Articles

The Spread of its Message: Studying the Prominence of al-Qaida Materials in UK Terrorism Investigations
by Donald Holbrook

Abstract

Al-Qaida emphasises its ability to communicate its core message to those who might be sympathetic towards the group and its aims. Yet we have little sense of how this relationship, between al-Qaida as messenger, and potential sympathisers as message recipients, unfolds, especially in the West. To shed light on this question, this article analyses evidential materials from police counterterrorism investigations in the UK, exploring the way and extent to which al-Qaida-related materials have featured. The analysis identifies al-Qaida as one of the more prominent groups responsible for content found in these investigations but emphasises the overall heterogeneity of the extremist Islamist media content that has been discovered. The analysis also illustrates the importance of English-language content for this particular audience and the ability of prominent ideologies, especially Anwar al-Awlaki, to retain popularity and influence beyond his grave.

Keywords: Al-Qaida, extremist movements, message impact, grassroots response, media, United Kingdom

Spreading al-Qaida's Message

A few weeks after Osama bin Laden was killed in his Abbottabad compound in northeast Pakistan on the 2 of May 2011, the al-Qaida organisation released a eulogy in his honour, delivered by Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Ladin's successor and former deputy. In it, Zawahiri highlighted one of the late *amir's* apparent achievements above all others: he had managed to incite the *ummah* to *jihad*, he argued, "and his message reached from East to West and all over the world."[1] Spreading this message, Zawahiri later reiterated, was the core objective of the group. "Al-Qaida is a mission [*risala*] before it is an organisation [*tanzim*] or a group [*jama'at*]", Zawahiri argued in his seventh 'interview' which As-Sahab published in May 2014.[2]

For al-Qaida to succeed, therefore, it would have to ensure that its message and mission would be welcomed by those seeking to embrace Islamist militancy, irrespective of their association with the core group itself. Any organisation that depends largely on nonmaterial incentives to mobilise support is inevitably reliant on its ability to convince others of the merits of its cause and method to achieve its objectives, especially when it operates within a crowded and competitive field. Bin Laden voiced similar concerns on the eve of his tenure as leader, writing to Abu Basir (aka Nasir al-Wuhayshi) in an undated letter: "It is in our interest to spread the jihadist ideology, especially among the youth and new generations in [competition] with the other groups and Islamic movements".[3]

Yet we have little sense of how this relationship, between ideologue and nascent militant, between messenger and recipient, unfolds. Given that this relationship is dependent not only on the substance of the message and the context in which it is given, but also on the circumstances of message recipients, which are likely to differ between individuals and cultures, a nuanced and qualitative perspective is needed to enhance our understanding. Audience interpretations of "message systems" [4] can serve to mediate or mitigate media effects, whereby a reader's interpretation of a text is not a simple reflection of the author's work.[5] Events and their conveyance do not impact audiences in unidirectional, straightforward or universal ways.[6] Those who, like al-Zawahiri, seek to shape a social movement thus have to provide interpretive schemata that offer "a language and cognitive tools" to make sense of such events and experiences.[7] This relationship therefore involves different actors, from leaders seeking to shape activism to potential activists themselves. In the context of al-Qaida and associated organisations, our understanding in this regard is relatively limited.

To this end, I examine thirteen concluded terrorism cases investigated by British counterterrorism law-enforcement agencies, involving a total of 48 individuals who were ultimately convicted for terrorism offences or who died as they carried out acts of violence. My purpose is to explore the extent and way in which materials that can be associated with al-Qaida featured among the media articles that these subjects collected before and during their involvement in terrorist plots. I begin by unpacking these cases and explaining how they are constituted, especially with respect to published media that police uncovered during their investigations. I then analyse to what extent materials associated with al-Qaida featured within this collection of published media before examining the wider context in which these materials featured. The results of this enquiry highlight the influence of Anwar al-Awlaki among the subjects involved in the cases examined, and this dimension is therefore studied in a particular detail. In the conclusions, I expand upon these findings more broadly in relation to al-Qaida and Islamist inspired militancy in the United Kingdom.

