as many and

wound and cripple hundreds of thousands" (2002). This threat is obviously aimed primarily at civilians, pointing to a strategy of punishment through mass civilian casualty terrorism. This *reciprocity* is based on numerous Quranic verses: "He who attacked you, attack him as he attacked you" (surah 2:194); "The reward of evil is a similar evil"; "punish as you have been punished", alternately this verse is translated: "Hence, if you have to respond to an attack, respond only to the extent of the attack levelled against you", however, Abu Gheith does not quote the full verse which continues "but to bear yourselves with patience is indeed far better for [you, since God is with] those who are patient in adversity" (16:126).

Referring to works by Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Al-Qayim, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Nawawi, Al-Shukani and others, Abu Gheith declares:

> "The sages have agreed that the *reciprocal punishment* to which the verses referred is not limited to a specific instance. It is a valid rule for punishments for *infidels*, for the licentious Muslims, and for the *oppressors*. …If by religious law it is permitted to punish a Muslim [for the crime he committed]—it is all the more permitted to punish a *Harbi infidel* [belonging to dar al-harb 'the abode of war'] in the same way he treated the Muslim" (Abu Gheith 2002).

According to Bin Laden:

> "Each action will solicit a similar reaction. We must use such punishment to keep your evil away from Muslims, Muslim children and women… (Miller 1998).

Citing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Bin Laden argued American *aggression* is indiscriminate, failing to "differentiate between the military and the civilians or between men and women or adults and children". Accordingly, neither does Al-Qaida:

> "We do not differentiate between those dressed in military uniforms and civilians; they are all targets in this fatwa. …The fatwa includes all that share or take part in killing Muslims, assaulting holy places, or those who help the Jews occupy Muslim land" (Miller 1998).

4.4.7 Democracy and Civilians

Al-Qaida is opposed to *democracy* considering it *shirk* (idolatry) usurping the sovereignty of Allah, reflecting the ideas of Qutb and Zawahiri's *Bitter Harvest* (appendix A3.9; A3.15):

> "…you are *mujahidin* who strive to arbitrate the Islamic law and you do not believe in the arbitration of the governorship of the multitudes and any other governorship than the governorship of the Koran and Sunnah?" (Zawahiri 2007)

It accuses the US of hypocrisy in proclaiming principles of "freedom and democracy" for itself whilst supporting *tyrannical*, *agent* regimes across the Islamic world, citing American support for Algeria in annulling the election of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS): "you unleashed your *agents* in the Algerian army…to attack them…a new lesson from the 'American book of *democracy*'!" (Bin Laden 2002b)

Alongside *retribution* and *reciprocity*, killing Western citizens is also justified by their support for their governments. Here, again, the practice of terrorism against civilians is informing the narrative as Al-Qaida sought to justify 9/11 *post factum*. According to Al-Qaida's conception of *democracy*, Western civilians are legitimate targets because they belong to democratic states in which sovereignty belongs to the people. As electors, civilians of *Crusader* countries are culpable for Western foreign policy. The alleged *war against Islam* must have popular endorsement (Bin Laden 2002c; Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 pp88-90).

> "If the successive *Crusader-Zionist* governments had not received support from their people, their *war against Islam* and Muslims would not have taken such an obvious and conspicuous form" (Al-Qaida 2002).

American citizens not only support US foreign policy through elections but also through taxes, financing American military hardware used to kill Muslims, and military and economic aid for Israel:

> "The American people…pay the taxes which fund the planes that bomb us in Afghanistan, the tanks that strike and destroy our homes in Palestine, the armies which occupy our lands in the Arabian Gulf, and the fleets which ensure the blockade of Iraq. These tax dollars are given to Israel for it to continue to attack us and penetrate our lands. …the American people cannot be innocent…" (Bin Laden 2002b).

Following Faraj's (appendix A3.11) and Zawahiri's ideas (A3.15.2) and the practices of EIJ (A4.3) Al-Qaida creatively uses the legal concept of *tatarrus* (A2.4) to justify the practice of inflicting civilian, including Muslim, casualties as 'collateral damage' when: firstly, intermingled with combatants and distinguishing between them is difficult (Maher 2016 pp75-81), based on a hadith from the Sahih Bukhari (4:52:256) regarding the permissibility of killing women and children of polytheists in night raids. Muhammad purportedly said: "They are from them" (Khan). A similar hadith is found in Sahih Muslim 19:4321-2 (Siddiqui).

> "It is allowed for Muslims to kill protected ones among the unbelievers in the event of an attack against them in which it is not possible to differentiate the protected ones from the combatants or from the strongholds" (Al-Qaida 2002 p4).

Secondly, when attacking "strongholds" if there is "a need to burn the strongholds or fields of the enemy so as to weaken its strength in order to conquer the

stronghold or topple the state. It is permissible even if protected ones are among the victims, as the Prophet did among the Bani Nadir" (Al-Qaida 2002 p5). A "stronghold", *hisn*, is a place impenetrable due to fortification or great height, hence, they argue the Pentagon and World Trade Center were strongholds (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 pp87-88).

Third, when using "heavy weapons" which, though they are effective maybe inaccurate and indiscriminate, killing combatants and non-combatants including Muslims. This is based on Muhammad agreeing the use of catapults during the siege of the walled city of Taif in 630 AD. With *tatarrus* practices are leading theological argument, not vice-versa (Maher 2016 pp76-77). According to Zawahiri it is about intention; attacks causing Muslim fatalities are legitimate so long as they are not killed deliberately; Muslim casualties become *martyrs* anyway (appendix A3.15.2).

Al-Qaida argues that the passenger jets used on 9/11 are the modern equivalent of medieval siege engines, and would even justify using weapons of mass destruction on these grounds:

> "Acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty. …It would be a sin for Muslims not to try to possess the weapons that would prevent the *infidels* from inflicting harm on Muslims" (Yusufzai 1999).

Abu Geith argues Muslims have a "right to fight them with chemical and biological weapons" as an act of *reciprocity* (2002 p4).

In all three arguments, the practice seems to precede the justifications—which lack narrative fidelity, stretching the truth—for attacking undeniably civilian targets, like the World Trade Center or the London Underground. With Al-Qaida's interpretation of *tatarrus* terrorist practices are driving theology and narrative rather than vice-versa (Maher 2016 p84).

Violation of a treaty with Muslims, if it ever existed, can also be used as a justification for violence against civilians, to make an example of the other party (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 p90):

> "It is allowed for Muslims to kill protected ones among unbelievers if the people of a treaty violate their treaty and the leader must kill them in order to teach them a lesson. This is just as the Prophet did among the Bani Qariza" (Al-Qaida 2002 p5).

This is based on an Islamic tradition from 622 AD, following the migration to Medina, where the Qurayza tribe broke their alliance with the Muslims, probably by negotiating with an enemy, whilst Medina was being attacked. Muhammad retaliated by besieging them for 25 days before the Qurayza surrendered. The tribesmen were killed and their women and children enslaved (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 p90).

Al-Qaida and other Salafi-jihadis also justify civilian deaths by attempting to undermine the credibility of Salafi scholars who oppose such tactics. Al-Qaida rebuffed denunciations of 9/11 from both Salafis, including the Saudi Mufti, and Islamist groups including the leaders of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami and even HAMAS founder Ahmad Yassin. However, these denouncements were dulled by concurring criticism of US foreign policies. Salafi-jihadists, like Al-Qaida, portray themselves as the true inheritors of the *salaf*, accusing their non-violent counterparts of corruption, ignorance, *hypocrisy*, even *apostasy*, particularly those scholars linked to Middle Eastern regimes. These ulama are seen as pawns of Arab regimes like Saudi Arabia (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 pp76-83).

Al-Qaida justifies its jihad on the basis of certain Quranic verses which, according to their interpretation, legitimate their war against the West. The group justified

the attacks of 11 September 2001 in "The Mandates of the Heroes" released in April 2002, five months after 9/11, beginning with Surah 9:29:

> "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or the last day and who do not prohibit what Allah and His messenger have prohibited, those who do not obey the religion of truth from those who were given the book. Fight them until they pay the poll tax and are humbled" (Al-Qaida 2002; Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 pp76-77).

This is followed by a Hadith from Ibn Hanbal's Musnad (11/203 #7036) reporting Muhammad telling mocking Qurayshis: "I have come to you with slaughter" (Al-Qaida 2002 p1; Ibn Hanbal).

4.4.8 Soviet Defeat and American Weakness

Al-Qaida's theme of *Soviet defeat* credits the Afghan and Arab *mujahideen* with vanquishing the Soviets and forcing their "humiliating" withdrawal from Afghanistan and the USSR's subsequent disintegration:

> "The Soviet Union entered [Afghanistan] in the last week of 1979, in December, and with Allah's help their flag was folded December 25 a few years later and thrown in the trash, and there was nothing left to call Soviet Union" (Miller 1998).

The theme disregards any contribution of America or Britain in supplying arms and training to the Afghans in the defeat of the USSR in Afghanistan and denies ever co-operating with them (Fisk 1996b):

> "We beat the Soviet Union. The Russians fled. …Personally, neither I nor my brothers saw evidence of American help" (Fisk 1993).

This reflects Abdullah Azzam's claim that the "small band" of Arab volunteers "changed the tide of battle" (Azzam 2002). *Soviet defeat* destroyed "the myth of

superpowers". Bin Laden believed the Americans had weaker resolve than the Soviets, therefore America could similarly be defeated and forced to end its *occupation* of Muslim lands and support for Israel:

> "We have seen in the last decade the decline of the American government and the *weakness* of the American soldier who is ready to wage Cold Wars and unprepared to fight long wars" (Miller 1998).

The Afghan jihad provided "a training course of the utmost importance to prepare Muslim *mujahideen* to wage their awaited battle against the superpower that now has sole dominance over the globe, namely, the United States" (Zawahiri 2001 p38).

> "Using very meagre resources and military means, the Afghan *mujahidin* demolished one of the most important human myths in history and the biggest military apparatus. We no longer fear the so-called Great Powers. We believe that America is much *weaker* than Russia…" (CIAO).

This belief that the US was weaker than the USSR fuelled Al-Qaida's adoption of a *far enemy* strategy. American withdrawals from Lebanon, following Hizballah's 1983 suicide bombings against US and French barracks in Beirut (appendix A4.1), and Somalia following the deaths of military in Mogadishu a decade later, demonstrated this weakness.

In his 1996 Declaration of War, Bin Laden mocked American Defence Secretary, William Perry for saying "the explosion at Riyadh and Al-Khobar had taught him one lesson: that is not to withdraw when attacked by coward terrorists", pointing to the above-mentioned withdrawals and Al-Qaida's 1992 Yemen bombings:

> "Where was this false courage of yours when the explosion in Beirut took place in 1983. You were turned into scattered bits and pieces at that time; 241 mainly marines were killed. And where was this courage of yours

> when two explosions made you to leave Aden in less than twenty-four hours!" (Bin Laden 1996)

This theme of *American weakness* points to the "disgraceful" American withdrawal from Somalia following the deaths of 18 US servicemen, in which Al-Qaida claims involvement:

> "…when tens of your soldiers were killed in minor battles and one American pilot was dragged in the streets of Mogadishu you left the area carrying disappointment, humiliation, defeat and your dead with you. …You have been disgraced by Allah and you withdrew; the extent of your *impotence* and *weaknesses* became very clear" (Bin Laden 1996).

These withdrawals from Somalia and Lebanon demonstrated *American weakness*, cowardice and casualty aversion. This lack of resolve leads to overreliance on its technological advantages:

> "They also depend on massive air strikes so as to conceal their most prominent point of *weakness*, which is the fear, cowardliness, and the absence of combat spirit among US soldiers" (Bin Laden 2003b).

If the Soviet defeat showed that America could be defeated, the American withdrawal from Somalia convinced Al-Qaida, they were "a paper tiger." It showed the war against the US would be "much simpler than the war against the Soviet Union":

> "…some of our *mujahedin* who fought here in Afghanistan also participated in operations against the Americans in Somalia and they were surprised at the collapse of American morale" (Fisk 1997).

This theme fails to recognize that America had no strategic interest in Lebanon or Somalia.

Following the *mujahedeen's* victory and Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan descended into civil war. Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia, before moving into exile in Sudan (Fisk 1993). In 1996, Osama returned to Afghanistan where:

> "the largest *infidel* military force of the world was destroyed. And the myth of the superpower was withered in front of the *Mujahideen's* cries of Allahu Akbar. Today we work from the same mountains to lift the iniquity that had been imposed on the *Ummah* by the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance…" (Bin Laden 1996).

Victory over the United States, like that over the Mongol invaders of the thirteenth century and Soviets in Afghanistan, is inevitable with the help of Allah:

> "The Islamic Nation that was able to dismiss and destroy the previous evil Empires like yourself, the Nation that rejects your attacks, wishes to remove your evils, and is prepared to fight you. …just like the other previous *Crusades* in which you were humiliated by the hands of the *Mujahideen*, fleeing to your home in great silence and disgrace. If the Americans do not respond, then their fate will be that of the Soviets who fled from Afghanistan to deal with their military defeat, political breakup, ideological downfall, and economic bankruptcy" (Bin Laden 2002b).

4.4.9 Martyrdom

Al-Qaida's theme of *martyrdom*, incorporating the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, whereby those killed in battle are rewarded (appendix A3.4.3) is a *master narrative* with *cultural resonance* within Islamic culture. Employing a *noble sacrifice story-form*; a tale of redemption where the sacrifice of the *Shaheed* (martyr) who dies fighting for Allah atones for their sins (Cook 2016; Halverson *et al.* 2011 p165). This incorporates *martyr* and *champion* or *hero* archetypes: *martyrs* are portrayed as *champions* of Islam. Bin Laden claimed he was not afraid to die because "as

Muslims, we believe that when we die, we go to heaven. Before a battle, God sends us *seqina*, tranquillity" (Fisk 1993).

Following the storming of the Lal Masjid, or 'Red Mosque', in Islamabad by the Pakistani military in July 2007, Bin Laden declared that Al-Qaida would "*retaliate* for the blood of" mosque leader and instigator of the rebellion, Abd al-Rashid Ghazi, his rebels, and "the blood of the *champions* of Islam in Waziristan" including *martyred* Taliban militants Nek Muhammad and Abdullah Mahsud (Bin Laden 2007).

Martyrs attain immediate salvation and entry into paradise (Halverson et al. 2011 p165). They are entered into the *Illiyeen*—a "record of the righteous"[2] (Surah 83:18) where the deeds of the pious are listed (Paret 2012).

> "O Allah, our Lord, accept those of our brothers and sisters who have been killed among the martyrs…. Raise their grades in Illiyeen" (Bin Laden 2007).

Of an attempted assassination of General Abdul Rashid Dostum, currently Vice-President in Afghanistan, Al-Qaida said "our *hero* approached him, wearing an explosive belt. Moments later, the group dispersed and the soul of Abd-al-Mu'min rose to heaven, leaving behind three dead…". The pain of dying as *martyr* is merely that of "a sting" (Al-Qaida 2007 p6-8).

In 1998 Al-Qaida adopted the strategic practice of "martyrdom operations" (*amaliyyat istishhadiyya*). This practice is not framed as 'suicide bombing' for suicide (*intihar*) is forbidden in Islam (Moghadam 2011 p106): would-be suicide bombers are therefore termed "martyrdom seekers" (Al-Qaida 2007 pp6-8). Suicide bombers believe they are not committing suicide "in the ordinary sense"

[2] The deeds of the wicked are recorded in the sijjeen (Surah 83:7).

but "sacrificing themselves" for a greater cause (Moghadam 2011 p6). According to Zawahiri (appendix A3.15.2), like Qaradawi (A3.13) the difference between *martyrdom* and suicide is, again, to do with intention.

Al-Qaida counters its detractors amongst Salafists and Islamists, like Qaradawi, who consider suicide attacks or 'martyrdom operations' in Israel and killing Israeli civilians justifiable, but criticized 9/11 and killing Americans as hypocrisy (A3.13). For Al-Qaida the logic is the same, both the US and "the Jews" are considered "people of war"; part of a *Zionist-Crusader* alliance. This links to the theme of *democracy*, justifying *martyrdom* operations against American civilians, because their country supports Israel and thus, at least tacitly, supports the killing of Palestinian civilians (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003 pp76-83).

According to the themes of *martyrdom* and Islam's inevitable victory, there is no downside for its jihadists and 'martyrdom seekers': "Know that God promised us either one of two good rewards: victory or *martyrdom*". Al-Qaida cites surah 3:169-170:

> "Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord; They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah…" (Al-Qaida 2007 pp6-8).

According to some traditions the souls of *martyrs* inhabit green birds in paradise until judgment day. Another common theme amongst *martyrdom* narratives of SJVNSAs is that *martyrs* will be rewarded in paradise and in particular with 72 virgins or houris—*hur al-ayn* (Halverson et al. 2011 pp170-174). The houris constitute celestial characters besides the deity, Allah, in Salafi-jihadist *martyrdom* narratives. The theme is based on the Musnad hadith of Ibn Hanbal (16553):

> "Verily Allah the Almighty will bestow upon the *martyr* (*al-shahid*)…a dignified crown of rubies better than anything in the world upon his head and the *martyr* will be married to seventy-two maidens of paradise (*hur al-*

ayn) and intercede on behalf of seventy of his family members" (Halverson et al. 2011).

Zawahiri cites a very similar hadith in *Jihad, Martyrdom and the Killing of Innocents*, regarding the rewards of martyrdom (appendix A3.15). Another, more tenuous passage—considered weak by most Sunni scholars—is cited in support of this theme in Sunan al-Tirmidhi:

> "The smallest reward for the people of heaven is an abode where there are 80,000 servants and 72 wives, over which stands a dome decorated with pearls, aquamarine and ruby, as wide as the distance from al-Jabiyyah [in Damascus] to Sana'a."

Instead of the word 'virgins'—*hur al-ayn*—it says 'wives'. Neither does it say this reward is reserved for '*martyrs*' but all "the people of heaven" (Halverson et al. 2011). The promise of heavenly reward for *martyrs* as *champions* of Islam is that they, the vanguard of Islamic revolution has no fear of death, quite the opposite.

This theme assimilates the story of the battle of Madain (634AD). Khalid ibn al-Walid, commander of the outnumbered Arabs, proclaimed to his Persian enemy: "…enter into our faith [lest we come with] a people who love death just as you love life" (Long 2007a p79):

> "…the sons of the land of the two Holy Places feel and strongly believe that fighting (Jihad) against the *Kuffar* in every part of the world, is absolutely essential… These youths love death as you love life" (Bin Laden 1996).

> "The Americans should know that the storm of plane attacks will not abate, with God's permission. There are thousands of the Islamic nation's youths who are eager to die just as the Americans are eager to live" (BBC 2001c).

The death of a '*martyr*' in battle or suicide operation is akin to their wedding when they meet their seventy-two virgins of paradise (Wright 2006 p338). A document found in 9/11 hijacker, Muhammad Atta's car says:

> "You should feel complete tranquillity, because the time between you and your marriage [in heaven] is very short…" (Observer 2001).

4.5 Conclusion

Unlike states, VNSAs are more liable to strategic cultural change. Al-Qaida and its close ally, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, were led by domineering leaders—Bin Laden and Zawahiri—and riven with disagreements. Al-Qaida formed in Afghanistan when Bin Laden split from Azzam's MAK in 1986, whilst still following its *irredentist* agenda to expel the Soviets and Marxist government from Afghanistan before its devastating defeat in 1989. Bin Laden and Zawahiri were *norm entrepreneurs* adopting a *far enemy* strategic culture, their respective organizations formally merging in 2001; to the consternation of both groups' members.

Al-Qaida's strategic narrative portrays a global struggle between Islam and its *umma* and its antagonists of *near* and *far enemies* (Gerges 2009); the archetypal *hypocrites*, *tyrants*, *apostate* and *agent* regimes who betrayed their people by failing to implement Islamic states ruled according to *sharia* law and must be overthrown; and the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance respectively, seeking to undermine or destroy Islam. This represents a *ruse story-form* of a conspiracy against Islam. Characters of *near* and *far* enemies represent sub-narratives within Al-Qaida's strategic narrative.

Following the end of the anti-Soviet jihad and the 1991 Gulf War, Al-Qaida's public narrative adopted a *near enemy* focus criticizing the Saudi monarchy in the early 1990s, for allegedly abandoning *sharia* law, and its relationship with the US. This reflects the notion of *al-wala wal-bara* whereby the Saudi regime were

pledging loyalty to American *infidels*, making them also *infidels* and *agents* of the West.

Al-Qaida intensified its *far enemy* narrative with its 1996 Declaration of War. Yet, anti-American jihad was part of its internal strategic narrative from at least 1992, indicating a dominant *far enemy* agenda. In adopting a *far enemy* narrative Bin Laden was a *norm entrepreneur* shifting away from the *near enemy* focus of earlier Salafi-jihadist movements. However, from 2003 onwards Al-Qaida's strategic narrative underwent a degree of "hybridization", increasing its *near enemy* rhetoric though its *far enemy* narrative remained dominant (Hegghammer 2009 p33).

The stationing of US forces in Saudi Arabia was Bin Laden's *casus belli* for jihad against the West. This alleged '*occupation*' allowed Al-Qaida to justify attacks against the US and its Western allies as *defensive jihad*, alongside a sense of *victimization* by the West. However, this *far enemy* agenda was supported by the theme of *American weakness*; that America lacked resolve and could be more easily defeated than the USSR in Afghanistan.

Al-Qaida's strategic narrative is a story of *deliverance*, aiming to arrest the decline of Islam from the golden age of the Prophet and the Rashidun Caliphate, and restore the *umma's honour* from its humiliation, principally since the *colonial* era. Thus, besides '*occupying*' Saudi Arabia, Al-Qaida's strategic narrative includes a list of other historical grievances against the West: from the medieval *crusades* to Anglo-French *colonialism*, with the Sykes-Picot agreement dividing up the Ottoman Caliphate; Britain's *betrayal* of the Arabs and Balfour Declaration during World War One, paving the way for the establishment of Israel, and subsequent American support for Israel; subsequent Western *neo-colonialism*, plundering Muslim's resources; the 1990s sanctions causing suffering in Iraq; and following 9/11 the *occupations* of Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, by tying together Israel and the West as the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance collectively responsible for the deaths of Palestinian civilians, Al-Qaida justifies attacking the West as *qisas* (retribution).

The logic behind Al-Qaida's *far enemy* strategic narrative is primarily the theme of *neo-colonialism*: Western support for alleged *apostate*, *agent* regimes prevents Islamic revolution, therefore, the West must be forced to desist. This narrative will be resolved with the formation of *Islamic states* and ultimately reinstating the *Caliphate*; the ultimate goal for Salafi-jihadists. The first step on this journey is to defeat the *Crusaders*, who must be forced to stop propping-up *near enemy* regimes before the latter can be overthrown and replaced with *Islamic states*.

1998 marked an escalation in Al-Qaida's rhetoric when Bin Laden announced he no-longer distinguished between the American military and civilians, justified on grounds of *reciprocity* due to American direct and indirect responsibility for the deaths of Muslim civilians. Following 9/11 Al-Qaida also justified its terrorism against civilians on grounds of *democracy* and popular sovereignty; and *tatarrus* arguing civilian casualties are permissible when they cannot be distinguished from combatants. Even Muslim casualties are justified if they were not the intended target. Here, existing practices of mass casualty terrorism seem to be feeding back into the narrative—justified *post factum*—rather than being driven by it. This suggests a dynamic relationship between narrative and practices. As such practices are not solely influenced by the narrative but also influence the narrative, to justify those practices. Indeed, as chapter five will show, Zawahiri advocates suicide bombing on utilitarian grounds, which Al-Qaida justifies with a narrative of *martyrdom* which has *cultural resonance*; framed as 'martyrdom operations'. Since suicide is impermissible, Zawahiri emphasizes the intention of perpetrator whether dying from despair or for Islam.

In this jihad against enemies *near* and *far*, the *mujahideen* are *champions* of Islam willing to sacrifice themselves in battle or "martyrdom operations"; they "love death as you love life". Through *martyrdom*, Al-Qaida's holy warriors will achieve salvation and be rewarded in paradise for their sacrifice.

Chapter 5: Strategic Practices of Al-Qaida

5.1 Introduction

While Al-Qaida-central's strategic narrative has undergone a degree of hybridization, it still prioritizes the battle against the *far enemy*. This second chapter in the strategic cultural analysis of Al-Qaida firstly outlines Al-Qaida's strategies of asymmetric warfare, provocation and coercive punishment behind its strategic practices. Al-Qaida has sought to resolve the tragedy that has befallen the *umma* since the First World War, particularly the Caliphate's abolition, by provoking global jihad; attacking the West in order to inflict military defeat upon the United States, precipitate the fall of its "*agent* regimes" and carve out utopian *Islamic states* through jihad. Moreover, its strategy outsources violence to allied and affiliated groups. The chapter, secondly, identifies the strategic practices of Al-Qaida and how they are framed by and intertwined within this strategic narrative (discussed in chapter four) forming its strategic culture. It covers strategic practices of assassination, bombing and suicide attacks.

5.2 Asymmetric Warfare

Al-Qaida's strategy is one of asymmetric warfare against the West due to "the imbalance of power between our armed forces and the enemy forces" (Bin Laden 1996). In 1996 Bin Laden envisioned his vanguard as an unconventional military force which would "initiate guerrilla warfare" against "the *crusader* enemy" to liberate the land of "the two holy places" from US *occupation*. At this time, expelling the Americans from Saudi Arabia was Bin Laden's primary objective as the first step towards Islamic revolution. This guerrilla movement would utilize "fast moving light forces" operating in "secrecy" (Bin Laden 1996); adopting similar strategic practices to those of the *mujahideen* who fought the Soviets in Afghanistan and demonstrated by Al-Qaida and Taliban linked insurgents two decades later.

The US government sees Al-Qaida as more "facilitator" than "active participants" in the Afghan insurgency—estimating a maximum of 100 Al-Qaida fighters in 2009 (Rollins 2010 pp6-7)—outsourcing violence to other groups. As an unconventional force ill-equipped to fight American military might head-on, due to its economic and technological limitations, Al-Qaida utilizes low-tech strategic practices of bombing and suicide attacks to inflict mass casualties on *infidel* civilian and military targets. Abu Ubeid al-Qurashi (2002a) conceives Al-Qaida's strategy as "asymmetric" or "fourth generation" warfare (4GW) presenting "significant difficulties for the Western war machine" citing American literature on 4GW (Hammes 1994; Lind *et al.* 1989). Lind *et al's* (1989) article was found at Tora Bora, Afghanistan (Lind 2004).

This strategy is framed with themes of *American weakness* and *Soviet defeat* by the "*mujahideen*"—proving its "superiority in fourth-generation warfare using only light weaponry" (Qurashi 2002a). Al-Qaida believed US forces could similarly be defeated through strategic practices of asymmetric warfare. Al-Qaida has "experience in using guerrilla warfare and the war of attrition to fight *tyrannical* superpowers, as we, alongside the *mujahidin*, bled Russia for 10 years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat" (Bin Laden 2004a).

In this "war amongst the people" (Smith 2012) combatants blend in amongst civilian populations (Manwaring 2012 pp68-69); clustered in clandestine terrorist cells. "They are part of the people, and hide amongst the multitudes…" Asymmetric warfare has a proven record where weaker forces overcame stronger ones and "nation-states have been defeated by stateless nations", i.e. VNSAs (Qurashi 2002a).

5.3 Punishment, Provocation and Agitation

Abu Bakr Naji describes Al-Qaida's strategy as "vexation and exhaustion" (Naji 2006): a war of attrition. Al-Qaida's themes of *retribution* and *reciprocity* and

strategic practices point to dual, *far enemy* strategies of coercive punishment (Pape 2003 pp346-349) and provocation; designed to make the US and its allies "pay the price" for their actions (Naji 2006 pp32-34).

Through attrition, coercive punishment ratchets-up the cost of continuing certain foreign policies. With greater cumulative costs inflicted, VNSAs prove a credible threat of inflicting future losses, designed to gain concessions (Kydd and Walter 2006 pp51, 59-60). Such escalation is demonstrated in Al-Qaida's narrative, no-longer distinguishing between military forces and civilians, and its strategic practices of bombing civilian targets and employing suicide bombing, from 1998 onwards.

Through provocation and coercive punishment, Al-Qaida hoped to end the Western '*occupation*' of Muslim lands and support for *apostate*, *agent* regimes in the Islamic world in order to facilitate Islamic revolution and the return of the *Caliphate* (Kydd and Walter 2006 pp50-53). According to Al-Qaida's strategic narrative it is Western support that holds *apostate* regimes in Muslim countries in power.

Al-Qaida's provocation strategy aimed to provoke the *far enemy* and agitate Muslims to jihad against *near* and *far enemies*. Influenced by themes of *American weakness* and *Soviet defeat*, the USS Cole and 9/11 attacks were acts of provocation (Bergen 2006b pp254-255) designed to lure the Americans into invading Afghanistan, instigating guerrilla war against the US; further raising the cost of Western foreign policies (Libicki et al. 2007 pp9-11). Al-Qaida ultimately aimed to vanquish America, as the *mujahideen* defeated the USSR, in Afghanistan, compelling the Americans to withdraw their military forces and support for its *agents* in the Muslim world:

> "All that we have mentioned has made it easy for us to *provoke* and bait this [Bush] administration. All that we have to do is to send two mujahidin to

> the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al-Qaida, in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses without their achieving for it anything of note…" (Bin Laden 2004a).

This strategy of provocation was designed to overstretch US military resources, as Naji quotes Paul Kennedy (1988):

> "If America expands the use of its military power and strategically extends more than necessary, this will lead to its downfall" (Naji 2006 p7).

It aimed to "Force America to abandon its *war against Islam* by proxy and force it to attack directly…" (Naji 2006 p10). The attacks were designed to raise the cost of the American crusader's support for *Zionist* Israel and *apostate*, *agent* regimes in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden characterized this strategy as "bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy" in Afghanistan and Iraq (Bin Laden 2004a).

Again, this strategy aimed to elicit a change in American foreign policy, ending its '*occupation*' of Saudi Arabia and support for Israel and *apostate* regimes. It also aims to strain "fragile" alliances and "widen the gap of interests" amongst Al-Qaida's enemies:

> "When there is violent resistance which leads to invasions that cost a great deal and are of little use, the factions of the coalition began to withdraw one after another, preferring (their own) security or delaying the conflict until more suitable circumstances" (Naji 2006 p38).

Accordingly, Al-Qaida's strategy is to provoke the US into overstretching its military and economic resources causing its collapse. The goal in the ensuing confrontation is military "exhaustion" of the US, leading to economic weakness, social breakdown or "cultural annihilation", shattering its "deceptive media halo"

or "aura of invincibility"; and the misguided belief in its ability to control "any place" on earth. This lesson is drawn from the theme of *Soviet defeat* in Afghanistan leading the USSR to collapse:

> "This is exactly what happened to the Communist superpower when it was put in a military confrontation with a power weaker than itself by several degrees... However, (the weaker power) succeeded in exhausting it militarily and, even more important, it activated the elements of cultural annihilation in (the superpower's) homeland…" (Naji 2006 pp7-8).

By provoking the US to invade Muslim countries, Al-Qaida aimed to erase "respect for America", exacerbate anger against it, rallying Muslims to the cause, reviving the Salafi-jihadist movement; transforming "the suppressed anger toward the regimes of *apostasy* and *tyranny* into a positive anger." Jihad against America would demonstrate the theme of *American weakness*, revealing to "the noble ones…their fear of deposing the regimes because America is their protector is misplaced and that when they depose the regimes, they are capable of opposing America if it interferes" (Naji 2006 p10).

Having achieved this, Al-Qaida's ultimate "goal is to dislodge these regions from the control of the regimes of *apostasy*", creating zones of anarchy, ungoverned space or "savagery" where it could seize control:

> "the region of savagery is usually a city, or a village, or two cities, or a district, or part of a large city" (Naji 2006 p17).

Naji refers to this strategy as the *Management of Savagery*, creating an alternative regime out of the political vacuum, managing food, medicine, security and justice amongst the people and establishing *sharia* (Naji 2006 pp11-12, 17-18). There, according to Qurashi, Al-Qaida could create "desirable social and economic alternatives in the areas under revolutionary control" (Ryan 2013 pp275-276). Both *near* and *far enemies* would be punished, "paying the price" for attacks against the

mujahideen or regions under "the administration of savagery" anywhere in the world, to "deter" further attacks and spread "hopelessness" amongst the enemy (Naji 2006 pp32-34):

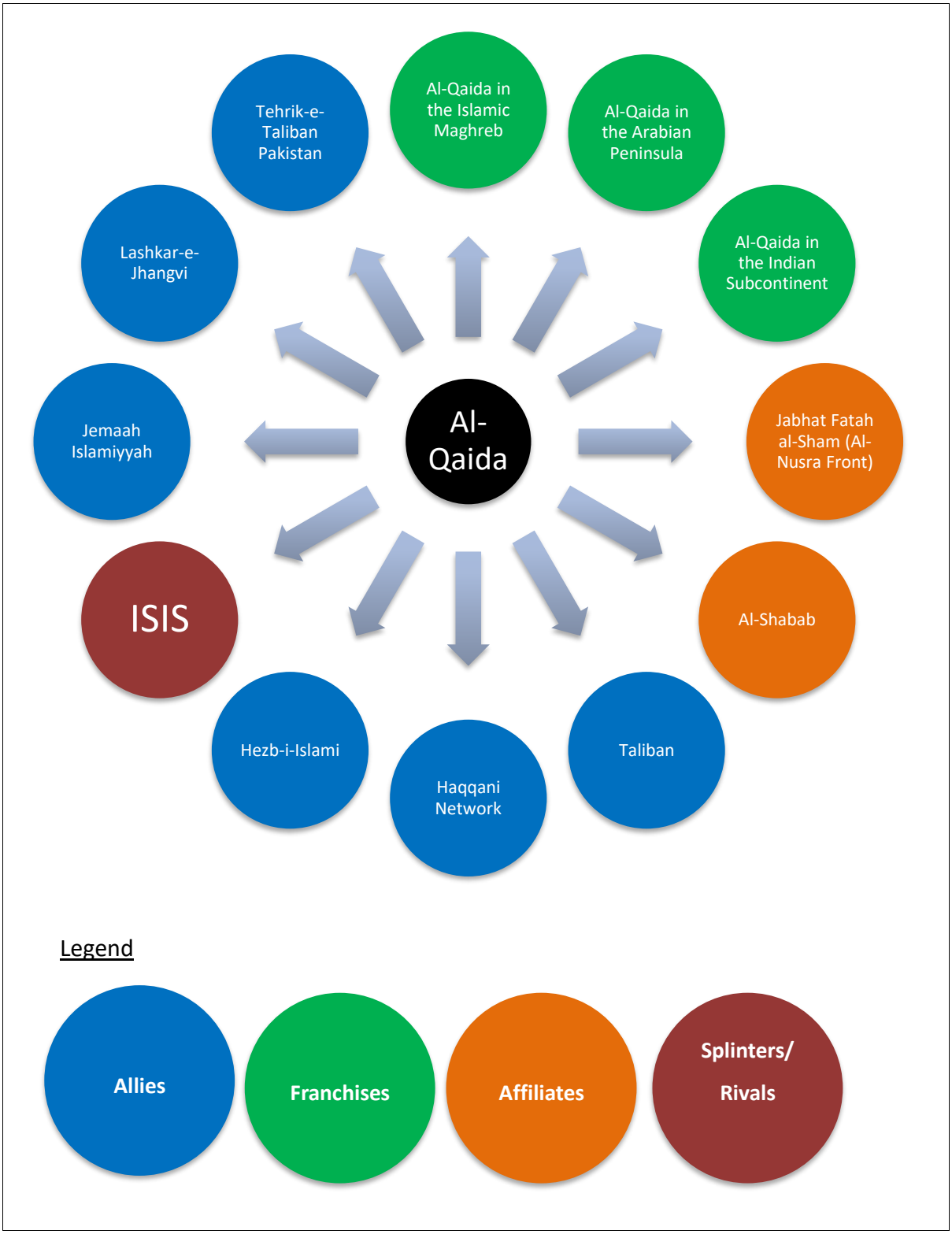
> "…if the *apostate* Egyptian regime undertakes an action to kill or capture a group of *mujahids*, the youth of jihad in Algeria or Morocco can direct a strike against the Egyptian embassy and issue a statement of justification, or they can kidnap Egyptian diplomats as hostages until the group of *mujahids* is freed, and so forth" (Naji 2006 p33).

5.4 Outsourcing Violence

Part of Al-Qaida's modus operandi is outsourcing terrorism and guerrilla warfare to, and bolstering, local allies and affiliates; "insinuating itself" into local conflicts, around the Islamic world (Byman 2015 p44). Bin Laden is believed to have funded travel to Afghanistan of members of Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Gamaa Islamiyya and training in camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan during the jihad against the Soviets. Bin Laden's camps trained many non-Afghan recruits. Five hundred Filipinos are believed to have trained in these camps during the early 1980s (Scheuer 2006 p101). He is also suspected of funding GIA attacks targeting the French metro in 1995 (Macintyre and Tendler 1996). The CIA (1997b) believes Al-Qaida sent fighters to Somalia to assist Islamist forces, "kill US troops, incite violence against US personnel, and undermine the success of the US mission".

As Figure 6 shows, Al-Qaida's network consists of affiliates that have pledged allegiance to the organization, and franchises which have adopted its brand-name. It also co-operates closely with allied groups sympathetic to its cause. Thus, it outsources violence on three levels.

Figure 6: Al-Qaida's Relationships with Select VNSAs



The insurgency provoked in Afghanistan has largely been outsourced to allied groups. Al-Qaida acting as a "force multiplier", embedding itself in local, allied insurgent networks incorporating Taliban, the Haqqani network and Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami militants. Al-Qaida participation in combat in Afghanistan has thus

been limited. Rather, Al-Qaida has provided financial support, advised on propaganda and practices of insurgency to these jihadists, particularly bomb-making (Jalali 2006 p8; Jones 2014a). According to the National Security Council Al-Qaida's "55th Brigade…has been a key fighting force for the Taliban…" (NSC 2001).

In 2006 the DIA characterized Al-Qaida's relationship with these Afghan networks as "increasingly cooperative" (Maples 2006). Al-Qaida aided Taliban recovery since its fall providing "critical advice and fighters" (Riedel 2010 p122). However, Stenersen argues Al-Qaida involvement in Afghanistan is "localized", largely confined to the south-eastern border (2013 pp86-88). Al-Qaida is also closely allied with, and protected by, militant networks in Pakistan, such as Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Jaish-e-Muhammad (Moreau 2009; Rabasa *et al.* 2002 pp87-96; Riedel 2010 pp124-125). Lashkar-i-Jhangvi is believed to have assassinated Benazir Bhutto at the behest of Al-Qaida (appendix C11).

In Iraq much of the insurgency was outsourced to its franchise, Al-Qaida in Iraq, later rebranded as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Ties were severed when the group, rebranding again, as the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) moved into Syria in 2014 against Zawahiri's orders. Al-Qaida's effort in Yemen and Saudi Arabia is overseen by its franchises operating under its brand-name: Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and AQIM in the Maghreb-Sahel (Novenario 2016 p954). In Somalia, Al-Shabab became an Al-Qaida affiliate, pledging allegiance to Al-Qaida in 2012, but has not adopted its nomenclature (BBC 2012b).

In Syria, Al-Qaida has outsourced its effort to Jabhat al-Nusra (Novenario 2016 p954) which rebranded as Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in 2016, distancing itself from Al-Qaida. This rebranding may be purely pragmatic; more superficial than real (Chulov 2016). According to Naji, priority regions for jihad are the Arabian Peninsula, the Magreb, Jordan, Pakistan and Nigeria (2006 p15).

The October 2002 double suicide bombing of two nightclubs on the Indonesian island of Bali targeting Western tourists was financed by Al-Qaida and outsourced to its Indonesian ally, Jemaah Islamiyya, providing $30,000 (Gunaratna 2014 pp400-404; SMH 2003), as part of Al-Qaida's strategy of vexation and exhaustion, raising the cost of Western foreign policy:

> "If a tourist resort that the *Crusaders* patronize in Indonesia is hit, all of the tourist resorts in all of the states of the world will have to be secured by the work of additional forces, which are double the ordinary amount, and a huge increase in spending" (Naji 2006 p19).

5.5 Assassination

On 9 September 2001, Ahmed Shah Massoud, leader of the Taliban's rival Northern Alliance, was assassinated by Al-Qaida suicide bombers purporting to be Arab television journalists in Afghanistan (appendix C4). Massoud's assassination, in preparation for the anticipated American retaliation following 9/11 two days later, demonstrates a strategy of provocation. Al-Qaida correctly predicted the Americans would employ the "*hypocrite*" Northern Alliance in its campaign to oust the Taliban (Al-Adel 2009). Apparently, Al-Qaida's had previously attempted to assassinate Afghan king, Mohammed Zahir Shah, in 1991. Posing as a journalist, Portuguese Al-Qaida member, Paulo Jose de Almeida Santos, stabbed the exiled king in Italy (Anunciacao 2002; Bergen 2006b p116). Al-Qaida may also have been involved in Benazir Bhutto's assassination (appendix C11) by a suicide bomber (Riedel 2010 p125).

5.6 Bombings

5.6.1 Aden Bombings 1992

From 9 December 1992 American forces began arriving in Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. Osama Bin Laden issued a fatwa declaring these *infidels* must be

killed and driven from Somalia. Al-Qaida conspired to punish America by attacking hotels in Yemen where US service personnel, en-route to Somalia, were believed to be staying. On 29 December 1992 a bomb exploded inside the Gold Mohur hotel in Aden. A second bomb exploded prematurely in the car park of the nearby Movenpick. The soldiers were actually staying at another hotel. The blasts killed two civilians and injured seven, including one perpetrator (Patman 2010 pp44-45; Scheuer 2006 p147). The bombings were framed with the theme of *American weakness*. Bin Laden believed:

> "The United States wanted to set up a military base for US soldiers in Yemen so that it could send fresh forces to Somalia. The Arab *Mujahidin* related to Afghan Jihad carried out bomb explosions in two hotels in Yemen to warn the United States, causing damage to some Americans staying in these hotels. The United States received our warning and gave up the idea of setting up its military bases in Yemen" (Shiraz 1998 p116).

The bombings aimed to coerce US forces to leave Yemen. Bin Laden believed their subsequent departure was "the first al-Qaeda victory scored against the *Crusaders*" (Scheuer 2006 p147).

Abu Gheith claimed: "In Somalia, America killed 13,000 Somalis and carried out acts of abomination on boys and women" (2002). Bin Laden believed the US wanted to "establish its bases in Somalia so that it could get control over Sudan and Yemen" (Mir 1997 p44). Al-Qaida was concerned about creeping US influence across the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa, and the proximity of American forces to his base in Sudan.

5.6.2 Riyadh Bombing 1995

On 13 November 1995 a car bomb exploded outside the Saudi National Guard communications centre in al-Uliyya, Riyadh, killing 5 American military personnel and 2 Indians (Fandy 1999; Gardner 1995 pp1-2). The Islamic Change Movement,

an Al-Qaida front (TRAC 2015; appendix C2) who previously demanded Western forces leave the Kingdom, threatening to "exert all available means to evict these forces", claimed responsibility (AP 1995b). This was an act of coercive punishment designed to raise the cost of the American '*occupation*' of Saudi Arabia and compel US forces to leave. The bomb targeted '*infidels*' during noon prayers to avoid Muslim casualties (Fandy 1999 pp1-2).

On 25 June 1996, a fuel truck exploded outside Khobar Towers, housing American and British military personnel at King Abdul Aziz Air Base near Dhahran—involved in Operation Southern Watch—enforcing Iraq's no-fly zone (Woodcock 1995). Nineteen Americans were killed. The attack was attributed to Shia militants from Saudi Hizballah by the FBI (Hegghammer 2008), though others, including members of the CIA believe Al-Qaida was responsible, linking it to the earlier Riyadh bombing (appendix C3). The 9/11 Commission (2011 p60) reflects these differing opinions suggesting both the Shia militant organization, Hizballah, and Al-Qaida may have been involved. Both Iran and Hizballah's leadership in Lebanon denied involvement (AFP 1996b; BBC 2001d). It has been alleged that Bin Laden met with Imad Mughniyah of Hizballah and that, between 1992 and 1996, Al-Qaida members received training in Lebanon (PBS 2001; SDNY 1998). Since attribution remains uncertain the Khobar bombing will be excluded from the statistics on Al-Qaida's strategic practices (LaFree *et al.* 2014 p75).

Bin Laden was ambiguous about Al-Qaida involvement, denying directly taking part in the Riyadh and Khobar attacks whilst praising their perpetrators as "*heroes*": "I was not in Saudi Arabia, but I have great respect for the people who did this action… What they did is a great job and a big *honor* that I missed participating in" (CNN 1997). Nevertheless, he at least justified them; framing them with themes of *occupation* and *American weakness*; designed to communicate a message for the American *crusaders* to end their *occupation* of Saudi Arabia:

> "We saw the Riyadh and al-Khobar bombing as a sufficient signal for people of intelligence among American decision-makers to avoid the real battle… If they understood the signal it would mean withdrawing all troops from the region" (Atwan 2001).[3]

American weakness "was proven in Beirut when the Marines fled after two explosions. It also proves they can run in less than 24 hours, and this was also repeated in Somalia. We are ready for all occasions" (Miller 1998).

When asked by Peter Arnett why the bombings happened and if his supporters were involved—failing to answer the latter—Bin Laden framed them with the themes of *retribution* and American *occupation* of Saudi Arabia, saying they were:

> "a reaction to a US provocation of the Muslim peoples, in which the US transgressed in its aggression until it reached the *qibla* of the Muslims in the whole world. So, the purpose of the two explosions is to get the American occupation out. So, if the U.S. does not want to kill its sons who are in the army, then it has to get out" (CNN 1997).

He portrayed Saudi Arabia as an *agent* regime, and the executed Khobar bombers as *martyrs*. The bombers atoned for the *dishonour* Muslim had suffered due to Western victimization and *neo-colonialism*:

> "We pray Allah grants them *martyr* status. They have raised the head of the Muslim nation high, and washed away some of the *dishonor* we had to bear by the Saudi government's *collaboration* with the American government in the land of Allah" (Miller 1998).

[3]The interview took place in 1996.

5.6.3 Madrid Bombings 2004

On 11 March Islamist militants planted 13 bombs in 12 carriages of four different trains travelling between Alcada de Hanares and Atocha stations in Madrid. Ten bombs were remotely detonated by mobile phones between 7:37 and 7:41am, killing 191 and injuring 1,841. Two of these bombs, and a fourteenth device at a request stop platform failed to explode (Reinares 2010 pp83-84). This formed part of Al-Qaida's strategy targeting transport systems.

At the time there was speculation the attacks were the work of an independent jihadist cell. However, subsequent evidence suggests strong links between the plotters, particularly Amer Azizi, and Al-Qaida's leadership (Reinares 2010; 2012 appendix C7).

The bombings were initially claimed by the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades. Abu Hafs aka Muhammad Atef was an Al-Qaida member killed in Afghanistan in November 2001. The existence of the Brigade is uncertain following a number of spurious claims including a plane crash and power cuts (Torres-Soriano 2015 pp181-185). Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper believed the statement genuine and published it. It framed the attack with the *crusader* architype portraying Spain as an historical enemy:

> "The death squad succeeded in penetrating the *crusader* European depths to strike one of the pillars of the *crusader alliance*—Spain—with a painful blow. These bomb attacks were part of settling old scores with the *crusader* Spain for its *war against Islam*" (Al-Jazeera 2004).

The statement also took credit for an attack on Italian Carabinieri in Nasirya, Iraq, in November 2003, believed to be the work of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Tawhid wal-Jihad (Bergen 2011 p162), subsequently rebranded Al-Qaida in Iraq and later ISIS. It framed both attacks with the theme of *retribution*, as part of a strategy of

coercive punishment to compel Spain and Italy to withdraw from their '*occupations*' of Muslim lands in Iraq:

> "When we hit Italian troops in Nasirya and sent you and other *hirelings* a warning to withdraw from the alliance against Islam, you did not comprehend our warning—now we have made it clear—we hope that it will be understood this time… Stop targeting us, release our prisoners and leave our land and we will stop attacking you" (Al-Jazeera 2004).

It also followed the theme of *reciprocity*, justifying the killing of civilians:

> "We…did not feel sad for the death of the so-called civilians. Is it lawful for them to kill our children, women, the elderly and men in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, and Kashmir and unlawful for us to kill them back?" (Al-Jazeera 2004)

Doubt about the veracity of the claim and initial government accusations against ETA, led the perpetrators to hastily film a video which they neglected to prepare in advance (Torres-Soriano 2015 p188). The video, retrieved from a bin by journalists on 13 March (Reinares 2010 p86), also framed the bombings with themes of occupation and *retribution* for Spanish participation in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It claimed responsibility on behalf of "the military spokesman for al-Qaeda in Europe, Abu Dujan al-Afghani." The bombings were "a response to your collaboration with the criminals Bush and his allies" and "the crimes that you have caused in the world, and specifically in Iraq and Afghanistan, and there will be more, if God wills it"; promising further bloodshed if Spain did not cease its aggression, again pointing to coercive punishment:

> "If you don't stop your injustices, more and more blood will flow and these attacks will seem very small compared to what can occur in what you call terrorism" (BBC 2004c).

While the bombings were not '*martyrdom operations*', the statement invoked the *martyrdom* theme indicating their willingness to die for their cause: "You love life and we love death" (BBC 2004c). On 3 April, seven members of the cell, surrounded by Spanish security forces, with whom they exchanged fire, 'martyred' themselves, blowing up the flat they were holed-up in at 9pm, destroying the building in Leganés. An eighth member escaped (Reinares 2010 p85). Similarly, Bin Laden also framed the bombings alongside 9/11 with the themes of *retribution* and *reciprocity*:

> "What happened on 11 September and 11 March is your commodity that was returned to you. …Our acts are a reaction to your own acts, which are represented by the destruction and killing of our kinfolk in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine" (Bin Laden 2004b p1).

The attacks may have been timed to maximize their effect; part of its strategy of coercive punishment, aimed to influence the subsequent general elections of 14 March (Burke 2007 ch16). The incumbent Partido Popular (Popular Party) led by Jose Maria Aznar lost to the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party). The attacks and theme of *retribution* point to a strategy of coercive punishment, perhaps to influence the elections, which seemingly had the desired effect; at least Al-Qaida claimed so. The new Prime Minister Jose-Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, had promised to withdraw Spanish forces from Iraq (BBC 2004d). However, Reinares believes 11 March had been chosen before the election date was announced (2016). The Liquid Bomb Plot (appendix 0), believed to have been planned for the fifth anniversary of 9/11, may also have been designed to have maximum impact, with upcoming Congressional elections in the US (Riedel 2010 p131).

The Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigade, which may or may not speak for Al-Qaida (Torres-Soriano 2015), announced a truce:

> "We gave the Spanish people the choice between war and peace, and they have chosen peace of their own will by electing the party which was against the US coalition in the *war against Islam*."

In view of this, the leadership has chosen to suspend all operations in Al-Andalus against civilian targets, until we know the stance of the new government which has promised to withdraw Spanish forces from Iraq, and until we confirm the non-interference of the new government in Muslim affairs" (BBC 2004a; Reinares 2010 p98).

On 3 April a letter signed by the cell's leader, Serhane Ben Abdelmajid Fakhet, revoked this truce as the government decided to boost troop numbers in Afghanistan (Reinares 2010 pp98-99; Torres-Soriano 2015 p189-190).

5.7 Suicide Attacks

In 1998 Al-Qaida adopted the strategic practice of suicide bombing, under the influence of Zawahiri (appendix A3.15.2) and his EIJ contingent—which first employed it in 1993—(A3.15.2) and emulating Hizballah (A4.1). Zawahiri justified suicide bombing as much on utilitarian as religious grounds being cost-effective (Mansfield 2006 p200). Here, strategic practices and a desire to escalate its strategy, led the narrative; framed as legitimate acts of *martyrdom*. Multiple simultaneous suicide attacks became Al-Qaida's signatory practice. Figure 7 shows that the majority of Al-Qaida attacks since 1998 have been suicide attacks. The majority of non-suicide bombings are accounted for by the Madrid bombings in Spain (which the Global Terrorism database counts as six incidents), followed by three in Pakistan. Two occurred in Afghanistan. This points to dual strategies, primarily of suicide attacks targeting the *far enemy* across the world, and secondly, embedding itself within, whilst largely outsourcing the Afghan-Pakistan insurgency to allied groups (Jones 2014a).

Figure 7: Suicide and Non-Suicide Attacks Attributed to Al-Qaida

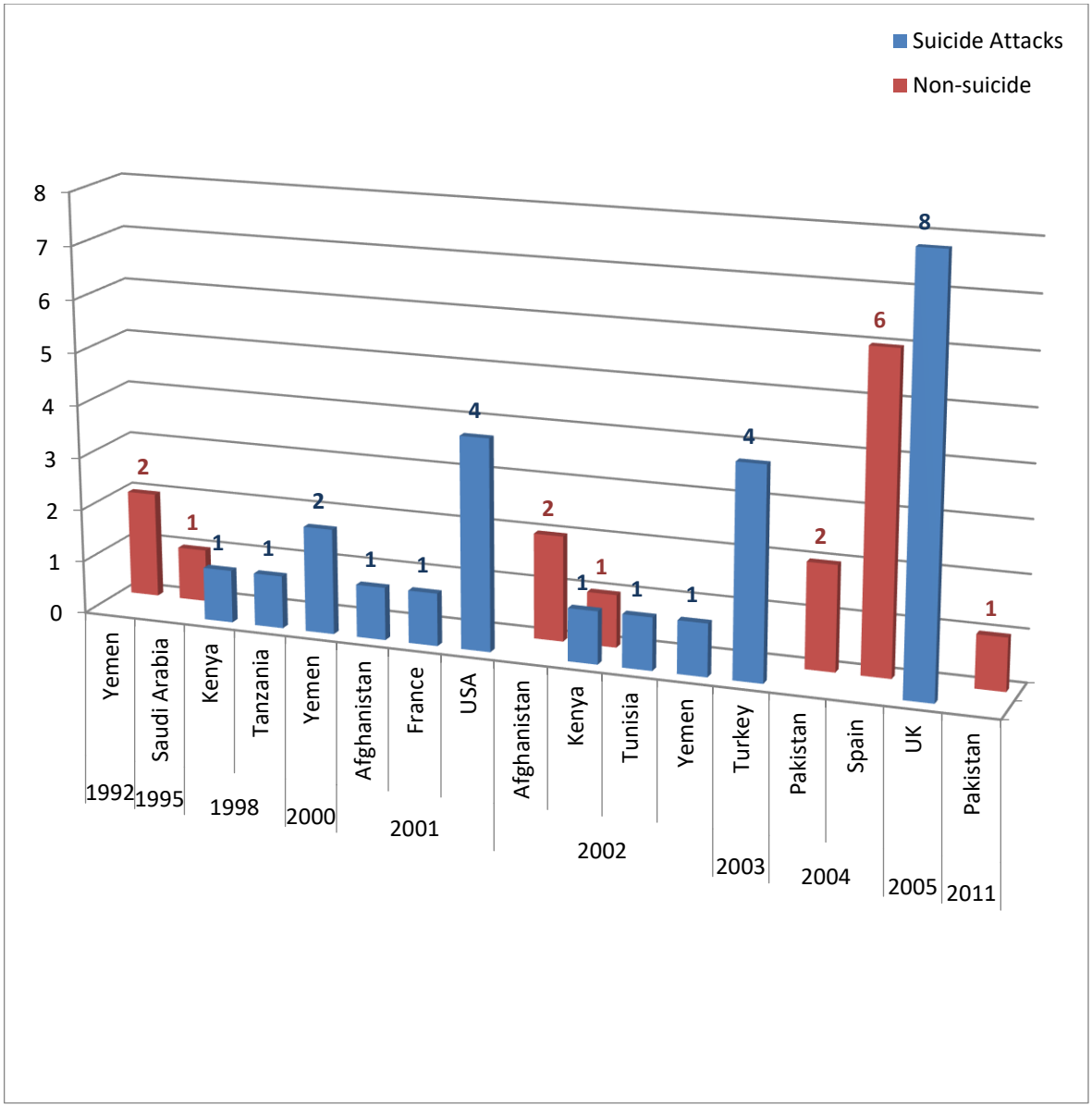
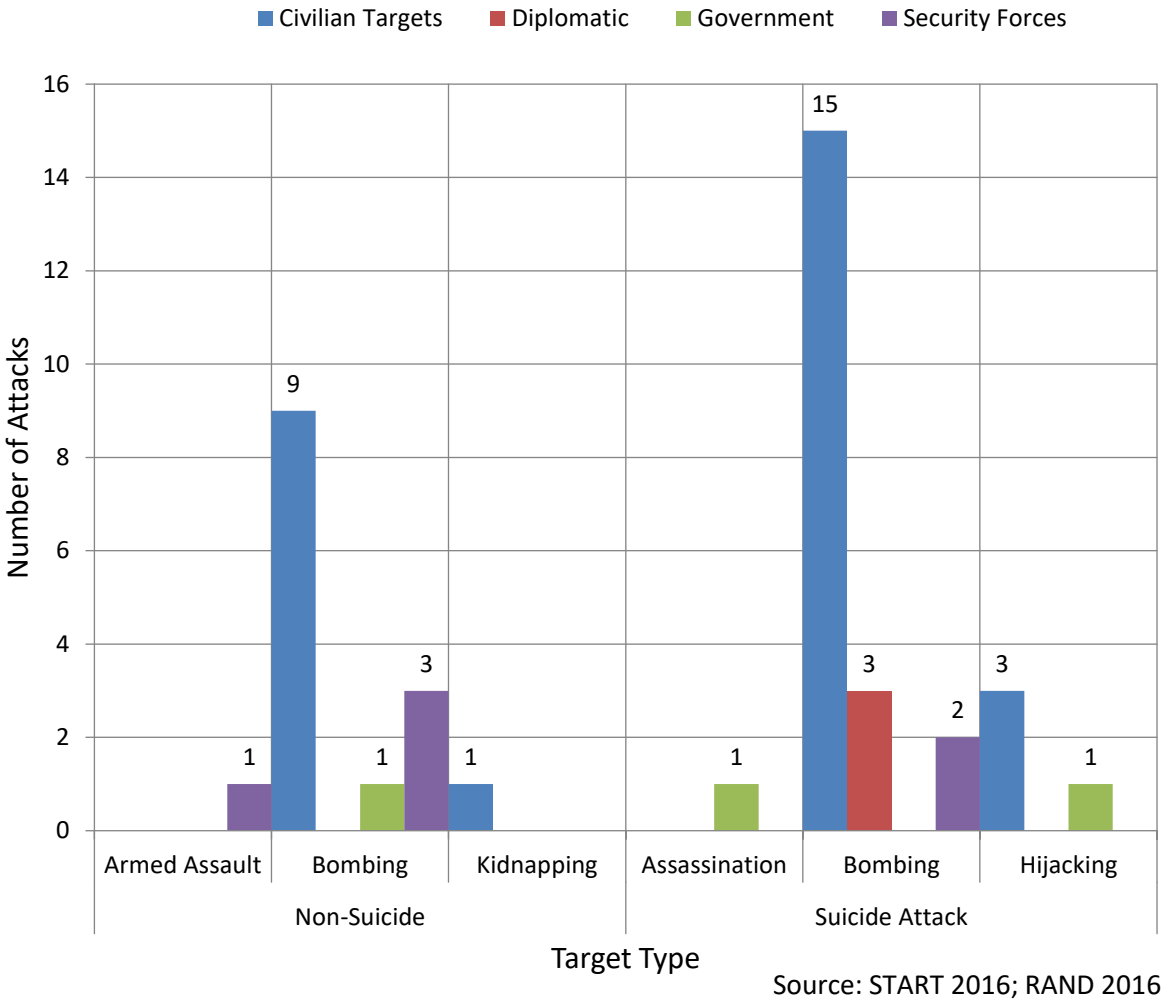


Figure 8 shows the majority of Al-Qaida attacks have been suicide attacks against civilian targets, the deadliest being the suicide hijackings of 9/11. It shows, however, that Al-Qaida's favoured practice is suicide bombing, followed by non-suicide bombings, against civilian targets.

Figure 8: Attacks Attributed to Al-Qaida by Attack Type and Target Type 1992-2011



Source: START 2016; RAND 2016

5.7.1 Embassy Bombings

On 7 August 1998 Al-Qaida perpetuated its first suicide attack: twin suicide truck-bombs exploded simultaneously outside US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es-Salaam, killing 12 Americans and 212 others (FBI 2015); marking a shift in strategic practices (Moghadam 2011 p87; START 2016). The attacks emulated Hizballah's suicide vehicle bombing of the American embassy in Beirut and double suicide vehicle bombing of the barracks of US Marines and French paratroopers, on 18 April and 23 October 1983 respectively (appendix A4.1). In June 1999, Bin Laden declared the Americans "had not sustained such a blow since the blowing up of the Marines in Lebanon" (Berner 2007 p103).

The suicide bombings were an act of coercive punishment framed as *retribution*: the "Islamic Army for the Liberation of the Holy Places" (Al-Qaida) was "compelled to wage the jihad" against America "throughout the world":

> "Young Muslims, particularly Saudis, must get *revenge* for the unholy pollution of the Holy Land and al-Aqsa."

They were revenge for *Zionist-Crusader* aggression against Iraqi and Palestinian Muslims, "*occupation*" of Palestine and Saudi Arabia; and *neo-colonialism* in the Arab world "given the theft of Muslim fortunes through oil development":

> "The Americans encouraged the Jews to *occupy* Jerusalem, and then they *occupied* Saudi Arabia. They have supported the *corrupt* rulers of the region."

Citing *American weakness*, they claimed "America will share the fate of the USSR…" Following the theme of *victimhood*, these embassies had, allegedly, "supervised the killing of thirteen thousand Somali civilians at least in the treacherous attack" by America. Bin Laden also claimed the CIA had, for "decades", hatched "plots" from the American Embassy in Nairobi to "partition Sudan" for instance.

Citing "Nagasaki and Hiroshima", invokes the theme that America did not distinguish between civilian and military targets, or care about Muslim casualties in Iraq, Palestine or Bosnia (Jacquard 2002 pp226-228); therefore, neither does Al-Qaida. In December 1998, Bin Laden denied ordering the attacks, whilst framing them with themes of *martyrdom* and restoring Muslim's *honour* out of *victimhood* and *humiliation*:

> "They managed to rid the Muslim community of disgrace. We highly respect them…and pray to Allah…to accept them as *martyrs* and permit them to intercede on behalf of their kin" (Berner 2007 p103).

In January 1999 he admitted instigating "jihad against the Jews and the Americans in order to liberate al-Aksa Mosque and the Holy Ka'aba"; if this is "a crime, then let history be a witness that I am a criminal. Our job is to instigate and, by the grace of God, we did that, and certain people responded to this instigation" (Yusufzai 1999). This illustrates the strategy of provocation and agitation, to "rally" Muslims to the cause of jihad (Libicki et al. 2007 pp12-14). He also portrayed the bombings as *reciprocal retribution* for the victimization of Muslims:

> "They deserved it. It made them taste what we tasted during the massacres committed in Sabra, Shatila, Dayr Yasin, Qana, Hebron and elsewhere" (Berner 2007 p103).

In a December 1998 interview Bin Laden claimed these bombers "have removed the shame from the forehead of our *umma*, whether they carried out the explosions in Riyadh or Khobar or East Africa or the like" (Lawrence 2005 p74; Long 2009 pp209-210).

5.7.2 Maritime Suicide Bombings

Al-Qaida's maritime practices emulate the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam's (LTTE) suicide boat-bombings against Sri Lankan Navy ships from 1990 onwards (appendix A4.4). Apparently, clips of LTTE maritime attacks were found amongst Al-Qaida videotapes obtained by CNN in Afghanistan (Gunaratna 2008 pp78, 84).

5.7.2.1 USS Cole

On 12 October 2000 an Al-Qaida suicide boat-bomb struck the USS Cole in Aden, killing 17 sailors and wounding at least 40 more (DoJ 2003). The attack on the USS Cole was preceded by a failed attempt to strike another the American destroyer, the USS Sullivans in January (CIA 2000). In November, Rifai Ahmed Taha, an Al-Qaida and former Gamaa Islamiyya member, framed the Cole attack as an act of *martyrdom* by *mujahideen* prepared to die for their cause:

> "We must make [the United States] feel that our souls can no longer tolerate the prison walls of our bodies and that they long for the freedom to circle like *green birds*, and that (our souls) have the will and determination to push *our bodies* to destroy shields and tanks" (Jacquard 2002 p230-232).

Bin Laden also framed the attack with themes of *martyrdom*, alongside *neo-colonialism* and the archetype of *agent* regimes: "…God helped the *mujahidin* to successfully implement a great *martyrdom operation*, demolishing the American destroyer USS Cole in Aden." It "exposed the fact that the Yemeni government was a *collaborator*, like the rest of the region's governments" (Bin Laden 2003a).

The bombing points to dual strategies of coercive punishment and provocation. Firstly, Taha framed the bombings with the themes of *American weakness*, an act America could not tolerate: "Muslims must understand that the Americans can change policies if they are struck directly";

> "The *infidels* will not be able to bear a life of terror with the sword of Damocles hanging over them. …Hitting targets that are called civilian has been portrayed as heinous by the gigantic Western media machine, whereas targeting the destroyer is more painful to the United States…" (Jacquard 2002 p230-232).

It was *retribution* for the American *occupation* and Muslim victimization by the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance: "America supports the *Zionists*, *occupies* our lands, drives our peoples to emigration." He portrayed the bombing as *retribution*; part of a strategy of coercive punishment. Muhammad Atef by contrast told Al-Jazeera journalist, Ahmad Zaidan, the Cole attack aimed to provoke the Americans:

> "We did [the USS] Cole [attack] and we wanted United States to react. And if they reacted, they are going to invade Afghanistan and that's what we want. We want them to come to our country, and then we know that they would have bases in Pakistan, in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan. And they are

going to hit Afghanistan from these countries. And then we will start holy war against the Americans, exactly like Soviets" (Bergen 2006b pp254-255).

It was also designed to agitate Muslims to the cause:

> "Utmost effort should be made to prepare and instigate the *Ummah* against the enemy, the American-Israeli alliance *occupying* the country of the two Holy Places and the route of the Apostle…to the Furthest (Al-Aqsa) Mosque" (Bin Laden 1996).

The attack on an American military target was contrasted to killing of Muslim civilians by the Americans, *Zionists* and Russians; "as for Muslims, there is no objection to killing their children and women and old men, in Palestine and Chechnya and elsewhere!" (Jacquard 2002 p230-232)

Al-Qaida portrayed the attack as part of a *defensive jihad* against American and Israeli *occupations*:

> "The main motive of these operations is the *defense* of the Islamic sacred places, the Haramain [Mecca and Medina] and the blessed al-Aqsa [Jerusalem]. The last operations were meant to support the Jihad in Palestine against the Jewish enemy. We said at the time that the operation against Cole was the first serious attack in support of the Palestinian uprising, and it would be followed by sister operations" (Paz 2002).

5.7.2.2 MV Limburg

Two years later, Al-Qaida again emulated the LTTE with another suicide boat-bomb, striking the MV Limburg oil tanker off the Yemeni coast. This was another act of coercive punishment, inflicting economic costs on the oil industry; a "strike" against "the international oil-carrying line", ratcheting-up the economic cost of Western foreign policy:

> "using a $1,000 boat to destroy such a big tanker, one can assume the scope of risks facing the Western economic lifeline, oil, of which the region holds the world's vast reserves" (Libicki et al. 2007 pp40-41).

This followed Naji's strategy of "vexation and exhaustion" designed to provoke a reaction, increasing the cost of maintaining security for the oil industry across the Middle East:

> "If an oil interest is hit near the port of Aden, there will have to be intensive security measures put in place for all of the oil companies, and their tankers, and the oil pipelines in order to protect them and draining will increase" (Naji 2006 p19).

Bin Laden praised "the *heroic* jihadist operations that our brave sons conducted in Yemen against a *crusader* oil tanker" alongside an attack on US soldiers in Kuwait; framed as part of "the American *occupation* and aggression" in the Middle East. It was framed as *retribution* for Western aggression and *neo-colonialism*:

> "By exploding the oil tanker in Yemen, the holy warriors hit the umbilical cord and lifeline of the *crusader* community, reminding the enemy of the heavy cost of blood and the gravity of losses they will pay as a price for their continued aggression on our community and looting of our wealth" (MacAskill and Whitaker 2002).

5.7.3 9/11 Attacks

The Embassy, USS Cole and 9/11 attacks demonstrate dual strategies of provocation and coercive punishment against the *far enemy*, framed with a *ruse story-form* alleging a *Zionist-Crusader* conspiracy led by America against Islam, supporting *apostate*, *agent* regimes across the Muslim world. Indeed, the September 11 2001 attacks were portrayed with the themes of American aggression, *occupation* and *victimization* of Muslims and support for Israel:

> "America is the reason for all oppression, injustice, licentiousness, or suppression that is the Muslims' lot. It stands behind all the disasters that were caused and are still being caused to the Muslims; it is immersed in the blood of Muslims…" (Abu Gheith 2002).

The attacks were framed as restoring the *honour* of the *umma*. In a video showing preparations for the attacks from Afghanistan, ostensibly conceding Al-Qaida responsibility, the apparent voice of Bin Laden claims:

> "As we talk about the conquests of Washington and New York…we talk about those men who changed the course of history and cleaned the records of the nation from the dirt of the treasonous rulers and their followers" (Whitaker 2002).

The hijackers were thus portrayed as *heroes* and *martyrs* engaged in a *defensive jihad* against American injustices and occupation of Saudi Arabia:

> "The heroes…offered their souls as a *sacrifice* for the religion of Allah almighty, *defending* Muslims whom American hands had mistreated by various types of torture and forms of domination and subjugation in every place. …the only motive these young men had was to *defend* the religion of Allah, their dignity, and their *honor*" (Al-Qaida 2002 p1).

In a video released in September 2002 deceased hijacker, Abdulaziz Alomari, framed the operation as an act of coercive punishment: "a message to the *infidels* that you should leave the Arabian Peninsula defeated and stop giving a hand of help to the coward *Jews* in Palestine" (Whitaker 2002). The civilian casualties were justified *post factum* on grounds of *reciprocal retribution*, democracy and *tatarrus* i.e. collateral damage (appendix A2.4), including inability to distinguish civilians from combatants, when using 'heavy weapons'; and by portraying the World Trade Center (WTC) and Pentagon as strongholds (Al-Qaida 2002). The grounds of

collateral damage lack narrative fidelity since the WTC was undeniably a civilian target indicating practices informing the narrative, not vice-versa.

> "What the United States tastes today is a very small thing compared to what we have tasted for tens of years. Our nation has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for more than 80 years" (Bin Laden 2001b).

They were not only attacks on the WTC and Pentagon, but part of a strategy targeting transport systems including aviation, as subsequent plots and attacks demonstrate; airliners being opportunities for mass casualties. They also reveal the strategic practice of '*martyrdom operations*' as part of a strategy of coercive punishment designed as "a message to all the enemies of the *ummah*" delivered "with an iron hand" to compel the United States in particular to desist from its aggressive policies and injustices against Muslims:

> "The only way to liberation from this *humiliation* is the sword, which is the only language the enemy understands that will deter it" (Al-Qaida 2002 p1).

The assassination of Ahmed Shah Massoud two days before 9/11 removed the Taliban's main rival in preparation for war, demonstrating the attacks were also acts of *provocation*; designed to elicit a violent reaction from the Americans who, as intended, invaded Afghanistan (Kepel 2004b pp2-4). According to Saif al-Adel:

> "Our ultimate objective of these painful strikes against the head of the snake was to prompt it to *come out of its burrow*. This would make it easier for us to deal consecutive blows to undermine it and tear it apart. …Such strikes will force [them] to carry out random acts and *provoke* [them] to make serious and sometimes fatal mistakes. This was what actually happened. The first reaction was the invasion of Afghanistan and the second was the invasion of Iraq" (Al-Adel 2009).

The magnitude of the 9/11 attacks against the American homeland inevitably elicited military action against Al-Qaida and the Taliban regime harbouring them (Jervis 2005 p51). This is exactly what Al-Qaida wanted: To draw the Americans and their allies into the trap of an aggressive invasion and *occupation* of Afghanistan. They aimed to bring about a war of attribution in Afghanistan. The second "bleeding war" in Iraq was a "welcome bonus" (Riedel 2010 pp121-122).

The theme of *American weakness* exemplified by retreats from Beirut and Somalia led Al-Qaida to believe the US military did not have enough resilience to tolerate the casualties of fighting a counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. This perceived low "cost tolerance" (Kydd and Walter 2006 p62) led Al-Qaida to believe it could ultimately elicit a change in US foreign policy through provocation and coercive punishment. The USA could be brought to its knees in Afghanistan, like the USSR before it, causing it to retreat from the Islamic world. By *provoking* an invasion, Al-Qaida wanted to draw America into an asymmetric war of attrition, ratcheting-up the cost of US foreign policy.

Following the themes *of Soviet defeat* and *American weakness*, Al-Qaida wanted to engineer a scenario like the Afghan-Soviet War, mobilizing Muslims to jihad against invading *crusaders* (Cullison 2004). Salafi-Jihadists consider jihad against invaders of Muslim territories compulsory. The MAK/Al-Qaida had "experience in using guerrilla warfare and the war of attrition to fight tyrannical superpowers, as we, alongside the *mujahidin*, bled Russia for 10 years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat" (Bin Laden 2004a).

By instigating a guerrilla war, Al-Qaida hoped to galvanize an army of *mujahideen* like those who fought the Soviets in Afghanistan to inflict military defeat upon America and its allies. According to Al-Qaida's narrative, the *mujahideen* defeated the USSR on the battlefields of Afghanistan, ultimately leading to its domestic collapse and that the American's are weaker than the Soviets were; cowardly and lacking in fighting spirit. By inflicting military defeat, Al-Qaida aimed to force the

US to withdraw from the Islamic world and cease support for Israel and its *apostate*, *agent* regimes in Muslim countries.

Provoking American retaliation played into Al-Qaida's *far enemy* strategic narrative of aggression, Muslim *victimhood*, *defensive jihad* and a *war against Islam*; rallying Muslims to its cause of jihad. The attacks and expected military response were intended to unite the group, healing divisions and rousing support for a jihad in Afghanistan, reminiscent of that 20 years earlier. Fighting and defeating the US aimed to reignite the global jihadist movement whose battles against the *near enemy* in Egypt, Algeria and elsewhere had burnt-out.

Bin Laden reasoned that without American support these *agent* regimes could be overthrown more easily in order to install *Islamic states* and ultimately create a *caliphate* in the Muslim world. Consequently, Al-Qaida's strategic culture has prioritized its *far enemy* strategic narrative and strategic practices, primarily of terrorism against Western civilian targets.

By attacking America Al-Qaida hoped to demonstrate *American weakness* to "the noble" Muslims among "the masses" and "armies of *apostasy*"; that despite American support, its *apostate*, *agent* regimes were vulnerable and could be overthrown: revealing "fear of deposing the regimes because America is their protector is misplaced". Moreover, "when they depose the regimes, they are capable of opposing America if it interferes" (Naji 2006 p10). This is a form of 'propaganda by deed', exposing the oppressor is vulnerable and can be overcome (Garrison 2008 p28), designed to mobilize Muslims to jihad against enemies *near* and *far*. This *far enemy* strategy aimed to revive the Salafi-Jihadist movement; to "sweep Islamists to power in Muslim countries" (Kepel 2004b p4).

Provoking American retaliation against the Islamic world was, simultaneously, a strategy of agitation, to rally Muslims in solidarity behind Al-Qaida and its jihad (Kydd and Walter 2006 p51). The attacks were designed to rally Muslims to the

cause of jihad just as Black September's attack on the 1972 Munich Olympics rallied Muslims to the Palestinian cause:

> "This increase in 'terror' activity after Munich will doubtless recur… It will gradually give rise to an all-out struggle against the American *crusader* campaign, which if it continues to spread, will strike at the heart of America" (Qurashi 2002b pp275-276).

Provoking American intervention would exacerbate anti-American anger already present in the Islamic world due to America supporting "the Zionist entity", Israel. It would mobilize the Muslim masses against "the regimes of *apostasy* and *tyranny*" ruling Muslim countries, revealing their "*collaboration*" with "the enemies of the *Umma*", exposing their abandonment of Islam (Naji 2006 p10).

The attacks goaded the West into striking the Muslim "nation", awakening it "from its slumber": "Woe unto the Americans, British, and everyone who supports them when our nation wakes up" (Al-Adel 2009).

The attacks of September 11 2001 followed a *far enemy* narrative and strategy, utilizing the strategic practice of multiple suicide attacks or 'martyrdom operations', like the Embassy Bombings, in a terrorist spectacular. The aeroplanes were suicide vehicle bombs writ large. Al-Qaida sees itself as Qutb's vanguard of Islamic revolution:

> "When Almighty God rendered successful a convoy of Muslims, the *vanguards* of Islam, He allowed them to destroy the United States" (Bin Laden 2001b).

5.7.4 Djerba Bombing 2002

In a suicide bombing on 11 April 2002 a gas tanker exploded outside the El-Ghriba synagogue on Djerba Island, Tunisia, killing 21, including 4 French and 14 Germans. Al-Qaida claimed responsibility (Guardian 2002b). The bombing was

again framed with themes of *retribution* and oppression of Muslims, particularly Palestinians, by the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance:

> "A youth could not see his brothers in Palestine butchered and murdered while he saw Jews cavorting in Djerba. So, this spirit of jihad surged and he carried out this successful operation, may God accept it. …As long as America insists on its unjust and biased policy towards Muslims in favour of Jews and Christians around the world, then God willing, we will continue to hit it anywhere in the world" (Doran 2002).

This act of coercive punishment was, according to Naji, a "qualitative" or "medium" scale operation against the *Crusader-Zionist* alliance as part of the strategy of "vexation and exhaustion" (2006 p16); one stage in a broader "grand strategy" to defeat America (Brachman and McCants 2006 p310). The attack aimed to rally the Muslim "youth" to jihad, "dispersing" the security resources of the enemy, in this case the Tunisian government (Naji 2006 p16; Ulph 2005c).

5.7.5 Mombasa Attacks 2002

On 28 November 2002, jihadists fired two SA-7 shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) missing an Israeli, Arkia Airlines, 757 after taking-off from Mombasa airport, illustrating Al-Qaida's strategy of targeting aviation (BBC 2002b; Guardian 2002a). This was the first Al-Qaida attack specifically targeting Israelis. Moreover, the use of man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADs) was a new practice for Al-Qaida (appendix C6; Fighel 2014 pp421-422).

Subsequently, three Al-Qaida suicide bombers approached the Israeli owned Paradise Hotel in Kikambala, near Mombasa, Kenya in a vehicle-bomb. One bomber left the vehicle, detonating in the hotel lobby. Their truck rammed the hotel gate before exploding, killing the other two. Nine Kenyans and three Israelis were killed and approximately 80 injured. The attacks were initially claimed by the "Army of Palestine" which may or may not be an Al-Qaida pseudonym,

saying the attacks were to "make the world hear once again the voice of Palestinian refugees, and to cast light on *Zionist* terrorism in the West Bank and Gaza" (BBC 2002b; Guardian 2002a).

Al-Qaida subsequently claimed responsibility for striking Israelis, part of the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance. Following the American embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, Al-Qaida "returned and sent a big blow to that alliance, but this time against the Jews" (CNN 2002). It was "another blow at the Israeli Mossad, like the blows we landed in the past at the Djerba synagogue" (Melman 2002).

The Mombasa attacks demonstrate Al-Qaida's strategic practice of "multidimensional synchronized" attacks, designed to inflict mass civilian casualties using suicide bombers and, in this case, SAMs (Fighel 2014 p420). They were part of the strategy of "vexation and exhaustion" demonstrating that members of Zionist-Crusader alliance were not safe anywhere:

> "Al-Qaeda announces officially its responsibility for the two attacks in Mombasa. This statement comes as a challenge to the American enemy and to let it know Al-Qaeda is capable of reaching any place in the world."

According to Abu Geith: "The Jewish-Crusader alliance will not be safe anywhere from the *Mujahideen* attacks. We will hit the most vital installations and strategic interests with all means at our disposal."

Indeed, the attacks were framed with themes of Western *neo-colonialism*, particularly military domination in the region, and *occupation* by the *Crusaders* in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, and *Zionists* in Palestine; its perpetrators portrayed as *heroes*.

> "These two operations were meant to destroy all the dreams of the *Jewish-Crusader* covenant of safeguarding their strategic interests in this region and

prove the failure of America and its allies who amassed their huge naval fleets around the Horn of Africa to pursue the *Mujahideen*… [Calls on Africa's Muslims to] follow in the footsteps of the *heroes* of the Mombasa operations to turn the land into a hell under the feet of the Jewish and *Crusader* occupiers" (Berner 2007 pp97-98).

Like previous attacks, they were acts of coercive punishment, framed as *reciprocal retribution*:

"In response to the killing of our children, we will kill yours; for our wives, we will kill yours; for our elderly, we will kill yours; and for [the destruction of] our houses, your towers" (Melman 2002).

5.7.6 Istanbul Bombings 2003

On 15 November 2003, suicide truck bombs exploded outside two synagogues in Istanbul, killing 27 and injuring over 300. Five days later suicide bombers targeted the British Consulate and (British-headquartered) HSBC bank in Istanbul, killing 30 including the Consul and injuring nearly 400, mostly Muslims (Steinberg and Holtmann 2014 pp461-462; appendix C8). The attack reflects Al-Qaida's strategy of vexation and exhaustion, mirroring Naji's claim:

"If a usurious bank belonging to the *Crusaders* is struck in Turkey, all of the banks belonging to the *Crusaders* will have to be secured in all of the countries and the (economic) draining will increase" (2006 p19).

The latter was an act of coercive punishment designed to raise the cost of British foreign policy and Western business in the Middle East. Indeed, the Abu Hafs al-Masari Brigades, which may or may not speak for Al-Qaida (Torres-Soriano 2015), framed the attack as such, claiming they:

"…targeted the British consul, Roger Short, because of his extensive experience in combating Islam and because he is considered the

> mastermind of British policy in the region comprising Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran…. As for the British bank headquarters, this is a bastion of the British economy and let Britain and its people know that its alliance with America will not bring it prosperity or security" (Haaretz 2003).

5.7.7 7/7 London Bombings 2005

On 7 July 2005 Al-Qaida struck another transportation system. Three suicide bombers, Mohammad Siddique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer and Germaine Lindsay simultaneously blew themselves up on three London Underground trains at approximately 8:50am near Edgware Road, Liverpool Street and Russell Square tube stations. Hasib Hussain apparently missed his train, detonating his suicide bomb on a bus in Tavistock Square about an hour later. The bombs killed 52 people, wounding more than 770 (BBC 2008a). The bombings were claimed by the Secret Organization of al-Qaida in Europe and Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades (appendix C9).

On 4 August, Al-Jazeera aired a video from Ayman az-Zawahiri framing the bombings as *retribution* for British aggression and *occupation* in Iraq and Afghanistan.

> "As for the British, I tell them that Blair has brought you destruction in central London, and God willing, will bring more destruction. O nations of the crusade alliance, we proposed that you at least stop your aggression against the Muslims. The lion of Islam, *mujaheed* sheikh Osama Bin Laden, may God preserve him, offered you a truce to leave the house of Islam" (BBC 2005b).

In this message, aimed primarily at the British and Americans, he continues to berate the "*crusade alliance*", employing themes of *reciprocity*, "aggression", *neo-colonialism* and support for the *near enemy*:

> "You, however, shed rivers of blood in our land so we exploded volcanoes of anger in your land. Our message to you is crystal clear: Your salvation will only come in your withdrawal from our land, in stopping the robbing of our oil and resources, and in stopping your support for the corrupt and corrupting leaders."

The 7/7 bombings were another act of coercive punishment in Al-Qaida's war of attrition to compel the UK to abandon its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan:

> "Has sheikh Osama Bin Laden not informed you that you will not dream of security until we live it in reality in Palestine and before all *infidel* armies leave the land of Muhammad, may peace be upon him?" (BBC 2005b).

Zawahiri claimed the occupation of Iraq would make America "forget" Vietnam (BBC 2005b).

In his '*martyrdom*' video aired by Al-Jazeera in September, Khan framed the bombings with themes of *defensive jihad* (Hoffman 2014a p202), *democracy* and hence collective responsibility, aggression, *victimhood* and *retribution*:

> "Your *democratically* elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and *avenging* my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation" (BBC 2005a).

He portrayed himself and his fellow perpetrators with the *martyr* archetype and Bin Laden, Zawahiri and Zarqawi as "*heroes*", asking Allah "to raise me amongst those whom I love like the prophets, the messengers, the martyrs… I ask you to

make dua [supplication] to Allah almighty to accept the work from me and my brothers and enter us into gardens of *paradise*" (BBC 2005a).

The video also featured Ayman az-Zawahiri framing the 7/7 bombings with themes of *retribution*, *reciprocity* and *defensive jihad*. The "blessed raid" was "thanks to the racing of the squadrons of Islam to achieve *martyrdom* in *defence* of their religion and sanctities and security" and to "punish the new Zionist Crusade":

> "I speak to you today about the blessed raid on London which came as a blow to the insolent British *Crusader* pride and made it take a sip from the same glass from which it had long made the Muslims drink. The blessed raid which, like its illustrious predecessors in New York, Washington and Madrid took the battle to the enemy's own soul."

He characterized Britain with the "*Crusader*" archetype, as "one of the severest enemies of Islam and the Muslims", going on to list Britain's crimes from the First World War to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, for which *retribution* is due, including toppling the Ottoman empire, *occupying* Jerusalem, creating Israel, quoting General Allenby.

> "England toppled the Ottoman empire; that the English commander Allenby said when he entered Jerusalem: 'Now the Crusades have finished'; that England created Israel and killed thousands of Palestinian *mujahidin*; that England killed tens of thousands of Muslims from Delhi to Dinshawai [in Egypt] and that it participated in the sanctions against Iraq that killed more than 1 million Iraqi children; and that it participated in the *Crusader* campaign against Afghanistan and Iraq" (BBC 2005c).

7/7 demonstrates the strategic practice of multiple suicide bombings as part of a strategy of coercive punishment designed to pressure Britain to withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan and divide the Anglo-American alliance.

A fortnight later on 21 July four would-be suicide bombers, Muktar Said Ibrahim, Yassin Omar, Ramzi Mohammed, and Hussain Osman, attempted to attack three tube trains and a bus in London. All four devices failed to explode. A fifth bomb was abandoned by Manfo Asiedu in Little Wormwood Scrubs. The failed bombings were also claimed by the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades.

5.8 Conclusion

VNSAs are more prone to strategic cultural change than states. Al-Qaida has consistently pursued a strategy of asymmetric warfare due to its strategic environment, facing more powerful enemies, primarily the US and USSR. Yet, Al-Qaida's strategic practices evolved over a relatively short period of time. After seceding from Azzam's MAK in 1986, Al-Qaida continued the *irredentist* strategic practices of guerrilla warfare of its predecessor, to expel the communists from Afghanistan. This illustrates the factionalism often endemic in VNSAs, secession being the easiest way to affect strategic cultural change.

After its defeat at Jalalabad in 1989, Al-Qaida refocused on training foreign volunteers. However, following the 1991 Gulf War, Bin Laden turned against the West for their '*occupation*' of Saudi Arabia. Indeed, Bin Laden was a domineering leader and *norm entrepreneur* who broke with jihadist tradition by focusing on the *far enemy*, and provoking war with America, to the consternation of many Al-Qaida members. Zawahiri was similarly domineering, joining Bin Laden's 'World Islamic Front' and formally merging EIJ with Al-Qaida to the dismay of members.

Between 1992 and 1997, Al-Qaida's strategic practices targeted US military personnel in Aden, Riyadh (and possibly Khobar Towers) with bombs. 1998 saw a change in strategic narrative and practices as Bin Laden declared Al-Qaida no-longer distinguished between the military and civilians, justified on grounds of *reciprocity*; attacking US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania with suicide truck-bombs, mainly killing indigenous civilian staff.

Since then Al-Qaida has primarily employed strategic practices of terrorism targeting Western and Jewish civilians, portrayed as part of a *Zionist-Crusader* alliance. Indeed 'martyrdom operations' and often multiple, simultaneous attacks, became Al-Qaida's signatory strategic practice, using trucks, boats and aeroplanes as VBIEDs. Al-Qaida frames these suicide attacks as acts of *martyrdom* utilizing a *noble sacrifice story-form*, and their perpetrators as *martyrs*. The group has, less frequently, bombed 'hard' military targets, in Riyadh in 1995, alongside the USS Cole and failed USS Sullivans attacks in 2000. Some suspect that the MV Limburg was attacked when an expected America Navy target failed to present itself (Libicki et al. 2007 p41).

