



al Qaeda: Beyond Osama-bin Laden

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Summary

“Justice has been done” exclaimed a visibly re-energised but sombre US President, Barack Obama, as impromptu celebrations broke outside the White House. A decade since the “World’s Most Wanted Terrorist” had declared war against the US and made “Jihad global”, bin Laden’s elimination has been touted as “closure”. Conspiracy theories – the “suspect timing” with Obama’s bid for second term closing in, “level of compliance of Pakistani authorities”, “Was Osama’s head the price Pakistan had to pay to save the cracking relationship?”, “is this the master plan to ease Pakistan’s entry and US exit from Afghanistan?” – seem to cloud the right here and now; but naturally. Yet, the importance of this development on the movement of “global jihad” pioneered by Osama and al Qaeda remains a pivotal conceptual question that will require nuanced analysis. The war is not over yet, even Obama says so.

"This has nothing to do with the poor servant of God, nor with the al-Qaeda organisation. We are the children of the Islamic nation whose leader is Mohammed." -Osama bin Laden, October 21, 2001 to al Jazeera (on the importance of Osama to al-Qaeda).¹

*"The death of Bin Laden marks the most significant achievement to date in our nation's effort to defeat Al Qaeda. But his death does not mark the end of our effort."*² - US President Barack Obama, in a late-night televised address on May 1, 2011.

"Justice has been done" exclaimed a visibly re-energised but sombre US President, Barack Obama, as impromptu celebrations broke outside the White House. A decade since the "World's Most Wanted Terrorist" had declared war against the US and made "Jihad global", bin Laden's elimination has been touted as "closure". Conspiracy theories – the "suspect timing" with Obama's bid for second term closing in, "level of compliance of Pakistani authorities", "Was Osama's head the price Pakistan had to pay to save the cracking relationship?", "is this the master plan to ease Pakistan's entry and US exit from Afghanistan?" – seem to cloud the right here and now; but naturally. Yet, the importance of this development on the movement of "global jihad" pioneered by Osama and al Qaeda remains a pivotal conceptual question that will require nuanced analysis. The war is not over yet, even Obama says so.

*"The history of ideas obeys laws of irony. Ideas have consequences, but rarely those their authors expect or desire, and never only those. Quite often they are the opposite."*³ Osama bin Laden's biggest legacy is the "idea of a global discourse of discontent" that he so infamously articulated. "The idea of al-Qaeda – the percept, the maxim, the formula", not literally just 'the base', was his singularly most important contribution, says Jason Burke who has examined the extent of bin Laden's influence.⁴ Osama engineered what is now known in common parlance as "the war of ideas". This is perhaps the reason why most scholars refer to al Qaeda as an 'ideological movement'. Some like Audrey Cronin, Olivier Roy and Faisal Devji conceptualise it as a 'social movement'. But at the heart of all these arguments is the idea that it is one which moves "further away from direct contact with the core."⁵

¹ Transcript of interview with al Jazeera correspondent Tayseer Alouni, reproduced in *Al Qaeda Now*, Greenberg, K (2005), p. 201.

² "Bin Laden Is Dead, Obama Says," Peter Baker and Helene Cooper, May 1, 2011, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/02/world/asia/osama-bin-laden-is-killed.html?ref=global-home) accessed on: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/02/world/asia/osama-bin-laden-is-killed.html?ref=global-home>.

³ Gray, J (2003), p. 27.

⁴ Burke, J (2007), p. 14.

⁵ Cronin, A (2007), 'Ending Al-Qaeda', *Adelphi series*, 47: 394, p. 55, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/05679320802103714>, accessed March 1, 2010.

Research into the 'al-Qaeda phenomenon' post 9/11 and 'Operation Enduring Freedom' infers that al-Qaeda as an 'organisational structure' that existed before the World Trade Centre attacks is dead.⁶ Cronin notes that post September 2001 it came to be composed of "three main elements; a core group of leaders and strategists directly associated with bin Laden and deputy al-Zawahiri; a nebula of more traditional groups that are formally or informally aligned with the core and sometimes respond to central guidance; and localised factions (even individuals) that have no physical contact with the centre, but strive to associate themselves with the worldview of al-Qaeda and its vaunted label."⁷ 'Brand' al Qaeda is now the real threat, not the individuals.

