



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center**

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The use of mosques for military and political purposes by Hamas and other terrorist organizations and Islamic groups: according to international laws governing of armed conflict, mosques used for military purposes lose the special protection afforded houses of worship and may become legitimate targets for attack.



Weapons found in mosques during Operation Cast Lead. Top left: The pulpit in the Al-Atatra mosque in the northern Gaza Strip. Top right: Kalashnikov assault rifle, vest and binoculars found hidden under the pulpit on February 14, 2009. Bottom: Store of rockets found by the IDF in a mosque in the Zeitun neighborhood in Gaza City.

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Overview

1. Operation Cast Lead illustrated the varied military uses made by Hamas of the mosques under its control in the Gaza Strip. During the operation evidence (which was extensively documented by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center) was found about the storage of weapons in mosques (rockets, IEDs, light arms and even an anti-aircraft gun), and about using the mosques for military training and as bases from which to launch rockets into Israel and mortar shells at IDF forces nearby.

2. The extensive use made of mosques by terrorist organizations and radical Islamic groups for military, terrorist and political purposes **is not limited to the Gaza Strip**. This study also examines similar uses made by Hamas in Judea and Samaria, Hezbollah in south Lebanon, and global jihad and other radical Islamic groups in various countries around the Arab-Muslim world (in conflict focal points such as Iraq and Pakistan) and even in the Muslim communities in Europe. In many locations both in the Middle East and beyond, radical Islamic terrorist organizations exploit the mosques to hide weapons, organize in preparation for attacks, enlist supporters and terrorist operatives, preach terrorism and **indoctrinate Muslims** who come to worship **with hatred** for Israel, the Jewish people, the West in general and the United States in particular, as well as for pro-Western Arab and Islamic regimes.

3. The study also examines the religious and social roots of the use of mosques for military and political purposes. Senior Islamic clerics, both Sunni and Shi'ite (particularly the Sunni sheikh Yussuf Qardawi and the Shi'ite Ayatollah Khamenei), repeatedly claim that making **such use of the mosques for jihad objectives is legitimate according to Islamic point of view. They also encourage their use for spreading jihad ideology and terrorism (*muqawamah*, i.e., "resistance") against the enemies of Islam**. Their religious views are based on the Islamic oral traditions (*hadiths*) which say that the prophet Muhammad himself used a mosque for military and political purposes, beyond the classic use of the mosque as house of worship.

4. The use made by terrorist organizations of mosques for military purposes and as launching pads for terrorist attacks is **liable to endanger innocent civilians** who have no link to the organizations. It harms the status and special protection afforded houses of worship by international laws of armed combat, as well as the protection afforded civilian structures and the civilian population in general. **The laws of armed conflict unequivocally state that houses of worship used for military purposes lose their right to protection and thus expose themselves to attack**. Hamas and Islamic terrorist groups claim that attacking mosques (even though they were put to military-terrorist purposes) is illegal and is

an infringement of the freedom of worship. Those claims, aimed primarily at Western ears where public opinion regards the mosques as places used exclusively for religious purposes, are worthless. The measures taken by the IDF in the Gaza Strip against mosques used for military purposes, as well as those taken by other countries, including, for example, the United States in Iraq, **were in accordance with international law and arose from the natural commitment of any state to defend its citizens.**

5. The legitimate battle against the military and political use made of mosques by terrorist organizations and radical Islamic elements has been waged in various ways: during Operation Cast Lead in the **Gaza Strip**, the **IDF** attacked mosques used for such purposes by Hamas; in **Iraq**, the **United States** attacked mosques in Fallujah and other cities because they were being used as military bases by insurgents and other terrorist elements; in **Judea and Samaria** the **Palestinian Authority** invaded mosques controlled by Hamas and confiscated weapons and propaganda materials, and detained clerics; in **Pakistan** the regime was forced to take over the entire Red Mosque precinct in Islamabad, where radical Islamic activities were being held and from which terrorist groups affiliated with the global jihad launched their attacks.

6. **Arab countries** such as **Saudi Arabia** have been forced to impose close security supervision on the mosques which are home to global jihad groups whose activities are also directed against the host countries (the sheikh of Al-Azhar mosque, Muhammad Al-Tantawi, who is a senior religious authority in the Sunni Muslim world, determined that a country has the full right to attack a mosque to preserve its security interests). In addition, **European countries (especially Britain) and the United States** were also forced to impose close security supervision on mosques which had become focal points for global jihad incitement and terrorist activities, especially after September 11, 2001.

7. The radical Islamist terrorist exploitation of mosques for military and political purposes can be expected to continue. The struggle against such exploitation has met several serious difficulties, especially since in many places Islamic terrorist organizations enjoy great popularity with those who come to the mosques (popularity which is sometimes greater than that of the countries and regimes fighting terrorism, each in its own way). Nevertheless, the struggle must be continued in a variety of ways as an integral part of the global war against terrorism and its various manifestations.

The Use Made by Hamas of Mosques in the Gaza Strip for Military and Political Purposes

Background information

8. The extensive network of mosques in the Gaza Strip, which has become significantly larger during the past 30 years, is for the most part controlled by the **Hamas movement**. The main reasons for its control, are the popularity of Hamas's radical Islamic ideology, its extensive social welfare activities, the difficulties experienced by Fatah (whose orientation is secular and national) in gaining a foothold in the mosques, the lack of a strong central government with the ability to control the mosques as is usually done in Arab countries, and Hamas's political domination of the Gaza Strip since June 2007. The Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip made it possible for the movement to strengthen its control of the mosques and to remove clerics belonging to the rival camp. Hamas and the other terrorist organizations use the mosques to recruit operatives for terrorist attacks, store weapons, hold terrorist operative meetings, and as bases for terrorist attacks, training sites and rocket and mortar shell launching sites.

9. The large number of mosques spread throughout the Gaza Strip, the relative security Hamas operatives feel within them and the religious roots for using them for military purposes (See below) encourage Hamas to exploit them for military purposes and make them a central component in fighting the IDF forces in built-up areas. Hamas assumed, at least until Operation Cast Lead, that the IDF would refrain from attacking mosques, regardless of the military activity taking place in them, because they were religious institutions and attacking them would cause a negative reaction in the Arab countries and even the West, where there is a long-standing tradition of the sanctity of places of worship.



The Al-Khulafaa mosque in Jabaliya, used by Hamas as an operations room and weapons storehouse. It was attacked by the IDF during Operation Cast Lead (IDF Spokesman, January 2, 2009).

Military use of mosques during Operation Cast Lead and other IDF operations in the Gaza Strip

Before Operation Cast Lead

10. The use of a mosque for military purposes was revealed during counterterrorist Operation Hot Winter (March 2008) in the northern Gaza Strip. During the operation an IDF force found a cache of weapons hidden in a mosque in the **Jabaliya refugee camp**. There were telephone-detonated IEDs, coils of cable for activating bombs, mortar shells, hand grenades and ammunition clips. Cables for activating charges inside the mosque were found, as were parts of ammunition clips, showing that terrorist operatives had fired from within the mosque.



Left: IDF forces searching a mosque in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip during Operation Hot Winter. Right: Weapons found in the mosque, among them mortar shell and grenades (IDF Spokesman, March 2, 2008).

11. On April 16, 2008, an IDF force operating in the northern Gaza Strip attacked ten armed terrorists. During the exchange of fire the terrorists launched mortar shells and anti-tank missiles from within **a mosque on the outskirts of Saja'iya**, in which they had hidden large quantities of IEDs and other weapons. (IDF Spokesman, April 16, 2008).