The Embassy suicide truck bombings emulated those of Hizballah against American and French forces in Lebanon in 1983. Subsequent maritime suicide boat-bombs against USS Cole and MV Limburg, and failed USS Sullivans attack, emulated those of the Tamil Tigers. Following the theme of *American weakness*, these suicide attacks and previous bombings followed a strategy of coercive punishment framed as *defensive jihad* and *retribution* for a series of injustices by Western *Crusaders* (primarily Britain, France and America)—illustrated by themes of *victimhood*, *occupation*, *colonialism* and *neo-colonialism* against Muslims, supporting *apostate*, *agent* regimes and Israel—to compel Western forces to withdraw from Saudi Arabia, as they had in Lebanon. Western policies have brought dishonour upon the *umma*. These acts of vengeance are portrayed as part of a *defensive jihad* to punish the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance for their transgressions inflicted upon Muslims, seeking to restore the honour of the Muslim nation.

As part of this strategy of coercive punishment Al-Qaida also, seemingly, attempts to time attacks to maximize their impact, perhaps to influence elections, and thus foreign policies; apparently successfully in the Madrid bombings, when a new Spanish government withdrew forces from Iraq; and unsuccessfully in the foiled Liquid Bomb Plot (appendix 0).

Ayman az-Zawahiri advocated suicide bombing on practical rather than religious grounds as the most cost-effective tactic, here indicating strategic practices were leading Al-Qaida's strategic narrative. Moreover, Al-Qaida frames civilians as legitimate targets based on themes of *reciprocity* and *retribution* since their countries are held responsible for the deaths of Muslim civilians. The attacks of 9/11, the 2004 Madrid, 7/7 and 21/7 London Bombings, as well as the LAX and Liquid Bomb plots (appendix C4; 0) demonstrate a penchant for targeting civilian transportation to maximize casualties.

The civilian casualties of 9/11 were also retrospectively justified with themes of *democracy*—since citizens elect their governments they must support the alleged *war against Islam*—and *tatarrus* (collateral damage), again indicating a desire for escalation in practices leading the narrative. The latter justification lacked narrative fidelity since the World Trade Center was a civilian target.

With the USS Cole attac, failed USS Sullivans and LAX plots of 1999 and 2000 (perhaps as early as the 1998 Embassy bombings), Al-Qaida adopted a strategy of provocation alongside that of coercive punishment against the West. Following the themes of *Soviet defeat* and *American weakness*, Bin Laden believed through provoking a US-led invasion of Afghanistan and further acts of coercive punishment, America could be defeated like the USSR; forcing the US to withdraw its forces from the Islamic world and cease supporting *agent* regimes and Israel. However, the battle against Western forces in Afghanistan was largely outsourced to indigenous actors. With the 2003 invasion of Iraq the strategy of provocation was more successful than had been hoped. These twin strategies of provocation and coercive punishment are part of a grand strategy of "vexation and exhaustion" to stretch the resources of the '*Zionist-Crusader alliance'*, framed with themes of *retribution*, *reciprocity* and *defensive jihad*.

Defeating the US in Afghanistan (and Iraq) aimed to enable Islamic revolution with the fall of these *apostate* regimes, (perhaps also Israel) and their ultimate goal,

resolving their narrative with the restoration of the Caliphate. Subsequent attacks in Madrid and London aimed to undermine the coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq through coercive punishment. Indeed, Spain withdrew from Afghanistan following the Madrid bombings. Moreover, by punishing, and ultimately defeating the *Crusaders* Al-Qaida hoped to rally Muslims to its cause, also rekindling the jihad against the *near enemies* to achieve Islamic revolutions.

Similarly, the bombing of the British Consulate and HSBC in Istanbul aimed to punish the British, raising the cost of Western foreign policy and business in the Islamic world. This, alongside the Djerba and Mombasa attacks were also part of this grand strategy of exhaustion and vexation against *Zionists* and *Crusaders*. The Djerba bombing killed citizens of Germany and France; two countries involved in Afghanistan. The attacks on Jewish targets, particularly those in Mombasa targeting Israelis, aimed to punish Israel for oppressing Palestinians.

Al-Qaida-central has a dominant *far enemy* strategic culture dedicated to jihad against the *Crusader West*, combining a *far enemy* strategic narrative primarily with strategic practices of suicide attacks against Western civilians.

Chapter 6: Strategic Narrative of the GSPC-AQIM

6.1 Introduction

Following the case study on Al-Qaida's strategic culture in the previous chapters, this is the first of two chapters on Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)—formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)—covering the period from 1996 to 2015. This chapter presents the strategic narrative of the GSPC-AQIM, using the method utilized in chapter four. It begins with the group's historical context, before outlining the narrative's key *characters* or *archetypes*, its basic plot and key themes. The following chapter moves on to an analysis of the group's strategic practices.

The GSPC-AQIM's strategic narrative has evolved over time, transitioning from Islamist-nationalism by incorporating broader regional *near enemy* and international *far enemy* narratives. This shift in narrative will be linked to the group's changing strategic practices in the subsequent chapter.

6.2 Historical Context

Algerian SJVNSAs have been riven by factionalism. Internal disagreements over its anti-civilian strategy, domineering leadership (like Al-Qaida), and purges under Jamal Zitouni and Antar Zouabri (Kepel 2004b pp272-273) led Hassan Hattab's faction to secede from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in 1996; rebranding as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 1998. Further quarrels over the GSPC's relationship with Al-Qaida led Hattab to resign in 2003; surrendering to the government in September 2007, after the GSPC rebranded as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) that January.

The strategic narrative of the GSPC-AQIM is an amalgam of influences from Algerian and Maghrebi history, of indigenous armed struggle and imported ideas from Egyptian Islamism and Al-Qaida. The GSPC-AQIM follows the historical

trends of Islamic revivalism and armed struggle framed in Islamic terms, linking it with the GIA as earlier VNSAs, militant and religious movements in Algerian and Maghrebi history. All questioned the legitimate authority of the ruling regime, aiming to establish puritanical Islamic rule under *sharia* law. The organization's strategic narrative attempts to integrate itself into Algeria's national story.

AQIM's Salafist religious doctrine is influenced by a history of Algerian Salafism, particularly Ben Badis, the AUMA and Al-Qiyam (appendix B2). The GSPC-AQIM is dedicated to creating a puritanical *Islamic state* based on a Salafist interpretation of Islam and *sharia* law in the Maghreb-Sahel region through violent revolution.

6.3 Characters and Plot

Like Al-Qaida's, the GSPC-AQIM narrative divides its antagonists into *near* and *far enemies* (Gerges 2009). The former refers to the regimes of the Maghreb-Sahel, primarily in Algeria, demonized as *tyrants*, *apostates*, *infidels*, *hypocrites*, *pagans*, *criminals* and *devils*; and dehumanizes them as monkeys or apes, rats, snakes, pigs, dogs and parasites; creatures considered unclean and impure (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 pp10-11; SITE 2005). The security forces are frequently referred to as the "pagan guard".

Algerians, under their *tyrannical* regime endure "lesions of poverty, misery and oppression." President Abdelaziz Bouteflika is considered a *puppet* imposed by a military regime (Ahmed Al-Jijeli 2013a) which is an *agent* of *colonialism*: "the sons of France" (NYT 2008). Over time the group's *near enemy* narrative has undergone a process of regionalization, increasingly portraying Algeria's neighbours likewise.

The *far enemy* are the *kafir* or *kuffar* (pl.) (*infidels*) which form the "international *crusaders*", the Jewish-Zionists and Christian *masters* of the Algerian regime, primarily the French (Kohlmann 2005i); Christians and *crusaders* being synonymous. Jews and Zionists are frequently depicted as the descendants of apes

and pigs. There are also traditions, particularly of Jews and Christians, but also sinful Muslims, being turned into apes and pigs (Solnick 2002). The regime is considered an *agent* of the West; America being the embodiment of evil:

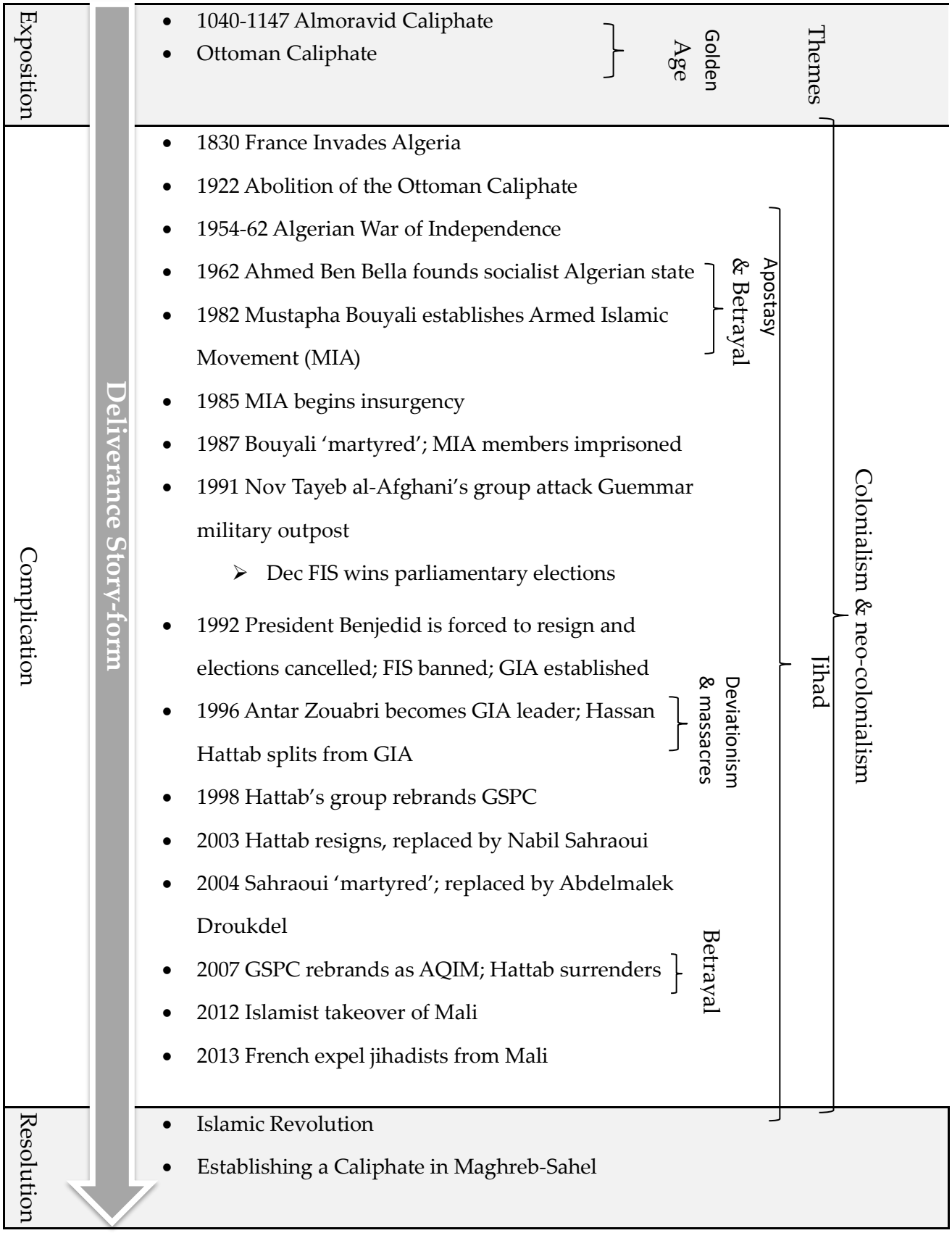
> "the head of unbelief, the origin of evil, the source of depravity, the apex of malice, the epitome of oppression, and the symbol of barbarism..." (MEMRI 2011).

A third category of antagonists are the *deviants* or "khawarij" (kharijites) of the GIA, "the Zouabri group", who declared the whole of Algerian society *apostate*, discussed below. The protagonists are the original GIA, before the *deviants* took charge, and the GSPC which seceded from the latter, continuing the righteous jihad against the *tyrannical* regime. This characterological distinction is between the 'good' *mujahideen—champions* of Islam—and the *deviants* who, following a *betrayal story-form*, forsook the cause. The GSPC's origins lie in this splintering.

Like Al-Qaida, AQIM considers itself *mujahideen*; *champions* or *heroes* (batal); "knights" or "lions" of the Islamic cause (AQIM 2011d; Bartolucci and Corman 2014; Bernardi et al. 2012 p30; SITE 2005). They are both brothers of other Muslims who are oppressed everywhere and brothers-in-arms with their fellow "*mujahideen*" within the GSPC-AQIM and around the world (Kohlmann 2005d). AQIM's *martyrs*, all those killed in pursuit of this cause, including suicide bombers, are employed in a *martyrdom* or *noble sacrifice story-form*.

The group employs an 'us' against 'them' *story-form*, defining itself in opposition to the enemy 'other', the *apostates* and *Crusaders*. The narrative employs a "predication" strategy, depicting a struggle between the protagonists assigned positive traits—the righteous *mujahideen* of the GSPC-AQIM—and antagonists assigned negative traits—the evil *Crusader's*, *apostates* and *deviants* (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 pp9-12; Wodak and Meyer 2002 p27).

Figure 9: Plot of AQIM's Narrative



The GSPC-AQIM's strategic narrative employs a *conflict with God story-form* for the Algerian and neighbouring regimes' failures to rule according to *sharia* (Kohlmann 2007d). As figure 9 shows, it also follows a *deliverance story-form* which aims to deliver Muslims of the Maghreb-Sahel from these *tyrannical*, *apostate* rulers.

This plot begins historically with the golden age of the Almoravid caliphate, when large swaths of this region were governed according to orthodox Maliki Sunnism. Subsequent Ottoman rule was disrupted in 1830 when France invaded Algeria, ultimately subjecting much of Muslim North and West Africa to *colonial* rule.

Through vertical integration this plot appeals to a millennia and a half long struggle for Islam in northern Africa, of which the GSPC-AQIM is a part, alongside historical characters—legendary Muslim *heroes* and *champions*—from the seventh and eighth centuries, invoking the historical characters and master narratives of Uqba Ibn Nafi, Musa Ibn Nusayr and Tariq Ibn Ziyad, and eleventh century Almoravid conqueror Yusuf Ibn Tashfin (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 p5; Kennedy-Boudali 2009 p16; Porter 2011 p5). The *mujahideen* are the descendants, "sons" or "grandchildren" of these legendary figures:

> "O grandchildren of Tarek Bin Ziyad and Uqba Bin Nafi! O sons of Yusuf Bin Tashfin!" (Kohlmann 2007d).

It also ties itself to anti-colonial guerrillas such as Umar Mukhtar in Libya, Abd al-Karim in Morocco, and the FLN who drove the French from Algeria in the War of Independence. However, the new Algerian President, Ahmed Ben Bella, *betrayed* the revolution, adopting a socialist rather than Islamist ideology. Since then a series of jihadist movements have struggled to overthrow this '*apostate*', '*tyrannical*' government, portrayed as an '*agent*' of France.

The *mujahideen* of the GSPC-AQIM continue the fight of the MIA, led by the *champion* and *martyr* Mustapha Bouyali, against the FLN *traitors* during the 1980s, to overthrow the Algerian *apostates*. They consider themselves "saplings" of

Bouyali (Akbar and Martin 2013; Kohlmann 2007e p3). The group was, again, part of the movement led by the GIA—itself formed from remnants of Bouyali's MIA—which resisted the *tyrants* of the Algerian military who cancelled the elections of January 1992.

From the mid-1990s *deviants* took control of the GIA, *betraying* the cause of Islamic revolution and the Algerian people by turning against them. GIA atrocities committed against civilian Muslims peaking during Antar Zouabri's leadership. This deviance takes a *ruse story-form* whereby *imposters* and *tricksters* from the military and intelligence service (DRS), are blamed for leading the group astray (Halverson et al. 2011 pp207-208). There are also allegations *imposters* from the military formed death squad masquerading as jihadists who perpetrated civilian massacres to taint the jihad.

The GSPC split from Zouabri's GIA, restoring the jihad to Salafist principles; rejecting violence against civilians. The GSPC subsequently joined Al-Qaida, rebranding as AQIM in 2007. The plot will ultimately be resolved when the group achieves its goal of creating an *Islamic state* or *Caliphate* in the region, delivering the Muslims from their oppression by the region's *tyrannical*, *apostate* governments and their French, *neo-colonial masters*.

The GSPC's original goal, like its MIA and GIA predecessors, was establishing an *Islamic state* in Algeria, but has developed a broader vision of restoring Islamic rule by establishing a *Caliphate* in the Maghreb-Sahel region like that of the Almoravids centuries earlier.

Like that of Al-Qaida, the GSPC-AQIM's narrative divides the world into two implacably opposed groups of believers, Dar al-Islam (the land of Islam) and non-believers, Dar al-Harb (the land of war): "This is a war between the camp of Islam and the camp of the Cross, to which the Americans, Zionists, Jews, their *apostate* allies, and others belong." These enemies of Islam fight to prevent Muslims

establishing an *Islamic state* and conspire to destroy Islam, forcing every Muslims to *apostatize*. Islam is under attack therefore their jihad is *defensive*:

> "During this time, Jihad is one of the greatest personal commandments. Every Muslim must know that *defending* Islam and the Muslims in this war is an obligation incumbent upon him, with his soul, his money, and his tongue" (MEMRI 2004).

> "No peace, no dialogues, no settlements, no protection covenants, and no security agreements with the *apostate* enemies of Allah—only destruction, killing and humiliation" (Kohlmann 2005a).

The GSPC-AQIM's purpose is to deliver the Muslim people from their humiliation and oppression, restore the "rightfully guided" Caliphate ruled by s*haria* law. Theirs is a utopian vision of the ideal *Islamic state* (Kohlmann 2005i).

6.4 Themes

Having briefly outlined its origins and historical context, identified key characters and basic plot the following will demonstrate, thematically, how these are incorporated into GSPC-AQIM narrative.

6.4.1 Salafism, Deviationism and Intelligence Plots

Following the death of GIA leader Jamal Zitouni in 1996, regional emirs, Hassan Hattab (aka Abu Hamza) and Habbi Miloud, accused his successor, Antar Zouabri, of "*deviationism*"[4] (Roy and Sfeir 2007 p421). The GSPC-AQIM strategic narrative places its origins in its separation from the GIA, because of its "*deviation* from the Salafist doctrine to that of al-*Takfir wal-Hijra*" (appendix A3.10) which justified the "killing of innocents and denunciation of scholars unjustly" (Ulph

[4] Deviation from accepted ideology or practices (Collins 2015; RH 1997).

2005a). Thus, a splinter group formed under Hattab's leadership (Tawil 2011 p135). The new group "condemned the crimes of the GIA of Antar Zouabri" for "shedding the blood of innocent people in massacres" (Wiktorowicz 2001). According to the *deviationist* and *Salafist* themes, Zouabri and his successors' ideology *deviated* from *Salafism*:

> "When Antar Zouabri took over the leadership of the group, he caused great corruption by *deviating* from the *Salafist* ideology of the organization" (Kohlmann 2005i).

In September 1998, Hattab's faction rebranded as *al-Jamaah al-Salafiyyah lil-Dawa wal-Qital*, "the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat" (GSPC), disassociating itself from the GIA's *deviant* hard-core (BBC 1998); "remedying the *deviations* of GIA leadership" (BBC 1999b). Through secession these norm entrepreneurs affected a narrative shift, castigating the "bloodthirsty GIA" (BBC 1999a) for "spilling the blood of the nation, looting its property and kidnapping its women" (AFP 1997a).

The group invokes the historical character and the legacy of Islamic scholar Abdulhamid Ben Badis (Kennedy-Boudali 2009) who holds an important place in Algeria's national story, cloaking itself in the legitimacy of a mainstream, nationalistic, Algerian Salafism (appendix B2.1). Like the FLN and GIA previously, the GSPC-AQIM invokes Islam to legitimate its struggle (appendix B3.5.1).

The GSPC also claimed the legacy of late MIA emir Abdelkader Chebouti who forbade targeting civilians. Hattab previously belonged to this organization (Mideast Mirror 1999; Ruedy 2005 p263).

The GSPC adopted a theme of *unity*, announcing a "new dawn" following the "divisions and rifts" of the Algerian "jihad" (BBC 1999a). It constituted "the unification of the ranks of the Salafi *Mujahidin*" after "three years of division and sedition" (BBC 1999b).

In May 1999 the GSPC announced Hattab was resigning as emir (remaining military commander) in favour of Islamic jurisprudence adviser Abdelmadjid Dishu (Mideast Mirror 1999); to "reinforce the unity of the Salafist fighters and change the doctrinal and spiritual *deviations* that have occurred within the Armed Islamic Group" (Wiktorowicz 2001). The following month, Dishu (aka Abu Mossab) was killed by security forces. Hattab regained leadership (AFP 1999; Kohlmann 2005i).

The GSPC-AQIM emphasizes a return to Salafist doctrine and the original goals of the GIA; to fight the *apostates*, spread the *true* Islam of the Salaf, and "educate the Muslims about the principle that loyalty to Islam and to the Sunna must take precedence over loyalty to all the other frameworks" (MEMRI 2004).

> "Rejoice, our Shaykh [Bin Laden], for despite the great troubles that have plagued the jihad in Algeria, such as *apostasy*, *deviation* from the righteous path, and a global conspiracy, the vessel of jihad is now resting atop the mountains of Ararat [like Noah's Ark]" (Kohlmann 2007d).

Contrary to the *takfiri* doctrine shared by Al-Qaida, the GSPC and early GIA—declaring the state *apostate* justifying attacks against political leaders and security forces; the GIA, like Takfir wal-Hijra, adopted the *deviant* doctrine of *takfir al-mujtama*, condemning Algerian society collectively as *apostate*; Muslim civilians became 'legitimate' targets (Le Sueur 2009 128-129; McGovern 2010 p85; Timani 2007 p103). The GSPC denounced the GIA as Kharijites (appendix A1.1); "followers of" and "a slogan for advocates of Takfir wal-Hijra" (BBC 1999a; Kohlmann 2005i).

In early 1998, Abu Hamza al-Masri, GIA spokesman in London, realigned with the GSPC (Tawil 2011 p126; Thomas 2014 p175), subsequently denouncing Zouabri's GIA as "Khawaij" (Kharijites) (Hamza al-Masri 2000).

The themes of *deviation* and *intelligence plots* assert Zouabri's GIA and the Algerian military bear responsibility for the massacres that rocked Algeria in the late 1990s. Zouabri's faction was allegedly penetrated by *imposters*, *trickster* and *infiltrators* from the military and DRS. These "intelligence plots" invoke a *ruse story-form* of a government conspiracy, illustrating "the degree of hatred" of "those apostates" towards their people. Accordingly, the Algerian tyrant regime bears responsibility for "the majority of the massacres" (Kohlmann 2005i; MEMRI 2004). The GSPC is at the forefront of the battle against the *deviants* and massacres (appendix B3.7.7): "many brothers were killed in battles with the *deviant* Zouabri group which sought to extend its control according to the plans of the intelligence agents" (Kohlmann 2005i).

Indeed, Hattab's successor, Nabil Sahraoui claimed two groups committed these atrocities: "Zawabiri's group, who accuse [society] of unbelief…like the *Khawarej*" but "barely exist in the field"; and the *apostate* "regime, which stands behind most of the massacres", in order to intimidate the people and deter support for "the *mujahideen*" (MEMRI 2004).

AQIM spokesman, Salah Abu Muhammad, reiterated this *intelligence plot* theme asserting government responsibility for the majority of massacres, whose "crimes" against their Muslim people continue:

> "Everyone knows who the killers of the innocents are, in Serkazi and Barouazia and the massacres of Bin Talha, the latest of the list of crimes which were overseen by senior officers of the Algerian army. As for the righteous *martyrs*, they are the most caring for Muslim blood. Would a *martyr* kill his brothers or family?" (BBC 2008b).

Here, the history of GIA brutality directly influences the GSPC-AQIM narrative. The themes of *deviationism* and *intelligence plots* serve to distance the GSPC-AQIM from the violence against Muslim civilians of the Algerian civil war. This narrative

asserts that, unlike its predecessor, the GSPC-AQIM does to not target Muslim civilians, caring more for the people than the *criminal* government whilst denouncing government misinformation to the contrary. Abu Muhammad implored the media and the people to disbelieve the *mujahideen* would target them (BBC 2008b).

Misinformation is a persistent theme in the GSPC-AQIM narrative employing a *ruse story-form*. It denounces Algeria's government, and the media for collaborating with the *apostate* regime's campaign of *misinformation* against the *mujahideen*. The regime and media are portrayed with the *trickster* archetype; as liars, deceiving the public, tarnishing the *mujahideen* and understating the regime's casualties:

> "And habitually, the cooperative, accomplice media rushed to misguide public opinion and accuse the *Mujahideen* openly with this crime, without the least confirmation without proof, without excuse, and without abiding by honest journalism" (Flashpoint 2010a).

AQIM adamantly denies its operations target civilians, warning Algerians to avoid government buildings and foreign organizations (CBS 2008). This serves to transfer blame for the deaths of Muslim civilians onto the victims.

6.4.2 Defiance and Betrayal

The theme of *betrayal* asserts the FLN, having led the jihad to liberate Algeria from French colonialism, they *betrayed* the "principles of November 1st" 1954 (Kohlmann 2005e) which promised a "sovereign democratic, and social Algerian state within the framework of Islamic principles" (Ruedy 2005 p159). This theme of *betrayal* is influenced by the ideas of Al-Qiyam, particularly Sultani's *Masdakism Is the Origin of Socialism* which argued as much (appendix B2.3); and Mustafa Bouyali who took up arms against the FLN (B3.6). Both believed the FLN had *betrayed* the revolution, failing to implement an Islamic state (Ellman 1987a). Here,

the GSPC-AQIM aims to "remobilise" vital principles of the FLN regime's "own complex ideological tradition" against it (Roberts 2011 p33).

Rather than implementing an *Islamic state*, the *treacherous* FLN leaders adopted socialism, making them *apostates*:

> "Not so long ago, our fathers and grandfathers fought *crusader* France and kicked her out of Algeria defeated and humiliated. They sacrificed all that they had so that we would enjoy freedom in accordance with Islamic teachings. Before we knew it, victory was stolen from us" (Kohlmann 2007d).

For Salafi-jihadists, regimes which fail to rule according to *sharia* law are *apostate*. Algeria's political leaders, security forces and bureaucrats are therefore legitimate targets. This character of the *apostate* regime shows the clear influence of Wahhab and Qutb (appendix A3.6; A3.9). Indeed, ruling by non-Islamic laws is one of Wahhab's Ten Voiders of Islam constituting *apostasy* (Wiktorowicz 2005 p81).

In September 1999, Algerian president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika's Law on Civil Concord, making peace with the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) was approved in a referendum. A supplementary Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation was similarly approved in 2005 (Le Sueur 2009 pp77-81, 90-91). The GSPC-AQIM, however remains *defiant* "against the truce", adopting the slogan "neither truce, nor reconciliation" (BBC 1999b) reasserting the GIA's mantra: "no dialogue, no truce, no reconciliation" (AFP 1994a; BBC 1994b; Ruedy 2005 p264). This *defiance* echoes Abdullah Azzam's motto: "Jihad and the rifle alone; no negotiations, no conferences, and no dialogues" (Bergen 2001 p56).

The GSPC remained determined to "continue the jihad against the security forces" (AFP 1998) in *defiance* of the government reconciliation process. Despite its determination to distinguish itself from the GIA, this theme of *defiance* is a clear

hangover from its predecessor, asserting that jihad is the only way to create an *Islamic state* and rejecting a democratic solution (appendix B3.7.4).

The GSPC portrayed its rival paramilitary group as treacherous and "*apostate*" (BBC 1999a), denouncing "the bogus truce of the AIS" (BBC 1999b), accusing their leader, Madani Mezrag, of "high treason". They were criticized for negotiating with the DRS (NAJ 1999). These *traitors* had not only *betrayed* the cause but also Muslims and Islam. The GSPC "declared war against the Islamic Salvation Army, which accepted the government truce and laid down its weapons" (Wiktorowicz 2001). Again, this rivalry with the AIS shows continuity with the GIA's strategic narrative which previously denounced the AIS for refusing to renounce its commitment to a democratic solution (appendix B3.7.6).

This *betrayal story-form* depicts the GSPC as *champions* of Islam and the Algerian people, attracting disillusioned GIA fighters to the GSPC and dissuading them from joining "the truce with the dictatorship" (Kohlmann 2005i). When many were renouncing violence, the GSPC wanted to redeem the jihad by repudiating violence against Muslim civilians, returning to a *near enemy narrative*, focused on fighting the *apostate* state and its security forces (Le Sueur 2009 pp143-145; Ulph 2005a).

Hattab did not welcome the attacks of September 11 2001, concerned about the *far enemy* strategy Al-Qaida had instigated; fearing grave consequences for the Islamist movement (Tawil 2011 pp183-185). These doubts, the first "signs of surrender", mark the beginning of a new theme: Hattab's *betrayal* (Kohlmann 2005c). Influenced by the nationalistic Salafism of Ben Badis (appendix B2.1), Hattab was an Islamist nationalist wedded to Algeria's religio-nationalist tradition, opposed to an internationalist agenda.

The fallout of 9/11, particularly the Iraq War created factionalism reminiscent of the GIA, opening a "strategic debate" over the GSPC's future course (Filiu 2009b

p221). Hattab's faction refused to pledge allegiance to Al-Qaida causing speculation he was preparing for a negotiated settlement (ICG 2004 p16). Through norm entrepreneurship by both factions, two competing norms emerged, *defiance* and *reconciliation*, ultimately causing the GSPC to splinter. Hattab's faction, who had favoured a *near enemy* narrative and strategy, recognizing the futility of continuing the fight despite public opposition, ultimately seceded from the GSPC (Tawil 2011 p183).

Norm entrepreneurs within the GSPC led by Nabil Sahraoui believed the group had to embrace Al-Qaida and adopt its strategic narrative of global jihad. The war in Iraq caused a final split as hardliners pushed for internationalization of the GSPC's agenda and involvement in the Iraq conflict (Filiu 2009b p221; Le Sueur 2009 pp144-145; Ulph 2005a). In October 2003 a communiqué announced Hattab had been replaced as emir by Nabil Sahraoui (aka Abu Ibrahim Mustapha) (BBC 2003a; Kohlmann 2005c). This demonstrates that the easiest way to affect strategic cultural change and resolve disagreements within VNSAs is to divide into factions.

Attitudes towards reconciliation and renunciation of jihad, the questions of links with Al-Qaida, the increasing influence of Osama bin Laden over the group and whether to follow a local or global strategy caused a power struggle (Filiu 2009b; Ulph 2005a p221). The group disavowed Hattab's "suspicious behaviour" for trying to persuade the "brothers" to join "the *apostate* reconciliation project" (Kohlmann 2005c). Hattab finally surrendered in September 2007, encouraging others to follow suit, claiming AQIM wanted to create "a second Iraq" in Algeria (BBC 2007d).

The GSPC-AQIM narrative portrays Hattab as a *traitor* who "abandoned his principles and religion" becoming an *agent* of the "*tyrants*". His actions were "a *betrayal* of Allah, his messenger, the path of jihad, and the blood of the *martyrs*" (Kohlmann 2005c). Hattab and his fellow defectors involved in this "conspiracy"

were "unjust, cowardly and unfaithful" (Kohlmann 2005c); "defeatist", "cowards" (Ennahar 2009). This *betrayal story-form* aims to dissuade GSPC-AQIM militants from following suit.

Following Hattab's departure, the GSPC remained *defiant*, denouncing the reconciliation scheme as a "trap" and "conspiracy" of the *trickster* Boutiflika, against the jihad and Islam by the *apostate* regime: "Now the Algerian *tyrants* are up to their old tricks with the so-called comprehensive national reconciliation exemption." Like Zawahiri (appendix A3.15.1) Sahraoui argued the lessons of the FIS (B2.4) and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood were that dialogue with *apostate* regimes always fails:

> "Pacts must not be formed with these rulers; they must not be given security; there must be no reconciliation with them, and there must be no truce with them" (MEMRI 2004).

According to AQIM, despite:

> "…obvious displays of disbelief, you [Bouteflika] then drone on about the reconciliation deception in an attempt to *trick* the nation. You fraudulently disguise yourself in the clothes of the righteous" (Kohlmann 2007d).

On 29 July 2010 Droukdel reiterated that reconciliation was a trick born out of desperation to defeat the *mujahideen*:

> "…calls to recede and surrender are proof and a confession from the enemy that the military solution has failed, as the *apostates* have realized that defeating the *mujahideen* militarily is highly impossible…" (Zelin 2010b).

6.4.3 Solidarity

The GSPC aligned itself with Al-Qaida due to a legitimacy crisis for which Hattab resigned. He claims: "There wasn't one cleric anywhere willing to support our

campaign" (Tawil 2011 p183). Following Hattab's departure, the GSPC attempted to overcome this legitimacy deficit, increasingly adopting the theme of *solidarity* with oppressed Muslims and Salafi-Jihadist groups around the world, particularly Al-Qaida-central and Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI). It portrayed itself as part of a broader, global jihadist *mujahideen*; brothers-in-arms:

> "The conflict in the world today is a conflict between belief and unbelief. The war in Palestine, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Algeria, in Chechnya, and in the Philippines, is one war" (MEMRI 2004).

Following this theme of *solidarity*, the GSPC declared allegiance to Al-Qaida in 2003:

> "The GSPC announces to the world in general and to Muslims in particular its allegiance to all Muslims and to fighting to the glory of God in Palestine and in Afghanistan under the direction of Mullah Omar and of the al-Qaeda organisation of Osama bin Laden" (AFP 2003).

According to Sahraoui:

> "We strongly and fully support Osama bin Laden's jihad against the heretic America as well as we support our brothers in Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Chechnya" (BBC 2003c).

Despite asserting *solidarity* with Al-Qaida, Sahraoui, influenced by the nationalistic Salafism of Ben Badis, clung to the Algeria-centric tendency of the GIA (appendix B2.1; B3.7). He did not fully embrace its *far enemy* narrative or strategy of fighting America, prioritizing battling the *near enemy* in Algeria, showing the continuing influence of the ideas of Faraj (appendix A3.11):

> "Fighting the *apostates* takes precedence over fighting others from among the original *infidels* [the West]…. As the punishment for *apostasy* is harsher, in this life and the next, than unbelief" (MEMRI 2004).

Sahraoui maintained that if the GSPC were not so busy fighting in Algeria, it would happily join the global jihad against the *far enemy*: the American *crusaders* and their Western allies (Atwan 2008 p233; Gray and Stockham 2008 p93). By invoking a *far enemy* narrative, AQIM seeks legitimacy in the eyes of Al-Qaida and other jihadist movements. However, the GSPC and the GIA previously, were always more concerned about Algeria's own traditional *far enemy* in its former colonial *master*, France. By invoking anti-French, as well as anti-Spanish, themes AQIM seeks legitimacy, grounding their jihad in the region's anti-colonial history, in particular the continuation of the FLN's struggle for Algerian independence.

They see continuing French support for the *apostate* Algerian regime as an obstacle to Islamic revolution. As such there is no contradiction in the GSPC-AQIM's anti-French theme, which is the legacy of the anti-colonial struggle, whilst still prioritizing the battle against the *near enemy* in pursuit of domestic Islamic revolution. This is unlike Al-Qaida's innovation in reversing the priorities of Salafi-Jihadists outlined by Faraj (appendix A3.11) in provoking war against the *far enemy*. This theme of solidarity and *far enemy* narrative mimicked that of Al-Qaida, particularly the theme of global oppression of Muslims by foreign *crusaders* and *apostate* or *hypocrite* regimes. Indeed, the group's strategic narrative underwent a degree of "hybridization", combining its *near enemy* narrative with a *far enemy* one (Hegghammer 2009). For the GSPC, Al-Qaida was an exemplar of jihad to be emulated.

In June 2004, Sahraoui and six other fighters were killed by the Algerian military in the mountains of Bejaia province following the deaths of 12 soldiers in an ambush (AFP 2004a). Saharaoui was replaced by Abdelmalek Droukdel—adopting the alias Abu Musab Abdelwadoud after his Jordanian counterpart in Iraq, Abu Musab az-Zarqawi. Under Droukdel's leadership, the GSPC-AQIM narrative continues the theme of *solidarity*, equating itself with *mujahideen* elsewhere:

> "[Algeria's] crimes still continue to this day: only days ago, a relentless bombardment of napalm bombs…poured down on concentrations of the *mujahideen* in the Al-Akhdariya Mountains coinciding with the American bombardment of defiant Fallujah. The killing of Shaykh Abu Ibrahim [Sahraoui], the leader of the GSPC, coincided with the killing of Abdelaziz al-Muqrin, the leader of Al-Qaida's Committee in Al-Haramain [Saudi Arabia], and an assassination attempt on the hero Shaykh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al-Qaida's Committee in Mesopotamia" (Kohlmann 2005i).

In fighting the Algerian *tyrants*, the group portrays itself as one of the "brigades" at the forefront of a global war, sending greetings "to all the jihad groups steadfast on the blazing frontlines." It is part of the "vanguards of jihad" fighting this "malicious *crusader* war" against the "Bouteflikas" in Algeria, alongside the "Karzais" and the "Allawis" in Afghanistan and Iraq. They ask Allah "to grant victory to the *mujahideen* everywhere" and "give them power on this earth" to restore the "rightly guided *Caliphate*" (Kohlmann 2005i).

Following Droukdel's accession, the GSPC adopted a more internationalist stance, particularly emphasizing its solidarity with the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, increasingly co-operating with Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI):

> "We wish to tell the righteous Shaykh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi...how he has pleased our hearts by what he has inflicted upon the enemy crusaders and their *apostate agents* by frustrating and killing them. May Allah protect [Zarqawi] and all of the *mujahideen*" (Kohlmann 2005f).

Iraq and Zarqawi featured in 23.1% and 8.6% of GSPC (1998-2007) and AQIM (2007-2009) propaganda respectively (Torres-Soriano 2011b pp283, 291). This theme of *solidarity* with AQI was illustrated in GSPC strategic practices, becoming a recruiting sergeant and transit hub for Maghrebi volunteers. Recruits trained in

GSPC camps in the Atlas Mountains and Sahara Desert—moving frequently to avoid surveillance—were funnelled to Iraq (Atwan 2008 p236; Filiu 2009a p5-7; 2009b p221-223).

In December 2004 the "Nur Brigade" of the GSPC pledged allegiance to Bin Laden, forming *Tanzim al-Qaida fi Bilad al-Berber* (Organization of al-Qaida in the Land of the Berbers). The name reflects imitation and possible links to *Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn*—Al-Qaida in the Land of the Two Rivers (i.e. AQI) (Hunt 2005; Ulph 2005b). It was believed to be a subgroup of the GSPC, taking responsibility for training North African recruits to fight in Iraq (Atwan 2008 p236).

The theme of *solidarity* and policy of co-operation with AQI demonstrates a deliberate strategy, fostering closer ties with the Al-Qaida movement, ultimately leading the GSPC to officially join Al-Qaida (Atwan 2008 p236). Zawahiri apparently appointed Zarqawi as an intermediary between the GSPC and Al-Qaida-central (Filiu 2009a pp4-5).

By emphasizing its *solidarity* with Al-Qaida the GSPC sought to bolster its popularity, mobilizing fresh recruits radicalized since Algeria's brutal civil war, eager to fight Iraq's invaders; following the surrender of many Algerian *traitors* of the previous generation to the government amnesty (Filiu 2009b p221):

> "The [American] entry into Iraq gave a strong breath to international jihad, and it was incumbent upon us to benefit from this breath" (BBC 2012a).

Droukdel's statements increasingly mimicked those of Bin Laden, Zawahiri and Zarqawi, increasingly expressing support for the brothers fighting in Iraq (Atwan 2008 p236; Gray and Stockham 2008 p94; Harmon 2010 pp15-16). As the sincerest form of flattery, this imitation represented the group's desire to become 'Al-Qaida-like' as the exemplar of Salafi-Jihadism. GSPC solidarity and co-operation with AQI declined with the latter's fortunes following the "Sunni awakening" from late

November 2006 (BBC 2006d). Driven out of Anbar province and Baghdad as Iraqi Sunnis turned against AQI, co-operation was stymied (Filiu 2009a p5-7; 2009b p221-223).

The GSPC-AQIM narrative increasingly became a hybrid one of global jihad and *solidarity* with jihadist movements around the world, fighting the American *crusaders* and their "*servants*" incorporating a *far enemy* narrative. Influenced by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the GSPC-AQIM portrays itself as part of a global struggle between Islam and the *crusaders*:

> "The GSPC is not limited by a narrow regional vision. It is important for us to spread the fragrance of jihad in every country and region until the fire ignites under the feet of Jews, Christians, and the *apostates*..." (Kohlmann 2005i).

The GSPC's legitimacy crisis and the surrender of its members to the government amnesties led it to affiliate with Al-Qaida. They "joined Al-Qa'idah organization ideologically and in practical terms and were transformed into a branch for it in the Islamic Maghreb region long before this was announced publicly. This gave us a long breath and represented our principal backing in the face of the so-called *reconciliation* blueprint Algeria started to implement" (BBC 2012a).

The GSPC officially joined the Al-Qaida network in 2006; the culmination of a rapprochement between Al-Qaida and former GIA militants. The merger was announced in a video released on 11 September 2006, exactly five years after the World Trade Centre attacks, in which Ayman az-Zawahiri declared a "blessed union" between Al-Qaida and the GSPC:

> "All the praise is due to Allah for the blessed union which we ask Allah to be as a bone in the throats of the Americans and French *Crusaders* and their allies, and inspire distress, concern and dejection in the hearts of the *traitorous*, *apostate* sons of France…. We ask him (Allah) to guide our

> brothers in the Salafist Group for Call and Combat to crush the pillars of the *Crusader* alliance, especially their elderly immoral leader, America" (Leicester 2006).

Two days later Droukdel pledged loyalty to Al-Qaida. In January 2007 the GSPC rebranded Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), saying:

> "We had wished to do this from the first day we joined [al-Qaeda] but we wanted the permission of Sheik Osama, may God protect him. This obstacle has now been removed" (Al-Jazeera 2007).

With Bin Laden's blessing the GSPC officially became the North African franchise of his network (Filiu 2009a p2-3; 2009b p213). This rebranding was framed with the theme of *solidarity* with Al-Qaida:

> "Our project is one. Therefore, we have to help, advise, consult each other, and exchange the experiences and coordinate the efforts to face the world's crusade *war against Islam*" (NYT 2008).

On why the GSPC joined Al-Qaida, Droukdel stated:

> "God ordered us to be united, to be allied, to cooperate and fight against the idolaters in straight lines. The same way they fight us in military allies and economic and political mass-groupings. Why shouldn't we join our brothers while almost all these nations got united against the Muslims and separated them, and divided their land, and took away Al-Aksa mosque out of their hands, and consumed their goodness, and destroyed their morals? ...God's says 'hold on to the rope of God and do not be dispersed' surah 3:103" (NYT 2008).

By rebranding and repeatedly referencing conflicts in other Muslim territories the GSPC sought to boost the legitimacy of the tainted Algerian jihad. It aimed to popularize its struggle by tying itself into the global jihadist movement,

positioning itself alongside jihadist brothers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Chechnya. In tying itself to Al-Qaida and the global jihadist movement, AQIM is able to defer to other propagandists the legitimacy and justification of its battle in Algeria (Torres-Soriano 2011a p78). Moreover, it aimed to ensure its survival, attracting new recruits in defiance of the government reconciliation scheme. According to former assistant director of France's DST, Louis Caprioli, "To recruit, they can say, we are in international jihad, we need to help our brothers in Iraq, and Afghanistan, not just fight in Algeria" (Meftahi 2007a).

Whilst employing the Algerian variant of the *near enemy* narrative AQIM deferred to the broader *near enemy* ideology by continuing the GSPC's theme of *solidarity*, tying itself to the global jihadist movement and international events. Figure 10 shows that during the GSPC (1998-January 2007), Iraq and Palestine were the most cited Muslim countries after Algeria—which featured in 67.3% of group's propaganda—both featuring in 20.2%; followed by Chechnya (16.3%) and Afghanistan (15.4%). However, over the period 2007 to 2015 references to Iraq declined to 12.8%, behind Palestine at 16%, to fourth most cited, overtaken by Mauritania (Torres-Soriano 2016). References to Abu Musab Az-Zarqawi also fell from 8.6% to 3.1% between rebranding as AQIM in 2007 and 2009 (Torres-Soriano 2011b), following his death in June 2006 (BBC 2006e). These references serve to link the GSPC-AQIM to on-going conflicts, contemporary events and the wider global jihad.

These changes are due to the course of world events. References to Iraq waxed following the invasion of 2003 and waned with the declining fortunes of the Sunni insurgency. This link to current events is similarly illustrated by the fall in the rankings of Chechnya from fourth most cited Muslim territory under the GSPC (1998-2007) to eleventh under AQIM (2007-2015) as conflict there waned, surpassed by Iraq and Afghanistan in intensity and international and Muslim

consciousnesses. References to Afghanistan also declined slightly from 15.4% to 11.5%, remaining in fifth place (Torres-Soriano 2016).

Indeed, Palestine has remained prominent, as part of the group's theme of *solidarity*—as it has for Al-Qaida-central—featuring in a total of 13.2% of GSPC-AQIM propaganda between 1998 and 2015 (Torres-Soriano 2016) due to the continuing conflict between brother Arabs and Israelis. Neither Al-Qaida nor AQIM have attached much real significance to the Palestinian cause in practice. Yet it has used the conflict to illustrate the injustice of the "*Zionist-Crusader* alliance" of Israel and its Western supporters; legitimating their own struggles against the *far enemy*.

6.4.4 Apostasy, Revolution and the Islamic State

Salafists believe *democracy* constitutes *bida* (un-Islamic innovation) (appendix A3.1). Showing the influence of Qutb (A3.9), as well as Ayman az-Zawahiri (A3.15.1), AQIM believe *democracy* subverts the sovereignty of Allah. The GSPC-AQIM, like its predecessor in the GIA, and Al-Qaida, is anti-democratic, neither "fighting for a return to ungodly democracy, nor to get seats in parliament, but for the supremacy of the word of God". "The *mujahideen* refuse to return to the year 1991", when democratic elections were annulled, "rather, they wish to return to the first three centuries of the rule of the Khalifate" (Kohlmann 2005h).

Like its predecessor, the GSPC-AQIM rejected "any truce or reconciliation" with the Algerian "*tyrants*". In splitting from the GIA, the GSPC returned to the GIA's initial goal: overthrowing the *tyrannical* Algerian government, deemed *apostate*, to create an *Islamic state* or "Caliphate" ruled according to Salafists principles and *sharia* law:

> "The GSPC…follows the Salafist creed and ideology in order to fight the rulers in Algeria who have abandoned Islam and to fight their *masters* among the Jews and Christians. [Our goal is] to restore the rightly guided

Caliphate, implement the *Shariah*, and to lift the oppression and humiliation from the shoulders of those who are oppressed among our brothers" (Kohlmann 2005i).

This builds on the theme of the *betrayal* of the revolution influenced by Al-Qiyam and Bouyali (appendix B2.3; B3.6), as the GSPC-AQIM seeks to create the *Islamic state* the FLN failed to implement. The early GSPC during the leadership of Hassan Hattab followed a religious nationalist, *near enemy* narrative and agenda dedicated to political revolution in Algeria. This strand of the narrative has continued throughout the group's history, though it later broadened, portraying Algeria's neighbours, who must also be overthrown, with these same archetypes.

Clearly influenced by Qutb (appendix A3.9), the GSPC-AQIM strategic narrative portrays the Muslim world populated by *apostate* and *tyrannical* regimes which must be overthrown and replaced by *Islamic states*. Like the GIA before it, the group's *near enemy* narrative is the Algerian variant of this broader antisystem narrative (Hafez 2003 pp156-157). It employs the archetypes of *tyrant*, *apostate*, *infidel*, *pagan* and *agent* of the West; portraying its campaign as a jihad against the corrupt, *apostate* and *tyrannical* Algerian regime, which must be replaced with an *Islamic state* ruled by *sharia* law. This narrative incorporates a *takfiri* theme (not the *deviant* GIA notion of *takfir al-mujtama*).

Framing the regime's leaders, politicians and security forces as *apostates* means, following Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Kathir and Qutb's logic (appendix A3.4.4; A3.5; A3.9), they can justifiably be killed. The *near enemy* narrative incorporates a *deliverance story-form* whereby the protagonists—the GSPC-AQIM *mujahideen*—must deliver the Algerian people from their oppression by the *tyrannical* rulers of Algeria, who have abandoned Islam, supported by their "Christian and Jewish *masters*". The regime is effectively a *puppet* kept in power by "America, the Jews, and France, who feed them milk."

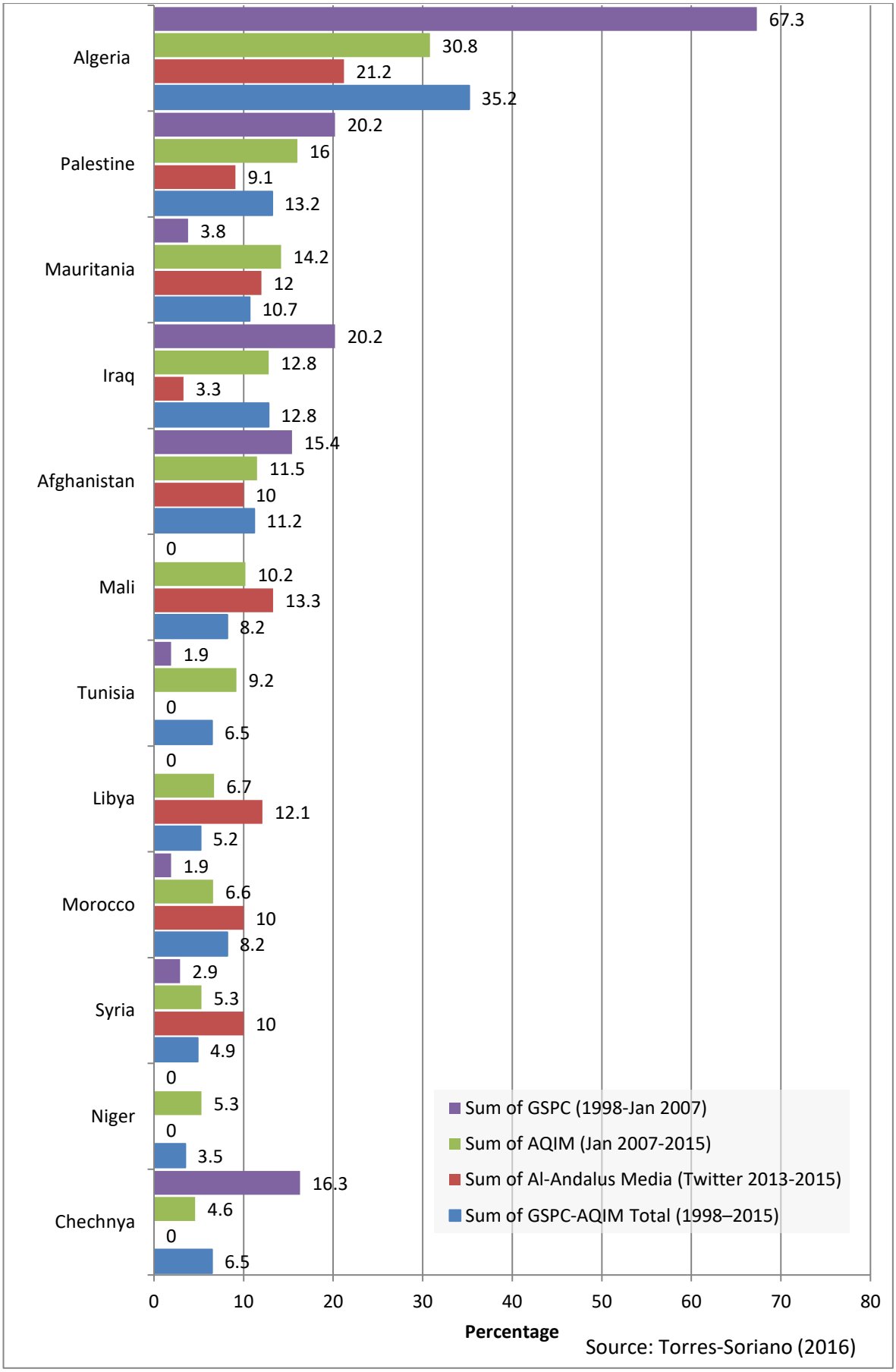
6.4.5 Regionalization, Restoration and Revanchism

AQIM's *near enemy* narrative has undergone a process of regionalization, developing from an Algeria-centric one to a broader regional one, incorporating neighbouring regimes. It has expanded from the Algerian Islamist nationalism of the GIA and early GSPC, particularly under Hattab, to an increasingly regional agenda. It has increasingly included a broader region of Maghreb-Sahel, incorporating anti-Mauritanian, anti-Malian anti-Nigerien, anti-Moroccan and anti-Tunisia themes:

> "By the generosity of God, we were able to transfer our jihad from the country to [the] regional, and we were able to expand our activity to the Maghreb states and the African coast, and we could participate in the regional awakening jihad" (NYT 2008).

While this regional, *near enemy* narrative is more diffuse in focus, it similarly portrays Algeria's neighbours as *apostate* regimes whose politicians, security forces and bureaucrats can also justifiably be killed. These *apostate* regimes must also be removed from power and replaced by *Islamic states* ruled according to *sharia* law and Salafist principles. This regional narrative, in part reflects a changing strategic environment and consequent changes in strategic practices, following setbacks in Algeria, including its continuing legitimacy deficit and surrender of jihadists to the government. Consequently, the group has had to adjust its practices by diversifying into neighbouring countries, in turn influencing its narrative.

Figure 10: Muslim countries cited in GSPC-AQIM Propaganda



Since rebranding, AQIM's references to neighbouring countries have increased. As figure 10 shows, references to Mauritania rose to 14.2%, becoming the second most cited Maghreb-Sahelian country after Algeria, and third overall. Meanwhile references to Mali, Libya and Niger grew from zero to 10.2%, 6.7% and 5.3%, respectively. Moreover, looking at AQIM's Al-Andalus Twitter account (2013-2015) alone Mali, Libya and Mauritania were the second, third and fourth most cited Muslim countries, after Algeria. Meanwhile, references to Algeria fell from 67.4% to 30.8%. However, overall Algeria remains the most cited Muslim country at 35.2% over the entire period (Torres-Soriano 2016).

These changes reflect the regionalization of AQIM attacks beyond Algeria into Mauritania, Mali and Niger; and the outbreak of wars in Libya in 2011 and Mali in 2012. References to Tunisia and Morocco also increased from 1.9% to 9.2% and 6.6% respectively (Torres-Soriano 2016).

Regionalization represents a strategic cultural shift towards *revanchism* and *restoration*. AQIM seeks the recovery of lost territory by restoring Islamic rule, creating an *Islamic state* in the Maghreb-Sahel region as under the Almoravid Caliphate. *Revanchism* is indicated by its name change demonstrating its pan-Maghrebi pretensions.

These themes of *revanchism* and *restoration* straddle *near* and *far enemy* narratives, of reconquering Spain for Islam from *Crusaders* and recovering territory and restoring Islamic rule under *sharia* across the Maghreb-Sahel region, from *tyrannical*, *apostate*, *agent* regimes which must fall like the former Tunisian president:

> "Every *Taghoot* (tyrant) ruling the Muslim lands who exalts themselves on earth and has left the way of Allah like Ben Ali must face the same fate: humiliation, degradation, and an end to his reign" (AQIM 2011b).

Indeed, regionalization of the GSPC-AQIM's narrative demonstrates the evolution of its goals and frames its operations and strategic practices with this *restorative* theme; of re-establishing Islamic rule not only in Algeria, but increasingly Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Tunisia and Morocco too, through revolution and conquest:

> "The spark of jihad that has emerged from the Islamic Maghreb will not stop, and this Muslim people will offer sacrifices to support it by wealth and by self until the last *Jew*, *Crusader*, and *apostate collaborator* are expelled, and until our countries are ruled by Islamic *Shariah* law" (NEFA 2009c).

The regionalization of its narrative and themes of *revanchism* and *restoration* evokes the conquests of the Umayyad and Almoravid Caliphates; invoking historical characters and *master narratives* of Umayyad conquerors, Uqba Ibn Nafi, Musa Ibn Nusayr and Tariq Ibn Ziyad, and eleventh century Almoravid conqueror Yusuf Ibn Tashfin (appendix B1). In September 2008, Salah Abu Muhammad stated:

> "We will not stop the raids until the Islamic Maghreb is liberated from Sarkozy and Bush's representatives. We will not stop the raids until every open inch is conquered and liberated by virtuous men such as *Uqba bin Nafi* and *Tariq bin Ziyad* and *Yusuf bin Tashfin* and until the banner of Islam is raised high and you stop your support and *collaboration* with the *Crusaders* and stop your corruption and injustice and humiliation of the nation" (Kennedy-Boudali 2009).

This *restorative* theme also invokes the historical character and *master narrative* of Muizz Ibn Badis (appendix B1.4) the fourth Zirid emir who broke with his Ismaili-Shia overlords, considered heretics by Salafists, in circa 1041 returning to the 'true path' of orthodox Maliki Sunnism, recognizing Abbassid authority (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp68-69). Here AQIM portrays itself, like Ibn Badis, upholding Sunni orthodoxy.

Through *vertical integration* the group frames its struggle "as part of a multi-generational effort to restore the *caliphate*" (Kennedy-Boudali 2009); invoking a *revanchist* theme of reconquest. These *master narratives* and historical champions of Islam evoke golden ages of 'true' Islamic rule to former territories of the Umayyad and Almoravid Caliphates in northern Africa. Indeed, AQIM portrays its struggle as analogous to, and a continuation of, the legacy of the above champions, as well as those of the later colonial era; including Algerian Salafist scholar Abdulhamid Ben Badis (appendix B2.1), the FLN's struggle for Algerian independence; the Moroccan resistance fighter Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi and the Libyan *martyr* Umar al-Mukhtar (AQIM 2011a; McGregor 2011) who fought French and Italian colonizers, respectively (B3). Here the group is tying itself into the national stories of Algeria and its neighbours:

> "Grandsons of *Uqbah* and *Tariq* and *Yusuf bin Tashfin* and *Al-Mu'iz Bin Badis* and *Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi* and *Umar al-Mukhtar*, rise from your inertia and put your hands in the hands of your brothers, the *mujahidin*, in the al-Qa`ida Organization in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb who have sacrificed their money, their lives, and their honor for the sake of protecting Islam and the unity and the reverence of the Islamic Maghreb" (Kennedy-Boudali 2009)

In October 2008 Abu Ubayda Yusuf again invoked these historical characters within its *revanchist* and *restorative* themes:

> "I end my message by saluting the steadfast *mujahidin* in the lands of the Islamic Maghreb, you the grandsons of *Uqba*, the conqueror of the Maghreb, and *Musa Bin Nasir*, the conqueror of Andalusia [Spain], and *Tariq Ibn Ziyad*, the vanquisher of the Romans and the Spanish, and [*Yusuf*] *Tashfin*, the hero of Zalaqa, and *Abd al-Hamid Bin Badis*, the leader of the reforms. Today you are the pride of the *umma* in a time of exploitation; you are the hope in reclaiming its usurped honor in our broken Islamic Maghreb and

> the appropriated Andalusia, Cordoba, Sicily, and Zalaqa. We will not rest and we will not be content until we regain every inch of our usurped land including the occupied Ceuta and Melilla, and let us meet with our beloved people in the land of Palestine" (Kennedy-Boudali 2009).

The regionalization of AQIM's narrative is exemplified, below, with AQIM calling for the deposition of the "governing *traitor* cooperatives of the likes of Ibn Ali [Tunisia] and Boutaflika [Algeria] and Muhammad the Sixth [Morocco], and al-Qaddafi [Libya] and others" (Wadoud 2011). AQIM portrays Maghrebi and Sahelian regimes as *tyrannical*, *apostate*, *traitors* against Islam and *agents* of a *Zionist-Crusader alliance*, incorporating the theme of *solidarity* amongst Muslims oppressed by their governments. They denounced the Moroccan King as an *agent* of Israel:

> "What hurts us most is to observe the forces of *treachery* and *agencies* of terror in the Islamic Maghreb continuing in their *criminal* acts against our brothers and sisters in this nation which is cursed with its regime and administration, just when our people, for once, thought that their condition had improved slightly following the crimes of the condemned Jewish stooge, Hassan II [of Morocco]…" (NEFA 2008a).

AQIM similarly portrayed former Tunisian president as a *tyrant* and *apostate*:

> "Ben Ali filled Tunisia with oppression and injustice during his tenure. He made his subjects taste hunger and fear, showing them the way to *apostasy* while blocking the way to Islam, to the extent the Muslims were almost like Ahl-ud-Dhimmah to the Christians who invaded it under the pretext of 'tourism'. Allah gave him respite and prolonged his tenure, leading him more astray. His case totally befits the saying of Allah: 'We shall gradually seize them with punishment in ways they perceive not...' (Al-A'raaf (182-183)" (AQIM 2011b).

AQIM refers to Mauritania by its historical name, "Land of [bilad] al-Shanqit" (Flashpoint 2011), implying that AQIM does not recognize the modern state of Mauritania and follows a *revanchist* theme of *restoring* Islamic rule to this territory, once part of the Almoravid Caliphate. One of AQIM's grievances against Mauritania was its relations with Israel. The countries agreed a mutual recognition pact in 1995 before establishing full diplomatic relations and exchanging ambassadors in 1999 (CNN 1999). Though severed in early 2009 (BBC 2009b), for the GSPC-AQIM, Mauritania's ties with Israel constitute a *betrayal story-form* of co-operation with the *Zionists*—seen as enemies of Islam—and therefore *apostasy*.

> "We call upon the proud sons and men of Islam in the Islamic Maghreb...to compel their *treacherous* governments to break off diplomatic and commercial relations with Israel and to target the interests of the Jews and the Christians and their nationals in the Islamic Maghreb" (NEFA 2008c).

In August 2008 AQIM called for jihad as *retribution* for the military coup led by General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz overthrowing Mauritania's first democratically elected president, Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi (Mohamed 2008).

It appears that Mali and Niger were more or less absent from the GSPC's narrative until around 2004, illustrating a narrative shift, as the group kept a low profile to avoid antagonizing their governments so long as the *mujahideen* were undisturbed. The GSPC used these countries' northern territories as sanctuaries beyond Algeria's borders and bases for training and kidnapping operations (Tawil 2013). The group's *near enemy* narrative has thus broadened to include both Niger and Mali.

Since 2004 when clashes began between the military and GSPC, the Nigerien government has been denounced as *apostate* employing the theme of *retribution*: "So be warned that your crimes against the *mujahideen* will not pass without punishment…." The group exhorted the regime to distance itself from "the

Crusaders" and "the *apostate children-of-France* in Algeria" ending their admonishment with their common refrain "he who has warned is excused" (NEFA 2010c).

The GSPC was left alone until the American *Crusaders* became involved, introducing the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) from 2002, becoming the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2005. Annual regional military exercises codenamed "Flintlock" began in 2006 (Africom 2015; State Dept 2002; 2015).

In 2006 Mokhtar Belmokhtar (aka Khaled Abu al-Abbas) bemoaned the American military bases in Mali[5] and Niger,[6] and bases planned in Mauritania,[7] threatening to punish these *agent* regimes for collaborating with the Crusader US military (McGregor 2009).

Following an engagement with Malian forces in al-Wasra on 4 July 2009 AQIM declared: "Our swords are thirsty to pluck the heads of those who allow themselves to join the ranks of the *Crusaders* to fight Islam and its people" (AFP 2009e).

Following a series of guerrilla attacks in Algeria on 11 February 2007, AQIM announced:

> "We inform the thieves and the French who follow the Christians and the Jews that the young Muslim men of the Maghreb are determined to liberate their homeland from every *crusader*, *apostate*, and *co-conspirator*..." (Kohlmann 2007c).

According to Torres-Soriano:

[5] Gao
[6] Agadez
[7] Naama. Belmokhtar also reported a US base in Tamanrasset, Algeria.

> "Despite styling itself as the organization leading the jihad in the Maghreb, the negligible presence of countries such as Morocco and Libya in its discourse indicates that the group is not willing, even in its communications, to divert too many resources to issues other than Algeria or areas where it enjoys at least some presence" (2011b p294).

Drawing towards Al-Qaida caused a narrative shift, away from the Islamist nationalist, *near enemy* focus on Algeria pursued by Hattab to broader, regional narrative. Guido Steinberg and Isabelle Werenfels (2007) characterize AQIM as caught "between the 'Near' and 'Far' Enemy"; ambivalent over which to target. Since Hattab's departure, the group has to some extent, undergone a process of "hybridization" increasingly combining its *near enemy* narrative with a *far enemy* one. The GIA's narrative was also, to a similar extent, hybrid (appendix B3.7.5). This degree of hybridization is nothing new, showing continuity with the GIA. However, both groups' strategic practices demonstrate this hybridity is limited since attacks on domestic targets have vastly outnumbered those against foreign ones (Hegghammer 2009 pp28-32).

From the globalization of its narrative and the geographical dispersion of its operations, it is apparent the group employs violence across national, regional and global levels and sees no contradiction as reflected in its hybrid narrative, targeting enemies *near* and *far* across its region of operations. AQIM is therefore a "glocal" organization (Marret 2008), like the GIA before it.

6.4.6 Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

Anti-colonialism, particularly animosity towards France, is a major theme in Algerian political culture (appendix B4), feeding into the GSPC-AQIM's strategic narrative, due to the country's history of French *occupation* and its struggle for independence. Taking root in the colonial era, Algerian Salafism has a strong nationalistic element—unlike the globalist Salafi-Jihadism embraced by Al-

Qaida—having opposed the French occupation and been incorporated into the FLN during the war for independence (appendix B2.1). This nationalistic Salafism is an important element in the GSPC-AQIM's strategic culture. Thus, the GSPC-AQIM's, primarily anti-French *far enemy* narrative has its own indigenous element which is as much a continuation of Algeria's nationalistic Salafism and anti-colonialism as the importation of Egyptian Islamism and Al-Qaida ideology which identify America as principal *far enemy* (Roberts 2011 pp33-34)

This *far enemy* narrative condemns Algeria's relations and rapprochement with its old enemy, France, based on a *neo-colonial* theme whereby the West, primarily France, is involved in a conspiracy against Islam; propping-up *apostate*, *agent* regimes in Algeria and across the Maghreb-Sahel region, to serve their interests and prevent Islamic revolution. Through this nationalistic anti-French rhetoric, the GSPC-AQIM seeks legitimacy within Algeria's national story, claiming the legacy of the FLN and anti-colonial struggle (appendix B3.5). They seek to "remobilise essential elements of the state's own complex ideological tradition" against it (Roberts 2011 p33).

Bartolucci and Corman identify an "anti-neoliberal" theme where these regimes collude with the West, implementing "liberal economic policies" and allowing "capitalist exploitation of the region's resources" (2014 p16). '*Neo-colonialism*' seems more appropriate, incorporating France's colonial legacy; arguing Africa never truly gained independence from France, still suffering a "soft *occupation*". France continues to "plunder" its resources, alongside its "*Zio-Crusader* allies" (Ahmed Al-Jijeli 2013d). These *Christian* and *Jewish masters* loot the countries' wealth and reward these regimes' treachery (Kohlmann 2005i). The West 'steals' Algeria's hydrocarbons and the government embezzles the profits from the country's petrochemical industry:

> "…the beneficiaries of the energy revenues in the first place are the American and European economy, followed by the thieves that are ruling the country" (NYT 2008).

This *neo-colonial* theme employs *crusader* and *colonialist/neo-colonialist* archetypes portraying the West, particularly France, as *masters* of agent *regimes* in Algeria and neighbouring countries. It depicts France as a puppeteer, remaining in control of Algeria: "the French politicians who have great influence at the top of the pyramid of power, took control of the Algerian administration and the media" (Torres-Soriano 2011b p189).

AQIM's *agent* archetype links together *near* and *far enemy* narratives through the character of the French *colonial masters*. French relations, particularly military co-operation in counterterrorism with its former colonies is used by AQIM as evidence of this alleged *master-agent* relationship (CSCC 2011 p14).

> "The French *Crusaders* are the ones who supported [the] *Taghoot* [*tyrant*] regime of the criminal generals in Algeria, and they are the ones who help them to kill and suppress the Muslims there to this day… we have not the slightest doubt that America and France will play the same filthy role in the future of Tunisia, unless they are repelled by the strikes of the *Mujahideen*, the progeny of *Yousuf bin Tashfin*" (AQIM 2011b).

Like the GIA before it, AQIM believes France still has undue influence over Algeria and the wider Maghreb, which led its predecessor to take vengeance on mainland France (appendix B3.7.5). The region's regimes are depicted as *agents*; creations of French *colonialism*: the "sons of France". This serves to delegitimize the Algerian regime by claiming the *anti-colonial* legacy of the FLN for itself (CSCC 2011 p14). AQIM claims little has changed under FLN rule:

> "The insurgency today and this great revolution by our Muslim brothers in most areas of Algeria and their demand of their usurped rights by the

> people of France, is an expected matter and honorable and positive position. How can it make sense that after a half century of *fallacious independence*, that Algerian families would be struggling in the same dire living situation they had endured during the French *occupation*…" (CSCC 2011 p33)?

This fictitious independence is also true of France's other former African colonies:

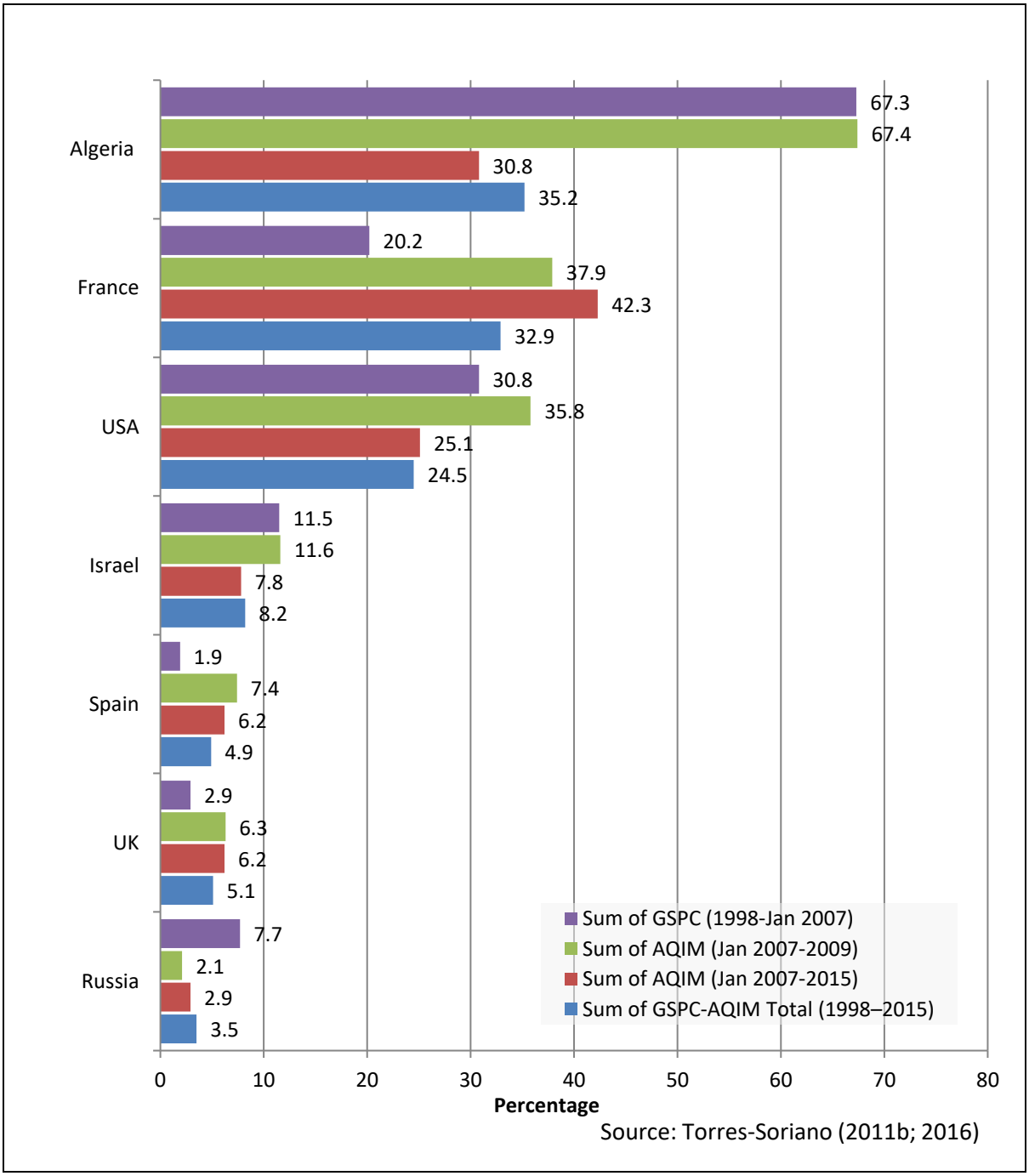
> "When the French empire declared its withdrawal from Africa…many Africans thought they really became free, and didn't pay attention to the traps of the security agreements and shackles of the economic agreements that kept them under the mercy of a soft *occupation* that takes from the oppressed African peoples by the right hand what it gave them by the left hand" (Ahmed Al-Jijeli 2013d).

The GSPC had a weak *far enemy* narrative, subordinate to its dominant *near enemy* narrative. However, following the September 11 attacks, reflecting Hattab's fear of its consequences, it threatened to "strike hard" at Western interests in Algeria if the US attacked "Muslim and Arab nations". It warned against any action to "avenge innocent people", invoking a conspiracy against Muslims by "Jews and evil-doers". Reflecting the theme of avoiding civilian casualties and the legacy of GIA brutality (appendix B3.7.7), the GSPC distanced itself from 9/11; saying "Islamist organisations do not target, in their actions, innocent civilians" (AFP 2001).

The GSPC-AQIM has undergone a process of "ideological hybridization", increasingly supplementing its *near enemy* narrative with a *far enemy* narrative (Hegghammer 2009). The transition of the GSPC's narrative, incorporating that of the *far enemy* was illustrated when Nabil Sahraoui declared war on foreigners on 13 June 2004 (Al-Jazeera 2008), like the GIA had done previously (appendix B3.7.5):

"The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat decides…to declare war on everything that is foreign and atheistic within Algeria's borders, whether against individuals, interests or installations" (IHS 2004).

Figure 11: Non-Muslim Countries plus Algeria cited in GSPC-AQIM Propaganda



References to Algeria's "*masters*" illustrate this hybridization of the GSPC-AQIM narrative with the increasing prominence of that of the far enemy. France is seen

as "the mother of evils" (WorldAnalysis 2009). America is "the Hubal of our age" (a pagan false god and idol) (Kohlmann 2007d).

Since rebranding in January 2007, AQIM has given greater prominence to the *far enemy* narrative, mimicking Al-Qaida's—denouncing the *Zionists* and *Crusaders*; Israel and the West. In so doing AQIM is, again, following the theme of *solidarity*, further tying its narrative to the global jihadist and Al-Qaida movements. This provides greater legitimacy for the group within jihadist circles.

As figure 11 shows, during the GSPC period (1998-2007) Algeria was overwhelmingly the most cited country at 67.3% and remained so between rebranding in 2007 and 2009; followed by the US at 30.8%. The latter was overtaken by the region's former *colonial master*, France, between 2007 and 2009; becoming the second most cited at 37.9% (Torres-Soriano 2011b; 2016). This is due to the increasing prominence of an *anti-colonial* theme following the historical legacy of French colonialism in the Maghreb and Sahel. While America is "the head of *infidelity*"—leader of the "satanic" (Reuters 2014) *Zionist-Crusader* Alliance of which France is part—France is closer to the Maghreb-Sahel, remaining the most influential '*Crusader*' country in the region ahead of the US.

However, over the period 2007-2015 references to Algeria fell to 30.8%—as the group regionalized its operations—and were overtaken by references to France at 42.3%. This coincides with a decline in AQIM attacks in Algeria and French intervention in Mali, discussed in chapter 7. Yet over the whole period of 1998 to 2015 references to Algeria still exceeded those to France at 35.2% compared to 32.9%, showing a slight dominance of a *near enemy* narrative over a *far enemy* narrative overall, particularly when taking into account increasing references to neighbouring countries discussed previously. However, the increasing importance of France in the data demonstrates the hybridization of AQIM's strategic narrative. Yet the group frequently cites the "sons of France" referring not to France but its former colonies, which may distort the data (Torres-Soriano 2016; 2017).

References to Israel remained constant between the periods 1998-2007 and 2007-2009; those relating to Israeli leaders fell from 4.8% to 2.1% (Torres-Soriano 2011b). This follows the theme of *solidarity* with Palestinian brothers oppressed by the Israeli occupation. However, references to Israel subsequently fell between 2007 and 2015. Spain's prominence rose from 1.9% to 7.4% between 1998-2007 and 2007-2009 to fourth most cited *infidel* country in AQIM propaganda, overtaking Russia and Britain, before falling to joint fourth with Britain at 6.2% (Torres-Soriano 2016). Between the GSPC era (1998-2007) and 2007-2009 references to Italy rose from zero to 2.1% (Torres-Soriano 2011b).

Influenced by the inherent anti-colonialism of Algerian political and religious culture, AQIM's *neo-colonial* theme portrays France as its primary overseas enemy, over and above the USA. AQIM cites Algerian Salafist scholar, Ben Badis, who in 1936 declared Algeria "isn't France, and doesn't want to be France, and it cannot be France even if it wanted" (Ahmed Al-Jijeli 2013c p136; appendix B2.1). France is a greater threat to AQIM than the US. When AQIM and its allies seized northern Mali in 2012 it was France, not the US that intervened.

> "France is our primary enemy, the enemy of our religion and the enemy of our belief" (Torres-Soriano 2011b p189).

This *neo-colonial* theme denounces the former *colonial master*, which ruled most of north-west Africa including most of the Maghreb. It blames the "criminals" of France, Spain and Italy for the division of the Maghreb into separate countries: Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania occupied by France, Libya by Italy (1912-42) and Spain ruled Western Sahara and the Rif region of northern Morocco and still controls Ceuta and Melilla (appendix B3.1-B3.3; Ahmed Al-Jijeli 2012).

This *neo-colonial* theme serves to bolster AQIM's legitimacy, portraying AQIM as heir to the Algerian liberation from French *colonialists*; before the FLN *betrayed* the *mujahideen* by failing to implement *sharia* law. This anti-French theme is a

continuation of the GIA's. The GIA was more anti-French than AQIM in its practices, attacking mainland France (appendix B3.7.5). AQIM's anti-French strategic practices have so far been restricted to the Maghreb-Sahel region. AQIM portrays itself as *champions*, continuing the *anti-colonial* struggle in the region, particularly that of the FLN:

> "Behold, O people of our Muslim nation, your current plight with these rulers is no different from your past situation with *colonial* rule...and the role of these criminals is no different from the role of the *apostates* in Iraq, who were put into power by America and its army. The same goes for the Karzai regime in Afghanistan" (Kohlmann 2007f).

AQIM propaganda (2007-2015) suggests its *Zionist-Crusader* enemies ranked in order are France, USA, Israel and Spain and the UK in joint fourth. If '*Zionist*' Israel is excluded as a Middle Eastern state, often portrayed as one with the US in jihadist propaganda—the "Zionist-Crusader alliance"—the *Crusader* countries, Spain and Britain are bumped up the rankings, making France, America, Spain and the UK primary Western targets (Torres-Soriano 2016).

Like its fellow French *Crusaders*, Spain plays a prominent role in AQIM propaganda, again, due to its geographical proximity and historical links with the Maghreb. This follows the group's *neo-colonial* theme that the regimes of the Maghreb are *agents* of France and Spain, amongst others:

> "…we seek to liberate the Islamic Maghreb from the *sons of France* and *Spain* and from all symbols of treason and employment for the outsiders, and protect it from the foreign greed and the *crusader's* hegemony" (NYT 2008).

The relationship between the US, France, and these regimes is characterized as that between *master* and *slave*. They are portrayed as puppets or "*agent* regimes", only too happy to join the US "*crusade*" against the *mujahideen*. This serves to

emphasize the importance of the Algerian front in defence of the *umma* from the United States and its *puppets*.

The US, UK, Russia and France which on an historical basis could be described as the meddling powers having interfered most in the Islamic world since at least the nineteenth century are condemned largely for what they do. In contrast, Spain, like Israel, is also denounced for its existence as Islamic *irredenta* (Torres-Soriano 2009 p947). Moreover, during the colonial era the *Crusader* Spanish ruled colonies in Western Sahara and parts of Morocco. Spain's colonialist legacy, in part, explains its presence alongside France in AQIM propaganda (appendix B3.3).

Spain's colonial legacy combines with a more ancient hatred illustrated by the deliberate use of the historical Arabic name Al-Andalus. Spanish and Portuguese Crusaders were responsible for the Reconquista of Iberia, evicting the Moors from Granada in 1492 (Torres-Soriano 2009 pp938-945). Through *vertical integration* modern Spain is conflated with its *Crusader* forebear. This reconquest of Spain by Christian monarchs marks the beginning of the Crusades, which, for AQIM, represent a Western *war against Islam* that continues today. The Spanish are painted as an historical enemy of Islam who stole Iberia. AQIM's allusions to this "lost paradise" are evident in renaming its media wing the "Al-Andalus Establishment". Spain fits into its *revanchist* theme, reminding Maghrebi Muslims of the "the duty of jihad…to bring back every inch from the invaded land of Islam, and to apply the ruling of Allah's *sharia* that's been absent" (NEFA 2009e).

AQIM's narrative portrays Spain, like Israel, as Islamic *irredenta* formerly ruled by Muslims, rightfully belonging to Dar al-Islam ("the land of Islam") but now *occupied* by *infidels*. Spain is the only Western country jihadists stake a claim to. Al-Andalus is "an authentic exception among the '*far enemy*'"; remaining a target until it is returned to Islam. This revanchism follows the broader jihadist theme of the sorrowful story of Islamic decline in the balance of power (appendix A1.6) which must be overcome by restoring the Caliphate and Islam to its former glory

(Torres-Soriano 2009 pp938-948). Revanchism is exemplified by AQIM's claim of responsibility for suicide bombings in April 2007:

> "By Allah, we will neither return our sword into its scabbard nor enjoy life until we liberate every Islamic land from the *Crusaders*, the *apostates*, and the *collaborators*, and until our ritually cleansed feet walk in the stolen [land of] Al-Andalus and in desecrated Jerusalem" (Torres-Soriano 2009 p939).

Al-Andalus evokes a glorious history of Islam in the western Mediterranean linked to the Maghreb by conquest through Muslim *champions* Tariq bin Ziyad and Musa bin Nusayr during the Umayyad period, and Yusuf bin Tashfin of the Almoravid era, whose empires spanned the Straits of Gibraltar, connecting the Maghreb to Iberia (appendix B1.2-B1.5.2). Al-Andalus conjures up a period of Islamic political power and civilization in Europe. These glory days appeal not only to the historical consciousness of North African Muslims, but across the globe, irrespective of religiosity, politics or belief in political violence (Torres-Soriano 2009 p938).

AQIM stakes a claim to both Iberia and more importantly, Spanish *irredenta* along the North African coast: Ceuta and Melilla, ruled by Iberians since the fifteenth century. In May 2005 a previously unknown Moroccan organization, the "Army of Islamic Liberation" called for the liberation of Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands. In 2006 an internet posting under the pseudonym, previously used by Algerian jihadists affiliated with the GSPC, Nadim al-Magrebi, appealed to "*mujahideen* brothers and those wishing to carry out the jihad in the countries of northern Africa" for the liberation of the two cities (Botha 2009 p149; Jordán 2007; Torres-Soriano 2009 p942-945). During the period ending in 2008, Droukdel referred to Ceuta and Melilla on three separate occasions as justifications for attacking Morocco (Torres-Soriano 2009 p946). The Moroccan King is blamed for "losing [the] plundered cities of Ceuta and Melilla" (Ahmed Al-Jijeli 2013b).

The "Spanish *occupation*" (Ahmed Al-Jijeli 2013b) of Ceuta and Melilla is disputed by Morocco and popularly viewed as unjust by Moroccans. The failure of the monarchy to rectify the situation is seen as treacherous, *betraying* Moroccan Muslims, providing AQIM with a popular cause to condemn the *apostate* government of Morocco. The Moroccan government is portrayed as colluding with Spanish *occupiers*:

> "What is strange is that the Moroccan regime…seeks to annex the Western Sahara that is ruled by Saharans. In the meantime, it is as silent as an accomplice about the *occupation* of Ceuta and Melilla by the Spanish *crusaders*" (NYT 2008).

Influenced by Islam's past glories when the Umayyad and Almoravid Caliphates spanned the Gibraltar Straits, this grievance of Spanish *occupation* follows the *revanchist* theme of returning lands once ruled by Muslims to Islam, including Al-Andalus, and restoring the Caliphate; obviously part of the group's attempts to broaden its appeal beyond Algeria to Morocco and the broader Maghreb. AQIM's claim to Spanish territories, particularly Ceuta and Melilla, follow the theme of an *occupation* of the Maghreb, parallel to those in Palestine, Chechnya, Iraq and Afghanistan, and their struggle as *defensive*; to liberate North Africa from *infidels* and Western influence. Both Spain and France have become increasingly prominent in Al-Qaida's narrative encouraging Maghrebi jihadists, particularly AQIM, to attack Spanish and French interests (Torres-Soriano 2009 p941-947).

6.4.7 Defensive Jihad

Like Al-Qaida, AQIM also appeals to the classical notion of compulsory *defensive jihad*, expressed by Ibn Taymiyyah (appendix A3.4), amongst others, portraying Muslims as victims of an "evil alliance" between the *apostates* and *crusaders* engaged in a war "against Islam and the Muslims" (NYT 2008). This theme employs a *ruse story-form*, depicting a conspiracy against Islam; portraying Islam

and Muslims as under attack both from *apostate* regimes within and their *crusader masters* without. The GSPC-AQIM are *champions* "*defending* the religion of Allah", which the Algerian regime has "stomped on with their feet and turned into a toy, while *defending* their Jewish and Christian *masters*" (Kohlmann 2005i).

> "The *Mujahideen's* enemy is the *criminal* regime and its *crusader masters*. As for our Muslim brothers, whether tribal or Arabs: we are from them and they are from us, and we left our homes and *sacrificed* our souls and blood only to *defend* them and their religion" (Flashpoint 2010a).

AQIM claims this is a religious *war against Islam* motivated by "the *crusader's* religious hate" (NYT 2008). Portraying the West with *Christian* and *crusader* archetypes frames the conflict in religious terms. The assassination of Osama Bin Laden followed this theme:

> "It proved beyond doubt that it [the West] is lying when it claims it is not at war with Islam..." (MEMRI 2011).

AQIM's struggle is a *defensive jihad* in defence of Islam and Muslims who suffer from humiliation and oppression across North Africa and the broader Muslim world. This follows the *neo-colonial* and particularly anti-French themes. In a video from March 2010 AQIM declared:

> "The war that is being waged by the jihadist group in the lands of the Islamic Maghreb is a legitimate war that seeks to *defend* against the diverse *Crusader* attack against Islam and its people in our Maghreb countries. This began with the wicked French *occupation* of Algeria in 1830 and is still continuing until this very day" (CSCC 2011 pp11-12).

This theme portrays AQIM as continuing the anti-colonial struggle, seeking to defend the region's independence, people, religion and resources from French *neo-colonialism* and exploitation. Depicting Islam as under attack and Muslim lands as

occupied portrays jihad as an individual obligation (*fard ain*) incumbent on every Muslim (Salmi et al. 1998 pp70-71).

> "Based on their sacrifices and their blood, our *mujahedeen* could continue the cause of jihad and carry the flag generation after generation, and revive the *absent duty* in the hearts of the Muslims" (NYT 2008).

This links back to Faraj's notion of jihad as a "neglected obligation". A video entitled "Join the Caravan" (AQIM 2010) quotes directly from Abdullah Azzam (appendix A3.12.2) who, like Faraj (A3.11), believed jihad was obligatory, arguing that the abandonment of jihad was the cause of Muslim oppression, humiliation and rule by *tyrants*:

> "Anybody who looks into the state of the Muslims today will find that their greatest misfortune is their abandonment of Jihad 'due to love of this world and abhorrence of death'.[8] Because of that, the *tyrants* have gained dominance over the Muslims in every aspect and in every land" (Azzam 1988 p5).

Since Islam is under attack and must be defended, AQIM claims:

> "We will walk on thorns in order to *defend* this religion whose blood has been spilled, as well as our nation's sanctuaries that have been violated…. We lend our hand today to every loyal Muslim that cares about Islam in Algeria. We lend our hand so that you may join us in the honorable act of *defending* our religion, our land, and our dignity" (Kohlmann 2007d).