In keeping with this framework, will the loss of bin Laden really affect al Qaeda? Symbolically, yes, since it has lost an inspirational ideologue. The wave of the Arab Spring across the Middle East, which illustrated that violence need not be the only means to vent dissent and affect political change, significantly marginalised the support for al Qaeda, with some even talking of 'al Qaeda's obituary being written at Tahrir Square'. Case in point, the "Muslim Brotherhood", of which Zawahiri was a former member, fell in line with the moderates in the pro-democracy movement that swept Egypt. Yet, this revolution was being seen only affecting change in "well to do" states with technological sophistication that used the social media to its potential. In other countries where corrupt regimes are still holding onto power, "bin Laden as a propaganda figure head may have already served his purpose."⁸ Now he will be celebrated as a martyr, "inspiring the strengthening of his ideas for generations to come."⁹

It may perhaps be safe to argue that the decapitation of the al Qaeda leadership would have been an immediate goal post 9/11, but in 2011 the impact is more symbolic rather than strategic. For, now, the "MNC of terror" has mastered the art of decentralised influence with billions of dollars being funnelled through charities, financiers, and sleeper cells all in support of this global jihad network. Experts have repeatedly articulated that while 'al-Qaeda's centrality' to the radicalisation of Islam needs to be demystified, its resilience, adaptability and ability to survive and operate despite an intense military campaign against it are characteristics unique to the movement. The absence of bin Laden might definitely disable the movement temporarily before it mutates into a more potent form.

⁶ Burke, J (2007), p. 274.

⁷ Cronin, A (2007) *Ending Al-Qaeda*, Adelphi series, 47: 394, p. 60, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/05679320802103714>, accessed : March 1, 2010

⁸ "What next after bin Laden death?," Caristrom, G. May 2 2011, <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/2011/05/20115255840441224.html>

⁹ Bergen, P (2006), p. 383.

In the immediate term, the killing of bin Laden may see violent retaliation by al Qaeda and its associates – a possibility the US government has already forewarned about. In the long term, as analysts have been speculating for a while, the al Qaeda has prepared for the eventuality of a change in leadership. It was believed that a succession plan had been put in place with bin Laden's son leading the pack. Despite US special operations taking the heir apparent out, the bench strength still seems strong.¹⁰

Remaining leadership (Source Washington Post, May 2, 2011)



POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO BIN LADEN



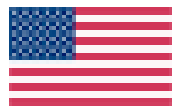
Ayman al-Zawahiri

Nationality: Egypt

Advisor and second in command to bin Laden, most likely to succeed him. Head of Egyptian Islamic Jihad group.



POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO BIN LADEN



Anwar al-Awlaki

Nationality: United States. Holds dual American and Yemeni citizenship.

Leader of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and considered a possible successor to bin Laden.



Saif al-Adel

Nationality: Egypt

Security operations, succeeded Mohammed Atef. Former Egyptian army officer who joined the mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Reportedly being held under house arrest in Iran, but may have been released.

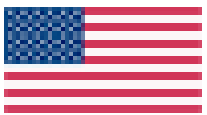
¹⁰ "Bin Laden is dead, but Al Qaeda is not," May 2, 2011, Washington Post
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/world/al-qaeda-leadership/>

**Adnan Gulshair el-Shukrijumah****Nationality:** Saudi Arabia

Operations. Lived in the United States with his father, a Muslim cleric.

**Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah****Nationality:** Egypt

Financial operations.

**Adam Gadhan****Nationality:** United States

Propagandist. Grew up in California and converted to Islam as a teenager. Moved to Pakistan in 1998 and appeared in several Al Qaeda videos. Indicted and charged with treason in 2006.

As obvious from the CVs above, the dissemination of al Qaeda's world view for almost a decade has replenished its ranks with second, third and perhaps even fourth generation terrorists, whose collective conscience has been unleashed to avenge "humiliation".¹¹ Osama bin Laden constructed this reality, which made al Qaeda a complex blend of an ideological as well as a social movement.

