The Language of Persuasion and Power in ISIS Political Discourse

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a
degree in any other University. Wherever contributions of others are involved, an
indication is clearly given, with due reference to the literature and acknowledgment of
collaborative research and discussion. Most importantly, this study is accomplished under
the supervision of Professor Ahmad Atawneh at Hebron University.

Signature: Maysa Qutteineh

In my capacity as a supervisor of the candidate’s thesis, I certify that the above
statements are true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: Prof. Ahmad Atawneh
Dedication

for dad, who told me to go the whole nine yards

for mom, who gave me all the emotional support needed

for my husband, who kept getting me back on track when the wheels fell off

and for my little baby boy, who made this mission an impossible one
Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have provided me with the possibility to make this study come to life. I am highly indebted to my parents for their understanding and help throughout the duration of my studies. Many thanks and appreciations also go to my husband whose encouragement has played a role in my success.

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Abstract

Based on the recognition that the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has received from international media and the success of its propaganda in recruiting foreign fighters, the researcher has decided to study ISIS political discourse as represented in its official English-printed magazine, Dabiq. The researcher, then, builds up on the existing knowledge of the pragmatics of political discourse by addressing this trendy topic from a multi-disciplinary perspective that combines language, politics, and psychology.

Basically, this research seeks to a) analyze the language of persuasion as implemented in thirty of Dabiq magazine articles and to b) explain the ideas that ISIS promotes through the use of this language. It also examines how ISIS activates persuasion strategies to practice power verbally. To achieve this purpose, the researcher has adopted Cialdini’s and Shabo’s principles of persuasion and propaganda. The third question which the study tries to answer is whether Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Culpeper's impoliteness strategies apply this language of persuasion and power. The study concludes that Dabiq uses all the investigated persuasion strategies to achieve four main goals: to create a positive self representation and negative other representation, to call for immigration to its territories, to religiously justify its punishment methods, and to recruit fighters. Most importantly, it proves that there is indeed a correlation between persuasion and politeness and another one between impoliteness and power. However, aside from the original aim of the study, it turned out that ISIS tends to de-contextualize religious texts to serve its own political agendas.
Abstract in Arabic

لغة القوة و الإقناع في الخطاب السياسي لتنظيم الدولة الإسلامية (داعش)

ملخص الدراسة

انطلاقاً من الاهتمام الذي أولته وسائل الإعلام العالمية بتنظيم الدولة الإسلامية (داعش) و نجاح إعلامه في تجنيد مقاتلين أجانب، ارتأت الباحثة ضرورة دراسة الخطاب السياسي لتنظيم الدولة الإسلامية كما غرّض في مجلته الرسمية دابق بالنسخة الإنجليزية. و بذلك تضيف الباحثة إلى المعرفة السابقة برامجات الخطاب السياسي عن طريق تناول هذا الموضوع الذي أصبح حديث الساعة من وجهة نظر متعددة التخصصات تداخلها اللغة و السياسية و علم النفس.

يسعى البحث بشكل أساسي إلى (أ) تحليل لغة الإقناع المستخدمة في ثلاثين مقالة من مقالات مجلة دابق و (ب) الكشف عن الأفكار التي بروجها تنظيم الدولة من خلال تضمين هذه اللغة في خطابها السياسي. كما وتهدف الدراسة إلى التمتع في الطرق التي اتبعتها تنظيم الدولة في تفعيل أساليب الإقناع لنسخة قوتها لغويًا. و لتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تم الاعتماد على مبادئ الإقناع و التضليل الإعلامي كما بينهما سيدني و شابو. أما السوال الثالث الذي يحاول البحث الإجابة عنه فهو عن الدور الذي تلعبه نظريتنا التآدب في الحديث لبراون و ليفسون والوقاية اللغوية للكالبيير في صياغة لغة الإقناع و القوة. و خلصت الرسالة إلى أن مجلة دابق تعد إلى استخدام أساليب الإقناع التي تم الإشارة إليها في قسم الأدبيات كافة لتحقيق أهداف أربعة أساسية، ألا و هي: خلق صورة إيجابية لتحقيق تنظيم الدولة بحيث تكون مخالفة لصورة أعداء السليبة، الدعوة إلى الهجرة إلى أراضي التنظيم، تقديم مبادرات دينية لأساليب العقاب التي يستخدمها و تجنيد المقاتلين. إضافة لما تم ذكره أعلاه أثبتت الدراسة وجود علاقة تربط بين الإقناع و التآدب و أخري بين الفظاعة و القوة. و بعدها عن هدف البحث الأساسي، اتضح أن تنظيم الدولة الإسلامية يعمل على إخراج النصوص الدينية من سياقها لخدمته خططه السياسية.
Definition of Key Terms

1. **Pragmatics**: It is the field of linguistics that goes beyond the structural view of language to study the invisible meaning of a speaker's utterance that is not being explicitly stated (Yule, 1996).

2. **Political Discourse Analysis (PDA)**: It refers to the analysis of political discourse from a critical perspective, a perspective which focuses on the reproduction and contestation of political power through political discourse (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012).

3. **Persuasion**: It is a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice (Perloff, 2003).

4. **Power**: It is the possession of control, authority, or influence over others (Van Dijk, 2001).

5. **The Contrast Principle**: It is one of the principles of persuasion that aims at convincing audience of an idea by showing a drastic contrast between the presented items (Cialdini, 2007).

6. **The Reciprocity Principle**: It is one of the principles of persuasion which stresses the fact that people's reactions are usually imitations of the original actions initiated by others towards them (Cialdini, 2007).

7. **The Authority Principle**: It is a persuasion technique that relies on quoting authoritative figures because of their professionalism and the trust people attribute to them (Cialdini, 2007).

8. **The Consistency Principle**: It is a persuasion technique that exploits people's appreciation for those who are committed to certain beliefs and continuously act according to them (Cialdini, 2007).

9. **The Liking Principle**: It is a persuasion technique that uses humor, familiarity, and
similarity aspects to convince audience of the speaker's ideas (Cialdini, 2007).

10. **Glittering Generalities**: It is one of the false-reasoning propaganda strategies that take advantage of appealing words with positive connotations but vague meaning (Shabo, 2008).

11. **Name Calling**: It is a false-reasoning propaganda strategy which is based on evoking negative connotations related to certain words so as to ridicule an opposing enemy or idea (Shabo, 2008).

12. **False Dilemma**: It is a false-reasoning propaganda technique which aims at providing audience with two suggested options so that they choose the one that is labeled good, even if both are actually bad (Shabo, 2008).

13. **Bandwagon**: It is a false-reasoning propaganda technique which is based on the idea that people look at the common behavior practiced by others in order to constitute their own decisions (Shabo, 2008).

14. **Card Staking**: It refers to a false-reasoning propaganda technique that downplays or omits conflicting perspectives (Shabo, 2008).

15. **Face and Politeness Theory**: It is a theory presented by Brown and Levinson which explains the several strategies one uses to mitigate his/her face threatening acts so as not to attack the face of the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

16. **Impoliteness Theory**: It is a theory present by Culpeper in response to Brown and Levinson's theory. His theory explains the numerous strategies a speaker uses to directly attack and offend the hearer's face (Culpeper, 1996).
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Whether we put it into Machiavelli's "the end justifies the means" or Smedley's "all is fair in love and war," the fact that politicians are ready to do whatever it takes to win their fight remains an ever-lasting truth, even if that includes convincing others to believe that a war which could jeopardize the life of a whole nation is simply justified, moral or even "great." In 2014, the name of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, hereafter ISIS, rose to prominence. Since then, and despite the international disapproval of its ideology, ISIS has been able to do both: a) recruit more young supporters and b) persuade them of the morality of its actions. It is suggested that ISIS' official magazine, Dabiq, plays a focal role in achieving these purposes. Therefore, it becomes essential to analyze this particular political discourse of ISIS in order to identify its persuasion techniques. To achieve that, the first part of this research presents certain theoretical background about the definition and historical development of persuasion, as well as Cialdini's (2007) and Shabo's (2008) persuasion principles. In addition, Brown and Levinson's politeness techniques (1987) and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies are listed in an attempt to find correlations among persuasion, power and politeness. In other words, there is an attempt to decide a) if politeness and persuasion complement each other and b) if impoliteness and power go hand in hand. The second chapter, however, explains the methodology used for data collection and analysis. As for the third chapter, it deciphers the language used in Dabiq to identify its persuasion techniques and the reasons why it does so. Moreover, a look at the speeches of ISIS officials, which are part of the analyzed data, uncovers how persuasion


requires the integration of politeness strategies into one's talk. It also shows that
impoliteness can be seen as a sign of power. Conclusions are then drawn to prove that the
hypotheses of the study are valid. Finally, even though this study is one of the first to study
ISIS discourse from a pragmatic point of view, more research should be conducted to
cover other kinds of ISIS propaganda and other stages in the International-ISIS war such as
the Russian military intervention in Syria.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Critical discourse analysis is considered to be the umbrella under which various
political topics are discussed (Van Dijk, 2001); so, whenever a new political topic rises to
prominence, it becomes essential for analysts to critically identify its linguistic behavior.
ISIS is not an exception. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, worldwide
media have spotted ISIS' notorious reputation as one of the most intimidating terrorist
group that history has ever witnessed (Archick, Belkin, Blanchard, Hemud, & Mix, 2015).
Its global strategy and multi-million dollar propaganda, which aims at recruiting foreign
fighters and encouraging terror attacks in the Western World while still condensing its
forces in Iraq and Syria, have marked it as the top priority of the US counter-terrorism plan
(Institute for the Study of War, 2015). In fact, ISIS on-line media have caused "around
30,000 foreign fighters from 100 different countries [to travel to ISIS' territories]" (Gorka
& Gorka, 2015, p.7). The several attacks against many European countries have also been
proven to be inspired by ISIS propaganda (Archick, Belkin, Blanchard, Hemud, & Mix,
2015). In other words, the accumulating power of the Islamic State and the persuasive
impact of its propaganda have already been acknowledged, but how this persuasion is
achieved and how power is reflected in ISIS discourse are two of the many areas that have
been left uninvestigated. Therefore, this critical discourse analysis study might provide
audience with the sought answers.
1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims at detecting how and why ten of the most common persuasion strategies have been implemented into ISIS discourse. This goal has been accomplished by scrutinizing thirty articles selected from the first ten issues of ISIS' official English-printed magazine, *Dabiq*. From the researcher's perspective, these articles represent all the recurring ideas in *Dabiq* and show a wide variety of persuasion techniques; so, saturation is achieved. As for the analysis, Cialdini's (2007) principles of persuasion and Shabo's (2008) persuasion techniques have been specifically chosen because they complement each other. The former focuses on the psychological aspects underpinning persuasion, which can be analyzed by considering the overall pragmatic meaning of the text; while the latter presents direct war-time propaganda techniques, which can be spotted by looking at certain linguistic features in a text. Furthermore, the study investigates how Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness theory are used in the public speeches of ISIS leaders either a) to practice persuasion by mitigating the speaker's face threatening acts or b) to claim power by attacking the hearer's face needs.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Political discourse analysts, readers of *Dabiq* magazine, and teachers are the audience to whom this study attends. First of all, the current study extends the existing knowledge about persuasion by viewing it in a new political context, which has not been seriously researched, instead of studying it from a business-related perspective. In addition, the conducted research explains how the "self-proclaimed," rather than the universally acknowledged, power of the speaker affects the way he/she structures his/her talk, thus, the way hearers perceive him/her as well. Moreover, the distinctive combination of frameworks adopted to test the hypotheses of the study has two benefits: a) it looks at the overall pragmatic meaning of the text instead of its pure linguistic features and b) it stands
out as a new outline for other researches to build on for a more comprehensive understanding of political ideologies. Secondly, this study attempts to reveal the secrets of persuasion so as to place both the speaker and the reader on a level playing field. The secrets of persuasion are revealed, for readers should no longer be treated as passive receivers, rather active participants who have enough knowledge to keep their options open. Thirdly, teachers can rely on this study to prove to their students that context is important for determining the pragmatic meaning of a text.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The study aims at exploring the following goals:

1. To place persuasion in the context of political discourse analysis.
2. To critically analyze the numerous persuasion strategies applied in Dabiq and show the agendas they serve.
3. To explore the effect of the speaker's power on the way he/she carries out face threatening acts.
4. To explain how persuasion and power affect the speaker's decision to talk politely or impolitely.

1.6. Questions of the Study

1. Which of the ten investigated persuasion techniques appear in ISIS' magazine?
2. What are the ideas ISIS tries to convince readers with?
3. How do ISIS officials exploit politeness/impoliteness strategies to express their power and to persuade the target audience of their agendas?

1.7. Limitations of the Study

1. The study investigates only a limited number of articles in comparison to the huge amount of data published by ISIS on the World Wide Web. However, keeping up with all the information uploaded about ISIS is by far an unreachable goal.
2. This study looks at ISIS discourse before and after the intervention of the US-led coalition. Still, it does not cover other stages of the war against ISIS, especially the Russian intervention. Such new contexts might lead to a change in the way ISIS addresses its enemies.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This section presents the branch of linguistics that governs the analysis of this study as well as a brief introduction about ISIS. After that, the definition of persuasion and its development throughout history are tackled to pave the way for an elaborated explanation about the methods used in the persuasion industry. In fact, two persuasion theories are presented: a) Cialdini’s (2007) persuasion principles which explain the psychology of influence and b) Shabo's (2008) propaganda techniques that portray how persuasion was carried out in WWII. Finally, the study refers to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies to draw a relationship between power and persuasion.

2.2. Pragmatics

The talk about persuasion cannot be handled without reference to pragmatics, for both highlight the role of the speaker in the creation of the multiple layers of meaning a given context has. Therefore, the following paragraphs define "pragmatics" and introduce some of its main principles.

To appreciate pragmatics, one has to understand what it is, as well as what it is not. As a field of linguistics that goes beyond the structural view of language, pragmatics is considered to be "the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker" (Yule, 1996, p.3). Actually, it encompasses what Grice (1975) calls "implicature," i.e., the invisible meaning of a speaker's utterance that is not being explicitly stated. In pragmatics, it is the contextual elements (the setting, participants, movement, and shared knowledge) that determine what the speaker means by his utterances (Gee, 2011). This is simply what pragmatics is all about, but how does it differ from other related branches of linguistics? Linguists have
always contrasted it with syntax and semantics. On the one hand, syntax studies the organization of the linguistic forms in a sentence and pays no attention to meaning (Sowa, 1995). On the other hand, semantics focuses on the relationship between these linguistic forms and their literal meanings in a language or their actual reference in the real world, without taking the context or the intentions of the speaker into account. In other words, semantics works on the sentence level to investigate its truth conditions (Yule, 1996). This is the reason why the semantics of idiomatic expressions is totally different from their pragmatic meaning.

As for the main ideas discussed under the scope of pragmatics, they include -though not limited to- reference, inference, deixis, speech acts and politeness theory (Adamec, 2011). To demonstrate, the speaker chooses some kind of referring expressions that all language speakers agree on, such as proper nouns and pronouns, to create a connection between the signified and the signifier (Saussure, 1959). Still, people sometimes do not call the things they know by name. Instead, they use a descriptive phrase and wait for the receiver to "infer what referent [they] have in mind" (Yule, 1996, p.17). Also, deictic expressions are one of the means through which one can point to things in the outer world, expecting others to decode their meaning (Levinson, 2003). Without context, these personal, spatial and temporal indexicals cannot be decoded. Moreover, pragmatics is about Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) speech acts theory which states that utterances perform actions as in apologies, compliments, promises and requests. Finally, the different theories of politeness, such as Grice's (1975) four cooperative maxims and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies, are essential for the interpretation of meaning in a given text, especially when power is involved.

So, why to discuss pragmatics here and now? In simple terms, pragmatics sheds light on the significance of the context and the speaker in determining the meaning of utterances.
Thus, if the persuasion strategies implied in ISIS discourse are to be examined in this study, some of the previously mentioned aspects of pragmatics will contribute to the overall analysis of the materials. Yet, in order to fully comprehend ISIS discourse, some elaboration on the context under which it operates and about ISIS itself is presented in the following sections respectively. After all, it is crucial to establish the ideology that governs the speaker's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.

2.3. Political Discourse Analysis (PDA)

Classified under the critical discourse analysis (CDA) umbrella, political discourse analysis, henceforth PDA, looks at the enactment of power in political texts and talks (Van Dijk, 2001). To unravel the hidden agendas of politicians, PDA "provide[s] answers to questions about the relationship between language, …power, …ideology and politics" (Rahimi & Riasati, 2011, p.107). PDA, then, refers to the "analysis of political discourse from a critical perspective, a perspective which focuses on the reproduction and contestation of political power through political discourse" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p.17).

In order to identify political discourse (PD), one has to consider its contextual and textual properties. According to Van Dijk (1997a), the context of PD is distinguished by its participants, settings, ideologies, values, and functions. For instance, the participants of political discourse are both those who practice it and who receive it, including politicians, political institutions, political organizations, and the masses to which messages are addressed. Logically speaking, not everything uttered by a politician is political unless it is practiced in political domains, such as news media sources, campaigns, demonstrations and formal speeches. In addition, PD covers a variety of systems (democracy and dictatorship) and values (freedom and equality). Most importantly, the purposes of political discourse are mainly to govern a nation and persuade it of the righteousness of that governance.
As for the textual aspects of PD, Van Dijk (1997b) presents a framework that lists some. Referring to figurative language, he suggests that euphemism and irony can mitigate the offensiveness of some political views and actions whereas metaphors and similes transform abstract political ideas into vivid images etched in the minds of receivers so that they feel the urgency of acting in a certain way. Also, some syntactic structures like passives and nominalizations "hide or background agency" (p.129) by omitting or replacing the agent of the sentence and bringing the focus to actions instead. Other aspects such as generalizations and vagueness provide politicians with an escape out of accusations. Moreover, comparison-contrast arguments, which are also called conducive argumentations (Walton, 2011), enhance the polarization of "we" vs. "them". Briefly, political discourse analysis relies on a mixture of linguistic tools, out of which some work on the sentential level while others work on the discursive level, each activated right on time.

2.4. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

To put the discourse of ISIS under a microscope, a look at the big picture within which it operates seems to be crucial; therefore, this section briefly introduces some information regarding ISIS' ideological beliefs, historical development, geographical expansion, online videos, and official magazine. To avoid bias, the following introduction is compiled from different ISIS and non-ISIS resources.

To begin with, ISIS claims that it is a Sunni jihadist group that aims at establishing an Islamic caliphate similar to that founded by Prophet Muhammad in the early days of Islam (Glint, 2014; ISIS, 2014, June). In fact, it follows the Wahhabism doctrines, which reject any modern interpretations of Islam, as stated by Kirkpatrick (2014, September), a journalist for The New York Times. Furthermore, ISIS' view of Islam emphasizes that it is a "religion of sword rather than pacifism" (ISIS, 2014b, February, p.20). Consequently, 57
countries represented by the Islamic Organization Cooperation have "almost unanimously
condemned and denounced ISIS not merely as un-Islamic but actively anti-Islamic"
(Hasan, 2015, January, p.1).

Secondly, even though ISIS has been recently taken seriously by the international
community, it is not a newborn political party. Back in 2003, it was founded by Abu
Musab az-Zarqawi under the name of "Jama'at at-Tawhid wa al-Jihad", translated as "The
Organization of Monotheism and Jihad" (Guidere, 2012, p.181). Yet as a reaction to the
invasion of Iraq and the formation of the Iraqi Interim Governing Council in 2004, the
group joined al-Qaeda and was renamed "Tanzim Qaeda al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn,"
which means "al-Qaeda Group of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers" (Bunt, 2009,
p.227). Two years later, al-Zarqawi died and his organization "created the Mujahidin Shura
Council [as] an umbrella organization that five other small jihadist groups joined" (The
National Counterterrorism Center, 2009, p.38) so as to announce the formation of the
Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).

Unsurprisingly, with the beginning of the Syrian civil war, al-Zarqawi's successor, Abu
Bakir al-Baghdadi, saw potentials of a geographical expansion in Syria. By 2013, ISI
forces had become the most powerful insurgent group on the Syrian land and claimed the
merger of an-Nusra Front to its troops (ISIL, n.d.). However, this was rejected by an-Nusra
Front, which then aligned with al-Qaeda against ISIS in an open-fire battle. Since then,
ISIS has been called "Da'ish" as an abbreviation for the Arabic name "al-Dawlah al-
Islamiyyah fi al-Iraq wa Bilad ash-Sham." Nevertheless, ISIS considers "Da'ish" as a
derogatory term and prefers to be named the "Islamic State," with a clear declaration of a
worldwide caliphate (Withnall, 2014, June).

However, there are many scholars such as Chomsky and Galloway who talk about ISIS
being directly or indirectly created by the West in general and the US in particular. For
Chomsky (Chomsky's Philosophy, 2015, August 22), the US created the background from which ISIS grew and developed because after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003; the complete destruction of Sadam Hussein's state; and the formation of a Shiite administration; Iraq exacerbated sectarian divisions from which Al-Qaeda and ISIS rose. Galloway (OxfordUnion, 2016, March 16) dates the origins of ISIS even back to the 1990s war against Taliban. At that time, the US welcomed the intervention of the extremists in the region, which are mostly Wahabbists and Salafists from Saudi Arabia, to come and fight against Taliban. Saudi Arabia was an alley of the US in the Middle East, therefore, was provided with money, materials, and political support to create this monster of Islamist fanaticism. In other words, what was once created by the US now backfires. Others go even further to assert that America is deliberately "using ISIS to a) to attack its enemies in the Middle East, b) to serve as a pretext for US military intervention abroad, and c) to foment a manufactured domestic threat, used to justify the unprecedented expansion of invasive domestic surveillance" (Chengu, 2014, November 14).

Thirdly, ISIS has several provinces under its control. Even though it has official branches in Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Gulf, the main presence is centered in Iraq and Syria. On the Iraqi side, ISIS claims authority over major cities like Mosul, Sinjar, Anbar, Fallujah, Tikrit, Samurra, Salah Din, Kirkuk, and Ninawa. On the Syrian side, ISIS has control over Haska, Dir al-Zur, al-Raqqa, Eastern Aleppo, Idlib, and Tadmur (Institute for the Study of War, 2015).

Fourthly, the reason why ISIS has riveted the world's attention goes back to the types of punishment it practices against its enemies. These practices include the genocide of religious minorities, sexual slavery of non-Muslim women, beheading, and burning of apostates. For instance, ISIS targets all non-Sunni religious factions, such as Shia, Alawites, Druze, Christians and Yezidis. The most compelling evidence of this kind of
persecution is the 5000 Yezidis who were killed during ISIS battles in Iraq (York, 2015). As for sexual harassment and slavery, which ISIS prefers to call "saby" and "tasarri," they are directed towards non-Muslim women who are abducted in war times (Al-Muhajerah, 2015, May).

Most importantly, ISIS utilizes modern technology to document how its enemies get far more than a slap on the wrist when captured. Sometimes, a ransom is asked in exchange of the hostage, but on other occasions it is not. For example, the Japanese Haruna Yukawa and Kenji Goto Jogo have been beheaded after the refusal of their government to pay a huge ransom of 200 million dollars (ISIS, 2014a, February, p.3). Other videos that show the beheading of Iraqis, Kurds, Assyrians, and even Egyptian Copts are also available online. As for burning, two incidents have spread like wildfire on the internet: a) the burning of the Jordanian pilot Mu'ath Kasasbah (Ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyya Security Database, 2015, February) and the burning of four Shia spies (Al-Anbar, 2015, August). Yet, it should be noted that ISIS provides a logical justification for each of the previously mentioned actions, supported by Quranic verses taken out of context.

However, the multiple videos uploaded on the internet are not the only source of ISIS propaganda. Actually, since the 28th June, 2014 ISIS has been publishing an English-printed magazine, entitled Dabiq, to focus on certain Islamic religious issues and current political events. The name itself represents ISIS' belief in apocalypticism since it "is taken from the area named Dabiq in the northern countryside of Halab (Aleppo) in Sham. This place was mentioned in a hadith describing some of the events of the Malahim (what is sometimes referred to as Armageddon in English)" (ISIS, 2014, June, p.4).

Last but not least, this increasing power of ISIS has intimidated multiple countries in the Middle East and the world. As a result, the United States of America has initiated a coalition to fight ISIS troops. Fantz (2014, October), a reporter for the CNN, mentions the
involved nations and their roles. The regional allies of the U.S. are Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Bahrain while the western allies include the UK, Australia, France, Germany, Canada, and the Netherlands. The list could go on and on if one counts the countries that provide ammunition, humanitarian aid, and financial support.

Obviously, after this brief introduction about ISIS and its political context, the focus from now on is shifted towards "persuasion," its definition, development throughout history, psychological principles, and methods of analysis.

2.5. Persuasion Defined

Before explaining how persuasion works, it is better to understand what persuasion is and how it is related to propaganda. Starting with the definition of persuasion, it is a "a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice" (Perloff, 2003, p.8). To explain, persuasion is considered symbolic for two main reasons. The first one is that "persuasion" is not magical, i.e., it does not happen in the blink of an eye; rather, it needs to be practiced systematically for a long period of time before the persuader reaps what he/she saw. The second reason is that the persuader uses the rich symbolism of a certain language in transmitting his/her thoughts. In fact, whenever a speaker wants to send a message, he/she starts encoding ideas and information in the form of a symbol. In most cases, language is that symbol system that people rely on because the intended receivers are familiar with it. Moreover, persuasion is an attempt, which may fail or succeed. Yet, whatever outcome the persuasive process achieves, it is still a conscious, deliberate action that the persuader has prepared for in advance. In addition, persuaders need a medium to transmit their messages, a medium that ranges from simple face-to-face conversations to the more complex mass media
sources. Finally, what makes persuasion different from coercion is the presence of "free choice", the ability of the hearer to accept or reject what the speaker presents.

Even though Perloff’s (2003) definition is very comprehensive, it should be clear that persuasion does not always aim at changing the responses of an audience but at reinforcing the already existed responses and shaping new ones as well (Miller, 1980). The first purpose, "response change," is by far the most difficult to achieve since the speaker asks the hearer to abandon some values or attitudes which constitute his/her identity. For instance, it has been quite difficult to push some White Americans to accept Afro-Americans as equivalent human beings (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997). In contrast, "response reinforcing" requires the least effort from persuaders since speakers have to only remind their audience of what they already believe in. In between, there is "response shaping," i.e., to get audience to support or disapprove something for the first time (Miller, 1980). Regardless of which purpose persuaders seek to achieve, they must always study the needs of their audience.

As for "propaganda," many scholars have used it interchangeably with "persuasion" to mean the same thing, but some scholars insist on stressing the deceptive nature of the first term. On the one hand, Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) state that "propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (p.7). On the other hand, Partkanis and Aronson (1992) consider propaganda as the abuse of persuasion because it is based on lies, faulty reasoning and manipulation instead of logical reasoning.

Perloff (2003), however, lists two focal differences between "persuasion" and "propaganda." First of all, "propaganda is typically invoked to describe mass influence through mass media" whereas persuasion "occurs in …interpersonal and organizational
contexts" (p.17). Secondly, propaganda refers to occasions in which some groups have total control over the transmission of information. Obviously, it is difficult to allocate a fine line to separate persuasion from propaganda. Therefore, and to avoid confusion, the two concepts will be used interchangeably in this study even though the analyzed texts are transmitted through mass media.

2.6. Persuasion throughout History

The history of persuasion goes back to the ancient times of Greece. For example, in the fifth century BC, Corax was the first founder of rhetoric, which sprang mainly from the practice of law (Hinks, 1940). Later on, the "sophists" of Athens made their living by teaching intellectuals how to use language to mesmerize audience, whether they actually knew or did not what they were preaching (Crome, 2005). To do that, sophists focused on oratory, argument, and the rational response on questions that deal with morality, religion, and politics. Socrates, as presented in Plato’s dialogues, despised these sophists’ fallacious reasoning and glorified the truth (O’Grady, 2008). Aristotle, however, was the first to create systematic strategies to analyze persuasion. His treatise, Rhetoric, consists of three books (Gross & Walzer, 2000). The first one introduces rhetoric in a general sense. The second book, which is the most popular, offers a clear distinction between logos, pathos and ethos. "Logos," deals with the logical and rational argumentation of a speech, which can be managed by proposing opinions that are consistent with the audience's beliefs. "Pathos," nevertheless, refers to the emotional appeals that evoke the pleasant and unpleasant feelings of the public. Last, but not least, "ethos" tackles the two notions of reliability and credibility of the speaker (Jarraya, 2013). The third book discusses the lexis and taxis of language to show how the elements of language are played on to create specific effects in the hearts and minds of the hearers (Graff, 2005).
Even though Rome did not contribute to the study of persuasion as Greece did, there were two main philosophers who left an immense impact on this domain: Cecirom and Quintilian (Quintilian, n.d.). They emphasized different parts of the persuasion process. On the one hand, Cicero discussed all the five canons of rhetoric: inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria and pronuntiatio (Golden, 1969). Yet, his focus was mainly on the power of emotional appeals in directing audiences' actions, something he mastered as a lawyer inside the courtroom. His *De Oratore* has been a "serious effort by a responsible expert to put the fruit of his own experience on record for the benefit of future statesmen" (Hadas, 1951, p.117). Quintilian, on the other hand, developed recommendations, which operate beyond the linguistic aspects of communication, for the perfect orator in his twelve-volume book entitled *Institutio Oratoria* around AD 95 (Kennedy, 1969).

Unfortunately, with the decline of the Roman Empire and the "growth of Christianity, Italian Renaissance, Black Death and European wars … rhetoric became a less important feature of European society" (Perloff, 2003, p.40). As a result, research about it was neglected.

In the 20th century, research on persuasion was mainly conducted from a social scientific perspective and was intertwined with the attitude change program at Yale University (Allport, 1935). It all began with Carl Hovland when the US was engaged in the Second World War. He tried to study the effect of propaganda on troops’ attitudes and morale, and with the help of his colleagues, he published *Communication and Persuasion* (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953) to emphasize the four components of persuasion: the source of the persuasive communication, the characteristics of the message, the characteristics of the recipient and the context (Lasswell, 1948). The following points briefly summarize the findings of this study:

1. The messenger has to be credible, trustworthy, likable and an expert.
2. The message is better presented according to the climax approach, in which the most striking evidence is left till the end (O'Keefe, 1999). In addition, a two-sided message is proven to attend to the more educated audience, leaving the one-sided message to the less educated people.

3. The recipients' motivation and ability to process evidence determine the degree of influence. This claim is supported by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

4. Complex messages convert the attitudes of intelligent people, "but when a message [is] weak, people of lower intelligence [are] more likely to change their attitudes" (Deaux, Dane, & Wrightsman, 1993, p.185). To explain, laypeople can relate to simple, straightforward messages; they want to understand the main points in order to determine their attitudes. However, intelligent audiences look for logic, evidence, and coherence in the transmitted message; therefore, they need multi-layered arguments to get them involved.

Then, many psychological theories have been formed to understand the nature of persuasion. To begin with, Festinger presented his Cognitive Dissonance theory which asserts that any gap that breaks the harmony between human beings' beliefs and their behaviors creates discomfort. So, persuaders can offer an idea or a product that fills in this gap, thus, relieving their audience (Brinol & Petty, 2012, p.7). Another effective theory in the history of persuasion is the Social Judgment Theory proposed by Sherif and Hovland (1961). It is based on the idea that persuasion is the product of comparing one's attitude with the ideas advocated in the message. This framework suggests that persuasion happens only if the "message [one] sends is in the individual's latitude of non-commitment or at the edges of his/her latitude of acceptance" (Dainton & Zelley, 2015, p.109). Finally, the Narrative Paradigm, proposed by Walter Fisher (1987), considers narration or storytelling as the ultimate means of influence if it is both logical and coherent.
After World War II, the publications about the political views of war propaganda and the formation of public opinion have become ample; therefore, any effort to survey all writings about propaganda would be impossible, especially if one takes into consideration the overlap among disciplines when approaching this topic. Yet, here is a brief citation of the most popular books and articles.

