

Articles

Revisiting al-Qaida's Foundation and Early History

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Abstract

This article examines the early rise and fall of al-Qaida from its emergence in early 1987 as a splinter group of Maktab al-Khadamat through to its organisational decline following the defeat of the Arab-Afghans at the 1989 Battle of Jalalabad. Drawing from first-hand accounts and primary materials, it contributes a history of al-Qaida's first stage of development and identifies the factors that drove the organisation's early growth and decline. The article finds that two factors were crucial to al-Qaida's early growth: battlefield success and access to combat opportunities for volunteer youths. It determines that al-Qaida's defeat at Jalalabad and bin Laden's ordered withdrawal from combat were the cause of its near terminal decline. The article concludes by outlining that the bitter lesson al-Qaida took from its early history was that to attract and retain a significant number of youths, it must appear victorious in battle, and be able to provide access to combat opportunities.

Keywords: Al-Qaida, bin Laden, Azzam, Maktab al-Khadamat, Afghanistan, jihad

Introduction

The Afghan jihad began in earnest in December 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to prop up the struggling Communist regime.[1] The invasion transformed what was primarily a local conflict into an internationalised jihad. The jihad not only birthed 'Arab-Afghans' and the contemporary foreign fighter phenomenon, but also a range of militant organisations - some of which continue to affect international security nearly 40 years on.[2] Chief among these was al-Qaida, an organisation widely believed to have been founded by Osama bin Laden in 1988. Bin Laden was an early supporter of the Afghan jihad and began providing financial assistance almost immediately after the Soviet invasion.[3] It was his money that another leading Arab-Afghan, Abdullah Azzam, used in late 1984 to establish an Arab-led organisation called the Services Office, Maktab al-Khadamat (MAK).[4]

So many years on from these events, it is tempting to think we know all we can about al-Qaida's Afghan jihad origins. It is, for example, established wisdom that al-Qaida was founded in August of 1988, as reflected in 'minutes' obtained by American investigators in 2002.[5] However, al-Qaida had formed as a MAK splinter group well over a year before these minutes were authored.[6] Drawing from primary source materials, this article contributes an early history of al-Qaida that shows it emerged in early 1987 and explores this first phase of its development.[7] To do so, the article revisits the history of the Afghan jihad to explore when, why, and under what circumstances al-Qaida emerged as a MAK splinter group.

Like al-Qaida, MAK's formation and evolution is understood through a number of established wisdoms. It is, for example, accepted knowledge that MAK grew from a meeting at the 1984 Hajj between the Afghan leader Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, Azzam, and bin Laden, who was influenced to support MAK's establishment because of his visit to an Afghan frontline.[8] However, by the time of bin Laden's first real travel to an Afghan front in late 1986, MAK had already been operating for close to two years. Moreover, rather than being the driver of his decision to fund MAK, the winter 1986 visit was the catalyst for bin Laden's decision to withdraw his funding and fully separate from MAK.[9] In order to explore al-Qaida's evolution as a MAK splinter group, we must first therefore revisit MAK's origins.

The Emergence of MAK

Agreement to establish what became MAK was reached during meetings at the 1984 Hajj. However, this

agreement was the culmination of a number of earlier meetings, proposals, and initiatives that had taken place over many months in Peshawar and Jaji, and earlier at the Qais training camp.[10] Unpacking the circumstances and conflicts that led up to this final agreement are important to correctly contextualising MAK's founding *raison d'être* and showing how diverging views on the organisation's purpose proved to be an unresolvable point of difference between Azzam and bin Laden, much earlier than is commonly thought.

While MAK ultimately became famous for its recruitment, housing and training of foreign volunteers, and its media and *dawah* work, these were not the main reasons it was founded.[11] Nor were they the reasons why the group's establishment was supported by key Afghan figures and funded by bin Laden. When MAK was established in 1984, it was widely known there were problems with corruption and the logistics of aid and supply distribution to the various Afghan groups leading resistance efforts against the Soviets. Several early generation Arab-Afghan figures had already sought to introduce initiatives to rectify these problems.[12] The most significant of these was a meeting held in Jaji on the first night of Ramadan 1984, and attended by a number of senior Afghan leaders and their deputies, as well as Arab-Afghans.[13] Afghan leaders in attendance included Jalaluddin Haqqani, Yunis Khalis, Sayyaf, Mawlawi Nasrullah Mansur, Ahmad Gul, Gulzarak Zadran, and Arsala Rahmani, while Arab-Afghans in attendance included Abdul Aziz Ali, Mustafa Hamid and several other Arab attendees.[14]

At this meeting a number of the initiatives that would subsequently form the rationale for MAK's creation were discussed. Most focused on meeting immediate needs, including securing additional funding for and delivering more supplies to the Afghan mujahidin.[15] It was suggested that an independent Arab committee be established to provide a centralised mechanism via which funding and support could be coordinated and measures put in place to ensure aid and battlefield supplies reached where they were most needed.[16] This would involve Arabs working inside Afghanistan as well as in Peshawar, so they could identify what was required and coordinate and oversee its delivery.[17]

Attendees at the meeting positively received these ideas, so much so that discussions quickly moved to making the committee initiative a more formal program, which would have its first project in Paktia, where a coordinated offensive would be undertaken.[18] Afghan leaders would contribute forces and the Arab-Afghans would secure funding.[19] An Arab-Afghan committee headed by Azzam would supervise the direct distribution of funding to the various Afghan groups, while another Arab-Afghan, Abdul Aziz Ali, would oversee logistics to ensure that supplies reached the mujahidin where they were needed.[20] The Paktia project was initially planned for three months, with the first month's funding coming from an Arab present at the meeting.[21] All Afghan leaders at the meeting agreed, with Khalis asking the committee to come to Jalalabad and coordinate a campaign there once the Paktia offensive was over.[22]

However, the Paktia project ultimately languished. At a follow up meeting of Afghan leaders, Sayyaf rejected the initiative because he saw it as Arab interference.[23] Nonetheless, the ideas put forward for Arab-Afghan involvement survived, and were supported by Haqqani and Khalis. Haqqani subsequently asked Mustafa Hamid, a Jaji meeting attendee and one of the main Arab-Afghans pushing this initiative, to write a report for him detailing what was required and why. Haqqani wanted to take the report with him to the Hajj, where there were to be a number of meetings held to try to secure additional Arab support for the Afghan jihad.[24]

Hamid's report emphasised establishing a body that would not only secure and provide supplies but also supervise and coordinate their delivery to ensure they reached where they were needed, and were not unevenly distributed between the various Afghan groups.[25] It was thought independent oversight and coordination of logistics and delivery could help prevent corruption, which was hampering supply and capacity and thus negatively affecting the unity and effectiveness of the Afghan mujahidin. Hamid's report contained other suggestions such as establishing a media capability and building a capacity for ammunition production.[26] However, improving the performance of the mujahidin through reform and development in areas of education and military training, and a strong anti-corruption effort in relation to aid and supplies, were the driving reasons behind his and other Arab-Afghans' support for an Arab oversight body.[27] Support for the proposal from Afghan leaders stemmed more from a desire to secure improved access to donations, supplies, and aid

than reform and anti-corruption.[28] Sayyaf's reversal of his position to support the establishment of an Arab-Afghan grouping also resulted in large part from his desire to be a beneficiary of additional funding and aid streams such a group would deliver.[29]

It was at one of the Hajj meetings that Hamid's proposal to establish an Arab body to lead matters in this area was agreed upon. As decided at the earlier Jaji gathering, Azzam would head the group.[30] Bin Laden was the initial benefactor who would provide funding. He agreed to do so on the understanding that "money would go directly to the mujahidin on the fronts." [31] However, the organization that evolved under Azzam's leadership following the Hajj agreement took a fundamentally different direction to that discussed prior to its establishment. This changed focus would ultimately cause bin Laden to separate from MAK.

MAK's Evolution

MAK was established in October 1984 and was initially a very small grouping. At formation, the organisation had approximately 13 members, at least half of who held leadership positions.[32] Organisationally, MAK had an amir (Azzam) and was administered via consultation councils. Its executive leadership comprised of an amir, deputy amir, and a leadership and development council.[33] Bin Laden reportedly held no stronger authority than a position on the development council.[34] As Wael Julaidan, an early member of MAK, recounted, "during that time Abu Abdullah [bin Laden] would come and go. He was only responsible for funding." [35]

Although media, technical, education, and transport councils were also nominally established when MAK was created, its organisational structure did not become fully functional until at least mid-1985.[36] MAK's media council was the first to become operational, with the release of its inaugural edition of *Al-Jihad* magazine in December 1984.[37] Other areas such as training would not be fully functional until mid-1986.

