



Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the
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The “Global Campaign Against Aggression”: The Supreme Council of Global Jihad?

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PRISM web site is -- www.e-prism.org

Introduction

In April 28th 2003, a forum of 225 Islamist clerics, scholars, and businessmen established in Makkah/Saudi Arabia a new body of supporters of global Jihad against the United States and the “Crusader” West. They opened a special web site – www.maac.ws -- in both Arabic and English, and published their existence through the Al-Jazirah TV channel. The new forum was meant to be the first global Islamist reaction to the American war against Iraq.

Out of the 225 original founders, 99 are Saudis, 15 are from Australia, 13 are Yemenis, 10 are Pakistanis, 10 are Moroccans, 7 are Kenyans, 5 are Mauritians, 4 are Nigerians, 4 are Kuwaitis, and two are from the United States. Five of the founders are Saudi women. Since the announcement, as to May 1st 2003, 25 scholars joined the founders, 18 of them are Egyptians, including three senior clerics of Al-Azhar, and one Palestinian.

The secretary General of the forum is the known Saudi Dr. Safar al-Hawali, who is regarded by many scholars as one of the main mentors of Osamah bin Laden. The campaign is not limited by time, and according to its founders “The Campaign will continue as long as necessary to achieve its goals. Any projects or committees issuing from it will only be endorsed or developed after consultation with and study by the thinkers and scholars of the Islamic World.”

The web site of the new forum (IP 198.169.127.203) is registered through Innovation Place, 15 Innovation Blvd. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan CANADA, S7N 2X8, Tel. (306) 933-9825. The servers are: ns1.amanah.net and ns2.amanah.net.

Following is the original founding declaration: ¹

MAKKAH ANTI-AGGRESSION CAMPAIGN

The Muslim Ummah has been subjected to vicious aggression at the hands of the forces of tyranny and oppression, especially the Zionists and the American administration led by right-wing extremist, that are working to expand their control over nations and peoples, loot their resources, to destroy their will, and to change their educational curricula and social system.

This aggression is comprehensive in nature and has taken the form of falsifying facts, ridiculing Islamic values, attacking the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad Allah's blessing and peace be upon him, deceptive media campaigns, and economic extortion. One of the worst forms it has taken has been armed attacks on peaceful countries and peoples such as the American and British invasions we have seen in Iraq and Afghanistan which have destroyed industrial facilities and infrastructure, killed women, children and the elderly, and destroyed cities over the heads of their occupants in an insult to the concept of human dignity which are protected by all laws and religions, and in violation of treaties and conventions. This is besides what the Zionists are doing through occupying Palestine, expelling unbending people infringing their rights, and defiling Islamic holy places.

This sinful aggression has caused humanity to revert to the hateful days of colonialism when the imperial states violated the inviolability of weak peoples - exploiting their resources and fiddling with their values - when the law of jungle reigned supreme.

In rejection of this aggression the signatories to this Declaration summoned to proclaim **(The Global Anti-Aggression Campaign)**, as a framework in which to unite the efforts of members of the Ummah in alerting the community concerning its right to self-defense and resistance to the aggression of its enemies in all possible legitimate and effective means.

The founding of this campaign shall be in accordance with the instructions of Allah and His Messenger - peace and blessing be upon him - to cooperate in righteousness and piety, and to come to the aid of the oppressed and repel aggressors. The goals of the campaign are as follows:

1. To work to alert the Ummah concerning the plans of its enemies, calling on the community to protect its identity.
2. To repel the aggression of our enemies with all possible legitimate means.
3. To reawaken the Islamic spirit among Muslims to serve their Faith and nation, and to defend their rights.
4. To clarify the true image of Islam, to explain the humanitarian and ethical aspects of its laws, and to expose the falsehood of the campaigns of prejudice against Islam.
5. To work for cooperation and coordination between the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in service to Muslim causes throughout the Islamic World.
6. To work for active cooperation among peoples, organizations, and international bodies opposed to the oppression and domination of peoples and their resources.

The Global Anti-Aggression Campaign is a non-governmental, independent, peaceful, educational campaign of volunteers. Participation is open to all members of the Ummah.

We call on all peoples, governments, supporters of truth and justice, and friends of peace to cooperate with the campaign to reject this aggression, and to work together to spread the values of truth and justice.

¹ See on-line in: <http://www.maac.ws/index.cfm?Lang=EN>

Global Jihad by legitimate means or terrorist ones?

By reading the above English translation of the official announcement, it seems that the founders are attempting at establishing a non-violent global front against what they primarily perceive as Western cultural imperialism, led by the Jewish-American alliance. The key element, as stated by them is: To repel the aggression of our enemies with all possible legitimate means. So far it looks as a political gathering, which is trying to unite Islamic Anti-Western efforts, on the background of the American-led efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The basic point of view, which is not new, is the nature of self-defense of the Islamic reaction.

