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# Jihadism, a Phenomenon That Did Not Start on 9/11/2001

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**Abstract:** This manuscript is part of the author's doctoral thesis in Humanities that the author is doing in the Almeria University. That research is investigating the relationship between immigration and jihadist terrorism and if it is used more or less than other ways of recruiting. This work intends to establish that in order to implement effective strategies against jihadism, the authorities must know it in all its dimensions. And one of them is know its origin since despite the fact that for most of the world it is a fact that it was made known on 9/11 after the attacks on the United States by the Al Qaeda organization and that were later repeated in Madrid on 3/11, 2004 and London in 2005. Global terrorism had arrived on the scene. The world changed forever. The paper will start from the problem of obtaining a valid and internationally accepted definition for the entire international community and it will continue with the different stages of jihadist terrorism and will finish with the future scenarios of the two great terrorist groups (Al Qaeda and Daesh) and some conclusions about what strategies would be valid in the fight against this world problem.

**Keywords:** History, Terrorism, Jihadism, Strategies

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## 1. Introduction

This year 2022 has been celebrated the 21st anniversary of the 9/11 attacks against various US targets in New York and Washington. Those attacks brought a new phenomenon to the forefront of public opinion: jihadist-style terrorism.

Later, Spain was also seriously attacked with the attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004 and later in 2017 with the attacks on the Ramblas in Barcelona and Cambrils. In 2015, London and Paris were attacked. From that moment we witness a new phenomenon such as the "globalization of terror."

But that phenomenon wasn't born in 2001, 2004 or 2005. In this article I will try to explain the origins in time, its phases and if its purposes were or have been the same from its origins to the present. If we know the phenomenon, we can establish better and more effective strategies in the fight against it.

## 2. Problems in Adopting a Definition of Terrorism

Jihadist terrorism is a real, current and global threat. This is reflected in the 2019 National Counter-Terrorism Strategy

in Spain:

"Terrorism constitutes one of the main threats to our open and plural society and directly attacks the essential values and principles that govern our coexistence". [1].

But to reach that term, jihadist terrorism, and establish effective strategies in its fight, are we clear about what the concept of terrorism is? Can the concept of terrorism be assimilated to that of political violence? To establish effective strategies to combat this phenomenon, we must have a clear definition of the term. The need for the importance of having an internationally accepted definition of terrorism is established by the United Nations Rapporteur for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms against terrorism, Martin Scheinin, who states:

"It is particularly worrying that the international community's repeated calls for action to end terrorism may, due to the lack of a universal and global definition of the term, be detrimental to human rights. If the term is not defined, it can be understood that the international community's calls to combat terrorism leave the definition to the discretion of each State. This carries the danger of unintentional violations of human rights and even a deliberate misrepresentation of the term." [2].

Throughout history this concept has not been clear. The

proliferation and seriousness of the attacks in the 19th century is of such great importance in some countries that it will lead the international community to mobilize to deal with the terrorist problem. Today, there are gray areas in its conceptualization that in turn make it more difficult both in the criminal legal bodies of the countries and in international organizations. The first 2 international legal instruments to deal with the terrorist threat are:

Rome Conference of November 1898.

The anarchist revolutionary ideal is going to be the framework in which a series of high-impact attacks take place, the main targets of which will be the holders of political power at the time, such as heads of state and government.

- 1) Conference for the repression of terrorism in Geneva on November 16, 1937, within the framework of the League of Nations. [3] In this convention, in the article 1.2, terrorism was defined as "any criminal act directed against a State in order to generate a situation of terror in people or groups of people" [4].

The lack of ratification by the countries, to which must be added the declaration of the Second World War, caused the terrorism agenda to remain parked until the 70s of the last century when under the auspices of the United Nations a draft was submitted for consideration. of General Convention but finally had a negative result. [5].

But it is not until 1988 when there is a certain consensus between the Academic Community and the experts in the definition within the United Nations, adopting the definition of Schmid and Jongman:

"Terrorism is an anxiety-producing method based on repeated violent action by a (semi) clandestine individual or group, or by state agents, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political motives, in which—unlike assassination—direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen at random (targets of opportunity) over a larger target, and are used as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between the terrorist (terrorist organization), endangered victims, and primary targets are used to manipulate general audiences into targets of terror, lawsuits, or of attention, depending on whether their intimidation, coercion or propaganda is sought primarily". [6].