The Cases

Each of the thirteen cases concerns an organised effort to carry out violence that, according to UK legislation, is defined as an act of terrorism.[8] I am thus concerned only with those who sought to participate in lethal terrorist violence, not someone involved in less serious facilitative, logistical or supportive roles such as propaganda distribution, financing, or involvement in terrorist training, that are also covered by terrorism legislation in the UK. These thirteen acts and attempted acts took place between 2004 and 2017; all concerned Islamist-inspired extremism. The 48 individuals involved operated either alone or as part of a network. In all investigations into these cases, police recovered media publications that can be defined as conveying "political, religious, racial or ideological" content (to use the language of the UK Terrorism Act 2000), that had been acquired prior to, and during, attack planning.[9] In total, 1,942 unique publications that fall within this category were identified in these cases, based on police searches of properties and digital devices. Whilst we cannot be sure that this includes *all* ideological publications that subjects involved in these plots chose to collect, we can be confident that the number represents a high percentage of these collections. Within this collection of close to two-thousand individual publications, 236 featured in more than one case.

Before I examine the extent to which material associated with al-Qaida could be identified within this dataset, three caveats are in order. The purpose of this study is not to offer any predictive assumptions regarding the relationship between media and participation in terrorism. We know that subjects in the cases under review collected these media publications, but we may be equally sure that scores of others expressed similar interest in comparable media content without seeking to participate in terrorism.[10] Second, the UK has experienced a high intensity of terrorist plots during the period under review. The cases examined here, therefore, represent a snapshot of a larger whole. Third, by exploring the extent to which UK terrorists collected al-Qaida material, I am not making assumptions regarding their consumption of this content or any notions of causality between this exposure and participation in terrorist acts.

Al-Qaida Materials in UK Terrorist Plots

The 1,942 publications consisted of audio (41%) video (18%) and written (41%) material that ranged from moderate religious or political content to extremist interpretations promoting violence (A list of these extremist titles that featured in more than one investigation is provided in the Appendix). Most of these materials were in English, with only ten publications (0.5%) written in Arabic, indicating that British terrorist subjects - at least as far as this collection is concerned - are primarily reliant on materials published in English or translated into English.

Whilst As-Sahab, al-Qaida's premier media wing, has ensured that many of its key publications have been translated or subtitled, this dependence on English-language content may well place al-Qaida at a disadvantage when it comes to disseminated messages from the core leadership. At the same time, of course, al-Qaida affiliates, especially al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, have introduced English-language publications, such as the *Inspire* magazine, aimed at sympathisers in the West. However, there is evidence suggesting the al-Qaida

leadership was not unanimous in its support of such initiatives. Bin Laden, for instance, had been warning against the potentially "dangerous consequences" of individuals operating independently - beyond the remit set out by the leadership.[11]

In total, 291 individual publications were identified as being produced or authored by networks or individuals who *became* associated with al-Qaid This figure includes materials by Anwar al-Awlaki, the popular Yemeni-American preacher, whose association with al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula was only solidified after he had produced the mainstay of his ideological output.[12] If Awlaki's 'pre-terroristic' content, though this may be a little hard to define, is excluded, the total number of al-Qaida related publications found in the cases under review drops to 98 individual publications. These include 17 involving Awlaki, including his audio rendition of Yusuf al-'Uyayri's book *The Constants on the Path of Jihad.* Other al-Qaida authors include bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Yahia al-Libi as well as materials originating from Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) and As-Sahab. Figure 1 illustrates this distribution, based on the principal figure or organisation represented in each publication.[13]

