

Forum Participant Posts Abu-Yahya al-Libi Essay on 'Jihad or Resistance'

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[Please note: Images may have been removed from this document. Page numbers have been added.]

Terrorism: Forum Participant Posts Abu-Yahya al-Libi Essay on 'Jihad or Resistance' On 8 June, a forum participant posted to a jihadist website an essay by Abu-Yahya al-Libi titled "Jihad or Resistance?" In the essay, Al-Qa'ida leader Abu-Yahya al-Libi pointed out the importance of terminology and warned of what he saw as potential language manipulation by the opponents as a back door to distorting and undermining Islam's genuine and fundamental principals. He defended the term "jihad" against what he described as an attempt to compromise its legitimacy and its legal significance in Islamic jurisprudence.

A translation of the item follows:

"Praise be to God, prayers and peace be upon the messenger of God, and upon all of his family, his companions, and his followers.

"(Islamic) legal terminology, with its preserved and precise forms, has always had a certain reverence and a special place in our hearts. The terms possessed an ability to fully express the intended meaning, because they are more reflective of the semantic content and because selected terminology at the time used to be much more precise and much less susceptible to ambiguity or misinterpretation. This is especially true for the terminology used in the Koran and the Sunnah and that uttered by (Muslim) jurists and scholars and included in their books and compilations. How is it then that the meaning was defined for the terms used and their intended meaning was explained, making the form of the word fit the meaning and referring to it in such a way that allows no room for ambiguity or postulation?

"Anytime Islamic legal terminology is undermined and is abandoned by people, whether it is used selectively or completely rejected, legal problems will emerge, categorical rulings will be manipulated, established truths will be changed, and the doors to strife will be opened. This is due either to the strong motivation to find the new alternative terminology and the determination to impose it, or to the weakness of this terminology, especially if the new term was used by other nations with whom God is displeased (non-Muslims) and their quislings and was used to express specific meaning determined by them (non-Muslims). This will surely lead to confusion and instability that cannot be remedied easily or a tumult that will take ages to quell.

"God Almighty said: 'O ye of faith, Say not (to the messenger words of ambiguous import, but words of respect; and hearken (to him)). To those without faith is grievous punishment.' (Koranic verse, Al-Baqarah2:104)

"You may wonder why God urged his faithful servants to refrain from calling their Prophet, prayers and peace be upon him, 'ra'ina' when all they meant was to draw his attention. Who could doubt that their hearts were filled with love, respect, and reverence for their Prophet? How could the use of the word ra'ina take from their love and admiration for him (Prophet Muhammad), prayers and peace be upon him? The word ra'ina carries multiple meanings. It is more commonly used to mean 'to take care' and 'watch over,' which is the positive sense, or to mean 'foolish,' which is the despicable and loathsome sense of the word. Because some people used the word in the latter sense, God shut this door in the face of the promoters of evil and blocked access to this usage by forbidding (Muslims) to address the Prophet, prayers and peace

be upon him, with that word. This protected (Muhammad) from insults and undercut evil intentions held by his enemies. This also elevated the noble companions and those that came after them from partaking with their enemies in the use of a word used to carry insult and slander against the Prophet of God, prayers and peace be upon him. God guided them instead to a clear and unambiguous word they alone could use, a word that left no back door for the connivers and evil doers to use to achieve their goal and satisfy their hateful hearts. God said: 'Of the Jews there are those who displace words from their (right) places, and say: "We hear and we disobey," "hear what is not heard," and "ra'ina," with a twist of their tongues and a slander to Faith. If only they had said: "What hear and we obey," and "Do hear," and "Do look at us," it would have been better for them, and more proper; but Allah hath cursed them for their Unbelief; and but few of them will believe.' (Koranic verse, Al-Nisa 4:46)