Neither bin Laden nor Azzam were based permanently in Peshawar, where MAK was headquartered, until mid-1986.[38] While Azzam retained overall authority as amir, day-to-day management of MAK was delegated to his deputy.[39] As had been initially envisaged at meetings leading up to and during the Hajj, MAK was involved in the delivery and oversight of aid and supplies to the Afghan groups. A significant number of convoys were delivered, which led some Afghans to label the Arabs "just donkeys carrying money," and with poor organisation and initially small numbers, MAK had a limited ability to provide oversight and ensure money and supplies got where they were needed.[40]

Most of MAK's early activities focused on media, *dawah*, and *tarbiyyah*. [41] Azzam was trying to bring attention to the Afghan conflict, raising awareness and understanding, and educating people as to the necessity of supporting the jihad. MAK's focus on these areas was in part because of a limited capacity to do much else at that time, but also because these were the areas Azzam wanted prioritised.[42] Through its education, media, and religious councils, MAK provided *tarbiyyah* for the Arab-Afghans, and the Afghans more generally. This involved conducting religious education in Afghan training camps, and later, establishing community Islamic study centres.[43] MAK also began supporting health and education initiatives in partnership with various charities, and would go on to help establish hospitals and clinics.[44]

Azzam favoured broadening the scope of MAK's activities because he believed this would help foster unity among Afghan groups. In turn, this unity would assist in his goal to expel the Soviets and establish an Islamic state in Afghanistan. Through MAK, Azzam was trying to support the cultivation of such a state.[45] Bin Laden may have shared Azzam's wish to see an Islamic state ultimately established in Afghanistan, but he did not believe it was MAK's (primary) role to bring this about. Rather he saw this focus and broader activities as distracting from the group's key function - which was to fund and support the Afghan mujahidin.[46] This is clear in his statement about MAK's purpose at the time.[47]

Bin Laden also thought that MAK's broad focus was responsible for causing disorganisation and ineffectiveness in its activities.[48] By mid-1986, MAK was suffering extensive administration problems that, in his eyes, further diminished the level of support MAK could provide to the Afghan mujahidin.[49] In response, bin

Laden moved to base himself in Peshawar in order to exert more control over the administration and direction of MAK. He did so around the same time Azzam relocated from Islamabad for the same purpose.[50] This set the stage for disagreement between the two men over what were seemingly administrative issues, but which revealed conflicting views about MAK's purpose and function, and indeed the Afghan jihad more generally. The emerging issue of Arab-Afghan military training also further complicated relations between the two and led to bin Laden's first efforts to undertake activity independent of MAK.

Although there had been some Arab-Afghan attempts to carry out military training in 1984, with varying degrees of success, no organisationally supported Arab-Afghan training program existed until 1986.[51] Volunteer numbers were still low, and the idea of Arab-Afghan training was not yet widely supported.[52] It would not be until after the 1987 Battle of Jaji, and the international publicity it received that both trainee numbers and receptivity to training increased.[53]

In early 1986 MAK moved the bulk of its operations to Sadda, and it was here that its first efforts at a training program were undertaken.[54] By then, Azzam was based at Sadda and had become more involved in *tarbiyyah* efforts for both MAK's trainees and the Afghans.[55] The first training was, however, a failure. Although MAK 'graduated' a number of trainees they were so poorly prepared that when a 'brigade' of the trainees and senior Arab-Afghan figures, including bin Laden, was formed and attempted to join the Battle of Zhawar in April 1986, the Afghans turned them away.[56]

Mustafa Hamid is scathing of this early training program, noting that Azzam set up a "mosque not a training camp." [57] Bin Laden, too, was unhappy with MAK's poor standard of training, and believed its diversification of activities was responsible.[58] In this respect, MAK's early problems in military training brought to the surface underlying differences between bin Laden and Azzam about MAK's function, the direction and form its support to the Afghan jihad should take, and how this should manifest in MAK's activities.[59] Indeed, it was not long after the Zhawar debacle that Bin Laden, who by then was also based in Peshawar, decided to independently establish his own training camp and began scouting for locations.

Bin Laden's Withdrawal and Separation from MAK

Jalalabad and Sadda were among the first two locations scouted for bin Laden's training project in the summer of 1986.[60] After Jalalabad was deemed unsuitable, a 'secret' location at Sadda was decided upon, but word soon spread and bin Laden found himself coming under pressure to scrap his project.[61] Senior Arab-Afghans pressed him to stop his plans to establish a separate training camp, arguing efforts needed to remain centralised and that MAK should be the body through which all volunteer training was conducted.[62]

By this time Abu Burhan al-Suri had arrived at MAK's newly established camp in Sadda and had taken over its training program, rapidly raising it to a much higher standard.[63] There was, therefore, no longer scope for Bin Laden to argue the need for another camp on the basis of MAK's poor training. While he scrapped the idea of a camp at Sadda, bin Laden did not stop his plans. By September 1986 another site had been scouted, this time at Jaji inside Afghanistan.[64] Bin Laden quickly became enamoured with the location, parts of which included a mountain that overlooked a garrison of enemy forces.[65]

Construction at the site started in October of 1986, a month after the location was scouted; bin Laden, along with a small group of mostly Saudi nationals, carried out this initial work.[66] He secured Sayyaf's permission to stay in the area, offering to construct a series of fortifications along the border area.[67] This was in addition to the work he was carrying out at his own site.

By early 1987, the Jaji site, later known as al-Masada, had become the birthplace of al-Qaida, and not long after, the location of what has become one of the Afghan jihad's most famous battles.[68] But in September and October 1986, bin Laden had not yet fully separated from MAK. It was not until a visit to a nearby Afghan front in late 1986 that he decided to do so. The trip not only proved to be the final trigger for bin Laden's separation from MAK, but also his establishment of a separate Arab group at his new base.

Early in the winter of 1986 bin Laden made an unannounced and unaccompanied trip to an Afghan front in the Jaji area under Sayyaf's control.[69] Afghan leaders typically accompanied Arab financiers and senior Arab-Afghan figures on their visits.[70] As valued 'guests' they were often restricted in what they were able to see, and did not get the opportunity to visit Afghan frontlines where conditions were extremely poor.[71]

Bin Laden did not announce his intention to go to the front and so was able to gain access to areas usually off limits to Arab-Afghan leaders. By this time, he was also based inside Afghanistan and working for Sayyaf in the Jaji region, as well as at his own encampment. Bin Laden's near constant presence in the area likely meant that it was impossible for him to be accompanied at all times. He was therefore able to see what most other Arab-Afghans leaders could not - the real conditions at the front. Doing so had a profound impact.

Seeing the conditions in which Afghan mujahidin were living and fighting, without adequate protection or supplies, angered bin Laden. He had thought that the money he was putting through MAK would have reached the area. It was, after all, the founding rationale of the group. As Hamid recounts:

Abu Abdullah just gave the money to Azzam to spend for the mujahidin. In fact, this was the idea Abu Abdullah initially liked and the reason he supported Maktab al-Khadamat because he thought the money would go directly to the mujahidin on the fronts. It did not, which he saw when he visited the front in 1986 and saw the extremely poor conditions of the mujahidin. He wondered where his money was going and thought it was a crime they were operating in such poor conditions.[72]

Although there were increased supplies going into Afghanistan as a result of MAK's activities, corruption remained rife. Even with additional personnel MAK was unable to effectively supervise shipments going across the border. According to Hamid, many Afghans knew of MAK's lack of capacity and ability, and because it was paying for each transport of shipments, MAK was routinely defrauded.[73] The same shipments would be taken back and forth across the border multiple times, with monies being claimed for each separate trip with the same goods, which may or may not have reached their intended destination.[74]

Bin Laden's realisation of how little aid was actually reaching the front was the tipping point for his relationship with MAK. It was not only a matter of his dissatisfaction with MAK's mismanagement and inability to effectively supervise shipments. Bin Laden had agreed to fund a group whose primary focus, he thought, would be supporting the Afghan mujahidin, like the men he met on his visit to the front. But by this time MAK's activities and focus were much broader, stretching across education, medical assistance, refugee aid, and religious education, in addition to supporting the mujahidin with supply and logistics. In this respect, bin Laden's visit to the front proved to be the catalyst for his withdrawal of funding to MAK and he instead used the money to directly support military activities inside Afghanistan.[75] In addition to this, bin Laden continued working on his construction of a base at Jaji, which by this time had been underway for several months. Bin Laden did so despite increasing pressure for him to stop his activities and return to Peshawar.