[8]AbuDawud, As-Saheehah 958

Therefore, jihad to *defend* Islam is compulsory: "Therefore, fighting in Allah's cause is the only solution. Preparation and fighting are both required in the religion of Allah, just as ablution for prayer is required" (AQIM 2010).

As a *defensive jihad* in the face of the *war against Islam* and Muslims, theirs is a just cause: "The Muslims are sympathetic with Al-Qaeda because its cause is just" (NYT 2008).

Besides the theme of *solidarity*, the GSPC's joining Al-Qaida was framed with this theme of *defensive jihad*; Muslims uniting in the face of a war against them by the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance:

> "Then look at the crimes that happen in Gaza and Iraq and Afghanistan, and Somalia and others places. These crimes are committed by the *Jew-crusader* ally; but when the Muslims get together to *defend* themselves, they blame them for getting together and accused them with mass-grouping, and made an approach about their unity. Yes, we see that it's our duty to join Al-Qaeda so that we can have our fight under one flag and one leadership in order to get ready for the confrontation. An ally is faced by another ally, and unity is faced by unity" (NYT 2008).

6.4.8 Victimhood and Retribution

Like Al-Qaida's, the GSPC-AQIM's narrative employs the theme of *victimhood*. While Al-Qaida emphasizes Muslim *victimization* by the UK and USA, for AQIM—influenced by the Maghreb-Sahel's colonial history—France has been and remains prime overseas oppressor. Following a *deliverance story-form*, the GSPC-AQIM aims to *deliver* the Muslim people from their humiliation and oppression by restoring the "rightfully guided" *Caliphate* ruled by *sharia* law. Theirs is a utopian vision of the ideal Islamic state (Kohlmann 2005i).

Again, they maintain Muslims are victims of a conspiracy against Islam prosecuted by Western *crusaders* and their *agents*, the *apostate* regimes which populate the Muslim world, focusing particularly on the Maghreb and Sahel countries. The use of this archetype, portraying Algeria's leaders as *tyrants* is indicative of this theme of oppression. These *tyrannical*, *apostate* regimes and their *crusader masters* must be *punished* for their oppression and humiliation of Muslims across both the region and the world. This also follows the theme of *solidarity* whereby Muslims must unite against the enemies of Islam:

> "And let us join together to stand in the face of the real enemy of our *Ummah*. And let us all seek to *punish* it and remove its evil from Islam and Muslims" (Flashpoint 2010a).

Again, according to this theme, Muslims and Islam itself are under attack, portraying the group's jihad as *defensive*. The GSPC-AQIM must therefore seek *retribution* and even the score for the victimization, oppression and humiliation of Muslims and the broader *umma*. It must seek reprisals for assaults against the group, and the *martyrdom* of its *mujahideen* by the *apostate* regimes of Algeria, its neighbours and their Western *masters*:

> "Praise Allah who said in his holy book: 'whoever attacks you then you attack back equally as you were attacked, and be devout to Allah and know that Allah is the pious one,' [al-Baqara, 194]," (NEFA 2010b).

Following the death of Bin Laden in 2011, AQIM declared it wanted *revenge* on America: "Today, we are a nation denied *vengeance*, and it is a time for *vengeance* and anger, not for crying..." (MEMRI 2011).

The GSPC-AQIM narrative portrays attacks by the security forces of the Maghreb-Sahel's *apostate agent* regimes as part of a war by proxy persecuted on behalf of Western *crusaders*, particularly France and the USA.

> "These *agent* forces were not created in order to free Palestine, nor in order to protect the land and our honor, nor to repulse the *crusader* invasion of Muslim lands—but rather, they were created in order to punish the Muslim youth in a showcase of aggression, to lock them up in the darkness of jails, and in order to fight against the jihad and its warriors on behalf of their *masters* in the Elysees Palace and in the White House..." (NEFA 2008b).

6.4.9 Martyrdom

Like Al-Qaida, the GSPC employs a theme of *noble sacrifice* or *martyrdom* and violent struggle, employing *martyr* and *champion* archetypes. Sahraoui declared:

> "The *Islamic State* will not arise through means of slogans, demonstrations, parties, and elections, but through blood, body parts, and [sacrifice of] lives…" (MEMRI 2004).

This theme of *sacrifice* continues under Droukdel who, in January 2007—before the GSPC rebranded—declared: "Our swords are drawn and we are risking our lives, as we consider nothing too precious to *sacrifice* for the sake of the victory of Islam" (Kohlmann 2007d).

Joining Al-Qaida bolstered this theme of *martyrdom*; of AQIM *champions* becoming *martyrs* for the cause, sacrificing their lives fighting the *crusaders* and *apostate* regimes. This notion of *martyrdom* is in continuity with the FLN's perception of militants killed as *martyrs* for God and national liberation, portrayed as *mujahideen* (fighters of jihad) and *fedayeen* (those who sacrifice themselves) promised salvation. Indeed, the FLN's ideology conflated Islamic and nationalist ideals (Derradji 1997 pp245-246; Zisenwine 2016). However, from April 2007, this theme accompanied the adoption of the strategic practice of "martyrdom operations", emulating Al-Qaida. Like Al-Qaida, AQIM portrays suicide bombers as "martyrdom seekers" (AQIM 2011d). In a May 2007 statement entitled "Where are Those Who are Committed to Die?" Droukdel claims:

> "…in order for the Islamic nation to survive and prosper, it should follow the path of jihad, *sacrifice*, and *martyrdom*. Our nation should be awake and ready because the time of confrontation is near.... We, the *mujahideen*, promise to keep sacrificing our souls and blood in fighting the *apostates*, Jews, and Christians...who wish to take over our resources. We promise to increase our workload and expand the zone of jihad...and as proof of our sincerity, we have decided from now on to execute suicide attacks as our strategic weapon in our confrontation with the enemies" (Kohlmann 2007f).

AQIM's *martyrdom* theme is much the same as that of Al-Qaida (AQIM 2011d; Halverson et al. 2011 p165).

> "And we praise Allah because the rains of bullets and the infiltrations of the *intended-martyrs* and the detonation of explosive devices shattered their hegemony and brought humiliation upon them…. We do not surrender. We win or we die" (Zelin 2010b).

It employs the themes heavenly reward, including that of 72 virgins. With the "*martyrdom*" of its first suicide bombers, AQIM echoed Al-Qaida:

> "Now, we are witnessing the gates of *paradise* being opened and the *virgins* making ready to meet their beloved ones. Now, we are witnessing the *apostate* and *collaborating* powers moaning [in agony], begging for help after being crushed by the strikes of the knights of *martyrdom* and the lovers of the *virgins* [of paradise]…. Behold those who *cherish death more than life* itself, and cherish *martyrdom* the same way that you cherish your corrupt lifestyle" (Kohlmann 2007b).

Following the death of Baitullah Mehsud, leader of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), killed in an American drone strike in 2009 (Walsh 2009), AQIM employed themes of *solidarity* and *martyrdom* including that of heavenly reward, declaring Mehsud a *hero* and *martyr*:

"...every time it loses a *hero*…another *hero* rises of the same traits and more… Today, our beloved and *martyr* Baitullah Mehsud disappears and leaves us after he had opened a new fighting front, which America and its allies and *cooperatives* have feared…. May Allah have mercy on you Baitullah, and may He reward you and raise your degree in *Illiyeen*…" (NEFA 2009f).

6.5 Conclusion

Like Al-Qaida, Algerian SJVNSAs have been riven by internal squabbles and factionalism; perhaps more so. Disagreements within the GIA over its anti-Muslim-civilian violence, domineering leadership and purges led Hattab's faction to secede, founding the GSPC. This supports the claim that VNSAs are more prone to strategic cultural change than states.

During Hattab's leadership the GSPC maintained a *near enemy* narrative, dedicated to the goal of political revolution in Algeria, to overthrow the *apostate* regime and replace it with an *Islamic state*. The GSPC employed themes of *unity* and *defiance*; determined to continue the jihad against the *apostate* Algerian regime, in *defiance* of the government reconciliation scheme, depicted as a *ruse* to undermine the jihad. This theme served to distinguish itself from the factionalism of the GIA.

The GSPC-AQIM narrative maintains the theme of rejection of GIA *deviationism* from Salafi principles to those of *takfir al-mujtama* and brutal practices against Muslim civilians as the *deviants* or *Kharijites* and *tricksters* took control. This *trickster* archetype invokes themes of *intelligence plots*, of Algerian governmental agents masquerading as jihadists committing atrocities, and *misinformation*, designed to undermine the jihad. The GSPC rejected the *deviant* doctrine of *takfir al-mujtama*—that Algerian society collectively was *apostate*—adopting that of a return to *Salafism*; linking itself with the historical Algerian Salafist scholar

Abdulhamid Ben Badis. They reverted to the mainstream jihadist notion of *takfir*, considering the military junta *apostates* whilst distancing itself from the violence against Muslim civilians of the later GIA; refocusing attacks on the *apostate* security forces. Indeed, it claims that the group does not target Muslim civilians. Their strategic narrative was similar to that of the early GIA, before it '*deviated*' from its goal of overthrowing the Algerian *tyrants*.

The GSPC-AQIM narrative incorporates a theme of *betrayal*, firstly, of the FLN leadership *betraying* the jihad to liberate Algeria from French *colonialism* by failing to implement an *Islamic state* upon taking power; an act of *apostasy*. This spawned the *hero* and *martyr* Bouyali to instigate jihad against the *apostate* Algerian regime in the 1980s. The GSPC-AQIM considers itself successors to Bouyali. The group's rival AIS similarly *betrayed* the jihad by committing to a ceasefire in 1999. Hattab and other 'repentants' subsequent departures, similarly became subject to this *betrayal story-form*, in succumbing to the government reconciliation scheme; *betraying* the jihad and Islam itself. The group remains *defiant* against this government amnesty.

The nature of any links between Hattab, Bin Laden and Al-Qaida are uncertain, though Hattab remained committed to an Algerian agenda, rejecting their *far enemy* narrative and regionalization. However, since Hattab's departure, the group's narrative has undergone processes of hybridization and regionalization. It has, firstly, increasingly supplemented its *near enemy* narrative with a *far enemy* one, particularly since rebranding, of fighting a *Zionist-Crusader* alliance propping up *apostate*, *agent* regimes across the Maghreb-Sahel region.

Secondly, the *near enemy* narrative has regionalized from a nationalistic, Algeria-centric agenda to a broader regional narrative of Islamic revolution across the Maghreb-Sahel, particularly since rebranding as AQIM. This regionalization of the narrative was influenced by a change in the strategic environment in Algeria, causing the group to regionalize its operations. Thereby changing practices caused

a change in narrative. This regional narrative employs a *deliverance story-form* and *restorative* theme of restoring 'true' Islamic rule not just to Algeria, but the wider Maghreb and Sahara-Sahel region, reminiscent of the Almoravids. The themes of *revanchism* and *restoration* invoke *master narratives* of the Umayyad and Almoravid Caliphates, citing Islamic heroes Uqba Ibn Nafi, Musa Ibn Nusayr and Tariq Ibn Ziyad, as well as Muizz Ibn Badis of the Zirid era. These master narratives invoke themes of *revanchism* or reconquest and *restoration* of Islamic rule in both the Maghreb-Sahel and Iberia.

This hybrid narrative, like that of Al-Qaida, combines themes of *victimhood*, of an *umma* humiliated, oppressed and under attack in a religious *war against Islam*. A war against *tyrannical*, *apostate* regimes within the Maghreb-Sahel and broader Muslim world, and *crusaders* and *Zionists* without. This is depicted as a religious war between Islam and this *Zionist-Crusader* alliance. AQIM's struggle is therefore framed as a *defensive jihad*, portrayed as obligatory for Muslims. Its strategic practices are framed as *retribution* designed to punish the *apostates* and *crusaders*. This hybridity represents a duality in AQIM's strategic narrative, like that Alastair Johnston (1995a) identified in Ming Chinese strategic culture. This duality is between a regional-*near enemy* narrative and a *far enemy* one. Between 1998 and 2015 the former has been slightly dominant over the latter, which has increased in prominence, demonstrating this narrative hybridization.

AQIM's *far enemy* narrative is not only influenced by Al-Qaida. Its anti-French theme, particularly, is influenced by an *anti-colonial* theme inherent in Algerian religious and political culture, and inherited from GIA strategic culture, due to France's *colonial* legacy and continuing influence over the region. There is also an anti-Spanish element to AQIM's *anti-colonial* and *revanchist* themes of *occupation* in Ceuta, Melila and reconquest of Spain for Islam. AQIM *anti-colonialism* employs *master narratives* of resistance from the colonial era, citing Moroccan and Libyan resisters, Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi and Umar al-Mukhtar. This supplemented by a

neo-colonial theme that the West plunders the region's resources and its regimes are *agents*, primarily, of France. Indeed, France remains determined to thwart their project of creating an *Islamic state*.

This *far enemy* narrative became increasingly evident during the leaderships of Sahraoui and Droukdel, with the group's adoption of the theme of *solidarity* with Muslims, Al-Qaida and '*mujahideen*' around the world fighting a global jihad against Western *crusaders*, Russians and *Zionists*. Following this theme, the GSPC ultimately rebranded as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb during Droukdel's leadership.

Like Al-Qaida and FLN, the GSPC-AQIM employs a theme of *martyrdom*, that those killed in this holy war are *martyrs*, promised a place in paradise. This theme was further bolstered, emulating Al-Qaida, after the group rebranded, with the adoption of strategic practices of suicide bombing framed as '*martyrdom* operations'.

Following the bloody civil war, the GSPC's rebranding sought to legitimize its jihad, attract new recruits to continue its struggle in defiance of the Algerian reconciliation programme and further tie itself to the global jihadist movement.

The following chapter will demonstrate how the strategic narrative of the GSPC-AQIM is related to, and used to frame, the group's strategic practices.

Chapter 7: Strategic Practices and Strategic Culture of the GSPC-AQIM

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the second case study, on Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, by analysing their strategic practices. The chapter, firstly, outlines the strategy of insurgency and guerrilla warfare behind the group's strategic practices. Secondly, it uses examples of GSPC-AQIM's attacks and claims of responsibility to demonstrate how their hybrid strategic narrative, its themes and archetypes are used to frame the group's strategic practices. The analysis covers strategic practices of ambush, raiding, bombing and suicide bombing, assassination and kidnapping in Algeria before discussing the regionalization of its strategy to neighbouring countries. As such, it combines the group's narrative and practices into a strategic cultural analysis. In particular this analysis will link the group's strategic practices to the sub-narratives of *near* and *far enemy* in order to find AQIM's dominant strategic culture. Although AQIM has a hybrid narrative, its practices demonstrate a dominant *near enemy* strategic culture.

7.2 Insurgency

Like Al-Qaida, the GSPC-AQIM pursues a strategy of asymmetric warfare, dictated by its weakness relative to its antagonists: primarily the Algerian security forces. The foremost objective of the GSPC-AQIM—like all VNSAs—is the organization's survival; prerequisite to achieving its political goals. In contrast with Al-Qaida's strategies of provocation and coercive punishment, the GSPC-AQIM, like preceding Algerian VNSAs—the FLN, MIA and GIA—is an insurgent VNSA dedicated to political revolution, primarily in Algeria; to overthrow the *apostate* Algerian government, implementing a *Salafist*, *Islamic state* based on *sharia* law. Insurgency is an often-protracted campaign of organized violence perpetrated by non-state actors or movements aiming to overthrow or weaken the

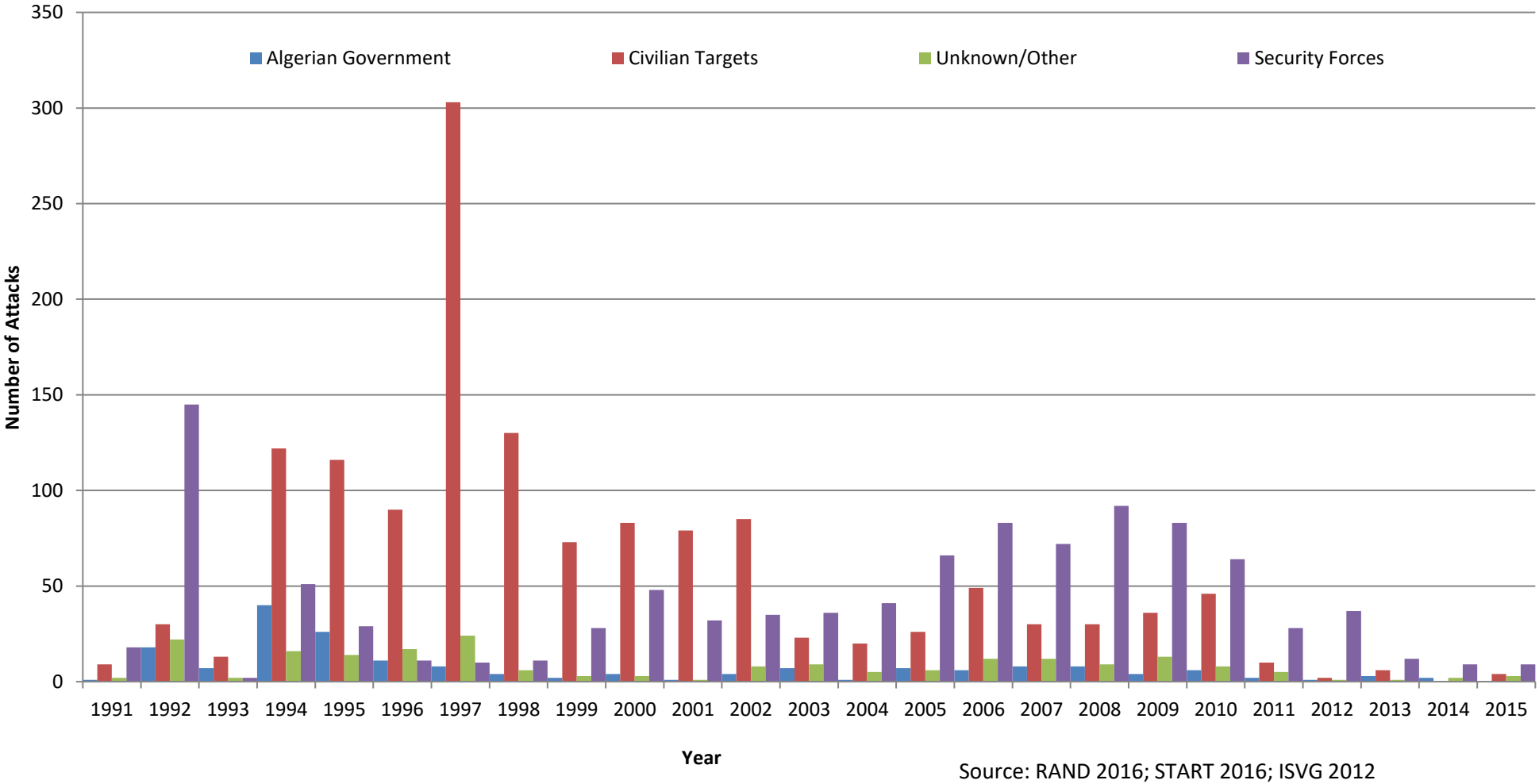
territorial control of a government or occupying power (Hamilton 1998 p14; US Army 2006).

The GSPC-AQIM's *near enemy* narrative has historically been expressed in insurgent strategic practices on a national level. This strategic choice by Hattab was framed as rejecting *deviationism* and returning to *Salafism*; refocusing on fighting the Algerian regime whilst repudiating civilian violence and a *far enemy* strategy. Since Hattab's departure, the group's *near enemy* narrative and operations have regionalized to neighbouring countries; broadening its insurgent practices to a transnational level. This strategy of insurgency is manifest in strategic practices of terrorism and, primarily, guerrilla warfare (Joes 1996 p4; Tuck 2014 pp130-131).

Guerrilla combat is a mode of asymmetric warfare consisting of small, rapid attacks on military, police, and sometimes rival paramilitary forces (Asprey 2014). Terrorism, by contrast, denotes violent practices targeting civilians (Ganor 2005 pp17-20).

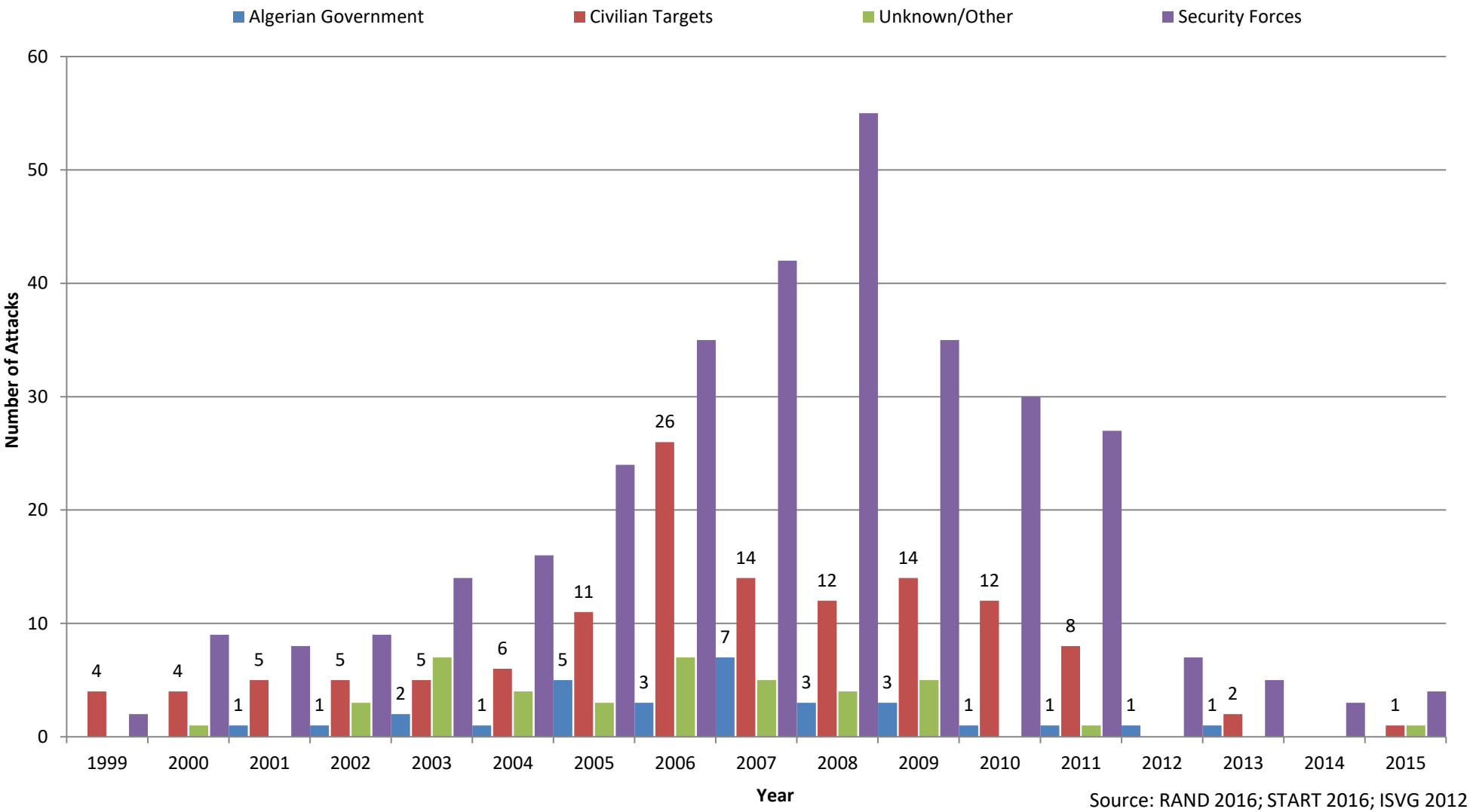
Like the early GIA, the GSPC-AQIM primarily employs strategic practices of guerrilla warfare; unlike the *deviant* GIA which increasingly adopted a strategy of terrorism against Muslim civilians. Figure 12 demonstrates a marked decline in violence against civilians in Algeria since its height in the mid-1990s and relative increase in violence targeting security forces form 2003 onwards. Yet, the data does not demonstrate a total absence of attacks against domestic civilian targets, including attacks on businesses, transport and maritime targets, educational institutions, religious institutions, leaders and journalists.

Figure 12: Attacks in Algeria by Target 1991-2015



Source: RAND 2016; START 2016; ISVG 2012

Figure 13: Attacks Attributed to the GSPC-AQIM in Algeria by Target Type 1999-2015



Source: RAND 2016; START 2016; ISVG 2012

Figure 13 shows that between 1999 and 2015, GSPC-AQIM attacks in Algeria primarily targeted the police and military, indicating the dominance of guerrilla practices over terrorist ones. Moreover, it shows the primacy of domestic over foreign targets indicating a *near enemy* strategic culture over a *far enemy* one.

The shift away from terrorism introduced by Hattab was framed with themes of *deviationism*, a return to the true path of *Salafism* and jihad and avoiding Muslim civilian casualties and distancing the GSPC from GIA *deviants*. According to Droukdel:

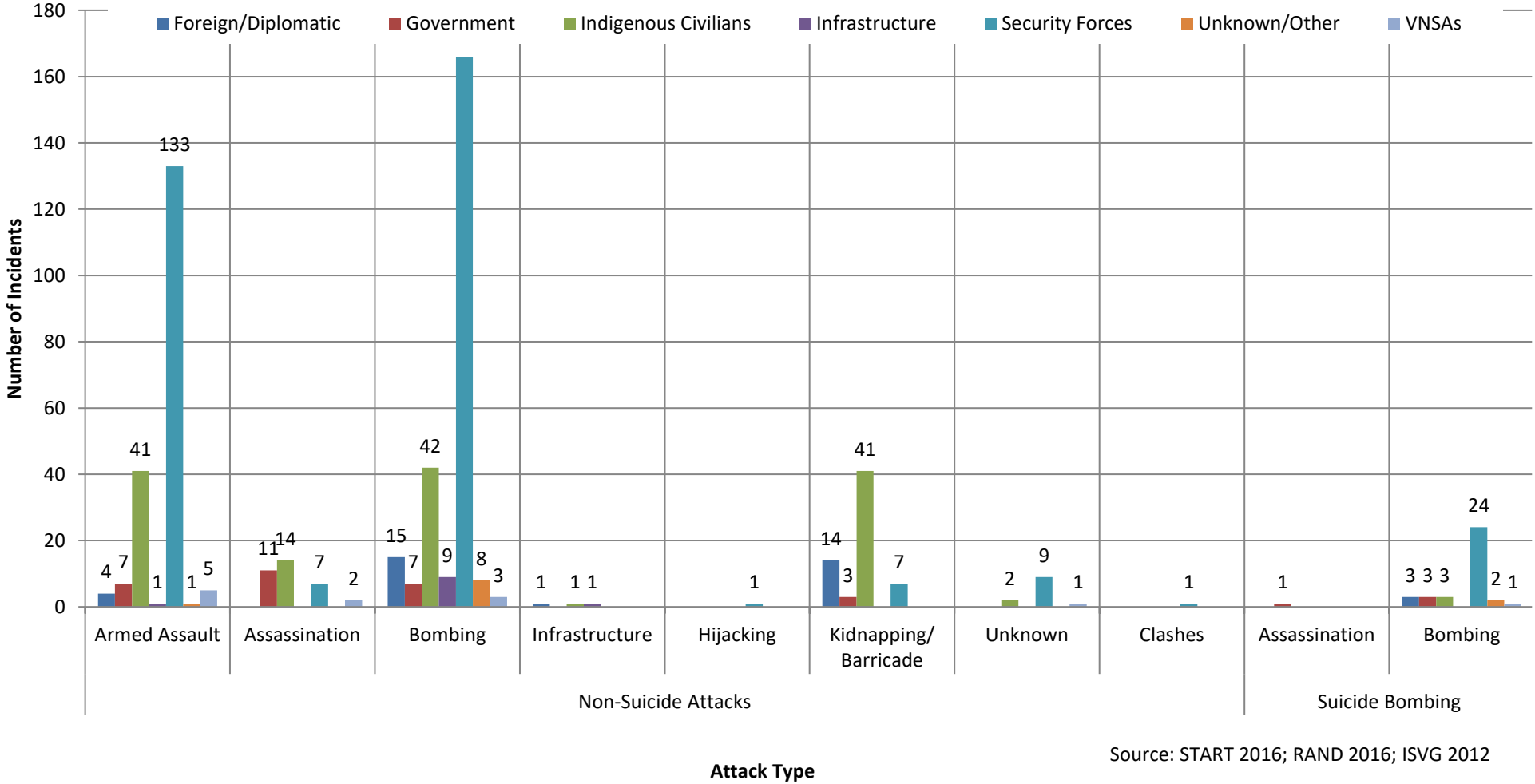
> "We are not insane to target our Muslim brothers. … Our goals in our fight are very clear, which are the military and official targets of the government and the Western interests. We make sure as much as we can in our attacks that no Muslim gets hurt. … Our nation must know that we are in a war against the *apostates* and their *crusader masters*. Mistakes may occur in the war but they are unintentional. We seek pardon from God and we apologize to our nation about that" (NYT 2008).

For the GSPC-AQIM, guerrilla warfare is a strategy which allows for its survival as the weaker force in an asymmetric conflict, whilst enabling that force to express its *near enemy* narrative by engaging the *apostate* security forces of the *tyrannical* Algerian regime. Guerrilla strategies avoid "direct, decisive battles, opting instead for a protracted struggle consisting of many small clashes" (Merari 2007 p21). As Mao said:

> "The strategy of guerrilla war is to pit one man against ten, but the tactic is to pit ten men against one."

While the guerrilla is outnumbered by the enemy's forces the basic strategy of guerrillas is to outnumber and overwhelm the enemy at specific points of attack.

Figure 14: GSPC-AQIM Attacks by Attack Type and Target 1999-2015



Source: START 2016; RAND 2016; ISVG 2012

This requires guerrilla forces to gather quickly, surprise the enemy and disappear rapidly (Joes 1996 p4). The aim of guerrilla warfare is attrition (Merari 2007 pp21, 26), harassing the enemy and stretching their military resources. Inside Algeria, AQIM's sanctuaries or hideouts are believed to be in the forests of Tizi Ouzou and Boumerdes (BBC 2007a).

These guerrilla practices targeting the *apostate* security forces of Algeria and neighbouring countries, in particular Mali and Mauritania, is a manifestation of the *takfiri* narrative of fighting the region's *apostate* regimes the GSPC-AQIM shares with Al-Qaida-central. As figure 14 shows, the GSPC-AQIM's primary strategic practices are non-suicide attacks using explosives and armed assaults, including hit-and-run raids, ambush tactics including explosive traps or 'mines' overwhelmingly targeting security forces. This illustrates its preference for guerrilla warfare.

7.2.1 Ambush

Ambush is a favoured strategic practice of the GSPC-AQIM, demonstrating its *near enemy* narrative by attacking the *apostate* security forces and assassinating officials of the *tyrannical* regimes of the region, as well as foreign *infidels*, using small arms and mines, often in combination. Ambushes are sudden, surprise attacks from a concealed location usually by gunfire, explosives or other traps (LeFavor 2013 pp182-183).

On 3 January 2005 "beloved *heroes*" of the GSPC's ninth zone, led by Belmokhtar, ambushed "the *apostates*." Roadside bombs struck an army convoy destroying 3 vehicles, before a 30-minute gun-battle involving approximately 50 militants in Biskra. Thirteen soldiers and five civilians were killed. The militants looted firearms, radios and ammunition (AFP 2005b; Kohlmann 2005g). Plundering weaponry is a typical guerrilla practice previously employed by the FLN to stock-up on armaments (appendix B3.5). The ambush was framed with a *near enemy*

narrative with the Algerian military portrayed as "*apostates*", "*pagans*" and "*criminals*":

> "…the beloved [*mujahideen*] set an ambush for a group of *apostates* comprised of members from the *pagan* army and *criminals* from the municipal guard…"

By claiming "the deaths of 18 *oppressors*" the GSPC invoked themes of *victimhood* and *retribution.* They admonished "the oppressors", warning they would "execute Allah's will in *punishing* them" for "their *betrayal*…" (Kohlmann 2005g).

In December 2005 the GSPC again, acting on its *near enemy* narrative, claiming members of its sixth zone ambushed "an *apostate* patrol from the *pagan* guard"; detonating explosives before exchanging fire. They claimed to have killed 2 soldiers before the army fled with several injured. The "*mujahideen*" stole a Kalashnikov, ammunition and 100,000 dinars (Kohlmann 2005a).

On 10 December 2006 the GSPC demonstrated its *far enemy* narrative, invoking the *crusader* archetype, ambushing a convoy of foreigners working for American company, Brown and Root-Condor, with a bomb and small arms. The attack killed an Algerian driver and injured 9, including 5 Britons, 1 American and 1 Canadian. The GSPC warned Algerians: "Stay away from the *infidels*' interests to avoid any harm that could befall you from mixing with them at the time they are targeted." They also invoked the theme of a *war against Islam* implying a *defensive jihad*:

> "God enabled a group of our holy warriors to carry out this attack targeting the *Crusaders* working for BRC in Bouchaoui…. We carried out this raid as a gift to all Muslims who are suffering from the new *Crusader* campaign targeting Islam and its holy places" (AP 2006).

A similar attack on 3 March 2007 targeted a bus carrying engineers working for a Russian gas firm with IEDs at Hayoun, near Ain Defla. The attack framed with a

far enemy narrative, was part of its war on foreign *infidels*: "*Mujahedeen*, using a high intensity bomb targeted the convoy of Russian *infidels* working for the Russian company Stroytransgaz". Four Russians and Ukrainians, and three Algerians were killed and at least two people injured in the ambush. These Algerian civilian casualties are explained as 'collateral damage' or *tatarrus* (appendix A2.4).

The attack was framed with themes of *solidarity* with the Chechen *mujahideen*, *victimhood* and *retribution* for Russian oppression of Chechnya's Muslims: "We dedicate this modest conquest to our Muslim brothers in Chechnya…victims of the criminal Putin" (AFP 2007c; 2007d) "…who are being killed and oppressed by the criminal Russian government" (AP 2007b).

On 26 February 2007, AQIM's "courageous *mujahideen*", portrayed as *champions*, perpetrated an "ambush on a convoy of *pagan* army and municipal police" with automatic weapons in Lakhdaria. The ambush was framed with a *near enemy* narrative portraying the Algerian security forces again with the *pagan* archetype. The ambush was followed by a bombing targeting "supporting forces in in the Hozamah district" (Kohlmann 2007a). The following night "the courageous *mujahideen*" ambushed "the *apostate* army on Boukahil Mountain" near Ain Rich, Djelfa. It was again framed with a *near enemy* narrative, invoking *apostate* and *infidel* archetypes: "…Allah guided [the *mujahideen*] in killing 2 officers and wounding many of the *infidels*" (Kohlmann 2007a). According to Algerian officials, one officer was killed, and a soldier injured (AP 2007a).

The claim of responsibility employed both *near* and *far enemy* narratives incorporating themes of injustice, *victimhood*, humiliation and *oppression* of Muslims by *criminal tyrants* who are *agents* of the *crusaders*:

> "All these attacks were launched as a gift for our *oppressed* Muslim brothers, who face humiliation and injustice from these *criminals*—and as a clear

message to the *dogs of the cross* that all of your security plans are bankrupt and have failed" (Kohlmann 2007a).

AQIM also employed the *martyrdom* theme as "the youth of the Islamic Maghreb will not be stopped by your fortresses, nor your security measures, in our efforts to attack you in your own backyard and to achieve...either victory or *martyrdom*. Launching attacks or counterattacks in the cause of Allah is better than this life and everything it has to offer" (Kohlmann 2007a). The term "counterattacks" points to the theme of *defensive jihad*.

On 1 March 2007 AQIM claimed responsibility for a series of attacks between 22 and 28 February. This included a series of "counterattacks" invoking themes of *defensive jihad* and *retribution*. On 22 February, "with the consent of Allah", AQIM ambushed the Algerian army in Awlad Issa, Lakhdaria. The attack, framed with a *near enemy* narrative, invoked the *pagan* archetype, as "the *mujahideen* executed an ambush" targeting "the *pagan* army during a clearing operation". According to AQIM the engagement resulted in a day-long battle. AQIM claimed to have killed and wounded 8 "pagans" and, employing the theme of *government misinformation*, "returned to their base safe and sound, contrary to the claims of the lying *tyrants* that they were able to capture one of the *mujahideen*" (Kohlmann 2007a).

At dusk on 17 June 2009 AQIM demonstrated its *near enemy* narrative when jihadists detonated two roadside bombs targeting a convoy of police before shooting and killing at least 18 gendarmes, again stealing weapons and uniforms. The ambush occurred near Mansourah, Algeria, on the road between Constantine and Annaba as the convoy returned from escorting Chinese construction workers (AFP 2009a). The militants were probably aware of the routine of escorting these workers and planned accordingly.

As a form of ambush or trap, the GSPC-AQIM also uses mines, planting IEDs to defend themselves from the *apostates* of the Algerian security forces. Mines planted

in woodland surrounding AQIM strongholds in the mountainous Tijelabin area of Boumerdes province, discovered by security forces, slowed a government offensive in April 2008 in which 10 militants were killed. The operation coincided with the shooting of emir Youcef Khelifi (aka Talha) of the Zamouri brigade, shot during a terrorist attack on a workshop used by Chinese labourers. His body was subsequently found in woodland (BBC 2008c).

The GSPC-AQIM also ambushes and assaults official roadblocks to attack the security forces, often using explosives. On 27 February 2007 "the *mujahideen*" attacked seven checkpoints with snipers and heavy weapons: "thanks be to Allah, an unknown number of [*infidels*] were killed and wounded" (Kohlmann 2007a). According to security forces, no-one was killed (AP 2007a).

7.2.2 Raid

The GSPC-AQIM also demonstrates its *near* and *far enemy* narratives through raids against the *apostate* security forces and foreign *Crusaders*. Raids involve rapid incursions into enemy territory "to destroy installations, gather intelligence, liberate captured personnel, and to kill or capture personnel" (LeFavor 2013 pp182-183). GSPC-AQIM raids consist of hit-and-run, armed assaults on military and police outposts where security forces are killed, wounded and/or kidnapped; and military materiel often stolen.

During the night of 29 January 2000, GSPC militants of Amari Saïfi's battalion raided a municipal guard station in Arris, killing eleven and kidnapping 3 or 4 guards. A manhunt led to an engagement between the GSPC and GLD militia (BBC 2000). In another raid on 15 April 2011 AQIM militants attacked a military outpost in Azazga, Algeria, using automatic weapons and grenades.

Amidst a series of attacks on the night of 27 February 2007, AQIM's "*mujahideen*" assaulted three "*infidel*" police stations in Bayti Jalabian, Al-Thaniya, Boumerdes,

and Ayat Saadh, Tizi Ouzou. The raids framed with a *near enemy* narrative, using *infidel* and *apostate* archetypes, "caused an unknown number of casualties for the *infidels*, and the *mujahideen* returned to their base safe and sound." In a simultaneous assault in Al-Thaniya, Boumerdes, framed with both *near* and *far enemy* narratives, part of its war on foreign companies, "the *mujahideen* launched an attack on the offices of a Canadian company guarded by *apostate* policemen". AQIM employed the theme of government *misinformation*: "The enemy was very bewildered by these attacks, and tried to manipulate the facts to minimize their losses" (Kohlmann 2007a).

On 15 April 2011 AQIM invoked its *near enemy* narratives and *champion* archetype, when approximately 50 "*lions* of the Islamic Maghreb" conducted a "*heroic* and successful raid" on an army guard post in Azazga, outside Yakouren forest of Tizi Ouzou, Algeria. The narrative invoked both *far* and *near enemy* narratives and *crusader*, *apostate* and *agent* archetypes: "we will march on the road of glory steadfast, battling the *crusaders* and the *sons of France* who are amongst us…". Moreover, the attack was framed with the theme of *defensive jihad*, "in defense of our Ummah, religion and holy places." AQIM claimed the assault began at 7:07pm with mortars and automatic weapons. "[T]he *mujahideen* were able to take full control of the barracks…killing and wounding 30 *apostates* including the barracks commander".

The jihadis looted the outpost of weapons, ammunition and equipment before retreating to their bases. Alongside that of fighting the *near enemy apostates*, the assault was framed with themes of *martyrdom* and *retribution* as "the *mujahideen* celebrated the *martyrdom* of brother 'al-Rabi'…. And this battle comes as loyal commemoration of one of our pious *martyrs*, our *heroic* brother Kamal Abi Haffs, may Allah have mercy on him, and so the *apostates* may know that we will not forget the blood of our pure *martyrs*, and we will take *revenge* for all of our dead

from the evil *apostates*…". Fourteen soldiers were killed and 12 injured in the two-hour assault (Ennahar 2011; GTD; NEFA 2011a).

7.2.3 Bombing and Sabotage

Besides the use of mines and IEDs as a form of trap or ambush, the GSPC-AQIM employs explosives in other strategic practices. On 22 December 2005 the GSPC bombed a port in Boumerdes. The bombing was framed with a *near enemy* narrative portraying the GSPC as *heroes* in the form of "*knights*" fighting the "*devils*" of the *apostate* Algerian regime.

> "Here are the *knights* of al-Ansar Brigade teaching the *devils* another lesson at their own home by detonating two bombs from afar in the port of Dellys…the *mujahideen*, with Allah's help and guidance, were able to infiltrate into the port by their own means and planted two bombs in the port. After the military ship approached, the *mujahideen* detonated the first bomb on the *devils*, and after another group came to support and rescue the victims, the *mujahideen* detonated the second bomb."

This was supplemented with a *far enemy* narrative, also invoking the *agent* and *Zionist-crusader* archetypes, as the GSPC promised "to continue their war against the Jews and the Christians and their converted dogs who are erroneously called the Algerian rulers" (SITE 2005).

Vehicle bombings are another GSPC-AQIM strategic practice, inherited from the GIA. On 13 February 2007 "the valiant *mujahedeen*" simultaneously detonated a series of car bombs, in what AQIM called "the battle of Shaykh Abul Baraa Ahmad", invoking the theme of *martyrdom* and sacrifice (Kohlmann 2007c). "After a long life full of giving and sacrifices, the *knight*", Al-Baraa (aka Zeir Abib Ahmad)—head of the GSPC's Sharia council, killed on 17 January 2006 in battle with the army in mountainous terrain near Togabigiya—"left his horse to join the

martyrs". He died "in the mountains, after a severe confrontation between the *mujahideen* and the Algerian army" (SITE 2006).

The bombings, framed with a *near enemy* narrative, using *apostate* and *agent* archetypes, targeted "several *apostate* police stations" (AFP 2007b; Kohlmann 2007c). Seven VBIEDs exploded outside police and National Gendarmerie stations in Si Mustapha, Souk El-Had, Boumerdes, Draa, Benkheda, Meklaa and Illoula, killing six and injuring thirteen. AQIM claimed responsibility for the attacks on the "*agents*" of the United States. This was supplemented with a *far enemy* narrative: "Wherever the US may be, we will, God willing, pursue it and its *agents*" (BBC 2007a), demonstrating its *far enemy* narrative and *neo-colonial* theme. It also employed the theme that it avoids Muslim civilian casualties—"The *mujahideen* chose their targets precisely and timed the operations…to lessen any injury to fellow Muslims"—and warned against *government misinformation*:

> "In the event that the *apostates* attempt to cover up their massive losses, then we inform you that 5 *apostate* bases were totally destroyed and at least 140 were killed or wounded. Let the Interior Minister tell his *lies* to you, but their casualties are eyewitnesses to the cruel blows dealt by the soldiers of Islam" (Kohlmann 2007c).

The GSPC-AQIM also employs explosives for sabotage, to disable or destroy infrastructure. Since the beginning of the civil war, Algerian SJVNSAs including the GIA and GSPC-AQIM have repeatedly blown-up gas pipelines and sabotaged the electricity grid, attempting to disrupt the economy (START 2016). The day after Sahraoui's '*martyrdom*', a GSPC truck bomb exploded along the perimeter wall of the Hamma power station on the evening of 21 June 2004 near Algiers. The attack failed to cause the intended blackout. The plant suffered superficial damage. Despite injuring eleven people, the attack follows the theme of *avoiding Muslim civilian casualties*: "The *mujahedin* tried to avoid loss of human life by

reducing the explosive charge, which should have been bigger and destroyed the whole plant"; "other actions and targets chosen with precision" would follow.

The attack, framed within the group's *near enemy* narrative and theme of government *misinformation*, "was one of a series of acts of harassment which, even if they are not 100-percent successful" send a message to the *tyrants* that their "rest time" is over; undermining the *apostate* regime's "fabrications" that it has "control of the security situation" and its "assurances for foreign investors" that the "residues of terrorism" are gone (AFP 2004d; AP 2004). This "harassment" points to strategies of attrition and guerrilla warfare. The following week suspected GSPC militants caused a power-cut by sabotaging electricity pylons close to Cap Djinet power station near Algiers (AFP 2004c).

Algerian SJVNSAs have on occasion also attempted to sabotage the country's transport network. The GSPC-AQIM has targeted freight trains in order to cause economic disruption. On 13 July 1998 a bomb was discovered in a tanker wagon on a train at a gas plant in Arzew. A number of bombs have also been discovered next to bridges.

The GSPC-AQIM also practices indirect fire tactics using mortars and rocket strikes against police and military facilities and personnel sometimes in isolation or as a hit-and-run tactic and sometimes in support of a raid (START 2016). In 2010, using the *apostate* archetype, AQIM announced the "brothers in the Islamic Maghreb are using a new weapon in the battlefields against the *murtadeen* [*apostates*]" with homemade rockets. On 2 March the "brothers…attacked a military base using rockets" (WorldAnalysis 2010), the communal guard headquarters in Yakouren, Tizi Ouzou (START 2016). This again demonstrates the group's *near enemy* narrative.

In June 2008 AQIM perpetrated a series of bombs declared "the Battle of the *Martyr* Abdelrahman al-Thulathi". The twin suicide bombing and subsequent

single bombing, implemented the *near enemy* narrative; attacking the *apostates*. In the second attack, on 5 June "a massive" bomb struck "an *apostate* army convoy in Ras Jannat (Boumerdas)" (NEFA 2008c). The bombings were framed with both *near* and *far enemy* narratives and the theme of government misinformation, invoking *apostate*, *tyrant*, *agent* and *neo-colonial masters* archetypes: "reaping a severe harvest from among the *apostates* and their *masters*", revealing "the *lies* and *deception* of the security forces" and disturbing "the slumber of the *tyrants*." The campaign, firstly, invoked themes of *retribution* and *martyrdom*, *victimhood*, a *war against Islam* and *defensive jihad*:

> "O' our beloved Islamic nation: here again we are witnessing the *lions* of Islam from among your righteous sons, writing new epic legends each day with *their blood*, and using *their bodies* to frame the most beautiful portraits of *sacrifice* and selflessness, to repel the assault of the *infidels* and the *apostates*…plotting to enslave and murder you" (NEFA 2008d).

Secondly, it was framed as *retribution* in "*revenge*" for the martyrdom of AQIM "commander" Abdelrahman al-Thulathi; invoking the Tariq Ibn Tashfin *master narrative*: "the descendants Tariq bin Ziyad have sought *revenge* for a commander…" The bombings aimed to spread fear amongst the security forces:

> "Another blessing resulting from this raid were the tremor of *terror* and *anxiety* that have rippled through the ranks of the *pagan guards*, who did not expect that the *mujahideen* would be able to reach such fortified and secure positions" (NEFA 2008d).

The third bombing demonstrated the *far enemy* narrative and *neo-colonial* theme, invoking the *crusader* archetype on 8 June 2008 when "the *mujahideen*" remotely detonated a bomb targeting a vehicle occupied by "two French *crusaders* working for" French construction firm Razel "in Beni Amrane (Boumerdas)." The French '*neo-colonial masters*' were supported by their *agents*:

> "Following much preparation and careful observation, the *mujahideen* decided to target the French delegation, despite the heavy security blanket provided by their *apostate servants*".

It was framed as part of its war on foreign companies:

> "Among the blessings from this battle was the immediate shutdown of operations by the French company, whose presence has posed risks which the *mujahideen* have, for so long, warned of—and of [the risks posed] by other *Christian* companies. We have clarified several times that these [companies] are legitimate targets for the *mujahideen* and that they will enjoy no safety, by the power of Allah and his might, under the protection of the *apostates*" (NEFA 2008d).

The bombing killed a French engineer and his driver, who was actually Algerian (AFP 2008b). The attack was supplemented with a *near enemy* narrative as a second bomb killed "9 *apostates*": "When the *apostates* attempted to intervene, the *mujahideen* confronted them and detonated the second explosive device" (NEFA 2008d). A similar incident on 21 September injured 2 Frenchmen and an Italian working for Razel and five Algerian guards (AFP 2008b).

7.2.4 Suicide bombing

The GSPC did not adopt the strategic practice of suicide bombing, a far more indiscriminate tactic than those advocated by Hattab. Following its rebranding as AQIM the group adopted suicide bombing, emulating Al-Qaida, in particular the multiple suicide bombing; a signatory practice of Al-Qaida. This practice demonstrates AQIM's theme of *martyrdom*. On 11 April AQIM conducted its first martyrdom operation when suicide truck bombs or SVBIEDs (suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices) struck the office of the Prime Minister and Police Special Forces Headquarters in Algiers killing 33. AQIM claimed the "Badr

Raid" involved three *martyrs* and that a third truck bomb hit Interpol. A third car bomb was defused near the home of the director general of the national police (Smith 2007a; 2007b). The group also claimed links with a triple suicide bombing in Casablanca, Morocco, the previous day (BBC 2007b). This act of terrorism departed from the theme of avoiding Muslim civilian casualties. It was framed with themes of *solidarity*, *retribution* and *defensive jihad*, demonstrating its *far enemy* narrative of fighting the *Crusaders*—in the alleged Interpol attack—and its *near enemy* narrative, targeting their *agents*:

> "Our jihad aims at *defending* the religion of Islam and the blood and honour of our Muslim brothers in the entire world, who are oppressed, detained and tortured in Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, or other countries. …this wretched alliance, which consists of the *Crusaders*, and their *collaborator* Arab governments in the region, target our religion, honour, and sanctities. Our strikes are *retaliatory*, and we will chase them everywhere, God willing" (BBC 2007b).

These suicide bombings in Algiers, on the fifth anniversary of Al-Qaida-central's first suicide bombing in the Maghreb in 2002 at Djerba, Tunisia, were symbolic of the GSPC's rebranding (Filiu 2009a p6).

On 11 July a suicide truck bomb struck a military barracks in Lakhdaria killing 10 and wounding 35, according to security officials. The bombing was framed with the martyrdom theme: "Our *martyr*, with God's help and might, managed to infiltrate the heart of the military camp...and exploded in the middle of the courtyard."

The attack was perpetrated by "brother *martyr* Sohaib Abou Malih who drove a truck carrying more than one ton of explosives" into the barracks (Meftahi 2007b). This formed part of a *near enemy* narrative, targeting the "*apostates*": "The

explosion killed more than 70 soldiers while dozens more of the *apostates* were wounded" (AFP 2007a).

In September 2007, AQIM claimed responsibility for two *martyrdom* operations, on the sixth and eighth: an assassination attempt on President Bouteflika in Batna by a suicide bomber with an explosive belt and a vehicle bombing against a coast guard barracks in Dellys. The SVBIED destroyed the barracks killing 37 (Chikhi 2007). The bombing was framed with both *near* and *far enemy* narratives invoking *crusader* and *agent* archetypes and themes of *martyrdom*, a *war against Islam* and establishing an *Islamic state*:

> "We swear to God to continue *sacrificing* our lives until you stop supporting the *crusaders* in their *war*, apply the Islamic tenet and stop your *war against God's religion*" (Meftahi 2007a).

The attacks also invoked a theme of *defensive jihad*: "in *defence* of Islam and the Islamic nation" (Chikhi 2007).

On 11 December 2007 another double suicide car bombing rocked Algiers. The first car bomb exploded outside Algeria's Constitutional Council at about 9:30am, demonstrating a *near enemy* narrative. The dead included students on a passing bus. The second suicide vehicle bomb detonated ten minutes later, demonstrated the *far enemy* narrative, destroying much of the UN building: "the nest of international *apostasy*". At least 26 people died in the blast. Illustrating both narratives and using the *crusader* and *agent* archetypes, AQIM claimed the attacks struck "the *Crusaders* and their *agents*, the *slaves* of America and the *sons of France*" (Bennhold and Smith 2007; NEFA 2007). The UN bombing mirrored that on the UN mission in Baghdad by Zarqawi's al-Tawhid wal-Jihad on 19 August 2003 (CPOST 2016). The attack follows AQIM's *martyrdom* theme, justified as part of *defensive jihad*:

> "Allah has bought from the believers their lives and their money in exchange for *Paradise*. Thus, they fight in the cause of Allah, willing to kill and be killed.... Here we have another successful raid...by the *lions* of faith with their *blood*, and those who long for the *virgins of paradise* will use the remnants of their bodies in order to *defend* the wounded Islamic nation…" (NEFA 2007).

Besides targeting symbols of the *apostate* regime and Western Crusaders, as figure 14 showed, AQIM primarily employs the strategic practice of suicide bombing as a guerrilla practice against the security forces rather than of terrorism against civilians.

On 2 January 2008, an AQIM suicide vehicle bombing targeting a police station in Naciria, Boumerdas, was framed with a *near enemy* narrative employing the *apostate* archetype of security forces "who have *abandoned our religion*" (NEFA 2008b), as well as a *martyrdom* theme invoking *heros* or "*lions*" and *martyr* archetypes:

> "The Muslim youth who *swore to die* and *yearn for paradise* are destroying these fortresses one after the next.... On January 2, 2008, at 7am, a *lion* from Al-Qaida's Network in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the *martyr* Abdullah at-Chayani, set forth on his mission carrying no less than 500kg of explosives aiming to attack the *apostate* den working against the jihad…" (NEFA 2008b).

The operation aimed to spread fear amongst the security forces; part of a strategy of attrition to persuade them to lay down their arms and quit their jobs:

> "…we repeat our call to the military forces, the police, the gendarmerie, and the national security forces to return to the path of Allah, to put down their weapons, and to cease fighting against the *mujahideen*" (NEFA 2008b).

The attack was also framed with an *anti-colonial* theme and *far enemy* narrative of a "*crusader* invasion", thus invoking the theme of *defensive jihad*, and "*apostate*", "*agent* forces" controlled by foreign *masters*, particularly France and America:

> "O' you, who have abandoned our religion and your *masters*: you should expect the arrival of groups of those who long for *martyrdom*, and they will greet you with the *scent of death*."

The narrative also employed the theme of a *Zionist-Crusader* conspiracy against Islam: "O' Allah, kill the Jews, the *Christians*, and their *agents*, those who *abandoned our religion*" (NEFA 2008b). AQIM stressed the themes against *deviationism*, that it does not target Muslim civilians, against government *misinformation* and of *defensive jihad*:

> "And to our beloved Muslims we say *it is so difficult for us to accept even one Muslim being hurt* as a result of our jihad operations, and how many targets have the *mujahideen* wiped out in order to *safeguard* your blood—so don't believe the *demons* and their *lies*, suggesting that we target innocent people. Allah knows that we *sacrifice* our blood and souls in order to *protect* the innocent and to support the exploited" (NEFA 2008b).

AQIM's communiqué ended with the theme of *solidarity*: "Oh Allah, grant victory to the *mujahideen* everywhere and support them with your help..." (NEFA 2008b).

On 4 June 2008 as part of its "Battle of *Martyr* Abdelrahman al-Thulathi" AQIM demonstrated its *near enemy* narrative and *martyrdom* theme using *apostate*, *martyr* and *hero* archetypes when two explosive-clad suicide bombers struck "the *pagan guard* [i.e. army] barracks in Burj Kaifan" near Algiers. In the evening the first "courageous *martyrdom seeker* marched forth wearing an explosive vest in order to attack the *apostate* villains" targeted the gate as soldiers left. A second "*lion* and

martyrdom seeker" detonated amidst a "gathering of these *apostates* at a café nearby…". AQIM also employed the theme of avoiding Muslim civilian casualties:

> "The *mujahideen* were able to confirm that [this café] was not frequented by innocent, ordinary Muslims, but rather catered only to soldiers."

AQIM claimed "these *martyrdom operations* resulted in the deaths of more than 23 *apostates* from the *pagan guard* and wounding dozens more" (NEFA 2008d).

On 3 August 2008 a suicide truck bomb loaded with a 600kg explosive targeting a police station in Tizi Ouzou detonated prematurely as the driver was prevented from approaching the building, damaging a nearby apartment block; injuring 25 people (IHS 2007). The bombing was framed with both *near* and *far enemy* narratives, invoking the *agent* or "*slave*" regime archetype, the Algerian "*sons of France*" and colonial "masters" archetypes, specifically France and America:

> "We tell the *sons of France* and the *slaves of America*, and their *masters* too, that our finger is on the trigger and the convoys of *martyrs* are longing to rampage your bastions in *defence* of our Islamic nation" (Reuters 2008).

The attack was thus, also framed with themes of *martyrdom* and *defensive jihad*. The '*martyr*' was identified as Makhlouf Abou-Mariam.

On 7 August 2008 Algerian security forces "*martyred*" 12 AQIM militants with a bomb in Beni Douala, Tizi Ouzou. The operation followed a suicide bombing the previous week. The ambush was followed by a second suicide bombing framed as *retribution* for the killing. AQIM vowed to *retaliate* in the event of further security operations:

> "After the treacherous operation in which a group of fighting youth were *martyred* in Tizi Ouzou following a treacherous intelligence operation, similar to the *Zionists*, by planting a bomb in their car and setting it off

remotely; this resulted in the *revenge* attack, which was ordered for the first time this year by the emir of the organization, Shaykh Abou Moussab Abdelouadoud, may God bless him…" (BBC 2008b; DPA 2010).

A suicide vehicle bomb exploded as it was fired upon outside a police station in Zemmouri, Bourmerdes on 10 August, killing 8 and injuring 8 others (AP 2008). On 19 August 2008 a suicide car bomb struck a crowd outside a police academy, waiting to take an entry exam, in Issers, killing 48 and wounding 45. The following day a double suicide car bombing struck Bouira. The first SVBIED ploughed into a military barracks wounding 7 soldiers and one policeman (Whitlock 2008). The second targeted a bus carrying workers for Canadian construction company, SNC-Lavalin, outside a hotel killing 12 and wounding 15. The attacks demonstrated both *near* and *far enemy* narratives attacking both the *apostates* and *crusaders*, part of its war on foreign companies.

Despite AQIM citing government *misinformation* claims it does not target Muslim civilians—and "made sure that passengers on the protected bus were Canadian citizens. Therefore, they targeted the bus, and it is not, as the *apostates* claim, that we are targeting our brothers, Muslim workers"—the victims were all Algerians: "…we are choosing our targets carefully and we are always careful with your blood. We do not target the innocent." A *far enemy* narrative was invoked as, according to AQIM, the suicide bomber "targeted with his car a bus carrying about 20 Canadians, working in a Canadian company in the area" (Bell and Coutts 2008). These Algerian civilian casualties could be explained as mistaken identity.

On 27 August 2011 two suicide bombers had an "appointment with their *martyrdom*", attacking Algeria's largest military barracks, The Cherchell (Tipaza) military academy established by France "before the alleged independence". This demonstrated AQIM's *near* and *far enemy* narratives of Algeria as an *agent* regime, still beholden to its former *colonial master*, France. The attack also employed

AQIM's *martyrdom* theme: "We ask [Allah] to accept their *martyrs* and elevate their status in the *Illiyueen*…" (AQIM 2011d).

According to AQIM, the first "*martyrdom seeker*", Abu Nooh walked into the café filled with '*apostates*' hurled a grenade before detonating his explosive jacket. A second bomber detonated his motorbike in the café courtyard.

The "operation" was also presented with the themes of *victimhood* and *retribution* for the deaths of other Algerian *martyrs*: "a small gift to the families of the *martyrs*, the injured and the weak and subdued prisoners of Algeria…suffering the worst of atrocities at the hands of France, making them subject, with metal and fire, to a criminal gang of Algerian army generals, transgressing across the land spreading much corruption." Moreover, invoking the *solidarity* theme, the *apostate* regime's "corruption and crime" crossed its borders in "conspiring against the revolutions of our brothers in Tunisia and Libya" (AQIM 2011d).

As figure 14 showed AQIM has restricted suicide bombing principally as a battlefield practice against security forces. However, conventional bombings, followed by armed assaults (raids and ambushes), predominantly against security forces remain AQIM's favoured strategic practices.

7.2.5 Assassination

Assassination is the premeditated, targeted killing of one or more specific people, usually noteworthy individuals for example politicians or military officers. This does not include general attacks on particular groups, such as security forces, rival VNSAs or militias.

Targets for GSPC-AQIM assassinations include '*traitors*'; former militants including ex-group members who surrendered to the government reconciliation programme; demonstrating themes of *betrayal* and *retribution*. The group has conducted a terror campaign against these so-called 'repentants'. On 4 March 2003

GSPC members gunned down former militant Hamid Doghman as he returned home (START 2016).

This terror campaign was at its height in 2006. Ex-GSPC member, Abdelkrim Kaddouri, was shot in his car outside his home in El-Oued on 10 March 2006. Kaddouri, responsible for persuading many jihadists in eastern Algeria to surrender, was silenced because his activities were a threat to the GSPC, undermining the group's fifth zone. He was executed to deter potential repentants. Surrendering jihadists reported GSPC emirs forbidding members communicating with anyone outside to prevent any temptation to surrender (BBC 2006c).

Another GSPC repentant, Mourad Marazka, was shot dead in his home by two former comrades on 19 May (BBC 2006d). A third revenge killing occurred when the brother of another ex-GSPC emir was murdered at 9pm on 10 July in Boumerdes (START 2016).

Following the surrender of Abdelkader Benmessaoud (aka Mossaab Abou Daoud) former emir of zone 9—denounced as a "traitor"—his father was murdered on 7 September 2007 in Boukahil. Benmessaoud disapproved of Droukdel "unilaterally" joining Al-Qaida (BBC 2007c; START 2016).

Suspected AQIM militants planted a bomb in Mustapha Kertali's car injuring the former FIS leader in the blast on 14 August in Larba (Ouali 2007a). This assassination campaign reveals the group's attempts to stem defections to the government due to disillusion, divisions within the GSPC-AQIM over its relationship with Al-Qaida and adoption of suicide bombing.

The GSPC-AQIM also carries out revenge killings on other *traitors*, eliminating suspected informants who disrupt the group's operations and jeopardize the freedom and lives of its members, to deter others from doing likewise. On 4

January 2006 a suspected informant was killed in Tigzirt. And on 11 August GSPC jihadists beheaded a shepherd for reporting the theft of a donkey, then stole eighty sheep. His head was left on a stake as an example to deter would be informants. The GSPC-AQIM also targets 'collaborators' who refuse to co-operate with the group. In July 2007 suspected AQIM militants slit another farmer's throat in Garet who repeatedly refused to provide logistical support (START 2016). The group tends not to comment on the strategic practice of revenge killings since they undermine its anti-*deviationist* theme of not targeting Muslim civilians.

GSPC-AQIM assassinations also demonstrate its *near enemy* narrative, targeting *apostates* of the regime, particularly politicians, military officers and police personnel, using firearms and explosives. Indeed, the group frames these assassinations as part of its campaign against the *apostate*, *agent* regime; "to assassinate its notables and hammer its proxy security forces, whether from the army, the gendarmerie or the police" (AQIM 2011d). This was illustrated on 5 July 2007—Algerian Independence Day—when AQIM militants attempted to assassinate the prefect of Tizi-Ouzou, Hocine Mazouz, with a remote-controlled bomb. The bomb missed its intended target damaging a vehicle at the convoy's rear (Ouali 2007b).

The *near enemy* narrative was again manifested at dusk on 5 November 2008 when Mayor of Timezrit, Fateh Bouchibane, was abducted at a crossroad and later found dead with his burnt-out car (Montesquiou 2008). The group assassinated Colonel Abdelkader Yamani, commander of Jijel province, alongside his driver on 14 August 2008 when a remote-controlled IED hit their vehicle near Chekfa. This followed an assassination attempt on the Army's head of land forces, General Ahcene Tafer, also in Jijel province that March (AFP 2008a). Since 2007 AQIM has also used suicide bombers in assassination attempts on political leaders. As mentioned previously, an assassination attempted on Algeria's president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, failed on 6 September 2007 when a 'martyrdom seeker'

"carried out a suicide attack with his explosive belt...targeting Bouteflika during his visit to the town but unable to reach him, he exploded himself amid the security men." The bomber detonated prematurely as police became suspicious, killing 15 and wounding at least 74 (Zenati 2007).

The attempted assassination was framed with a *near enemy* narrative, targeting the *apostate* president and security forces, and the themes of not targeting ordinary Muslim civilians, contrary to media *misinformation*:

> "We reiterate that the majority of those killed in this operation were from the police and security forces...and that our brother did not target innocent people as reported by the media" (Chikhi 2007).

7.2.6 Kidnapping and Ruse

Very few GSPC-AQIM attacks in Algeria demonstrated a *far enemy* narrative by targeting foreign *infidels* or interests. This illustrates the dominance of a *near enemy* narrative and strategic practices targeting the Algerian regime over the '*crusaders*'. This is despite a number of high profile kidnappings of Westerners in recent years, manifesting the *far enemy* narrative. In fact, more kidnappings of Algerian civilians were committed by the GSPC-AQIM than foreign citizens or security forces, in order to extort money between 1999 and 2015. This is contrary to the GSPC-AQIM theme of not targeting civilians, but far from the violence inflicted on civilians by GIA *deviants*. According to the data, few of the kidnappings of foreign *infidels* committed by or on behalf the group took place in Algeria. More occurred in Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Tunisia. This implies AQIM is strapped for cash.

The GSPC-AQIM often steals police and military uniforms, pointing to another strategic practice of ruse, inherited from the GIA, demonstrating the GSPC-AQIM's *near enemy* narrative. Fake roadblocks are created by militants posing as security forces, stopping vehicles and executing or kidnapping *apostates* of the

police, military, pro-government militias or those who work for the government. An AQIM video posted on 12 November 2008 demonstrates jihadists erecting a roadblock to capture government officials and disseminate propaganda (EIU 2008). This terrorist practice is designed to spread fear amongst government officials and members of the security forces. On 13 December 2001 two armed militiamen were stopped at a GSPC fake roadblock, murdered and their car burned. The GTD suggests this practice of fake roadblocks aims to "destabilize Algeria" and "terrorize Algerian citizens" (START 2016).

In a similar incident on 5 April 2008 approximately 20 AQIM jihadists stopped a minibus at a fake roadblock between Tigzirt and Tizi Ouzou, checked passenger's IDs, identified and executed a policeman before distributing propaganda videos on CD about their attacks in the Kabylie region to the remaining passengers (BBC 2008e). Again, on 24 April, AQIM abducted and killed a navy sailor at another bogus checkpoint in Draa Al-Mizane, south of Tizi Ouzou (BBC 2008c).

The GSPC-AQIM also uses fake roadblocks to extort money from drivers. On 8 August 1999 suspected GSPC militants established a roadblock between 6 and 8pm on a road from Tizi Ouzou to Bouira Province, extracting money from the traffic. One man was killed. The group "have specialized in racketeering people by erecting regular roadblocks and killing people who had stood against Islamic terrorism" (BBC 1999c; START 2016). Extortion is part of the group's financial strategy, but does not appear in the group's narrative as it is contrary to its claims of not targeting Muslim civilians.

The GSPC-AQIM utilizes the practice of kidnapping for ransom, not only the high profile foreign hostage cases, but also wealthy Algerians. Having repeatedly been refused financial and material assistance from Sufi millionaire, Adelghani, the GSPC abducted his son and farm guard in El-Oued on 14 October 2006. They demanded a ransom for their release. Their fate was unknown (BBC 2006b).

The group has also used kidnappings as a form of ruse in order to engineer engagements with the security forces. On 22 November 2006, GSPC militants kidnapped two civilians and laid an ambush for security forces searching for the hostages in Lagraf, Biskra province. Five members of the security forces were killed and the hostages subsequently released (AFP 2006; START 2016).

7.2.6.1 Kidnapping Infidels

From 2003 onwards the GSPC-AQIM increasingly moved away from kidnapping Algerian civilians, instead kidnapping Westerner '*infidels*' for ransom. This represented a shift in the group's strategic practices, expressing a *far enemy* narrative and "hybridization" of its strategic culture. Kidnapping serves a financial and bargaining strategy for AQIM to fund its operations and exchange for captured militants; a political strategy raising the international profile of the group; and a terrorist strategy targeting '*crusader*' civilians and punishing them when their governments fail to comply.

Kidnapping Westerners has been accompanied by regionalization of the group's sphere of operations. Between February and March 2003, a battalion of Algerians, Malians, Mauritanians and Nigeriens led by Amari Saïfi abducted 32 European tourists in the Algerian Sahara (Atwan 2008 pp232-233; Black 2009 p11; Le Sueur 2009 pp150-155). Saïfi was a norm entrepreneur, pioneering GSPC kidnapping of Westerners for ransom.

Seventeen hostages were purportedly freed by the Algerian army on 13 May 2003 in Amguid, Tamanrasset in southern Algeria (Bernstein 2003a), which Saïfi dismissed as government *misinformation* (BBC 2003b). Of the remaining 15 hostages, one died from heat stroke in June; the rest were exchanged with Malian authorities on 18 August at Tessalit, north-eastern Mali (Bernstein 2003b); for an alleged €5 million ransom on behalf of the German government (Le Sueur 2009 p152). The kidnappers engaged in several skirmishes whilst fleeing Mali across

Niger into Chad. One group was intercepted by the Chadian military (Khatchadourian 2005). Thirteen Algerians, including Saïfi, and five Nigeriens were subsequently captured by Chadian rebels on 16 March 2004 (Smith 2004) and extradited to Algeria via Libya (Le Sueur 2009 p153).

After a hiatus, AQIM adopted the strategic practice of kidnapping Westerners across the region, abducting two Austrians in Tunisia in February 2008 (Thurston 2011). The GSPC-AQIM frames kidnapping with a *far enemy* narrative and themes of *victimhood*, *sacrifice* and *defensive jihad*, defending Muslim *honour* against oppression:

> "The demand to free our two fellow Muslims [held] in Austria is…manifested in fellowship among Muslims and the *oppressed* in the *defense* of their *honor* and stolen rights.... For the sake of calling for justice, unity, and freedom, we are *sacrificing* ourselves and our most precious valuables in order to wipe out the oppression confronting every Muslim equally, all over the world…" (NEFA 2008e).

The primary motive behind kidnapping Westerns is bargaining power and financial gain. Besides accusations of oppressing Muslims, AQIM also invoked the themes of *solidarity* and *occupation* with Afghan and Iraqi Muslims, denouncing Austria for participating in the "*crusader alliance*" "*occupation*" of Afghanistan. The "*mujahidee*n" demanded Austria release a "Muslim brother and his wife" from prison and its withdraw its "symbolic" force occupying Afghanistan:

> "What business does Austria have in allying itself with the criminal gang which has invaded the land of Islam?!... And what have the unarmed Muslim people of Afghanistan done to the nation of Austria that has caused it to send four officers to participate in the *occupation* of their country and in the desecration of their religion, land, and *honor*?!... The Muslims have already experienced the troubles, massacres, and destructions caused by the

humanitarian work of the *crusader alliance* in Afghanistan and Iraq...in the interests of spreading freedom and cursed American *democracy*" (NEFA 2008e).

The hostages were subsequently released in Mali, allegedly in exchange for $4 million and AQIM prisoners (Thurston 2011).

Further kidnappings occurred when two Canadian diplomats, Robert Fowler and Louis Guay, were abducted in Niger on 14 December 2008. On 22 January 2009, Marianne Petzold, Gabriella Greiner, Werner Greiner and Edwin Dyer were abducted in Mali. Petzold, Gabriella Greiner and the Canadian diplomats were exchanged for three Mauritanian militants imprisoned in Mali and a ransom on 22 April. The hostages were used as bargaining chips for negotiating concessions and ransom payments (Thurston 2011; York 2009).

The narrative surrounding Dyer's captivity was framed with a *far enemy* narrative and themes of *oppression* and *victimhood* with AQIM demanding the British government release Abu Qatada:

"And, it is a final chance from the *mujahideen* to exonerate themselves of Britain's excuses and to exhaust all its delays, and for the British public opinion to know that the *mujahideen* when they execute their threats next time, their country will take full responsibility in the continuation of its injustice and violations of the rights of prisoner sheikh Abu Qutadah…" (NEFA 2009d).

Edwin Dyer was the first Western hostage to be executed by AQIM on 31 May, because the British government refused to pay a ransom or negotiate concessions such as releasing Abu Qatada. Dyer's murder was framed as *retribution* for Muslim *oppression* by the *crusaders*, particularly the British, and Zionists:

> "The British captive was killed so that he, and with him the British state, may taste a tiny portion of what innocent Muslims taste every day at the hands of the *Crusader* and *Jewish* coalition…" (Borger and Pidd 2009).

Werner Greiner was released on 12 July, following an alleged Swiss ransom payment.

American teacher Christopher Leggett was shot-dead in Nouakchott, Mauritania by AQIM militants on 23 June 2009 as he resisted abduction (AFP 2009b). The group justified the killing with a *far enemy* narrative of a conspiracy against Islam, alleging Leggett was an *infidel* trying to convert Muslims to Christianity: "Two *knights* of the Islamic Maghreb succeeded Tuesday morning at 8a.m. to kill the *infidel* American Christopher Leggett for his *Christianising* activities" (BBC 2009a).

The use of hostages as bargaining chips is also demonstrated by the abductions of Frenchman, Pierre Camatte, in Mali on 25 November 2009 and three Spaniards, Albert Vilalta, Roque Pascual, and Alicia Gamez in Mauritania on 29 November. The kidnappings were justified with a *far enemy* narrative and themes of *solidarity*, a *war on Islam*, *occupation*, *defensive jihad* and *victimhood* by *crusaders* and *apostate agents*:

> "…the *crusaders* continue their collateral *war against Islam* and Muslims everywhere through *killing innocents*, *occupation* of our land, violating our holy places, and their support to their *agents* and *apostate* cooperates…the *mujahideen*, praise to Allah, continue, targeting the *satanic* party, and they are fighting all the *polytheists* like they fight all of us; in *defense* of our Muslim Nation and in deterrence to their aggression and belligerence. With the grace of Allah, two groups of *heroic mujahideen* were able to kidnap four Europeans…".

AQIM also used themes of *reciprocity* and *retribution*:

> "We say to the *crusaders*: your security and the security of your citizens are based on our security and the security of our Muslim brothers…and we will exhaust all of our efforts to deter your oppression and rescue our prisoners tortured in your prisons…" (NEFA 2009b).

AQIM demanded Mali release four militants in exchange for Camatte within 20 days or his fate would be the same as Dyer's. The statement employed a *far enemy* narrative and the themes of *victimhood* and a *war on Islam*, framing the kidnapping as "seeking to deter the vicious *Crusader* campaign that targets Islam and its people" (NEFA 2010a). Camatte was exchanged for the militants in February 2010. France denied paying a ransom (France24 2010a). Of the Spanish hostages, Gamez was released on 10 March 2010, as were Vilalta and Pascual on 22 August in exchange for one militant and a reported €8 million ransom (AFP 2010d).

On 18 December 2009, two Italian citizens, Sergio Cicala and Philomene Kabouree (born in Burkina Faso), were kidnapped in Mauritania. The kidnapping was framed with a *far enemy* narrative and themes of *solidarity* and *retribution* for "the crimes of the Italian government in Afghanistan and Iraq" (DPA 2009a). AQIM demanded the release of militants held by Mauritania, portraying Italy as fighting a w*ar on Muslims*:

> "[T]he *mujahideen* have decided to demand the release of our prisoners…in exchange for the release of the Italian Sergio Cicala, we give the Italian government a period of 25 days…and we call upon this government that is engaging in the *war against Islam* and Muslims to comprehend that protecting the lives of its citizens requires serious correspondence with our legitimate demands" (NEFA 2010b).

The pair were released on 16 April 2010 (DPA 2009b).

Michel Germaneau was kidnapped on 19 April 2010 in Niger. AQIM framed the kidnapping with the theme of *retribution*. France had to negotiate or Germaneau would be punished: "We say to Sarkozy: You are responsible, first and last, for the life of your citizen" (Sayare 2010). AQIM demanded France secure the release of AQIM prisoners (AP 2010b). Mauritania rejected a prisoner exchange (AFP 2010c).

AQIM also employed its regional *near enemy* narrative of a region populated by *apostate* regimes fighting a *war on Islam*: "At a time when the *apostate* forces hold their special meeting in Tamanrasset to fight jihad and the *mujahedeen*...a group of *mujahedeen* managed to kidnap Michel Germaneau" (AP 2010b). This refers to a meeting of military chiefs from Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Niger, on creating a joint military command to share intelligence and coordinate operations against jihadists in the Sahel. This joint command was established in Tamanrasset, Algeria on 21 April (BBC 2010b).

In June AQIM announced a final deadline, again employing the theme of *retribution* whilst shifting the blame for Germaneau's fate onto the French president: "The *mujahedeen* decided to grant a final extension to France that will not be repeated and will not exceed 15 days, starting on Monday.… At the end of this period and the non-response to our legitimate demands, then France will have sentenced its citizen to death…". AQIM warned President Sarkozy not "to commit the same folly" as the British government's refusal to negotiate leading to in Edwin Dyer's death.

> "Here is the last chance of the *mujahideen* that is priceless and the extension will not be repeated to save this man…. We have done our best to find a satisfactory solution. He who warns is excused" (AFP 2010e).

On 22 July six jihadists were killed when Mauritanian forces, with French support, raided an AQIM camp in Mali. Mauritania's Interior Minister denied speculation the assault aimed to rescue Germaneau. He was not found (AFP 2010b; ANSA

2010). AQIM framed Germaneau's subsequent murder as *retribution* for the *martyrdom* of six jihadists in the raid and French intransigence. Droukdel promised further *retribution*:

> "We announce that we executed the French hostage Michel Germaneau on Saturday July 24, 2010, to *avenge* the killing of our six brothers in the cowardly French raid…. Sarkozy failed to free his compatriot in this operation but he has, without any doubt, opened for his people and for his country one of the *gates of hell*" (AFP 2010a).

Invoking *near* and *far enemy* narratives, El-Khadim Ould Semane of AQIM's Mauritanian branch, interviewed from a Nouakchott prison, also threatened *retribution* against France and Mauritania for the *martyrdom* of its fighters: "I say to the *infidels* and French *crusaders* [we] will not rest until French blood has been spilled". He claimed AQIM were "prepared to *retaliate*". For Semane, Franco-Mauritanian operations demonstrated Mauritania was a French *agent* engaged in a *war against Islam*: "fighting hand in hand with French miscreants is sufficient proof that the Mauritanian army is fighting Islam" (Al-Jazeera 2010b).

Five French, one Togolese and a Madagascan were kidnapped from a uranium mine in Arlit, Niger, on September 16, 2010. On 21 September AQIM spokesman, Salah Abi Mohammed, declared the "*heroic mujahedeen*" led by Abu Zeid took the hostages and warned "against any sort of stupidity…" (Al-Jazeera 2010a).

The Togolese, Madagascan and one French woman were released in 2011, alongside a Malian hostage, Hamma Ould Mohamed Yahya, abducted from Timbuktu in 2010, accused of being a Mauritanian spy implicated in the arrest of an AQIM supporter in Mali (AFP 2011c). This demonstrates the GSPC-AQIM strategic practice of targeting suspected informants in Mali as in Algeria. AQIM framed the hostages' captivity with themes of *victimhood*, *retribution* and *solidarity*. The kidnappings were *punishment* for the *oppression* of Muslims in the Maghreb-

Sahel and elsewhere. They employed a *far enemy* narrative and anti-French *neo-colonial* theme invoking the *colonial master* archetype, stealing Africa's resources:

> "The men were able to attack the mine of Arlit in Niger which is considered one the most important sources of uranium that France has been *stealing*…" (AP 2010a).

AQIM also employed themes of *solidarity* and *reciprocity*. France should cease meddling in the Maghreb and broader Islamic world or face *retribution*:

> "And that message has clearly summed the dimensions of our fight with you, and it clearly showed the security formula between us and you, which is that you won't enjoy safety in the land of Allah until we enjoy it as a living reality in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, the Islamic Maghreb and others, if you do not stop your interference in our affairs and your injustice against our Muslim *Ummah*" (Flashpoint 2010b).

AQIM demanded France withdraw from Afghanistan or the hostages would be punished. Further negotiations should be conducted with "our honourable Sheikh and glorified Emir, Lion of Islam" bin Laden:

> "And accordingly, if you want safety for your kidnapped and imprisoned citizens we hold, then you must rush to remove your soldiers from Afghanistan, and that should be according to a specified timeline that you shall announce officially. Should you refuse so, you will hold the responsibility before your populace" (Flashpoint 2010b).

AQIM kidnapped two more French "spies", Philippe Verdon and Serge Lazarevic in Hombori, and three other Westerners[9] in Timbuktu, Mali on 24 and 25

[9]One Swedish, one Dutchman (Sjaak Rijke) and a British-South African; a German was killed in the incident. Rijke was freed by French special forces on 6 April 2015 (AFP 2015).

November 2011, respectively. This was justified with its regional, *near enemy* narrative following the theme of a *war against Islam*, declaring the Malian regime an *agent* of the *crusaders* for "the repeated and unjustified involvement of [President] Amadou Touré in the war against the *Mujahideen*"; acquiescing to "French and American pressures." Mali was blamed for detaining two "*mujahid* brother[s]" and extraditing another to the "*collaborative* Mauritanian regime" and for a joint Malian-Mauritanian attack on a "*mujahideen*" base in Mali's Wagadou Forest. AQIM promised further *retribution* (AFP 2011b; 2011d; AQIM 2011c):

> "The repeated assaults on the *Mujahideen* by fighting and capturing them to satisfy America and France of Sarkozy [are] a wrong and unjust policy that goes against reason and Shariah and it won't pass without *punishment*, and it will not bring to you but woes of war that you don't need. …cease killing and capturing the Muslims to satisfy the *infidel crusaders*" (AQIM 2011c).

AQIM warned President Sarkozy he was responsible for the fate of the French hostages. The hostages were again linked with themes of *retribution* and *victimhood* for the oppression of Muslims by France. The seven hostages were "insignificant numbers compared to the thousands of murdered, wounded and imprisoned Muslims who are scorched with the fire of your injustice in Afghanistan and elsewhere" (AQIM 2011c). Verdon was murdered on 10 March 2013. The Arlit hostages were released in October 2013 (AFP 2013). Lazarevic was released in December 2014 in exchange for four militants (BBC 2014).

The evidence suggests the strategic practice of kidnapping is primarily motivated by profit and the potential release of AQIM prisoners. Ransom money is used to purchase arms (AP 2013a p6). Use of the *far enemy* narrative serves to justify the abduction of Western *infidels* for what is a strategy for gaining money and concessions. Belmokhtar was criticized for trading "the weightiest case", two valuable Canadian diplomats, for a "meagre" €700,000 rather than bargaining for

more money and concessions (AP 2013a). The majority of hostages were freed in exchange for ransoms and/or prisoners (AFP 2009d; Thurston 2011). The strategic practice of kidnapping in the Sahara-Sahel demonstrates the regionalization of AQIM operations. Rukmini Callimachi estimates AQIM raised $91.5 million in ransoms from Europe and Canada between 2008 and 2013.

Table 1 Ransoms paid to AQIM by Western Countries 2008-2013

Year	Ransom (2014 US$)	Paid by	Hostages
2010-13	$40.4m	French state-controlled company	4 French
2010-11	$17.7m	French state-controlled company	1 French, 1 Togo national, 1 Madagascan
2009	$12.4m	Switzerland	2 Swiss, 1 German
2011-12	$10.8m	Unknown	1 Italian, 2 Spaniards
2009-10	$5.9m	Spain	3 Spaniards
2008	$3.2m	Austria	2 Austrians
2008-9	$1.1m	Unknown	2 Canadians

(Callimachi 2014)

7.3 Regionalization

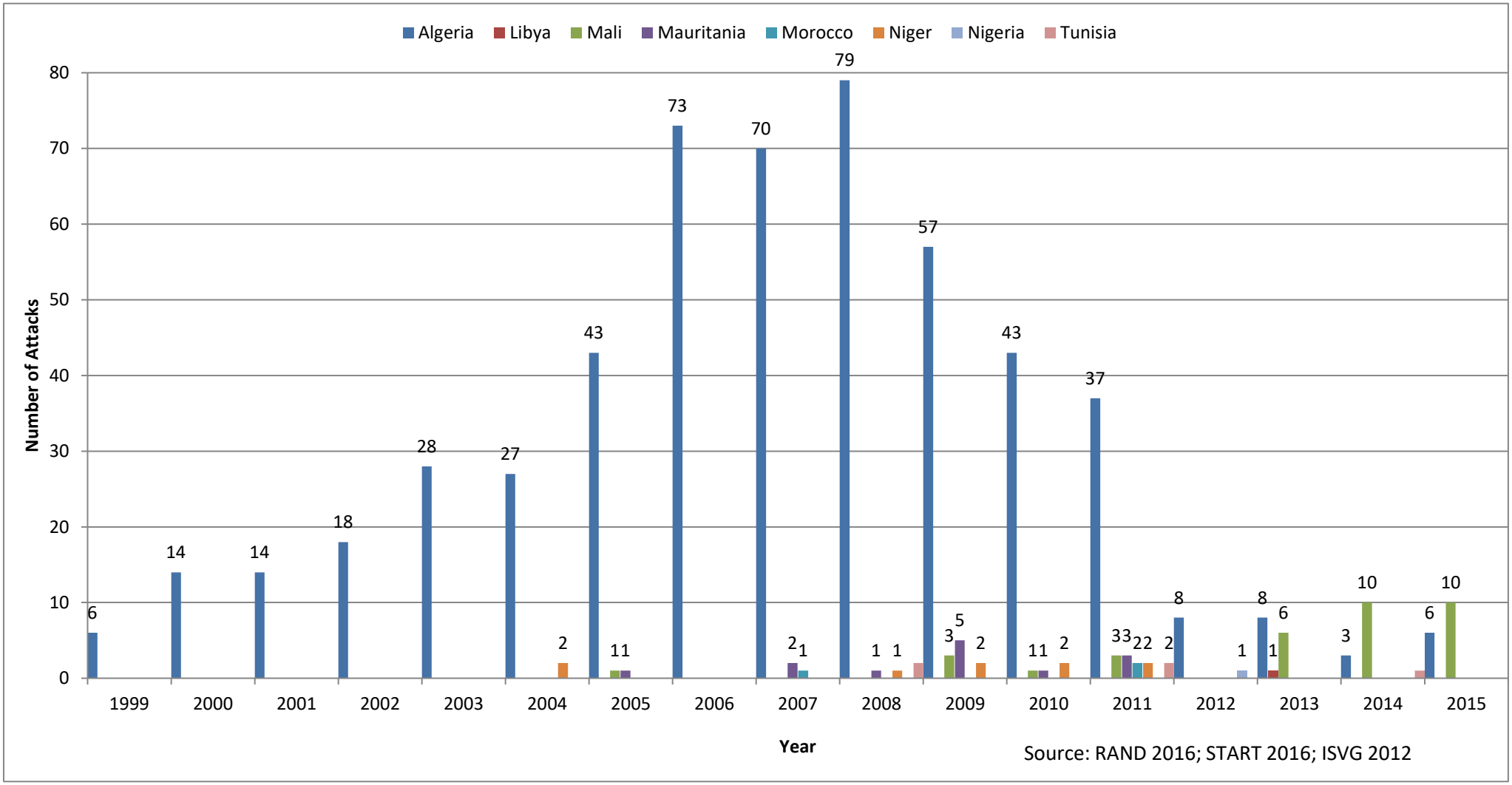
The GSPC-AQIM's strategic culture has developed in both its narrative and practices from a nationalistic, Algeria-centric insurgency during Hattab's leadership, into an increasingly regional one since his departure, particularly after rebranding (Steinberg 2007 p6). The regionalization of its theatre of operations has been gradual. The group's Saharan activities began in 1993 when Mokhtar Belmokhtar returned from Afghanistan, establishing the Shahada Katibat (Martyrs Battalion) in Ghardaïa, central Algeria, bordering the desert. In 1994 it became the GIA's ninth zone and expanded into the Sahara, exploiting business opportunities in cross-border smuggling (BBC 2012a). Following the GSPC's formation Belmokhtar switched allegiance, becoming emir of its ninth, Saharan zone, and key weapons supplier (Abu Al-Ma'ali 2011 p1; BBC 2012a; Black 2009 pp9-10; Filiu 2009a p4).

Setbacks in Algeria, especially the government's reconciliation scheme, massacres of Algerian Muslims by GIA *deviants*, factionalism and war-weariness discredited the jihad, making recruiting Algerians difficult. These difficulties and government counter-terrorism successes curtailed the group's activities in Algeria leading the group to take advantage of the region's porous borders to seek sanctuaries in the Sahara, gradually expanding its activities into Mauritania, Mali and Niger (BBC 2012a p545; Marret 2008; Tawil 2010 p13). The regionalization of AQIM's narrative reflects and is reflected in the changing strategic practices of the group.