What is obviously unique to the conception of al Qaeda by bin Laden and al Zawahiri is the articulation of a movement that co-opts various struggles - some ideologically, others strategically - and its ability and adaptability to internationalise and link regional and global conflicts. Rohan Gunaratna has termed the movement "opportunistic",¹² while conversely Oliver Roy thinks "neo fundamentalism and radical violence are more linked with westernisation than with the return to the Qur'an."¹³ Both views capture the complexity of the debate. Central to the movement is the idea - and its appeal lies in exploiting anti-western sentiment and mirrors in many ways the trends of movements such as anti-globalisation. Thus, "Islamic fundamentalism", as John Gray reiterates, is a "modern project" - a by-product of globalisation.

¹¹ Hellmich, C (2005), p. 53.

¹² Gunaratna, R (2003), p. 31.

¹³ Roy, O (2004), p. 6.

The secret of the seemingly global appeal of al Qaeda's world view is the twin phenomena of the individualisation and de-territorialisation of Islam coupled with the consequences of globalisation.¹⁴ In the absence or weakening of the authority of religion, individualisation of religious practices becomes inevitable. This shift from 'religion to religiosity' sets in motion a quest for the reconstruction of a universal community going beyond cultures and nations with a stress on faith and values. The manifestations of this may either be liberal Islam or neo-fundamentalism.¹⁵ Referring to "Islamic terror" as "neo-fundamentalism", Olivier Roy calls it a product and agent of globalisation since it de-contextualises religious practices. This translates into "turning human behaviour into codes and patterns of consumption de-linked from any specific culture."¹⁶

Faisal Devji recounts bin Laden's observation - that the 9/11 attacks rather than the traditional form of preaching attracted more people to Islam from Holland - as a critique of the existing forms of proselytization while acknowledging "jihad's global novelty."¹⁷ This gives al Qaeda's hardcore the distinction of being radical reformers who interpret the Qur'an as a guide to daily life despite the lack of academic credentials.¹⁸ The destruction of "inherited forms of religious authority" by al Qaeda's jihad makes it more ideologically accessible even to groups that it might "consider beyond the pale of Islam."¹⁹

This is key to the success of al Qaeda's brand of ideology in the landscape of radical Islam. It expresses itself distinctly in "the new breed [of al-Qaeda] which is largely uprooted, more westernised than its predecessors, had few links if any to a particular Muslim country and moved around the world travelling from *jihad* to *jihad*."²⁰ This second generation comprises of educated professionals, college drop-outs and marginalised Muslims of diverse ethnicities born or raised in the West who have been victims of exclusion, alienation and extreme polarisation and are constantly 'seeking to belong'. Rewarded with "a substitute of identity, they become members of a vanguard of international jihadists who fight the global power and the international system."²¹

¹⁴ Roy, O (2004), p. 9.

¹⁵ Roy, O (2004), p. 149.

¹⁶ Roy, O (2004), p. 258.

¹⁷ Devji, F (2005), p. 15.

¹⁸ Burke, J, "Al Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, No. 142 (May - Jun., 2004), pp. 18-26, www.jstor.org/stable/4147572, accessed February 27, 2010.

¹⁹ Devji, F (2005), p. 16.

²⁰ Roy, O (2004), p. 302.

²¹ Roy, O (2004), p. 309.

This trend is explained by the individualisation of religion and its de-territorialisation or breaking away from traditional boundaries. It also explains why Europe and not the Middle East has been the target of increasing 'Islamist' terror post 1996. In Mamdani's reading of Roy's *'Globalised Islam'*, one of the key insights into understanding "neo-fundamentalism" or "Islamic terror" is the bifurcation in Political Islam between Islamist parties in the Middle East and the Islamic diaspora in the West. The former has mostly been able to mobilise and integrate itself into "nationalist struggles" in the political space, while in the West there has been no outlet for this 'alternate' world view. This was exacerbated by the fact that the diaspora had to survive in adverse conditions which often included being subjects of racism and now increasingly stigmatised for belonging to a "terrorist culture."²² Olivier Roy points out that "there are now in the West only two movements of radical protest that claim to be 'internationalist': the anti-globalisation movement and radical Islam. For a rebel to convert is to find a cause."²³

