

This is an ICSR insight produced by Senior Research Fellow, Shiraz Maher

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has released the sixth edition of its English-language magazine, *Inspire*.

This quarterly publication serves as AQAP's primary means of addressing its followers in the West, offering a unique insight into the strategic thinking of al-Qaeda's most potent affiliate.

Executive summary

- This edition offers detailed instructions on the production and preparation of Acetone Peroxide explosive.
- AQAP calls on its followers to “punish the Indonesian government with swift terror” for convicting the radical cleric Abu Bakr Bashir last month of terrorism offences.
- AQAP thanks and offers its appreciation to the Pakistani Taliban for avenging Osama bin Laden's death.
- The cover story is dedicated to coverage of Osama bin Laden's death. The theme of ‘martyrdom’ is consequently featured heavily in the magazine, with AQAP also lionising six of its most important fallen members.
- The magazine was published late and carried the following apology:

“We apologize for the delay in the publication of the magazine. Things have been quite hectic over here. The country is falling apart and our brothers are busy picking up the pieces...while the different parties are bickering, the mujahideen are busy laying the foundations for the coming rule of the Shariah...but there is a price for everything. During these great battles we have lost some of our dear brothers; brothers from the first generation, the ones who were with us from day one”.
- The magazine's authors continue to revel in the attention *Inspire* is attracting, dedicating a section to publicising international reactions to the magazine. This includes quotes from *The Guardian*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Times* among others.

Open Source Jihad

- The magazine again republishes work from al-Qaeda strategist Abu Musab al-Suri for the third consecutive edition. It is significant due to al-Suri's development of the ‘lone wolf’ model of jihadist activity in the West – a modus operandi which AQAP has adopted and exported more vigorously than any other chapter of al-Qaeda. It is also notable that very little of al-Suri's work is available in the English language despite its importance, something AQAP has been addressing with its selected translations of his work.

- Seven “general principles for the theory of individual jihadi action” from al-Suri’s work are given to readers. The most significant include:

1. Spreading the culture of the Resistance and transforming it into an organized strategic phenomenon;
2. Spreading the ideology of the Resistance, its program, its legal and political bases, and its operational theories;
3. Spreading the legal, political, military and other sciences and knowledge that the mujahidun need in order to carry out Resistance operations, without this being in a direct way that leads to a series of arrests in the networks, as happened in the centralized organizations;

- AQAP’s creation of the ‘Open Source Jihad’ strategy is clearly the product of al-Suri’s doctrine. The practical outgrowth of that approach is the regular feature of bomb making instructions and other ideas for terrorist attacks as featured in *Inspire*.

- Open Source Jihad is defined as “A resource manual for those who loathe the tyrants; includes bomb making techniques, security measures, guerrilla tactics, weapons training and all other jihad related activities.” It further states this strategy is “A disaster for the repressive imperialistic nations...America’s worst nightmare”. It also explains that this section exists because “it allows Muslims to train at home instead of risking a dangerous travel abroad”.

- This edition carries two lessons in its ‘Open Source Jihad’ section which is ten pages long in total. The first relates to training with an AK47, while the latter gives detailed instructions in the preparation of Acetone Peroxide.

- Peroxide based explosives (TATP or TACP) have long been favoured by terrorists as their explosive of choice, particularly in the Middle East, due to its volatility.

- Some high profile incidents of peroxide based explosives being used against Western targets include: the shoe-bomber Richard Reid who used a bomb containing a TATP trigger; the 7/7 bombers used organic peroxide explosives; and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab used a device also containing TATP explosive.

- The explosives lesson is authored by ‘Dr. Khateer’ (meaning ‘dangerous’). It is stated that Dr. Khateer was previously a student of Midhat Mursi al-Sayd Umar in Afghanistan (also known as Abu Khabab al-Misri).

- Umar was a leading bomb maker in al-Qaeda and occupied a prominent position in Osama bin Laden’s inner circle until his death in Wana, South Waziristan, in 2008. He is believed to have personally trained both Richard Reid, and Zacarias Moussaoui.

- Umar has also authored scores of bomb making manuals which continue to circulate on al-Qaeda affiliated forums. Some of these have recently been translated into English, including the ‘Explosives Course’ published last year by the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF). For more analysis on the Explosives Course see the Insight on the New English-Language al-Qaeda Explosive Manual Released Online by Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens.

- An article by Abu Yahya al-Libi which comes later in the magazine implores readers to jihad stating “It is either jihad or disgrace, so choose!”

Death of Osama bin Laden

- The magazine opens by reproducing the official statement from al-Qaeda confirming the death of Osama bin Laden. (For more on this see the ICSR Insight on Al-Qaeda confirms death of bin Laden).
- A one page poster featuring a picture of Hakimullah Mehsud, the current leader of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Pakistani Taliban) and Osama bin Laden reads, “A special thanks to Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan for taking revenge on behalf of Shaykh Usama bin Ladin”.
- While eulogising Osama bin Laden, Samir Khan writes “The martyrdom of our Shaykh will never halt us from bursting into the gates of Paradise. The kuffâr should realize that Islam is what burns in our souls and not any personality or object”.
- The widely stated mantra of al-Qaeda members after the death of Osama bin Laden is repeated: “If you fought for Shaykh Usama, then know that Shaykh Usama is dead. But if you fought for Allah, then know that He’s Ever Living.”

Anwar al-Awlaki

- Inspire has consistently goaded Western security and intelligence agencies. This edition mocks attempts by the U.S. military to kill the Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki. “The fact that the drones were unable to pinpoint his location nor follow him the rest of the way is a sign from Allah that He protects His believing slaves” it states.
- The magazine carries two pictures of Awlaki posing in the desert. In one of them he is carrying an AK47.
- An ‘advert’ from al-Malahem media promises an upcoming “exclusive video interview with the Shakyh [Anwar al-Awlaki] where he will answer your questions”. Readers are then invited to submit questions using a secure encryption method, details of which are given at the end of the magazine.

Background

- Inspire magazine is a quarterly publication of AQAP produced in the English language. Although it is not the first time al-Qaeda has produced a magazine in English, Inspire is noted for its high production values and relative sophistication.
- Two American citizens, Anwar al-Awlaki and Samir Khan, are believed to be the principal architects behind the magazine.

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