

Searching for the Next al-Qaeda:
Why and How Hizb-ut-Tahrir Was Framed

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Searching for the Next al-Qaeda: Why and How Hizb-ut-Tahrir Was Framed

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This study examines the correlation made by United States policy institutes, foreign governments, and international media between al-Qaeda and Hizb-ut-Tahrir's (HT) potential for terrorism in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001.² These arguments are compared with the membership structure, ideological base, and establishment of both HT and al-Qaeda. In this analysis, evidence points to the inherent differences between the groups and the high unlikelihood that HT will resort to violence or terrorism in the near future. After establishing these conclusions, potential issues in analysis bias are discussed.

After the unexpected and tragic events of September 11, 2001, United States policymakers, Intelligence Community members, and research institutes were very concerned not just about future al-Qaeda attacks, but also which group may be on a “conveyor belt” to al-Qaeda, or more generally, terrorism against the United States and its interests.³ There was intense pressure on the President of the United States and on these groups to “get it right” and protect America from harm. Less than a month after the attacks, on October 7, 2001, President George W. Bush launched Operation Enduring Freedom, bombing al-Qaeda training camps and Taliban strongholds in Afghanistan.⁴ Many countries joined the United States with troops, logistical support, and shared intelligence. These efforts marked the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, which fueled U.S. and foreign governments to set out against terrorists worldwide. Since then, Central Asian governments, in particular, have been keen to label opposition groups and extremists as terrorists.

Between 2003 and 2005, much literature was published about a group relatively unknown to Americans, Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT), or The Party of Liberation as a potential terrorist organization. News agency Rosbalt even asked, “Hizb ut-Tahrir to replace Al-Qaida?” in a 2003

article.⁵ On the surface level, HT and al-Qaeda may have similar ideologies and goals because both claim to work towards the active recreation of the Islamic Caliphate, a state connecting the Muslim world ruled by an appointed Caliph. The last remnants of the historical Caliphate were abolished during the end of the Ottoman Empire. Zeyno Baran, the primary advocate for the HT “conveyor belt to terrorism” model, gained international attention in 2003 for comparing HT with terrorism and even al-Qaeda. Her work is echoed in reporting from other international policy institutes and media. Prior to the events of September 11, 2001 and even to some degree before the start of the Iraq War on March 19, 2003, there were relatively few analyses of HT. The anti-Semitic nature of HT, the potential for political mobilization, and the group’s methods were frequent themes of these works. This report will consider the effects of the inattention such early reports received.

First, this project will review other analyses, particularly by Baran, Cohen, and the International Crisis Group (ICG), in relation to HT’s potential to use violence and weapons of mass destruction, controversial recruitment and organizational structure of HT, and the overarching goals of HT. Next, a summary of the Central Asian response to HT will be assessed. After these critiques, issues that may have been sidelined in these analyses will be explored; the inherent difference in the founding of al-Qaeda by Osama bin Laden and HT by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, al-Qaeda’s initial call to violence and HT’s refrain, the impact Sayyid Qutb had on shaping radical political Islam, how HT and al-Qaeda define and use jihad in their methods, and a deeper meaning behind why these groups want to reestablish the Caliphate. Upon review, this study will explore these findings with Moghaddam’s “Staircase to Terrorism” model at a deeper historical and psychological level. Evidence points to HT most likely not on the “conveyor belt”

or “staircase” to al-Qaeda or to terrorism but perhaps towards heightened extremist philosophies denouncing the policies of the West.⁶

This study seeks to expose these differences and clarify the separate structure, background, and ideology between HT and al-Qaeda. As well, it argues that attempts to fit HT into an al-Qaeda narrative have caused severe misrepresentations and false allegations of HT and its members. The outcome has led to a greater secrecy of the group in some states and possibly heightened anti-West rhetoric. Finally, the study urges those analyzing HT to reconsider the effects of bias in reporting and to question assumptions about Islamist groups. Perhaps researchers ought to look to history for guidance about a group’s intentions. HT may be fundamentally a pan-Islamist group, but evidence in this report points to the connection to terrorism or even future terrorist actions as weak. For this purpose, this study aims to shed light as to the breadth of political Islam.

Post-9/11 Hizb-ut-Tahrir Analysis

Why Study HT Now?

Though HT was established over fifty years ago, (1953) most literature concerning the group was written in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001.⁷ Before this date, many Americans were unaware of al-Qaeda’s Osama bin Laden and his motivation for attacking U.S. civilians. Another one of the more significant reasons for HT study predominantly post-9/11 is that the membership level of HT remained relatively stagnant until the mid-1990s.⁸ With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, borders became more permeable between Central Asia states and countries that were not part of the Soviet Union, like Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and China. Conversely, the previously open borders among the Central Asian Soviet republics rather

suddenly imposed divides among ethnic, economic, and cultural groups and caused transnational border disputes. At the same time, the rise of internet access and personal computers in the 1990s enabled HT leaders to publish their leaflets and multimedia in harder to reach locations. Awareness and membership increased, and now HT claims to have over one million members in over 40 countries.⁹ Thus, because of al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks, the collapse of the Soviet Union lending itself to the revival of Islam in Central Asia, and the increase in internet activity that helped with higher membership, scholarly publications concerning HT have increased only recently.

With HT study becoming prominent only after the events of 9/11, it is important to review contemporary analyses of HT and explore the findings of these post-9/11 researchers, media, and governments. Later, this study will examine the argument that because of the intense pressure to prevent another al-Qaeda group from emerging, many of these individuals and entities attempted to fit HT into an al-Qaeda narrative. That is, because al-Qaeda's founding, ideology, and goals have been studied extensively by scholars today and on the surface seem similar, these individuals and entities tried to force HT into a terrorism pattern that does not correlate well.

Firstly, this study will review the primary arguments made for HT's high potential for and possible connection with terrorism. In particular, Zeyno Baran and Ariel Cohen have briefed the U.S. House Armed Services Committee: Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities about "Combating Al Qaida and Militant Jihadist Threats."¹⁰

Zeyno Baran, "Conveyor Belt to Terrorism" Argument

Perhaps the most current and widely cited monograph that suggests HT is on the "conveyor belt" to terrorism is Zeyno Baran's, "Hizb ut-Tahrir: Islam's Political Insurgency."

Published in December 2004 by The Nixon Center, a conservative Washington, D.C. think tank, this report is based on numerous interviews with Western and Central Asian government officials, various analysts of non-governmental organizations and with Hizb-ut-Tahrir members.¹¹ Preceding this monograph are Baran's research presentation report and article introducing the "conveyor belt" finding. Throughout these reports, Baran extensively reviews the history and structure of HT in an effort to understand the root of HT's ideology because she and the 9/11 Commission view the Global War on Terror (GWOT) as not just against terrorists but against radical Islamist ideologies.¹² Her primary finding is that HT's nonviolent rhetoric is essentially a "mask" covering the group's objectives which are "only...achieved through violence."¹³ She also suggests policy initiatives for each Central Asian state, China, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and the United States. Yet, Baran's policy suggestions are heavily rooted in her work with the same Central Asian governments that are notorious for skewing country statistics. So, this paper will try to focus on the narrative concerning trends in HT recruitment and Baran's rationale that HT is on a "conveyor belt" to terrorism.

References to al-Qaeda

Baran duly notes that "lumping" HT with al-Qaeda or other international terrorist organizations is a "mistake," yet compares their charters.¹⁴ For instance, she writes,

Like al-Qaeda, whose founding charter defines it as the "pioneering vanguard" of Islamic movements, HT declares itself to be the "ideological vanguard" of the Islamist movements. Just as al-Qaeda "showed the way" for other armed groups by destroying two of America's most prominent landmarks, HT blazes a path for other radical groups by destroying America's most prominent ideological principles: democracy and capitalism.¹⁵

thereby emphasizing not just the GWOT but the war of ideologies and that HT is, in her view, a "political insurgency" bent on leading ideological revolutions throughout the Muslim world.¹⁶

HT will use violence

The ultimate difference between al-Qaeda and HT is the use of violence. HT members, HT literature, and other media profusely proclaim that HT is peaceful and as spokesman Wasim Doureihi states,

We completely reject the employing of any violence or aggression from a party perspective. We completely reject that. That has been our position from day one. But the assertion and inference that we in some way would advocate violence towards any individual irrespective of their creed is a charge we strongly reject.¹⁷

While the word “peaceful” may be a subjective term, the group’s messages regarding Jews and Western leadership are widely considered hateful, as evidenced by Germany’s banning of HT on the grounds of anti-Semitism. Yet, Doureihi’s message of nonviolence is clear. However, Baran forecasts that, “HT may be non-violent, but it certainly is not peaceful. Though it is not engaged in violence, its ideology is violent. If HT ever takes power in a country, it will certainly launch military attacks.”¹⁸ Baran continues:

Hizb ut-Tahrir as an organization is not likely to take up terrorism. Terrorist acts are simply not part of HT’s mission, which is to serve as an ideological and political training ground for Islamists. In order to best accomplish this, HT will need to remain non-violent, acting within the legal system of the countries in which it operates. Moreover, HT does not need to become a terrorist group—winning hearts and minds is a much more effective method towards achieving its ultimate goal.¹⁹

Ariel Cohen of The Heritage Foundation projects, “When a critical mass of cells is achieved, according to its doctrine, Hizb may move to take over a country in preparation for the establishment of the Caliphate. Such a takeover would likely be bloody and violent.”²⁰

Further confusing the matter is that an Arabic language HT-associated publication, *Al-Waie*, has a fatwa, or religious decree, allegedly allowing the use of suicide attacks and other forms of violence against “unbelievers,” according to Baran. A definite relationship of HT to this magazine is unknown, as some party activists claim “*Al-Waie* is not the official publication

of Hizb-ut-Tahrir...but the party maintains close contacts with the monthly,” and other researchers claim that the publication is in fact directly from HT.²¹ There is no mention of *Al-Waie* on HT’s official English-language information and media office websites, but one explanation may be that the articles are not translated in English on the internet.²²

The International Crisis Group (ICG), an independent and non-partisan organization, notes that HT’s opposition to violence “is conditional, not absolute,” with the conditions centered on the last stage of commencing the Caliphate.²³ Citing Suha Taji-Farouki’s *A Fundamental Quest*, the ICG report states that HT founder al-Nabhani’s view was that “a regime could be brought down through acts of civil disobedience...Alternatively, it could be toppled through a military coup” who would then give power to HT.²⁴ To be sure, determining whether today’s HT would or could commit any violent acts, let alone utilizing weapons of mass destruction, based on al-Nabhani’s statements from the 1950s remains a challenge.

