



The Islamic Imagery Project

*Visual Motifs in Jihadi
Internet Propaganda*



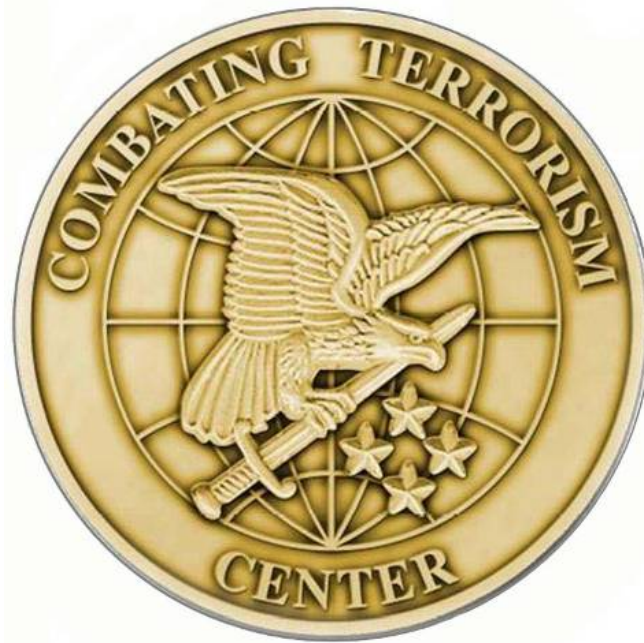
The Combating Terrorism Center
Department of Social Sciences
United States Military Academy



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Project:

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Propaganda*



Combating Terrorism Center
Department of Social Sciences
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Foreword

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Fred Barnard once said that “One picture is worth a thousand words,” summarizing the reason why we focus on pictures as much as words when we communicate with one another. As many people grapple with how to communicate effectively with the Islamic world, understanding the pictures, motifs, and images and, more importantly, the emotions that they evoke is essential. The Combating Terrorism Center at the United States Military Academy is pleased to provide this report on *Visual Motifs in Jihadi Internet Propaganda*. This report is the first comprehensive cataloging of the most important and recurring images used in violent jihadi literature, websites, and propaganda. These images can have very different meanings in different cultural contexts, and it is essential for students, teachers, and policy makers to have a way to understand the meaning of these images.

This project supports the mission of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, which is to understand better the foreign and domestic terrorist threats to security, to educate leaders who will have responsibilities to counter terrorism, and to provide policy analysis and assistance to leaders dealing with the current and future terrorist threat. The Combating Terrorism Center is part of the Department of Social Sciences of the U.S. Military Academy and is closely integrated with the instruction for cadets and the Academy’s outreach and support of projects to educate and inform current and future leaders.

The work for this project was done by the team of faculty members in the Combating Terrorism Center, led by Ms. Lianne Kennedy-Boudali. She has done a tremendous job in compiling, cataloging, and indexing this information to put it in a usable form for individuals with limited background in this area. This project would not have been possible without the efforts of Mr. Jarret Brachman, Mr. Afshon Ostovar, and Mr. Chris Hefflefinger. In addition to this product, the images and analysis are available at: <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery.asp>. Additional questions about the project can be directed to Ms. Kennedy-Boudali at lianne.kennedy@usma.edu.



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The opinions expressed in this report are those of individual contributors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Military Academy or any other agency of the U.S. government.

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Preface

Afshon P. Ostovar

The study of Islamic imagery has heretofore been the exclusive domain of art historians and museum curators, with pre-modern art being the central area of interest. Thus, there is a palpable lack of information on modern imagery associated with political Islam, especially imagery that is produced by radical, and often violent, Muslim groups. Nowhere is the dearth of critical research more apparent than in the study of jihadi organizations. These organizations have had a brief but prolific history in the production and distribution of visual propaganda, and have arguably created their own distinct genre of Internet-based Islamic imagery. While the tragic events of September 11 highlighted the importance of understanding the ideology and methods of jihadi groups, the process of achieving this understanding is still at the early stages, and the remaining areas of ignorance are profound.

The current study on jihadi imagery, the first of its kind, is an important step in this process. Herein, visual propaganda is considered to be more than just a host for textual messages; rather it is treated as an expressive medium unto itself—one which communicates ideas just as effectively, and sometimes as explicitly, as the written word. We regard jihadi imagery to be a primary vehicle for the communication and diffusion of jihadi ideas, and an essential tool utilized by radical ideologues, terrorist organizations, and sympathetic propagandists, which plays to the particular religious and cultural experiences of their audience. Therefore, understanding how these images work, what ideas they convey, why they are employed, and what responses they may elicit, is vital to our struggle against the influence of jihadi organizations and the violence they create.

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Introduction

Jarret Brachman and Lianne Kennedy Boudali

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Since 2001, the United States and its allies have catalyzed two significant changes in the way the jihadi movement learns, communicates, and recruits. First, by eliminating the extensive network of al-Qa'ida training camps in Afghanistan, the United States has forced jihadist terrorist groups to find new ways to transfer knowledge to their membership. Second, by killing or capturing two-thirds of al-Qa'ida's senior leadership, the United States has drastically undermined the jihadi movement's ability to formulate and communicate its strategic vision.

In the face of such challenges, the Salafi jihadi movement has adapted, finding new ways to keep the movement driving forward. Numerous analysts have recognized that jihadi websites are rapidly proliferating. The number of radical Islamic websites has increased exponentially, providing religious instruction and operational training; indeed, these websites have created a virtual global community.

The Internet is providing a convenient way for jihadist to pass tactical and operational level instruction of the kind that they had been delivering in the Afghan training camps. More importantly, it allows them to paint a picture of their objectives, their enemies, and their strategy using visual imagery. This imagery is a sophisticated mix of graphics and photographs that reference architecture, religious symbols, historical events, and more.

Visual motifs accomplish several objectives for jihadi propagandists. First, they create a mental conception of reality for their audiences. The use of carefully edited images evokes existing emotional or historical memories, eliciting an emotional response that may be conscious or subconscious. Often, these motifs tap into deeply held beliefs or intersubjective understandings within a public as a means of communicating an idea.

Importantly, Constructivist theory teaches that there is no unmediated knowledge of reality. There are only symbolized, constructed understandings of reality, mediated through language and images. Each viewer of this propaganda, therefore, brings with him/her a unique set of experiences and knowledge, which helps to cognitively frame the messages being promulgated in the images.

Secondly, they help the author, or propagandist, communicate a message, which is often a visual argument *for* something or *against* something. Texts and language, including imagery, provide interactive ways for jihadis to engage the ideology itself. The notion of resonance, the ways in which a message harmonizes with existing understandings of an audience, is the outcome of this dialectical process.

The following report identifies recurring themes within a discrete sample of radical Islamic imagery obtained over the course of the past several years by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. These patterns, or motifs as we call them, pervade most of these radical jihadi websites.

For the purposes of this assessment, the Combating Terrorism Center identified one-hundred motifs that commonly occur in jihadi propaganda. The CTC then developed a glossary entry for each of these motifs, and each entry is grounded in a deep reading of Islamic history, culture, language and experience.

This report is a “first cut” at a topic that merits much more time and attention, although we have reached a number of preliminary conclusions.

It is our belief that these images speak for themselves, quite literally. In most cases, one does not need to be able to read any of the text within the images to understand the broad meanings conveyed by the propagandists. The motifs may have a significant impact on people who are not literate in Arabic so long as they possess a cultural frame of reference that allows them to decode the components of the images.

Many of the photographic images that are used by jihadi propagandists were not originally created by the propagandists; rather they have been lifted from other websites and various media sources. The propagandists have re-appropriated these images for their own purposes, both literally and figuratively, and the only modification may be the addition of a terrorist logo, or the name of a city, or individual. In short, originality and authorship do not matter beyond the desire for a particular group to show that it is participating in the global jihad.

Although the photographic images are fairly contemporary, the motifs are often based on ancient traditions and historical cultural references. There is a certain timelessness to these motifs, which reflects the authors’ desire to portray their extreme interpretation of Salafi thought as a logical refinement of traditional Islamic thought. The propagandists use easily recognized symbols as a basis for creating new motifs that support a radicalized interpretation of Salafi ideology. The new motifs gain legitimacy when used in proximity to widely accepted symbols and cultural references. An example of this technique can be seen in the frequent use of a photograph of Osama bin Laden on a horse, which connotes his (supposed) kinship and affiliation with the companions of the Prophet Mohammad.

Much work remains to be done in order to comprehensively capture and catalogue the full range of jihadi visual propaganda, particularly in regards to monitoring the frequency of existing motifs and identifying the incidence of new motifs. The rate at which particular themes become more or less popular may reflect broader changes in ideology and orientation of the global jihad movement and its sympathizers.

It is our belief that this analysis will facilitate greater understanding of the subtleties of jihadi propaganda among counter-terrorism professionals. Creating links between diverse professional fields such as art history, communications, and counter-terrorism will enrich our understanding of terrorism-related issues. Finally, this analysis may serve as a template or reference point for further research in this area.

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Jarret Brachman holds a joint appointment as Director of Research in the Combating Terrorism Center and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point. His research interests include al-Qa'ida strategy and Salafi jihadi ideology, on which he has both published and discussed with a range of audiences. Mr. Brachman consults with agencies across the federal government, the New York Police Department as well as multiple national news organizations. He served as a Fellow with the Central Intelligence Agency before coming to West Point. Mr. Brachman personally collected the images that comprise the CTC's image library. Mr. Brachman and William McCants conceived the original project design and served as consultants throughout the project.

Lianne Kennedy Boudali is an Associate in the Combating Terrorism Center and also serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point. Professor Kennedy-Boudali holds a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University where she specialized in International Security Policy and Middle East Affairs. She served for two years as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger, and has also lived in Morocco. Ms. Kennedy-Boudali's research interests include terrorism in North Africa, strategic communication in terrorism and counter-terrorism, and the process of political-religious radicalization. Ms. Kennedy-Boudali directed the research, development, and publication of this project.

Afshon Ostovar is a Ph.D. student in the Department of History at the University of Michigan and also serves as a Research Associate at the Combating Terrorism Center. He is trained in both the premodern and modern fields of Islamic history, and has lived and worked throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. Currently, his research focuses on the social, cultural, and intellectual history of political Islamic movements and jihadist visual propaganda. Mr. Ostovar identified and categorized the key motifs from the CTC's extensive collection of jihadi imagery and wrote the analyses of the individual motifs.

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I. NATURE

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Sun, figurative

In jihadi images, the sun is generally used to evoke notions of regional identity and the divine, and it may be used literally or figuratively. The figurative sun motifs are either graphic representations (i.e. not photographic), or abstractions such as golden rays that evoke the rays of the sun. These motifs are usually used to “illuminate” certain symbols or text in order to give these items a divine “coloring.” When the sun is invoked, the symbols, items, or individuals with which it is associated are also associated with the divine. In this manner, the sun is used to associate things with God, and thus, to legitimize them spiritually and religiously.

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Sun.fig_a



Sun.fig_b



Sun.fig_c

Note: Translations of the text within these images may be found at the end of this report.

Sun, literal

The sun motif is generally used to evoke notions of regional identity and the divine. Literal (i.e. photographic) depictions of the sun, which generally take the form of either a sunrise or sunset, are common in jihadi imagery. The literal sun motif can also be used to evoke notions of regional identity as well as abstract notions of the divine and the afterlife.

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Sun.lit_a



Sun.lit_b

Sun.lit_c

Moon, general

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The moon is a very important and complex symbol in Islamic culture. It is imbued with astrological significance as well as wider religious and spiritual meanings. Its use in jihadi visual propaganda, however, is usually less complex and almost always indicates aspects of religious identity and notions of the afterlife and the divine. A full moon is usually employed in order to evoke notions of the afterlife and the power of God. The moon may be combined with images that highlight the concept of martyrdom (such as the clouds and white horse shown below) to suggest the martyr's heavenly reward.



Moon.gen_a



Moon.gen_b

White Crescent

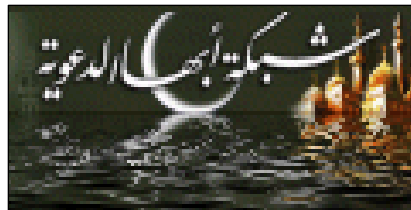
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The crescent moon is an important symbol of Islamic identity and may be used either as an abstract symbol or as a realistic representation of an actual moon. An abstracted moon is a more overt sign of Islamic identity than a photograph of a moon, as the abstraction evokes stronger notions of purity and religious piety.



white.cres_a



white.cres_b

White Crescent in Sky

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The crescent moon can be used as an abstract symbol or as a representation of an actual moon. Both have similar meanings; however, the latter serves primarily as a symbol of Islamic identity, while also evoking notions of the divine and the afterlife. A more realistic image of the moon carries the same meaning, but it also evokes strong notions of purity and religious piety. The white crescent in the sky in the example provided below specifically alludes to the goal of martyrdom and the promise of heavenly paradise.

white.cres.sky_a



Green Crescent

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The green crescent, like the white crescent, carries the meaning of Islamic identity, purity, and religious piety as the white crescent; however, it is a more politicized reference to Islam. The green crescent evokes strong notions of the Prophet Muhammad, and thus further emphasizes the Islamic nature of the symbol. Because of this, the green crescent is viewed as a more overt, militantly Islamic and fundamentalist version of the crescent motif. It is an aggressively Islamic symbol, unlike the more passive white crescent.



green.cres_a

Water Drop

Jihadi visual propagandists generally employ water in order to evoke notions of purity, the divine, heavenly paradise, and religious piety. Water may take the form of drops, a body of water, a waterfall, or some sort of figurative abstraction. Drops of water can be used as the focal point of an image or in combination with other symbols that together suggest a larger meaning. The drop of water—whether represented as a single drop or as ripples in water—is generally used to evoke notions of religious purity and can also conjure up notions of the afterlife and heavenly paradise. The drop of water could also be used to symbolize God’s promised assistance and generosity to the pious.