Figure 1: Al-Qaida publications distributed by source

AQI = Al-Qaida in Iraq; AQIM = Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb; AQAP = Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula
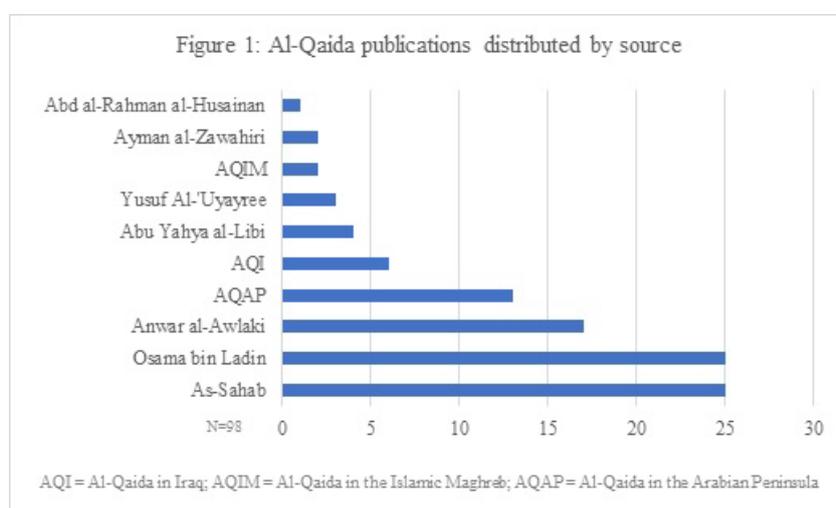
Within the entire dataset of close-to two-thousand individual publications, this collection, of course, is very small. If we focus only on those publications that contain endorsement of lethal violence (591 unique publications), the proportion of al-Qaida material rises to 17%. Fourteen of the 98 al-Qaida publications featured in more than one investigation, with materials by Anwar al-Awlaki being especially popular. In terms of temporal changes, materials from 'al-Qaida core' (i.e. bin Laden, Zawahiri, As-Sahab) dominated in cases from the period 2004-2008, whilst materials from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, including the *Inspire* magazine which was first published in 2010, were more common in more recent cases. Awlaki's materials, as indicated above, however, seemed almost 'time-proof', featuring in old and new cases. Other ideological, especially strategic, output associated with al-Qaida, moreover, is curiously absent. There was no original material by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri [14], for instance, or a copy of Abu Bakr Naji's 'Management of Savagery', which has received substantial coverage in the analytical literature.

The Wider Context of Extremist Media

This relatively small concentration of original al-Qaida material in these UK terrorism investigations begs the obvious question, what other Islamist extremist content was found? As noted, just under 600 publications were identified as promoting lethal violence in support of religious or political causes, an intuitive benchmark of 'extremism'. The list of extremist materials uncovered in these plots consists of a relatively heterogeneous mixture of original English-language materials by provocateurs such as Awlaki, Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki (a Jamaican-born radical cleric who lived in the UK), Abu Hamza al-Masri, Omar Bakri Mohammed and others; material from foreign terrorist organisations, such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State organisation; and material by foreign ideologies such as Abdullah Azzam or Sayyid Qutb that had been translated and often repackaged in abridged versions by media entrepreneurs such as Babar Ahmad's 'Azzam Publications', the Birmingham-

based 'Maktabah al-Ansaar', and the online publisher 'At-Tibyaan Publications'. Given the heterogeneity of this collection of extremist publications, therefore, al-Qaida did emerge as one of the more prominent *groups*. But the point is that most publications could not be associated with any specific organisation that dominated over other content.

Aggregating publications that featured in multiple investigations can shed further light on the popularity of materials found. Table 1 lists, in descending order, publications that condoned lethal violence These were found in between four and six of the thirteen cases under examination.

Table 1: List of Most Popular 'Extremist' Titles		
Author	**Title**	**Publisher**
Anwar al-Awlaki	Mashari Al-Ashwaq ila Masari al-Ushaaq [12 lectures]	Dar Ibn Al Mubarak
Anwar al-Awlaki	The Life of Mohammed (The Medinan Period) [37 lectures]*	Awakening Media/Zenith Productions
Anwar al-Awlaki	The Hereafter/The Afterlife/Al-Achira [21 lectures]*	Al-Basheer
Anwar al-Awlaki	Lives of the Prophets [21 lectures]*	Al-Basheer Publications
Anwar al-Awlaki	The Life of Mohammed (Makkan Period) [16 lectures]*	n/a
Abdullah Azzam	Join the Caravan	Maktabah al Ansaar
Abdullah Azzam	Defence of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation after Iman	Maktabah al Ansaar
Abi Zakaryya al Dimashqi al Dumyati, a.k.a. 'Ibn-Nuhaas' (d. 814 hijri) translated by Noor Yamani	The Book of Jihad or Mashari al-Ashwaq ila Masari al-Ush-aaq wa Mutheer al-Gharaam ila Daar Assalaam	n/a
Abdullah Azzam	The Signs of Allah the Most Merciful Ar-Rahmaan in the Jihad of Afghanistan	Maktabah al-Ansaar
Anwar al-Awlaki	Allah is Preparing us for Victory	n/a
Abdullah Azzam	The Lofty Mountain	Azzam Publications (also Maktabah al Ansaar)
n/a	Contemporary Heroes of Islam (1): Khattab 1 and 2	waislamah.net
*only some parts endorsed violence		

