

Zarqawi and other Islamists to the Iraqi People: Elections and Democracy are Heresy

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As the elections in Iraq drew near, Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi addressed the Iraqi people in a speech that was posted on Islamist websites, in which he stated that democracy and the elections are heresy. This address was supported by similar calls from the Mufti of the Jihad warriors in Chechnya, Sheikh Abu Omar Al-Sayf, and by "Jaysh Ansar Al-Sunna" and other Islamist organizations in Iraq. The following are excerpts from their statements:

'Democracy Is the Very Essence of Heresy, Polytheism, and Error'

In a taped speech from January 23, Al-Qa'ida's leader in Iraq, Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, raised seven arguments for why democracy equals heresy:

"What harvest has the American aggressors and their Shi'ite allies reaped from the invasion of and aggression against the peaceful lands of Islam? Their outrages and blatant lies have become apparent to the entire world, and their arguments and false claims of achieving security and safety for the apostate Iraqi government have all collapsed. Now they are completely preoccupied with making the big American lie called 'democracy' successful. Americans have been playing with the minds of many peoples with the lie of 'civilized democracy;' they have deluded them that their happiness and prosperity is conditional upon this inadequate human system, and subsequently the infidel American administration declared war on Iraq and Afghanistan because it is the primary protector and guardian of democracy in the world...

"Democracy has come to tell us that the people in a democratic regime constitute both the executive power and the source of authority and that it has the last say in all matters, and no one can appeal [the people's] decisions and no one can criticize [the people's] rulings, for it has full power and it is the source of authority. Its will is sacred, its choice is binding... That which the people permits is permitted, that which it forbids is forbidden, and that which it accepts as law and regime must be accepted as such. Anything else has not sanctity nor value nor weight, even if it is religion or divine law given by the Lord of the world.

"This principle – that is, government of the people [and] by the people – is the very core of the democratic system ... and it exists only through this [principle]. This, then, is the 'religion of democracy' which is being praised and glorified with much fanfare. This is what its theoreticians and thinkers and missionaries keep publicizing, and this in fact is what we see and experience in the reality from which we suffer. Democracy, in all its variations and interpretations, is based on principles and foundations, the most important of which may be summarized as follows:

"First: Democracy is based on the principle that the people are the source of all authority, including the legislative [authority]. This is carried out by choosing representatives who act as proxies for the people in the task of legislating and making laws. In other words, the legislator who must be obeyed in a democracy is man, and not Allah. That means that the one who is worshiped and obeyed and deified, from the point of view of legislating and prohibiting, is man, the created, and not Allah. That is the very essence of heresy and polytheism and error, as it contradicts the bases of the faith [of Islam] and monotheism, and because it makes the weak, ignorant man Allah's partner in His most central divine prerogative – namely, ruling and

legislating. Allah said: 'Sovereignty is Allah's alone. He has commanded you to worship none but Him' [Koran 12:40]. 'He allows none to share His sovereignty' [Koran 18:26]...

"Second: Democracy is based on the principle of freedom of religion and belief. Under democracy, a man can believe anything he wants and choose any religion he wants and convert to any religion whenever he wants, even if this apostasy means abandoning the religion of Allah... This is a matter which is patently perverse and false and contradicts many specific [Muslim] legal texts, since according to Islam, if a Muslim apostatizes from Islam to heresy, he should be killed, as stated in the Hadith reported by Al-Bukhari and others: 'Whoever changes his religion, kill him.' It does not say 'leave him alone.'

"One may not make a [peace] treaty with an apostate, nor grant him safe passage or protection. According to Allah's religion, he has only one choice: 'Repent or be killed.'

"Third: Democracy is based on considering the people to be the sole sovereign, to whom all juridical matters and conflicts should be referred, and if there is any controversy or conflict between governor and governed, each of them threatens the other to refer to the will of the people and its choice, so that the people should decide on the matter on which is disagreed. This conflicts with and is contradictory to the principles of monotheism, which determines that the arbiter, deciding by His judgment in matters of discord, is Allah and none else. Allah said [Koran 42:10]: 'And in whatever thing you disagree, the judgment thereof belongs to Allah.' Democracy, on the other hand, says: 'And in whatever things you disagree, the judgment thereof belongs to the people and to none beside the people...'