In 1999 a "Saharan vanguard"—of which only Belmokhtar survives—went to northern Mali and Niger, to acquaint themselves with the terrain, attract new recruits and build trust with locals. Belmokhtar exemplifies a norm entrepreneur, pioneering GSPC regionalization into the Sahara and Sahel; fostering links with the Tuareg, who provided sanctuary so long as attacks did not occur within their territory. Belmokhtar reportedly married four wives from amongst the region's Tuareg and Arab communities (Black 2009 p10). The GSPC was pragmatic and opportunistic in its practices, avoiding antagonizing the regimes of Mali and Niger, precluding the creation of multiple fronts. Initially, they were not resisted (BBC 2012a) until the inevitable crackdown. AQIM's appeals to Maghrebi-Islamic history are reflected not only in attacks in Algeria, but demonstrate a *revanchist* strategic culture, targeting its neighbours.

Figure 15 shows the regionalization of GSPC-AQIM targeting practices with attacks in Niger from 2004, and Mali and Mauritania from 2005 onwards. It shows the majority of GSPC-AQIM attacks happened in Algeria prior to 2013, gradually declining from a peak in 2008; overtaken by those in Mali in 2014, with the ensuing insurgency following the Mali War, beginning in 2012.

Figure 15: GSPC-AQIM Attacks by Country 1999-2015



These changing strategic practices reflect the transition from a nationalist, Algeria-focused *near enemy* strategic narrative to a regional, *revanchist* one of restoring Islamic rule to the Maghreb and Sahel countries. Paralleling its narrative, its practices, prior to the Mali War, indicated the battle for Algeria remained its top priority, but the increasing presence of these territories in AQIM's narrative is accompanied by an increasingly regional strategy. However, since the War, AQIM's focus has switched to Mali.

7.3.1 Niger

On 6 February 2004 Nigerien forces engaged GSPC jihadists at Midal and subsequently further north following an attack on French tourists. On 5 March GSPC militants were engaged by Nigerien and Chadian forces near Dao Timi, along Niger's eastern border (Mamane 2004). The militants crossed into Chad and were engaged in a 3-day battle from 8 March, near Data in the Tibesti Mountains, killing 43 militants. Amari Saifi was alleged to have participated in the fighting before escaping. Five 4x4s, two rocket launchers, light weapons, radios, GPS and satellite phones were seized. The militants were a mixture of Algerians, Malians, Nigeriens and Nigerians (AFP 2004b).

AQIM claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing followed by a raid at a military barracks in Niger on 12 March 2010, before stealing "the *apostates*' weapons and a military vehicle." The attack was framed with the regional, *near enemy* narrative and themes of *retribution;* revenge for the *martyrdom* of Saad Abi Sariya and his comrades in clashes with "the *apostate* Niger army" two months earlier: "we will not stand cross-armed before any aggression against the *mujahideen* under the cover of 'counterterrorism'" (NEFA 2010c).

7.3.2 Mauritania

At 6:30am on 5 June 2005 up to 140 GSPC jihadists disembarked from a dozen vehicles, raided a remote army base in the Sahara Desert at Lemgheity, Tiris Zemmour, north-east Mauritania, where approximately 50 soldiers resided, before fleeing in their vehicles (AFP 2005a). Belmokhtar gave an insight into the strategic practice of GSPC raiding. The 15-minute raid began with three assault teams and two mobile support units "encircling" and firing heavy weapons at the base, destroying communications posts to prevent reinforcements, before advancing on the target. Belmokhtar claimed the deaths of 15 soldiers, six '*martyrdoms*',[10] and seven Toyotas, two RPG7s, one recoilless rifle, an anti-aircraft gun, 58 Kalashnikovs and 50,000 rounds captured (BBC 2006a). The GSPC claimed responsibility for the attack on President Taya's "heathen regime" (Stratfor 2005). The attack was framed with a regional, *near enemy* narrative and themes of *martyrdom* and *victimhood*, using *infidel* and *apostate* archetypes.

In the battle "five *mujahideen* were killed and we ask Allah to accept them among his *martyrs*. …O' Allah, accept our *martyrs* and release our prisoners from the prisons of the *infidels* and *apostates* in Sarkaji, El-Harrache, Mauritania, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, and every other known and unknown prison…" (Kohlmann 2005b).

The GSPC vowed to continue its "Badr invasion" of Mauritania, using themes of *retribution*, *occupation* and *revanchism*. The attack was "just the first of a series of attacks against (Taya), allied with the Jews, and to *avenge* our brothers who have been picked up in the latest wave of arrests in Mauritania"; "The objective of these operations is to liberate Muslim lands from the grip of the *infidels* and their miscreant allies…". The attack was also framed with themes of a *war against Islam*

[10] A claim of responsibility stated five deaths.

and, again, *retribution*, employing the *agent* archetype, in response to joint "Flintlock" training operations between "the enemy of God, America, and its *agents* in the region" (AP 2005) and "to *avenge* our brothers" alluding to seven suspected GSPC members imprisoned in Mauritania (IHS 2005). Consequently, "we decided to attack that military zone to show those forces that we cannot stand about idly given what is happening. That was a victory, and the operation was the cause of the fall of Ould Taya's regime"[11] (BBC 2006a).

On Christmas Eve 2007 four French tourists were shot dead and one wounded near Aleg. Eight AQIM suspects were subsequently arrested in Guinea-Bissau (BBC 2008d; Filiu 2009a p7). This attack expressed themes of *victimhood* and *retribution*, punishing France for oppressing Muslims in the Maghreb-Sahel, its former colonial subjects.

Two days later, four Mauritanian soldiers were killed near El-Ghallaouiya (State Dept 2011). On 1 February 2008, gunmen sprayed the Israeli Embassy and a neighbouring nightclub, allegedly serving alcohol illegally, with bullets in the capital, Nouakchott. The assailants, who injured five at the club, were engaged by embassy guards before fleeing (Polgreen 2008). AQIM's claim of responsibility followed the themes of *victimhood*, *retribution* and *solidarity* with Muslim brothers in Palestine:

> "This attack has come at a time during which the wretched Jews are treating our brothers in Palestine unjustly, with an oppressive siege, tyranny, torture, murder, expulsion, and images that cause our hearts to break. This has been met with a disgraceful silence on the part of Western nations and with the shameful connivance of...the so-called rulers of the Muslim world. And so we say to our brothers in Palestine to rejoice. By

[11] Taya was overthrown in a coup on 3 August 2005 (AllAfrica 2005).

> Allah, your *mujahideen* brothers in the Islamic Maghreb share your pain and suffering…" (NEFA 2008c).

On 15 September 2008 jihadists ambushed an army patrol near Zouerat, northern Mauritania, kidnapping 12 soldiers. According to AQIM "valiant holy warriors took 12 soldiers prisoner, among them a captain who led the patrol" and stole three vehicles, weapons and munitions. The attack was framed with its anti-Mauritanian theme, and *far enemy* narratives, portraying the regime as *agents* of America: "This jihadist operation targeted the *allies* of the Americans, the *crusaders* on Islamic Mauritanian territory *occupied* by *infidels*". AQIM accused the regime of allying itself with "American non-believers, *crusaders*, Jews and *enemies of God*." Moreover, it invoked the theme of *defensive jihad* portraying Mauritania as *occupied* (DPA 2008; Mohamed 2008).

On 8 August 2009, a suicide bomber attacked the French embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania, injuring two French guards and one other. AQIM framed the bombing with *near* and *far enemy* narratives and themes of *victimhood* and *retribution*, for aggression particularly by French "*crusaders*" and the Mauritanian regime, against Muslims and Islam: "The recent arrests, aggression and torture...of Muslim youth in beloved Mauritania will not go *unpunished*". The bombing followed three militants being charged with Christopher Leggett's murder and assisting AQIM (AP 2009).

On 25 August 2010 a suicide car bomb exploded outside an army barracks in Nema when soldiers fired at it, lightly injuring three (AFP 2010d). The bombing was framed with the themes of *martyrdom* and *retribution* and the regional *near enemy* narrative, striking Mauritania's *apostate* regime in *revenge* for the *martyrdom* of its fighters. The attack was a "resounding response to the death of six of our militants" in a joint Franco-Mauritanian operation. It was also framed with the Ibn Tashfin *master narrative*:

> "One of the *lions* of Islam, a grandchild of *Youssef Ibn Tacheffine* smashed his car, loaded with explosives into a military fortress, to kill soldiers of the *apostasy*, and for those who would escape, to live the rest of their lives in the terror of what happened to them during that holy night" (Zelin 2010a).

On 1 February 2011 AQIM demonstrated its regional narrative launching "a bold and *heroic* operation" attempting to "assassinate the French *agent* in the Land of Shinqeet", Mauritanian president Ould Abdel Aziz, with a SVBIED. The attack illustrates AQIM *martyrdom* theme as the "courageous *martyrdom-seekers*" passed "military checkpoints with which this *Taghoot* [*tyrant*] surrounded his throne", invoking both *martyr* and *tyrant* archetypes. Upon reaching the capital, Nouakchott, the "*martyrdom-seekers*" were blocked from reaching their target by guards protecting their "*master*" amongst whom they detonated the 1.5-ton bomb: "By Allah's Grace, a number of them were afflicted" (Zelin 2011).

The suicide bombing was framed by both regional, *near enemy* and *far enemy* narratives and *tyrant* and *crusader* archetypes. AQIM employed a theme of *retribution*: "All the strikes of the *Mujahideen* were responses to military operations carried out by the Mauritanian regime against us to please its *masters*. This proves that these *tyrannical Tawagheet* base their legitimacy from *Crusader* support, and that they have no concern whatsoever for the interests of the people." This was *punishment* for attacks against "the *Mujahideen*" misrepresented as "self-defense", implying rather that AQIM's actions are part of a *defensive jihad*. Moreover, AQIM's communique stated: "The goal of the *Mujahideen* is clear, all praise be to Allah, which is to stop the *Crusaders* in *defense* of our *Ummah*. Whoever chooses to side with them and prevents us from targeting them should blame none other than themselves." It called upon Mauritania's military to "overthrow" their president.

The narrative portrays the Mauritania's battle as a proxy war by an *agent* of France:

> "This first [assassination] attempt was a response to the open war which this *agent* has launched against the *Mujahideen* in lieu of France and in protection of their interests. …the *Mujahideen* will launch more attacks time after time, by Allah's leave, as long as he ceases to stop *allying* with the *crusaders* and defending them, and end his *alliance* with them in the *war against Jihad*" (Zelin 2011).

On 24 June 2011 AQIM demonstrated its regional narrative with a "pre-planned ambush" of the '*agent*', Mauritanian army in northern Mali conducting joint operations to clear Wagadou Forest of jihadists. AQIM claimed a "military defeat" had befallen "the cooperative Mauritanian regime, on the hands of the grandsons of *Yousuf bin Tashfeen*…". The attack was framed as *retribution* because Mauritanian president "Ould Abdulaziz decided to continue his proxy war, on behalf of France, and push the Mauritanian Army outside the land of Mauritania to launch a campaign...in northern Mali." AQIM claimed to have attacked a convoy of 17 vehicles, destroying 12, killing 20 "*apostates*" and taking "booty" of light weapons. Employing the *misinformation* theme, AQIM claimed two of the *mujahideen* were missing, denying the "falsification and usual lies" that fifteen had died in the battle (NEFA 2011b). The Mauritanians also claimed to have destroyed an AQIM base, fortified with trenches and mines, routing the militants. Nine jihadis were captured over the following two days, including six Mauritanians (AFP 2011e; IHS 2011). The military was aware of AQIM strategic practices, wary of landmines and ambushes (AFP 2011a).

7.3.3 Mali

The GSPC's presence in Mali was demonstrated by the downing of an Algerian helicopter during cross-border clashes on 5 July 2005 (Panapress 2005). On 10 June

2009 jihadists assassinated a Malian intelligence officer in Timbuktu, in *revenge* for the apprehension of several AQIM *brothers* entering Mali (AFP 2009f). On 16 June Mali responded with an assault on AQIM militants, led by Abu Zeid, at Garn-Akassa, west of Tessalit, near the Algerian border *martyring* 16. A second attack occurred on 4 and 5 July at an AQIM base near Garn-Akassa, reportedly killing 26 '*martyrs*'. The offensive followed Edwin Dyer's execution (AFP 2009c; 2009d). According to AQIM's version of events, "the *Mujahidin* launched a pre-emptive attack on a Malian military convoy…. A fierce battle was waged. Almighty Allah helped his *Mujahidin* servants crush the military convoy" capturing 3 soldiers, 4 cars and weapons including a machine gun, and killing 28 '*apostates*'; disputed by Mali.

The attack followed the themes of *retribution* and a war by proxy against Islam conducted by the Malian *agent* regime: "This blessed invasion comes in the context of the war waged by the Malian army on behalf of the *Crusaders* against Al-Qaeda Organisation, especially after the British *infidel* [Dyer] was killed" (AFP 2009e; NEFA 2009a). It demonstrated the group's narratives of fighting enemies *far* and *near*: the *crusaders* and *apostates*. The attack was designed to deter Mali from siding with the *crusaders* and the Algerian *apostate agent* system" who "strive with every means to involve you in the fight against the *Mujahidin*—you do not have the energy to fight them, and no interest to stand against us" (NEFA 2009a). Attacks and battles in Mali, prior to the Mali War (2012 onwards), were *retribution* for a government crackdown, threatening AQIM's safe haven:

> "We call on you to move away from fighting us, and (to stop) defending the *crusaders*. We have not faced you in the past; we stood against you only after you captured our brothers and became hostile toward us" (NEFA 2009a).

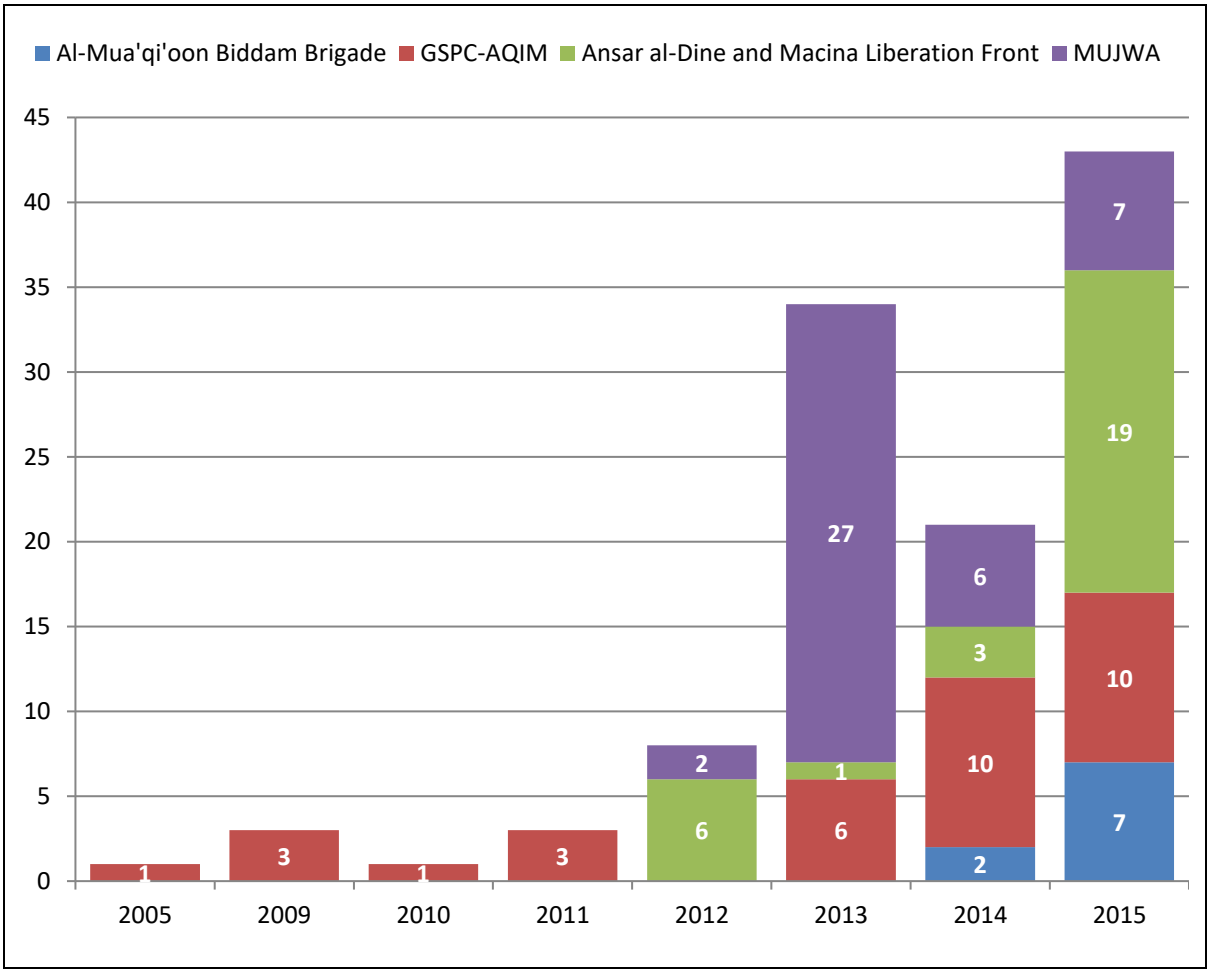
In January 2012 the Tuareg separatist MNLA and allied Islamists of Ansar ad-Dine seized control of most of northern Mali. By 2 April the rebels had captured Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu. In June the MNLA-Islamist alliance broke amid clashes. AQIM and its allies, Ansar ad-Dine and MUJWA expelled the MNLA from Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu, imposing strict *sharia* law (Cristiani and Fabiani 2013; France24 2012). This demonstrates ill-discipline or a poor chain of command as Droukdel, in Algeria, censured his followers for being too "hasty" in applying *sharia* punishments, vandalizing Timbuktu's shrines and losing support from the MNLA; hastening foreign intervention (AP 2013c).

In January 2013 France launched Operation Serval to protect the capital, Bamako, from advancing jihadists and restore government control of northern Mali. By March, Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal had been secured and Franco-Chadian forces had cleared AQIM forces led by Abu Zeid—killed in battle—from the valleys of the Ifoghas mountains. UN peacekeepers took over as insurgency ensued (Chivvis 2015 pp94-153).

Figure 15 probably underestimates attacks involving AQIM in Mali since it fought alongside, sharing fighters with allies and its splinters—MUJWA (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa), Belmoktar's Al-Mua'qi'oon Biddam Brigade ("Those who Sign with Blood")—and Ansar ad-Dine,[12] a Tuareg AQIM front. Droukdel advocated AQIM forces "pretend to be a 'domestic' movement" (AP 2013c). Figure 16 gives a better overview of the insurgency, showing AQIM-linked attacks in Mali at least equalled those in Algeria in 2012; exceeding them thereafter.

[12] Macina Liberation Front is a subgroup of Ansar ad-Dine.

Figure 16: Attacks by AQIM and allies in Mali (2005-2015)



In 2013 MUJWA and Mua'qi'oon Biddam merged (Joscelyn 2015; Roggio 2013), before re-joining AQIM in November 2015 (AP 2015). AQIM and allied jihadists are believed to have taken refuge in the deserts and Teghargar Mountains of northern Mali in the wake of French intervention following the Islamist seizure of territory. Since 2003 the region has been used to train militants and hold Western hostages (Morgan 2013). AQIM and Ansar ad-Dine maintain a foothold in northern Mali, despite French-led military intervention to restore Malian authority from these SJVNSAs.

AQIM has failed to embrace a global agenda or fully adopt Al-Qaida's *far enemy* strategic culture. AQIM's regional strategic culture remains dominant over its *far enemy* one. Despite rebranding AQIM "has not fully transcended its local dynamics" (Filiu 2009b p213), undergoing a process of "pan-Maghrebization"

rather than internationalization (Steinberg and Werenfels 2007 pp411-412) or more accurately "Sahelization" (Cristiani and Fabiani 2011; 2013 p82). The regionalization of GSPC-AQIM operations beyond Algeria remains, primarily, a Sahelian phenomenon, largely restricted to Mauritania, Mali, and Niger with less impact upon Tunisia and Morocco.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has tied together the strategic narrative and strategic practices of the GSPC-AQIM into a strategic cultural analysis. There is a duality in AQIM's strategic narrative and practices manifesting in *near* and *far enemy* strategic cultures. The analysis of GSPC-AQIM strategic practices demonstrates the dominance of guerrilla practices, targeting the security forces, over terrorist ones, targeting civilians.

The dominant *near enemy* narrative frames guerrilla attacks, initially, solely against the Algerian regime, as *retribution* for its attacks against the *mujahideen*, its *apostasy* and FLN *betrayal* in failing to implement an *Islamic state* and acting as *agents* of the '*crusaders*'; part of a *defensive jihad* to defend Muslims from *tyrannical*, criminal regimes conducting a *war against Islam*. In continuity with its predecessors, the MIA and original GIA—before *deviation*—the GSPC conducted an insurgency, aiming to overthrow the '*apostate*' Algerian regime to establish an *Islamic state* or "*Caliphate*" based on Salafi principles and ruled according to *sharia* (Kennedy-Boudali 2009 p14). This utopian vision of this *Islamic state* is seen as the panacea to this *victimization*, humiliation and oppression of Muslims.

The GSPC rejected GIA *deviationism*, citing a return to *Salafism*, and alleging government *intelligence plots* to tarnish the jihad; distancing the GSPC-AQIM from its predecessor's anti-Muslim-civilian violence. Moreover, it remained *defiant*, determined to continue its jihad despite the government reconciliation scheme.

Indeed, the GSPC-AQIM primarily employs strategic practices of guerrilla warfare against the security forces, which are dominant over terrorist practices, targeting Muslim civilians. Its favoured guerrilla practices are bombings—including suicide bombing from 2007 onwards—ambush and hit-and-run raids against police and military forces. As such, following its *restorative* theme, AQIM has an insurgent strategic culture, dedicated to Islamic revolution in the Maghreb-Sahel, contrary to Al-Qaida's terrorist strategy of provocation and coercive punishment against the West.

There has been a drastic decline, but not a complete absence of violence against Muslim civilians in Algeria under the GSPC-AQIM. Following the theme of *betrayal*, the group has conducted a campaign of assassinating 'repentants' who *betrayed* their duty to fight jihad; succumbing to the reconciliation programme. Suspected informants, government collaborators and those who refuse to co-operate with the group have also been assassinated. There have also been kidnappings of wealthy Algerians for ransom due to a shortage of funds. Since 2003 the group has shifted to a strategy of abducting foreigners instead, raising millions of dollars. Some deaths of Muslim civilians can, plausibly, be explained as 'collateral damage' (*tatarrus*) or mistaken identity. Indeed, the group urges Algerian civilians to avoid potential targets, specifically government and foreign institutions thus transferring the blame to the victims themselves. It adamantly denies that its operations target Muslim civilians citing government and media *misinformation*.

Since Hattab's departure, the group's *near enemy* strategic culture has increasingly regionalized, in strategic narrative and practices, framing similar attacks against neighbouring regimes in Mali, Mauritania and Niger with these same themes of *retribution*, *defensive jihad*, *apostasy*, *tyranny* and *betraying* Islam by not implementing *Islamic states*. By "leveraging" *master narratives* of Umayyad and Almoravid conquests (Kennedy-Boudali 2009), AQIM invokes *revanchist*,

restorative themes of reconquest and returning Islamic rule to these territories. Again, AQIM intends to achieve this primarily through strategic practices of guerrilla warfare, targeting the security forces and political leaders of these '*apostate*' regimes. Algeria, however, has been the most cited and, prior to the Mali War, most targeted country.

The narrative has also undergone a degree of hybridization since Hattab left, supplementing its *near enemy* narrative with a subordinate *far enemy* one. This *far enemy* narrative is used to frame terrorist attacks against Western, Israeli and Russian civilians as *retribution* for the '*Zionist-Crusader alliance*' *victimizing* Muslims, *neo-colonialism*—of Western *masters* maintaining *apostate*s in power and plundering the resources of these *agent* regimes in the Maghreb-Sahel and preventing the establishment of *Islamic states*.

This is not just a *neo-colonial* struggle but a religious *war against Islam*, portrayed as a *defensive jihad* against this *Zionist-Crusader* alliance; alleging "the Christians" have been at war with Islam since the Crusades. Moreover, it frames this jihad as a continuation of the *anti-colonial* struggle against France, whereby the region never truly gained independence. It depicts France, followed by America, as primary *crusader* enemy of Muslims in the Maghreb-Sahel due to its colonial legacy. The *crusaders*, *colonialists/neo-colonialists* and *Zionists* are responsible for undermining the *Caliphate*, dividing, conquering, occupying and plundering the Islamic world and fighting a war by proxy, through its *agents*, against Islam to prevent the desired Islamic revolution.

There has been regionalization of the group's *far enemy* strategic practices, including kidnapping of Westerners, from Algeria and Tunisia to Mali and Niger; and attacks on French and Israeli embassies in Mauritania. However, there is a degree of disconnect between AQIM's *far enemy* narrative and its strategic practices. Occasional attacks on Western targets are far outweighed by those on

local targets. Its *far enemy* narrative is largely instrumental, in part justifying a financial and bargaining strategy; framing kidnapping of Westerners—and other relatively infrequent attacks on the '*crusaders*'—as *retribution* for an alleged Western *war against Islam*. AQIM has increasingly mimicked Al-Qaida's *far enemy* narrative without adopting its full strategic cultural implications in practice. While AQIM's strategic practice of suicide bombing emulates Al-Qaida, since rebranding the *far enemy* narrative has not influenced the group as much as might have been expected.

AQIM's rebranding, its *far enemy* narrative and practices are part of a propaganda strategy to boost its profile, legitimize and restore the image of the Algerian jihad following the bloody civil war; adhering to the theme of *solidarity* with Al-Qaida and other Salafi-jihadists around the world and *defending* Islam from a *Zionist-Crusader* conspiracy. The GSPC's rebranding demonstrates its admiration for Al-Qaida as an exemplar of jihad, but was also largely for instrumental reasons. Despite exploiting a *far enemy* narrative and theme of *solidarity* with Muslims and *mujahideen* brothers who are oppressed around the world, AQIM's strategic culture is primarily regional. Besides some involvement in training recruits for Iraq, the *solidarity* theme has had little effect on the group's strategic practices.

While the importance of France, the United States and Spain has become increasingly apparent in AQIM's narrative, their significance to the group's operations and strategic culture remain minimal. Despite Algeria's *colonial history* the GSPC-AQIM has confined its operations to the region—unlike the GIA's attacks on mainland France under Zitouni. To date, attacks on Western and Israeli interests and nationals, have remained confined to the region, striking the *far enemy* in their midst. Within the region attacks on French interests have been sparse.

Hitherto the group has been unable or at least unwilling to strike across the Mediterranean, risking their European support networks; eschewing a global agenda in favour of a continuing regional one (Torres-Soriano 2011b p293). AQIM's *far enemy* narrative is therefore largely rhetorical and instrumental, to bolster its legitimacy within the global jihadist movement, and does not necessarily imply a broader agenda.

Despite rebranding as an Al-Qaida franchise and the hybridization of its narrative, AQIM's strategic practices reveal regionalization rather than globalization of its strategic culture, shifting from an Algeria-focused, *near enemy* agenda to a regional one, rather than a *far enemy* strategic culture. It seems the GSPC joined Al-Qaida for instrumental reasons, not intending a dramatic change in strategy or agenda. Rather, it has adapted over time to its changing fortunes and strategic environment (Torres-Soriano 2011b pp280, 294). AQIM remains an independent actor with differing strategic priorities (Steinberg 2007).

Rebranding and regionalization served to ensure its survival, attracting new recruits in the face of the government '*ruse*' of reconciliation. AQIM's strategic culture has been more changeable over a shorter period, and in that sense, less state-like than that of Al-Qaida's, as it has adjusted to the opportunities and adversities of a changing security environment. While Al-Qaida has focused on the *far enemy*, AQIM has refocused a number of times from the *deviationist*, anti-Muslim-civilian strategy of the GIA, to a nationalistic, Algeria-centric strategic culture under Hattab; to a broader regional one, in which Algeria still remained the primary target; and from 2012 onwards a Mali-focused strategic culture. It has been opportunistic, switching focus to ensure its survival and relevance. Moreover, AQIM's leadership in Algeria has shown a lack of command and control of the group's activities and ill-discipline amongst its subordinates in Mali with Droukdel censuring his followers for being hasty in applying *sharia*

punishments and vandalizing Timbuktu's shrines. This demonstrates that AQIM does not have the command and control structures of a state military.

The regionalization of the GSPC-AQIM's narrative and its guerrilla practices reveals the dominance of a regional-*near enemy*-guerrilla strategic culture over a subordinate *far enemy*-terrorist one, in contrast to Al-Qaida's *far enemy* strategic culture of terrorism. The following chapter will compare and contrast the strategic cultures of the two groups.

Chapter 8: Strategic Cultural Comparison

8.1 Introduction

While strategic culture has traditionally been applied to states, the case studies on Al-Qaida and AQIM have demonstrated a conception of strategic culture, based upon narrative and practices, is applicable to VNSAs. Such an approach is more consonant with conceptions of culture in contemporary anthropology and sociology, than Alastair Johnston's positivist conception, divorcing strategic culture from behaviour (Neumann and Heikka 2005 pp6-9).

The sources of VNSA strategic cultures are, much like those of states, influenced by historical experiences, narratives and analogies, geography and geopolitics, key thinkers and texts. Such historical narratives and analogies are also utilized instrumentally, framing VNSAs' actions in continuity with regional histories. This chapter compares and contrasts the strategic cultures of Al-Qaida (presented in chapters four and five) and AQIM (chapters six and seven).

Identifying the strategic cultures of VNSAs is not easier than for states, as Long contends (Lantis and Howlett 2010 p98). They are, perhaps, more difficult, being more elusive due to their compartmentalized, clandestine, capricious nature and sometimes episodic operations. They are frequently opportunistic, rapidly adjusting their strategies and practices as opportunities arise and political realities change. AQIM has demonstrated opportunism in its kidnapping and strategic refocusing due to Algerian government successes and the emerging political vacuum in Mali in 2012.

The case studies of Al-Qaida and AQIM have shown that VNSA strategic cultures are more disposed to change than those of states, lacking formal, bureaucratic structures; prone to factionalism and often dominated by powerful leaders, as mentioned in chapter two. VNSAs are often fuzzy entities of networked

structures, alliances and franchises, creating ambiguities over who is a member of one organization, another, or none. This can make attribution of attacks and narrative analysis problematic. Even prior to their formal merger it was hard to know where Al-Qaida ended and Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) began.

AQIM and the associated Salafi-Jihadist movement in the Maghreb-Sahel are in flux as groups constantly splinter, re-organize, merge and establish front organizations or coalitions; creating complex webs of relations, alliances and rivalries, of which it can be difficult to keep track. These different entities often have shared membership with the same fighters frequently fighting under the banner of seemingly different organizations; particularly noticeable during the Mali War. There are also shifting allegiances amongst the groups and factions, between Al-Qaida and ISIS. Changes in leadership and key personnel are liable to affect, sometimes dramatic, changes in narrative and practices. VNSA strategic cultural change happens over the months and years rather than decades.

Al-Qaida was a splinter group of the MAK formed by its chief financier, Bin Laden and his followers, particularly Egyptian jihadists, due to disagreements with its leader, Abdullah Azzam, over strategy and aims; demonstrating that secession is often the easiest way to affect strategic cultural change amongst VNSAs. Bin Laden was a *norm entrepreneur* who monopolized Al-Qaida decision-making, precipitating a change from the *irredentist* strategy advocated by Azzam—through a brief *near enemy* revolutionary agenda influenced by Qutb and members of EIJ, though focused on Yemen around 1990—to a *far enemy* strategic culture targeting the West from the mid-1990s (Brown 2011). Bin Laden was a domineering leader whose decision to attack America concerned many Al-Qaida members who feared the consequences. Similarly, Zawahiri changed his priorities from the Egyptian *near enemy* strategy advocated by Faraj, and himself as late as 1995 (appendix A3.15). EIJ also suffered internal disputes over money, its relationship with Bin Laden and Zawahiri's changing strategy (Cullison 2004). Zawahiri is similarly

domineering, apparently, signing up to Bin Laden's 'World Islamic Front' without consulting EIJ's council. Members also opposed his organization's merger with Al-Qaida (Cullison 2004).

Al-Qaida's provocation strategy outlined by Naji (2006), aimed to provoke Western intervention in order to simultaneously defeat America and create anarchy whereby an *Islamic state* could be established. The Iraq War provided such an opportunity, though the jihad was largely outsourced to the various permutations of Al-Qaida in Iraq.

The GIA and GSPC-AQIM have similarly been riven by factionalism, but more so. A rapid succession of increasingly dictatorial GIA leaders, particularly Zitouni and Zouabri, who purged the group, led it to adopt an ever-more extreme strategic culture (appendix B3.7). Secession was the easiest way for Hassan Hattab to precipitate strategic cultural change, away from anti-Muslim-civilian brutality, by creating the GSPC. This again demonstrates the importance of key individuals and leaders.

The GSPC-AQIM was itself divided over its relationship with Al-Qaida; riven between the '*repentants*' who advocated reconciliation and ultimately surrendered, including Hattab; and hardliners who denounced them as *traitors*; and divided over the legitimacy of suicide bombing. Suffering divisions between its leader, Droukdel, and Mokhtar Belmoktar, whose battalion, alongside MUJWA, seceded, before subsequently re-joining AQIM in 2015. Moreover, a weak chain of command and ill-discipline amongst Droukdel's subordinates, hasty to implement *sharia* and vandalize Timbuktu, was illustrated during the Mali War. Such vandalism is influenced by Abd al-Wahhab (appendix A3.6-A3.6.1).

The case studies in the previous chapters showed both similarities and differences in the strategic narratives and strategic practices of Al-Qaida and AQIM. They also demonstrated how, despite their differences, similar themes and *archetypes*

incorporated in these narratives are used to frame these groups' strategic practices. This chapter seeks to compare and contrast these strategic cultures, specifying the similarities and differences between the two organizations' strategic narratives, strategic practices and as a whole. Furthermore, it explores reasons behind these differences, identifying the influence of Maghrebi history and its guerrilla tradition, particularly that of Algeria, informing AQIM's strategic culture. Al-Qaida's strategic culture, in contrast, reflects Middle Eastern history, the legacy of the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad and a strategic choice to attack the West.

8.2 Strategic Culture

8.2.1 Characters

The narrative analysis demonstrates that Al-Qaida's and AQIM's narratives incorporate many of the same archetypes. The protagonists for both Al-Qaida and the GSPC-AQIM are portrayed as *heroes* or *champions* of Islam and *mujahideen*, or fighters of jihad in defence of Islam. AQIM particularly likes the terms knights and lions. As expected, both narratives frequently refer to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad.

The common characters of *tyrants*, *apostates*, *hypocrites* and *agents* are used to justify a *near enemy* strategy of rebellion against '*apostate*' regimes, expressing the ideas of Faraj, Zawahiri and EIJ, among others, themselves reflecting Qutb's notion of *jahiliyya*—borrowed from Mawdudi. These *takfir* accusations of infidelity, hypocrisy and apostasy are the basis of *near enemy* narratives, reflecting the influence of Ibn Taymiyyah, Mawdudi and Qutb, that the only legitimate state is based on *sharia* law. The current governments of Muslim countries are therefore legitimate targets which must be overthrown. AQIM's denunciations of Algeria and Mali and Al-Qaida-EIJ's denunciations of Egypt have some narrative fidelity for Islamists, following Qutbist-*takfiri* logic, since these states are not ruled solely according to *sharia* law.

This *takfiri* logic, influenced by Qutb, has its own Algerian history in the ideas of Al-Qiyam, an offshoot of Ben Badis' AUMA, particularly Abdel Latif Sultani who argued the FLN was illegitimate for failing to follow Islamic principles in *Masdakism Is the Origin of Socialism* (appendix B2.3). Sultani's ideas are reflected in AQIM's theme of FLN *betrayal*.

Al-Qaida's condemnation of Saudi Arabia on the basis of having man-made law has less narrative fidelity since the kingdom is essentially a *sharia* state and claims to be such. The fear of this charge of implementing human-law is demonstrated by Saudi reluctance to codify its laws (Brown 2012). Al-Qaida's pronouncement of *takfir* reflects the conception of *al-wala wal-bara* (loyalty and disavowal) promulgated by Juhayman al-Utaybi, and expanded by Maqdisi. Juhayman, leader of the 1979 Mecca Uprising, argued Saudi politico-military and economic relations with the West made the government illegitimate (appendix A2.5). Maqdisi further judged them *apostates*. Bin Laden claimed receiving assistance showed loyalty to the Christian Americans, making the Saudi monarchy *apostates* who must be overthrown.

Al-wala wal-bara is the basis of the *agent* character in the narratives of Al-Qaida and AQIM as these regimes refuse to disavow the *crusaders*, allowing *neo-colonialism* as the West plunders these countries' resources. According to Maqdisi, economic relations with America indirectly fund military aid to Israel. Loyalty to non-Muslims makes these regimes *apostate* (Wagemakers 2008).

AQIM employs some distinct characters and archetypes reflecting Algerian history: the *treacherous* FLN, the 'repentants' who surrendered, and the *deviant* or *Kharijite* GIA. In this way, as an Al-Qaida franchise, AQIM "tailors" its Salafi-Jihadist narrative to local histories, exigencies and agendas (Long 2009 p202). Historical *characters* and *master narratives* from the Umayyad and Almoravid eras conjure a glorious past, invoking themes of *restoration* and *revanchism*. By lionizing

Ibn Nafi, Ibn Nusayr, Tariq Ibn Ziyad, and Ibn Tashfin (appendix B1), AQIM claims the legacy of these great conquerors of Islamic history, informing a regional, rather than global agenda.

Both narratives have a degree of hybridity, characterizing their antagonists, divided into *near* and *far enemies*, firstly, as *tyrants*, *apostates* and *agents* of the West, who govern the Middle East and Africa; and secondly, as *infidels*, *crusaders* or Christians, and *Zionists* or Jews; part of a *Zionist-Crusader alliance*. These countries are portrayed as *masters* of *agent* regimes, *colonialists* and *neo-colonialists*.

Both Al-Qaida and AQIM narratives have undergone some hybridization. Al-Qaida's *near enemy* narrative has become more bellicose towards Muslim regimes, evolving from more subtle accusations of *apostasy* and *infidelity* against these regimes in the 1990s, to increasingly blatant denunciations in subsequent decades. Since the Afghan and Iraq Wars, Al-Qaida's rhetoric has also become increasingly hostile towards Muslims deemed collaborators, reflecting political events, particularly the invasions, overthrowal and replacement of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq with Western-backed regimes (Hegghammer 2009). In 1998 Bin Laden congratulated Pakistan for its nuclear tests (FBIS 1998), but subsequently became increasingly hostile to President Musharraf for siding with America following 9/11.

In 2003 Zawahiri denounced Musharraf as a "*traitor*" (Zawahiri 2003). Conversely, AQIM has increasingly mimicked Al-Qaida's *far enemy* rhetoric (Hegghammer 2009). This narrative hybridization is linked to its theme of *solidarity* with jihadists around the world, serving AQIM's quest for legitimacy as part of a global jihad, incorporating world events into its narrative. However, as discussed below, the two groups' narratives still differ in emphasis on *near* and *far enemy* the former remaining dominant for AQIM and vice versa for Al-Qaida.

8.2.2 Themes

Table 2: Thematic Narrative Comparison

Themes	Similarities	Differences
Apostasy & Agents	Both groups portray regimes in Muslim countries as *apostates*, who have abandoned Islam, *tyrants* and *agents* of the West.	The GSPC-AQIM focuses on local regimes of the Maghreb, traditionally Algeria, but increasingly Mali, as well as Mauritania and Niger.
Betrayal	Both narratives incorporate themes of *betrayal*.	Al-Qaida focuses on *betrayal* by the British and Saudis whereas the GSPC-AQIM focuses on that by the FLN following the Algerian War of Independence; *betrayal* of the cause by the AIS, Hassan Hattab and other repentants.
Colonialism & Neo-Colonialism	Both narratives allege that the West, particularly America, Britain and France, are *colonial/neo-colonial masters* of *agent* regimes across the Islamic world. Both allege neo-colonial exploitation or 'stealing' of MENA fossil fuels.	Al-Qaida condemns Britain's colonial legacy in the Middle East, particularly Sykes-Picot (alongside France) and the Balfour Declaration laying the foundations for and allowing the establishment of Israel. The end of Anglo-French *colonialism* in the Middle East precipitated *neo-colonialism* primarily by the US, UK and France. AQIM, however, primarily emphasizes French *colonialism* (also referencing Spain and Italy) and *neo-colonialism* in the Maghreb-Sahel.
Defensive Jihad	Both groups portray their struggles as *defensive*.	Al-Qaida portrays its struggle primarily as a *defensive jihad* against Western aggression, whereas AQIM is primarily defending Muslims against *oppression* by local regimes backed by the West.
Defiance		*Defiance* against the Algerian reconciliation process is a key theme for the GSPC-AQIM, expressing its continued commitment to jihad against the Algerian regime.

Democracy	Both groups are opposed to *democracy* as un-Islamic.	Al-Qaida uses the theme of *democracy* to justify terrorism targeting Western civilians. Since the electorate elects its government, they are held responsible for its actions and policies.
Deviationism		The theme of *deviationism* is specific to the GSPC-AQIM in the context of the GIA's brutality towards civilians.
Intelligence plots		The GSPC-AQIM accuses the Algerian regime of responsibility for many of the civilian massacres of the Algerian Civil War.
Islamic state	Both narratives contain themes of Islamic revolution; implementing *Islamic states*/restoring the *Caliphate* as a solution to the problems of the Islamic world; as the resolution to their narratives.	
Martyrdom & Sacrifice	Both narratives share the same themes of *martyrdom* and *sacrifice*.	The Al-Qaida's narrative emphasizes the legitimacy of 'martydom operation' more than AQIM which limits their use
Misinformation		The GSPC-AQIM accuses the Algerian regime and media of deceiving their people about the group, particularly regarding their casualties, those of the regimes forces and civilian casualties
Occupation	Both narratives share themes of *occupation*.	Al-Qaida emphasizes the *occupation* of Palestine by Israel as evidence of Muslim victimhood, the alleged US *occupation* of Saudi Arabia as its *casus belli*, and subsequent *occupations* in Afghanistan and Iraq, whereas AQIM alleges a "*soft occupation*" of the Maghreb-Sahel by France.
Retribution & reciprocity	Both narratives employ themes of *retributive* justice, justifying *reciprocal punishment*; an eye for an eye. Both groups frame their attacks as *retribution*.	Al-Qaida uses the theme of *reciprocity* to justify terrorism against Western civilians citing the deaths of Muslim civilians due to Western and Israeli actions and policies.

Restoration & Revanchism/ Reconquest	Both narratives appeal to themes of *restoration* of Islamic *irredenta*, particularly Spain and Israel.	AQIM's use of *master narratives* of great conquerors of the region's Islamic history alludes to themes of *reconquest* and restoring *Islamic rule* to the region once more.
Salafism	Both groups see themselves as Salafists; followers of the noble ancestors or *salaf*.	The GSPC-AQIM appears to place greater emphasis on its *Salafist* credentials and a return to those principles due to the *deviationism* and anti-civilian violence of the GIA. It is influenced by, and claims the legacy of, the nationalistic Algerian Salafism of Ben Badis.
Solidarity	Both groups emphasize their *solidarity* with *oppressed* Muslims and jihadist movements across the world, particularly those affiliated or associated with Al-Qaida.	AQIM emphasizes its *solidarity* with Al-Qaida-central and other Al-Qaida affiliates.
Soviet Defeat & American Weakness		Informed by the legacy of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan, this theme claims USSR was defeated through jihad in Afghanistan and precipitated its collapse. Moreover, the USA is weaker and could be defeated in much the same way. These themes are specific to Al-Qaida, informing its strategy of *provocation*.
Victimhood	Both narratives employ the theme of *victimhood* caused by Western *aggression* and domestic *oppression* by *tyrannical*, *apostate* regimes and *agents* of the West.	

As table 2 shows, despite their differing emphasis on *near* and *far enemies*, the narratives share some common themes of *martyrdom*, oppression and *victimhood*, *retribution*, *defensive jihad* and a *war against Islam*. Other themes differ more than at first appears. Common themes reflect shared ideas, influences and traditions since both groups inhabit a common Salafi-Jihadist doctrinal universe.

Themes of *martyrdom* are common to Islamist militant groups worldwide—not just Salafi-Jihadists like Al-Qaida and AQIM—both Sunni, like Hamas, and Shia, like

Hizballah. *Martyrdom* is, firstly, a *mobilizational frame* to bolster recruitment, promising heavenly reward for those who die fighting for the cause and, secondly, to justify its practices; framing them in religio-cultural terms, lionizing those killed in guerrilla and terrorist operations, including suicide bombers as *martyrs*. Jihadists justify their strategic calculus and "innovative" practice of suicide-bombing within a familiar discourse of *martyrdom* with cultural resonance (Hafez 2006 pp170-171).

Establishing an *Islamic state* is a central tenet of Islamist ideology. This concept can be traced back to Rashid Rida, writing in 1922 following the Caliphate's abolition (appendix A3.7); taken up by the Muslim Brotherhood and elaborated by Mawdudi. Reflecting the shared influence of Mawdudi, Al-Qaida and AQIM ultimately believe the "panacea" to all Muslim woes is the establishment of *Islamic states* governed according to *sharia* (Kepel 2004c pp34-35); representing the resolution of their narratives. Incorporating the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, Qutb and Mawdudi, both organizations believe only governments ruling according to *sharia* are legitimate. This is reproduced in Al-Qaida's and AQIM's calls for *Islamic states* and the restoration of the *Caliphate*.

Qutb and Faraj agreed with Rida and Mawdudi that the *Islamic state* was the answer, but believed it could only be established through violent revolution; subsequently influencing Al-Qaida and AQIM. This revolutionism is justified by Ibn Taymiyyah's Mongol fatwa expressing the right to rebel against rulers who may identify as Muslims, but are actually *apostates* for failing to implement *sharia* law (appendix A3.6.3). This also reflects the influence of Wahhabi thought. Himself influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, Wahhab believed that those who judged according to non-Islamic laws were *apostates* who should be killed (appendix A3.6).

Al-Qaida sees the rule of Muhammad and the Rashidun Caliphs as the ultimate, just and moral society, whereas AQIM also identifies the Almoravid caliphate as a golden age when the Maghreb was ruled according to *sharia*. AQIM's narrative incorporates *master narratives* of the Almoravid period, characterizing itself as their heirs.

The common themes of *retribution* and *reciprocity* reflect a shared conception of *qisas* (*retribution*) in Islamic law referring to *lex talionis*, "an eye for an eye", whereby victims or their families may seek redress through reciprocal punishments for murder and other crimes against the person (appendix A2.2; Zubaida 2005 p208). These themes of vengeance link to those of *victimhood* by *crusaders* and their *agents*, appealing to culturally resonant themes of *humiliation* and *honour* (appendix A2.3)—common to Salafi-Jihadist narratives—which can only be restored through *retribution*, to justify their actions and mobilize support (Hafez 2007 pp99-101).

Another related theme is *solidarity* amongst Muslims and a shared ideology with Salafi-jihadist movements worldwide. This, firstly, relates to the central Salafist concept of *al-wala wal-bara* that Muslims give exclusive 'loyalty' to Allah and fellow Muslims and disavow, or show enmity towards non-Muslims. For Salafi-jihadists the ultimate in hostility towards *infidels* and *apostate* regimes is to fight them (appendix A2.5; Wagemakers 2008). Secondly, it pertains to *assabiyya* meaning social solidarity or group feeling, originally fostered by tribalism and with the advent of Islam, a common religion (A2.1). Both conceptions of *solidarity* also relate to *defensive jihad* as a collective responsibility for defending Islam and Muslims, demonstrating utmost loyalty.

In Arab tribal society *assabiyya* entailed collective responsibility (appendix A2.1) whereby *retribution* could be exacted against the tribe of those who wronged you, leading to a culture of vendetta. Here Al-Qaida has innovated, reverting *qisas*—a

concept with *cultural resonance*—from personal justice promulgated by *sharia* law to a notion of collective responsibility to justify *retribution* against the West, primarily civilians, for the alleged crimes of their governments (Maher 2016 pp65-75; appendix A2.2). This is the basis of Al-Qaida's *far enemy* narrative and justification of its terrorist strategy. This notion of Western collective responsibility is used instrumentally in AQIM's *far enemy* narrative to justify kidnapping. There is, however, a disconnect between narrative and practices since, aside from hostage-taking, attacks on the '*crusaders*' have been relatively few.

Like Qutb who denounced all man-made political systems as un-Islamic *jahilliya* (ignorance), both AQIM and Al-Qaida reject *democracy* as *bida* (un-Islamic innovation). Salafis are often cautious towards and generally oppose *democracy*. Its rejection is another central tenet of Salafi-Jihadism (Anjum 2016; Ashour 2009 p8). This *anti-democratic* theme is ideological, reflecting the common influence of Qutb and Zawahiri over EIJ, Al-Qaida, the GIA and subsequently the GSPC-AQIM. It also reflects common history. Some founding members of the GIA, led by Qari Saïd (appendix B3.7.2), trained in a*l-furuq* camp in Afghanistan, run by EIJ and Al-Qaida, where Zawahiri's ideas were "drummed into them" to the consternation of Abdullah Anas, a member of Azzam's MAK and FIS supporter (Tawil 2011 pp47-48). In *The Bitter Harvest* Zawahiri condemned the Muslim Brotherhood's democratic approach—and implicitly the FIS (Tawil 2011 pp47-48), citing Mawdudi's scepticism of popular democracy (Ibrahim 2007 p123).

AQIM's *anti-democratic* and *defiance* themes, inherited from the GIA, however, form a distinct local narrative. Opposition to *democracy* distinguished the GIA and GSPC from the FIS/AIS; refusing to countenance reinstatement of the electoral process, abrogated by the Algeria military in 1992. This links to the *betrayal* theme since the GSPC denounced the AIS as *traitors* for its 1997 ceasefire and 1999 amnesty agreement. The theme of *defiance* against any negotiated settlement or reconciliation process in Algeria continues that of the GIA. This is informed by

Abdullah Azzam who proclaimed jihad was an obligation, but more importantly Faraj's notion of revolutionary jihad as obligatory. It however indicates a local agenda whereby violent revolution is the only path to change in the Maghreb-Sahel, as the experience of the FIS in Algeria demonstrated (appendix B2.4).

Al-Qaida, by contrast, uses the theme of *democracy* to support its notion of collective responsibility and justify its terrorist strategy of *retribution* against Western civilians (Al-Qaida 2002; Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003). This notion of collective responsibility is neglected by AQIM's narrative. AQIM seemingly defers such *jus in bello* arguments, justifying practices of targeting Western civilians and suicide bombing, to Al-Qaida. Yet AQIM's treatment of Western hostages shows a preference for ransom payments over retribution, not executing captives when negotiation is possible. AQIM prioritizes profiteering over punishing the *far enemy*, motivated by insufficient resources.

Al-Qaida and AQIM portray a *war against Islam* perpetrated by enemies *near* and *far*; *apostate* and *criminal* regimes which *victimize* their Muslim subjects and the *Crusader-Zionists* who oppress Muslims everywhere. They both promote and tap into the notion that Islam is threatened, "widespread" in the Muslim world (Pew 2003). This theme allows Al-Qaida and AQIM to seek legitimacy by proclaiming theirs is a *defensive jihad*.

Fighting *defensive jihad* is *fard ayn*, compulsory when Muslim lands are invaded, according to classical Islamic law reflecting the influence of medieval jurists, including Ibn Taymiyyah, and twentieth century jihadi scholar Abdullah Azzam who used the same argument; declaring the Afghan, anti-Soviet jihad compulsory. By justifying these struggles as *defensive*, both groups are able to legitimize their violent actions as *retributive* acts of *reciprocity* (Long 2009 pp208-210). Al-Qaida's depiction of Western forces as *occupiers* in Saudi Arabia allowed it to frame its

jihad as *defensive* and therefore obligatory; part of a narrative of *victimhood* upon which the justification of *retribution* depends.

This *occupation* theme has been used to demonstrate a *Zionist-Crusader war against Islam* due to the Israeli presence in Palestine and primarily Anglo-American forces in Saudi Arabia, and subsequently, in Afghanistan and Iraq. Al-Qaida uses the theme of *occupation*, which implies a war against Muslims, not only as another grievance for which the West must be punished, but also to frame their struggle as *defensive jihad* against them. Some Salafis argued Bin Laden's jihad was not akin to Azzam's *irredentism* since the Americans were invited into Saudi Arabia (Wiktorowicz and Kaltner 2003), making Al-Qaida the aggressor. The Western invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, however, played into the themes of *occupation*, *defensive jihad* and a *war against Islam*.

In the Maghreb-Sahel this notion of *defensive jihad* has less narrative fidelity in a *near enemy* context, since there was no foreign military presence prior to the Mali War. *Defensive jihad* was originally concerned with external threats, but through the caricature of Muslim rulers as *tyrants* who oppress their subjects, AQIM maintains its struggle is *defensive*. Indeed, both Al-Qaida and AQIM follow Faraj's argument that jihad against non-sharia states is compulsory. However, the alleged quasi-*occupation* by the French is rather, part of AQIM's *colonial/neo-colonial* theme, influenced by colonial history, asserting France's former African colonies never truly gained independence; remaining *agents* of the West.

Both narratives incorporate themes of *colonialism* and *neo-colonialism* which allege that former colonial powers, Britain, France, Spain, and now the USA, remain *masters* of *agent* regimes across the Muslim world. As Western *agents* the regimes of the Middle East and Maghreb-Sahel enable *neo-colonial* exploitation of Muslim's resources and domination of the Middle East and North Africa by the *Zionist-Crusader* alliance. Though both claim this is the case, it does not point to

converging *far enemy* agendas, since the two groups have come to different solutions.

For AQIM this *neo-colonial* notion that the regimes of the Maghreb and Sahel are *agents* of the West is as much another stick to clobber these *apostate* regimes with as to bash the West. This serves to justify its *defiance* and the continuation of its struggle against the Algerian, and other regional governments. AQIM frames its jihad as a continuation of the *anti-colonial* struggle; recycling "the old nationalist discourse" of animosity towards the "traditional French enemy" and condemnation of the Algerian regime's "clientelist relationship" with them and the West generally. These are enduring themes in the narratives of Algerian armed groups (Roberts 2011 p36). In contrast, Al-Qaida, at least in the Saudi context—which was never a European colony—this *agent* archetype relates more closely to a politicized Salafi notion of *al-wala wal-bara*. Accordingly, friendly relations demonstrate loyalty rather than disavowal of the *crusaders*. Indeed, Al-Qaida damned al-Saud for allowing the American '*occupation*' of Saudi Arabia. The centrality of *al-wala wal-bara* to Salafi-Jihadist justifications for Islamic revolution can be attributed to Maqdisi (appendix A2.5), putting the *takfiri* ideas of Qutb and Faraj on a soundly Salafist footing (Wagemakers 2009 pp95-102).

The notion that these *agents*' backing by Western *masters* prevents Islamic revolution is central to Al-Qaida's *far enemy* narrative and strategy. Al-Qaida concluded that Western support for these *agent* regimes is the primary barrier to Islamic revolutions in the Muslim world. It should therefore provoke and punish the US and its Western allies. Only by inflicting defeat upon the United States would revolution become possible. The themes of *Soviet defeat* and *American weakness*, exclusive to Al-Qaida, point to this *far enemy* agenda. The theme of *occupation* is much more prominent in Al-Qaida's narrative within the broader *colonial/neo-colonial* theme as part of its grievance narrative, used to justify *retribution* against the West.

Harking back to the region's *colonial* era distinguishes AQIM's narrative from Al-Qaida's, for instance citing the nationalist, Salafist scholar Ben Badis, who emphasized Algeria's distinctness from France (appendix B2.1). Ben Badis influenced the Algerian Salafist nationalism of the GSPC, particularly under Hattab, but also Sahraoui; diluted by AQIM's regionalization under Droukdel. AQIM's invocation of the *anti-colonial* struggles of Abd al-Karim in Morocco and Umar Mukhtar in Libya is indicative of this historical *colonial* narrative, but also its expanded agenda, and perhaps recruitment drive, beyond Algeria; though not Al-Qaida's commitment to global jihad.

The strategic narrative of Al-Qaida emphasizes themes from Middle Eastern history: the *crusades*, British *betrayal* with Sykes-Picot and the Balfour Declaration; the founding of Israel and the alleged American *occupation* of Saudi Arabia. In contrast, AQIM's strategic narrative emphasizes North African history, relevant to the local and regional context of the Maghreb and Sahel, appealing to its more distant past.

Both narratives incorporate themes of *betrayal*. That of Al-Qaida forms part of its *far enemy* narrative of *victimhood* by the West; British *betrayal* of the Arabs in making contradictory promises to the French, the Arabs and the Jews, dividing Muslim territories of the former Ottoman Caliphate and allowing the establishment of Israel. This theme of *betrayal* is among the grievances against the West in general—and the British in particular—used to justify Al-Qaida's attacks against it as *retributive*. For Al-Qaida, American *neo-colonialism* continues where British *colonialism* left off. For Al-Qaida grievances against the British and Americans are one and the same. Moreover, the Saudi government *betrayed* its people by allowing the American *occupation* and *neo-colonialism*.

For AQIM *betrayal* forms part of its *near enemy* narrative of grievances against the Algerian state in the FLN's *betrayal* of the revolution bringing self-rule to Algeria.

Rather than implementing an *Islamic state* based on "Islamic principles", Ahmed Ben Bella adopted socialism. This was followed, secondly, by *betrayal* of the cause of creating an *Islamic state* by the AIS, Hassan Hattab and other former GSPC members who surrendered to government amnesties. This *betrayal* links to a distinct theme of *defiance* against the reconciliation process which AQIM frames as a deceitful act on the part of the regime, to which it has lost members, and to denounce those *traitors* who have surrendered. These differing themes of *betrayal* and *defiance* reveal different strategic priorities for Al-Qaida and AQIM, prioritizing global and local agendas respectively.

The differences in AQIM's narrative are contextual, reflecting local realities, influences and agendas; its legitimacy deficit and lack of public support, reflected in the *deviationist* theme of returning to the true path of Salafism. This functions to rehabilitate Algerian jihadists' image amongst potential supporters and fellow Salafi-Jihadists, distinguishing itself from its GIA predecessor.

AQIM's desire for legitimacy is central to its strategic narrative. This *mobilizational narrative* aims to persuade recruits and sympathizers its "actions are justifiable, appropriate and necessary", rationalizing its violent practices and motivating existing members in pursuit of its objectives (Bartolucci 2016 p126). It seeks to re-legitimize the tainted image of jihad in Algeria, in the eyes of the people.

AQIM's themes of *deviationism* and emphasis on a return to Salafism thus form part of a local narrative, building on the experience of the GIA's jihad in Algeria which alienated the people from the rebels, pointing to a local agenda. AQIM places greater emphasis on its Salafist principles than Al-Qaida, to atone for the GIA's legacy of brutality against Muslim civilians during the Algerian civil war, and rehabilitate its image primarily in its region of operations. The themes of *misinformation* and *intelligence plots* are similarly motivated by the group's image

problem in the region, warning potential supporters not to believe government 'lies' regarding AQIM.

While AQIM's strategic narrative is essentially a hybrid narrative, just like the GIA's before it, incorporating both *near* and *far enemies*, the former remains dominant, illustrated by their strategic practices. Indeed, between 1998 and 2015, Algeria was the country most cited in GSPC-AQIM propaganda, ahead of France, indicating a local agenda (Torres-Soriano 2011b; 2016).

This indicates AQIM's strategic priorities differ from those of Al-Qaida. AQIM is more concerned with regional issues and battling the *near enemy*, primarily the Algerian and Malian regimes. France is more prominent in AQIM's narrative, having been the dominant colonial power in North-West Africa, compared to the US and Britain in Al-Qaida's narrative; Britain having been dominant in the Middle East and Indian Subcontinent before World War Two. As with the GIA previously (appendix B3.7.5), France's prominence can be seen as the continuation of an *anti-colonial* theme in Algerian political culture (B4), through which AQIM seeks legitimacy. This theme was bolstered in response to French intervention in the Mali War. AQIM's notion of a French "soft *occupation*" of Africa is merely an extension of this *neo-colonial* theme contributing to a negligible *far enemy* strategy.

By contrast, Al-Qaida's framing of the American presence in Saudi Arabia as an *occupation* allowed them to frame theirs as a *defensive*, irredentist jihad against US aggression in the Muslim world, justifying its *far enemy* strategy. This reflects the ideas of Abdullah Azzam who believed countries *occupied* by *infidels* must be liberated. While we cannot know what Azzam would have made of the American presence in Saudi Arabia, he rejected the *near enemy* notion that Muslim regimes, like Saudi Arabia, were *apostate*. His ideas of *defensive jihad* support the battles against Western *occupations* in Afghanistan and Iraq, but it seems unlikely he

would have supported Al-Qaida's provocation strategy, since he argued liberation of Palestine should follow Afghanistan.

This shows that for AQIM the *near enemy* narrative is dominant, whereas Al-Qaida's narrative prioritizes the *far enemy*. Though Bin Laden frequently cited Saudi Arabia, as Zawahiri does Egypt, Al-Qaida's *near enemy* narrative is more general, brandishing regimes across the Islamic world as *tyrants* and *apostates* and therefore enemies. The *near enemy* narrative of the GSPC-AQIM has evolved from an Algeria-centric one to a broader regional *near enemy* narrative, incorporating anti-Malian, anti-Mauritanian, anti-Nigerien, anti-Moroccan and anti-Tunisian themes.

The plots of both narratives follow a *deliverance story-form* which will be resolved with Islamic revolutions and the *restoration* of the *Caliphate*, following the defeat of the *near enemy* for AQIM and, for Al-Qaida, the *far enemy* prior to the *near enemy*. In accordance with Al-Qaida's *far enemy* strategic culture, it is Western support that has prevented Islamic revolutions. Ending Western support through coercive punishment and military defeat is the initial step towards Islamic revolution. Without Western backing the *apostate* regimes of the Muslim world will fall more easily.

8.2.3 Strategic Practices

The GSPC-AQIM follows the strategic priorities outlined by Faraj that Islamic revolution took precedence over the liberation of Palestine. For Faraj, only once an *Islamic state* had been established in Egypt could the battle against Israel follow. These were the strategic priorities Zawahiri adhered to as late as 1995 (appendix A3.15). Faraj's revolutionism differed from Azzam's *irredentism* which prioritized the liberation of Afghanistan from the Soviets and subsequently Palestine, rather than overthrowing Muslim regimes. Bin Laden departed from Azzam's *irredentism* and guerrilla strategy, refocusing Al-Qaida's strategic priorities by targeting the

West with terrorist practices. Azzam never advocated terrorist tactics targeting Russian civilians (A3.12).

Like Azzam (appendix A3.12), AQIM prefers practices of guerrilla warfare over terrorism, which it justifies firstly as *retribution* against the forces of state in the Maghreb for the alleged *tyranny* and *oppression* of their citizens; and secondly a *takfiri* doctrine proclaiming these states *apostate* and therefore legitimate targets, for failing to implement *sharia*. Besides its narrative, AQIM's targeting practices indicate Islamic revolution in the Maghreb-Sahel remains its priority over attacking the West. In contrast, Al-Qaida's *far enemy* strategy included an additional stage since, according to its narrative, Islamic revolution is stymied by American support for *apostate* regimes. America, believed to be weak, therefore had to be forced to desist, punished and ultimately defeated.

Table 3: Strategic Practice Comparison

	Al-Qaida	**AQIM**
Strategy	Primarily terrorism; provocation & coercive punishment	Primarily guerrilla warfare; strategy of attrition against security forces
Primary targets	Civilian 'soft' targets; *far enemy*	Police and military targets; *near enemy*
Tactics by frequency	1. Suicide attacks 2. Bombing 3. Assassination	1. Bombing 2. Armed assaults 3. Kidnapping 4. Suicide bombing 5. Assassination
Influences	Hizballah, HAMAS & Egyptian Islamic Jihad use of suicide bombing Zawahiri Qaradawi LTTE maritime suicide attacks	Guerrilla tradition: Umar Mukhtar, Abd al-Karim, FLN, Bouyali, early GIA. Al-Qaida suicide attacks. Distancing itself from GIA massacres. Geography
Theatre of operations	Global	Regional: Maghreb-Sahel; primarily Algeria and Mali, also Mauritania and Niger.

For the US to be defeated it had to be provoked into invading Muslim lands. This strategy was informed by themes of *Soviet defeat* and *American weakness* asserting the US could be defeated just like the USSR in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida-central successfully provoked the US to intervene in Afghanistan, and overreact, invading Iraq. These invasions reinforced Al-Qaida's themes of *occupation*, *defensive jihad* and a *Zionist-Crusader war against Islam*, formerly evidenced by the US presence in Saudi Arabia, sanctions against Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.

Like Faraj's Egyptian Islamist nationalism, GSPC leader Hassan Hattab was an Algerian Islamist nationalist. Hattab rejected Bin Laden's *far enemy* strategy, prioritizing the battle against the Algerian regime through a strategy of guerrilla warfare. Besides Faraj's influence, these priorities were informed by the nationalistic Algerian Salafi tradition of Ben Badis, the Islamist nationalism of Al-Qiyam (appendix B2.1; B2.3) and the Algeria-centric strategy of Mustapha Bouyali's MIA and the GIA (B3.6-B3.7). Islamic revolution in Algeria remained the GSPC's priority under Nabil Sahraoui.

Figure 15 (chapter 7, p246) showed the gradual regionalization of GSPC-AQIM attacks began in 2005 under Droukdel's leadership with operations in Mali, Mauritania and Niger. However, the group continued to prioritize the struggle in Algeria until 2012, which saw a marked decline in attacks there (the lowest since 1999). The impetus for AQIM's changing strategic priorities, refocusing on Mali, was the Mali War beginning in 2012, and Algerian counterinsurgency successes with the deaths, surrenders and displacement of AQIM militants.

Figure 15 also showed that AQIM attacks in Mali overtook those in Algeria in 2014. AQIM and Ansar ad-Dine maintain a foothold in northern Mali, despite French-led military intervention to restore Malian authority from these SJVNSAs. AQIM and allied jihadists are believed to have taken refuge in the deserts and

Teghargar Mountains of northern Mali in the wake of French intervention following the Islamist seizure of territory. Since 2003 the region has been used to train militants and hold Western hostages (Morgan 2013).

The regionalization of GSPC-AQIM operations beyond Algeria remains, primarily, a Sahelian phenomenon, largely restricted to Mauritania, Mali, and Niger with less impact upon Tunisia and Morocco. Figure 16 (p255) is indicative of the ongoing AQIM-linked insurgency. MUJWA and Al-Mua'qi'oon were reabsorbed into AQIM in November 2015.

Informed by themes of *Soviet defeat* and *American weakness*, Al-Qaida, in contrast has primarily employed terrorist practices (targeting civilians) against the *far enemy* as strategies of provocation and coercive punishment, "vexation and exhaustion". In 1998 Al-Qaida adopted suicide tactics in the Embassy bombings, becoming the group's favoured strategic practice, following Zawahiri's belief that suicide operations are most efficient in inflicting mass casualties against the enemy with minimal losses amongst the jihadists (appendix A3.15).

Al-Qaida's suicide attacks reflect the theme of *American weakness*, emulating the decisive blows inflicted by Hizballah's suicide bombings causing Franco-American forces to withdraw from Lebanon. Secondly, they reflect the influence of Ayman az-Zawahiri and his EIJ contingent, absorbed into Al-Qaida-central, who copied this practice; and thirdly, Yusuf Qaradawi who justified suicide bombing in the Palestinian context (A3.13). EIJ first employed suicide bombing in 1993. Seemingly it was Zawahiri who persuaded Bin Laden, a strict Salafist, of the efficacy and legitimacy of martyrdom operations (Moghadam 2011 pp79-80). One former EIJ member described Al-Qaida's "spectacular martyrdom operations" as "vintage Islamic Jihad" (Gerges 2009 pp142-143). Moreover, Al-Qaida's maritime suicide attacks emulated those of the Tamil Tigers.

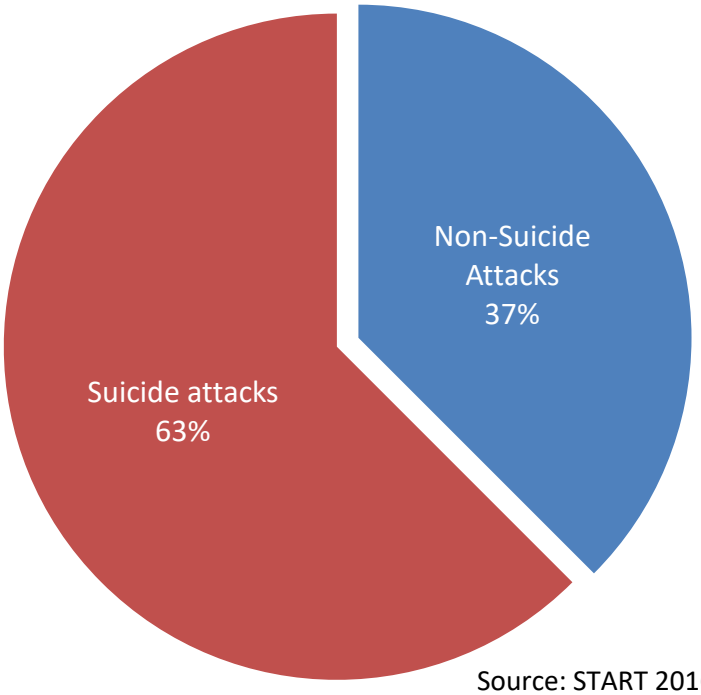
The Embassy bombings represent an escalation in Al-Qaida's war against the West, firstly as suicide bombings and, secondly, primarily targeting civilians, though most casualties were African. This escalation matched Al-Qaida's increasingly bellicose narrative, from 1997 when Bin Laden stated non-Muslim civilians were not a target, to 1998 stating Al-Qaida did not distinguish between civilian and military targets (Bin Laden 1998). It moulded its narrative, particularly concepts of collective punishment—informed and justified by its theme of democracy—*qisas*, *tatarrus* and *reciprocity*, around increasingly brutal practices of mass casualty terrorism against Western civilians; adapting from a position of weakness. Prior to the Embassy bombings, Al-Qaida attacks targeted American military personnel.

Al-Qaida switched from attacks primarily aimed at coercive punishment in the Middle East, to increasingly large and provocative attacks, especially the Embassy bombings and 9/11—both instigating American retaliation—and back again; as provocation had succeeded and mass attacks, particularly in the West, became increasingly difficult for Al-Qaida to orchestrate. As part of this strategy Al-Qaida has seemingly attempted to time attacks for maximum impact, perhaps to influence elections, and hence foreign policy, ostensibly successfully in the Madrid bombings, and unsuccessfully with the Liquid Bomb Plot (appendix 0).

This switch was due not only to attrition of key members in battle and 'drone-strikes' in Afghanistan-Pakistan, but stricter security measures, particularly in aviation, and intelligence successes in the years following 9/11, 7/7 and the Liquid Bomb Plot when liquids were restricted on aircraft. The latter, particularly, demonstrates Al-Qaida tactics and plots becoming increasingly innovative to overcome security measures. According to the government 40 jihadist plots were foiled in Britain between 7/7 and November 2014 (Topping 2014). Al-Qaida's strategic cultural change is being driven by the exigencies of asymmetric warfare against the West.

Figure 17 shows that 63% of attacks attributed to Al-Qaida-central were suicide attacks, when those deemed uncertain, mostly linked to Afghan and Pakistani insurgencies are excluded. This points to dual strategies, utilizing guerrilla practices of bombing, directly, or outsourcing through its associates as part of the Afghan insurgency (Jones 2014a) whilst following a terrorist strategy primarily of suicide bombing against the *far enemy*.

Figure 17: Suicide and Non-Suicide Attacks Attributed to Al-Qaida 1992-2011



Source: START 2016; RAND 2016

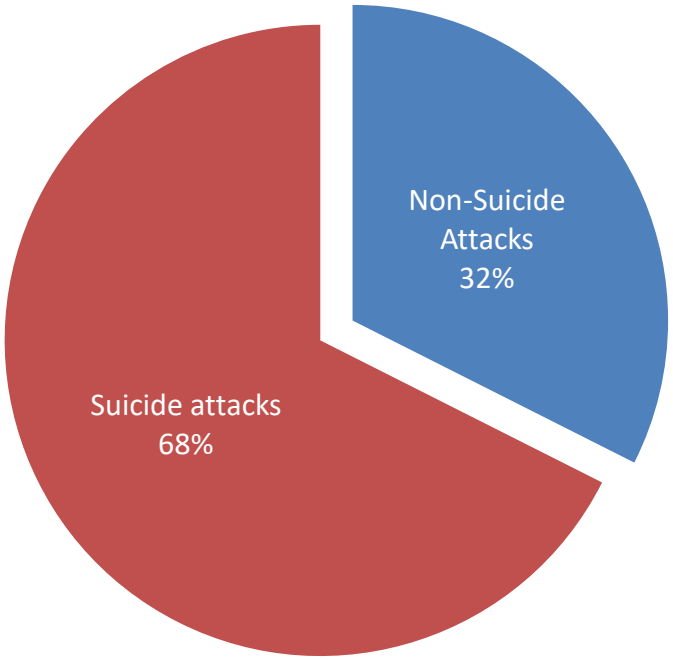
Figure 18 shows that since 1998, when Al-Qaida adopted suicide bombing, 68% of its attacks have been suicide attacks.

Having provoked Western intervention, the jihads to defeat the Americans and their allies in Afghanistan and Iraq were effectively outsourced to Al-Qaida's associates, including the Taliban, Haqqani network and Hezb-i-Islami in Afghanistan, and its affiliate AQI (later ISI) in Iraq, before severing ties with the rebranded ISIS, in 2014. Following Western intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, Al-Qaida has sought to attack America and its allies involved in these campaigns,

successfully in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, and unsuccessfully in the Liquid Bomb plot of 2006.

These attacks aimed to divide these coalitions. Indeed, Spanish forces were subsequently withdrawn from Iraq (BBC 2004d). Al-Qaida's support for insurgencies, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan form part of its strategy of "vexation and exhaustion" designed to frustrate stabilization and state-building.

Figure 18: Suicide and Non-Suicide Attacks Attributed to Al-Qaida 1998-2011



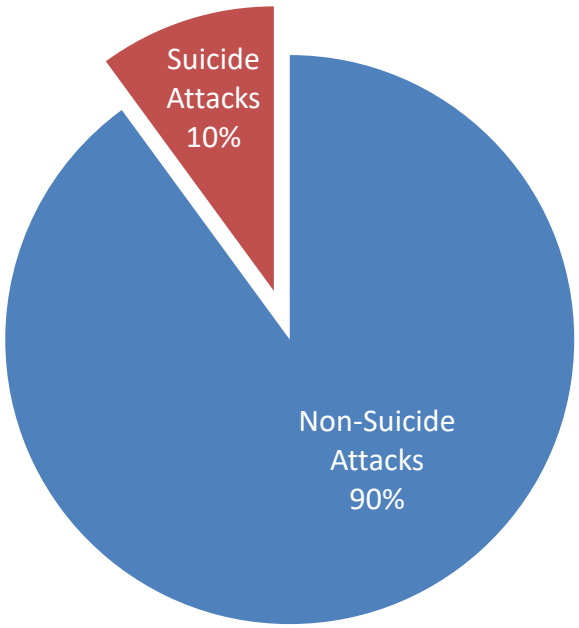
Source: START 2016; RAND 2016

In the Maghreb-Sahel, AQIM is the franchise to which Al-Qaida has outsourced. While Al-Qaida sees itself as a vanguard movement instigating a global jihad by attacking the *far enemy*, AQIM are more foot soldiers; a guerrilla army seeking local revolution. Besides the regionalization which began before rebranding, the GSPC-AQIM's *near enemy* agenda and strategy has not drastically changed since joining Al-Qaida, reflecting the continuing influence of the guerrilla tradition (appendix B3). Conversely, Al-Qaida's project was a radical departure from the jihadist strategy pursued by Zawahiri's EIJ in Egypt. Bin Laden and Zawahiri

reconfigured the strategy of targeting the *near enemy* outlined by its chief ideologue, Faraj, switching to a *far enemy* strategy, as Al-Qaida and EIJ became entwined.

AQIM did not emulate Al-Qaida's suicide bombings until rebranding in 2007. In contrast to Al-Qaida and EIJ, AQIM is trying to distance itself from its predecessor which on three occasions perpetrated suicide bombings in Algeria (Shay 2004 pp95-96). Yet, there is some continuity between AQIM and the GIA, neither routinely employing martyrdom operations. As figure 19 shows, only 10% of AQIM attacks between 2007, when it adopted the practice, and 2015 were suicide bombings.

Figure 19: Suicide and Non-Suicide Bombings Attributed to AQIM 2007-2015



Source: START 2016; RAND 2016; ISVG 2012

While Al-Qaida suicide attacks have primarily targeted civilians, particularly Westerners, those of AQIM have primarily struck security forces. AQIM's favoured strategic practices remain, firstly, conventional bombings and secondly armed assaults against police and military targets, indicative of a campaign of guerrilla warfare.

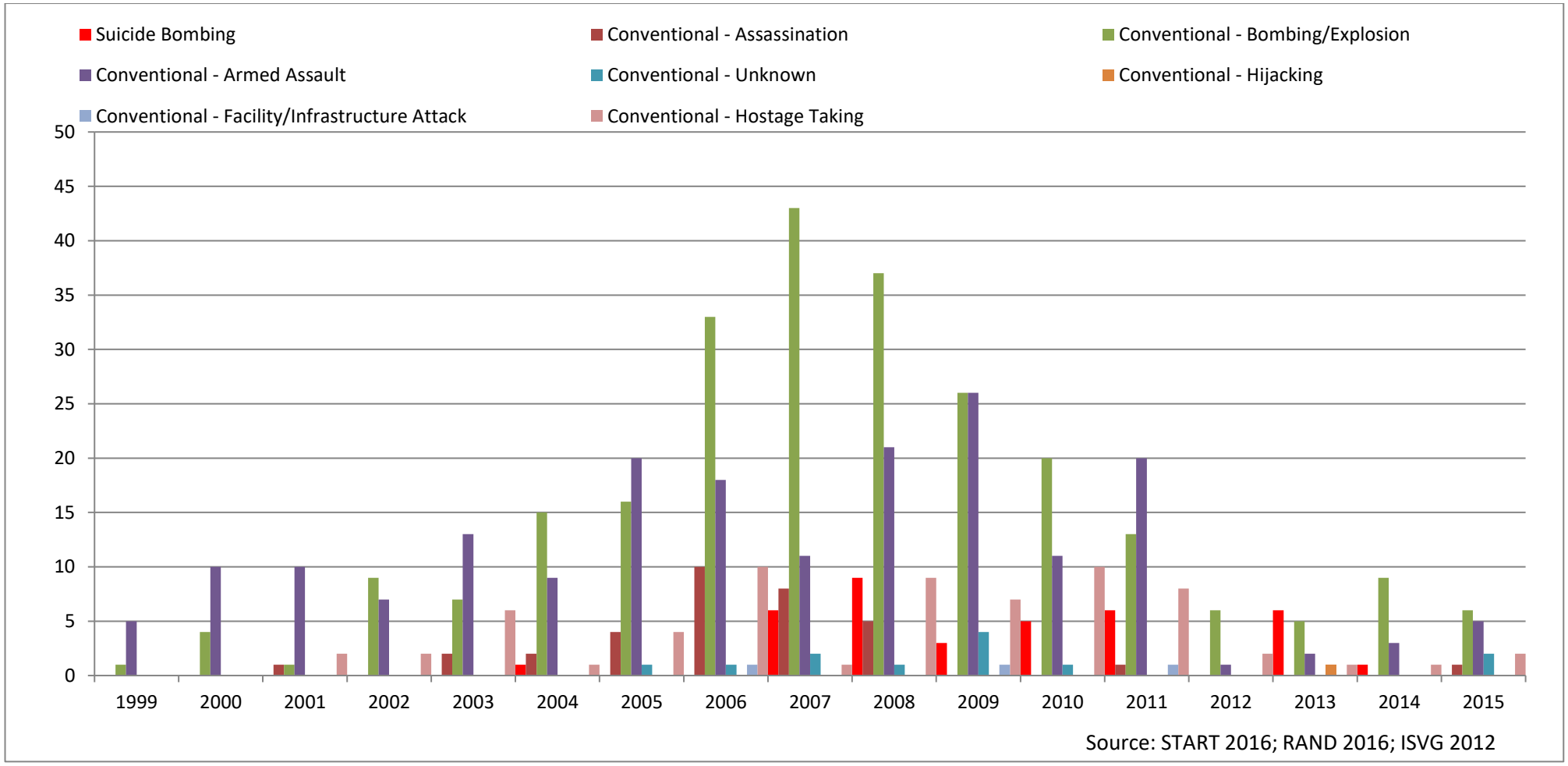
The adoption of suicide bombing reflects the influence of Al-Qaida over AQIM. However, neither joining Al-Qaida, nor adopting suicide bombing, were universally popular within the GSPC-AQIM, causing internal disagreements. High ranking GSPC-AQIM leaders opposed Droukdel's strategy of suicide bombing as "imported from Iraq and serving only Al-Qaida" (Wilkinson 2012 pp16-19).

Following the 11 April 2007 suicide bombings in Algiers, which caused many Muslim civilian casualties, they deemed AQIM was returning to the *deviance* of the GIA. Indicative of this El-Watan reported that anonymous calls to Algeria's security forces helped prevent two suicide bombings. The attack was also criticized by a smaller militant group, the Guardians of the Salafi Call (HDS), delaying a planned merger until 2013 (SITE 2013). AQIM's recruitment manager, Samir Sayoud (aka Samir Moussab) and religious scholar Touati Othame (aka Abou Al-Abbas) surrendered following the group's adoption of suicide attacks (Ouellet et al. 2014 p658).

AQIM's aversion to suicide bombing is thus normative, to assuage divisions within the group (McGregor 2007; Wilkinson 2012 pp16-19) following an "Algerian martyrology" differing from that of Al-Qaida and EIJ (Ouellet et al. 2014 pp657-658). The justifications for suicide attacks espoused by Qaradawi and Zawahiri seemingly had less resonance within AQIM than Al-Qaida.

Here the legacy of the GIA and resulting themes of *deviationism* and the return to *Salafism* influences AQIM's strategic practices, particularly its aversion to suicide attacks which have largely been limited to police and military targets. The opinions of, and negotiations with, the HDS may also have influenced AQIM's behaviour. Its limitation of suicide bombing is the result of an "institutional compromise" within AQIM, firstly, due to internal disputes over the legitimacy of this strategic practice; and, secondly, their indiscriminate nature, in order to avoid Muslim civilian casualties (Ouellet et al. 2014 pp657-659). The latter, influenced by

Figure 20: GSPC-AQIM Suicide and Non-Suicide Attacks by Year



the *deviationist* theme, is in order to disassociate itself from the anti-civilian violence of the GIA.

Perhaps AQIM recruits, particularly Algerians, have largely been unwilling to volunteer for suicide missions. Though only a snapshot, records captured at Sinjar from Al-Qaida in Iraq/ISI of foreign recruits entering Iraq in the year from August 2006 to 2007 indicated that only 5/36 (13.9%) of Algerian foreign fighters in Iraq wished to become suicide bombers, compared to 91.7% of Moroccans, 85.2% of Libyan's and 41.7% of Tunisians (Felter and Fishman 2007 p19). Ouellet et al argue Algerians spurn the notion of suicide attacks as acts of *martyrdom*, but rather acts of murder, due to the legacy of GIA violence against civilians. Algerians, they argue, cling to the notion of *martyrdom* fostered by FLN insurgents and subsequent government of Algeria, blending nationalist and Islamic narratives, lionizing those killed on the battlefield for the cause of nationhood as *martyrs*. Self-immolation falls outside this "martyrology" (Ouellet et al. 2014 p657-659; Zisenwine 2016). This explains why, unlike Al-Qaida, AQIM has largely confined suicide bombings to military and police targets. This chimes with the theme that AQIM does not target civilians.

The practice of suicide bombing seems to be somewhat undergoing a process of normalization with a slight upward trend in the proportion of AQIM attacks which are 'martyrdom operations', at least up to 2013, shown in figure 20. This is, perhaps, due to the diffusion of practical knowledge on constructing suicide bombs amongst AQIM's battalions; depletion in its ranks following Algerian amnesties (since as Zawahiri argues suicide attacks are less costly in manpower); and increased recruitment of non-Algerians.

The FLN's overthrowal of the colonial regime provides these insurgent groups with a blueprint or "national tradition" of how to bring about regime change.

Hugh Roberts argues that the "main source" of the jihadist trend in Algeria is a "nationalist guerrilla tradition" beginning with the FLN's insurrection using the dominant language of protest of the time, rather than Salafism itself. He points out that besides fighting for the ALN, Bouyali had participated in the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS) rebellion of 1963-1965 prior to the MIA's insurgency of the 1980s (2011 pp34-35).

Roberts emphasizes the influence of "national traditions" amongst jihadist organizations. Zawahiri and EIJ were initially inclined towards revolution in Egypt along the lines of Nasser's military coup by attempting to infiltrate the military (appendix A3.15). Such infiltration was exemplified by Sadat's assassination by Egyptian soldiers (Al-Zayyat 2004; Gerges 2009 p121; Roberts 2011 p38).

Guerrilla warfare was the model for progression to Algerian independence and has been seen as the only way towards creating an *Islamic state* by the jihadists of the early GIA and GSPC-AQIM. Indeed, AQIM's strategic practice of guerrilla warfare is based on historical, geographical and economic factors. There is a tradition of guerrilla warfare in the Maghreb (appendix B3). In Algeria this guerrilla tradition incorporates the hit-and-run and ambush tactics of Abd al-Qadir (B3.1) and the FLN/ALN (Derradji 1997 pp42-53; Laqueur 1976 pp69, 297) also used by the MIA, early GIA (B3.6) and GSPC-AQIM. The strategic practice of bombings utilized by the GIA and GSPC-AQIM parallels the urban bombing campaign of the FLN, particularly the Battle of Algiers. These strategic practices are part of Algeria's national tradition starting with the FLN.

> "…the original MIA was an offshoot of the guerrilla tradition of the ALN and that it was veterans of the MIA, and thus products of this tradition at one remove, who launched the armed struggle against the regime in 1992.

> The tradition of the ALN was the tradition of the revolutionary maquis and thus both a tradition of mobilising popular support for a protracted guerrilla war and a tradition that actually constituted the state" (Roberts 2011 pp38-39).

This is not solely an Algerian tradition, but a wider Maghrebi phenomenon. AQIM is also influenced by and invokes the *master narratives* of Umar Mukhtar and Abd al-Karim who led *defensive jihads* against imperialism, fighting the Italians in Libya, and the Spanish and French in Morocco, respectively (appendix B3.2-B3.3). Although Abd al-Qadir (B3.1)—who resisted the French conquest of Algeria—and Umar Mukhtar were both Sufis, the latter is referenced in AQIM's strategic narrative, because he followed the austere Sanusi brotherhood deemed acceptable by Salafis. By citing Umar Mukhtar, AQIM is appealing to Libyans by invoking their national hero. I have not come across any references to Abd al-Qadir in the group's strategic narrative. However, AQIM has a more recent example of asymmetric warfare against French colonialism in Algeria in the FLN and, following their subsequent '*betrayal*', against the *apostate* regime in Mustafa Bouyali and the pre-*deviation* GIA.

AQIM's preference for guerrilla warfare, primarily targeting security forces, is itself influenced by distancing itself from the terroristic violence meted out upon Algeria's civilians by GIA *deviants*. Since Algeria and its neighbours are majority Sunni Muslim countries, violence against civilians is counterproductive as the GIA discovered, alienating its base of support (Kalyvas 1999 p251). Algeria lacks the religious divisions of Iraq where Al-Qaida in Iraq and latterly ISIS has exploited sectarian tensions by targeting the Shia majority, who they deem heretics, seeking to provoke civil war and make Iraq ungovernable (Hafez 2007 pp96-97). Through this brutal logic, ISIS was able to carve out a territory for itself in Iraq and Syria.

However, this strategy *deviates* from that of Al-Qaida-central who rebuked Zarqawi for initiating sectarian war in Iraq (GlobalSecurity 2005), aware, like AQIM, of the reputational consequences of mass killings of Muslim civilians, suffered by the GIA for killing Sunni civilians in Algeria.