The first to recall is George Orwell who has expressed his concerns about the corruption that the language of propaganda does to English. In "Propaganda and Demotic Speech" (1944) and "Politics and the English Language"(1946), he demonstrates how war discourse has been either overly simplified or excessively dressed up to the extent that metaphors have become dead, diction pretentious, and words meaningless. However, rather than criticizing propaganda, Jacques Ellul (1973) comes to explain it. His all-inclusive book, Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes, classifies the external and internal characteristics of propaganda, its various categories and how it has been implemented by Hitler and China. Similarly, Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) elaborate on the history of propaganda throughout ages from the time of Alexander the Great to the 1991 Gulf War in their book Propaganda and Persuasion. Unsurprisingly, the daring Noam Chomsky (2002) speaks about the US public relations industry, the fear it has planted into people's minds to keep them occupied, and the tons of lies it has promoted about the Vietnam War in Media Control: the Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda.

As for the techniques of persuasion, rather than history, they are discussed in details in David Welch's (2013) and Richard Miller's (2010) works. On the one hand, Welch's Propaganda, Power and Persuasion draws a timeline for the development of persuasive strategies that have been used in WWI posters, as well as those implemented via the digital media of the Afghani conflicts. On the other hand, Miller's Fighting Words: Persuasive
Strategies for War and Politics investigates eighteen war speeches to explain how politicians' argumentative techniques lead to change.

Up to my knowledge, there is no abundant research on persuasion from a linguistic point of view. However, there is Halmari and Virtanen's (2005) *Persuasion Across Genres: A Linguistic Approach*, which consists of nine chapters, each dealing with a different genre of modern persuasion. Regarding the chapter about the political discourse of Bill Clinton and Ronald Regan, Halmari concludes that the strength of their lexical choices, rhetorical questions, and appeals to authority have been the main reason for their popularity. In addition, Peter Adamec (2011) has written a thesis about "Persuasion in Political Discourse" in which he dissects Barack Obama's speeches from a pragmatic point of view that is based on four tools, namely reference, inference, presupposition and entailment. He concludes that entailment has been the most prevailing persuasive tool in both Obama's domestic and foreign speeches. Furthermore, Karl Soring (1989) in his article "Some Remarks on Linguistic Strategies of Persuasion" explains some grammatical, lexical, and phonetic tricks to enhance the persuasive skills of a speaker. Finally, Magedah Shabo's (2008) *Techniques of Persuasion and Propaganda*, which is one of the frameworks adopted for the analysis of this study, explains in details a variety of the linguistic elements used in WWII posters.

To summarize, even though persuasion is as old as the hills, the main research about its techniques has been conducted after World War I. It has been approached by many scholars from various domains like political science, journalism, marketing, and mostly psychology (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012; Halmari & Virtanen, 2005). This necessarily means that if this thesis is to consider persuasion in political discourse from a linguistic point of view, some psychological principles have to be established first.
2.7. Cialdini’s Principles of Persuasion: A Psychological Analysis

Scholars agree that the hacks of persuasion begin with psychology, for no change is induced without penetrating the other's meta-programs, attitudes, and beliefs (Hogan, 2004). Yet, people are different in the way they perceive the outer world. Some might be convinced if the persuader appeals to their fears; others prefer looking at the full side of the glass so as to decide their next step. For instance, some might obey God due to their fear of Hell or because of their love for Heaven. After all, "many fears and desires are two sides of the same coin" (Shabo, 2008, p.70), and "everything we do is either to gain pleasure or avoid pain" (Hogan, 2004, p.230). Regardless of which filter human beings wish to activate, propagandists are expected to adjust their techniques to tempt more than one kind of psychology. Accordingly, this section presents Robert Cialdini’s (2007) five psychological principles of persuasion, which are specifically chosen due to the popularity of Cialdini's book, Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion.

2.7.1. The comparison-contrast principle.

The first weapon of influence is "contrast," which affects the way people consider things that are presented one after another. For example, if you ask a person to place one of his/her hands in a pail of cold water and the other in a pail of hot water, and then you ask him/her to place both in lukewarm water, what will happen? "Even though both hands are in the same bucket, the hand that has been in cold water feels as if it is now in hot water" (Cialdini, 2007, p.9) and vice versa. Such an experiment shows us how easily one's mind can be manipulated by drawing connections between things. Moreover, this principle shows how the good features of anything in life will look even better if compared to something of low quality. If the previous example is not good enough, consider the following one: "a man might balk at the idea of spending $95 for a sweater, but if he has just bought a $495 suit, a $95 sweater does not seem excessive" (Cialdini, 2007, p.10).
Clearly, the more drastic the difference between the presented items or ideas is, the easier it is to plead one's case.

Now, what about the similarities between compared ideas or objects? Are they powerful tools of persuasion as well? Yes, they are, if portrayed well using figurative language. The intensity that metaphors and similes encompass can convey a message in an interesting yet simple way which cannot be stated otherwise (Graesser, Mio, & Millis, 1989). In fact, metaphorical language has been used to convince people of abstract scientific ideas like time and black holes (Boroditsky, Fuhrman, & McCormick, 2010). For instance, the black hole is compared to a vacuum cleaner because it has an event horizon, a region that nothing escapes from. So, if an object crosses this event horizon, it will hit the singularity and get sucked in (Greene, 2012, January). If such a metaphor had not been created, it would have been difficult to understand this scientific concept. In addition, these tools of analogy change the way people perceive an idea because they provide us with structures of thinking (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As evidence, "metaphors of hunting down animals or exterminating vermin were common in the rhetoric of both sides during World War II" (Jowett & O'Donnel, 2012, p.303) so as to influence the way people considered their enemies. Obviously, if enemies are perceived as animals, treating them as so will be acceptable.

In fact, the assumption that comparison can be persuasive is basically based on a research conducted by Dillard and Sopory (2002) in which they have confirmed the fact that metaphorical language can be more influencing than the literal one. Yet, the manner by which such an effect is accomplished is elaborated on in "previous research on metaphor and persuasion [which] has suggested that metaphorical language elicits an assimilation effect wherein positive metaphors elicit positive attitudes toward the communication topic and negative metaphors elicit negative evaluations" (Ottati, Rhoads,
This process of evaluation depends on the similarity between the two fundamental components of metaphor (Ottati & Renstorm, 2010): the topic, which is the object being described, and the vehicle, which is another object that the topic is being compared to. For example, Benjamin Franklin's famous metaphor *a good conscience is a continual Christmas* transmits a positive evaluation of the topic (good conscience) because the vehicle (Christmas) refers to happiness, celebration and spiritual awakening. However, Neil Tyson's *ignorance is a virus* possesses a negative evaluation of ignorance because virus is linked to infections that spread quickly. Topics and vehicles can be implicit as well, yet easily identified by the underlying "root metaphor" that is being activated, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

Still, not all metaphors are effective. Sopory and Dillard (2002) propose some characteristics of effective metaphors, such as extendedness and novelty. To explain, extended metaphors are associated with greater attitude change than non-extended ones. Also, novel metaphors that have not been overly used are more persuasive than clichés. Moreover, the intensity and vividness (Nisbett & Ross, 1980) of metaphorical language are more persuasive than the literal one because they provoke the emotions of the audience. Similes and analogies, albeit different in surface from metaphors, carry the same cognitive meaning.

### 2.7.2. The reciprocity principle.

Reciprocity is a "technique by which a proponent makes a respondent more likely to consider or accept his argument by making the respondent obliged to the proponent in advance of the argument" (Walton, 2007, p.24). Obviously, in all social communities, people like to return the favor and provide others with the same kind of actions they have provided them with. For example, when a salesperson provides a costumer with samples to try and comes later to see if he/she likes the product, the customer will feel indebted to the
salesperson and "will purchase at least one of [his] products" (Hogan, 2004, p.44). Yet, "although the obligation to repay constitutes the essence of the reciprocity rule, it is the obligation to receive that makes the rule so easy to exploit" (Cialdini, 2007, p.33). Still, the principle works the other way round. When a person initiates mistreatment towards another, the latter will be even more convinced to reciprocate. What makes things even more complicated is the fact that the reciprocity principle doesn't abide by Newton's third law, which states that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Sometimes, the repaid favor or harm can be even greater than the one presented at first.

Linguistically speaking, reciprocity can be articulated through multiple ways. To name a few, reciprocal pronouns like each other and the more formal one another added at the end of a sentence suggest that A and B are acting as both "the agent and the patient" of a sentence (Haspelmath, 2007, p.2088). In fact, reciprocity itself is one of Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategies that will be tackled later in this study so as to draw connections between persuasion and politeness. Likewise, certain constructions in English like vice versa, verb + back, and too can achieve a similar effect. One may add to that the predicates which have a natural tendency to express reciprocity with singular subjects and no markers. These include verbs (meet, exchange,) nouns (friend, countryman,) adjectives (parallel, similar,) and prepositions (opposite, with) (Konig, 2005). Most importantly, "reciprocity can be expressed through discourse, i.e. by a coordination of two propositions with inverted arguments [as in] John adores Mary and she adores him"( Konig, 2005, p. 7).

2.7.3. The commitment and consistency principle.

Consistency is a persuasive technique in which the arguer uses the previous commitment of the recipient or pulls him/her towards committing to an idea that will support the final conclusion which the arguer wants him/her to accept (Walton, 2007,
In general, when people make certain choices and act accordingly, their actions are seen as honest whereas those "whose beliefs, words, and deeds don't match may be seen as indecisive, confused, [and] two-faced" (Cialdini, 2007, p.45). For instance, when President George Bush suggested that a "military action could take place on January 15, 1991" to stop the "aggression against Kuwait" (Hogan, 2004, p.53), the nation was divided into pros and cons. Regardless of his opponents' perspective, he put his words into action next morning so as to act consistently with his commitment. Consequently, if a propagandist wants to persuade someone of something, he/she should make the receiver commit to a first belief from which he/she can take off. Simply put, if a person is loyal to the first belief, then he/she can be easily convinced to express loyalty to its final outcome. It is like simple mathematics: if A equals B and B equals C, then A necessarily equals C.

Repetition, cohesion and coherence are some of the linguistic tools that portray consistency in written language. The effective appearance of key words or structures several times in a text reinforces the message and creates resonance (Ellul, 1973). As for cohesion, there are multiple major types of linguistic devices that help writers connect their sentences across whole written texts. These include pronouns, determiners, quantifiers, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion, and conjunctions (Gee, 2011). Coherence, on the other hand, refers to the logical connection readers perceive in a text. Semantically speaking, the text is said to be coherent if the topics flow and change smoothly to demonstrate consistency throughout a stretch of writing (Roen, 1996).

2.7.4. The authority principle.

The authority principle, which is also called "intertextuality" in discourse analysis (Gee, 2011), is related to two main notions, namely trust and professionalism (Cialdini, 2007). On the one hand, individuals trust authority because they have been told not to question it since early socialization (Milgram, 1974). One of the earliest incidents in which human
beings have followed this belief is Abraham's (also called Ibrahim) story in the Holy Quran. God asked him to sacrifice his son, and despite his sadness, he bounded his son to the alter until God substituted him with an animal sacrifice (Quran 37: 102-107). The correctness of the action was not judged by some earthly manners like love and sense but by the mere command of a higher authority. However, persuaders may not always be authoritative figures. In such cases, quoting what authorities say transfers their power and credibility to the speaker. Even better, the use of "language associated with authority figures...renders authority to that which the language describes, [e.g.] fatherland, Mother Church and Uncle Sam" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p.303).

On the other hand, people rely on authority because it is uttered by professionals who know more about the promoted subject than laypeople. Their credibility arises from the scientific knowledge and expertise people attribute to them. Even if the speaker does not provide us with actual evidence or data to prove his/her statements, our "belief that the communicator has special skills or know-how" seems to be enough (Perloff, 2003, p.160). Clearly, information from a recognized [professional] can provide us with a valuable shortcut for deciding how to act in a situation" (Cialdini, 2007, p.173).

2.7.5. The liking principle.

Liking, as a positive attitude, encourages people to say "yes" to the people they find irresistible. After all, if there is "something objectionable about the messenger, the message itself must be wrong" (Berger, Roloff, & Ewoldson, 2009, p.11) and vice versa. Yet, the question is: why do we prefer someone over another? Cialdini (2007) suggests many reasons for that behavior including similarity and familiarity.

First of all, persuaders realize that their messages will not gain support without activating their "plain folk" strategy in order to be seen as an "average citizen" (Shabo, 2008, p. 60). In their attempt to do so, speakers might bring some colloquial expressions
and pronunciation into play to sound more of a tough-guy figure or a middle-class citizen. Besides, the implementation of some inclusive personal deictics, such as *we* and *us*, into propagandists' utterances may "induce interpreters to conceptualize group identity" (Chilton, 2004, p.56). Also, *our* and *ours* might stand for "the coalescence of the voice of the person with the voice of the people" (Adegoju, 2005, p.140). Indeed, if a communicator points out that he/she and the audience are in the same boat, the ball will be in his/her court.

Secondly, familiarity, or what Shabo (2008) calls the "testimonials" technique, takes advantage of famous personas whom audience tend to trust, "even if that trust is based on mere recognition rather than true credibility" (p.62). To demonstrate, Michael Jordan, a known basketball player, was the main reason why Nike got so popular in the 1980s. It is his speed and superb athletic history that have made people rush to stores to get a pair of his sneakers (Perloff, 2003, p.19). Likewise, when familiar public figures adopt a certain ideology, his/her fans will be more than willing to follow their steps. In short, alluding to what other famous figures say aims at transferring the feelings, which audience has towards that person, to the cause he/she is endorsing (Gee, 2011).

In addition to familiarity and similarity, humor is another characteristic that likable people enjoy. Generally speaking, human beings are more likely to remember and want to be around the people who cheer [them] up and make [them] laugh. So, laughter can actually be used as a persuasive tool to question the opponent's credibility (Mulholland, 1994) or to, at least, express disapproval towards the enemy's opinions.

**2.8. Shabo's Techniques of Persuasion: A Wartime Analysis**

In the previous section, the psychology behind persuasion has been established. Yet, promoting ideas does not work in vacuum; rather, it needs a medium to go through to materialize, and here comes the role of language. Despite the fact that language alone is
not self-sufficient in the realm of propaganda, its role as the principal means of persuasion cannot be overlooked. This language of propaganda, which is encountered on daily basis, has been used for all kinds of purposes: the good, the benign, and the bad. Still, no discourse has convinced the public to get engaged into catastrophic actions as political discourse has. In fact, "political language…is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" as George Orwell once said.

Shabo's (2008) *Techniques of Propaganda and Persuasion* explains how the political language has been utilized in World War II posters to advertise war-related ideas. Originally, the author provides eleven techniques. However, certain tactics are combined together and presented under the same subtitle for the sake of a smoother and briefer presentation of the topic.

2.8.1. Glittering generalities.

This technique refers to any of the "appealing but vague words that often appear in propaganda" (Shabo, 2008, p.30), especially those left without explaining their specific definitions. These might include *freedom, liberty, security, victory, prosperity, strength, civilization, choice, equality, change, choice, and democracy* (Shabo, 2008, p.32). The positive connotations attached to these lexical items are powerful enough to cause the audience a change of heart, for they influence the hearer's emotional feelings. Consider the following example from WWII posters:

1. *Adolf Hitler ist der siege*² (Shabo, 2008, p.31).
2. *Americans will always fight for liberty* (Shabo, 2008, p.32).

As a matter of fact, this strategy has been initially proposed by Aristotle under the name of "pathos." He believes that "once the pathos trigger is pulled, the addressee may feel an

² In English, it means "Adolf Hitler is victory."
urgent desire to achieve the goal or goals in question" (Poggi, 2005, p.314). So, if readers want to stay vigilant, they have to remember that all that glitters is not gold, and there is nothing golden about war.

2.8.2. Name calling.

Unlike "glittering generalities," "name calling" tends to evoke negative connotations related to certain words to ridicule an opposing enemy or idea (Shabo, 2008, p.40). Usually, individuals abide by their group norms; if these norms are defied, group members would go fierce (Norton et al., 2003) and start name calling the other party. This strategy can be applied both directly and indirectly. Starting with the more straight-forward technique, the speaker uses insulting words to express the inferiority of his opponents' actions, ideas, or even looks. Thus, he/she threatens the positive and negative face needs of the hearer. As for the indirect technique, the propagandist conveys his/her message but in a sarcastic, less confrontational manner. Here are some examples (Shabo, 2008, pp.47-48):

1. Direct: *Clearly, my opponent's anarchist suggestions will not help to solve the current crisis.*

2. Indirect: *Although we all have a great deal of respect for Senator Parker, I'm not certain we need to accept his views on marriage without careful scrutiny. After all, he is a confirmed bachelor.*

When a propagandist is courageous enough to pinpoint his/her enemy's bad side, more credibility and honesty would be attributed to him/her (McCroskey, 1997), which finally makes his talk more convincing.

2.8.3. False dilemma.

Also known as "the black and white thinking," false dilemma is used in political discourse to create an "either/or" relationship between the suggested options, in which the addressee feels as if there are only two options to choose from; therefore, he/she decides on
the one "that is labeled good" (Shabo, 2008, p.39). However, if the hearers are on the horns of a dilemma, they will certainly support the lesser of the two evils, which is a special case of false dilemma. This particular approach is usually summoned when the audience is unwilling to adopt the first option. So, "in order to make the choice more appealing, an even worse alternative is presented as being the only other option" (Shabo, 2008, p.41). As an illustration, read the following examples from World War I & II posters:


2. *If you can't enlist, invest! Buy liberty bonds* (Shabo, 2008, p.40).

In the first example, the speaker implies that if you do not join a car-sharing club, then you are supporting Hitler, a crime that no American wants to be accused off. As a result, the public would choose not to ride alone. In the second example, both decisions require sacrifice; however, giving up one's money is by far more tolerable than sacrificing one's life. Consequently, the hearer will be encouraged to support his/her country's army financially.

### 2.8.4. Bandwagon.

Also known as "the herd instinct," the bandwagon strategy is utilized when people look at the common behavior practiced by others in order to constitute their own decisions (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p.301); it is just a sophisticated way of saying "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." The naming of this tactic goes back to the 1800s when politicians used wagons to grab the attention of the public. Sometimes, politicians "would end up joining causes they did not believe in, just to be part of a [popular wagon]" (Shabo, 2008, p.23). Similarly, if a propagandist is trying to persuade his/her audience of some kind of action, it would be effective to claim that everybody else is doing it. To achieve that, numbers, statistics, or even quantifiers (*all, every, and most*) can be implemented into one's
speech or writing. Obviously, "no one likes to be left out, therefore, jumps on the bandwagon" (Berger, Roloff, & Ewoldson, 2009) because fewer mistakes are made by "acting in accord with social evidence than contrary to it" (Cialdini, 2007, p.98). In spite of what others do, intelligent readers should pause and reflect whenever they find themselves on the side of the majority, as Mark Twain once suggested, because majority does not necessarily mean right.

2.8.5. Card staking.

Previously in the "name calling" strategy, it has been stated that people assume that a political party is honest and trustworthy if it has the courage to mention the perspectives of opposing political parties (O'keefe, 1999). Yet, what people do not realize is that the opposing perspectives are not explained to discuss both sides of the equation but to state well-argued reasons why the speaker's views are superior to those of others. Well, this is the essence of "card staking." When a propagandist presents a two-sided message, his/her preferred views are "made noticeable [while]… conflicting perspectives are unfairly downplayed" (Shabo, 2008, pp. 25-27).

Linguistically speaking, there are certain syntactic structures that help speakers bring focus onto particular pieces of information rather than others. To illustrate, the topic is the most important term in English simple sentences because it is the departure point from which the comment takes off (Gee, 2011). That is why Halliday (1967) considers whatever comes in the initial position of a sentence as its topic. Generally, it is the subject, but this is not always the case. For example, the topic of the passive voice is the object because the speaker wants to background the actor and foreground the non-actor (Foley & Van Valin, 1985) such as the first example bellow. In addition, the introductory phrases placed at initial position of a sentence, like the "as for" construction in English, stand in the topic position (Reinhart, 1982). On the contrary, expletives or dummy subjects, such as it and
there, never act as the topic of a sentence even if they come initially (Svenonius, 2001).

Rather, the topic is realized pragmatically as in the third example:

1. The taxes have been raised by the government. (topic = subject)
2. As for the final chapter, you have to study it by your own. (topic = phrase)
3. There are some solutions for the problem. (topic = complement)

   In more complex and compound sentences, what the speaker chooses to include in the main clause is foregrounded whereas the backgrounded information is left for subordinate clauses. By doing so, the sender of the message "cannot be accused of dishonesty although he/she has not been exactly honest either" (Gee, 2011, pp.92-93).

2.9. Examples of Persuasive Techniques

   The previously mentioned techniques of persuasion and propaganda have been used in nearly all aspects of life, especially in politics-related issues. The following paragraphs mention few popular examples of persuasive techniques practiced by real life authoritative figures and some fictional characters in Shakespearean literary works.

   The first example comes from Greece when Greeks were fighting a losing battle against their Persian enemies led by King Xerxes in 480 B.C. In an attempt to turn the tables on Persians, the Athenian commander, Themistocles, suggested that Greeks need to start a decisive battle in the straits of Salamis Island. In order to bring Persian troops there, Themistocles sent fabricated messages to Xerxes, telling him that Greeks are using it as an escape. This propaganda made the Persian huge fleet struggle in the narrow straits of Salamis; therefore Greeks were no longer outnumbered, which in turn led to their victory (Strauss, 2004).

   Another example dates back to World War I when the Allies "told the story of Germans boiling down corpses of their soldiers to be used for fats." This disinformation campaign was based on a deliberate mistranslation of the German word *kadaver*, which originally
meant the corpse of an animal rather than a human being. However, the "non-German-speaking audience did not know this" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p. 167); therefore, the Allies exploited this fact to persuade their nations of the brutality of their enemies and the righteousness of this Great War.

Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) also tell a story about the Gulf War. In 1991, the George Bush Administration claimed that Operation Desert Storm was initiated to help the 'democratic' Kuwait get rid of the Iraqi 'dictatorship'. Highlighting the contrast between the political ideologies of the two countries in Bush's statements was one of the persuasive strategies to justify the Gulf War. After all, the US alleged that its intervention aimed mainly at protecting poor Kuwaitis from the tyranny of the dictator Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, the U.S. backgrounded the fact that many Kuwaiti practices were not as democratic as the description suggests. Another persuasive method employed was related to the naming of the operation, which was changed from Desert Shield to Storm. This alteration made people perceive the U.S. military operation as "raging" forces that are capable of winning a war instead of being "protective" troops that have a passive role (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p.9).

Now, let's mention some persuasive speeches included in Shakespearian literature and briefly analyze them in relation to the topic of our thesis. In Julius Caesar, for example, funeral is the most compelling of all, for it applies Mark Antony's speech at Caesar's Aristotle's typology of persuasion. His ethos are highly persuasive since "there's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony" (Shakespeare, 2000, 3.2.118-119), not to mention the fact that his use of "sweet friends" (Shakespeare, 2000, 3.2.212) when addressing Romans makes him a more likable character. He also uses "common knowledge [which] listeners will accept and therefore begin to find common ground with the speaker"(Adamson et al., 2007, p.125). His pathos, on the other hand, reach a climax when describing Julius
wounds, especially those caused by his best friend Brutus. However, the most influencing persuasive tool is logos. Antony's ironic statement, "Brutus is an honorable man" (Shakespeare, 2000, 3.2.85), is the pivot around which his argumentation revolves (Carston & Uchida, 1998). The "honorable" Brutus has said that Caesar is ambitious, but Antony gives multiple logical examples proving the opposite to be true. As we know, if the message is wrong, then the messenger's credibility is questioned. These are just a few tactics utilized by Antony to turn the Romans against the conspirators.

Finally, the speech delivered by King Henry V to encourage his forces to conquer the city of Harfluer is full of persuasion. Similar to Mark Antony's speech, King Henry V uses his "plain folks" strategy to get closer to his soldiers whom he calls "dear friends" (Shakespeare, 1823, 3.1.38) and "good yeoman" (Shakespeare, 1823, 3.1.62). Furthermore, he activates the "commitment and consistency" principles to persuade them of the necessity of urging this battle. He knows that his troops are loyal to "Harry, England, and Saint George" (Shakespeare, 1823, 3.1.70); therefore, they should defend what they are committed to. Actually, they should act like their fathers who have "sheathed their swords for lack of argument" (Shakespeare, 1823, 3.1.58). Here, one may detect the "false dilemma" technique since Henry suggests that his troops either "summon up the blood" or they will dishonor their families.

2.10. Politeness and Impoliteness

While trying to convince audience of something, many face threatening acts might be enacted. Based on the speaker's intentions of softening or hardening these acts, he/she employs some politeness or impoliteness strategies to achieve his/her aim. In this study, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Culpeper's corresponding impoliteness theory are the frameworks used to spot how power and persuasion function in ISIS political discourse.
2.10.1. Brown and Levinson's politeness and face theory.

One of the earliest attempts to explain how politeness works among interlocutors is Brown and Levinson's (1987) *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, in which they define the notion of *face* and present several politeness strategies deployed by interlocutors to mitigate face threatening acts, hereafter FTAs.

At the beginning of their book, Brown and Levinson (1987) discuss the notion of *face* as "something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced" (p.66). This *face* has both positive and negative needs which the interlocutor chooses to stress to different degrees based on the context. *Positive face* is related to human beings' desire to be liked and approved while *negative face* is more about one's wish to be free from imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.61).

Brown and Levinson declare that in order to weigh the seriousness of an FTA, three factors should be considered: a) the social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer, b) the relative power (P) attained by both of them, and c) the ranking of imposition (R) in a given context, as shown in the following formula:

\[
\text{FTA Weightiness} = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R
\]

When doing an FTA, interlocutors use different strategies, which are summarized in the following figure, based on the context they are in and the content they wish to convey.

**Figure 1: Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies (1987, p.69)**
First of all, on record strategies are applied if the communicative purpose of the interaction is known to all participants. If an actor chooses to do an FTA directly, without minimizing the imposition, as in imperatives, then a bald on-record strategy is activated without redress or compensation. This kind of FTAs is done in any of the following situations (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.74):

1. The participants agree that the efficacy of the situation is more important than face demands: "Watch out!" (alerting someone before an accident happens)
2. The danger to H's face is minimal as in offers: "Give me your heavy bags to carry" (offering help )
3. The speaker is vastly superior in power: "Pull over and give me your license" (a police officer talking to a driver).

However, speakers mostly modify their sentences to perform "redressive" FTAs to indicate that there is no intention to damage the addressee's face. Consequently, they take one of the following routes:

1. Positive Politeness: It is implemented when the speaker (S) treats the hearer (H) as an insider whose in-group rights and interests are respected and valued. By doing so, the speaker minimizes the debt implications of FTAs by referring to the reciprocity principle (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.72). Actually, there are 15 positive politeness strategies discussed by Brown and Levinson.
2. Negative Politeness: It is to show that the speaker recognizes the hearer's negative face and "will not, or will only minimally, interfere with the addressee's freedom of action" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.70). This might be achieved using any of the 10 strategies presented by Brown and Levinson.
3. Off-record strategy: It is the most indirect way of saying things, which provides
speakers with an escape to claim that they haven’t said something in the first place.

Finally, it should be noted that this study is mainly about persuasion and power, and not about politeness. Therefore, only some of Brown and Levinson's strategies, which are directly related to the topic of the thesis, will be used to analyze the data. These include the bald on record strategy, some positive politeness sub-strategies (such as using in-group markers, assuming reciprocity, presupposing common ground), and one off-record strategy (rhetorical questions).

2.10.2. Culpeper's impoliteness theory.

Arguing that Brown and Levinson's work does not fully account for all kinds of interactions, especially the conflictive ones, Culpeper (1996) presents a parallel classification of strategies with opposite orientation to face. After all, there are certain circumstances in which participants wish to deliberately attack the hearer's face. For example, in any context where there is power imbalance, the powerful party tends to be impolite, reducing the powerless' ability to retaliate. Moreover, inside the courtroom, direct confrontation is essential for the elicitation of truth (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980); therefore, politeness is not sought.

Culpeper (1996) defines impoliteness as "the use of strategies that are designed to [cause]…social disruption" (p.350). These strategies are listed below as explained in Culpeper's (1996) article "Towards an Anatomy of Impoliteness":

1. Bald on-record impoliteness: the performance of FTAs in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized. It is important to distinguish this strategy from Brown and Levinson's bald on record. For Brown and Levinson, bald on record is a "politeness" strategy in fairly specific circumstances. For example, when face concerns are suspended in an emergency, when the threat to the hearer's face is very small…, or when the speaker is
much more powerful than the hearer…. In all these cases…, it is not the intention of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer.

2. Positive impoliteness: the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee’s positive face wants.

3. Negative impoliteness: the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee’s negative face wants.

4. Sarcasm or mock politeness: the performance of FTAs with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realizations. [Culpeper's] understanding of sarcasm is close to Leech's (2004) conception of irony… [which states that] "if you must cause offence, at least do so in a way which doesn't overtly conflict with the PP [Politeness Principle], but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of an implicature"(p.82).

5. Withhold politeness: the absence of politeness work where it would be expected.

(Culpeper, 1996, pp.356-357)

As for the sub strategies, Culpeper focuses on negative and positive impoliteness. He cites ten strategies for positive impoliteness and five for the negative one. However, the strategies mentioned bellow are the only ones which might be directly related to our study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 2: Culpeper's Impoliteness Sub-Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Impoliteness Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ignore the other: fail to acknowledge the other's presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Be disinterested, unconcerned, and unsympathetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use inappropriate identity markers: use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>titles when close relationship pertains or nicknames when a distant relationship pertains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Call the other names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use obscure or secretive language: mystify the other within jargon or use a code known to others in group but not the target.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**2.11. Conclusion**

This chapter has covered a variety of topics in the core of our study. It has first provided a brief summary of pragmatics and political discourse analysis, which are the major and minor linguistic branches that embrace the study. Then, ISIS has been introduced to give readers an idea about the ideology of the subject under discussion. Later on, the focus has moved on towards persuasion and propaganda, their historical development, and how they have been practiced by politicians at different stages of the human life. Most importantly, ten persuasion strategies have been precisely explained to act as an outline for the analysis section. They are extracted from Cialdini's (2007) *Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion* and Shabo's (2008) *Techniques of Propaganda and Persuasion*. Finally, illustrating Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies has been essential to investigate the role of power in shaping ISIS discourse and whether there is a relationship between persuasion and politeness/impoliteness. The following section, however, explains why exactly these frameworks have been used to analyze the texts and how texts have been collected in the first place.
Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This study is conducted in order to examine how ISIS language is structured to achieve two purposes: a) to persuade audience of its agendas and b) to practice power verbally. Yet, to carry out such an investigation, the research has utilized the descriptive analysis, which relies heavily on the researcher's interpretation of extended stretches of talk instead of statistics. The materials have been collected based on the research method of documentary analysis, in which data are extracted from existing documents with no need for questionnaires or interviews. These compiled materials have been analyzed based on four frameworks to make sure that the presented interpretations are highly plausible. So, the following paragraphs elaborate on the methods implemented to collect and analyze the data.

3.2. Data Collection

In order to have a clear idea about how the research data have been collected, the following presentation explains some information about the source and the size of the analyzed materials. To start with, Dabiq magazine has been chosen to be the only source from which the data are derived due to three reasons. First, it is published in English; therefore, nothing is lost in translation. Second, it gives a clear indication of ISIS ideology because it is considered to be ISIS’ official magazine, as stated in the foreword of its first issue. So, analyzing ISIS discourse in light of its own stated ideology seems to be more reliable than studying it based on what anti-ISIS propaganda has to offer. Third, dealing with written materials, such as magazines and newspapers, might be the best way to examine mere language in isolation from other propaganda forms that rely basically on visual and auditory effects. As a result, thirty articles from the first ten issues of Dabiq are scrutinized. They cover a variety of topics, including the justification of ISIS brutal
execution methods, their call to migration and Jihad, and their under-estimation of the US-led coalition. It should be noted that it has been difficult to decide the sample size because there is no rule of thumb for that in discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Still, there are two main reasons why the researcher has decided not to analyze any more data. On the one hand, the research is mainly conducted for academic purposes; therefore, there are time restrictions that the researcher abides by. On the other hand, the researcher has found that the collection of new articles does not add new information to the issue under investigation. Such a concept is often referred to as "saturation" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). After reading all the articles of the first ten issues, excluding religious texts; avoiding repletion of ideas; drawing connections between the texts and the approaches used for analysis; the researcher has come to the conclusion that these thirty articles give a general idea about the language of persuasion and power in ISIS political discourse.