"Fourth: Democracy is based on the principal of 'freedom of expression,' no matter what the expression might be, even if it means hurting and reviling the Divine Being [i.e. Allah] and the laws of Islam, because in democracy nothing is so sacred that one cannot be insolent or use vile language about it.

"Fifth: Democracy is based on the principle of separation between religion and state, politics, and life; what is Allah's is rendered unto Allah, which is just worship in the places designed for it. All other aspects of life - political, economic, social, etc. - are the people's prerogative...

"Sixth: Democracy is based on the principle of freedom of association and of forming political parties and the like, no matter what the creed, ideas, and ethics of these parties may be. This principle is null and void according to [Islamic] law for a number of reasons... One of them is that voluntary recognition of the legality of heretical parties implies acquiescence in heresy... Acquiescence in heresy is heresy...

"Seventh: Democracy is based on the principle of considering the position of the majority and adopting what is agreed upon by the majority, even if they agree upon falsehood, error, and blatant heresy... This principle is totally wrong and void because truth according to Islam is that which is in accordance with the Koran and the Sunna [i.e., the tradition of the Prophet], whether its supporters are few or many; and that which contradicts the Koran and the Sunna is false even if all the people of the world agree on it..."

"It is both noteworthy and surprising that despite the fact that democratic experiments have had damaging consequences for the Muslims, causing weakness, controversy, division, and conflict ... despite all this, many people continue to admire democracy and defend it as though they were its owners and creators; their hearts are imbued with the love of democracy as the Children of

Israel were imbued with the love of the [golden] calf... Allah has decided this matter: 'I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship' [Koran 109:1], and at the end of the same chapter [He says]: 'You have your religion and I have mine' [109:6]. The matter, then, is a matter of principle; it is non-negotiable, and there can be no concession regarding it whatsoever... It is a matter relating to the principles of our creed – nay, it is the very essence of our creed."

Al-Zarqawi's Organization Warns Against Going to Vote

A statement published on January 26, 2005, by the "Al-Qa'ida Organization in Iraq," headed by Al-Zarqawi, reads as follows:

"Your brothers in the military wing of the Al-Qa'ida organization in Iraq announce:

"1. Oh enemies of Islam, prepare yourselves and fortify whatever you like, wear as much armor as you can. We have men who love death as you love life. Our fallen [go to] heaven, and yours – to hell. While your reinforcements come from the Jews and the Christians, our reinforcements come from the Blessed and Lofty Allah.

"2. Take care not to go near the centers of heresy and abomination, that is, the election [booths.] He who has warned has carried out his duty; [if something happens] do not blame us, but yourselves.

"3. Oh the gardens [of Eden], prepare yourselves; oh black-eyed [virgins], approach; oh brigade of martyrs, say, 'There is no God but Allah,' and 'Allah Akbar.' The martyrs' wedding is at hand."

Al-Zarqawi's Mentor, Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi: 'Democracy Is a Religion of Heresy'

The claim that democracy is heresy is already evident in writings by Al-Zarqawi's mentor, Issam Muhammad Taher Al-Burqawi, who goes by the pseudonym Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi. A Palestinian Salafi, who is currently incarcerated in Jordan, Al-Maqdisi became Al-Zarqawi's mentor in 1989. In his book, 'Democracy is a Religion,' Al-Maqdisi wrote:

"[Democracy is] denying Allah the Almighty, attributing [to other deities] partnership with [Allah,] the Lord of heaven and earth, and [it] contradicts the religion of monotheism [i.e., Islam] and the religion of the prophets, for many reasons. Among them:

"First, [democracy] is legislated by the masses or the regime of tyrants, and it is not the rule of Allah the Exalted. Allah commanded his Prophet to act according to the law that He sent down to him, and forbade him from following the desires of the nation or the masses and warned him that they would divert him from some of the [precepts] sent down by Allah: 'Judge between them by that which Allah has sent down, and do not follow their wishes to deviate from it' [Koran 5:49]...