After the Madrid attacks of 3-11-2004, various UN actions took place with the aim of providing governments with a definition of terrorism. Thus, in October 2004, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 1566, which stated that "terrorism occurs when the purpose of an act, due to its nature or context, is to intimidate the population, or force a government or international organization to perform or refrain from a certain act [7].

### 3. Jihadist Terrorism Evolution, Stages

In the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we have witnessed with astonishment, fear and terror on the part of Western society a

new form of terrorism that has cruelly and indiscriminately attacked our cities, our means of transport and our way of life. We are referring to terrorism of a jihadist nature or etiology, which although initially it was understood as a phenomenon far from our borders and was only one more part of the international sections in the written press or on the television news.

Later, at the end of the last century, it began to hit some Western countries, reaching its climax in the attacks on Tuesday 9-11-2001 in the US, where New York and Washington were attacked.

Spain was also seriously attacked with the attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004 and later in 2017 with the attacks on the Ramblas in Barcelona and Cambrils. From that moment we witness a new phenomenon such as the "globalization of terror."

No country was safe and any citizen could be a direct or indirect target. The world would never be the same again. But this phenomenon, jihadist terrorism, is not born by spontaneous generation and throughout this time it has undergone various stages and transformations like a virus to become more resistant.

To better understand the phenomenon of jihadist terrorism and to be able to establish effective strategies to combat it, we must know its origins, its ideologues, its initial agenda and how it has evolved.

EGYPT -NATIONAL AGENDA (1970s).

Its origin can be established in Egypt. It is the country where the first organizations that try to establish an Islamist regime appear. With a totally national agenda to reach their goals, they do not hesitate to use violence. From this time we have two main groups: Tanzin Al Jihad and Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya.

The year 1979 in the evolution of Jihadist Terrorism.

In that year, a triple succession of historical events took place that are the basis of the current situation in which we find ourselves:

1- Revolution in Iran.

In the year 79, Iran was plunged into institutional chaos. The regime maintained by the United States was tottering. The shah, Reza Pahlavi, had fled in January and in early February Ayatollah Khomeini had returned to the country from his exile in Paris. After 10 days, specifically on February 11, the regime collapsed, due to the magnitude of the street demonstrations. After the triumph of the Iranian revolution, the country became an enemy of the Arab countries it considered apostates, such as Saudi Arabia or Iraq, as well as the United States and Israel.

In 1981 the new Iranian regime created the Supreme Council for the Coordination of the Islamic Revolution, which served as a support platform for various terrorist groups operating in Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Turkey. To a great extent, the evolution of Al Qaeda from a guerrilla organization to a terrorist group is due to the instruction of Hizbollah in Lebanon. And this would not have been possible without the authorization of Iran. [8].

Iran's response to the 9/11 attacks has been "very cautious

and carefully calculated" because as a US-listed terrorism-supporting country, it is in a delicate position. Failure to express support for the US "war on terror" places the country at high risk. The absence of the Taliban regime and a more volatile Afghan people would favor the designs of the Iranian government. [9].

#### 2- Attack on the holy places of Mecca.

Since its creation in the thirties of the 20th century, the state of Saudi Arabia has been marked by 2 main pillars:

- 1) The monarchy, in the hands of the Al Saud dynasty.
- 2) The Wahhabi religious doctrine, which has endowed the Al Saud family and the political project of this dynasty with religious legitimacy since the second half of the 18th century. [10].

Due to the oil crisis of the 1970s, the wealth and influence of the country increased exponentially. The Saudi Arabian regime continued to finance groups that it understood to be favorable to its interests, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to extending its power in madrasahs around the globe, mosques and cultural centers, with the purpose of spreading its Salafist vision of Islam.

It was a key player in the so-called "Islamic awakening" that saw political Islam become a political force that crossed borders. Salafists were seen as a positive alternative to the political Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists who wanted to upset the status quo.

But then comes the serious incident of the occupation of the Great Mosque of Mecca for two weeks that began on November 20, 1979 and in which a large number of assailants, led by Juhayman al-Otaybi, leader of the Salafi group for the promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (al-Jama 'a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba) sought to institute a theocracy based on the purest version of Islam. The assault cost the lives of thousands of people including hostages, soldiers, police. During the kidnapping, dozens of soldiers who had survived the attack were beheaded in public.

