**I. Image of the Dome of the Rock and Martyr**

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**Image Analysis**

The image is a signature .gif file that was preceded by the caption (in translation): “O God, have mercy on him with Your compassion O God, and place him in the most spacious of your heavenly gardens; the Arab nation has lost one of the forerunners of the Arab revolution, and so hopefully, Bin Ladin, you will have produced a million avengers in your wake, O God have mercy on him with Your compassion.” The post appeared in a thread eulogizing Usama bin Ladin and mourning his death. The phrase in the image reads: “waht al-shuhada’” (“martyrs’ arena”), and it appears against a background of an orange/yellow sky with light rays emanating from the sun that is setting behind the Dome of the Rock. The latter is recognized and revered by all Muslims, but it is a particularly powerful symbol of Palestinian self-determination. It was built in 692 A.D. by the Umayyid caliph ‘Abd al-Malik on the site where Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven in his *mi‘raj*(night journey), and it is considered the third holiest site in Islam after Mecca and al-Madina. Because of its status in Islam, the Dome of the Rock is often used to code a message of inspiration for jihadi activism. Furthermore, its appearance in the image conjures up the idea of a martyr’s shrine or tomb and reminds the viewer of the importance of martyrdom in Islam. It should be noted that light rays are usually used to illuminate other symbols or text (the Dome of the Rock in this case) in order to give the images an aura of divinity and/or afterlife.

Doves are flying over the body of an armed fighter whose blood brightly colors the earth where he lays. The world of birds in general is very important in the symbolic language of Islam. Pre-Islamic Arabs imagined soul birds fluttering around the grave of the deceased, and the bird continues to symbolize the flight of the soul beyond the confines of this world. Doves in particular are considered sacred, since they are believed to have protected Muhammad during his nocturnal journey. It is in this manner that the dove can be linked to the notion of martyrdom and the rise of a martyr’s soul to heaven. The dove is also a symbol of loving fidelity, which is manifested by the collar of dark feathers around its neck, called “the dove’s necklace.”

The green headband on the fighter is the mark of the ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (military wing of Hamas).

**Sourced from:**

**Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point**

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**II. Image Commemorating Abu-al-Hayja’ al-Ansari**



### Image Analysis

Most images contains the name or logo of the designer, here it is Abu al-Hayja’ al-Ansari, whose nisba (nickname) indicates his local, as opposed to muhajir (foreign) origins. The logo contains a yellow open Qur’an in front of an AK-47 and evokes a phrase commonly used by jihadists “kitabun yahdi w sayfun yansur” (a book [Quran] to guide, and a sword [for] victory.”  The phrase is attributed to Ibn Taymiya, an influential religious scholar revered by many jihadists.

The yellow and red of the flames invoke the pain of separation and a longing to be united with God, that is, the longing for death and achievement of martyrdom. The fiery red resonates blood, passion, impulse and danger. The yellow floral pattern combines the meaningful color and the familiar floral motif. Flowers in general represent vitality, as well as life and its incessant pace, and thus will evoke notions of life after death, paradise and martyrdom, especially in the context of jihadi imagery

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**III. Indonesian Banner Mimicking Iwo Jima Memorial**



### Image Analysis

The dominant element of the image is the red rays, which are significant, as red is the color of fire, blood, passion, impulse and danger. Light rays are often used to illuminate other symbols or text in an image to give them an aura of divinity and/or afterlife. At the center of the rays is a Palestinian flag that bears theshahada (Islamic testimony of faith holding that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger). The flag is held by a group of men, identified as fighters by the fact that their faces are covered by the kafiyya (head scarf). The text is a Qur’anic quote (Q 8:39), written in Indonesian.

It seems that the image, via the posture of the soldiers and the way they are holding the flag, is trying to imitate the famous United States Marine Corps War Memorial (also known as the Iwo Jima Memorial), located in Arlington, Virginia. By doing so, the image evokes notions of bravery and sacrifice on the battlefield and absolute commitment to the mission/struggle.