Weapons of Mass Destruction Link

Another argument in HT analysis that may lend comparisons to al-Qaeda is the feasibility or attractiveness of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Baran also suggests that HT has shown increased interest in WMD, and that interest piqued after U.S. and coalition forces failed to recover them in Iraq. Additionally, she writes that because Central Asia has nuclear weapon neighbors of Pakistan, Russia, and India, there is the possibility of “loose WMD material” which is especially “attractive” for HT.²⁵ Cohen makes U.S. policy recommendations of preventing the “development and production of weapons of mass destruction in the region, to preclude them from falling into the hands of rogue regimes or terrorists,” neither of which HT can be defined as in the United States.²⁶ He also states that the U.S. and allies “must do everything possible to avoid” a HT “takeover of any Central Asian state” because the group could have “access to the

expertise and technology to manufacture weapons of mass destruction.”²⁷ Mayer counters that Cohen’s statements create “an artificial link” with the “hot topic” of weapons of mass destruction, suggesting that “when it comes to Hizb ut-Tahrir, his [Cohen’s] assessments look conjectural, despite their boldness”²⁸ The ICG states that if the Caliphate were established, HT “should embrace modern military technology, including nuclear weapons” to follow through with HT theory in which HT has a “duty to pursue jihad against the State of Israel and its destruction.”²⁹

Recruitment Techniques Separate, Not Equal

There is also an apparent controversy regarding how HT recruits new members, especially in HT Britain. According to Baran and HT publications, a party member meets with prospective individual and exposes that person to HT ideology and methods. That person then begins meeting with others in a small study group for six months to three years, however long it takes before a person becomes “ideologically, theologically, and spiritually” committed to HT.³⁰ At this point, the prospective member is offered a full, official membership status in HT’s organization.³¹ In a BBC Newsnight feature, BBC allegedly had access to an undercover mole who infiltrated an HT circle in South London. This mole reported that his final step before being offered a full membership was to pledge allegiance to the group and to “intimidate” three youths on a nearby street into giving him £3.³² When interviewed by BBC, current HT Britain Chairman Executive Dr. Abdul Wahid denied that these men the mole had contact with were actually in HT and that if he met individuals such as these, he would ask them to leave the group. In fact, when trying to explain his views and defend his group on BBC Newsnight, Wahid was repeatedly interrupted by correspondent Jeremy Paxman:

Wahid: Let me finish—

Paxman: No, no I really want to be clear about this ... Your position really is that independently members of the Muslim community have come to us and made up accusations about your organization including criminality? Entirely made up? Independently?

Wahid: Our organization has nothing to do with criminality...³³

Paxman's interview of Wahid was criticized by HT Britain and even BBC Newsnight reported that it had received many complaints that the "film was politically motivated and that we [BBC Newsnight] had set out with an agenda to discredit Hizb ut-Tahrir."³⁴ BBC Newsnight Editor, Peter Barron, stood by the programming on radical Islam and stated that the segment detailed "several accusations" about HT but that ultimately Wahid "was given an ample opportunity to put across his position and address the key issues raised by the film."³⁵ HT Britain called attention to the "shadowy reconstructions and sinister background music" that "sensationalized the story" in addition to Newsnight connecting terrorism with "non-violent Islamic political work and the call for a Caliphate in the Muslim world."³⁶

Is Calling HT Groups "Cells" Appropriate?

It is widely acknowledged that HT typically recruits college-aged persons with individual contact and then small study groups. This familiarity, in context with words like "extremism" and "secretive cells" may facilitate the reader's mental bridge over to terrorist and al-Qaeda cells.³⁷ However, many college organizations gain membership in this manner. For example, American collegiate Bible study groups may engage in student-led worship sessions, group scripture readings, and one-on-one discipleships, where an older student mentors a new recruit and encourages higher levels of involvement.³⁸

These situations are parallel to HT recruitment in British universities, but instead of labeling the groups as “Hizb-ut-Tahrir Quran Study,” or as HT Britain calls them, “Study Circles,” the media and scholars have called them Hizb-ut-Tahrir “secretive cells,” “indoctrination cells,” or even “clandestine cells.”³⁹ This study argues that although Westerners, in this case, may not approve of the ideology and methods of HT, by assigning words typically associated with terrorist networks, they are doing HT a disservice in branding them as such. HT is, by compulsion, a more secretive group in the Middle East and Central Asia, where admitting membership goes hand in hand with prison.⁴⁰ However, a supposed cell structure makes rallies, conferences, and media relations offices surprising, to say the least. In 2007, more than 100,000 HT supporters filled a stadium in Indonesia. Yet, in Pakistan, public rallies and demonstrations are held in support of HT, but HT members are “forbidden by their leaders to participate in any public event” for fear of members revealing their identity and being repressed.⁴¹

Prior to September 11, 2001, some al-Qaeda cells, including the infamous “Hamburg Cell” were formed based on preexisting bonds of community, friendship, and values.⁴² Led by the intelligent, dogmatic Mohammed Atta, the “Hamburg Cell,” as it became known, was comprised of at least eight extremists who initially wanted to join the jihad in Chechnya. When the four key members of the group, Atta, Binalshibh, Shehhi, and Jarrah were traveling by train, they coincidentally met a man who convinced them to train in Afghanistan prior to fighting. Once in Afghanistan, these Hamburg friends became part of al-Qaeda and were personally selected by Osama bin Laden to lead the 9/11 plot. The 9/11 Commission states that the speed in which the cell leadership was formed “is remarkable,” but also clarifies that the planning of the plane hijacking plot had been in the works since Khalid Shaik Mohammed’s proposal in 1996.⁴³ Granted, most of the “al-Qaeda hardcore” were “many of the pre-eminent militants active around

the world” that bin Laden had attracted between 1996 and 2001.⁴⁴ Other members in al-Qaeda were leftover international mujahideen from the Soviet war against Afghanistan.⁴⁵

These examples of HT study groups formed in university outreach initiatives and of the “Hamburg Cell” highlight that for terrorist groups like al-Qaeda, radicalization usually happens within a small group which then joins a jihadist movement. HT appears to be different from this pattern because the study circles are formed by bringing together individuals to join its cause. This one-on-one recruitment method for HT study circles appears common in both the United Kingdom and Central Asia. The study circles are helpful in fostering interpersonal relationships and convenient in societies in which HT is banned. At the other end of the spectrum, HT large gatherings, like the stadium in Indonesia or organized protests in London and Jerusalem, are useful in raising broad awareness to the international community and in gaining momentum for HT’s Caliphate movement.

Goals: Viewpoint of Scholars & Media

After September 11, 2001, some scholars seemed to also fit the goals of HT into an al-Qaeda narrative. For example, Ariel Cohen lists HT’s “proclaimed goal” as “jihad against America and the overthrow of existing political regimes and their replacement with a Caliphate,” when HT, while anti-United States and anti-West, does not explicitly claim anything in English as a jihad against the U.S. on its official websites.⁴⁶ The ICG concurs, plainly stating that HT “does not call for terrorist actions against America.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, Cohen suggests that “Hizb’s goal is to smash the existing state apparatus, not become a player within it.”⁴⁸ In the open societies of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Australia, the United States, and others, HT has somewhat integrated into society in that it functions in public meetings and rallies with established leadership.⁴⁹ HT’s primary goal is to reestablish the Caliphate in the traditional

lands of the Middle East and Central Asia, and not in any of the above countries. By using the charged word “smash,” Cohen injects a violent overtone to the nature of HT. While HT’s method of waiting for public opinion in a country to become predominantly HT-minded may seem naïve or idealist to some, it nevertheless does not equal any sort of “smashing” of the “state apparatus.”⁵⁰ The U.S. government now discourages the use of the word “Caliphate” in reference to al-Qaeda’s objectives because the word has so-called “positive implications” that the U.S. government does not want to recognize.⁵¹

Central Asian Government Reactions to HT

The Ferghana Valley, the intersection of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, is known for ethnic violence and rising Islamic militancy. HT is a part of this trend; it functions in the Valley, and most of its members seem to be ethnic Uzbeks. In Uzbekistan, largely considered the ideological stronghold of Hizb-ut-Tahrir efforts in the early 2000s, many allegations of Hizb-ut-Tahrir members as accomplices to crimes and even as suicide bombers and terrorists are made by the state government.⁵² In the spring of 2004, there were a series of suicide bombings and house attacks in the capital city of Tashkent. Uzbek Prosecutor-General Rashid Qodirov claimed that the events were caused by HT and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and even suggested that al-Qaeda had a hand in the incidents.⁵³ However, the ICG states that “there is no proof of its [HT’s] involvement in terrorist activities in Central Asia or elsewhere” and also that government positions regarding HT are labeled as “contradictory and often ineffective.”⁵⁴ As Ahmed Rashid argues, Uzbekistan is eager to make a connection between al-Qaeda and HT because the governmental torture of Islamic militants could be more justifiable. Furthermore, Rashid points out that human rights campaigns are concerned that

Uzbekistan may be leveraging its Western alliance with a higher intensity of repression against its own people.⁵⁵

Conversely, HT's popularity has declined over the past couple of years, in large part due to the Karimov regime's crackdown of it. Karimov has grouped HT with al-Qaeda, the IMU, al-Jihad, and other terrorist movements. When the various revolutions started in some of the former Soviet republics, Karimov and other Central Asian leaders banned HT in fear of losing their own power. Karimov held many of the people handing out HT leaflets in prison and frequently tortured them. In one particularly extreme case, two men suspected of belonging to HT and distributing literature were boiled to death.⁵⁶ The Karimov regime's brutality was enough to dissuade many Uzbeks from joining HT. In general, the Uzbek recruits felt that joining the nonviolent group, only to be tortured in very violent ways, was not worth the risks. In the neighboring state of Kyrgyzstan, new initiatives are underway to "stamp out" HT by imposing harsher penalties for promoting the group and through trying to reduce the flow of finances to the group. As Jolbors Jorobekov, the former director of the Kyrgyz State Agency on Religious Affairs, explains, "when they have money, they increase their recruitment activities...and when they don't have the finances, they again operate quietly, out of sight."⁵⁷ The number of HT associated arrests has been rising since 2002, but it is unclear if this correlates with a rise of membership in Central Asia.