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water.drop_a



water.drop_b

Body of Water

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Water is generally employed in jihadi visual propaganda in order to evoke notions of purity, the divine, heavenly paradise, and religious piety. It may take a variety of forms, but a body of water (e.g. a lake or the ocean) is generally used as a background element in the visual composition. Used in this way, the water is usually not meant to refer to any one specific region, but rather serves as an evocation of the divine and of the afterlife.

body.water_a



body.water_b



Waterfall

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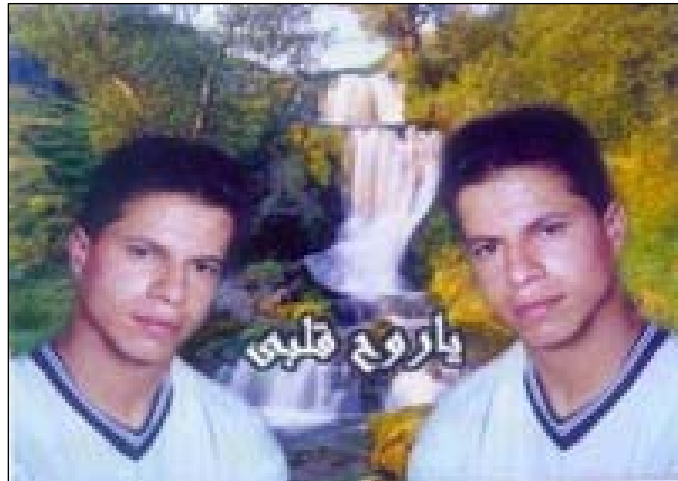
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Jihadi visual propaganda generally uses water to evoke notions of purity, the divine, heavenly paradise, and religious piety. Waterfalls are generally depicted literally (i.e. photographically) in order to form the background of an image. Waterfalls—similar to the “body of water” motif—evoke notions of the afterlife and heavenly paradise while also suggesting a more on-going or active progress toward greater religious piety. In this manner, waterfalls can be associated with the soul, its spiritual progress, and ultimately its elevation to heavenly paradise. To this effect, waterfalls are commonly associated with pictures of martyrs to evoke the sentiments discussed above.

Waterfall_a



Waterfall_b



Water, figurative

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Water is generally employed in jihadi visual propaganda as a way of evoking notions of purity, the divine, heavenly paradise, and religious piety. When water is associated with specific individuals—such as the image below with Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri – it is meant to suggest both the purity of their faith and their personal religious piety.



Flowers, general

Generally, flowers evoke a sense of both martyrdom and paradise. Although jihadi imagery makes ample use of flowers, not every color and variety of flower carries a specific meaning.

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In the image provided below as example A, the yellow flowers that make up the background of the composition suggest a sense of living, or inevitable martyrdom, and the reward of everlasting paradise.

Flowers.gen_a



Flowers.gen_b



Flowers.gen_c

White Rose

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A white rose often appears as a symbol of purity and martyrdom in Islamic culture. In jihadi propaganda, the white rose is most often utilized to evoke the act (and goal) of martyrdom, and may be used with the image of an individual martyr. In the images provided, the white rose is used in order to evoke a sense of the straight path, the righteousness of martyrdom, and the paradise that awaits those martyred in cause of God.

White.rose_a



White.rose_b



Red Rose/Red Flowers

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The red rose, like the white rose, is a symbol of martyrdom. More specifically, it suggests martyrdom through violent means. Other kinds of red flowers may be used in this way, and can be considered symbolically synonymous with red roses. The red rose/red flower motif lacks the inherent purity of the white rose, and so it may be used to signify violent (jihadi) struggle more broadly. In the Shiite tradition - especially the Iranian variety - red tulips are used as symbols of martyrdom, which stems from a tradition regarding the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn.

Red.rose_a



Red.rose_b

Palm Tree

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Palm trees, particularly date palms, are inextricably linked to Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Islamic cultures. In jihadi imagery, palm trees are often employed in order to evoke a sense of Arab or Islamic pride and concern. Palms can also be used as geographical markers – that is, shorthand references to places where palm trees are common. Because of their importance in Islamic history, they can also conjure up Salafi notions of the Prophet, his companions, and early Islamic history in general.

Palm.tree_a



Palm.tree_b



Palm.tree_c

Greenery

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Greenery – plants, trees, forests – is very common in jihadi imagery. While greenery is usually non-specific and used as a background element, it almost always conjures up notions of the Islamic concept of heaven being a lush garden (janna). In this regard, greenery also evokes all things associated with paradise (including virgins, etc.).

Greenery_a



Greenery_b



Mountains, literal

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Mountains are a common motif in jihadi visual propaganda. They can be depicted as both literal (i.e. photographic) or figurative (i.e. graphic) representations. Literal images of mountains generally allude to or depict specific regions of concern. The images may also represent regions with completed or ongoing operations, such as Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Kashmir.



Mountains.lit_a

Mountains, figurative

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Mountains, which may be depicted literally or figuratively, are a common motif in jihadi visual propaganda. When used figuratively, mountains generally evoke spiritual beliefs and allude to the divine. They can also serve as graphic representations of specific regions of jihadi interest, such as Afghanistan or Kashmir, but this is less common. Figurative depictions of mountains are most commonly used in a manner similar to the images provided, which evokes the grandeur of the divine and aspects of heavenly paradise. They are thus implicitly linked to notions of martyrdom and sacrifice.

Mountains.fig_a



Mountains.fig_b



Sandy Desert

There is perhaps no landscape in Islamic culture and tradition more evocative and recognizable than the desert. In jihadi visual propaganda, desert landscapes can be represented in a number of ways, but are usually depicted as either “sandy” or “rocky.” Although sandy desert landscapes are not actually that common in the Middle East, landscapes similar to those shown in the film “Lawrence of Arabia” are important markers of Islam, with particular relevance to Arab traditions and cultures. In this manner, depictions of sandy deserts are generally used to evoke a sense of Arab-Islamic identity and the early history of Islam. Sandy deserts are thus commonly used by Salafi groups as an evocation of the first generation of Muslims, and can serve as a reference to both their success in jihad and the purity of their faith.

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Sandy.desert_a



Sandy.desert_b



Rocky Desert

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Desert landscapes in jihadi visual propaganda usually fall into one of two categories: “sandy” or “rocky.” Rocky desert landscapes—where the land is rugged and spotted with shrubs and other flora—are the most common landscape across the inhabited parts of the Middle East and North Africa. In this sense, depictions of rocky desert landscapes resonate across Islamic cultures and can be used by groups from diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds. Rocky desert landscapes can also be used to evoke certain regional identities and/or historical events, such as the Prophet Mohammad’s jihad against the Meccans, or the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, which has particular relevance for the Shiites.



Rocky.desert_a

Lion, general

The lion is an important symbol in Islamic culture. As in Western cultures, the lion evokes qualities of bravery, strength, and valor for Muslim audiences. This motif has been popular throughout the centuries, having been mentioned in the Koran, the traditions of the Prophet, and Sufi poetry. In early Islam, the lion is associated with the Caliph/Imam 'Ali who is said to have been given the title of "Lion of God" (*asad allah*) by the Prophet himself. The lion is more generally associated with the early companions of the Prophet and their heroic deeds in the field of religious battle (*jihad*). In the modern era, it has been deployed by Islamist authors such as Sayyid Qutb, and has become a key motif in jihadist propaganda. It is employed as a term of honor for both major jihadi leaders and for low-ranking suicide bombers/jihadi militants. With regards to the latter, it is also used to suggest martyrdom or, in a sense, may designate a martyr-to-be. The lion is often used in reference to Osama bin Laden, whose first name means lion in Arabic.

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In the image provided, we see a picture of a lion and Arabic text, which reads: "Lion of Islam." This is an example of how the literal image of a lion can be used to suggest the aforementioned cultural and religious attributes.



Lion.gen_a

Lion, figurative

The lion motif may be used figuratively to denote qualities of bravery and religiosity within a jihadi context. A lion may refer to an individual jihadi militant, but it may refer more broadly to the global jihadi insurgency.

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In the example below, by describing Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as a lion, the propagandist depicts him as a just warrior, and as a Muslim striving toward martyrdom through the righteous path of jihad. The Arabic text reads “The lion of the Two Rivers (i.e. Iraq/Mesopotamia).”



Lion.fig_a

Lion with Jihadi Leaders

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The example below shows a large lion's head surrounded by the photographs of major jihadi leaders. At the center of the image, superimposed on the lion's face, and thus symbolically becoming the head of the lion (or, in this case, the head "lion"), is a picture of Osama bin Laden. Flanking both sides of the lion's head are two emblems of Arabic calligraphy, each reading "God is Great" (*allahuakbar*). At the bottom of the image is a Koranic verse (Q:33:23), which reads: "There are men among the faithful who have been true to the covenant they made with God; and some of them fulfilled their vows (by dying in His cause), and some still wait (prepared for death), and stand firm . . ." This verse describes how these jihadi leaders are viewed by their sympathizers: they are all regarded as either martyrs or martyrs-to-be.



Lion.leaders_a

Lion, literal & figurative

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The background of this image appears to be a map of Europe, Africa, and Asia circa World War I. At center, superimposed upon this map, is the image of a lion's head. On both sides of the lion are images of Ibn al-Khattab, the Chechen jihadi leader. The Arabic text at the bottom of the image reads: "Khattab"¹ – "The Lion of Chechnya, the Lion of the Battlefield." At the top of the image is the *shahada* (the Muslim claim of faith) in Arabic script. This image clearly evokes the spirit of jihad and praises a key jihadi leader in Chechnya. The use of the lion motif indicates that Ibn al-Khattab is seen as both a brave jihadi leader and a willing martyr for this cause. Thus, this image brings together both the literal image of a lion and the figurative use of the lion motif to describe the religious, personal, and martial qualities of a single jihadi leader. By associating this individual with the lion, the image also associates his actions and his cause (i.e. leading the jihad in Chechnya) with all of those attributes that make the lion motif so significant in Islamic culture.



Lion.lit&fig_a

¹ i.e. Ibn al-Khattab, Samir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem, Jihadi commander in Afghanistan and Chechnya, assassinated March 2002 by Russian special operations.

Horse, general

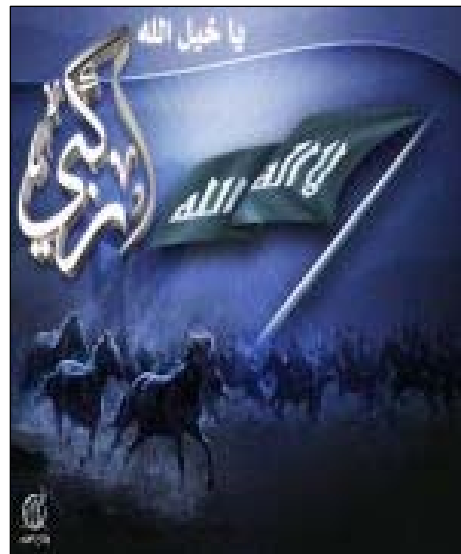
The horse is a very important symbol in both Arabic and Islamic culture. Since pre-Islamic times, Arabs have identified horses with chivalry, battle, bravery, and victory. For Muslims, horses also evoke the first generation of Muslims and their successful campaigns of jihad. The horse motif as a synonym for jihad stems from a famous Islamic hadith that states: “He who out of faith in Allah and a firm belief in His promise prepares a horse while waiting for jihad, then its feeding and drinking and its dung are all in his favor on the day of Resurrection.” The horse is also often employed to evoke specific Salafi religious sentiments, especially with regards to the military (i.e. jihadi) victories of the first generation of Islam. The horse evokes the Salafi notions of purity and the belief that the first generation of Muslims and the companions of the Prophet Muhammad practiced the “true” version of Islam. The horse motif is thus used both literally and figuratively to evoke jihad itself. More importantly, horses evoke Salafi notions of the purity of the jihad (and Islam) as practiced by the first generations of Muslims, and serve as a reminder of their incredible success in battle.

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Horse.gen_a



Horse.gen_b

Horse Herd

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A herd of horses evokes the broader struggle of jihad as well as the specific Salafi notions of the glorious history of Islam. The use of a herd of horses is meant to suggest that jihad is an obligation for all Muslims, and that victory requires a unified Muslim response. In this regard, the herd motif takes the power of the horse motif away from the individual and places it in the realm of the general Muslim community.



Horse.herd_a



Horse.herd_b

Horse with rider and Jihadi Leader

The horse and rider motif is common in jihadi visual propaganda. The rider emphasizes the element of human agency in jihad, and is a way to make the relatively benign symbol of a horse into something more aggressive and jihad-oriented.

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At the center of the image below we see the profile of a horse with a rider in what looks to be a battle stance. Superimposed upon the horse and rider is Arabic text in red that reads: “Come to jihad” (or “Living/experiencing jihad”). To the right of the horse, rider, and text is an important and well respected Muslim religious leader. The inclusion of the sheikh on the right side of this image provides legitimacy and authorization to the combined visual and textual messages.



Horse.rider.jihadi_a

Horse with Rider and Black Flag

The combination of a horse, a rider, and a battle flag is very common in jihadi visual propaganda. Each element--the horse, the rider, and the battle flag--are symbols of jihad and jihadi activism. In combination, they serve to amplify the jihadi element of this image, making it more aggressive and proactive than any image that contains only one of the three component motifs.

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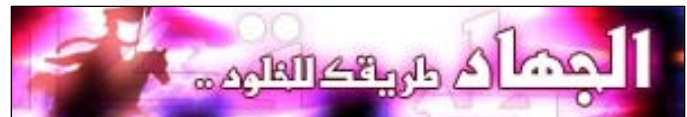
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The English text, "We Islam," on the horse in the primary example serves to alert both non-Muslim English-speakers and Muslims who speak English that jihad is a collective responsibility of the Muslim community.



Horse.rider.bl.flag_a

Horse.rider.bl.flag_b



Horse.rider.bl.flag_c

Horse with Rider and White Flag

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The use of horses, riders, and battle flags represent the active pursuit of jihad.

The example below depicts a pre-modern battle and evokes the jihad of the first generation of Muslims. Thus, this image exemplifies a Salafi use of the horse motif, as it is meant to convey to the audience a connection (both religious and practical) between the jihad of early Islam and that which some Muslims believe is occurring today. In this way, these motifs place current jihadi activities within the same unfolding dialectic as the jihad of early Islam.



Horse.rider.wh.flag_a

Horse with Rider and Sword

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This image employs a popular combination of motifs similar to those previously mentioned. It includes a charging horse with a rider holding a sword. This is the most aggressive and explicitly militaristic use of the horse motif. It evokes the violent nature of jihad, which is emphasized by the Arabic text which reads, “The Jihad.” The sword (like the horse) conjures up Salafi notions of jihad in early Islam, and is thus suggestive of Salafi ideology in general.

Horse.rider.sword_a



Horse.rider.sword_b

White Horse

The white horse is inextricably tied to conceptions of the prophet, martyrdom, and paradise (heaven). It is most often associated with the Prophet Muhammad's *miraj* or night journey to heaven, when the Prophet ascended to heaven on the back of a white horse. In this regard, the white horse most specifically evokes notions of the afterlife and the heavenly paradise awaiting pious Muslims (or jihadi martyrs) upon their death. White horses are also important in the Shiite tradition, in regards to their association with the aforementioned traditions and in regards to the Imam Husayn and his martyrdom at Karbala in the 7th century (where he is said to have ridden a white horse). Thus, in both Sunni and Shiite traditions, the white horse is strongly associated with martyrdom and the expectation of heavenly paradise.