At the top of this list is a title called 'Mashari Al-Ashwaq', sometimes marketed as 'The Book of Jihad', which is Awlaki's audio rendition of a book by Abi Zakaryya al Dimashqi al Dumyati, also known as 'Ibn Nuhaas', a seminal medieval scholar who wrote his book dedicated to the topic of jihad in the 14th Century. The book has since been revived and translated by different individuals, including Awlaki himself. A translation of the book by Noor Yamani also featured in several cases discussed here as shown in Table 1. Awlaki's audio lecture, based on the book, was published by Beirut-based Dar Ibn Al Mubarak in 2003. In his version, which is effectively a homage to the original work, Awlaki's recites his translation but adds his own interpretation of how these medieval tenets might play out today. In particular, Awlaki provides specific examples where he shows how believers can apply Nuhaas' ancient version of jihad, down to minute tactical details, in more contemporary settings, including the use of suicide bombings and modern weaponry.

As illustrated in Table 1, other audio lectures by Awlaki appear to be equally popular, namely his series on the Life of Mohammed, the Lives of the Islamic Prophets and 'The Hereafter', which covers death and the afterlife. In these lectures, especially in his accounts of Mohammed and other prophets, Awlaki utilises the story form to present listeners with gripping accounts from the formative years of Islam, with the direct implication, of course, that this revered society should be re-established through means that include clandestine warfare.

The other prominent author who features in Table 1 is Abdullah Azzam, who is often described as Osama bin Laden's 'mentor'.[15] Azzam wrote several essays where he set out his vision regarding jihad, predominantly in the context of the Soviet war in Afghanistan, where participation in warfare, through combat and support, was seen as a defensive obligation incumbent on all believers. Four seminal treatises by Azzam are listed in Table 1: *Join the Caravan*, *Defence of the Muslim Lands*, *The Signs of Allah*, and *The Lofty Mountain*. Notably, though, these publications have all been translated and repackaged by UK-linked publishing networks that thrived in the early 2000s. These networks thus constitute important gatekeepers, translating and digitising the doctrine of 'classical jihadism'.[16] They also sometimes undertake a more creative role, doctoring, re-arranging or supplementing some of this original content. The version of Azzam's *Lofty Mountain,* which 'Azzam Publications' [17] published in 2003, for instance, contained a eulogy for a fighter killed in a US bombing raid on Tora Bora in 2001, thus connecting Azzam's original account of the Afghan jihad with more contemporary events.[18]

Most Islamist terrorists in the UK, as noted above, appear to rely on translations of scriptural or ideological discourse that was originally written in Arabic. Whilst Awlaki may have authored his own original content, his role as a gatekeeper to a narrative that UK-based subjects would otherwise struggle to reach is thus paramount. The same applies to obscure publishing initiatives such as those cited above. For more recent cases, English-language user-generated content which is often distributed on YouTube and similar sites and advertised on social media and networking platforms supplements existing material in English.

The Awlaki Factor

This brings us back to the question, to what extent has al-Qaida's message reached those seeking to participate in terrorism in the UK? The results from Table 1 are mixed. Both Azzam and Awlaki, of course, have clear links to al-Qaida. The former became instrumental in bin Laden's trajectory towards global Islamist militancy as he set up the organisational components upon which al-Qaida was built.[19] Awlaki, as mentioned, became one of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula's most famous representative and sponsor of some of their most daring attempts to strike at the West.

Yet, his representation as 'al-Qaida-affiliated' is problematic for three reasons. First, as noted, he published most of his material before he became involved with al-Qaida or, indeed, terrorism in a direct way.