Going it Alone: Bin Laden at Jaji

Although bin Laden had secured Sayyaf's permission to remain in the Jaji area, his establishment of the al-Masada base was not widely supported. Many Afghans and figures from the growing Arab-Afghan community in Peshawar tried to convince him to stop his efforts and withdraw from al-Masada.[76] They had several reasons for concern. The first was that bin Laden was building a military training base exclusively for foreign volunteers, in Afghan territory. This had the potential to alienate Afghans. According to Abu Hajr al-Iraqi "the people around him did not agree, and told him that: you came here to make tunnels to protect the Afghans... so you do not have anything to do with the military operations." [77] Their efforts were unsuccessful. Bin Laden continued, as al-Iraqi noted "without making clear for them [the Afghans] that he hoped that Al-Masada would be a base or centre for training in the future." [78] The reason it was not made clear was that the training base was not built for, nor was it to include Afghans.[79] It was to be a base for a new Arab training group. With volunteer numbers lacking at that time, bin Laden did not invite the Afghans; rather he direct-recruited from Saudi Arabia - a practice he continued for close to six months after establishing the base.[80]

While there was Arab-Afghan concern over how the Afghans would respond to a base on their territory that excluded them, the most immediate worry was the safety and practicability of bin Laden's undertaking. He was spending significant amounts of money building a base in an area many thought was not only unsafe, but could not be effectively defended over the long term.

Bin Laden thought his site could become strategically important because of its location.[81] While the area offered excellent visibility over enemy positions, it was also highly exposed and not suitable for the establishment of a permanent base and to effectively defend it would take a huge amount of resources for little practical gain. [82] Although parts of the area were suitable for guerrilla warfare this was not what bin Laden was intending. [83] He was building a training base, to be filled with foreign youths whose military experience, like his own, was extremely limited, if not non-existent, which was a matter of concern to senior Arab-Afghans who worried for the safety of base inhabitants. Azzam was among those who feared bin Laden's efforts would unnecessarily expose al-Masada's inexperienced, untrained and under-armed occupants to capture by Soviet forces. He and other senior Arab-Afghan leaders repeatedly asked bin Laden to withdraw and return to Peshawar.[84]

When bin Laden would not abandon his project, he was lobbied to send his still small but growing band of volunteers at al-Masada to Sadda for basic military training, which most lacked.[85] It was thought that this would at least allow for the camp's occupants to have some ability to defend themselves should they come under attack.[86] MAK was also facing the problem that word about bin Laden's base had reached its trainees - some of whom wanted to go there in the belief it might offer better opportunities to see combat.[87]

Azzam reluctantly agreed to allow Sadda trainees to go to Jaji only after they finished their training course. [88] Azzam also sought an agreement from bin Laden that any newly arrived trainees he direct-recruited must also first go through Sadda for training.[89] Bin Laden nominally agreed but continued to allow untrained volunteers to remain at the base.[90] It was a situation that continued to concern Arab-Afghan leaders. The volunteers were restless for combat, impetuous, inexperienced, and unable to defend themselves if they came under attack - an event the leaders assessed was made likely by increasing activity at the base, which would have been visible to enemy forces.[91]

Bin Laden, meanwhile, remained undeterred in his plans to expand the base and the numbers of youths present there. He was particularly persistent with his efforts to enlist support from a small group of seasoned Arab-Afghan mujahidin, mostly Egyptians, who were fighting on Haqqani's Khost front.[92] They had not previously been involved with MAK's activities, having kept away from the Peshawar 'scene'. [93] However, they too had reservations about bin Laden's project.[94] Indeed, concerns were so widespread that a meeting of Arab-Afghans with military experience, including the Khost group was held in Islamabad to discuss al-Masada's safety and viability.[95] Among them were several future leaders of al-Qaida, including Abu Ubaydah al-Banshiri and Abu Hafis al-Masri.[96]

All of the attendees at the Islamabad meeting expressed reservations about the wisdom of occupying such an exposed base with a largely untrained and ill-disciplined group of volunteers.[97] Group representatives were then dispatched to convince bin Laden to withdraw from the area.[98] The plan was to try to convince him to withdraw by arguing there were more pressing priorities and that the base was dangerously vulnerable to enemy attack and held little strategic value beyond being an early warning position.[99] It was indeed ironic that bin Laden had withdrawn his money from MAK because it was not being well utilised to support the Afghans, only to build a base that excluded them, and that both Afghans and Arabs thought was wasteful because of its questionable utility and unsustainability as a military position. It is little wonder then that bin Laden was mocked for his wastefulness and described as "someone who takes money and throws it into the sea." [100] Still, however, bin Laden ignored counsel to withdraw and continued to direct-recruit untrained youths from Saudi Arabia to join his project.[101]

Bin Laden's determination to continue at al-Masada convinced a small group of primarily Egyptians to decide to assist him.[102] This was not because they agreed with bin Laden's viewpoint but rather, having recognized he would press ahead regardless, they sought to "reduce the damage as much as... [they]... could." [103] Abu Ubaydah al-Banshiri, an Egyptian who would go on to become al-Qaida's first military commander was among

a small number who travelled to Jaji in an effort to minimise damage and at least ensure the encampment had appropriate fortifications, and its residents, basic training.[104] Another reason why some chose to join bin Laden was his financial power. Several of the Egyptians who worked with bin Laden at Jaji were, at that time, also members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, (EIJ), a group that was actively trying to convince him to fund its activities against the Egyptian regime.[105]

Al-Qaida Begins

Abu Ubaydah al-Banshiri's decision to stay and establish a formal training program at the camp marked the beginning of al-Qaida, as it transitioned from his nickname for the training base, to become the name for the group bin Laden built around his leadership in the opening months of 1987. Abu Ubaydah also convinced his friend Abu Hafs al-Masri to join him, and together the two took over training and camp leadership at al-Masada.[106] In January 1987 they were placed on bin Laden's payroll.[107]

By February 1987 the first training courses of around 40 men had begun in one of what would grow to be six camps within the al-Masada base.[108] While the base continued to grow in size and numbers, MAK's Sadda camp continued to attract the bulk of a small but growing number of volunteers arriving for training.[109] As a result, bin Laden continued direct recruiting from Saudi Arabia.[110]

Outside of training, al-Qaida's volunteers were mostly engaged in efforts to build base infrastructure, but they continually sought to participate in combat, with many not only wanting to fight but also to achieve martyrdom. [111] Consequently, discipline was a problem.[112] In this respect, constructing and running a growing base and training recruits while managing their overriding desire to fight, in a location that was already dangerously exposed, was challenging for the camp's leadership. Despite their efforts, the trainees continued to push bin Laden to allow them to participate in armed combat.[113]

The trainees' thirst for armed jihad had serious implications. Their demands to fight soon came to heavily shape bin Laden's thinking and directly influenced his decision to allow them to carry out a number of small attacks against nearby enemy positions.[114] Bin Laden did so because he was afraid if he did not allow trainees to carry out an attack they would leave the encampment and return to Saudi Arabia complaining that they had not participated in any combat while a part of his group.[115] Through these actions bin Laden let his leadership be dictated by the youths surrounding him, and his fear of them leaving. It would not be the only time he allowed himself to be influenced in this way. Indeed, it became an enduring characteristic of his leadership of the organisation.[116]

The attacks bin Laden allowed in April and May of 1987 precipitated al-Masada being attacked by the Soviets on May 25 of that year. That these skirmishes were allowed to happen demonstrates how self-serving bin Laden's approach to the conduct of jihad had become. His focus was no longer on assisting the Afghans, but rather on preserving his group. Not only did bin Laden agree to these attacks, he actively lobbied for them, and for assistance from Azzam and the Afghans in the area, because he needed the attacks to build morale and stem a potential exodus if recruits were not allowed to fight.[117]

The attack on Jaji and ensuing battle did not, therefore, come as a surprise to al-Masada's occupants or the Arab-Afghans more generally. For close to two months there had been anticipation that an attack was likely. Fearing for the safety of those at al Masada, and expecting the base to soon come under attack, Azzam allowed youths who had trained at Sadda to go to help in the defence of al-Masada and bolster its numbers.[118] This reflected both his concern at the situation and awareness that once conflict broke out they would most likely leave anyway. Abu Burhan al-Suri, MAK's chief trainer and the commander of the Sadda camp, also travelled to al-Masada to assist with training and preparation, although he left before the base was attacked, and did not return to assist in its defence.[119]

The Jaji Aftermath – Al-Qaida Takes Hold

When the Soviets did finally launch an assault on the base on May 25, 1987, its inhabitants were able to withstand the attack, and by doing so cemented al-Masada's place in mujahidin history.[120] The 'victory' at Jaji served to reinforce bin Laden's focus on military aspects of jihad, which had been the basis of his separation from MAK, with its broader agenda of support and assistance. It also bolstered bin Laden's hubristic belief in the superiority of his group, which had, by then, become known across the region as *Qaidat Ansarallah*, or al-Qaida, for short. In bin Laden's worldview, the steadfastness of the Arabs, not the assistance of the Afghans, prevented al-Masada from falling to the Soviets. This affirmed his focus on armed jihad and separation from the Afghans. Bin Laden's views were supported by al-Qaida's military commanders, Abu Hafs and Abu Ubaydah.