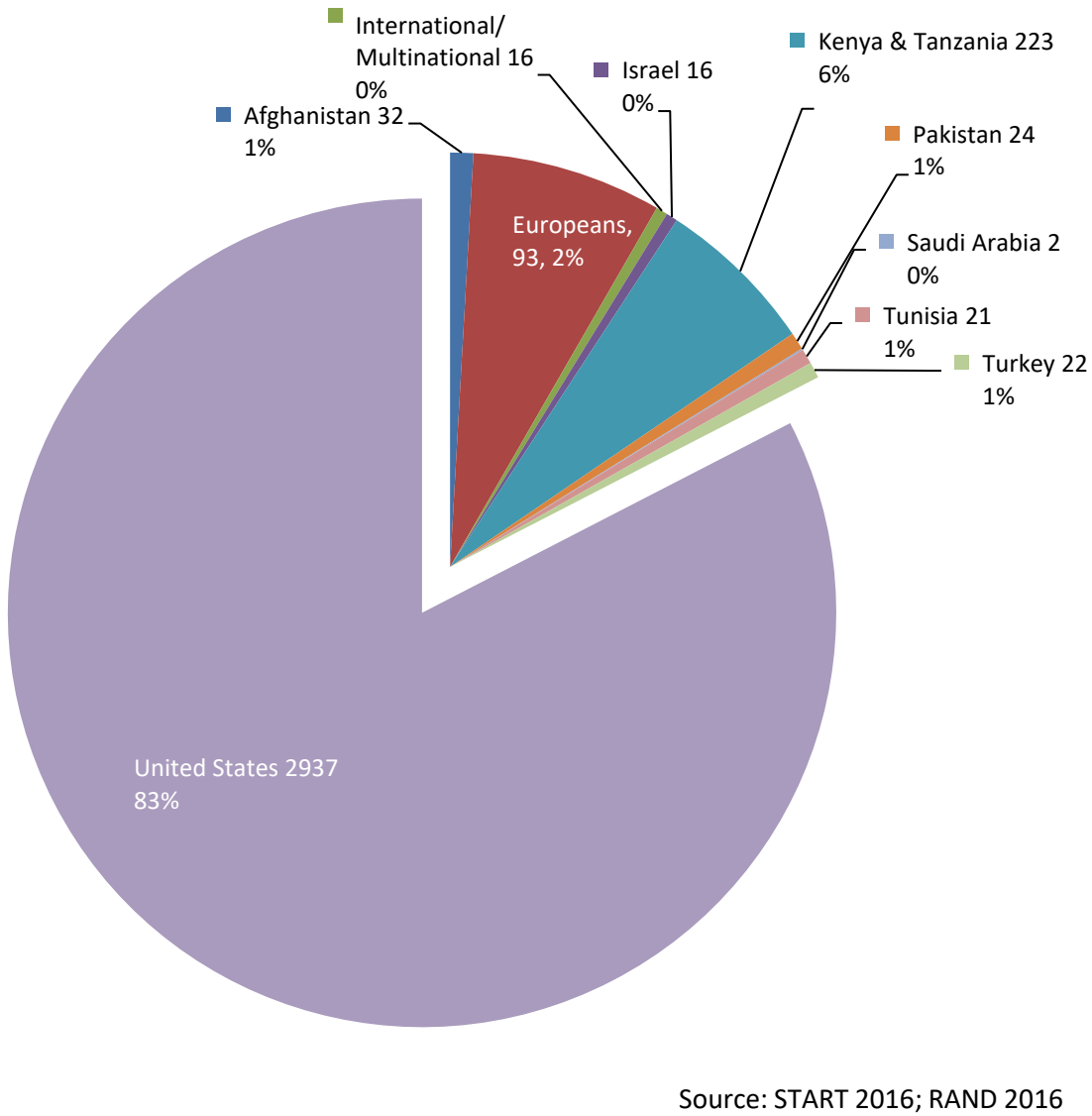
AQIM's guerrilla tradition is not solely based on imitation of, or disassociation from preceding movements, but also geography and its lack of resources. Guerrilla warfare is cheap (Laqueur 1976 p379) and the mountains and deserts of the Maghreb and Sahara are well suited to such practices. AQIM emulates its predecessors' utilization of this terrain to their advantage, employing many of the same strategic practices as preceding movements, particularly hit-and-run raids.

Operating on a regional scale, AQIM is thus bound to terrain ideal for guerrilla warfare thus following a *near enemy* strategy. By contrast, terrorism is more suited to the *far enemy* strategy pursued by Al-Qaida as vanguard of global jihad; operating on a global rather than a regional scale to provoke and punish the West by attacking soft targets. Guerrilla war is necessarily protracted, wearing down the enemy through repeated small attacks, within a specific territory:

> "…the guerrilla fights the war of the flea. The flea bites, hops, and bites again, nimbly avoiding the foot that would crush him" (Taber 1965 p53).

Rather than the guerrilla approach of death by a thousand cuts pursued by AQIM, Al-Qaida's signature strategic practice is carrying out spectacular terrorist events, frequently incorporating multiple, often simultaneous, suicide attacks; killing as many '*infidels*' at once as possible, illustrated by 9/11. Al-Qaida favours bombings and suicide attacks far above armed assaults, primarily attacking civilian targets demonstrating a terrorist strategy.

Figure 21: Deaths by Nationality Targeted by Al-Qaida



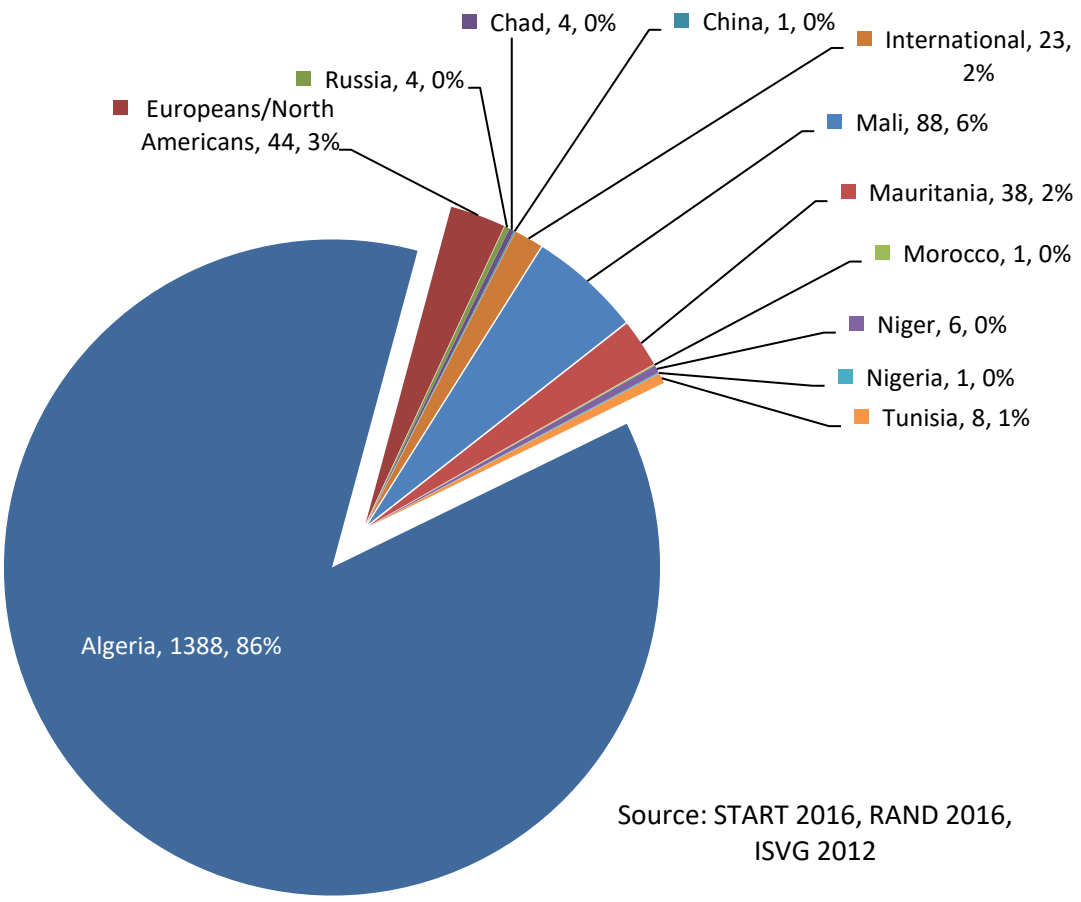
Source: START 2016; RAND 2016

As figure 21 indicates, the death toll of Al-Qaida-central attacks by nationality targeted shows it has primarily targeted Americans, including the mass casualties of 9/11, and Europeans indicating a *far enemy* strategy. The Kenyan and Tanzanian casualties reflect the Embassy bombings. However, in contrast with Al-Qaida, the GSPC-AQIM has principally employed guerrilla practices against the *near enemy* as part of a strategy of insurgency, rather than terrorism against the *far enemy*. The group has long been pursuing its own strategy of exhaustion and vexation,

fighting a war of attrition against Algerian security forces, harassing them with ambushes, hit-and-run attacks, IEDs and suicide bombings.

Figure 22 shows the GSPC-AQIM has overwhelmingly killed Algerians, followed a distant second by Malians, third by Europeans (including Russians) and North Americans combined and fourth Mauritanians, demonstrating a *near enemy* strategy.

Figure 22: Deaths by Target Nationality in GSPC-AQIM Attacks 1999-2015



AQIM has a much greater propensity for holding foreign *infidels* hostage than Al-Qaida. While justifying abductions with a *far enemy* narrative, AQIM appears to be primarily motivated by money, to fund their activities, since most hostages were released in exchange for ransoms. Ransoming captives can be justified by the

Quran which says prisoners of war were to receive grace or be ransomed in exchange for money or indentured work. Ibn Taymiyyah and Abdullah Azzam, similarly argued prisoners could be ransomed (Bar 2006 pp65-66). These profits from hostages both entrenched this strategic practice and encouraged the GSPC-AQIM to increase its illicit business activities (Rosato 2016 p127). Roberts argues that AQIM's kidnapping and other criminal activities follows a "tradition of banditry" to which Algerian jihadists, unable to imitate the ALN's success have frequently descended. The GSPC's ransom demand for Westerners abducted in 2003 marked its "decline into brigandage rather than continued adherence to a revolutionary jihadi purpose…" (Roberts 2011 pp40-41).

Indeed, the GIA and GSPC-AQIM practiced extortion against the Algerian people and businesses. The group is also believed to be involved in other forms of organized crime motivated by profit in the region, participating in arms and cocaine smuggling networks (Rosato 2016 pp123-124), pointing to a need or desire to make money. This illustrates AQIM's opportunism using the permissive environment of weak state structures in the Sahara-Sahel to its advantage (Rosato 2016 pp125, 129).

The group's turn to criminality shows the organization ensuring its survival despite its failure to achieve Islamic revolution in Algeria (Roberts 2011 p43). The regionalization of its activities also demonstrates opportunism, repurposing in light of its failure in Algeria by expanding its struggle to neighbouring countries whilst using its broadening strategic narrative to justify its continued existence.

According to Martinez, there is a tradition in Algeria of using violence as a means of gaining prestige, honour and profit, such as the Barbary pirates who gained authority under Ottoman rule; new officials (caids) appointed by French colonists; and the FLN "colonels" who gained power with independence (2000 pp10-14).

Kidnap for ransom echoes Maghrebi history. Where AQIM abducts Westerners by land; corsairs captured European and American ships, seizing their crews and passengers at sea, for ransom or slavery. The coasts of Europe were also raided for slaves. These acts were frequently framed as *revenge* against the Christians (Kiser 2008 p35; Leiner 2007 pp14-15).

While AQIM has emulated Al-Qaida by adopting suicide bombing it has largely used this practice as a battlefield tactic against the *apostate* security forces of Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Niger. Conversely, Al-Qaida has frequently employed suicide attacks against *crusader* targets. Both groups frame these suicide attacks as *martyrdom operations* and their perpetrators as *martyrs*; and their violence more broadly as *retribution* for the *victimization*, oppression and humiliation of Muslims by *near* and *far enemies*.

8.3 Conclusion

Despite operating under the Al-Qaida brand-name and some common characters and overlapping themes, Al-Qaida and AQIM possess distinct strategic cultures reflecting differing and unique histories as separate entities. Both narratives have become increasingly hybridized.

While Al-Qaida's narrative has become increasingly bellicose towards Muslim regimes, overall Al-Qaida's strategic culture displays limited "ideological hybridization" in its narrative and practices, primarily striking Western targets (Hegghammer 2009 p33). This demonstrates a *far enemy* strategic culture. By contrast, those of the GSPC-AQIM demonstrate that while the group's strategic narrative has increasingly incorporated the *far enemy* narrative of Al-Qaida since Hattab's departure, the group's strategic practices still demonstrate a dominant *near enemy* strategic culture.

Aside from the anomaly of AQIM's co-operation with the Iraqi insurgency, the themes of *solidarity* and fighting *crusaders* have had little practical impact. The GSPC aligned itself with Al-Qaida due to a legitimacy crisis following the legacy of the bloody civil war. In joining Al-Qaida, the GSPC desired "external legitimation" for continuing its jihad (Roberts 2011 p42). However, joining Al-Qaida also caused divisions within the organization, particularly over the use of suicide bombing.

The GSPC-AQIM strategic culture has been undergoing a process of regionalization, increasingly referencing and targeting Algeria's neighbours, particularly Mali (Torres-Soriano 2016 p976). Meanwhile, there has been a marked decline in attacks in Algeria. This adaptation has similarly been prompted by changes in the regional political and strategic environment. Firstly, the 'shock' of Algerian counterterrorism successes and reconciliation process; and secondly, taking advantage of weaker, neighbouring states, particularly the opportunity of the power vacuum created by the Tuareg rebellion and coup in Mali in 2012. This allowed AQIM and its allies to create a short-lived *Islamic state*, demonstrating the group's continued predisposition for establishing such a regime in the Maghreb-Sahel. Despite its regionalization and shifting focus from Algeria to Mali, the increasing hybridization of the GSPC-AQIM narrative is increasingly at odds with the continuity in practices targeting the *near enemy*. Operations against the *far enemy* have been limited.

The group's strategic narrative and practices show that it has evolved from a nationalistic, Algeria-centric strategic culture, to a broader, regional *near enemy* one. Thus, AQIM remains dedicated to a *near enemy* agenda. This regionalization seems to be a reaction to setbacks in Algeria; the resilience of the *apostate* regime despite more than two decades of struggle and its reconciliation scheme. The

strategic cultures of Al-Qaida and AQIM, in both narrative and practices, demonstrate opposing strategic priorities. Al-Qaida has innovated by inverting the priorities of the jihadist movement by provoking the USA, prioritizing the battle against the West over Islamic revolution in Muslim countries, which must come later. Indeed, Zawahiri, who dedicated much of his life to overthrowing the Egyptian regime underwent a role reversal, seemingly under Bin Laden's influence, demonstrating a degree of opportunism in joining Al-Qaida, as EIJ was effectively defeated in Egypt.

Despite rebranding as an Al-Qaida franchise, AQIM continues to prioritize the battle against the *near enemy*. Faced with a similar failure in Algeria, AQIM has shown opportunism in a different way, not by inverting its priorities and pursuing a *far enemy* strategy against the West, but by broadening its activities into neighbouring countries, with weaker governments. Despite their short-lived success in Mali, French intervention ultimately frustrated this goal, which helps explain AQIM's increasingly anti-French rhetoric. While this can be seen as a degree of hybridization, it is more a continuation of the *anti-colonial* theme as the old colonial *master* once again dashed the aspirations of Muslim self-rule according to Islamic law, first through *occupation* and currently its continued support for the region's *apostate* regimes. AQIM's goal of establishing a permanent *Islamic state* in the Maghreb-Sahel remains elusive.

Chapter one posed the question of the extent to which AQIM has implement the strategic culture of Al-Qaida-central. This chapter has shown that, despite the hybridization of its strategic narrative, AQIM has failed to fully embrace the strategic culture of Al-Qaida, particularly its *far enemy* strategy, and has restricted its use of Al-Qaida's favoured strategic practice of suicide attacks. Beyond the limited adoption of suicide tactics rebranding has had little significant impact

upon the group's strategic practices. This continuity is due to both internal and local influences. AQIM continues the region's guerrilla tradition, favouring strategic practices of guerrilla warfare, against the security forces of the regimes in its region of operations, over terrorist tactics targeting civilians. These guerrilla practices are influenced by the region's geography and a history of violence against Algerian civilians; and internal divisions over the group's alliance with Al-Qaida and the legitimacy of 'martyrdom operations'. This demonstrates the continuing dominance of a *near enemy* strategic culture. This suggests that by aligning itself with Al-Qaida, the GSPC-AQIM sought to boast its legitimacy, emphasizing its jihadist credentials. Rather than adopting Al-Qaida's strategic culture it has increased its *far enemy* rhetoric for largely instrumental reasons.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs), particularly Salafi-Jihadist ones (SJVNSAs), are a major source of instability in the contemporary world. This study employed a strategic cultural approach to provide insight into Al-Qaida and AQIM, and the Salafi-Jihadist movement generally. It demonstrates that despite their Al-Qaida nomenclature the two organizations have distinct strategic cultures.

Since the contemporary struggle between SJVNSAs and states is both "semiotic" and "military" (McGovern 2010 p81), the study adopted Lock (2010), Neumann and Heikka's (2005) conception of strategic culture as the interaction of narrative and practices. As such my conception incorporates both the ideational, in the form of strategic narratives, and behavioural aspects, or strategic practices, into a mutually constitutive strategic cultural whole.

This provides an interpretivist alternative to Alastair Johnston's (1995a; 1995b) positivist approach which separates strategic culture from behaviour. The latter was rejected in chapter two, concurring with Colin Gray (1999b) that strategic culture cannot be disentangled from behaviour. This is more consonant with conceptions of culture in contemporary sociology and anthropology than the outdated conceptions usually employed in strategic studies (Bloomfield 2012; Neumann and Heikka 2005 pp6-9). Chapter two also dismissed the predictive utility of Johnston's conception since strategic cultures evolve and change.

Traditionally the literature on strategic culture has focused upon states. This thesis has, firstly, demonstrated that strategic cultural approaches provide a useful tool for examining VNSAs. However, VNSAs differ due to their relatively small size and clandestine, compartmentalized and opportunistic nature, which enables their survival. Consequently, the strategic cultures of VNSAs are more elusive and

changeable, due to their clandestinity and greater proclivity for factionalism, secessionism and restructuring, as discussed in chapters two (p46) and eight (p263). Despite this clandestinity, strategic cultural analyses of VNSAs are feasible by studying their strategic narratives and strategic practices.

The case studies have shown that VNSAs often have weak chains of command—illustrated by AQIM during the Mali War—lacking the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures and formal decision-making procedures of states. Al-Qaida, the EIJ and GIA were all led by domineering or dictatorial leaders. The GSPC-AQIM and its GIA precedessor have demonstrated the proclivity of VNSAs to factionalism. The GIA was particularly factional with purges within and disagreements over its anti-Muslim-civilian strategy leading it to splinter. This secessionism led to the formation of the GSPC. Al-Qaida similarly formed when Bin Laden seceded from Azzam's MAK. Further factionalism over the GSPC's relationship with Al-Qaida and reconciliation led Hattab and his followers to surrender to the Algerian government. Meanwhile, the remaining group rebranded as AQIM. Indeed, secession is often the easiest way to resolve disputes and affect strategic cultural change. These factors make VNSAs more prone to strategic cultural change than states.

The strategic cultures of states and VNSAs are influenced by many of the same factors: culture and religion, political culture, history and geography, key texts and thinkers. Yet, these sources of strategic culture also vary between distinct actors, whether state or VNSA, some being more important than others.

Secondly, it has made a significant, in-depth contribution to the small literature on the strategic culture of VNSAs exemplified by the works of J.M. Long (2009), Thomas Johnson (2007) James Smith (2008) and Richard Shultz (2012) discussed in chapter two. It goes beyond the largely narrative approaches of the

aforementioned works where behavioural aspects, if mentioned, are limited; treated as secondary to the ideational elements of strategic culture.

This study built upon Long's (2009) thematic narrative approach to Al-Qaida's strategic culture by, firstly, incorporating literary narrative concepts employed by Halverson et al (2011) and Bernardi et al (2012) in studying Islamist extremist narratives. Secondly, it interlinks these strategic narratives of VNSAs with an analysis of their real-world actions by incorporating a practice approach. This approach is practical for both, studying clandestine VNSAs and how ideational and behaviourial elements of strategic culture interact. It goes beyond an analysis of what VNSAs say, but how, if at all, these ideas manifest themselves in their behaviour, which may in turn shape that very narrative.

The primary research tasks have been to identify the strategic cultures of Al-Qaida-central (chapters 4 and 5) and AQIM (chapters 6 and 7), before comparing them; exploring the extent Al-Qaida-central and its franchise, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), share a common strategic culture. Common wisdom holds that these jihadist organizations are essentially the same, referring to franchises around the world as simply 'Al-Qaida' or 'ISIS'; illuminating the similarities between these core groups and their franchises, but obscuring potential differences.

By comparing and contrasting the strategic narratives and practices of Al-Qaida-central and AQIM, as separate entities, my comparative strategic cultural approach demonstrates that while there are similarities, there are also significant differences between the two organizations. This is likely true for other SJVNSAs too; confirming what Long (2009 p202) suggests, that particular Salafi-Jihadist groups, or "Al-Qaidas" adapt the broader ideology or Salafi-Jihadist milieu into their own national and regional contexts, forming idiosyncratic strategic cultures.

As such they combine local and external influences. This debunks the conception of Al-Qaida and its franchises as a homogeneous movement. Treating affiliates as separate entities allows tailored responses to individual nodes and potentially exploiting divisions within the movement (Cronin 2006 pp41-46).

9.1 Findings

This section focuses on the thesis' main findings. The study identified that Al-Qaida and AQIM have identifiable, relatively coherent, but differing strategic cultures. Al-Qaida's and AQIM's strategic cultures differ primarily in their strategic priorities, with the former prioritizing the battle against the *far enemy*, i.e. the West, and the latter fighting local regimes or the *near enemy*, as chapter 8 demonstrated. It showed the two narratives incorporate many of the same themes, importantly those of the *Islamic state*, *apostasy*, *defensive jihad*, *victimhood* and *martyrdom*, due to their shared ideational influences and Salafi-Jihadist ideology.

Moreover, since Al-Qaida and AQIM share a common doctrinal universe, their strategic narratives incorporate many of the same archetypes, though AQIM includes additional characters like the *deviant* GIA. However, AQIM's strategic narrative also incorporates local *master narratives* and their respective historical characters, comparing themselves analogously with the exploits of its heroes such as Uqba ibn Nafi, Tariq Ibn Ziyad and Ibn Tashfin. Both utilize *ruse* and *deliverance story-forms*, depicting a conspiracy against Islam and a solution to Muslim's problems by establishing *Islamic states*. This resolution reflects the ideas of Rida, Mawdudi and Qutb that an *Islamic state* or *caliphate* ruled according to *sharia* is the ideal society. Despite their sometimes superficial thematic similarities, which differ more than may first appear, their differences and nuances point to differing strategic priorities, illustrated in chapter 8.

Retribution and *reciprocity* are resounding themes, used to justify the violence of both organizations. Their strategic practices, however, demonstrate more stark differences in their tactics and targeting practices, hence differing strategic cultures. While both have become hybrid narratives of *near* and *far* enemies, that of Al-Qaida places greater emphasis on the battle against the former, i.e. the West, whereas that of AQIM is more focused on local regimes in the Maghreb-Sahel.

Al-Qaida's *far enemy* strategy is influenced by the themes of *Soviet defeat*—reflecting the groups origins during the Afghan-Soviet jihad—*American weakness* and *occupation*. Its strategic practice of 'martyrdom operations' is influenced by Egyptian Islamic Jihad, emulating the tactics of Hizballah and the LTTE. Al-Qaida practices a strategy of global terrorism primarily targeting Western civilians with suicide attacks, as part of its dual strategies of provocation and coercive punishment, designed to influence both elections and foreign policy.

In contrast, AQIM employs a guerrilla strategy, influenced by the guerrilla tradition in the Maghreb (appendix B3), and has predominantly targeted Algerian and Malian security forces in a strategy of guerrilla warfare; primarily utilizing conventional bombing and armed assaults against the *near enemy* and occasional kidnappings targeting the *far enemy*, when opportunities arise. While Al-Qaida pursued a strategy of provocation against America (p116), the GSPC-AQIM has not. Indeed, GSPC leader, Hassan Hattab, feared the consequences of this *far enemy* strategy for his own group (p165).

These add up to differing strategic cultures. AQIM has emulated Al-Qaida's practice of suicide bombings, but internal and ideational factors have so far limited their use, though this may be beginning to change. This shows that, as suggested in chapter one, the strategic cultures of SJVNSAs are "novel blends" of narratives and practices (Snow and Byrd 2007 p130). As argued in chapter eight,

this demonstrates that despite some similarities AQIM has failed to adopt fully the strategic culture of Al-Qaida-central since rebranding as an Al-Qaida franchise.

Regarding strategic cultural change the study has shown, firstly, VNSAs' proclivity for change. The easiest way to affect strategic cultural change is often secession demonstrated by Bin Laden's separation from Azzam's MAK and the GSPC's split from the GIA. Secondly, it has shown that Al-Qaida and AQIM have evolved over time, both increasingly undergoing a degree of hybridization in their strategic narratives, but not convergence in strategic cultures, particularly in terms of practices. The strategic practices of Al-Qaida have become more brutal towards Western civilians since the mid-1990s. AQIM by contrast has tried to distance itself from the brutality its GIA predecessor inflicted on Algerian civilians.

Indeed, the GSPC attempted to return to the *status quo ante*, before GIA *deviation*, continuing a *near enemy* agenda in Algeria. However, AQIM's strategic culture has subsequently undergone a process of regionalization, following setbacks in Algeria; gradually expanding its operations outside its birthplace in Algeria, into Mauritania, Niger and particularly Mali. A changing strategic environment caused this strategic cultural change, with strategic 'shocks' or setbacks (pp40-46) in Algeria restricting AQIM activities there while new opportunities arose in Mali, discussed in chapter seven. Thus, AQIM has shifted its primary focus from Algeria to Mali seizing the opportunity of the power vacuum in the latter following the military coup and Tuareg rebellion.

Egyptian Islamic Jihad in contrast reacted to a changing strategic environment and personnel change—its strategic defeat with the 'shock' of losing the majority of its personnel inside Egypt—by joining Al-Qaida and refocusing on the latter's *far enemy* agenda. Indeed, Bin Laden and Ayman az-Zawahiri were *norm entrepreneurs*

(p43) who, following the failure of jihad in Egypt and GIA havoc in Algeria concluded Al-Qaida must innovate by provoking America.

Al-Qaida has a dominant, *far enemy* strategic culture, whereas AQIM's is a *near enemy* one. This indicates that the GSPC joined Al-Qaida for instrumental reasons, seeking legitimacy for its cause and to bolster recruitment rather than to affect a drastic change in strategic culture or strategy. The strategic culture of Al-Qaida-central has been more consistent, static, and thus in a sense more state-like, than that of AQIM. The latter has adjusted to a changing security environment: of setbacks, reconciliation and its legitimacy crisis in Algeria following the GIA's civilian massacres of the civil war, leading to the regionalization of its activities. It has also exploited new opportunities of kidnapping in the Maghreb-Sahel and the emerging political vacuum in Mali created by the Tuareg rebellion of 2012 shifting its focus there, leading to French intervention. AQIM's strategic culture is also un-state-like, lacking the hierarchical command and control of state militaries, manifesting in ill-discipline. Al-Qaida-central, by contrast, operates like a dictatorship.

Meanwhile, Al-Qaida-central has seemingly lost relevance, eclipsed by ISIS. Despite its rhetoric, up to now at least, AQIM constitutes less of a threat to Western homelands than its GIA predecessor or Al-Qaida-central, though kidnapping Westerners is likely to continue when opportunities arise. On the other hand, maybe Al-Qaida did not intend such a change from its new franchise, following its dual strategy of attacking the *far enemy* whilst outsourcing the battle against the *near enemy* to establish an *Islamic state*.

9.2 Further Research

The strategic cultural approach of narratives and practices promulgated in this study opens up a new avenue for research into VNSAs. Expanding this comparative strategic cultural approach to additional SJVNSAs would provide further insight into the similarities, and perhaps more importantly, the differences between groups within the global Salafi-Jihadist movement; how they compare and contrast in narratives, practices and as strategic cultural wholes. An expanded study could include Al-Qaida franchises and affiliates, such as Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) or Al-Shabaab in Somalia; or ISIS and its affiliates, to see how their strategic cultures differ from Al-Qaida-central and AQIM. Incorporating ISIS into this study could provide insights into its similarities, differences and rivalry with Al-Qaida, perhaps even cracks and divisions within the global Salafi-Jihadist movement, which does not appear to be dissipating anytime soon.

Factionalism, internal rivalries and domineering, dictatorial leaders are striking features within the cases of Al-Qaida, EIJ, AQIM and its predecessors, seemingly making SJVNSAs more prone to strategic cultural change than states. Ill-discipline, also a form of factionalism, as demonstrated by AQIM in Mali may create strategic cultural change from below. Further research would show whether these claims hold true for other Salafist and non-Salafist VNSAs.

Appendix A: Sources of Salafi-Jihadist VNSA Strategic Cultures

A1 Islamic History

A1.1 Battle of the Trench (627)

During this siege Muhammad's forces, outnumbered by pagan Arab and Jewish tribesmen from Mecca, utilized the terrain to successfully defend Medina (Glassé and Smith 2003a pp81-82). A trench was dug across the plain to the Medina's north, between the lava plains which surround it on three sides, to defend the city from the Meccan army. The ditch seemingly confounded the Meccans who, after more than a month were running short of supplies, gave up and went home (Gabriel 2007 pp131-141).

A1.2 Kharijites

In Arabic, *khawarij* or 'Kharijite' means those who 'secede', or 'go outside' "the legitimate authority of the state." The movement that became known as the *Khawarij* (pl.) or Kharijites were the first Muslim rebels. In 656 rebel tribesmen from Basra and Kufa in modern-day Iraq and Egypt murdered the third Caliph, Uthman, in Medina, accusing him of misruling and nepotism (Khatab 2011 p29; Watt 1961 p95).

A1.2.1 The Battle of the Camel (656)

Uthman was succeeded by the Prophet Muhammad's cousin, Ali. In Mecca, Muhammad's wife, Aisha, and two of the companions, Talha and al-Zubayr who were stripped of their governorships of Yemen and Bahrain, rejected his leadership for failing to punish Uthman's killers (Timani 2007). Those responsible for slaying Uthman came to support Ali, maintaining his death was justified

(Hodgson 1974 p214). The Meccan rebels marched on Basra where they clashed with governor Uthman bin Hanayf. A truce was agreed and broken while the two parties' awaited the Caliph's arrival, as Zubayr seized the governor and executed some of the Basran rebels, responsible for Uthman's death. On 8 December, Ali's forces prevailed over the rebels (Ali 2011; Timani 2007 pp9-12).

> "The Kharijites themselves, however, claimed to be the successors of the revolutionary party responsible for the assassination of the caliph Uthman" (Watt 1961 p95).

A1.2.2 The Battle of Siffin (657)

Uthman's nephew, Muawiya, the governor of Syria still refused to accept Ali as Caliph, apparently for failing to punish his uncle's assassins, leading to the Battle of Siffin. As Muawiya's forces were on the verge of defeat the two armies agreed to resolve the dispute by arbitration. Montgomery Watt believes the dispute was not primarily about who should be Caliph, but whether Uthman's death was justified. According to this account, the arbiters judged Uthman's death was unjustified. Many of Ali's supporters disagreed and deserted him, blaming him for agreeing to the arbitration they had encouraged (Watt 1961 p98).

The Kharijites disputed the authority of the Umayyad Sunnis. Kharijites—divided in order of extremity into three sub-sects, the extremist Azraqites defeated in Iraq in 699, the Sufrites and moderate Ibadites—agreed on three basic principles: Unlike mainstream Sunni Islam, sinful Muslims were not considered true believers. Committing a major sin constituted *apostasy*, though there was no agreement amongst the three branches on their treatment. Leaders who committed such transgressions, acted unjustly, violated or failed to uphold or govern according to Islamic principles did not constitute legitimate authority and could

justifiably be overthrown. Leadership of the Muslim community should not be hereditary or restricted to Arabs, as under the Umayyad caliphs; rather the *imam* should be elected on the basis of piety and religious learning by religious scholars (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp37-38).

The Azraqah, followers of Nafi ibn al-Azraq, were the most virulent faction of Kharijites, who from 684 exiled themselves from Basra to the mountains of Persia. These Asraqites believed in *istirad* that Muslims who did not fully accept their doctrines were unbelievers and should be killed; their women and children could be enslaved. Those who disagreed were not 'true' Muslims. Merely accepting their creed was not enough, unless one exiled oneself to their mountain camp (Watt 1961 p100).

Modern jihadists, like Al-Qaida, the EIJ, GIA and AQIM have often been denigrated as latter-day Kharijites believing the rulers of modern Muslim states like Egypt, Algeria, even Saudi Arabia, are *apostates* for failing to govern according to *sharia* law and must be overthrown and even killed. In its extreme form this doctrine echoes those of the Takfir al-Hijra (A3.10) and the later GIA, which not only condemned the Egyptian and Algerian regimes respectively, but broader society as *apostate* and worthy of death.

A1.3 Sykes-Picot and the Arab Revolt (1916)

During the First World War the British made, apparently, contradictory promises to the Hashemite ruler of Mecca, Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali, the French and the World Zionist Organization (Fieldhouse 2006 pp44-45). As the Ottomans entered the war Britain sought support from the Arabs. Britain promised the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein Ibn Ali, an Arab homeland in return for an Arab Revolt (1916-1918) against their Ottoman overlords (Fieldhouse 2006 pp52-53).

Lord Kitchener instructed Hussein be told:

> "If the Arab nation assists England… England will guarantee that no internal intervention takes place in Arabia, and will give Arabs every assistance against external aggression. It may be that an Arab of true race will assume the Khalifate at Mecca and Medina…".

In December 1914 the Sharif was assured that if the Arabs drove the Ottomans from Arabia, Britain would recognize their "perfect independence"; and in April 1915, that "The Arabian Peninsula and its Mahommedan holy places should remain independent. We shall not annex one foot of land in it, nor suffer any other Power to do so" (Fieldhouse 2006 pp52-53). Moreover, in a letter of 24 October to Hussein, Sir Henry McMahon promised vague boundaries for an Arab state:

> "The districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Hama, Homs and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab and should be excluded from the proposed limits and boundaries. With the above modification, and without prejudice to our existing treaties with territories wherein Great Britain is free to act without detriment to her Ally, France, I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give you the following assurances and make the following reply to your letter:-
>
> Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs within the territories included in the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sherif of Mecca. Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression and will recognize their inviolability….

> With regard to the Vilayets of Baghdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognize that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitates special measures of administrative control in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to secure our mutual economic interests" (Fieldhouse 2006 pp55-56).

Meanwhile, negotiations between Sir Mark Sykes for Britain and Francoise George-Picot for France over a post-war Middle East, in the event of Ottoman defeat, began on 23 November 1915. Both parties were aware of Britain's commitments to the Arabs. Ratified in May 1916 by Britain, France and Russia, the Sykes-Picot agreement is seen both by Arab nationalists and Islamists, including al-Qaida, as a *betrayal* by the French and more particularly the British, pursing imperialist agendas at the expense of the Arabs.

This secret agreement was published following the Russian Revolution of November 1917 as the Bolsheviks withdrew from the war (Fieldhouse 2006 pp50-52, 58; Long 2009 p206). Meanwhile, the Arab Revolt began on 5 June 1916. The promise of an independent Arab state within McMahon's broad and ambiguous boundaries was, in the eyes of many Arabs, contradicted, by the Sykes-Picot Agreement and Balfour Declaration promising a Jewish homeland (A1.4).

Sykes-Picot planned for the division of the Arab territories into spheres of influence. What exactly was promised by McMahon to Hussein, whether it included or excluded Palestine (lying south of the Damascus-Aleppo line mentioned in the correspondence), and whether the British fulfilled their commitments remains controversial. However, it is commonly seen as a *betrayal* amongst Arabs (Cleveland and Bunton 2009 pp158-160), and is portrayed as such by Al-Qaida. Whether Hussein knew of the Sykes-Picot Agreement prior to its

disclosure by the Bolsheviks remains subject to debate amongst historians (Fieldhouse 2006 pp52-58).

Figure 23: Map of Sykes-Picot Agreement[13]

[13] The original map from the National Archives is available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sykes%E2%80%93Picot_Agreement#/media/File:MPK1-426_Sykes_Picot_Agreement_Map_signed_8_May_1916.jpg. See also BBC (2016).

As figure 23 shows, Sykes-Picot proposed France impose direct control over northern Syria and a sphere of influence to the south. Meanwhile, Britain would impose a sphere of influence over Jordan and western Iraq whilst asserting direct control of what is now eastern Iraq, Kuwait and down the western coast of the Persian Gulf. Palestine was to become an international zone (BBC 2001e; Fieldhouse 2006 44-58).

Islamists see Sykes-Picot as contributing to the fall of the *Caliphate* (A1.6). According to Long (2009 p206) this is what Bin Laden was referring to in his video of October 2001:

> "What the United States tastes today is a very small thing compared to what we have tasted for tens of years. Our nation has been tasting this humiliation and contempt *for more than 80 years.* Its sons are being killed, its blood is being shed, its holy places are being attacked, and it is not being ruled according to what God has decreed. … But if the sword falls on the United States after 80 years, hypocrisy raises its head lamenting the deaths of these killers who tampered with the blood, honour, and holy places of the Muslims" (Bin Laden 2001b).

A1.4 Balfour Declaration (1917)

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 is also seen to *betray* the assumed promise that Palestine was to be part of the proposed independent Arab state. The letter of 2 November, from Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild declared:

> "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object."

Balfour did not mention the implied Jewish state saying "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country" (BBC 2001a).

The Declaration is seen as contributing to what the Arabs consider *al-nakba*, "the Catastrophe" of the foundation of Israel (A1.7.2; Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp149, 158; Long 2009 p206), appearing in Al-Qaida's rhetoric, which is equally critical of contemporary Palestinian politicians. In an interview on 16 December 2007 Ayman az-Zawahiri said:

> "The Balfour Declaration promised to cut off a piece of Palestine and give it to the Jews. But today, in comparison, the politicians bargaining for the Palestinians, among them some belonging to the Islamic movements, give up four-fifths of Palestine to the Jews, and they have yet to apologize for that to this very day" (Mansfield 2007 p378).

Both Sykes-Picot and the Balfour Declaration were apparently in contradiction to the independent state the Arabs thought they had been promised (BBC 2001e).

A1.5 Treaties of Sevres and Lausanne

Following the Turkish surrender with the Armistice of Mudros of 31 October 1918 the Entente presided over the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, as Sykes-Picot planned for. Under the terms of the armistice, the victors occupied the Dardanelles and Bosporus straits, seized control of the telegraph and railway systems and reserved the right to defend the Armenians of eastern Anatolia. A peace treaty was only concluded on 10 August 1920 at Sevres as "the allies put off as long as possible the difficulties of sorting out their contradictory promises to one another about the post-war disposal of the Ottoman lands". The 1920 Treaty of Sevres put

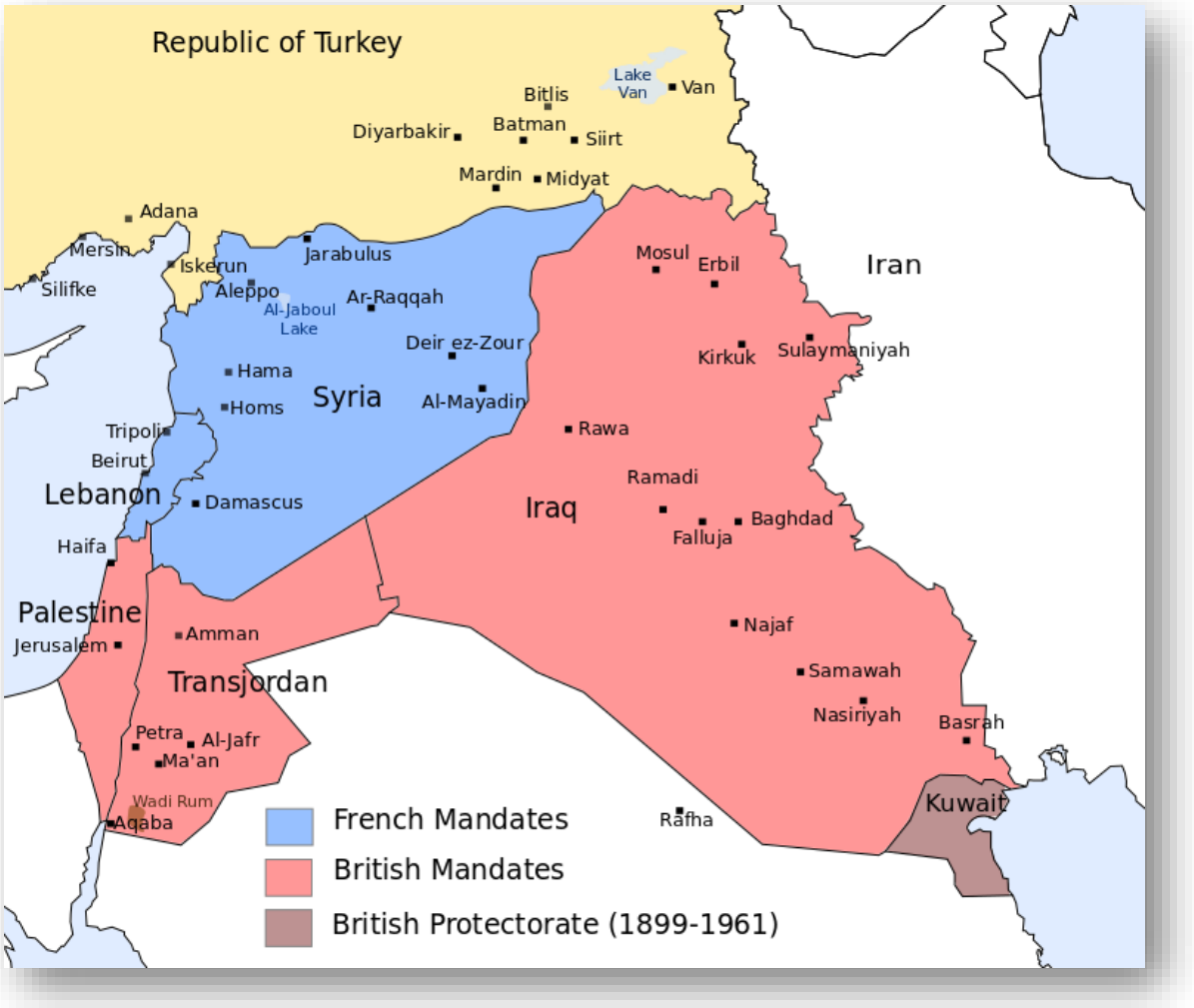
the Sykes-Picot Agreement in modified form, into effect, drawing the borders of the modern states of much of the Arab Middle East (Howard 2001 pp84-89).

Under the treaty the Ottoman Empire was reduced to north western Anatolia as the region was divided into British, French and Italian spheres of influence, and the Greeks, occupied Thrace and Izmir in May 1919, before launching an invasion of Turkey, but were beaten back by nationalist forces of Mustapha Kemal during the War of Independence of 1919-1922. The war overturned the Treaty of Sevres which was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne of July 1923, as Turkey regained the whole of Anatolia and eastern Thrace. Arab territories were, however, divided into British and French mandates endorsed by the League of Nations along slightly different boundaries from those of Sykes-Picot. Britain took responsibility for what became Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine while France took Syria and Lebanon (Howard 2001 pp84-89; Shuster 2004).

Meanwhile, Hussein's son Faisal had established an administration for an independent greater Syrian state in Damascus. France saw this as contravening Sykes-Picot and deposed Faisal, seizing control of its Syrian mandate in 1920. In compensation the British made Faisal king of a truncated kingdom in what became Iraq; and Transjordan was created for his brother, Abdullah, both under British tutelage (Cleveland and Bunton 2009 pp166-168). The mandate system itself was seen to contradict, or at least postpone, the British promise of independent statehood (Fieldhouse 2006 p70):

> "From the Arab perspective, the British pledges to Husayn had been sacrificed to the requirements of Allied harmony and imperial self-interest" (Cleveland and Bunton 2009 p168).

Figure 24: British and French Mandates



According to Bin Laden

> "Hence it is essential to hit the main enemy who divided the Ummah into small and little countries and pushed it, for the last few decades, into a state of confusion. The *Zionist-Crusader* alliance moves quickly to contain and abort any 'corrective movement' appearing in the Islamic countries" (Bin Laden 1996).

As for Hussein, his Meccan capital was subsequently conquered by Ibn Saud in 1926, subsequently becoming part of Saudi Arabia.

A1.6 Fall of the Caliphate (1924)

On 29 October 1923 the Turkish Parliament declared Turkey a republic. The new republican constitution, approved by parliament on 20 April 1924, abolished the Caliphate, the Ministry of Religious Endowments and its chief cleric, in the office of Sheikh al-Islam, were abolished; replaced by the Directorate of Religious Affairs and General Directorate of Religious Foundations. The *sharia* courts, madrassas and mosque colleges were closed down to create unitary systems of justice and education. Religious secondary education would be controlled by the Ministry of Education (Howard 2001 pp93-94). This is referred to as the "1924" master narrative by Halverson et al (2011 pp137-148).

According to Islamist extremist literature, Mustapha Kemal Atatürk was not a hero but a villain who was secretly Jewish, sometimes a Freemanson, and a British *agent*, who conspired with the *Zionists* (and the British) to undermine Islam by abolishing the Caliphate. This conspiracy has long endured amongst Islamists though it is contrary to the facts. Though some of the Young Turks were in fact Muslim converts from Donme Judaism, Atatürk was at least nominally Sunni (Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp137, 144-147). According to Sayyid Qutb's *Our Struggle with the Jews:*

> "And a Jew was behind the incitement of various kinds of tribal arrogance in the last Caliphate; the (fomenting) of revolutions which began with the removal of the *shari'ah* from the legislation and substituting for it 'The Constitution' during the period of the Sultan, Abdul-Hamid II; and the 'hero' Atatürk's ending of the *Caliphate*. Then behind the subsequent war declared against the first signs of Islamic revival, from every place on the face of the earth…stood the Jews" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p146).

Al-Qaida mythologizes the *Caliphate*. The Caliph was often brutal and corrupt, just like the kings of medieval Europe: "The 1924 master narrative fails to recognize any of these unsavory details or any other negative elements of the *Caliphate*." Moreover, the concept is not mentioned in the Quran and entirely post-dates Muhammad as his successors grappled to hold together the tribes which made up Muhammad's Muslim followers. According to Marshall Hodgson:

> "Though the Qur'an enforced the idea of a community, in which pious action was completed by joint action in the cause of God, it provided directly for no government other than that of the Prophet himself" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp137-140).

Atatürk established a modern, secular, republican state based on Turkish nationalism and European ideals, banning wearing of the fez and turban and adopting the Gregorian calendar in 1925. Arabic script was replaced by the Latin alphabet, Sufi orders outlawed, the constitutional clause making Islam the state religion, and *sharia* were abolished in 1928 to be replaced by new Western-style legal codes. Finally, from 1933 the call to prayer and reading the Quran had to be in Turkish (Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp141-142). The former Ottoman polity underwent a process of Westernization, secularization and Turkification to create a modern nation-state:

> "Atatürk systematically purged Islam from public life in Turkey in an alarmingly rapid fashion, and a national personality cult surrounding Atatürk developed in its place. Turkish secularism, therefore, differs substantially from American secularism. The Turkish state, even as many of Atatürk's reforms have since waned, remains very active in regulating and controlling the practice of religion in its borders" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p142).

Following the abolition of the *Caliphate*, movements emerged dedicated to its restoration. Hussein Ibn Ali, who was then in possession of the holy cities of the Hijaz, proclaimed himself Caliph in 1924 (as the British had suggested during World War One), before their conquest by the Saudis (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p142).

> "Th[e] notion of a Jewish conspiracy against Islam situates the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and the *Caliphate* at the center of modern historical events and seeks to explain, in grand terms, the current predicament of so many in Muslim societies. But it would be a mistake to reduce the 1924 master narrative to an anti-Semitic story about Jewish machinations against Islam. Rather, the most important element of the master narrative is still the abolition of the *Caliphate* and the implications of that event for the future of Islam" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p146).

According to Ayman az-Zawahiri's interview of 10 September 2006: "After the fall of Ottoman *Caliphate* a wave of psychological defeatism and ideological collapse spread" (Zawahiri 2006). Indeed, a sense of *anti-colonialism* is a vital element of this narrative.

For Rashid Rida (A3.7) the *Caliphate* was a source of Muslim political unity, independence and prestige vis-à-vis European imperialism (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p143). Al-Qaida's strategic culture is as much about the loss of Islamic power in the world, the secularization of Muslim societies, for which Atatürk is blamed, as the "humiliation" of Muslims by the great powers of the West. Moreover, Western support for Israel and that state's regional power and repression of the Palestinians must be seen within the context of this narrative, hence the oft-mentioned "*Crusader-Zionist*" plot to undermine Islam.

According to Kepel: "The *caliphate* was already a spent political force at the time, but it represented the ideal of spiritual unity within the Muslim world" (Kepel 2004c p43).

A1.7 Arab-Israeli Conflict

Palestine holds an important place in Islam, as it does in Christianity and Judaism, known as *al-Ard al-Muqadassa al-Mubaraka,* "The Holy and Blessed Land", Jerusalem, or *al-Quds*, being the third holiest city for Muslims after Mecca and Medina. Firstly, Palestine has a historical significance in all three religions, as the land of the prophets of the Bible and Quran. Besides the holy city there is the Tomb of the Patriarchs, *al-Haram al-Ibrahimi*, in Hebron believed to be the final resting place of Abraham/Ibrahim, Isaac and Jacob. Secondly, Jerusalem was the first *qibla*, or direction for Muslim prayer, before it was replaced by Mecca in 622AD, following the *hijra* to Medina and a revelation from Allah. Third is the legend of Muhammad's night journey, *isra,* to Jerusalem and ascension to seventh heaven, or *miraj.* There is only a brief reference to the night journey in the Quran (17:1):

> "Glory be to Him that transported His servant by night from the Masjid al-Haram [in Mecca] to the Masjid al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem], that area which We blessed in order to make clear Our Signs" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p149-150, 154).

The story in the hadith of Sahih Muslim says Muhammad was awoken by angel Gabriel beside the Kaaba at Mecca and the pair were transported by a mystical beast called al-Buraq to *al-Haram as-Sharif*, "the noble sanctuary" or the Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque are located. Muhammad is believed to have ascended to heaven from the place now beneath the Dome of

the Rock (Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp150-152). Byzantium surrendered Palestine to the Muslims in 638AD and was ruled by various Islamic empires—apart from 88 years as a Crusader kingdom—until the end of Ottoman Empire following World War One (Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp153-157).

Palestine is also sacred to Jews as the Promised Land and in light of a history of anti-Semitic persecution in Europe, which reached its climax during the Second World War, the idea of Jews returning to their historical homeland to escape persecution gathered strength. Jewish migration from Europe to Palestine began around the time of the Russian pogroms of 1881-1882. The manifesto for this Zionist movement, *The State of the Jews: An Attempt at a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question* was published by Theodor Herzl, a secular Viennese Jew in 1896, arguing that Jews were one people requiring a nation-state. The First Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland, in late August 1897 declared: "Zionism aims at the creation of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine to be secured by public law". The Zionist movement actively encouraged Jewish settlement in Palestine (Gerner 1994 pp12-15) and by 1945 Jews made up 30.6% of the population (Horowitz and Lissak 1978 p232).

> "For the Arabs, political Zionism and its substantial European and American support amounted to little more than colonial *occupation*" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p158).

A1.7.1 Palestinian Revolt (1936-1939)

Guerrillas led by Sheikh Izz ad-Din al-Qassam were killed by British soldiers in November 1935. On 15 April the Ikhwan al-Qassam guerrillas, named in honour of

Qassam's *martyrdom*[14], attacked a bus killing two Jews. Reprisals by the Haganah, killing two Palestinians, followed. The British announced a state of emergency as a full-scale revolt against the British mandate and Jewish settlement ensued. Arab political parties formed the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) under Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini, leading to a six-month general strike, demanding an end to the immigration of and the sale of land to Jews and the formation of an Arab national government in Palestine. The strike gave way to a rural insurgency employing strategic practices of hit-and-run night raids. In September the British district commissioner was assassinated leading to mass arrests and deportations of Arab leaders, the imposition of censorship, curfews and collective punishment (Farsoun and Aruri 1997 pp105-106; Marshall 2002 pp112-113).

In 1937 Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, and the Hashemite kings Abdullah of Transjordan and Ghazi of Iraq mediated a cessation of the revolt, between the British and the AHC. implementing the Peel Commission (Marshall 2002 pp112-113). Osama bin Laden was critical of the deceased Saudi monarch for this mediation as selling out the Arabs and subservience to the British:

> "In 1304 A.H (1936 AD) the awakened Muslim nation of Palestine started their great struggle, Jihad, against the British *occupying* forces. Britain was impotent to stop the *Mujahideen* and their Jihad, but their devil inspired that there is no way to stop the armed struggle in Palestine unless through their *agent* King Abdul Aziz, who managed to deceive the *Mujahideen*. King Abdul Aziz carried out his duty to his British *masters*. He sent his two sons to meet the *Mujahideen* leaders and to inform them that King Abdul Aziz would guarantee the promises made by the British government in leaving

[14] The military wing of HAMAS, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, is similarly named in his honour.

the area and responding positively to the demands of the *Mujahideen* if the latter stop their Jihad. And so, King Abdul Aziz caused the loss of the first *Qibla* of the Muslim people. The King joined the *crusaders* against the Muslims and instead of supporting the *Mujahideen* in the cause of Allah, to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque, he disappointed and humiliated them" (Bin Laden 1996).

Thus, Bin Laden portrays a long history of Saudi deceit, undermining the Arabs, and collaboration with the West against Islam, firstly with the British and later with the American deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia in 1990. He also blames Abdul Aziz's collusion with Britain for the later loss of Jerusalem to Israel.

In July 1937 the Peel Commission advocated the partition of Palestine into two states. While the Zionist Congress rejected the proposed boundaries, the Arabs rejected the notion outright. The revolt reignited and spread. By March 1939 the British crushed the revolt militarily. Britain capped Jewish immigration to 75,000 for five years, plus 25,000 European refugees, and restricted land sales, to ensure access to the strategic oil and airfields of its Arab allies for the looming World War (Cleveland and Bunton 2009 pp258-261; Farsoun and Aruri 1997 p107).

A1.7.2 Al-Nakba (1948)

As World War Two drew to an end a Zionist campaign of terrorism against the British escalated. In July 1946 the Irgun blew up the British authorities headquarters at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem killing 91 (Fieldhouse 2006 p188). Between August 1945 and September 1947, 169 British soldiers and 37 Jewish militants were killed, leading Britain to abandon the Palestinian mandate to the United Nations. On 29 November 1947 the UN General Assembly voted in favour of Resolution 181 proposing the partition of the Palestinian territory with a

45% to 55% split into Arab and Jewish states respectively, though Jews only constituted 31% of the population. A wave of violence ensued between Jewish and Arab militias with the Zionists extending control beyond the territory agreed by the UN (Farsoun and Aruri 1997 pp109-116).

On 14 May 1948 Israel was declared an independent state—and recognized immediately by the USA—a date known to Arabs as *al-Nakba,* "the Catastrophe". As the British abandoned Palestine the following day, the new state was attacked by its Arab neighbours initiating the first Arab-Israeli War. By the end of the war in 1949 Israel controlled 77% of Palestine, Jordan had annexed the West Bank and Egypt controlled Gaza; 6,000 Israelis and 15,000 Arabs were dead, 750,000 Arabs had been displaced and 531 Arab villages destroyed (Cleveland and Bunton 2009 pp267-269; Farsoun and Aruri 1997 pp109-116; Fieldhouse 2006 p191; Gerner 1994 pp43-44; Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp158-159).

For Al-Qaida the catastrophe of the establishment of Israel constituted a Western plot against Islam "to establish a beachhead on Muslim lands" (Long 2009 p206):

> "Palestine is a place that has been suffering from military *occupation* for more than 80 years. The British handed over Palestine, with your [American] help and your support, to the Jews, who have *occupied* it for more than 50 years. The Jews attacked the Palestinians viciously, sparing no method, including killings, crimes, punishments and destruction. The creation, nurturing, and protection of Israel is a great crime and you are the leaders of this crime. And of course, there is no need to explain and prove the degree of American support for Israel. The creation of Israel is a crime and it has to be erased. Each and every one who has polluted him or herself with this crime has to pay for it, and pay for it heavily" (Bin Laden 2002c).

A1.7.3 Al-Naksa (1967)

Al-Nakba, "the Catastrophe" was followed by *al-Naksa* "the setback" of the Six Day War of 1967 when Israel occupied Gaza and the West Bank, including the Old City of East Jerusalem with its holy sites (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p160). These events were, according to Landes, an "unbearable affront to Arab honour" (2007 p849). The recovery of Jerusalem is one of Al-Qaida's key war aims (Long 2009 p206). According to their fatwa of 23 February 1998:

> "Third, if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its *occupation* of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there….
>
> The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the *al-Aqsa Mosque* [Jerusalem] and the Holy Mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim" (Bin Laden 1998).

The Arabs defeat in 1967 is seen by Islamists as a punishment from God and indictment of secular Arab nationalism, who propose an alternative, Islamic solution, *hal al-Islami*, based on political Islam. Groups such as Al-Qaida "have seized on any sort of disaster as an opportunity to show—by rhetoric and practice—the superiority of the Islamic solution, mobilizing the aid that feckless Arab governments cannot, then exploiting the public relations moment" (Long 2009 pp206-207). This sentiment was expressed in Ayman az-Zawahiri's 2001 treatise *Knights Under the Banner of the Prophet:*

> "The jihad movement realized that the woodworm had begun to eat the idol [Nasser, as leader of secular Arab nationalism] until he became weak because of the effects of the setback [*al-Naksa*] and he fell to the ground amid the bewilderment of his priests and the horror of his worshippers…. The death of [Nasser] was not the death of one person but also the death of his principles, which proved their failure on the ground of reality, and the death of a popular myth that was broken on the sands of Sinai" (Long 2009 p216).

A1.7.4 Yom Kippur War (1973)

The initial success of the Arab offensive of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, also known as the Ramadan or Yom Kippur War, was seen to restore Arab honour, necessitating Israel's resupply by the United States. This reinforcement demonstrated to Bin Laden, the extent of American support for Israel and was, according to Long, "a formative event in the development of al Qaeda's view of the real nature and structure of the house of war." A similar resupply effort occurred during Israel's Second Lebanon War against Hizballah in July 2006 (Long 2009 pp206-207). Thus, Western and particularly American support for Israel is a major grievance for Al-Qaida, as stated by Suleiman Abu Gheith in June 2002: "For 50 years in Palestine, the Jews—with the blessing and support of the Americans—carried out abominations of murder, suppression, abuse, and exile" (2002). Similarly, Ayman az-Zawahiri has said:

> "The United States also dispersed the Palestinians and settled the brothers of apes and pigs in their place in Palestine. It has supported the criminal Jewish state with money, weapons, and expertise. How could America perpetrate these actions and not be viewed as the Islamic nation's enemy that fights against them?" (2008 p34).

Al-Qaida therefore expresses a desire for *retribution* against Israel and its US ally. Following the failed attempt to bring down Delta Airlines Flight 253 on Christmas Eve 2009 by the "underpants bomber" Omar Farouq Abdulmutallab on behalf of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Bin Laden declared:

> "America will not dream of security until we experience it as a reality in Palestine. It is not fair that you should live peacefully while our brothers in Gaza are experiencing the most miserable living. Based on this, with the permission of God, our raids against you will continue as long as your support for the Israelis is continuing" (Bin Laden 2008).

Thus, Western support for Israel is central to Al-Qaida's strategic culture and the narrative of an alleged "Crusader-Zionist" alliance against Islam: "The European origins of many Israelis and their migration to Palestine during the time of the hated British Mandate certainly facilitated the conflation of the Zionist with the archetypal *crusader* in Islamist accounts of the Arab-Israeli conflict" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 pp163-164).

A2 Culture

Cultural factors of societies will influence their political and strategic cultures: the value it puts on human life, masculinity, *martyrdom*, violence, etc. (Booth and Trood 1999 366). Early Islamic conceptions of war and peace were influenced not only by the Quran, but also pre-Islamic culture and political context (Donner 1991 p33). The key virtues of Arab culture were loyalty and solidarity, honour, generosity (a sign of prestige) and for the warrior, martial prowess (Donner 1991 p34; Firestone 1999 p30).

A2.1 Assabiyya (solidarity)

Islam arose in the then stateless, society of northern Arabia where social cohesion and a degree of order were achieved through tribal solidarity; what Ibn Khaldun called *assabiyya*. Tribal society was ordered around patriarchy, kinship and solidarity, organized along a male segmentary lineage system. Tribesmen belonged to "a series of nested patrilineages" with greatest *solidarity* accorded by closeness of kinship: family, clan then tribe, diminishing with more distant relations. *Assabiya* meant the convention in inter and intra-tribal conflict was to back "the genealogically closer against the genealogically more distant" (Salzman 2008 pp32-33 52-33). *Solidarity* or *assabiyya* was based on collective responsibility and generalized *reciprocity*. The latter meant that tribes-people stood by those most closely related to them in their time of need in the hope that they, in future, will do likewise (Donner 1991 p34; Salzman 2008 pp11-13, 32-33). This is summed up in an Arab proverb: "I against my brothers; my brothers and I against our cousins; my brothers and cousins and I against the world" (Salzman 2008 p68).

Assabiyya meant responsibility belonged to the collective, i.e. the tribe or one's closest relations (Davie 1929 pp51-55; Donner 1991 pp23, 34; Salzman 2008 pp11-13, 32-33, 51-55). In pre-Islamic Arab culture, the kinship group would be held collectively responsible for transgressions of any of their kinsmen against members of another group, leading to vendettas where the latter would seek equivalent *retribution* or *thar*. *Thar* could be taken against the perpetrator or an equivalent person who would receive a punishment equal to the crime, essentially "an eye for an eye". Though such disputes could escalate to inter or intra-tribal violence and war, they could be settled through mediation by a distinguished elder not immediately involved, and the payment of compensation or "blood money" to which the group was collectively expected to contribute (Davie 1929

pp124-126; Salzman 2008 pp51-55). Not seeking restoration through *retribution* or blood payments (*diya*) was seen as dishonourable; a sign of weakness potentially encouraging other groups to take advantage (Gabriel 2007 p24). Codes of chivalry were abandoned and tactics of ambush and treachery employed during feuds. Members committing crimes within the group could be banished or killed (Gabriel 2007 pp10, 24).

According to Ibn Khaldun the most cohesive form of *solidarity* is that inculcated by a common religion, to a degree displacing that of kinship (Issawi 1950 p11). Al-Qaida and AQIM appeal to notions of Islamic *solidarity* with the *umma* or Islamic nation and other jihadist movements. According to Khemiri, *assabayya* connotes "nationalism in the broadest sense" (cited in Issawi 1950 p10).

A2.2 Qisas

With the coming of Islam *thar* was replaced by *qisas* (Hakeem *et al.* 2012 p15). Qisas refers to the concept of *reciprocal retribution* or *lex talionis* in *sharia* law, whereby "the guilty person is to be punished in the same way as he has treated his victim" (Mohamed 1982 p77) and applies to crimes against the person; murder, manslaughter and mutilation where the victim or their relatives seek justice against the perpetrator (Maher 2016 p65). It follows the Old Testament logic of "an eye for an eye" (Exodus 21:22-25; Leviticus 24:17-20; Deuteronomy 19:21) rendered as: "Life for life, eye for eye…and wounds equal for equal" in the Quran (Surah 5:45). Surah 2:178 proclaims:

> "O ye who believe! *Retaliation* is prescribed for you in the matter of the murdered; the freeman for the freeman, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. And for him who is forgiven somewhat by his (injured) brother, prosecution according to usage and payment unto him in

kindness. This is an alleviation and a mercy from your Lord. He who transgresseth after this will have a painful doom."

Al-Qaida and other Salafi-Jihadists have used *qisas* innovatively taking a concept of criminal justice intended for specific perpetrators and applying it to whole nations. In so doing they have adopted a concept of collective responsibility or "vicarious liability" justified on the grounds of *democracy*, to justify targeting Western civilians (Maher 2016 pp65-75). In so doing they have essentially reverted to the pre-Islamic tribal codes of *thar* and collective responsibility (A2.1) and the logic of vendetta against the West. Using this logic of vendetta, Bin Laden held the West collectively responsible for the injustices perpetrated against Muslims, not simply political elites, making civilians legitimate targets and thus sought retribution against these civilian populations through terrorism (Maher 2016 pp65-75).

A2.3 Honour and Masculinity

Notions of honour and masculinity were pervasive in Arab tribal culture, where strong tribes are superior to the weak; men superior to women; nobles to commoners; freemen to slaves (Schacht 2002). Honour (*ird*) was a broad concept covering all aspects of society through tribe, family down to the individual. At the tribal level, prestige is perhaps a better translation, as it is constituted by the size of the group, its history, lineage, its victories and maintenance of its independence. Furthermore, female chastity and "invulnerability of the abode" reflected upon the individual's and family's honour (Farès 2012). Honour was also closely associated with power and martial prowess; weakness with humiliation (Donner 1981 pp17, 30-31). Honour (*ird*) was accorded to tribes that:

> "consistently proved themselves more powerful than their neighbors and rivals, and that imposed their will on them or extracted payments from them, came to be recognized as *sharif*, 'noble', and formed a kind of warrior aristocracy among the tribes. In essence, this warrior aristocracy consisted of those tribes that were politically independent and could offer effective protection to weaker groups that might choose to attach themselves to them on a short-term or a long-term basis" (Donner 1981 pp30-31).

Dependent groups were known as *da'if*, meaning weak and thus lacking in honour (Donner 1981 pp30-31). Failure in combat or losing independence resulted in dishonour and humiliation or *dhilla*: "everything that contributes to power is an element of honour, while all that causes weakness is an element of dishonour" (Farès 2012). Moreover, not to seek redress through *retribution* or compensation in cases of theft, injury or death is seen to be dishonourable. The ethos of the Arab warrior was encapsulated in the concepts of *muruah* and *ird* (Gabriel 2007 pp23-24). *Muruah* encompassed manhood and virility, though it is essentially chivalry: "frankness, courage, magnanimity, generosity and sense of honor—qualities, in some depth or the other, without which a man was not a man" (Almaany.com 2013; Islamic Encyclopedia 2012). *Ird* corresponding to the concept of honour or prestige played a central role in Arab culture predating the dawn of Islam. The concept is closely linked to that of *hasab*, or "nobility in character and deeds" (Farès 2012; Rosenthal 2012).

In modern Arabic the extensive concept of *ird* has been replaced by sharaf meaning honour in the simple sense, while *ird* has been circumscribed mainly relating to women. In Jordan it is associated with female virtue, and in Egypt a man's ird or honour is a reflection of his wife's and female relatives, whereas in Syria it is a reflection of that of every tribe member (Farès 2012).

Salafi-Jihadist narratives resound with themes of honour, humiliation and masculinity which still have *cultural resonance* in Muslim cultures, demonstrated by the phenomenon of so-called 'honour killing'. They appeal "to notions of masculinity that pervade tribal culture, in which *sharaf* (nobleness), *árd* (honor), and *Muruah* (chivalry or manliness) are of vital importance" (Hafez 2007 p101).

Al-Qaida's narrative is a tale of Islamic decline in the balance of power relative to the West. It claims the West has oppressed and humiliated Muslims and the *umma* through Western *colonialism*, causing the fall of the *Caliphate* and division of the Middle East (A1.3-A1.7), and now *neo-colonialism*. In order to restore this honour, Al-Qaida must seek *retribution* against the West. It must fight to defend the honour of the *umma*. It frames *martyrdom* in this '*jihad*' as a great honour (Meijer 2004 p31). Al-Qaida ultimately wants to restore Islamic honour and power by re-establishing the *Caliphate*, but first it must defeat the West which supports *apostate* regimes.

A2.4 Tatarrus

Tatarrus refers to circumstances in which the enemy has taken Muslim civilians hostage to be used as human shields. The concept allows the Muslims to attack the enemy even though some human shields may die in the process. This interpretation was promulgated by Ibn Taymiyyah when the Mongols were taking Muslim civilians as human shields during their invasion of the Abbasid Caliphate, capturing Baghdad in 1258; enabling Muslim forces to counterattack and rescue the hostages. It applied in certain circumstances: when there was active, inter-state war; as a last resort when it is the only viable option; the human shields are likely to be killed anyway; and when the benefits to the Muslim's public interest and security outweighed the costs. This is a battlefield practice to be undertaken by the state against another state military. Moreover, the civilians were not to be directly and deliberately targeted (Khatab 2011 pp200-207).

However, Zawahiri has innovated, creatively reinterpreting *tatarrus* as collateral damage to justify the deaths and targeting of civilians, who are not human shields, in terrorist attacks. Former Egyptian Mufti, Professor Nasr Farid Wasil, rejects this interpretation, saying "killing civilians in the name of defense is not legally accepted and cannot be based on *al-tatarrus* either" (Khatab 2011 pp200-207).

In *Jihad, Martyrdom, and the Killing of Innocents*, Zawahiri justifies civilian deaths on the grounds of necessity and expediency, because of their asymmetry in forces versus the West: "It has become next to impossible to confront them in open warfare." Moreover: "Forfeiting the faith is a much greater harm than forfeiting money or lives." In *Al-Tatarrus fi al-Jihad al-Muasir* (*Human Shields in Modern Jihad*), Abu Yahya al-Libi also justifies the killing of Western civilians on the grounds of necessity, arguing that currently the benefits outweigh the costs, due to a *crusader war against Islam*. He argues that where involuntary and voluntary human shields,[15] are near legitimate targets, their deaths are justifiable (Maher 2016 pp76-79).

A2.5 Al-Wala wal-Bara

Al-wala wal-bara is an important concept in Salafist as opposed to mainstream Islam meaning, something like loyalty and disavowal, requiring Muslims' total loyalty to Allah and other Muslims and rejecting everything else. Indeed, early Hanbali scholars believed the concept was *bida* (innovation) associated with Kharijite and Shia Islam (Wagemakers 2008; 2009 pp81-85).

Concerned for Islamic purity and avoiding innovation, Hanbali scholar Ibn Taymiyyah promulgated a conception of *al-wala wal-bara*, though he never used the

[15] The notion of voluntary human shields seems illogical.

term. He believed Christian and Jewish ideas were a corrupting influence diverting Muslims from "the straight path" of Islam. This was justified by, among others, surah 5:51, a favourite of Al-Qaida:

> "O believers, take not Jews and Christians as friends (*awliya*); they are friends of each other. Whoso of you makes them his friends is one of them. God guides not the people of the evildoers."

Muslims must therefore shun their festivals and clothing, and avoid showing friendship (*mawadda*) or loyalty (*muwala*) to non-Muslims. The worst from of loyalty to *infidels* was incorporating their rituals into Islam (Wagemakers 2009 pp86-87).

A more extreme interpretation of *al-wala wal-bara* was incorporated into Wahhabi-Salafism by Abd al-Wahhab's (A3.6) grandson, Sulayman ibn Abdallah Al al-Shaykh (1786–1818), who argued that any form of 'loyalty' to unbelievers or indeed anyone other than God made one an unbeliever. The later Wahhabi scholar, Hamad ibn Ali ibn Atiq, argued that belief in the *tawhid* (unity or oneness) of Allah necessitated, not only avoiding loyalty (*wala*) to *infidels*, but until they showed disavowal or hostility (*wala*) towards unbelievers, they remained unbelievers themselves:

> "until one disavows the people of unbelief (*ahl al-kufr*)…and declares to them that they are unbelievers and that one is their enemy…one has not declared the religion" (Wagemakers 2009 pp87-88).

Salafis believe *al-wala wal-bara* is an expression of loyalty to, and acceptance of the *tawhid* or oneness of God, outwardly expressed in shunning all that is un-Islamic. It is a puritanical notion to prevent the accumulation of un-Islamic innovations or *bida* (Wagemakers 2008). For "purist" Salafis (Wiktorowicz 2006) this means

avoiding corrupting influences; not giving 'loyalty' to Jews, Christians and all non-believers in any way; eschewing their festivals, not dressing like them, avoiding unnecessary contact with them and travel to non-Muslim countries, etc. All these activities show loyalty to non-Muslims and disloyalty to Allah and Islam. It means separating oneself from non-Muslims or performing *hijra* (emigrating or exiling oneself) by leaving non-Muslim countries for *dar al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) (Wagemakers 2008).

Political Salafists, or "politicos" as Wiktorowicz (2006) calls them, also apply *al-wala wal-bara* to international relations such that Muslim states should not associate themselves or show loyalty to non-Muslim states. They admonish Muslim regimes for such friendly relations as a "political threat" to Islam (Wagemakers 2008).

The first Salafi to apply this political notion, apparently the first to use the exact phrase, "*al-wala wal-bara*", and ultimately employing violence was Juhayman al-Utaybi, who led the seizure of Mecca's Grand Mosque in 1979; taking worshippers hostage. Juhayman argued the Saudi monarchy was illegitimate because they were not members of Muhammad's Quraysh tribe and did not disavow friendly relations with the West, though he did not declare them *apostates*. Saudi's therefore did not owe loyalty or allegiance to the monarchy (Hegghammer and Lacroix 2007 p111; Wagemakers 2009 p90). According to Juhayman, *al-wala wal-bara* entailed three stages: disavowing idolatry (*shirk*), *hijra* to safety—separating oneself from society—and *qital* (fighting) (Wagemakers 2009 p90).

Juhayman criticized the Saud for allying with the "Christians" and ceasing the "jihad" of the Wahhabi Ikhwan (see A3.6.3). The Mecca captors demanded severing diplomatic relations with the West, ending oil exports to the US,

expelling foreign advisers, the overthrowal of the Saudi monarchy and its replacement with an *Islamic state* (Kechichian 1990 pp12-13).

Humud al-Uqla al-Shuaybi argued that asking for help from Christians and Jews is tantamount to pledging loyalty to them (Wagemakers 2008). This is why the Saudi's asking for American protection following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and subsequent alleged American '*occupation*' was so incendiary for Bin Laden and others Saudis.

Salafi-Jihadists such as the Jordanian-Palestinian, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (aka Isam ibn Muhammad ibn Tahir al-Barqawi), have declared *takfir*, arguing that Muslim regimes like Saudi Arabia have become *apostate* through their "loyalty to the *infidel* enemies of God" (Wagemakers 2008) i.e. America, Britain and the West in general. Maqdisi was influenced by and built upon Juhayman al-Utaybi's ideas of *al-wala wal-bara*, but unlike the latter, declared the Saudi monarchy *apostate* (Wagemakers 2009 pp90-91).

Since these regimes have apostatized, jihadis argue, they must be fought. According to Maqdisi, "the highest degree of showing enmity and hatred to the enemies of God" is "jihad and fighting". He argues that "it is compulsory for you, if you want Paradise…to work and wage jihad all of your life for his [the *apostate* ruler's] destruction…" (Wagemakers 2008).

A similar notion can be seen in Shukri Mustafa's Society of Muslims, known as Takfir wal-Hijra, or excommunication and emigration. These extremists declared *takfir* on the Egyptian state and society, denouncing them as *apostates*, and exiled themselves to the deserts and caves of Egypt and committed acts of violence (see A3.10).

A3 Religio-Ideological Influences

A3.1 Salafi-Jihadism

Salafi-Jihadism refers simply to Muslims following Salafi tenets who participate in armed struggle (Roberts 2011 p28). Al-Qaida and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), now Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, are both Salafi-Jihadist groups, such that Salafism and Islamism form the "ideational milieu" in which their strategic behaviour is conceived. While both are Islamic fundamentalist trends, much confusion surrounds these concepts, both in relation to each other and politics. The strategic cultures of jihadist groups are based upon a certain interpretation of key texts and more particularly certain verses of religious texts in the Quran and hadiths which are used to justify their violence.

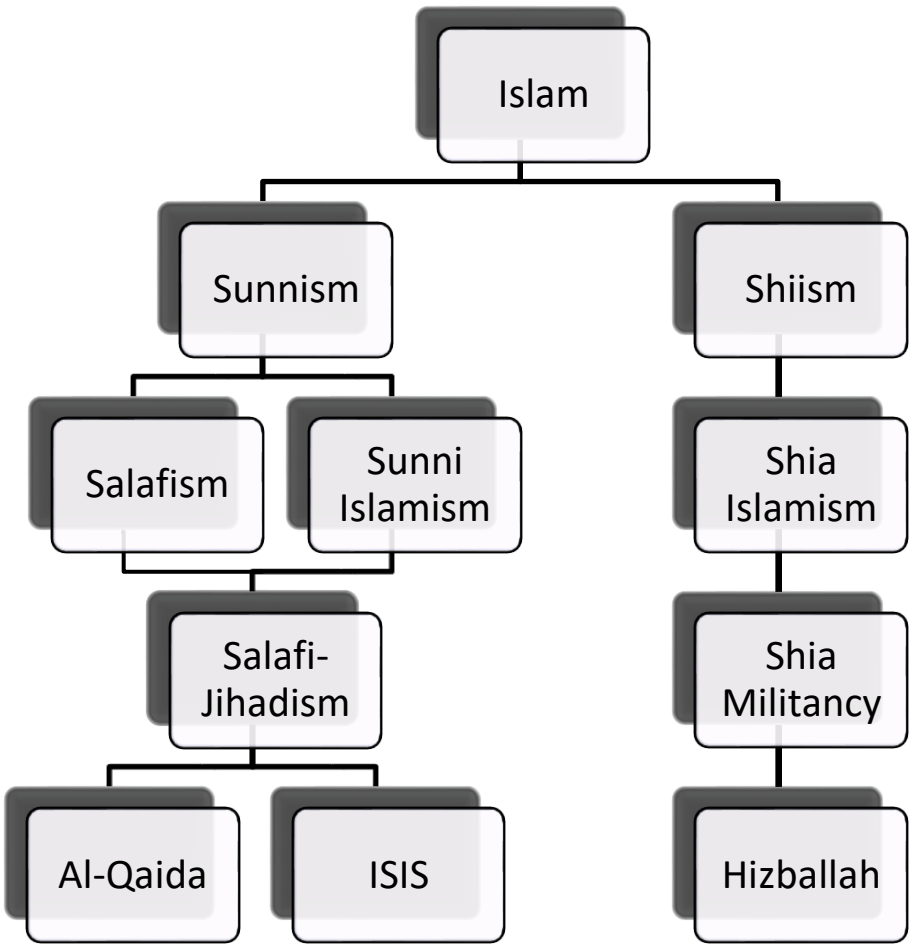
Salafi-Jihadists do not seek to rule according to the opinions of Islamic scholars (ulama) as under the *Caliphate* they aspire to restore, but by emulating the example of the Prophet Muhammad and the other pious ancestors (*salaf*). They frequently portray the ulama as illegitimate and corrupt (Turner 2014 pp81-82).

Salafism has been used to denote various Islamic fundamentalist and revivalist movements which champion a return to the example of *al-salaf* and the foundations of Islam, before innovations *(bida)*, sectarianism and different schools of jurisprudence or *madhab* (*sing*.) emerged. These movements can be either a progressive or regressive force (Moussalli 2009 p11).

Strategic cultures operate at a number of different levels (Jones 1990). Figure 25 shows that Islamist violent non-state actors inhabit a number of cultural levels: (1) within the broader Islamic culture; (2) which can be divided along sectarian lines between Sunni and Shia; (3) the more particular Islamic doctrines of Sunni Islamism and Salafism, on one hand, and Shia Islamism on the other. Within these

religio-political ideologies/cultures are their "hard" variants (4); the cultures of militant Salafi and Sunni "jihadism", and its Shia equivalent. VNSAs such as Al-Qaida and Hizballah inhabit these respective cultures.

Figure 25: Religio-Ideological Roots of Al-Qaida



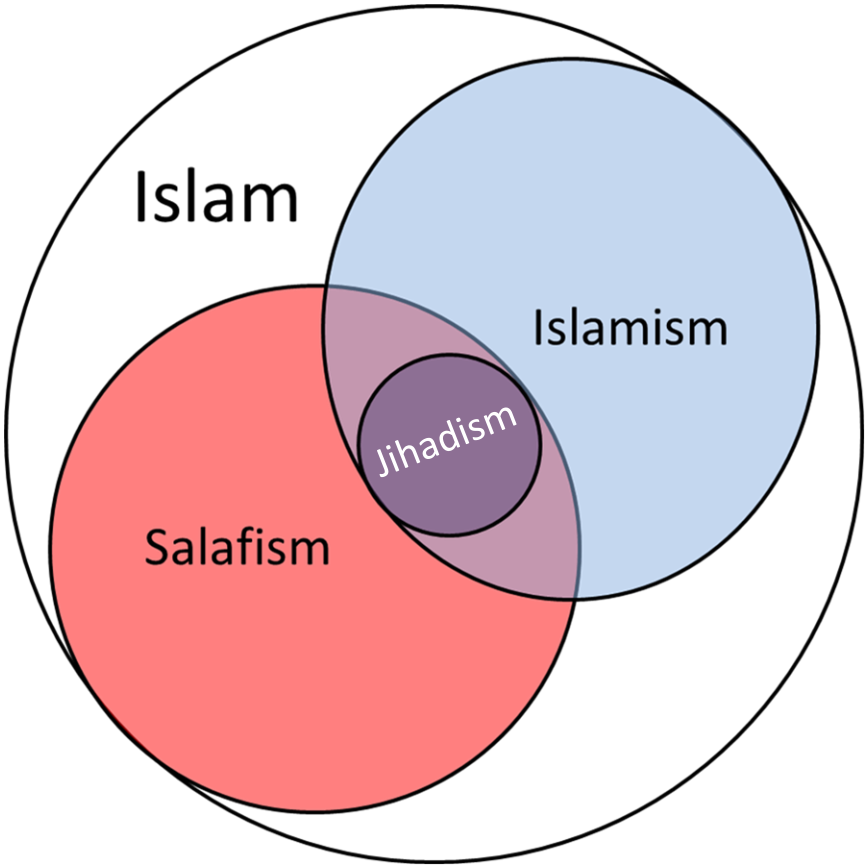
Salafism is a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam whose ideal is in the past and whose adherents wish to emulate Muhammad and his companions, even in appearance, returning to their *pure* version of Islam, before the faith, allegedly, deviated. Salafists tend to wear traditional Arabian attire, grow long beards and prefer to speak Arabic over other languages, as did Muhammad, as advised by Ibn Taymiyyah, to distinguish themselves from non-Muslims. Moreover, they

generally shun music, dancing and other forms of entertainment as *infidel* (Moussalli 2009 pp11-13; Wiktorowicz 2006 p209).

The Salafi creed *(aqida)* is a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam that rejects all forms of innovation *(bida)* that have emerged since the time of the *salaf*, including legal precedents *(taqlid)* of the orthodox schools of Islam, and independent scholarly reasoning *(ijtihad*) and rationalism, hence their disdain for reformist Islam. The central doctrines of Salafism are *tawhid*, monotheism or "the oneness of God" (Moussalli 2009 pp12-15), loyalty to Allah; loving what he loves and rejecting what he hates (*al-wala wal-bara* A2.5). The creed therefore emphasizes cleansing Islam of all forms un-Islamic innovations (*bida*), idolatry *(shirk)*, superstition (*khurafa*), and unbelief *(kufr)*, returning to the pure Islam of the forefathers (Moussalli 2009 p12). In emulating the *salaf* they follow a literalist interpretation almost solely based on the Quran and hadith, but also including prominent later thinkers such as Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Abd al-Wahhab (Wiktorowicz 2006 pp209, 216). For Salafis "all religious, intellectual, social, doctrinal, political conflicts have resulted from the failure to follow the method of *al-salaf al-salih"* (Moussalli 2009 p12).

Despite sharing a common creed Quintan Wiktorowicz divides Salafists into three camps which differ in their "contextual interpretation and analysis" of politics and the contemporary world, and their attitudes towards violence "rather than belief": purists, "politicos" and jihadis (2006 pp208, 234). Ahmad Moussalli on the other hand makes a distinction between Salafism (meaning the purists) and Islamism (Islam as a political ideology) in democratic and revolutionary forms. He terms the combination of Salafism and revolutionary Islamism, shown in figure 26, "neo-Salafism" or "takfiri-jihadism" (2009 pp3, 31-32).

Figure 26: Venn Diagram of Salafi-Jihadism



Purist Salafists focus on the peaceful call *(dawa)* to the *one true* interpretation of Islam through preaching, purification *(tazkiyya)* and religious education *(tarbiya)*, to cleanse Islam of un-Islamic practices and avoid the corrupting influences of politics (Wiktorowicz 2006 pp208, 217). This last point must be qualified by the fact that purist Salafism represents the official religious establishment of the state in Saudi Arabia and its senior clerics: an un-politicized population is in the interests of the state.

The fact that Saudi Arabia was never colonized and avoided the ideological divisions of countries like Egypt, contributed to the isolationism and apoliticism of Saudi Islam, for such political and international issues never arose (Wiktorowicz 2006 pp221-222). While the purists emphasize their religious knowledge to make informed, Islamic judgements, the politicized Salafists, or "politicos" believe they

have a better understanding of the modern world than their purist elders in order to apply the creed to a contemporary context. The influence of the Islamism of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in exile in Saudi Arabia from the 1960s onwards, particularly its "more Salafi-oriented" disciples of Sayyid Qutb, spawned this more political Salafism. Many of these Muslim Brothers, or *Ikhwan*, taught in Saudi universities (Wiktorowicz 2006 pp217, 221-222).

The roots of Salafi-Jihadism can be found in the jihad against the Soviet Union which further cemented the bond between Salafis and radical Islamists. On returning home, many of these so-called "Arab-Afghans" who volunteered to fight alongside the Afghan *mujahideen* against Soviets, engaged in revolutionary activity against their own states', fighting with groups including Gamaa Islamiyya and Islamic Jihad in Egypt and the GIA in Algeria.

A3.2 Quran

Salafi-Jihadism is one particular interpretation of the Quran amongst others. Indeed, jihadists are selective in their use of verses emphasizing those that advocate violence over those that promote peace and tolerance such as: "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (surah 2:256). The Quran and hadith are key texts for Salafi-jihadist strategic culture used, somewhat selectively, to justify their strategy and world view (Holbrook 2010 pp15-16). According to Firestone, the verses most frequently cited by jihadists are some of the most bellicose ones. Salafi-Jihadist's bellicose interpretation is one amongst many since the Quran is "far from consistent" on the topic of jihad. Indeed, Firestone identifies three different interpretations regarding war:

> "…does Islamic Scripture prescribe avoidance of violence in propagating and defending the faith (16:125), defensive wars only (22:39-40), or unrestricted warfare (9:5)? (Firestone 1999 pp47-49).

Salafi-jihadists use the concept of abrogation whereby earlier, less bellicose Quranic verses are nullified by later, more bellicose verses. This relies on chronology. Yet the Quran is not arranged chronologically but rather roughly by chapter length, it is therefore sometimes difficult to ascertain for certain the exact historical context within which they were revealed (Bonner 2008 pp23-27; Halverson *et al.* 2012 pp3, 7). Therefore, the verses' historical context has to be gleaned from other, later, sources (Bonner 2008 p21).

Surahs eight and nine are the primary chapters of the Quran dealing with warfare and jihad, though their content "do not, in and of themselves, constitute a coherent doctrine" (Bonner 2008 p20). Indeed, in their sample of Islamist extremist statements Halverson et al (2012) found verses from surahs nine and eight, respectively, were cited most. Moreover, the final instructions of the 9/11 hijackers told them to prepare by reading these chapters (Observer 2001). However, seemingly, there are also "contradictions" or at least "differences in emphasis" within these chapters (Bonner 2008 p20).

The most bellicose verse, dubbed the 'sword verse', is cited by Bin Laden in both his 1996 Declaration of War and 1998 World Islamic Front fatwa (Bin Laden 1996; 1998):

> "When the sacred months are past, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, and seize them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them in every place of ambush; but if they repent, pray regularly, and give the alms tax, then let them go their way, for God is forgiving, merciful" (Firestone 1999 p61)

However, Halverson et al (2012) found the 'sword verse' was not the most frequently cited exhortation to battle used by jihadists, in their sample. Rather the following verses were the most frequent "battle imperatives":

> 9:14: "Fight them and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of believers."
>
> 4:75: "And why should you not fight in the cause of God and [the cause] of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? Men, women, and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee one who will protect."
>
> 22:39: "To those (people) against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged; and verily God is Most Powerful for their aid."
>
> 8:39: "And fight them until there is no more discord and religion (or the way) is for God (alone)."