In the images selected, the white horses are associated with images of individual jihadi martyrs. Used in this manner, the white horse evokes the righteousness of these individuals' martyrdom, and reminds the audience that these men have been granted the martyr's promised reward of ascension to heavenly paradise.

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White.horse_a



White.horse_b

Falcon

The Falcon is an important symbol in Islamic culture. It symbolizes bravery, speed, and fierceness in battle. Falconeering was (and in some regions remains) a common and prestigious method of hunting in the Middle East and Central Asia. Falcons represent all of the qualities that a jihadi fighter is said to embody as well as his eventual (or actual) martyrdom.

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In the primary example below, the falcon suggests the individual's qualities as a fighter, and it also highlights and honors his martyrdom.



Falcon_a

Eagle

The eagle is used to denote fierceness in battle. It generally suggests qualities of strength, power, speed, and victory in the jihadi struggle. Unlike the falcon, however, it is not usually used as a reference to martyrdom. It is used to highlight and emphasize specific individual jihadi fighters or groups, especially in Palestine and among the Palestinian diaspora.

In the primary example below, the eagle is used in conjunction with other key symbols (the sword and the map of Iraq) to praise and promote the actions of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Oddly, the text refers to the “falcon of Iraq,” which may indicate that the designer couldn’t locate an appropriately configured falcon, or that the designer meant to indicate an appropriation of American power. Furthermore, the man pictured does not seem to be Zarqawi. It is also possible that the text was added later by someone who didn’t mind these inaccuracies.

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Eagle_a

Snake

The snake is a common symbol in the Islamic tradition. It suggests treachery, tyranny, and general evil. The snake is often employed by jihadists to describe their enemies. Thus, in the image below, the snake is associated with the US “occupation” (*ihtilal*) of Iraq.

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Snake_a



Snake_b



Camel

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There are an endless number of possible meanings for camels in both Islamic and Arab cultures, but the camel has particular importance to Arab culture. In jihadi imagery, camels are most often used to suggest a national (i.e. Arab-Islamic) consciousness. Incorporating a camel in an image may therefore imply that a group is seeking to associate its goals or actions with the Arab or Islamic community as a whole. The primary example below was created by (or for) an Iraqi group, the Salah al-Din Brigade.



Camel_a



Camel_b

Dove

The white dove is sometimes used to indicate peace, although it is most often used as a sign of war (thus jihad) and martyrdom. White doves are also commonly shown flying out of explosions or other depictions of warfare. When used in this manner, the white dove symbolizes a martyr's soul rising to heavenly paradise.

In the primary example, the white dove can be seen sitting on its nest gazing at American fighter jets. The dove is front of a spider web covering the entrance to a cave. This image invokes a famous story in which the Prophet Mohammad, being pursued by the Quraish, finds safety in a cave. The Prophet's position in the cave was concealed by a spider web. Here, the dove represents the innocence and purity of Iraqis and their families, while the spider web suggests that participating in jihad against the American occupation would be following the path of the Prophet.

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Dove_a



Dove_b



Weather and Storms

The weather, particularly natural storms, is commonly understood as an act of God in Muslim cultures. Playing to this popular sentiment, storms and other natural occurrences associated with weather can be used as motifs in jihadi visual propaganda in order to evoke notions of the divine. Images of lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes suggest God's power, wrath, and justice. Certain jihadi groups may associate themselves with these symbols as a means to exaggerate their power and imply that they are acting on God's will. Thus, by using these symbols, jihadi groups are able to represent themselves and their cause as extensions of divine power.

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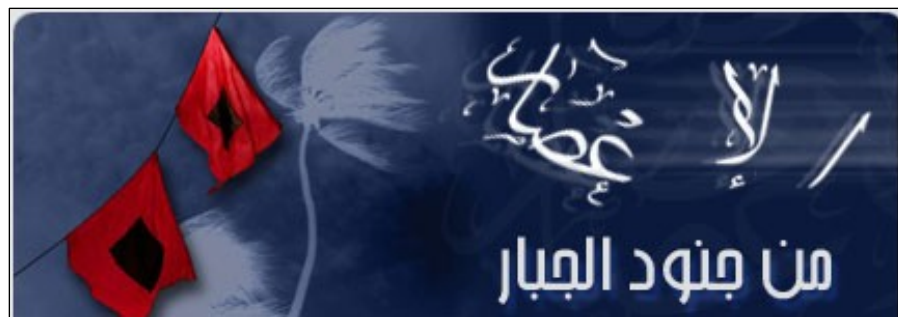
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Storms_a



Storms_b



Storms_c

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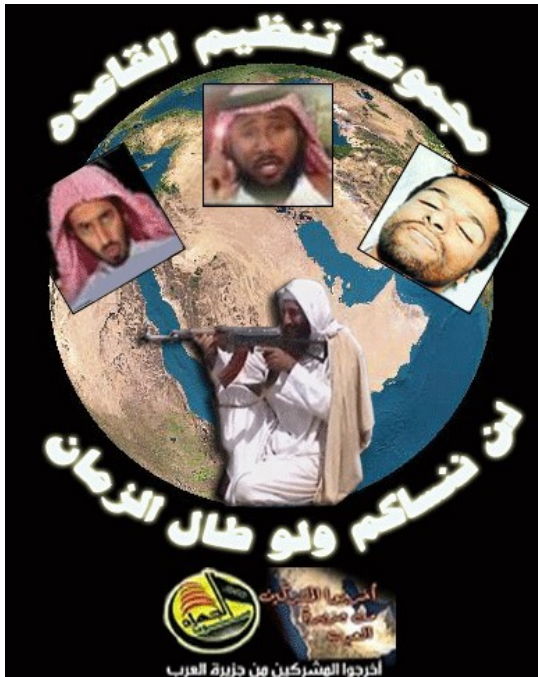
[Important Defeats](#)
[Important Victories](#)

Globe, literal

Jihadi visual propaganda uses the globe, or Earth, to globalize specific issues and conflicts, as well as to articulate the global aims of particular groups. In the primary image selected (below left), we see the globe as a background with Saudi Arabia at its center. Specific jihadi leaders and martyrs are superimposed on the globe, with Osama bin Laden firing a rifle in the center. This image uses the globe to highlight the global aims and success of al-Qaeda, as well as to suggest the importance of the jihadist struggle in Saudi Arabia as part of the greater (i.e. global) jihadi struggle.

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Globe.lit_a



Globe.lit_b

Globe.lit_c

Globe, figurative

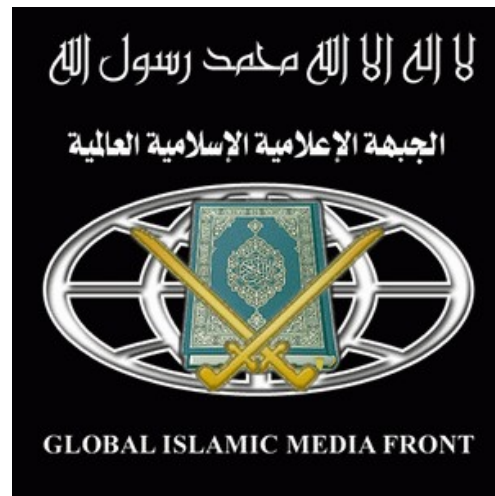
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Figurative, or abstracted, globes are also common in jihadi propaganda. All of these motifs combine to suggest an Islamic centered, jihadi organization with specifically global—as opposed to national or regional—aims. The image below is the logo for the Global Islamic Media Front, which is one of the most active and prolific jihadi propaganda organizations on the Internet.



Globe.fig_a



Globe.fig_b

States, general

Jihadi imagery often nationalizes its goals by isolating a theatre of jihad and representing it as a “stand-alone” entity. Depicting a state or country alone, without bordering countries or bodies of water, emphasizes the national context and scope of that specific regional jihad. While jihadi rhetoric often speaks of transnational and global goals (e.g. defeat of the west, defeat of capitalism, establishment of a caliphate, or the establishment of a pan-Islamic state), jihadi imagery often speaks in nationalized terms, and does so to present a more comprehensible goal to its audience.

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States.gen_a



States.gen_b



States.gen_c

State with Battle Flag

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In the images selected, the countries of Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia are shown with battle flags “planted” in each state. This designates them as important theatres for jihad, and implies a national obligation to join the jihad in order to establish a “true” Islamic state. By highlighting these states in relation to the rest of the world, the propagandists are attempting to show that Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia are integral pieces (or perhaps the first stages) of a larger, global jihad.



State.battleflag_a



State.battleflag_b

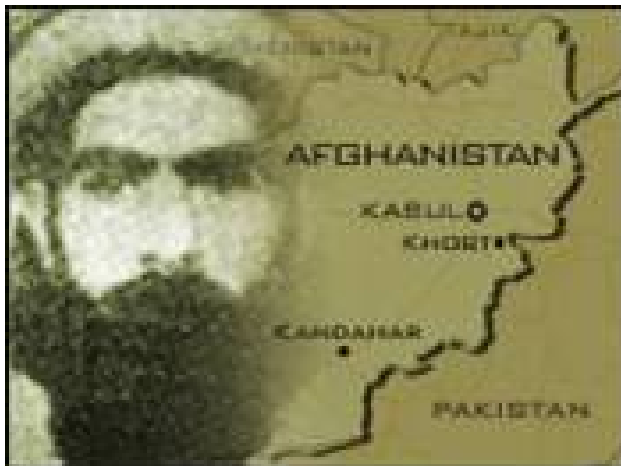
Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been an important country for the jihadi movement since the Soviet invasion of 1979, and it has become increasingly significant following the American invasion of 2001.

In the primary example below, Afghanistan is highlighted within the context of a political map. To the left of Afghanistan is a picture of Mullah Omar, the spiritual and political head of the Taliban. It is important to note that the country names on the map are in English, not in Arabic script. The use of English text prevents this image from being associated with a specific ethnic group (e.g. Pushtuns, Arabs, Tajiks, etc.), thereby avoiding the alienation of another. English text could also serve as a means of communication with the West and Muslims living in the West.

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Afghanistan_a



Afghanistan_b



Afghanistan c



Afghanistan d

Iraq

Acontextualized images of the Iraqi state are common in jihadi imagery. In the primary example below, Iraq is shown in isolation, a black flag planted in its soil. A jihadi militant towers over the country whose cities are indicated in English (an unusual choice). Overall, the image emphasizes the national context of the Iraqi jihad and, by placing a comparatively gigantic jihadi militant on top of Iraq, inflates the success and power of the jihadi insurgency.

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Iraq_a



Iraq_b



Iraq_c

Italy

In this image, we see the black flag “stabbed” into the center of Italy. The Arabic script on the picture of Italy simply reads: *al-italya* (Italy) and *ruma* (Rome). On the right side of the image is an emblem that reads *al-khilafa* (The Caliphate) in Arabic calligraphy. At the top of the image is a line from the Koran (Q: 24:55) which reads: “God has promised to make those of you who believe and do the right, leaders in the land, as He had made those before them . . .” Combined, the internal symbology of this image suggests three things: 1) That Italy is specifically identified as a place against (or within) which waging jihad is not only legitimate, but necessary. 2) The Koranic passage suggests that this jihad will be a victorious one and that those involved (i.e. righteous Muslims) will ultimately take (figurative or literal) power. 3) These first two points are clarified in the third, namely the re-establishment of the Caliphate.

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Italy_a



Kashmir

The conflict surrounding Kashmir is a key theme in jihadi propaganda. Kashmir is used as a rallying cry to elicit support for what is considered to be an important Muslim struggle.

In the images below, the region of Kashmir is removed from its context and “unified” into a single entity. In the image on the left, Kashmir is overflowing with blood, emphasizing the perceived oppression and injustice wrought on the Kashmiri people by the occupying governments (especially India).

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In the secondary example, Kashmir is shown in regional context with the word “Kashmir” stretched across the divided territories to imply that the two halves are in fact one nation.



Kashmir_a



Kashmir_b



Kashmir_c

Kuwait – Non-front line state

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In this image, Kuwait is highlighted as a jihadi target. While jihadi internet sites often focus on major theaters of conflict such as Afghanistan and Iraq, jihadi groups also have aims in seemingly stable countries. This image exemplifies the way in which jihadis attempt to destabilize countries that do not seem to be affected by jihadi activism. The implication is that every country or region is susceptible to jihadi activism, and could be the next object of similar jihadi propaganda.



Kuwait_a

Palestine

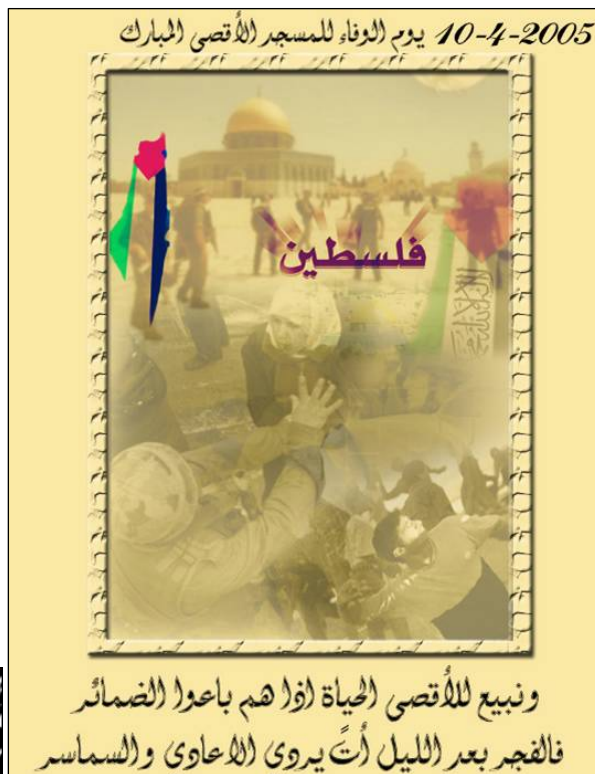
Key jihadi strategists have referred to the Palestinians' quest for statehood as "the mother of all Islamic causes." Many Muslims view the situation in the West Bank and Gaza as at best an indication of Western indifference to Muslim suffering, and at worst, as proof of a Western-Crusader-Jewish alliance to destroy Islam and Muslims. Therefore, Palestine and Palestinians have great resonance among Muslims, and serve to produce sentiments of Islamic nationalism. For example, images of stone-throwing youth are synonymous with resistance to tyranny, and jihadi propagandists use images of Palestine and Palestinians to associate themselves with the broader interests of the Muslim community.

In the primary example below, the country of Israel and the Occupied Territories are represented as a single entity, without political or geographical context. It should be noted that Israel, as a country or political entity, does not exist in this image. Additionally, the country is shaded green, and the Dome of the Rock is superimposed on top. Both of these motifs (the color green and the Dome) give this image an explicitly Islamic "coloring". Thus, this image expresses both nationalistic and Islamic connotations.

