



## Ready For Defeat

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We are so insecure about our policies, so lacking in will to win, that defeatism has set in everywhere. If Amman suffers a triple attack, we immediately interpret it as another step in the spread of Islamic terrorism, forgetting that back in 2001 an American diplomat was murdered there and in April 2004 an attempt was made to blow up the intelligence service's headquarters.

Since its inception, Al Qaeda has not stopped acting as a platform for coordinating and giving strategic sense to a diverse group, both in origin and history, of terrorist organizations around the globe.

The Iraq War, without question, mobilized human resources. Many Islamic radicals traveled to the country ready to fight or sacrifice themselves in suicide attacks. But it is not clear the number of actual terrorists has increased; nor are there reasons to believe they are now stronger than before the war. In fact, most attacks correspond not to any logical tactic concerning the national crisis in Iraq, but to the specific goal of the terrorist organization: cleansing Islam of corrupt leaders.

The main battlefield for Al Qaeda is Islam. Its success or failure is measured by feelings within the Muslim community and the political evolution of its regimes. Lately, the winds of change have not been favorable to Al Qaeda: Libya's diplomatic

180° and abandonment of its weapons of mass destruction program; the consolidating democratic process in Iraq after its first elections and constitutional referendum; the Syrian retreat from Lebanon; the beginning of a transition process, elections and democratic progress in Palestine; small but symbolic steps toward greater representative voice in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; and, lastly, the international isolation of Syria. Little by little, the US strategy is making headway, although these changes need more time to solidify.

Al Qaeda is aware, despite its fanaticism that events are moving against it. To keep this process from consolidating, it must increase pressure, arrange for more and more attacks to de-stabilize regimens on the path to democracy. For the terrorists, any experience demonstrating the possibility of Islam and Western modernization coming together is intolerable and forces them to try to stir up civil strife to upset the process.

The triple attack in Jordan is just one more example. This small and poor country has become, thanks to the Hashemite monarchy, a major financial and business center. It has an excellent relationship with the United States, Europe and Israel. It is clear in its support for a democratic Iraq and the elected Palestinian Authority. This is far too much for terrorist, and Jordanian citi-

zen, Al Zaraqawi –sentenced to death by Jordan’s courts.

We are witnessing Islamic terrorism in flight. We cannot confuse force with intensity. Al Qaeda is increasing its actions out of desperation because events are not going its way. Moreover, as Al-Zawairi, operations chief for Al-Qaeda, pointed out to al-Zaraqawi, a local terrorist leader, attacks on Muslims lead to a backlash against the radical Islamist cause. The religious community does not understand why it is necessary to sacrifice innocent men, women

and children. We are seeing it in the streets of Amman, where people poured out into the streets to call al-Zaraqawi a coward.

Al Qaeda is losing the political battle as more countries begin to democratize. It is also starting to lose the spiritual battle. People increasingly are rejecting its attacks. So why the defeatism? The answer does not lie in the Arab street, but in the West’s lack of values.

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