Second, some of the al-Qaida core leadership appears to have been ambivalent about him. Published letters from the Abbottabad compound, in particular, suggest that bin Laden was unsure about Awlaki's elevation within the ranks of AQAP. When Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the incumbent, put him forward as potential leader, bin Laden suggested instead that Wuhayshi should remain in that position, whilst asking for more information about Awlaki. In a letter addressed to Atiyatullah al-Liby and dated 27th August 2010, by which time Awlaki was a household name within jihadi circles with well-established links to AQAP, bin Laden asked for further evidence of his track record and his 'detailed vision' for the region, which bin Laden appeared to want to scrutinise and contrast with the visions of others.[20]

Third, in a rather crude effort to 'claim' popular and charismatic figureheads of jihad, the Islamic State organisation has suggested that it and their leaders constitute the proper heirs to bin Laden's and Awlaki's legacy and those of other fallen leaders they care to embrace.[21] As if to counter this charm offensive, Ayman al-Zawahiri, as bin Laden's successor as *amir* of al-Qaida, has also praised Awlaki as one of al-Qaida's fallen commanders in several of his statements.[22]

But the bottom line is that an assessment of al-Qaida's reach among sympathetic audiences within the UK largely depends on the extent to which Awlaki can be presented as part of this fold. The two measurements of message resonance [23] considered here: the total number of individual publications associated with al-Qaida identified in the thirteen cases examined and the list of most common publications found across these investigations both point to the overwhelming influence of Awlaki.

Conclusions

These results, of course, come with the important caveat that they represent only a snapshot of a very dynamic realm. The media environment in which terrorists and potential terrorists operate at any given time is a moving target by definition. We have no assurances that particular events or circumstances, or different interpretations regarding their significance, remain static or *en vogue.* Datasets such as the one presented here can be skewed and shaped by the addition of new cases where individuals have, for whatever reason, expressed an interest in a completely different set of authors, publishers and resources from those included in the thirteen cases examined here. Nor are any assumptions being made about ways in which the subjects' collection of these ideological publications ultimately contributed to their decision to *mobilise*, to seek to participate in violence. Such considerations are beyond the scope of this article.

However, this study does help us to establish an empirically founded way in which to assess the relationship between al-Qaida as a terrorist organisation disseminating a particular message, on the one hand, and those recipients to whom that message is targeted, on the other.

Admittedly, potential sympathisers living in the UK hardly constitute a key target audience of al-Qaida, especially not of the core leadership, which has only delivered a handful of messages directed towards Muslims living in the West (though references to the UK, especially in relation to issues such as the Sykes-Picot agreement, are much more common). Yet it is important for students and practitioners in this field to understand what the relationship between messenger and recipient might look like.

In this regard, three findings from the current analysis stand out.

First, the majority of those seeking to become involved in terrorism in the UK rely on English-language content. This group, therefore, is not exposed to an unfiltered message from al-Qaida, but is instead dependent on intermediaries to act as gatekeepers to this content when no translations of original content are available or they have to rely on bespoke publications such as the *Inspire* magazine. This will inevitably shape the type of jihadi discourses that will reach British audiences in the future.

Second, authorities, authors and ideologues continue to inspire even when they are dead. This finding is consistent with Stenersen's analysis of extremist videos that featured in terrorism trials, especially in relation to the iconic status of the Saudi-born commander of Chechen militants, 'Ibn al-Khattab'.[24] Material by Awlaki is still popular even though he was killed in September 2011. Abdullah Azzam, killed decades earlier, also continues to resonate, albeit via more contemporary gatekeepers. Output from other al-Qaida leaders such as bin LadeLadenn or members of AQAP, therefore, may well continue to inspire in the future, perhaps in repackaged form or via user-generated content.

Third, materials from al-Qaida do not feature in isolation. This study suggests that subjects seeking to become involved in terrorism collect a broad repertoire of media publications conveying religious, political or ideological content from a variety of different sources. No single group, cluster or school appears to dominate, even when we concentrate on extremist materials alone. In fact, as far as established terrorist organisations are concerned, al-Qaida seems quite prominent. However, the point here is that the range of influencers is diverse.