"As for the religion of democracy and polytheism, those who worship it say: 'Judge between them by that which the people wish; be wary of deviating from what they want, desire, and legislate...' This is what they say, and this is what democracy instructs, therefore, democracy is heresy and partnership [with Allah] if it is implemented..."

"Second, the rule of the masses or the tyrant is in accordance with the constitution, and not in accordance with the law of Allah. This is what is stated in their constitutions and their books, which they sanctify over the Koran. Evidence of this is that the law [of the constitutions and books] is preferred to the law [of the Koran], and the law [of the constitutions and books] is higher [to them] than [the Koran's] laws... According to the religion of democracy, the masses do not accept the judgments and laws ... unless they are based on the precepts and articles of the constitution, because they see it as the father of the laws and the holy book. In the religion of democracy, there is no consideration of the Koranic verses or the Hadiths of the Prophet, and laws cannot be legislated in accordance with them unless they are compatible with the precepts of their holy book, the constitution...

"Third, democracy is the vile fruit and illegitimate daughter of secularism, because secularism is a heretical school of thought that aspires to isolate religion from life or separate religion from state and law, and democracy is the rule of the people or the rule of the tyrant. But in any event, it is not the rule of Allah the Exalted, and it does not take the unswerving legislation of Allah into account at all unless it is first compatible with all the articles of the constitution, and then with the desires of the people, and even before that with the desires of the tyrant or the masses.

"Therefore, if the entire people was to tell the tyrant or the lords of democracy: 'We want to act according to the law sent down by Allah, and then no one – not the people, not the MPs, and not the ruler – will have the right to legislate laws. We want to implement the law of Allah regarding the apostate [Murtadd], the adulterer, the thief, the wine-drinker. We want to require the woman to wear a veil [Hijab], to act modestly, and [we want] to prevent [her] from adorning herself. [We want to prevent] obscenity, corruption, adultery, sodomy, and other abominations.' [If the entire people was to tell the tyrant this,] the tyrant would immediately tell [those demanding it] that these demands are against the religion of democracy and democratic freedoms."

'Democracy is a Farce' to Grant 'Legitimacy' to the New Government, Which 'Serves the Crusaders'

On December 30, 2004, the Army of the Supporters of the Sunna [Jaysh Ansar Al-Sunna], the Jihad Warriors Army [Jaysh Al-Mujahideen], and the Islamic Army in Iraq [Al-Jaysh Al-Islami] published a joint statement titled 'The Farce of Democracy and Elections,' in which they said:

"The origin of the term 'democracy' is Greek. It is an abbreviation of two words, whose meaning is 'rule by the people' or 'the people's legislation,' that is, that the people are the ones who legislate for themselves laws that suit their aspirations and goals.

"This concept is denying Allah the Almighty, attributing [to other deities] partnership with the Lord of heaven and earth, and [it] contradicts monotheism, the Muslims' religion. According to democracy, if the majority of the public votes in favor of a given law, such as legalization of marriage between [two] men or between [two] women, as is accepted among them [in the West], then this law becomes legislation which obligates everyone, even if it contradicts Allah's religion and His law...

"According to democracy, members of parliament and national assemblies become gods and lords aside from Allah. They have the right to legislate together with Allah...

"Appealing to laws which were established by men and which contradict Allah's law is polytheism and the diversion of worship to one other than Allah... Anyone who appeals to a [law] other than that of Allah, even in a single matter – he has apostatized, has attributed [to other deities] partnership with Allah, and has left the fold of Islam...

"This issue, then, is a farce which [our] enemies have created in order to grant what they call legitimacy to the new government, which serves the Crusaders and carries out their designs. To strive to make these elections successful and to participate in them is the greatest gift [that could be] given to America, the enemy of Islam and the tyrant of this era.