3.3. Data Analysis

Since the study is mainly qualitative, content coding has been the major data analysis method. To make sure that the presented interpretations are valid, the following steps have been adopted: a) reading the data several times, b) trying to find the main features that add a persuasive aspect to the chosen texts, c) sorting these features into themes, and d) deciding on the hierarchy according to which these persuasive strategies will be presented. Moreover, the context of each of the explored examples (including time, participants, and the shared knowledge between the sender and the receiver of the message) has been taken into consideration. Most importantly, ISIS’ political ideology, religious beliefs, and historical background have been key elements in deciding the best plausible interpretation of the data.

The categorization of persuasion principles is based on two theoretical frameworks: Cialdini’s (2007) persuasion principles and Shabo’s (2008) techniques of persuasion and
propaganda. The former's principles cannot be realized from first sight; rather, they are related to the overall pragmatic meaning of the text. This is particularly important in the persuasion industry because the speaker does not directly state what he/she wishes the hearer to do. The latter's principles, however, are easily pinpointed by looking at certain lexical items and grammatical structures. Starting with the first framework, it has been inevitable to include Cialdini's approach in this study because psychology and persuasion are inherently intertwined. His distinguished career as a Professor of Psychology and Marketing, as well as the fact that his book has been listed on the New York Times Best Seller list, shows that he knows exactly how persuasion serves the interests of its users. To elaborate, he presents seven psychological principles of persuasion that can be utilized in every domain where manipulation is sought. Even though he mainly emphasizes how persuasion influences marketing, his principles can be easily exploited by politicians in their debates and speeches. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only five of Cialdini's seven strategies are chosen for the analysis of the study, and they are contrast, reciprocity, consistency, authority, and liking. As for his social proof strategy, it is a replica of Shabo's bandwagon technique; therefore, repetition has been avoided. In addition, the scarcity principle is not directly related to power talks; thus, it is excluded.

As for Shabo's approach, it covers a variety of persuasion tactics that were used in World War II. This makes their application into any other political context, as the one at hand, fairly reasonable. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that Shabo is an ESL instructor whose works are taught at distinguished universities across the US, including Harvard, which adds to the reliability of this study. Her eleven strategies are not all adopted in our investigation, for they are too many to be tackled at once. Yet, the techniques which correlate with each other are presented under one title; for example, false dilemma and the lesser of the two evils are both considered false dilemma because the latter is a special case
of the former. By following this plan, only five persuasion techniques are found to be essential for our analysis, namely *glittering generalities, name-calling, false dilemma, bandwagon, and card staking*. These tactics either depend on the connotative meanings of words or on the fallacious argumentation of propagandists.

Later on, it has been decided that the inclusion of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies is essential for a better interpretation of the data due to two main reasons. First of all, politeness and impoliteness are highly determined by power, which is a major factor in shaping the political discourse of any party. Second, appropriately activating politeness and impoliteness, of course based on the context, may probably help propagandists to achieve their purposes. On the one hand, the seriousness of Brown and Levinson's face threatening acts is determined by power (P), distance (D) and risk (R), three factors in the heart of political discourse analysis. So, noticing whether ISIS officials actually take these factors into consideration when addressing their supporters gives an idea about how professional they are. Furthermore, persuasion sometimes needs the establishment of certain politeness strategies so as to attend to the hearer's face wants.

Still, Brown and Levinson's theory, as its name suggests, deals only with politeness. Yet, failing to abide by their rules does not necessarily mean that one is being impolite. Therefore, it has been necessary to find a framework that parallels Brown and Levinson's approach with opposite orientation to face. Fortunately, Culpeper's model fulfills this need and accounts for the conflictive interactions that aim at deliberately attacking the hearer's face. After all, ISIS is in war with many factions, and impolite speech is expected to emerge when addressing enemies. Moreover, in certain occasions, being impolite towards the recipient helps in persuading other participates in the interaction to believe what the speaker says; this is similar to what happens in political debates, in which candidates
criticize each other so as to convince audience of the righteousness of the speaker's ideas and the falsehood of the other candidate's claims.

3.4. Conclusion

In brief, this section has explained in details the methods used for collecting and analyzing the data at hand. Clearly, Dabiq magazine has been found to be the best source to assemble the data from because it perfectly portrays the ideology of its sponsors, i.e., ISIS members. Also, the rationale behind choosing four frameworks to examine the documents has been explained. They are all activated to present a clear idea about the principles of persuasion, the verbal practice of power, and the correlations among persuasion, power, and politeness in ISIS discourse. Having clarified that out, one may smoothly move on to the practical side.
Chapter Four
Results and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

In order to be able to hypnotize audience, media sources bring into play myriads of persuasive strategies that can endorse the ideologies and interests of their sponsoring companies and governments (Van Dijk, 2001). Assuming that ISIS' official magazine is not an exception, this section dissects the political discourse of the State as presented in the first ten issues of Dabiq magazine so as to uncover the methods used to delude audience. By doing so, the researcher is providing readers with the chance to stop, reflect, and learn not to fall into the trap of ISIS propaganda. To accomplish that, Dabiq articles are analyzed in light of Cialdini's and Shabo's principles of persuasion and propaganda, as well as Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Culpeper's impoliteness strategies.

4.2. Persuasion

This section is basically an attempt to answer the first question of the study, a goal achieved by looking at the various persuasion methods used by Dabiq producers to promote their agendas. Each of Cialdini's and Shabo's persuasion and propaganda techniques is examined to decide whether it has or hasn't been integrated into ISIS discourse and why. The following section also sheds light on certain linguistic elements that have helped in the creation of the overall pragmatic meaning of the text.

4.2.1. The comparison-contrast principle.

Cialdini's original principle focuses on the importance of highlighting the drastic contrast between the compared elements so as to suggest that one side is way better than the other, even if it is actually not. Still, highlighting the similarities may just achieve the same effect; therefore, the researcher has decided to tackle both topics under the same umbrella, for they are linguistically inseparable.
4.2.1.1. Compare.

In political discourse, metaphors are commonly used to describe the speaker, his ideologies, agendas, and opponents (Lakoff & Johnson, 2004; Mio, 1997), and this is exactly what ISIS does. Metaphorical language has been used to describe ISIS, its power, attacks, agendas, and even its enemies.

4.2.1.1.1. Comparison to achieve negative-other representation.

The first discussion of metaphorical language scrutinizes the use of animal imagery to negatively describe ISIS' opponents. First of all, the US is said to have withdrawn from Afghanistan "with its tail between its legs" (L. 1128). Even though the root metaphor is not explicitly stated, readers know that this idiomatic expression is derived from the image of a cowardly dog whose pride has been hurt. This is certainly not a complimentary remark, and the following examples do not exactly praise other anti-ISIS parties either. The foreigner tourists who have been killed in an ISIS attack on Bardo National Museum have been described as a "prey for the soldiers of the Islamic State" (L.705). The use of prey both dehumanizes the enemy to justify its killing and expresses its helplessness when being hunted by a predator. Similarly, the army of the Iraqi government is portrayed as "lick[ing] its wounds from the murderous thrashing it [has] received from the mujahidin" (L.791). Once again, a metaphor of an animal coming out of defeat emerges in ISIS discourse to describe its foes. Even when Dabiq producers have decided to compare Obama to a lion, it was an offensive metaphor highlighting his "toothless roaring" (L.737). A roaring lion may sound tough, but sounding and being are not alike. Without teeth, lions wane and cannot do harm. All in all, the comparisons between ISIS' enemies as a topic and animals as a vehicle aim at creating an image of a powerless opponent that cannot keep up with the king of the jungle.

The plural form of "mujahid", one who is engaged in jihad, which is a holy war for the defense of Islam
Likewise, there has been one metaphor used six times in *Dabiq* to dehumanize the anti-ISIS Arab countries. However, the vehicle of the metaphor holds even more negative connotations this time because it does not refer to a living thing in the first place. The Iranian, Iraqi, and Jordanian governments are all considered "puppet[s]" (L. 156; 789; 535). Such an association suggests that these governments have no choice; they are toys being manipulated and controlled by other regimes.

4.2.1.1.2. *Comparison to achieve positive-self representation.*

As for ISIS self-proclaimed power, several novel metaphors and similes are summoned to create an illustration of a terrifying state with increasing power. Sometimes, ISIS' future plans about acquiring an aircraft are regarded as a "Western horror film" (L. 1185), and the metaphor is extended for the next half page to write a short "scenario" (L.1201) describing how a nuclear weapon can be transported from Pakistan to the heart of the US. Even though the events seem to be more suitable for an action movie, ISIS looks at it from an American perspective. If such a scenario materializes, the results would be horrific for the Obama government. However, if horror movies are not scary enough, ISIS always has something new up the sleeve. Therefore, the pledges of allegiance which ISIS receives from several factions and the possibility of becoming "an international insurgency" (L.400) are both considered "nightmare scenario[s] for the military and political leaders of the democratic world" (L.1117). Nightmares trigger our fears and feel more agonizing than horror movies for one simple reason, i.e., they seem so real. These fears, just like desires, are proved to motivate attitude and behavior change (Witte & Allen, 2000). So, if the US wishes to live a more peaceful life, ISIS suggests the US government stops its intrusion in the State's affairs. It should be noted, however, that such comparisons are considered bluffing because they do not abide by the felicity conditions of the speech acts of threatening, simply because as far as we know the speaker (ISIS) has been incapable of
carrying these exaggerated threats even after three years of the US engagement in the war against ISIS.

Similes and metaphors also present ISIS increasing power in a creative way. This power is "like a snowball that rolls down a mountain getting larger until you end up with an avalanche" (L.1154-1155). Such a simile is not only an indication of ISIS growing power but is also a sign of the speed with which that happens. When more and more factions pledge allegiance to the State, its power becomes destructive. Similarly, ISIS geographical expansion "from one border to another" is compared to "a wildfire that is burning out of control" (L.1225). The uncontrollable speed of fire, which is similar to that of the snowball in the previous discussion, harmonizes with the overall presentation of the State. It can be noticed that in the above mentioned comparisons, Dabiq refers to two natural powers that have clashing effects: snow that gets people frozen and fire that gets them burned. Still, both become unbearable at a certain stage.

The last metaphor to be clarified in this section is related to animal imagery. ISIS fighters are compared to "a pride [of lions] that is hungry and cunning enough … to devour [a large] prey" (L.1139-1142). Unsurprisingly, in this one occasion in which ISIS is compared to an animal, it is the king of the jungle that has been chosen due to all the positive connotations related to its power, authority, and ferocity, not to mention the fact that being hungry makes it even more vicious. Moreover, Dabiq declares that a" single lion can kill an antelope but a pride that is hungry and cunning enough can, if they work closely together, take down an African elephant" (L. 1139-1140). Team work always gets better results, and ISIS continuously highlights the importance of unity. Clearly, it adopts the Arabic proverb saying, "Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable." In other words, despite the fact that ISIS attributes immense power to itself, the language used shows that its love for power is unquenchable yet.
To sum up, *Dabiq* figurative language perfectly builds up a positive-self representation and a negative-other representation, in which ISIS is the powerful in the face of all other powerless political parties. Metaphors and similes are drawn out to glorify ISIS, its soldiers, and its growing power while humiliating the enemies of the State through the use of negative animal imagery.

**4.2.1.2. Contrast.**

The contrast principle is heavily activated throughout ISIS discourse to boast about its application of the Islamic Shari'ah\(^4\) and to bare the illogical sayings and doings of its enemies.

**4.2.1.2.1. Contrast between ISIS and other Islamic groups.**

First of all, ISIS' ruling system, which radically differs from the approaches practiced by other Islamic groups, is meant to make it look as "the only state ruling by Allah's Shari'ah today" (L.1880). For example, ISIS lists some of its Islamic ruling methods and explains to the reader how other Arab countries mock these divine rules. "[Arab countries] refer to …[ISIS'] collection of zakah\(^5\) and jizyah\(^6\) as 'taxes,' the enslavement of non-Muslim women as 'fornication,' the implementation of the hudud\(^7\) as 'foolishness,' and the manifestation of enmity towards the tawaghit and mushrikin as 'insanity' " (L.1310-1313). ISIS' Islamic terminology, such as zakah, jizyah and hudud pushes the reader to believe that its name reflects its ideology, unlike other Arab governments which prefer using legal language, like *taxes*. This distinction obviously triggers something in the minds of Muslim readers and encourages them to reassess their governments.

Similarly, comparing what ISIS fighters are ready to do with what is done by the

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\(^4\) The code of law based on Quran and Hadith

\(^5\) The obligatory contribution of a certain portion of one's wealth in support of the poor or needy or for other charitable purposes, considered as one of the duties of Islamic religious practice.

\(^6\) A poll tax levied from those who did not accept Islam, but were willing to live under the protection of Islam

\(^7\) The portion of shari'a law concerning the trial and punishment of the most serious crimes, including adultery, theft, and murder. It prescribes penalties such as flagellation, amputation, and beheading.
fighters of other factions builds up on the image ISIS tries to create for itself, i.e., the image of a new caliphate. For instance, the fighters of the State "persist in their jihad\(^8\), not concerning themselves with how they will subsequently be portrayed in the … media" (L. 1898-1900). "The cowardly jihad claimants, in comparison, with their large numbers, heavy weaponry, and their claim of some regions of Sham\(^9\), are nonetheless afraid of implementing the Shari'ah lest they offend the people" (L. 1901-1903). Clearly, *Dabiq* makes a comparison between two parties abiding by different laws: ISIS abiding by Allah's law and other Arab countries following their own version of law which they legislated to suit their interests. Opening the eyes of readers to such a drastic contrast between ISIS and Arab countries suggests that readers may want to reconsider their commitments.

4.2.1.2.2. Contrast between the sayings and doings of anti-ISIS parties.

The cognitive dissonance of anti-ISIS parties becomes crystal clear when noticing that they hold different responses to the same kind of action. For instance, "while genocide is committed by the Maliki, Asadi, and Israeli forces against the Muslims via systematic massacres, chemical warfare, rape, and starvation by siege, Obama watches with euphoria. However, when his brothers in Yezidi\(^10\) Satanism and Peshmergan\(^11\) Zionism are killed, he panics" (L.1542-1545). Choosing both the conjunction *while* and *however* draws attention to the divergent reactions of President Obama to the death of different religious groups. So, murdering Muslims becomes tolerable whereas killing Christian Yazidis and Zionist Jews is not, despite the fact that Muslims have gone through a much excruciating death experience as elaborated on in the statement. It should be noted that even though passivization is used to describe the killing of both groups, the doer of the action or the

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\(^8\) A Muslim holy war or spiritual struggle for the propagation or defense of Islam

\(^9\) A region on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea north of the Arabian Peninsula and south of Turkey, usually including the area of Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria.

\(^10\) A member of a Kurdish-speaking group who practice Yezidism and live predominantly in Iraq, Syria, and southeast Turkey.

\(^11\) A member of a Kurdish militia.
subject of the underlying active sentence is mentioned only in the case of Muslims
genocide after the preposition by. However, the killers of Yezidis and PKK soldiers are not
explicitly stated because it would not be intelligent from Dabiq producers to insert ISIS
name in this argument. Moreover, anti-ISIS powers are portrayed as playing on words to
justify their wrongdoings, while criticizing the same act if carried out by the State. To
illustrate, "if a mujahid kills a single man with a knife, it is the barbaric killing of the
'innocent.' However, if Americans kill thousands of Muslim families all over the world by
pressing missile fire buttons, it is merely collateral damage" (L.185-187). In reference to
the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US activates its broadly defined concept of collateral
damage; yet, such a primitive act like knife killing is reported to be an act of terrorism.
How could that be possible? Readers can clearly notice the lack of logos in the US speech.

Still, ISIS does not only focus on this gap between sayings and doings in the US speech
but also refers to the contrast between what al-Qaeda preaches and practices. Dabiq writes,
"[It is] permissible for al-Qaeda – according to Dhawahir’s\textsuperscript{12} feeble guidelines – to bomb
a Houthi\textsuperscript{13} rally in a public square, but forbidden for the Islamic State to bomb a Houthi
gathering in a Houthi temple" (L.723-725). Once again, the use of the conjunction but, as
well as antonymous adjectives like permissible and forbidden, shows the contradiction
between what anti-ISIS parties do and say. After all, people who live in glass houses
should not throw stones. If Al-Qaeda targets Houthis, then why to criticize ISIS? On the
whole, the persuasive strategy under discussion has been professionally integrated into
ISIS discourse to bare the illogical actions and reactions of its enemies, thus, giving readers
the opportunity to change their perspectives and loyalties.

As one may realize, the contrast principle is also employed throughout Dabiq articles
by skillful, trained authors who know when to stress differences to achieve the best

\textsuperscript{12} Former leader of Al-Qaeda
\textsuperscript{13} A Yemini political party led by Shia Muslims
rhetoric. ISIS peculiar jargon highlights its Islamic philosophy while the language of other Arab countries reflects their attachment to man-made laws. Most importantly, the language of major anti-ISIS parties suggests their lack of the Aristotelian typology: logos, ethos, and pathos. For those purposes, readers might be persuaded of the righteousness of ISIS’ political ideas.

4.2.2. The reciprocity principle.

Reciprocity has been heavily employed in ISIS discourse to justify its attacks against and mistreatment of the State's enemies because such operations are the natural response to the atrocities these enemies have initiated.

4.2.2.1. Reciprocity justifies the killing of the Copts.

To start with its religious enemy, ISIS cites reciprocity to explain the reason why its fighters have targeted the Catholic Churches in Baghdad and the Copts in Tripoli. In 2010, the Islamic State of Iraq initiated an operation against "the Baghdad church [which was] executed in revenge for Kamilia Shehata, Wafa Constantine, and other [Muslim] sisters who were tortured and murdered by the Coptic Church of Egypt" (L.632-634). So, the justifying phrase "in revenge for" is meant to show the reader that what ISIS does is not an action but a reaction to the mistreatment practiced against it. At first glance, readers may wonder why ISIS has attacked Christians in Baghdad if the initial harm was caused by the Copts of Egypt. Yet, the State is always ready to answer. In 2010, "the Islamic State was distant from Egypt and so could not target the Coptic crusaders there" (L. 639-640), but its ideology maintains that "the different kuffar\(^{14}\) still have allegiance to each other in the face of Islam" (L. 644). Consequently, directing attacks towards the Iraqi Christians, who according to the reciprocal pronoun each other became accomplices in the crime (Haspelmath, 2007), has been considered legal. Was that satisfying for the State? No. In

\(^{14}\) Plural of kafir, one who does not believe in the oneness of God, prophethood, and Shari'ah
2015, ISIS managed "to easily capture the Coptic crusaders – the followers of the dead Shenouda"15 – ” (L.677-678) in Tunisia. It seems that ISIS considers this series of actions and reactions as part of a religious conflict between Muslims and Christians wherever they reside. In fact, it does not hesitate to inform audience that Shenouda is "directly responsible for every single Christian killed anywhere in the world when the Islamic State [seeks] its just revenge" (L.650-652). In light of what has been said, ISIS murders only mirror the wrongdoings of its rivals.

Before audience fall into this trap, they should search for the missing piece of the puzzle which can falsify such an argument. ISIS alleges that Allah legitimizes reciprocation in His Holy Quran when saying, "and if you punish [an enemy], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed"16 (Quran 16: 126). Let's assume that this verse is interpreted and translated correctly, which is not the case as explained under the authority principle section. The question is then: why doesn't the Islamic State follow Allah's rules? After all, killing "more than one hundred crusaders" (L.654) in Baghdad operation and "21" (L.631) in Tripoli is not an equivalent to the few female Muslims who have been imprisoned and tortured to death by the Coptic Church. We are not trying to legitimize killing by any means here, for every life matters. Rather, it is more of an attempt to show the inconsistency of the State's ideology that abides by religious rules only if they match its interests.

4.2.2.2. Reciprocity validates attacks on Western and Easter countries.

Likewise, the State validates all attacks against any of the countries intervening in its business, including Eastern and Western countries. To illustrate, a "temple [in Kuwait has been] rocked by an explosion …in revenge for Ahlus-Sunnah"17 and in defense of the

15Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria
16 The verse is translated by ISIS (L. 565-566)
17 Sunni Islam is a denomination of Islam
Khilafah\textsuperscript{18}, which the government of Kuwait is waging war against as part of the crusader coalition" (L.1854-1857). So, ISIS' \textit{revenge} and \textit{defense} are expected to cover for its illegal actions. Also, the Jordanian pilot has been burnt alive "as retribution for his crimes against Islam and the Muslims, including his active involvement in crusader airstrikes" (L.531-532). Once again, a synonym of \textit{revenge}, in this case \textit{retribution}, is integrated into \textit{Dabiq} discourse to hint at the reciprocity principle.

Still, there are other Eastern non-Arab countries which have also got a slap on the rest from ISIS even though they are not directly engaged in the war against it. For instance, the beheading of two Japanese hostages, Haruna Yukawa and Kenji Goto Jogo, is ISIS' way of telling Japan you reap what you saw. The "Islamic State demanded 200 million dollars from the Japanese government [to release the two hostages], the same sum initially committed to the crusaders and their apostate allies by the Japanese Prime Minister" (L.498-500). The parenthetical expression inserted between two commas at the end of the previous sentence describes the ransom which has been demanded in exchange for the hostages. It emphasizes the fact that the ordered ransom and the donated money for the coalition are of the \textit{same} amount, which stands as a sign of reciprocation. Apparently, the shocking wrongdoings committed by ISIS members are suggested to be twisted replicas of the violence that has been practiced against them at an earlier stage.

More examples are found in the statements through which ISIS addresses the West. For example, the hatchet assault against "four policemen in Queens," New York (L.356) serves as "a damning indictment of America's continued policy of foreign intervention" (L. 363-364). Even though aggression should never be vindicated, ISIS' defense here is mind-swaying because if one considers the kind of damage the US has caused to Iraqis since 2003, and let's take the Abu Ghraib Scandal as a demonstration, then ISIS has been

\textsuperscript{18} The Arabic equivalent of Caliphate
merciful towards the US. In a similar manner, other operations in Canada and Australia have been carried out under the excuse of self-defense. Also, James Foley's demise is basically "a result of the US airstrikes in Iraq" (L.147), as well as a "number of related events that the Obama administration and western media [have] tried to ignore" (L.172-173). Whenever ISIS justifies its attacks against the West, one message seems to be recurrent: "the Islamic State [is] not initiat[ing] a war against you [European countries] as [the] governments and media try to make you believe. It is you who [have] started the transgression against us" (L. 1497-1499). As one may notice, every action done by ISIS comes as an indictment of, a result of, a revenge for, or a retribution for some other kind of action initiated by its enemies.

4.2.2.3. Reciprocity expresses ISIS relationship with Allah and Muslims.

Most importantly, reciprocity has been minimally used so as to emphasize the position of the Islamic State as "the only state ruling by Allah's Shari'ah today" (L.1880). Therefore, ISIS quotes Allah saying, "Allah will bring forth … a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, mighty against the disbelievers" (Quran 5:54). The coordination of the two propositions with inverted arguments depicts the special bond ISIS claims to have with Allah, especially in light of the following hadith: "The people of Sham are Allah's whip on Earth. He takes retribution through them from whomever He wills and however He wills" (L.1247-1248). There is no doubt that ISIS seeks to convince its Muslim audience of the holiness of its mission, a mission that receives power from the Almighty. Yet, the State's relationship with Allah is not the only one highlighted in Dabiq magazine, for its relationship with Muslims is also as important. "[Muslims] depend on [ISIS] and it depends on [them]" (L.1747). Expressing this kind of reliance on each other gives the impression that neither the State nor Muslims

19 The verse is translated by ISIS (L.672-674)
can survive without one another.

Basically, the reciprocity principle has helped ISIS portray its attacks as a self-defense strategy which "the International Law would simply regard as a counter-war against an illegal war" (Van den hole, 2003, p.72).

4.2.3. The authority principle.

Halmari and Virtanen (2005) assert that "resorting to authorities" in political speeches can "justify [one's] points of view" (p.118). So, it is not surprising to find out that Dabiq magazine quotes several authoritative figures and uses intertextuality, including both its pros and cons, for its own advantage, i.e., to convince readers of the importance of joining ISIS ranks, the righteousness of its actions, the deceitfulness of the State's enemies, and the power it enjoys.

4.2.3.1. Religious authorities require immigration to ISIS' lands.

First, ISIS refers to the Holy Quran and hadith so as to persuade Muslims that immigration to its lands and pledging allegiance to the State's Imam are in the core of Islam. For example, Prophet Muhammad states that "[t]he best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of [Abraham's] hijrah20" (L.1470). Scholars mostly agree that the land of Abraham's21 hijrah is Sham (As-Sabuni, 1997, p.457), also called the Levant area where ISIS geographical existence is currently centered. On another occasion, Allah's Messenger advises one of the companions to "[g]o to Sham, for it is the best of Allah's lands" (L.1513-1514). As one may notice, the superlative adjectival form "the best" is activated to describe the superiority of the Levant and its people in the previously mentioned hadith. So, ISIS suggests that Muslims around the world should follow Prophet Abraham's steps and abide by Prophet Muhammad's words to gain this religiously-acquired supremacy. The other action which Dabiq pushes its audience to do is to pledge allegiance

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20 Hijrah is the Arabic equivalent of migration, and Abraham or Ibrahim decided to migrate after his people tried to burn him alive because of his preaching.
21 Also called Ibrahim in the Holy Quran
to the Islamic State and obey its Imam. When asked about the evil at the end of the time and how to overcome it, Prophet Muhammad replies, "Stick to the jama'ah\textsuperscript{22} of the Muslims and their imam\textsuperscript{23} (L. 1762-1763). Moreover, "whoever pledges allegiance to an imam, giving him his hand in sincerity, should obey him as much as he is able to" (L.1416-1417). Prophet Muhammad's orders and advice, expressed by the imperative verb stick and the modal verb should respectively, are certainly valued by Muslims, who may fall victims of this persuasive technique.

\textbf{4.2.3.2. Religious authorities justify killing.}

Second, the explanation that ISIS relies on to rationalize its punishment methods depends mainly on their own interpretation of certain religious quotes. To illustrate, \textit{Dabiq} producers add the following two verses from Holly Quran to their articles in an attempt to validate the burning of the Jordanian pilot: "So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you"\textsuperscript{24} (Quran 2:194), and "if you punish[an enemy], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed"\textsuperscript{25} (Quran 16:126)\textsuperscript{26}. Clearly, ISIS exploits this reciprocity principle legislated by Allah to justify the unexpected punishment carried out against the Jordanian pilot. According to ISIS, the pilot has been involved in the "crusader bombing campaign" which has caused many Muslims to be "burned alive and buried under mountains of debris" (L.559). Thus, burning him becomes a taste of his own medicine, for it is "a just form of retaliation for his involvement in the crusader… airstrikes" (L.559). In addition, ISIS lists a series of five stories about Prophet Muhammad companions practicing this kind of punishment against apostates. Simply put, Allah has provided Muslims with a constitution, and ISIS portrays itself as a religious organization that works by the book, no more, no less.

\textsuperscript{22} The group of Muslims who follow Allah's Shari'ah
\textsuperscript{23} Leader
\textsuperscript{24} The verse is translated by ISIS (L.575-576)
\textsuperscript{25} The verse is translated by ISIS (L.565-566)
\textsuperscript{26} Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali
ISIS' argument in the previous paragraph seems to be persuasive indeed, right? Still, before you make up your mind, consider the following information. The previous discussion is ISIS' story, but here is the untold part of it. If readers go back to the different explication books that clarify Quranic verses, they will find that ISIS takes texts out of contexts. For instance, the quotation from The Cow Chapter does not mean to assault people in the same way they have assaulted you but "to fight them because they have fought you" (As-Sabuni, 1997, p.127). In addition, the verse is a "commentary from Allah on what has happened with Prophet Muhammad when he has gone to do Umrah during the prohibited months, the months in which Muslims are supposed not to fight" (At-Tabari, 1994, pp.520-522). Yet, on that occasion, Allah has allowed Prophet Muhammad to fight back whoever that has fought him. So, the verse actual translation is "If anyone transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress ye likewise against him" (Quran 1:194) as translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1987). What does all this mean? Well, it suggests that ISIS translation and interpretation of Quranic verses are pragmatically invalid for the new context in which they are used.

If the previous refutation of ISIS' story is not convincing enough, let's look at the other verse from The Bee Chapter. To avoid repetition, at-Tabari and as-Sabuni introduce the same interpretation as the one presented above. However, there is another evidence here of how ISIS manipulates Holy texts to suit its agendas. In fact, ISIS decides to ignore the remaining part of the verse in their discourse because if they had included it, their argument would have been vulnerable. In the same verse, Allah continues, "But if ye show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient" (Quran 16:126). Obviously, Allah "asks His people to abandon punishment and let Him deal with His creation" (As-Sabuni, 1997, p.149). Moreover, the reason why Allah has included this

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27 Unlike Hajj, umrah is a pilgrimage to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of the year
verse in His Holy book is to address Muslims after the Battle of Uhud, in which Kuffar mutated the bodies of Muslim fighters. As a result, Muslims' comrades promised to do their enemies more harm than the one practiced against them. In return, "Allah first ordered Muslims not to overdo punishment and then suggested not to punish at all" (At-Tabari, 1994, p.570). Briefly, it is not intended to transform this study into a religious one, but the idea is that readers should pay attention to whatever religious proof provided by ISIS members to justify their actions, for they are masters when it comes to manipulation.

In this regard, it should be noted that ISIS relies heavily on religious intertextuality to support its argumentations. The name of Allah is used two hundred thirty-six times throughout the chosen articles, which is practically the most frequent content word in the State's discourse. The Quranic verses appear fifty-two times to verify ISIS claims. As for Prophet Muhammad, his name, as well as other alternative names such as The Prophet, Allah's Messenger, and Rasullulah, is cited twenty-two times. Up to twenty different hadiths are also included to achieve the same goal.

4.2.3.3. American authorities show lack of unity.

The third reason why ISIS discourse implements the authority principle is to make the reader question the credibility of the US government. As evidence, Dabiq incorporates some quotes from Obama's media talks and criticizes them using comments made by major US political experts. In other words, ISIS delivers its meta-message without having to explicitly utter it. To illustrate, there is a comparison between the way President Obama describes ISIS and the way it is portrayed by other US experts. On the one hand, Obama thinks that ISIS embodies a "terrorist organization, pure and simple" (L.738). He does not elaborate or allow audience to see the whole picture, as if to under-estimate ISIS. On the other hand, his own Former Defense Secretary, Chuck Hagel finds it "so well-organized,

28 The Battle of Uhud was the second battle between Meccans and Muslims. It was initiated by a force led by Abu Sufyan to retaliate against the Muslims for the Battle of Badr.
so well-trained, so well-funded, so strategic, so brutal, so completely ruthless […] and] an incredibly powerful new threat” (L.746-750). In other words, Hagel gives weight to ISIS by adding the intensifier *so* before every single adjective he uses to describe it. The same effect is created by using the adverb *incredibly* to tell the reader the degree to which ISIS is considered powerful. This divergence of opinions within the US government indicates lack of consistency. Of course, a house divided against itself cannot stand; thus, ISIS implicitly suggests that the US should not be trusted. Logically speaking, if one assumes that the Islamic State is a terrorist group only, as Obama alleges, then why couldn't the US-led coalition defeat it until now despite the very fact that the US needed only three and a half years to defeat the Axis in WWII.

ISIS brings forward more quotes to criticize the US foreign policy. To begin with, when Obama says that the US "strategy of taking out terrorists…is one that [they] have successfully pursued in Yemen and Somalia for years" (L.1170-1171), *Dabiq* immediately responds using the Washington Post's comment, i.e., "Somalia is a failed state and Yemen is hardly a healthy one; both remain incubators of dangerous terrorism" (L.1179-1180). By substituting the lexical item "successful" in Obama's statement with its antonym "failed" in the Washington Post article to describe the situation in Somalia and Yemen, the latter explicitly refutes the former's claims. In addition, ISIS brings the issue of Shiites to the table so as to prove the dishonesty of the American government. The US has always considered Iran as a threatening power due to the allegations about its nuclear weaponry. Likewise, the Sunni Islamic State considers Shiites, such as Iran, Iraqi government, and Hezbullah, as enemies (L.157-158). Therefore, if both ISIS and the US have a common enemy, then the US logic necessitates the cancelation of the Western intrusion against ISIS because any deterioration in the Islamic State power means the revival of its Shiite rivals.