Further analysis of current and future cases would be needed to establish whether the Islamic State group emerges as a more prominent organisation in terms of published media content recovered in terrorism investigations. However, overall, the diversity of sources within these collections appears to be a persistent feature.

This raises questions about how we conceptualise the 'local terrorist' and his/her association with established organisations like al-Qaida. The latter constitutes a structured entity which we have come to comprehend with increasing clarity through years of dedicated scholarship, declassified internal documents and a vast repertoire of public communications. The former, however, is a much more diffuse and opaque entity where we have far less research and empirical evidence to guide us. Yet, in order to understand the manifestation of al-Qaida and its future development at a local level, we need to explore the way in which AQ's message – a message that its leaders claim has achieved global reach - has been received by those who may seek to carry out acts of violence under AQ's flag.

Some of these individuals will undoubtedly have direct links with established organisational nodes that lead them along that path to violence, but even those individuals seek to interpret the world around them through a variety of different means. Whilst one analytical perspective will trace how al-Qaida as a group or organisation will evolve in the future, an equally important effort is needed to assess how its message and mission continues to be received within a competitive market place of ideas.

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Notes

[1] Al-Zawahiri, A. (2011) 'The Noble Knight Dismounted', published by As-Sahab (May) secured from https://archive.org/details/retha_001 [as of October 2016]. English transcript available in Holbrook, D. (Ed.) (2017) *Al-Qaeda 2.0: A Critical Reader*, Hurst, London.

[2] Al-Zawahiri, A. (2014) 'The Seventh Interview with Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri: Reality Between Pain and Hope', published by As-Sahab (May); URL: http://justpaste.it/fb61 [video], and URL: https://justpaste.it/lqaa [Arabic transcript], as of August 2017, English transcript available in : D. Holbrook (2017).

[3] Office of the Director of National Intelligence (2017) .'Letter to Abu Basir'; URL: https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ubl2017/english/Letter%20to%20Abu%20Basir.pdf [as of August 2017].

[4] Bryant, J. & Zillmann (2009) 'A retrospective and prospective look at media effects'; in: Robin L. Nabi, Mary Beth Oliver (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Media Processes and Effects*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 9-17.

[5] Holub, R. C. (2003) *Reception Theory*, Abington:Routledge, p. xiv.

[6] Tololyan, K. (2006) 'Cultural Narrative and the Motivation of the Terrorist'; in: Rapoport, D. (Ed.) *Critical Concepts in Political Science: Terrorism Volume IV: The Fourth or Religious Wave,* London: Routledge,p. 32.

[7] Wiktorowicz, Q. (2004) Introduction in Wiktorowicz (Ed.) *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*. Indiana University Press, p. 15.

[8] Part 1, Section 1, Terrorism Act 2000; URL:http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents [as of August 2017].

[9] UK Terrorism Act 2000, Part 1 (1); URL: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11 . Includes subsequent amendments.

[10] C.f. Glazzard, A. (2017) 'Losing the Plot: Narrative, Counter-Narrative and Violent Extremism', the Hague: ICCT Research Paper, International Centre for Counter Terrorism, p. 11

[11] Lahoud, N. et al. (2012) 'Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Laden Sidelined?' Harmony Program, The Combating Terrorism Center, West Point; URL: https://ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/CTC_LtrsFromAbottabad_WEB_v2.pdf [as of August 2017], p. 52.

[12] I should also note that Awlaki's extensive series of audio lectures that were split into multiple chapters and marketed as such were treated as separate publications. Awlaki's audio series titled 'The Hereafter', for instance, published by Al-Basheer, is divided into ten chapters and thus logged as ten independent entries.

[13] The *Inspire* magazine, published by AQAP's *Al-Malahem*, is grouped under that organisation's output. Otherwise a 'group' label

indicates generic output from that particular organisation, not a publication which exclusively carries a leadership statement.

[14] Even though his material was reproduced or referenced in the *Inspire* magazine.

[15] E.g. Post, J. M. (2002) 'Killing in the Name of God: Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda', Counterproliferation Paper No. 18, USAF Counterproliferation Center.