"At the same time as the Jihad groups are ardent about the people's interests ... they call upon all Muslims zealous for their religion not to participate in this act of heresy, whose aim is to permit heresy and to permit behaving according to the heretical laws drawn up by the Crusaders, and to remove the great religion from the reality of our lives and to propose secularism as a substitute for it.

"In addition, we call for support of the Jihad warriors who offer up their souls and their blood in order to help this religion and to make it triumph."

The Mufti of the Jihad Fighters in Chechnya: 'Democracy [in Iraq] is a Victory for the Crusaders'

The first issue of Al-Fath online magazine, which was published in December 2004, posted an open letter by the Mufti of the Jihad fighters in Chechnya, Sheikh Abu Omar Al-Sayf "to the Jihad warriors in Iraq regarding democracy and the elections," which read:

"Your Jihad against the Crusaders is defense of Islam, whose enemies are aiming to remove it from the hearts and lives of the Muslims. In this crime of democracy, the ones aiding them [the Allied forces] are members of our people and those who speak in their name, who call their apostasy and corruption 'reform'...

"Democracy [in Iraq] is a victory for the Crusaders, even if they retreat from Iraq and leave their agents to guard the idol of democracy that has become the god worshipped besides Allah.

"Accordingly, the Jihad warriors must wage Jihad against the soldiers of the idol of democracy, whether these [soldiers] be Crusaders or their democratic agents who are apostates from Islam [Murtaddoun]...

"The enemies of Allah, the Crusaders, and the apostate groups have closed ranks and agreed to establish an infidel democratic government in Iraq, despite differences in their schools of thought and trends. In contrast, the Jihad warriors have no united leadership, and no general imam to whom they have sworn allegiance...

"The arrival of democracy to the Muslim countries will constitute great corruption. Therefore, the Jihad warriors in Iraq must close ranks and swear allegiance to a general imam of the Muslims in Iraq to whom the rules of the Imama [imamate] apply, and who will be chosen by the Shura members, the Jihad warrior commanders, and the Ulema of the Muslims.

"But it is forbidden to hold general elections to choose the general imam or [to choose] members of the Shura council even in a country ruled by the laws of Islam, because these are the methods

and ways of the infidel democratic regime, and [these methods] must not be associated with Islam.

"The evidence for the ban on holding general elections is:

"1. The regime, according to Islam, [must] be Allah's, not the people's or anyone else's. The people must obey the order of Allah and his laws...

"2. Annulling the Shari'a conditions that must be met by the imam or the Shura members, and also annulling the Shari'a method for choosing the imam, and replacing [the Shari'a method with] democratic elections means accepting the rule of the idols instead of the rule of Allah...

"3. The aim of the Imama is to apply Allah's Shari'a in all areas of life, to impose justice, and to promote virtue and prohibit vice. In order to realize the goal of the Imama, Shari'a has set conditions that must be found in the imam, such as justice and honesty, [religious] knowledge, courage, and other conditions.

"But general elections rely on the caprices and impulses of people, and most people vote for whoever meets their desires, regardless of the conditions of the Imama ...

"4. Allah created Djinn s and people so that they would worship Him... The conditions of the Imama, according to Shari'a, are aimed at realizing this goal. But general democratic elections annul these conditions, since electing [a leader] is done according to the caprices and desires of people. This contradicts the acceptance of His command and submission to Him.

"5. Allah showed that most people do not obey Him, and are not interested in His Shari'a and in His rule, but are interested in Jahiliyya [pre-Islamic] law... How, then, can the fate of the establishment of the rule of Allah on earth be dependent on this majority that desires Jahiliyya law and distances itself from the law of Allah?

"6. Islam does not treat equally – either in this world or in the world to come – the wise and the ignorant, the Muslim and the infidel, the pious and the sinner. But the elected democratic regime treats all these as equal in the elections...

"7. The principle of general elections is perceived by many to be legitimate. Many think that legitimacy is obtained by a majority of people, and not from the Book of Allah [i.e., the Koran] and the Sunna of His Messenger..."