Although Afghan mujahidin commanders Sayyaf and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar dispatched forces to the area in support of al-Masada, the poor performance of the Afghans during the battle became a point of contention. [121] Abu Hafs, in particular, was scathing about Sayyaf's lack of promised support when the base came under attack, and argued that al-Qaida should stay away from the politics and corruption of the Afghan yard.[122] The souring of relations with Sayyaf would see al-Qaida move its main operations away from the al-Masada base in 1988 to Haqqani's camps in Khost, and camps in Jalalabad, before establishing what would become permanent camp complexes in Khost in territory under Hekmatyar's control in 1989.[123]

The Jaji battle was not only significant to al-Qaida's growth but also MAK's. Before the battle there had been a lack of support for training activities at Sadda. However, the superior performance of Abu Burhan's trainees at Jaji, and the important role they played in defending al-Masada, resulted in increased support for MAK's training activities. The growing number of volunteers arriving in Pakistan following the publicity surrounding the Jaji battle may have also driven greater support for MAK's training, particularly since a substantial number of them entered MAK's camps and not al-Qaida's. This was perhaps because they had read about the mujahidin's exploits in *Al-Jihad*, which was a MAK produced publication that contained its contact details. MAK's offices and training infrastructure were public knowledge and easy to locate in a way that al-Qaida's were not. At this time, al-Qaida's camps were in a state of flux, moving several times, and were also growing more secretive.[124]

Despite these constraints, a significant number of youth found their way to al-Qaida's camps, wanting to join with bin Laden. He had training bases, weapons, (unparalleled) financial resources, and following the Jaji victory, a public profile built on his battlefield exploits and status as a victorious field commander. This drew the youth to him. As Hamid notes, "the youth followed him because they thought he would lead them to the action." [125] As a result, over a short period of time al-Qaida expanded to be largest the Arab-Afghan organisation in the arena outside of MAK. Indeed, in the period between late 1987 and early 1989 al-Qaida reached its pre-911 membership apogee, with core member numbers topping 400 people.[126] Many more would become part of the combat groups that followed al-Qaida into the 1989 Jalalabad battle and fought under its command.[127]

As a result of its rapid expansion, command and control was relatively haphazard during al-Qaida's early period of development.[128] Al-Qaida's organisational structure did not keep up with its expansion and remained much as it had before the Battle of Jaji, with a structure comprised of bin Laden as ultimate amir, and a military council headed by Abu Ubaydah.[129] There was one addition, a small media wing operated for a brief time in early to mid 1988 by Abu Musab al-Reuters, until he left the organisation after bin Laden shut down his efforts to run an al-Qaida magazine.[130] Abu Musab had released a magazine that contained unapproved commentary, causing a storm of criticism in Peshawar against bin Laden, who had been away when the magazine was released.[131]

Bin Laden's frequent absences may have also contributed to al-Qaida's disorganisation. He was, according to Hamid, away quite often during the post Jaji period, before returning to lead al-Qaida and its combat groups in the Battle of Jalalabad.[132] Participation in this battle was something bin Laden pushed heavily for as part of his expansive new vision of al-Qaida as an elite armed combat group leading an Arab-Afghan army.[133]

Bin Laden's unique financial power allowed him to consolidate al-Qaida and push this new vision and agenda,

despite encountering opposition to his plans, which involved leading the military program for all Arab-Afghans. The increase in volunteer numbers reaching MAK did not escape bin Laden's notice. While al-Qaida's own numbers were very healthy, and it was rapidly growing, bin Laden also wanted to secure ongoing access to MAK's Sudda trainees. Sudda graduates were well trained, and would provide a ready-made recruit stream for al-Qaida. To gain access, bin Laden sought to continue the 'damage-reducing' arrangement that Azzam had put in place prior to the Battle of Jaji, where Sudda camp trainees were dispatched to al-Qaida's camps after finishing training.[134] Bin Laden was ultimately unsuccessful in co-opting Sudda graduates in this manner. However, it took a collective effort from the Arab-Afghans in Peshawar to prevent his sustained attempts to do so, especially as bin Laden's power within the Arab-Afghan milieu was growing.

Although bin Laden remained sensitive to criticism, as his shutting down of al-Qaida's magazine shows, it was nonetheless the case that reigning in his actions became more difficult after the Jaji victory. Several key players in the Arab-Afghan milieu did continue to seek means via which they could influence him and mitigate any damage caused by what was a growing divergence between MAK and al-Qaida, and competing military training programs. This required finding a way in which bin Laden could be mollified in the face of censure of his actions so as to prevent him departing the arena and criticising the Arab-Afghan jihad. Such criticism could have negatively impacted upon Arab-Afghan funding, which was an outcome all parties sought to prevent.

A solution came in the form of an advisory council, the formation of which bin Laden also advocated, not least because it ultimately resulted in him attaining the title 'Amir of the Arabs.' This body, which came to be known as the Peshawar Advisory Council, is the subject of much of the material in the 'minutes' often mistakenly thought to be related to al-Qaida's formation.

Amir of the Arabs: Bin Laden and the Peshawar Advisory Council

Established after the 1987 Jaji battle, and lasting until the beginning of the Arab-Afghan involvement in the Jalalabad Battle in May 1989, the Peshawar Advisory Council was a body that came together to try to coordinate and oversee the growing Arab-Afghan population in Peshawar.[135] It had its own military, financial and religious committees, and was intended to serve as the overall administrative body, organising the activities of the Arab-Afghans.[136] A key reason for the council's establishment was that there was growing competition and tension within the Arab-Afghan milieu and establishing a body whose function it was to coordinate activities was intended to help prevent conflict.[137] Bin Laden, as the leader of al-Qaida - by then the largest Arab grouping outside of MAK - was a key member of the council.[138] Also on the council were Azzam, Julaidan, Sayyaf or his delegate, and a number of 'semi-independent figures' within the milieu such as Abu Ibrahim al-Iraqi and Abu Hajr al-Iraqi.[139]

Through the auspices of the council, bin Laden was appointed 'Amir of the Arabs,' while Azzam was assigned the position of amir of Sudda, and Julaidan, amir of Peshawar activities.[140] According to Hamid, Azzam and Julaidan's positions were not new, rather a reflection of what they were already doing.[141] The only real new outcome from the council was bin Laden's amir appointment, which was little more than an honorary title because he held no authority over anyone outside of al-Qaida.[142]

By appointing bin Laden as 'Amir of the Arabs' the council was trying ensure ongoing Saudi funding for Arab-Afghan activities. Although he was no longer regularly funding MAK with his own personal money, bin Laden had great influence with other financiers and there was a general funding shortage at the time for Arab activities outside of MAK.[143] It was also thought bin Laden's appointment might encourage him to broaden his personal financing activities, which were then restricted to al-Qaida.[144]

In early 1988, the council also appointed a military committee to coordinate cooperation among the various Arab-Afghan groups and entities operating in the region.[145] Headed by Abu Ubaydah al-Banshiri, it also included Abu Hafs al-Masri, Julaidan, Abu Hajr al-Iraqi, and Issam al-Libi.[146] With membership of the military committee stacked in his favour, bin Laden attempted to pursue his plans for al-Qaida's expansion via this medium while also continuing to pressure the advisory council to cooperate more with al-Qaida.