Even the Former US Secretary of State and US National Security Advisor, Henry
Kissinger, shares ISIS this point of view. He stresses that "in all the crises roiling the world, the U.S. shouldn't lose focus on Iran" (L.243-244). The previously mentioned examples represent the way ISIS perceives the US; yet, it is supported by acknowledged figures from the US itself. In brief, the authority strategy is activated in ISIS discourse to show the lack of unity the US government suffers from, which in turn questions their ethos.

4.2.3.4. American authorities recognize ISIS power.

Finally, ISIS alludes to several US political authorities to persuade the reader of its own internationally-recognized power. For instance, the Former CIA intelligence officer, Gary Bernsten, says that "ISIS has billions of dollars. They have a network of communications…They are truly the most successful Sunni terrorist group in history" (L. 1162-1164). The use of the adjectival superlative form, the most successful, is a clear declaration of ISIS power. Similarly, Former Lieutenant, Colonel Bill Cowan, informs Fox News that "ISIS will …[take] more towns, more territory, [and] consolidate more gains" (L.777). In this case, the tripled use of the comparative form more clearly shows the increasing expansion of ISIS geographical existence. Actually, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, confesses that "there's no military-only solution to ISIL. And … there's no airpower alone solution either in Iraq or Syria" (L. 754-756). Negating the previous two sentences suggests that ISIS military power is not underestimated by international powers. All these quotes come straight from the horses' mouth to convince audience of the political, economic, and military power that the Islamic State enjoys. After all, ISIS "is a physical, if extralegal, reality on the ground" (L. 1357-1358).

To conclude, the authority principle or intertextuality, which depends on quoting professional and authoritative people, has been successfully integrated into ISIS discourse. When addressing Muslim readers, Allah and His Messenger have been referred to.
However, when appealing to the logic of other readers, the statements of certain expert US
officials have been quoted.

4.2.4. The consistency principle.

Though it is difficult to spot this persuasive strategy due to its holistic spirit, certain
ideas have been stressed out and continuously referred to in Dabiq articles. In fact, the
overall consistent rhetoric of ISIS plants the seeds of several conclusions: ISIS religious
superiority over other Islamic movements, the necessity of performing hijrah to its land, its
unfading power, and the misguidance of the enemy's media.

4.2.4.1. Consistent reference to ISIS' religious ideology.

First of all, based on its Quran-and-Sunnah29 codified law, ISIS believes itself to be the
best, if not the only, Islamic state in the modern era. For instance, the tenth issue of Dabiq
magazine entitled The Law of Allah and the Laws of Men spots a striking contrast between
ISIS ruling ideology and that of other Islamic organizations, parties, and brigades. On the
one hand, the article bearing the same title as the cover's points out that "there is no place
on the face of the Earth where the Shari'ah of Allah is implemented and the rule is entirely
for Allah except for the lands of the Islamic State" (L.1234-1235). Such a powerful
assertion needs evidence so as to be taken seriously by the reader, and ISIS knows that its
actions speak louder than words. Eventually, it "enforce[s] prayer, collect[s] zakah,
…execute[s] the hudud, judge[s] in their courts by what Allah revealed, return[s] the rights
of the oppressed, [fights] the kuffar and apostates, and enforce[s] the jizyah upon Ahlul-
Kitab30 (L.1278-1281). On the other hand, the Shari'ah committees dubbed by the Sahwah
Coalition "give an illusion of Shari'ah while they are in reality committees afflicted with
fitnah " (L.1293-1294). Similarly, other "cowardly jihad claimants… [are] afraid of
implementing the Shari'ah lest they offend the people” (L. 1901-1903). Similar arguments

29 The verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions of prophet
Muhammad, as well as various reports about his companions.
30 Christians and Jews
about ISIS implementing Shari’ah have been repeated throughout the data twenty-six times, and they have always included ISIS Islamic jargon and a long list of clues confirming ISIS claims. It should also be noted that the contrast and consistency principles have been working side by side to accomplish this mission.

In addition, ISIS execution methods are religiously justified as previously explained under the authority and reciprocity principles. However, one example will receive a closer look here, i.e., the burning of the Jordanian pilot. Some "palace 'scholars' and …ignorant defeatists" have condemned ISIS as un-Islamic based on one of Prophet Muhammad's statements: "None should punish with fire except Allah" (L.570). However, ISIS' response has definitely assembled a case against these scholars. Rather than defying a hadith by another one, ISIS prefers relying on a verse from the Holy Quran, the first source of Islamic law, in which Allah says, "So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you." (Quran 2:194). According to ISIS' understanding, burning the pilot is just an application of Allah's law of retribution. If that is not convincing enough, Dabiq refers to Prophet Muhammad gouging the eyes of Urani men as a retribution for their atrocious killing of Muslim shepherds (L.577). Furthermore, the article starts listing numerous similar incidents in which the Prophet's companions, such as Abu Bakir and Khalid Ibn al-Walid, used fire for punishment throughout the Wars of Apostasy. Then comes the concluding sentence: "Thus, the Islamic State [is] not only follow[ing] the footsteps of Allah's Messenger … but also emulat[ing] the example of his righteous Sahabah" (L.623-625). As a result, Muslim readers may deem ISIS a true

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31 The verse is translated by ISIS (L.575)  
32 When this tribe came to Medina ill, Prophet Muhammad asked them to go to the Muslim Shepherds to get some food and medicine. After getting their health back, the Urani tribe killed all the shepherds and drove away their camels. So, it is said in Sahih Bukhari that Prophet Muhammad gouged their eyes as a retribution.  
33 A war launched by Abu Bakir as-Siddiq against those Muslims who rebelled against Islam after the death of prophet Muhammad  
34 A term used to describe those who met prophet Muhammad, believed in his message, and died as Muslims. These include his companions, disciples, and family members.
Islamic State. If so, then they will be ready to accept ISIS' final proposition, i.e., to immigrate to its land.

**4.2.4.2. Consistent call to immigrate to ISIS' territories.**

Second, this call to immigrate to ISIS' lands has been one of the most recurring themes in ISIS discourse. Actually, in the third issue of *Dabiq* magazine, which is entitled "A Call to Hijrah," al-Baghdadi requests Muslims to come to the State "because hijrah to the land of Islam is obligatory" (L. 1326). This "obligation" to support the Caliphate is stressed out fourteen times throughout ISIS discourse. It is tackled in six of the chosen articles; however, it should be noted that there are many other articles which discuss the same issue but are not included in our data. Furthermore, Muslims should not consider immigration to the lands of Islam as part of the Islamic history, for "[h]ijrah will not cease to exist … until the sun rises from the West" (L. 995-996), Prophet Muhammad asserts. Actually, there is another hadith in which it is declared that "[t]he best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of Ibrahim hijrah [which is Sham according to some scholars]. Then there will remain on the Earth the worst of its people" (L. 1470-1471). The superlative form of the adjective "good" clearly gives ISIS the chance to brag about its superiority; as a result, it emerges seven times in the same context under the title of "Hijrah to Sham is from the Millah of Ibrahim" (L. 1464). Such reports are summoned to give the State some kind of a religious legitimacy so as to be able to pull the reader towards believing that without residing in its territories, one does not act as a committed Muslim.

**4.2.4.3. Consistent refusal of being under-estimated.**

Third, the refusal of being called a "mere organization" is accentuated in the State's discourse, and the claim is refuted by providing numerous examples to prove the total opposite. Basically, "a mere 'organization'… [cannot] lay siege to cities or have their own
police force" (L.768-769). "[A] mere 'organization' [is not expected] to have tanks and artillery pieces, an army of soldiers… and their own spy drones" (L. 770-771). Definitely, "a mere 'organization'… [does not] have a mint with plans to produce [its] own currency, primary schools for the young, and a functioning court system" (L.772-773). What a professional rhetoric! The repetitive inclusion of "organization", which is an underestimating labeling of ISIS, and its placement within scare quotes every single time stand as a sign of sarcasm. To be categorized as an "organization" certainly does not live up to ISIS' expectations, for it runs after a more powerful accreditation. Yet, one should question whether ISIS doesn't appreciate being called an "organization" or doesn't value the adjective describing this organization, i.e., "mere." After all, Bernsten has called it "the most successful Sunni terrorist group" (L.1164); McCain has described it as "the most extreme, Islamic organization" (L.1450-1451); it has referred to itself as "the most explosive Islamic group" (L.1122). Unlike President Obama's "mere organization" classification, none of the previous comments has caused ISIS irritation. Apparently, superlatives are welcomed because they show that the thing being described has the "greatest degree of a particular quality" (Superlative, n.d.). To sum up, ISIS insistence on not being underestimated is a clear indication of the power it attributes to itself.

4.2.4.4. Inconsistent anti-ISIS propaganda.

Finally, the deceitfulness of the enemy’s propaganda has been also put under the microscope in an attempt to persuade audience to trust ISIS media only. The selection and elimination methods adopted by anti-ISIS media are highly stressed out in the State's discourse. For instance, the embarrassing defeat of Safawis after the liberation of Biji37 "[has been] largely overlooked by the international media, which [have chosen] instead to

37 A city in Iraq
focus on bloated tales of Peshmerga murtaddin\(^{38}\) ‘advancing' on Sinjar” (L. 451-452). So, the anti-ISIS media strategy of controlling the flow of information in their countries by emphasizing news about their winnings and ignoring reports about their defeats makes sure that the public is kept in the shadow. Otherwise, fear might dominate and defeat might become inevitable. Another example to support ISIS' perspective comes as an attack against President Obama. He "[has] ordered a number of online social networks to shut down all Islamic State media accounts" so as to "prevent knowledge of [James Foley's issue] from reaching his citizenry" (L.197-198). Again, Western media puts wool over the eyes of their nations whereas ISIS tries to convince these nations that it "[has] not initiate[d] a war against [them], as [their] governments and media try to make [them] believe" (L.1497-1499). Basically, ISIS knows the importance of media channels in circulating information and the effect they have on people's attitudes. Therefore, ISIS portrays itself as a player putting all of his/her cards on the table. In contrast, anti-ISIS players are represented as if they are using all tricks available to make sure they are not exposed. This battle of who speaks the truth definitely encourages readers to either change their political loyalties or, at least, obtain a more neutral position.

All in all, the repetitive mentioning of certain ideas, as discussed under this section and others as well, aims mainly at tarnishing the image of ISIS' rivals while polishing that of its own as the honest, powerful Islamic State. Yet, it should be taken into consideration that dealing with this principle has been the most challenging because it cooperates with many other persuasive principles to achieve the sought outcome. As a result, reading this section in isolation does not provide an overall picture of how it operates.

4.2.5. The liking principle.

Despite its minimal application in ISIS discourse, the liking principle takes advantage

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\(^{38}\) The plural of "murtad," a person who rejects in deed or words his/her former religion if he/she was originally a Muslim.
of two characteristics, namely humor and similarity (Whipple & Calvert, 2008; Cialdini, 2007) to clarify the US nonsense talk and ISIS care for Muslims.

4.2.5.1. Using humor to mock the US.

First of all, unlike the rigidity and seriousness which dominate ISIS discourse, humor finally pops out to mock some of President Obama's statements. For instance, when Obama claims that the US strategy in "taking out terrorists" has been "successfully pursued in Yemen and Somalia for years," the authors of Dabiq magazine sarcastically comment, "Would you like those words served with relish or pickle, president?" (L.1176). The previous humorous punch-line cannot be understood unless explained in light of a common idiomatic expression in English, i.e., "eat one's word." By comparing Obama's talk to food which can be served with different kinds of appetizers, the author suggests that Mr. President should eat his words and take back his statement. Such a derisive expression is the result of the author's belief that Obama is neither sincere nor logical in his announcements, for those are still "dangerous incubators of dangerous terrorism" as asserted by "the Washington Post" (L.1179-1180). So, ISIS suggests that if Obama has cited US policy in Yemen and Somalia as a successful illustration of what's in store for Iraq and Syria" (L.1177-1178), then his analogy is a meaningless, disposable one because these countries cannot be compared to ISIS. After all, "Somalia is a failed state and Yemen is hardly a healthy one"(L.1179). Noticeably, humor has been employed here to express the speaker's disapproval of his opponent's perspectives, which in return convinces the reader to reconsider the President's line of reasoning and weigh it against the newly presented argument.

In addition, when discussing the US foreign policy of dealing with ISIS, Dabiq producers create the following cynical dialogue between a robot (the US government) and its master (the voice of reason), in which the robot is stuck on a loop, making the same
mistake over and over again regardless of his master's instructions:

Master to robot: You have to find a different way of addressing the danger the mujahidin pose to the west. "Cannot… compute…" Military action doesn't work, what about negotiations? "Must… obey… programming…" Everything you've done since 9/11 has put us in more danger, not less. Zzzzz… syntax… error. (L.418-422)

The choice of modal verbs used by the master and his robot indicates an important point to reflect on. Even though both have to and must imply obligation, the semi-modal verb have to is often used for what an authoritative figure has said it is necessary to do, but must entails a personal opinion about what is necessary to do. So, the US personal opinions obviously contradict with those of the voice of the reason because the latter thinks about considering another tactic of dealing with the Islamic State. Overall, humor is used here to kill two birds with one stone. It adds to the aesthetics of the article and persuades the reader of the US failure to learn from its mistakes due to its force-only programmed policy.

Since the previous texts do not resemble ISIS' writing style, more analysis has been done to explain why humor appears in this one article entitled "The Perfect Storm" (L.1107). It turned out that it is written by John Cantlie, a British Journalist who was captivated by ISIS in Syria in November 2012. Cantlie's coworkers describe him as a good-humored man who gets the job done in difficult conditions. That is evident, but what is not is whether he has been forced to lie and write things he does not believe in or he just can't-lie, pun intended. Either way, his sense of humor is a persuasive tool that has been exploited by ISIS to question their opponents' credibility (Mulholland, 1994).

4.2.5.2. Using similarity to unify Muslims.

Second, similarity, which is expressed through the utilization of family-related terms and the inclusive personal deixis "our," points out that ISIS wishes Muslims to support each other wherever they live. Although the Islamic State desires to be seen as a
threatening power, there is a part of it, as tiny as it may be, that wants to be seen as a caring state for its Muslim citizens. As a result, ISIS never hesitates to call its Muslim readers *brothers, sisters, and sons*, as if the State is just a big family embracing its members. On one occasion, al-Adnani invites all Muslims and "brothers in creed" (L.1869) to rally around the Islamic State in its fight against the crusaders. On another, he wonders how Muslims can "enjoy life and sleep while not aiding [their] brothers" (L. 1680). Clearly, such family relationship terms are expected to lessen the distance between the sender of the message and its receiver. Furthermore, the personal deictic expression *our* has been inserted seven times into *Dabiq* articles to give readers a sense of group identity that unifies them with the speaker. For example, al-Adnani asserts, "Muslim Kurds …are our people and brothers whenever they may be" (L.1689-1690). ISIS also writes, "The transgression against our sons in Palestine" (L.465) is not accepted, and the release of "our Muslim brothers and sisters" (L. 134) from Israeli jails is one of the State's aims.

Obviously, ISIS argues that it is not only concerned with its own citizens, rather, all Muslims in other countries as well. All in all, these deictic expressions are meant to stress out the similarities, instead of differences, between ISIS and the audience, creating a good atmosphere to communicate its ideas by focusing on religion as a unifying umbrella.

To conclude, liking is not a major feature of ISIS talk, but the very few times in which this persuasive strategy has been activated are influencing indeed. The few stinging humorous comments and inclusive deixis implemented in ISIS discourse lessen the formality of the talk between the State and its audience. This good side of the State, which differs from what anti-ISIS propaganda promotes, is a clever method to create more flexible readers.

### 4.2.6. Glittering generalities.

People's fears and desires can be a key element in deciding their future attitudes and
behaviors, but glittering generalities appeal to the latter by drawing attention to the positive connotations attached to certain lexical items (Perloff, 2003; Shabo, 2008). In the case of the Islamic State, propagandists have packed their articles with a variety of glittering generalities in an attempt to portray the Islamic State as an unblemished one. By doing so, some readers may eventually be encouraged to adopt ISIS’ line of thinking. The following chart shows the absolute and relative frequencies of the most recurring glittering generalities in *Dabiq* magazine, with a total sum of 110 occurrences. Other glittering generalities which are mentioned once or twice in the data are overlooked.

![Figure 3: Glittering Generalities in ISIS Discourse](image)

**4.2.6.1. Truth.**

As shown above, *truth* has been mentioned the most in ISIS discourse, reaching up to 23 times. This may signify ISIS’ wish to be portrayed as a reliable source of information, for truth contributes to the establishment of a speaker’s ethos. Yet, what are the truth-conditions that ISIS depends on to evaluate a statement as being true or not? On the one hand, when Western media sources indicate that the successive attacks on Australia, Canada, and the US are carried out by "disturbed loners" (L.371), ISIS asserts that "the truth runs far deeper than that" (L.372) since these attackers are neither disturbed nor
loners according to ISIS' point of view. Rather, they are organized Islamic Jihadists who have responded to the call of ISIS leader "on Muslims around the world to rise up in arms" (L.381). On the other hand, when the Former CIA Chief of "the Bin Laden Issue Station," Michael Scheuer, advises President Obama to watch the battles in the Middle East from sidelines, his speech is described as "a truth that should be reflected over" (L.286).

Similarly, the description of Islamic Jihadists' tactics as "eerily sophisticated" is considered an "educated comment and closer to the truth" (L.428). It becomes clear at this stage that ISIS judges any statement to be true if it only fits its agenda.

Moreover, the repetitive use of truth as an indication of ISIS' Islamic teachings has been successfully carried out. To illustrate, after a lengthy speech in which ISIS leader, al-Baghdadi, explains the importance of pledging allegiance to the State, he maintains that ISIS "is upon the clear truth and supported by Allah, the Mighty, the Strong" (L.1747-1748). He gives a similar talk in front of ISIS soldiers to assure them that they "are upon the truth" (L.1102). He also advises Mursi, the former Egyptian President, to "hold on to the truth"(L.1826-1827) and "declare the truth [Allah's] law obligates upon [him]" (L.1830). If one takes into consideration the fact that Islam is "the religion of truth" (Quran 9:33), then ISIS seems to be quite religious because truth has been emphasized in its discourse. However, the question one needs to ask in order to avoid being manipulated is: Is the truth that Allah describes in his Holy Book similar to that which ISIS seeks? After all, truth is an elusive term, and Dabiq producers make sure to keep it that way.

4.2.6.2. Victory.

Moving on to victory, it is employed 21 times in Dabiq chosen articles to convey one basic message, i.e., ISIS guarantees the protection of its citizens. As evidence, one of the very first articles published in Dabiq magazine informs the readers that "[t]riumph looms

39 Author's translation
on the horizon" and that "the signs of victory have appeared" (L. 20). Even more surprisingly, the Islamic State alleges that it is "Allah [who] has blessed it with …victory" (L.1394), without actually providing readers with any logical explanation why it believes itself to be Allah's chosen state. At first glance, this glittering generality seems to be successfully integrated into ISIS discourse because it addresses a wide range of readers whose meta-programs are directed toward rewards (Hogan, 2004), but ISIS spokesperson, al-Adnani, makes a grave mistake when defining victory. He says, "Being killed — according to [the State and its soldiers'] account – is a victory" (L.1619-1620). Logically speaking, being killed is not that appealing; so, victory can no longer be considered tempting enough to mesmerize audience.

In contrast, every victory achieved by other anti-ISIS parties is underrated in an attempt to suggest that it is not the kind of triumph audience should look for in comparison to that achieved by ISIS. For instance, if ISIS logic considers Israel as a historical enemy, then any victory against it should be welcomed, regardless of who achieves it or why. Yet, this is not the case as evident in the way ISIS describes Hezbollah's victory against Israel as a "so-called" (L.231) one. "So-called victory"! Who called it so? And why isn't ISIS' victory called so as well? Clearly, the adjective defining victory is meant to devoid this glittering generality from any constructive associations attached to it. Also, ISIS puts sarcasm into play to create the same effect. Dabiq declares that the Safawi's "much-vaunted victory" (L.443) over Biji has been crashed only one month later by ISIS fighters who reclaimed power over the territory. In brief, victory is appreciated if it is an achievement of the State and mocked if it is accomplished by its enemies.

4.2.6.3. Power and might.

Power and might come third, each observed 20 times in ISIS discourse to persuade the reader of its ability to take care of its own citizens. In fact, ISIS promises Muslims of "a
new era …of might and dignity" (L.1) and emphasizes that "Muslims live in the territory of the Islamic State with might and honor" (L.1091). Furthermore, the numerous attacks that have been initiated against Western countries prove the "power [ISIS has] over men… on the other side of the world" (L.384-385). Despite the recognition of ISIS as "an incredibly powerful new threat" (L. 749-750) by some US politicians, it further looks for the fusion of several Islamic movements under the black flag to become "a force of immense power" (L.1154). Obviously, ISIS wants an exaggerated form of power that is incredible and immense to attract readers to come to its lands.

However, power means different things to different people (Standler, 2005); therefore, ISIS explains one aspect of this vague lexical item, i.e., its religious origins. Dabiq producers announce that the attacks of their Muslim fighters demonstrate two major teachings of Islam, namely, "the immense power that jihad wields over those who chose to embark upon its path" (L.378-379) and the "power of sincerity… granted by Allah to the slaves He has chosen" (L.905-906). In other words, this ambiguous lexical item has been highlighted by ISIS to mean "the true power [which] relies in the creed of tawhid⁴⁰ " and not that "in weaponry and technology" (L.253). In the view of what has been said, power has not been professionally dealt with as a glittering generality in ISIS discourse because glittering generalities should be left open-ended; otherwise, they lose their glamour. Thus, the kind of power ISIS elaborates on may act as a persuasive tool if it targets Muslim readers only who already believe in jihad and tawhid.

\textbf{4.2.6.4. Honor and success.}

Finally, honor and success are also summoned to a) draw a fascinating picture of the life audience could enjoy if they become members of the Islamic State and b) to brag about its achievements. To explain, ISIS says that honor will accompany Muslims, whether alive

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⁴⁰ Believing in the oneness of God.
or dead. In the earthly life, Muslims "will walk everywhere as [masters], having honor, being revered, with [their] head[s] raised high and [their] dignity preserved" (L.4-5), and if they return to Allah as "shuhada" (martyrs), [it would be] an incomparable honor which they …desire" (L.539). Nevertheless, the talk about Shahada (martyrdom) might be encouraging for Muslims only, who already know about Allah's Heaven; otherwise, why would any human being wish to die?

A more persuasive use of this glittering generality alludes to how the enemies of the State perceive it as one that "enjoys success … [and] attracts more to its fold, thereby causing expansion and breeding more success" (L.335-336). It seems that ISIS portrays itself as a materialization of Plato's imagined Utopia.

To summarize, the emphasis put on certain lexical items in ISIS propaganda plays a key role in the construction of its positive image as a State that deserves to be joined, for it is supported by Allah and supports its citizens. However, some of the previously discussed terms have been elaborated on by ISIS officials, causing these glittering generalities to occasionally lose their general meaning. This clearly marks ISIS' lack of professionalism in dealing with some propaganda strategies.

4.2.7. Name calling.

This technique of propaganda, with its direct and indirect subdivisions (Shabo, 2008), aims at establishing the inferiority of the opponent by "using negative words and bad names to create fear and dislike for people, ideas, or institutions" (iCivics, 2012, p.1) that the speaker disagrees with. Since ISIS is in conflict almost with everyone else, it is expected that it will exploit this technique to insult and underestimate the State's rivals; yet, the unexpected part is related to the degree to which ISIS does that directly, as shown in

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41 The plural of "shadeed", one who is killed for the sake of Allah, defending his religion, country, or beliefs.
42 Dying for God's sake while defending His religion.
the following figure:

![Figure 4: Name Calling in ISIS Discourse](image)

4.2.7.1. **Indirect name calling.**

Starting with the indirect method, it is mainly integrated into ISIS discourse to mock the Western definition of *peace*. Actually, the few incidents of indirect name calling in ISIS discourse are placed within scare quotes, which are "quotation marks used to express… skepticism or derision concerning the use of the enclosed word or phrase" (Scare Quotes, n.d.). To explain, when commenting on Japan's $200 million aid to the US-led coalition, ISIS ironically remarks that "a 'pacifist' country [Japan] is led by a 'peace' prizewinner [Obama] in a war doomed to fail" (L.489-490). The appearance of antonyms (peace vs. war) in the same sentence raises doubts about whether these countries deserve the titles they have been given or not, especially in light of the dissonance between their words and deeds. To put it another way, ISIS questions one of the major characteristics that build the ethos of its enemies. These suspicions are based on one core question: why are pacifist countries engaged in war? Apparently, one cannot deny that such a simple argument is very persuasive, for it is ironic to find a "Nobel Peace Prize winner" (L.489&1168) leading the world to the total opposite.

4.2.7.2. **Direct name calling.**

As for the lexical choices that have contributed to the implementation of the direct
name calling strategy in ISIS discourse, they are demonstrated in the coming chart:

![Figure 5: Name Callining in ISIS Discourse](image)

The lexical items are divided into three sets for a more profound analysis: a) words that have negative religious connotations, b) words that mock the mental abilities of ISIS' foes, and c) words that criticize their behavior.

4.2.7.2.1. Name calls that carry negative religious connotations.

First of all, there has been an emphasis on using adjectives like murtad\(^43\), apostate, and kafir\(^44\) to describe ISIS' enemies. These lexical items are part of the Islamic jargon that ISIS seeks to promote. "Murtad" and its English equivalent, "apostate," appear 31 times in the chosen excerpts to describe some political parties. These include the "PKK/Peshmerga murtadd\(_i\) in both Iraq and Sham" (L.101), "the Houthi murtadd\(_i\) in the city of Sanaa," (707) and the US "apostate allies"(L.883). To clarify things out, the mentioned allies are actually the Arab nations involved in the war waged against ISIS, as suggested by the cover of the ninth issue of Dabiq magazine from which this final quote is extracted. Also, the Jordanian pilot is represented as "murtad" (L.527) and Erdogan as an "apostate" (L.74). Believing that it is vastly superior in power, ISIS baldly threatens the positive face needs of its enemies. Thus, this set of name calls, which ISIS' enemies receive, is meant to

\(^{43}\) The singular form of murtadd\(_i\): people who forsake in deed or word their former religion if they are originally Muslims.

\(^{44}\) One who does not believe in the oneness of Allah, prophethood, and Shari'ah
accomplish three main effects: a) to practice power, b) evoke negative emotional feelings towards its opponents, and c) present a pretext to declare war against them under the banner of Islam

Similarly, Christians, whether foreigners or not, are all called "kuffar" (nonbelievers) 14 times in the chosen articles. For example, when reporting the assault on multinational foreigners at Bardo National Museum in Tunisia, Dabiq says that ISIS fighters have "poured terror on the kuffar inside, killing more than 20 of them and injuring a dozen others" (L.700-701). Likewise, the murdered Egyptian and Iraqi Copts are referred to as "kuffar" (L.641), although other Christians within ISIS' territory are called "Ahlul-Kitab" (L.1281). Probably, the Islamic State tries to validate its attacks against the Copts by informing Muslim readers that its actions are simply the State's duty as an "Islamic" organization rather than an act of terrorism, as the West propagates.

Yet, vigilant readers should raise a focal question: what is ISIS' definition of murtad and kafir? The Academy of the Arabic Language (2004), which is one of the most popular Arabic dictionaries, defines murtad as a person who abandons his/her religion (p.338); however, the groups ISIS name calls have never declared their desertion of Islam or conversion to another religion. Furthermore, kafir is a term used to describe a person who does not believe in the oneness of God (The Academy of the Arabic Language, 2004, p.791), but Christians are called "Ahlu al-Kitab" in the Holy Quran. Still, the most unexpected and unexplained claim ISIS presents is that "by fighting the Islamic State, you fall into kufr whether you realize it or not" (L. 1239-1240), as if ISIS is Islam itself. At this point, one may realize that the State's argument is not consistently logical.

4.2.7.2.2. Name calls that mock the mental abilities of ISIS' enemies.

The second set of name calls, which appears 14 times in ISIS discourse, mocks the judgmental capabilities and sense of the State's enemies. It includes certain lexical choices
such as fool, ignorant, and unwise. As evidence, Obama's refusal to release Muslims from American prisons in exchange of James Foley is looked at as an action of an "arrogant, foolish, and defeated … government [that has] turned away from …[its] citizen with apathy" (L.136-137). Likewise, the $200 million aid that Japan Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo, has offered to the US government highlights the "foolishness" (L.518) and the "infamously unwise announcement [Japan has made] against the Islamic State" (L.524), an announcement similar to that carried out by his predecessor, "the unwise Prime Minister Juichiro Koizumi," (L.477) who has provided "logistical support for the Western crusaders against Afghanistan" (L.478). In addition, the Sawafis have succeeded in deluding their ignorant supporters into believing that they …[have driven] out the mujahidin [from Biji]" (L. 448-449) even though they actually have not. All in all, whether it is the US, Japan, or Safawis that ISIS insults publically, the aim is to persuade audience that the actions of these opposing parties are not the result of profound thinking, rather the lack of logic, experience, and wisdom. Still, attacking the other party verbally may be looked at as a defense strategy. It is similar to what children do when asked about the wrong they have done; they always tend to project their wrongdoings onto someone else. The question is then: does ISIS project its hidden characteristics onto its enemies?

4.2.7.2.3. Name calls that question the behavior of ISIS' enemies.

The last set of adjectives, which includes "tyrant, taghut, hypocrite, and arrogant," questions the credibility of those whom these adjectives describe and gives a justification for waging war against them. To begin with, ISIS despises "the most vile tyrants in the Middle East" (L.432), especially the "tyrannical rule" (L.787) of Bashar al-'Asad and "Maliki's Shia tyranny" (L.278). Unsurprisingly, the Arabic equivalent of tyrant is utilized to describe King Abdullah as "the taghut of Jordan" (L.533) and Shenouda as "the taghut

45 A derogatory term used to refer to Shi'a Muslims, specifically Iranian ones.
46 Tyrant
of the Copts" (L.649). Both words stress the cruelty and injustice practiced by rulers over their nations (Tyrant, n.d.; The Academy of Arabic Language, 2004, p.558). This cruelty seems to be a good excuse for targeting them from ISIS' perspective. Obviously, one cannot but notice that Arab political and religious figures are the only ones meant to be characterized as dictators. This is not random; actually, such a presentation suggests that the State, as a major power in the Middle East, can become an alternative for these regimes at a later stage of the argumentation.

The list of insults goes on and on to portray the other negatively in all possible manners. Arab countries have been accused of hypocrisy, and non-Arab powers are suggested to be acting arrogantly. To demonstrate, in response to adh-Dhawahiri's, the current leader of al-Qaeda, statement against ISIS' attacks on Houthi temples in Sanaa and Sa'dah47, ISIS states, "When one contrasts this blessed operation with al-Qaeda's attack on a Houthi rally in Tahrir Square in Sanaa last fall, the blatant hypocrisy becomes evident." Clearly, ISIS exposes adh-Dhawahiri's inconsistent opinion to the reader since he rationalizes the bombing of "a Houthi rally in a public square, but forbid[s] for the Islamic State to bomb a Houthi gathering in a Houthi temple" (L. 724-725). In general, hypocrites or two-faced people are not considered a credible source of information (Cialdini, 2007); therefore, their statements are not taken seriously. This is exactly what ISIS seeks to achieve, i.e., to refute the accusations pressed against it from al-Qaeda leaders. Even though ISIS was once called al-Qaeda Group of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers (Bunt, 2009), it now has the power to criticize their originators simply because their opinions no longer match those of ISIS.

Moreover, ISIS wants to "humiliate the arrogance of [the] Japanese government" (L.501-502) and is surprised to find that "[t]he arrogant US government [has] paid no attention to the offer nor to the threats" (L.149) of the Islamic State. Usually, arrogant

47 Yemini cities
individuals tend to adopt "an insulting way of thinking or behaving that comes from believing that [they] are better, smarter, or more important than other people" (Arrogant, n.d.). So, ISIS does not seem to accept the ego-centrism of powerful Western governments whose "own arrogance and inability to learn the lessons of the past" (L. 332) have put them in critical positions. In order to teach them a lesson, some British and American prisoners are kept "in the cells of the Islamic State, only after their governments arrogantly [have] refused to release [ISIS] imprisoned brothers" (L. 142-143). In other words, the mistakes that some governments make due to their arrogance cost their nations a lot, thus, should not be supported. Briefly, such characteristics that ISIS uses to refer to its enemies with all the negative denotations and connotations they hold are the exact opposite of what a ruler should look like. Yet, by labeling others and disrespecting them verbally, it seems that ISIS itself acts arrogantly. What an irony!