Operation Cast Lead

12. **During Operation Cast Lead** (December 2008-January 2009) Hamas and the other terrorist organizations extensively used mosques for military-terrorist purposes. Israel, on the other hand, rose to the challenge and attacked mosques in which or from which military actions were taken. During the operation evidence was found for a variety of uses to which the mosques were put:

- i) **Storing weapons, ammunition and military equipment:** the equipment found in the mosques included Qassam rockets, IEDs, Kalashnikov assault rifles, ammunition clips and even an anti-aircraft gun. Israeli Air Force attack films of mosques taken during the operation show powerful secondary explosions, evidence of the presence of

large quantities of weapons.¹ Hamas considered the mosque compounds as possible battle sites and therefore placed IEDs, set up positions and dug tunnels nearby.



Weapons, ammunition and military equipment found in a mosque in Al-Atatra during Operation Cast Lead (January 14, 2009). They were discovered in the prayer hall under the pulpit (IDF Spokesman, January 15, 2009).



Weapons uncovered by IDF forces during Operation Cast Lead: Left: Anti-aircraft gun found at a mosque in Jabaliya. Middle: Rockets and military equipment. Right: Shawaz explosively formed projectile charges found in a mosque in Al-Atatra.

¹ For further information see our February 16 bulletin entitled "Evidence from Operation Cast Lead Shows Hamas Uses Mosques to Store Weapons and as Sites Launch Rockets and Mortar Shells -- File No. 3" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e059.pdf.



Rockets and mortar shells found in IDF searches of a mosque in the Zeitun neighborhood of Gaza City during Operation Cast Lead (January 11, 2009).



Weapons found in a side room in Al-Atatra mosque. Top left: An IED camouflaged as a concrete block. Top right: IEDs. Bottom left: Bomb concealed in a plastic container. Bottom right: Fragmentation IEDs hidden in plastic foam.



The Filastin mosque with a roadside bomb and rocket launching position nearby.



Roadside bomb near a mosque on the main road, south of Khan Yunis. The bomb is detonated from inside the mosque by electric cable.

- ii) **Launching rockets and mortar shells into Israeli territory and at IDF forces:** Israeli Air Force films taken during Operation Cast Lead and aerial photos clearly show rockets being launched from mosque compounds and firing positions and IEDs situated close to them.



Rocket launching site near a mosque in the Shaati refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip.



Rocket launched from the precinct of a mosque, January 7, 2009.²

iii) **Giving military training courses in mosques:** a captive Hamas operative from Al-Atatra in the northern Gaza Strip named **Subhi Ma'jid Atar** told about courses in military theory he attended at the **Bilal bin Rabah mosque in Al-Atatra**, where he learned about firing rockets and RPGs.

False representation of IDF attacks on mosques used by Hamas in its propaganda war against Israel

13. **Dr. Taleb Abu Shaar**, endowments minister in Hamas's de facto administration, protested the IDF attacks on the mosques during Operation Cast Lead. He said that Israel's claims that the mosques served as weapons storehouses were not proved and that the Palestinian people had the right to full "freedom of worship." He said that Israel had acted contrary to international law, human morality and religious principles. He added that it was a manifestation of the "religious war Israel is waging against Islam" (Hamas's Palestine-info website, February 1, 2009).



Taleb Abu Shaar, endowments minister for the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip (Palestine-info website, February 1, 2009).

² For a video of the launching see File No. 3 at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e059.pdf.

14. Representing the attacks on mosques used as military bases as an attack on “freedom of worship” is a **lie** whose objective is to score points for Hamas in its propaganda war against Israel. In fact, the mosques which Israel attacked were clearly used for military purposes in grave breach of the laws of armed conflict, and an **exploitation** of the special protection afforded religious institutions. The cynical and deliberate use of religious institutions for military purposes is a violation of the laws of armed conflict and may turn them into legitimate targets for military attack. In certain instances putting the mosques to such use is considered the war crime of using civilians as human shields. Thus it is not a question of Israel’s waging a “religious war” or attacking Palestinian civilians, as Hamas propaganda claims, but of **legitimate attacks on military-terrorist targets**, which were in compliance with international legal rules and with the State of Israel’s commitment to defend its citizens.

Political incitement and propaganda

15. The mosques in the Gaza Strip are used as forums for political incitement and hatred for the State of Israel, the Jewish people, the United States and even the Palestinian Authority and various Arab regimes. The themes of hatred appear in the Friday sermons, which also include political discussions of current events.

16. Conspicuously anti-Semitic sermons were given at the end of the Arafat era by Sheikh **Ibrahim Mudeiras**, a Hamas-affiliated cleric. They were delivered on Fridays at the Zaid Bin Sultan Aal Nahyan mosque in Gaza City and broadcast live via Palestinian TV, which was under the supervision of the Palestinian Authority³ (the broadcasts on Palestinian TV ended during the Mahmoud Abbas era). Currently the most conspicuous inflammatory preacher is **Sheikh Yunes al-Astal**, a Hamas representative in the Palestinian Legislative Council. For example, in a Friday sermon broadcast by Hamas Al-Aqsa TV he announced that Islam would soon conquer Rome, “the Catholic or Crusader capital,” as in the past Islam conquered Constantinople, and from there it would continue and conquer both Americas and even Eastern Europe (Al-Aqsa TV, April 11, 2008).

³ For further information see our June 29, 2008 bulletin entitled “Contemporary Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism, its Significance and Implications (Updated to March 2008)” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/a_s_170408e.pdf.



Sheikh Ibrahim Mudeiras: "The Jews are a virus, like AIDS, that the whole world is suffering from" (Palestinian TV, May 13, 2005).



Sheikh Yunes al-Astal: Islam will conquer Rome and then both Americas...

The Use Made by Hamas of Mosques in Judea and Samaria for Military and Political Purposes

Propaganda, incitement and terrorist activity in mosques during the violent campaign against Israel (the second intifada)

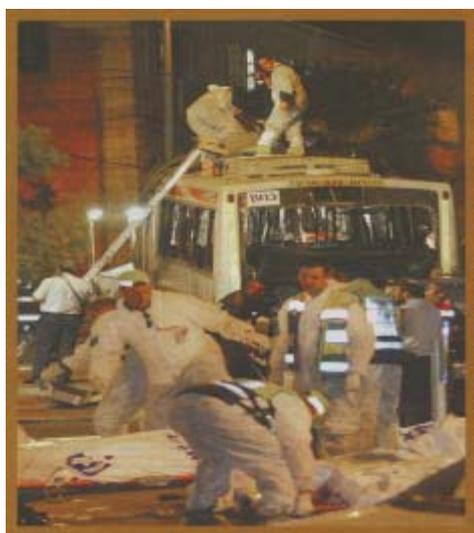
17. During the violent campaign waged by the terrorist organizations against Israel many mosques in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories, some of them as a result of Hamas influence, served as centers for **incitement to terrorism and hatred**. Sometimes they also served as launching pads for terrorist attacks against Israel. In the Gaza Strip, which is under Hamas domination, incitement and military activity have taken place in the mosques without interference, but in Judea and Samaria, at least theoretically, the activities of Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the mosques are expected to be controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

18. The mosques in Judea and Samaria are subject to inspection by the Palestinian Authority's security services and by its endowments and religious affairs ministry. Moreover,

some of the more extremist preachers, including those affiliated with Hamas, are paid by the ministry and are in fact PA employees. In reality, however, **the PA finds it difficult to maintain effective continuous supervision of the mosques**, which over the years have become sites of Hamas influence where anti-Israel and anti-PA propaganda is preached and where terrorism is indoctrinated.