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Palestine_a



Palestine b

Palestine_c

Saudi Arabia

The Arabian Peninsula is the birthplace of Islam and home to its two most holy places. Therefore, issues surrounding the governance and policies of the Saudi government appear frequently in jihadi propaganda, which often utilizes religious arguments to advocate jihad against the ruling regime. The al-Saud dynasty is one of the “near enemies” of jihadi groups.

The primary example provided below is the logo for the jihadi group al-Tajdid al-Islami. The country is shaded green, with a black flag and cross swords superimposed over top. This combination of Islamic symbols and motifs establishes the overt jihadi message of the image and the group that it represents. Notice that Saudi Arabia is not represented by the Arabian Peninsula, but rather by its political borders. This highlights the national focus of al-Tajdid al-Islami, and suggests their desire to establish an Islamist state in Saudi Arabia.

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Saudi_a



Saudi_b



Saudi_c

White Flag (*al-liwaa*)

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In the Islamic tradition, the Prophet Muhammad used the white flag (*al-liwaa*) to represent both the leader of the Muslim army and the first Muslim state. It bears the same inscription as the black flag, which is the Muslim proclamation of faith (*shahada*). In jihadi propaganda, the white flag is usually used synonymously with the black flag; however, it has less overt militant connotations. The white flag is most often used to evoke the Prophet and the idea of establishing an Islamic state. With regards to the latter, the Taliban used the white flag as the official flag for their briefly recognized state. The white flag is also used in scenes depicting a pre-modern setting, and in this sense has strong Salafi connotations.

White.flag_a



White.flag_b



Green Flag, general

The green flag generally includes the same text as the black and the white flags, namely the Muslim proclamation of faith (*shahada*). The color green is considered to be the color of the Prophet Muhammad. In this regard, green flags (regardless of the text) always conjure up historical, genealogical, and religious notions of the Prophet and Islam. The standard green flag (with *shahada*) is also linked to the Prophet's time and is said to represent springtime and the growth (i.e. advancement) that occurs therein. Thus, it is a more optimistic flag, and one that speaks to both the Islamic nature of the enterprise and its success. The green flag is often used synonymously with the black and white flags in jihadi imagery, although it has a less overt militant (or jihadist) message than the black flag, and is slightly less state-oriented than the white flag. The general green flag should not be confused with the Saudi flag, which is very similar, but also features a curved sword below the Arabic calligraphy. Green flags may also include text other than the *shahada*.

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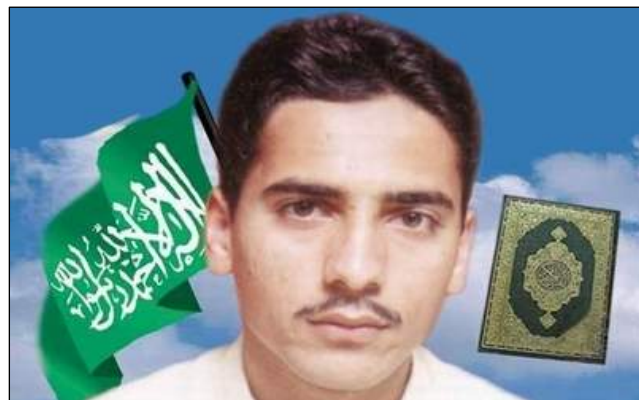
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One of the examples given shows a green flag with the word "Gaza" written upon it. This identifies the struggle against Israeli occupation and oppression within the Gaza Strip with explicit notions of Islam.

Green.flag.gen_a



Green.flag.gen_b



Green.flag.gen_c



Green Flag, Saudi

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The Saudi Arabian flag is very similar to the generic green flag. Unlike the universal green flag, however, the Saudi flag includes a curved sword underneath the Arabic calligraphy. The Saudi flag is also common in jihadi imagery, but it is always used as a direct reference to Saudi Arabia. It can be used in conjunction with other motifs to symbolize struggle against the Saudi royal family, or it can be used to identify the jihadi struggle within Saudi Arabia.

Saudi.flag_a



Saudi.flag_b



Saudi.flag_c



Flags Combined

In jihadi propaganda, political symbols are often combined in such a way as to create literal and symbolic connections between them. In the case of flags, this is often done in reference to jihadi campaigns taking place in different locations.

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In the examples given, the Palestinian and Iraqi flags are brought together with the Arabic word *shahada*, here meaning both “testimony” and “martyrdom.” In this manner, the Palestinian and Iraqi conflicts, which stem from very different political situations, are united in representation of the larger jihadi struggle. The goal is that the audience should recognize these conflicts as “jihadi” and “Islamic,” not merely political or nationalistic.

Comb.flags_a



Comb.flags_b



American Flag

The American flag is used liberally in jihadi propaganda, always evoking the unpopular sentiment surrounding U.S. foreign policy and military campaigns.

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American.flag_a



American.flag_b



American.flag_c



American.flag_d

Stars and Stripes

Equally as common, if not more so than the actual U.S. flag, is the Stars and Stripes motif. The Stars and Stripes are often used to “color” other important motifs or symbols, thereby linking them to U.S. foreign policy, politics, and military intervention in the Muslim world.

In the first image selected, the Stars and Stripes are used to “color” a cross. The image itself is a comment on the Abu Ghraib abuses, and the Arabic text at the top of the image states: “a story of a captive of the Crusaders.” In this manner, the propagandists explicitly link—both textually and symbolically—the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the Abu Ghraib abuses with Christianity and the Crusades. This conjures up the historical memory of the Crusades, and frames the U.S. occupation of Iraq as a form of neo-Crusading: i.e. a renewed war instigated by the Christian West against the Muslim East.

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Similarly, the next image uses the cross and the Stars and Stripes to “color” the phrase: “Martyr of Duty.”

Stars.stripes_a



Stars.stripes_b



American Flag with Star of David

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From the perspective of the Muslim world, the United States and Israel are equally responsible for the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. To this end, jihadists often employ American and Jewish symbols together to comment on the situation in Gaza and the West Bank.



Amer.flag.star.david_a



Amer.flag.star.david_b



Amer.flag.star.david_c

Star of David

The Star of David is always used explicitly in reference to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. By extension, it also evokes fears of a greater Jewish conspiracy and a general anti-Semitism.

In the primary example below, the Star of David is represented as a stone that is crushed by a rifle and a green flag that reads "Gaza." The text to the right of the flag reads "Liberation...." Thus, in this image the propagandists are able to invert the power dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and evoke a sense of impending and eventual victory. [Note: this image was posted on the internet over a year before the Israeli withdrawal of the Gaza Strip.]

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In the second example, the Star of David is employed with various other symbols to show that the religions or organizations represented by these symbols are threats to Islam.



Star.david_a



Star.david_b

British Flag

The Union Jack is used less frequently in jihadi propaganda than are the American and Israeli flags. It is usually meant as a reference to the foreign policy and military deployments of the U.K., especially British support and involvement in the current war in Iraq. The Union Jack is also used in reference to domestic jihadi activities and concerns, as well as in reference to specific groups operating in the United Kingdom.

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In the image show below, the Union Jack appears in one side of a pair of hand cuffs that is locked around a microphone. In this manner, the U.K. is shown to be holding back or preventing the “Islamic Renewal” that is advocated by the group that created the image.

Brit.flag_a



Brit.flag_b

Foreign Currency

All Jihadi propaganda plays on popular sentiments in the Muslim world, one of which is the belief that the U.S. and other Western powers are only concerned with the Middle East because of its oil deposits. Many Muslims believe that Western society is greedy and materialistic, and that Westerners are slaves to money. Jihadi propagandists use the motif of foreign currency as a means of capitalizing on these sentiments. Although the U.S. dollar is the most common currency motif, other western and global currencies also appear.

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In the primary image below, the currencies of the US, Canada, England, France, Germany, the Netherlands and others are used as a backdrop to Arabic text that invokes jihad. This image, created by two Iraqi groups, uses foreign currency to evoke the sentiment that the West is the major enemy of Islam and Iraq.

Foreign.currency_a



Foreign.currency_b



Inverted Currency

Foreign currency, especially the U.S. dollar, is perceived as a symbol of Western power and dominance. Its inversion (or reconfiguration) allows jihadi groups to associate themselves with the same perceptions of power and dominance.

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In the image selected, the U.S. \$100 bill is inverted by replacing the image of Benjamin Franklin with that of Osama bin Laden. On the back, Independence Hall has been replaced with an image of the Twin Towers after the 9/11 attacks. In this manner, Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda are depicted as possessing enough power to challenge the United States, or possessing the capability to turn American power against itself.



Holy Places

There are many buildings, shrines, monuments, tombs, and mosques associated with important holy figures in the Islamic tradition. Reverence for many of these are shared by all Muslims across sectarian lines, while others hold special significance only for certain groups—such as the tombs of the Holy Imams for the Shiites, and tombs of sheikhs for particular Sufi groups. Regardless of the nature of these monuments, almost all of them have religious as well as national and regional significance to Muslim peoples, and can be invoked to draw upon both loyalties. For instance, while the Dome of the Rock is recognized and revered by all Muslims, regardless of sect, it is also a powerful symbol of Palestinian national identity. Likewise, the tomb of the Imam Husayn in Karbala is an important monument for most Muslims, but it is of particular value to Shiites worldwide, and its image can be employed as a Shiite-centric symbol of Iraqi nationality.

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Holy.places_a



Holy.places_b



Dome of the Rock

The Dome of the Rock was built on the site where Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven in his *miraj* or Night Journey, and it is considered the third holiest site in Islam. It is often used as both a pan-Islamic and Palestinian national symbol, however, it is perhaps most recognizable and important as a motif used by militant Palestinian groups. It can be used as a symbol of Palestine as a whole, or it can be used as a religiously inspirational symbol for jihadi activism, such as martyrdom. In one of the images provided, the Dome is used as the background for the headshot of a jihadi martyr. In this manner, jihadi groups such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade employ the Dome to evoke both a sense of national duty and religious sacrifice. The Dome, paired with the photos of martyrs, also legitimizes the actions of these militants by linking them with Islam and the memory of the Prophet Muhammad.

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Dome.rock_a



Dome.rock_b



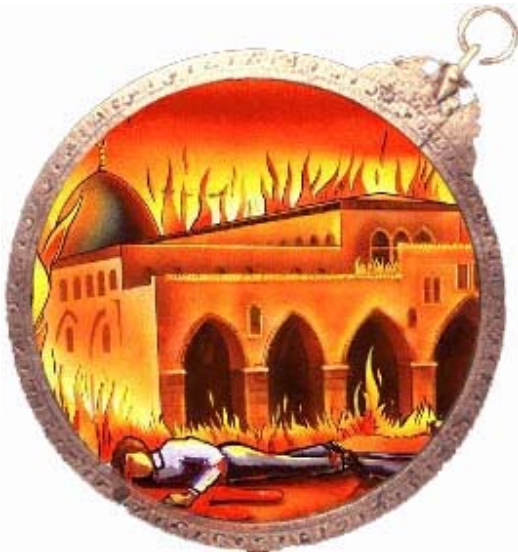
Dome.rock_c

Al-Aqsa Mosque

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The Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is adjacent to the Dome of the Rock and conjures up many of the same associations, is used extensively in jihadi imagery produced by Palestinian groups. Unlike the Dome of the Rock, however, the Al-Aqsa Mosque is generally not used as a pan-Islamic symbol, but rather is almost always employed as an Islamic symbol of Palestinian national identity. It is used in imagery with a more internal, or Palestinian-centered, purpose. In one of the examples provided, the Al-Aqsa Mosque is used as background for photos of martyred Palestinian militants. This image exemplifies how the image of the Al-Aqsa Mosque is usually employed in Palestinian jihadi propaganda.



Al-Aqsa_a



Al-Aqsa_b

Kaaba

The Kaaba in Mecca is the symbolic and literal center of the Islamic faith for all Muslims, and it is a common motif in jihadi imagery. It is the single most important, and holiest, site in Islam and evokes the strongest sense of Islamic identity and tradition across all Muslim sects and groups. Although it is inherently pan-Islamic, the Kaaba can also be employed to draw attention to issues concerning Saudi Arabia. Use of the Kaaba motif may also internationalize, or pan-Islamize, specific Saudi-centered jihadi concerns, such as the “occupation” of the Saudi holy sites by American forces during the first Gulf War.

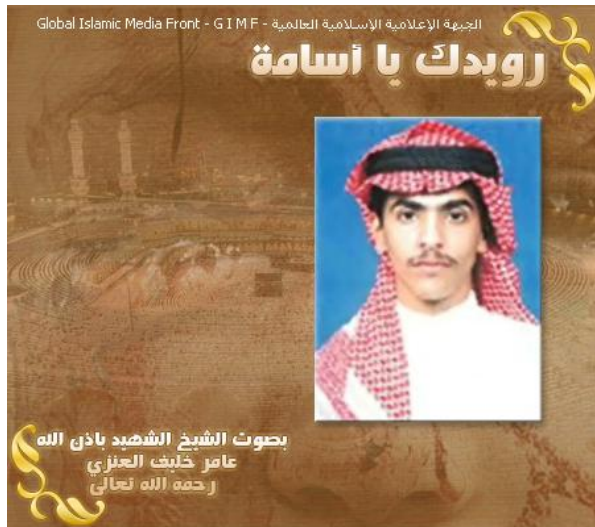
In the primary image provided, the Kaaba is combined with other symbols, such as Osama bin Laden, minarets, a gun, the Koran, and an a-contextual political outline of Saudi Arabia, to evoke a sense of piety and duty in the twin causes of “jihad and dawa’ (literally “calling”, i.e. the proselytizing of Islam).” In the process, it associates bin Laden and al-Qaeda with the most Holy site in Islam, thereby indicating their religious piety and association with the divine.

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Kaaba_a



Kaaba_b



Kaaba_c

Important Defeats

Jihadi propaganda frequently reminds its audience of important political and violent events. These images draw attention to events that have helped to shape the current jihadi movement, and they allow the propagandists to reinterpret these events through their own ideological and cultural frameworks. A key example of this is the way in which jihadi groups present past and contemporary defeats to their audiences as examples of violent oppression and injustice inflicted upon the Muslim world by the Christian West. These defeats could range from historical events like the crusades to more modern conflicts like the Russian military intervention in Grozny in 1991. The images remind the audience of instances where Muslims fought but were defeated, and this may serve as justification for past, current, and future jihadi activism. There is also an implication that more fighters are needed to avoid such defeats in the future. The examples below refer to Grozny and Falluja.