Today, many influential Central Asian religious leaders and HT members have serious reservations about the feasibility and intentions of reviving the Caliphate. The former Mufti of Kyrgyzstan, Sadiq Qari Kamal al-Deen, says that, "70% of their [HT's] ideas are good.... they're for social justice and education and against prostitution and drugs. But 30% are bad ideas - the revival of the Caliphate and their opposition to democracy, for instance."⁵⁸ In other words, al-

Deen's opinion about HT is that the group should continue with its humanitarian and social society campaigns in Kyrgyzstan—and implies that the group's primary campaign in the region is not reestablishing the Caliphate. In 2004, Dr. Emmanuel Karagiannis, an assistant professor at the Kazakh Institute of Management, Economics, and Strategic Research, found that, “for Uzbeks outside Uzbekistan, HT and the Wahhabi movement are expressions of Uzbek identity.”⁵⁹

Another issue with HT's connections in Central Asia is that current HT literature distributed in the region can be dissimilar to that of other countries. Rather than heavily focusing on the reunification of the Caliphate, these leaflets normally criticize the widely unpopular regime in power, capitalism, United States foreign policy, the United Kingdom, and Zionists and the state of Israel.⁶⁰ Moreover, there is no evidence that the HT groups of the region were truly receiving direct orders from the organization's public headquarters in London. Baran notes that the HT country leadership can authorize leaflet publication, and other reports indicate that some Central Asian HT leaflets are translated into regional languages from Arabic ones of the Middle East.⁶¹ Rashid also claims that the technology used to distribute the leaflets and other HT propaganda is “very rare in Central Asia, where people have little access to technology. Much of HT's equipment was funded and imported from abroad, indicating probable collusion with senior bureaucrats in the customs department.”⁶²

Review of al-Qaeda and Hizb-ut-Tahrir

Legacy of Sayyid Qutb in Shaping Political Islam

Sayyid Qutb's writings have had a profound impact on Islamist thought. The crisis of faith that Qutb, an Egyptian philosopher and educator, had when he experienced life abroad in

the United States in 1948 dramatically made way for his extremist views against the West and for an Islamic revival. From studying in a small Colorado liberal arts college to researching in California and Washington, DC, Qutb became very uneasy with a Western society that lacked outward faith and devotion to God. He witnessed rapid American post-war economic progress, racial segregation, and a sexually curious public. His turn to radicalization was certain. He was resolute on joining the Society of the Muslim Brothers after hearing of the assassination of his peer, al-Banna and after a meeting with a person likely trying to recruit him into the Central Intelligence Agency.⁶³ When Qutb finally set foot back in Egypt, his message was clear, “the white man in Europe or America is our number-one enemy...the enemy of humanity...[our children] should destroy him at the first opportunity...”⁶⁴

His seminal work, Milestones, sets the tone with, “Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice...,” and establishes that the morality of society is in grave danger.⁶⁵ He continues to state that, “[The Western world] knows that it does not possess anything which will satisfy its own conscience and justify its existence,” and proclaims that, “it is essential for mankind to have new leadership!”⁶⁶ By this, Qutb calls for renewed efforts to establish a Muslim community, which leads the way for the Islamic Caliphate. The “milestones” that Qutb’s title refers to are the steps necessary for or the “signposts” that indicate progress towards the revival of Islam.

As Qutb views the world, it is “steeped in Jahiliyyah”, or “ignorance of the Divine guidance,” and only a “revivalist movement” will bring about this change towards God.⁶⁷ Qutb went on to become the “chief spokesman” of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1954 and “its latest ‘martyr’ in 1966,” which eventually fueled the fires of revenge for al-Qaeda and strengthened HT’s resolve to rise above violence to achieve their goals.⁶⁸

Hizb-ut-Tahrir: Founding

In 1953, about 35 years prior to the founding of al-Qaeda, Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, a judge, al-Azhar graduate, and high school religious teacher in the Court of Appeals in al-Quds, established Hizb-ut-Tahrir in a Jordanian-controlled portion of East Jerusalem.⁶⁹ Though not as much is known about al-Nabhani as Osama bin Laden, it is clear that al-Nabhani was vehemently anti-colonialist and blamed “Islam’s decline” on the “submission of the Ummah to greedy colonial powers”.⁷⁰ Here, the Ummah refers to the Muslim world, and it is sometimes interpreted as the Arab world. Al-Nabhani believed that converting to an Islamic way of life was the answer to this decline, not “nationalist or economic policy prescriptions.”⁷¹ In fact, al-Nabhani joined the Muslim Brotherhood, an established Islamic fundamentalist group, but “found its ideology too moderate and too accommodating of the West,” which planted the ideological seeds for his own organization.⁷² HT’s records even indicate that he “exchanged views with Sayyid Qutb” at this time.⁷³ His 1950 publication, “The Treatise of the Arab,” further explained his vision of “establishing the Islamic state in Arab territories and afterwards in non-Arab Islamic territories,” which is the reunification of the historic Caliphate and expanding its reach.⁷⁴ Three years later, he formally founded HT in writing “The Concepts of Hizb-ut-Tahrir”, recruited disillusioned extremists of the Muslim Brotherhood, and reached out to individuals in the Muslim community by teaching them HT’s philosophy.⁷⁵

In the mid-1950s, al-Nabhani encouraged cooperation with other groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood. Ultimately, these efforts failed, “Hizb-ut-Tahrir and the Muslim Brotherhood were mostly in competition, and the party ‘did not want to lose its distinctive identity.’”⁷⁶ HT spread throughout Egypt and Jordan, but was then accused of various coup attempts in the 1960s and 1970s and forced to be more underground.⁷⁷ In the late 1960s, HT leaders were unsuccessful in

establishing a major presence in Turkey, which was a significant setback in the quest for the Caliphate. Turkey is, in some sense, a crown jewel in HT's Caliphate strategy because the Caliph offices were last disbanded there. These early failures, on top of Middle Eastern countries banning HT, prompted HT leaders to spread the group to Europe and avoid major persecution in the 1970s.⁷⁸ In particular, HT offices grew heavily in England and Germany.⁷⁹ By the 1980s, HT's message became more aggressive in denouncing Israel and Zionism.⁸⁰ Also during this time period, HT expanded to Indonesia.⁸¹ In the 1990s, HT continued to increase its membership size and take advantage of the newly independent states of Central Asia.⁸² Overall, from HT's founding until the present day, it seems that HT's predominant strategy for establishing the Caliphate is to gain the most popular support by establishing branches worldwide. Apart from HT's global reach, it is unclear how much HT's message has dramatically changed and just how organized the regional branches are in respect to national and international leaders.

Al-Qaeda: Founding

In the summer of 1988, a small circle of men set a goal "to lift the word of God, to make His religion victorious" in their group they named al-Qaeda.⁸³ Yet, the name, "al-Qaeda" had been used worldwide by many of the Islamic radicals during the mid-1980s to define their cause in fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.⁸⁴ Interestingly enough, the "most extreme" of the Afghani fighters used the word "al-Qaeda" to describe those who believed the struggle would endure beyond Soviet withdrawal.⁸⁵

According to Jamal al-Fadl, a Sudanese informant and witness in the trial of the 1998 East African embassy bombings, al-Qaeda's initial goals of continuing jihad outside of Afghanistan did not include the United States or the West. Rather, this new organization

pledged to set goals to bring about “an Islamic revolution to the countries of the Ummah” through violence.⁸⁶ Al-Fadl, a new recruit to al-Qaeda, joined in late 1989, when there were just about a dozen members. Bin Laden, named the ‘emir’ of al-Fadl’s new group, wanted to concentrate the “alliance” formed during the war against the Soviet Union before the militants diverged to individual interests.⁸⁷

Indeed, Osama bin Laden always intended al-Qaeda to use violence in its campaign against the West, as evidenced by a short-lived precursor group: al-Qaeda al-Askariya, meaning military base.⁸⁸ During the end of the Soviet-Afghanistan war, the work of this group was divided into short and long-term training, with those who completed long-term training to be the first members of the militant al-Qaeda.⁸⁹ However, men who trained in al-Qaeda’s camps and pledged allegiance to bin Laden did not commit targeted attacks until ten years later in the Kenya and Tanzania embassy bombings. Instead, during these ten years, al-Qaeda trained men mostly created unorganized “havoc” in their home countries while bin Laden touted his group’s strength and war against America.⁹⁰