19. During the terrorist campaign (the second intifada) the mosques in Judea and Samaria have been used for the following purposes:

i) **Military-terrorist uses:** Recruiting suicide bombers, meeting and coordination before leaving to carry out terrorist attacks and hiding weapons. The most conspicuous example was the suicide bombing attack on a bus on the No. 2 line in Jerusalem, carried out on August 19, 2003, which resulted in the deaths of 23 civilians and the wounding of more than 115. **The suicide bomber was Ra'ed Misk, imam of a mosque in Hebron, where he was recruited for the attack.** That morning he went to Abu Dis (a neighborhood at the eastern edge of Jerusalem) and from there to the **Abadin mosque in Wadi Joz** (a neighborhood north of the Old City). The explosive belt he used was also brought to the mosque from Hebron. Two Hamas operatives dressed him, showed him how to detonate the belt and drove him to a bus station near the mosque where he could get a bus to carry out the attack.



Left: The bus after the attack. Right: Suicide bomber Sheikh Ra'ed Misk, represented as "a hero of excellent qualities" in Hamas's *Filastin al-Muslima* newspaper (September 2003).

ii) **Terrorist propaganda and incitement:** Many of the mosques under Hamas influence or control are centers for spreading radical Islamic propaganda and incitement against the State of Israel, the Jewish people, the Palestinian Authority, the United States and Arab countries. They preach terrorism, glorify suicide bombing terrorism and turn its perpetrators into role models. The themes are expounded directly

by preachers with convincing rhetorical skills who fan the emotional flames of those who come to pray, and by posters and flyers hung or distributed in the mosques. During the second terrorist campaign (intifada) the Palestinian media broadcast the sermons live and reported on them extensively.

iii) **As political offices for Hamas:** The mosques are part of the Hamas political structure, and Mahmoud Abbas's administration is fully aware of the situation. During the violent confrontation (second intifada) Palestinian Authority general intelligence reported on it but refrained from confronting Hamas's control over the mosques. A general intelligence document written in December 2001, which mapped Hamas institutions in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh regions, also dealt at length with the mosques. It noted that "all mosques in Al-Bireh serve as sorts of offices for the Hamas movement," and suggested that the Palestinian Authority security services appoint reliable individuals to be responsible for each mosque "for the sake of order and control."⁴ Only during the past year did the Palestinian Authority take more decisive steps to counter Hamas's control of the mosques (see below).

20. The **Al-Ayn** mosque in Al-Bireh, where Hamas is particularly vigorous in disseminating propaganda and which has been exploited as a meeting place for Hamas terrorist operatives, is a good test case. On October 1, 2003 the IDF conducted a search of the mosque and found many posters and flyers with anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic and anti-Western themes. They were hung on the front door of the mosque and on its bulletin boards, and flyers were also handed out to people who came to the mosque to pray. The most prominent preacher at the Al-Ayn mosque was **Bassam Nihad Ibrahim Jarrar**, and the imam was sheikh **Feisal Muhammad Salah Hamdan**, a senior Hamas activist and Muslim Brotherhood leader in the PA-administered territories. For that both were detained a number of times by the Israeli security forces.⁵

⁴ For the document and its Hebrew translation, see התשתית האזרחית העניפה של ה"חמא"ס" [ה"דעוה"] כחלופה ולמוסדותיה וכמעטפת תומכת טרור at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/HEBREW/AUTHORITY-HAMAS/PDF/SEP10_04.PDF.

⁵ **Bassam Nihad Ibrahim Jarrar** was detained (administrative detentions) a number of times by the Israeli security forces and released in March 2006. **Feisal Muhammad Salah Hamdan** was detained in August 2006, tried, sentenced, imprisoned and expected to be released in the coming months.

Examples of documents and literature found in the Al-Ayn mosque in Al-Bireh



A combination of anti-Semitic and anti-American propaganda: Its claim is that today the Jews crucify the Palestinians the way they crucified Christ in the past. The poster reads: "...Bush's swearing allegiance to Sharon makes it clear he is one of the descendants of the Antichrist..."



Poster commemorating Hamas terrorist operative Ramez Fahmi Izz al-Din Abu Salim, who carried out the suicide bombing attack at Café Hillel in Jerusalem on September 9, 2003, killing 7 and wounding more than 70.



Pamphlet by Sayyid Qutb entitled “The message of the Muslim Brotherhood and the genius of its organizational structure,” found at a mosque in Al-Ayn. Sayyid Qutb was one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and a prominent Islamist ideologue. The Egyptians executed him in 1966. His ideology is one of the foundations of contemporary radical Sunni Islam in the Islamic world in general and Egypt in particular.



A Hamas flyer apparently issued in 2003 on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the deaths of two of its senior commanders in Judea and Samaria, Adel and Imad Awadallah. It supports and encourages suicide bombing attacks, noting that “...death does not frighten us, and the death of martyrs for the sake of Allah does not frighten us: they are the beginning of eternal life and the first signs of life forever...”

21. Hamas activist Bassam Nihad Ibrahim Jarrar, after his release from an Israeli jail, became director of the Nun Center for Qur'an studies. He also continued his propaganda activity in mosques. A video posted on YouTube on January 1, 2009, shows an old sermon he gave at the **Al-Umari mosque in Ramallah**. In it, he referred to the Jordanian and Egyptian leaders, including King Hussein, the late Anwar Sadat and President Mubarak, as “spies” accused their regimes of “spying” for the CIA and not serving Arab and Islamic interests. He also noted that it would be the fate of the State of Israel to disappear.⁶

⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwBfwVuEXis&feature=related>.



Hamas activist Nihad Ibrahim Jarrar giving a sermon at the Al-Umari mosque (YouTube, January 1, 2009).

Mahmoud Abbas's Activities against Hamas's Influence in the Mosques in Judea and Samaria (end of 2007 to February 2009)

22. At various times during the Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas eras, the Palestinian Authority made attempts to supervise the mosque preachers and their sermons, knowing full well that the sermons were also directed against it. Political sermons were forbidden, the preachers had to send copies of their sermons to the PA for approval and sometimes preachers affiliated with Hamas were fired or even detained. The PA's attempts have **continued** to this day, but their success is still uncertain and greatly dependent on developments in the internal Palestinian arena.

23. Since the end of 2007 the PA has taken more intensive measures against Hamas's civilian infrastructure (the *da'wah*) in Judea and Samaria. Salam Fayyad's government and the Palestinian security services have acted against the **mosques**, many of which have traditionally been under Hamas control. The PA has focused its actions in the **Nablus** and **Hebron** districts, where Hamas enjoys great influence within the local population. The PA security forces had raided the mosques dozens of times, confiscated propaganda material, detained preachers and in some cases replaced them.

24. At the end of 2007 the PA's security services took action against Hamas-affiliated mosques in the **Nablus** district. They uncovered weapons stores, military uniforms and Hamas flyers in the basement of the **Musab Abu Amir mosque** in the Askar area of Nablus. **Akram al-Rajoub**, head of preventive security for Nablus, reported that the operation was "part of the PA's efforts to prevent the politicization of the mosques and sites of worship...because Hamas uses [them to promote] its own narrow objectives and military interests" (Ma'an News Agency, November 19, 2007). **Ahmed al-Sharqawi**, Nablus police chief, said that his men respected the mosques but had detained Hamas

activists who had stored weapons and ammunition in them and loaded mosque computers with propaganda material (Radio Voice of Palestine, September 29, 2007). Hamas accused the Palestinian Authority and Fatah of threatening to replace the imams and preachers in the mosques with their own men on the grounds that the security services forbade politics being discussed in the mosques, and forced the preachers to keep to themes acceptable to the ministry of endowments, and that they had threatened to detain anyone who did otherwise (Hamas's Radio Al-Aqsa, October 7, 2007).