To summarize, regardless of which offensive word ISIS selects to insult its rivals, the recurring aims are always the same. First, name calling creates a "negative-other presentation" (Van Dijk, 1997a), which indirectly indicates that the speaker has what it takes to fill in the gaps that its opponent cannot. Second, it advises the reader to reconsider the ethos of certain public figures. Third, these accusations cause direct damage to their opponents' positive face needs, which might be a sign of ISIS self-proclaimed power because there is no other reason that explains the impoliteness practiced in ISIS discourse, as will be proven in the politeness section.

4.2.8. False dilemma.

Even though false dilemma has not been majorly incorporated into ISIS discourse, there are few occasions in which it has. These target two groups of audience: Muslims and the US. Muslims are asked to support ISIS whereas the US is advised to agree to a truce with
the State. Both aims are presented by providing audience with a less likable opinion next to
the one ISIS wishes its audience to perform.

4.2.8.1. Either a supporter or an uncommitted Muslim.

To start with, Dabiq mentions the negative effects of not pledging allegiance to the
State, obeying its leader, and immigrating to its lands. For example, ISIS quotes Omar Bin
al-Khattab saying, "There is no Islam except with jama'ah [Muslim group], and no jama'ah
except with imarah (leadership), and no imarah except with ta'ah (obedience)" (L.1440-
1442). ISIS clearly creates the following equation: Muslims + leadership + obedience =
Islam. If a person misses any of the three elements, he/she cannot be considered a true
Muslim. So, if Muslims do not stick to the larger group of Muslims, then they cannot be
considered true Muslims. The same rhetoric is used to discuss the significance of obeying
the State's leader. Linguistically speaking, the no- A-except- with-B structure expresses the
exclusion of B after the negative generalizations made before A. Repeating the same
structure three times in a row emphasizes the three pillars of Islam, as ISIS suggests.
Consequently, either Muslims abide by these three elements or they will not be following
true Islam. The second option is definitely the less tempting option because not following
Islam, for Muslims, has extremely negative consequences. However, vigilant Muslims
know that being or not being a Muslim is something to be decided by Allah only.

In a similar manner, al-Baghdadi states that "either one performs hijrah to the wilayat
(states) of the Khilafah or…he must attack the crusaders, their allies, the Rafidah\(^{48}\), the
tawaghit, and their apostate forces" (L. 1023-1025). The either-or conjunctio

\[^{48}\text{An Islamic term which refers in a derogatory way to those who, in the opinion of the person using the term, reject legitimate Islamic authority and leadership.}\]
not professionally tailed into its discourse, for there is no striking difference between the two presented options to encourage the reader to take an action. Not to mention the very fact that the tone with which ISIS orders Muslims to do certain things and to avoid others is not inviting by any means. People, after all, do not like to be pushed into something.

4.2.8.2. Either a truce or a war.

Nevertheless, false dilemma does a good job promoting a truce between the US and ISIS. *Dabiq* writes, "Either one side emerges victorious while the other is vanquished, or some kind of truce is reached" (L.857-858). The *either-or* structure appears once again so as to inform the addressee that the US and its allies have two options to choose from: to enter a war against the State or to declare a truce. In war, both sides lose regardless of who conquers whom because both sacrifice the lives of their nations, burden their national economy, and most importantly, abandon their sense of humanity. Yet, reaching a political treaty, as a temporal solution, gives them the chance to weigh their losses and gains in order to decide on the right course. Clearly, reaching a truce seems to be far more sensible than pursuing a war that has been going on for awhile right now. In fact, ISIS states that "at some point the only option left will be an offer of a truce" (L.813) because other attempts to conquer ISIS militarily, financially, and media wise have all gone in vain. The placement of the adjective *only* right before *option* eliminates one of the false dilemma two alternatives, as if it is a must for the US and the West to adopt that one and only option. By the same token, ISIS declares that "Iran will never be a bigger problem than ISIS unless the West enters into a truce with the Islamic State" (L. 255-256). The use of the conjunction *unless* to link the main and the subordinate clauses means that if the West ignores a truce with ISIS, it will become their biggest problem in the Middle East, one that is even bigger than the ever-lasting disagreement with Iran. Simply put, this persuasive strategy has been wisely used to convince the US and its allies of the necessity of reaching a truce.
4.2.8.3. Either here or there.

The third example shows how ISIS exposes the false dilemma statements used by its opponents, ironically using the same strategy. After the 9/11 attacks, President George Bush has initiated a war-on-terror campaign, which has been justified by the "if we don't fight them there we'll have to fight them here reasoning" (L.365-366). This influential announcement activates a type-one-conditional tense, which originally explains actions that are likely to happen. So, Bush's interpretation is based on the possibility that if the US does not move its forces to the terrorists' lands, terrorists will come to fight the US on its own land. It should be noted that the spatial deictic expressions here and there refer to the inevitability of fighting terrorists wherever they are. Still, doing the dirty work outside the US territories was considered the better option back in 2001. In ISIS' case, however, this reasoning is "shown to have completely failed" (L.366) because the US is both leading a coalition against ISIS on ISIS' territorial claims and receiving strikes on its own lands. In other words, fighting is going on both sides: here and there. Therefore, ISIS proves that Bush's reasoning has expired. To establish a better argument, ISIS refers to Michael Scheuer's statement. The Former CIA Chief of the Bin Laden Issue Station says, "We are on the way to a world war that the United States will have to fight at home and abroad if the foreign-policy status quo is retained" (L.399-401). That is to say that if the US does not stop sticking its nose into other countries' political affairs, a world war will be just around the corner. The latter choice is certainly nobody's favorite. Unsurprisingly, ISIS does not declare that explicitly, rather, finds someone else to send its message, someone American who attacks America using the same persuasive strategy it has used to defend itself. Pretty Clever!

In conclusion, the correlative conjunction either-or and type one conditional have linguistically helped ISIS practice false dilemma to achieve three main purposes: a) to
persuade Muslims to come to the State, b) to tell the US that a truce is possible at this stage but not in the future, and c) to turn the table on Bush's war-on-terror logic.

4.2.9. Bandwagon.

Even though it is probably the least persuasive technique implemented in ISIS discourse, the bandwagon strategy has been wisely used to promote ISIS quick geographical expansion. In order to convince readers of joining its ranks, ISIS suggests that everyone is pledging allegiance to it and fighting for its sake all around the globe. As evidence, Dabiq states that "huge swathes of Pakistan, Nigeria, Libya, Yemen, and the Sinai Peninsula are all now united under the black flag of tawhid" (L.1124-1126). "All of them [have] announced uniformly …[that they wish to hold firmly to the rope of Allah"49 (Quran 3:103). Similar assertions about the huge territories under the State's control are replicated seven times throughout the chosen data to indicate "the support of the masses" (L. 1345). Clearly, the use of the adjective huge, the quantifier all, and the plural noun masses is meant to show that the number of fighters recruited by ISIS is growing fast and furious. However, ISIS expansion in Asia and Africa does not seem to satisfy its thirst for power. Rather, it is becoming a global phenomenon that infiltrates many Western countries and brags about its "foreign fighters travel[ing] everywhere, from Europe, to the United States, to Australia" (L.842) for the sake of standing with the Islamic State against their countries of origin. Clearly, the indefinite pronoun everywhere aims at showing readers that ISIS is actually remaining and expanding, as its motto suggests. In its attempt to sound even more credible, ISIS quotes its enemies to confirm the previously stated allegations. For instance, the former CIA intelligence officer, Gary Bernsten, is referred to saying, "ISIS has been brilliant at selling itself to the hundreds of millions of people out there looking for a message" (L. 1166-1167). So, when ISIS stresses the fact that such great

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49 The verse is translated by ISIS (L. 1776-1778).
numbers of people back it up, readers will be more encouraged to jump on the bandwagon; otherwise, they will be left alone.

Yet, in order not to fall into the trap of this persuasive technique, one must always remember two points. First, throughout its general talk about its followers, ISIS has not provided the reader with any actual numerical evidence for the accumulating masses that it claims to have attracted. To be fair, it has done so only once when stating that "[a]ccording to Western media, the Islamic State now boasts over 35,000 fighters" (L.389-390). Obviously, 35,000 means nothing to the overall population of the planet. Second, majority does not necessarily reflect righteous actions.

4.2.10. Card stacking.

Based on the analysis in the previous sections, one can conclude that ISIS leaves no room for any negative-self representation to appear in its propaganda. After all, the reputation of "the one and only Islamic state" must not be tarnished. It is even noticed that none of ISIS' opposing perspectives are given priority unless they are in favor of the State. As a result, Dabiq magazine is mainly based on card stacking propaganda because it either doesn't cite the other side of the issue or downplays it. Since it is impossible to track every single piece of information provided in Dabiq magazine, only few examples will be discussed below. These include some weak or de-contextualized hadiths that aim at manipulating readers to see Islam through ISIS' eyes as explained beneath.

First of all, ISIS' continuous talk about the obligatory nature of their call to hijrah turns a blind eye to other hadiths that refute its allegations (L.27, 1012, 1017, 1020, 1027, 1326, 1464, & 1508). Basically, the State's main defense counts on one of Prophet Muhammad's reports in which he states that "[h]ijrah will not cease to exist until repentance ceases to be accepted, and repentance will not cease to be accepted until the sun rises from the West" (L.995-996). Yet, there are other hadiths kept under wraps which seem to challenge the
previously mentioned evidence. For example, Prophet Muhammad himself says, "There is no hijrah after the Conquest of Mecca, but there is jihad and good intentions. If you are called to jihad, you should immediately respond" (Al-Bukhari, 2002, p.689). To reconcile these seemingly conflicting texts, scholars have talked about the importance of circumstances in determining whether migration is or is not obligatory. The former hadith necessitates Muslims to migrate for fear of inability to perform religious practices or fear of getting one's self and family harmed as in the case of the first migration to Abyssinia. At the early stages of Islam, Muslims were extremely tortured by the tribes of Mecca, so Prophet Muhammad asked them to seek refuge to Abyssinia\textsuperscript{50}, whose monarch was known for his justice and tolerance (Ibn Ishaq, 2004). It should be noticed that Muslims did not immigrate to any Islamic country because there was none; rather, they chose a place where they can live peacefully. The second hadith, however, refers to the famous hijrah to Medina. It was obligatory when Muslims could not practice their religion in Mecca. Yet, after the Conquest of Mecca, migration was no longer necessary. In both cases, the Islamic law concerning migration was determined by one major factor, i.e., the ability to practice one's religion. Hence, the compulsion to migrate cannot be generalized as ISIS claims. Consequently, readers should be quite vigilant when reading \textit{Dabiq} magazine because it is an excellent example of a systematic propaganda that reflects the perspectives of ISIS and stretches the truth to suit its agendas.

Furthermore, in an attempt to validate the burning of the Jordanian pilot, \textit{Dabiq} mentions several incidents about Prophet Muhammad's companions burning people. Yet, there are really important pieces of information that \textit{Dabiq} has decided not to point out. To clarify things out, Prophet Muhammad himself, as narrated by Abu Hurairah, has asked his companions to burn two people, but he has quickly changed his mind and said, "I [have]

\textsuperscript{50} Today's Ethiopia
commanded you to burn So and so, and So and so. But verily no one punishes with fire except Allah. So if you find them, execute them" (Al-Bukhari, 2002, p.729). Accordingly, one of the two sources of the Islamic law prohibits burning, but why does Dabiq only recite half of the hadith and does not even elaborate on it? In fact, the hadith is mentioned only so as to be refuted in the next couple pages. Still, the State's refutation is misleading as explained later on. The story about Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, one of the four rightly-guided Caliphs, burning al-Fuja'ah (L.599-605) is not soundly narrated. After studying all the narrations about this incident, Isma'il Rudwan (2005) concludes that all have weak chains due to the main reporter of the incident, 'Ulwan Bin Dawood, who is discarded in hadith. Likewise, the story of Khalid Bin al-Waleed burning apostates is told by Saif Bin 'Amr, whose reports are considered weak by the majority of the Islamic scholars (Al-Maqrizi, 1994). Put briefly, the different incidents that ISIS focuses on are either weak or de-contextualized, and without digging deeper Muslims will probably believe the ideas ISIS sells.

4.2.11. Conclusion.

The prolonged analysis of ISIS' texts answers the first two questions of the study and reveals that each persuasive strategy conveys several pragmatic meanings with the help of specific linguistic elements.

Questions: 1. Which of the ten investigated persuasion techniques appear in ISIS' magazine?

2. What are the ideas ISIS tries to convince readers with?

Answer: First of all, the comparison principle takes advantage of figurative language to compare the State's escalating power to a rolling snowball and a marching wildfire while attributing animalistic features to the enemies of the State. Pragmatically speaking, ISIS indirectly suggests that it has a) the ability to stand up for any defying power and b) the
legitimacy to kill any opposing nation. The contrast strategy, however, draws attention to the difference between the Islamic jargon adopted by ISIS (such as zakah and jizyah) and the constitutional terminology (like taxes and crimes) of other Arab countries ruled by Muslims. Antonyms and conjunctions have also stressed the lack of harmony between the stated beliefs of ISIS’ enemies and their actual doings on the ground, which definitely questions their credibility and logical sense. Second, the reciprocity technique depends on revenge-related phrases (such as in retribution for and an indictment of) to express ISIS’ attacks against opposing countries as a retaliatory reaction rather than an initiative action. The coordination of two propositions with inverted arguments has also explained the strong relationship ISIS claims to have with Allah and the one it seeks to have with all Muslims. In other words, Dabiq validates killing as a self-defense tactic and presents itself as the chosen Islamic State which can defend all Muslims under its umbrella. Third, the authority principle relies mainly on the religious and political intertextuality in ISIS discourse. On the one hand, Quran and Sunnah are quoted to rationalize the wrongdoings of the State. On the other hand, the statements of several US political figures, which are packed with intensifiers and superlative adjectives, are summoned to highlight the State’s superior status as the best Sunni, political organization history has ever witnessed. Moreover, this persuasive strategy exposes the lack of unity among the US officials, for some under-estimate ISIS, while other over-estimate it.

Fourth, the repetition of certain ideas, like the obligation to perform hijrah and the supremacy of ISIS, is the pivot around which the consistency strategy revolves. However, this technique cannot be studied in isolation from the previously mentioned principles. Fifth, the liking technique, which is probably the least implemented in the State’s discourse, includes some sarcastic punch-lines that mock President Obama’s "senseless" argumentation and his inability to learn from the mistakes of his predecessors. Thus, Dabiq
indirectly questions whether President Obama has what it takes to fill his position. In addition, the endearing inclusive pronoun, *our*, and some family-associated terms have been minimally integrated into ISIS discourse in an attempt to lessen the distance and formality between the State and Muslim readers. Sixth, the positive connotations attributed to certain ambiguous lexical items (like *truth, victory, and power*) are the essence of *glittering generalities*. By keeping most, but not all, of these glittering generalities undefined, ISIS appeals to the desires and emotions of its audience, calling them all to enjoy the gains and victories of the State. Seventh, both direct and indirect *name calling* tactics have been used to scold ISIS' rivals and to raise doubts about their logic and credibility. Nevertheless, the foul language which is used to address Arab countries holds negative religious connotations, which in turn implicitly gives ISIS the right to attack them under the banner of Islam.

Eighth, without the correlative conjunction *either...or* and the subordinating conjunction *unless*, the persuasive strategy of *false dilemma* couldn't have materialized. Even though it is not the most professionally used technique in *Dabiq*, its employment to turn the table against Bush's "if we don't fight them there, we'll fight them here" reasoning is brilliant. ISIS argues that the current situation shows that the US is both fighting on its land and abroad; therefore, if a truce is not reached, a new world war might be the less tempting option. Ninth, the geographical expansion of the State is mainly expressed through the use of the *bandwagon* strategy. Some generic terms (like *everyone* and *everywhere*) and certain quantifiers (such as *most* and *all*) have indicated that huge numbers of Muslims from all over the world are pledging allegiance to the State, thus, adding to its power. Finally, *card stacking*, or as Shabo (2008) calls it "the sin of omission" (p.27), has mainly manipulated religious quotes to serve ISIS' purposes; these include encouraging Muslims to immigrate to the State and convincing them of the
morality of killing enemies in all possible manners. All in all, the different techniques of persuasion and propaganda glorify ISIS' image while criticizing that of its enemies. The State's talk plays on the Aristotelian typology of logos, ethos, and pathos to persuade audience of four main ideas: a) the religious and political power of the State, b) the importance of supporting it by all available means, c) the righteousness of murder and war, and d) the lack of logic, credibility, and unity of the enemies of the State.

4.3. Politeness in ISIS Discourse

In this section, the different speeches of ISIS leaders, which are mentioned in Dabiq magazine, are dissected to figure out which politeness strategies they rely on. In addition, the connections among politeness, power, and persuasion will be drawn out.

4.3.1. Introduction.

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is crucial for understanding the language of persuasion and power in ISIS political discourse due to two main reasons. First, the final stage of persuasion "should be handled tactfully so as to redress the face-threatening act" (Zheng, 2015, p.1471); otherwise, hearers will not be encouraged to buy what the speaker sells. Second, power is one of the three major factors that help speakers to find out the weightiness of their FTAs, hence, decide whether to adopt or disregard politeness strategies. In the following sections, certain excerpts from Dabiq magazine, which are simply transcribed speeches given by ISIS officials, are examined to find out which of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies are used, who are the addressed audiences, and why such choices have been made. Yet, it should be noted that not all strategies are examined, rather the ones which are directly related to the topic of our study about persuasion and power.

4.3.2. Bald on-record politeness.

If the speaker's (S) priority is directed towards achieving maximally efficient
communication rather than satisfying the hearer's (H) face needs, then the non-redressive bald on-record strategy will inevitably pop out in one's interactions. In ISIS case, this strategy emerges when addressing the Islamic State citizens and soldiers, especially after considering the minimal danger attributed to their face and the power difference between S and H.

**4.3.2.1. Minimal danger attributed to H's face.**

The first reason why ISIS discourse relies on the bald on-record politeness is related to one of Brown and Levinson's FTAs weighing factors, i.e. the risk of imposition (R). Giving the hearer some sympathetic advice or warning minimizes R's weight. As a result, it does not necessitate the speaker to redress his FTAs, for there are other demands in his/her communication that override face concerns (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.98). Let's consider the following example:

**Example (1)**

Be patient and firm, and be cautious, for the enemies of Allah are mobilizing, thundering, increasing, and threatening the people of Mosul. We believe that their mobilization will be for ar-Raqqah and Halab before Mosul. So be cautious. (L.1097-1100)

This part from al-Baghdadi's speech comes after elaborating on the Rafidah's\(^{51}\) cruelty in slaughtering Sunnis due to some religious differences between the two parties. As a result, al-Baghdadi articulates his concern about ISIS citizens by a) advising them not to lose patience and b) warning them about the possible attacks against ISIS cities in Syria before those in Iraq. He also wishes them to "be firm" and to watch their backs "cautious[ly]" in the coming period. While doing so, ISIS leader has got directly to the

\(^{51}\) A derogatory term used by Sunni Muslims to refer to Shia because they do not believe in Omar, Abu Bakr, and Uthman as the successors of Prophet Muhammad. The word literally means "rejectors."
point, been truthful to his nation, and spoken as clearly as possible. In other words, al-Baghdadi has followed Grice's conversational maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner to express sympathy towards his people, even if baldly, because he is more worried about saving their lives than saving their face. Is al-Baghdadi a caring leader? Or is it just a means to deceive his followers into believing that he does? Either way, al-Baghdadi acts as expected because without the respect of the few followers he has, ISIS will be in a critical position.

4.3.2. Power difference between S and H.

The second case in which ISIS officials have decided to activate this non-redressive strategy is "where S's want to satisfy H's face is minimal… because S is powerful and does not fear retaliation or non-cooperation from H" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.97).

Example (2)

We also announce the acceptance of bay'at\(^\text{52}\) given by the groups and individuals in all of those mentioned wilayat [states] and others. We ask every individual amongst them to join the closest wilayah [state] to him, and to hear and obey the wali [governor] appointed by us for it. (L.1785-1788)

Several factions in Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Indonesia, Nigeria and elsewhere have decided to pledge allegiance to the State; hence, they have actually vowed to become its servants. This procedure is similar to the enlistment oath taken by armed forces in most of the world's countries, by which soldiers swear to follow orders and be faithful to their countries. ISIS leader is aware of the fact that he has the upper hand in this communication, thus, puts his FTAs baldly on-record. He commands these newcomers to "hear" and "obey" their assigned governor. They in turn are not expected to argue because

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\(^{52}\) An Islamic system according to which certain certain people are elected to lead Muslims
each participant knows his position in this kind of interactions where power and social distance stand as determining factors of how each of S and H should speak.

To conclude, risk, distance, and power have helped al-Baghdadi to decide how to structure his talk. On the one hand, ISIS power has materialized discursively by choosing the most direct way of doing FTAs, especially when addressing hearers of a lower military status. On the other hand, advising and warning ISIS citizens have lowered the risk of al-Baghdadi’s FTAs. Obviously, the bald on-record talk has been appropriately integrated into ISIS discourse.

4.3.3. Positive politeness.

Appealing to H's want to be thought of as desirable might be a key element in persuading him/her of something for S's interest (Ervin-Tripp, Guo, & Lambert, 1990). *Dabiq* magazine exploits this correlation between politeness and persuasion to send several messages to the Islamic world. To achieve such a goal, ISIS has incorporated three main positive politeness sub-strategies: using in-group identity markers, presupposing common ground, and assuming reciprocity with H.

4.3.3.1. Use in-group identity markers.

By claiming in-group solidarity with audience, "S may evoke all the shared associations and attitudes that he/[she] and H have toward [certain objects or ideas]" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 111). This professed similarity between H and S can be taken as a departure point to convince H of the appropriateness of S's request. For example, *Dabiq* magazine and ISIS leaders use in-group address forms, jargon, and deictic expressions to soften their FTAs carried against Muslim audience; therefore, their requests become more polite and in turn more persuasive.
Example (3)

O brothers in creed... O people of wala' and barā\textsuperscript{53}... O patrons of the Islamic State... O you who have given bay'ah to the Khalifah (Caliph) Ibrahim everywhere...
O you who have loved the Islamic State... O you who support the Khilafah... Your state is facing a new campaign by the crusaders... O muwahhid, we call you up to defend the Islamic State. (L.1869-1876)

When speaking to the State's supporters living in countries involved in the coalition waging war against ISIS, al-Adnani (ISIS spokesperson) repeatedly uses the in-group address form "brothers" and packs his talk with Islamic terminology (such as wala', barā', bay'ah, and muwahhid), which can be understood by Muslim audience only. All this seems to be a successful attempt to lessen the distance between himself and the addressee; therefore, the weightiness of his coming FTAs is also lowered. To illustrate, when ISIS leader presents his final request, i.e., to "defend the Islamic State", it does not seem to be power-backed; rather, it is what members of the same group do to each other. After all, they are all in the same boat, facing the same enemy and clinging to the same values and wants. At least, this is what al-Adnani believes in or pretends to believe in.

Example (4)

Soon, by Allah's permission, a day will come when the Muslim will walk everywhere...being revered, with his head raised high and his dignity preserved. Anyone who dares to offend him will be disciplined, and any hand that reaches out to harm him will be cut off. So let the world know that we are living today in a new era. (L.3-7)

At the end of his speech about the glory that ISIS will bring to the Islamic world, al-Adnani adds the inclusive personal deictic expression "we" to invite H to share him this

\textsuperscript{53} It is an Islamic term which means supporting anything that pleases Allah and fighting anything against his teaching. Its literal translation is "loyalty and disavowal."
promising future. Once again, he does not speak from a position of power but from a rank equal to that of his audience, which in turn lessens the risk of imposition and the overall weightiness of his FTA. As a result, asking Muslims to "remove the garments of dishonor and shake of the dust of humiliation and disgrace" (L.17-18) should not be perceived as an impolite gesture by hearers, since they have already been considered insiders and informed about the advantages of being so. Rather, al-Adnani encourages supporters to move one step further so as for the Islamic world to retain its reputation as a strong nation.

4.3.3.2. Presuppose common ground.

Stalnaker's (1974) common ground theory of presupposition asserts that for interlocutors to interpret the speaker's utterances correctly, they need to have shared knowledge with him/her, which may rise from sharing the same community or building on preceding conversations with him/her. When S alludes to these presuppositions, he/she is actually highlighting the similarity between the speaker and the hearer, which eventually adds to S's likable characteristics that might be involved in carrying out a successful persuasive conversation (Cialdini, 2007). In addition, assuming that S is aware of H's wants, values and attitudes stands as a sign of keeping up with H's news and paying attention to his/her life. Al-Adnani uses this technique once to send a message to the former Egyptian president, Muhammad Morsi. The message, however, is too long to add here; therefore, it is cut down. For better insight, see (Appendix A, L.1892-1923).

Example (5)

I ask Allah to relieve you of your suffering, guide your heart, and rectify for you your religion and worldly affair... So I say, you dealt with the secularists...with the crusaders...with the Americans...with the Israelis...with Mubarak's army...and with the floggers from the Interior Ministry ...So what was the result? Today you are in a great tribulation...So do not be slack in supporting the religion and raising the rule of
Even though al-Adnani wants to rebuke Morsi for his cooperation with numerous countries and political parties that have participated in the killing of innocent Muslims over the years, he still does not perform his FTAs baldly so as not to upset Morsi's followers. Instead, al-Adnani employs several positive politeness strategies to give his talk an impression of advising rather than ordering. At the beginning of the message, Morsi is respectfully called by his academic title (Dr.), unlike the way ISIS addresses foreigner presidents. Then, S shows sympathy towards H, asking Allah to "relieve [him] of [his] suffering" and "rectify… [his] religion." This necessarily presents two main presuppositions: Morsi is actually suffering and he is not acting as a confirmed Muslim leader. To explain, this message was sent in February, 2015, in the same month when the Egyptian court decided to deliver a verdict about Morsi's trial on April 21. So, al-Adanani makes sure that Morsi knows that he is aware of the latter's hardship. Yet at the same time, he makes clear that Morsi's failure to act as a Muslim leader is the only reason behind this hardship. Being the leader of the Freedom and Justice Party, as well as having another political affiliation towards the Muslim Brotherhood, requires Morsi to hold on to certain religious beliefs, something that he fails to accomplish when deciding to work with the enemy. So, if things had gone the other way round, Morsi wouldn't have ended up being imprisoned.

So, after showing deference, expressing sympathy, and establishing common ground with Morsi, al-Adnani invites Morsi to go back on track, "supporting [his] religion" and "raising the rule of Shari'ah." ISIS leader also refers to an incident about Imam Ahmad Ibn
Hanbal,\textsuperscript{54} in which he has hold into the truth in the face of Abbasid caliphs, assuming that Morsi’s knowledge of Islam can help him relate. This allusion, however, is not about what Imam Ahmad has done but about what Morsi should do. Then comes the second threat which is identified linguistically by the use of \textit{if conditional type zero}. Al-Adnani tells Morsi that if he continues the same way he is, "Allah knows best how [he] will end up." Morsi and al-Adnani's Allah is allegedly the same. So, instead of informing Morsi about the awful outcome of his wrongdoings, the former relies on their shared knowledge of Allah's punishment methods. All in all, al-Adnani’s message to Morsi heavily praises the latter’s face just before threatening it.

4.3.3.3. Assume reciprocity.

"S may convey his cooperation with H by indicating that he believes reciprocity to be prevailing between H and himself, that they are somewhat locked into a state of mutual helping" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 125). As a result, S may tell H that "if you do X for me, I will do Y for you." This politeness strategy is directly correlated to the reciprocity principle which has been discussed earlier in the study.

\begin{example}
So guarantee for us two matters, and we will guarantee you – by Allah’s permission – constant victory and consolidation. First, do not oppress anyone nor be content with oppression by being silent about it and not raising the matter to those in authority. Second, do not become conceited or arrogant. This is what we fear from you and fear for you. (L.1601-1605)
\end{example}

When addressing the soldiers of the State to congratulate them for their success in the battle field, al-Adnani asks them to keep the State updated about the oppression happening

\textsuperscript{54} Imam Bin Hanbal was known for his opposition to the Abbasside Caliph, Al-Ma’mun, who created an era of religious persecution according to which religious scholars were punished or killed if they opposed the Caliph’s doctrine of the created nature of the Quran.
within its borders and to avoid arrogance in order for him to guarantee them victory and consolidation. If one cannot maintain these two conditions, ISIS will deal with him/her differently. This cooperative principle is also stated in other parts of Dabiq magazine, as explained in the following statement. "You depend on [the Islamic State] and it depends on you" (L. 1747). Briefly, by doing good to H and expecting him/her to reciprocate, ISIS does not actually violate politeness principles.

Simply put, positive politeness strategies have appeared in ISIS discourse to communicate with Muslim hearers only. In- group identity markers and the reciprocity principle have intended to persuade ISIS soldiers and supporters to work for the benefit of their state. As for the presupposition of common ground, it has softened al-Adnani's FTAs when asking the former Egyptian president, Muhammad Morsi, to act in accordance with the Islamic teachings and values by facing the unjust new rulers of the country in his upcoming trial.

4.3.4. Off-record politeness.

By going off-record, which is classified as the most redressive politeness strategy, speakers enjoy many benefits; for example, "[they] can get the credit for being tactful, non-coercive…, and [they] can avoid responsibility for the potentially face-damaging interpretation" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.71). Consequently, it is unsurprising to figure out that ISIS heavily employs this technique to ask Muslims to perform certain actions in support of the Islamic State using only one sub-strategy, i.e., rhetorical questions. It should be noted, however, that some scholars might consider the following examples as a demonstration of negative politeness strategies. Still, since al-Baghdadi's speech has the format of a monologue, which does not allow the audience to interrupt the speaker verbally, all the questions in his talk are considered rhetorical ones. Accordingly, they are analyzed as part of the off-record politeness techniques.
4.3.4.1. Rhetorical questions.

Even though rhetorical questions have the form of a question, "they neither seek information nor elicit an answer" (Rohde, 2006, p.134). Therefore, they enact as an indirect way of saying something with one extra advantage, i.e., the ability to pretend not to have said it in the first place. As a result, ISIS leader makes sure to insert a variety of rhetorical questions into his speeches to "invite assent [and]… provide a persuasive conclusion to [his] argument" (Spurgin, 1994, p.303). Since ISIS is encouraging non-decisive Muslims to immigrate to its lands and fight for its sake, phrasing such a threatening act in a question form is the safest way to lower its weight. Otherwise, the absence of power difference and the distance between H and S would have caused al-Baghdadi's FTAs to sound impolite.

Example (7)

O Muslims everywhere, has the time not come for you to realize the truth of the conflict and that it is between kufr and iman?...Has the time not come O Ahlus-Sunnah for you to know that you alone are the targets? This war is only against you and against your religion. Has the time not come for you to return to your religion and your jihad and thereby bring back your glory, honor, rights, and leadership? Has the time not come for you to know that there is no might nor honor nor safety nor rights for you except in the shade of the Khilafah? (L.1074-1081)

Convincing Muslims to emigrate from their countries is not an easy mission to accomplish; therefore, Dabiq depends on a variety of persuasive strategies to get that job done. Building a polite argument which appeals to the logos and pathos of the audience might just be what audiences are looking for if they are already attracted to the idea. To illustrate, al-Baghdadi's argument is based on the idea that the current conflict in Syria is not against ISIS itself as much as it is a fight against Islam in general, a truth that can be
reflected on in light of the wide spread of Islamophobic beliefs in the West. Assuming that this war is between Muslims and non-Muslims, ISIS leader suggests that each party ought to assemble its forces. Muslims, after all, should not stand still while others are targeting them. In addition, being engaged in this war under the black flag, al-Baghdadi claims, is the only way for Muslims to restore their stolen dignity, honor, and leadership. Such glittering generalities are meant to stimulate yearning for a bygone Islamic civilization that was once able to hold power over huge areas in the world. All the previously analyzed ideas are not communicated directly; rather, indirect rhetorical questions that "enhance the ethos, [manipulate] the flow of discourse and… [decrease] the distance between the rhetor and the audience" (Halmari & Virtanen. 2005, p.117) are brought into play. Any answer other than "yes, the time has come for Muslims to realize what is going on the ground, and yes the time has come to support ISIS" is overlooked by al-Baghdadi because his questions are not about eliciting answers as much as about stirring feelings and ideas in H's heart and mind.