Osama bin Laden had always been a devout Muslim, and even in his early school days in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, he was known among his friends for his piety.⁹¹ Not only did he pray five times daily and fast twice weekly, but he also admonished the material interests of his friends and quizzed them on the teachings of the Quran.⁹² Growing up as one of the offspring of a well-endowed and well-connected father enabled Osama to embrace religious study and forgo monetary hardships. Although Osama’s father, Mohammad bin Laden, divorced his mother when Osama was four or five years old and died in a plane crash just five years later, Osama maintained a very modest lifestyle despite the immense family wealth.⁹³ Young Osama’s piety increasingly steered him to more conservative and traditional Islamic circles in his community of

Jeddah.⁹⁴ In Jeddah, Abdallah Azzam and Mohammad Qutb, Sayyid Qutb's brother, lectured at King Abdul Aziz University while bin Laden was enrolled.⁹⁵ Bin Laden's course of study was in economics, which would later prove troubling to Islamic scholars when he claimed to issue fatwas that only certain religious scholars are authorized to make.⁹⁶

Inspired by Azzam's passionate recruiting and feeling an intense calling to defend Islam in the mountains of Afghanistan from a godless empire, bin Laden disobeyed his mother and Saudi Arabian authorities and embarked on the new path of joining the mujahideen.⁹⁷ Mujahideen, or "fighters driven by jihad", came from all across the Muslim world to defend Islam and the Muslims of Afghanistan.⁹⁸ Bin Laden's connections with the Muslim Brotherhood, some of his late father's money, and particular ability for fundraising enabled him to be a natural leader of a new group. Azzam viewed jihad as a defensive tactic, much like Osama bin Laden did at the beginning of the Gulf War. However, bin Laden changed his belief to a violent, offensive jihad by the end of the war.⁹⁹ Teaming up with Ayman al-Zawahiri, a physician who had been tortured brutally after Sadat's assassination, bin Laden was able to plant the roots for a group that hoped to have global impact.¹⁰⁰

What is important about the stories of bin Laden and al-Zawahiri is that the roots of their terrorist activities began in terrorism by responding to violence in Afghanistan and Egypt, respectively. HT's founder, al-Nabhani, responded to his perceived lack of devotion and religiosity in the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Qaeda evolved from the Afghani mujahideen, not simply the writings of Qutb or Muhammad abd al-Salaam Faraj. In fact, al-Zawahiri's beginnings as a militant Islamist began in the Islamic Jihad, which launched terrorist training camps in the early 1990s and bombed federal buildings in Saudi Arabia in 1996.¹⁰¹

Al-Qaeda: Call to Violence

Al-Qaeda has only had the desire to achieve political change through violence. In The al-Qaeda Manual confiscated during a 2002 search in an al-Qaeda member home in Manchester, England, the *casus belli* is outlined as a retribution for the fall of the Islamic Caliphate in 1924. The Islamic Caliphate of 1924 was essentially the Ottoman Empire until Kemal Ataturk secularized Turkey and divided the Caliphate.

After the fall of our orthodox Caliphates on March 3, 1924 and after the expelling the colonialists, our Islamic nation was afflicted with apostate rulers who took over in the Moslem nation...[the rulers] started to fragment the essence of the Islamic nation by trying to eradicate its Moslem identity.¹⁰²

In explaining that the Muslim identity was, and is still threatened, al-Qaeda has established its defensive, rather than offensive stance. As well, the psychological forces upon these young Muslim men is clear; a colonialist government has, and will continue, to make states secular. In their view, the only way to protect their spiritual destiny is to fight: “These young men [Haraka Al-Islamiya (Islamic Movement) youth] realized that an Islamic government would never be established except by the bomb and rifle. Islam does not coincide or make a truce with unbelief, but rather confronts it.”¹⁰³

When Osama bin Laden and the other four others issued the 1996 fatwa, “Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” none of them had the religious authority to do so.¹⁰⁴ In Islam, only al-*ulama* scholars, or those who have completed rigorous study of the Quran and the hadith are qualified to issue fatwas. A *mujtahid*, or highly learned Islamic scholar, may issue independent Quranic opinions.¹⁰⁵

What is Jihad?

The word “jihad” can be translated as “to strive, to struggle, or to exert oneself” but the greater meaning for Muslims and Islamists is controversial.¹⁰⁶ Both al-Qaeda and HT use the

term in different ways, and each faction in the Muslim world has its own interpretation.

Counterterrorism expert Marc Sageman classifies two types of jihad, non-violent and violent. As he notes, there is an important distinction between “traditional jihad” and “global Salafi jihad.” The “traditional jihad,” also known as the “greater jihad” can be loosely defined as “the individual nonviolent striving to live a good Muslim life, following God’s will.” However, the “lesser jihad” gives way to the global Salafi jihad. The lesser jihad is the “violent struggle” for Islam that is called for to expand the Islamic community throughout the world for greater world order.¹⁰⁷ Rashid notes that “global jihadi movements...ignore the greater jihad advocated by The Prophet and adopt the lesser jihad as a complete political and social philosophy;” while defining the lesser jihad as a potential means to mobilize a political and social struggle in response to rebellion against unjust rulers.¹⁰⁸ Sageman labels the contemporary form of lesser jihad the “global Salafi jihad” called forth by Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden, and Sayyid Qutb.¹⁰⁹

As early as 1954, Sayyid Qutb had declared jihad on Britain during his Egyptian imprisonment. To Qutb, the call for jihad was necessary because Gamal Abdel Nasser was in the process of negotiating a treaty to end occupation.¹¹⁰ One chapter of Milestones is devoted to the concept of jihad and why it is necessary to engage in it to save the Ummah. Yet, Qutb states that, “the Islamic Jihad has no relationship to modern warfare, either in its causes or in the way in which it is conducted” giving a somewhat peaceful-sounding description of his jihad.¹¹¹ Yet, when describing how to enact this jihad, he writes, “those who have usurped the authority of God and are oppressing God’s creatures are not going to give up their power merely through preaching...” suggesting that the West will not just change by persuasion, but with action.¹¹² Qutb continues to state that the concept of *jihad bis saif*, or “striving through fighting” is acceptable, and fighting for “defensive war” needs to be expanded upon.¹¹³ That is, Qutb

believes the Islamic jihad he calls for is just because he and his followers are defending man “against all those elements which limit his freedom.”¹¹⁴ To be more precise, Qutb explains that “the twin purposes of jihad are to cleanse Islam of the impurifying influence of the West, and to fight the West using political, economic, and religio-cultural weapons—the same weapons the West allegedly uses against Islam.”¹¹⁵ Abd Al-Salam Faraj’s The Neglected Duty, claims that the “ultimate object” is to have a “world governed by *shari’a*” and to do so, Muslims should return to practicing jihad as “*the* essential means for reviving Islam.”¹¹⁶ Faraj’s work “seemed a serious challenge to the interpreters of the Islamic tradition, the *ulama* (religious sages) who were, indeed, chided by the government for having been lax in their responsibilities,” and the Egyptian government reacted strongly to counter the relatively unknown man’s text.¹¹⁷ Faraj’s group, al-Jihad, was responsible for the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and Faraj’s writings were made famous after the Egyptian government issued a response to The Neglected Duty.

Burke notes that jihad is not “merely a tactic aimed at achieving a specific worldly goal,” but rather a “part of the cosmic struggle.”¹¹⁸ That is, Burke utilizes Qutb’s statement, “the scope of this struggle is not limited to this earth or to this life. The observers of this struggle are not merely a generation of men,” and thus it is not necessarily violence, but a Muslim’s will and Allah’s will to ever hold jihad.¹¹⁹ On August 8, 1996, Osama bin Laden’s declaration of “War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places (Expel the Infidels from the Arab Peninsula)” called for jihad.¹²⁰ Bin Laden believed that the United States was controlling the Islamic world and had divided the Ummah (Muslim Community). Because of these factors, Bin Laden sought not just revenge over these misdeeds, but a war; the United States had already begun a “war on Allah, his Messenger, and Muslims.”¹²¹ Indeed, al-Qaeda goes on to persuade youths that Allah is ordering them to the frontlines of Jihad, and that because no other cause

could be greater than Allah's, they are compelled to fight. The following excerpt from The al-Qaeda Manual, containing a verse from the Quran, illustrates the commitment that these youths make to Allah and to Jihad:

The young came to prepare themselves for Jihad [holy war], commanded by the majestic Allah's order in the holy Koran. [Koranic verse:] "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know."¹²²

Ayman al-Zawahiri extends this message and call for Salafi jihad in Knights Under the Prophet's Banner, going as far to say that the new jihad will be waged between Islam and the United Nations, friendly rulers of Muslim peoples, and even international relief agencies.¹²³ He also writes that "A jihadist movement needs an arena that would act like an incubator, where its seeds would grow and where it can acquire practical experience in combat, politics and organizational matters," and continues on to make a strong distinction between a jihadist movement and nationalism.¹²⁴ This commentary is also useful for the argument towards a Caliphate, the Islamic government that al-Qaeda allegedly strives for. If this sentence were altered to read, "An *Islamist* movement needs an arena that would act like an incubator, where its seeds would grow and where it can acquire practical experience *in politics and organizational matters*," it would handily sound like an HT leaflet.