Faisal Devji describes this language of al Qaeda as one which articulates like other global movements but even more seductively the "displacing of politics by ethics as a way of engaging with its accidental universe."²⁴ Bruce Lawrence and Peter Bergen, both of whom have published biographies on the al Qaeda founder, note that the striking feature in bin Laden's rhetoric is the absence of any social dimension or vision of the societies in which Jihad is awakened after the final triumph, rather the emphasis is always on the glories of martyrdom.²⁵ "This is a creed of great purity and intensity capable of inspiring its followers with a degree of passion and principled conviction that no secular movement in the Arab world has matched," observes Lawrence.²⁶ This logic may falter in the wake of the new pro-democracy protests in the Middle East, but largely it still stands ground. Burke notes that "we are now in a post-bin Laden phase of Islamic militancy."²⁷ Bin Laden himself has been widely quoted saying "*regardless of whether Osama is killed or survives, the awakening has started, praised be God.*"²⁸

It is argued that "religious fundamentalism thrives on a sense of embattlement."²⁹ These frustrations with injustice and humiliation did exist before bin Laden, all he did was to funnel the dissent. bin Laden, as most analysts emphasise, is not an original thinker.³⁰

²² Mamdani, M (2005), "Whither Political Islam? <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/60445/mahmood-mamdani/whither-political-islam>

²³ Roy, O (2004), p. 49.

²⁴ Devji, F (2005), p. 13.

²⁵ See Lawrence, B (2005), Introduction, p. 22, Bergen P (2006)

²⁶ Lawrence, B (2005) Introduction, p. 22.

²⁷ Burke, J (2007), p. 20.

²⁸ Benjamin, D & Simon, S (2003), p. 158.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 115.

³⁰ Lawrence, B (2005) Introduction, p. 12.

Most of his ideas are borrowed from the writings of Abdullah Azam his mentor, a Palestinian professor at Jeddah who wrote *"Defending the Land of Muslims is Each Man's Most Important Duty"* in 1985, laying down a comprehensive case for Jihad against the West.³¹ He was also deeply influenced by Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian writer also considered the "Lenin of the al-Qaeda movement."³² Qutb's work became the powerful voice of radical Islamic protest against both Arab nationalism and Western hegemony and called for holy wars against the enemies of Islam.³³ So what then was unique to al Qaeda's ideology?

Osama bin Laden "framed" the debate to topple twenty years of "Jihadist thinking".³⁴ The Israel-Palestinian conflict portrayed as an epic clash between Zionists and Islamists was at the heart of the matter. Saudi Arabia's alliance with the US, which supported Israel, had made it an "infidel" regime – the "near enemy" that needed to be overthrown. Europe backed by America which propped up oppressive secular Arab regimes throughout the region and desecrated "the holy soil" (Mecca/ Medina, Jerusalem) were seen as the "Far enemy". A holy war was thus justified to avenge centuries of humiliation and suffering. Bin Laden turned the equation around.

The idea was a tactical shift in focus from the 'near' to the 'far enemy'. This coincided with the defeat of Islamic nationalists across the world and hence catalysed the Jihadi movement. It was argued that US support for the 'infidel' and 'corrupt' regimes in the region was the only reason why Islamic nationalists were losing. "With the near enemy unbeatable in its own turf, the only solution was to wage a war against the far enemy."³⁵ This departure allowed for Islamic nationalists fighting for their respective movements to escape the barriers of territory and join the wider battle of defeating the 'far enemy'. It made bin Laden's jihad global.

The message, couched in religious rhetoric, strategically co-opts a variety of struggles and justifies extreme action. The result has been the spawning of groups of radicals that can develop in any part of the world, who no longer need an order from the al Qaeda leadership and believe they are under "direct orders from Allah".³⁶ This is the biggest and most potent impact of al Qaeda's ideology. "The global consequences of al-Qaeda's jihad have outstripped its local causes, and so have exceeded its intentions, to take a life of their own and well beyond the politics of control."³⁷ This is why the focus on al Qaeda

³¹ Ibid., p. 16.

³² Greenberg, K (2005), p. 4.

³³ Lawrence, B (2005), Introduction, p. 12.

³⁴ Benjamin, D & Simon, S (2003), p. 118.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

³⁶ Greenberg, K (2005), p. 64.

³⁷ Devji, F (2005), p. 2.

as an umbrella organisation of Islamic “terror” or “fundamentalism” or “militancy” is problematic.