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Defeats_a



Defeats_b



Defeats_c

Important Victories

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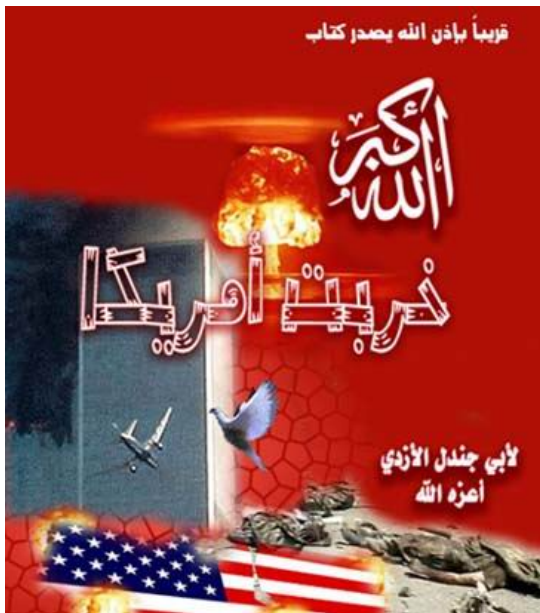
Jihadi propaganda often marks important violent events in order to establish these events as key milestones that shape the current jihadi movement. These events are then reinterpreted to match the jihadists' assertion that these events were successful. These "successes," which can range from suicide bombings to large-scale terrorist attacks, are presented to the audience as examples of jihadi victory against much stronger and more powerful Western forces. Propagandists often exaggerate and inflate these events, and portray them as evidence of the imminent victory of jihadist Islam over Western imperialism and secularism. These events are used to promote faith and confidence in the jihadi enterprise, as well as to inspire others to join in the growing success of the jihadi movement.



Victories_a



Victories_b



Victories_c



Victories_d



Victories_e

III. PEOPLE

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Jihadi Religious/Strategic Leaders

The leaders of the jihadi movement can be divided into two major groups: religious officials and operational commanders. The former—which include figures such as the British-born preacher Abu Hamza and the martyred spiritual leader of Hamas, Ahmad Yassin (both depicted in the images provided)—are seen as individuals who possess proper religious training and credentials, and are considered the chief religious ideologues of the jihadi movement. Their firebrand sermons and sensationalist writings, distributed throughout the Muslim world, are key motivational tools used for recruiting and inspiring jihadi activists. They are generally seen as pious religious leaders rather than tactical, on-the-ground jihadi commanders. They often keep themselves at arms length from actual jihadi activity, although they often praise, highlight, and defend the exploits of jihadi activists in their writings and sermons. These religious leaders are common motifs in jihadi imagery that are used as symbols of the religious piety espoused by the jihadi movement. Their images serve to religiously legitimize jihadi groups and promote activism along purely Islamic lines. They also evoke the messages, ideology, aims, and specific movements associated with these figures to suggest that they are religiously-based (as opposed to nationalist, secularist, or merely political).

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People_a



People_b



People_c



People_d



People_e

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Jihadi Operational Leaders

The leaders of the jihadi movement can be divided into two major groups: religious officials and operational commanders. The latter—such as Osama bin Laden and Abu Zarqawi—are jihadi leaders who do not possess official religious credentials, but are seen as key tactical leaders of the jihadi movement. Although their writings and ideas are commonly accepted as religiously sound, they are generally presented as pious Muslim warriors rather than trained religious officials. Images of these operational leaders serve as an example of someone who is both a religiously pious individual and a militarily successful jihadi commander doing God’s work. These images can be used to draw attention to specific events and triumphs, to advertise the jihadi movement in general, or to attract recruits to a winning team.

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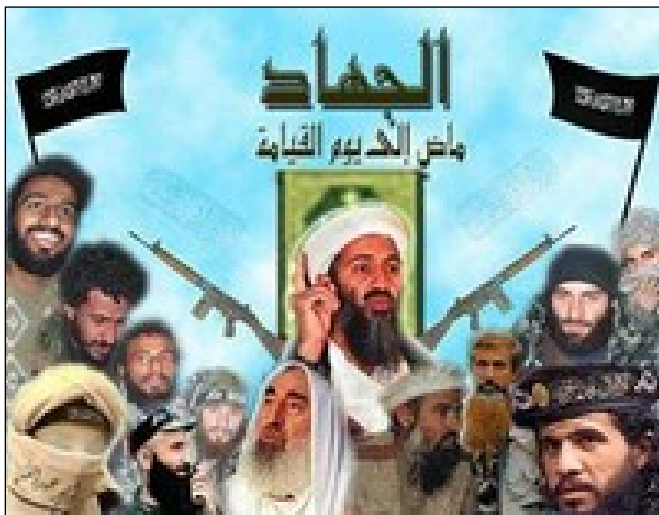
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Jihadi.op.leaders_a



Jihadi.op.leaders_b



Jihadi.op.leaders_c



Jihadi.op.leaders_d

Jihadi Leader: Osama bin Laden

The motif of “Osama bin Laden” is used by jihadi propagandists to symbolize resistance to unjust authority and dedication to jihad. Images of OBL are ubiquitous in jihadi propaganda, closely followed by Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Mullah Omar, and Ibn al-Khattab.

Images of Osama bin Laden on or associated with a horse are common in jihadi visual propaganda. Both in actual practice and in visual presentation, riding a horse associates Osama bin Laden with the tradition of horses in Islam, but particularly evokes Salafi conceptions of the first generation of Muslims. In this manner, Osama is identifying himself and is identified by others as embodying the spirit and purity of the companions of the Prophet and all of their successes in jihad and religion.

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Bin.Laden_a



Bin.Laden_b



Bin.Laden_c

Jihadi Leader: Khattab

While participating in jihad gives a jihadist important religious credibility, death in battle provides both figurative and literal immortality as the deceased becomes a martyr. This is particularly true for the widely-recognized jihadi leaders. Jihadi leaders, such as Sayyid Qutb, Sheikh Yassin, and Osama bin Laden, have an important status among jihadi groups and sympathetic Muslim societies. With martyrdom, their personalities are elevated to the status of mythical heroes. Through martyrdom, these leaders become religious heroes similar to and associated with the great historical warriors and martyrs of Islamic tradition. Martyrdom further legitimizes their cause and their actions. In death, jihadi leaders such as Ibn al-Khattab, the Arab leader of jihadists in Chechnya, become motifs in their movement's visual propaganda. Their images evoke all of the qualities associated with martyred leaders and help to further legitimate and advertise the cause for which they were killed.

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Khattab_a



Khattab_b



Khattab_c

Non-Muslim Political Leaders

Global political leaders are characterized in jihadi propaganda as oppressors of Islam and the jihadi movement. They are depicted as the main obstacles to achieving the overall goals of the jihadi enterprise—i.e. creating a state (or states) based solely on Islamic law (shariah). Leaders ranging from Russian President Vladimir Putin to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon are presented with other political and religious symbols in order to connect their states' policies to greater concerns of the Muslim world. For instance, President Bush is often associated with the Star of David and the Israeli flag in order to connect U.S. foreign policy to Israel's oppression of the Palestinian population. In these images, the individual political leader is generally treated as a stand-in for the government that he represents, although sometimes the imagery is a personal attack on the individual shown. Such imagery serves to undermine any new policy initiatives put forth by these leaders, and also taints their policies and rhetoric in the eyes of the greater Muslim community.

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Non-Muslim.leaders_a



Non-Muslim.leaders_b



Non-Muslim.leaders_c

Muslim Political Leaders

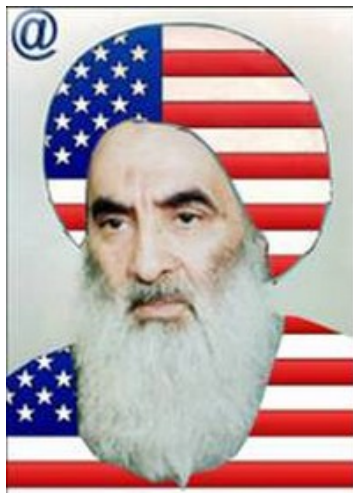
Global political leaders appear in jihadi propaganda as both foreign and local oppressors of Islam and the jihadi movement. Muslim political leaders are depicted as the main obstacles to achieving the overall goals of the jihadi enterprise—i.e. creating a state (or states) based solely on Islamic law (shariah). Leaders ranging from Syrian President Bashar al-Asad to Ayatollah Ali Sistani (both depicted in the images provided) are presented as wayward and heretical Muslims who are often puppets of the Western states. It is important to note that in Salafi jihadi ideology, no Muslim ruler is legitimate unless the territory under his control is governed solely by Islamic law. Effectively, this means that no current leader of a majority Muslim state is deemed legitimate by fundamentalist Islamic ideology. Further, since Shiites are considered heretical by fundamentalist Sunnis, all Shiite leaders (religious or political) are also considered enemies of true Islam and the jihadi movement. Thus, in order to remind their audience of these facts, and in order to undermine the authority of these leaders, jihadi groups depict these leaders as enemies and oppressors of true Islam and obstacles to jihadi success. Generally, they do this by either labeling them as such with text, or by associating them with symbols (such as the Star of David or the U.S. flag) in order to paint them as western puppets or secular tyrants.

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Muslim.leaders_a



Muslim.leaders_c



Muslim.leaders_b



Muslim.leaders_d

Martyr, general

In Islam, there is no greater sacrifice than martyrdom. To die for one's faith is the most spiritual act in the Islamic tradition, and is seen as a reward in and of itself. It is also believed that Muslim martyrs will be highly rewarded in the afterlife for their sacrifice and will hold a special station in heavenly paradise. It is not unusual, then, for martyrdom to be one of the central themes in jihadi visual propaganda, and it is used by nearly every group. Furthermore, there is a sub-genre of jihadi imagery concerned solely with martyrdom. In this latter group of images, martyrdom is advertised and praised; encouraged and celebrated. Martyrs depicted in these images generally fall into two categories: innocents those killed by enemies, and jihadi activists, who are either killed in battle or on suicide missions.

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Martyrs.gen_a



Martyrs.gen_b



Martyrs.gen_c



Martyrs.gen_d

Martyr in Frame

There are many ways to depict martyrs in jihadi visual propaganda. One common technique is on oval or round “frame.” By framing the photograph or a specific martyr, jihadi propaganda is able to evoke notions of familial sentimentality. They use this method for both innocent martyrs and those killed in action. These “portraits” are meant to remind the audience of their own family portraits, conveying the sense that these are typical men who engaged in an activity that is a reasonable option for any member of the community. While framed martyr photos are found in the propaganda of several jihadi groups, they are most commonly used by Palestinian organizations.

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Martyrs.frame_a



Martyrs.frame_b



Martyrs.frame_c

Martyr with Country

A common technique for depicting martyrs in jihadi visual propaganda is to combine a photograph of a martyr with a representation of the country in which he was killed or from which he originated. The purpose is to draw attention to the jihadi activities taking place within that country while emphasizing the oppression of the ruling powers within that country. Thus, this method both nationalizes the martyrdom and internationalizes what began as a local conflict.

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Martyr.country_a



Martyr.country_b



Martyr.country_c

Martyrs, 9/11

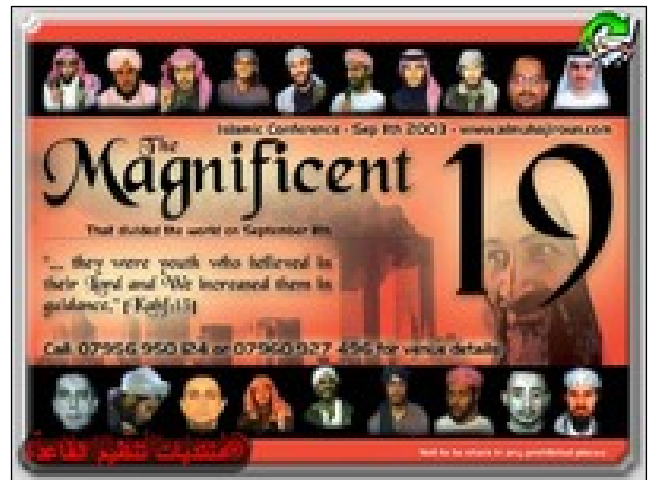
Martyrs are a source of inspiration in Islamic culture, and their images are used in visual propaganda to inspire support for jihad. Anyone killed while executing a jihadi attack is always depicted as a martyr in order to legitimize the violent act to the wider Muslim community. If a suicide bomber whose actions cause the death of innocent civilians is recognized as a martyr by the wider Muslim community, then his actions, regardless of how deplorable they may seem, become justified. In this manner, the individual activists killed in jihadi attacks become important motifs in jihadi propaganda. Perhaps the most widely used group of martyrs is those who were involved with the September 11, 2001 attacks. Depictions of this group advertise the success of jihadi activism in general, and emphasize the religious nature of the attack for all potential audiences.

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Martyr.911_a



Martyr.911_b



Martyr911_c

Martyr with Koran and Weapons

The “before shot” or “last will and testament” image is common in jihadi propaganda. These photographs, generally taken before a suicide mission to mark that event, almost always include weapons, the Koran, and other religious symbols. They combine these disparate items into a single overall message: the religious importance of martyrdom and its violent nature. These images also serve to inflate the actual power of jihadi groups and their activists. This type of imagery is most commonly used by Palestinian organizations.

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Martyr.Koran_a



Martyr.Koran_a



Martyr.Koran_c

Female Martyr

Images of female martyrs are common in jihadi visual propaganda and always evoke very intense notions of masculine pride, duty, justice, and shame. When a Muslim woman is killed by enemies or is driven to sacrifice herself through militant activism, Muslim men feel an intense sense of shame and oppression. Images of Muslim women, then, are used to both stir sympathy for the innocent victims of violent oppression, and to provoke men into responding against the perceived injustice.

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Female.martyrs_a



Female.martyrs_c



Female.martyrs_b

Women

Women hold powerful symbolic value in Islamic culture. Women symbolize masculine honor and purity, and are central to nearly every Muslim man's sense of pride. To this effect, women are a common motif in jihadi visual propaganda, and are usually depicted as either symbols of purity and honor, or as innocent victims of anti-Muslim oppression. With regards to the former, women, especially mothers (as exemplified by the image of the woman in a white shroud), are used to evoke notions of masculine pride and honor in the Muslim audience, and are used to inspire participation in jihadi activism. Women are also portrayed as innocent victims of anti-Muslim oppression and violence. In this regard, women are invoked visually to play to the powerful sentiments of masculine pride and honor in Muslim society. They serve to inspire anger against the enemy, and present a symbolic choice to Muslim men who may be vulnerable to such appeals: whether sit back and do nothing, or to join the fight and regain their honor.

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Women a



Women_c



Women_b

Children

Children are employed in jihadi imagery to evoke notions of pride, honor, and injustice. Images of living children usually include boys, and are symbols of innocence and purity. In this manner, they evoke notions of paternal pride and honor, and are symbolic of the need to protect Islam from outside harm. Images of young boys also suggest that there is a new generation of jihadi fighters on the rise, and imply that the cause will live on through these children.