HT's definition of "jihad" is more vague and flexible than al-Qaeda's, which may be purposeful to allow party leaders a greater range of options to lead their group nearer to the Caliphate. Taqiuddin al-Nabhani's foundational piece of HT philosophy, the "Concepts of Hizb-ut-Tahrir" discusses jihad as "...a war against anyone who stands in the face of the Islamic Da'wah whether he is an aggressor or not..." and also as "...the removal of any obstacle standing in the face of the Da'wah, i.e. the call to Islam, and the fight for its sake; for the sake of

Allah...".¹²⁵ These statements give the impression that HT's jihad is more localized than the "cosmic struggle" that Burke discusses for al-Qaeda and is also supportive of a war against civilians.¹²⁶ Then again, looking further in al-Nabhani's piece it seems that HT, as its members claim, will not use violence to defend itself or be offensive to others. Al-Nabhani insists on separating the ideas of jihad from material actions in writing "that the Party does not use material power to defend itself or as a weapon against the rulers is of no relevance to the subject of jihad, because jihad has to continue till the Day of Judgment..." but curiously states that "whenever there is a Muslim emir who declares jihad to enhance the Word of Allah (swt) and mobilises the people to do that, the members of Hizb-ut-Tahrir will respond in their capacity as Muslims in the country where the general call to arms was proclaimed."¹²⁷ Al-Nabhani even warns that Muslims will "...fight the enemy and repel them" and that jihad is a "materialistic action" that has "spiritual value" and "achieves a tangible result."¹²⁸

It appears that modern-day HT will not consider materialistic actions and jihad continues until the "Day of Judgment" occurs.¹²⁹ This day, according to al-Nabhani references, is when a Muslim will be questioned about his or her faithfulness to Allah and His prohibitions and commands. So, while a jihad reminiscent of the Greater Jihad is ongoing, a Muslim emir may call for jihad and HT may feel obligated to respond.¹³⁰ Bin Laden considers himself an emir, despite his non-religious course of study.¹³¹ This begs the question of whether HT can pick and choose which emirs' calls to jihad they respond to. Bin Laden says that his jihad is a defensive one, much like Qutb's interpretation. Another point of contention is the "materialistic action" idea that al-Nabhani says is jihad, and that HT is most adamant against doing.

Shared Goal: The Caliphate

Both al-Qaeda and HT proclaim their goal of reconnecting the Ummah with the ideal Islamic society, or Caliphate.¹³² However, the Muslim rule of law in the Caliphate government is not directly addressed in the Quran or in the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad.¹³³ Traditionally, the Islamic Caliphate is headed by a Caliph, a person selected by the people for his piety and “competence and the confidence of the mass in him.”¹³⁴ Ideally, the Caliphate served the people with “unity in the ‘brotherhood of religion’ and ‘equality in the rights and duties.’”¹³⁵ However, since the Caliphate’s birth in the seventh century, it has been stricken with a king-like family “with arbitrary power” which did not share its wealth with the citizens and rejected the peaceful tenets of the Caliphate for corruption and authoritarian rule.¹³⁶ As Mitchell notes, the difference between an “Islamic order” and a “Muslim state” can be reduced to whether the society implements *shari’a* law.¹³⁷ The “Islamic Order” adheres to *shari’a* law, socially and religiously, whereas a “Muslim state” need not have *shari’a* law. At the same time, even the definition of *shari’a* law is bit murky as there is no codified set of laws of *shari’a*. Fuller plainly states that “a single *shari’a* doesn’t exist” and that it is a combination of interpretations of human understanding of the Quran and the lifestyle of the Prophet.¹³⁸ *Shari’a*, meaning path of God, is a set of “divinely revealed general principles, directives, and values” and Muslims sought to adhere to these principles in the centuries after Prophet Mohammad’s death partly to limit the powers of the Caliph.¹³⁹ Fuller concedes that “*shari’a* law...can be easily abused and has been abused...to suppress political opposition and inhibit spiritual growth,” which appears to fit the pattern of so-called Islamic states.¹⁴⁰ As well, Taji-Fourouki speaks to the flexibility of Islamic governments that have “little problem accommodating their Islamic paradigms” to the states they uphold.¹⁴¹ Other theorists, he remarks, have less compliant views that the Islamic state is a

“substantive part of the *shari’a*; it is not merely a technique.”¹⁴² HT and al-Qaeda Caliphate philosophy likely falls into this latter group. In fact, HT founder al-Nabhani avoids using the “problematic term ‘sovereignty of God’” and employs “‘sovereignty of *shari’a*’ instead, adding that ‘authority’ is vested in the Ummah.”¹⁴³

According to the Muslim Brotherhood, which al-Qaeda leaders al-Zawahiri and bin Laden have regarded for many of their viewpoints on the Caliphate, the political organization of an Islamic state was bound by the Quran as the constitution, the government as consultation (*shura*), and the executive ruler’s commitment to Islam and to the welfare of his people.¹⁴⁴

What do terrorists want? How does this apply to al-Qaeda and HT?

Dr. Gunter Rohrmoser, who studied West German terrorists of the 1970s, described the nature of terrorist wants in this excerpt:

What do the terrorists want? They want The Revolution, a total transformation of all existing condition, a new form of human existence, an entirely new relationship of people to each other, and also of people to nature. They want the total and radical breach with all that is, and with all historical continuity. Without a doubt they are utopians. The source of their (self-provided) legitimacy is the utopia which they want to make real, and it is the same utopia that makes them regard all historical and ideological factors as illusions.¹⁴⁵

While the terrorists described in Rohrmoser’s statement are not Islamic and have decidedly different targets, the philosophical similarities are striking. The “utopia” that both Hizb-ut-Tahrir and al-Qaeda aim for is the Caliphate, a gathering of Islamic people and nations throughout the Middle East, and eventually, the world. This Islamic “utopia” is a relative fantasy; the general Middle Eastern Caliphate was in existence from the sixth century until 1924, with its fall due to the Turks. However, beyond the year 850, the Caliphate that HT and al-Qaeda speak of was mainly nominal in nature. In 1924, Kemal Ataturk removed the last

remnants of the Caliphate, which were symbolic offices typically used for foreign policy initiatives.¹⁴⁶

Many scholars argue that the Caliphate or another Islamic system of government and law is not wholly different from the authoritarian governments that most of the proposed Caliphate lands are in presently.¹⁴⁷ Aside from the semantic differences in the naming of offices and the official requirement of devout Islamic customs, the 1924 Caliphate system is, altogether, not very different from the current model. The romantic notion of the Caliphate from 850 is difficult to conceive of in present society. Despite a draft HT constitution outlining the rule of law, it is yet to be seen how economic and social services could be provided for its citizens. Al-Nabhani viewed the Islamic state as having a Caliph elected by an Islamic council, who “would control the army, political system, economy, and foreign policy.”¹⁴⁸

These groups do want the “historical continuity” of Islamic law and a “radical breach” from the present.¹⁴⁹ HT seeks to “to take over the rule in order to establish the Khilafah and apply Islam,” and in Osama bin Laden’s 1996 Fatwa, “Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places”, he calls for a jihad to “re-establish the greatness of this Ummah and to liberate its occupied sanctities.”¹⁵⁰

Response to HT and al-Qaeda Analysis

Consider the Source

Before delving into a more theoretical approach to understanding the differences between HT and al-Qaeda, it is important to review some of the key differences raised by the previously mentioned scholars, media, and governments. To begin, an exercise in evaluating how some of the think tanks mentioned in this report predicted what would happen in Iraq will be beneficial in

showing how realistic their analyses have been. Cohen, in September 2002, coauthored an article about post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and how to bring “economic prosperity” to the country once its “menacing arsenal of weapons of mass destruction” was removed.¹⁵¹ Cohen’s argument also extends that, “presumably, a post-war U.S. military presence in Iraq and Iraq’s future security forces will ensure that the new Iraqi government does not continue to develop WMD and support terrorism;” despite the fact that this report was published four months before U.S. forces began to bomb Baghdad. The ICG however, summarized various options for avoiding or entering war against Iraq in early 2003. Directly stating that the issues surrounding the “Iraq crisis” are more “finely balanced than most of those publicly supporting or opposing war are prepared to acknowledge,” the ICG Board was divided and recognized the deep complexity of the implications of Iraq.¹⁵² Presently, the major military operations in Iraq have ended, with no reported caches of chemical, biological, nuclear, or radiological weapons in the country, and with a thriving presence of Iraqi al-Qaeda. Thus, these think tanks’ predictive analyses concerning Iraq appear to range from a balanced perspective to a predominantly bold pro-invasion one.

Weapons of Mass Destruction, Really?

Now, turning to the weapons of mass destruction issue regarding HT and al-Qaeda globally, the arguments made by Cohen and Baran seem imprecise. The troubling statements implying HT’s predilection for chemical, biological, radiological, and even nuclear weapons as a potential means for HT to come to power just do not seem to fit any message that HT has ever officially issued. As well, the author has not seen these views corroborated elsewhere.¹⁵³

While several pan-Islamist terrorist groups, with al-Qaeda the most notorious, have proclaimed that acquiring WMD materials for “dirty bombs” and other terrorist attacks would

contribute to their mission, HT's membership base and Western legitimacy would be devastated by such actions.¹⁵⁴ If HT were to acquire and use WMD materials, Western governments would immediately ban and label HT as a terrorist organization, likely stopping major international financing of the group. As well, the membership base would suffer because many reportedly join because HT is obstinately nonviolent and is, in some sense, the antithesis of al-Qaeda's means and methods.¹⁵⁵ At the same time, the foundation of arguments about HT's potential usage of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, is shadowed by the overall infeasibility that HT could acquire such weapons. As Charles Ferguson and William Potter, the authors of The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism, explain, presently, "al Qaeda is likely the only network with all the requisite characteristics...to pursue nuclear terrorism of the most extreme form."¹⁵⁶ Ferguson and Potter further elaborate that even for the heavily financed al-Qaeda, acquiring the material, technology, and human resources required for nuclear weapons or improvised nuclear devices is highly unlikely.