As bin Laden pursued this agenda and moved al-Qaida further away from supporting the Afghan jihad, Azzam appears to have sought to distance himself from the council, instead sending his deputy Tamim al-Adnani in his place to meetings.[147] Documentation from one gathering attended by al-Adnani in late August 1988 has often been interpreted as the second of two meetings marking al-Qaida's formal establishment.[148] However, these meeting 'minutes' and assorted notes are a summary from a lengthy Peshawar Advisory Council meeting attended by al-Adnani in Azzam's place, as well as notes from al-Qaida's own follow-up meeting after the Advisory Council had met.[149]

The notes from the Peshawar Advisory Council meeting show al-Qaida's attempts to control the milieu, and the complaints made by bin Laden and al-Qaida against MAK and Azzam, and the general pressure put on the organisation.[150] Despite having little to do with MAK at that time, Bin Laden was able to do so because of his financial power and influence with 'merchants' upon whom other parties on the Advisory Council relied for funding. Hamid recalled there was a "need for all parties involved to support bin Laden because of his financial power, and recommendations to financiers in Saudi Arabia, and the weight of his family financially and politically within the Kingdom." [151]

Azzam, in particular, felt this pressure and feared funding would be impacted.[152] He, like many others, did not support al-Qaida's actions on the Council, but as Hamid notes at times he "bowed to the intransigence of bin Laden and his ability to do as he pleased as a result of his extraordinary financial strength over the poverty stricken yard." [153] The reasons for the pressure against Azzam become clear when viewing notes from an earlier meeting between bin Laden and Abu al-Rida, discussing "new military work." This meeting, on August 11, 1988, is often contended to have been the meeting at which the establishment of al-Qaida was discussed. [154] However, a close inspection of the document shows it does not relate to establishing a new group, but rather is a discussion about establishing a new military program, specifically, "the new military work." [155] The mention of Azzam in this document sheds light on the pressure against Azzam, and why such an effort was later made to secure continued access to Sadda's graduates; his military 'gang' was seen as 'ended.' [156]

Al-Qaida's notes from an internal meeting following the Peshawar Advisory Council meeting a week or so later (which al-Adnani attended) show very clearly that it wanted to secure access to MAK's Sadda camp graduates, as a feeder for its own recruitment objectives. This is clear by the framing of training at Sadda to be first part of "the military work," with the second stage being entry to al-Qaida. [157] It is not clear if the proposed course of work discussed among al-Qaida members was presented this way to a subsequent Peshawar Advisory Council meeting, but in Hamid's recollection al-Qaida was not successful in gaining access to Sadda's trainees in this manner. [158]

The 'military work' being discussed more generally in these documents was al-Qaida's program for Jalalabad, from which it was envisaged 314 trained brothers would be produced. [159] At the time these documents were written, al-Qaida had already moved away from al-Masada and was establishing and looking to expand its training infrastructure in the Jalalabad region. [160] It was also looking to formalise its military work. [161] As a part of this process, al-Qaida recruited Abu Ayub - one of the first Arabs to establish a training camp in Jalalabad - to run its Jalalabad program. [162] The al-Qaida meeting that followed the Advisory Council meeting in late August was in reference to its planned recruitment and training efforts in Jalalabad.

Bin Laden's ultimate plans for these trained brothers were not listed in the documents but as his actions in the lead up to the Jalalabad battle make clear, his vision had become increasingly expansive. As the key Arab-Afghan agitating for Arab participation in the Battle of Jalalabad, bin Laden not only wanted to field al-Qaida in battle, but he also wanted it to have command over all other Arab-Afghan combat groups. [163] It would be this 'army' that bin Laden would return to Afghanistan to lead during the Battle of Jalalabad, which began in early 1989.

The Jalalabad Defeat

On February 15, 1989, the last Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan. The previous day, in anticipation of this event, the main Afghan resistance groups announced they had formed an Afghan Interim Government (AIG). Headed by Sibghatullah Mujaddidi as President and Sayyaf as Prime Minister, the AIG believed that without military support, the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul could quickly fall, and so began moving forward with a plan to attack on Jalalabad, where they intended to establish a provincial capital. In strategic terms, Jalalabad was not as important as Kabul, but it was closer to the mujahidin's rear supply base in Peshawar. Not all were supportive of the plan, although bin Laden had been an enthusiastic advocate. Neither the Afghans nor the Arabs were ready to undertake the type of warfare required to conquer Jalalabad. To take Jalalabad successfully required a force much larger than the mujahidin groups had traditionally fielded, and called for conventional warfare, which they lacked the capacity and expertise to undertake and coordinate.[164]

However, with the Soviets gone, hubris prevailed, and on 5 March 1989 the Battle began. It soon faltered and by May there was concern defeat was looming. Al-Qaida was not formally represented in these early stages of the Battle.[165] Indeed, it was not until May when bin Laden arrived to join the battle that al-Qaida officially entered the fray.[166] Alongside it were the Arab-Afghans, numbering in their hundreds and organised into combat groups that were also led by bin Laden, who according to al-Yamani, had cajoled and funded his way to convincing them to join al-Qaida's forces on the battlefield.[167] Al-Qaida emptied its camps and cancelled all other projects to support the Jalalabad campaign.[168] Among the groups that 'followed' al-Qaida into battle were elements from Azzam's MAK, the Egyptian Islamic Group (GI), both of which were closely aligned with Sayyaf, as well as EIJ, which followed al-Qaida into battle despite its high-profile criticisms of the AIG.[169]

There was strong dissent about Arab participation in the battle from some members of the Arab-Afghan community, who saw defeat looming.[170] Moreover, while bin Laden was an enthusiastic participant in the campaign, not all of al-Qaida's leadership supported its involvement. Abu Hafs, for example, objected to the campaign seeing defeat as the only likely outcome. He told Hamid that throughout the siege he "was expecting at any time a decisive attack by the enemy that would end the situation." [171] When Hamid asked Abu Hafs why he did not speak out about this situation, he replied "I am in the tanzim [organisation], I cannot." [172] Abu Hafs was right about the battle's outcome for al-Qaida. Over 2 days in July 1989 al-Qaida (and the groups it had led in battle) was badly defeated and forced into a withdrawal in which bin Laden was nearly captured as he ordered his forces into a hasty retreat.[173]

Hamid was one of the most outspoken of the critics of al-Qaida's Jalalabad campaign, although he was not alone.[174] He alleged, "what is happening in Jalalabad is a crime because Arab blood is being needlessly spilt there....Had I been in charge, I would court martial Abu Abdullah, Abu Ubaydah and Abu Hafs." [175] He assessed the Arabs had "never accomplished anything considerable for the Afghans or themselves. Or [they] achieved for themselves incomplete things which will lead to disasters. The incomplete preparation of the personnel, the huge mental deficit will lead to self destruction for them and their movement." [176] He was certainly correct in his assessment of al-Qaida's fortunes.

The defeat at Jalalabad was a disaster for al-Qaida, and the Arab-Afghans more generally. There was a heavy loss of life, resulting in anger among the Arab Afghans. Bin Laden faced heavy criticism for his role in pushing for the campaign and for Arab-Afghan mujahidin to join him.[177] His refusal to accept responsibility generated further anger, especially when he left for Saudi Arabia without answering the questions asked of him.[178] Bin Laden's actions seriously affected his standing among the older generation Arab-Afghans.[179]

In the aftermath of its defeat al-Qaida's numbers also began to drop. Bin Laden had anticipated battlefield glory and an increase in al-Qaida's strength and fortunes but the opposite happened. All of the combat groups that had fought with al-Qaida left, with none joining the organisation.

Al-Qaida's core membership also suffered, particularly after bin Laden's fateful decision to prohibit his organisation from participating in any further combat - the very activity for which it was formed.[180] This decision saw al-Qaida's core numbers drop so severely that it was reduced to little more than several dozen

members. Those who had joined al-Qaida because bin Laden was seen as a strong victorious leader, left, as did those who had joined believing al-Qaida offered their best chance of participating in combat.[181]

In bin Laden's absence, al-Qaida's commanders turned their attention to military training. They tried to rebuild the group by establishing it as the pre-eminent training institution in Afghanistan.[182] However, few it seemed, wanted to join a defeated group that had all but withdrawn from conflict and restricted itself to training.[183] Despite their best efforts al-Qaida's commanders were unable to attract and/or retain recruits in any significant number, and by the time the group left for Sudan in early to mid-1992, it was reduced in number to around 50 persons.[184] The battle of Jalalabad thus marked a turning point for the organisation. In the space of a little more than two years, almost all of the gains al-Qaida had made since its establishment at al-Masada were lost.

Conclusion

This article has explored the circumstances leading to al-Qaida's 1987 emergence as a MAK splinter group and the first two or so years of its organisational history. It has clearly demonstrated that al-Qaida was already operating well before the 1988 minutes commonly believed to have marked its establishment were authored, and offered new context to the organisation's early evolution as well as that of MAK.

The article's exploration of al-Qaida's first few years has traced its organisational trajectory from a base, to a small training group, to an organisation, and finally, to an armed faction with combat groups under its command that all but disintegrated following its Jalalabad battlefield defeat. In doing so, it has identified features in al-Qaida and MAK's early evolution that are important to the study of militant Salafist groups more generally, in particular factors influencing the growth and decline of such groups.