**Example (8)**

O you who believe in wala' and bara'…Will you leave the disbeliever to sleep safely at home while the Muslim women and children shiver with fear of the roars of the crusader airplanes above their heads day and night? How can you enjoy life and sleep while not aiding your brothers, not casting fear into the hearts of the cross worshippers, and not responding to their strikes with multitudes more? So O muwahhid wherever you may be, hinder those who want to harm your brothers and state as much as you can. The best thing you can do is to strive to your best and kill any disbeliever, whether he be French, American, or from any of their allies. (L.1674-1684)

Even though readers might get bored of being introduced to the same idea over and over again, ISIS seems not to. Once again, al-Baghdadi struggles to promote the necessity for
Muslims to attack the enemies of "their" Islamic State. However, before striking the reader with the final command in the last three lines, which is to hinder and kill the enemies of the State, al-Baghdadi surprises his audience with some rhetorical questions: questions about H's willingness to leave his/her brothers and sisters in creed being tortured by "crusaders" and questions about being able to turn a blind eye to Muslims while still having a clean conscience. It is obvious, based on the context preceding this paragraph, that al-Baghdadi's questions have a requesting function. In fact, this paragraph comes at the end of al-Baghdadi's talk in which he directly and inappropriately commands Muslims to kill the citizens of any country involved in the war against ISIS. So, to correct his Freudian slip, al-Baghdadi ends up his speech politely, asking rhetorical questions that aim at provoking the emotions of the hearers and readers towards a group of people who shares them the same religion.

To summarize, ISIS officials seem to be doing well implementing the most indirect, hence, most polite way of communicating their FTAs. Clearly, the Islamic State is in a desperate need for all the support it can get so as to be able to stand against the coalition. After all, requesting help in any other way would have sounded rude, an impression that ISIS does not wish to leave on the Islamic world at the current time.

4.3.5. Conclusion.

On the whole, Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies are chosen to persuade Muslim hearers and readers of certain ideas in favor of ISIS. First of all, the bald on-record politeness, which is the least polite technique, is used in restricted situations to a) advise ISIS citizens to watch their backs and to b) give commands to its soldiers. Second, positive politeness is activated to please ISIS supporters by assuming reciprocity and using in-group identity markers. Al-Adnani's message to Morsi, however, depends mostly on the presupposition of common ground (since both are leaders of Islamic parties) to convince
the latter of the necessity of defying unjust rulers. Third, the off-record politeness strategy, which comes at the top of politeness hierarchy, is used the most in ISIS discourse. In fact, it exploits rhetorical questions to test the moral judgment of Muslim hearers when seeing their brothers in creed being slaughtered by crusaders. It should be noted that no negative politeness strategies are detected in *Dabiq* magazine.

4.4. Impoliteness in ISIS Discourse

Unlike the previous section, this one aims at investigating the impoliteness strategies that have been practiced by ISIS officials to understand the connections among impoliteness, power, and persuasion.

4.4.1. Introduction

As noticed above, politeness strategies come to light in ISIS discourse only if the talk is directed towards Muslims, whether they are supporters of ISIS or not. After all, acting tactfully might prepare the hearers to accept the ideas ISIS sells. However, does being tactful towards the enemy change the course of the goings on the ground? Logically speaking, ISIS has been regarded a terrorist group by some 60 nations, including incredibly powerful countries like the US, Russia, and the UK. This necessarily means that ignoring ISIS is never going to be one of the options on the table, for doing so will cause these governments the loss of their credibility and their reputation as peacemakers. In other words, nothing could have prevented the coalition countries from getting involved into a war against ISIS, and the latter knows that too. So, acting politely seems aimless when addressing the enemy; thus, the officials of the Islamic State have decided that being impolite is the best way to resist the power of the other and attempt to gain it for themselves (Bousfield & Locher, 2008). It is a defense strategy.

After proving that ISIS impoliteness is crucial for claiming power over its rivals, an impoliteness framework seems necessary for interpreting the following examples. For this
purpose, Culpeper's (1996) theory has been chosen because it perfectly parallels Brown and Levinson's theory, with one distinction, i.e., its goal is to attack H's face rather than to save it. Some positive and negative impoliteness strategies are detected, and the targeted hearers have turned out to be the countries backing up the coalition invasion. Yet, there is a special emphasis on sending impolite messages to the US nation and president for starting this whole plan up.

4.4.2. Positive impoliteness.

Pragmatically speaking, positive impoliteness is achieved when S intentionally causes the perlocutionary effect of offence for H's positive face, causing certain negative emotional responses to arise (Culpeper, 2011). The most relevant context to practice this kind of impoliteness is constructed when S wishes to be perceived as a powerful counterpart of H, even if he/she is actually not, a situation similar to that of ISIS when addressing countries of internationally recognized power. In an attempt to self-proclaim power, Dabiq magazine frequently name calls its enemies. Even worse, ISIS completely ignores the presence of several parties.

4.4.2.1. Call the other names.

Using derogatory terms to negatively represent the other encourages audience to reject the person being criticized (Culpeper, 1996; Cialdini, 2007). Hence, ISIS continuously insults its enemies to question their credibility and overall political performance as elected leaders whom are supposed to put the interests of their nations at the top of their priorities. In fact, this strategy has already been thoroughly analyzed previously in this study. So, in order to avoid repetition, this section is tackled briefly here and the provided examples are not mentioned earlier.

**Example (9)**

You claimed to have withdrawn from Iraq – O Obama – four years ago. We said to you
then that you were liars, that you had not withdrawn, and that if you had withdrawn
that you would return, even if after some time, you would return. (L.1640-1642)

_Dabiq_ magazine continuously accuses President Obama of dishonesty and inconsistency (See the consistency principle). In the above mentioned example, al-Adnani uses the personalized negative assertion "you [are] liars" to insult the previous and current presidents of the US for claiming to have withdrawn from Iraq in December, 2011 just to return back there three years later, backed up with more proxies to cause more damage than ever before. Even though al-Adnani is less powerful than Obama, the distance between the two is huge and so is the risk of making the enemy's blood boil, the former still insists on doing his FTA directly. Similarly, on another occasion when the US and its allies announce that their intervention is due to their wish to defend Muslims, al-Adnani's responds: "Indeed, they lie!" (L.1039). In fact, President Obama is not the only figure whose face is attacked by ISIS; his predecessor George W Bush and the whole American government are also offended as they are described as _foolish, arrogant, and unwise_.

4.4.2.2. Ignore, snub the other.

Failing to acknowledge the other's presence indicates that he/she is not worthy of being taken into consideration (Culpeper, 1996). As a result, H's positive want to be accepted by others is impolitely dismissed. In ISIS discourse, one expects the Syrian regime and Iraqi political parties to be scolded baldly. Yet surprisingly enough, this is not the case; the data of this study, which cover a lot of topics that ISIS has focused on throughout its first ten issues, avoid any direct mentioning of Arab countries. Consequently, providing examples will not support the fact that ISIS applies this strategy, but the lack of examples will. If we talk numbers, readers will be shocked. Qatar and Bahrain are never mentioned in ISIS discourse while the UAE and Saudi Arabia are each mentioned once. Also, al-'Asad's name appears eight times whereas al-Maliki's appears five times. All these numbers seem
negligible in comparison to the 103 times in which the US has been referred to as America, American, US, and USA. In fact, Obama’s name alone emerges 31 times. These simple frequency counts definitely resemble ISIS’ under-estimation of Arab countries involved in the attack against its territories.

Generally speaking, Arab countries are absent in ISIS discourse, and even if there were the slightest chance of ISIS mentioning them, it would be for the sake of disrespecting any positive image these countries have of themselves as in the following example:

**Example (10)**

O Muslims, the taghut [tyrant]rulers who rule your lands … are the allies of the Jews and Crusaders. Rather, they are their slaves, servants, and guard dogs, and nothing else… The Arabian Peninsula’s rulers have been exposed and disgraced and have lost their supposed ‘legitimacy.’ (L.1041-1050)

In the above-mentioned example, al-Baghdadi does not call Arabian Peninsula’s countries by name, for they are all different sides for the same coin; all are enemies of the State. Also, it should be noted here that the other positive impoliteness strategy (name calling) is applied when the Gulf countries are compared to slaves, servants, and dogs whose job is to protect their masters. The metaphor implies that such governments have no free will to take their own decisions in isolation from the US. However, if that is not considered rude enough, then being accused of tyranny and lack of legitimacy is even more offending.

In brief, two positive impoliteness strategies appear in ISIS discourse, each targeting a different audience. Western countries, especially the US, are verbally affronted while the presence of Arab countries is majorly overlooked. The second method is even more offensive than the first one because recognizing the negative aspects of the other at least means that S is paying attention to his/her actions. Nevertheless, failing to notice the
attendance of someone in the first place is a clear sign of him/her being invisible, silent, and useless. This kind of talk suits ISIS political agenda which aims at establishing an Islamic state in the whole world rather than in the Middle East area.

4.4.3. Negative impoliteness.

Attacking H's negative face needs can be accomplished by violating any of the equity rights that guard H's right not to be "unduly imposed upon" or "unfairly ordered about" (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p.16). So, negative impoliteness is the best way for ISIS to claim power over its enemies, and there are two techniques displayed in ISIS discourse to achieve that purpose: frightening and ridiculing the other.

4.4.3.1. Frighten the other.

To convince H of a certain idea, S "must decide which side to present, calculating whether fears or desire will be a better manipulative tool in a given context" (Shabo, 2008. p. 77). In war language, arousing fear seems to be the plausible choice because it causes disturbance to H's life and interests, which in turn may motivate behavior changes on H's side (Atawneh, 2009). Such an effect can be stimulated throughout the use of the speech acts of threatening. As expected, ISIS applies this strategy to convince the US and its allies that calling a halt to their incursion is a must.

Example (11)

O Americans, and O Europeans… you will pay a great price. You will pay the price when your economies collapse. You will pay the price when your sons are sent to wage war against us, and they return to you as disabled amputees, or inside coffins, or mentally ill. You will pay the price as you are afraid of travelling to any land. Rather you will pay the price as you walk on your streets, turning right and left, fearing the Muslims. You will not feel secure even in your bedrooms. You will pay the price when this crusade of yours collapses, and thereafter we will strike you in your homeland, and
you will never be able to harm anyone afterwards. You will pay the price, and we have prepared for you what will pain you. (L.1647-1656)

One month after "September 10, 2014, [the time when] President Obama announced the formation of a global coalition to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State" (Congressional Research Service, 2016, p.1), ISIS published its fourth issue of *Dabiq* magazine to warn the US and its allies about the possible consequences of their intervention. To begin with, it can be noticed that the intimidating expression "you will pay the price" is repeated seven times to emphasize ISIS's point of view. To elaborate, al-Adnani threatens that if the coalition countries start the transgression against the Islamic State, their economy will collapse (for their contributions and donations will cost them a fortune), their soldiers will be either killed or seriously injured (for ISIS fighters are well trained and equipped), their right of movement will be restricted (for ISIS will be waiting for them on every corner inside and outside their own countries), and eventually their coalition will collapse (for its losses will be far greater than gains).

Moreover, this long list of threats relies solely on the modal verb of certainty *will* to suggest that ISIS's predictions obtain the highest degree of logical probability (Murcia & Freeman, 1999), as if they are based on actual data rather than random guesses. Most importantly, even though it seems illogical for ISIS to powerfully state threats against 60 nations, knowing that this war is unavoidable clears things up. This war has been initiated as a counter-terrorism campaign by countries that claim to be the guardians of international peace; so, acting politely when communicating with the coalition has not been expected to stop the campaign. Therefore, ISIS officials have obviously decided that being impolite may at least help them save their face.

**Example (12)**

Send arms and equipment to your agents and dogs. Prepare them with the most modern
equipment. Send them very much, for it will end up as war booty in our hands by Allah's permission. You will spend it, then it will be a source of regret for you, then you will be defeated. (1631-1634)

In the same speech from which example 11 is extracted, al-Adnani inserts another set of threats accompanied with the imperative form of the verb. Asking the enemy to send arms and prepare its allies with modern equipment is not exactly for the benefit of the speaker, since such actions may allow the other to emerge victorious in the coming war. However, imperatives have different functions based on the context they appear in, and in this case, threatening is the most plausible interpretation of the meaning. To elaborate, ISIS claims that regardless of what action the coalition countries decide to take, the result will not be in their favor. Their armor will end up being in ISIS's hands, and the coalition countries will get a taste of their own medicine. Showing confidence and pretending to be ready to face the enemy may affect the way H perceives S, which in turn may encourage H to retreat. Furthermore, the final two explicit threats (you will be defeated and it will be a source of regret for you) encapsulate the message ISIS wishes the coalition to understand.

4.4.3.2. Scorn, ridicule the other.

Not treating the other seriously suggests disrespect for the other's personality and ideas. It indicates that the hearer is not worthy of paying attention to or taking his words into consideration. Since ISIS tries to disrespect President Obama in all possible manners, it implements this technique as well. However, it is used only once and explained earlier in the study.

Example (13)

Would you like those words served with relish or pickle, president? (L.1176)
This remark comes as a comment on President Obama's statement in which he states that his strategy of taking out terrorists has been successfully pursued in several countries, and it will continue to be so in Syria. So, *Dabiq* makes sure to ridicule Obama's statement because the countries he mentions (Somalia and Yemen) do not enjoy the power ISIS does; as a result, the comparison he makes is looked at as nonsense talk that no one will buy. That is why his words are compared to non-tempting food that no one will be willing to taste without some appealing appetizers or side dishes.

All in all, using threats is the major negative impoliteness strategy noticed in ISIS discourse. Those threats have linguistically materialized through the use of imperatives and the modal verb *will*, and they are all felicitous because S is willing and capable of carrying out the threat, and H does not want that threat to take place. In fact, ISIS has carried out its threats and attacks against several American and European countries involved in the coalition soon after the US-led intervention in Syria and Iraq. As for the second technique, which is making fun of the other, it appears only once or twice in *Dabiq* magazine to achieve one goal, i.e., to attack President Obama's negative face.

4.4.4. Violation of politeness/impoliteness principles.

Throughout their speeches, ISIS officials has constructed their talk as expected, using polite language to persuade Muslims of the necessity of assisting ISIS and impolite language to insult enemies and convince them that ISIS has enough power to stand up in their face. However, there are several examples in which ISIS officials give direct commands to non-decisive Muslims, requesting them to defend the Islamic State. At first glance, these examples could be considered an illustration of the bald on-record impoliteness. Yet, Culpeper (2005) insists that having the intention to attack the face of the hearer is one of the prerequisites for the manifestation of this strategy. As a result, the researcher has decided to explain these instances separately because the speaker could not
have possibly intended to damage the hearer's face (since S needs H's help); still, his talk has been directly uttered with no redressiveness.

**Example (14)**

So O muwahhid, do not let this battle pass you by wherever you may be. You must strike the soldiers, patrons, and troops of the tawaghit. Strike their police, security, and intelligence members, as well as their treacherous agents. Destroy their beds. Embitter their lives for them and busy them with themselves… Do not ask for anyone's advice and do not seek anyone's verdict. Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military, for they have the same ruling. (L.1665-1673)

This talk has been given by the State's spokesman in October, 2014, short time before the US-led intervention in Syria. Such engagement of the World's most powerful country as well as other major Western countries (like the UK, France, Canada, Australia, and Germany) in a fight against ISIS will definitely make the latter's mission to expand in Syria and Iraq an extremely difficult one, if not impossible. For al-Adnani, such a critical period cannot be overcome unless all Muslims unify themselves under the black flag of ISIS. Yet, to convince those non-decisive Muslims to put their lives at stake for the sake of the Islamic State, for the already decisive ones do not need to be persuaded, al-Adnani should have been more polite, actually the most polite, in his speech. Still, he decides not to. In fact, he prefers to give commands and does not hesitate to use the imperative form of the verb (as in *strike, destroy, kill, do not let, do not ask, and do not seek*) and the modal verb of obligation *must* to provide Muslims with a long list of do's and don'ts. Hearers usually do not tolerate a speech with such a powerful tone unless uttered by an extremely powerful speaker. In Islam, this talk is expected to be articulated by Allah, and Muslims gladly accept it.
The question now is why does ISIS official talk resemble Allah's discourse? And why would any Muslim abide by al-Baghdadi's orders? In short, ISIS' ideology is based on the belief that it is "the only state ruling by Allah's Shari'ah today" (L.1880); its leader is called Amirul-Mu'minin, which is the popular Arabic title of Muslim rulers. He has even changed his name into "Ibrahim", which is the name of one of the arch-prophets and the father of prophets. So, the only plausible explanation for al-Baghdadi's impolite commands is that he perceives himself to have an immense power over Muslims everywhere, power that has been transmitted to him by Allah. Obviously, in the previously explained context, ISIS leader is not interested in mitigating his FTAs as much as he is concerned about the urgency of taking an action in support of the State. After all, Muslims should do their duties towards their state because targeting ISIS is just the first step in eradicating "every Muslim everywhere" (L.1004), like a domino effect.

On the whole, ISIS leaders believe that the Islamic ideology upon which their state is build gives them the right and power to require Sunni Muslims everywhere to abide by ISIS laws. Is that convincing? No, it is not. Does it show power? Yes, it does. Obviously, ISIS puts an emphasis on the idea that it is powerful maybe because deep inside it knows that it is not. So, to defy such a feeling, it acts in an aggressive way to claim that it does not lack power.

4.4.5. Conclusion.

The previous two sections about politeness and impoliteness answer the third question of the study, which is:

**Question:** How do ISIS officials exploit politeness/ impoliteness strategies to express their power and to persuade the target audience of their agendas?

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55 A reference to the five prophets, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and Muhammad, who were all sent with religious and divine books.
On the one hand, it turned out that politeness and persuasion work hand in hand because tactfulness is one of the vital factors required for the success of persuasion. Yet, this politeness targets Muslim hearers only including ISIS soldiers, citizens, supporters, and leaders of religious organizations in the region. First of all, the least polite strategy, which is the bald on-record, is employed when addressing ISIS soldiers and citizens because the main aim is to give orders to these already committed groups, orders that show what a caring state ISIS is. Nevertheless, the supporters that do not live within ISIS territorial claims are treated with more respect; thus, the positive politeness strategy of referring to in-group language and markers becomes dominant when addressing them. Most importantly, when addressing Muslims in general including uncommitted ones, the most polite strategy (off record) is implemented to question their moral judgment. In other words, the more risk ISIS feels, the more polite it acts.

On the other hand, the study proves that there is a correlation between impoliteness and power. Impoliteness in ISIS speeches mainly targets the enemies of the Islamic State, including the Western and the Arab worlds. For example, positive impoliteness is continuously practiced against the US president, calling him names and disrespectfully describing his illogical and non-ethical attitudes. Moreover, Arab countries are completely ignored in ISIS discourse, as if indicating that this war going on the Syrian lands is not regional. Moving on to negative impoliteness, frightening the enemy is the most prevailing technique used by ISIS to scare its enemies, and President Obama definitely has the lion's share of ISIS’ mockery. Briefly, it seems that ISIS relies on impoliteness for two main reasons: a) it realizes that politeness will not change the status quo and b) it uses impoliteness as a defense strategy when it feels less powerful that its enemies.
Chapter Five

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

After fiercely getting engaged into the Syrian Civil War, ISIS has managed to stay in the spotlight for over four years now, defying national and international powers as never before. Even though ISIS' success in becoming famous or infamous has taken advantage of several factors, such as its military power and the already unstable political situation in the region, the role of ISIS language cannot be overlooked, especially in light of the unbelievably mesmerizing propaganda it leads. Therefore, scrutinizing ISIS political texts, which are extracted from its official Dabiq magazine, has been mainly decided on as the topic of this study. After all, hearing the news straight from ISIS' mouth gives a clear idea about its ideology.

Analyzing the persuasion strategies applied in the State's discourse and the strategies used to practice its self-proclaimed power answers the questions of the study and proves that the hypotheses are valid. First of all, it is assumed that ISIS will use most of the examined persuasion techniques because it has been able to attract supporters and receive international recognition. The results show that ISIS indeed uses all the persuasion principles and techniques under investigation, but there is still an emphasis on "the authority," "reciprocity," "contrast," and "glittering generalities" because they are directly related to the Aristotelian typology of logos, ethos, and pathos. The authority and contrast principles add logic to ISIS arguments and question the ethos of its opponents. However, the reciprocity principle and glittering generalities get audience more emotionally involved. All the ten persuasion strategies have been implemented to achieve four main purposes: to promote the religious and political power of the State, to call for the unity of the Muslim community, to justify ISIS' unjustifiable actions under the banner of Islam, and to leave a question mark over the US' ability to make decisions in favor of their citizens.
Yet, what this study misses is an interpretation of ISIS discourse after the Russian incursion and whether it has affected the way ISIS addresses its supporters and enemies. Therefore, more research on this topic is advised to be conducted.

Second, it has been proven that there is a correlation between persuasion and politeness, as well as between power and impoliteness. On the one hand, persuasion requires more politeness on the part of the speaker to address his/her audience. Some evidence is found in the speeches of ISIS officials who tactfully ask Muslims to believe the ideas they sell. Nevertheless, there are certain occasions in which ISIS has been supposed to tactfully deliver its message but failed to do so. Rather, ISIS officials have tended to give their audience orders. To interpret such an unexpected behavior, ISIS ideology has been taken into consideration. ISIS believes in the supremacy of Islam and aims at establishing an Islamic caliphate similar to that of Prophet Muhammad, whose words are considered as part of the Islamic constitution. Thus, he is obeyed by Muslims with no questioning. Similarly, ISIS officials might believe that they are the new prophets and caliphs to rule the Islamic World; as a result, commands and orders have become part of their governance.

On the other hand, impoliteness has been found to be a more suitable strategy to claim power over the enemies of the Islamic State in an attempt to convince them to stop their advancement in ISIS territories and to cease fire. Even though Brown and Levinson have predicted that politeness depends on the power of the participants, Culpeper's impoliteness theory has suggested a better interpretation for our case. According to Brown and Levinson, ISIS is expected to speak more politely to the world's most powerful countries. However, it has turned out that this supposition is invalid because in conflictive times, as Culpeper proposes, politeness is not expected to change the goings on the ground. In fact, ISIS has already been recognized as a terrorist group that should be vanquished. So, avoiding a war with ISIS could have questioned the integrity of the US war-on-terror,
which is something that the US cannot risk to lose. Obviously, power and persuasion are intertwined in political discourse because persuasion is mainly activated to create an image of a powerful country which is perfectly ready to fight tooth and nail.

Aside from the original purpose of the research, the researcher has also figured out that ISIS tends to de-contextualize the Quranic verses so as to suit its agendas and legitimize murder. It also does not pay attention to the soundness of the reporters of the hadiths included in their magazine, even though it is a focal point that Muslim scholars rely on to determine whether a hadith should be adopted. In fact, ISIS has decided to imitate the worst incidents in the Islamic history, forgetting the true soul of Islam which is based on tolerance, good-manners, and human-life appreciation.

Most importantly, it should be noted that the importance of this study lies in the fact that it dissects ISIS language so as to help political analysts find ways to counter such talk and to open the eyes of the readers to the manipulation process practiced by the Islamic State. Even though the study does not directly address pedagogy, it helps teachers explain to their students the importance of the context in deciding the intended meaning of the speaker, especially in light of the fact that real-life language works on the discursive, rather than the sentential, level.

To conclude, the study makes us realize that war is a battle to decide who over-powers who. Despite the fact that military power is the determining factor in most cases, history has witnessed numerous occasions in which it has not. Propaganda, which convinces audience of the exaggerated power of its sponsors, has proven that appearances can be really deceiving.
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1. A new era has arrived of might and dignity for the Muslims

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Amirul-Mu’minin said: “Soon, by Allah’s permission, a day will come when the Muslim will walk everywhere as a master, having honor, being revered, with his head raised high and his dignity preserved. Anyone who dares to offend him will be disciplined, and any hand that reaches out to harm him will be cut off. So let the world know that we are living today in a new era.

Whoever was heedless must now be alert. Whoever was sleeping must now awaken. Whoever was shocked and amazed must comprehend. The Muslims today have a loud, thundering statement, and possess heavy boots. They have a statement to make that will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism, and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy, and uncover its deviant nature.”

Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-‘Adnani said: “The time has come for those generations that were drowning in oceans of disgrace, being nursed on the milk of humiliation, and being ruled by the vilest of all people, after their long slumber in the darkness of neglect – the time has come for them to rise. The time has come for the Ummah of Muhammad (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to wake up from its sleep, remove the garments of dishonor, and shake off the dust of humiliation and disgrace, for the era of lamenting and moaning has gone, and the dawn of honor has emerged anew. The sun of jihad has risen. The glad tidings of good are shining. Triumph looms on the horizon. The signs of victory have appeared.

2. A call to all Muslims

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Amirul-Mu’minin said: “We make a special call to the scholars, fuqaha’ (experts in Islamic jurisprudence), and callers, especially the judges, as well as people with military, administrative, and service expertise, and medical doctors and engineers of all different
specializations and fields. We call them and remind them to fear Allah, for their emigration is wajib ‘ayni (an individual obligation), so that they can answer the dire need of the Muslims for them. People are ignorant of their religion and they thirst for those who can teach them and help them understand it. So fear Allah, O slaves of Allah.”

3. It’s either the Islamic State or the flood

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all creation.

From amongst the polluted ideologies that have afflicted people the entire world over throughout the course of the tyranny carried out by the forces of kufr, is the notion that the people can choose whether to follow the truth or to embark upon falsehood. This ideology teaches that no one has the right, regardless of whom he may be, to impose any creed or set of morals on anyone else even if that creed or set of morals is the truth revealed by Allah. They went to the extent of attributing this “methodology of free choice” to the religion of Allah ta’ālā, and to the call of the prophets, peace be upon them.

The proponents of this ideology have portrayed the prophets of Allah incorrectly, making them out to be more akin to preachers and guides who have no authority over the masses at all or, at best, like political guides or opposition party leaders with a message that opposes their peoples’ principles. These same people further portray the prophets as having only one tool at their disposal for changing the beliefs of their people and era. This tool is what is referred to today as a “peaceful means of change.” It entails displaying their methodology to the people and leaving them to choose for themselves, without any sort of pressure or force used against them, even if the other methodologies in question stand in complete contradiction to the methodology of the prophets and also oppose those “diplomats” who are pleased with giving the people a choice!
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Then, when a group within the Ummah woke up and rejected this twisted methodology of giving people the choice between absolute truth and complete falsehood, the members of this group were stained by this polluted ideology, except for those whom Allah had mercy upon. This group believed that the people had a choice between right and wrong, but within the confines of the “truth”! In other words, they sufficed with removing blatant kufr from the field of choice and with letting different types of bid’ah and nifāq remain as valid options – bid’ah and nifāq whose true nature many Muslims can’t distinguish. They even believed some of the bid’ah and nifāq in question to be directly from the Sunnah, and anything apart from that to be extremism and excessiveness in the religion. These new proponents of choice had forgotten that many of the Ummah who held onto the name Islam had left through their deeds much of Islam’s attributes.

Therefore, giving the people choice was no longer a possibility in this new state of affairs. Rather, the guiding principle became that every time choice is allowed it will result in misguidance, either in the present or in the future.

4. The fight against the PKK

Issue 2, Pages 12-13

Comprising territory that spans from eastern Turkey, through northeastern Syria and northern Iraq, all the way to northwestern Iran, the area commonly referred to as Kurdistan is a region that is mostly home to a Sunni Kurdish population.

In the 1970s, a group of students led by Abdullah Ocalan founded a communist political organization called the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, with the goal of establishing an independent marxist state. Thirty years ago, the PKK began an armed conflict against Turkey in an effort to advance their goals. The conflict continued on and off with occasional ceasefires until 2013, when the PKK announced the end of hostilities after lengthy negotiations between the apostates Erdogan and Ocalan.
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Approximately ten years ago in neighboring Shām, the marxist Kurds in the north founded a political opposition party called the PYD (Democratic Union Party), which shares the kufri ideology of Ocalan and is seen as being a Syrian front for the PKK. During the course of the jihad in Shām, the PYD’s armed wing, the YPG, became increasingly involved in clashes with the mujahidīn as they attempted to control a number of towns and cities in the north with significant Kurdish populations.

The Islamic State did not hesitate to wage war against the communist murtaddīn of the PKK/YPG, while simultaneously continuing their fight against the nusayrī regime and the sahwāt. There are presently a number of fronts in the Islamic State being defended against the Kurdish communists in both Iraq and Shām. The month of Ramadān saw numerous operations taking place against the PKK and their Iraqi counterparts, the Peshmerga. The following is an account of some of the operations carried out by the mujahidīn.

On the 3rd of Ramadān, the soldiers of the Islamic State made preparations to strike the PKK in the village of Zūr Maghār, near Jarāblus. The dead pkk soldiers assault began in the morning and included a group of inghimāsiyyīn plunging into the enemy ranks with support from the mortar team, a tank, a BMP, a 23 millimeter gun, and some doshkas. The mujahidīn killed many PKK soldiers, with around 20 of their corpses being removed from the battlefield. They then advanced to a position on high ground called “the home of Ahmad Munīr,” which overlooks the town of Jarāblus.

Numerous weapons were captured as ghanīmah including assault rifles, PKC machine guns, RPG launchers and rounds, a sniper rifle and a night vision scope. During the course of the battle there was one shahīd and a number of light injuries. This battle was just one of a number of successful advances made against the PKK on numerous fronts including the capture of the village of Kindār and a number of other villages adjacent to it on the western front of Tal Abyad on the 11th of Ramadān with the advance continuing towards Ayn
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Al-’Arab. This was in addition to a number of operations against the PKK within their main
strongholds including istishhādi operations carried out against the PKK/Peshmerga murtaddīn
in both Iraq and Shām, as well as a number of PKK vehicles blown up by the Islamic State’s
undercover cells in Wilāyat Al-Barakah, all leading to many of their apostate soldiers being
killed.

5. Foley’s blood is on Obama’s hands

It was a cooling balm for the believers’ hearts to witness the execution of the American
James Wright Foley as a retribution for the recent American aggression against the Muslims
of Iraq.

At the same time, anger and hatred spewed from the mouths of the disbelievers and the
hypocrites alike, whose media outlets wasted no time and immediately exerted themselves
day and night in an attempt to mislead the American public and the rest of the world away
from the real cause for James Foley’s execution. So who was James Foley? And who bears
the ultimate responsibility for his death?

James Wright Foley was an American who spent a large part of his career travelling
exclusively to war zones embedded with the American military at war with Muslims. He had
entered Afghanistan and Iraq numerous times from 2008 to 2010, during the ongoing
crusades. TG Taylor and Mathew Gregory were two of his military overseers as he covered
the US military in Afghanistan.

His work entailed documenting the wars through the crusaders’ eyes, reporting all that
which serves their foreign policy and agenda whilst withholding any news that could expose
their evils. In the archive of photographs he had personally taken, there were images
glorifying the American crusaders in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the Iraqi Sahwah. There
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were also photos showing the capture of many poor Afghani and Iraqi Muslims at the hands of the crusaders. Alas for James, this archive was with him at the time of his arrest.

James traveled to Syria, taking many security precautions due to his prior knowledge and experience as an American “journalist.” He knew that Americans were not welcome in Muslim lands because of their government’s shameless and lengthy record of aggression against Muslims. Nevertheless, he entered Syria carrying along with him items used for espionage, which were also found on his possession at the time of his capture.

As for who is ultimately responsible for his execution, then the Obama administration was aware of James’s detention as early as November 2013. In a message sent thereafter, the simple solution for his release was clearly stated to the Americans. All that Obama had to do was release our Muslim brothers and sisters from their prisons.

From this point up until James’s execution, there were many attempts by the Islamic State to reach a solution concerning the fate of James Wright Foley, but the arrogant, foolish, and defeated US government turned away from their citizen with apathy.

During this long 9-month period, as the American government was dragging its feet, reluctant to take the necessary steps to save James’s life, negotiations were made by the governments of a number of European prisoners, which resulted in the release of a dozen of their prisoners, after the demands of the Islamic State were met. That left a number of British and American prisoners remaining in the cells of the Islamic State, only after their governments arrogantly refused to release our imprisoned brothers and our sister, Dr. Aafia Siddiqui.

