

**10<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

The death of Osama Bin Laden was a victory on the war on terror for the United States and its allies. Although the battle is being won, the war on terror is still very much prevalent and real. The death of Osama Bin Laden will not crush Al Qaeda's international organization and its affiliates groups or its ideological goals. The threat of international terrorism will still remain and though his followers will mourn his death, they will prevail in administering his leadership mission.

We must understand the evolution of Al Qaeda and how Osama Bin Laden took it to the next level. In addressing radical and extremist views to propagate Al Qaeda and its true teaching of the Islamic faith, Osama Bin Laden propagated his doctrine based on Sayyid Qutb, an extremist Islamic scholar and author. He described the vanguard for Al Qaeda by claiming to establish true Islamic states and to implement the Sharia. Based on enemies of Islam, these would include treacherous orientalist and world jewry who plotted conspiracies and opposed Islam.

Since the formation of Al Qaeda in 1988 Osama Bin Laden has managed to draw the Muslim world to believe such treacheries that the West was plotting against Islam. Al-Qaeda (and the jihadi movement as a whole) has always been internally divided between tactical pragmatists whose worldview is shaped by the Muslim Brotherhood school of thought and salafi-jihadi literalists whose views are more shaped by extreme Wahhabism.

Today certain radical Muslim leaders tend to manipulate Al Qaeda's ideological goals and it has created a major political shift in the Middle East and in the Muslim world. We also see the shift in immigrants of Muslim faith in the West where a worrying number is becoming more radical. These immigrants tend to support extreme and fundamentalist ideologies and the younger generation of them is weeded into the context of this platform creating homegrown jihadists.

Al Qaeda will continue to threaten the world and the current politically led violence in the Middle East is evident. The platform for Al Qaeda and its affiliate groups to marginalize on the

opportunity exist and they are strategizing their inroads. Although Al Qaeda is now loosely organized, there exist groups who may or may not represent Al Qaeda as a whole and will still adhere to Osama's global mission of Islamizing the world, according to intelligence sources.

The US is well aware that the threat of Al Qaeda still remains and that the current killing of Osama Bin Laden will only encourage further possible imminent attacks on the West. Al Qaeda operatives and its affiliate groups loyal to Osama will plan for retaliation attacks against the US in particular and also allies of the US. Al Qaeda will not be disbanded as there are other leaders that are capable of taking Osama's place.

The one most likely to take command of Al Qaeda is none other than Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri who is Al Qaeda's Deputy Operations Chief. According to Al Qaeda's hierarchical structure, it has a mechanism that will allow Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri to succeed Osama Bin Laden if the leader is captured or killed. As a result of the death of Osama Bin Laden the leadership of Al Qaeda is automatically passed to Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. There is no dispute on this matter within Al Qaeda's members. Being close to Bin Laden and the cofounder of the *Qaedat 'al-Jihad* umbrella organization (aka al-Qaeda) in 1996, makes him the most qualified person for the role.

Al Qaeda and its international affiliate groupings spanning from the Middle East, the Americas, Europe, North East Asia and Asia will continue to threaten democracies of the world and disrupt world economies. Al Qaeda although has been dismantled after the 911 attacks has steadily grown over the years with loosely operated networks operating within the Al Qaeda framework. The very fact remains that Al Qaeda's name still carries weight in the international domain and plays a very strong role in the plight of its religious endeavor, the threat will remain and imminent attacks will still continue to occur.

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