As both MAK and al-Qaida's tumultuous early histories have shown, enthusiasm and money, a training location and weapons, an open front, and a charismatic leader do not necessarily attract volunteer youths or ensure an organisation's growth. Nor does media and *dawah* on its own. During this early period of its evolution al-Qaida had no doctrine or ideology that could be used to attract youths, and despite the media and *dawah* efforts of MAK, volunteers only began to arrive in significant numbers after al-Qaida's battlefield success at al-Masada. They came to al-Qaida in growing numbers after the Battle of Jaji because it was seen as powerful and victorious, and offered them the best access to combat opportunities.

These two factors - battlefield success and access to combat - drove al-Qaida's early growth. Their removal, following al-Qaida's defeat at Jalalabad and withdrawal from combat activities in Afghanistan, in turn caused the organisation's near catastrophic decline, in which it lost over three quarters of its core membership and all of its combat groups. The bitter lesson bin Laden learned in the aftermath of the Jalalabad defeat was that financial power, training camps and weapons, and a past history of success cannot repair popularity lost in defeat, particularly if there are no opportunities for combat. To attract youths in significant numbers a group must be seen as winning; it must be, as bin Laden would later remark, "the strong horse," and it must offer access to combat at an open front. It would be this lesson that drove bin Laden to carry out the 9/11 attacks, and to try to recreate al-Qaida's Jaji apogee at Tora Bora in 2001.[185] As has become apparent since the start of the Syrian conflict, it also had some bearing on how al-Qaida's current senior leadership, who lived through this early rise and fall of al-Qaida, have sought to pursue opportunities for development and growth in the Syrian jihad.

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Notes

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[2] The term Arab-Afghan refers to volunteers who traveled to join the Afghan jihad. It is often used to denote all foreign volunteers, including non-Arabs.

[3] Bin Laden reportedly travelled to Pakistan within weeks of the invasion and met with the leaders of the Jamaat e Islami mujahidin to hand over money for the Afghan mujahidin. See Essam Deraz, *The Lion's Den of Ansar, the Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, Undated. URL: Previously available at <http://www.jehad.net/ansar.zip>.

[4] Basil Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*. (Jeddah: House of Learning Printing Press Co., 1991 2n ed.), 49 (English translation).

[5] See "Al Qaeda 'Founding' Minutes," INTELWIRE, 1988; URL: <http://intelfiles.egoplex.com/1988-08-11-al-qaeda-founding.pdf>. These minutes were submitted as evidence in a 2003 court case. See Patrick Fitzgerald, "Government's Evidentiary Proffer Supporting the Admissibility of Co-conspirator Statements," *United States of America vs Enaam Arnaout, No 02 CR892, United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division* (January 6, 2003), 34-37. URL:

<http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/bif/usarnaout10603prof.pdf>. See also Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2006), 130-36; Peter Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 75-81; and National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States, "9/11 Commission Report," (Washington DC: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States, 2004), 467, n24-25. URL:

<http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>.

[6] Leah Farrall. "Reconsidering al Qaeda's Evolution: An examination of its organisational, doctrinal and ideological evolution." (Ph.D. Diss., 2011), 110.

[7] This primary material includes first-hand accounts, interviews, and written histories by those who were involved with the Afghan jihad and/or those who participated in it.

[8] Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 101-102. This seems to be an interpretation drawn from selected excerpts from Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 31. According to Deraz, bin Laden's trip was at the behest of Azzam, who told him to "go to...Jaji...where Sheikh Sayyaf is." Sayyaf had a presence in the Jaji area and is reported by Muhammad to have kept a tent reserved for Arabs in a safe area at his base. See Deraz, *The Lion's Den of Ansar, the Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*; Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 31.

[9] Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), 76-77.

[10] Ibid, 62, 65, 67, 70.

[11] *Dawah* means to invite or call back to Islam. It is the means via which people are invited to or called back to Allah.

[12] See, for example, the efforts carried out as part of the Qais camp initiative. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 55-59.

[13] Ibid, 67.

[14] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 67.

[15] At this time in the conflict, funding streams had not formalised in the way they would after the establishment of MAK and the arrival of a number of charities and other organisations through which money was funnelled. The funding sources being discussed as part of this proposal were coming straight from the contact networks of those Arab-Afghans involved in the project. That is, they were direct funds, and not coming from government or charity funding streams.

[16] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 66.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid, 67.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid, 68.

[22] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid, 69.

[26] Ibid. Haqqani did not take the first part of Hamid's report, which highlighted corruption issues that had the potential to cause conflict between the groups.

[27] Ibid. The military training would include Arabs and Afghans.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Hamid contends that also Sayyaf changed his mind to support the project because he could see it would happen anyway. Ibid,79.

[30] Azzam had already seen an early version of Hamid's report, and excerpts from it were later published in *Al-Jihad*. It is not clear if this was published under his name as the report was provided confidentially to Azzam's then secretary, with instructions that it was only for Azzam and not public distribution. Ibid, 69-70.

[31]Ibid, 78.

[32] Depending on interpretations, the number of MAK members holding executive positions could have been as high as ten, leaving only three workers. Muhammad. *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 49. According to Abu Musab al-Suri, in 1984 there were 12 mujahidin with Azzam, 25 in 1985 and less than 200 by mid-way through 1986. See Abu Musab al-Suri, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, 714; Previously available at URL: <http://www.fsboa.com/vw/files/books/2005/mqdoc.zip> . According to Hamid's account, at one point MAK had 30 members, with 15 of those serving on the consultation council. See Mustafa Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 20. See also Anas cited in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 41.

[33] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 49.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid, 49, 80-84. This is because shortly after its founding, MAK members in Peshawar attended the Badr camp for military training. During training, MAK members formed into a brigade (The Badr Brigade), elements of which, along with some other Arab volunteers, were dispatched to various locations within Afghanistan. Owing to the inexperience of some MAK members, and the ad-hoc nature of the training, brigade casualties were high and several members were killed. The deployments were also quite long; some members did not return for six months. See Ismail, cited in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 26; Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 38-42, 81, 84.

[37] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 41, 57-58. See also Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 20.

[38] Ibid, 81-85.

[39] Ibid, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 49.

[40]Ibid, 57-58. See also Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 20.

[41] *Tarbiyyah* in this context means Islamic education, in the context of upbringing, or raising. *Tarbiyyah* programs or lessons in religious development are often carried out in a mosque. Until 1986, largely under Azzam's stewardship, MAK had a concentrated focus on *dawah* and *tarbiyyah* as the means through which funding could be obtained, and volunteers recruited, organised and supported once they arrived in in Pakistan. This would later expand into the provision of military training. See Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, "The September 11 Raid: The Impossible Becomes Possible," (2002), 15-16; URL://www.slideshare.net/rmuslim1978/the-11-september-raid-the-impossible-becomes-possible-by-abu-ubayd-al-qirshi Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 19; Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 80. See also Yusuf al-Uyayri, "An Open Letter to Sheikh Safar Al-Hawali," (2001) Previously available at URL: <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=trrei4g6> .

[42] Anas commented on the non-military support role played by the majority of MAK's members, and noted that even at its peak only 10 percent of MAK's membership was directly involved in military activities. See Anas in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 41. Ismail also comments on MAK's function becoming like a Non Governmental Organisation by 1987. See Ismail in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 63.

[43] The community centres were also called Religious Institutes and run by the religious council. See Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 84.

[44] Drawn from information contained in al-Qurashi, "The September 11 Raid: The Impossible Becomes Possible."; Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 24; and Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*.

[45] It can be seen in Azzam's early efforts to bring the Afghan leaders together for *tarbiyyah* 'training.' The *tarbiyyah* training appears to have been focused on religious instruction in relation to jihad and the establishment of an Islamic state. For an account of training see Mustafa Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles* (2006), 233-34, and Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 49.

[46] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 81-84.

[47] Ibid, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 39.

[48] Ibid, 81-84. See also Ismail in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 63; and Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 19, 22.

[49] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 81-85.

[50] Ibid.

[51] For details of earlier training at the Badr camp, see Ibid, 38-42. For details of training at the Qais camp see Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 55-59.

[52] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 82-83.

[53] Ibid, 83.

[54] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 81, 85, 87 92, 95. See also Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 83.

[55] Azzam spent much of his time providing lectures and lessons, which would also be included in a training regime for MAK volunteers when its Sadda camp program was established. See Ibid, 49.

[56] For separate accounts of the poor levels of preparation of the trainees and the Afghans not allowing them to train, see Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 71-75. See also Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 84.

[57] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 84.

[58] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 84-85,87. See also Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 22-23.

[59] See Tamim al-Adnani's comments in Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 85. See also Rushdi cited in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 68.

[60] Bin Laden scouted other locations including Sadda, Khost and Jalalabad before he established al-Masada. See Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 84-85. See also Huthayfah Azzam in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 62.