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**IV. Image Celebrating Attacks of 9/11**

**Image Analysis**

Jihadi propaganda often marks important jihadi operations/violent events in order to establish these events as key milestones that shape the current jihadi movement. Usually, these events are reinterpreted as illustrations of the effectiveness of the violent jihadi struggle and its success in targeting its enemies. In other words, they are used as examples of jihadi victory against much stronger and more powerful Western forces and evidence of the imminent victory of jihadist Islam over Western imperialism and secularism.

In this specific image, Usama bin Ladin appears in the top left corner, above the skyline of New York and the iconic American symbol of Lady Liberty. The caption under the bust identifies him as: “asad al-islam usama b. ladin” (“lion of Islam, Usama bin Ladin”). The light rays emanating from Bin Ladin and the gray clouds in the background may be associated with the foretelling of divine anger and punishment. The latter is an especially likely interpretation in light of Lady Liberty’s visible destruction and the visual reference to the events of 11 September 2011.

In this image, the rider is carrying a black banner bearing the *shahada* (Islamic testimony of faith holding that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger). According to *hadith*, the black flag was the battle flag of the Prophet Muhammad and it was carried into battle by many of his companions. Since then, the image of the black flag has been used as a symbol of religious revolt and engagement in battle (i.e., jihad). In the contemporary Islamist movement, the black flag with the *shahada* is used to evoke notions of jihad and of reestablishing the Islamic Caliphate.

The caption (directed at Usama bin Ladin) expresses the sum of all the elements: “kull ‘am wa-anta qahir lil-salibiyyin” (“may you always be [lit. every year you are] the vanquisher of the crusaders”). The structure of the phrase in Arabic plays on the wording of the traditional Arabic greeting/blessing said on holidays or birthdays.

**Sourced from:**

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**V. Al-Jama’a Al-Islamiyya Propaganda**



### Image Analysis

The image is the cover of a document analyzing/describing the failures of American intelligence, particularly the CIA. As provided in the image, the document is entitled “usturat al-wahm: kashf al-qana‘ ‘an al-istikhbarat al-amrikiyya” (“The Myth of [Self-]Delusion: removing the veil from American Intelligence”). At the bottom of the image appears the name of the author, Muhammad Khalil al-Hukayma, a deceased leader of the Egyptian al-Jama‘a al-Islamiyya, whose faction was said to have allied itself with al-Qa‘ida in 2006. Al-Hukayma (also known as Abu Jihad al-Misri), who appeared in an al-Sahab video announcing this merger, was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Pakistan on 31 October 2008. (For a detailed analysis of the document, see Brian Fishman, Al-Qaida’s Spymaster Analyzes the U.S. Intelligence Community, 6 November 2006.)

Jihadi propaganda often marks important jihadi operations/violent events in order to establish these events as key milestones that shape the current jihadi movement. Usually, these events are reinterpreted as illustrations of the effectiveness of the violent jihadi struggle and its success in targeting its enemies. In other words, the illustrations are used as examples of jihadi victory against much stronger and more powerful Western forces and evidence of the imminent victory of jihadist Islam over Western imperialism and secularism.

This specific image contains both a visual and textual reference to the events of 9/11 and is dominated by the American symbol of power, the bald eagle. However, American symbols of strength—both economic (Twin Towers) and physical (military)—are portrayed as broken and weak. The Towers are shown in their last hours, burning and smoking, and the eagle sheds a tear.

The eagle is a relatively common motif in Islamic imagery, though the image clearly marks its American context with the emblem of the CIA on (or even instead of) the eagle’s eye.

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**VI. Image from Facebook account of the Coaltion of Intifada Youth to Liberate Palestine**



### Image Analysis

The image makes use of classic Nazi propaganda elements with a picture of Hitler on the right, and the Nazi eagle and swastika on the left. In the foreground is an alleged quote from Hitler that reads: “kana bi-imkani an aqtul jami‘ yahud al-‘alam, wa-lakin taraktu ba‘dan minhum li-kay ya‘rif al-‘alam li-madha aqtuluhum” (“I could have murdered all the Jews of the world, but I left some so the world would know why I was killing them”). In the bottom right appears the date 15 May 2011 over the caption “thawrat al-shu‘ub al-‘arabiyya” (“the revolution of the Arab people”). The date indicated was set by various Palestinian media groups as the date for the outbreak of the third Palestinian intifada (armed awakening/resistance) and the return of Palestinian diaspora to all of Israel/Palestine.