25. To enforce its authority in the **Hebron** district, the Palestinian Authority undertook activities to prevent incitement in the mosques. For example, according to an announcement issued by Palestinian military intelligence on September 9, 2008, propaganda materials were confiscated in **six mosques in Hebron**, including incitement against the PA itself (Ma'an News Agency, February 9, 2008). On August 30, 2008, PA security services raided mosques in the town of Sureif in the Hebron district. A surfer on Hamas's PALDF forum (August 30) uploaded photographs from a mosque raided by the PA security services, as well as a Hamas flyer warning the PA not to defile the sanctity of the mosque.

Pictures from the mosque in the village of Sureif where the propaganda material was found. Hamas flags and insignia were also found in the mosque (Hamas's PALDF Forum, August 30, 2008).



26. The Palestinian Authority's activities to enforce its effective control over Hamas-dominated mosques are still far from completion. Sheikh **Jamal Muhammad Ahmed Bawatna**, minister for endowments and religious affairs in the Salam Fayyad government, recently warned that changes could be expected in the ministry, hinting that preachers "who do not adhere to the message of the mosques and of the ministry [of endowments]" would be dismissed. He added that "in the last few days a number of preachers and guides in the mosques have exploited the freedom given them...Anyone who wants to expound election propaganda should go to the radio and television stations..." (from an interview with the German News Agency on the Qudsnet website, February 15, 2009).

27. A Ynet posting by Ali Waked on February 24, 2009 described the struggle waged by the Palestinian Authority against Hamas activists in the mosques. It includes "reeducating" the preachers and the dismissal of dozens (there are those who claim hundreds) of Judea and Samaria imams affiliated with Hamas, especially in the more important mosques. The sermons are given only by moderate imams affiliated with the PA, who in ordinary times are allowed to speak only about religion and are forbidden to avoid inciting those who come to pray (**Note:** During Operation Cast Lead they were permitted to let off steam and speak against the fighting).

28. A preacher in one of the mosques in the Ramallah district told Ali Waked that "every so often we get a circular from the ministry of religious affairs which tells us what the topic of the weekly sermon is supposed to be, and we aren't allowed to talk about anything else...We haven't talked about politics for a long time." In Ramallah people say that the Palestinian Authority's security services oversee the mosques' activities, and renegade imams are detained and replaced.⁷ Hamas recently claimed that 50 imams were dismissed because of their affiliation with the movement. A Fatah member told Ali Waked that it was clear to the PA that taking over the mosques was a blow to Hamas: "**[Taking] control of the mosques is like the struggle against the charitable societies or Hamas's armed networks.**"

⁷ The **Al-Kashef** Internet site, apparently affiliated with Hamas, reported that the Hebron district of the PA's endowments ministry instructed that the mosques open only ten minutes before prayers begin and that they close ten minutes afterwards. The instructions were given after the decision was made to replace the imams affiliated with Hamas and to get rid of traces of Hamas in the mosques (Al-Kashef, February 25, 2009).

The Use Made by Hezbollah of Mosques in South Lebanon for Military Purposes

29. The second Lebanon war revealed the vast military infrastructure constructed by Hezbollah in the populated areas of south Lebanon and the exploitation of Lebanese civilians as human shields. Situating its offensive and defensive military networks in densely populated areas was intended to reduce potential damage to the organization and to give it a kind of immunity from IDF attacks (knowing that the IDF is committed to refraining from harming the civilian population insofar as is possible).⁸

30. It was also proved that Hezbollah customarily situates its military installations around public institutions such as **religious institutions**, schools and hospitals to make it difficult or to prevent the IDF from attacking. Hezbollah also exploited it for propaganda against Israel as part of the battle for hearts and minds by represented Israel as attacking public institutions regarded as protected places by the Geneva Convention.

31. **The following are examples of religious institutions used for military purposes during the second Lebanon war:**



Storing weapons in mosques: A vehicle loaded with arm parked near the village of Marouahin in the western sector of south Lebanon. The vehicle was attacked by the IDF. Additional weapons were found in the basement of the mosque.

⁸ For further information see our date bulletin entitled "Hezbollah's use of Lebanese civilians as human shields: the extensive military infrastructure positioned and hidden in populated areas" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/human_shields.pdf.



Weapons storehouse near a mosque in Kafr Qana in the central sector of south Lebanon.



Hezbollah base near the Al-Khayam mosque in a densely-populated residential neighborhood (mosque precinct outlined in yellow)



Arms storehouse in Kafr Qana after an Israeli Air Force attack. The picture shows its proximity to the mosque (Photo: Sharif Karim for Reuters, July 31, 2006).



Hezbollah operatives in the town of Bint Jbail (south Lebanon's most prominent rocket launching site) fleeing a mosque after a clash with IDF forces. The mosque roof was used as a launching pad from which to attack IDF forces.



The structure in the village of Faroun housing the rocket storehouse. Enlargement shows it is next to a Husseinia and that another one is nearby.⁹

The Use Made of Mosques in the Arab and Muslim World for Military and Political Purposes

General information

32. How widespread is the use of mosques for military and political purposes by radical Islamic terrorist organizations?

- i) It is **prevalent** in countries such as Lebanon, in global jihad conflict areas such as **Afghanistan** and **Iraq**, and in the **Palestinian Authority**, where the central government is **weak** and radical Islamic terrorist organizations have military power and political influence.

⁹ Husseinia, named after Hussein bin Ali, is a religious Shi'ite community center which holds cultural and educational activities and provides welfare services. There are many Husseinias in the villages of south Lebanon and though the Shi'ite world in general.

ii) In contrast, the regimes of Arab countries such as **Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria** struggle against the military and political use of mosques with a considerable level of success. It is part of their fight against the radical Islamic terrorism which threatens them as well.

iii) In **Pakistan**, it appears that the situation is out of the government's control because of its weakness in combating radical Islamic groups, for instance in the Red Mosque affair (see below).

iv) **In Muslim communities in Europe, the US and other Western countries**, mosques are used by global jihad groups for incitement and terrorist purposes. However, the full scope of such use and its implications are largely unknown (that would necessitate a careful study by the law enforcement agencies of each country).

33. Following are examples of the use made of mosques for military and political purposes in Arab and Muslim countries and in Muslim communities in Europe and the United States.

Iraq

34. The extensive military use made by terrorist elements of mosques was exposed by the large-scale offensive mounted by American and Iraqi forces in the cities of **Fallujah** (west of Baghdad) and **Samara** (north of Baghdad) in 2004 (particularly in October and November). In those cities, the American and Iraqi forces had to fight gunmen who took shelter in mosques and turned them into bases for military and terrorist activities. For example:

i) Qassem Daoud, the Iraqi National Security Minister, announced that **Iraqi commando forces** had taken over the Golden Mosque, the main Shi'ite mosque in the city of Samara. He added that 25 insurgents hiding inside were apprehended (*Haaretz* website, October 3, 2004).

ii) **US army forces in Iraq** bombed a mosque in Fallujah. The Deputy Director for Operations in Iraq said that Iraqi insurgents had taken refuge inside it (Ynet, November 4, 2004).

iii) **A US army spokesman** related that US forces had exposed the largest weapons **cache** ever found in Iraq in a Fallujah mosque. The weapons found in the Sa'ad Abi Bin Waqas Mosque in downtown Fallujah included small arms and anti-tank mines. Documents were also found relating to foreign nationals abducted in Iraq (Walla News, November 25, 2004).

iv) US fighter planes attacked a mosque in Fallujah after gunmen barricaded inside and fired at ground troops. A US army spokesman said that the “[American] forces only used necessary force to remove the threat” (Ynet, November 10, 2004).