Thus, Halverson et al (2012) find jihadists employ verses which justify violence as a response to a narrative of victimhood.

A3.3 Ahmad Ibn Hanbal

Ahmad Hanbal (780-855) founded the Hanbali *madhab*, or school of jurisprudence which is said to be the strictest of the four Sunni *madhab* still in existence. Hanbal followed a traditional and literalist interpretation of Islam, as that of the modern Salafist movement which by and large emerged out of Hanbali Islam. Hanbal was sceptical of human reason and believed that Islamic law should be based primarily on the Quran and hadiths, even those whose credibility were more doubtful took primacy over analogical reasoning. Indeed, Hanbal was imprisoned for opposing

the rationalist *Mutazilite* doctrines, influenced by Greek philosophy, which became official doctrine under of Abbasid Caliph al-Mamun (r.813-833) and his Chief Justice Abi Dawud. Mutazilites believed that the Quran was not eternal but "created in time" so as not to question the unity, *tawhid*, of Allah avoiding the trinity of Christianity and polytheistic accretions. They also rejected simple, literalist, anthropomorphic interpretations of the Quran, characteristic of early Islam, regarding descriptions of God as having human features and enthroned on high, as metaphorical. Hanbal, like the later Ibn Taymiyyah, followed a literal and unquestioning approach to the Quran and hadith which said God had "hands" and he therefore must have hands. Hanbali Islam is most prevalent in the Gulf states (Jackson 2006 pp44-47, 127-131) and Hanbal was a key influence upon the literalism of the later Salafist movement.

A3.4 Ibn Taymiyyah

A3.4.1 Salafism

Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), a jurist of the Hanbali *madhab* (A3.3) is a key influence upon Salafism in all its forms. He believed Muslims should copy the example of *al-Salaf al-Salih* (the pious ancestors) (Peters 2005 p43). According to Henri Laoust, Taymiyyah was:

> "the most logically implacable foe, inside Islam, of all worship directed at anyone other than God" (quoted by Sarrio 2011 p275).

This conception of the unity of worship influenced Sayyid Qutb and Salafi-Jihadists, who believed that democracy, communism and capitalism were all un-Islamic innovations (*bida*), subverting the *sovereignty* of Allah, constituting a form of worship of humans over God (A3.9). As such Ibn Taymiyyah can be seen as an early or historical Salafist (Rumman and Hanieh 2010) who appealed to *as-salaf*,

"the pious predecessors" and *al-Rashidun*, the first four "rightly-guided Caliphs"; an age of Islamic moral and political purity.

He insisted on a literal interpretation of Islam, strict enforcement of the *sharia* and forbidding rituals such as pilgrimages to tombs (Sivan 1983 p42) which he considered *shirk* or idolatry. This conception of idolatry (*shirk*) is the motivation behind the destruction of tombs by the Wahhabi movement (A3.6.1), the destruction of the ancient Buddha statutes by the Taliban in Afghanistan, antiquities by ISIS including the ancient cities of Nimrud in Iraq and Palmyra in Syria, as well as the vandalism committed by AQIM and Ansar ad-Dine at Timbuktu in Mali.

A3.4.2 Jihad

According to a 2006 report by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, Ibn Taymiyyah was the most cited figure of all time by jihadist groups (McCants *et al.* p18) and is referred to in Osama Bin Laden's 1996 *Declaration of War* (Bin Laden 1996).

For Ibn Tamiyya jihad was the greatest act of worship, above the *umra* and *hajj*[16] pilgrimages to Mecca, *salat* (daily prayers) and fasting:

> "More than any other act it implies love and devotion for God, Who is exalted, trust in him, the surrender of one's life and property to Him, patience, asceticism, remembrance of God and all kinds of other acts [of worship]" (Peters 2005 pp47-48).

[16] The hajj pilgrimage takes place from 8 to 12 of the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijjah whereas umra is a ritual performed alongside the hajj, but can be performed separately throughout the year.

He backed this claim with a hadith, saying "The head of the affair is Islam, its central pillar is the *salat* [5 daily prayers] and its summit is jihad" (Peters 2005 p47). This reflects Azzam (A3.12.2) and Faraj's later conception of jihad as a neglected obligation (A3.11). For Taymiyyah the aim of jihad "is that the religion is God's and God's word is uppermost". Those who obstruct this "must be fought." (Peters 2005 pp49).

Ibn Taymiyyah followed the consensus of classical Islam that expansionary jihad is a collective duty (*fard kifaya*) incumbent on the Muslim community to source enough warriors to undertake the campaign. However, when Muslims or their territories are under attack defensive jihad is *fard ayn*; an individual obligation for all able Muslim men to fight (Kelsay 1990 pp126-127):

> "Jihad is obligatory if it is carried out on our initiative and also if it is waged as defence. If we take the initiative, it is a collective duty [which means that] if it is fulfilled by a sufficient number [of Muslims], the obligation lapses for all others and the merit goes to those who have fulfilled it…. But if the enemy wants to attack the Muslims, then repelling him becomes a duty for all those under attack and for the others in order to help him" (Peters 2005 p53).

In 1996 Bin Laden cited the Taymiyyah's notion of *defensive jihad* to justify his Declaration of War against the Americans:

> "Ibn Taymiyyah, stated: 'to fight in defence of religion and Belief is a collective duty; there is no other duty after Belief than fighting the enemy who is corrupting the life and the religion. There are no preconditions for this duty and the enemy should be fought with one's best abilities'" (Bin Laden 1996).

A3.4.3 Martyrdom

According to Taymiyyah those who participate in jihad will be rewarded, and quoting the Sahih (authentic) hadiths of al-Bukhari, "God will save from hellfire". Moreover, the Sahih Muslim says:

> "A day and night in ribat [a fort] are better than one month spent in fasting and vigils. If he dies…he will receive recompense of his deeds and subsistence, and he will be protected from the Angel of the Grave" (Peters 2005 p47).

According to Taymiyyah, jihad is "unequalled" in terms of "reward and merit". Indeed, jihad benefits others besides the mujahid: "…jihad is religiously and temporally more beneficial than any other deed full of hardship." Those who fight jihad find themselves between "victory and triumph or *martyrdom* and Paradise." Through jihad "one can live and die in ultimate happiness, both in this world and in the Hereafter." Moreover, "the death of a *martyr* is easier than any other form of death. …it is the best of all manners of dying" (Peters 2005 pp48-49). This glorious theme of *martyrdom* is later adopted in the narrative of Al-Qaida and other jihadist groups.

A3.4.4 Rebellion

He influenced the Islamism of Mawdudi who drew upon Taymiyyah's explication of *tawhid*, the unity of Allah, which he divided into two concepts: unity of lordship accepted by all Muslims that God is creator and sovereign; and unity of worship, of God as sole object of obedience and worship. Consequently, following man-made law or disobeying major Islamic laws constituted disobedience and *apostasy*. Ibn Taymiyya issued a fatwa justifying the Mamluk jihad against the Mongols (Tatars) who despite converting to Islam still followed Genghis Khan's *Yasa* code

(Wiktorowicz 2005 pp78-80). Unlike Hanbal who believed it was for God and not humans to judge whether someone was a proper Muslim (Jackson 2006 p46), Taymiyyah reasoned that despite their conversion to Islam, the Mongols remained *apostates* and therefore legitimate targets. Life under their rule constituted a contemporary condition of "*jahiliyya*" or pagan ignorance that comprised Arabia before the advent of Islam, and thus jihad was justified (Bonner 2008 p144). Consequently, Ibn Taymiyyah, and this fatwa in particular, has been used by jihadists including Sayyid Qutb (A3.9) and Faraj (A3.11) to justify rebellion against secular Muslim states (Wiktorowicz 2005 p80).

Taymiyyah believed rulers who did not govern according to *sharia* were unbelievers who must be fought. Since the Mongols ruled according to their Yasa code they were *apostates*, justifying jihad against them (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p43).

In *Public Policy in Islamic Jurisprudence*, Taymiyyah states:

> "It has been established from the Book, from the Sunna and from the general unanimity of the [Muslim] nation that he who *forsakes the Law of Islam* should be *fought*, though he may have once pronounced the two formulas of Faith (in Islam). There may be a difference of opinion regarding rebellious groups which neglect a voluntary, but established, piece of worship…but there is no uncertainty regarding the duties and prohibitions, which are both explicit and general. He who neglects them should be *fought* until he agrees to abide (by these duties and prohibitions)…. Furthermore, they should avoid all forbidden acts…. Any such *trespasser of the Law* should be *fought*, provided that he had knowledge of the mission of the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him. This knowledge makes him responsible for obeying the orders, the prohibitions and the permits. If he disobeys these he should then be *fought*" (Sivan 1983 p43).

According to Emmanuel Sivan, this is "the nearest any pre-modern theorist in Sunni Islam ever came to expounding a theory of the right of resistance to illegitimate power" (1983 p44), setting a "dangerous precedent" (McGregor 2006)

Here, jihadists have found a justification for rebellion against Muslim authorities, which they denounce as *apostate*, for failing to fully implement the *sharia*, encompassed in a *near enemy* narrative calling for Islamic revolution. In his treatise, *The Neglected Duty*, Muhammad Abd as-Salam Faraj, chief ideologue of *Al-Jihad*, relies heavily on Ibn Taymiyyah to legitimate their rebellion against the Egyptian government, as did those members who assassinated President Anwar Sadat (Sivan 1983 p41).

According to his fatwa on the Mongols (1303):

> "…join jihad against those who must be targeted with jihad against, such as the [Mongols]. We should join jihad against them with any ruler, commander or group that is closer to Islam than they, if such is the only means of fighting them (Bonney 2007 p424-425).

A3.4.5 Killing Civilians

According to *God's Law in Reforming both the Ruler and his Flock* (*Al-Siyasa al-Sharia fi islah al-rai wa-al-raiyya*):

> "Those who cannot fight or resist, women, children, monks, the elderly, blind and disabled, etc. must not be killed, unless they assist or spy for the enemy, or "fight with words", spread propaganda.

He rejects the opinion that all unbelievers, except women and children, who are seen as property, may be killed. Accordingly, "we may only fight those who fight us when we want to make God's religion victorious" (Peters 2005 pp49).

Al-Qaida's interpretation of Ibn Taymiyyah's definition of who is a legitimate target is sufficiently broad to effectively nullify the notion that Western civilians are protected in anyway, for all are in some way guilty of assisting their governments. This argument was used to justify the indiscriminate violence of 9/11:

> "It is allowed for Muslims to kill protected ones among unbelievers on the condition that the protected ones have assisted in combat, whether in deed, word, mind, or any other form of assistance, according to the prophetic command" (Al-Qaida 2002 pp4-5).

A3.4.6 Kidnapping

Ibn Taymiyyah provides a potential justification for kidnapping for ransom, supporting the strategic practice of hostage-taking employed by AQIM. According to his *Governance According to God's Law in Reforming both the Ruler and his Flock*:

> "If a male believer is taken captive during warfare or otherwise, e.g. as a result of shipwreck, or because he lost his way, or as the result of a *ruse*, then the head of state (*imam*) may do whatever he deems appropriate: killing him, enslaving him, releasing him or setting him free for a *ransom* consisting in either property or people" (Peters 2005 p50).

A3.5 Ibn Kathir

Ibn Kathir (1300-1372/3) subscribed to the abrogation method of exegesis regarding jihad, that Quranic verses revealed later, chronologically,[17] superseded those earlier in time. Accordingly, by negating more pacific verses believed to

[17] The Quran is not organized in chronological order (see Firestone 1999 ch3).

predate more belligerent ones, Muslims were permitted to fight *polytheists*, other monotheists who refused to pay the jizya tax, *hypocrites* who pretend to be Muslims; and Muslims who oppressed other Muslims (Firestone 1999 pp63-64).

Ibn Kathir, a disciple of Ibn Taymiyyah, also followed the latter's notion that those, like the Mongols, who had converted to Islam, but failed to rule according to the *sharia*, were "*infidels*" *or* apostates, according to his exegesis on the Quranic verse (Surah 47, 50):

> "Whoso judgeth not according to what God hath revealed, they are the *transgressors*.... Do they therefore seek after the Jahiliyya (pre-Islamic times)?"

Kathir believed that combining divine law with man-made laws, as the Mongols did, was tantamount to the ignorance of the pre-Islamic era of Jahiliyya. Such regimes must be fought until they rule solely by Islamic law:

> "[These verses] refer to people who abide by regulations and laws set by men, to fit their own misguided desires and whims, rather than adhering to the *Shari'a* bestowed upon us by Allah. This was the case with the inhabitants [of Arabia] during the *Jahiliyya*…and (today) with the Mongols who follow the Yasa code set down by Genghis Khan, which is a conglomeration of laws, some taken from Jewish, Christian, Muslim and other legal traditions and many others decided upon by the whim of the Mongol rulers: the whole amalgam being given priority over the laws of Allah laid down in the Koran and the Sunna [oral tradition]. Those who follow such (man-made) laws are *infidels* and should be *combated* till they comply with the laws of God" (Sivan 1983 p43).

> "God disapproves of whosoever rebels against God's laws, (laws) that are clear and precise and that contain everything which is good and that forbid everything that is bad. … Whosoever (rejects these laws in favour of other systems, i.e., the Mongols) is an *infidel* and he must be fought (*yajib qitaluhu*) until he returns to the Rule of God and His Apostle, and until he rules by no other law than God's law" (McGregor 2006).

In *The Bitter Harvest*, Ayman az-Zawahiri used this *tafsir* (exegesis) of Ibn Kathir to justify Al-Jihad's battle against Mubarak's regime in Egypt, on the grounds that it failed to rule according to *sharia* law (Ibrahim 2007 pp124-125).

A3.6 Abd al-Wahhab

Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) was born in Uyayna in the Najd region of central Arabia to a lineage of Hanbali scholars, the Ahl Musharraf. He was son of a religious judge *(qadi)* and grandson of a theologian (Commins 2006 pp10-11; Wynbrandt 2010 p113). Wahhab followed the literalist Hanbali school in matters of Islamic law (*fiqh*), but Wahhabism is distinctive in terms of its creed (Vogel 2000 p76). Greatly influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah (A3.4.1) and his conception of *tawhid*—a strict notion of monotheism—Wahhab followed a puritanical interpretation of Islam set out in his *Kitab al-Tawhid*, or *Book of Unity*. Like Taymiyyah, Wahhab believed that Islam had become corrupted by innovations *(bida)* and that the faith needed to be cleansed of all idolatry and un-Islamic practices that had emerged in Arabia over the preceding centuries (Jackson 2006 p159; Wynbrandt 2010 pp90, 113-115).

In line with Taymiyyah's conception of *unity of worship*, practices directed towards intermediaries or anyone or anything other than Allah constituted *shirk* implying idolatry or polytheism (Esposito 2003e). In the *Book of Unity*, declaring oneself a

Muslim by proclaiming the *shahada*—"there's no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger"—is not enough. A true Muslim, for Wahhab, must explicitly and uncompromisingly disavow all other objects of worships justified by this Hadith:

> "Whoever affirms that there is no god but God and denies all other objects of worship, safeguards his blood, property and fate with God."

For Wahhab, this meant that Shias—who he considered "rejecters" *(rafida)* who venerated the Imams (Ali and his descendants)—and Sufis venerating holy men, and those who sought intercession at their graves, sacrificed animals to beings other than God or made vows to lower beings were not true Muslims but polytheists, *mushrikun* (those who practice *shirk* by ascribing divinity to objects or beings other than God, or associating them with God) (Esposito 2003b); and therefore unbelievers.

Table 4: Wahhab's Ten Voiders of Islam

1) Polytheism (associating others with God in worship)

2) Using mediators for God (for example, praying to saints)

3) Doubting that non-Muslims are disbelievers

4) Judging by non-Islamic laws and believing these are superior to divine law

5) Hating anything the Prophet Mohammed practiced

6) Mocking Islam or the Prophet Mohammed

7) Using or supporting magic

8) Supporting or helping non-believers against Muslims

9) Believing that someone has the right to stop practicing Islam

10) Turning away from Islam by not studying or practicing it.

(Wiktorowicz 2005 p81)

Wahhab also forbade praying at or building tombs, shrines or mosques at grave sites, as such innovations which lead to idolatry. He advocated their demolition, citing a disciple of Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya, who considered their destruction obligatory. Wahhab's reading of the above hadith implied its reverse: those who worshipped other objects or associated them with God would not only be punished in the afterlife, but could justifiably be attacked, even killed, and their property seized in this life, "making idolatry a justification for war" (Commins 2006 pp13-21).

In *The Ten Voiders of Islam* Wahhab listed ten things which automatically constitute *apostasy* such that one is no-longer a Muslim, including those already discussed related to *shirk* (points 1 & 2 above), which he used to justify his struggle against unbelief.

A3.6.1 Al-Muwahhidun

As a young man Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab studied in Mecca, Medina and Basra where he is said to have first encountered Shiism and began his campaign for *tawhid* or monotheism, and against idolatrous innovations *(bida)*. His campaign and anti-Shia stance were unpopular amongst Basra's clergy who had him expelled, before travelling to Huraymila where he is said to have written *The Book of Unity*, before fleeing to Uyayna following an attempted murder. There he found favour with the local *emir* Uthman Ibn Hamad Ibn Muammar, who became his student. There Wahhab's campaign to uproot unbelief truly began when he chopped down sacred trees, led a raid alongside Uthman and his warriors to demolish the tomb of Zayd ibn al-Khattab—a Companion of the prophet Muhammad and brother of the second caliph Umar—and had a woman stoned dead for adultery. Opposition from local *ulama* and pressure from his overlord forced Uthman to expel Wahhab who settled in Diriyya in 1744 where he formed

an alliance with its *emir* Muhammad Ibn Saud. This alliance, sealed by marriage, between the Houses of Saud and al-Sheikh, the descendants of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (Commins 2006 pp11-12, 17-19; Wynbrandt 2010 pp113-114), lasts to the present-day.

The movement that gathered around Wahhab called itself *al-Muwahhidun*, the Monotheists or Unitarians, which incidentally was the name of a puritanical North African caliphate corrupted into Spanish as "Almohad" (Roberts 2003b p12) and a Wahhabi faction that formed part of the GIA in Algeria (ICG 2004). The alliance with the Saud dynasty backed Wahhabi doctrine with political and military power forming the basis of the first Saudi state.

The most controversial aspect of Wahhab's doctrine was his attitude towards *unbelief* and *apostasy*, regarding those who did not follow his interpretation of the *shahada* or partook in practices he deemed idolatrous were not really Muslims, even though they thought themselves such. The *Muwahhidun* considered itself the bearer of a universal truth, the one true interpretation of Islam and those who did not conform to the Wahhabi doctrine were *infidels*. This was the charge levelled against Wahhab by another Najdi cleric, Sulayman Ibn Suhaym (c.1718–1767). Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was also condemned by his brother Sulayman, *qadi* of Huraymila, who argued that according to scholarly consensus, many practices his brother condemned, such as invoking holy men, in fact constituted "lesser idolatry" for which Muslims could not be declared *apostates (takfir)* or executed. Besides, Muslims could not be held responsible for major idolatry before being educated about their errors. However, Muhammad insisted these practices were indeed "major idolatry" for which one must repent or be killed, and anyone who disagreed was also an *infidel*. Indeed, fighting infidelity and idolatry was a religious duty (Commins 2004 pp19-25).

This justified the battle against fellow Muslims and the expansion of the first Saudi state, transforming an expansionist war, a war of gain, into a jihad, a war of doctrine: a "missionary or crusading war, war to assert principles and advance a cause" (Wight 1999 pp138-139). A precondition for waging jihad, according to Wahhab, was first calling the enemy to embrace Islam; he often sent epistles and treatises to Arabian towns making such a call. Prisoners of war were to embrace Islam, accept *dhimmi* status and pay a protection tax, usually only applied to "People of the Book" or die. Inevitably many Muslims on the receiving end of this proselytizing and so-called jihad found the declaration of their infidelity insulting (Commins 2006 pp25-26):

> "What could be more divisive in a monotheistic religion than the claim that to be a believer one must adopt a particular view and that all others are *infidels*?" (Commins 2004 pp19-21).

Muhammad Ibn Saud died in 1765, succeeded by his son Abd al-Aziz who, by 1797 had conquered the Najd, the Shia dominated al-Hasa region, Qatar and Bahrain, before reaching the Hijaz region incorporating the Holy cities: Mecca and Medina. There Saudi forces committed a massacre during the capture of Taif in 1802 or 1803, reportedly killing 1,500 inhabitants, before capturing Mecca and Medina in 1803 and 1804, respectively, where shrines were demolished, some leaders executed and the Ottomans expelled. From 1801 the Saudis launched raids into Ottoman Iraq. Between 1801 and 1803 the Wahhabis attacked Zubayr, a centre of anti-Wahhabi opposition, destroying the tombs of Talha—son of the companion Zubayr Ibn al-Awwam—and al-Hasan al-Basri, killing its residents; and the holy Shia cities of Najaf and Karbala, apparently killing 4,000 Shias and destroying the tomb of Husain and other shrines in the latter (Commins 2006 p52-53; Lukitz 2006 p71; Niblock 2006 pp27-28). The Ottomans responded to the conquest of the Hijaz

by dispatching the governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali who invaded Arabia in 1811. By 1819 the Saudis had been crushed, Dariyya razed to the ground and Abd al-Allah executed (Commins 2006 pp33-38).

During the Ottoman-Saudi War, a grandson of Wahhab, Sulayman Ibn Abd Allah (1785–1818), also known as Sulayman al-Sheikh—cited six times in the *Militant Ideology Atlas*, particularly by the Salafi-jihadist ideologue, Abu Muhammad Maqdisi (said to have mentored Abu Musab az-Zarqawi in a Jordanian prison) (McCants *et al.* 2006a pp188-210, 333; McCants *et al.* 2006b p19)—wrote two epistles on befriending idolaters or *infidels* and travelling to their lands. According to Sulayman, it was permissible to travel to these places provided one openly practiced one's religion and avoided befriending or offering loyalty to idolaters (see *al-wala wal-bara*, A2.5), citing a Hadith: "Whoever associates with the idolater and lives with him is like him." Indeed, his grandfather had argued Muslims must be hostile towards idolaters. Another of Sulayman's epistles declared the residents of Mecca, Basra and al-Hasa assisting the Egyptian forces were idolaters.

> "Thus, in Sulayman's view, the Ottoman-Saudi military confrontation was not merely a struggle between enemy political forces but a facet of the struggle between belief and unbelief, between monotheism and idolatry, between those who love God and His messenger and those who hate God and His messenger. The principles governing the early nineteenth-century war were the same as those revealed by God in the Qur'an to guide His messenger and the believers in their struggle against idolaters, unbelievers and hypocrites more than one thousand years earlier."

It is therefore necessary to perform *hijra* (go into exile) to avoid being led from the true religion. Wahhab himself believed emigration was necessary if one is unable to practice their religion. Sulayman was executed in September 1818 for refusing

to submit to Egyptian commander, Ibrahim Pasha, but his themes were taken up by Hamad ibn Atiq during the second Saudi Emirate (Commins 2006 pp33-37, 47-50) also referenced in the *Militant Ideology Atlas* (McCants *et al.* 2006b p18).

A3.6.2 Wahhabism and Contemporary Jihadism

This idea is based on the *hijra* of Muhammad who emigrated from Mecca to Medina, which combined with these later Wahhabi ideas, could be seen as a key influence on the Egyptian Shukri Mustafa and his group the *Jamaat al-Muslimin* (Society of Muslims), better known as *Takfir wal-Hijra* (Excommunication and Exile). Some believe Ayman az-Zawahiri may have once belonged to this group (Stanley 2004).

The Ten Voiders of Islam have been used by jihadis, including Sayyid Qutb and Osama bin Laden, to declare *takfir* (Esposito 2003f) on the leaders of Muslim states which are not deemed Islamic, pronouncing them unbelievers *(kafir)* and justifying their violent overthrow; though Wiktorowicz notes some employ a longer list. For modern jihadists, as for Taymiyyah and Wahhab, ruling by non-Islamic laws and failing to implement the *sharia* (point 4) constitutes *apostasy*, even polytheism (Wiktorowicz 2005 pp81-82). In his 1996 fatwa, Osama bin Laden utilized points 4 and 8 against the Saudi monarchy, accusing the regime of replacing *sharia* with human law:

> "As stated by the people of knowledge, it is not a secret that to use man-made law instead of the *Shari'a* and to support the *infidels* against the Muslims is one of the ten 'voiders' that would strip a person from his Islamic status" (Bin Laden 1996).

Point 8 is another key jihadist argument utilized against Muslim leaders, that supporting unbelievers against Muslims constitutes *apostasy*, backed up by a favourite Quranic verse for Al-Qaida (5:51):

> "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each other."

Jihadis take a broad reading of this verse such that virtually any relationship with non-Muslims is forbidden. An obvious example is again from Bin Laden's 1996 fatwa. Despite having no love for Saddam Hussein, he declared that by allowing American forces into Saudi Arabia in 1990 who prosecuted the subsequent war against Iraq from their territory, the Saudi regime had apostatized by collaborating with non-Muslims against Muslims (Wiktorowicz 2005 p82). US forces remained in Saudi Arabia until April 2003 (BBC 2003d):

> "The regime *betrayed* the *Ummah* and joined the *Kufr*, assisting and helping them against the Muslims. It is well known that this is one of the ten 'voiders' of Islam" (Bin Laden 1996).

He made a similar point in February 2003, during the build-up to the Iraq War, declaring that those who supported or assisted the American-led war were also unbelievers who could be killed and have their property seized, before quoting the above Quranic verse (5:51):

> "We also point out that whoever supported the United States, including the hypocrites of Iraq or the rulers of Arab countries, those who approved their actions and followed them in this crusade war by fighting with them or providing bases and administrative support, or any form of support, even by words, to kill the Muslims in Iraq, should know that they are *apostates*

and outside the community of Muslims. It is permissible to spill their blood and take their property" (Bin Laden 2003b).

The precedent of the Muwahiddun attacking those they deemed *infidels* is reflected by recent terrorist groups. For instance, Abu Musab az-Zarqawi and *Tawhid wal Jihad* (Unity and Jihad), later Al-Qaida in Iraq—whose original name has obvious Wahhabi connotations—in its sectarian attacks on Shia Muslims and their places of worship. Moreover, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) of Algeria took Wahhabi ideas and the concept of *takfir* to their extreme. The group began its campaign by issuing a deadline for all foreigners to leave Algeria after which numerous foreigners were murdered. This takes the ideas of not associating with unbelievers to an extreme by cleansing them from the country, though it is the opposite of *hijra,* migrating from the land of idolatry. Later the GIA would declare all who disagreed with them, the whole of Algerian society, *apostate*, justifying the civilian massacres that followed, like those committed during the Saudi jihad of the early nineteenth century.

Since the 1950s Saudi religious institutions have promoted their Wahhabi/Salafi doctrine and particularly disseminated the works of Ibn Taymiyyah around the world frequently referenced by jihadists, particularly Abd al-Salam Faraj and GIA tracts justifying their massacres (Kepel 2004c pp157-158).

A3.6.3 Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan

In 1901 Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud, founder of present-day Saudi Arabia, marched out of Kuwaiti exile and captured Riyadh in January 1902. From around 1912 into the 1920s, nomadic Bedouin tribes were settled in colonies called *hujar* (sing. *hijra),* educated in Wahhabism and drafted into Ibn Saud's military campaign. With the help of these zealous warriors, the Saudis completed the re-conquest of Arabia

with the fall of Mecca accompanied by another massacre at Taif in 1924 and capture of Jeddah and Medina in 1925 (Britannica 2011; Ochsenwald *et al*. 2011). The *Ikhwan* (brotherhood) advocated strict adherence to Wahhabi doctrine, but soon fell afoul of Ibn Saud, conducting raids on Arabian tribes and towns deemed lax; they were notorious for killing prisoners and sometimes women and children. In turn the Ikhwan complained of Ibn Saud's *betrayal* of Wahhabi ideals: leniency towards Shiism, modern innovations, particularly automobiles, telegraphy and telephony, allowing his sons to travel to idolatrous countries, Britain and Egypt, and taxes levied against them. While the *ulama* upheld some of these grievances they declared that only the monarch could determine friend or foe, believer of *infidel*, and declare jihad, a radical departure from Wahhabi doctrine (Commins 2006 pp85-89).

The *Ikhwan* wanted to continue jihad, despite its ban. Some *Ikhwan* tribes continued raids into Iraq, attacking a police post in Busayya in October 1927, violating borders agreed with the British. In December 1928, *Ikhwan* attacked a Saudi merchant caravan from al-Qasim. On 30 March 1929 rebellious *Ikhwan* were crushed at the Battle of Sibila before the last of the rebels surrendered to the British at the Kuwaiti border on 30 January. Non-rebellious and rehabilitated *Ikhwan* were finally incorporated into the National Guard (Commins 2006 pp88-92; Moussalli 2009 p7).

Wiktorowicz contends that the *Ikhwan* who revolted in the late 1920s constitute one source of radicalism, alongside Wahhab, Sayyid Qutb and Soviet-Afghan War (2006 pp82-83). Indeed, Juhayman al-Utaybi, responsible for the 1979 seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca, was born in the Ikhwan *hijra* of Sajir in the Najd. His father fought under rebel leader Sultan bin Bijad at the Battle of Sibila (Hegghammer and Lacroix 2007 p109).

Under Ibn Saud, Wahhabism was pacified into a "purist" Salafism (Wiktorowicz 2005 p208), creating a disjuncture between "its quietist present and activist past" (Meijer 2009 p8):

> "After defeating the [Ikhwan] he turned Wahhabism into a state institution. Wahhabism was then forcefully changed from a movement of revolutionary jihad and theological *takfiri* purification to a movement of a conservative social, political, theological, and religious *da'wa* (call) and to a justifying the institution that upholds loyalty to the royal Saudi family and the King's absolute power" (Moussalli 2009 p7).

Indeed, the modern state of Saudi Arabia is based on a bargain whereby the Wahhabi *ulama* have responsibility for matters of religion and public morality in return for political submission and promulgating *wali al-amr,* obedience to the ruler in the House of Saud, who rule over temporal matters (Meijer 2009 p8).

A3.7 Rashid Rida

Rashid Rida would influence the thought of the Algerian Salafi scholar Abdulhamid Ben Badis. Writing in the colonial era, Rida adhered to the notion outlined by Ibn Kathir that failing to rule according to *sharia* but rather implementing human, or more specifically, European laws entailed *infidelity*. In an exposition of Surah 44 (see A3.5) in *al-Manar* he declared:

> "…to those Muslim (rulers) who introduce *novel laws* today and forsake the *Shari'a* enjoined upon them by God…. They thus abolish supposedly 'distasteful' penalties such as cutting off the hands of thieves or stoning adulterers and prostitutes. They replace them by *man-made laws* and penalties. He who does that has undeniably become an *infidel*" (Sivan 1983 p45).

While Rida stopped short of calling for Islamic revolution (Sivan 1983 p45), it is not a huge leap from declaring Muslim rulers *infidels* to calling for them to be overthrown. Like Ibn Taymiyyah and his follower Ibn Kathir, Rashid Rida believed contemporary Muslims who "set laws of their own making and free themselves from the discipline of the laws of Allah" were living in a state of *jahiliyya* or ignorance. They were "geographical Muslims": Muslims by virtue of their country of origin birth, but not the laws they abided by (Sivan 1983 p45).

A3.7.1 Caliphate

Rashid Rida agitated for the restoration of the Caliph's temporal powers of which he had been stripped in 1922, prior to the Caliphate's abolition in 1924. In *The Caliphate or the Supreme Imamate* (*Al-khilafah awal-imamat al-uzma*), Rida argued the Caliphate was obligatory, based on *sharia* and must be restored or replaced by some other form of *Islamic state* (Enayat 2005 p71; Kerr 1966 p158).

From his readings of the history of the Rashidun (rightly guided) Caliphate, Rida believed the Caliph should effectively be elected through consultation (*shura*) amongst "the people who loose and bind" (*ahl al-hall wal-aqd*) a vague term meaning learned, influential and prestigious men amongst the Muslim community, presumably the *ulama*, or religious jurists. He believed the Caliphate had become corrupted following the Rashidun era. Rida does not specify how these representatives of the *umma* are to be selected.

Citing Mawardi (972–1058), these people must have moral integrity, wisdom, good judgement and knowledge of the requirements for Caliph. The Caliph in turn must be a free, adult, male Muslim of the Arab Quraysh tribe—to which Muhammad belonged—with moral integrity and a *mujtahid* capable of independent legal reasoning (*ijtihad*). These jurists act as a check on the Caliph's

power and could depose him on grounds of physical or mental incapacity, captivity, moral deficiency and *apostasy* or *unbelief*, as outlined by Mawardi. Indeed, Muslims have a right to revolt if the Caliph becomes a *kufr* or *infidel*. Yet tyrants are to be tolerated out of necessity (Enayat 2005 pp71-72; Kerr 1966 pp160-170). Rida's Caliph must make decisions in consultation with those 'who loose and bind', but it is not clear that he is bound by their *ijtihad*, or reasoning, so long as he does not contravene the Quran or Sunna. The Caliph's primary purposes are to implement and enforce *sharia* and as preeminent interpreter, or *mujtahid*, of that law. He combines spiritual and temporal power (Kerr 1966 pp164-166, 176-177).

A3.8 Sayyid Abu Al-ala Mawdudi

Mawdudi was a Salafist who believed Islamic decline was because contemporary Muslims did not understand the Quran in its original context as the Salaf did. Mawdudi rejected reliance on the traditions as "sclerotic" (Kepel 1985). In *Al-Mustalahat al-Arbaa fil-Quran* (The Four Technical Terms of the Quran) Mawdudi was attempting to restore the full meaning of Quranic terms by adopting modern equivalent terms (Kepel 1985 pp48-49).

Mawdudi rejected any separation of Islam and politics arguing God was "to be worshipped in the religious sense, and as a ruler and sultan in the political and social sense" (Binder 1988 p176). He argued Islam was "a revolutionary ideology", but, according to Nasr, his appropriation of the term 'revolution' has caused confusion. Mawdudi did not advocate a violent or dramatic revolutionary change, but a gradual approach. Rather, he argued that whatever the degree of "despotism" of regimes in Muslim countries, it was necessary "to resist the temptation of resorting to the methods and techniques of secret underground movements and bloody revolutions" (Nasr 1996 pp69-71) or the "use of arms for bringing a revolution.":

"…in your cherished path of revolution, impatience and haste have no place. A true revolution always evolves through popular movements" (Moten 2003 p407).

A3.8.1 Sovereignty and the Islamic State

For Mawdudi history was a struggle between Islam and *jahiliyya*, defined as "every such conduct which goes against Islamic culture, morality and the Islamic way of thinking and behaving". Since the Rashidun (rightly guided) Caliphs, Islam had been diluted but, unlike in the secular West, Muslims had not been overcome by *jahiliyya* (Shepard 2003 p523).

For Mawdudi *sovereignty* (*hakimiyya*) over all matters belonged to God since he "is the sole master, ruler, director, and administrator of His creation." Therefore, "sovereignty in this universe does not and cannot vest in anyone except God. Nor has anyone else any right to share this *sovereignty* with Him." As such, Allah has authority over all earthly rulers who are merely vice-regents: "His is the only rightful authority in human affairs…. No one else…has any right to give orders or decide matters independently." As the supreme lawmaker people should submit to his sovereignty and laws, revealed by God to his prophets:

"…an unadulterated obedience is the due of God alone; that it is His Law that should rule supreme; and that to obey others or to follow one's own wishes against the Law of God, is not the right way."

Muslims must therefore live according to the "supreme law" revealed by the Quran and Prophet Muhammad. Violation of this law was not only wrong but constituted blasphemy and rebellion against God. The state must, therefore, be ruled according to *sharia* law. The purpose of the *Islamic state* is to command good and forbid evil, provide order, security and justice for its citizens, Muslim and

non-Muslim alike. In return its citizens must be prepared to sacrifice themselves and their property in *defensive jihad* (Maudoodi 1963 pp191-196). Non-Muslims would have *dhimmi* (protected) status, but not full equality since they could not hold positions of power (Jackson 2006 pp193-194)

Mawdudi believed *sharia* law represented a "complete scheme of life and an all-embracing social order" with "nothing superfluous, nothing lacking" and a complete system of laws which will "fulfil the needs of human society in every age and in every country" (Maududi 1960 pp53, 59). Mawdudi believed a virtuous state would make for a virtuous people (White and Siddiqui 2016 p148).

In his initial book, *Jihad in Islam* Mawdudi advocated "Islamization from above" with the implementation of an *Islamic state* where sovereignty belonged to Allah, ruled according to *sharia* law. He rejected the separation of religion and politics, the latter being "an integral, inseparable part of the Islamic faith", making Islam a political ideology. He declared "the *Islamic state* that Muslim political action seeks to build is a panacea for all their [Muslims'] problems." Mawdudi sought a peaceful Islamic revolution, establishing a party, Jamaat-e-Islami in 1941 as his "vanguard" for establishing the *Islamic state* (Kepel 2004c pp34-35). It began as an organization dedicated to Islamic revival and *dawa*, preaching Mawdudi's vision of Islam and moral virtue (Moten 2003 pp393-394).

He saw his *jihad* or struggle for the *Islamic state* not as violent revolution but participation in Pakistani politics. The party opposed capitalism and socialism (Kepel 2004c pp34-35). He led Jamaat until 1972, stepping aside on health grounds (Moten 2003 p398).

They campaigned for an Islamic, rather than merely the Muslim state envisioned by Muhammad Ali Jinnah for Pakistan (Kepel 2004c p59). The state would be

democratic in that citizens could elect their leaders, but the legislature would not be permitted to make laws contravening *sharia* (Maudoodi 1963 p197). He distrusted Western, secular democracy, since Mawdudi believed there were correct and incorrect decisions which should not be made merely on the opinions of the majority (Jackson 2006 p192). In *Islam and Modern Civilization,* he declared:

> "There can be no reconciliation between Islam and *democracy*, not even in minor issues, because they contradict one another in all particulars. Where this system (of democracy) exists we consider Islam to be absent. When Islam comes to power there is no place for this system".

Indeed, Mawdudi disliked notions of popular sovereignty because they usurp the sovereignty of God (Tibi 1998 p187). Yet his thought about democracy was more complex, if not contradictory, arguing that the *Islamic state* would be a "theo-democracy" bestowing "limited popular sovereignty to Muslims under the paramount sovereignty of God" whereby "the executive and the legislature would be formed in consultation with the Muslims" (Jackson 2010 p131). Despite his reservations about democracy, Jamaat-e-Islami participated in elections beginning with the Punjab Provincial Assembly in 1951, winning one seat (Moten 2003 p395).

This limited democracy would be theocratic whereby positions of power would rest with the 0.001% qualified to interpret Islamic law. Since Mawdudi mistrusted human nature, the state would be authoritarian in its enforcement of Islamic doctrine, relying on its "coercive power". In *The Islamic State* he asserts:

> "…who has authority in whatever capacity among Muslims deserves obedience. It is not correct to dispute with them and disturb the life of the community" (Jackson 2010 pp131-132, 142-143).

For Mawdudi, gender equality demonstrated Western decadence. In his *Islamic state*, men and women would not have equal status. Women would have to cover their faces. Moreover, women "are allowed to go out under necessity. But this permission is neither unconditional, nor unlimited. Women are not allowed to move about freely and mix with men in social gatherings" (Jackson 2010 pp133-136, 139).

Mawdudi reasserted the idea that those who apostatized from Islam should be executed, amid unease about continued application of the death penalty and modern conceptions of freedom of religion and conscience. He dismissed these anxieties, arguing if this was rejected, what other tenets of Islam would be abandoned:

> "To everyone acquainted with Islamic law it is no secret that according to Islam the punishment for a Muslim who turns to *kufr* (infidelity, blasphemy) is execution. Doubt about this matter first arose among Muslims during the final portion of the nineteenth century as a result of speculation. Otherwise, for the full twelve centuries prior to that time the total Muslim community remained unanimous about it. The whole of our religious literature clearly testifies that ambiguity about the matter of the *apostate's* execution never existed among Muslims" (Mawdudi 1994).

In the Islamic state *apostasy* from Islam would be punishable by death, but Mawdudi did not pronounce *takfir* on apathetic Muslims (Nasr 1996 p68).

A3.9 Sayyid Qutb

In his final, most radical work, *Milestones*, Sayyid Qutb (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p43) incorporated many of the Mawdudi's ideas, including *sovereignty*, *jahiliyya*, Islamic revolution and the *Islamic state* (Binder 1988; Halverson *et al.* 2011 p43), turning

them into something more virulent. His "most powerful organizing concepts are Qur'anic terms that Mawdudi had revived for contemporary use years before" (Euben 1999 pp54-55).

Unlike Mawdudi's vanguard, Jamaat-e-Islami, the pioneering vanguard of Islam (*al-Islam al-haraki*) Qutb advocated in *Milestones*, was not a political party but a revolutionary one (Gerges 2011 p34; Kepel 2004c p36).

Like Mawdudi, Qutb's *Milestones* argued the Islamic world had reverted to a state of *jahiliyya* (ignorance) and barbarism akin to that before the arrival of Islam in Arabia: "the whole world is steeped in *Jahiliyyahh*" (Qutb 2006 p26). Qutb was essentially a Salafist according to whom "the generation of the companions (*sahabah*) of the Prophet," were "without comparison in the history of Islam, even the history of man." This generation lived according to the Quran as their sole source of guidance. However, Islam subsequently became contaminated with other, idolatrous influences and ideas, including Greek philosophy. Thus, for Qutb "the decline of Islam was due to the loss of the Qur'an as the sole source of guidance and basis for all action" (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p44).

Now rulers, like Nasser in Egypt, disregarded the Quranic guidance, *sharia* law and God's *sovereignty* (*hakimiyya*) by adopting foreign, secular ideologies of socialism, communism and nationalism where *sovereignty* belonged to *tyrants* (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p43).

For Qutb *jahiliyya* meant "rebellion against Allah's sovereignty on earth." Rule by man-made laws usurped the sovereignty of God to humans making "some men lords over others". Contemporary *jahiliyya* consists of "claiming that the right to create values, to legislate rules of collective behaviour, and to choose any way of life rests with men, without regard to what Allah Almighty has prescribed". Thus,

modern society was *jahilli* because it was not ruled according to *sharia*. Rather it was exploitative. Secular communist and capitalist systems constituted "rebellion against Allah's authority and the denial of the dignity of man given to him by Allah Almighty". Any alternatives to an *Islamic state* ruled according to *sharia* law; democracy, capitalism, communism involved the worship of people over God:

> "…Islam's way of life is unique, for in systems other that Islam, some people worship others in some form or another. Only in the Islamic way of life do all men become free from the servitude of some men to others and devote themselves to the worship of Allah alone, deriving guidance from Him alone, and bowing before Him alone" (Qutb 2006 p27).

There is an anti-colonial tone in *Milestones,* in keeping with Al-Qaida rhetoric, as capitalist imperialism exploits both individuals and nations due to greed, while communism humiliates "the common man" (Qutb 2006 p27). Only under Islam could people be truly free.

Qutb's rejection of Western secularism is based not only on his repudiation of its secular conception of sovereignty, but emerges out of the context of foreign domination, cultural imperialism and colonialism (Euben 1999 pp8-9), which remain important themes in the narratives of Muslim *victimhood* expounded by Al-Qaida and AQIM.

For Qutb sovereignty in the ideal society belongs to Allah (Euben 1999 p52). He desired a return to the ideal of the first Islamic community when "society was freed from all oppression, and the Islamic system was established in which justice was Allah's justice and in which weighing was by Allah's balance. … Mankind was uplifted in its social order, in its morals, in all of its life, to a zenith of

perfection which had never been attained before and which cannot be attained afterwards except through Islam" (Qutb 2006 pp43-44).

His Islamic alternative would be "perfect to the highest degree", a shining example to humanity, but "cannot be appreciated unless it takes a concrete form" (Qutb 2006 p27). Yet Qutb was vague about the nature of this *Islamic state*: "Thus, when such a society actually comes into being and the basic teachings of Islam are its guide, it will proceed to formulate laws and regulations for the existing practical needs according to the general teachings of Islam." One must simply "accept the *Shari'ah* without any question and reject all other laws in any shape or form" (Qutb 2006 pp48-49). Though based on *sharia*, Qutb's Islamic state was not a "theocracy" ruled by "spokesmen" for God. Rather, it meant "His laws be enforced and that the final decision in all affairs be according to these laws" (Qutb 2006). Moreover, Qutb was antipathetic towards democracy, believing it was morally degenerate (Euben 1999 p79):

> "After the decay of democracy, to the extent of bankruptcy, the West has nothing to give to humanity…" (Tibi 1998).

Despite his anti-Americanism and concerns about Western cultural influence in the Muslim world, Qutb believed in confronting the *apostate* leaders of Muslim states who allowed this state of affairs and failed to implement *sharia* law, not the West itself. This was a clash between the sovereignty of God, *hakimiya*, in the *sharia* and *jahiliya* or ignorance. Qutb's was a *near enemy* narrative. According to his associates, Qutb never advocated targeting the West or global jihad, but rather attacking the '*apostate*' rulers of Muslim countries, such as Nasser's Egypt, allowing foreign influence in the Islamic world. According to one former associate, Sayyid Eid:

> "Qutb's raison d'être was the replacement of *jahiliya* with *hakimiya* at home and the establishment of a Qur'anic state. I do not ever recall *al-shahid saying* that we should wage war against America or Britain; rather he wanted us to be vigilant against the West's cultural penetration of our societies" (Gerges 2011 p32).

However, regardless of its *far enemy* narrative, Al-Qaida, particularly Zawahiri, claims Qutb's legacy (Gerges 2011 pp30-33). Zawahiri cites Qutb as a key influence in *Knights under the Banner*:

> "Sayyid Qutb's call for loyalty to God's oneness and to acknowledge God's sole authority and *sovereignty* was the spark that ignited the Islamic revolution against the enemies of Islam at home and abroad. The bloody chapters of this revolution continue to unfold day after day. Sayyid Qutb played a key role in directing the Muslim youth to this road in the second half of the twentieth century in Egypt in particular, and the Arab region in general" (Bergen 2006b p19).

Qutb scorned the irredentist notion that jihad was only permissible in defence of Muslim lands which were under attack or occupation by non-Muslims:

> "As to the persons who attempt to defend the concept of Islamic jihad by interpreting it in the narrow sense of the current concept of defensive war…they lack understanding of the nature of Islam and its primary aim" (Bergen 2006b pp19-20).

The systematic torture to which Qutb and his fellow Muslim Brothers were subjected to in prison led him to proclaim *takfir*, judging Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime as "*jahili*" or *apostate* by its actions (Halverson *et al.* 2011 p43):

> "We must also free ourselves from the clutches of *Jahili* society, *Jahili* concepts, *Jahili* traditions and *Jahili leadership*. Our mission is not to compromise with the practices of *Jahili* society, nor can we be loyal to it. *Jahili* society, because of its *Jahili* characteristics, is not worthy to be compromised with. Our aim is first to change ourselves so that we may later change the society" (Qutb 2006 pp34-35).

The implication of this taken up by Egyptian jihadist organizations was that the regimes leaders, as *apostates* could be killed. Following Ibn Taymiyyah, Qutb believed that jihad was permissible, even necessary, as a form rebellion against rulers, such as Nasser's regime in Egypt, who implemented man-made laws (Euben 1999 p55). According to Qutb, proclamation of the *Shahada* "was a challenge to that worldly authority which had *usurped* the greatest attribute of Allah, namely, *sovereignty*. It was a *rebellion* against all modes of behaviour which have been devised under this *usurpation* and was a *declaration of war* against that authority which *legislates laws not permitted by Allah Almighty*" (Qutb 2006 p38).

Like Mawdudi, Qutb believed Islam to be a revolutionary ideology, but in a more literal sense. Rather than as a gradual, peaceful, political struggle to bring about the *Islamic state*, Qutb believed in jihad as a form of violent revolution, to:

> "establish Allah's authority in the earth; to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by God; to abolish all the Satanic forces and Satanic systems of life; to end the lordship of one man over others since all men are creatures of God and no one has the authority to make them his servants or to make arbitrary laws for them. These reasons are sufficient for proclaiming *Jihad*" (Qutb 2006 p81).

In short, the purpose of jihad was to abolish the *jahili* state and replace it with an *Islamic state*, ruled according to *sharia* law—rather than man-made laws—whereby *sovereignty* belonged to Allah:

> "Since this movement comes into conflict with the *Jahiliyyahh* which prevails over ideas and beliefs, and which has a practical system of life and a political and material authority behind it, the Islamic movement had to produce parallel resources to confront this *Jahiliyyahh*. This movement uses the methods of preaching and persuasion for reforming ideas and beliefs, and it uses *physical power* and *Jihad* for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the Jahili system which prevents people from reforming their ideas and beliefs, [and] forces them to obey their erroneous ways and make them serve human lords instead of the Almighty Lord." (Qutb 2006 p65)

Qutb reasoned that once the state was ruled according to *sharia* all the people would be free from servitude to anyone other than God. They would not be compelled to believe but free to choose Islam, presumably so long as they did not transgress Islamic law, since the Quran says "there is no compulsion in religion" (Surah 2:256). Islamic revolution was thus a means to eliminate the impediments to living a good Muslim life under the sovereignty of Allah:

> "…there are many practical obstacles in establishing Allah's rule on earth, such as the power of the state, the social system and traditions and, in general, the whole human environment. Islam uses *force* only to remove these obstacles so that there may not remain any wall between Islam and individual human beings, and so that it may address their hearts and minds after releasing them from these material obstacles, and then leave them free to choose to accept or reject it" (Qutb 2006 p83).

For Qutb, violence was the only means by which an *Islamic state* could be created, since the jahili system will always "defend its existence" and "*crushes* all elements which seem to be dangerous to its personality."

> "*Jahiliyyahh* controls the practical world, and for its support there is a living and active organization. In this situation, mere theoretical efforts to fight it cannot even be equal, much less superior, to it. When the purpose is to *abolish the existing system* and to *replace it with a new system* which in its character principles and all its general and particular aspects, is different from the controlling Jahili system, then it stands to reason that this new system should also come into the *battlefield* as an organized movement…" (Qutb 2006 p57).

For Qutb political legitimacy was thus based upon ruling according to *sharia* law. Muslim rulers who failed to implement Islamic law constituted illegitimate authorities and were therefore *apostates* who had forsaken their religion and must be overthrown. Qutb's understanding that jihad is permissible against such rulers was based on Ibn Taymiyyah's conception of the right to rebel against *apostates*; in the latter case the Mongols who though they claimed to be Muslims ruled according to the Yasa code rather than *sharia* law (A3.4.4). Qutb believed the Egyptian regime was similarly "jahili" or *apostate* (Bergesen 2008 p18; Euben 1999 p55; Qutb 2006 pp34-35).

Indeed, the concept of rebellion against authorities deemed illegitimate, for failing to implement Islam 'correctly', was nothing new. This same logic has been used throughout Islamic history to justify rebellion from the Kharijites onwards (A1.1; B1.3) and the expansion of new empires including the Fatimids, Almoravids (B1.5) and Almohads in the Maghreb, and the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance in Arabia (A3.6.1). What Qutb did was update this doctrine for the twentieth century to justify

Islamic revolution in the modern state of Egypt and elsewhere, deemed not to follow God's law.

Though many of his ideas were by no means original (Euben 1999 p54), Qutb would be a highly influential thinker amongst Egyptian and Algerian militant groups, including AQIM, following his view that Arab regimes like those in Egypt and Algeria must be overthrown through violent revolution.

A3.10 Shukri Mustafa and Takfir wal-Hijra

Jamaat al-Muslimin (the Society of Muslims), commonly known as Takfir wal-Hijra or Excommunication and Exile, was formed by Shukri Mustafa in 1971 (Auda 1994 p381). Mustafa followed an extreme interpretation of Qutb. Mustapha not only proclaimed *takfir* on the Egyptian government, like other jihadist groups, but declared Egyptian society as a whole *infidel* (Timani 2007 p103):

> "…if one religious obligation is missed, the rest are nullified…every Muslim who the call reached but turned away is an *infidel*…*infidels* deserve death" (Brooke 2008 p204).

This has led comparisons to be drawn between the Kharijites (A1.2), Takfir wal-Hijra, and the GIA (B3.7). The latter's successor, the GSPC-AQIM, denounced the GIA as Kharijites in order to distance itself from their atrocities against Muslim civilians. The Kharijites held that anyone who did not join them was an *infidel*. Moreover, killing non-Kharajites was permitted (Timani 2007 p103).

Like modern day Kharajites, members of Mustafa's organization separated themselves from Egyptian society and could only marry and maintain family ties within the group. Anyone marrying outside the sect was denounced as a *kafir* (*infidel*) and ostracized. Existing marriages between members and non-members

were annulled. Working for the Egyptian government or attending state schools was forbidden and Islamic rituals and prayers were supervised by the group's leaders. Jamaat al-Muslimin even denounced the Muslim Brotherhood of which Shukri Mustafa was a former member. Individuals who did not fully fulfil the rituals and duties required by Islam was deemed an *apostate*; society was deemed un-Islamic until it could prove its people carried out what was required of them. Indeed, only members of Takfir wal-Hijra were deemed true believers and everyone else was *infidel*. One former member says those who wished to leave the group were threatened with execution. Islamic orthodoxy has it that only Allah can judge who is a true Muslim, who is to be punished or absolved (Jansen 1997 pp91-92; Timani 2007 pp103-104).

Since Egyptian society was in a state of *jahilliya* (ignorance) many members of Jamaat al-Muslimin exiled themselves to the mountains and caves of Minia Province and deserts near Markaz Abu Al-Raqqas in Asyut Province, and were trained for jihad. These cells were discovered and their members arrested in September 1973 but were pardoned following the Yom Kippur War of October (Hiro 2014 p72; Jansen 1997 p75). Takfir wal-Hijra believed they must separate the righteous (themselves) from the unrighteous society which would ultimately collapse:

> "Retribution will descend on them, and not fall upon us; mercy will descend upon us, and will not fall upon them, as there can be no intermingling or mixing or confusion between truth and lies, and God would not assist a society that pretends to support Islam, while its core beliefs are still *jahiliyya* beliefs, and its branches are intertwined with the branches of *jahiliyya*" (Brooke 2008 p205).

In January 1977 Takfir wal-Hijra cells attacked bars, nightclubs and cinemas during riots leading to the arrests of 60 members. As the government failed to try or release them, the group kidnapped a former minister for *waqfs* (religious endowments), Sheihk Muhammad Hussein al-Dhahabi, on 3 July; demanding a ransom of 200,000 Egyptian pounds to pressurize the regime military (Hiro 2014 p72; Jansen 1997 p75). When this failed, al-Dhahabi was executed. Subsequently, 620 members were arrested across Egypt; 465 were prosecuted by the military. Shukri Mustafa and four others were executed in 1978 (Hiro 2014 p72).

As ultra-fundamentalists, Takfir wal-Hijra rejected sources of Islam other than the Quran, Hadith and Sunna, including the rulings of people, repudiating all four schools of Sunni Islam and the legal reasoning (*ijtihad*) of Islamic scholars (*ulama*). They followed an extreme interpretation of Qutb's conception of *hakimiyya* (sovereignty) belonging solely to Allah, rejecting rule by humans. However, unlike other Islamist groups, and Qutb himself, Takfir wal-Hijra did not desire implementing *sharia* law, they rejected it as manmade and post-dating the Quran and Prophet Muhammad (Jansen 1997 pp87-89; Timani 2007 p108). This put the group at odds with other Salafists and jihadists. Mustafa told the court:

> "Islam has been in decline ever since men have ceased to draw their lessons directly from the Qur'an and the Sunna, and have instead followed the tradition of other men, those who call themselves *imams*" (Timani 2007 p108).

According to a former follower, Abd al-Rahman Abu al-Khayr:

> "We do not accept the words ascribed to the Apostle's contemporaries, or the opinions of those versed in Islamic law, the *fuqaha*. We do not accept the opinions of the early jurists, or their consensus, *igma*, or the other idols,

asnam, like analogy, *qiyas*. How can words of mere humans be a source of divine guidance?" (Jansen 1997 p80).

A3.11 Muhammad Abd as-Salam Faraj

Muhammad Abd as-Salam Faraj was an electrical engineer and leader of Al-Jihad in Egypt from 1979 until his execution on 15 April 1982 alongside President Sadat's assassin Khalid al-Islambouli (Van Linschoten and Kuehn 2012 p471).

According to Faraj, jihad is neglected duty: "Jihad for God's cause, in spite of its extreme importance and great significance for the future of this religion, has been neglected by the ulama of this age" (Jansen 2013 p153). Faraj was against forming a political party because it means collaboration with the state enacting man-made laws (Jansen 2013 p179). Rather, since "Fighting is prescribed for you, though it is distasteful to you" (Surah 2:216), jihad is a "personal individual duty" (Jansen 2013 p183). Faraj argued that "Neglecting jihad is the cause of the lowness, humiliation, division and fragmentation in which Muslims live today" (Jansen 2013 p202).

Based on the Quranic verse "Whosoever does not rule by what God sent down, those, they are the unbelievers", Faraj, like Qutb previously (A3.9) believed the rulers of Muslim countries were *apostates*, because they did not rule according to *sharia* law. "The Rulers of this age are in *apostasy* from Islam. They were raised at the tables of imperialism, be it Crusaderism, or Communism, or Zionism (Jansen 2013 p161). Referencing Abu Hanafi (eponym of the Hanafi school of Islam), Faraj argued that states like Egypt were un-Islamic since three criteria were currently met: It was ruled according to non-*sharia* laws; the Muslims were not safe since Islamists were harassed by the government; and it was adjacent to the *infidel* domain of war (*dar al-harb*) i.e. Israel (Brooke 2008 p206; Jansen 2013 p159)

Thus, for Faraj, jihad meant Islamic revolution: "the establishment of an *Islamic State* is an obligation for Muslims" to establish God's rule, because "something without which something [else] which is obligatory cannot be carried out becomes [itself] obligatory." Unlike Mawdudi, Faraj did not mean peaceful revolution, for if it "cannot be established without war, then war is an obligation as well." He justifies this by citing Ibn Kathir (A3.5) who said that rulers who do not rule according to Islamic law were *infidels* who "must be fought until" they rule "by no other law than God's law" (Jansen 2013 p161).

He argued that since the fall of the Caliphate (A1.6) Islamic laws were abolished in favour of foreign laws: "The laws by which the Muslims are ruled today are the laws of Unbelief, they are actually laws that were made by *infidels* who then subjected the Muslims to these [codes]…". The situation is akin to the rule of the Mongols (Jansen 2013 p160).

> "With regard to the lands of Islam, the enemy lives right in the middle of them. The enemy even has got hold of the reins of power, for this enemy is these rulers who have [illegally] seized the Leadership of the Muslims. Therefore, waging *jihad* against them is an individual duty, in addition to the fact that Islamic *jihad* today requires a drop of sweat from every Muslim" (Jansen 2013 p196).

He cites Ibn Taymiyyah's (A3.4) Mongol (Mardin) fatwa, which said: "It is a well-established rule of Islamic Law that the punishment of an *apostate* will be heavier than someone who is by origin an *infidel* [never a Muslim]…. …an *apostate* has to be killed in all circumstances…" according to Abu Hanifa, Malik and Ibn Hanbal. This is the basis for President Sadat's assassination. Taymiyyah also said: "Any group of people that rebels against any single prescript of the clear and reliably transmitted prescripts of Islam has to be fought…" (Jansen 2013 pp162-163).

Because jihad is an individual obligation all Muslims must participate: "…there can be no excuse for any Muslim for neglecting the duty of jihad…. We must seriously begin to organize jihad activities to return Islam to this nation and establish an *Islamic State*…" (Jansen 2013 p200).

Faraj made the distinction between the *near enemy* and *far enemy*. In contrast with Palestinian jihadists like Fathi Shiqaqi, a founding member of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Brooke 2008 p205), Faraj prioritized the jihad against the *near enemy*, in order to overthrow the Egyptian regime and create an *Islamic state*, rather than that against the *far enemy* in Israel:

> "It is said that the battlefield of Jihad today is the liberation of Jerusalem, since it is [part of] the Holy Land. It is true that the liberation of the Holy Land is a religious command, obligatory for all Muslims…". However, "To fight an enemy who is *near* is more important than to fight an enemy who is *far*" (Jansen 2013 p187).

The "*near* enemy"—*al-Adou al-Qareeb*—refers to regimes in Muslim countries which do not rule according to *sharia*. It follows a theme of religious nationalism employed by SJVNSAs justifying jihad against their ruling regimes (Gerges 2009 pp1, 12). For Salafi-Jihadists "the *far enemy*"—*al-Adou al-Baeed*—refers to America and its Western allies, and Israel (Gerges 2009 pp1, 14), as well as Russia (Hahn 2007 p88). For Faraj Islamic revolution to establish an *Islamic state* had to come first. Subsequently, it must be this *Islamic state* which would lead the battle against Israel:

> "Muslims blood will be shed even if victory [over Israel] is achieved. Now it must be asked whether this will benefit the interests of [establishing] an *Islamic State*? Or will this victory benefit the interests of *Infidel* Rule? It will

> mean the strengthening of a state which rebels against the Laws of God…. These rulers will take advantage of the nationalist ideas of these Muslims in order to realize their un-Islamic aims, even though at the surface [these aims] look Islamic. Fighting has to be done under the Banner of Islam and under Islamic Leadership. …we have to establish the Rule of God's Religion in our own country…. There is no doubt that the first battlefield for jihad is the extermination of these *infidel* leaders and replace them by a complete Islamic Order" (Jansen 2013 p188).

This *Islamic state* would be the "nucleus" from which a new Caliphate could expand (Jansen 2013 p158). Establishing an *Islamic state* was the first step towards re-establishing the Caliphate (Jansen 2013 p155).

Following the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty of 1979, Faraj declared President Sadat an "*apostate* of Islam fed at the tables of *imperialism* and *Zionism*," and as such could legitimately be killed and his regime overthrown, to be replaced by an *Islamic state*. Sadat was assassinated during a military parade on 6 October 1981 by soldiers belonging to Al-Jihad led by Khalid al-Islambouli. The attack failed to spark the hoped-for uprising (Kepel 2004b pp86-87).

Faraj employs the now familiar jihadist theme that those '*martyred*' in jihad will be rewarded, based on a hadith from Al-Tirmidhi:

> "He will be forgiven upon the first drop of blood. His seat will be in Paradise. He will be free from the punishment of the grave. He will be safe from the Great Fright. He will be dressed in the garb of faith. He will marry the heavenly dark-eyed virgins. He will intercede for 70 of his relatives" (Jansen 2013 p202).

As for Zawahiri (A3.15.2) and Al-Qaida subsequently, Faraj argued that the killing of women and children as collateral damage was permissible so long as it was not intentional, using the example of night raids (Jansen 2013 pp214-215).

A3.12 Abdullah Azzam

Abdullah Azzam was born near Jenin in Palestine in 1941, before moving to Jordan following the Six Day War, where he joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1969. He subsequently earned a PhD in Islamic Jurisprudence from Al-Azhar University, Cairo, in 1973. In 1981 Azzam began lecturing at King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia (Maliach 2010 pp79-80) where he met Osama bin Laden (Esposito 2003g p19) before moving to Islamabad's International Islamic University, Pakistan, in November 1981 (Calvert 2007 p89).

A3.12.1 Al-Qaida al-Sulbah

The concept of *al-Qaida al-Sulbah* (the solid base) was conceptualized by Azzam in *Al-Jihad* in 1987:

> "Every principle needs a *vanguard* to carry it forward and, while focusing its way into society, puts up with heavy tasks and enormous sacrifices. There is no ideology, neither earthly nor heavenly, that does not require such a *vanguard* that gives everything it possesses in order to achieve victory for this ideology. …This vanguard constitutes *Al-Qa'idah al-Sulbah* for the expected society" (Gunaratna 2003 p3-4).

This conception of a vanguard to build an *Islamic state* owes much to Qutb. According to Burke, *al-Qaida al-Sulbah* referred to a doctrine rather than an organization (2007 ch1).

Azzam was dedicated primarily, to an irredentist vision of jihad to defend and liberate lands *occupied* by *infidels* such as Afghanistan and Palestine, Kashmir, the Philippines, Chad, Eritrea and Spain. He believed in the creation of a Muslim foreign legion, a vanguard for the liberation of *occupied* Muslim lands conceptualized as *al-Qaida al-Sulbah*, the solid base (Calvert 2007 pp90-97). Once liberated, *Islamic states* would be built in these countries, beginning with Afghanistan, and would ultimately be subsumed into a restored caliphate:

> "We will fight, we will beat our enemies; we will establish an *Islamic State* on the slice of land, like in Afghanistan. Afghanistan will expand, the jihad will spread. Islam will fight in other places. Islam will fight against the Jews in Palestine and will establish an *Islamic state* in Palestine and an *Islamic state* in Afghanistan and in other places. Afterwards, all of these states will merge into one *Islamic state*" (Bartal 2015 p30).

Azzam established the Office of Services for the Arab *Mujahideen* (*Maktab al-Khidmat lil-Mujahidin al-Arab* or MAK) in 1984, calling Arabs from across the world to the Afghan jihad and began publishing Jihad Magazine. The MAK was led by Azzam, Bin Laden and an Algerian, Abu Anas (aka Boudejema Bounoua) (Bergen 2006b pp24-29). Azzam was also a founding member of HAMAS during the first Palestinian Intifada (Calvert 2007 p96). According to Anas, Azzam told him:

> "We have founded this bureau to gather the Arabs and to send them inside Afghanistan instead of going to the guesthouse of [someone like Afghan leader Gulbuddin] Hekmatyar. It's better to save them from the political games of the Afghans. So we need to stay in a separate guesthouse. We are here as servants. We are proud to serve the boots of the *mujahideen* inside Afghanistan. We are not here to guide them, to tell them what to do. We are here to serve them, to liberate their land" (Bergen 2006b p29).

In the event of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Azzam believed the next front for jihad should be Palestine, disagreeing with the Egyptian's of the EIJ who, as Qutb and Faraj previously, prioritized a *near enemy* strategy, to topple *apostate* regimes in the Middle East over liberating Palestine (Gerges 2011 p46). Neither did he agree that Muslim regimes were *apostate*, though he did believe in jihad against Western imperialism (Calvert 2007 p87).

Unlike Bin Laden, Azzam did not believe that Christian or Jewish guests in Muslim countries were legitimate targets. A visa made them a guest entering an accord guaranteeing their safety and property provided they did no harm to the interests of Muslims. The same applied to Muslims in non-Muslim countries where they must obey the laws. Where harm occurred a death, sentence was impermissible before the individual was given the opportunity to leave. People of the Book (Christians and Jews) could only be fought if they attacked Muslims. Otherwise fighting would only lead to retaliation and Muslim deaths (Haniff and Redzuan 2009). Moreover, Azzam opposed attacking Russian civilians during the Afghan War (1979-1989) (Gerges 2011 p44). According to Anas, Bin Laden grew more distant from Azzam from 1986 (Bergen 2006b p48).

A3.12.2 Jihad as an Individual Obligation

Like Faraj, Azzam believed jihad was an individual obligation, *fard ayn*, in defence of Muslim lands *occupied* or threatened by *infidels*. Thus, jihad was obligatory upon Muslims, so long as Afghanistan and Palestine were occupied: "…Jihad is a religious duty for the *Umma* [Muslims around the world], so as to free the people and give them Islamic justice and protection of the religion" (Bergen 2006b p35). He also believed offensive jihad to expand the realm of Islam was a collective duty *fard kifaya*. Moreover, he believed Muslim territory constituted a single entity, quoting Ibn Taymiyyah: "The Muslim lands are like one land" (Calvert 2007 p94).

However, Azzam rejected the *near enemy* narrative of pursing violent Islamic revolution against Muslim regimes (Brooke 2008 p213). He essentially saw jihad as a sixth pillar of Islam, arguing:

> "*Jihad* must not be abandoned until Allah alone is worshipped. *Jihad* continues until Allah's Word is raised high. *Jihad* until all the oppressed peoples are freed. *Jihad* to protect our dignity and restore our occupied lands. *Jihad* is the way of everlasting glory" (McGregor 2006).

Since the Afghan War was a *defensive jihad* it was an obligation for all Muslims capable of fighting. It meant:

> "…expelling the *Kuffar* [*infidels*] from our land, and it is *Fard Ayn*, a compulsory duty upon all. It is the most important of all the compulsory duties and arises in the following conditions: if the Kuffar enter a land of the Muslims. We have to concentrate our efforts on Afghanistan and Palestine now, because they have become our foremost problems. Moreover, our *occupying* enemies are very deceptive and execute programs to extend their power in these regions" (Bergen 2006b p27).

Because it was compulsory, neglecting jihad was a sin: "…every Muslim on earth bears the responsibility of abandoning jihad and the sin of abandoning the gun. Every Muslim who passes away without a gun in his hand faces Allah with the sin of abandoning fighting" (Cook 2005 p130).

Azzam claimed jihad was the highest form of worship, citing a hadith saying "To stand one hour in the battle line in the cause of Allah is better than sixty years of night prayer" (Bergen 2006b p27). Participation in the jihad would bring "reward", and non-participation "punishment" for all not exempted (Cook 2005 p130).

A3.12.3 Martyrdom

According to Moghadam, Abdullah Azzam contributed more to the "cult of martyrdom" within Al-Qaida and amongst other Salafi-Jihadists than anyone else:

> "More than any other single jihadist, Azzam persuaded volunteers for jihad in Afghanistan that those who die for the sake of God (*fi sabil Allah*) will be *rewarded* in *paradise*" (Moghadam 2011 p78).

During the 1980s he extolled the virtues of *martyrdom* and jihad to would be recruits for the Afghan jihad in Afghanistan.

A3.12.4 Hostages

In *On Jihad: Morals and Rules*, Azzam, like Taymiyyah previously, argued that the leaders of the *mujahideen* were to decide whether prisoners taken after battle could be freed or ransomed. However, prisoners could not be taken during battle for men were to be killed. Killing women and children was not allowed. However, wounded *infidels* and communist prisoners could be killed due to communism's atheist ideology (Bar 2006 pp65-66).

A3.13 Yusuf al-Qaradawi

Yusuf al-Qaradawi is a respected Egyptian-born Islamic scholar. In 1996 Qaradawi issued a fatwa ruling that the use of suicide bombing by Palestinian militants against Israelis is legitimate, arguing they are not acts of suicide, which are forbidden: "…make not your own hands contribute to your destruction" (Surah 2:195). Rather they were *martyrdom*. He based this opinion on the so-called 'Constantinople hadith'. The hadith refers to a single-handed attack by a Muslim soldier, who was killed in the process, against the Byzantine army (Holtmann 2009

pp22-31) in 668AD during the First Arab Siege of Constantinople (Jankowiak 2013 p316).

Following Ibrahim al-Ali in 1995, Qaradawi, Abu Faris and Hammam Said all used this same hadith to argue in 1996 that in the context of jihad, this "single attack" was not an act of self-destruction (*taluka*), i.e. suicide (*intihar*), but of *martyrdom*. Rather, not continuing jihad is a greater act of self-destruction. Moreover, they argue the single-handed attack against the Byzantines is equivalent to a suicide bombing. These fatwas were used to justify HAMAS's use of suicide bombing (Holtmann 2009 pp22-29).

According to Qaradawi:

> "Suicide is an act or instance of killing oneself intentionally out of despair, and finding no outlet except putting an end to one's life. On the other hand, *martyrdom* is a heroic act of choosing to suffer death in the cause of Allah, and that's why it's considered by most Muslim scholars as one of the greatest forms of jihad" (Byman 2015 p55).

Yusuf al-Qaradawi is the most influential of the above clerics, seen more as a moderate than an extremist. Qaradawi has thus been accused of opening the floodgates for suicide attacks (Hassan 2014). It is not much of a stretch from arguing suicide attacks by Palestinians in the occupied territories are legitimate to others using this same justification in other contexts. Despite Qaradawi's condemnation of 9/11, 7/7, and other suicide attacks, this is exactly what Al-Qaida has done (Graf 2016). Indeed, according to Al-Qaida:

> "…you will truly be surprised by those who rule that the *martyrdom* operations in Palestine in which civilians fall victim are among the highest forms of jihad, and then rule that the *martyrdom* operations in America are

wrong because of civilian deaths. This inconsistency is very strange! How can one permit the killing of the branch and not permit the killing of the supporting trunk? All who permit *martyrdom* operations against the Jews in Palestine must allow them in America" (Al-Qaida 2002 p3).

A3.14 Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-Auda

Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-Auda are amongst a number of "politicized sheikhs" (Fandy 1999 p90) or Salafist "politicos" in Saudi Arabia (Wiktorowicz 2006). Safar al-Hawali was born in al-Baha province, Saudi Arabia, in 1950 and graduated with a PhD from Umm al-Qura University, Mecca, in 1986. Salman al-Auda was born in al-Basr, near Burayda, Saudi Arabia in 1955 and studied Arabic and Islamic Jurisprudence at Imam Muhammad bin Saud University, Riyadh (Fandy 1998 pp5, 90).

Both opposed the deployment of Western forces in Saudi Arabia following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990; influencing Bin Laden's narrative. Bin Laden frequently cites Hawali and Auda since he has no scholarly credentials himself (Bergen 2001 p81). They, and their imprisonment, are referred to explicitly in Bin Laden's Declaration of War (Bin Laden 1996). They were arrested in September 1994 for criticizing the Saudi government (Bergen 2006b p149).

In a sermon on 17 August, Hawali asked, rhetorically "Can 30,000 immoral American women protect the sons of Prophet Muhammad?" Salman al-Auda subsequently accused the Saudi monarchy of putting "trust in the President of America rather than in God" (Hiro 2014 p161). Moreover, he accused the Supreme Council of Senior Ulama who signed the fatwa permitting the "assistance of Arab and non-Arab" (i.e. Western) forces to defend Saudi Arabia (BBC 1990) of "signing on behalf of God what He had forbidden" (Hiro 2014 p161).

Hawali's studies, lectures and sermons reveal a Qutb-like distrust of secularism which he perceived as a Western conspiracy to undermine Muslim society. According to Hawali, the greatest threat to the Islamic world is "the imposition of Israel and American hegemony over the whole area". He believes a confrontation between the Islamic world and the West, in the form of a *Crusader* war, is inevitable, leading to an Islamic revival (Fandy 1998 pp5-6). Following the deployment of US forces in Saudi Arabia, Hawali declared:

> "We have asked the help of our real enemies in defending us. The point is that we need an internal change. The first war should be against the *infidels* inside and then we will be strong enough to face our external enemy. Brothers, you have a duty to perform. The war will be long. The confrontation is coming" (Burke 2007 ch9).

Bin Laden's criticisms of Saudi dependence on America mimic those of Hawali, who believes the Muslim world is not prepared for this impending confrontation due to national divisions, and economic and military dependence on the West. The deployment of Western forces to Saudi Arabia in 1990 revealed its military dependence on the West. To break this dependence Hawali advocated building a strong military and domestic arms industry. Moreover, military dependence leads to economic and cultural dependence. Like Nasser's Pan-Arabism, Hawali's solution was the reunification of the *umma* in opposition to the West, united in its conspiracy against Muslims: "Nothing can be achieved if not by means of unity under the rule of the Book of God" (Fandy 1998 pp6-7).

Western support for Israeli oppression of Muslims is evidence of this united front. In this context, he argued it was necessary to "mobilize all the energies of the *umma* against a vicious enemy" (Fandy 1998 pp6-7). In a similar vein, Auda

regards Arab states' moves towards normalization of relations with Israel as an attempt to humiliate Muslims (Fandy 1999 p112).

Hawali argued that despite claims to the contrary, Arab governments were adopting Western secularism and were thus *agents* of the West who "undermine the basis of Islamic law". Islamic governments should be governed by "those who are knowledgeable about the principles of the Islamic faith". Therefore, he advocates strict adherence to *sharia*. Citing the Quranic proscription of usury *(riba)*, assets held with the Western financial system should be withdrawn and invested in Muslim countries. Indeed, the diffusion of Western secularism was undermining Islam necessitating internal reform and an Islamic awakening *(sahwa)* (Fandy 1998 pp6-7).

He believes secularization is intensified by globalization and diffusion of communications technologies, constituting a Western conspiracy to undermine Islam, allowing Muslims access to un-Islamic materials and advocates censorship whilst criticizing his government for censoring him (Fandy 1998 p10).

Similarly, Salman al-Auda rails against perceived Western influence and any moves towards Westernization, liberalization or secularization in Saudi Arabia and the Muslim world, which he also sees as a conspiracy against Islam. Like Qutb, Auda regards Western culture as morally bankrupt. He is critical of American policies towards Israel and Muslims, particularly Palestinians; and perceives double standards particularly regarding human rights (Fandy 1999 pp97-112). In what seems a reference to the colonial legacy in the Middle East he claims:

> "The West has succeeded in creating divisions among Muslims. This is why we don't sympathize with other Muslims. Muslims are called Gulfis,

> Levantines, Egyptians, Kurds, etc. … Now we see Kurds as enemies because the colonial powers wanted us to believe so" (Fandy 1999 p106).

There is a xenophobic element to Auda's rhetoric advocating purging Saudi Arabia of foreign and 'heretical' influences, calling for the expulsion of all non-Muslims and the Shia (Fandy 1999 pp100-101).

In *Realities Behind the Gulf Crisis (Haqaiq azmat al-khalij)*[18] Hawali argued that the American deployment to Saudi Arabia was part of a planned *occupation* of the Gulf, citing the strategic importance of Arabian oil to the West: "I'm of the opinion that what took place [in the Gulf] was not a random event, but part of the larger Western design…" (Fandy 1998 p11). According to Hawali:

> "The *Crusader* invasion of the Arabian Peninsula has already undermined the honor…of every Muslim. It will not be long until your blood is shed with impunity or you declare your abandonment of your belief in God" (Teitelbaum 2000 p29).

He believed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was orchestrated by the US to enable its *occupation* of the Arabian Peninsula. This increased military presence was the "new Christian crusade of the twentieth century". Moreover, American alliances with Arab regimes and Israel were designed to prevent the spread of Islam, creating a "defense perimeter". These strategies were designed to "enforce complete Western hegemony on the Islamic world and to eradicate Islamism" (Fandy 1998 p70). Hawali's is a narrative of victimhood is reflected in Al-Qaida's strategic narrative.

[18] Also known as *Kissinger's Promise: American Goals in The Gulf* (*Wad Kissinger wal-ahdaf al-amrikiyya fil-khalij*).

> "Do you think that the West came to this region to defend us? By God, No! They have never wanted any good to happen to us. Whether it is we who are destroyed or Iraq, it is our Nation that is destroyed" (Fandy 1998 p71).

According to Mamoun Fandy, Hawali believed the war was not purely about oil but to humiliate Islam (Fandy 1998 p70). According to Hawali "What is happening in the Gulf is part of a larger Western design to dominate the whole Arab and Muslim world" (Fandy 1999 p61).

Hawali's other book *Palestine Between the True and False Promise* (*Filistin bayn al-wdd al-haqq wal-zvad al-muftara)* is about American Christian-Zionism, Bin Laden's Zionist-Crusader alliance. For Hawali also believes Evangelical Christian Zionists are the power behind America's pro-Israeli foreign policy, who "believe that if Israel does not continue to exist, the Messiah will not have a place to go back to." Accordingly, Jews and Christians are united in hate for Muslims (Fandy 1998 pp14-17).

Hawali rejects the adoption of parliamentary democracy because it subjects the sovereignty of God to human desires to follow or forsake *sharia* tenets and constitutes unbelief (*kufr*): It "is against our beliefs and against what was revealed to our Prophet". For Hawali the ideal model is that of Ibn Saud (Fandy 1998 pp7-8). Unlike Bin Laden, Hawali did not accuse the Saudi monarchy of apostasy.

Mirroring Bin Laden's criticism of Saudi corruption, Auda criticizes corruption, bribery and excessive spending in Saudi Arabia, as well as nepotism where good jobs go to those with family connections. Thus, he calls for meritocratic appointments of public servants (Fandy 1999 pp97-99).

A3.15 Ayman az-Zawahiri

Following the imprisonment of Al-Jihad Islamist militants in the aftermath of President Sadat's assassination and Faraj's execution (A3.11), the group divided into two factions known as Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and Gamaa Islamiyya (GI) (Sageman 2004 pp25-34).

Reflecting the influence of Qutb and Faraj, Ayman az-Zawahiri, as late as 1995, prioritized the jihad against the *near enemy* in Egypt over fighting the *far enemy*. Zawahiri rendered Faraj's strategic priority of "fighting the enemy that is *near*" (Faraj 2000 p50) as "*The Way to Jerusalem Passes through Cairo*", in EIJ's *Al-Mujahideen* newsletter of April 1995. It declared: "Jerusalem will not be liberated unless the battle for Egypt and Algeria is won and unless Egypt is liberated" (Al-Zayyat 2004 p62; Gerges 2009 pp32-33). Vahid Brown dismisses this argument, claiming Zawahiri had already adopted a *far enemy* approach. The quote Brown cites claims the battle in Egypt is part of a broader jihad against other '*apostate*' regimes, Israel and the West:

> "In such wise have the battle lines been clearly drawn between the parties of infidelity—Western, Russian, Zionist and nationalist—and the *mujahidin*, the vanguard of the *umma*, and this is the reality that God Almighty commands us to grasp when He says in His book 'fight the *polytheists* all together as they fight you all together' (surah 9:36). The battles in Palestine, Algeria, Bosnia and Chechnya are all one war being waged on different fronts" (Brown 2011 p98).

However, Zawahiri continues to prioritize the battle against the *near enemy*:

> As for the battle in Palestine…in consideration of the circumstances, the matter will not be settled and Jerusalem will not be liberated until the

> battles in Egypt and Algeria are settled…and not until Cairo is liberated" (Brown 2011 p98).

While theirs was a global war against multiple antagonists—*apostate* regimes, the West, Russia and Israel—the battle against the *near enemy* in Egypt and Algeria took priority over liberation of Palestine, which could only take place following the defeat of the *apostates* and establishment of an *Islamic state*.

Moreover, his letter of 4 February 1995 to Zitouni of the GIA in Algeria, suggests he is using a *far enemy* narrative instrumentally to rally support for fighting the *near enemy*.

> "Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that the Islamist movements must adopt the confrontation with Israel and America, so that they attract the masses to the fight and to the critical strike against the regime" (Brown 2011 p98).

In 1992 an EIJ leader and his computer were seized leading to the arrest of 800 members of the organization within Egypt, curtailing its activities (Sageman 2004 p41). Moreover, in July 1997 a reconciliation scheme was negotiated between members of EIJ's fellow Egyptian jihadist organization Gamaa al-Islamiyya (GI) and the Egyptian regime. 2,000 prisoners were to be released in exchange for renouncing violence. Some senior members of the EIJ also joined the Non-Violence Initiative, which caused divisions within both the GI and EIJ between those, largely inside Egypt, who desired reconciliation and those, mainly in Afghanistan, who wanted to continue the jihad. Finally following the Luxor massacre in November 1997, where six militants killed 58, mostly Swiss, foreign tourists and

four Egyptians, support for the jihadists in Egypt waned.[19] Responsibility was claimed by Rifai Taba in Afghanistan, on behalf of Gama'a al-Islamiyya whilst the organization's spokesman, Usama Rushdi, condemned the massacre. This miscalculation deprived the Islamists of support amongst the populace, thus attacks dissipated (Tawil 2011 pp140-144; Wright 2006 p258).

According to the GTD, following the massacre there were only four terrorist attacks in Egypt before 2004, compared with 22 in 1997 (START 2016). The logic behind the attack as with previous attacks on tourists was primarily to undermine the Egyptian economy rather than a *far enemy* one. In fact, it spurred Zawahiri's turn to a *far enemy* strategy (Wright 2006 pp256-260). The failure of the jihadist movement in Egypt to overthrow the regime led Zawahiri to a strategic cultural shift from a *near enemy* strategy targeting the Egyptian regime to a *far enemy* one targeting the West (Al-Zayyat 2004; Gerges 2009).

This led Zawahiri to align EIJ with Osama Bin Laden as a signatory of his 1998 declaration of the *World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders* (Bin Laden 1998). This led to divisions within EIJ. Some members distrusted Bin Laden, accusing Zawahiri of jeopardizing the group's survival (Gerges 2011 pp35-36).

Wright believes it was Zawahiri who actually drafted the declaration "to unite all of the different *mujahideen* groups that had gathered in Afghanistan under a single banner… turn[ing] the movement away from regional conflicts and toward a global Islamic jihad against America." Taha would sign the declaration for Gamaa Islamiyya against its wishes (Wright 2006 pp259-260).

[19] Swiss police believe Bin Laden funded the attack.

It seems Zawahiri aligned with Bin Laden for financial reasons with his organization on the verge of bankruptcy, unable to afford its fighters expenses or stipends to the widows of its '*martyrs*' (Gerges 2011 p36):

> "With even more defectors from his membership and no real sources of income, Zawahiri had no choice but to join bin Laden in Kandahar" (Wright 2006 p250).

A3.15.1 Opposition to Democracy

In *The Bitter Harvest: Sixty Years of the Muslim Brotherhood* (circa 1991) Ayman az-Zawahiri argued that "democracies, elections and parliaments" are "*jahiliyya*"; criticizing the Muslim Brotherhood for abandoning their "duty of jihad" and participating in Egyptian elections and portraying "*infidel* governments as legitimate" (Ibrahim 2007 p116). This anti-democratic ideology influenced the strategic cultures of both Al-Qaida and the GIA (B3.7.2) and in turn its successor in the GSPC-AQIM. He cites Mawdudi's *Islam and Modern Civilization* which claims that "democracy is partnership with Allah" constituting "the deification of man":

> "The difference between democracy and monotheocracy [tawhid] is that monotheocracy makes Allah the sole legislator while democracy is rule of the people for the good of the people" (Ibrahim 2007 p123).

Thus, following Mawdudi and Qutb, Zawahiri believes democracy usurps the sovereignty of God. He quotes Qutb's *In the Shade of the Quran*, which says "Sovereignty is the most exclusive prerogative of godhood." He also cites Ibn Taymiyyah (A3.4) who said "whoever justifies…adherence to a law other than the *sharia* of Muhammad, such one is an *infidel*…". Moreover, Zawahiri claims democracy constitutes a "new religion" and in obeying man-made laws one "worships" the legislators over, or in partnership with Allah, which is

"blasphemy". He repeats Qutb's claim that in non-*sharia* states some people become lords over others (Ibrahim 2007 pp126-132).

Moreover, like Qutb, Zawahiri believed in the objective of creating *Islamic states* in Muslim countries, particularly his native Egypt. He did not believe in non-violent reform or political participation, but jihad against *tyrants* and *apostates*. Quoting Ibn Kathir (A3.5), Zawahiri claimed those, like the Mongols, who fail to rule according to *sharia* are *infidels* who must "be fought till he submits to the Commandments of Allah and his Messenger, so that he reigns in evil for the shortest amount of time" (Ibrahim 2007 p125).

Political parties and elections were heretical, democracy *apostate* and participants *heretics*. In *The Bitter Harvest*, Zawahiri denounced the Muslim Brotherhood as misguided and heretical and by implication the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) (B2.4) in Algeria also (Tawil 2011 pp38, 44-47). Since the Muslim Brotherhood (and FIS) are agreed to a democratic strategy they are, therefore *apostates* and *infidels* (Ibrahim 2007 pp133-136). Moreover, the FIS was also condemned at his al-Faruq training camp in Khost, Afghanistan, where the Algerians "were brainwashed into thinking that what the FIS was doing in Algeria was much the same as what the Muslim Brotherhood believed in" (Tawil 2011 pp38, 44-47).

In a letter to Muntasir al Zayyat, lawyer for Gamaa Islamiyya, opposing the group's peace initiative, Zawahiri argued:

> "The experience of Hassan al-Banna[20] with the Egyptian government is still fresh in our minds. His end came after he chose to praise the despots and declare peace. They killed him as a present to the King! If making

[20] Leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna was assassinated in 1949.

agreements with the authorities was productive, the Brotherhood would've benefited before you" (Asharq al-Aswat 2005a).

Zawahiri's change in strategic priorities to a *far enemy* agenda created divisions within EIJ. Four members in Yemen resigned when Zawahiri reversed the group's priority of "fighting the enemy who is close at hand is better and more deserving than the enemy who is far away", when he signed Bin Laden's 1998 fatwa (Asharq al-Aswat 2005b).

Based on the exegesis hadith of Ibn Battal and Ibn Hajar, Zawahiri argues that it is not legitimate to oust a *tyrannical* Muslim ruler unless they are an "*infidel*" whereupon it becomes compulsory to prosecute jihad against them. However, Zawahiri contends:

> "The current rulers of Muslim countries who govern without the *sharia* of Allah are *apostate infidels*. It is obligatory to overthrow them, to wage jihad against them, and depose them, installing a Muslim ruler in their stead" (Ibrahim 2007 pp121-122).