The response of the Saudi authorities was to give Wahhabi clerics more influence over education, the media and the public sphere. In addition, the leader of the attack and sixty-seven attackers were publicly tried and beheaded.

More than twenty years after that date, another product of this environment, Osama Bin Laden, organizes and plans the worst terrorist attack in history and where many of the members of the suicide squads were of Saudi nationality.

#### 3- Afghanistan -Soviet invasion (1979).

Due to the violent coup d'état that ended the life of Afghan President Mohamed Daud in April 1978, the government of Afghanistan adopted the form of the Revolutionary Council with the idea of establishing a new socialist order. But this new secular project sparked a rebellion from the Afghan hill tribes. That is why the Council asks the Soviet Union (USSR) for help.

At the end of 1979 the leader of the Council, Hafizullah Amin, is assassinated in a new coup supported by Moscow and then Soviet troops invade the country, which leads to the internationalization of the conflict. Faced with this new situation, the Afghan rebels gain the support of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States itself. In addition, an

extensive army of volunteers from all corners of the Muslim world arrive on Afghan lands.

This fight was already called by many Islamist ideologues as a "Jihad" against the enemies of Islam and for which Muslims from all over the world were called to collaborate to a greater or lesser extent (money, fight, logistical help) against the Soviet invader. [11].

Among all those foreign volunteers who responded to the call of the Afghan conflict against the Soviet invader, two fundamental figures stand out. One of them and the main one in the creation of Al Qaeda is Abdullah Azzam, Bin Laden's mentor. [12].

Palestinian professor and perhaps the biggest propagandist of the Afghan campaign. A member of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, he came to be considered one of the creators of Hamas (a group born in 1987 of Palestinian origin declared nationalist and Islamic, declared a terrorist group in different countries). He promulgated "jihad" in defense of the territories of Islam. This is reflected in one of his best-known writings, *Join the caravan*, where he states "The obligation of jihad today is personal, until the liberation of the last piece of land that was in the hands of the Muslims, but has been occupied by the infidels"[13].

Another transcendental figure at that time and in the current situation with regard to jihadist-style terrorism is Osama Bin Laden. Young Saudi, who met Azzam in the 1970s in Saudi Arabia, specifically in Jeddah on the occasion of the Saudi's studies in economics at King Abdulaziz University, where Azzam and Qutb's brother taught Islamic (Concepts of Jihad and Istishhad. Military and Strategic Affairs, 2017). According to all studies, this is where Bin Laden became aware that armed jihad was necessary.

Years later Bin Laden would join Azzam in supporting the Afghan rebels. This union is demonstrated in the little-known book, "Arab volunteers in Afghanistan" by Abdul Jalil Batterji, where the beginnings of Al Qaeda are recounted in great detail and numerous testimonies are collected, including Bin Laden himself, whom the volunteers themselves called "Abu Abdullah" [14].

Although at first Bin Laden preferred to be in the background, he entered the border area with Pakistan where he saw firsthand the dire situation in which the Afghan rebels found themselves, which made him regret his cowardice. A few days after the Soviet invasion, Bin Laden heads to Pakistan to meet with various Afghan leaders and then returns to Saudi Arabia to pressure his family to support the Afghans with both cash and heavy material from their construction industries [15]. He then decides to invest his assets in the Afghan jihad and with the logistics of the family group's companies, he sets up several training camps along with tunnels to house field hospitals, shelters and ammunition depots out of Russian reach.

On the other hand, Azzam starts up the Mak (Maktab al-Khadamat) or service office. It was a kind of foundation whose mission was to bring together all that river of human, material and financial material in aid of the rebels. As soon as it was created, Azzam attracted Bin Laden and also the

rich Saudi Wa'el Julaiidan who had left the US to move to Afghanistan. In turn, the US through the CIA launches the "Cyclone operation" supplying weapons, money and training to the Afghan rebels [16].

The Mak came to have delegations all over the world, putting Arab fighters from all over the world, Islamist movements, terrorist groups, mosques, secularists in contact, creating a network that in the future would be at the service of Al Qaeda. In the mid-1980s, Azzam published the magazine "Risalat Al Jihad", a periodical that praised and reported on the armed struggle in the Asian country. But he also insisted that jihad should be extended to all those fronts where Muslims were victims of oppression and to countries ruled by infidels that had previously been under the mantle of Islam [17].