US troops in a mosque in Fallujah (November 12, 2004)¹⁰



Weapons found in the Hadhra al-Muhammadiyya Mosque in Fallujah on November 10, 2004¹¹

35. A prominent incident took place in **Fallujah** when US marines surrounded and assaulted the **Hajj Mohsen Abd al-Aziz al-Qubeisi Mosque** compound. It had been turned into a hiding place for insurgents, who fired RPG missiles, mortar shells and small arms (globalsecurity.org, April 7, 2004). **General Mark Kimmitt**, Deputy Director for Coalition Operations in Iraq, said that US forces dropped two 227kg bombs on the wall of a mosque in Fallujah where insurgents were hiding (Ynet, April 8, 2004).

¹⁰ <http://www.pacificviews.org/weblog/archives/000702.html>

¹¹ <http://www.talkingproud.us/Military042805B.html>

36. The American attack on the Fallujah mosque and Mark Kimmitt's statement were met with mixed reactions by Arab web surfers. Some sided with the general, while others accused the Americans of attacking the Islamic religion. Other surfers said that mosques should not be used for military purposes. One, an Egyptian citizen, noted that mosques should not be used for war because the American "occupation forces" in Iraq had no respect for holy places. A surfer from Iraq wrote that the Americans should not be given any excuses to defile the mosques. Yet another surfer lashed out at Islamic terrorists for having perpetrated terrorist attacks in churches and synagogues worldwide, twisting true Islam and turning mosques into weapon storehouses.¹² **Mark Kimmitt** stated that **"if mosques turn into military outposts, they are no longer places of worship but rather military targets, so they can be targeted by our forces"** (BBC in Arabic, April 19, 2004).



Aerial photograph of the Hajj Mohsen Abd al-Aziz al-Qubeisi Mosque compound in Fallujah. Armed insurgents fighting against coalition forces made use of the mosque for military purposes (globalsecurity.org, April 7, 2004).

37. More examples of using mosques in Iraq for anti-American and anti-Jewish incitement as well as for storing arms and ammunition:

- i) **Abd al-Razzaq al-Samarai**, the imam of one of the largest mosques in **Baghdad**, the Abd al-Qader al-Gaylani Mosque, pulled out his sword during a Friday sermon and called for jihad against the American forces in Iraq and for killing Jews (February 2003). To justify the killing of Jews, he quoted a well-known Islamic oral tradition (*hadith*) which says that on Judgment Day every tree and stone with a Jew hiding behind it will let Muslims know where they are so that the Muslims can come and kill them.¹³

¹² http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/talking_point/newsid_3620000/3620647.stm

¹³ <http://www.paldf.net/forum/showthread.php?t=31930>



Imam Abd al-Razzaq al-Samarai pulls out his sword during a sermon, causing the assembled worshippers to cheer wildly (Photo courtesy of MEMRI)

ii) In December 2005, US troops discovered arms and ammunition in a mosque near the **town of Haditha**.



Weapons found by American forces in Iraq in a mosque near the town of Haditha (December 2005)¹⁴

iii) On April 23, 2007, US troops in Iraq find weapons (including artillery) in a **mosque in Baghdad**.¹⁵

38. Iraqi mosques also serve as **the sites of violent confrontations between Sunnis and Shi'ites**, which has in many cases led to attacks on mosques. For example, on August 27, 2007, a suicide bomber blew himself up in a Sunni mosque in Fallujah during the evening prayers. The explosion killed ten worshippers, including the imam of the mosque (boston.com, August 28).

Saudi Arabia

39. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, the Saudi government took action against mosques harboring operatives belonging to Al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist

¹⁴ <http://newsblaze.com/story/20051230130333nnnn.nb/topstory.html>

¹⁵ http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11618&Itemid=128

organizations. For example, in July 2003, the Saudi security forces exchanged fire with Islamic terrorist operatives who barricaded themselves in a mosque in the **village of Suweir** (northern Saudi Arabia). The terrorists refused to surrender and used explosive belts to blow themselves up inside the mosque.¹⁶

40. On July 8, 2004, the Saudi Islamic Affairs and Waqf (religious endowments) Minister **Saleh Bin Abd al-Aziz Aal al-Sheikh** warned that preachers in Saudi Arabian mosques were inciting the worshippers to wage jihad outside the borders of the country.¹⁷

41. Mosques in Saudi Arabia are also used to spread **anti-Semitic incitement** by influential, reputable clerics:¹⁸

i) **Dr. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Sadis** is the imam and preacher of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. During a Friday sermon in May 2002, he said the following: "Our conflict with the Jews is a conflict of faith, identity, and existence... Read your history so that you know that Jews have denied [Allah's] mercy, twisted the word [of God], worshipped the [golden] calf, murdered the prophets... These are the Jews, a continuous chain of depravity, treachery, stubbornness, adultery, evil, and corruption..."¹⁹



Dr. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Sadis

ii) **Sheikh Ali Bin Abd al-Khaleq al-Qarni** is a reputable Saudi preacher known for spreading anti-Jewish incitement. His numerous audio tapes are circulated throughout the Arab world, including the Palestinian Authority-administered territories. A tape called *Folded Pages*, found in the offices of the Tulkarm Charitable Society in 2001, says that "**History proves that the Jews often resort to deceit.**" To further substantiate his claim, he says that in the 5th century of the Muslim calendar (11th century AD), Jews in the Arabian Peninsula presented the Abbasid Caliph with a forged document with which they planned to return to the town of Khaybar and would stop at nothing to achieve their ends. At the end of the section, the Sheikh adds: "Allah will punish the infidels and the schemers" [i.e., Jews].

Pakistan

42. A clear example of a mosque turned into a hotbed of terrorism and incitement against an Islamic regime is the **Red Mosque**, the central mosque of **Islamabad**, which was attacked

¹⁶ <http://www.al-yemen.org/vb/archive/index.php/t-71167.html>,
<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=8990&article=181008&feature>

¹⁷ <http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=243752&issueno=9354>

¹⁸ For details, see: "Contemporary Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism, its Significance and Implications" (April 2008), pp. 100-103 [in Hebrew].

¹⁹ http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/kotbah/2002/24_4_02.htm

after activities there could no longer be controlled. There were two *madrasas* (religious schools) on the mosque grounds, one for men and one for women. The attack on the mosque compound, where hundreds of gunmen had barricaded themselves, took place on July 10, 2007, and led to the deaths of about one hundred supporters of radical Islam in Pakistan, including their leader, **Abd al-Aziz Ghazi**, the mosque's deputy imam.

43. The attack was carried out in response to earlier mass-casualty terrorist attacks, some of them suicide bombings, carried out by Abd al-Aziz Ghazi's supporters. They were perpetrated after Ghazi's announced in April 2007 that Islamic religious law (*shari'a*) would be imposed in regions he controlled and that an Islamic court would be established, which would issue verdicts competing with state law. In addition, mosque administration sent students from the two schools to serve as morality police to impose Islamic religious law on all of Pakistan. On July 3, 2007, students attacked a police roadblock and nearby government offices and set cars on fire, killing 16 people.