But, the web site includes in its Arabic section, a letter that was not presented in English so far, written by the secretary general, Dr. Safar al-Hawali.² In his letter Hawali returns to the typical language of radical Islamist scholars.

His main theme is that the Islamic nation should acknowledge the fact that they are facing a global infidel campaign (*al-batil*), which can never meet or compromise with the true faith (*al-haqq*). The last "Crusader campaign" should wake the Islamic nation up from its indifference and cause it "uprise to resist its enemy, either voluntarily or by force."

The voluntary way is that of the "secured and victorious community," – *Al-Ta'ifah al-Mansourah* – in the usual Islamic terms, those who have never believed in the Western values, where "the Crusader spirit lies under the sand of the Humanist slogans." The enforced way is through the Western anti-Islamic campaign, where "the enemy revealed its masks and uncovered its beastly teeth, destroying every doubt and eliminating every optimism. Hence, they found themselves in one line with their brothers from the first group, who believe that this nation has no glory or honor but by investing their soul, their property, and their words in favor of Allah." According to Al-Hawali, this global campaign is not a target but a means "to achieve better means." The campaign should serve also as a platform for unity.

The list of the founders of the new forum includes several prominent clerics and scholars who belong to the Saudi Islamist opposition, such as Ibrahim al-Harithy, Sheikh Salman al-Awdah, the brothers `Awadh and `Aeidh al-Qarni, or Dr. Abdallah al-Shanqiti. Many of the Saudi founders are university lecturers, businessmen, and lawyers, who could very well represent the elite of the Saudi society. The same with the Yemeni and Egyptian founders. A new element to note here are 21 Iraqi clerics and scholars, among them several Shi`is, who could join such an initiative only following the release of Iraq from Saddam Hussein by "the American enemy." Another issue to note is the absence, so far, of persons from Jordan, Algeria, Syria, and Lebanon, and the very few from the Gulf States.

Some of the interesting persons are Islamic figures from Western countries. The most prominent phenomenon, though not surprising, is the dominancy of the Arab origin of the vast majority of them. 15 of the founders are from Australia, and 9 of these are Imams in Australian mosques. Only one of the founders is from the United Kingdom, and he is not a known figure there. There is no one from the quite large Saudi Islamic opposition in London, what might hint for us that there is no linkage between these two parts of this opposition. There are two Americans of Arab origin, quite known figures – Dr. Ahmad Sharbini a lecturer in the American Open University in Colorado, of Egyptian origin, and Sheikh Walid Manisi, the Imam of the mosque in that university. The Belgian "representative" is quite known, Sheikh Muhammad al-Tijkani, of

Moroccan origin. Another “European” is Sheikh Ahmad Abu Laban from Denmark. It should be noted that there are no Islamists from France and Germany.

In any case, the core of the list of founders is of persons who are known for supporting the anti-Western Islamist struggle of the school of global Jihad. Some of them are very popular among the generation of young supporters of Al-Qa`idah in the Arab world.

² <http://www.maac.ws/index.cfm?fuseaction=content&contentid=8&categoryID=9&lang=AR>

Conclusion

The combination of the letter of al-Hawali, in addition to his known positions, and the list of founders where the Saudi oppositionist element is dominant, seems to be a potential of a supreme council to back politically and ideologically a global struggle, either against the West and its presence in the Muslim world, or the Muslim governments that cooperate with the United States. It might mark also a further step in the march of the Saudi Islamist opposition, which seems to act with growing freedom in the kingdom, with almost no steps taken by the authorities to limit it, not to mention to block it. It is difficult to say whether it is a result of weakness, or part of the double game the Saudi regime is playing.

The new forum might also mark a further step in establishing the united Salafi-Jihadi trend in radical Islam, that will use the tremendous sympathy and support it gained through Al-Qa`idah operations. It might be premature, but it might also be an attempt to promote a political-ideological anti-Western struggle, as a result of the operational difficulties of Al-Qa`idah to launch attacks against Western target, as was expected from it following the war in Iraq.

In any case, the fact that this global forum is led by Dr. Safar al-Hawali should be worrying and a test case for assessing the new body. Hawali is known also for his writings about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict³, and the endless effort to link between the various Islamist fronts.

³ *In March 2003 he published a new book on the Palestinian Intifadah, following former books. See Safar al-Hawali, Al-Intifadah wal-Tatar al-Judud (The new Tatars). See on-line in:*
<http://www.saaid.net/Warathah/safar/sf19.pdf>