[16] Hegghammer, T. (2010) *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[17] Over which Babar Ahmad, a veteran of the Bosnian jihad in the 1990s and pioneer of a new generation of Islamist propaganda, presided.

[18] Azzam, A. (2003) *The Lofty Mountain*. London, Azzam Publications.

[19] Bergen, P. & Cruickshank (2011) 'Revisiting the Early Al Qaeda: An Updated Account of its Formative Years', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 35:1, pp. 1-36.

[20] Combating Terrorism Center (no date) 'Letter from Usama bin Laden to Atiyatullah Al-Libi' [SOCOM-2012-0000003-HT]; URL: https://ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Letter-from-Usama-Bin-Laden-to-Atiyatullah-Al-Libi-Translation.pdf [as of August 2017], p. 2; Lahoud et al. (2012), p. 19.

[21] A feature article in the fourth edition of *Dabiq*, IS's English language magazine, referenced Awlaki, who had also been praised in IS-linked video output. The organisation has been more explicit in its references to bin Ladin's legacy, quoting from material presenting ISIL as the al-Qaida leader's true successor (in *Dabiq,* issue 4) and lamenting the chaos that followed his death, once al-Zawahiri took over (in *Dabiq* issue 10).

[22] Al-Zawahiri, A. (2012) 'Yemen: Between a Fugitive Puppet and his new Replacement', As-Sahab (15 May); al-Zawahiri (2012) 'To Our People in the Place of the Revelation and the Cradle of Islam', As-Sahab (18 May); As-Sahab (2014) 'Announcing the Establishment of the Organization for Qaeda Al-Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent' (3 September); al-Zawahiri (2015) 'The Islamic Spring' sixth instalment, published by As-Sahab (9 October).

[23] I am here referring to the ability of movement leaders as "signifying agents engaged in the social construction of meaning" to "articulate and disseminate frameworks of understanding that resonate with potential participants and broader publics to elicit collective action"; see Wiktorowicz, Q. (2004), p. 15.

[24] Stenersen, A. (2014) 'Gathering data through court cases: implications for understanding visual messaging'; in: Carol K. Winkler & Cori E. Dauber (Eds.) *Visual Propaganda and Extremism in the Online Environment*. United States Army War College, pp. 33-54.

Appendix: List of Extremist Titles Featuring in at least Two of the Fourteen Cases Examined

Author	Title	Media type	Publisher (if known)
Abdullah Azzam	The tawhid of action	Written material	At-Tibyan Publications
Anwar Al-Awlaki	Abu Bakr al Siddiq: His Life and Times [series]	Audio	Al-Basheer publications
n/a	Readings in Kashf-ush Shubu-haat (Removal of the Doubts) Publication in eleven parts on responding those Muslims who doubt fundamental components of Islam	Written material	Salafipublications.com
Khalid bin Abdur Rahman Al Husai-nan	How Can You Out-do the Scholars	Written material	Al Fajr Media (publisher) Dar Al-Murabiteen (translation)

Anwar Al-Awlaki	Mashari Al-Ashwaq ila Masari al-Ushaaq/'The Book of Jihad' [series]	Audio	Dar Ibn Al Mubarak (Beirut) 2003
Anwar Al-Awlaki	Constants of Jihad/Constants on the Path of Jihad [series]	Audio	Islambase
Abi Zakaryya al Dimashqi al Dumyati, a.k.a. 'Ibn-Nuhaas' (d. 814 hijri) translated by Noor Yamani	The Book of Jihad or Mashari al-Ashwaq ila Masari al-Ushaaq wa Mutheer al-Gharaam ila Daar Assalaam	Written material	N/A
Abdullah Azzam	The Signs of Allah the Most Merciful Ar-Rahmaan in the Jihad of Afghanistan	Written material	Maktabah Al-Ansaar
Abu Hamza al-Masri, edited by Ibn Umar	The Khawaarij and Jihad	Written material	N/A
Mohammad 'Abdus Salam Faraj	Al-Jihad: The Absent Obligation	Written material	Maktabah Al Ansaar
Anwar Al-Awlaki	Allah is Preparing us for Victory	Multiple file types	N/A
Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi	This is our Aqidah	Written material	At-Tibyan Publications
Abdullah Azzam	The Lofty Mountain	Written material	Azzam Publications (also Maktabah al Ansaar)
Anwar Al-Awlaki	Lives of the Prophets [series]	Audio	Al-Basheer Publications
Anwar Al-Awlaki	The State of the Umma	Audio	N/A
Anwar Al-Awlaki	The Life of Mohammed (Makkan Period) [series]	Audio	Awakening Media
Anwar Al-Awlaki	The Life of Mohammed (The Medinan Period) [series]	Audio	Awakening Media
Anwar Al-Awlaki	The Hereafter/The Afterlife/Al-Achira [series]	Audio	Al-Basheer
Sayyid Qutb	Milestones (or Signposts on the Road)	Written material	N/A