**Sourced from:**

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**VII. Cover of al-Sumad Magazine (Feb-March 2011)**



### Image Analysis

The image is the cover of the February-March 2011 issue of the Taliban’s monthly magazine, al-Sumud. Referring to the picture of the American coffins and the crashed military plane, the caption in blue reads: “nazra ‘amma ‘ala al-saha al-qitaliyya fi afghanistan; hakadha yaf‘al kull muhtall hinama yanhazim” (“a general look at the theater of combat in Afghanistan; may every occupier do this when they are defeated”). The caption is also the title of one of the articles that appears in the issue (see page 65).

The American flag, or parts thereof (such as the stars and stripes), are widely used in jihadi propaganda to evoke negative sentiments towards U.S. foreign policy and military campaigns. The stars and stripes are also used to color other symbols in an image, thereby linking the symbols to U.S. foreign policy and military intervention in the Muslim world.

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**VIII. Syrian Map with UBL Quote**



### Image Analysis

This image was posted on a Salafi web forum by a user who appears to be trying to “hijack” the upheaval in Syria (2011), as he appended to the post a distinct signature quote by Usama bin Ladin, made famous by its incessant posting on the web: أقسم بالله العظيم الذي رفع السماء بلا عمد لن تحلم أمريكا ولا من يعيش في أمريكا بالأمن قبل أن نعيشه واقعا في فلسطين وقبل أن تخرج جميع الجيوش الكافرة من أرض محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم (“I swear to God Almighty who erected the sky without supports that America and those who live there will never live in safety before we actually live in safety in Palestine and before the infidel armies leave the land of the Prophet, may Allah’s prayer and blessing be upon him”).

In the image, a context-free map of Syria is seen. Depicting the Syrian state without bordering countries or bodies of water evokes the national context and scope of that specific struggle, thereby designating Syria as an important theater for local jihad and implying an obligation to join the struggle. This idea is further emphasized by the blood spatter on the map. The red of the blood serves in place of the top red stripe in the Syrian flag.

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**IX. Image of Child with Rifle and UBL**



### Image Analysis

Children are symbols of innocence and purity, and are employed in jihadi imagery to evoke notions of pride, honor and injustice. Images of young children, usually boys, also suggest the emergence of a new generation of jihadi fighters who will continue to tread down the same path of resistance as their fathers before them. This idea is expressed in the image by the young boy clutching a weapon. His figure holds center stage between the picture of the fighters in the bottom right corner and the face of Usama bin Ladin on the left. The appearance of bin Ladin in the image ties the struggle portrayed here with the global jihadi movement and al-Qa’ida in particular.

The black banner on the right side of the image traces its roots to prophetic times. According to hadith (prophetic tradition or report), the black flag was the battle flag of the Prophet Muhammad and it was carried into battle by many of his companions.

In the contemporary Islamist movement, the black flag with the shahada (Islamic testimony of faith holding that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger) is used to evoke notions of jihad and of reestablishing the Islamic Caliphate. The black headband on the child’s head also bears the shahada. The caption is a partial text of a hadith that reads as follows: “qala rasul Allah, salla Allah ‘alayhi wa-sallam: …thumma takun khilafatun ‘ala minhaj al-nubuwwa” (“the Prophet, Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him, said: …and then there will be a caliphate according to the custom of the Prophet”).

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Promote the Cause (Martyrdom)

I. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0375>

II. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0414-2>

III. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0265>

Mark Important Events

IV. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0382>

V. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0401>

Promote Hatred

VI<http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0388>

VII.<http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0220>

Recruitment

VIII. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0389>

IX. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/imagery/0176>