[61] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 84-85.

[62] Ibid. See also the comments of Julaidan and Ismail in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader*, 62-63.

[63] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 83-84.

[64] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 78, 87, 89.

[65] Ibid, 89-90.

[66] They would stay through the winter with him, working on construction. Ibid, 87, 89, 90, 93; Deraz, *The Lion's Den of Ansar, the Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*.

[67] Both Deraz and Muhammad suggest bin Laden's initial proposal was to construct a series of fortifications along the border and in the Al-Areen area to assist the mujahidin. Bin Laden's assertion that he sought 'permission' may have in reality been more akin to his insistence. See Deraz, *The Lion's Den of Ansar, the Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*; Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 49, 69; and Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 89, 90, 93, 98-99.

[68] While there were a number of other battles of greater consequence to the Afghan jihad, and which can be said to have gained more attention at the time, such as the Khost Battles, Masoud's exploits in the Panjshir, and the 1989 Jalalabad battle, the Jaji battle

has arguably become more broadly famous owing to its link to al-Qaida.

[69] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 76-78.

[70] *ibid.*, 77.

[71] *Ibid.*, 77.

[72] *Ibid.*, 78.

[73] *Ibid.*, 76.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*, 77.

[76] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 89-100. While Deraz's work provides a useful account of the activities at al-Masada, Muhammad's book is utilised extensively here, because in addition to outlining activities, it also highlights the differences of opinion among the Arab-Afghans regarding al-Masada.

[77] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 90.

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] *Ibid.* An after action report authored by al-Banshiri after the 1987 Jaji battles and later provided to Mustafa Hamid shows the camps' leadership had no intention of handing the camp over to the Afghans. Al-Banshiri wrote to bin Laden that "the presence of Afghan groups would be only for guarding the perimeters of al-Masada." See Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles*, 260.

[80] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 92, 96.

[81] *Ibid.*, 89-90.

[82] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 92-93.

[83] *Ibid.*, 92-93, 95. See also Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97-100.

[84] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97-100.

[85] *Ibid.*, 91-92, 96, 98, 100-101.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*, 97-100.

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] *Ibid.*, 92, 96.

[91] *Ibid.*, 103-104. See also Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 93.

[92] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 95.

[93] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97-100.

[94] *Ibid.* See also Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 95.

[95] *Ibid.* Hamid recalls there were several meetings held in Islamabad. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 95. The meeting cited here is the one that is also referenced in Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97-100.

[96] *Ibid.*

[97] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97-100.

[98] *Ibid.*

[99] Bin Laden had argued that it was strategically important. The other priorities included securing Khost or participating in other fronts. See Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 89-100. See also Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 22-23; and Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles*, 345-46.

[100] Amin al-Haq, quoted in Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97.

[101] Mustafa Hamid offered an interesting explanation as to why bin Laden continued with his plans in the face of such opposition, saying:

'Abu Abdullah [bin Laden] became stronger in his will when he was opposed by the mainstream; this made him feel like he was right, and he insisted to continue his way. Jaji was a prime example of this, because most of the people around him told him it was not a good idea to establish a permanent base there but he insisted on continuing. When they then won the Jaji battle in 1987, Abu Abdullah became certain of his way'. - Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 96.

[102] Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles*, 241-42.

[103] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 98-99. See also Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles*, 241-42.

[104] Ibid.

[105] The group is also known as Tanzim al-Jihad, the Jihad Organisation. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 99.

[106] Ibid., 95-97. Both had initially planned to return to Khost, but instead remained with bin Laden at al-Masada.

[107] "Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 100," in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda*. Intelwire Press. Kindle Edition, Location 528-533.

[108] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 95-96, 101-102. Although the listing of six camps suggests that al-Masada was a highly developed complex, the camps were rudimentary.

[109] Sada had by that time graduated its first course, which consisted of a two-month training program. Ibid., 98.

[110] Ibid., 96.

[111] Ibid., 103-04. This problem was not isolated to al-Masada; it was a problem facing MAK too. The youth were also seeking *agir* (rewards) that came from combat, believing them to be higher than non-combat related activities.

[112] Al-Banshiri was dismayed by the lack of discipline and unruly nature of al-Masada's recruits. Ibid., 103-04.

[113] Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles*, 241. See also Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 103-06.

[114] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 106. The trainees also disobeyed bin Laden in his absence, by pressuring inexperienced commanders to launch a series of skirmishes.

[115] Ibid., 103-106. See also Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles*, 241.

[116] Bin Laden's decision to expel a Shia Afghan commander from Jaji was also done as a result of the Salafi youth around him at the time. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 102. See also p.104 and p.301 for other examples.

[117] Ibid., 105-106.

[118] For descriptions of this agreement see, Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97-100. This was part of the broader strategy of reducing the damage bin Laden could do, which included earlier agreements and discussions among key Arab-Afghans. See also Hamid, *The Rock Gate Battles*, 241-42. The first graduates of Sada who went to al-Masada nearly all died there.

[119] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 85. Abu Burhan trained them on mortars and rocket launchers.

[120] The assault lasted for around three weeks. Deraz, *The Lion's Den of Ansar, the Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*.

[121] Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 122-24.

[122] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 100.

[123] Ibid., 133-137.

[124] Ayman Sabri Farag, *Memoirs of an Afghan Arab: Abu Jafar Al-Masri Al-Kandahari*, 28-29.

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[125] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 122.

[126] Ibid., 115-116. See also Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 21; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010 ; and Muhammad Mustafa Abu Shama, "The Future of Conflict in Afghanistan (the First Episode): Dr. Fadl, Founder of Al-Jihad Writes About the Complete Story of the Birth of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan." *Asharq Al-Awsat*, January 25, 2010; URL: <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=554311&issueno=11381> .

[127] Ibid.

[128] According to Santos, an early al-Qaida member, disorganisation was rife. He recollected “[i]n our group, there wasn’t a well-defined hierarchy, we were rather disorganised; you could give a try to whatever entered into your head.” See Santos in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda’s Leader*, 119-120.

[129] For an account of al-Banshiri as the amir of al-Qaida’s military council, see Hamid, *Betrayal on the Road*, 65.

[130] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 115.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid., 105. Jalalabad had also been an area of longstanding focus for bin Laden. Before identifying Jaji as the location for a training base, bin Laden had also considered Jalalabad. See Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 15, 2010; and Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 84.

[134] This is visible in al-Qaida documentation, often referred to as ‘Al-Qaida’s founding documents,’ or ‘minutes,’ which are discussed in further detail in the following section.

[135] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 123.

[136] Ibid.; Hamid, *Betrayal on the Road*, 65; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Hamid notes that al-Qaida was by then the largest Arab group on the scene and was renowned for the achievement at Jaji, so it was logical that he should have the nominal title of amir of all Arabs. Mustafa al-Yamani also writes of bin Laden’s position; see Mustafa al-Yamani, “Conflict within the Arab Leaders, Peshawar,” *Afghanistan, Memories of the Occupation*; Previously available at URL: <http://tokhaleej.jeeran.com/archive/2008/6/597601.html>.

[139] See Hamid, *Betrayal on the Road*, 65, 89-90. See also Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 15, 2010; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010. These names can also be seen on the selected Peshawar Advisory Council notes, for example “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 127 - 127a,” in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda* (Kindle Location 236). Intelwire Press. Kindle Edition. See also “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 93” in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda* (Kindle Location 281).

[140] Hamid, *Betrayal on the Road*, 65, 89-90; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010. Al-Yamani also writes of bin Laden’s position; al-Yamani, “Conflict within the Arab Leaders, Peshawar,” See also the mention of bin Laden (Abu Abdullah) as amir in early Advisory Council documentation that pre-dates the August minutes, “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 93” in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda* (Kindle Location 281).

[141] Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010.

[142] Ibid.

[143] See Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat’s War?*, 21; Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010.

[144] Ibid. See also al-Yamani, “Conflict within the Arab Leaders, Peshawar.”

[145] At this time Abdul Aziz Ali, another key Arab-Afghan figure had also started trying to establish his own training program at Warsak. See Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 133. See also “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 91,” in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda*, Kindle Location 312

[146] Hamid, *Betrayal on the Road*, 65. Al-Banshiri at that time was the amir of three military committees/councils. These were the Tanzim al-Jihad, al-Qaida, and the Peshawar Council’s military committees. See Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010.

[147] According to Hamid, this was a common tactic used when key figures did not agree with decisions being made, or were coming under criticism. See Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010.

