

Al-Qaeda targets moderate Muslims

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Since Israel's unilateral withdrawal in 2005 from Gaza, violent Palestinian factionalism and Hamas' fanatical vision of a Judenrein Holy Land have interacted to create the current witch's brew. Israel has had to act militarily to defend its citizens from terrorist rocket barrages, murder tunnels and kidnappings.

The Hamas-led Palestinian government, committed by blood oath to the annihilation of Israel, seeks to leverage the sufferings of its own people to further a broader region-wide jihadist agenda.

Across the Mideast, Islamic extremists mix violence with apocalyptic religious fervour to transform their region into an intolerant theocracy with no rights for moderate Muslims, Christians or Jews.

The arc of jihadist violence extends from Iraq where Osama bin Laden ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi died trying to incite a Sunni-Shia religious war, to Jordan, where Zarqawi's agents blew up three Amman hotels, maiming and killing hundreds including wedding guests, to Egypt where al-Qaeda suicide bombers attacked Sinai resorts during the Coptic Easter, killing 24 Egyptians and injuring 60.

In a recent audiotape broadcast, bin Laden rallied support for the Hamas-led Palestinian government against the "Zionist crusader war on Islam." He also urged jihadists from all over the Middle East to descend on Sudan to aid the Muslim-on-Muslim war in Darfur.

The objective of the Arab militias in Sudan: "Kill all the blacks." Intelligence reports confirm al-Qaeda is also extending its operational capacity into Gaza and the West Bank, where other factions include Fatah's Martyrs' Brigades and Islamic Jihad, which claimed responsibility for the recent Tel Aviv suicide bombing that killed nine and wounded more than 60. Meanwhile, the senior partner in Hamas' terrorist mafia is Khaled Mashal, who gives his bloody orders from the safety of dictator Bashir Assad's Damascus.

Perhaps the new onslaught against Israel is meant to distract the attention of the "Arab street" which is finding it harder every day to reconcile its ears and its

eyes. It hears the jihadists maligning "Christian Crusaders and sons of dogs and apes Jews," but increasingly sees that the growing numbers of terrorist victims are Muslims who disagree with al-Qaeda's worldview.

Observers of the Middle East puzzle palace are divided into those willing to connect the dots, and those who can't, or won't. Amid new terror horrors in the Holy Land, we can still hear the seductive, but false arguments that empowering Hamas would help "moderate" the terrorist group. In fact, the opposite has come about.

Now, the world needs to back the few Arab moderates who have the courage to speak and act against terrorists. Ottawa and Washington should encourage Jordan's courageous King Abdullah II who recently demanded "unified international efforts to combat this dangerous disease terrorism which is completely alien to our Islamic values and traditions."

Just before the recent terrorist escalation, Abdullah was urging Hamas to negotiate peace with Israel before it's too late. Hamas' response: to threaten a region-wide "Third Intifada" if international funding sources were not immediately turned on.

Many world leaders have yet to join the king's call for a united front against jihadist fanatics. It's still easier to be lulled by duplicitous propagandists like Egyptian-born Sheik Yusuf Al Qaradawi, the theological darling of Al Jazeera, who heads the Geneva-based "Coalition for Good."

At the Royal Palace in Amman, the sheik publicly defied Abdullah's call for a total condemnation of terrorism by Muslim religious leaders, while continuing to laud Palestinian women who become suicide bombers even without the knowledge of their husbands.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is challenging the UN and NGOs dedicated to promoting international human rights to demand the extradition from Damascus and indictment of Mashal.

Time is running out to recognize al-Qaeda, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Fatah's Martyrs' Brigades, and Hamas for what they are. This is no "War on Islam," but the imperative to defang a theologically based terrorist culture of death that is recruiting young Muslim foot soldiers for future 9/11-style attacks on democratic societies.

Canada can help lead the way by demanding that international human rights law be mobilized to target the food chain of terror. They can start with preachers who hide behind the facade of a holy book in the conspiracy against our democratic way of life.

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