44. After Abd al-Aziz Ghazi declared an **Islamic revolution** on July 7, 2007, the Pakistani army launched an offensive against the people barricaded in the Red Mosque, killing over a hundred of them, including Ghazi himself. In addition, various weapons and letters containing instructions **from the Al-Qaeda leadership** were found in the compound. Ghazi and his father, the mosque founder Maulana Abdullah (killed in 1998), had a direct connection with the Taliban and were Al-Qaeda supporters.



The Red Mosque compound (Al-Rai al-Aam, July 9, 2007)

Muslim communities in Europe and the United States

Britain

45. Mosques in Britain served as recruitment pools of local young Muslims of Pakistani descent for the **Lashkar-e-Taiba** terrorist organization (which cooperates with Al-Qaeda and is responsible for the Mumbai terrorist attacks on November 26-28, 2008). A Lashkar-e-Taiba

operative of Pakistani descent named **Shafik ur-Rehman** served as the imam of **Oldham's Ross Street Mosque**, (greater Manchester) and was considered the representative of Markaz-ud-Dawa wal-Irshad (Lashkar-e-Taiba's mother organization) in Britain. Shafik ur-Rehman was accused by the British authorities of raising funds for Lashkar-e-Taiba in 1999-2000 and of supporting the organization (which he admitted). Also, he allegedly sent young Muslims to training camps near Lahore, Pakistan (which he did not admit). The British authorities were going to deport him but did not, and he still resides in Oldham. According to an article published in the British newspaper *The Sunday Times* (May 2004), one of the Ross Street Mosque recruits was trained to hijack a Boeing 767 and was supposed to take part in the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US.

46. Some mosques in Britain spread anti-Western and anti-Jewish propaganda and incitement, which is fairly common in radical Islamic mosques. Details can be found in a report published by the British institute **Policy Exchange** in 2007. The report, which deals with incitement in British mosques in 2006-2007, is based on activities monitoring various mosques in Britain. The report indicates that the mosques are used for **preaching terrorism, violence and rabid incitement against the West and the Jews**, using sermons and book sales. A **religious ruling (fatwa)** was found in terrorist East London mosque according to which **infidels must be beheaded**. A Friday sermon in the North London Central Mosque, said that jihad was a duty of modern-day Muslims, and that their leaders should mobilize them with that goal in mind. One of the books found in the East London Tawhid Mosque says that obeying laws which contradicted Islam and preferring them to Islamic laws was apostasy.²⁰

47. There have also been reports of global jihad operative activities taking place in British mosques. For example, according to police sources in Britain, concealed weapons found in a **London mosque** in 2003 were used by terrorists associated with the terrorist **Abu Hamza al-Masri**;²¹ six people were arrested in **London, Southwell, and Luton** on April 24, 2007 who were involved in preaching worldwide terrorism in mosques and in fundraising for terrorist activities in mosques about two and a half years previously.²²

Italy

48. On July 21, 2007, the Italian police confiscated a bomb and chemical substances **in a mosque in central Italy**. During the operation, the police arrested several operatives apparently associated with Al-Qaeda, **all of Moroccan descent**.²³

²⁰ See: <http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/libimages/307.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article728162.ece>,
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/jan/20/terrorism.uk>

²² <http://www.arabia.pl/english/content/view/377/16>

²³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6909961.stm>

49. On June 6, 2003, an anti-Western sermon was delivered in a **mosque in Rome**. The preacher, of Egyptian descent, said **"Allah, bring victory to the holy warriors in Palestine, Chechnya, and everywhere else! Allah, destroy the homes of the enemies of Islam!"**²⁴

Germany

50. On September 11, 2002, the German police raided a **mosque in Hamburg** and arrested a radical Islamic operative who was allegedly planning a terrorist attack in Germany.²⁵

Spain

51. On January 24, 2008, ten global jihad operatives were arrested in a **mosque in Barcelona**. They were allegedly planning a suicide bombing attack in that city.²⁶

USA

52. Law enforcement agencies seem have increased their security control over mosques in the United States following the September 11 terrorist attacks.²⁷ However, we do not have reliable information on the subject. In one incident, it was reported that an Al-Qaeda terrorist cell was operating in Al-Farouq Mosque, **Brooklyn, New York**. It had allegedly been raising funds for that organization for many years.²⁸ In another incident, it was reported that FBI forces raided a mosque in **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** to arrest a suspect.²⁹

Virtual mosques

53. On May 8, 2008, the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs published a report entitled "Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet and Home-Grown Terrorist Threat" which dealt with the extensive Internet activities of Al-Qaeda, global jihad elements, and groups associated with radical Islam.³⁰

54. According to the report, radical Islam operatives are highly active on chat groups and forums, which have become a **virtual substitute for convening in mosques** and community centers, where they sometimes meet with opposition to their extremist messages. The web surfers are usually **young, and there is a constant rise in the number of women participating in chats and forums**. Chats allow the personal connections to be

²⁴ <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/6953?eng=y>

²⁵ <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-13336852.html>

²⁶ <http://www.jihadwatch.org/archives/019686.php>

²⁷ http://religion.info/english/articles/article_385.shtml

²⁸ http://www.globaljihad.net/view_page.asp?id=52, <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0303/west031003.asp>, see also New York Times article dated March 9, 2003.

²⁹ <http://www.pww.org/article/articleview/9513>

³⁰ The complete report is available at http://hsgac.senate.gov/public_files/IslamistReport.pdf. For an analysis, see: "Terrorism and Internet: a US Senate report analyzes the extensive use made by Al-Qaeda of the Internet in its war for hearts and minds. The report voices concerns over the exposure of American citizens to the websites of Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamic organizations" (July 14, 2008).

established between Islamic terrorist operatives, who can exchange e-mails and cell phone numbers and continue their relationship in the real world.

55. One of the most prominent and influential contemporary Muslim clerics to make extensive use of the Internet to distribute distinctly political radical **religious rulings** is **Yussuf al-Qardawi**:

i) **Incitement to terrorism against American and British forces in Iraq:**

"...Those are hostile invaders, and when they attack Iraqi land and the Iraqi people, it is the duty of Iraq [i.e., the people of Iraq] to engage in resistance [i.e., terrorism] against them. It is a personal duty, and the Muslims around Iraq must help its war in any way possible, in spirit [i.e., in life] and in property, for it is one Muslim helping another. That religious duty is beyond question. Every Muslim who has engaged in resistance against those invaders, coming to the aid of his [Muslim] brothers, and was killed for Allah, is a martyr according to Islamic law" (permanent text appearing on Yussuf al-Qardawi's website since January 9, 2005).

ii) **A call to boycott US-made products**, claiming that failure to do so is a grave offense against Islam (from Yussuf al-Qardawi's website, January 17, 2009).



Sheikh Dr. Yussuf al-Qardawi



Sheikh Yussuf al-Qardawi (Photo from his website, February 17, 2009).

56. **Sheikh Dr. Yussuf Mustafa al-Qardawi** was born in Egypt in 1926. During his studies in Al-Azhar University he took an active role in the resistance against the British presence in

Egypt, inspired by the radical Islamic ideology of Hassan al-Banna (founder of the Muslim Brotherhood). Because of his preaching against the British, and later against Nasser's government, al-Qardawi spent many years in prison. It is possible that his excessively provocative statements led to his dismissal from Al-Azhar University in 1961 and his appointment to director of the university's branch in Qatar. It was that move, however, which set him apart as an independent cleric who did not rely on the establishments of Arab countries.