Despite these doctrinal differences that existed between them at the time, Azzam congratulates Bin Laden in his publication for his work, calling it Al-Qaeda Al Saliba (The Solid Foundation). It was not the first time that he used this expression since, in 1987 in another of his writings, to define the destiny of the volunteers of the Afghan campaign when this war ended.

It was established that any ideology requires a vanguard willing to sacrifice for its realization and the mujahideen in Afghanistan could constitute that vanguard on which to base the unification project of the UMMA.

"This duty does not end with victory in Afghanistan; It will continue to be a personal obligation until all the territories that were Muslims are returned to us so that Islam reigns again"<sup>1</sup>

These words were inspiration for Bin Laden with the name of his terrorist organization. In the autumn/1988 Al Qaeda was born as an independent organization.

On 11-29-1989 a car bomb exploded near a mosque in Peshawar, resulting in the death of Azzam and two of his children. Some time later it was learned from an AQ militant that it was Bin Laden himself who ordered that attack, encouraged by the Egyptian faction of the group that was already beginning to have a specific weight in the organization. The disappearance of Azzam accelerated the final decline of the MAK whose facilities were closed one after another in the early 90s.

End of the war in Afghanistan-Birth of Al Qaeda. (1988-present).

In April 1988, the Afghan rebels and their jihad achieved their objective and the Soviet troops left the country after Moscow ordered it for the following 9 months. The leaders of the jihad must rethink the new map and the new situation.

At this time Azzam and Bin Laden agree that everything created there should not disappear and they established what they called a base or foundation (Al Qaeda) as a potential headquarters for the future jihad. They created an advisory council (Shura) made up of Bin Laden's innermost circle. Among those advisers was the Egyptian doctor Al Zawahiri (leader of AQ until 31-7-22) who at that time directed an

important faction of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. At the time of the integration of said organization in Al Qaeda, he becomes number 2 of the organization. The entire leadership of Al Qaeda moves to Sudan protected by its leader Al Turabi.

In August 1990, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq takes place and it is Bin Laden himself who makes himself available to the Saudi monarchy and his organization to liberate the emirate as long as US troops and other coalition countries do not set foot on the ground. Holy of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi authorities managed to take away his passport so that he would not leave the country, but with the help of a member of the Saudi royal family he managed to leave the country under the pretext of going to Pakistan for an Islamic meeting in April 1991. The government Saudi froze all his funds and deprived him of nationality, making him stateless. From here Bin Laden felt like the leader of a world confederation of jihad. He was creating the foundation for an international terrorist network. Global jihad is born.

In early 1992 the leaders of Al Qaeda announced a fatwa calling for jihad or holy war for the occupation of territories in Arab countries. The United States and its allies were the object of his wrath. The organization's support of organizations around the world was frequent. This is the case of the events in Somalia in 1993 with the shooting down of the Black Hawk and the departure of American troops from that country. In August 1996, "the declaration of war against the Americans for the occupation of the two holy places in Saudi Arabia" or "Laden epistle" is issued [18].

In all this time, attacks against North American and Western interests have occurred, causing fewer and fewer countries to grant shelter and support to the organization in the face of international pressure. After being expelled from Sudan, he settles in the Taliban's Afghanistan. In February 1998, another fatwa was produced against the United States, followed by attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. In the year 2000, the attack against the destroyer USS COLE took place, causing 17 deaths and 42 injuries [19].

After September 11, 2001, when the US attacks took place (with more than 3,000 deaths), jihadist-style terrorism spread worldwide. The war against terror began (Operation Enduring Freedom) and in a fight in which we find ourselves today.

Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden was located and eliminated by US Navy special forces (SEALs) in Abbotabad, Pakistan on May 2, 2011 in Operation Neptune's Spear [20].

The one who was number 2 Dr al-Zawahiri assumed command of the organization until a CIA operation ended his life on July 31, 2022 (Analytica., 2022).

Islamic State-Daesh (2014-present).

Despite the fact that this organization jumped to the head of all the media in the summer of 2014 after the declaration of the caliphate by its leader, its macabre attacks and its advertising campaigns, made this group speak of before. But it has gone through various states, names and leaders of the organization.