Al-Qaeda Parallels

On another note, especially in consideration of Baran and Cohen's Congressional consumers, the associating of HT to even some of al-Qaeda's published phrases and using parallel structure to fit the two groups into one narrative is apt to prove dangerous to HT's reputation. It is somewhat paradoxical that Baran wants to separate HT from al-Qaeda and international terrorist organizations, yet clearly illustrates that HT is ideologically and structurally like al-Qaeda. HT spokesman Dourehi explains that, "Hizb ut Tahrir has no association with terrorism or acts of terrorism and refutes any notion of being a conveyor belt to terrorism."

Analogy to “Staircase to Terrorism”

Fathali Moghaddam’s article, “The Staircase to Terrorism,” provides an interesting metaphor of a narrowing staircase as the psychological process that individuals climb to commit terrorist acts. Broadly, Moghaddam argues that the “vast majority” of “deprived and unfairly treated” people stay on the ground floor of a narrowing five-story building.¹⁵⁷ Individuals perceive the building’s floors and doors open to them as they climb the staircase. He furthers this analogous claim by stating that as these people climb the staircase, there are fewer options until the “only possible outcome is the destruction of others, or oneself, or both.”¹⁵⁸

Ground Floor: Psychological Interpretation of Material Conditions

Moghaddam’s ground floor consists of “hundreds of millions of people” who feel intense frustration and shame.¹⁵⁹ This frustration and shame is not necessarily material, and many may feel a “perceived right to independence and the retention of indigenous cultures for a society, a perception that other societies have achieved this goal, and a feeling that under present conditions, the path to this goal has been blocked...”¹⁶⁰ This statement deeply resounds with the notion for an Islamic Caliphate from both HT and al-Qaeda. Moghaddam credits the international mass media and increased access to it as having “fueled feelings of deprivation among vast populations...” and that this anger has “given rise to greater sympathy for extremist “antiestablishment” tactics.”¹⁶¹

The first description of “hundreds of millions of people” being on the ground floor of Moghaddam’s building is too broad to be useful in the context of a pathway to terrorism.¹⁶² Because his ground floor includes people who feel deprived, but may or may not be absolutely deprived, for a large variety of reasons, it is nearly impossible to make conclusions about HT or

al-Qaeda. However, for the individuals not on the ground floor or higher floors, it is difficult to determine how these privileged people could be led to terrorism.

First Floor: Perceived Options to Fight Unfair Treatment

On the first floor of Moghaddam's staircase, individuals have progressed from feeling frustration and injustice to searching for solutions for the injustice. Moghaddam cites three categories of justice from Tyler and Huo to define the perception of individuals at this level: distributive justice, interactional justice, and procedural justice. Distributive justice, or the "outcomes of justice processes", and interactional justice, "the explanations that authorities provide for their decisions and the considerations they show to the recipients of decisions" are the two ideas that prompt individuals to recognize the overall procedural justice.¹⁶³ That is, people on floor one wrestle with how inherently fair the governmental system's decision-making appears to be. Overall, Moghaddam reasons that if individuals feel they have more choice in their future—not always democracy, but a sociopolitical system that allows for "participation in decision making and social mobility," then these individuals will not progress to the next floor, "Displacement of Aggression."

For the earliest members of al-Qaeda, this stage is reasonable; before the men were mujahideen in Afghanistan and then terrorists, they were united by their perceived injustices (from the ground floor) and also by their perceived lack of options to defend Islam from perceived Western imperialism in the Middle East and abroad. Because much of the Middle East is ruled by autocratic regimes in not-free states that have poor civil liberties and political rights, and the initial al-Qaeda members came Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and other states, these men perceived a lack of options to change their situation.¹⁶⁴ Osama bin Laden and al-Zawahiri,

despite their wealth and education, felt as though their religious needs were unmet by society and had no traditional way of changing the system.¹⁶⁵

Second and third wave members of al-Qaeda, however, have more perceived options at floor one.¹⁶⁶ Today, al-Qaeda members and cells are worldwide; in states with and without perceived options to change. Al-Qaeda in Britain is a curious phenomenon because the British have free and fair elections to determine leaders.¹⁶⁷

In much the same way, HT's 1953 roots in East Jerusalem were first planted by a lack of perceived options for change in the Middle East.¹⁶⁸ Today, Muslim youths of England, Central Asia, South East Asia, and other regions have committed to HT not just because they perceive few opportunities to escape or alleviate their perceived injustices. As mentioned, those from England and some South East Asian countries have opportunities for political and social mobility, and are geographically very far from where the Caliphate once was. This begs the question as to how and why HT has become so global—surely there is no history of the Caliphate spreading to England, so the Muslims living there ought not to feel obligated to revert back to the Caliphate system of the Middle East.

Second Floor: Displacement of Aggression

This stage of the staircase analogy goes beyond feelings of frustration and of inequality to fight unfairness. Moghaddam's second floor contains individuals who displace their aggression onto out-groups, such as the United States. In turn, the aggression is “channeled through direct and indirect support for institutions and organizations that nurture authoritarian attitudes and extremist behavior.”¹⁶⁹ Both prospective HT and al-Qaeda members appear to go through this stage.

In fact, as al-Qaeda documents indicate and as Dr. Wahid, the HT Britain Chairman Executive says, it is because they feel the Middle East is ruled by leaders corrupting Islamic values and lending support to Western countries.¹⁷⁰ Thus, by changing Western policies, HT hopes that the Middle East has a greater chance at becoming Islamized. Clearly, some modern-day HT and most al-Qaeda members are aggressive in speaking out about Western “colonial empires,” but is this truly displaced? Moghaddam notes that “...without U.S. support, a number of such [Middle Eastern] governments would probably collapse,” suggesting that HT’s and al-Qaeda’s mantra of the U.S. “propping up” these governments is correct.¹⁷¹ So, while Moghaddam’s argument for potential terrorists displacing their aggression for their local governments’ for the West is on the right track, these groups are knowingly doing so because they want to “kill the hand that feeds.”

Third Floor: “Moral Engagement”

Moghaddam boldly states that “terrorist organizations arise as a parallel or shadow world, with a parallel morality that justifies “the struggle” to achieve the “ideal” society by any means possible.”¹⁷² Essentially, “the struggle” refers to jihad, and “the ‘ideal’ society” is the Caliphate, which are acceptable substitutions given the discussions of “jihad” and “Caliphate.” In discussing “moral engagement,” it is important to consider varying viewpoints; al-Qaeda and HT see themselves (but not each other) as morally “engaged” and their adversaries as the morally disengaged, whereas the opposition to these groups view themselves as the morally engaged. Because discussion of being “more moral” is beyond the scope of this project, it is incumbent to focus on how people at this level acquire their feelings of moral engagement. Degrees of morality are a moot point in view of how this study examines terrorist acts.

Moghaddam suggests that recruits become phased into the group mentality with means such as "...isolation, affiliation, secrecy, and fear..."¹⁷³ Furthermore, the third floor's occupants engage in living parallel, secret lives from friends and family because of fear from government persecution while closed societies lead these individuals to "the sense of absolute affiliation".¹⁷⁴ Here, Moghaddam's ideas fall in line with al-Qaeda's first and second waves of recruitment, but can be very opposed to HT's structure for moral engagement.¹⁷⁵ If a prospective HT member is in an open or closed society, then there are different recruitment methods employed for high moral engagement.

First, this study will examine HT Britain, the alleged organizational headquarters of HT worldwide. According to numerous former and active HT members, recruits go through up to three years of an initiation process before becoming a "full member."¹⁷⁶ This process not does involve fear or hazing, but rather indoctrination to al-Nabhani's writings and small group or cell meetings. Most recruits first become involved while looking for more devout Muslim communities in universities or by word of mouth. Women and men meet in separate circles, and are encouraged to wear traditional, conservative dress. Recruits are told to see everyone they interact with as potential HT members and to seek out opportunities to persuade them to come to meetings. These steps become the catalyst for leading a secret, parallel life. In fact, as one woman states, her membership became "cult-like" due to constant recruiting of new members and circle meetings.¹⁷⁷

Another important consideration is the perceived closed societies of countries such as Uzbekistan, which has the largest membership of HT in Central Asia.¹⁷⁸ Uzbekistan is also known for its gross violations of human rights and authoritarian rule by Islom Karimov.¹⁷⁹ Though it is unclear precisely when HT spread from the Middle East to Central Asia, it is

suspected that HT grew after the breakup of the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁰ Familial clan structures were the most likely vehicle through which the group spread. However, the government of Uzbekistan (GOU) categorized HT as a terrorist group on account for its revolutionary rhetoric.¹⁸¹ In the early 2000s, membership increased as a result of political prisoner culture. The GOU detained and tortured suspected HT members for distributing leaflets or videos, while women were left to maintain households. Women bonded over their shared experiences and help spread HT throughout the unstable Ferghana Valley, located at the intersection of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.¹⁸² The cell structure was in place in Uzbekistan, but many joined HT because they longed for faith-based nonviolent solutions to their people's frustrations. In fact, much of HT Uzbekistan literature was not translated directly from Arabic or English texts and did not focus on the Caliphate; it criticized the Karimov regime's disregard for civil liberties, human rights, and wealth disparity.¹⁸³ Uzbek HT cells were morally engaged and wanted to reform society, but not with violent means. Between al-Qaeda, the Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and other terrorist groups, people longed for a group that took a moral high ground against terror.

As Sayyid Qutb, writes in Milestones:

We must also free ourselves from the clutches of jahili society, jahili concepts, jahili traditions and jahili leadership. Our mission is not to compromise with the practices of jahili society, nor can we be loyal to it. Jahili society, because of its jahili characteristics, is not worthy to be compromised with. Our aim is first to change ourselves so that we may later change the society. Our foremost objective is to change the practices of society.¹⁸⁴

Qutb's statement sounds remarkably like the initial phase of HT roadmap to the Caliphate, which calls for "culturing to produce people who believe in the idea and the method of the Party."¹⁸⁵

With a core of believers reaching out to the ignorant, or jahili society, HT is aligned with moral engagement on the third floor.