57. In 1977, **with the support of the Qatari administration**, Al-Qardawi established a faculty for the study of Islamic religious law (*shari'a*) at the University of Qatar, and at the same time founded an institute for the study of Sunna. Those institutions are still an important center for his activity in the Muslim religious world. Al-Qardawi is currently considered a major authority on religious law for many Sunni Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere. He is also a religious and spiritual authority **for the Hamas movement in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories and even for the Islamic Movement in Israel**. However, in his capacity as director of the Union of Good, he also assists Hamas in the practical realm of funding terrorism. (The Union of Good is an umbrella organization of Islamic foundations worldwide which transfers money to Hamas's civilian infrastructure in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories).

58. Al-Qardawi's key position in Sunni Islam gives further weight to his rulings, **which justify Palestinian terrorism against Israel**, making him a major factor in the shaping of anti-Israeli sentiments in the Muslim and Arab world. Among other things, Al-Qardawi provided a **religious authorization to suicide bombing attacks** carried out by the Palestinians, even if women and children were hurt as a result (Qatar's *Al-Watan*, December 16, 2003). He was also the first to allow Palestinian women to carry out suicide bombing attacks and even encouraged them to do so.

Religious and Social Roots of the use of Mosques for Political and Military Purposes

The status and role of the mosque in Muslim life at the dawn of Islam

59. Since the dawn of Islam, the mosque has played a key role in Muslim community life. The prophet Muhammad's first project was to construct a mosque in his city, Medina, which served as his residence and a government headquarters of sorts. Muhammad turned the mosque into a center of preaching where political decisions were made, talks were held,

appointments were made, and the Muslim army was prepared for wars and raids on the enemies of Islam. A commonly held view by Muslim religious scholars is that a mosque is more than just a place of worship and can have **military and political uses**, because in Muslim tradition Muhammad himself used the mosque for such purposes.

60. Owing to the significant role and importance of the mosque, Muhammad encouraged the establishment of mosques and even noted in one of the oral traditions (*hadiths*) attributed to him that “Whoever builds a mosque for Allah, even if it be tiny, like a bird's nest, Allah will build a house in paradise for him”. The enthusiastic mobilization for building mosques is therefore also based on Muhammad's promise of a house in paradise. The mosque's two major figures are the **preacher** (*khatib*) of the Friday prayers and the **imam**, who leads the worshippers' prayers five times a day and can also serve as the *khatib*. They are two distinct roles occasionally filled by the same person, especially if he is a dominant and highly respected figure.

61. Beyond its classical role as a place of worship, the mosque has had **a variety of roles**, agreed on by researchers of Islam and Muslim religious scholars, which have turned it into the most dominant establishment in Muslim community life:

i) **Administration and politics:** The mosque has always had a **political nature**, in contrast to the modern Western concept of separation between religion and state (a concept which does not exist in Islam). The mosque was the place where Muhammad and his four successors met delegations and messengers, appointed ambassadors and commanders, and divided the spoils of war. The Friday prayer (*khutba*) includes blessings for Allah, for the prophet Muhammad, for the rulers and for the faithful, accompanied by verses from the Quran and references to daily life regarding social, economic, and political issues (including references to the rulers). In the Middle Ages one of the most common forms of declaring disloyalty to a ruler was not mentioning his name in the *khutba*.³¹

ii) **Guidance and indoctrination:** The sermons delivered in mosques are used as a central means of delivering not only religious but also political and social messages. The mosque is the scene for the Friday sermons, as well as the place where lessons are taught in such subjects as religion and politics, economics and science. All Muslim religious scholars are educated in mosques, where they are given lessons in a variety of subjects, including the law of jihad (holy war) in Islam. The preachers may become the most effective mediators between government and society for delivering political and social messages and also for purposes of indoctrination. The control exerted by the

³¹ See: Prof. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Chapters in the History of the Arabs and Islam* (Jerusalem: Modan, 1969), pp. 69-70 [in Hebrew].

establishment over the sermons' contents is therefore important, since preachers can become dangerous enemies of the regime by delivering political anti-establishment messages to their listeners.³²

iii) **Jihad (holy war)**: The call for jihad would emerge from mosques, where jihad warriors congregated before leaving for battle.³³ The mosque served as a military headquarters in Muhammad's time, as well as a center for briefing the warriors before embarking on their mission. Also, mosques have been used as gathering places for soldiers and military leaders, for boosting soldiers' morale before leaving for battle, for propaganda, and even for incitement, which may also be directed against the central regime.

iv) **Trials**: Mosques have functioned as courtrooms and been where the sides pleaded their cases.

v) **Welfare and aid**: Mosques attracted the poor and those with special needs, who came to Muhammad and his successors for assistance.

62. Islamic terrorist organizations and radical Islam operatives (*mujahedeen*) use mosques for military purposes to this day in the various arenas of confrontation, including the Palestinian. The two violent anti-Israel campaigns (the first and second intifadas) are viewed in Islamic discourse as "mosque intifadas" because of the **key role** mosques played in announcing the intifadas, as gathering places for operatives, and as stages for incitement (as indicated by Sheikh Dr. **Yussuf al-Qardawi**).³⁴ The extensive military use made of mosques during the intifadas by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad is **consistent** with the Islamic view of the variety of social and religious roles a mosque plays, as noted above.

Prominent Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim clerics speak out in favor of using mosques for military and political purposes

63. Many prominent Muslim clerics hold the view that **mosques are more than just places of worship, and that using them for military purposes as part of jihad is legitimate.**

Two of those clerics exert particularly significant influence on modern Muslim society:

i) **Sheikh Yussuf al-Qardawi, held in high esteem by the Hamas movement,** unequivocally rules that mosques may be used for political, social, cultural, and

³² See book by Uriah Furman, *Islamiyyun* (Tel-Aviv: Maarakhot, 2002), pp. 97-99 [in Hebrew].

³³ Source: http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-Arabic-Ask_Scholar/FatwaA/FatwaA&cid=1122528608354. See also: forum of Muslim scholars in Iraq associated with the anti-American camp: <http://iraq-amsi.org/news.php?action=view&id=5324&d92cf9d3f29d6bf6a83651ac4f9cfad8>

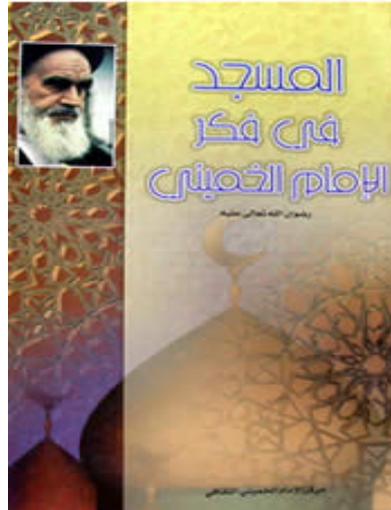
³⁴ Source: <http://www.alsalafway.com/cms/news.php?action=news&id=1984>. See also: http://www.Qardawi.net/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=3598&version=1&template_id=230&parent_id=17

religious purposes, including matters pertaining to jihad. In Muhammad's time, says al-Qardawi, the mosque was the focal point for the entire Muslim society. It was not just a place to worship Allah but a place to study, gather, and hold consultations. He also says that in Muhammad's time, delegations from the Arabian Peninsula who came to the prophet would meet with him in the mosque. Friday sermons were delivered in mosques and instructions from the prophet in various spheres (including religion, society, and politics) were given to his followers. In al-Qardawi's view, **since the early days of Islam the mosque has played an important role in encouraging Muslims to wage jihad and engage in "resistance [*muqawamah*] against the enemies of the [Muslim] nation, against those invaders seeking to rule it [i.e., the Muslim nation]."** Al-Qardawi notes that the mosques play an important part in every jihad. In his opinion, **mosques may be used to preach against a government which does not follow Islamic law**, and mosques must not become tools to be used by the regimes interested in controlling the Muslim population through them³⁵ (Thus he provides religious authorization for turning mosques into sources of political incitement **against Arab regimes**, including the Palestinian Authority).