[148] For the minutes, see “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 127 - 127a,” in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda* (Kindle Location 230). For these being believed to mark the second part of the founding of al-Qaida, see Fitzgerald, “Government’s Evidentiary Proffer Supporting the Admissibility of Co-conspirator Statements,” *United States of America vs Enaam Arnaout, No 02 CR892*, 34-37. See also Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 131-36; Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda’s*

Leader, 75-81; and National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States, “9/11 Commission Report,” 467, n24-25.

[149] For a longer more detailed explanation of these documents see Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 108-111.

[150] See, for example, “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 128-135,” and “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 127 - 127a,” in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda*.

[151] See Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010. For bin Laden’s influence on Saudi aid see Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat’s War?*, 21.

[152] Ibid. See also Muhammad, *Arab Supporters in Afghanistan*, 97.

[153] Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010. See also the comments of Essam al-Ridda, where he notes he was an early objector to relying on the financial power of bin Laden for reasons of his consequent ability to dominate decision making; in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda’s Leader*, 44. Al-Yamani’s memoir also supports this contention. See al-Yamani, “Differences with Bin Laden and the Killing of Sheikh Jamil,” and al-Yamani, “Preparation for the Jalalabad Battle by Osama Bin Laden,” in *Afghanistan, Memories of the Occupation*.

[154] See for example, Fitzgerald, “Government’s Evidentiary Proffer Supporting the Admissibility of Co-conspirator Statements,” *United States of America vs Enaam Arnaout, No 02 CR892*, 34-37. See also Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 131-36; Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda’s Leader*, 75-81; and National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States, “9/11 Commission Report,” 467, n.24-25.

[155] [Al-Qaeda “Founding” Minutes], p. 1; URL: <http://intelfiles.egoplex.com/1988-08-11-al-Qaeda-founding.pdf>. For the original Arabic, see page 3 of the document. For a discussion in relation to this mistranslation, see Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 109.

[156] [Al-Qaeda “Founding” Minutes], p. 1

[157] “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 127 - 127a,” in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda* (Kindle Location 250). Intelwire Press. Kindle Edition. While these were separate phases, and graduates of Saddam were to go to the Afghan fronts and be supervised by the Peshawar Council Military Committee, al-Qaida’s intent to tap into this recruit stream is clear in this document and in the collection as a whole.

[158] Hamid contends that even if al-Qaida was successful in doing so, it would have only been for a short time, explaining that the activities of the Peshawar Military Council amounted to little, which he knew from firsthand experience after dealing with it to try to secure support for his own military project in Khost in 1988. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 121.

[159] “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 122 – 123”; in *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda* (Kindle Location 158).

[160] Huthayfah Azzam’s comments show the time frame for the Jalalabad program to be correct. See Huthayfah Azzam in Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda’s Leader*, 62.

[161] Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010.

[162] For details of Abu Ayub’s involvement in that arena see Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat’s War?*, 70. See also “Finding aid: Tareekh Osama 127 - 127a,” *Beatings and Bureaucracy: The Founding Memos of Al Qaeda* (Kindle Location 266), and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 31, 2010; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, June 6, 2010.

[163] See al-Yamani, “Preparation for the Jalalabad Battle by Osama Bin Laden.” Interestingly, al-Yamani also argues the Afghan groups assembled “symbolic force” to appease bin Laden, who was encouraging their participation in his May offensive by offering them money, which they were increasingly reliant upon as other sources began to dry up in the changing climate after the Soviet withdrawal.

[164] Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin, *Afghanistan: The Bear Trap* (South Yorkshire: Leo Cooper, 1992), 226-231. See Hamid’s reservations on the campaign; Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat’s War?*, 109. See also Al-Yamani who criticises the capabilities of al-Qaida and bin Laden and its poor planning and inexperience in anything other than guerrilla warfare. See al-Yamani, “Preparation for the Jalalabad Battle by Osama Bin Laden.”

[165] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 147. Some members of al-Qaida had been involved but it was not organizationally represented until bin Laden’s return.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Al-Yamani recalls funding was drying up from the Pakistanis and others, which also “forced some Afghan leaders to submit to Osama’s decision.” He also recounts that bin Laden’s attempts to rally the troops were being promoted like a commercial. The

obvious security implications of this, where word had travelled to Saudi Arabia, meant the Afghan government (Najibullah) was no doubt aware of the forthcoming effort. The number of Arab-Afghans here excludes the Pakistani groups, who also participated. See al-Yamani, "Preparation for the Jalalabad Battle by Osama Bin Laden."

[168] Only administrative personnel remained as al-Qaida turned its total attention to Jalalabad. See Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 58-59.

[169] Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 58-59, 70, 73. It is interesting to note that the EIJ willingly sought to participate in this battle despite being part of the current that considered Mujaddidi, the head of the AIG, an apostate, and criticising Azzam--as well as what Hamid terms was EIJ's "general opposition to what was happening in Afghanistan." See Ibid, 13-19, 73, 147-148. The main reason for the EIJ's participation was to ensure continued access to bin Laden's finance. See Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 99, 154-155. See also Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 15, 2010.

[170] By the time al-Qaida and the groups that followed joined the fighting in May, the battle had been going for close to two months, and the Afghans were already encountering problems. See Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 146-148. Some figures were also critical of al-Qaida's incitement of volunteers from all currents to join the campaign, and in particular bin Laden's manipulation of the volunteers' desire for martyrdom. See al-Yamani, "Preparation for the Jalalabad Battle by Osama Bin Laden.;" Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 59-60, 67, 93-94; and Hamid, Personal Correspondence, May 15, 2010.

[171] Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 59. Abu Hafs had first-hand experience of what it would be like for al-Qaida and the Arab-Afghans, having joined Sayyaf and his forces at the outset of the battle in March, and according to Hamid, he refused to return to fight with al-Qaida when it entered the battle in May. He instead stayed in Peshawar. See Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 148-149. Abu Hafs recounted that when he was in Peshawar senior mujahidin confronted him with a harsh critique of al-Qaida's participation in the battle. Conceding he had no authority over the matter Abu Hafs told them to take the matter up with bin Laden. Several did, including Hamid, but to no avail. See Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 59-61.

[172] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 149.

[173] Ibid.,150.

[174] Al Yamani's memoir details widespread anger at al-Qaida among the Arab-Afghans. See al-Yamani, "Differences with Bin Laden and the Killing of Sheikh Jamil."

[175] Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 94.

[176] He likened the Jalalabad campaign to the pied piper because it led the youth to an untimely fate. Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*,108, 110. See also page 86 where Hamid recalls he was so disgruntled he left the Afghan arena and travelled to the UAE.

[177] al-Yamani, "Preparation for the Jalalabad Battle by Osama Bin Laden."

[178] Ibid. Al-Yamani's account shows that bin Laden deflected responsibility and refused to accept the criticisms levelled at him.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Some cadre did participate in small clashes, according to Hamid. However, the Jalalabad battle was the last battle in which al-Qaida formally participated. See Hamid, *Big Folly or Goat's War?*, 21-22. Some al-Qaida members were allowed to travel to fight with Mustafa Hamid in Khost in 1990, but this appears to have been done without bin Laden's permission, as he was in Saudi Arabia at the time. The numbers were also small; less than 10. See Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 118-119, 159. According to al-Yamani, bin Laden later refused to support a campaign against Kabul; see al-Yamani, "Differences with Bin Laden and the Killing of Sheikh Jamil."

[181] In 1990, when Mustafa Hamid asked for al-Qaida to send him some recruits to assist him with his campaign in Khost, the organisation had less than 10 'spare' recruits to send. He recalled asking Sayf al-Adl why al-Qaida could not provide more people and was told that this was all the people it had at that time. The reason Sayf provided for the further drop in numbers after the Jalalabad defeat was that the EIJ also separated from al-Qaida at this time, further depriving it of trainers and 'members' who in the early stages of the group's evolution had dual membership across the groups, until the EIJ's separation. Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 118, 159.

[182] Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 159.

[183] By 1991, al-Qaida's recruit numbers had grown to around 60. Highly trained, they were also allowed to travel to join Hamid in Gardez, where he was coordinating the Arabs at the front and had requested extra support from al-Qaida. The al-Qaida group ultimately did not see combat, however, as Gardez had surrendered before their preparations for their planned participation in the campaign were completed. See Hamid and Farrall, *The Arabs at War in Afghanistan*, 85, 125,159,178, 191. Al-Qaida members at the time did claim to have participated in combat at Gardez. See Anne Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 29.

[184] See Hamid, *Cross over Kandahar Sky*, 47, 279. See also Shama, “The Future of Conflict in Afghanistan (the First Episode): Dr. Fadl, Founder of Al-Jihad Writes About the Complete Story of the Birth of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.”

[185] Farrall. “Reconsidering al Qaeda’s Evolution: An examination of its organisational, doctrinal and ideological evolution.” (Ph.D. Diss., 2011), 513.