Indeed, Zawahiri argues that "He who performs deed not sanctioned by us is an *apostate*." Echoing Qutb, Zawahiri claims that under these regimes Muslims have returned to a state of *jahiliyya*. These regimes have *betrayed* Islam and the *umma* by having Muslims disregard *sharia* in return for "*jahiliyya* democracies" allowing humans to choose their own "laws and ideologies" rather than submitting to God's laws (Ibrahim 2007 pp122-123).

A3.15.2 Martyrdom and Killing Innocents

Like Qaradawi, Ayman az-Zawahiri uses some hadiths creatively to justify suicide bombing on the grounds of the intention of the perpetrator; why they wish to die.

Are they dying as martyrs for their faith or are they committing suicide out of despair, which is forbidden? Despite Islam forbidding suicide, in *Jihad, Martyrdom and the Killing of Innocents*[21], Zawahiri argues it is permissible if the intention is to avoid capture by *infidels*, divulging secrets under torture or renouncing Islam (Ibrahim 2007 pp137-139).

Citing a hadith in which Muhammad said war is deceit, Zawahiri claims:

> "Deception in warfare requires that the *mujahid* bide his time and wait for an opportunity against his enemy, while avoiding confrontation at all possible costs. For triumph, in almost every case is [achieved] through deception: triumph achieved through confrontation possesses many dangers."

In "avoiding confrontation" Zawahiri is seemingly also outlining a strategy of asymmetric warfare. He argues that "martyrdom operations" are a form of "deception" and therefore permissible (Ibrahim 2007 pp142-143). In *Knights Under the Banner* he advocates suicide bombing on utilitarian grounds:

> "Suicide operations are the most successful in inflicting damage on the opponent and the least costly in terms of casualties among the fundamentalists" (Mansfield 2006 p200).

Regarding the rewards of *martyrdom*, Zawahiri cites a hadith reported by Al-Muqadam bin Maad Yakrub in which Muhammad said:

> "The *martyr* is special to Allah. He is forgiven from the first drop of blood. He sees his thrown in *paradise*, where he will be adorned in ornaments of

[21] This was written for EIJ's council. The date is not clear.

> faith. He will wed the Aynhour [virgins] and will not know the torments of the grave and safeguards against the greater terror [hell]. Fixed atop his head will be a crown of honor, a ruby that is greater than the world…".

Zawahiri argues that since God treats martyrs in such high esteem "demanding martyrdom and desiring death in the path of Allah", i.e. suicide bombing, "becomes legitimate". Moreover, to justify seeking martyrdom, Zawahiri cites Abdullah bin Jahsh (a companion of the prophet) who reportedly said:

> "O Allah! Find me among the idolaters a mighty and furious man, full of blasphemy and unbelief, that I may fight him for your sake. Then he will overcome me, plunder me, and chop of my ears and nose" (Ibrahim 2007 pp143-144).

Zawahiri goes on to cite a number of examples from the hadith where a single Muslim attacks a larger force, facing almost certain death, which he equates with suicide bombing. This is permissible if it will benefit the Muslims. He argues "there is no difference whatsoever between the man who kills himself", i.e. suicide bombers, "or who plunges himself into the ranks of the enemy and they kill him…provided that this is all done for the good and glory of Islam." Whether it is martyrdom or suicide depends on "intention": "is it to service Islam, or…out of depression and despair?" (Ibrahim 2007 pp152-157).

Like Faraj, Zawahiri argues that jihad is a neglected duty, abandonment of which has caused humiliation, "division and conquest", while jihad leads to "glory", quoting a hadith in which Muhammad said: "If you…are content with farming, and thus abandon jihad, Allah will let humiliation lord over you until you return to your religion." Accordingly, when Muslims embraced jihad Islam was at the

height of its power: a golden age, since when its power and honour has waned (Ibrahim 2007 pp144-145).

Moreover, Zawahiri uses the same argument for using indiscriminate weapons which may kill *infidel* non-combatants as *The Mandates of the Heroes* (Al-Qaida 2002), if it is necessary or if not doing so would delay jihad, based on Muhammad's use of catapults at Taif. He claims that such cases mentioned in the hadiths refer to offensive jihad to spread Islam, arguing women, children and *dhimmis* are protected in this context. However, in the *defensive jihad* Al-Qaida claims to be fighting, safeguarding the lives of civilians is not applicable (Ibrahim 2007 pp139-140). He also alters the concept of *tatarrus* (A2.4), arguing Muslims freely intermingling with *infidels* are less protected than Muslim human shields (Ibrahim 2007 p140) who may be killed as collateral damage when attacking infidel forces.

Zawahiri cites Abu Hanifa who argued it was permissible to bombard enemy forts when they held Muslim hostages without paying blood money (compensation); and Al-Qurtubi, who said: "it is permissible to slay the human shield without any disagreement—Allah willing—if the advantage gained is imperative, universal, and certain" (Ibrahim 2007 p163). Again, it is about intention since the Muslims are not the intended target, but 'collateral damage' killed accidently, who become martyrs anyway (Ibrahim 2007 pp165-167).

Ibn al-Himam (from the Hanafi school) said: "Whether or not holding back from [bombarding] the *infidels* will result in defeat [for Muslims], there is absolutely nothing wrong with bombarding the strongholds of the *infidels*, even if there are Muslim hostages or merchants among them—indeed, even if they use the Muslims or their children as human shields. For the target is always the *infidel*" (Ibrahim 2007 pp166-167).

Zawahiri holds to this interpretation that using explosive weapons to target '*apostate*' government forces and 'infidels' is always justified, even if Muslim civilians are killed, "to expedite jihad and never cause it delay". He also expresses it in terms of asymmetric warfare, as both necessary and effective: "Bombarding the organizations of the *infidels* and *apostates* in this day and age has become an imperative of jihad in our war with the idolatrous *tyrants*, where weakened *mujahidin* battle massive and vigilant armies armed to the teeth: It has become next to impossible to confront them in open warfare." However, they should warn Muslims to avoid government buildings and forces (Ibrahim 2007 pp168-170). Similarly, AQIM's narrative does exactly that.

A4 Military Strategy

A4.1 Hizballah

Suicide bombing was pioneered by Iranian-backed Shia militant organizations, such as Hizballah and Al-Dawa, in Lebanon in the early 1980s. During the coinciding Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) the first suicide vehicle bombing by the Iranian-backed Hizb Al-Dawa Islamiyya struck the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut on 15 December 1981, killing 66 (Zahed 2017 p74). Hizballah came to practice suicide vehicle bombing prolifically, conducting the second such attack on the Israeli military headquarters in Lebanon on 11 November 1982 (CPOST 2016). They subsequently blew up the American Embassy in Beirut with a van packed with approximately 400kg of explosives, killing 63 and causing a partial collapse of the buildingon 18 April 1983 (Shay 2004 p41).

On 23 April 1983 a massive suicide truck bomb with an estimated payload of 5.4 tonnes struck the US Marine's barracks in Beirut. A second suicide truck bomb exploded outside a nearby barracks housing French paratroopers. The twin

suicide bombings killed 241 marines and 58 paratroopers. American, French and Italian forces were all subsequently withdrawn from Lebanon by 26 February 1984 (Britannica 2013; CPOST 2016; Shay 2004 p41). The US Embassy, which had moved to Akkar, was struck again on 20 September 1984 (Shay 2004 p41).

Al-Qaida's twin suicide attacks on the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, emulated those of Hizballah, aiming to have a similar effect: the withdrawal of US forces from Saudi Arabia.

A4.2 HAMAS

HAMAS normalized the strategic practice of suicide bombing amongst Sunni jihadist groups (Acosta 2009 pp193-195). HAMAS adopted suicide bombing on 16 April 1993, attacking an Israeli Defence Force (IDF) bus with a car bomb. A second, similar, attack on an IDF bus occurred on 4 October. Between 1993 and 2016 HAMAS perpetrated 79 suicide bombings (CPOST 2016).

A4.3 Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ)

"Al Qaeda's adoption of suicide attacks was also influenced heavily by the EIJ and its leader, Zawahiri" (Moghadam 2011 p79). Following HAMAS, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, led by Ayman az-Zawahiri, was the second Sunni jihadist organizations to employ the strategic practice of suicide bombing, also in 1993 (Moghadam 2011 p79).

Breaking Islamic norms against suicide, whilst emulating the example of the Shia militant group, Hizballah, EIJ attempted to assassinate the Egyptian Interior Minister, Hasan al-Alfi, in August 1993, when two suicide bombers detonated an explosive-rigged motorcycle alongside his motorcade. The minister survived the

attack which killed seven and wounded sixteen people (Stanford 2016; START 2016 pp185-186; Wright 2006).

> "Zawahiri was a pioneer in the use of suicide bombers, which became a signature of Jihad assassinations. The strategy broke powerful religious taboos against suicide and the murder of innocents" (Wright 2002).

EIJ perpetrated a second suicide vehicle bombing on 19 November 1995, striking the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, at 10:45 am killing seventeen people and injuring 58. The attack both targeted the *apostate* Egyptian government and served as a warning to Pakistan against co-operating with Egypt, with whom it had signed an extradition treaty in July 1994 (Shay 2004 p93). Zawahiri has dismissed the notion that those who are following their master's orders are not responsible for their wrongdoing to justify the deaths of the staff as supporters of the Egyptian regime which has failed to implement *sharia* (Asharq al-Aswat 2005a).

EIJ detonated another suicide car bomb in Pakistan, targeting a market in Peshawar on 21 December 1995, killing at least 30 and injuring approximately 100. The attack followed a warning to the Pakistani government the previous week against extraditing Egyptian jihadists (Shay 2004 p93).

These attacks, particularly that on the civilian market in Peshawar, show EIJ had few qualms about killing Muslim civilians. Zawahiri praises the utility of 'martyrdom operations' to "Cause the greatest damage and inflict the maximum casualties on the opponent":

> "Suicide operations are the most successful in inflicting damage on the opponent and the least costly in terms of casualties among the fundamentalists" (Mansfield 2007 p200).

The Egyptian group Gamaa Islamiyya adopted the practice of suicide bombing in October 1995, attacking a police station with a car bomb in Rica, Croatia in retribution for the arrest of Talaat Faud Kassem (Shay 2004 pp92-93).

A4.4 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE)

On 12 July 1990 the Sea Tigers, the naval wing of the Tamil Tigers perpetrated its first maritime suicide bombing, attacking a Sri Lankan Navy ship with a boat-bomb, killing six. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PLFP) had previously attempted a similar attack against an Israeli Navy ship in 1989. Between 1990 and 2008 the LTTE perpetrated 32 maritime suicide boat attacks targeting Sri Lankan Navy ships and, on one occasion, two merchant ships carrying military supplies (CPOST 2016). Nineteen of these attacks took place prior to Al-Qaida's failed maritime suicide bombing of the USS Sullivans in January 2000, and USS Cole bombing of October.

Appendix B: Maghrebi Sources of GSPC-AQIM Strategic Culture

B1 Maghrebi History

The strategic cultural narrative of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb resounds with references to the history of Islam in northern Africa, particularly the Arab invasion and early Umayyad Caliphate. AQIM's narrative invokes three ancient *master narratives* (Bartolucci and Corman 2014 pp5, 18) of legendary *champions* of the seventh and eighth centuries, Uqba Ibn Nafi, Musa Ibn Nusayr and Tariq Ibn Ziyad; and eleventh century Almoravid conqueror Yusuf Ibn Tashfin (Kennedy-Boudali 2009 p16; Porter 2011 p5).

B1.1 Uqba Ibn Nafi

Islam was brought to the Maghreb (the west) from the Mashreq (east) during the seventh century (Le Gall 1993 p4). Armed struggle mobilized by Islam in the Maghreb began in 670 with the Islamic conquest under Uqba ibn Nafi al-Fihri. His forces conquered the province of Ifriqiya—from Tripolitania in Libya, through Tunisia into eastern Algeria for Islam, establishing a capital at Qayrawan (Kairouan) in Tunisia. Uqba was replaced by Abu al-Muhajir Dinar in 674 (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp28-30); possibly for "his exclusively military views, his imperious attitude towards the Berber chiefs, his systematic massacres and his forays as full of risk as they were devoid of advantage" (Julien 1970 pp7-9).

Al-Muhajir negotiated a pact with Kusayla, chieftain of the Awraba tribe who was apparently persuaded to become a Muslim and vassal of Umayyad rule.[22] This agreement was scuppered when Uqba returned in 681 leading a legendary westward march, with al-Mahajir and Kusalya in tow, reaching the Sus River in Morocco, which flows into the Atlantic, in 682. There he massacred the inhabitants. Legend has it that Uqba rode into the sea proclaiming "Oh God! If the sea had not prevented me, I would have coursed on for ever like Alexander the Great, upholding your faith and fighting all who disbelieved!" Charles Julien cast doubt that Uqba got further than Oran in Algeria, for lack of detailed evidence. Sus was a vague term at that time.[23] In 683 Uqba was ambushed at Biskra in modern Algeria by Kusayla's forces. Kusayla escaped his captor, forcing Qayrawan to be abandoned to the Berber chief, while Cyrenaica was re-occupied by Byzantium. Uqba's *martyrdom* made him a *hero*. Kusayla was defeated at Mems in 686 (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp28-30; Brett and Fentress 1997 pp82-83; Julien 1970 pp8-11).

B1.2 Musa Ibn Nusayr, Tariq Ibn Ziyad and the Conquest of Spain

In 693 Hassan Ibn al-Numan re-conquered Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Tunisia, again encountering resistance, from the Jawara tribe led by al-Kahina, "the priestess", who was finally defeated near Gabis in 698. Ibn Nusayr is credited with conquering the Maghreb al-Aqsa, "the far west", i.e. Morocco, seizing Tangier. He left Tariq Ibn Ziyad as governor for the Sus region and Sijilmasa by 708/9 (Abun-Nasr 1993; Julien 1970 p18).

The subsequent conquest of Spain—which still has strong resonance for Al-Qaida and AQIM (Torres-Soriano 2009)—began in April 711 when Musa ordered an

[22] It is uncertain whether Kusayla was a Muslim as asserted by later chroniclers, or remained Christian (Julien 1970 p10). Making him Muslim justifies the Arab view of rebellious, apostatizing Berbers and punitive action against Kusayla.
[23] There is also a city in Tunisia called Susa.

invasion commanded by a Berber freedman, Tariq Ibn Ziyad (O'Callaghan 1975 pp52-53). Tariq landed at Gibraltar, or *Jabal Tariq*, "Tariq's Mountain", with approximately 7,000 Berbers before advancing to Algeciras where reinforcements of 5,000 men arrived. In July, Tariq's forces fought those of King Rodrigo, who probably died in the battle, somewhere along either the Guadalete or Barbate River; before routing the remaining Visigoth forces at Ecija, capturing Cordoba, despoiling Granada and Malaga and seizing the Visigoth capital of Toledo (O'Callaghan 1975 pp52-53, 92; Watt 1965 pp13-14).

In June 712 Musa landed an army of 18,000 Arabs at Algeciras, capturing Medina Sidonia, Alcalá de Guadaira and Carmona, before Seville and Merida fell to siege in 712 and 713 respectively. In Spring 714 Muslims advanced north-eastwards through Sigüenza, Calatayud and across the Ebro River to Zaragoza. Tariq split north-westwards subduing Aragon, Leon and Astorga, while Musa followed the Duero and Minho rivers to the south-west into Galicia. Musa was subsequently recalled by the Caliph in Damascus, leaving his son, Abd al-Aziz Ibn Musa, in command. Meanwhile the Caliph had died, succeeded by his brother (O'Callaghan 1975 pp92-93; Watt 1965 pp13-15).

Under Abd al-Aziz control of Iberia was consolidated and Muslim forces crossed the Pyrenees into south-eastern France. Abd al-Aziz was assassinated in 716 on command of the Caliph. Barcelona and Narbonne fell between 717 and 718 to the Muslims, who conquered no further. Following the Muslims defeat by Charles Martel in 732 somewhere between Poitiers and Tours, the Franks pushed the Muslims back to Narbonne, which was recaptured in 751 or 759 by Pepin the Short (O'Callaghan 1975 pp93-98).

Uqba Ibn Nafi (B1.1), Musa Ibn Nusayr and Tariq Ibn Ziyad are heroes of Islamic history who feature in AQIM's narrative (Kennedy-Boudali 2009 p16) for

conquering and bringing Islam to the Maghreb and Iberia, or '*al-Andalus*'. Between 2007 and 2009 AQIM's *emir*, Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud aka Abdelmalik Droukdel, mentioned Ibn Nafi and Ibn Ziyad four times each.

> "From AQIM's perspective, Bin Nafi is relevant because of his role in securing North Africa as Islamic territory. AQIM argues that it is defending this same territory against *infidels* and *apostates*, thus framing its violence as an extension of Bin Nafi's original conquest" (Kennedy-Boudali 2009 pp15-16).

The Saharan unit formerly led by Abd al-Hamid Abu Zeid (aka Muhammad Ghadir) was called *Katiba Tariq ibn Ziyad* (the Tariq Ibn Ziyad battalion) (Porter 2011 p7). Ibn Nusayr and Ibn Ziyad are a reminder of the glorious conquest and lost paradise of *Al-Andalus* representing Islamic irredenta, or unredeemed land, which must be recovered. References to Ibn Ziyad particularly appeal to Berbers.

B1.3 The Berber Rebellion and Division of the Maghreb

Following Berber resistance to the Arab conquest illustrated by the legends of Kusayla and al-Kahina, Berber converts to Islam revolted under the banner of Kharijite Islam (A1.2) due to Arab discrimination. Berber rebels seized Tangier in 739-40 and Tripolitania in 757, and again in 768, amidst the struggle for power between the Umayyads and Abbassids in the Mashreq. Thus, the Maghreb was lost from the Caliphate (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp37-42). Such rebellions justified on Islamic grounds, exemplify the recurring theme of Islam and armed struggle in Maghrebi and Algerian history. The Kharijite rebellions exemplify the key theme of religio-political disputes over legitimate authority (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp37-38).

Following the Berber rebellions and collapse of the Umayyad Empire, the Maghreb was divided along sectarian lines. The Sunni Abbassids recovered

territory as far as eastern Algeria, ruled by Aghlabid suzerains from 800. To the west the Maghreb was divided amongst the Ibadi Kharijite imamate of the Rustamids ruled from Tahart from 776/7, the Sunni Idrisids in Fez from 809, and to the south the Sufrite Banu Midrar ruled from Sijilmasa from 757. In Spain an Umayyad prince seized power in 756 (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp37-55).

B1.4 Muizz Ibn Badis

Buluggin Ibn Ziri's (r.973-984) dynasty ruled the Maghreb, alongside the Hammadids, from the reign of third Zirid *emir* Badis (r.996-1016), as suzerains of the Fatimid caliph in Cairo (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp61-75; Naylor 2009 pp72-74, 79-84).

Muizz Ibn Badis (r.1016-1065), the fourth Zirid *emir* broke with his Ismaili overlords in circa 1041, justified by Islamic doctrine, in favour of Maliki Islam and recognized Abbassid authority (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp68-69). Muizz Ibn Badis features in AQIM's propaganda for upholding Sunni orthodoxy (Kennedy-Boudali 2009) against the Ismaili Shia 'heresy' of Fatimid authority, hence their absence from AQIM's narrative. AQIM sees itself like Ibn Badis; upholding Islamic orthodoxy, in the form of Salafism, against illegitimate, *apostate* regimes in the Maghreb and Sahara, which fail to impose *Islamic states* based on *sharia*. Ibn Badis' insubordination was punished when the Fatimids unleashed the troublesome Hilal and Sulaym Arab nomadic tribes residing in Egypt on the Maghreb in 1050. The Banu Hilal journeyed to Tunisia wreaking havoc as they went. The Zirids and Hammadids clung to power in Mahdiyya and Bejaia respectively. In 1171 Saladin Ibn Ayyub seized Cairo, ending the Fatimid Caliphate (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp68-70; Naylor 2009 pp83-86).

B1.5 Almoravids

The Almoravids can be seen as a proto-Salafi-Jihadist movement based on a strict interpretation of the Maliki school of Sunni Islam and advocates of *jihad* against those they considered *infidels*. Through conquest the Almoravids created a great empire which, at its zenith, stretched from the Sahara, through Morocco, to southern Spain. AQIM sees itself in much the same way, as a puritanical organization which, through jihad, aims to bring true Islamic rule back to the region; much as it was under the Almoravids. Indeed, the Almoravids are heavily referenced by AQIM, particularly Ibn Tashfin. The Almoravids are an inspiration for AQIM having had a great empire stretching across the Maghreb and western Sahara—regions in which the group operates or aspires to dominate—based on strict Islamic principles, *sharia* law and military jihad against *impious* Muslims, *infidels*, *heretics* and *Crusaders*. AQIM sees itself in the same way; fighting a contemporary jihad against the impious and *infidel* regimes of that same region.

Al-Murabitun, the Almoravids—also known as al-*Mulathamun*, "the veiled ones" (Naylor 2009 p90), for, beneath their turbans Sanhaja men wore a *litham*, a veil covering the face below the eyes; a custom is still observed amongst the Tuareg who are descendants of the Sanhaja (Brett and Fentress 1997 p102; Fromherz 2010 p82).

This golden age of Islam in the Maghreb and Sahara regions is reflected in *noms de guerre* and names of the organization's Saharan divisions, such as that led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, known as *Katiba al-Mulathamun*, "The Battalion of Veiled Men", referring to the veiled Almoravid warriors (Porter 2011 p7).

By linking itself with the Almoravids, AQIM appeals to the descendants of the Sanhaja tribes in the Tuareg. Tuareg are present within the ranks of AQIM, notably

Abu Abdelkarim "*Le Targui*", who leads *Katiba al-Ansar* operating in the Kidal region of north-eastern Mali; responsible for the kidnap and murder of Frenchman Michel Germaneau in 2010 (Guidere 2011 p10; Morgan 2012).

B1.5.1 Ibn Yasin

In 1038 Sanhaja Berbers, nomads from the western Sahara, returning from their Meccan pilgrimage, led by Yahya Ibn Ibrahim of the Gudala tribe, arrived in Qayrawan, the centre of Maliki Islamic learning in the Maghreb, meeting renowned local Imam, Abu Imran al-Fasi. Their pilgrimage had made them aware of their own and fellow tribesmen's ignorance of Islam. Ibn Ibrahim requested a teacher return to his tribe. Abu Imran dispatched him to meet Wajjaj Ibn Zalwi at the *Dar al-Murabitun,* "house of those bound together in the cause of God"—the Arabic root of the Spanish Almorávide—in Sus, who recommended his pupil Abdullah Ibn Yasin, a Sanhaja of the Jazula tribe (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp79-80; Messier 2010 pp1-5).

Ibn Yasin was essentially a proto-Salafist who enforced a strict interpretation of Maliki, Sunni Islam. Ibn Yasin exemplifies the theme of Islamic revivalism in Maghrebi history. Ibn Yasin found the Gudala's faith rudimentary and became their Imam and prayer leader. During prayers the tribes-people were to follow him exactly as demanded by Malik's *al-Muwatta.* He demanded prayers were carried out four extra times, explaining: "In your past life you have omitted prayers many times, so you must make up for it." Ibn Yasin taught the tribe and its religious leaders his uncompromising Maliki interpretation of Islam, banning music, alcohol and non-Quranic taxes. A strict disciplinarian, he zealously enforced *sharia* law through corporal punishment; demanding 20 lashes for

missing Friday prayers, 5 for skipping one prostration *(raka)*, 100 for adultery, 80 for slander and drunkenness, sometimes even more. Even upon joining his movement recruits were flogged: Yasin would say "You have committed many sins in your heart, so you must be punished as stipulated by the law, and so purified from your transgressions" (Messier 2010 pp5-9).

Ibn Yasin banned seizing booty from Muslims during warfare as demanded by Islamic law, though his definition of "Muslim" was narrow and of *infidel* broad, like the later Wahhabis, resorting to armed jihad to spread his message. He ordered jihad against fellow Sanhaja including the Lamtuna tribe, who he accused of polytheism, seizing their booty. Following Ibn Ibrahim's death Ibn Yasin endorsed the election of Yahya Ibn Umar, chieftain of the Lamtuna, as *emir* of the Sanhaja confederation to the consternation of the Gudala elite, who conspired against Yasin. He fled back to Sus and apparently retreated to a ribat, or fortified monastery. On returning to the desert Ibn Yasin issued a fatwa condemning the conspirators to death (Messier 2010 pp8-11). According to historian, Ibn Abi Zar, Ibn Yasin then called for jihad:

> "He steered them from evil and talked of God's rewards; then called them to jihad against those tribes of the Sanhaja who refused to follow the *true faith*. He said to them: 'Almoravids, you are many, you are the chiefs of your tribes and the heads of your clans! The Almighty has reformed you and guided you on the straight path. You must thank Him for His blessings by exhorting men to be good and to shun evil and by striving in the cause of God'" (Messier 1991 p21).

In league with Ibn Umar and his tribe, Ibn Yasin's movement, gathered pace. Driven by Islamic zeal and revivalism, they waged holy war on those fellow tribes who declined the call to 'true' Islam as he understood it and refused to join the

movement (Messier 2010 p12). In 1054 the Almoravids captured Sijilmasa, the northern terminus of the trans-Saharan trade route between the Maghreb and Soninke kingdom of Ghana[24], apparently following a plea from the ulama of the city and Draa valley to save them from oppressive rule by the heretical Kharijite Maghrawa tribe. Ibn Yasin smashed their wine shops and musical instruments. The Almoravids retreated to the desert following the battle. The Almoravids also captured Awdaghust, the southern terminus of the caravan route. The Almoravids treated the population severely, sacking the city, seizing booty and molesting the women, because they did not consider Awdaghust's citizens Muslims due to their suzerainty to the pagan king of Ghana. Control of this trade route lay the foundations for the Almoravid Empire (Messier 2010 pp3, 13-16).

Ibn Umar retreated to the defensible mountains of Jabal Lamtuna, but fatally was drawn out to the plains at Tebferilla by the Banu Gudala following their secession from the Almoravids. Ibn Umar was defeated, killed and succeeded by his brother Abu Bakr Ibn Umar in 1056 (Abun-Nasr 1993 p81). The Almoravids crossed the High Atlas to capture Aghmat in 1058, where Abu Bakr married a wealthy woman, Zaynab al-Nafzawiya, and onwards to fight the illegitimate Barghawata, who recognized their own prophet and Berber "Quran", on the Tamasna plains where Ibn Yasin died in 1059. Abu Bakr eventually subjugated the Barghawata, who renounced their heretical beliefs, while his cousin Yusuf Ibn Tashfin laid siege, finally capturing Fez from the Maghrawa between 1069 and 1071; purportedly slaughtering 3,000 tribes-people, and founding Marrakesh (Abun-Nasr 1993 p81; Messier 2010 pp36-38, 45-51).

[24] This territory does not correspond with modern Ghana.

B1.5.2 Ibn Tashfin

In 1070-71[25] Gudala attacks on the Lamtuna made Abu Bakr return to the desert, but he could not take Zaynab who remarried Ibn Tashfin to whom command in Morocco was transferred. Abu Bakr returned expecting to regain command, and possibly his wife, but Yusuf bought him off becoming de facto leader of the northern empire (Abun-Nasr 1993 p81; Messier 2010 pp53-59). By 1082 the Almoravids had secured the Moroccan coast, bar Ceuta, marching into western Algeria first taking Tlemcen and on as far as Algiers (Messier 2010 pp64-66).

The legendary figure of Ibn Tashfin, famous for expanding the Almoravid Empire across Morocco, western Algeria and Andalusia, is central to AQIM's narrative; referred to six times between 2007 and 2009 by *emir* Droukdel, and has also been mentioned by Osama bin Laden in the past (Kennedy-Boudali 2009 pp15-16). AQIM aims to boost its legitimacy by presenting itself as heir to Ibn Tashfin's legacy. For instance, a claim of responsibility for a would-be suicide vehicle bombing on the Nema military barracks in Mauritania, foiled when troops fired at the vehicle and ignited the bomb, referred to the deceased driver as a "grandson" of Yusuf bin Tashfin (APA 2010; France24 2010b). Tashfin was named again in March 2011 (AQIM 2011b).

Ibn Tashfin fits into AQIM's revanchist narrative, fighting jihad against the Christian re-conquest of Spain. He conquered and reunited the former Umayyad Caliphate of *Al-Andalus* which had fragmented into numerous feuding Muslim kingdoms—led by the *Muluk al-Tawaif* (Arabic) or *Taifa de Reyes* (Spanish), the "Kings of the factions"—for the Almoravid Empire (Glassé and Smith 2003b p445; Messier 2010 p71). The kingdom of Castile took advantage of the Moors' disunity

[25] Dates vary; 1060 in Abun-Nasr (1993 p81).

capturing Badajoz (1057), Toledo and Seville (1062), before conquering Toledo again in 1085. Mutamid bin Abbad, the king of Seville struck a deal with Ibn Tashfin, providing a naval blockade to assist the Almoravid conquest of Ceuta in 1084 in return for assistance in the jihad against the Christians (Messier 2010 pp66-76).

> "Until now the Almoravids had waged jihad only against pagans in the deep Sahara or against 'unpious' or 'heretical' Muslims who resisted them in forming their African empire. For the first time, they were about to fight a Christian enemy in the name of Islam" (Messier 2010 p77).

Ibn Tashfin landed at Algeciras in 1086 and was victorious at the battle of Zallaqa (Messier 2010 pp77-82). Ibn Tashfin turned against the Taifa kings, having obtained a fatwa from Andalusian jurists declaring them corrupt, impious and unfit to govern and absolving Ibn Tashfin's pledge not to conquer Andalusia. Their crimes: submitting to and allying with the Christians, levying non-Quranic taxes and laxity in their religious duties. The fatwa was not only endorsed by the Almoravid's own Maghrebi scholars, but also Mashreqi theologians including al-Ghazzali and al-Turtushi (Messier 2010 pp101-102). Between 1090 and 1110 the Almoravids conquered Granada, Cordoba, Seville, Badajoz, Valencia and as far as Zaragoza in the northeast (Watt 1965 pp99-100).

AQIM sees itself, likewise, as an Islamic revivalist movement fighting to bring down the illegitimate regimes of the Maghreb as Ibn Tashfin dethroned the Taifa kings. Ibn Tashfin resisted the *Crusader's* re-conquest of Spain as AQIM portrays itself resisting a modern Crusade, perpetrated not only by the Americans but more ancient foes, France and Spain. This fits into the broader Al-Qaida narrative of the "*Crusader-Zionist* alliance" to subjugate the Muslim world. It also supports the

jihadists' claim that Spain rightfully belongs to the Muslims and was stolen during the Reconquista, though impeded by the Almoravid's jihad.

The Almoravid's expansion in Spain soon went into reverse under pressure from the might of Aragon, Castile, Catalan and French *Crusader* forces, finally collapsing with rebellions in 1144 and 1145 (Messier 2010 pp137-139; Watt 1965 p100). Almoravid Spain and the Maghreb were subsequently conquered by the Almohads (Abun-Nasr 1993 pp90-92; O'Callaghan 1975 pp234-236).

B1.6 Influence of Maghrebi History upon Algerian VNSA Strategic Culture

Historical references in AQIM's narrative reflect a desire to root their struggle in the region's glorious Islamic past, when Muslims possessed greater political power. This narrative links AQIM's present struggle to those of the region's past, "reflect[ing] both local and international jihadist concerns". Whilst AQIM's narrative cites legendary Muslims of distant history whose exploits are known and "resonate" both regionally, and across the Islamic world, it also mentions more recent heroes who resisted *colonialism* (Kennedy-Boudali 2009 pp14-15), discussed later.

References to historical figures appeared in just 3.8% of GSPC propaganda (1998-2007), rising by 5.6% to 9.4% under AQIM (2007-2009), according to Torres Soriano's *statistics* (2011b p291). These historical allusions aim to bolster AQIM's legitimacy by framing its battle as a continuation of those of the region's Islamic past. It presents itself as heir to figures like Uqba Ibn Nafi, Musa Ibn Nusayr and Tariq Ibn Ziyad who brought Islam to the region, and the great conqueror Ibn Tashfin, continuing their battles against *infidels* and illegitimate, un-Islamic, authority—as well as those of the *anti-colonial* struggle of a later era. They

endeavour to bring the territory of their forebears' conquests under Islamic rule. They also reference figures like Muizz Ibn Badis who restored Sunni Islamic orthodoxy (Kennedy-Boudali 2009 pp14-16).

> "Behold, O young men of Islam, O grandchildren of Tariq bin Ziyad, Uqbah Bin Nafi, and Yousef bin Tashfin: you are the source of courage and sacrifice. You are the essence of Islam and the ammunition of this religion. Stand tall and support your religion, nation, and homelands. Here, we have the Jews—the murderers of the prophets—the Christians, and the *apostates*, who are collaborating with the *infidels* to humiliate your religion and its Quran. They have taken away your dignity, corrupted your values, stolen your resources, and have treated you like slaves. You have no other path but the path of jihad in the cause of Allah, embracing *martyrdom*, and facing certain death..." (Kohlmann 2007f).

B2 Religious Ideology

B2.1 Abdulhamid Ben Badis and the Association of Algerian Ulama

During the nineteenth century "popular" Sufi Islam mobilized the greatest resistance to French rule. However, by century's end, a new wave of Islamic revivalism imported from the east had reached Algeria; fuelled by the sense of inferiority to the European colonial powers occupying North Africa (Willis 1996 pp1-2). The revivalist movement led by Abdelhamid Ben Badis (1889-1940) in Algeria, influenced by the thought of Jamal Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida (A3.7) represented a convergence of modernist and a purist Wahhabi Islam. Hugh Roberts argues:

> "By the time the Salafiyya movement reached the Maghrib in the 1920s, it had resolved itself to most intents and purposes into Wahhabism, that is,

> the most extreme and sectarian version of the already extremely rigid and conservative Hanbalist tradition" (2003b p13).

Abdelhamid Ben Badis met Muhammad Abduh, when the latter visited Algeria in 1903. Ben Badis began studies at the Zituna Mosque University in Tunis in 1908 before travelling to the Middle East. A revivalist circle gathered around Ben Badis upon his return to Algeria in 1913, more influenced by Wahhabism than himself, particularly Tayyib al-Uqbi (1888-1960) who had spent time in Saudi Arabia and Mubarak al-Mili (1897-1945). The Algerian Salafis established a newspaper, *al-Muntaqid*, '*The Critic*', in July 1925. *Al-Muntaqid* was banned after 18 issues following an article seen to support the Rif Rebellion in Morocco (B3.3), before re-opening as the more moderate *Al-Shihab*, '*The Meteor*' (Ruedy 2005 pp134-136; Shahin 1997 p27). Subsequently, Ben Badis founded the Association of Algerian Ulama (AUMA) in May 1931 (Willis 1996 p10). They:

> "…took their inspiration from the Salafiya and Wahabist movements in the Middle East and from the modern Egyptian reformist doctrine of Sheik Mohamed Abdo" (Gillespie 1960 p44).

The AUMA began as a non-violent, apolitical, revivalist, primarily educational organization, spreading Salafi ideas and educating the population by establishing a network of societies and Arabic elementary schools; initially avoiding the corrupting influence of politics. Its founding statutes forbade "all political discussion" and "intervention into political questions". The organization was "an association for moral education" that would counter the "social scourges" of "alcohol, gambling, idleness [and] ignorance". It also disapproved of tobacco, music, dancing and sport (Ruedy 2005 pp135-136; Willis 1996 pp11-13, 33). The Association was however anti-colonialist, aspiring to preserve the Arab-Islamic

character of Algeria, whilst at the same time purifying Islam and railing against traditional Sufi practices.

> "In truth, we live in a society where chaos reigns on every side – anarchy rules in religion, in morality, in the economic life [of our people]" (Al-Shihab, April 1936 cited in McDougall 2008 p86).

It resisted colonial influences and ambitions to Frenchify Algeria and negate the "cultural, social, and economic structures of the indigenous population" by integrating it as a province of France (Shahin 1997 pp23-27). Instead, the AUMA promoted Arabic and Islamic culture. Indeed, Islam was "the natural cultural rallying point" for resisting of colonialism: "Uprisings and resistance to French control regularly came from religious circles" (Fuller 1996 p7).

In resisting *colonialism*, the AUMA inevitably became politicized (Wiktorowicz 2006 pp221-222). It aligned itself with the nationalist movement, allying with the Fédération des Elus Indigènes (FEI) and Communist Party, in the Muslim Congress of June 1936; campaigning for the rights of native Algerians. This campaign, interrupted by the battle for North Africa during the Second World War, re-emerged in March 1944 as the AUMA joined the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA) and Ferhat Abbas's Union Populaire Algérienne forming the Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté (AML).

Ben Badis countered a 1936 article in *Entente* in which Ferhat Abbas of the FEI denied Algerian nationhood, asserting "without emancipation of the natives, there is no durable French Algeria", with his own in *Al-Shihab*" (Ruedy 2005 p-136):

> "For our part, we have consulted the pages of history, and we have consulted present circumstances, and we have found the Algerian Muslim nation (*al-umma 'l-jazariyya 'l-muslima*) existing just as the other nations of

> the world have been formed and exist. This nation has its history, filled with great deeds, it has its religious and linguistic unity, its particular culture, its customs, its moral character, with its part of the good and the shameful, just as does every other nation of the world.
>
> Furthermore, this Algerian Muslim nation is not France. It cannot become France. It does not want to become France. It could not become France even if it wanted to. On the contrary, this nation is distanced in every respect from France, in its language, its moral character and its religion. It desires no assimilation, and has its own homeland, namely the Algerian homeland with its own borders as they are now established and well known" (Al-Shihab, Apr 1936 cited in McDougall 2008 p85).

Indeed, this text is frequently cited to illustrate the nationalist ideals of the AUMA declaring the existence of an Algerian nation and rejecting assimilation with France (McDougall 2008 pp65, 85). Between 1928 and 1932 Mubarak al-Mili wrote the first history of Algeria in Arabic, "*A History of Algeria in Antiquity and Modern Times*" in two volumes, arguing nationhood was necessary for Algerian renewal. In 1932 Ahmad Tawfiq al-Madani published *Kitab al-Jazair*, "*Book of Algeria*", scorning the idea of assimilating Algerians, a people with a different culture, language, and history, into greater France. The preface ends with the slogan; "Islam is my religion; Arabic is my language; Algeria is my fatherland", adopted by the AUMA and subsequently independent Algeria (Ruedy 2005 pp134-135; Willis 1996 p36).

However, it was Messali Hajj, leader of the Etoile Nord-Africaine (North African Star) party, not the AUMA, who first called for full Algerian independence from France in August 1936. Denouncing the Muslim Congress's Charter of Demands calling for equal rights and full integration with France, (Ruedy 2005 pp140-141;

Willis 1996 pp16-18): "Our country is in reality administratively attached to France today"; the ENA "will never accept our country being attached to another against its will; we do not wish, under any pretext, to jeopardize the future, the hope for national freedom of the Algerian people" (Ruedy 2005 p142).

The AUMA gave Algerian Islamism "its strongly nationalist color". Indeed, Ben Badis understood "Salafism as a tool for national revival and identity formation" countering French machinations to undermine "the Algerian political persona" (Bowering 2012 p30).

Doctrinally, the AUMA had similar tenets to the Muslim Brotherhood (Kepel 2004c p55). The Association's other newspaper *Al-Basair* edited by Madani bemoaned the decline of a once great civilization and retrograde nature of contemporary Algerian Islam, and the young Muslim "who has forgotten [his] glorious past and prepares nothing for the future, choosing contemptible debasement after having known greatness" (10 Jan 1936 cited in McDougall 2008 p109).

Ben Badis saw Islam as a complete way of life enabling people to flourish, writing in *The Vision of the Future* (1937): "Islam is a social system which responds to all the needs of life, in all countries, at all times. Only its principles can permit Humanity to build its happiness". In 1938 he denounced Muslims becoming naturalized French citizens as an "option of a Muslim for a people which is not Muslim". For Ben Badis, assimilation with France necessitated rejecting Islam, since being Algerian and Muslim were inextricably linked. Naturalization meant disregarding *sharia*. It constituted "the rejection of the divine laws which regulate him and the adoption of human and profane laws..." (Gillespie 1960 p45). Ben Badis therefore believed Muslims must live according to *sharia* law while rejecting manmade laws as idolatrous and usurping the sovereignty of Allah over his people. Following

independence, the AUMA's "ideas still held sway, largely due to the high level of organization surrounding its activities and the institutions it had established" (Saeed 2016 p37).

B2.2 Malik Bennabi and Jazarism

Besides Salafism, another strain of Islamism, Jazarism, was derived from the ideas of Malek Bennabi (1905-1973). Born in Tebessa to a French-speaking family, Bennabi went to a Quranic school *(al-Kuttaab)* before attending secondary school, receiving his diploma before leaving to study engineering in Paris in 1930. Bennabi returned to Algeria in 1947, publishing his first works (in French) in 1949 and 1954, but went into exile in Egypt in 1956 during the War of Independence (1954-1962); improving his Arabic, in which he wrote his later works. Upon returning to Algeria in 1963 Bennabi was appointed Director of Higher Education by President Ben Bella where he remained until 1967, pursuing his studies at the University of Algiers' Central Faculty, until his death in 1973, where he organized seminars for Islamist students (Walsh 2007 p236).

While Western scholars have often ascribed the underdevelopment of the Muslim world to the Islamic religion, Bennabi believed that the decline of Islamic civilization was rather caused by its historical misapplication. Islamic civilization flourished through rationalism and inquiry (Bariun 1992 pp325-326). Influenced by Ibn Khaldun's cyclical view of history, Bennabi believed civilizations pass through phases: birth, peak and decline. These also correspond with spiritual, rational and instinctive phases. People are guided by human instinct until a new spiritual doctrine or religion, such as Islam, appears inaugurating the spiritual phase, where natural instincts are reconciled with that religious doctrine. In Islam, this first stage lasted from the first revelation to Muhammad to the Battle of Siffin, according to Bennabi. As this religion spreads and develops into a new civilization

it progresses to the rational phase where art and science flourish as reason comes to guide that society. But reason is not as effective a control over instinct as spirituality, which gradually reasserts itself. Thus, civilization reverts to an instinctive stage of weakness, corruption and decline (Bariun 1992 pp328-329):

> "…only the spirit gives humanity the opportunity to rise and progress to form civilization. When the spirit is lost, the civilization falls, for who loses his ability to ascend could not help but plunge due to gravitation" (Bariun 1992 p328).

Islamic civilization went into decline following the fall of the Almohads, who wanted to reunite the *umma*. Contemporary Muslims and Islamic civilization had reached the instinctive phase, falling into a malaise; the problem of "post-Almohad man" characterized by intellectual and spiritual apathy, with Muslims lacking aspiration. Bennabi believed Muslims had strayed; Islam had been reduced to staid rituals devoid of meaning, no-longer a guide to life. Unlike the scripturalism of the Salafists, Bennabi wanted both Islamic revival of Islam and a revival of a dynamic Islamic civilization. This decadence had left Muslim states like Algeria in a condition of "*colonisabilité*", making European colonization possible. The problem was not solely colonialism and its legacy after independence, but also intellectual: "colonialism [past and present] finds its best allies in our own mental and psychological attitudes and traditions." The solution was a revival of Islamic faith and creativity, releasing Muslims from *colonisabilité* enabling national development.

> "Bennabi argued that the key was to renew religion itself, to reconnect with the living faith underneath the accreted laws and traditions distorting its natural condition as an inspiration for progress" (Walsh 2007 pp235-238).

Although influenced by the modernist Islam of Afghani and Abduh, for Bennabi they focused too much on the symptoms rather than the causes of Islamic civilization's decline (Shahin 1997 p119). A moderate, modernist Islamist thinker, Bennabi rejected Salafism, believing in a contemporary interpretation of Islam for the modern world, but like Ben Badis, rejected the idea Algeria had no distinctive national identity. Bennabi believed every country was unique, needing to develop its own unique solutions for its own governance and society. Bennabi believed that "ideas and methods that had been successful historically for one nation would not automatically be appropriate for another." Algeria could not import wholesale, foreign ideologies or political and economic models, but must develop its own Algerian models, incorporating Islamic principles. He was critical of the FLN's adoption of socialist ideology and Soviet-style development models following independence. Unlike Salafists, Bennabi did not oppose democracy as un-Islamic, believing it could be adapted for an Algerian, Islamic context (Walsh 2007 pp237-239).

Human problems and their solutions were affected by place and time, environment, society and history (Boussalah 2006 p9). Despite their shared Islamic faith, Algeria was distinct from the Mashreq culturally and environmentally with its significant indigenous Berber minority and its own, unique, indigenous national identity. Bennabi rejected the pan-Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood and more radical thought of Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi. Bennabi was an Algerian Islamist nationalist who believed in creating a modern, uniquely Algerian state based upon Islamic principles without forgetting its particular identity. "Thus Algerian Islamists, Bennabi believed, could not just echo the Arabo-Muslim creed of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers" (Walsh 2007 pp237-239).

In 1963 Bennabi became a professor at Algier's University. During this period he held Islamist seminars in his home, attracting mainly Francophone science students. This circle known as the Jazara or "Algerianists" rejected the pan-Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood favouring an Algeria-centric approach, and included figures such as Anwar Haddam, Rashid Benaissa, Mustapha Brahimi, al-Tijani Boujelkha, Muhammad Saïd and Abdelrazzaq Rajjam. Jazarists formed an important faction within the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) (B2.4) and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) (B3.7.3). Future FIS leader, Abbasi Madani, was close to the Jazarist faction and attended Bennabi's seminars (Shahin 1997 p120; Walsh 2007 p240). The group created a journal, *Que sais-je de l'Islam*, facilitated the establishment of a student mosque in 1968 and formed a consultative council or a *majlis al-shura* in 1973—the year of Bennabi's death—becoming a rallying point for Jazarists in the face of Boumediene's crackdown on Islamism. Arabophone Islamists were hostile to the Jazarists. Firstly, they were considered elitist, being mainly French-speaking science students, and secondly corrupted by their knowledge of western philosophy. Finally, the Arab-speaking Islamists were Salafist in orientation, followers of Ben Badis, whereas the Jazarists were sceptical of Salafism (Walsh 2007 pp239-241).

B2.3 Al-Qiyam

The theme of Islamic revivalism promoted by the AUMA continued with the formation of a new, independent, organization Jamiyyat Al-Qiyam, "The Association of Values" in 1963. Islamism in independent Algeria continued along the Salafist path of Ben Badis and the AUMA, themselves influenced by Afghani, Abduh and Rida and increasingly influenced by foreign ideas, particularly Egyptian Islamism. Former AUMA members, Abdel Latif Sultani, Ahmed Sahnoun, Omar al-Arabaoui and Mosbah al-Huwaiziq, previously arrested for

supporting the FLN turned against the regime imposed upon independence. Unwilling to be incorporated into or used as instruments of the state, or associated in any way with official state Islam, they established Al-Qiyam at Al-Taraqqi, "the Progress" Club where the AUMA was announced in 1931. Led by Hachemi Tijani, also influenced by the Algerian Islamism of Malek Bennabi, Al-Qiyam inherited its predecessor's agenda, promoting Islamic values and Arabization over the French language and cultural influences, through meetings and newspapers, and was critical of government policies and its adoption of a foreign socialist ideology (Shahin 1997 p116-117; Willis 1996 pp41-43).

Al-Qiyam's ideology was pan-Islamic rather than nationalist, influenced by imported Mashreqi ideas, and socially conservative in its attitude towards the family, women and private property. Al-Qiyam opposed Western ideas and particularly the Marxist bent of the Algerian regime (Roberts 2003b p21).

In 1974 Sultani published *Masdakism Is the Origin of Socialism*, duly banned, casting the FLN regime as an illegitimate authority, for intolerance towards its critics, particularly Muslim scholars like himself, and *betraying* the revolution; failing to base the new state on Islamic principles (Shahin 1997 p116-117; Willis 1996 pp41-43). Al-Qiyam "became a focus for both popular protest against the regime and for independent Islamic criticism of the direction of government policy" (Willis 1996 p41).

This sense of *betrayal* became a rallying cry for Islamist opposition, including the GSPC-AQIM, in the coming decades, claiming the legacy of the War of Independence. Al-Qiyam's French journal *Humanisme Musulman,* outselling the Arabic edition, emphasized the humanistic aspects of Islam, reflecting Islamic modernist ideas. Contributors included Malek Bennabi (B2.2; Shahin 1997 p116; Willis 1996 pp41-43). The Association was not only influenced by Ben Badis and

Algerian Salafism, but also the Islamist thought of Pakistan's Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (A3.8) and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood including its founder Hassan al-Banna and its more extreme intellectual, Sayyid Qutb (A3.9), whose tracts were distributed by the group's members. Qutb's radical doctrine clearly made an impression within the group. Qutb's influence upon Algerian Islamism from Al-Qiyam to AQIM is unmistakable. Al-Qiyam members were puritanical illustrated by vandalism of a Roman theatre in Guelma (Shahin 1997 p117; Willis 1996 pp41-43). In 1965 *Humanisme Musulman* proclaimed, in Qutbist style, the regime was illegitimate as it was not Islamic:

> "All political parties, all regimes and all leaders which do not base themselves on Islam are decreed illegal and dangerous. A communist party, a secular party, a Marxist party, a nationalist party (the latter putting in question the unity of the Muslim world) cannot exist in the land of Islam" (Roberts 2003a pp9-10).

Al-Qiyam was circumscribed as demonstrations followed Qutb's execution in the Egypt in 1966. Members, including Madani Abassi, were arrested. It was subsequently banned in March 1970 (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006; Shahin 1997 pp116-117), driving Islamist groups underground. Al-Qiyam was succeeded by Ansar Allah, also dismantled by the government, and Dawa wal-Tabligh, seemingly inspired by the Jaamat Tabligh of 1920s India. More worryingly, in 1974-1975 tracts appeared in urban areas from a group calling itself Takfir wal-Hijra (A3.10) inspired by, and perhaps linked to, the radical Egyptian group of the same name (Willis 1996 pp56-57).

B2.4 Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

This FIS comprised three main factions represented on its 40-man strong Majlis Shura*:* firstly, more moderate Algerian Salafists who were followers of Ben Badis and the AUMA, the 'Badisiyya', represented by figures like Ahmad Sahnoun, and secondly, more radical, uncompromising Salafists represented by Ali Belhaj. Third was the Islamic nationalist Jazarist faction, followers of Bennabi (B2.2), represented by Muhammad Saïd. The Jazarists initially refused to join the FIS, only to relent in June 1990. At lower levels radical Salafists joined the FIS, including future GIA *emir* Cherif Gousmi, an FIS representative in Bir Khadim, Algiers. The FIS, therefore, did not have a unified ideology creating a diverse political culture (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006 pp116-117; Walsh 2007 pp244-245), though its various ideologies would influence the violent non-state actors (VNSAs) that formed following the cancelled elections. The party was held together by the moderate Abbasi Madani, an Algerian Salafist who was sympathetic towards Jazarism and the thought of Bennabi. He tried to steer a middle course; close to the Jazarists whilst trying to keep the Salafists on-board, in order to hold the front together (Walsh 2007 pp240-245). He "represented the Islamist populist current that was characterized by its evasiveness, pragmatism, and reliance on popular mobilization" (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006 p117).

The FIS coalition was based on an accommodation of the different factions who may not have agreed a shared vision for Algeria's future. The party never outlined a detailed political programme and meetings of its consultative council, *Majlis al-Shura*, were held privately, never publishing any party statutes or regulations. The moderates retained the upper hand so long as their party remained within the democratic process. The radicals were acquiescent, willing to go along with the democratic process, provided the party had a chance of winning (Vergès 1997).

Madani's agenda was closer to the Islamic nationalism of Malik Bennabi advocated by the Jazarist faction than puritanical Salafism: that a modern, uniquely Algerian model of democracy incorporating Islamic principles was the ideal system. Moderates certainly wanted some form of Islamic governance, and may have been influenced by the *Islamic state* envisioned by Mawdudi in the *Islamic Law and Constitution*, incorporating some form of democracy and a separation of powers amongst the executive, judiciary and legislature. Mawdudi believed in a gradual approach (A3.8), first Islamizing society before implementing the full strictures of the *sharia*, such that society would make a positive choice for its implementation. The hardliners advocated a purely theocratic state based on Islamic law and enforcement of the *sharia*, leading to accusations the party wanted an election once and for all. Madani's deputy, the more radical Salafist, Belhaj, was sympathetic towards the hardliners. This division between moderates and radicals represented by Madani and Belhaj within the FIS, accounts for its apparently schizophrenic statements and ideology (Walsh 2007 p244).

Influenced by Bennabi, Madani advocated an Islamic form of democratic pluralism, declaring: "Pluralism is a guarantee of cultural wealth, and diversity is needed for any development…. We are not *tyrants*, and we do not monopolize religion. Democracy as we understand it means pluralism, choice, and freedom". Belhaj, however, denounced democracy as a heretical Western import: "Democracy is a stranger in the House of God…. There exists only the *shura* with its rules and constraints…. The majority does not express the truth." The Salafists were never fully convinced of the electoral strategy and committed to a strict, dogmatic interpretation of Islam—of which Bennabi would have been critical for failing to recognize that Islam must be conducive to society—meaning Madani was increasingly reliant on Jazarist support (Walsh 2007 pp244-245).

Madani was joined on the National Executive by Belhaj, Benazouz Zebda and Ahmed Sahnoun, so the Salafists were initially dominant within the FIS until the new electoral law, passed on 1 April 1991, banned political speech in mosques and attempted to rig the forthcoming elections in the FLN's favour, by gerrymandering electoral boundaries. In response Madani called a general strike, opposed by the Badisiyya Salafis who were less committed to the political strategy, believing it compromised Islamic purity, causing divisions within the FIS. The strike was carried within the Majlis Shura by 21 to 17, taking place between 23 May and 8 June, costing 20 lives. The Prime Minister and his government resigned as emergency laws were imposed, troops deployed and night curfews enforced from 5 June. The electoral laws were subsequently revised. Badisiyya Salafis' criticism of Madani and his Jazarist allies for the strike led to the dismissal of Bashir Fakih and Ahmed Merrani, while Ahmed Sahnoun was spared by Belhaj. Meanwhile, Benazouz Zebda, Saïd Guechi, Achour Rebhi and Mohammed Kerrar, defied Madani by beginning negotiations with the government (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006 pp114-115; Walsh 2007 pp245-246).

Divisions within the party may have encouraged the subsequent arrest of Madani and Belhaj on 30 June. Provisional leadership of the FIS passed first to the Jazarist Muhammad Saïd, himself arrested, and then to Abdul Qadir Hachani, a former member of Al-Nadha. Both men pledged allegiance to the party's imprisoned leader. A turning point for the party came at its Batna conference of 25-26 July 1991. Against Salafi opposition, Madani was reaffirmed as party head and Hachani as provisional leader. Leading Salafists Benazouz Zebda, Ahmed Sahnoun and Muhammad Kerrar were removed and Saïd Guechi resigned from the Majlis Shura. Thus, the Islamist nationalists supplanted the Salafists, as two further Al-Nadha men, Othman Aissani and Rabah Kebir became vice-president

and head of political affairs, respectively, while the imprisoned Muhammad Saïd took a nominal position on the Majlis Shura (Walsh 2007 pp246-248).

Islamist nationalists came not only to dominate the FIS leadership, but also the broader party infrastructure: their agenda became increasingly obvious as Hachani attended the Revolution Day commemorations of 1 November, previously spurned by Madani. Following Bennabi's belief that the Berbers were integral to Algerian national identity, the FIS began issuing leaflets in Tamazight. The nationalists won over the party to an electoral strategy against Salafist doubts about the legitimacy of elections under Islam. Hachani was arrested on 27 September, but released alongside Muhammad Saïd in November. Doubts remained as to the fairness of the scheduled elections, so the party remained tactically divided over boycotting or participating in the elections, finally announcing its participation on 14 December (Walsh 2007 pp246-248).

The party won 54.25% of the vote (33.73% of registered voters) in municipal and regional elections held in June 1990; and the first round of Parliamentary elections of 26 December 1991 with 47.27% (24.59% of registered voters) of the vote, taking 188 seats in the legislature compared to 16 for the FLN (Vergès 1997 pp292-293, 303). With the FIS almost certain to win the military took over in a bloodless coup. President Benjedid was forced to resign and the elections cancelled on 12 January 1992 (Hermida 1992), putting paid to FIS political ambitions. The FIS was banned and thousands of its members imprisoned (Le Sueur 2009 p51).

Contrary to popular opinion, Sebastian Walsh believes that by the time of the December elections an FIS victory was little threat to democracy, as was the excuse for the coup, because its leadership was dominated by Islamist nationalists influenced by Bennabi. Salafis had been side-lined. According to Walsh, it was the party's need to "placate its more radical base, which created the dangerous

impression of a two-faced FIS. This allowed the regime to claim that its leaders' generally pragmatic rhetoric was a tactical facade for their real agenda, the imposition of a religious dictatorship". The *Islamic state* proposed by the FIS leadership was not an Iranian-style theocracy. Their agenda "owed far more to the two main strands of Algerian Islamism" (Walsh 2007 pp248-250). According to Anwar Haddam:

> "We don't want to establish a theocratic state. We don't believe a certain group of people have the divine authority to impose their vision on society. We seek a republic and with all what that means—political authority based on the popular will, on the separation of powers (legislative, executive, judicial), on a multiparty system, and so forth. The idea of imposing Islam does not exist in Islam. …the *Islamic State* of Algeria will be a republic based on Islamic principles" (Pipes and Clawson 1996).

The influence of Bennabi is unmistakable, for Haddam says:

> "The FIS approach was laid out by the Association of Algerian Ulema of Ibn Badis, and by the school of thought of the Algerian scholar Malek Bennabi. He pointed to what he called the phenomenon of *colonisabilité*, arguing that a people cannot be colonized unless it has the 'ability' to be so" (Pipes and Clawson 1996).

FIS ideology drifted away from a strict Salafist interpretation of *sharia* to a more flexible, contemporary one as advocated by Muhammad Abduh. As Ali Jeddi illustrates, it reflected Bennabi's modernist idea of a uniquely Algerian, democratic, *Islamic state*:

> "To pretend to legislate on the basis of the *Shari'a* and *not take account of the three variable dimensions of time, space and human nature is simply not realistic*....

> The Islamic reference is a reference to authentic texts, the Qur'an and the Sunna. The most perfect application of these texts occurred in the time of the prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and the first four caliphs. It nonetheless remains linked to *a very specific temporal, territorial and human context....* We can make this our model, an ideal to approximate, but we shall not be able to reproduce it exactly, fourteen centuries later. What we propose is that all the solutions to the problems of modern life be the object of a debate between the 'ulama and the specialists and experts…. The conclusions of this debate should be submitted to the approval of a sovereign people, enjoying all its freedoms, including the freedom to organise in opposition to whatever one may propose for its ratification.... In this way we will reconcile respect for the *Shari'a* and respect for the popular will" (ICG 2004 p9).

This *Islamic state* sounds remarkably similar to the republic originally proposed by the FLN, emphasizing its *betrayal* of the revolution. According to Ali Jeddi:

> "We are for a Republic in which power would belong to the Algerian people, in the framework of the values of our nation. Our idea of the Algerian state we derive from the Declaration of 1 November 1954: 'A democratic, social, state in the framework of Islamic principles'" (ICG 2004 p9).

B2.5 Influence of Religious Ideology upon VNSA Strategic Culture

From a strategic cultural point of view the AUMA contributed to a national, Arab-Islamic narrative. They "were the first to articulate with clarity and eloquence the proposition that Algerians belonged to a distinct nation with its own specific culture, and glorious past, which could never be confounded in another" (Ruedy

2005 p136). This Islam was not the indigenous Malikism of the Maghreb, but an imported neo-Hanbalism (Roberts 2003b p13).

By promoting Arabic over French and Islamic orthodoxy over the heterodoxy and parochialism of popular Islam, the AUMA gave leadership to Islam in Algeria and contributed to greater unity and uniformity in Islamic doctrine and practices, and a growing sense of national identity (Willis 1996 pp2-3, 8-35). From early on Algerian Salafism was nationalistic and anti-colonial, becoming increasingly involved in politics: joining other indigenous groups campaigning for the rights of native Muslims, spawning the politicization of Algerian Islam. As such, French rule constituted unjust and illegitimate authority. This Islamic nationalism contributed to the anti-colonialism and xenophobia inherent in Algerian political culture and VNSA strategic culture from the FLN/ALN to AQIM.

B3 Guerrilla Tradition

Guerrilla tactics in the Maghreb go back to antiquity with the Numidian Berbers (Derradji 1997 p52). Between 112 and 106 BC Numidian King Jugurtha fought the Romans. In the early first century AD, Tacfarinas led a rebellion of against the Romans in North Africa, practicing attack and retreat, harassing the legionnaires (Laqueur 1976 p5).

B3.1 Abd al-Qadir and the French Invasion

Abd al-Qadir was born circa September 1808 to the Beni Hachem tribe under the Ottoman Regency of Algiers (Kiser 2008 pp10-14). He was a Sufi Muslim of the Qadiriyya tariqa (order) (McDougall 2008 p43).

In June 1830 France invaded Algeria, led by General Auguste-Louis de Bourmont. By 4 July 1830 the Ottoman Dey Hussein had capitulated to the French, and went

into exile in Alexandria, Egypt. As General Bourmont's forces marched southwest from Algiers they were ambushed by tribesmen in the Tell Atlas foothills near Blida. Mistaking the tribal warriors for Ottoman forces, the Turks were banished from the capital (Kiser 2008 pp41-42). This illustrates the use of guerrilla tactics by the indigenous people of Algeria in resisting French colonialism.

In November 1832 Muhi al-Din was asked by the tribal chiefs around Mascara to unite the tribes in jihad against the French, but deferred leadership to his son, Abd al-Qadir (Kiser 2008 p48). Abd al-Qadir was referred to as *emir al-muminin* (Commander of the Faith). His oath of allegiance (*baya*) declared:

> "I accept this position of amir with reluctance, hoping that it will be a vehicle for uniting the Muslims, for preventing strife and dissension among them, for assuring the safety of the roads, for terminating activities which are contrary to the pure *sharia*, for protecting the country from the enemy (i.e. the French), and for establishing law and justice for the powerful and feeble alike…know that my utmost goal is the unification of the Islamic community and the execution of Islamic practices" (Pennell 1986 p125).

Abd al-Qadir declared a jihad against the French:

> "Oh Muslims, God has placed in my hand his flaming sword and we will go forth and fertilise the plains of our country with the blood of the *infidel*" (Derradji 1997 pp49-50).

In December the bey of Oran surrendered his city to the French and fled to Alexandria (Kiser 2008 p45). Abd al-Qadir ordered a tribal blockade and assaults against French forts surrounding the French occupied city. The commander of the French garrison, General Pierre Boyer responded with collective punishment, further alienating the tribes (Kiser 2008 pp47-48).

In late 1833 Abd al-Qadir captured four French soldiers escorting an Arab, flouting his blockade. This led to a series of correspondence with Boyer's successor as commander of Oran, General Louis-Alexis Desmichels. His troops weighed down by disease and malnourishment, Desmichels sought a pause in the fighting. However, honour would not allow either party to be seen as suing for peace. It was Abd al-Qadir's duty to fight jihad against the invaders and, following Muhammad's example, would not make peace unless his enemy took the initiative. Loyalty and solidarity or *assabiyya* (A2.1) amongst his tribal alliance depended upon it (Kiser 2008 pp58-60). Earlier that year Muhi al-Din had a leader of the rebellious Smelas tribe, Ben Tahar, captured at Arzew, executed for flouting the blockade and collaborating by trading with the French, ensuring the tribe came on side (Kiser 2008 pp52-53). *Assabiyya* amongst the alliance was ensured through prestige and retribution for disobedience.

On 2 December Qadir is said to have led his cavalry, covering sixty miles in four hours, to repel an assault on the allied Smelas tribe. Finally, on 25 February 1834 a truce was agreed between Abd al-Qadir and the French, known as the Desmichels' Treaty (Kiser 2008 pp58-60). The truce allowed the Qadir to consolidate control over much of the western Algerian interior, between Oran and Medea (Emerit 2017).

Desmichels was replaced by General Trezel in February 1835. The fighting reignited when Trezel pledged to protect the Douairs and Zmelas tribes, who defected to France, from Qadir's wrath. Trezel's forces suffered a major defeat, ambushed in a narrow pass between the hills and marshland at Maqta on 28 June. Qadir's forces were in turn defeated at the Sikkak river in July 1836 by Marshal Bugeaud (Kiser 2008 pp79-86; McDougall 2017 p65). The May 1837 Treaty of Tafna gave Qadir control of Algeria's western interior from Oran to Titteri, which

confined French control to the coast (Emerit 2017). The war restarted in October 1839 with the French adopting a scorched earth strategy and set about completing the conquest of Algeria (McDougall 2017 p70).

Charles Julien estimates that in 1840, Qadir's forces consisted of 8,000 infantry and 1,900 cavalry (Derradji 1997 p52), compared to 83,000 French troops by 1842, rising to 108,000 in 1846 (McDougall 2017 pp69-70). Abd al-Qadir's campaign of resistance employed harrassment and hit-and-run tactics, using the mobility of their horsemen and knowledge of Algerian geography to their advantage, frequently leading the French on "wild-goose chases" into difficult mountain and desert terrain (Laqueur 1976 pp69-72; Phillips and Axelrod 2005 pp1-5); laying amushes in valleys and forests and poisoning the water (Derradji 1997 pp52-53). Qadir's horsemen, armed with rifles, were swift and highly mobile, engaging in small skirmishes and rapid retreats, generally avoiding major confrontation (Emerit 2017).

Abd al-Qadir used the guerrilla tactic of drawing the French forces in a certain direction, encircling them before making a hasty withdrawal. He summarized his guerrilla tactics as follows:

> "…when your army moves forward we draw back, but it will be forced to withdraw and we will come back. We will fight when we judge the time is suitable…the troops which you lead, will be destroyed in pieces and climate will do the rest" (Derradji 1997 pp52-53).

Qadir's tactics forced the French, under the command of Marshal Bugeaurd to imitate their adversaries, abandoning baggage trains, restricting artillery guns and adopting mules over horses and more mobile light cavalry forces or chasseurs and light infantry. Abd al-Qadir's forces suffered a major defeat at Temda in 1844,

before retreating to Morocco. There Bugeaurd subsequently defeated the Moroccan Sultan, at Isly, who made peace in August 1844. The Sultan turned against Qadir who was conducting cross-border raids from the Rif mountains of Morocco. However, Abd al-Qadir did not ultimately surrender until December 1847 when he was expelled from Morocco (Laqueur 1976 pp69-72; McDougall 2008 pp70-72).

B3.2 Umar Mukhtar and the Italian-Sanusi Wars

The Sanusi are an austere Sufi brotherhood following the Maliki school of Sunni Islam, founded by an Algerian, Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi in the Hijaz in 1837. They based their beliefs on the Quran and Sunna, with emphasis on following the example of the Prophet Muhammad. Like other fundamentalist movements such as Wahhabism, the Sanusi rejected scholarly consensus (*ijma*), reasoning analogy (*qiyas*) and imitation (*taqlid*) as sources of Islamic doctrine. Thus, despite being Sufis, Sanusi doctrine is deemed acceptable by Salafists. Indeed, they are the only Sufi brotherhood tolerated in Saudi Arabia. The Sanusi did not practice the ritual dancing typical of some Sufi orders or play music (Esposito 2003c; 2003d; Evans-Pritchard 1949 pp1-3, 12).

In 1843 Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi, 'the Grand Sanusi', founded the order's first lodge in Cyrenaica (Libya) at al-Zawiya al-Baida (Evans-Pritchard 1949 p14). Henceforth, the Sanusi would resist European encroachment and imperialism. Between 1897 and 1910, the Sanusi resisted French expansion in Chad (Ahmida 2011 p102). From November 1901 to June 1902, the Sanusi resisted French imperialism in the mountainous region of Tibesti in what is now northern Chad, during which time the French captured Bir Alali, destroying a Sanusi lodge or *zawiya* in January 1902. Farther southeast the Sanusi defended the Ouadai (Wadai)

Sultanate where the French captured the capital Ouara (Wara) in 1909 (Evans-Pritchard 1949 pp22-26; Lea 2001 p82).

In October 1911, Italy invaded the Ottoman provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania in Libya occupying the port cities of Benghazi, Derna, Tubruq, Tripoli and Homs. Ottoman and local resistance led to stalemate. In October 1912 hostilities between Italy and the Ottomans concluded under the Treaty of Ouchy. While the Ottomans withdrew most of their forces, both countries still claimed sovereignty over Libya. However, Libyan resistance persisted, developing into a kind of proxy, guerrilla war as a small number of Turkish officers continued to organize local opposition (St.John 2012 pp112-122; Vandewalle 2012 pp24-26).

The Italians resumed their offensive in Tripolitania, Western Libya, but encountered fierce resistance from the Sanusi Sufi Order in Cyrenaica to the east, framed as jihad. Italy's forces in Libya were reduced when it joined World War One in May 1915. By year's end the Italians had retreated to the coast and made peace with the Sanusi under the April 1917 Akrama Agreement, giving the latter sovereignty over all bar coastal Cyrenaica. With the conclusion of World War One, Italy was given sovereignty over Libya, but effectively gave it autonomy (Vandewalle 2012 pp26-27).

However, even before Mussolini took power in October 1922, the conquest of Tripolitania recommenced under Italian governor Giuseppe Volpi, appointed in July 1921. Tripolitania and Fazzan had been conquered by the end of 1924 (Vandewalle 2012 pp29-30). The Italians restarted their campaign in Cyrenaica in 1923, where the Sanusi continued to resist under the leadership of Umar al-Mukhtar (Ahmida 2011 p136). Mukhtar and his aides saw their war against Italian Fascism as a *defensive jihad*:

> "We made a pledge not to surrender to the enemy, and defend our lives, religion and homeland to the last drop of our blood" (Ahmida 2011 p137).

Mukhtar's guerrilla practices clearly irked the Italians. The Italian Governor of Cyrenaica from 1927 to 1929, Attilio Teruzzi, described their tactics thusly:

> "…because the rebels are not tied down to anything, are not bound to any impediment, have nothing to defend or to protect, and can show themselves to-day in one place, tomorrow 50km away, and the following day 100km away, to reappear a week later, to vanish for a month, to disperse to fire from afar on an unarmed shepherd, on a patrol of inspection, or on a column which files along the edge of a wood, or at the foot of a hill" (Evans-Pritchard 1949 p172).

Operating in small bands or *muhafiziya,* Mukhtar's guerrillas practiced a highly mobile form of warfare (Atkinson 2000 pp104-105). Like Abd al-Qadir's guerrillas in Algeria, Mukhtar employed "endless surprises, incursions, raids, and ambushes; making use of his great mobility, powers of dispersal, tactical independence, and perfect knowledge of the insidious terrain, to avoid decisive encounters" (Evans-Pritchard 1949 p173). Mukhtar's *mujahideen* consisted of approximately 3,000 guerrillas, recruited from the tribes of Cyrenaica; employing strategic practices of hit-and-run, using the deserts, and valleys and caves of the Green Mountains, to their advantage. During 1931 the guerrillas undertook 250 attacks and ambushes against Italian forces (Ahmida 2011 p138). They conducted a campaign of harassment, exploiting their mobility and knowledge of the terrain to attack Italian forces at multiple locations, often simultaneously, before disappearing into "the supposedly pacified" coastal regions and deserts (Abun-Nasr 1993 p339; Atkinson 2000 p106; Nassar and Boggero 2008 p202).

Mukhtar effectively established a state on behalf of Sayyid Idris, leader of the Sanusi order, arranging supplies from Egypt, collecting taxes from the tribes and strategizing their campaign against the Italians (Abun-Nasr 1993 p339).

Mukhtar was captured on 11 September 1931 tried and hanged five days later, martyred for his cause, he became a Libyan national hero (Vandewalle 2012 p31). Indeed, "…Omar al-Mukhtar conveys a message of traditional religious values in a time of continuous social and economic modernisation" (Nassar and Boggero 2008 p204).

B3.3 Abd al-Karim and the Rif War

The Rif uprising was led by Muhammad bin Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi (Pennell 1986). In 1848 Spain occupied the Chafarinas Islands off the Moroccan coast and in 1859 the Spanish territory of Ceuta was attacked by Moroccan tribesmen. When the Sultan refused to punish the tribesmen, Spain declared war on 1 January 1860, capturing Tetuan over a month later. In 1889 and 1890 France seized the oases of Gurara, Tidikelt, Igli and Tuat in south-west Morocco (Pennell 1986 pp9-11).

In November 1912 northern Morocco (excluding Tangier) was transferred from French to Spanish control, adding to its existing territories of Ceuta and Melilla (Miller 2013 pp104-105). Muhammad Abd al-Karim was imprisoned for sedition in 1916. Following his release the following year, he set about organizing his Beni Ouariaghel tribe into a guerrilla force as the Spaniards encroached on the Rif region, displacing local Rifian tribes-people. In spring 1921 skirmishes broke out in the Rif mountains between Spanish and tribal forces. In July the guerrillas routed a much larger force at the Spanish outpost of Anwal. Spanish forces retreated in disarray, abandoning artillery, small arms and ammunition, eastward to Monte Arruit (Al-Aaroui) where they suffered another defeat. Around 9,000

troops died and hundreds were captured in the battles which forced Spain to abandon 5,000km^2 of territory, where Abd al-Karim established a Rifian Republic. He conscripted men and women into a regular army. Meanwhile, in Spain a military coup brought General Primo de Rivera to power (Miller 2013 pp106-107).

In 1923 France joined Spain's war against the Rifians. By 1924 the French had pacified the Taza region to the south, securing the railway from Fez to Oujda in Algeria. In April 1925, Abd al-Karim's forces overwhelmed outposts along the border with French-Morocco, before advancing to within 20 miles of Fez. The French responded with aerial bombing, chemical weapons and armour. General Petain directed a Franco-Spanish coalition from summer 1925, encircling Abd al-Karim's forces. With his capital, Targuist, captured by Spain on 23 May 1926, Karim fled to French territory and surrendered. It took 158,000 troops to defeat 40,000 guerrillas. Abd al-Karim was imprisoned on Reunion Island before going into exile in Cairo. Abd al-Karim became an inspiration for Moroccan nationalism and "Maghribis seeking models of anti-colonial resistance" (Miller 2013 pp108-110).

Like Abd al-Qadir's forces in Algeria and Umar Mukhtar's in Libya, Abd al-Karim's guerrillas exploited the element of surprise, particularly in strategic practices of ambush and hit-and-run attacks; overwhelming enemy forces at exposed points, disappearing before the enemy could react in force and avoiding battle against numerically superior forces where possible. Moreover, they used the Rif Mountains of northernmost Morocco to their advantage, concealing themselves within the landscape. The rebels would, for instance, hide artillery in caves (Alvarez 2001 p124; Er 2015 pp4-7).

Similarly, documents from Timbuktu believed to have been written by AQAP advise AQIM militants on concealment from UAVs using "thick trees", "natural

barricades like forests and caves" and "underground shelters" which are difficult for missiles to penetrate and to "avoid gathering in open areas" (AP 2013b).

> "Led by Abd el-Krim, Rifian tribesmen comprised elite regular units that excelled in encirclement maneuvers and surprise attacks" (Katagiri 2014 p234).

Che Guevara summarized these tactics as: "Strike and run, wait, watch carefully, and then again strike and run" (Harris 2010 p111). The guerrilla strategy and tactics employed by the Rifi rebels not only influenced those of the FLN during Algeria's War of Independence (Er 2015 p6), which in turn influenced those of the GSPC-AQIM, but also other guerrilla movements and leaders, including Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap of the Viet Minh, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong and Josip Broz Tito (Er 2015 pp6-8).

To the tribes-people Abd al-Karim framed their struggle as a *defensive jihad* against Spanish, Christian invaders and their warriors as *mujahideen*: "There is no doubt that jihad is a duty for us, to attack the enemy which has come on us in our land. We shall defend our religion and our land" (Pennell 1986 p124). Indeed, a propaganda letter to some of the tribes declared:

> "Mujahidin: Through God's will we have declared war on the Christian Spaniard, and have thrown him out of our beloved land, blessed by the Prophet. Our victory must be completed by the total expulsion of the Christians. To that end Jihad has been called throughout the Rif" (Pennell 1986 p97).

However, to the Europeans and Muslim modernists it was presented as a struggle for the right of self-determination: "Quite simply, we wish to be independent and to be governed by God" (Pennell 1986 pp124-125)

Abd al-Karim's bayat:

> "Thus the tribes of the Rif and the tribes of the Jibala, before the (events of the past) two years, lived in (a state of) extreme ferocity and disgrace, in great ignorance and tyranny and obduracy, and lived far apart from the rules of law (*shari'a*), and crime grew among the believers to such an extent that resistance to him who held authority in the country became general, and they continued (to live) in factionalism, to kill and to rob people's goods. At the same time they had (to face) what the enemy (i.e. the Spanish) brought in the way of sedition and terror so that they had no place of refuge or even of habitation, except what they could bring about through great cooperation. And, when all this exhausted them and they knew no remedy, they sought someone who would take over their leadership, (a man) commissioned by them, and they came together to consider, and they entrusted their business, in its importance, both in heaven and on earth, to Him who is most praiseworthy in His deeds in all the length and breadth of the earth. A man responded to their wishes and took over their affairs and he ordered them first of all to follow the law (*shari'a*) of the Prophet" (Pennell 1986 p248).

Like Abd al-Qadir, Muhammad bin Abd al-Karim took the title Commander of the faithful. Abd al-Karim's state implemented *sharia* law (Pennell 1986 p126). Abd al-Karim was influenced by the modernist Salafism of Muhammad Abduh, creating an *Islamic state* based on enforcing *sharia*, but also borrowing certain modern, Western ideas. His was "a modernizing Islamic nationalism". Abd al-Karim enforced the five-times, daily prayers: men who failed were given 15-20 days military service and women fined one chicken (Balfour 2002 pp188-189).

B3.4 Organisation Spéciale

(Continued from B2.1) In 1937 Hajj was imprisoned and his party banned, re-emerging as the Parti du Peuple Algerien and joined the AML. Still advocating independence, the PPA began arming paramilitary units of six to eight men in 1944 (Ruedy 2005 p148). Here lie the origins of the FLN, beginning a long history of revolutionary actors in Algeria. The AML and PPA were banned after demonstrations on 8 May 1945, Victory in Europe Day, turned violent in Constantine, spreading as the PPA declared an insurrection. Government property was attacked in Oran and Kabylia on 18 and 23 May, respectively, and a plot hatched to seize the Cherchell military headquarters. The uprising was brutally suppressed by the French. By the end of May, 100 Europeans and anywhere between 1,500 and 40,000 Algerians were dead; 5,560 were arrested and 99 sentenced to death (Ruedy 2005 p143, 147-150). French intransigence and brutality brought the Islamic movement closer to the nationalists.

The PPA pursued dual political and revolutionary strategies forming the Mouvement pour le Triomph des Libertés Démocratiques (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties) in 1946 in order to participate in scheduled elections. In 1947 PPA paramilitaries formed the Organisation Spéciale (OS), intent on pursuing armed revolution, whose leaders included future FLN members, Hocine Ait Ahmed and future president Ahmed Ben Bella.

The OS employed urban guerrilla warfare tactics relying on concealed light weapons, stealth and mobility, striking before disappearing into crowds or 'shooting-and-scooting'. Other tactics included sabotage, armed robbery and raids, assassination of indigenous collaborators and agents of France. The group acquired arms through black markets and hit-and-run attacks against French security forces. OS militant were trained in firearms and bomb-making. The

organization, divided Algeria into zones with further subdivisions, setting a precedent for future militant groups in the country and operated from the Aures Mountains (Derradji 1997 pp87-89, 96). In 1949 the Special Organization stole 3 million francs from the Post Office in Oran. The following March police arrested 363 and imprisoned 197 members including Ben Bella. Some militants retreated, forming guerrilla units in the Aures, while others fled to France or the Middle East, or repented (Derradji 1997 pp87-88, 96; Ruedy 2005 pp153-157).

B3.5 Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962)

The OS was reconstituted in 1953. Factionalism between Hajj and the Central Committee—a recurrent problem for future Algerian VNSAs—led hardliners and OS members to defect, forming the Comité Révolutionnaire d'Unité d'Action (Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action). Like the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) following the cancelled elections of 1991, the CRUA concluded the political path was blocked and announced the formation of the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) on 31 October 1954, declaring their aim: "The restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social Algerian state within the framework of Islamic principles." The FLN instigated insurrection the following day, with the primary goal of overthrowing the colonial regime, creating an independent Algerian state through violent revolution (Ruedy 2005 pp151-160).

The *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) began its insurgency on 1 November 1954 with bomb and guerrilla attacks on French military posts (Tompkins 2013 p291). In a series of attacks, bombs were detonated at the gasworks, a petroleum depot and radio station in Algiers; telephone wires were sabotaged and crops scorched at two farms in Oran. Guerrillas attacked military barracks in Blida and Boufarik, failing to steal weapons, as well as in Khenchela, in the Aures Mountains near Constantine where two French soldiers died. There, weapons were also seized

from a police station; an armed assault of administrative buildings occurred in Arris and French security forces were fired upon in Batna and Condé-Semendo. A Muslim policeman was killed and tobacco and cork stores burnt in Kabylia. A loyalist Muslim governor, Hadj Sadok, was killed at a roadblock near the gorge at Tighanimine between 7:00 and 7:30 in the morning. In all, there were 70 incidents of violence and destruction, costing 9 lives and 200 million francs. The next ten months of insurgency were limited to the countryside of eastern Algeria (Evans 2012 pp113-114, 117).

The National Liberation Army (ALN) used many of the same strategic practices employed in previous Maghrebi anti-colonial struggles in Algeria, Libya and Morocco, and subsequently by the GSPC-AQIM; particularly guerrilla tactics of ambush and hit-and-run attacks against French military units, outposts and convoys (Tompkins 2013 p315). Similarly, the GSPC-AQIM uses ambush and hit-and-run tactics against Algerian police and military outposts, units and convoys.

The ALN also assassinated local officials and Francophile Muslims, much as the GSPC-AQIM attacks Algerian politicians, those deemed 'collaborators' and repentant militants. The ALN also targeted European, primarily French, civilians with bombs left in public places (Tompkins 2013 p316). The GSPC-AQIM on occasion targets foreign, non-Muslim civilians with explosives; for instance, using roadside bombs targeting foreign contractors. These terrorist attacks were designed to divide the settler population from Algerian Muslims and relieve pressure on FLN guerrillas by forcing the French to increase security around civilian targets (Tompkins 2013 pp316-318).

B3.5.1 Use of Religion

The FLN combined nationalism, Islam, socialism and populism (Derradji 1997 p238; Roberts 2011 p32). AUMA (B2.1) leaders including Tawfiq al-Madani and Larbi Tebessi endorsed the rebellion, though its leader, Bachir Ibrahimi, in self-imposed exile, found FLN terrorism distasteful. The AUMA's assembly manifesto of July 1955 demanded an independent Algerian government and that the French negotiate with the FLN (Willis 1996 pp19-24). There is evidence AUMA members joined the rebellion on the first day. Tawfiq al-Madani joined the FLN in April 1956. Future FIS leader, Abbassi Madani, joined an attack on the official radio headquarters (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006 p108). Prominent AUMA members including Mosbah al-Huwaiziq, Omar al-Arabaoui and Ahmed Sahnoun were imprisoned for supporting recruitment and Abdel Latif Sultani for raising money for the FLN. Preliminary meetings for the 1956 Soummam Congress were also held in his home (Shahin 1997 p117). Returning to a key theme, this rebellion, like previous resistance, had an Islamic disposition.

The Islamists endorsed FLN political violence and Islam became a rallying cry for revolution, as during Abd al-Qadir's earlier uprising against France, and throughout Maghrebi Islamic history; and would again in the Algeria of the 1990s. The AUMA provided the struggle with "religious legitimacy" and was absorbed into the FLN in 1957. The rebels described themselves as *mujahideen*, (fighters of the faith) and *fedayeen* (those prepared to die) engaged in jihad against *colonialism*. Many commanders demanded their troops observe Ramadan, echoing Abd al-Qadir's moral strictness. Islam provided "a symbolic underpinning for war" (Derradji 1997 p238; Willis 1996 pp22-23). The FLN's struggle was "popularly conceived as a jihad" (Roberts 2011 p32).

The FLN's "secret slogan" was "Allahu-Akbar, Khalid, Uqba", meaning firstly God is great before referring to historical figures Khalid Ibn al-Walid, aka "the sword of Allah"—a great Muslim general and companion of Muhammad—and Uqba Ibn Nafi (B1.1), who first brought Islam to the Maghreb; embedding the FLN in Islamic and Maghrebi history. The AUMA is the "peaceful link" between Abd al-Qadir and the FLN rebels (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006 pp108-109; Britannica 2012). FLN strategic culture incorporated a mixture of Islamism, nationalism and socialism.

According to Boubekeur the violence of the Algerian Civil War "had clear antecedents in the war of national liberation" as the FLN "used religion as a way to acquire political legitimacy and used violence to achieve its goals. The anticolonial struggle was labelled a jihad, and the prerequisite for those who wanted to acquire positions of power after independence in 1962 was to have been a wartime *mujahid*" (2008 p4).

B3.5.2 Strategy and Tactics

Like earlier militant movements, the FLN's armed wing, the National Liberation Army (ALN) based itself in the mountains, beginning its campaign from the Aures Mountains and mountainous Kabylia region of the Tell Atlas, covering Tizi Ouzou, Bejaia and most of Bouira, before spreading its operations across Algeria. Like the OS and future VNSAs, the ALN divided Algeria into zones, later broader "wilayas": Zone 1 covered the Aures Mountains; zone 2, the northern Constantine region; zone 3 Kabylia; zone 4, southern Algiers; zone 5 western Algeria; and zone 6, southern Algeria and the Sahara (Derradji 1997 pp110-111).

In the early years of the insurgency between 1954 and 1955 the ALN utilized hit-and-run tactics, and sabotage from 1955, derailing trains (Derradji 1997 p112).

Zone one in the Aures Mountains, commanded by Mustapha Ben Boulaid, the most active region, primarily carried out hit-and-run raids against police and military targets, and ambushes. Colonial farms were also destroyed. This highly mobile asymmetric warfare was dictated by a shortage of combatants and materiel. Knowledge of the wooded mountainous terrain allowed ALN guerrillas to utilize the element of surprise by employing strategic practices of ambush, hit-and-run, attack and withdraw, striking front and rear (Derradji 1997 pp113-117).

Boulaid was captured smuggling weapons from Egypt on 11 August 1955, before escaping later that year and regaining command. Meanwhile Bachir Chihani, an outsider took command. His alleged failures created insubordination and he was executed in October. Boulaid was killed on 27 March 1956 (Derradji 1997 pp114-116).

Guerrillas from zones two and three stepped up their campaigns around the Aures to relieve French pressure on the embattled first zone (Derradji 1997 p117). Following the August 1956 Summan Conference zones became *wilayas* with additional political responsibilities (McDougall 2017 p208).

The *mujahideen* employed subversion, guerrilla warfare and terror tactics during the Algerian War of independence. A number of FLN militants had served France against the Viet Minh in Vietnam. Journalist Alfred Sherman could easily have been referring to the GIA when describing the ALN campaign of:

> "…sudden terror-bombs exploding in cinemas, shops and schools, random shooting in the streets, destruction of farms and warehouses, and killing and mutilation of civilians…. The National Liberation Army began as a poorly armed force utilizing shotguns, old rifles, home-made bombs and incendiaries, focusing mainly on rural areas, and prioritized the seizure of

> modern arms, employing armed raids, usually at night, ambushes and 'bomb-throwing' mainly against French security forces on security forces and facilities. There were attacks on a French garrison in Al-Amra and an ambush on a military convoy in Taberdga taking over 60 hostages" (Derradji 1997 pp107-109).

Armed assaults and raids on military facilities and ambushes upon their convoys resonate with those of the GIA and GSPC-AQIM. The ALN favoured mobility adopting the hit-and-run tactics of their OS forebears. Zone 1 and 2 leaders Mustapha Ben Boulaid and Yousef Zighout favoured late afternoon ambushes, allowing the guerrillas to disappear into darkness and evade French counter-attacks and blockades. The ALN was a highly mobile force "favouring sudden ambushes and striking by surprise, which enabled them to hit the front and rear of enemy forces without being caught or destroyed." Their "knowledge of the terrain and geography were also an asset for their success, especially when being chased by French military units in deep forests and inaccessible remote areas that were totally unknown to their enemy". ALN guerrillas employed sabotage against municipal utilities, cutting telephone and telegraph lines. In January 1956 militants of zone 5, commanded by L'Arbi Ben M'hidi derailed trains on the Oran-Sidi Bel Abbas line (Derradji 1997 pp108-119; Ruedy 2005 p161).