Dead children (i.e. children killed by outside forces) are typically utilized to inspire feelings of injustice, anger, and ultimately to inspire the desire to retaliate against the stated enemy. To this effect, the dead children can be either male or female; both representing a powerful blow to the Muslim sense of pride, honor, and paternal responsibility.

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Children_a



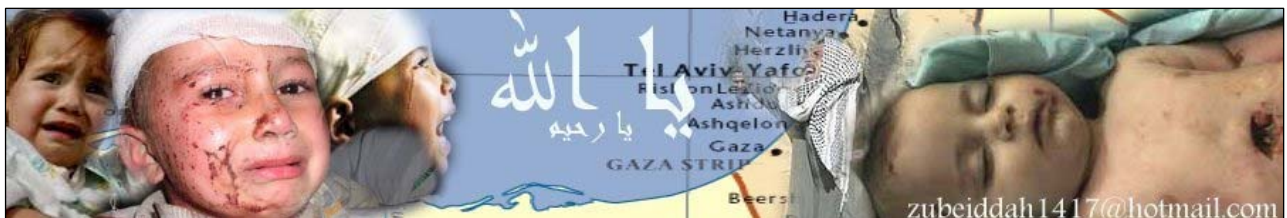
Children_c



Children_b



Children_d



Children_e

IV. WEAPONS, WARFARE & THE AFTERLIFE

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The Path of the Koran

Jihadi propagandists employ symbols and text in order to create a visual distinction between correct and incorrect Islamic belief and practice by invoking the “Path of the Koran” motif. Images which contain the Koran serve as a reminder (or admonishment) to Muslims to uphold their religious duties.

One of the examples below is split into three parts, each represented by certain symbols and colors. At the center of the image is a scale. On the left side of the scale sits a violin and an ‘ud. On the right side, which outweighs the left, sits some greenery, a white rose, and a book that indicates the Koran. The full text of the image reads: “O People of Iraq: No (to) the amusement/diversion (lahw) of stringed instruments (ma’aazif) – (yes to) the path of the Koran.” “The Path of the Koran,” is here indicated by the book itself and the white rose, which represents martyrdom. Thus this image is asking its audience (young Muslim men) to reevaluate their lives and turn from worldly pursuits (i.e. secular pastimes, here represented by the instruments) to the path of Islam. Here, the path of Islam is represented by suggestions of martyrdom (white rose) and heaven (greenery).

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Path.Koran_a



Path.Koran_b

Paradise, the Heavenly Garden

There is perhaps no greater inspiration for jihadi activists than the belief that they will be rewarded for their sacrifice by being granted entrance into the garden (*janna*) of heavenly paradise. Symbols and images may allude to paradise indirectly or directly. The word used to indicate heaven, *janna*, also means “garden” and indicates the garden of paradise that awaits those Muslims who have lived particularly just, obedient, and pious lives. *Janna* is an important and well-developed notion in Islamic discourse. It is mentioned in the Koran and is often used to describe the rewards awaiting those Muslims who have died (or will die) as martyrs. The term *janna* evokes all of the aspects associated with attaining this reward, including the accompanying *huris* (pure, virgin angels).

In the images below, the heavenly paradise motif is explicit and its message clear. In the foreground of one of the examples, two hands hold a scroll and a small branch. The scroll reads: “A Call (invitation) to Paradise (*janna*).” The Arabic word for call, *dawa*, also means invitation and is also used for the propagation and proselytization of Islam. Thus, this call is both to Islam and to the rewards that a true Muslim receives: heavenly paradise.

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Paradise_a



Paradise_b



Paradise_c

Hell for the Enemies of Jihad

The motif of *jahanam*, which means “hell” in Arabic, is often used in jihadi propaganda to discredit enemies and to emphasize the notions of good (Islam) and evil (enemies of Islam). The concept of Hell in Islam is similar to that in Christianity and Judaism. It is a place of eternal suffering and fire for the wicked, the tyrannical, and the unjust.

In one of the examples below, the concept of hell is used to boast about the deaths of what are represented as two American soldiers. The text of the image reads the same in both Arabic and English, literally: “They went to Hell.” The notion of hell and the gruesome pictures serves as propaganda against the Coalition Forces, and they are an attempt to boast of jihadi victories. It also serves to bolster the resolve and reinforce the religious righteousness of the anti-occupational jihadi insurgency. By labeling dead Coalition soldiers as people who are destined for Hell, the jihadi cause (i.e. those who brought about the death of these soldiers) is presented as the righteous side of the conflict.

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Hell_a



Hell_b

**The Black Flag
(*al-riya*)**

The Black Flag (*al-riya*) traces its roots to the very beginning of Islam. It was the battle (*jiha*d) flag of the Prophet Muhammad, carried into battle by many of his companions, including his nephew ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. The flag regained prominence in the 8th century with its use by the leader of the Abbasid revolution, Abu Muslim, who led a revolt against the Umayyad clan and its’ Caliphate. The Umayyads, the ruling establishment of the Islamic world at the time, were seen as greedy, gluttonous, and religiously wayward leaders. The Abbasid revolution, then, was aimed at installing a new, more properly Islamic ruling house that would keep orthodox Islam at the center of its regime. Since then, the image of the black flag has been used as a symbol of religious revolt and battle (i.e. *jiha*d). In Shiite belief, the black flag also evokes expectations about the afterlife. In the contemporary Islamist movement, the black flag is used to symbolize both offensive *jiha*d and the proponents of reestablishing the Islamic Caliphate.

In the primary example, we see a picture of the black flag (*al-riya*) superimposed on a map of the world. On the flag is the *shaha*da, or the Muslim decree of faith, and at the bottom of the image there is a line in Arabic script that reads: “Assembly of the Fleet-Footed (i.e. *jiha*d fighters)” (*muntada al-safinat*). In the background of much of the right side is a masked *jiha*d fighter looking onward. This image clearly suggests a global *jiha*d aim. That is, with the black flag covering the entire globe, the one who views this image recognizes that the banner of revolt and battle (*al-riya*) has been raised over the entire globe, which advocates an offensive *jiha*d in all parts of the globe.

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Black.flag_a



Black.flag_b



Black.flag_c

Weapons, pre-modern

Weapons are symbolically important in Islamic culture and are commonly used as motifs in jihadi visual propaganda. Depictions of weapons can be broadly categorized as either modern or pre-modern. Pre-modern weaponry includes swords or spears, and is used to suggest the violent reality of the jihadi struggle. These images also link jihadi struggle to early Islamic history and the first generation of Muslims. Swords are seen as noble weapons that embody the purity, nobility, and overall righteousness that is associated with early Islamic heroes and their jihadi campaigns. Therefore, depictions of the sword indicate a desire to link the current jihadi movement and its aims to those of the early Islamic ancestors, and to thus legitimize and depict current jihadi activities as the modern extensions of successful early Islamic jihadi campaigns.

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Premodern.weapons_a



Premodern.weapons_b



Premodern.weapons_c

Weapons, modern

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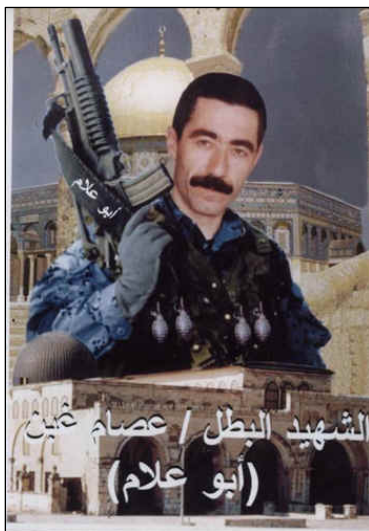
Modern weapons, such as rifles and RPGs, illustrate the violent nature of jihadi warfare and also exaggerate the power of the jihadists' military technology. Modern weapons evoke modern jihadi victories (or perceived victories) such as the expulsion of the Soviets from Afghanistan. In this manner, modern weapons embody the inherent capacity of the jihadi movement to overcome and defeat the West, using the latter's own military technology. Modern weapons are also used by jihadi soldiers and martyrs to associate themselves with violent jihadi activism and construct their identities as participants in jihad. Including a weapon in the photograph of individuals suggests heroic participation in the violent side of jihadi activism.



Modern.weapons_a



Modern.weapons_b



Modern.weapons_c



Modern.weapons_d

Weapon Combination

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Weapons may be used in different combinations, or presented in different ways, to evoke more complex sentiments. An example of this is the combination motif, which combines pre-modern and modern weapons. By combining a sword and a rifle with other symbols, both the connotations of pre-modern Islamic history and modern jihadi successes are evoked. In this manner, swords can be used to give modern weapons (such as rifles or RPGs) a nobler connotation, and link them to Salafi notions of the Prophet's companions and their successful (and religiously legitimate) jihadi campaigns.

Weapons.comb_a



Weapons.comb_b



Weapons Crossed

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Weapons can also be used in different combinations, or presented in different ways, to evoke more complex sentiments. One of these methods is the “crossed” motif. It is employed by various groups throughout the Muslim world, and is usually done with swords, rifles, and RPGs. While this motif evokes all of the meanings associated with each weapon used, it is also used more generally to suggest a group’s participation in, or espousal of, the contemporary jihadi movement.



Weapons.crossed_a



Weapons.crossed_b



Weapons.crossed_c



Weapons.crossed_d

Bloody Sword

Blood symbolizes violence, martyrdom, sacrifice, injustice, tyranny, oppression, and victory in battle.

In the example below, blood drips from the sword of a jihadi fighter, evoking both the literal violence inherent in the jihadi struggle and the possibilities of a military victory. The blood emphasizes the strength and power of the jihadi fighter and affords him an inflated stature (that of a strong, successful warrior). The jihadi fighter's sword, shield, and garments also connect him (and thus the greater jihadi struggle) to notions of the Islamic past, especially to the first generation of Muslims and their success in jihad. Thus, blood dripping from a sword, as seen in this image, has strong Salafi connotations.

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Bloody.sword_a

Blood with Martyr and Country

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In the example below, blood is used to symbolize the sacrifice and the martyrdom of a jihadi fighter. That the blood is “spilled” over Saudi Arabia both indicates where the fighter was martyred but it also speaks to the oppression and tyranny of the Saudi regime vis-à-vis their relationship to the radical Islamic movement in their country.



Blood.Martyr.Country_a

Blood on Desert

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In this image, blood is shown spilled on a shield and the ground. It suggests the sacrifice that jihad entails and alludes to the goal of martyrdom for jihadi fighters. That the blood is shown on the desert ground is significant for two reasons: 1) It speaks to the active jihad in Iraq, while also making this movement broader and thus more inclusive to a non-Iraqi, sympathetic Muslim audience. 2) It evokes the deep historical traditions related to Muslim jihad campaigns in early Islamic history. The sword and the shield, which are both symbols of pre-modern Islam, have Salafi connotations and remind Muslims that jihad requires sacrifice.



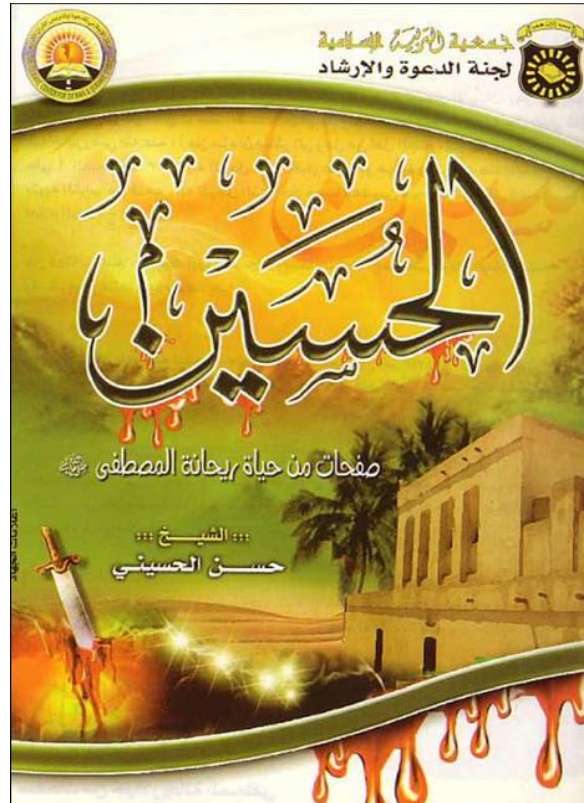
Blood.desert_a

Bloody Text

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Text dripping with blood, or “bleeding text”, is a common motif in jihadi imagery. In this particular image, we see the name “Husayn” dripping with blood. This image has a particular meaning to Shiites in that it references the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn. In this regard, the blood also symbolizes the oppression, tyranny, and injustice surrounding the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn and his companions in the 7th century, as well as of the general oppression of Shiites under Sunni regimes. While the blood glorifies Husayn’s martyrdom specifically, it also glorifies martyrdom in general.



Bloody.text_a



Bloody.text_b

V. OTHER

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Colors

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Hands

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Black

The color black is a very significant color in the Islamic tradition. It is linked to both the battle flag of Muhammad (al-rawa) and to the medieval Abbasid Caliphate. In this sense, it most often represents jihad and the caliphate, evoking a historical sense of both concepts. Black is also used to show religious adherence and strict piety in both the Sunni and Shiite traditions. For instance, both the Taliban and the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasize the wearing of black turbans specifically, and black clothing in general, for religious students and clergy. In jihadi imagery the color black is usually employed to emphasize the importance (or occurrence) of jihad and evokes sentiments regarding the perceived need to re-establish the Sunni caliphate.

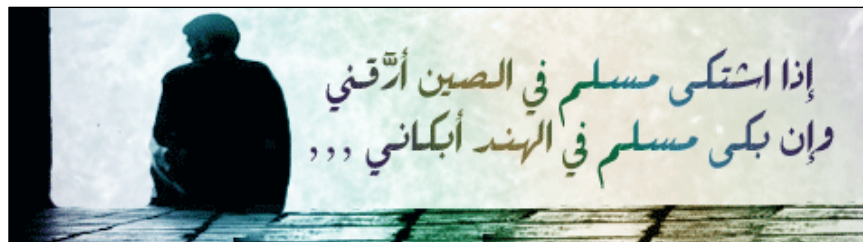
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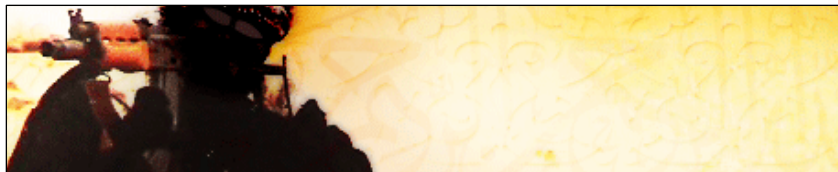
Black_a



Black_b



Black_c



Blue

The color blue has multiple, diverse, and complicated meanings in Islamic tradition. In jihadi imagery, blue is most often used to evoke a sense of hope and heavenly paradise. It is usually used in conjunction with the color white to amplify both of these sentiments. Blue can be employed as a graphic image (i.e. not a photograph) or as a realistic background (e.g. a bright blue sky).

