In the Aftermath of the Defeat of ISIS

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The phase ends of violent groups and organizations with extreme ideological principles are almost identical. Although they differ in details, causes, geographic regions, and the circumstances of end phases, they are mostly identical in the ideological, structural and methodological pattern of the phase of disintegration or regression. Moreover, they have almost the same shape in the aftermath of defeat as well as in the resistance and the attempts of re-healing after defeat.

At the beginning of the article, I made sure that I describe the ends as "phase ends" because according to factual and historical data, what has happened and is happening to major terrorist organizations cannot be described as an "end"; rather, it can be described as an "end of phase". This will be made clear through a perusal of the parts of the article.

Organizations under study:

The article aims at studying the most notorious contemporary terrorist organizations, which have constituted an ideological and terrorist field presence, and can be described as "the major organizations". These organizations are:

▶ **Egyptian Jihadist Group:** It was first formed in 1964, and although it was local, it is considered from an ideological point of view as a reference for the violent Jihadi trend in modern times.

▶ **Al-Qaeda Organization:** It was established in 1988, but the name "Organization of Al-Qaeda of Jihad" has only been circulated in the organization   since 1998. It was only after the first assembly of its members under the "Service Bureau" and "Houses of the Mujahideen" that an agreement was concluded in 1988 to use the name "Al-Qaeda" to call this assembly. At that time the global objectives of the organization had not matured yet, and most of its expansionist plans had been clandestine.

▶ **"ISIS" Organization:** The earliest structural origins of the Organization go back to the (Tawhid & Jihad Group) which was founded by Al-Zarqawi in 2003. Al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance in 2004 to Al-Qaeda and changed the name of the group to (Organization of Jihad's Base in Mesopotamia). In 2006, the Organization joined other blocs under the name of (Islamic State in Iraq and the Syria), and in 2013, announced the formation of the "Islamic State in Iraq and the Syria ", which is "ISIS" in its final form. However, the name was changed to the "Islamic State" in 2014 and the Caliphate Scheme was announced.

Outlining chronological order is of paramount importance in conceiving the phases of the structure development of major organizations until they reach maturity and ability as they are very similar in the phases of their formation.

These organizations have constituted the characteristics of the deviant jihadi movement. All of these organizations have been the result of previous developments of groups, initiatives and cells which have matured in ideology, and in the field and have subsequently acquired their organizational form. Although they are ideologically analogous and similar in their organizational mechanisms, they differ with regard to some of their foundations and ramifications. Moreover, they can be categorized within one frame due to the fact that their cognitive content is sequential, and their overall objectives are interrelated so much so that we can describe them with updated versions of the extremist trend and the terrorist ideology that have relied on the slogans of "Jihad" in a misconceived way.

These three organizations can be good study samples   due to the unity of their basic principles, the similarity of their tools and mechanisms and the action methodology within the organization.

The reason to author this article:

In fact, we are living through the end of one of the most important phases of the most glaringly notorious organizations - "ISIS". It has in fact lost all of its capital cities, central regions and nearly 96% of its territory in Syria and Iraq. This demise necessitates an analysis and anticipation of the next phase according to field, ideological and structural data as well as according to comparisons with similar organizations and groups. The forward-looking conception of the reality of organizations helps to create confrontations

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and solutions that limit the formation and redeployment of the organization. Furthermore, a deep understanding of the mobility of the organizations enables us to preemptively control the pathways of extremism and terrorism.

Phase Ends:

After the field and ideological "maturity" phase of organizations, they fall into a phase of disintegration, defragmentation, vulnerability and regression for several important reasons:

▶ **Excessive Growth and Expansion:** All relevant organizations have their own field and ideological expansionist goals. They have the desire, motivation and greed to further expand, especially in the phase of maturity, attainment of full strength and euphoria of 'alleged' victory. This geographical, field and ideological expansion is one of the causes of their vulnerability and their plunging into the vulnerable phase since that expansion brings about increasingly growing internal problems, disintegration, divisions and structural and methodological disagreements.

Al-Qaeda has had a voracious appetite to establish branches across the world, and attract more field and ideological leaders and recruited militants, which overburdened the central command in terms of oversight and control. Following the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011, gaps have come to surface, and some branches and groups have begun to make their decisions unilaterally. The central command became too weak to control and take the lead of the organizational movement. As such, it became easy to infiltrate into or defect from the organization in such a way that some groups affiliated to the organization have become more dominant and hegemonic on the organization itself, and "the supporters of Sharia in Yemen" is a case in point. A previous organization that have gone through the same situation is the Organization of Jihad although its ideological and operational excessive expansion was the dominant characteristic. The organization was unable to expand geographically, except after its interim end. The expansion was of its members and leaders.