After the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Al Zarkawi took

<sup>1</sup> De la Corte y J. Jordán. La Yihad Terrorista. Madrid, Sintesis, 2007.

command of the AQ branch in the country, which in 2004 was renamed "Community of Monotheism and Jihad". Later it was renamed "organization of the base of jihad in the country of the 2 rivers". In 2006, after the elimination of its leader by the US, its new leader renamed it the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant". This causes that, in 2013, the new leader of AQ, Al Zawahiri, expels him from the organization and becomes an autonomous terrorist organization [21].

In June 2014, the spokesman for the new organization, Al-Adnani, establishes the need to create a Caliphate and appoints Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as Caliph Ibrahim as Caliph and declares the caliphate in the Al-Nuri Mosque [22]. What came after, we all know, attacks with a high publicity and emotional charge (Paris, London, Barcelona, among others); domination of large areas of land in Syria, Iraq; great propaganda apparatus; huge pennant calling foreigners to fight in their ranks.

Its period of maximum splendor is from 2014 to 2016. This led to the creation of an international coalition to fight against it in different parts of the world in August 2014. As a result of this coalition, on June 17, 2016 Falluja was reconquered and the July 9, 2017 Mosul. And on October 27, 2019, President Trump announced the death of Al Baghdadi in Syria after an operation by US special forces [23].

Despite this, the organization has appointed a new leader: Abu Ibrahim Al Qurashi. That in order not to lower the "morale" of his followers, it has been released with the same brutality as his predecessor in office with the murder of a Catholic priest in Syria. On February 3, 2022, a US military operation killed this leader in northwestern Syria [24].

In March 2022, a new Daesh leader will be appointed. The position falls on Abu al-Hassan al-Hashemi al-Quraishi.

This subject is the older brother of the first caliph of the group, whose real name is Juma Awad al-Badri.<sup>2</sup>

## 4. Future Scenarios

In my opinion there are 2 possibilities:

- 1) There is a union in the global jihadist movement after the appearance of a new leader who unites the two great multinationals of jihadist terror, just as Bin Laden did in the 80s of the last century.
- 2) The two great groups (Al Qaeda and Daesh) continue to wage war individually and separately in order to obtain their ultimate goal, which is to wave the flag of the most radical Islam in the entire globe.

## 5. Conclusion

Whatever the scenarios, the West will have to experience moments of terror after new attacks.

First, multidisciplinary and international strategies are needed. Being a global problem, the solution must be international with the collaboration of all countries, as reflected by the United Nations Security Council in 2004

"Urging States to cooperate fully with the Committee against Terrorism established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001)" [25].

Second, we must learn from old mistakes by establishing wrong strategies. And always within the rules of International Law so that actions outside the law are not a justification for future terrorist actions. This happened with the Bin Laden's death "Has 'Justice Been Done'? The Legality of Bin Laden's Killing under International Law" [26]. If we study what happened in Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan, we will be better able to work on effective strategies against this problem "The shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, would remain on the throne for the foreseeable future: This was the firm conclusion of a top-secret CIA analysis issued in October 1978. One hundred days later the shah--despite his massive military, fearsome security police, and superpower support was overthrown by a popular and largely peaceful revolution" [27].

Since 19th century, terrorism has hit the world, adapting its justifications to its purposes "The origins of current global terrorism are well anchored in the war that took place in Afghanistan against the former Soviet Union. The handling of the post-war period by the various political actors involved in the conflict, contributed to the consolidation of the jihad, which spread taking advantage of the political vacuum and the neglect of Afghanistan after the war ended. On the other hand, the repression of moderate Islam in Arab countries triggered a process of radicalization that fed itself in a violent discourse that came to replace the traditional stance of political Islam. The handling of the religious realm by the regimes of Arab and Islamic countries did not bring any solution to the problem of radicalism, since the official Ulamas were not in a position to counteract the advance of extremism, nor to replace important political actors such as the Islamists whose discourse currently needs an in-depth reform" [28]. For this reason the strategies must be carried out at a social level (educational, health, etc), economic, political, legal without forgetting the military and police--raise many interesting and thought-provoking questionsevel. And those actions should be maintained over time.

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## Biography

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