Fourth Floor: Solidification of Categorical Thinking and the Perceived Legitimacy of the Terrorist Organization

Moghaddam's fourth floor leaves recruits with few perceived doors of opportunity and the perception that there is "little or no opportunity to exit alive," because recruits are either long-term members in small cells or "foot soldiers" who will execute the terrorist act.¹⁸⁶ For this purpose, he writes that the cell structure is conducive to the "legitimization of the terrorist organization and its goals," solidifies the "belief that the ends justify the means," and reinforces the "us-versus-them view of the world."¹⁸⁷ This may be the case in the first and second waves of al-Qaeda, but this formula does not quite work for HT. Al-Qaeda's recruits were indoctrinated in various training camps throughout Afghanistan and other states, and small cells were deployed or were arranged to execute certain missions, such as the Hamburg cell before the events of September 11, 2001.¹⁸⁸ The so-called "third wave" of al-Qaeda, however operates more like a large, decentralized franchise. Individuals approving of al-Qaeda's philosophy but not necessarily with an organized cell or directions from al-Qaeda's higher command may go on to commit acts of terror once they reach Moghaddam's fifth floor. What is most striking about the latest wave of al-Qaeda's franchise is that the emergent cells may be part of al-Qaeda in name only but still have the same underlying "ends justify the means" and "us-versus-them" mentality as someone directly in contact with al-Qaeda elite.¹⁸⁹ Burke notes that "[Al-Qaeda] is not about being part of a group. It is a way of thinking about the world, a way of understanding events, of interpreting and behaving."¹⁹⁰

Because this study reviews HT in parallel to Moghaddam's "Staircase to Terrorism," when HT is not defined as a terrorist organization by the United States government, it is important to not lose sight into the exercise that Moghaddam's structure is primarily useful as a

guideline. Member of HT perceive different doors and floors available to them than do al-Qaeda recruits. This study aims to use his metaphor to help determine if HT will mobilize into a terrorist group or one that commits other violence.

To this end, it would appear that there is a higher level than “moral engagement” for HT. The study circles or claimed cell structure seem most predominant in Central Asia because of the requisite secrecy to avoid imprisonment, but there is also evidence that more organized circles of HT dominate HT United Kingdom.¹⁹¹ While there are no “foot soldiers” of HT to carry out terrorist acts, in Britain and Indonesia, there are large rallying events and group protests.¹⁹² In addition, at least HT Britain, HT France, and HT Denmark have utilized websites like www.youtube.com to enlighten and to recruit interested individuals.¹⁹³ Perhaps the most compelling sign of this floor’s incompatibility with al-Qaeda comes from hearing from former HT members who psychologically advanced past moral engagement. For several of these former members, once they recognized how deeply into the socialized group was they had joined and wanted to leave, they faced immense pressure internally and externally against leaving. At least one former HT member went from this higher stage and quickly back to the first or ground floor of the psychological staircase.¹⁹⁴

In Uzbekistan and other Central Asian nations, the cell structure has been both a bane and a boon; the secretive nature of it keeps the cells hard for governments to enforce anti-terrorism laws but also keeps the cells from brazenly publicizing a group whose membership can handily turn the recruit into a political prisoner. At this floor, HT recruits have solidified categorical thinking that HT is the ideal legitimate group to bring about peaceful change. At the same time, there are many HT members who do not work for the Caliphate or do not see the Caliphate as viably happening in their lifetimes.¹⁹⁵ It would be logical to conclude that these people are on

the third floor of moral engagement because they do not perceive the ultimate goals of HT as legitimate possibilities.

Fifth Floor: The Terrorism Act and Sidestepping Inhibitory Mechanisms

Finally, Moghaddam argues that the psychological pressure and commitment towards the terrorist act climaxes on the fifth floor as a result of “social categorization” and “psychological distance.”¹⁹⁶ The process of “social categorization” involves the terrorist treating every person not in his or her terrorist group as an enemy combatant.¹⁹⁷ The “us-versus-them” mentality from the fourth floor goes to its extreme at this level, even classifying foreign mothers and children as enemies because they are not actively defending the terrorist organization’s beliefs. Also, the greater the “psychological distance” a terrorist puts between himself or herself and the victim of the attack will lower the chance “inhibitory mechanisms” would stop the terrorist from fully executing the terrorist act.

This argument is especially suitable for al-Qaeda, as it prefers to strike civilians over military targets for greater media attention and greater perception of fear in the community. Al-Qaeda’s civilian fear logic is especially relevant in big attacks like the events of September 11, 2001, the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole, and the bombings of U.S. Embassies in 1998.

Considering Crenshaw’s terrorist organizational belief that, “Generally, small organizations resort to violence to compensate for what they lack in numbers. The imbalance between the resources terrorists are able to mobilize and the power of the incumbent regime is a decisive consideration in their decision making,” it is clear that al-Qaeda’s most notorious acts followed this pattern and that HT’s large membership does not.¹⁹⁸

Could HT ever perceive itself with doors of opportunity on the fifth floor? It does not seem likely. While there are exceptions—only a couple of documented former HT members left

the group to join al-Qaeda or another terrorist group—there is no non-violent equivalent to committing a terrorist act. Neither al-Qaeda nor any other worldwide terrorist organization’s actions have brought substantive political progress towards the re-creation of the Caliphate. HT itself has no realistic outlined plan for reaching “Stage Three: The stage of establishing government, implementing Islam generally and comprehensively, and carrying it as a message to the world,” and suggests that a divine revelation and the will of the people alone will reunite the Caliphate.¹⁹⁹

Gateway to Terrorism: Not Likely

After evaluating each step of Moghaddam’s “Staircase to Terrorism” model, it would be reasonable to deduce that HT’s members are not going down the same path as al-Qaeda did to recruit members and initiate attacks. While HT’s claimed ideal of a recreated Islamic Caliphate is, perhaps, the most touted of its many convictions, the vast majority of members in HT do not actively pursue the Caliphate and condemn violence. In fact, most HT members join because it is exactly what al-Qaeda is not: a stubbornly non-violent organization promoting a return to Islamic doctrine and increased Islamic devotion throughout the youth of the world. Jessica Stern writes that “violence...restores the dignity of humiliated youth...it is a marketing device and a method for rousing the troops.”²⁰⁰ In HT seems to prefer to “rouse the troops” in an altogether different way than al-Qaeda. HT’s “troops” are the vocal members who stage protests, engage in the online community, and distribute leaflets elucidating their views on modern society.

HT initially took part in unsuccessful political coups, but after the group’s strategy changed for greater awareness in their aims, membership significantly increased. The Leninist model that HT suggests will help bring about the Caliphate is much different than al-Qaeda’s forceful, proposed institutional change. For over fifty years, HT has spread its method and

rationale for change. Yet, no one country seems likely to have a peaceful change of power to the Caliph system. Perhaps Crenshaw depicts HT's eventual fall because its views are just too extreme for the general public, "Why does an organization lack the potential to attract enough followers to change government policy or overthrow it? One possibility is that the majority of the population does not share the ideological views of the resisters, who occupy a political position so extreme that their appeal is inherently limited."²⁰¹

Big Picture: Analytical Bias

One problem with predictive threat analysis is that groups or individuals who do not commit violent actions always have the potential to do so. Yet, the President of the United States, politicians, and intelligence analysts are charged with protecting U.S. and U.S. interests by identifying the pressing transnational threats of today and of the future, indeed "no mean feat."²⁰² The "publish or perish" mentality in the academic world can and often does correspond to strategic threat analysis in the intelligence and policy field, as well.

A bias involved in naming threats is evident in some of the policy suggestions given by Cohen and Baran. Cohen recommends that "the U.S. should expand intelligence collection on Hizb ut-Tahrir" and work together with foreign intelligence agencies.²⁰³ More collection may be helpful for the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) to better understand HT, but here Cohen signals that whatever the current intelligence on HT is, it is not enough. He warns that some "regimes...will attempt to portray Hizb as a terrorist organization with links to Osama bin Laden," but does not explicitly state that this is false, which may mislead the reader.²⁰⁴ In fact, later in his essay, Cohen states that "Hizb may launch terrorist attacks against U.S. targets and allies, operating either alone or in cooperation with other global terrorist groups, such as al-

Qaeda,” which implies that his prior statement that seemingly dismisses Central Asian governmental assessments may be accurate.²⁰⁵ Central Asian states do label HT as a terrorist organization with links to al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, but there is no widely-accepted documented case of Central Asian HT activity with al-Qaeda.²⁰⁶ The ICG, in particular, notes that HT and al-Qaeda “reject each other as profoundly wrong on theological questions,” and then suggests that, “lumping them [HT] with violent groups such as al-Qaeda merely undermines the campaign against terrorism and gives ammunition to those radicals who claim that the West is acting against free speech and Islam in general.”²⁰⁷

Other U.S. policy prescriptions by Cohen include aid with economic reform, democracy building initiatives, and media that “discredits radicals and encourages moderates.”²⁰⁸ Cohen’s suggestions of economic reform and democracy building are largely responsibilities of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Since Cohen’s article was published in May of 2003, USAID monetary aid to Uzbekistan, the most populous Central Asian state which is considered the stronghold of HT efforts in Central Asia, has gone from approximately 35 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2004 to approximately 8.5 million dollars.²⁰⁹ Overall USAID assistance for Central Asia has declined over 25 percent.²¹⁰ It is important to note that US financial assistance to Uzbekistan boomed after September 11, 2001 when Karimov was the first Central Asian leader to offer military and airbase support. However, in the spring of 2005, USAID contributions and US foreign policy relations with Uzbekistan significantly dropped due to a state-sponsored killing of numerous political protesters in Andijon. Though Karimov claimed that the victims were Islamic terrorists, he forbade an international investigation of the incident and subsequently prohibited the US and coalition forces from utilizing Uzbekistan’s strategic airbase near Afghanistan.²¹¹

Rashid puts forth an innovative policy idea of legalizing HT as a political party, especially in those states in which it is banned. By legalizing the group, it would pressure the party's "leadership to deal with local problems and articulate concrete economic and political policies rather than rely on vague millenarian promises."²¹² Furthermore, Rashid argues that if HT were a legally authorized party, it would be much "less likely to forge links with other radical Islamic groups that do advocate violence."²¹³ In other words, Rashid hopes that HT would be accountable for its promises and also be on its best behavior to maintain relationships with its followers.