To paraphrase James, the Obama administration ultimately hit the last nail in James’s coffin and killed him by bombing Iraq. A message was sent two days before James’s execution, warning of his demise as a result of the US airstrikes in Iraq. The solution was easy… Stop the airstrikes!
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The arrogant US government paid no attention to the offer nor to the threats that accompanied it, so the question that every rational person needs to ask is what is the real reason behind the Obama administration’s refusal to comply with the demands put forward by the Islamic State for the safe release of American citizens?

The answer is that Obama now blindly follows the example of “the war president” Bush. He will continue to strengthen the ancient and historical enemy of the West – Persia/Iran. He sends comforting signals to the agents of the Iranian government in Syria and Lebanon (al-Asad and Hezbollah). Through his decisions, he solidifies the Iranian puppet government in Iraq as well as the Iranian-backed Shiite militias allied to the puppet government.

He supports the Shiite allies of Iran in Afghanistan. He strikes the mujāhidīn – the true enemies of the Shia in Yemen – and thus emboldens the Houthi agents of Iran. He does all this more foolishly than Bush, for Iran is a key ally of Russia, another historical enemy of the West, currently battling Western allies in the Ukraine and elsewhere! And to achieve these goals, he sacrifices the welfare of the American public for the sake of “the chosen few” benefitting from Zionism and capitalism, as America faces crisis after crisis including earthquakes in California, protests in Missouri, and the potential deaths of American prisoners held by the Islamic State.

6. Foreword

Issue 3, Pages 3-4

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. May peace and blessings be upon His Messenger Muhammad, and his family and companions.

On the 11th of Shawwāl 1435H (August 7, 2014), the USA decided to officially get involved once again in the affairs of the Muslim Ummah by conducting airstrikes against the Islamic State and its people. There were a number of related events that the Obama
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administration and western media tried to ignore when discussing the strikes and the consequential execution of James Foley.

1) The US had already interfered in Iraq by supporting Maliki’s military, the Peshmerga, and the new sahwah councils, with information, advisors, and weapons, prior to the recent air campaign. There have been regular aerial reconnaissance missions in al-Anbār and Nīnawā.

2) The US had interfered in Shām by supporting groups allied to it and to “Saudi Arabia” against the Islamic State. These same groups now beg the US for further support and aid, which, by Allah’s grace, will end up as ghanīmah for the Islamic State.

3) The US had killed women, children, and the elderly, during its direct occupation of Iraq prior to its withdrawal. There are countless accounts of American soldiers executing families and raping women under the sanctity of the US military and Blackwater. Muslim families were killed under the broad definition of “collateral damage,” which the US grants itself alone the right to apply. Therefore, if a mujāhid kills a single man with a knife, it is the barbaric killing of the “innocent.” However, if Americans kill thousands of Muslim families all over the world by pressing missile fire buttons, it is merely “collateral damage”…

4) The US was informed of James Foley’s status as a prisoner held by the Islamic State. There were demands made prior to the US strikes, for the release of Muslim prisoners held by the US in exchange for Foley’s release, but they were arrogantly ignored.

5) The US attempted a rescue mission in Wilāyat ar-Raqqah, which failed when some of the members of the mission were injured and possibly killed, so they carried their fallen away with disaster.

6) After the official US airstrikes began in Iraq, the Islamic State sent a message warning it would execute James Foley as a result of the airstrikes. This threat was received with typical American indifference.

7) Upon receiving the threat and prior to the execution, Obama scurried to prevent knowledge
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of the affair from reaching his citizenry. His administration immediately ordered a number of online social networks to shut down all Islamic State media accounts, including accounts of Islamic State supporters.

8) In his speech on “August 20, 2014,” Obama completely avoided mention of Steven Sotloff, again showing his “people” that the number one interest of the American government is the sanctity of Israel and its allies, which include the Zionist Peshmerga forces. These are more important than the lives of his citizenry.

And with Allah’s permission, Obama will continue to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, Bush, only to become the worst heir for the worst testator, and ultimately bring about the complete collapse of the modern American empire.

7. The crusade serving Iran and Russia

The odd alliance of Persia and Russia – two powers who for centuries were at war with the West – is an actuality one cannot deny. Regarding some battles of their ancient conflict, Allah ta’ālā revealed, {The Romans have been defeated in the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome [their enemy] within three to nine years. To Allah belongs the command before and after. And that day the believers will rejoice in the victory of Allah. He gives victory to whom He wills, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Merciful. [It is] the promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of the people do not know} [Ar-Rūm: 2-6].

And after centuries of Western conflict with Persia and Russia, we find that two Western leaders – Bush and Obama – are determined to do everything possible to strengthen Persian and Russian influence in the Middle East.

Regarding Bush’s blunders, Shaykh Abū Hamzah al-Muhājir said, “I want to remind the fool who is obeyed by his people (Bush) that he was able in a very short period to revive the
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Thus, he became more ominous for his country than Gorbatchev was for his Union (the USSR). Bush enabled the spreading of Persian (Iranian) influence over Afghanistan after it had been a tough obstacle for the Persians. He seconded with Iraq and opened up its treasures for them while they had not dreamt of drinking a sip of its water. And now they suck up its oil, loot its treasures, and enslave its men. Third, he panicked its rāfidī nusayrī tyrant – through an embargo upon Syria – into opening his country up to hundreds rather thousands of the Persians to nationalize themselves there and become supporters for the agent of the anti-Christ Nasrullāt who is called ‘Nasr Allah’ and who just emerged from a so-called victory against the pinnacle of the Roman military machine (the Israeli military). And thus, the ancient Persian empire completed and expanded from Mawarannahr (Transoxiana) to Iran then through Iraq – the location of al-Mada’in (the imperial capital of Persia) – ending in Shām (Syria/Lebanon/Palestine). So do you think that the Magian Persians will ever be able to repay this fool – Bush – who revived their ancient glory for them without them shooting a single bullet or sacrificing a single soldier? And do you think that the reasonable of the Romans will realize that they have become slaves for the Persians and have become mercenary fighters who fight for them without pay” [Inil Hukmu Illā Lillāh].

A number of Americans and Westerners have spoken about their ancient Iranian enemy and its allies – possibly the common enemy referred to by the Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam). The Jewish crusader, former US Secretary of State and US National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, has said that, “in all the crises roiling the world, the U.S. shouldn’t lose focus on Iran,” as paraphrased by Scott Simon of NPR.

Henry Kissinger also said, “There [has] come into being a kind of a Shia-belt from Tehran through Baghdad to Beirut. And this gives Iran the opportunity to reconstruct the ancient Persian Empire, this time under a Shia label. From a geo-strategic point of view, I
consider Iran a bigger problem than ISIS. ISIS is a group of adventurers with a very aggressive ideology. But they have to conquer more and more territory before they can become a geo-strategic, permanent reality. I think a conflict with ISIS – important as it is – is more manageable than a confrontation with Iran” [NPR Interview].

Again, his underestimation of the Islamic State is due to a materialist analysis believing that power is in weaponry and technology, forgetting that true power relies in the creed of tawhīd, which liberates one from any fear save the fear of his Lord and grants him the support of his Lord. Therefore, Iran will never be “a bigger problem than ISIS” unless the West enters into a truce with the Islamic State involving the halt of all attacks against the Muslims.

Former CIA Chief of “the Bin Laden Issue Station,” Michael Scheuer, said, “For now, however, the beginning of wisdom is to look at what is going on in Iraq and Syria and see it clearly. In both places all of those folks that multiple US administrations have identified as enemies of America are killing each other. In Syria, the Assad regime, Iran, and Lebanese Hizballah are killing Sunni mujahedin from all over the world, as well as their local allies and supporters. In turn, the Sunni Islamists in Syria are killing Assad’s troops, Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and Hizballah fighters. This is a perfect circumstance for the United States, all our enemies are killing each other and it is not costing us a cent or a life.”

“Over in Iraq, we see much the same marvelous phenomena occurring. Multinational Sunni mujahedin and Saddam’s former military personnel are fighting and killing Maliki’s dictatorial regime, its Shia military forces, and their Iranian military supporters. And, as in Syria, Maliki and his gang are killing our Sunni Islamist enemies. In Iraq there also is the potential for a delightful bonus coming to fruition. If the United States stays out of the affair, the renewed war in Iraq may trigger a widespread Shia-vs-Sunni civil war in which our Muslim enemies – as they are defined by our bipartisan political elite – may begin to kill each
other for a prolonged period and at unprecedented levels, and, again, at no cost to us in lives
or dollars.”

“So let us take both a deep breath and Lt. Col. Peters advice and sit back and watch what is
going on in Syria and Iraq with equanimity and absolutely from the sidelines. Cheer for
neither side, answer no one’s call for help – especially not one from the near-frantic Neocons
who now know they sank their beloved Israel with the 2003 invasion of Iraq – and pray that
Obama does not cooperate with Iran to restore Maliki’s Shia tyranny and thereby earn the
eternal enmity of all of the Sunni world.”

He also said, “What to do now? First, stay out of Iraq completely and utterly. To re-
intervene would cost more American money and lives, and it would drive-up oil prices even
faster. It also would amount not only to the United States again intervening in an oil-rich
Muslim country, but intervening in a Sunni-Shia religious war on the side of the Shia, who are
fiercely hated by the overwhelmingly Sunni Islamic world.”

Although his words contain hope for the further killing of Muslims at the hands of the
rāfidah as the US watches with glee, he expresses a truth that should be reflected over and that
is, why does America bother itself in a war between two of its enemies and side with one of
them in a manner that only serves its enemy’s interests in the region and no one else’s?

Obama now strengthens the Iraqi regime, which is undeniably backed by Iranian
intelligence, military, and finances. Iranian Shia militias currently fight to “defend” Baghdad.
The Iraqi regime and its Iranian founder have been one of the biggest allies of the Asad
regime in Syria. They have sent fighters to the Abul-Fadl al-‘Abbās battalion. The Asad air
force has stopped all airstrikes against the Islamic State in a number of Shāmī wilāyat,
probably because it is cheaper for them to benefit from the US airstrikes on their behalf,
especially since the Asad regime is collapsing financially and isn’t very good at hitting targets
accurately. At the same time, it has managed to “hide” chemical weapons from the West and
use them without a deterrent. Hezbollah has sent guerillas to fight against Muslims in Iraq and Syria. The Houthis of Yemen – allies of Iran – have overrun Sanaa.

Most significantly, Russia – Iran’s biggest ally as well as an ally of China – has entered Ukraine, which is supposedly claimed by the West. Russia continues to arm the Asad regime against the Muslims of Shām. They have boasted of their nuclear capabilities once again. And yet Obama insists upon strengthening “the Persian Crescent” and Russian influence in the region. It seems American leaders are blinded by their love of the Jewish state into doing things that only damage supposed Western interests.

8. The fight for Wilayat Alanbar

As the focus of the international media lay squarely on ‘Ayn al-Islām, ignoring the massacres carried out by the Safawī army and militias and their American backers against the Sunni population in Iraq, the mujāhidīn were at work seeing through the Islamic State’s strategy for the liberation of Wilāyat Al-Anbār.

This defiant region had long been a stronghold of the mujāhidīn in their fight against the US invasion more than a decade ago, continually terrorizing US forces and their allies during the course of their war in Iraq. Indeed, cities such as Fallūjah are the very reason that it was long considered political suicide for Obama to put “boots on the ground.” Thus, it would only be natural to assume that as the Islamic State continued to expand, it would place a strong focus on cleansing its bastion of Safawī forces and Sahwāh militias, thereby consolidating its hold on the very region that gave it birth only a few years before.

The fierce fighting in areas such as ‘Āmiriyyat al-Fallūjah, along with the assault and capture of strategic points and key military installations such as the Albū ‘Īthah Regiment and the continued assassination of Safawī commanders and Sahwāh leaders, all served to frustrate enemy attempts to slow down the Islamic State’s consolidation of the region.
9. If Cantile were the US president today

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If ever there were a shining, 24-carat example of good reasons not to reverse your own promises and declare another war in the Middle East, then we are witnessing it right now. $424 million dollars’ worth of airstrikes over Iraq and Syria have resulted in little more than the continued expansion and consolidation of the Islamic State in both countries, while the black flag of tawhīd now flutters on the skylines of Libya, Yemen, Sinai, and elsewhere, as the growth of the Islamic State gathers pace abroad.

It is absolutely the last thing Team Obama and his allies would have wanted after drumming up their coalition and heading off to war to make their countries safer places, or, lost as they are in their own arrogance and inability to learn the lessons of the past, even have expected.

Much to the dread of western political leaders, the Islamic State is now truly moving with great momentum. As an entity enjoys success, it attracts more to its fold, thereby causing expansion and breeding more success until it achieves some sort of critical mass, the point at which it becomes self-perpetuating, self-sustaining. And for the moment, the talk about the Islamic State is not even of its continued expansion in the Arab nations of the Middle East, but its reach into the homelands and living rooms of ordinary people living thousands of miles away in western cities and suburbs. The Islamic State has now become a global player.

It was Shaykh Abū Muhammad al-‘Adnānī’s call to action for Muslims wherever they were to rise up and fight the enemies of the Islamic State that brought almost instant reaction from around the world.

“Do not let this battle pass you by wherever you may be,” commanded the Shaykh.

“You must strike the soldiers, patrons, and troops of the tawāghīt. Strike their police, security, and intelligence members. If you can kill a disbelieving American or European – especially
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the spiteful and filthy French – or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the disbelievers waging war against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it may be.”

And so it began. Just days later, chaos erupted around the world. In Australia, Numan Haider stabbed two counterterrorism police officers. In Canada, a soldier was shot and killed in front of the war memorial in Ottawa by 32 year-old Michael Zehaf-Bibeau on October 22nd, who then entered Canada’s parliamentary building looking for other targets before himself being shot and killed by police. In the same week another two soldiers were run over in a hit-and-run in Quebec by Martin Couture-Rouleau and in New York, Zale Thompson attacked four policemen in Queens with a hatchet, the moment of his savage attack caught on CCTV cameras and beamed into people’s homes all across America.

All these attacks were the direct result of the Shaykh’s call to action, and they highlight what a deadly tinderbox is fizzing just beneath the surface of every western country, waiting to explode into violent action at any moment given the right conditions. Suddenly the mujahidīn of the Islamic State weren’t some esoteric concept fighting in a land nobody knew or cared about, they were on the doorstep of millions of people living in some of the biggest, most modern cities in the western world. The attacks served as a damning indictment of America’s continued policy of foreign intervention. Everything the United States and its allies had been fighting for in the “war on terror,” the old “if we don’t fight them there we’ll have to fight them here” reasoning, was in one week shown to have completely failed. “Trained and battle-hardened, these fighters could try to return to their home countries and carry out deadly attacks,” warned Obama in his speech to the nation on 10th September. But what he hadn’t counted on was his own citizens picking up weapons and attacking his police officers without any training or battle experience whatsoever. Sections of the media were quick to single out
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the attackers as “disturbed loners,” individuals just looking for an excuse to commit violent
crime in their hometowns. But the truth runs far deeper than this.

It is one thing for an individual to think about attacking or killing another man. It happens
every day and such thoughts are neither uncommon nor even that alarming. But to actually
step up and do it at the behest of a man they had never met, never seen, fighting in a country
several thousand miles away who did not even speak their language, shows an undeniable
strength in the power of jihād. Regardless of their social standing, regardless of who these
men were that committed these acts or how long they had been Muslim, it demonstrates the
immense power that jihād wields over those who chose to embark upon its path.

The significance of these attacks and others is enormous and cannot be underestimated. By
calling on Muslims around the world to rise up in arms, the Shaykh launched attacks in
Canada, America, and Australia (three of the countries mentioned in his speech) with nothing
more than words and a shared belief in the act of worship that is jihād. A general in a
conventional army couldn’t possibly hope to have such power over men he’d never met on
the other side of the world, ordering them to attack and possibly be killed, even if he offered
them money! The NYPD officers in New York were fortunate they were attacked with a
hatchet and not a gun, otherwise the outcome could have been even more serious.

And the numbers of Muslims taking up arms in the name of jihād under the banner of the
Islamic State are growing, and they’re growing fast. According to Western media, the Islamic
State now boasts over 35,000 fighters. Its grasp has now spread across northern Africa into
Libya and Algeria, across to Yemen and up to the Arabian Peninsula where the Shiites and
regimes are now being attacked by mujāhidīn loyal to the Islamic State. If it’s such isolated
numbers, why is Jordan shaking in its boots and why does Turkey shiver upon hearing
mention of the Islamic State? And if the numbers are so insignificant, why are attacks now
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occurring on the mainland of continental North America by jihādī fighters who have never
left their home countries, who don’t speak a word of Arabic?

I’ve quoted him far too often in the past but hope he will forgive me if I reach into the box
of Michael Scheuer quotes once again. In a text published on the 2nd of September he
commented, “We are far past facing terrorists. Rather, we are in the midst of fighting an
international insurgency, and we are on the way to a world war that the United States will
have to fight at home and abroad if the foreign-policy status quo is retained.”

Boom – there it is, just as Michael predicted. Spurred on by continual American
intervention, the sphere of influence of the Islamic State has expanded to such a degree that
they can now order attacks on US soil by complete strangers via word alone. An international
insurgency. It’s the nightmare scenario for the governments, one they’ve spent trillions trying
to avoid but, ironically, fuelled instead with their constant meddling in the affairs of the
Muslim world.

From my own experience here, our governments are too aloof, prideful, and conventional
in their way of thinking to have any idea how to proceed in the face of such a global threat.
They will simply continue to do what they’ve been doing for the last two decades which has
gradually been making the situation worse and worse. The intervention in Iraq today (such as
it is) is little different to the one before except with more window-dressing and, at some point
in the future, proxy boots on the ground instead of American ones because, to the people back
in the USA, it doesn’t matter how many of their allies die. And until they get their act together
the Peshmerga can bear the brunt of the dying with the odd resupply from the air and some
Special Forces help on the ground.

The governments are like a robot that is stuck on a loop, continually performing the wrong
sequence despite repeated instructions by its master to the contrary. Master to robot: You
have to find a different way of addressing the danger the mujāhidīn pose to the west.
“Cannot… compute…” Military action doesn’t work, what about negotiations? “Must… obey… programming…” Everything you’ve done since 9/11 has put us in more danger, not less. “Zzzzz… syntax… error…”

Of course, Robo-Obama doesn’t listen to voices of reason and thus programs himself with the same corrupted old data, making the same mistakes over and over again. James Comey described the Islamic State mujāhidīn as “savages” in September (a classic example of prideful and conventionalist thinking that will progress absolutely nothing) while Nick Paton-Walsh described their tactics in CNN as “eerily sophisticated,” which is a much more educated comment and closer to the truth, except Nick’s just a journalist while James Comey is director of the FBI.

If I were the president of the US today – and let it be said, I am very glad I am not – I’d be aghast at the mess that was blowing up in my face. Sucked into a war I claimed was over, making allies with the most vile tyrants in the Middle East, committing my country and presidency into a cauldron of conflict while my own people rise up against me in response to the Islamic State’s call, already halfway to the magic one billion dollars spent and the enemy appear to be leapfrogging from strength to strength. And not just that, they’re actually expanding their influence and territory into other countries I’d already built military bases in and committed billions of dollars into to stop them doing just that.

In the face of such a train wreck, I’d have to say that 18 holes around Martha’s Vineyard was a far more sensible alternative. And in light of current events, probably more constructive as well.

10. The liberation of Biji

Only a month after a much-vaunted “victory” in Biji against the mujāhidīn, the Safawī forces found themselves being chased out of the very town that they falsely claimed to have
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completely liberated. The “complete liberation” a month ago was, in reality, just another instance in a pattern of lies attempting to conceal the incompetence of the crusader-backed murtaddīn.

They had managed some minor gains within the town and succeeded in deluding their ignorant supporters into believing that they had actually driven out the mujāhidīn. So it’s not surprising that their embarrassing defeat last week, as the Islamic State liberated the town in its entirety, was largely overlooked by the international media, which chose instead to focus on bloated tales of Peshmerga murtaddīn “advancing” on Sinjār… advancing to Jahannam.

The town of Bījī, located north of Baghdad on the Tigris River, holds strategic value due to its neighboring oil refinery. The forces of kufr have repeatedly attempted to take complete control of the town and push back the Islamic State but have continuously failed despite being backed by American airstrikes.

Immediately after the liberation of the town, there were reports and pictures of alleged Safawī reinforcements being sent to the area. So as the soldiers of the Khilāfah celebrate and give thanks to Allah, they anticipate more battles, more victories, more ghanā’im, and more opportunities – bi idhnillāh – to take revenge for Ahlus-Sunnah from the filthy Safawīs and their allies.

11. Foreword

Issue 7, Page 3

“What is Japan’s concern with us? Who has drawn Japan into this difficult, powerful, and fierce war… into this transgression against our sons in Palestine? Japan cannot endure entering into a war against us. Therefore, it should reconsider its stance. What is the concern of Australia in the far south with us and with the condition of the defenseless people of Afghanistan and Palestine? What is Germany’s concern in this war except kufr and crusade?

It is yet another crusade just like the former crusades led by Richard the Lionheart,
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Barbarossa of Germany, and Louis of France. Likewise today, when Bush raised the cross, the crusader countries immediately scrambled. What is the Arab countries’ concern with this crusade? Why have they entered into it nakedly and openly in broad daylight? Because they are pleased with the rule of the cross” [October 2001 Interview].

Shaykh Usāmah Ibn Lādin (rahimahullāh) said the above words 13 years ago when numerous nations rushed to join the crusader coalition mobilized to invade Afghanistan.

Japan joined the crusade despite its non-Christian paganism, its “pacifist” constitution, and its great distance from Afghanistan. The unwise Prime Minister at the time – Junichiro Koizumi – committed to providing logistical support for the Western crusaders. What kind of interests did he expect to achieve for Japan in joining a crusade against Muslims? Thereafter, Japan – again under the leadership of Koizumi – joined the crusaders in Iraq by dispatching its “Self-Defense” Forces to support them there. Then when the mujāhidīn under the leadership of Shaykh Abū Mus’ab az- Zarqāwī (rahimahullāh) captured the Japanese crusader Shosei Koda and threatened to execute him unless Japanese forces withdrew from Iraq, Koizumi and his government arrogantly stated that Japan would not concede to the demands of “terrorists.” Accordingly, Koda was decapitated like those before him from amongst the prisoners belonging to the crusader coalition including Nick Berg and Kenneth Bigley.

Almost a decade later, “pacifist” Japan has once again defied wisdom by entering into another crusader coalition against the Muslims, but this time under the leadership of the “Nobel Peace Prize” winner Obama. And so a “pacifist” country is led by a “peace” prizewinner in a war doomed to fail. What interests did Abe Shinzo expect to achieve for Japan by publicly committing more than 200 million dollars to be explicitly used in the war against the Islamic State, as if the Khilāfah were not a dangerous entity to anger? What kind of hubris blinded him to make his thoughtless announcement from a podium erected by the tāghūt Sisi who wages war against the soldiers of the Khilāfah in Wilāyat Saynā’? What begot
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him into “forgetting” that the Islamic State had two Japanese prisoners inside its jails awaiting
the blunders of Japanese leadership?

It was nothing save the plan of Allah from which the pagans felt secure. And so
immediately the Islamic State demanded 200 million dollars from the Japanese government,
the same sum initially committed to the crusaders and their apostate allies by the Japanese
Prime Minister. The Khilāfah was not in need of the money and knew fully that the Japanese
would never provide the sum, but it had decided – by this demand – to humiliate the
arrogance of this Japanese government… a government in a line of governments enslaved by
the West since the Second World War.

After the passing of the first deadline, the Japanese prisoner Haruna Yukawa was
executed while Japanese representatives rushed to the murtadd Jordanian regime. The Islamic
State immediately requested for the release and transfer of Sājidah ar-Rīshāwī – a mujāhidah
who was imprisoned by the Jordanian tāghūt for almost 10 years – to the lands of the
Khilāfah in exchange for Kenji Goto Jogo. The Jordanian regime recklessly complicated the
process for the Japanese by attempting to include their pilot in the exchange deal, but the
Khilāfah explicitly refused such during the negotiations with the representative of the
Jordanian tāghūt – ‘Āsim Tāhir al-Barqāwī (AKA Abū Muhammad al-Maqdisī1) – as there
were other plans for the murtadd pilot. In the end, both al-Barqāwī’s murtadd client and the
Japanese prisoner were executed due to the negligence of both regimes in heeding the
warnings of the Islamic State. The relatives of Kenji Goto Jogo and the murtadd pilot have no
one to blame but the political leaders of their lands who strive to appease and serve the
American crusaders.

Prior to Abe Shinzo’s thoughtless pledge of support for this crusade, Japan was not on the
list of priorities to be targeted by the Islamic State, but through Abe Shinzo’s foolishness, all
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Japanese citizens and interests – wherever they may be found – are now a target for the soldiers and patrons of the Khilāfah everywhere.

Japan is now in a complicated predicament. How can it escape this threat? Can Abe Shinzo take the step to save his people whom he recklessly exposed to the wrath of the Khilāfah? Can he bravely announce the halting of his support for the war against the Khilāfah after making his infamously unwise announcement against the Islamic State? That is very doubtful. So let his citizens know that the sword of the Khilāfah has been unsheathed against the pagans of Japan by Allah’s might and power.

12. The Burning of the Murtad Pilot

Issue 7, Page 5-8

This week, the Islamic State released a video depicting the execution of the Jordanian crusader pilot, Mu’ādh Sāfī Yusuf al-Kasāsibah. As displayed in the video, the Islamic State had resolved to burn him alive as retribution for his crimes against Islam and the Muslims, including his active involvement in crusader airstrikes against Muslim lands.

When the news of the video broke out, the tāghūt of Jordan who at the time was in Washington to meet with his masters at the White House – as is the habit of the crusader puppets – cut short his trip, returned home early, and promptly ordered the execution of the mujāhidah, Sājidah ar-Rīshāwī and the mujāhid, Ziyād al-Karbūlī, both of whom had been imprisoned for nearly a decade by the murtaddīn of Jordan. The Islamic State had done everything it could to secure the release of both Sājidah and Ziyād, but Allah decreed that they would return to Him as shuhadā’, an incomparable honor which they had both desired, eagerly pursued, and supplicated their Lord for. We consider them so, and Allah is their judge. In executing the mujāhidīn, Jordan is merely hastening the inevitable destruction of its tāghūt regime. Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Whoever harms an ally of Mine, then I have declared war against him” [Sahīh al-Bukhārī].
While the execution of Sājidah and Ziyād became the focus of international headlines, the focus for many ignorant hizbiyyīn became the manner in which the pilot was executed. Amongst them was the Jordanian Abū Sayyāf Muhammad ash-Shalabī, who stated, “The manner in which he was executed and the subsequent production of a video displaying his execution is a matter that opposes the teachings of the pure religion. Jihād was legislated to make the people enter the religion, not to make them turn away from the religion or to distort its image.”

This type of rhetoric is typical of hizbiyyīn – even those masquerading as supporters of the mujāhidīn – who continue to live under the authority of the murtadd puppets, and of defeatist Muslims who reside in the lands of kufr under the authority of the crusaders themselves, with no intention of making hijrah to those lands in which the word of Allah is the highest. Such people have had their religion diluted and, not surprisingly, are always amongst the first to speak out in any case where the mujāhidīn display their harshness towards the crusaders, attempting to disguise their criticism towards the mujāhidīn as concern for the image of Islam. In burning the crusader pilot alive and burying him under a pile of debris, the Islamic State carried out a just form of retaliation for his involvement in the crusader bombing campaign which continues to result in the killing of countless Muslims who, as a result of these airstrikes, are burned alive and buried under mountains of debris. This is not to even mention those Muslims – men, women, and children – who survive the airstrikes and are left injured and disabled, and in many cases suffering from severe burns that cause them pain and anguish every minute of every day.

{AND IF YOU PUNISH [AN ENEMY], PUNISH WITH AN EQUIVALENT OF THAT WITH WHICH YOU WERE HARMED} [An-Nahl: 126]. This āyāh sufficiently demonstrates the shar’ī validity of burning someone alive in a case of qisās (retribution). The confusion perpetuated by the hizbiyyīn, the palace “scholars,” and the ignorant defeatists, is
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with regards to the authentic statement of Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam),

“None should punish with fire except Allah” [Sahīh al-Bukhārī].

As a result of their dishonesty in conveying the truth, the deviants concealed the fact that there is a famous exception to this ruling made in the case of qisās and maslahah (overwhelming benefit), and that in addition to the aforementioned āyah from Sūrat An-Nahl, the fuqahā’ used as evidence for these exceptions the following āyah from Sūrat Al-Baqarah.

{So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you} [Al-Baqarah: 194].

They further used as evidence the hadīth of the Uranī men whose eyes were gouged out by the Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) with heated iron [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

Furthermore, the scholars highlighted the fact that the Sahābah (radiyallāhu ‘anhum) punished people with fire in a number of incidents that took place throughout the course of the history of the rightly-guided Khulafā’. Here we will mention some of these incidents.

The first example: In his letter to the murtaddīn of the Arabian Peninsula during the riddah wars, Abū Bakr as-Siddīq (radiyallāhu ‘anh) threatened to burn them alive if they did not repent from their riddah. In it he states, “I have sent to you so and so [Khālid Ibn al-Walīd] with an army of the Muhājirīn, the Ansār, and their good followers, and I’ve ordered him to not fight anyone or kill anyone until he calls him to the call of Allah. Whoever answers him, accepts the truth, halts his evil, and does good, my envoy will accept this from him and will aid him in it. If he refuses, I’ve ordered him to wage war against them over such, to not spare anyone he is able to kill, to burn them alive with fire, to kill them in a severe manner using all means, to enslave their women and children, and to not accept from any one of them anything but Islam” [Tārīkh at-Tabarī; Al- Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

The second example: Likewise during his khilāfah, Abū Bakr (radiyallāhu ‘anh) gathered a number of his advisors from amongst the Sahābah and consulted them about the case of a
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man found guilty of committing sodomy. The one who had the most severe position was ‘Alī (radiyallāhu ‘anh) who said, “This is a sin that no nation had committed before except for one nation, and you know how Allah dealt with them. I view that we should burn him alive.” So the Sahābah agreed with his position, and Abū Bakr wrote to Khālid ordering him to burn the man alive [Al-Bayhaqi].

The third example: In another incident that occurred during the riddah wars, a man named al-Fujā’ah came to Abū Bakr as-Siddīq (radiyallāhu ‘anh) claiming to be Muslim, and asked Abū Bakr to prepare an army for him to lead in fighting the murtaddīn. Abū Bakr did so, and the man wound up killing and robbing anyone he came across, including Muslims. When this reached Abū Bakr, he sent an army to detain him. He was detained and brought back, and Abū Bakr ordered that he be taken to the area of al-Baqī’ and burned alive [Al- Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

The fourth example: During the riddah wars, when Khālid Ibn al-Walīd defeated Tulayhah al- Asadī in the battle of Buzākhah, Abū Bakr wrote to him ordering him to not be lenient and to make an example out of anyone he captured from amongst the kuffār who had killed Muslims. So Khālid remained in Buzākhah for a month hunting down the murtaddīn and taking revenge for the Muslims who had been killed alive, others he would stone to death, and others he would throw off the tops of mountains [Al- Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah].

The fifth example: Abū Mūsā al-Ash’arī reported that the Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) sent both him and Mu’ādh Ibn Jabal (radiyallāhu ‘anhumā) to Yemen, and instructed them to teach the people the Qur’ān. Mu’ādh came one day to visit Abū Mūsā and found with him a man who was chained up, so he said, “O, my brother, were we sent to punish the people or were we sent to teach them and order them with what would benefit them?” So Abū Mūsā said, “He embraced Islam and then disbelieved.” So Mu’ādh said, “By He who sent
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Muhammad with the truth, I will not leave until I burn him with fire.” So Abū Mūsā said,
“We still have some unfinished business with him.” So Mu’ādh said, “By Allah, I will never
leave!” So some firewood was brought and a fire was lit, and he threw him in [Al-Mu’jam al-
Kabīr – at-Tabarānī].

Thus, the Islamic State not only followed the footsteps of Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu
‘alayhi wa sallam) in his harshness towards the disbelievers, but also emulated the example of
his righteous Sahābah (radiyallāhu ‘anhum) by punishing with fire in retaliation, and for the
purpose of terrorizing the murtaddīn and making examples out of them.