Burke notes that some radicals might share most of bin Laden’s aims, the others some, and a few none at all. The lumping of various movements with different motivations under the “rubric of Islamic terrorism” may do more harm to understand what now is described as a “global insurgency”.³⁸ For some groups al Qaeda’s way of thinking or style of functioning may be attractive, to others using the al-Qaeda “brand name” may add weight to their cause. al Qaeda’s credit lies in its perfection of this technique of asymmetric warfare. It co-opts various struggles, pursues political goals that are global and non-negotiable and hence has led to an “unlimited type of war”.³⁹ This war draws its power from what it sees and exposes as the “weakness of [values of] Western style nation states – especially America.”⁴⁰

The “War on Terror” is thus a war of ideas. Although it is articulated as their cause, Burke argues that the use of “Islamic terror” is not primarily focussed on the destruction of the West to establish a ‘global Islamic state’ or caliphate, but to fight back what is seen as an aggressive campaign by the West to “complete the project begun during the Crusades and colonial periods of denigrating, dividing, and humiliating Islam.”⁴¹ Roy elaborates on Burke’s argument that the idea is not to return to the golden age of the Islamic empire dating back to early first and second centuries.⁴² “On the contrary, they play on globalisation to build what they see as the future golden age: a new universal community that can bypass and transcend the failure of the past models.”⁴³ John Gray points out that “al-Qaeda sees itself as an alternative to the modern world, but the ideas on which it draws are quintessentially modern.”⁴⁴ Islamic radicals, like Marxists and neo-liberalists, “see history as a prelude to the new world [...] convinced that they can remake human condition.”⁴⁵

This reflects in the ideology too which is borrowed from Syed Qutb’s work “*Ma’alim fi’l-tariq (Milestones)*, that reads in many parts like an “Islamicized *Communist Manifesto*.”⁴⁶

³⁸ Burke, J (2007), p. 24.

³⁹ Gray, J (2003), pp. 82-84.

⁴⁰ Cronin, A (2007) *Ending Al-Qaeda*, Adelphi series, 47: 394, p. 51, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/05679320802103714>, accessed March 1, 2010.

⁴¹ Burke, J, “Al Qaeda”, *Foreign Policy*, No. 142 (May - Jun., 2004), pp. 18-26, www.jstor.org/stable/4147572, accessed February 27, 2010.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Roy, O (2004), p. 13.

⁴⁴ Gray, J (2003), p. 26.

⁴⁵ Gray, J (2003), p. 3.

⁴⁶ Burke, J, “Al Qaeda”, *Foreign Policy*, No. 142 (May - Jun., 2004), pp. 18-26, www.jstor.org/stable/4147572, accessed February 27, 2010.

Many scholars have noted that most of Osama bin Laden's and al-Zawahiri's 'fatwas' use "Third-Worldist terms familiar to any contemporary anti-globalization activist."⁴⁷ The anger is not directed against modernisation but the resentment at being excluded from its benefits. al Qaeda's ideology is thus a "syncretic construction", a hybrid of multiple intellectual traditions that present an alternate view of the world.⁴⁸

However, to dismiss the impact of the capture of Osama bin Laden completely would be erroneous. Peter Bergen comments that "just as an account of Nazism and its impact on Europe would be nonsensical without the reference to the persona and world view of Hitler [...] our understanding of al-Qaeda and the ideology it has spawned would be incoherent without reference to Osama bin Laden." Bruce Lawrence adds that bin Laden's personal reputation for "probity, austerity, dignity and courage" contrasts starkly with the corrupt image of most Arab regimes. "His ability to forgo wealth [...] his defence of Islam, personal piety, bravery integrity and generosity [have made him] – an Islamic hero."⁴⁹ His ideas were unoriginal, yet he asked all the right questions and spoke to the minds of the people. bin Laden used the information age to make a local network, al Qaeda, into a global ideology.

In counter-terrorism strategy, Audrey Cronin notes, the capture and killing of a terrorist leader depending on the nature of the organisation may prove to be an important element in its decline. In the case of four "Foreign Terrorist Organisations" as designated by the US government – Peru's Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso), the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA), and Japan's Aum Shinrikyo – the capture of the charismatic leader either killed or deeply wounded the movement.⁵⁰ al Qaeda, however, is no ordinary terrorist group with a set hierarchy and structure; it is a nebulous entity whose ideology has transcended barriers of territory and space. So what will be the repercussions of Osama bin Laden's death?