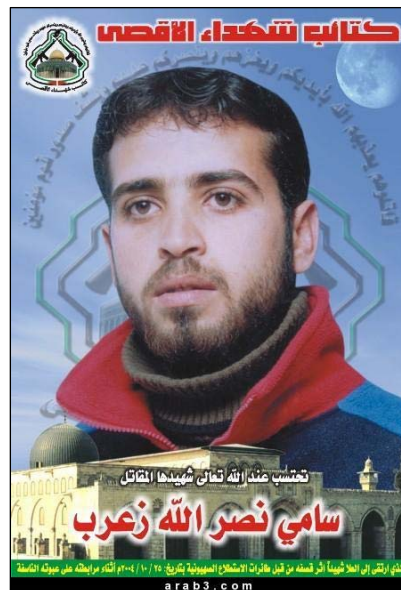
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In the example below, the color blue is used to illustrate beams of sunlight. The use of blue in this manner evokes a strong sense of hope in the jihad (as represented by the horse with rider and sword), which is further emphasized by the text which reads: “the power of jihad” in Arabic.



Blue_a



Blue_b

Green

The color green in Islamic tradition is always linked to the Prophet Muhammad, and is therefore synonymous with Islam itself. It is used ubiquitously throughout the Islamic world, as well as in jihadi imagery, to indicate the Prophet specifically and Islam in general.

In the primary example, below at left, Iraq is colored green. This indicates to the viewer that Iraq is, first and foremost, an Islamic land (i.e. not secular, not multi-cultural, and not multi-confessional). While the act of “coloring” a state (or a flag, an individual, or a symbol) green, may seem simple and of little consequence, it should be remembered that the color green is deeply significant to all sectors of the Islamic world, and the act of “coloring” specific symbols green is an overtly political and explicitly Islamic statement.

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Green_a



Green_b

Red

Red can have many meanings in the Islamic tradition; however its usage in jihadi imagery is generally simple and straightforward. It most often represents blood, war (and thus jihad), tyranny, oppression, defeat, and victory. Similar to the western traditions, it is the color of danger, and it evokes violence in both positive (i.e. pro-jihadi) and negative (i.e. anti-jihadi/Islamic) forms.

In the images selected, the color red is used to emphasize the death, violent oppression, and torture endured by Iraqis at the hands of Americans. The first image does this by showing a map of Iraq colored red (as if with blood), and suggests in Arabic that Iraq is the place of martyrdom due to “American hellfire.”

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In the next image, red is used to indicate American oppression and the mistreatment of Iraqis by Americans at Abu Ghraib. The Arabic text emphasizes this as well, simply stating “the story of a captive of the crusaders (i.e. Americans)”.



Red a



Red b



Red c



Red d

White

The color white in the Islamic tradition can have many meanings depending on the context and genre; however, in jihadi imagery it is almost always used to symbolize purity, piety, and religious authority.

In the first image selected, the color white is used to indicate both the spiritual and moral purity of the Muslim mother. Here the mother is being used as a symbol of honor and duty in relation to the jihad and the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom.

In the next image, the color white is used to evoke a sense of piety, purity, and religious authority in reference to Ahmad Yassin, the “martyred” spiritual leader of Hamas. The West Bank is “colored” with those qualities, and linked spiritually and politically to the authority and teachings of Ahmad Yassin.

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White_a



White_b



Hands Raised in Prayer

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There is a lot of symbology surrounding hand gestures in Islamic culture. Perhaps none are more significant, culturally and religiously, than hands raised with palms toward ones face, in an act of prayer. Prayer in Islam involves particular gestures and movements, and raising hands toward the face is one of its more recognizable features. In the image selected, four sets of hands are seen facing the viewer. This is an overt reference to Islamic prayer, and thus to Islam. The other motifs in the image—the red roses and the white crescent—combine with the Arabic text to articulate a specifically Islamic response to the Iraqi occupation, and to evoke the expectation of martyrdom.

Hands.raised_a



Hands.raised_b



Bloody Hands

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Bloody or bleeding hands are usually associated with an item or a gesture: e.g. a bloody hand holding a flag or sword and a bloody hand pointing or represented as a raised fist. The element of blood is highly symbolic in Islamic cultures, and often imbues the motif of bloody hands with added meaning and can evoke historical events. In the images selected, bloody hands are represented in two different ways: 1) holding the white flag, and 2) erupting from the ground and shackles with finger pointing upward. Both of these images highlight the inherent violence of the jihadi struggle, and provide a reminder that the struggle comes at a cost. Both motifs also suggest sacrifice and the duty of martyrdom in the jihadi cause.

Bloody.hands_a



Bloody.hands_b



Clasped Hands, Unity

Hands can often be used as symbols of Islamic unity within both the greater Muslim community and among specific jihadi activists and groups.

The first of the sample images was created by al-Qaeda. The hands clasped in a handshake are a symbol of unity between al-Qaeda and the greater jihadi movement. In this manner, the image is able to connect the concerns and activities of al-Qaeda with those of other jihadi groups and Muslim entities.

In the second image, several hands are clasped together in a team-like manner. Notice that each arm in the image seems to represent a slightly different race or, at the very least, skin color. This is an attempt to show a greater, pan-Islamic unity between Sunni Muslim peoples of all types. Images like this, attempt to internationalize, or “pan-Islamicize,” specific, nationally-based jihadi conflicts. This one, produced by the Salah al-Din Brigade, relates to Iraq and the Iraqi insurgency.

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Clasped.hands_a

Clasped.hands_b



Hand representing the power of the community

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References to divine assistance and intervention speak of the jihadists' sincere belief that they are agents of God's will, doing God's work. While some of these references are oblique, others are explicit and employ motifs such as the hand to illustrate their point. In the larger of the images below, a hand grasps the wrist of another, seemingly pulling the latter to safety, or at least preventing him from falling. The text of the image states: "The Hand of the Powerful: delivering Iraq from the occupation." The text of the second image is the beginning of the shahada, the declaration of faith. Both of these images suggest the power of a unified Muslim community.



Hand_a



Hand_b

Translations

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Sun.fig_a	[Logo of the GSPC] Fight them until there is no more discord and all of religion is for God alone / Rule/governance is for God alone / the Sunnah / The Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)
Sun.fig_b	[Flag with there is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God] / Fight the unbeliever with steadfastness (?)
Sun.fig_c	We are following your path [picture of Khalid Ayyash aka the Engineer]
Sun.lit_a	The new generation of mujahid ... holding strong to his rifle
Sun.lit_b	Hand in hand with ... The Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance (JAMI)
Sun.lit_c	[no text]
moon.gen_a	The martyr `Ahid Faris -- 8/22/2001
moon.gen_b	[Qur'an 5:23] [They said:] "Assault them at the (proper) Gate: when once ye are in, victory will be yours; But on Allah put your trust if ye have faith."
white.cres_a	God help us and free our country
white.cres_b	The Abha network for (da'wa) calling people to Islam
white.cres.sky_a	[calligraphy in background]
green.cres_a	There is no god but God... the Hasan al-Basri Brigades
water.drop_a	(JAMI) God's gift / for the sincere children of Iraq
water.drop_b	(Logo of GIMF) 39 ways to serve the jihad and mujahideen in the way of God. By Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Salim
body.water_a	[Top banner: there is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God ... group for monotheism and jihad (jama'at al-tawhid wa'l-jihad) [under the flags: squadron/company of Tawhid wa'l-jihad]
body.water_b	The horse of jihad / waiting for the lover of paradise [to ride] on its back.
Waterfall_a	(JAMI) Supremacy and purity... power and awareness / on the way of the blessed jihad
Waterfall_b	O the spirit of my heart

Note: JAMI is al-Jabhah al-Islamiyyah li'l-Muqawwimah al-'Iraqiyyah (The Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance)

Water.fig_a	[no text]
Flowers.gen_a	<p>God punish the Arab and foreign [here, Iranian] tyrants God punish their leaders and ministers God punish their members of parliament and officers and soldiers God punish their intelligence services God punish their press and institutions God kill them and scatter them God tear them to pieces God chop them into many parts God make their minds and thoughts and plans absent God stop the blood in their veins God take away their women and wealth God disgrace them and put fear in their hearts God ruin their homes and make their children orphans God take them, they have no power over you O powerful, O Almighty, O He who hears our prayers</p>
Flowers.gen_b	The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: Life is pleasant, and the best thing about life is a good wife.
Flowers.gen_b	On Abu Umr, on Abu `Umra bin Sufyan bin Abd `Allah God be pleased with him said: "I said: ...O prophet of God, tell me something about Islam I cannot ask anyone but you. He said: say: I believe in God, so straighten up your act".
White.rose_a	God / And God has the most beautiful names, so pray to them
White.rose_b	(JAMI) / Oh People of Iraq / No / [on right scale:] the way of the Qur'an / [on left scale:] amusement and playing music
Red.rose_a	Biographies of the pioneering martyrs / The lion of Falujah: Omar Hadeed
Red.rose_b	The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: Be good to women.
Palm.tree_a	From the palms of Iraq / and under its skies / it calls: come to jihad
Palm.tree_b	In the name of God, the most Merciful, the most Beneficent [Qur'an 9:111] Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Qur'an: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah. then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme.
Palm.tree_c	[Qur'an 3:169] 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 are with God's gift for them and they are awaiting for those living pursuing a similar path [martyrdom], who have no fear or sadness in their hearts / The newly married, brave martyr / Abu Sa`eed al-Qurtishani
pleased	

Greenery_a	God brought down the book ... controls the clouds / defeater of the parties [the infidels] / help our brothers in Iraq and Palestine and all Muslim countries...
Greenery_b	(JAMI) / Invitation to paradise
Mountains.lit_a	There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God / to whoever fears jihad and fears the martyrs' death
Mountains.fig_a	[Eid greetings from Osama bin Laden] The blessed `Eid al-Fitr / dedicated to the mujahid shaykh Usamah bin Ladin / and to the Mujahideen everywhere / your brother Shahab al-Yamani ma'ab (?).
Mountains.fig_b	Caravans of Martyrs / Hamza al-Qatari / God be pleased with him
Sandy.desert_a	Al-Usamah (the lion) Usamah / There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God
Sandy.desert_b	Jihad / continuing until the day of judgment / Islamic media center By Abu Hudaifa al-Shami
Rocky.desert_a	[Logo:] Kata'ib Salah al-deen (the brigades of Saladin). / Whoever leaves jihad, God will make his fate disgraceful
Lion.gen_a	The lion of Islam
Lion.fig_a	The lion of the two rivers [Iraq] / Shaykh al-Mujahid / Abu Anas al-Shami, God be pleased with him / the forums of al-Qaeda
Lion.leaders_a	God is great / [Qur'an 33:23:] Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah, of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait: but they have never changed (their determination) in the least.
Lion.lit&fig_a	There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God / Khattab / Lion of Chechnya, lion of the battlefield
Horse.gen_a	There is no way to victory except jihad
Horse.gen_b	O horse of God / ride me / [banner saving] There is no god but God
Horse.herd_a	Horses bring good until the day of Judgment / Abu `abd al-Malik
Horse.herd_b	The al-Bukhari Islamic Network / [banner:] There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God
Horse.rider.jihadi_a	May God reward you, O shaykh who answers the call to jihad [CDH Comments: Hayya `ala al-jihad is taken from Hayya `ala Salah (come to prayer) repeated in the adhan, or call to prayer, and is in large red print in this image]... spreading the good word ... and meanwhile the forsaken laid down [surrendered]

Horse.rider.bl.flag_a	[Written on banner in at top right:] There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God / [at bottom:] Jihad
Horse.rider.bl.flag_b	[no text]
Horse.rider.bl.flag_c	Jihad: your path to eternity
Horse.rider.wh.flag_a	Red text: We cry out for the lion's help from every place / they walk to the battleground whether they are young or old / lions who are made to fight and reject the dishonorable life / and proudly wear death to their graves. [Logo:] Kata'ib Salah al-deen (Saladin Brigades)
Horse.rider.sword_a	Jihad
Horse.rider.sword_b	The company/squadron (mil.) of the brotherhood open its main site on the brotherhood network / here in the company of the brotherhood / a shining word ... a glistening portrait ... a striking movement / the company of the brotherhood calls you to three featured themes of action and hope / set out with us on a journey of action and hope to which there are no limits
White.horse_a	The martyr `Ahid Faris -- 8/22/2001
White.horse_b	The brave martyr Usamah al-Jawabarah
Falcon_a	[map of Palestine] `Atif `Ubayan Abu Hussain / My homeland taught me everything / It also taught me that the letters of history themselves can be false if not written with blood. [poem by Moudhaffer al-Nawab, Iraqi]
Eagle_a	The commander al-Zarqawi, God protect him / The falcon of Iraq and the volcano of jihad and the headchopper
Snake_a	Soon we will be pleased to announce the ceremony of crushing the head of / [Large text:] The Occupation
Snake_b	[no text]
Camel_a	Caravan of Kata'ib Salah al-deen (the Brigades of Saladin) / calling the children of Iraq to join it
Camel_b	There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God [in background] / [I believe Qur'anic verses on bottom of logo – difficult to read]
Dove_a	Don't despair, God is with us / God will protect you, Oh people of Iraq!
Dove_b	Fly, don't walk! [i.e. become a martyr]
Storms_a	(JAMI) The coming Islamic hurricane [hurricane=cyclone=tornado] / from the land of the two rivers [Iraq]
Storms_b	(JAMI) Thunder and lightning / in the face of the occupation / and tomorrow succor (also rain) will come God willing