"Terminology can be used as a backdoor to undermine Islam. It may be used to disparage and distort its rulings, to falsify its truths, and contaminate its purity. Underestimating (the manipulation of terminology) and the importance of commitment to its consistency under any pretext will surely have grave consequences. Seldom is the case when a new term is substituted for an Islamic legal one by someone without a specific objective in mind, and whatever excuse is made or argument proposed, the legitimacy of the new terminology can never supersede the Islamic (legal) terminology. This is unacceptable, even if the only consequence of this change is its gradual fall into oblivion. If that is the case, how can this change be allowed then when it is used to widen or narrow its original meaning, associate with it what is not part of Islam, or abrogate from it what is Islamic. This could indeed be the first step toward changing Islamic law, and mixing it with foreign thoughts and vile whims. Muslims have been stricken with this in the past and in the recent years. It is a grave disease that afflicted the most critical parts of the Aqidah (study of Islamic doctrine and theology), jurisprudence, exegesis, Usul (study of sources and practice of Islamic jurisprudence), manners, and other subjects and which the Islamic nation is still suffering from and struggling to discard. The examples in our reality are countless, but let us stop at one of them, for examples can only confirm what is said. God, the legislator of the law, made the term for fighting, both offensively and in self-defense, 'jihad.' This term was used both in the Koran and in the Sunnah and in jurisprudence and exegesis literature. Muslims have thus formulated a clear and unambiguous understanding of the term. But as we have seen, the concept of jihad and many of its rulings have been muddled with a series of doubts and distortions that changed that magnificent Islamic legal term (jihad).

"We will not tackle here the false and distorted concepts that were attributed to the term 'jihad.' That is another debate that involved everyone both big and small, Muslim and non-Muslim, and good and evil. Our objective here is to point out the efforts to undermine the term 'jihad' as part of the overall effort to undermine its concepts and meaning and to give warning of the objective behind that substitution and change of terminology, which is to relegate the true meaning of jihad to newly invented meaning and modern concepts that has no relation to the Islamic legal and correct concepts.

"Recently, the term 'resistance' has become widely used to refer to instances of 'defensive jihad' exercised by mujahidin in some hot spots such as in 'the Iraqi resistance,' 'the Afghan resistance,' and 'the Palestinian resistance' to the extent that this term is more frequently used and is being used as an alternative to the word 'jihad'. This term (resistance) is used to refer to defensive jihad carried out by mujahidin against the assailant occupiers, but the term 'resistance' was mostly used in revolutions to describe armed struggles against repression and dictatorship. The term (resistance) spread and was accepted by Muslims. They used it in their statements and sermons, and they even used it to name their groups. This negative influence, I believe, resulted in the abandonment of the precise term in search for a substitute that would

not displease the enemies and would be acceptable to the secularists and the nationalists who might have some sympathy for a particular cause, not because it is Islamic, but because it fits their positions and thinking. This is why the phrase 'we must separate between the legitimate resistance and terrorism' has become so common, and considered an axiom that is frequently uttered by even those considered prominent (Islamic) scholars. It is evident that what they mean by the expression 'legitimate resistance' in they speak to '...those who believe neither in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, (even if they are) of the people of the Book...' (partial Koranic verse; Al-Tawba 9:29), is not legitimacy according to Islam, that is the defensive jihad, rather, what they mean is the Western concept of legitimacy according to international resolutions. These resolutions sometimes recognize and permit this kind of 'resistance' and criminalize and forbid everything else. They refuse to refer to anything else as 'resistance,' even if it was a legitimate jihad (according to Islam) and a command from God. Otherwise, why is it then that the term 'resistance' is accepted and widely used by the official media and by other sympathetic entities and groups, but we do not see the terms 'jihad' and 'mujahidin' also except in derogatory context or in abstract narratives?

"The armed groups with worldly tendency among the communists, secularists, and nationalists and others do not deserve this noble term (jihad). They do not accept this term, nor does the term accept them. It is more sublime and too pure to be desecrated by them. The vague term 'the resistance' is large enough to include them and everybody else, without giving a scary image that might make others unhappy with them.

"The point here is that God has blessed us through His Book and the tradition of His prophet with ample and satisfactory terminology that achieves the meaning, leads to the objective, and reveals the truth. God Almighty did not chose that term (jihad) without wisdom, whether we understand that wisdom or not. We must insist on reviving it and using it and rejecting everything else until it becomes engraved in the minds of the generations, and so that we distinguish ourselves from other nations and preserve our Islamic identity intact. We must not allow the terminology be our cause to slipping into deviant ideas and concepts forced upon us by our enemies according to their own whims and perspective. Let us not allow this to happen and find ourselves unable to change the situation simply because we unnecessarily opened the door to changing terminology.

"Praise be to God Almighty. I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I seek His forgiveness and mercy."