Moulana Moham-med Masood Azhar	The Virtues of Jihad	Written material	N/A
Yusuf al-'Uyayri	The Islamic Ruling on the Permissibility of Self-Sacrificial Operations: Suicide or Martyrdom?	Written material	At-Tibyan Publications
As-Sahab	The wills of the martyrs of New York and Washington, aka 19 Martyrs	Video	As-Sahab
Azzam Publications/Babar Ahmad	In the Hearts of Green Birds, also known as Martyrs of Bosnia	Multiple file types	Azzam Publications/Recordings. Also appears linked to the El-Mudzahid Brigade in Bosnia-Herzegovina
Azzam Publications, Sawt Al-Quqaz	Russian Hell	Video	First Released in December 1999, originally available by mail order through Azzam publications. More recently there have been numerous online distributors
Azzam Publications/Babar Ahmad	Under the Shades of the Swords	Audio	Azzam Publications
Feiz Mohammed	The Last Day	Audio	N/A
Feiz Mohammed	The Grave	Audio	Sometimes distributed via Islambase
Feiz Mohammed	True Qualities of a Believer	Audio	N/A
Abdullah bin Mohammad	Valuable Collection for the Strategic Memorandum Series	Written material	Ansar Al-Mujahideen, English Forum translation of an Al-Ma'sada Publication
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Declaration of War	Audio	Islambase
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Natural Disasters	Audio	darulislam.info
n/a	Caravan of Martyrs	Audio	Maktabah al Ansaar
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Rejecting the Taghoot	Audio	N/A
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Seven Conditions of Shahadah	Audio	N/A

Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Cancers in the Body of the Ummah	Audio	Given in the UK
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	History Repeats itself	Audio	London
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Shirk in Perspective	Audio	N/A
Abdullah Azzam	Martyrs: the Building Blocks of Nations	Written material	Azzam Publications
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Peak of the Matter	Audio	N/A
Abdullah Faisal Al-Jamiki	Treachery from Within	Audio	Delivered in UK in August 1998
Esa al-Hindi	The Army of Medinah in Kashmir	Audio	Maktabah Al-Ansaar
Taysir Allouni	Interview with Osama bin LadenLaden by Taysir Allouni	Written material	10 October 2001, Al Jazeera. Also became available on Taliban-News, http://www.taliban-news.com
Omar Abdur Rahman	Confronting the Ruler	N/A	Reportedly given during trial for assassination of President Sadat. Distributed by Azzam Publications
waislamah.net	Contemporary Heroes of Islam (1): Khattab 1 and 2	Video	waislamah.net
n/a	Heroes of Islam: Abdullah bin Al Mubarak	audio	n/a
Abdul-Qadir Ibn Abdil-Aziz	Jihad and the Effects of Intention upon it	Written material	At-Tibyan Publications
multiple	Inspire issue 1	Written material	Summer 2010
Abdullah Azzam	Join the Caravan	Written material	Maktabah al Ansaar
Abdullah Azzam	Defence of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation after Iman	Written material	Maktabah Al-Ansaar (and others)
Anwar Al-Awlaki	The Life of the Prophet Mohammed (Makkan Period), CD3: The Religious Situation in Pre-Islamic Arabia	Audio	Awakening Media

Munhammad bin Ahmad As-Salim/ Isa Al-Awshin	39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad	Written material	At-Tibyan
Husayn Ibn Mahmud	The Giant Man - Biography of Mullah Omar	Written material	At-Tibyan Publications