Storms_c	The hurricane / from the junud al-jabbar (troops of the almighty)
Globe.lit_a	The group of al-Qaeda [probably referring to those that have died, pictured] / we did not forget you even if much time passes by / Expel the polytheists from the Arabian peninsula [twice]
Globe.lit_b	[cannot read... the jihad of Algeria] Issue number 4 , Rajab 1420 hijrah / He is a tyrant, so warn him / There is no escape from jihad / the martyrs of America [the 19 on 9/11] / I hope ... Oh Islamic people of North Africa, this is your day! [TC: this is the cover of issue 4 of GSPC's journal "al-jama'ah", there are a total of 6 issues posted on their website]
Globe.lit_c	The voice of the Caucasus / presents...
Globe.fig_a	Our ideology and our program / Al-Qaeda in Iraq / The legal (shar'iah) body of al-Qaeda in Iraq
Globe.fig_b	There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God / Jabha al-`Ilamiyyah al-Islamiyyah al-`Alamiyyah (The Global Islamic Media Front)
States.gen_a	Expel the polytheists from the Arabian peninsula / Pleasing my lord is my goal, chopping heads is my hobby
States.gen_b	Believe ... God answers the oppressed / if you call him, he will answer
States.gen_c	Chechnya / Sorrow and Sadness / Do not be stingy with them [if you have nothing else to give them] pray for them
State.battleflag_a	A caravan / O horse of God, ride me [to paradise]
State.battleflag_b	The coming state (nation) of the Khilafah [Caliphate] / to rule the world
Afghanistan_a	[no text]
Afghanistan_b	To shaykh Imam al-mujahid `Abd `Allah Azzam
Afghanistan_c	[no text]
Afghanistan_d	The estranged [i.e. the mujahideen] / Victory or martyrdom
Iraq_a	There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God / Al-Jabhah al-Islamiyyah al-`Ilamiyyah al-`Alamiyyah (The Global Islamic Media Front) / [you have come back to Iraq] for your torture
Iraq_b	A series / An [in-depth] reading of the letters of Usamah bin Ladin / to the children of Iraq / tajdeed website
Iraq_c	The al-Firdaus [part of paradise] jihadist forums / For the people of jihad and their supporters

Italy_a	Qur'an 24:55 Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion - the one which He has chosen for them / [in circle:] The caliphate / [banner: There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God / [bottom text illegible, possibly a hadith]
Kashmir_a	[no text]
Kashmir_b	text of places on the map only
Kashmir_c	Patience beloved Kashmir / Patience O Kashmir patience
Kuwait_a	The rescue of Kuwait / is my hope
Palestine_a	[Picture of Ahmad Yasin]
Palestine_b	Day of loyalty to the blessed Masjid al-Aqsa / If they sell their consciences, we sell our life to al-Aqsa / light comes after the dark to tell the stories of the aggressors and the brokers [of the land]
Palestine_c	I remember the outset of the revolution / 39 years /
Saudi_a	The Islamic tajdeed (renewal) organization /
Saudi_b	An introductory series with / Dr. Shaykh Muhammad al-Mass`ari / ten parts
Saudi_c	A letter from Shaykh al-mujahid Usamah bin Ladin to the children of the Haramain (Saudi Arabia)
White.flag_a	Qur'an 3: 169-171
White.flag_b	Preparing for jihad / published by Global Islamic Media Center / prepared and organized by Abu Qa`qa`
Green.flag.gen_a	We love you O Usamah / America is digging its grave with its left hand as Osama already disabled its right hand
Green.flag.gen_b	[Saudi flag]
Green.flag.gen_c	Liberation / Gaza [on flag]
Saudi.flag_a	Saudi flag [There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God]
Saudi.flag_b	Guardian of the Crusaders [TC: pun on Khadim al-Haramain, the king's official title, Guardian of the two holy shrines]
Saudi.flag_c	The House of Sa'ud [on flag: kingdom of hypocrisy]/ doesn't represent us

Comb.flags_a	<i>Shahada</i> , to declare the Muslim testimony of faith, secondary meaning: to become a <i>shahid</i> , or martyr.
Comb.flags_b	(JAMI) [unintelligible] / Signs of victory in the Iraqis' jihad / Iraq and Palestine / One [unified] theater of jihad
American.flag_a	We reject the occupation / by the edge of the sword / and the picture tells the story
American.flag_b	The Battle of Badr at Riyadh series / in more than ten parts
American.flag_c	American coffins
American.flag_d	The media section of the Islamic Army in Iraq / presents / The fifth part / Today and Tomorrow, O ... (leading to picture of American flags with flames)
Stars.stripes_a	A story of a prisoner in the custody of the crusaders
Stars.stripes_b	Martyr of duty
Amer.flag.star.david_a	[no text]
Amer.flag.star.david_b	They kill us ... with our own wealth / Boycott them! / Boycott American and Zionist products
Amer.flag.star.david_c	God make them steadfast and make straight their aim and solve their grievances and concerns and shake the earth under the feet of their enemies
Star.david_a	Liberation ... Gaza
Star.david_b	Rebellion [<i>Rafida</i> --term used for the Shi'a] is a new religion
Brit.flag_a	Police raid [on the] Islamic Revival Radio / number 6011
Brit.flag_b	Historical series / no fewer than 10 parts / The history of the House of Sa'ud's rule in the Arabian Peninsula
Foreign.currency_a	(JAMI) On Abu Huraira, God be pleased with him / A man came and said O Prophet of God, a man wants to make jihad in the way of God yet he seeks material wealth. So the Prophet said, God will not reward him. The man asked three times, and all three times Muhammad replied, there will be no reward for him.
Foreign.currency_b	The response to the scholars of the Sultan / expel them from power / Islamic Renewal recordings / copyrighted material / and God bless anyone who spreads the message [of this tape]
Holy.places_a	Al-Aqsa is in danger / What is going to happen?! / Follow us...
Dome.rock_a	The martyr Yasir Sultan

Dome.rock_b	Lovers of al-Aqsa / My prayer and worship and my life and my death are for the Lord of Worlds
Dome.rock_c	My rifle, soul and longing, I brought it to you today as a dowry, O Jerusalem
Al-Aqsa_a	[no text]
Al-Aqsa_b	The Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas / proudly announced the condolences of the death of / its mujahid martyr / Hani Majid Abu'l-`Umrain /
Kaaba_a	26 years of jihad and calling people to Islam /
Kaaba_b	Take it easy Usamah! / By the voice of the mujahid martyr (God willing) `Amir Khalif al-`Anzari, God be pleased with him
Kaaba_c	The pilgrims calling to the sacred House of God / for the year 1425 hijrah
Defeats_a	[no text]
Defeats_b	Falujah / The third battle of Badr
Defeats_c	Falujah / Scenes of the crusader raid on the of the Muslims of Falujah
Victories_a	Series / Commentary on the events of September 11
Victories_b	When you aimed it was not your aim but God's
Victories_c	Soon, God willing, we will issue the book / America was ruined / By Abu Jindal al-Azdi
Victories_d	We praised God for the day he made us victorious / when we destroyed the USS Cole in the sea
Victories_e	[no text]
People_a	Ahmad Yasin / in God's care
People_b	If I am a Muslim I do not care in what manner I will be killed / however they will kill me, I am on the side of God / the al-Qaeda forums
People_c	Abu Mus`ab al-Suri / among the brightest minds of al-Qaeda ... The American government placed a 5 million dollar reward on his capture / A gathering with Saudi youth / among the most dangerous talks about the situation the land of the two holy shrines [Saudi Arabia] and the future of the jihadi movement
People_d	Commander of the Faithful [title of the Caliph] / Mullah Omar / long-term vision
People_e	Al-Zawahiri / Leader of the blessed generation /God protect him
Jihadi.op.leaders_a	The commander al-Zarqawi, God protect him / The falcon of Iraq and the volcano of jihad and the headchopper

Jihadi.op.leaders_b	We love you O Osama / America is digging its grave with its left hand as Osama already disabled its right hand
Jihadi.op.leaders_c	Jihad / until the Day of Judgment /
Jihadi.op.leaders_d	[In Background:] There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God
Bin.Laden_a	Al-Firdaus presents: A film on military training for the mujahideen
Bin.Laden_b	A letter from the mujahid Shaykh Osama bin Ladin / to the children of Iraq
Bin.Laden_c	O horse of God, ride me
Khattab_a	Abu Salih – the rebel Khattab
Khattab_b	Chechnya / The Russians are digging their grave with the left hand, because Khattab disabled their right hand
Khattab_c	N/A
Non-Muslim.leaders_a	N/A
Non-Muslim.leaders_b	N/A
Non-Muslim.leaders_c	We will bring security to the world ... safety and security?!
Muslim.leaders_a	[This is a eulogy for King Fahd, probably created by the Saudi government] / Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines / God be pleased with him
Muslim.leaders_b	[About the oppressor, cannot read first word]
Muslim.leaders_c	N/A
Muslim.leaders_d	No comment!
Martyrs.gen_a	The hero / Khalid al-Islambouli / The al-Qaeda forums
Martyrs.gen_b	One of the martyred children who were assassinated by the Zionist forces in the Jenin camp and now they are at rest – 14/2/2002
Martyrs.gen_c	The martyr / Osama Abu Khalil
Martyrs.gen_d	`Abd al-`Aziz al-Muqrin / I took an oath to live with dignity ... or my bones should be crushed
Martyrs.frame_a	N/A
Martyrs.frame_b	[Top right:] al-Jazeera exclusive / The Hani Hanjour company / destroyer of the American terrorist center – the pentagon

Martyrs.frame_c	The leader of al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade / Haythem Abu al-Naja
Martyr.country_a	`Abd al-`Aziz bin `Isa al-Muqrin / Lion of Islam / God be pleased with him and accept him among His martyrs / the al-Qaeda forums
Martyr.country_b	The al-Qaeda forums
Martyr.country_c	In eulogy / `Abd al-`Aziz al-Muqrin / [top right banner:] There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God
Martyr.911_a	al-Jazeera exclusive // to America, stop supporting the cowardly Jews / the martyr Abu `Abbas al-Janubi / the al-Qaeda forums
Martyr.911_b	N/A
Martyr.911_c	The martyrs of New York and Washington attacks [19 pictured with names]
Martyr.Koran_a	N/A
Martyr.Koran_b	N/A
Martyr.Koran_c	N/A
Female.martyrs_a	[no text]
Female.martyrs_b	Loyalists (Fath) continuously giving / from Dalal al-Magrabi to ... / and the revolution continues
Female.martyrs_c	[Hamis Islamic Slogans throughout image]
Women_a	(JAMI) Your prayers O my mother / Illuminating the path of jihad and bringing victory close
Women_b	Uncle `Izza al-Deen tales about Jerusalem / by Walid al-Hudali
Children_a	The Prophet said: ... and there will be a Caliphate in the way of prophethood [as described by the Prophet]
Children_b	Chechnya, land of Islam
Children_c	N/A
Children_d	God be our savior
Children_e	O Allah! O Merciful!
Path.Koran_a	(JAMI) / Oh People of Iraq / No / [on right scale:] the way of the Qur'an / [on left scale:] amusement and playing music
Path.Koran_b	Audience participation

Paradise_a	Invitation to paradise
Paradise_b	<p>God punish the Arab and foreign [here, Iranian] tyrants God punish their leaders and ministers God punish their members of parliament and officers and soldiers God punish their intelligence services God punish their press and institutions God kill them and scatter them God tear them to pieces God chop them into many parts God make their minds and thoughts and plans absent God stop the blood in their veins God take away their women and wealth God disgrace them and put fear in their hearts God ruin their homes and make their children orphans God take them, they have no power over you O powerful, O Almighty, O He who hears our prayers</p>
Paradise_c	(JAMI) Supremacy and purity... power and awareness / on the way of the blessed jihad
Hell_a	They went to hell
Hell_b	[no text]
Black.flag_a	The al-Safinat forums
Black.flag_b	N/A
Black.flag_c	N/A
Premodern.weapons_a	N/A
Premodern.weapons_b	[The battle of] Yarmuk / Book by: Kamal Mahmoud / Drawings by: Laith `Adnan
Premodern.weapons_c	The al-Qaeda network
Modern.weapons_a	Announcement of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (FATH) and the al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade in Palestine for their brave martyr / `Allam `Abd al-Latif Mustafa al-Qaniri / who became a martyr defending the Jenin camp on 9/4/2002
Modern.weapons_b	The Global Islamic Media Front / And the ground shook under their feet /A GIMF Flash Production / There is no god but God / Muhammad is the messenger of God /
Modern.weapons_c	The brave martyr `Isim Ghaban / (Abu `Allam)

Modern.weapons_d	The Islamic Media Center / Afghanistan: the longing and musk and blood of a martyr - we will never forget
Weapons.comb_a	In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful / Peace and blessing be upon the leader of the mujahideen / the poison and gas training session
Weapons.comb_b	The mujahideen Army
Weapons.crossed_a	[on crests:] Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman, Ali / There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God /
Weapons.crossed_b	The Army of Ansar al-Islam [the supporters of Islam] / The mind will not accept any weakness coming from any response / the beautiful blood [of a martyr] has shown me all the paths to proceed
Weapons.crossed_c	Al-Ansar [the supporters] /
Weapons.crossed_d	God support the mujahideen in every place / Strengthen their resolve and give them the spoils of war, and be with them, O God
Bloody.sword_a	Tawhid [monotheism] and Jihad company
Blood.Martyr.Country_a	In eulogy / `Abd al-`Aziz al-Muqrin / [top right banner:] There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God
Blood.desert_a	[Logo:] Kata'ib Salah al-deen (the brigades of Saladin). / Whoever leaves jihad, God will make his fate disgraceful
Bloody.text_a	Al-Hussain / Shaykh Hasan al-Hussain / Pages from the life of ...
Bloody.text_b	The letter of Fatimah, God be pleased with her
Black_a	The group of ... Harsh with the al-maslul [unsheathing, the nickname of Khalid bin Walid] / Cutting the necks of the tyrants
Black_b	If a Muslim in China complained, it would trouble me / If a Muslim in India cried, I would cry
Black_c	N/A
Blue_a	Glory in jihad
Blue_b	The al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade / We present to God / Sami Nasr Allah Za`rab
Green_a	N/A
Green_b	The Islamic revival (tajdeed) organization / Series on the Manifesto / Explaining the manifesto / In more than 5 parts!
Red_a	Scenes from the Americans' hell in the Islamic Iraq

Red_b	There is no god but God / the Hasan al-Basri brigades
Red_c	Iraq's cry for help / A GIMF flash production
Red_d	Lions behind bars / From the anger of a rebellion that will not calm down / My brother is under fire, a prisoner of the infidels / Rescue me from imprisonment
White_a	(JAMI) Your prayers O my mother / Illuminating the path of jihad and bringing victory close
White_b	Ahmad Yasin / In God's care
Hands.raised_a	God support us and free our country
Hands.raised_b	Ramadan
Bloody.hands_a	Qur'an 3:169-171
Bloody.hands_b	[no text]
Clasped.hands_a	There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God /the Islamic campaign against tyrants / hand in hand with the mujahideen
Clasped.hands_b	[Logo:] The brigades of Salah al-Deen / Hand in hand they vow to hold firm to their positions, steady and true
Hand_a	(JAMI) The most powerful hand [is al-Jami`] / to rescue Iraq from the occupation
Hand_b	There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God [TC: pointing the right finger, as a Muslim does when he makes <i>shahada</i>]

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Further Readings

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Radical Islam and the Jihadi Movement

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The Combating Terrorism Center

Department of Social Sciences
United States Military Academy at West Point

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