

Zarqawi's Pledge of Allegiance to al-Qaeda: From Mu'asker al-Battar, Issue 21

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

Translator's Introduction: On October 17, 2004, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his Tawhid wal-Jihad organization issued an online statement pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda and its commander, Sheikh Osama bin Laden. Al-Qaeda reprinted and acknowledged the statement, responding favorably to the new development in their online magazine Mu'askar al-Battar. The newly-affiliated group is known as Tanzim Qai'dat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn (al-Qaeda in Iraq), and has already claimed responsibility for numerous attacks, including the December 13 bombing at an entrance to Baghdad's Green Zone.

The bay'ah (oath of allegiance) has been deemed authentic by US military and intelligence analysts, and was further reaffirmed by al-Qaeda's public acknowledgement. For this reason, Jamestown has chosen to print a translated version of the segment from al-Battar, in the interest of providing its readership with primary material on key developments in global terror. Osama bin Laden and his lieutenant Ayman al-Zawahiri have endorsed and praised Zarqawi and the Iraqi insurgency in the past, and Zarqawi has been happy to acknowledge these remarks, while carefully maintaining his subordinate role in the greater mission and demonstrating his willingness to show loyalty. Many conclusions can be drawn from the text: firstly, Zarqawi's oath challenges past perceptions of rivalry between his organization and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Secondly, it demonstrates his desire to establish himself as a key player in al-Qaeda's mission in Iraq. Finally, the text serves as a recruiting statement for the Iraqi insurgency, through the endorsement of al-Qaeda leadership.

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"Hold fast to the rope of God and you shall not be divided." (Qur'an 3:103)

Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of worlds, and let there be no aggression except upon the oppressors; and peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet Mohammed, son of Abdullah, and upon all his family and companions.

It should bring great joy to the people of Islam, especially those on the front lines, and it was with good tidings of support during this blessed month that Tawhid wal-Jihad's leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (God protect him) and his followers announced their allegiance to the Sheikh al-Mujahideen of our time, Abu Abdullah Osama bin Laden, God protect him.

God said the following: Hold fast to the rope of God and you shall not be divided.

The order was given to unite the major jihadi organizations with their counterparts in Iraq, and more significantly, the Jamaah Salafiyah united with Tawhid wal-Jihad. Then this [newly unified] blessed group pledged allegiance to mujahid commander Abu Abdullah [Osama bin Laden] (God protect and help him).

This is undoubtedly an indication that victory is approaching, God willing, and that it represents a return to the glorious past. We shall, with great fury, instill fear in the enemies of Islam, who

consider that through their war in Iraq they have nearly uprooted Islam from its recent stronghold. For this, we will turn [the war] into a hell for them.

The land of Babylon, as it is called by the Jews and their compatriots in the extreme American right who perpetrate the war, is not the piece of cake expected by the people. Rather, they wish a return to the year 2001, for even though they suffered great losses, there is no doubt that those resulting from the blessed [9/11] attacks are not on the scale of their defeat in Iraq, God willing. They have thrown their weight around in this Muslim land, deciding that it would be the cornerstone in their plan which they named 'the Greater Middle East' in their effort to impose their infidel democracy, transform the peoples of the region and uproot Islam [from it]; however God will shame them and forsake them, grace and praise be unto Him.

[...]

On a memorable, historic day in this holy month, Sunday the third of Ramadan to be specific, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi- the known Islamic leader- pledged allegiance to the mujahid sheikh Osama bin Laden, to hear and obey for better or worse, and to the cause of jihad until all of Islam is in God's service.

The Iraqi mujahideen issued a statement to this effect, reprinted here in its entirety:

Praise be to God who has united the ranks of the mujahideen and disperses the forces of the infidels, and praise be to God who said: "hold fast to the rope of God and you shall not be divided". Blessings and peace be upon he who, through God, united the hearts of believers, and who stood as a bulwark in the face of the enemies of Islam (they are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves), and upon his family and companions, who raised the sword of truth against the propagators of falsehood.

Numerous messages were passed between 'Abu Musab' (God protect him) and the al-Qaeda brotherhood over the past eight months, establishing a dialogue between them. No sooner had the calls been cut off than God chose to restore them, and our most generous brothers in al-Qaeda came to understand the strategy of the Tawhid wal-Jihad organization in Iraq, the land of the two rivers and of the Caliphs, and their hearts warmed to its methods and overall mission.

With the appearance of Ramadan, the month of the gift of victories, Muslims are compelled to join forces and be a stick in the eye of Islam's enemies.

[Let it be known that] al-Tawhid wal-Jihad pledges both its leaders and its soldiers to the mujahid commander, Sheikh "Osama bin Laden" (in word and in deed) and to jihad for the sake of God until there is no more discord [among the ranks of Islam] and all of the religion turns toward God.

For we have heard the words of our Prophet, whom we believe and trust, (let the world not succumb to baseness and depravity), and we have seen the absurdity of today's political leaders. We are waiting in regard to his final promise on succession:

"Prophethood will remain with you for as long as God wills it to remain, then God will raise it up wherever He wills to raise it up. Afterward, there will be a caliphate that follows the guidance of Prophethood remaining with you for as long as God wills it to remain. Then, He will raise it up whenever He wills to raise it up. Afterward, there will be a reign of violently oppressive rule [unjust Muslim kings] and it will remain as long as God wills it. Then, there will be a reign of

tyrannical rule and it will remain for as long as God wills it to remain. Then God will raise it up whenever He wills to raise it up. Finally there will be a caliphate that follows the guidance of Prophethood."

By God, O sheikh of the mujahideen, if you bid us plunge into the ocean, we would follow you. If you ordered it so, we would obey. If you forbade us something, we would abide by your wishes. For what a fine commander you are to the armies of Islam, against the inveterate infidels and apostates!

Now then, people of Islam, come rally to the flag of the leader of the mujahideen, which we raise together, and let us cry ['there is no God but the one God'], as the flag waves, raised by our newest heroes. Let us cleanse all Muslim lands of every infidel and wicked apostate until Islam enters the home of every city-dweller and nomad.

Thus ends the statement, and it reminds us of the Companions and of the heroes of our great people, for this written message is like those from the history of Islam. It returns us to the time of the Prophet (God bless him and grant him salvation) and his Companions (may God be pleased with them), and so for God's sake, carry on, O people of Jihad, and return to the people of Islam their lost glory, doing that of which previous centuries were incapable.

It is worth mentioning that this oath of allegiance caused frustration and alarm among the American leadership. As one counter-terror official stated, "it is certain that this is not a step forward toward American security, but its effects thus far remain to be seen". A Pentagon official clarified that the Army would attempt to restrict the means of distributing Zarqawi's statement.