According to his former chief bodyguard Abu Jandal, Osama's death, by deflating his mystic persona, will "lead to a psychological defeat for the group's members and many Muslims".⁵¹ Cronin notes this may also "backfire by creating increased publicity for the groups cause and making the leader a martyr."⁵² Three distinct possibilities have been predicted: In the immediate effect it may "trigger violent anti-American strikes" throughout the world. In the medium term the "absence of Osama's charisma and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Gray, J (2003), p. 79.

⁴⁹ Lawrence, B (2005) Introduction, p. 17.

⁵⁰ Cronin, A (2006). p. 18.

⁵¹ Bergen, P (2006), p. 385.

⁵² Cronin, A (2006), p. 22.

organisation skills will come as a big blow to al-Qaeda.” Finally in the long term “Laden’s martyrdom would give a boost to the power of his ideas.”⁵³ Drawing parallels with Syed Qutb whose writings became radically influential after his death, Bergen says “the same will happen to bin Laden but to a much larger degree [...] his ideas attaining a measure of lasting currency.”⁵⁴

There exists a wide consensus among scholars studying the movement that while killing of Osama bin Laden may disable al Qaeda the organisation, it will not kill ‘al Qaeda the idea or movement’. In fact RAND analysts observe that taking out the top leadership of this entity may “create a disaggregated one that is more difficult to predict and pre-empt”.⁵⁵ Fighting these new groups, which function independent of the financing and training of “pre-September 2001” al Qaeda, will require a departure from the decapitation strategy.

What needs to be remembered is that bin Laden and al Qaeda articulated a political grievance which will not disappear with his elimination. The West’s perceived indifference (until the Jasmine revolution) to the “atrocities committed against Muslims the world over as well as its interference in the Middle East” will continue to replenish cadres of radical Islamic groups. There is no tangible solution, since even in the remote event of the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict that may perhaps reduce some tension, it will not guarantee a cure for the radical strain in Islam. “Israel is only seen as the West’s most obvious outpost” (the Crusader Kingdom established in the 12th century), and the *Umma* (community of Sunni Muslim believers) is still under attack in Chechnya, Kashmir, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Algeria.⁵⁶

More specifically the main cause for Islamic militancy arises from the sense of humiliation, and a two-state solution will not end the war for it will keep the Zionist entity intact and hence deepen the wound.⁵⁷ bin Laden had realised this and that’s perhaps why his vision of the future has no social dimension. The focus is entirely on martyrdom and sacrifice and there is no other strategy apart from the use of violence.⁵⁸

⁵³ Bergen, P (2006), p. 383.

⁵⁴ Bergen, P (2006), p. 383.

⁵⁵ Beyond al Qaeda :Global Jihadist Movement Part 1 (2006) , pp. 32-34, By RAND corporation, www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG429.pdf, accessed February 26, 2010.

⁵⁶ Burke, J, “Al Qaeda”, *Foreign Policy*, No. 142 (May - Jun., 2004), pp. 18-26, www.jstor.org/stable/4147572, accessed February 27, 2010.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Bergen, P (2006), p. 393.

Olivier Roy summarises that “International Islamic Terrorism is a pathological consequence of the globalisation of the Muslim world rather than the spill over of the middle eastern conflicts.”⁵⁹ The after-effects of which have been the individualisation and de-territorialisation of religion, a growing sense of alienation, a search for identity and extreme polarisation. All factors, which when framed with the misgivings against the “offensive” policies of the West, created conditions suitable for the radical articulation of dissent. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, with effective use of the information age, created a global discourse of discontent couched in religious rhetoric. Jason Burke and many scholars agree that the most effective means to battle the idea of al Qaeda is to arrest the growing sympathy of its followers.⁶⁰ For as a Pakistani journalist who interviewed the al Qaeda chief many years ago observed, “bin Laden as a dead man would be even more potent than when he was alive.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Roy, O (2004), p. 337.

⁶⁰ Burke, J (2007) pg 24

⁶¹ Bergen, P (2006), Pg 385

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