Though Rashid's solution almost seems like a panacea for many of the problems HT has globally, it would take significant effort and compromises of both governments and of HT. In Central Asia, the only state that permits Islamic groups to run as political parties is Tajikistan, which suffered through a civil war during 1992-1997 in part because of religious politics. As for HT, it claims to not recognize the legitimacy of the political processes in any country today, and that is why HT leaders have not run for office. Further compounding the problem of legalization is that during HT's early history, there were Middle Eastern coup attempts allegedly led by HT members. While HT has maintained its innocence, no other group has been held responsible for the plots. As well, in HT's recent history, HT has been blamed for attacks that may not have been instigated by its members; other groups like al-Qaeda and the IMU are possible initiators, but as with the case with many Central Asian legal practices, the truth may never be known.

Finally, for HT to take on a legal status in Central Asia would be an enormous change for Islam in those states. In 1917, during the Bolshevik revolution, the number of mosques in all of the Russian empire numbered around 20,000. By 1935, only a total of 84 mosques were in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.²¹⁴ Post-World War II, the "Soviets had reduced Islam

to the status of a cult,” and it was not until the collapse of the Soviet Union did Islam fully become legal in the region.²¹⁵

Conclusion

While this paper offers no solution as to how governments ought to manage HT, it does attempt to address the challenges of analysis of Hizb-ut-Tahrir in careful consideration of falling into the trap of the al-Qaeda narrative. That Ahmed Rashid and Suja Taji-Farouki’s detailed pre-9/11 analyses of HT were available and somehow did not make a significant impact on the post-9/11 HT reports speaks volumes as to the analytic biases that caused these researchers, media, and governments to frame HT in the al-Qaeda narrative. Upon review of both Islamist groups’ goal to reunify the Caliphate, analysts seemed to articulate that HT may invariably take the path of violence in the future. The foundings and methodologies of HT and al-Qaeda, however, lead to an alternative analysis. Al-Qaeda was formed as a reaction to violence and has always committed violence to justify its goal. Yet, HT’s insistence on non-violence was a reaction to dissatisfaction with the Muslim Brotherhood. Political Islam is far-reaching; the Caliphate that HT and al-Qaeda propose remains a theoretical and practical feat, but these groups nevertheless advocate their goals.

Appendix:

Abbreviation List:

Central Intelligence Agency	CIA
Global War on Terror	GWOT
Hizb-ut-Tahrir	HT
International Crisis Group	ICG
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	IMU
Government of Uzbekistan	GOU
National Counterterrorism Center	NCTC
North American Treaty Organization	NATO
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
(United States) Intelligence Community	IC

Maps:

Islamic Caliphate²¹⁶



Osama bin Laden's "Pan-Islamic Caliphate"²¹⁷



Timeline of Events

850

Last formal Caliphate, with a Caliph as leader “who receives obedience from all and has religious authority” exists.²¹⁸ Future references to the Caliphate are “largely symbolic posts for foreign policy purposes.”²¹⁹

1909

Taqiuddin al-Nabhani born in Ijzim, Haifa, the Jordanian controlled part of Jerusalem.

1924

Kemal Ataturk abolishes final office of the Caliphate in series of new Turkish reforms.

1953

Taqiuddin al-Nabhani breaks away from Muslim Brotherhood and establishes Hizb-ut-Tahrir

1964

Founding Hizb-ut-Tahrir member, Ahmad Daour, wins Jordanian parliament seat.²²⁰

1968

Hizb-ut-Tahrir members allegedly stage coup in Jordan, Iraq, and Syria.²²¹

Ahmad Daour arrested for involvement in Jordanian coup attempt.²²²

1969

Hizb-ut-Tahrir members allegedly stage second coup in Jordan.²²³

Hizb-ut-Tahrir membership in Jordan typically results in six-year jail sentence.²²⁴

1971

Hizb-ut-Tahrir members allegedly stage third coup in Jordan.²²⁵

1972

Hizb-ut-Tahrir members allegedly stage second coup in southern Iraq.²²⁶

1974

Palestinian Hizb-ut-Tahrir member, Salih Sirriya, allegedly initiates pre-coup attack on Egyptian armory of a military academy.²²⁷

Egypt bans Hizb-ut-Tahrir.²²⁸

1977

Taqiuddin al-Nabhani dies and is replaced with Palestinian Yusuf Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zaloom.

1983

Hizb-ut-Tahrir cells “broken up” by Tunisian government.²²⁹

Hizb-ut-Tahrir chapter launches in Indonesia.²³⁰

1988

Hizb-ut-Tahrir members allegedly stage coup in Tunisia and Iraq.

Al-Qaeda founded by Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

1990

Saddam Hussein executes Hizb-ut-Tahrir members who call for Islamic state.²³¹

1991

Tunisian government arrests 80 Hizb-ut-Tahrir members.²³²

Collapse of the Soviet Union.

Al-Qaeda moves to Sudan and establishes training camps.

Mid-1990s

Hizb-ut-Tahrir spreads to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan.²³³

1993

Al-Qaeda attacks World Trade Center with car bomb.

Black Hawk helicopters shot down by Somali militia, which was allegedly trained by al-Qaeda.

1994

Ten Hizb-ut-Tahrir members convicted of King Hussein of Jordan assassination attempt, eight decisions overturned and two tried in absentia.²³⁴

1996

Hizb-ut-Tahrir “splinter group,” Akramiyyah formed in Ferghana Valley.²³⁵

Bin Laden leaves Sudan and returns to Afghanistan.

1998

Bin Laden and associates declare a fatwa against the U.S. and Israel.

Al-Qaeda bombs U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing more than 220 people.

1999

Hizb-ut-Tahrir banned in Syria, with extensive arrests continuing to 2002.²³⁶

Tashkent Hizb-ut-Tahrir begins new party, Hizb-an-Nusra (Party of Victory).²³⁷

2000

Hizb-ut-Tahrir chapter launches in Pakistan.²³⁸

“Widespread arrests” of Hizb-ut-Tahrir members in Tajikistan.²³⁹

Al-Qaeda suicide bombers attack the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen, killing 17 sailors.

2001

400 women of imprisoned male Hizb-ut-Tahrir Uzbekistan members protest and up to 80 are beaten and arrested by government authorities.²⁴⁰

Al-Qaeda operatives launch four parallel hijacking attacks that result in over 3,000 civilian deaths. Three planes hit the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon; while one plane crashes in rural Pennsylvania.

U.S. military and coalition forces begin aerial strikes in Afghanistan, targeting al-Qaeda training camps and Taliban strongholds.

Briton Richard Reid, pledging allegiance to bin Laden, attempts to bring explosives hidden in his shoes on commercial aircraft.

2002

Three British citizens arrested in Egypt for Hizb-ut-Tahrir membership.²⁴¹

Decline of Hizb-ut-Tahrir activity in Central Asia observed.²⁴²

2003

Germany bans Hizb-ut-Tahrir due to “anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli propaganda.”²⁴³

Denmark Hizb-ut-Tahrir leader, Fadi Abdullatif, distributes anti-Semitic leaflets and breaks anti-racism laws.²⁴⁴

U.S. and coalition forces invade Iraq to eradicate alleged weapons of mass destruction and to topple Saddam Hussein’s regime.

Hizb-ut-Tahrir opens new Iraqi branch with U.S. and coalition forces removal of Saddam Hussein.²⁴⁵

2004

Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, a supporter of al-Qaeda, explodes ten bombs on Madrid trains and kills 191 people.

2005

In London, three trains and a bus are bombed by groups linked or inspired by al-Qaeda, killing 52 people.

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¹² Baran "Hizb-ut-Tahrir..." 6

¹³ Baran "Hizb-ut-Tahrir..." 6 The full quotation is, "It [HT] is doing so by using the rhetoric of democracy and a message of non-violence to mask its more radical objectives. But these objectives can only be achieved through violence."

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¹⁵ Baran "Hizb-ut-Tahrir..." 135

¹⁶ Baran "Hizb-ut-Tahrir..." 9

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- ²⁰⁴ Cohen “Hizb-ut-Tahrir...” Full quotation, “The U.S. intelligence community should work with the United Kingdom's MI5 and MI6 and with the intelligence services of Russia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and the Central Asian states. U.S. analysts and policymakers, however, should be aware that some of the regimes in question will attempt to portray Hizb as a terrorist organization with links to Osama bin Laden.”
- ²⁰⁵ Cohen “Hizb-ut-Tahrir...”
- ²⁰⁶ Rashid 124, 135
- ²⁰⁷ “Radical Islam...” 31, 47
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- ²¹⁴ Rashid 38. Rashid’s statistics, from Yaacov Roi’s Islam in the Soviet Union from the Second World War to Gorbachev, state that the number of 1935 registered mosques in Uzbekistan was sixty, Kazakhstan twenty, and Turkmenistan four.
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