The same direction of events has been replicated in the case of ISIS, which has facilitated its collapse in the central and major areas, making its media helpless and futile after long periods of ups and downs.

▶ **The Increasingly Growing Intervention of States:** The strength of organizations, their operations and access to the field, economic and ideological control points, and the downright damage brought about glaringly to the states require more holistic and intensive intervention than that required in previous stages in the battle against organizations, especially in the presence of stable states and institutions. Organizations grow more active in the most turbulent and vulnerable areas, and become weaker in the more cohesive regions.

When the state started to besiege and fight the Jihad Group in a holistic manner, the state was able to force them to enter the interim phase despite the human losses by the state, as it overcame the crisis under cohesive institutions.

The same applies to Al-Qaeda in its areas; although the Organization benefited from the experience of "Jihad Group" and tried to avoid collapse in stable countries, it eventually was not steadfast. An example is "Al-Qaeda in the land of the Two Holy Mosques". This branch was for the Organization and its senior leaders a cornerstone for future growth and an ideological pivot, but Saudi Arabia was able to dismantle this Organization, and even force it to change its structure. Consequently, the organization changed its name to "Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula" in 2009, and moved its centers outside Saudi Arabia; No focal points of the organization has remained in Saudi Arabia following fierce and continual battles with it since 2003.

This is what is happening now to ISIS in Iraq, Libya and Marawi – the Philippines; it lost control, its centers collapsed, and was forced to change course.

▶ Community Awareness: popularity and empathy of community make up the largest incubator for organizations. Once the organization loses this incubator, it becomes then stifled in all its circles. It begins moving, escaping, lurking, hiding and concealing. It also loses recruits, sympathizers and loyalists. This happens only after the organization dares to carry out brutal operations claiming the lives of innocent civil people and soldiers, such as guards of buildings and checkpoints. Societies are awakening and come to discover the realities of the organizations when such dangers get closer to these societies and when they feel the loss of their mainstays, especially young people, who are members in these organizations and become enemies of their home countries.

> "Societies become more aware and regain consciousness when they discover the realities of extremist organizations. Consequently, these organizations lose community empathy and get stifled in all their circles."
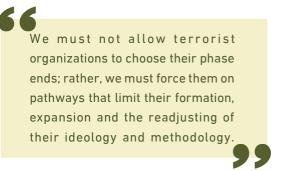
This is the same point to which Al-Qaeda has been alerted; Al-Qaeda accordingly has ordered its branches not to carry out any attacks that would raise social anger. Neverthess, it was too late and the organization leadership's control power became feeble.

After phase ends:

Organizations have not chosen to enter into this stage and this phase, but they are trying to adapt, change and alter its methodology in order to survive, which is what most of the leaders of the organizations call "tactical withdrawal". This withdrawal and change go as follows:

▶ **Global scattering,** through small cells, building new groups, social ties, and hidden expansions.

▶ **Strengthening some branches,** especially those in tribal or troubled areas.

▶ **Integrating under other groups,** where ideological convergence or similarity is not required; what is important at this phase is affiliation and providing a cover-up. This mode is more common among individuals and ethnic agglomerated groups.

> " We must not allow terrorist organizations to choose their phase ends; rather, we must force them on pathways that limit their formation, expansion and the readjusting of their ideology and methodology. "

▶ **Reconfiguration in an organization or a new formation.** The Jihadi Group, for instance, has pushed toward establishing a new formation, which contributed to the emergence of Al-Qaeda. By the same token, Al-Qaeda has pushed in the same direction across its branches in Iraq and Syria which contributed to the emergence of "ISIS" and "Al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra)". Leaders with personal agenda often take on this new formation.

▶ **Alliance with "pro-terrorist" states and regimes,** to protect leaders and their families and to preserve the human assets of the organization. This has happened to Al-Qaeda with the Iranian regime, which has provided Al-Qaeda leaders with protection and containment, and even set up special camps for the organization along with training and care.

These formations make us emphasize the term "phase end" because it is a period of transition and change that takes its time span to return again in a different way. This impedes organizations, especially ISIS, from taking their time range in one of these pathways. We must not allow terrorist organizations to choose their phase ends; rather, we must force them on pathways that limit their formation, expansion and the readjusting of their ideology and methodology.