Zighout and Lakhdar Ben Tobbal acted as norm entrepreneurs, widening the war to French civilians. Besides attacks on colonial farms, a number of massacres occurred. On 20 August 1955 ALN militants initiated massacres in 26 locations in Constantine, Algiers and Philippeville. Notably, eighty militants massacred the inhabitants of El-Halia from a new born baby to a grandmother aged 73 (Ruedy 2005 pp162-163). The ALN, like the GIA, also used violence to intimidate and coerce the Muslim populace to co-operate, punishing those who were unco-

operative or collaborators. Bachir Chihani, who replaced Boulaid while the latter was temporally incarcerated, allegedly resorted to traditional "Berber punishments such as cutting off lips and noses" for non-co-operation (Derradji 1997 pp113-115, 122-124).

The ALN, like the later GIA and GSPC-AQIM also had internal issues. Chihani was executed for his "shortcomings", while Boulaid removed ineffectual commanders and had insubordinates executed (Derradji 1997 pp114-116). As with successor VNSAs, there was a high turnover in personnel, with new commanders replacing those killed or captured (Derradji 1997 p122), leading to 'norm entrepreneurship' with resultant strategic changes.

Within two years, three of the nine historical chiefs were dead and five captured. At the 1956 Summam Summit, Abane Ramdane, who quickly climbed the ranks of FLN, promoted expanding the armed struggle to the cities and initiating an urban terror campaign (Derradji 1997 pp146-148).

Alongside the rural campaign, the Zone Autonome d'Alger (ZAA) initiated an urban bombing and assassination campaign in 1956, targeting European and pro-French civilians in the capital, creating mass casualties (Rosebraugh 2004 p154), reminiscent of GIA bombings. The ZAA recruited from the Casbah, co-opting the criminal underground. ZAA fidayeen were prepared to die for the cause, just like those *martyred* for AQIM. According to the FLN's *Al-Mujahid,* the Fidai's "personal qualities prepare him for delicate missions.… He is a soldier located in the heart of the enemy…designated to execute a traitor or to destroy a military installation…" (Derradji 1997 pp161-165, 238-239). The urban campaign was brutally crushed in 1957 by French force, mass arrests and torture, but the FLN was ultimately victorious, winning Algerian independence in 1962 (Derradji 1997 pp184-189).

B3.6 Mustapha Bouyali

Mustapha Bouyali was a follower of Qutb and former ALN officer who fought during the War of Independence. Moved by a sense of *betrayal* at the FLN's deviation from an Islamic to a socialist state he believed their revolution had forsaken its principles (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006 p109; Kepel 2004b pp163-164). Denouncing the government in occasional sermons at Al-Achour mosque, Bouyali formed the Group for Defence Against the Illicit in 1979 and attempted to arrange a demonstration for 1 May 1981—calling on the Algerian government to implement *sharia* law—in which other Islamists refused to participate. Bouyali initiated jihad following the death of his brother during a confrontation with police in April 1982. Bouyali's group combined with others creating the Armed Islamic Movement (Mouvement Islamique Armé, MIA) (Willis 1996 p71-73). The MIA was the first in a succession of VNSAs since the FLN took office, and in contrast, dedicated solely to the Islamist political cause.

The MIA was ancestor to later Islamic armed groups including the GIA and AQIM, marking a return to the themes of revivalism and armed struggle justified by Islam against what is seen as an illegitimate, un-Islamic political order in need of regeneration. Like the GIA and AQIM, Bouyali believed the Algerian state had to be overthrown and replaced with an *Islamic state* based on *sharia*.

The MIA's organizational structure imitated the *wilayas* of the FLN, dividing Algeria into regions each with its own commander or *emir*. Bouyali as overall *emir* led the command division (Willis 1996 pp71-73). Its centre of operations was in the Mitidja plains around Algiers, and like the ALN and subsequent VNSAs, targeted security forces (Kepel 2004a pp163-164; Le Sueur 2009 p29). The MIA operated from the same areas as the ALN during the War of Independence claiming the legacy of and *betrayal* by the FLN. Bouyali's MIA links the War of Independence

and the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s, “illuminating a clear continuity of method, along with an ideological shift from nationalism to Islamism” (Kepel 2004a pp163-164).

During 1982 the MIA was active stealing weapons, ammunition and explosives, until 23 members were arrested in mid-December, following the discovery of various munitions caches; thwarting a violent campaign planned against public institutions, including plots to kidnap Chérif Messadia, head of the FLN central committee, and assassinate the Prime Minister (Willis 1996 pp74-75). Further arrests were made in January 1983 and Bouyali fled into exile, possibly to Iran or Libya. Returning in late 1984, Bouyali reconnected with his comrades, 92 of whom had been released from prison in May, and re-established the MIA in Feb 1985.

On 21 August 1985 the group stole the payroll in an armed robbery on a factory, and attacked a police barracks in southern Souma, killing a police cadet, stealing weapons and ammunition, and graffiting the gate with the phrase “Allah the avenger is with us”. Like earlier militant movements, the elusive MIA retreated to the Atlas Mountains, inflicting “disproportionate” casualties on their military pursuers whilst continuing to attack public targets—as did the ALN—deemed un-Islamic including cinemas, restaurants, girl’s schools and libraries. Employing his knowledge of the mountains and guerrilla tactics gleaned fighting for the ALN, Bouyali evaded security forces, regularly appearing in mosques across the region, until he died in an ambush in February 1987 (Willis 1996 pp81-82). The MIA was accused of sabotage and murder, killing approximately 20 members of the security forces. Of 202 surviving members put on trial in July 1987, only 15 were acquitted. Bouyali's “principal lieutenants”, Mansour Meliani, Abdelkader Chebouti and Muhammad Amamra were all sentenced to death (Ellman 1987a; 1987b), but subsequently released.

B3.7 Armed Islamic Group (GIA)

B3.7.1 Reconstituted MIA

Armed groups proliferated following the abrogation of the elections, marking the failure of the FIS electoral strategy and a shift to armed struggle. With all former members of Bouyali's MIA released from prison by the end of July 1990, the group was resurrected in January 1991 by senior members who had remained aloof from the FIS, including Mansour Meliani, Azzedine Baa, Abdelkader 'Mouloud' Hattab and their leader Abdelkader Chebouti, who demanded strict discipline from his men (Ruedy 2005 p263; Willis 1996 p269). Disagreeing with the "constitutionalist strategy…they continued to hold the martyred Bouyali's belief in the efficacy and importance of armed struggle" (Willis 1996 p269).

Operating from the Atlas Mountains of Blida province, spreading east towards Constantine, the MIA grew to 2,000 fighters (Ruedy 2005 p263) becoming, by summer 1992, the chief source of armed resistance against the regime; specifically targeting security forces (Willis 1996 p269). However, the FIS also included many former Bouyalists, including Ali Belhaj himself, willing to follow Madani's electoral project (Roberts 1994 p24; Willis 1996 p143).

The primary goal of the MIA was not, according to Hugh Robert's, a revolutionary seizure of power through armed revolution, but to use violence as an instrument to pressurize the military into negotiating a political settlement overturning the ban on the FIS and reinstating the electoral process; a strategy continued by the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). Roberts argues that by targeting security forces and local government officials, particularly those appointed over elected FIS candidates, rather than the upper echelons of the state, the MIA's violence did not aim to cause the collapse of the state. The MIA's "behavior has been consistent

with a strategy of applying pressure to make the regime regret its decision to ban the FIS, and to induce the government to readmit the substance of radical Islamism to the political process" (Roberts 1994 p25).

The International Crisis Group (ICG 2004 p10), on the other hand believe that an armed seizure of power was exactly what Chebouti's MIA wanted, being the only remaining option for creating an *Islamic state* in Algeria. In fact, the MIA may have been more ambiguous over its exact goal. The division of MIA members between the AIS and GIA, following Chebouti's death, may have been due to factionalism within the organization over which strategy to pursue. What we do know is that the AIS became the official armed wing of the FIS dedicated to a negotiated settlement and a return to the political process.

Differences with the cautious Chebouti, selective in recruitment to prevent infiltration, led Saïd Makhloufi, a founding member of the FIS, and Kameredine Kherbane, both expelled in July 1991 for advocating armed struggle, to establish a second splinter group of the MIA, the *Mouvement pour un État Islamique* (MEI) in 1992 (ICG 2004 p10; Ruedy 2005 p263; Willis 1996 p270). Both were veterans of the Afghan Jihad. Kherbane was a former head of Afghan *Mujahideen* in Peshawar and Mekhloufi, who was on good terms with Kamel Assamer, leader of Takfir wal-Hijra, coordinated volunteers to fight for Iraq from Jordan during the 1991 Gulf War, and maintained contacts within the former FIS (Willis 1996 p270).

B3.7.2 Origins of the GIA

In early 1992 three meetings were held in the Zbarbar Mountains of the Tell Atlas to coordinate the activities of the various militant groups under the national leadership of Chebouti. At a fourth meeting in Tamesguida on 1 September, Nourredine Seddiki, representing "the Afghans", depleted by the security forces'

onslaught agreed to join the MIA. Muhammad Allal (aka Moh Leveilly), who led another independent group suggested forming a Majlis Shura, or consultative council. He died, but Chebouti and Sedikki escaped, when security forces raided the meeting (Willis 1996 p270-272).

However, a number of Algerians influenced by Ayman az-Zawahiri and led by Qari Saïd established the *Bayt al-Mujahideen* in Afghanistan, affiliated with al-Faruq training camp run by Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad and al-Qaida, where "al-Zawahiri's ideas" were "drummed into them". 'Algierian-Afghans' played a key role in establishing the GIA, such as Qari Saïd, a Qutbist and acolyte of Zawahiri, who made contact with the MIA in May or June 1991. Chebouti refused emirship of a new group. That year he also visited Meliani in Algeria, who accepted the offer and was persuaded to split from Chebouti, which he did in January 1992, forming *al-Jamaah al-Islamiyah al-Musallah*, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which, by July, had brought together numerous small outfits under his leadership. Meliani's reputation and Bouyalist links lent the new group credence (ICG 2004 pp11-13; Tawil 2011 pp47-48, pp67-71; Willis 1996 p281).

Qari Saïd's "Afghans" or al-Muwahhidun, were a Salafist grouping often referred to in the media as Takfir wal-Hijra, which would come to dominate the GIA. Like Zawahiri (A3.15.1), these Salafi-jihadists rejected *democracy* as an innovation and the Algerian regime as *apostate* (ICG 2004 pp11-12).

Following the Algerian security forces' assault on Tamesguida, Allal's deputy, Abdelhaq Layada (aka Abu Adlan) reneged on merging with the MIA and joined the GIA instead, becoming its leader following the arrests of Meliani and his deputy, Muhammad El-Oued, in July and October 1992, respectively (Izel *et al.* 1999 379-380). Meliani was executed in August 1993 for his alleged involvement in

the bombing of Houari Boumediene International Airport in Algiers on August 26, 1992, a charge he denied (Whitley 1994 pp33-35).

The GIA's opposition to *democracy* impeded the 1992 negotiations to form a unified armed movement under the FIS. According to Madani Merzaq, commander of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) from 1994, the GIA responded to further attempts at unification in 1993 by declaring "it is not appropriate to fight under the banner of parties, and the FIS should change its name because it contains opportunists." Unification with the FIS had to be premised on a rejection of *democracy*. The GIA dated its origins back to Tayeb al-Afghani's Guemmar raid of November 1991, implying the jihad did not originate with but predated the annulment of elections and military coup. Thus, in August 1993 the fourth GIA leader, Mourad Sid Ahmed, declared:

> "The Armed Islamic Group was not born today; it was in secret preparation for years, but its entry into open jihadist military operations was precisely a year and 10 months ago, that is since the Guemmar operation" (Hafez 2004 pp47-48, 56).

B3.7.3 GIA expansion and the formation of the AIS

Following Chebouti's death in late 1993 the MIA fractured. Elements of the MIA operating in western Algeria, including the cities of Oran, Tlemcen and Aïn Delfa came together under Ahmed Ben Aïcha in May 1994 as the Islamic Salvation Army (Armée Islamique du Salut, AIS). A second division emerged to the east in July under the leadership of Madani Merzaq. The AIS became the official armed wing of the FIS attracting supporters of the party, elements of the MIA who did not join the GIA, and army deserters (Ruedy 2005 p264). This group was less extreme and more pragmatic than the GIA, seeing armed struggle not as an obligation but "a

means *(wasila)* to an end" (Hafez 2004 p50), using armed force to bring the government to a negotiated settlement, overturn the annulment of the 1991 elections, or at least legalize the FIS once more and return to the democratic process (ICG 2004 p10; Ruedy 2005 p264). This led to rivalry and attacks from the GIA which rejected negotiation and democracy out of hand.

Also in May, other elements of the MIA, alongside Makhloufi's MEI (who later withdrew), and the Jazarist, 'Algerianist' faction of the FIS led by Muhammad Saïd, Abderrazak Rajjam and Yusuf Boubras and some smaller groups like the Islamic Front for Armed Jihad (FIDA) led by Abdelwahab Lamara joined the umbrella of the Armed Islamic Group (Groupe Islamique Armé, GIA), which initially operated out of the greater Algiers region (Hafez 2004 p47; ICG 2004 pp10-12; Roy and Sfeir 2007 p39; Ruedy 2005 p264; Tawil 2011 pp83-84).

Thus, the GIA was not a single united unit but an "agglomeration of armed groups" (Ruedy 2005 p264) and like the FIS, made up of Salafists and Jazarists. Factionalism, internal rivalries and ideological disputes, particularly between the conflicting ideologies of the extreme Salafists and the Jazarists, afflicted the organization. The GIA did however declare itself the only legitimate organizational framework for conducting jihad in Algeria (Hafez 2004 p47). The group became increasingly exclusive, demanding members adhere to Salafism and renounce any allegiance to Takfir wal Hijra or Jazarism during Zitouni's leadership.

The GIA saw itself as part of a broader, global, revolutionary Islamist movement—like its equivalents in Egypt, Libya and elsewhere—destined to expunge un-Islamic rule throughout the Islamic world and establish *Islamic states* based on *sharia* and the "rule of God", and perhaps, ultimately, restore the Caliphate. Thus, GIA leader Abdelhaq Layada announced:

"The great tragedy the Muslim community living in this era is the collapse of the Caliphate, because it is now living an abnormal and disharmonious life due to the separation between its high values, ideals and principles in which it believes and the pagan *(jahili)* reality imposed upon it" (Hafez 2004 p49).

B3.7.4 Defiance and Democracy

While the GIA was an agglomeration of armed groups (Ruedy 2005 p264) incorporating diverse groups of Jazarists, former FIS members, Afghan veterans and other Islamists, the group's core constituents were revolutionary Islamists and Salafi-jihadists. The strategic culture of this GIA core was therefore based upon the rejection of *democracy*, elections, party politics and secular constitutionalism as un-Islamic innovations, representing those Islamists both within and outside the FIS who were never really convinced by its electoral strategy. Their belief influenced particularly by Ayman az-Zawahiri and vindicated by the cancelled elections, was that armed insurrection was both morally and practically the only way to fulfil their primary objective of establishing *an Islamic state* (Willis 1996 pp279-281); avoiding the un-Islamic and corrupting innovation that is *democracy*. Even before the elections in December 1991 some members within the FIS dissented from the democratic path. For instance, Omar el-Eulmi, a senior figure within the FIS, both on its Majlis Shura and in its Islamic Labour Union, the Syndicat Islamique du Traveil (SIT), who abandoned the party in mid-1991 as the Jazarist faction rose to prominence, declared that armed force was the only way to establish an *Islamic state*. El-Eulmi would be the GIA's "spiritual guide" from 1992 until his death in April 1993 (AP 1993; Tawil 2011 p69; Willis 1996 p281). Similarly, in December 1992 Layada declared:

> "We reject the religion of *democracy*. We affirm that political pluralism is equal to sedition. It has never been our intention to participate in elections or enter parliament. Besides, the right to legislate belongs solely to God" (Willis 1996 p282).

For the GIA, "jihad [was] an Islamic obligation (*faridha*) until judgment day" (Hafez 2004 pp38-42, 50). The GIA refused to countenance negotiations with the "*apostate*" government adopting the slogan "no dialogue, no truce, no reconciliation" in August 1994, during Gousmi's leadership (AFP 1994a; BBC 1994b; Ruedy 2005 p264). This belligerent strategy of contention solely by violence with no possibility of a peaceful settlement with the "*apostate* regime" was justified by Surah 8:39: "So, fight them [the unbelievers] till all opposition ends, and obedience is wholly God's" (Hafez 2004 p49).

B3.7.5 The Far Enemy

Like AQIM, the GIA underwent a process of "hybridization" in its strategic narrative and practices (Hegghammer 2009). Particularly under Mourad and his successor Cherif Gousmi, the GIA broadened its targets by increasingly attacking foreign citizens and interests; hybridizing from a purely '*near enemy*' strategic culture by incorporating a '*far enemy*' narrative and practices, which would become much more prominent under Jamal Zitouni's leadership. Thus, despite maintaining its nationalistic ideology, the GIA became increasingly xenophobic, aiming to cleanse Algerian society of all "un-Islamic" influences; urging foreigners to leave the country or risk being killed, and adopting *far enemy* rhetoric. In August 1993 the GIA announced in *al-Ansar*:

> "Our struggle is with *infidelism* and its supporters beginning with France and ending with the leader of international terrorism, 'The United States of

> Terrorism,' its ally Israel, and among them the *apostate* ruling regime in our land" (Hafez 2004 p50).

Thus, the GIA's war was not only against the *apostate* Algerian regime, but also the machinations of *infidel* powers seen to support it, or repress Muslims elsewhere. A series of murders of foreign nationals followed: two French surveyors were kidnapped and killed in September near Sidi Bel Abbes, two Russian military advisers were murdered by the United Company of Jihad (UCJ)[26], a Philippine and two Latin Americans contractors for an Italian pipeline company were kidnapped and killed in October (AFP 1993; TOP; Willis 1996 pp283-284). The GIA justified such attacks in *al-Ansar* in October:

> "The jihadist operations commenced with prior planning and scheming, targeting all the symbols of the *infidel* regime from the head of state through the military, and ending with the last hypocrite working for the regime. Into this equation enters all who support the unjust, *infidel* system whether inside or outside [Algeria]…. As we previously stated in our communiqués, the nationals of the resentful *crusading* countries are a target for the *mujahidin* because they represent part of the wicked *colonialist* plan, which is led by the leader of international terrorism [United States], succored by its *crusading* friend [France]" (Hafez 2004 pp50-51).

Finally, two kidnapped French consulate workers, Jean-Claude Thevenot and Alain Freyssier were rescued on 30 October. Prior to the raid, which killed seven militants, a note was left in the Associated Press mailbox linking the GIA with the War of Independence as the 1954 revolt began with the deaths of two French

[26] Presumably an affiliate or faction of the GIA committed to the same strategy, both the GIA and UCJ claimed responsibility for the previous attack.

colonials. Jean-Claude's wife Michele was released the following day (Khiari 1993) with a note addressed to foreign nationals:

> "Leave the country. We are giving you one month. Anyone who exceeds that period will be responsible for his own sudden death. There will be no kidnapping and it will be more violent than in Egypt" (Walker 1993).

This desire to cleanse Algeria of foreign influences shows some continuity with the FLN which fought to remove the influence of the French occupiers. Yet, it also indicates a strategic shift influenced by Egyptian Islamist militants of Gamaa Islamiyya who began a similar strategy of targeting foreign national in the summer of 1992, illustrating the strategic cultural influence of Egyptian groups. This strategy aimed to scare foreign firms and investors away from Algeria and Egypt, as well as tourism in the latter; undermining economic growth, social improvement, support for the government and the *apostate* regimes themselves (Willis 1996 pp284-285). As such these strategies remained focused on domestic Islamic revolution and purging their countries of un-Islamic influences.

However, Jamal Zitouni took the *far enemy* concept to its logical conclusion by attacking mainland France. This strategy began when four GIA militants, armed with Uzis, AK-47s, grenades and 20 sticks of dynamite hijacked Air France flight 8969 from Algiers to Paris on Christmas Eve 1994 with 12 crew and 220 passengers aboard. Having secured the aircraft, their leader, Yahya Abdullah, 24, who led a battalion called "those who sign with blood", infamous for killing and beheading police officers in Algiers' suburbs—announced over the radio: "We are the Soldiers of Mercy. Allah has selected us to fight for him. We are here to wage war in his name." He demanded to fly to Paris, had an Algerian policeman amongst passengers executed and ordered the women to cover their hair. Algerian authorities refused to remove the 'Airstairs' allowing the Airbus 300 to take-off

and too proud to accept support from their former colonial master in the French Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN). Their refusal to allow the aircraft to take-off led the militants to execute a Vietnamese embassy official at 2pm (Taylor 2008).

Intelligence gleaned from a mole within the GIA indicated that the hijackers planned to crash the plane in the heart of Paris. At 2:30pm Yahya agreed to release 63 Algerian hostages, mostly women and children, in return for Islamist leaders. The Algerians also used Yahya's mother to persuade him to give himself up. Their conversation illustrates Yahya believed he would die a *martyr*:

> "No, I'm sorry, you are my mother, I love you, but I love God more than you and we shall see each other again in paradise."

At 9pm a chef from the French embassy in Algiers, Yannick Beugnet, radioed the control tower saying "If you don't do something, they are going to execute us." Then Yahya issued a half-hour deadline to be allowed to take-off after which one passenger would be executed every 30 minutes. Beugnet was then shot-dead. The Algerians granted permission for take-off. Without enough fuel to fly to Paris the Airbus was allowed to depart for Marseilles at 1am on 26 December. After landing at Marseille, Yahya demanded 27 tons of fuel, three times more than that needed to fly to Paris. After 13 hours on the runway Yahya made a final one-hour demand for fuel before preparing to blow-up the aeroplane. Finally, GIGN commandos stormed the plane killing all four hijackers as the passengers bailed down the escape shoots (Taylor 2008).

The GIA claimed the hijacking was *punishment* for France's "unconditional political, military and economic aid" to Algeria and demanded its end and "reparations to the Algerian nation" for the War of Independence (AFP 1994b).

The extension of the jihad to France was opposed by Abdelbaki Sahraoui, an FIS co-founder, who resided in Paris (Le Sueur 2009 p126) whose assassination in a mosque on 11 July 1995 (Kole 1995) followed the hijacking; and preceded a bombing campaign from 25 July to mid-October 1995, targeting the railway system, government and police targets mainly in Paris, and a Jewish school in Lyon.

The campaign began when an improvised explosive device (IED) made from a butane gas canister containing potassium chlorate exploded on a train at Saint Michel Metro station, Paris, killing 7 and injuring 86 (AFP 1995a; Dejevsky 1995a; GTD; Kole 1995). The GIA claimed responsibility in *al-Ansar* and by phone to RTL radio. A third telephone call from Frankfurt to France Inter Radio in Paris claimed the attacks for Algerian Islamic Jihad, threatening France: for every "Islamist" killed, one French person would be killed "on French territory" (Dejevsky 1995b).

A similar bomb "from the same workshop" packed with nails detonated inside a bin near the Arc de Triomph on 17 August, injuring 17 tourists. This bombing was also claimed by the GIA (Duval-Smith 1995; Kole 1995; Simons 1995). All three operations were apparently carried out by the same cell, led by Abdelkrim Deneche (aka Abdessabour) believed to head the GIA's European operations; arrested in Stockholm on 21 August in connection with the bombings and assassination of Sahraoui (Dejevsky 1995a; 1995c).

On 26 August an unexploded bomb was found on a railway near Lyon, followed by two bombs at markets in Paris on 3 and 4 September—the second failed to detonate—and a car bomb exploded outside a Jewish school on 7 September. Suspects included Karim Koussa, arrested on 27 September, and Khalid Kelkal, whose fingerprints were found on the Lyon railway bomb, killed on 29 September in a shootout with French police (Barnetson 1995). A bomb exploded outside

Maison Blanche Metro station on 6 October, injuring 13. A GIA claim of responsibility for preceding attacks came the following day. Further blasts occurred on an empty railway and on a train near the Musée d'Orsay Metro station, injuring 29, on 8 and 17 October, respectively (AP 1995a; Globe and Mail 1995b). In *al-Ansar* the GIA vowed to continue its campaign as police called to a car blaze narrowly escaped death on 14 October when a gas bottle exploded inside. Any GIA link was uncertain (AP 1995a).

GIA demands for ending to its French bombing campaign, reported in al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper, were the cessation of $1.2 billion of aid per annum to Algeria, closing their embassy in Algiers, condemning the upcoming November elections and cancelling a scheduled meeting between presidents Jacques Chirac and Liamine Zeroual at the United Nations. The group had previously demanded President Chirac convert to Islam (Ibrahim 1995; IHT 1995).

On 2 November police arrested ten suspects in Paris, Lille and Lyons including "coordinator" Boualem Bensaid (aka Mehdi) in Paris, Ali Ben Fatoum and two others in a Lille flat; discovering a bomb factory and disrupting a plot to attack a local market at the weekend (Dejevsky 1995d; Webster 1995). Rachid Ramda and four other suspects were arrested in London on the weekend of 4-5 November in connection with bombings (Mason 1995). A final GIA bombing occurred on 3 December 1996 at Port Royal railway station, killing 4. The device was similar to previous bombs (AFP 1996a; Oyog 1996).

The mid-1990s demonstrate the beginnings of a strategic shift of Salafi-Jihadist violent non-state actors (SJVNSAs) towards fighting the *far enemy*, with the GIA hijacking Air France flight 8969 and its bombing campaign in France, preceded by the bombing of the World Trade Center on 16 February by Ramzi Yousef; a nephew by marriage of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, alleged mastermind of the 11

September attacks, who may have colluded in the 1993 plot (Burke 2007 pp101, 112-114). The twin strategies of targeting the World Trade Center and using a jumbo-jet as weapon came together with devastating effect on 9/11.

B3.7.6 Rivalry with the AIS

Differences between the FIS/AIS and GIA over strategy and the objectives of the insurgency created a bitter rivalry leading to conflict between them. Those who disagreed with the GIA became its enemies. The FIS refusal to drop its demand for returning to the democratic process led to its denunciation by the GIA. On 13 June 1995 the GIA "proclaim[ed] its innocence from the FIS by announcing that the GIA is not the armed wing of the FIS" soliciting "the shedding of the blood of those 'blood merchants' [FIS members] inside and outside (Algeria) unless they repent." Finally, in January 1996, the GIA declared war on the AIS (Hafez 2004 p48).

B3.7.7 Civilian massacres

On 30 January 1994 Liamine Zeroual was appointed president by the High Security Council (BBC 1994a) and in August 1995 elections were announced for 16 November with campaigning to begin in October (Globe and Mail 1995a). The GIA was completely opposed to the elections adopting the slogan "one vote, one bullet"; threatening to kill voters and election observers (Welch 1995). An independent candidate, Abdelmajid Benhadid, was assassinated on 17 September (AFP 1995b). Zeroual won the election with 61% of the vote following a 75% turnout (Nassim 1995).

This marked a turning point for the GIA and another case of norm entrepreneurship under Zitouni. The high turnout at the election led Zitouni to pronounce *apostasy* on Algerian society at large; the doctrine of *takfir al-mujtama* (denouncing a society as *apostate*). This extremism departed from conventional

jihadi doctrine of pronouncing *takfir* on regimes, such as that in Algeria, making the population at large a "legitimate" target (Le Sueur 2009 pp128-129; Timani 2007 p103). This violated a norm against the mass killing of Sunni Muslim civilians by Sunni Muslim militants, justifying the civilian massacres that followed. This Muslim-on-Muslim violence was too much for Bin Laden, who withdrew his support from the group (Le Sueur 2009).

While the perpetrators in many of these attacks on civilians are unidentified, the GIA was responsible for many, though it is alleged that massacres were carried out by pro-government militias, death squads and even security forces, the death toll points to a strategic shift from targeting the regime to the civilian population.

This demonstrates a growing disjuncture between the group's original strategic culture and objective of overthrowing the Algerian regime, on one hand, and its behaviour on the other. The targeting of civilians seems disconnected from its revolutionary goal and war against the state. Thus, with the extremists in control the GIA's jihad increasingly shift from a battle against the state to a war on society. The GIA no-longer aimed solely to seize power through armed revolution and Islamize the state, but a radical transformation of society itself by force of arms. Reminiscent of Ibn Yasin (B1.5.1), anyone who did not support the GIA was against it and thus "*apostates*" or collaborators and therefore legitimate targets of jihad (ICG 2004 pp11-12). Following this precedent, the GIA under Zitouni and Zouabri used violence and the threat of it to "command right and forbid wrong" enforcing a strict doctrine, in this case Salafism; threatening to kill Muslims who did not pray or pay *zakat,* or used government mosques, and forbade women from leaving home without wearing a hijab, some of whom were murdered; legal redress was not to be sought through state courts but by GIA arbitration. In

"liberated zones" the group also demanded money, supplies and shelter (Hafez 2004 p51; Roberts 1994 p25).

Antar Zouabri reiterated the GIA's *takfir al-mujtama* doctrine in a communiqué of early 1998, again denouncing the entire Algerian population as *apostate*. The group's extremism increased under Zouabri: "in our war, there is no neutrality. Except for those who are with us, all others are renegades" (AFP 2002b). Moreover, in August 1997 Abu el-Mundhir (aka Mahfoud Assouli) justified the group's assassination and mass murder of civilians, in a 14-page interview for *al-Jamaa* newsletter, the "official voice of the GIA in the West", declaring:

> "It is clear that there are no indiscriminate killings. Our fighters only kill those who deserve to die. … We say to those who accuse us of indiscriminate killing that we will fight those *traitors* who have gone over to the '*taghout*' [*tyrants*]. …We do no more than carry out the wishes of God and the Prophet. … When you hear about killings and throat slittings in a village or town, you should know it's a matter of the death of government partisans, or else it's the application of GIA communiques ordering (us) to do good and combat evil" (AFP 1997b).

He argued it was the GIA's duty to eliminate all "those who do not pray, who drink alcohol, take drugs, homosexuals and immodest or debauched women." The GIA divided Algerian society in three: those who join the jihad, those who fight Islam by "force, talk or with the pen" and all those "*imposters* and wrong doers" who favour democracy and elections. The first are true Muslims, according to el-Mundhir, and the rest deserve death. Anyone who no-longer supports the GIA should leave Algeria: "They have become the enemies of our fighters, from the youngest of their children to the oldest of their elderly." He negated the issue of innocents killed in the violence, saying they would be accepted as "*martyrs*". The

deaths of innocent women and children in bomb explosions were also justified in the vicinity of enemy targets as collateral damage (*tatarrus* A2.4; AFP 1997b). He also confirmed a further GIA purge of Islamist nationalists or 'Jazarists' wanting to moderate or redirect the group, such as Abdelwahab Ouahabi, a commander in western Algeria, killed with his supporters in September 1996 (AFP 1997b). That same month the group declared:

> "The *infidelism* and *apostasy* of this *hypocrite* nation that turned away from backing and supporting the *mujahidin* will not bend our determination and will not hurt us at all, God willing…. All the killing and slaughter, the massacres, the displacement [of people], the burnings, and the kidnappings…are an offering to God (Hafez 2004 p52).

The GIA's jihad was:

> "a struggle against *apostasy (ridha), infidelism (kufr),* and *tyrannical* rule *(tughma al-hakima).* Moreover, the GIA did not make distinctions among non-GIA Algerians. Anyone who sustained the regime in one way or another (even through tacit approval) was considered an *apostate (murted)* or *infidel (kafer)* and consequently deserved death."

In August 1994 the GIA even justified attacks on schools: "continuing with schooling is aiding the *tyrants* to achieve stability…. It is known in [Islamic] law that it is not permissible to work in the institutions of *apostate* rulers" (Hafez 2004 pp48, 51).

Such a tendency of insurgent movements to perpetrate greater violence against civilians than security forces has been noted not only with the GIA, but with the Viet Minh, the Shining Path, the Venezuelan Armed Forces of National Liberation

(FALN) as well as the FLN. Like the GIA, the FLN perpetrated violence against rival groups and civilians refusing to follow its edicts (Hafez 2004 pp43-44).

The purges and rising civilian death toll cost the GIA its supporters both inside and outside Algeria. Firstly, in Algeria peripheral factions within the GIA began defecting during Zitouni's leadership, causing the group to splinter into numerous armed groups from 1995 onwards amidst claims the group had "*deviated* from the correct path of jihad"; and denounciation of its heinous crimes against innocent Muslim civilians (Hafez 2004 p52). Commanders, Ali Benhajar of Medea district, Kada Benchiha of western Algeria and Mustafa Kertali's al-Rahman Brigade of Larbaa district relinquished support for Zitouni, breaking away to form the Islamic League for Preaching and Jihad (LIDD), Guardians of the Salafi Call (*Houmat Al-Dawa al-Salafiyya,* HDS) and the Islamic Movement for Preaching and Jihad (MIPJ) (Ashour 2009 p60; Chaliand and Blin 2007 p306; ICG 2004 pp10-13).

Hassan Hattab, commander of the GIA's second zone, Boumerdès and Kabylia, also defected in 1996 when he refused to accept Zouabri as Zitouni's successor (Harmon 2010 p14; ICG 2004 p10). Zitouni declared war on these splinter groups and skirmishes ensued (Tawil 2011 p131).

Secondly, the GIA's brutality against civilians and its own members, the disappearance of Libyan fighters and mistreatment of a three man Libyan delegation sent to investigate, who were held captive by the GIA, before subsequently escaping, alienated its supporters in the international jihadist movement. The delegation was reported to have been killed by the GIA, having joined Mustafa Kertali's faction in the Larbaa mountains, but were in fact still alive (Tawil 2011 pp121-123).

Al-Qaida withdrew its support from the GIA. Bin Laden was infuriated when GIA leaders suggested he was too soft and, having already donated $40,000, disassociated himself from the organization (Le Sueur 2009 pp128-129).

The London Islamists, Abu Musab al-Suri, Abu Qatada and representatives of the LIFG and EIJ withdrew support from Zitouni and the GIA in June 1996 (Tawil 2011 pp120-124), a month before his death at the hands of the LIDD (Ashour 2009 p60; Tawil 2011 pp120-124, 131). However, Abu Walid refused to condemn the GIA, becoming "a spiritual leader for the pro-GIA Algerians" in London. He persuaded Abu Hamza to resume publishing *Al-Ansar,* providing a base at Finsbury Park Mosque, until Antar Zouabri, again, denounced the entire Algerian population as *apostate* in 1998. Abu Hamza abandoned the group and Abu Walid departed for Afghanistan (Tawil 2011 pp124-126).

Meanwhile, on 21 September 1997 AIS commander, Madani Mezrag announced a ceasefire agreement with the military beginning on 1 October. In July 1999 President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, elected two months earlier, introduced the Law on Civil Concord offering amnesty to militants who surrendered, supplemented by a decree that they be pardoned in January. Along with the AIS, Kertali's faction and the LIDD agreed to the deal. The GIA was haemorrhaging fighters, defecting to other groups or surrendering, such that by the time of Antar Zouabri's death, the GIA had shrunk to little more than an estimated 100 fighters (ICG 2004 p14). The GIA massacred the families of rival groups which surrendered. Kertali accused the GIA of massacring relatives of Larbaa rebels at fake roadblocks (Hafez 2004 pp52, 57). The GSPC soon eclipsed the other groups, which shrank from view, becoming the dominant jihadist group in Algeria.

Zouabri was killed by security forces on 8 February 2002 in Boufarik (AFP 2002b) and succeeded by Rachid Quqali (aka Rashid Abu Turab) who continued civilian

massacres, promising "blood and blood, destruction and destruction." He oversaw the decline of the GIA, surviving until he was deposed and executed in July 2005 in favour of Nourredin Boudiadfi who was arrested in November (Ashour 2009 pp128-129; Hafez 2004 pp52-53).

B4 Political Culture

According to Graham Fuller, "The political culture of Algeria and the nature of its historical experience" are vital for understanding the "environment" in which the civil war of the 1990s developed, and offer "insights into some of the deeply imbedded trends in Algeria". Algeria's "distinctive history" provides insight into "the character of its Islamic politics today" (1996 p5).

The country was profoundly affected by its colonial historical experience, longer and deeper than that of any other country in the Arab world, lasting 132 years. Algeria was not only occupied by French soldiers, but administrated as a province of France and "actively settled" by one million French people. Then there is the legacy of "an exceptionally violent anticolonial struggle" which gave rise to the modern, independent Algerian state. The liberation struggle was "longer and bloodier" than anywhere else in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, lasting eight years costing perhaps one million Algerian lives (Fuller 1996 pp5-6).

Islamic culture, heritage and the AUMA, the legacy of colonialism and liberation have had a profound impact upon Algerian political culture as a whole, including contemporary Islamism in Algeria (Fuller 1996 pp5-7). Algeria developed a closed, authoritarian political culture as the FLN imposed a one-party state. This closed political system remained unchanged until 1989 and the resultant political culture and novelty of democracy "contributed to the radicalization and capriciousness of their political behavior, at least among the majority of Islamist factions". Military

coups were exceptional in Algeria, thus Islamists were uncertain how to respond, whereas coups and intervention in the political system, by the military, were par for the course in Turkey (Ashour and Ünlucayakli 2006 pp112-113).

The FLN and its liberation struggle fostered a nationalistic, authoritarian and xenophobic political culture within the FLN, Algerian society, and military culture within the armed forces; suspicious of, even paranoid about the West, particularly France as former colonial master. Algerian military culture remained ambiguous towards France with its own cultural and lingual ties, not to mention training and operational philosophies and doctrines inherited from the French military, whilst remaining a bastion of Algerian independence (Fuller 1996 pp94-97).

The impact of colonialism on the FLN and Algerian political culture more broadly is exemplified by the state's commitment to 'Third Worldism', the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which it joined on gaining independence (Fuller 1996 pp7-9):

> "The drama of the struggle for liberation, and the national sagas and myths that emerged from it, have been the raw material of the Algerian self-image ever since independence. The very essence of modern Algerian culture is thus deeply embedded in the concept of conflict and struggle. … The colonial experience thus lends to Algerian political culture today an intensity of outlook and approach, a powerful sense of determination, and a belief in the power of imposition of will to attain accomplishments of heroic proportions. This factor inclines Algeria as a state and polity toward an activism—sometimes even tinged with a radical sense of mission—more perceptible than in many other states in the region" (Fuller 1996 p7).

Non-alignment meant a general suspicion of the West, its dominance and intentions, and resistance to its influence and power over the Third World.

Algerian distrust of the West generally as well as the broader international order was rooted in major powers support for France, or indifference to the liberation struggle. This anti-colonialism was expressed in support for Palestine, pan-Arab unity, the Arab League, mediation in disputes amongst Arab nations, and ties to the "socialist bloc". Algerian political culture fosters a suspicion of the West "verging on xenophobia", and pragmatism in its international relations (Fuller 1996 pp9-11, 16-17).

The relative homogeneity of Maghrebi society and lack of sectarian and ethnic minorities, Berbers being the only major minority grouping, has led Algeria to be "more relaxed about its Arabness"—where Islam and Arab nationalism are coterminous—compared to its Mashreqi (eastern) counterparts. Independence brought a campaign to Arabize Algerian education, culture and society, necessitating the immigration of eastern Arabs to teach their language and culture in schools and universities. They also brought their own "culture content" which brought Algeria closer affinity with its Arab counterparts, but also greater exposure to Islamist thought and a "powerful impetus" for "the development of Islamist circles within Algeria itself" (Fuller 1996 pp10-12).

Upon commencement of the War of Independence the question of the political denomination of an independent Algerian state had not been resolved, storing trouble for the future. Though influenced by Islam, at least instrumentally, the establishment of a socialist one-party state following the FLN's victory in 1962 was a turning point for Islamist groups in Algeria (Fuller 1996 p23).

Islamist groups became increasingly concerned by the secular, socialist orientated policies and Francophone culture fostered amongst the political elite (Fuller 1996 p23). After all the FLN's rhetoric, some felt a sense of betrayal. President, Ahmed Ben Bella promoted "Islamic socialism". Eager to stress the compatibility between

socialism and Islam, and avoid the atheistic connotations of Marxism, Ben Bella nationalized abandoned colonial property. In January 1963, former AUMA member, Tawfiq Madani, now minister for religious endowments, announced that "Islam is a socialist religion, it is a religion of equity" (Willis 1996 p38). Much of Muslim opinion remained unconvinced. Bashir Ibrahimi was put under house arrest following an address at the April 1964 FLN party congress criticizing socialist government policy:

> "Those governing us do not seem to realise that what our people aspire to above all is unity, peace and prosperity and that the theories on which their actions should be founded are to be found not in foreign doctrines but in our Arab-Islamic roots" (Willis 1996 pp36-40).

Socialist ideology ran through the FLN regime, but did not overwhelm the political culture of the party or broader society. The revivalist Islam of the now defunct AUMA remained strong amongst a somewhat marginalized group within the FLN and military, creating divisions within the regime (Willis 1996 pp36-40). With the departure of the French, Islam became the main source of opposition and resistance to, rather than support for the FLN: "the struggle for the character of the Algerian state and Algerian society was now at hand" (Fuller 1996 p23).

Such a transformation is typical of movements in post-colonial Muslim states as "the primary and immediate enemy is no longer the foreign oppressor" (still an enemy, but more distant)—the *far enemy* as Faraj called it—"but rather the state itself"—the *near enemy*. "It is the state that is now perceived as violating the Islamic patrimony and Islamic values and losing sight of the welfare of the community (*umma*)." This led to a gradual shift amongst Islamists from a social movement aiming to Islamize society to a political movement dedicated to gaining

power to implement their ideology and political goals (Fuller 1996 p23), giving rise to the MIA, FIS and later the GIA and AQIM.

The FIS was a revivalist Islamic political party dedicated to creating a political system incorporating Islamic principles, though it was internally divided on its vision for the Algerian state if the party was to win power. It was a broad movement incorporating moderate and more extreme figures amongst its fifteen founding members illustrated by moderate leader, Abbassi Madani, and his radical deputy Ali Belhaj (Walsh 2007 p244). The FIS, FLN and Algerian military inhabit a "common culture" of which Islam is an important source of identity. The FIS shared the nationalism of Algerian political culture—especially strong within the Jazarist faction—and its xenophobic attitude towards the outside world and suspicion of the West, and its perceived desire to emasculate Algerian power within the FLN and broader Algerian political culture (Fuller 1996 pp97-98):

> "Public anti-French rhetoric is part of the style adopted by all parties in Algerian political life and the FIS hardly indulges in it any more than the FLN" (Leveau 1992 p17).

According to Graham Fuller, the FIS and the military had attitudes in common; a shared view that the FLN had become corrupt and isolated from the people, and a "somewhat utilitarian view of democracy and liberalization" of lower priority than their other "national goals". For the FIS and the military, Fuller argues, democracy was a means for change rather than an end in itself (1996 p98), though the latter opposed the Islamist ideology of the former. "These commonalities suggest, then, that the two institutions share something of a common outlook on key political and cultural problems of Algerian society. In the eyes of many, FIS was almost trying to 'do better' what the FLN set out to do in the first place, but failed" (Fuller 1996 pp98-99).

Madani was a member of the FLN until 1974 who presented the FIS as the true inheritor to the FLN which had *betrayed* the revolution, invoking the term "front" used by the FLN with its nationalistic symbolism. The pronunciation of FIS also echoes the French *"fils"* for son (Walsh 2007 p243-244). He asserted that the FIS and FLN were:

> "…two branches of the same origin, the history of Algeria till March 19, 1962…. If the FLN goes back to its roots, it will find us there, and we will become one thing. If it returns to Islam and the revolutionary principles which it used to uphold, then we will undoubtedly converge…. The FLN was destroyed when it lost its principles, abandoned them, and lost its leadership. It replaced its doctrines with imported ideologies, its men with opportunists" (Shahin 1997 p141).

Algerian VNSAs are influenced by Algeria's political culture in utilizing Islam as the main source of opposition to the governing regime. Their ideology tends towards a nationalistic Islamism, incorporating a xenophobic attitude towards foreigners and deep distrust of the West, particularly France. Yet, they have diverged from the ideas of the moderate wing of the FIS and the desire to reinstate the democratic process of the original GIA to the imposition of a Salafist, theocratic, *Islamic state* through political violence.

Appendix C: Attribution of Al-Qaida Attacks

There is a debate within the academic literature about 'home-grown terrorism', or "leaderless jihad" as to the extent Islamist terrorist plots and attacks, particularly in the West post-9/11, have been perpetrated by militants who have been self-radicalized (see Sageman 2008) or linked to or directed by violent non-state actors overseas, such as Al-Qaida or ISIS (Celso 2014 pp81-104; Hoffman 2008). The purpose of this appendix is to establish that the attacks used in my case study on Al-Qaida were linked to or directed by this group.

The data this project uses is derived, primarily from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (START 2016), cross checked with the Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI) (RAND 2016) and, in some GSPC-AQIM cases the Institute for the Study of Violent Groups (ISVG 2012) as well as my own research. The organization responsible for terrorist attacks is sometimes difficult to ascertain (LaFree *et al.* 2014 pp72-75).

> "In reality, we often do not have precise information on who perpetrates acts of terrorism" (LaFree *et al.* 2014 p79).

In cross checking the data I have changed the GTD where the other datasets or my own research attributes responsibility to the GSPC-AQIM or Al-Qaida. This approach makes sense in the GSPC-AQIM case since its attacks are confined to one region, primarily Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Moreover, from the end of 2005 when the GIA ceased (Ashour 2009 pp128-129; Hafez 2004 pp52-53) to September 2011 when Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) broke away, followed by Belmoktar's al-Mulathamun in late 2013, the GSPC-AQIM was the major VNSA operating in Algeria (State Dept 2012; 2013). Al-

Mulathamun and MUJWA subsequently merged in 2013 before rejoining AQIM in November 2015 (AP 2015).

Attribution of attacks to Al-Qaida is often more difficult; whether the attack was ordered, directed or directly linked to Al-Qaida-central is sometimes difficult to ascertain. Indeed, the group did not claim responsibility for any attacks prior to 9/11 using the name "Al-Qaida" (Hamid and Farrall 2015 p115). For instance, the 1998 Embassy Bombings were claimed using the name the Islamic Army for the Liberation of Holy Shrines (AP 1998).

Attacks in Iraq attributed to Al-Qaida from the RAND (2016) RDWTI database are also excluded as likely perpetrated by affiliate groups, namely Tawhid wal-Jihad/Al-Qaida in Iraq. My data—like the GTD upon which it is primarily based—includes attacks that were unsuccessful such as Richard Reid's failed suicide attack on a flight from Paris to Miami and the unsuccessful London suicide attacks of 21 July 2005. Plots that were disrupted, however, such as the Liquid Bomb Plot to destroy aircraft flying from the UK to USA, have not been added to the database.

The attacks included in this project are those where there is evidence that Al-Qaida-central planned, directed or sponsored, but those committed by Al-Qaida's affiliates and franchises such as Al-Qaida in Iraq are excluded in order to maintain the distinction between Al-Qaida-central and its affiliates. Moreover, attacks where attribution to Al-Qaida-central by the GTD is deemed uncertain, except where additional research has found a link with Al-Qaida, will be excluded. The majority of Al-Qaida-central attacks deemed uncertain by the GTD were in Afghanistan and Pakistan, linked to on-going insurgencies there, where attribution is particularly difficult. Indeed, many of these have secondary attributions to other groups, particularly the Taliban in the case of Afghanistan.

Additional research on uncertain attacks is included in this appendix. Attacks that were foiled, included in this chapter, are excluded from the data.

C1 Somalia

Date:	**Target/Location:**	
3-4 Oct 1993	US Black Hawk Helicopters, Mogadishu, Somalia	
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD		
RAND RDWTI		
CIA	Links to Bin Laden[27]	

According to the Southern District court of New York's indictment of Osama Bin Laden:

> "On October 3 and 4, 1993, in Mogadishu, Somalia, persons who had been trained by al Qaeda (and by trainers trained by al Qaeda) participated in an attack on United States military personnel serving in Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope, which attack resulted in the killing of 18 United States Army personnel…" (SDNY 1998 p18).

US officials disagree on this allegation. United States Attorney for the Southern District, Mary Jo White, was "confident in the allegation". Former US envoy to Somalia says "Nobody I've talked to, most of whom were in a good position to know, knows anything about that.… We never heard anything about bin Laden" (Weiner 1999). Peter Bergen reports an American official believes the Somalis would have lacked the skills to down the three Black Hawk helicopters without outside help (2001 p82).

[27] 9/11_Commission (2011 p109)

One of the alleged trainers was Fazul Abdullah Mohammad who was also implicated in the 1998 Embassy and 2002 Mombasa attacks (Lahoud 2012 p21). Bin Laden told journalist, Abdel Bari Atwan, that members of Al-Qaida/Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) went to Somalia one month before the Americans arrived. According to Abu Jandal, Bin Laden's former bodyguard, Osama feared the US would create a foothold in Somalia and the Persian Gulf in order to dominate East Africa, potentially threatening Sudan, where he was based. Abu Jandal claims he arrived in Somalia too late to fight the Americans, just as Al-Qaida began leaving. Mohammed Saddiq Odeh, imprisoned in connection with the 1998 Embassy Bombings, told the FBI he was sent to Somalia by Saif al-Adel in March 1993 to train the Somali tribesmen. Moreover, Muhammad Atef created a pact with Muhammad Aideed to assist their battle against UN forces in Somalia (Bergen 2006b p138-139).

According to Mark Bowden, Aidid's troops were advised by "fundamentalist Islamic soldiers" who travelled from Sudan, corresponding with Bin Laden's stay there from 1992 to 1996, to bring down helicopters with rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). The veterans of the Afghan jihad had experience in attacking Russian helicopters. They advised targeting the helicopters tail rotors from behind and below. Aidid's troops dug ditches from which to fire their RPGs at the American Black Hawk helicopters (1999 p167).

Abu Ubaidah al-Banshiri (aka Ali Amin al-Rashidi) was a member of EIJ who oversaw Bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan and became Al-Qaida's military commander. He is said to have led Al-Qaida jihadists against American forces in Somalia (Scheuer 2006 p102). Abu Ubaidah died in a ferry accident in Lake Victoria in May 1996 (Grunwald and Loeb 1998). He was succeeded as

military chief by Muhammad Atef, who is also alleged to have plotted Al-Qaida's fight against US forces in Somalia.

C2 Riyadh Bombing, November 1995

Date:	**Location:**		
13 Nov 1995	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia		
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**	**Other Claims**
START GTD	Unknown		
RAND RDWTI	Al-Qaida	N	Tigers of the Gulf, International Justice Group, the Combatant Partisans of God, Islamic Jihad, Islamic Movement for Change.
NSA	Bin Laden[28]		

The indictment of the court of the Southern District of New York states that "on at least two occasions" between 1992 and 1995, Al-Qaida smuggled explosives from Sudan to the Arabian Peninsula (SDNY 1998 pp18-19). Moreover, the CIA believed that around 1994 Al-Qaida were planning to attack an American target in, and smuggled explosives to, Saudi Arabia. A car bomb exploded in Riyadh in November 1995 (9/11 Commission 2011; CIA 1997a).

Thirty minutes prior to the bombing at al-Uliyya in Riyadh, the US National Security Agency (NSA) intercepted a call informing Bin Laden, in Sudan, of the imminent bombing (Aid 2013 pp96-97).

The Saudi government refused to allow the FBI to interrogate four suspects in April 1996, who confessed to setting the device constructed with explosives smuggled from Yemen. The US embassy was informed 90 minutes before the men were beheaded on 31 May 1996. Three had fought in Afghanistan, of whom

[28] Aid (2013 p83).

Muslih al-Shamrani had been trained in Bin Laden's al-Faruq camp in Afghanistan, before fighting in Bosnia (Fandy 1999 pp1-2; Porter 2009c; Shenon 1996).

In their televised confessions the men declared their opposition to Saudi ties with non-Muslim countries and denounced the Saudi leadership as *apostates* or *infidels* (Al-Shihri 1996). The men all claimed links to radical cleric Muhammad al-Masari of the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) and Bin Laden's Advice and Reform Committee (ARC). Riyadh al-Hajiri apparently received by fax and distributed their publications, alongside those of Egypt's Gamaa al-Islamiyya (Fandy 1999 p3). Abdel Rab al-Saray, who fought the Soviets with Bin Laden at Massada, "the lion's den", in Afghanistan in 1987 perpetrated the bombing (Jones 2014a p382). Mustafa Hamid believes Al-Qaida was not responsible (Hamid and Farrall 2015 p169).

C3 Khobar Towers, June 1996

Date:	**Location:**	
25 Jun 1996	Dhahran, Saudi Arabia	
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD	Saudi Hizballah	N
RAND RDWTI	Hizballah	Denied
FBI	Hizballah, Iran	Denied
NSA	Bin Laden[29]	

The Khobar Towers bombing was attributed to Shia militants from Saudi Hizballah. Both Iran and Hizballah's leadership in Lebanon denied involvement (AFP 1996b; BBC 2001d). Dhahran is in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich east, home to its "*infidel*" Shia minority (Fandy 1999). However, as illustrated in chapter 5, Al-Qaida

[29] Aid (2013 p83).

effectively claimed responsibility for the Riyadh and Khobar bombings in *Al-Quds al-Arabiyya*, published 29 November 1996.

Al-Qaida seemingly, had a greater motivation for attacking Western forces in Saudi Arabia than Iran or Hizballah, coming a month before Bin Laden's *Declaration of War* (Bin Laden 1996). At a time when Saudi-Iranian relations were warming under President Khatami, Iranian involvement makes little sense, according to Mousavian and Shahidsaless (2014 pp245-250).

NSA intercepts, apparently, reveal Bin Laden was involved and congratulated following the Khobar Towers bombing by Ayman az-Zawahiri and Ashra al-Hadi of Palestinian Islamic Jihad. He also called al-Masari in London, saying the Riyadh attack was "the first action, Dhahran was the second and that more was coming" (Aid 2013 pp83, 96-87). Iranian intelligence also pointed to Sunni-Salafists, particularly Al-Qaida (Mousavian and Shahidsaless 2014 p249).

Following the bombing, Bin Laden's former bodyguard, Yusuf al-Ayiri, who had trained and instructed at al-Faruq camp in Afghanistan, was arrested and tortured in Saudi Arabia. He was released two years later, before forming what would become Al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia (Meijer 2006).

Journalist Abdel Bari Atwan believes Al-Qaida rather than Hizballah was responsible:

> "In May 1996 Bin Laden and his entourage moved from Sudan to Afghanistan. As if to make the point that they might have been chased out of Sudan by Saudi Arabia and the US they were not leaving with their tails between their legs, al-Qaeda struck again: the June bombing of Khobar Towers. The Saudi authorities were at pains to implicate Shi'i militants backed by Iran in this attack, since the embarrassing truth that they had

> their very own homegrown militancy problem was inadmissible; they did not want to give the impression that there was domestic opposition to the deployment of US troops on Saudi soil" (Atwan 2008 pp168-169).

Investigative journalist, Gareth Porter concurs with this view, citing US signals intelligence (SIGINT) intercepts revealing conversations between Saudi central government officials, including the interior minister, Prince Najaf, and officials including the governor in the Eastern Province indicating a cover-up. When FBI agents arrived on 26 June the Saudis had already begun bulldozing the bomb site. FBI special agent Scott Erskine threatened to get the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, in order to stop the demolition.

> "The Saudi regime steered the FBI investigation toward Iran and its Saudi Shi'a allies with the apparent intention of keeping U.S. officials away from a trail of evidence that would have led to Osama bin Laden and a complex set of ties between the regime and the Saudi terrorist organiser" (Porter 2009a).

Moreover, the FBI director, Louis Freeh, was informed not to expect further information on the Riyadh bombing. That case was dropped. No investigation into possible links between the two bombings was carried out (Porter 2009c). According to one former FBI official, Freeh had been convinced of Iranian involvement by Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Ambassador, who he frequently met in the latter's Virginia residence (Porter 2009a). According to Freeh:

> **"…**Mr. Clinton and his national security adviser, Sandy Berger, had no interest in confronting the fact that Iran had blown up the Towers. This is astounding, considering that the Saudi Security Service had arrested six of the bombers after the attack. As FBI agents sifted through the remains of Building 131 in 115-degree heat, the bombers admitted they had been

> trained by the Iranian external security service (IRGC) in the Beka Valley, and received their passports at the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, along with $250,000 cash for the operation from IRGC Gen. Ahmad Sharifi" (Freeh 2006).

The Mabahith (secret police) claimed to have intelligence linking the bombing to Saudi Hizballah and was arresting its members. However, a declassified report from July 1996 reveals CIA suspicions about the Mabahith who had "not shown U.S. officials their evidence…nor provided many details on their investigation." According to Ray Mislock, leader of the National Security Division of the FBI's Washington Field Office, the Saudis refused to allow the FBI access to telephone records for the area or to interview witnesses, claiming "It's our responsibility. We'll do the interviews." Porter alleges these interviews never happened (Porter 2009a).

According to Mousavian and Shahidsaless, the Saudi's were playing a double game, steering the American's towards an Iranian connection, while reportedly reassuring Iran it was dissatisfied with the US implication of Iran (2014 p250), in order to hide the Kingdom's problem with Salafi-jihadists.

The CIA's Bin Laden Unit and the FBI's I-49 unit, also investigating Bin Laden, were excluded from the Khobar investigation. The Bin Laden Unit collated its own intelligence into a document indicating Al-Qaida was planning to follow-up its November 1995 Riyadh bombing with another in Saudi Arabia in 1996. The Unit's former chief, Michael Scheuer, says:

> "One of the places mentioned in the memo was Khobar. [Al-Qaida] were moving explosives from Port Said through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea and to Yemen, then infiltrating them across the border with Saudi Arabia."

Their intelligence indicated that in January 1996, Bin Laden went to Doha, Qatar, to arrange transportation of 20 tonnes of C4 explosives from Poland to Qatar, of which two tonnes went to Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Bin Laden had discussed attacks against US targets in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia; specifically around the cities of Dammam, Dhahran and Khobar. FBI investigators were unable to account for how the bombers obtained 5,000lbs of explosives. Furthermore, Scheuer says the Riyadh and Khobar bombers followed similar modus operandi, parking their VBIEDs perpendicular to the targeted buildings rather than parallel, which would have caused them to collapse (Porter 2009a; 2009c).

One former FBI official explained to Gareth Porter (2009c), the Khobar bombing was different from the Riyadh bombing, occurring in the predominately Shia, Eastern Province. In fact, Khobar was predominantly Sunni and the Dammam-Dhahran-Khobar triangle was home to many Afghan-Arab veterans. Indeed, the Saudi, Sunni opposition group Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia (MIRA) and Al-Quds al-Arabiyya newspaper reported six Afghan veterans from Al Thoqba near Khobar had confessed, under torture, to the bombings. Dr Saad al-Faqih of the MIRA told the New York Times, these suspects "like the group that carried out the bombing in Riyadh last year, this new group is composed of young men who received training or spent time in Afghanistan". They were "native Saudis, who are all Sunni Muslims with no outside connections to either Iran or Iraq." Moreover, Saudi officials told the New York Times in August there was evidence suggesting the Riyadh and Khobar bombings were linked, contradicting the official story:

> "Our mistake was to think that the first bombing was an isolated case. It now seems it was not an isolated case. There is an organization of violent

> opponents whose members are loosely connected, organized in semi-independent cells like other violent fundamentalist movements in the Arab world" (Ibrahim 1996).

According to Scheuer, Winston Wiley, head of the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Center, showed him a single intercept transcript from Iran mentioning Khobar Towers. This was insufficient evidence for Scheuer. However, the Khobar bombing had already been attributed to Saudi Hizballah. Evidence to the contrary was dismissed.

In October 1996 the FBI received summary confessions from the Mabahith from unnamed Shia suspects, of how they belonged to Saudi Hizballah and were directed by Iran to bomb Khobar Towers. The Department of Justice (DoJ) judged the confessions inadmissible in court, almost certainly obtained under torture. The FBI was finally allowed to observe eight Shia suspects being interrogated by the Mabahith in November 1998, outlining the alleged plot sponsored by Iran. Again, the DoJ refused to indict the men on grounds of torture. In January 2001, FBI director Freeh convinced the incoming President Bush, Iran was responsible. The alleged bombers were finally indicted on 21 June 2001 (Porter 2009a; 2009b; 2009c; 2009d).

In May 1998 Saudi Interior Minister, Prince Nayef, told Kuwaiti newspaper, Al-Rai Al-Aam, the Khobar bombing "was executed by Saudi hands"; "no foreign party had any role in it", seemingly ruling out the implication of Iran and Lebanese Hizballah (Daiszewski 1998).

In hindsight, former US Defense Secretary, William Perry, now believes Bin Laden rather than Hizballah and Iran were responsible for the bombing:

> "I believe that the Khobar Tower bombing was probably masterminded by Osama bin Laden. I can't be sure of that, but in retrospect, that's what I believe. At the time, he was not a suspect. At the time...all of the evidence was pointing to Iran" (UPI 2007).

Perry admits the Clinton administration, during its first term, was not as concerned about Bin Laden as it ought to have been in retrospect (UPI 2007). Similarly, former Secretary of State, Warren Christopher recalls "there was never any adequate proof" Iran was involved (Leverett and Leverett 2013 p116).

While the NSA had intelligence linking the bombings to Bin Laden (Aid 2013 pp96-97), the FBI suspected the attack was sponsored by Iran; a theory the Saudi's discouraged, according to Perry. The evidence was too weak to convince Clinton or Perry that strikes against Iran were justified (UPI 2007). Despite this absence of any clear evidence or motive, the Clinton administration still sent a message to President Khatami via Sultan Qaboos of Oman, accusing Iran of involvement (Jaudeau 2009; Leverett and Leverett 2013 p116). The letter stated:

> "The United States government has received credible evidence that members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), along with members of Lebanese and Saudi Hizballah, were directly involved in the planning and execution of the terrorist bombing in Saudi Arabia of the Khobar Towers military residential complex on June 25, 1996" (Clinton 1999).

According to Omani Foreign Minister, Yusuf bin Allawi, Khatami said "Iran had nothing to do with bombing Khobar." Khatami maintains "the charge in this message was untrue. I could not accept it." Iran blames Al-Qaida for the attack (Jaudeau 2009). The Iranian replied, adamantly denying responsibility:

> "The allegations contained in the message attributed to President Clinton are inaccurate and unacceptable. The Islamic Republic of Iran views the recurrence of such unfounded allegations in the gravest terms.
>
> Reliable investigations and serious scrutiny leave no doubt that this allegation, which has been repeated on several earlier occasions is solely based on inaccurate and biased information. No agency of or entity connected with the Islamic Republic of Iran had any part, whatsoever, in the planning, logistics or execution of the said incident. Such allegations are fabricated solely by those whose illegitimate objectives are jeopardized by stability and security in the region" (Iran 1999).

According to LaFree et al: "The GTD currently attributes responsibility for this attack to Saudi Hezbollah, but it is clear that we may never know with absolute certainty" (2014 p75). The 9/11 Commission (2011 p60) suggests both the Shia militant organization, Hizballah, and Al-Qaida may have been involved. In summary there is insufficient evidence to conclude this was, or was not an Al-Qaida operation, but it remains a possibility.

C4 LAX Plot (foiled)

The plot to bomb Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) planned for the turn of the millennium, was conceived by a group of Algerian immigrants in Canada, led by Ahmed Ressam. However, they received explosives training at Al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan in 1998, and were assisted by Bin Laden's lieutenant, Abu Zubaydah. Moreover, he pledged allegiance to Al-Qaida who provided $12,000 towards the plot and some hexamine (used in RDX explosives). Ressam's car was searched at Port Angeles, Washington, and 59kg

of explosives discovered on 14 December 1999. He was arrested (Bergen 2001 pp139-142; Burke 2007 ch13).

> "Convicted plotter Ahmed Ressam has told the FBI that he conceived the idea to attack Los Angeles International Airport himself, but that Bin Ladin lieutenant Abu Zubaydah encouraged him and helped facilitate the operation. Ressam also said that in 1998 Abu Zubaydah was planning his own US attack" (DNI 2001).

US intelligence indicted that "after US missile strikes on his base in Afghanistan in 1998, Bin Ladin told followers he wanted to retaliate in Washington…". This intention to perpetrate attacks on American territory was evident from the thwarted 'Millennium plot' to attack LA International Airport. According to FBI interviews, Ahmed Rassam claimed he conceived the attacks facilitated by Al-Qaida's Abu Zubaydah who was also planning attacks in the US.

C5 Ahmed Shah Massoud

Date:	**Target/Location:**	
10 Sept 2001	Ahmed Shah Massoud, Afghanistan	
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD	Taliban	N
RAND RDWTI	Unknown	
CPOST	Not included	

There is little doubt that Ahmed Shah Massoud's assassination was an Al-Qaida operation given its timing, one day before the attacks of September 11 2001. Massoud, leader of the Taliban's rival Northern Alliance, was killed by suicide bombers posing as Television journalists. The supposed interview was arranged by Zawahiri who forged a letter from the Islamic Observation Centre in London (Wright 2006 pp337, 354).

C6 Mombasa Attacks, November 2002

Date:	**Target/Location:**
28 Nov 2002	757 airliner & Paradise Hotel, Mombasa, Kenya

Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD	Al-Qaida (suspected) Subgroup: Army of Palestine	N
RAND RDWTI	Al-Qaida	Y
CPOST	Army of Palestine Campaign: Al Qaeda vs. U.S. & Allies	Y

The data on the Mombasa attacks has been altered from uncertain to certain, based on the following: Mossad had vague intelligence that Al-Qaida had undertaken reconnaissance in Kenya and may be planning an attack in Mombasa. In mid-November the German and Australian governments also issued warnings terrorists may be planning attacks in Mombasa (AFP 2002a; BBC 2002a). The Mombasa attacks were organized by Fazul Abdullah Mohammad (aka Fadil Harun, Abdul Karim), who was previously indicted in connection with the 1998 Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and listed on the US international terrorist watch list; 'TIPOFF' (Fighel 2014 p418). Fazul returned to Kenya around January 2001 (Lahoud 2012 p26).

Born on the Comoros Islands (between Mozambique and Madagascar), Fazul attended a Salafi-jihadist Madrassa in Pakistan before joining Al-Qaida in Afghanistan. Fazul subsequently moved to Kenya where, in 1994, he moved in with and became secretary for Al-Qaida lieutenant, Wadih el-Hage. Wadih el-Hage was convicted of involvement in the 1998 Embassy Bombings in May 2001 (Fighel 2014 p418; Zill 2001). In 2001 Fazul travelled to Liberia and Sierra Leone with Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani in order to buy "blood diamonds" for Al-Qaida to use as a form of currency (Hill 2002).

Ghailani was detained in Pakistan in July 2004 and 'rendered' to the CIA, and in 2007 was convicted of using explosives to damage or destroy American property in the Embassy Bombings (BBC 2010a). He was subsequently arrested alongside Saleh Ali Nabhan in Nairobi on 12 July 2002 for credit card fraud, before escaping. Fazul returned to Kenya in August 2002 to orchestrate the Mombasa attacks from a farmhouse belonging to Al-Qaida sympathizers. He returned to Somalia several days prior to the attacks (Fighel 2014 pp418-419).

Funds for the attacks were obtained via a Sudanese Al-Qaida financier and bomb-maker, Tariq Abdullah (aka Abu Talha al-Sudani), also implicated in the 1998 Embassy Bombings (DeYoung 2007; Fighel 2014 p420). Fazul was shot dead by security forces near Mogadishu, Somalia, in June 2011 (Burke and Orr 2011).

The bomb outside the Paradise Hotel killed three Israelis and twelve Kenyans, injuring approximately 80 people. "This was the first al-Qaeda attack specifically directed against overseas Israeli targets" (Fighel 2014 p415). The suicide bombers were Kenyans identified as Harun Abdisheikh Bamusa and Fumo Muhammad. Fumo was suspected of previous involvement in the 1998 Nairobi Embassy bombing. The failed SAM strike was carried out by "al-Qaeda operatives" Saleh Ali Nabhan and Issa Osman Issa (also indicted in the Embassy case), and Abdul Malik (Fighel 2014 p420; Hoffman 2014b p153). One missile failed to explode. Its serial number (9M32M, 04-78,041033,04-78) indicated it was from the same batch, manufactured in 1973, as a missile launcher found outside Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia in May 2002, allegedly fired by a Sudanese national linked to Al-Qaida, Abu Huzaifa, at a US military aircraft; missing its target (Fighel 2014 pp421-422; MacFarquhar 2002).

The perpetrators of the Mombasa SAM strike fled to the Kenyan island of Lamu, before escaping to Somalia by boat. Nabhan was killed by US Special Forces in

September 2009, alongside Al-Shabab militants affiliated with Al-Qaida, in Barawe, Somalia (Gettleman and Schmitt 2009). (Fighel 2014 p422; Gettleman and Schmitt 2009). According to Fighel:

> "The Mombasa attack was planned and executed as a top-down al-Qaeda-led operation developed by a core of senior professionals and experienced operatives who had been involved in past terror attacks" (Fighel 2014 p426).

C7 Madrid, March 2004

Date:	**Target/Location:**	
11 March 2004	Madrid Trains, Spain	
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD	Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigade (suspected)	Y
RAND RDWTI	Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigade	Y

The Madrid train bombings were more than "a predominately local conspiracy" (Celso 2014 p89). According to Byman, the Madrid bombers had "direct links to Al-Qaeda" (2015 p43). Indeed, according to Steinberg, major jihadist plots in Europe from 2001 to 2007 indicate "the perpetrators had contact with larger organizations or backers with terrorist experience. …There are no cells in Europe that plan, organize, and carry out attacks altogether autonomously. The impression that they exist is probably due mainly to the individual group's professionalism in concealing their external contacts, making it more difficult for European security services to uncover these links" (Steinberg 2007 p7).

The cell which committed the Madrid train bombings was formed in Spain 1994 by Abu Musab al-Suri (aka Mustafa Setmarian Nasar) and Anwar Adnan Mohamed Saleh. Saleh went to Pakistan in 1995 and Abu Musab al-Suri moved to

London to work with Abu Qatada on the GIA's *Al-Ansar* magazine, leaving Abu Dahdah (aka Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas) as cell leader. Abu Dahdah had "direct links" to Muhammad Atta's Hamburg cell responsible for 9/11. In 2001 Atta travelled to Spain twice meeting Al-Qaida facilitator Ramzi Binalshibh between 8 and 19 July. Spain's security forces believe this meeting was facilitated by Amer Azizi (aka Othman al-Andalusi, Jaffar al-Maghrebi, Othman al-Faruq, Othman Ilyas) on behalf of the Dahdah cell. According to Reinares, Dahdah had prior knowledge that attacks on the US mainland were in preparation (Reinares 2012 pp1-2; Reinares 2014 p34).

> "Among the most important of Spain's al-Qaeda elite who had contacts with the 3/11 terrorists were Syrian Abu Dadah and Moroccan Amer Azizi. Considered al-Qaeda's leader in Spain, Abu Dadah recruited key 3/11 bomber Jamal Zougam into the organization in the 1990s" (Celso 2014 p88).

Dahdah fled to Syria following 9/11 where he was arrested in 2002, extradited back to Spain and convicted in relation to September 11 (Celso 2014 p88). Azizi died in a drone-strike in north Waziristan on 1 December 2005, alongside Abu Hamza Rabia, who became commander of Al-Qaida external operations in Western Europe and North America following Abu Faraj al-Libi's capture in May 2005 (Reinares 2014 p43; Telegraph 2005). According to Celso, this confirms Azizi "had penetrated al-Qaeda Central and was heavily involved in the planning of external operations" (2014 p90).

An online series entitled *Martyrs of Maghreb al-Aqsa in the Land of the Hindu Kush*, in 2009 included an obituary of Azizi, claiming that before his death, he had "assumed the function of adjunct to the commander for external action" facilitating "the lions that came from far away with the end of preparing them to

transform the tranquillity of the crusaders into a hell" (Reinares 2012 p3; Reinares 2014 p44).

The cell's core was broken up in November 2001. Azizi, who was in Iran at the time organizing a route for jihadists in Spain to travel to Afghanistan, escaped capture. Arriving in Pakistan in late 2001, Azizi was absorbed into Al-Qaida's core. The cell was linked to Al-Qaida-central via Azizi, who facilitated the Madrid bombings. He served as an intermediary between Al-Qaida-central and the Madrid cell (Reinares 2012 pp1-2; Reinares 2014 pp34, 43). The group reassembled around members linked to the Al-Qaida affiliated Moroccan Islamist Combatant Group (GICM) (Reinares 2014 p34), particularly Mustafa Al-Maymouni, who was himself arrested in Morocco in connection with the Casablanca bombings of 2003. He was apparently replaced by his Tunisian brother-in-law, Serhane bin Abdelmajid Fakhet, under whom the cell carried out the Madrid bombings (Celso 2014 p89; Pargeter 2008 p126).

Maymouni acted as liaison between Al-Qaida, GICM and the network which perpetrated the Madrid bombings and "coordinated al-Qaeda-GMIC operations", frequently travelling between Spain and Morocco. He was in contact with the perpetrators of both the Casablanca and Madrid bombings (Celso 2014 p89).

According to an EU intelligence report an unidentified Moroccan (i.e. Azizi) "formerly acted as intermediary between Abu Faraj al-Libi and Western Europe, where he resided". Indeed, between 2002 and 2003 Azizi remained in contact with Fakhet via a shared email account. According to Western intelligence agencies, Azizi returned to Spain in late 2003, presumably to provide Al-Qaida authorization for the attack (Reinares 2012 p3; Reinares 2014 pp44-47).

> "Azizi's prominence in al-Qaeda cannot be doubted. As chief lieutenant for al-Qaeda's director of external operations Hamza Rabia, Azizi helped craft the organization's post-9/11 vexation and exhaustion strategy" (Celso 2014 p90).

Abenabi Kounja (died in Leganes) also served as a liaison between the GICM in Morocco and the Madrid network, a key contact for Maymouni and Fakhet (Celso 2014 p89). Youssef Beljad, who was arrested in Belgium eight days prior to the Madrid bombings, also served as a link between the Madrid network, the GICM and Al-Qaida in Pakistan (Celso 2014 p90).

Spanish investigators suspected links between the Casablanca and Madrid bombings, issuing an international arrest warrant for Abd al-Karim al-Mejjati, also implicated in the 2003 Riyadh bombings (BBC 2004e), attributed to Al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia (START 2016).

The discovery of an unexploded bomb linked to a mobile telephone led Spanish police to the phone shop of Moroccan immigrant, Jamal Zougam. Zougam had links to those suspected in the Casablanca bombings (Pargeter 2008 pp123-124).

Zougam had previously been under investigation by Spanish police, after his name was discovered by French police in the address book of Frenchman, David Courtailler. Courtailler once shared a flat with Zacharious Moussaoui (Ford 2004). In May 2004 he was sentenced to two years imprisonment (plus 2 years suspended), alongside another Frenchman, Ahmed Laidouni (7 years) and Algerian Mohamed Chaouki Baadache (10 years) for conspiring in terrorist enterprise (BBC 2004b).

Spanish police raided Zougam's flat in 2001 finding telephone numbers of several known militants including Syrian, Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas, aka Abu Dahdah

(Pargeter 2008 pp123-126). In August 2001 Spanish police intercepted a telephone conversation between Dahdah and Zougam in Tangiers, in which the latter indicated he had met with and offered financial support to Muhammad Fizazi. According to Spanish prosecutors, Zougam had also met Mullah Krekar, the founder of the Kurdish-Iraqi militant group Ansar al-Islam, in Norwegian exile (Ford 2004).

According to the German Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Criminal Office, BKA) Krekar's group is believed to have forged an alliance with Abu Musab az-Zarqawi in mid-2002 (Bergen 2006b p362). Moreover, Dahdah, had contacts with senior Al-Qaida members including Bin Laden (Jordán 2003).

> "Eight years after the Madrid terrorist attacks, new intelligence collected since the main judicial sentence in 2007 suggests that al-Qa`ida's senior leadership not only approved the operation, but likely helped facilitate and supervise it" (Reinares 2012 p1).

According to Reinares:

> "Both the decision to attack Spain and the mobilization of a terrorist network to accomplish this objective were top-down processes" (Reinares 2014 p51).

C8 Istanbul, November 2003

Date:	**Target/Location:**	
15 Nov 2003	Synagogues, Istanbul, Turkey	
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD	Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front (IBDA-C)	Y
RAND RDWTI	Al Qaeda	
CPOST	Al-Qaeda Central, Great Eastern Raiders Front	

In 2007 a Syrian, Luayy Sakka, was convicted of masterminding the bombings of the Neveh Shalom and Beit Yisrael synagogues in Instanbul on 15 November 2003 (attributed to the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders by the GTD); and the attacks on the British consulate and HSBC of 20 November (attributed to Al-Qaida and the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders) (START 2016; Steinberg and Holtmann 2014 p461). The two attacks were thus perpetrated by the same cell. It was apparently a joint operation between Al-Qaida-central, Abu Musab az-Zarqawi's Tawhid wal-Jihad network (which would become Al-Qaida in Iraq) and a cell including former members of the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders and Turkish Hizballah (a Sunni Islamist organization unrelated to its Lebanese namesake). Luayy Sakka acted as a liaison between the three groups. The ringleader Habib Akdaş met Osama Bin Laden and Muhammad Atef, prior to 9/11, who wanted to orchestrate an attack on Incirlik Airbase, used by the USAF, and Western or Israeli shipping at Mersin port, in Turkey. The perpetrators received explosives training in Afghanistan. On their return from Afghanistan in May 2003 they opted for the softer targets following the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Al-Qaida provided US $150,000 for the bombings (Steinberg and Holtmann 2014 pp461-471).

Sakka is believed to have joined Al-Qaida in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s and was a close confidant of Abu Zubaydah, who sent him for training at the Khalden camp in 1997. Abu Zubaydah subsequently dispatched Sakka to Turkey to establish a network. He joined Zarqawi in Herat back in Afghanistan in 1999 (Steinberg and Holtmann 2014 pp461-471).

C9 London Bombings 7/7 2005

Date: 7 July 2005	**Target/Location:** London Underground, UK		
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**	**Other Claims**
START GTD	Secret Organization of al-Qaida in Europe	Y	Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades
RAND RDWTI	Secret Organization of al-Qaida in Europe	Y	Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades
CPOST	Al-Qaida-central		
German intelligence	Rashid Rauf/Al-Qaida		

According to the Director General of MI5 (2007-2013), Jonathan Evans:

> "Over the last five years much of the command, control and inspiration for attack planning in the UK has derived from Al Qaida's remaining core leadership in the tribal areas of Pakistan" (2007).

Similarly, Bruce Reidel says:

> "Al Qaeda has made repeated efforts to orchestrate massacres in the United Kingdom, a notable success being the attacks on London's public transport system in July 2005. British security officials were at first reluctant to credit al-Qaeda's leaders with planning the attacks but changed their tune as the evidence began pointing strongly in al-Qaeda's direction" (Riedel 2010 p130).

Mohammad Sidique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer went to Pakistan between 19 November 2004 and 8 February 2005 (TSO 2006 p20). British intelligence believes it is probable they received training in Pakistan and had contact with Al-Qaida. Pakistani intelligence suggests they met Ayman az-Zawahiri in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the Afghan border, but this is

uncorroborated by British intelligence. The head of Counter Terrorism Command for the Metropolitan Police at the time, Peter Clarke, said "It is not easy to find out what happened... such information as we do have does suggest there is probably a link to al-Qaeda" (Corera 2006). According to the British government "it seems likely that they had some contact with Al Qaida figures. It is possible that Khan made his martyrdom video during this visit" (TSO 2006 p20). According to Peter Bergen "…the more you delve into the London bombings, the more they look like a classic al-Qaeda plot." He notes as key evidence the fact that Khan's martyrdom, appended by Zawahiri displayed the emblem of Al-Qaida's Al-Sahab media group:

> "Khan's appearance on the videotape strongly suggests that he met up with members of al-Qaeda's media team based on the Afghan-Pakistan border, probably in the tribal area of Waziristan" (Bergen 2006a).

The Security Service (MI5) believes Khan and Tanweer were trained in explosives and countersurveillance (Hoffman 2014a p205). Indeed, "Khan's travels and contacts in Pakistan strongly suggest an al-Qaeda role in the operation." (Bergen 2006a). The narrator on Shezhad Tanweer's martyrdom video claims the two were trained by Al-Qaida:

> "In order to remove this injustice, Shehzad began training with all his might and devotion. Together with the martyr Siddiq Khan, he received practical and intensive training in how to produce and use explosives, in the camps of Qaeda Al-Jihad" (Hoffman 2014a).

According to US officials, "Bin Laden was absolutely a detail guy. We have every reason to believe that he was aware of al-Qaeda's major plots during the planning phase, including the airline plot in 2006 and the London 7-7 attacks"; and "We

believe he was aware of these plots ahead of time." Moreover, Western intelligence, including that gleaned from Abbottabad, suggests he was in communication with Al-Qaida jihadists, remaining aware of and "immersed in operational details" of Al-Qaida plots at that time. According to the American officials the London bombings were "the last successful operation Osama bin Laden oversaw" before his death (Hosenball 2011).

Indeed, MI5 and MI6 now believe Rashid Rauf, a British citizen linked to Al-Qaida-central, who directed the 'Liquid Bomb Plot' (0) from Pakistan also acted as "facilitator" to the 7/7 bombings. Rauf is believed to have met liquid bomb plotters, Assad Sarwar and Abdulla Ali in Pakistan in 2003 (Cobain and Norton-Taylor 2009). US intelligence believes Rauf had connections with Ayman az-Zawahiri (Telegraph 2008). The evidence suggests that the 7/7 bombers were not "self-starters" fighting "leaderless jihad" as initially speculated, but were directed by Al-Qaida:

> "Recent British trials in fact indicate that the majority of major terrorist plots formulated in the United Kingdom in the post-9/11 era were at least partly directed by major al-Qa`ida figures in the Afghanistan and Pakistan border region. Indeed, without the training supplied by al-Qa`ida members, it is likely that few of these plots would ever have become viable. …each of the major terrorist plots affecting the United Kingdom since the 9/11 attacks in the United States have had ties back to al-Qa`ida's central organization in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Brandon 2009 p10).

According to Hoffman:

> "…it has now been established incontrovertibly that MSK and Tanweer were recruited by a fellow British national of Pakistani descent, a long-time al-Qaeda operative named Rashid Rauf" (2014a p204).

Rashid Rauf was reported to have been killed in a drone strike in November 2008, but later implicated in subsequent plots including the New York plot. US intelligence now believe he was killed in a subsequent strike (Roggio 2012).

On 16 May 2011, German police arrested Austrian citizen Maqsood Lodin, who had previously returned from Pakistan, discovering electronic documents believed to belong to Al-Qaida on his person. One document believed to have been written by Rashid Rauf for Al-Qaida-central revealed his involvement in the 7/7 bombings in recruiting and organizing explosives training for Muhammad Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer in Pakistan, serving as their contact leading up to the attacks. Khan and Tanweer travelled to Pakistan in November 2004 where they met Rauf in Faisalabad, with whom they stayed in Islamabad. The three then met with "Haji", believed to be Abu Ubaidah al-Masri by American intelligence, in Pakistan's tribal zone. Ubaidah organized explosives training from Marwan Suri using hydrogen peroxide with hexamine peroxide detonators. According to the document, the pair were "ready for martyrdom operations". Rauf also helped the pair film their martyrdom videos. The potential targets were the London Underground, the Bank of England and G8 summit in Gleneagles. Khan and Tanweer recruited Germaine Lindsey and Hasib Hussain in Britain. Rauf reports the four perpetrators surveilled the Bank of England and Underground in London in June 2005 before selecting the latter target (Robertson *et al.* 2012a; 2012b). Transcripts from the inquest into the 7/7 bombings revealed calls from public telephones in Pakistan to Khan, particularly from an unidentified person in

Rawalpindi between 9 May and 2 July 2005 (Hallett 2011; Inquest 2011 p20-23). This is believed to have been Rashid Rauf (Robertson *et al.* 2012a).

In a video broadcast by Al-Jazeera on 19 September 2005, Zawahiri claimed responsibility on behalf of Al-Qaida for the 7/7 bombings:

> "London's blessed raid is one of the raids which Jama'at Qa'idat al-Jihad was honoured to launch.... In the Wills of the hero brothers, the knights of monotheism, may God have mercy on them, make paradise their final abode and accept their good deeds...." (Hoffman 2014a; TSO 2006 p21).

A US counterterrorism official told Peter Bergen "Zawahiri does not take credit for things that he hasn't done" (Bergen 2006a).

C9.1 Botched 21 July 2005 Bombings

Date:	**Target/Location:**	
21 July 2005	London Underground, UK	
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD	Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades	Y
RAND RDWTI	Unknown	Y
MI5/MI6	Rashid Rauf	
German police	Al-Qaida	

Since Richard Reid's failed suicide bombing on American Airlines Flight 63 from Paris to Miami on 22 December 2001 is counted as an unsuccessful suicide attack by the GTD, the data has been altered such that the 21 July bombings are counted as unsuccessful suicide attacks, rather than successful non-suicide attacks since they failed to seriously injure anyone. This makes the data more consistent since both Richard Reid and the 21/7 bombers all intended to die. Either all or none of these 5 incidents should be counted as suicide bombings since all their bombs failed to detonate. They are therefore counted as suicide attacks.

The Al-Qaida document seized from Maqsood Lodin reveals Rauf was similarly involved in the second failed attempt to bomb the London Underground on 21 July 2005. Rauf met Muktar Said Ibrahim and two associates in Pakistan in December 2004 and again "Haji" (believed to be Abu Ubaidah al-Masri). His associates were killed in a bomb test while training in Pakistan. Rauf again helped record Ibrahim's *martyrdom* video *(Wasiya).* Rauf wrote of a lack of communication by Ibrahim, inadequate training due to visa constraints and a less competent explosives instructor than Khan and Tanweer, contributing to the plot's failure. The attack went ahead without his knowledge until after the fact (Robertson *et al.* 2012a).

C10 The Liquid Bomb Plot 2006 (foiled)

According to Bruce Reidel and Guido Steinberg, the Liquid Bomb Plot to blow up several transatlantic airliners mid-flight en route from the UK to the US and Canada was masterminded by Abu Ubaida al-Masri in Afghanistan/Pakistan (Cruickshank 2014 p224; Riedel 2010 p131; Steinberg 2007 p7).

The conspirators planned to smuggle liquid explosives inside soft-drink bottles and modified batteries for detonators inside disposable cameras on-board the aircraft, construct the bombs and detonate them in-flight (Cruickshank 2014 pp225, 230). However, the plotters were under surveillance by British police and the Security Service (MI5). According to Reidel: "The likely date for the attack was the five-year anniversary of 9/11, which would also be just a few weeks before the U.S. congressional elections" (2010 p131).

Lieutenant General Michael Maples, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) told a Senate Committee the conspirators were "an al-Qaida cell, directed by al-Qaida leadership in Pakistan" (Cruickshank 2014 p227). As with the London

Bombings, Rashid Rauf (C9) provided the plotter's link with Al-Qaida-central. Indeed, Rauf met the ringleader of the plot Abdullah Ahmed Ali in Pakistan in 2004. He also arranged training for bomb-maker Assad Sarwar and other cell members between 2005 and 2006. Moreover, Rauf was in constant correspondence with the cell in Britain. In total, twelve British Muslims were charged with conspiracy to murder (Cruickshank 2014 pp228-232).

> "A-Qaida is pursuing its old strategy of calling for the withdrawal of Western powers from the Arab and Islamic world and underscoring this demand with spectacular terrorist attacks in the US and Europe" (Steinberg 2007 p3).

C11 Benazir Bhutto, December 2007

Date:	**Target/Location:**	
27 Dec 2007	Benazir Bhutto, Rawalpindi, Pakistan	
Source	**Attribution**	**Claimed Responsibility**
START GTD	Al-Qaida/Lashkar-i-Jhangvi	Y
RAND RDWTI	Al-Qaida	
MI5/MI6	Al-Qaida/Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan	

According to Riedel: "Al-Qaeda was probably also involved in the murder of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto in late 2007" (2010 p125). The GTD attributes the assassination to Al-Qaida and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, but deems the perpetrator uncertain (START 2016). As such there is insufficient evidence to include it in the data.

Al-Qaida's military commander Mustafa Abu al Yazid (aka Saeed al-Masri) claimed responsibility for Bhutto's assassination saying: "We terminated the most precious American asset which vowed to defeat [the] *mujahedeen*". It is believed Zawahiri may have ordered the attack, which was carried out by Lashkar-i-

Jhangvi (Shahzad 2007). The Pakistani government, however, blamed Baitullah Mehsud's Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Mehsud denied responsibility claiming it was "government propaganda" (BBC 2013).

Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has accused elements within the Pakistani government, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence agency, of colluding in her assassination (India Today 2008). The United Nations concluded that security arrangements for Mrs Bhutto were inadequate and the investigation into her death was botched, either deliberately or because of officials' "uncertainty" over whether the intelligence agencies were involved and "how vigorously they ought to pursue actions that they knew, as professionals, they should have taken" (UN 2010).

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