ii) The worldview of the late Shi'ite **Ayatollah Khomeini, the father of the Islamic revolution in Iran**, is accepted by the **Iranian regime and Hezbollah**. Khomeini's view of the mosque's role is described in detail in a booklet called **"The Mosque in the Reflections of the Imam Khomeini,"** seized by the IDF in the second Lebanon war. In Khomeini's view, the mosque plays a political, social, educational and jihadist role, being a center for the distribution of the spirit of jihad and as a place to organize Islamic wars. Khomeini also states that "the mosque in Islam, since the very beginning, has always been a center of Islamic activity. Islamic public relation campaigns began in mosques, and it was from there that Muslim armies went out to subdue the infidels and subject them to Islam" (p. 12). In addition, Khomeini asserts that "the mosque is the bastion of the great jihad" and that the mosque is a place of war against Satan and against tyrants, that is, a spiritual struggle against Satan and a political struggle against a corrupt regime (pp. 32-33). Khomeini further asserts that the mosque functions as a headquarters in times of war, and that "Masjid al-Haram [the mosque in Mecca which contains the Kaaba] and the mosques in the time of the most honorable of Allah's messengers, Muhammad...were places of war [i.e., the central command post from which wars were directed]". He notes that the mosque is the central place from which warriors go to battle, and that the mosque has an important function of lifting the soldiers' morale before they go to battle (pp. 32-33, 40).

³⁵ Ibid.

“Reflections of the Imam Khomeini on the Mosque”



The cover of the booklet “Reflections of the Imam Khomeini on the Mosque,” seized by IDF forces in the village of Maroun al-Ras on July 26, 2006. It was published in 2002 by the Imam Khomeini Culture Center in Beirut, and covers the importance of prayer in the mosque, the importance of the cleric in the mosque, and the importance of mosques for jihad and for spreading the ideas of Khomeini’s Islamic revolution.

64. Other opinions by Muslim clerics and intellectuals about the political and military uses of the mosque:

i) **Mahmoud Sheit Khattab (1919-1998)**, regarded by the Muslim world as an authority on Islamic military law and the author of many books on the subject: He claimed that the mosque functioned as the first headquarters and military command post in Islam. He noted that “Muhammad used his mosque as a command post in which he drew up [battle] plans, held assemblies before jihad, issued instructions, heard the suggestions of his advisors, gathered his friends and infused them with material and spiritual energies, instigating the believers to be strong and not to run away [from the battlefield].” In addition, Khattab stressed the significance of the mosque as a gathering place in times of trouble during war and as a center for treating the wounded (Mahmoud Sheit Khattab, *Al-Wasit fi Risalat al-Masjid al-Askariyya*, p. 42).

ii) **Ibrahim al-Mudarris**, member of the Muslim Scholars Association of Iraq (which is associated with the anti-American camp), argues the mosque was a place where Muslim armies prepared for war. The call for jihad was made from the mosque

(through the muezzin) and it was there that the warriors prepared to go to battle and received moral preparation.³⁶

iii) **Dr. Anwar Nassar**, a lecturer in the Al-Quds Open University (a university which has several branches in the Palestinian Authority) and an expert on Islamic religious law: He argues that the mosque has military, political, and cultural roles, and that in Muhammad's time the mosque was a military headquarters from which Muslim soldiers went out to jihad. He stresses that Muhammad's mosque was also his military headquarters, where he made battle plans, held war meetings with the commanders, and organized and equipped his forces. The mosque was also where the wounded were treated. It was also a symbol of the military victory of Islam, in Nassar's view, since mosques were built wherever Islam was victorious.³⁷

65. Arab and Muslim regimes are well aware of the political and military uses made by terrorist and radical Islamic elements, threatening to turn mosques into hotbeds of dissent, terrorism, and spreading the ideas of radical Islam. Therefore, they try to monitor the goings-on in mosques both by **controlling the preachers and the contents of their sermons** (as is the case with the Palestinian Authority and the Kuwaiti regime³⁸). Control is also exercised by having **security services monitor the mosques** (as practiced by the Palestinian Authority and Egypt).

Argument over the legitimacy of the actions taken by the Egyptian government against the mosques

66. To justify the security activities against mosques, Arab and Muslim regimes have enlisted senior clerics. The most prominent of them is **Muhammad al-Tantawi**, Sheikh al-Azhar, who is considered the highest religious authority in the Sunni Muslim world. On July 5, 2007, the Muslim Brotherhood website in Egypt stated that **the Sheikh had ruled that the country had every right to cause damage to mosques, to seal them and even to destroy them, in the interest of maintaining state security.**³⁹

³⁶ <http://iraq-amsi.org/news.php?action=view&id=5324&d92cf9d3f29d6bf6a83651ac4f9cfad8>

³⁷

<http://209.85.129.132/search?q=cache:vgmL7Lv7w6EJ:www.ahlalHdeeth.com/vb/attachment.php%3Fattachementid%3D47093%26d%3D1177493922+%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AC%D8%AF+%D9%81%D9%8A+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF&hl=iw&ct=clnk&cd=1&q=il>

³⁸ On January 23, 2008, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs cited the Kuwaiti Minister: "The mosque is not just a place of worship but also a scene of unity and social solidarity [among Muslims]. The mosque is also a place to spread culture and to spread the spirit of moderation among the public." The Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs also noted that the mosque was meant to spread Islam and to establish a spirit of good citizenship and patriotism (http://www.islam.gov.kw/site/news/details.php?data_id=6207).

³⁹ http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&cid=1183483978515&pagename=Zone-Arabic-Shariah%2FSRALayout

67. Al-Tantawi's ruling precipitated an argument after Egyptian clerics expressed their objection to it:

i) **Dr. Muhammad Kamal Imam**, a lecturer on Islamic religious law in the University of Alexandria, who argued that security arrangements could be reached without destroying mosques where anti-establishment activities were taking place. He claimed that the mosque was an Islamic religious endowment and was therefore highly protected by Islamic religious law.

ii) Egyptian cleric **Sheikh Muhammad al-Jazzar**, the former secretary of the Religious Rulings Committee in Cairo's Al-Azhar Mosque, argued that mosques may be closed down only for a limited period of time, not permanently. If a mosque is used for terrorist activity, action must be taken against the activity and the mosque should be temporarily closed until the threat is removed. After that, however, the mosque must be reopened.

iii) An Egyptian scholar who addressed that issue was **Dr. Abd al-Hayy al-Farmawi**, a lecturer in Al-Azhar University, who also opposes destroying mosques, claiming it is an attempt to diminish the political role mosques play in Islamic society. He says that in the past, when he was a member of the Egyptian parliament, he visited mosques where weapons were allegedly found and did not find any.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ibid.