We ask Allah to take revenge for the Muslims and the mujāhidīn, and rain fire and
destruction upon the kuffār and murtaddīn wherever they are.

13. Revenge for Muslimat persecuted by the Coptic crusaders of Egypt

This month, the soldiers of the Khilāfah in Wilāyat Tarābulus captured 21 Coptic
crusaders, almost five years after the blessed operation against the Baghdad church executed
in revenge for Kamilia Shehata, Wafa Constantine, and other sisters who were tortured and
murdered by the Coptic Church of Egypt. The operation was planned by Hudhayfah al-
Battāwī (rahimahullāh), wālī of Wilāyat Baghdad at the time, alongside the senior military
commander, Abū Ibrāhīm az- Zaydī (rahimahullāh), both of whom played a crucial role –
through their passion and zealousness – in preserving the morale of the Islamic State
mujāhidīn after the martyrdom of Abū ‘Umar al-Baghdādī and Abū Hamzah al-Muhājir
(rahimahumallāh). At the time, the Islamic State was distant from Egypt and so could not
easily target the Coptic crusaders there, but its leadership knew that despite the worldly and
sectarian animosity of the kuffār – as groups and individuals – towards each other, {Their
adversity among themselves is severe. You think they are together, but their hearts are
diverse. That is because they are a people who do not reason} [Al-Hashr: 14], the different
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kuffār still have allegiance to each other in the face of Islam, {And those who disbelieved are allies of one another. If you do not do so, there will be fitnah on earth and great corruption} [Al-Anfāl: 73]. {O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are allies of one another} [Al-Mā’idah: 51].

Therefore, the Islamic State leadership decided to target the Catholic Christians of Baghdad so as to teach the tāghūt of the Copts – Shenouda – that the price of Muslim blood is costly and so accordingly, if his church persecuted any Muslimah in Egypt, he would be directly responsible for every single Christian killed anywhere in the world when the Islamic State sought its just revenge… And the deaths did not begin until after the crusaders had expressed their arrogance and refusal to execute the righteous demands of the mujāhidīn.

So more than one hundred crusaders were killed and injured by just five brave istishhādiyyīn from the Islamic State. And the different Christian churches had no one to truly blame but Shenouda for the deaths of their brethren in kufr…

And instead of congratulating the Islamic State on this blessed operation in Iraq executed in revenge for the persecuted sisters, the hizbī ‘Azzām al-Amrīkī began to spew forth in some of his letters what his heart contained of rancor, by defending the Catholics of Europe in the face of the actions of the mujāhidīn! He then strove to act on his personal rancor towards the Islamic State as soon as he became a top leader of al-Qā’idah after the martyrdom of Shaykh Usāmah Ibn Lādin (rahimahullāh).

‘Azzām al-Amrīkī’s strange attitude towards the Christians was similarly expressed by Ayman adh-Dhawāhirī when he said, “I want to restate our position towards the Coptic Christians. We do not want to get into a war with them because we are busy in the battle against the greatest enemy of the Ummah [America] and because they are our partners in this nation, partners whom we wish to live with in peace and stability” [Risālat al-Amal wal-Bishr – Part 8]. So while the Islamic State targeted the Catholics in revenge for the sisters
imprisoned by the Copts, ‘Azzām al-Amrīkī’s commander was wooing the war-waging Copts themselves with feeble words, forgetting, {Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are harsh against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves} [Al-Fath: 29], and

{O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion – Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, mighty against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic} [Al-Mā’idah: 54].

And so, five years after the blessed operation in Iraq, Allah (ta’ālā) granted the Islamic State expansion to Libya, Sinai, and elsewhere, allowing it to easily capture the Coptic crusaders – the followers of the dead Shenouda and the supporters of the tāghūt Sisi – as the Salaf said, “The reward for a good deed is another good deed.” And thus, the Islamic State strikes terror directly in the hearts of the Copts after striking terror in the hearts of their Catholic allies before, while the jihād claimants and hizbiyyīn sit back and deliberate – in vain – on what they can do to prevent the further expansion of the Khilāfah.

Finally, it is important for Muslims everywhere to know that there is no doubt in the great reward to be found on Judgment Day for those who spill the blood of these Coptic crusaders wherever they may be found.

14. Soldiers of terror

This month, the soldiers of the Khilāfah sent a forceful message to the camp of kufr and riddah, striking and terrorizing them in multiple lands, and with no visas, borders, and passports to stand in the way. Strikes were carried out in Yemen and Tunisia by men whose allegiance lies, not with a false citizenship, but with Allah, His Messenger, and the believers.

They readily sacrificed themselves for the cause of Allah in their own lands, bringing
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massacre to the disbelievers and murtaddīn, not differentiating between them on grounds of nationalism.

In the city of Tunis, two soldiers of the Islamic State carried out an assault on kāfir tourists in the Bardo National Museum. The two mujāhidīn, Abū Zakariyyā at-Tūnusī and Abū Anas at-Tūnusī, were sent on their mission after having trained with their brothers in Libya and having declared their bay’ah to the Khalīfah (hafidhahullāh). They returned to Tunisia, bravely advanced towards the security quarter in Tunis, entered the museum – located across from the Tunisian parliament – and poured terror on the kuffār inside, killing more than 20 of them and injuring a dozen others. They then faced off against the local murtadd security forces with their AK assault rifles, hand grenades, and explosive belts, and were killed fī sabīlillāh. The operation succeeded in bringing anguish to a number of the nations involved in the crusader coalition (Italy, France, Britain, Japan, Poland, Australia, Spain, and Belgium), after some of their own citizens became prey for the soldiers of the Islamic State.

Just two days later in Wilāyat Sanaa, four soldiers of the Islamic State carried out coordinated istishhādī attacks against the Houthi murtaddīn in the city of Sanaa. They infiltrated two temples where the Houthis had gathered and detonated their explosives, leading to a massacre that killed over a hundred, including the top Rāfidī cleric Murtadā al-Mahatwarī and a number of Houthi leaders, and also injured hundreds more. At around the same time, a fifth mujāhid carried out an operation in Sa’dah, targeting a Houthi government building and detonating his explosives. Only days after the operations, the Americans announced that they had pulled the last of their special forces out of Yemen. These operations brought back memories of the blessed attacks ordered by Shaykh Abū Mus’ab az-Zarqāwī (rahimahullāh), targeting the Iraqi Rāfidah and killing their cleric Muhammad Bāqir al-Hakīm.

On the heels of this blessed operation in Sanaa and Sa’dah, the Yemenī branch of al-
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Qā’idah came out and exposed its two-faced nature by denouncing the attack and reaffirming their adherence to Dhawāhiri’s guidelines, as if to imply that the Islamic State’s operation was carried out against Sunnis in a public place of gathering not specific to the Houthis, when in reality the opposite was true. When one contrasts this blessed operation with al-Qā’idah’s attack on a Houthi rally in Tahrir Square in Sanaa last fall, the blatant hypocrisy becomes evident: Is it permissible for Al-Qa’idah – according to Dhawāhiri’s feeble guidelines – to bomb a Houthi rally in a public square, but forbidden for the Islamic State to bomb a Houthi gathering in a Houthi temple? Or is this distinction based on blind partisanship?

May Allah accept all those mujāhidīn who fight, massacre, and terrorize the kuffār while not differentiating between them under the influence of irjā’ or on the grounds of nationalism.

15. Paradigm Shift

Issue 8, Pages 64-67

After all the gnashing of teeth in September, there appears now a grudging acceptance by many Western politicians that the Islamic State is different to anything they’ve seen before. Their response, by necessity, has to be different too.

Firstly, a caveat. There is always a danger that I am well behind the curve in terms of recent developments and that some of the things I observe from news reports provided are outdated from the outset. But has anyone noticed a crucially telling shift in the way some American leaders and their allies are discussing the affairs of the Islamic State recently?

From the toothless roaring of Obama’s address to the nation on 10th September, in which he declared that the Islamic State “is a terrorist organization, pure and simple,” it would seem that some of his closest advisors, many figures in the rest of the NATO world and the media in general are not convinced by such a simplistic description, although “terrorism” is undoubtedly one of the tactics, amongst many, adeptly employed and advanced by the Islamic State in its jihād.
Obama’s own former defense secretary Chuck Hagel described the situation as “one of the most challenging periods in history for American leadership.”

In an interview with CBS, Hagel went on to say, “We’ve never seen an organization like ISIL that is so well-organized, so well-trained, so well-funded, so strategic, so brutal, so completely ruthless. We’ve never seen anything quite like that in one institution. Then they blend in ideology … and social media. The sophistication of their social media program is something that we’ve never seen before. You blend all of that together, that is an incredibly powerful new threat.”

For the former defense secretary to be using such relatively complimentary language when discussing an adversary is a clear sign that Washington isn’t so sure they’re up against a mere “organization” at all. And Hagel is not alone in his use of respectful parlance. General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, confessed on television that “firstly, there’s no military-only solution to ISIL. And secondly, there’s no airpower alone solution either in Iraq or Syria.”

There’s no point including quotations from the world’s journalists because so many of them wax lyrical about the gains and exploits of the Islamic State – we’d be here all day paraphrasing other peoples’ words.

But such admissions were impossible to even imagine back in the days when American leaders were busy laying the groundwork for this very environment today. Back then, it was all about crushing the unruly “terrorists” in Iraq and Afghanistan with “shock and awe” and the might of the American war machine. But today the men in charge are being forced to concede that maybe, just perhaps, they were a little too quick off the mark to dismiss the Islamic State as merely “a terrorist organization, pure and simple.” And that’s just three months into their campaign.

I am certainly no expert on such matters and my views are those of a layman, but
generally one doesn’t expect a mere "organization" (similar to mark antony) to lay siege to cities or have their own police force.

You certainly don’t expect a mere “organization” to have tanks and artillery pieces, an army of soldiers tens of thousands strong, and their own spy drones. And one certainly doesn’t expect a mere “organization” to have a mint with plans to produce their own currency, primary schools for the young, and a functioning court system.

These, surely, are all hallmarks of (whisper it if you dare) a country. Ah, the C-word. It’s being used sporadically by the media, slowly at first but its use is gathering pace. Could the Islamic State, the Caliphate that was only announced in June, really be a country?

“ISIS will have taken more towns, more territory, consolidated more gains and really become, unfortunately, the kind of country we don’t want to see over there,” declared retired Lieutenant Colonel Bill Cowan on Fox News in October 2014.

As uncomfortable as it may be for many in the West, there’s little reason why the State shouldn’t be considered a country. Countries can be born in days, in hours during a coup, or in minutes at the signing of a paper, they have been for centuries.

So there’s no reason this one shouldn’t have been born the way it was. And if it’s not the Islamic State’s country, then just whose is it?

Certainly, it no longer belongs to Bashar al-Asad, holed up in Damascus as his soldiers recuperate after four years of massacring the Muslims of Syria. There was never any legitimacy to his tyrannical rule and what control he had has long passed and can never return.

Does it then belong to the newly instated and incompetent puppet Iraqi government, tucked away in Baghdad while its army licks its wounds from the murderous thrashing it received from the mujāhidīn back in the summer? Clearly not. And it definitely doesn’t belong to the Free Syrian Army, who had years to do something decisive or cohesive but
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chose instead to smoke Gauloises cigarettes, drink tea, and complain that nothing could be
done without NATO jets flying overhead. Well they are now, and they’ve still achieved zero.

No indeed. If anyone has an actual claim to the lands stretching across Iraq and Syria (or
any of the other regions the Islamic State has reached), has the motivation to run them, and
the military to defend them, then it’s hard to argue against the leaders and soldiers of the

Islamic State.

Although the West might never admit such a thing, there are Western politicians who are
beginning to realize this fact and thus, little by little, we’re seeing a changing of vernacular, a
paradigm shift in how those leaders talk about the State, because if it is a country – whether
recognized by anyone or not (and the Islamic State doesn’t care either way) – then that
changes things, dramatically.

You can’t just conveniently write it off as merely “a terrorist organization,” because it
doesn’t wash with the public. You can’t drop a few bombs on it and hope it goes away,
because it won’t. And you can’t expect a feckless collection of poorly trained and even more
ground troops to do a job you don’t want to touch, because they will fail.

At some stage, you’re going to have to face the Islamic State as a country, and even
consider a truce. If there’s no military only solution to the Islamic State, and that’s already on
the record as being the case, then after you’ve tried getting the other Sahwah tribes to turn
against it and finished mucking around trying to find ways to cut their funding or shut down
their media message (which has already cost the US well in excess of $1.3 billion and
completely failed) at some point the only option left will be an offer of a truce.

And that’s going to take some swallowing of pride. But with the black flag of the Caliphate
now seen on the skylines of Africa, Arabia, and Asia, a complete departure in how the West
addresses this State is needed.

What’s the alternative, launch airstrikes in half-a dozen countries at once? They’ll have to
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destroy half the region if that’s the case. I was in Kobani in October last year and more than
170 US airstrikes – “the heaviest barrage since the air campaign began” according to CBS
correspondent Holly Williams – had merely finished what Islamic State artillery had begun
and reduced large portions of the city to rubble. In the end, it was over 600 sorties, and now
there is nothing left of the place.

Incidentally, there was a heavy airstrike some time ago in the dead of night and I promise
that you don’t sit there thinking, “Hurray, it’s the United States Air Force.” As the doors
shake on their hinges and the walls bulge momentarily inward from the shockwaves, you
become incandescent with fury. For 20 minutes afterwards there are the sounds of babies
crying in fear, mothers trying to soothe their children, and sirens as casualties are taken to
hospital. It’s a side to “precision” bombing that you never see back in the West.

Is a truce even realistic? Right now, it’s too early. The scene is just being set for a big
operation against the Islamic State to be executed by Iranian militias (AKA the Iraqi army)
backed by the US. But when that fails because Shiite militiamen are afraid of being burnt
alive, when special forces operations skyrocket in an effort to make up for what the Iraqi army
cannot achieve, and when the mujāhidīn start beheading Western troops, then every option is
going to be on the table, and fast. A truce will be one of those options.

THE ONLY QUESTION IS, HOW MANY MORE WESTERNERS WILL DIE
BETWEEN THEN AND NOW?

The way things are going at the moment, the answer is many. France, Belgium, Denmark,
Australia, and Canada, have all been the targets of mujāhidīn attacks over the last three
months alone, and as more Islamic fighters from different groups in different countries pledge
allegiance to the Islamic State, such attacks will surely only become more numerous and
better-executed.

“Foreign fighters travelled everywhere, from Europe, to the United States, to Australia, to
other parts of the Muslim world, converging on Syria,” said Obama on an interview aired on 60 Minutes. “And so this became ground zero for jihadists around the world. And this is one of the challenges that we’re going to have generally. Where you’ve got states that are failing or in the midst of civil war, these kinds of organizations thrive.”

However long it takes for those options to be placed on the table, the language change in the West is undeniably there. Just eight months into their campaign and already some of the most senior political figures in the US are admitting the Islamic State is unlike any opponent they have faced before and that a military solution by itself is impossible. That speaks volumes by itself.

Finally, I may have an overly-simplistic way of looking at things that perhaps does not reflect the immense complexities of modern warfare and nation-building. Any truce between the West and the Islamic State would ultimately have to address the end of support for Arab and non-Arab tyrannical puppets in the Muslim world as well as an end of support for Israel. That’s just for openers, but the impossible can and does happen.

War is entirely predictable in that it can only lead to one of two outcomes. Either one side emerges victorious while the other is vanquished, or some kind of truce is reached. It is the only way wars end, and America and its allies will never win this war. They know it and everyone else knows it as well. At some stage the only option that can prevail for America and the West is the sensible one.

15. And Allah is the best of plotters

Power belongs to Allah entirely. [And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah. And if only they who have committed injustice would
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consider [that] when they see the punishment, [they will be certain] that power belongs to

Allah entirely and that Allah is severe in punishment} [Al-Baqarah: 165].

Honor belongs to Allah entirely. {Give tidings to the hypocrites that there is for them a painful punishment – those who take disbelievers as allies instead of the believers. Do they seek with them honor [through might]? But indeed, honor belongs to Allah entirely} [An-

Nisā’: 138-139]. {And let not their speech grieve you. Indeed, honor [due to might] belongs to Allah entirely. He is the Hearing, the Knowing} [Yūnus: 65]. {Whoever desires honor [through might] – then to Allah belongs all honor. To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it. But they who plot evil deeds will have a severe punishment, and the plotting of those – it will perish} [Fātir: 10].

And plotting belongs to Allah entirely. {And those before them had plotted. But to Allah belongs plotting entirely. He knows what every soul earns, and the disbelievers will know for whom is the final abode} [Ar-Ra’d: 42].

No one can escape His power. No one can attain honor except through Him. And no plot can ever truly succeed except His.

These are realities that the crusaders have not realized. And so they use their power to
tyrannize the weak and oppressed Muslims. Their Jewish, hypocritical, and apostate allies attempt to attain honor and might through the crusaders. And they plot against Islam while having the doubts of Jāhiliyyah, thinking that Allah will not grant victory to His religion.

But the matter of victory belongs completely to Allah. {Say, “Indeed, the matter belongs completely to Allah”} [Āl ‘Imrān: 154]. {And to Allah belong the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth and to Him will be returned the matter completely, so worship Him and rely upon Him. And your Lord is not unaware of that which you do} [Hūd: 123].

And He legislated that the religion is for Him completely and decreed it would be so. {And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion is completely for Allah. And if they
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cease – then indeed, Allah is Seeing of what they do} [Al-Anfāl: 39]. {It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religions, even if the mushrikīn despise such} [At-Tawbah: 33]. {And sufficient is Allah as a witness} [Al-Fath: 28].

But due to the deviance and arrogance of the enemies of Allah, they plot against His religion and His allies. Their plots almost cause the mountains to collapse out of shock that the kuffār dare to oppose the Lord of the heavens and the earth. {And they had plotted their plot, but with Allah is their plot [recorded], even if their plot had been [sufficient] to do away with the mountains} [Ibrāhīm: 46].

And yet their plot is inherently weak, as it is part of the weak plot of Shaytān. {Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of tāghūt. So fight against the allies of Shaytān. Indeed, the plot of Shaytān has ever been weak} [An-Nisā: 76].

And this weakness is due to the power of sincerity – the core of tawhīd – granted by Allah to the slaves He has chosen, as the accursed Shaytān himself testified. {[Iblīs] said, “My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them on earth, and I will mislead them all except, among them, Your sincere servants.”} [Al-Hijr: 39-42].

And despite their weakness and the weakness of their master, Shaytān, they plotted for his sake. And so they became the object of the firm plot of the best and swiftest of plotters, without them realizing it. {And they plotted, but Allah plotted. And Allah is the best of plotters} [Āl ‘Imrān: 54]. {Then did they feel secure from the plot of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plot of Allah except those people in loss} [Al-A’rāf: 99]. {And when We give the people a taste of mercy after adversity has touched them, at once they plot against Our
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verses. Say, “Allah is swifter in plot.” Indeed, Our messengers record that which you plot} [Yūnus: 21]. {And I will give them time. Indeed, my plot is firm} [Al-A’rāf: 183]. {Or do they intend a plot? But those who disbelieve – they are the object of a plot} [At-Tūr: 42].

And Allah weakened their plots and led them to failure, misguidance, and severe error.

{Rather, their [own] plot has been made attractive to those who disbelieve, and they have been averted from the way. And whomever Allah leaves astray – there will be for him no guide} [Ar-Ra’d: 33]. {But they who plot evil deeds will have a severe punishment, and the plotting of those – it will perish} [Fātir: 10]. {And Allah does not guide the plot of betrayers} [Yūsuf: 52]. {But the plot of the disbelievers is not except in error} [Ghāfir: 25].

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And the outcome of their plots is the exact opposite of what they desire. They only plotted against themselves, their worldly life, and their hereafter, bringing about their debasement and self-destruction. {And they plotted a plot, and We plotted a plot, while they perceived not.}

Then look how was the outcome of their plot – that We destroyed them and their people, all. So those are their houses, desolate because of the wrong they had done. Indeed in that is a sign for people whoknow. And We saved those who believed and used to fear Allah} [An-Naml: 50-53]. {And thus We have placed within every city the greatest of its criminals to conspire therein. But they conspire not except against themselves, and they perceive [it] not} [Al-An’ām: 123]. {There will afflict those who committed crimes debasement before Allah and severe punishment for what they used to conspire} [Al-An’ām: 124]. {Those before them had already plotted, but Allah came at their building from the foundations, so the roof fell upon them from above them, and the punishment came to them from where they did not perceive} [An-Nahl: 26]. {Then, do those who have plotted evil deeds feel secure that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them or that the punishment will not come upon them from where they do not perceive?} [An-Nahl: 45]. {But the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way of the former peoples? But you will
never find in the way of Allah any change, and you will never find in the way of Allah any alteration} [Fātir: 43].

So a Muslim should not grieve when hearing about the weak plots of the kuffār. Rather, he should be patient and certain of the kuffār’s imminent destruction. His strongest weapon is his tawhīd and what it entails of relying upon Allah alone, fearing Him alone, supplicating Him alone, and declaring his barā’ah from the mushrikīn. {And if you are patient and fear Allah, their plot will not harm you at all. Indeed, Allah is encompassing of what they do} [Āl ‘Imrān: 120]. {And be patient, and your patience is not but through Allah. And do not grieve over them and do not be in distress over what they plot} [An-Nahl: 127]. {Say, “Call your ‘partners’ and then conspire against me and give me no respite. Indeed, my protector is Allah, who has sent down the Book; and He is an ally to the righteous. And those you call upon besides Him are unable to help you, nor can they help themselves”} [Al-A’rāf: 195-197]. {He said, “Indeed, I call Allah to witness, and witness [yourselves] that I am free from whatever you ascribe to Him of partners. So plot against me all together; then do not give me respite. Indeed, I have relied upon Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature but that He holds its forelock. Indeed, my Lord is on a path [that is] straight”} [Hūd: 54-56].

These lessons should always be on the Muslim’s mind as the crusaders and apostates plan and execute their newest plots. He should remind himself and others with these lessons so that he does not degrade himself before their weak plots nor succumb to the shirkī belief in extreme conspiracy theories.

16. An address from the khalīfah: On the last plot of the apostates

On 25 Rajab 1436, the Khalīfah (hafidhahullāh) addressed the Ummah in a speech titled “March Forth Whether Light or Heavy” in which he briefly mentioned the background of a
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new plot against Islam in the making. He first warned against the attitude that led many of the
militant factions into apostatizing and allying with the kuffār, and that is their willingness to
compromise and hope for permanent peace with the crusaders. He said, “O Muslims!
Whoever thinks that it is within his capacity to conciliate with the Jews, Christians, and other
kuffār, and for them to conciliate with him, such that he coexists with them and they coexist
with him while he is upon his religion and upon tawhīd, then he has belied the explicit
statement of his Lord (‘azza wa jall), who says, … {And they will continue to fight you until
they turn you back from your religion if they are able} [Al-Baqarah: 217] … So this is the
condition of the kuffār in dealing with the Muslims until the establishment of the Hour. {And
you will never find in the way of Allah any alteration} [Fātir: 43].”

He also said, “O Muslims, Islam was never for a day the religion of peace. Islam is the
religion of war. Your Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was dispatched with the sword as
a mercy to the creation. He was ordered with war until Allah is worshipped alone. He
(sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said to the mushrikīn of his people, ‘I came to you with
slaughter’ [Reported by Imām Ahmad from ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr]. He fought both the Arabs
and non-Arabs in all their various colors. He himself left to fight and took part in dozens of
battles. He never for a day grew tired of war … His companions after him and their followers
carried on similarly. They did not soften nor abandon war, until they possessed the Earth,
conquered the East and the West, the nations submitted to them, and the lands yielded to
them, by the edge of the sword. And similarly, this will remain the condition of those who
follow them until the Day of Recompense. Our Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) has
informed us of the Malāhim near the end of time. He gave us good tidings and promised us
that we would be victorious in these battles. He is the truthful and trustworthy, sallallāhu
‘alayhi wa sallam. And here we are today seeing the signs of those Malāhim and we feel the
winds of victory within them.”
He explained that the Muslims would not cease to fight parties of the kuffār until ‘Īsā (‘alayhissalām) descends and leads the Muslim armies. He said, “Indeed, fighting the kuffār, hijrah, and jihād will remain until the establishment of the Hour. Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‛alayhi wa sallam) said, ‘Hijrah will not cease to exist until repentance ceases to be accepted, and repentance will not cease to be accepted until the sun rises from the West’ [Reported by Abū Dāwūd from Mu’āwiyah] … He (sallallāhu ‛alayhi wa sallam) also said, ‘There will not cease to exist a group from my nation fighting upon the truth, manifest until the Day of Judgment. Then, Īsā, son of Maryam, will descend, and their leader will say, ‘Come and lead us in prayer.’ So he will say, ‘No. You are leaders over one another as an honor from Allah for this nation’” [Reported by Muslim from Jābir].”

He described the imminent extinction of the gray zone by saying, “And if the Crusaders today claim to avoid the Muslim public and to confine themselves to targeting the armed amongst them, then soon you will see them targeting every Muslim everywhere. And if the Crusaders today have begun to trouble the Muslims who continue to live in the lands of the cross by monitoring them, arresting them, and questioning them, then soon they will begin to displace them and take them away either dead, imprisoned, or homeless. They will not leave anyone amongst them except one who apostatizes from his religion and follows theirs. And you will remember what I now say to you, and I entrust my affair to Allah. O Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, and the rest of the kuffār will not approve of you nor abandon waging war against you until you follow their religion and apostatize from yours.”

He then expounded on the obligation upon the Muslims during these wars before the Hour. He said, “O Muslims! Do not think the war that we are waging is the Islamic State’s war alone. Rather, it is the Muslims’ war altogether. It is the war of every Muslim in every place, and the Islamic State is merely the spearhead in this war. It is but the war of the people of faith against the people of kufr, so march forth to your war O Muslims. March forth
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everywhere, for it is an obligation upon every Muslim who is accountable before Allah …

There is no excuse for any Muslim who is capable of performing hijrah to the Islamic State, or capable of carrying a weapon where he is, for Allah (tabāraka wa ta’ālā) has commanded him with hijrah and jihād, and has made fighting obligatory upon him. And we call upon every Muslim in every place to perform hijrah to the Islamic State or fight in his land wherever that may be.”

This is the order of the Khalīfah (hafidhahullāh). Either ones performs hijrah to the wilāyāt of the Khilāfah or, if he is unable to do so, he must attack the crusaders, their allies, the Rāfidah, the tawāghīt, and their apostate forces, wherever he might be with any means available to him, and he should not hesitate in doing so, nor consult any supposed “scholar” on this obligation. He should attack after declaring his bay’ah to the Khilāfah, so as not to die a death of Jāhiliyyah. And he will find an excellent example in the shuhadā’ of the Islamic State including Numan Haider and Man Haron Monis (Australia), Michael Zehaf Bibeau and Martin Couture-Rouleau (Canada), Zale Thompson, Elton Simpson, and Nadir Soofi (America), Amedy Coulibaly (France), Omar Abdel Hamid el-Hussein (Denmark), and Sofiane Amghar and Khalid Ben Larbi (Belgium).

He then warned against the propaganda of the crusaders by saying, “America and its allies from amongst the Jews, Crusaders, Rāfidah, secularists, atheists, and apostates claim that their coalition and war is to aid the weak and oppressed, help the poor, relieve the afflicted, liberate the enslaved, defend the innocent and peaceful, and prevent the shedding of their blood. They also claim to be in the camp of truth, good, and justice, waging war against falsehood, evil, and oppression, alongside the Muslims! Rather, they claim to defend Islam and the Muslims! Indeed, they lie.”

He then warned against the tāghūt rulers who tyrannize the Muslim lands with manmade laws and prostrate to the Crusaders. He said, “O Muslims, the tāghūt rulers who rule your
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lands … are the allies of the Jews and Crusaders. Rather, they are their slaves, servants, and
guard dogs, and nothing else. The armies that they prepare and arm and which the Jews and
Crusaders train are only to crush you, weaken you, enslave you to the Jews and Crusaders,
turn you away from your religion and the path of Allah, plunder the goods of your lands, and
rob you of your wealth. This reality has become as obvious as the sun in the middle of the
day.”

He then expounded in detail on the apathy of the tāghūt rulers towards the Muslims and
followed by saying, “The Arabian Peninsula’s rulers have been exposed and disgraced and
have lost their supposed ‘legitimacy.’ Their treachery has become clear even to the laymen of
the Muslims. And the reality of these rulers thereby became apparent. Therefore, their masters
from amongst the Jews and Crusaders had no more use for them. And so their masters began
to replace them with the Safawī Rāfidah and the Kurdish atheists. When Āl Salūl realized
their masters’ abandonment of them, their disposal of them like tattered shoes, and their
replacement of them, they launched their supposed war against the Rāfidah of Yemen. And it
is not a storm of resolve, rather it is the kick of a dying person, by Allah’s permission, as he
struggles during his last breaths.”

He then said, “Today they claim to defend Ahlus-Sunnah in Yemen against the Rāfidah!
Rather, they have lied, failed, and lost. Their war is nothing but an attempt to prove
themselves once again to their masters from amongst the Jews and Crusaders. It is nothing but
a desperate attempt to turn the Muslims away from the Islamic State whose voice is high
everywhere and whose reality has become clear to all the Muslims and therefore the Muslims
began to gradually rally around it. Their storm is nothing but a storm of delusion after the fire
of the Rāfidah scorched their thrones and after the Rāfidah’s march reached the people of the
Arabian Peninsula, a matter that will lead thereafter to the Muslim public in the Arabian
Peninsula rallying around the Islamic State since it defends them against the Rāfidah. This is
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what frightens Āl Salūl and the rulers of the Arabian Peninsula and makes their thrones tremble. This is the secret of their supposed ‘storm,’ which, by Allah’s permission, will be their imminent end, for Āl Salūl and the rulers of the Arabian Peninsula are not people of war nor do they have the patience for it. Rather, they are people of luxury and extravagance, people of intoxication, prostitution, dances, and feasts. They have become accustomed to the defense of the Jews and Crusaders for them and their hearts have drunk humiliation, disgrace, and subservience.”

He also called the Muslims to recognize the reality of this war. “O Muslims everywhere, has the time not come for you to realize the truth of the conflict and that it is between kufr and īmān? See on which front the rulers of your lands stand and to which camp they belong. Has the time not come O Ahlus-Sunnah for you to know that you alone are the targets? This war is only against you and against your religion. Has the time not come for you to return to your religion and your jihād and thereby bring back your glory, honor, rights, and leadership? Has the time not come for you to know that there is no might nor honor nor safety nor rights for you except in the shade of the Khilāfah?”

He also demonstrated how the Rāfidah deal with their apostate “Sunni” allies once they no longer have use for them. He said, “O Ahlus-Sunnah in Iraq … seek shelter – after Allah – with the Islamic State. What do you wait for after the truth has become clearer than the day and after the spiteful Rāfidah exposed their reality? Here they are today slaughtering everyone considered from Ahlus-Sunnah in Baghdad and elsewhere. No one was saved from them, even their allies, supporters, aids, tails, and dogs from the apostates who had once belonged to Ahlus-Sunnah, those in the Sahwah, army, police, and elsewhere, those whom the evil scholars confused into fleeing the implementation of Allah’s law in the territory of the Islamic State. So they became homeless, humiliated, fearful, and worrisome of the Rāfidah’s cruelty, whereas the Muslims live in the territory of the Islamic State with might and honor, secure by
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Allah’s bounty alone, with a life of comfort, going about the affairs of their business,
livelhood, and trade, enjoying the grace of living under the rule of their Lord’s law, and all
praise and grace is Allah’s. Therefore, O Muslims, seek shelter – after Allah – with the
Islamic State.”

He also warned of the possible attempt of the kuffār to strike against the Islamic State
wilāyāt in Shām before those in Iraq. “Be patient and firm, and be cautious, for the enemies
of Allah are mobilizing, thundering, increasing, and threatening the people of Mosul. We
believe that their mobilization will be for ar-Raqqah and Halab before Mosul. So be
cautious.”

Finally, he explained the growing weakness of the modern crusaders. “O soldiers of the
Islamic State, be firm, for you are upon the truth. Seek help through patience, for victory
comes with patience and triumph is for those who are patient. Be patient, because the
Crusaders are bleeding to death, the Rāfidah are faltering, and the Jews are horrified and in
dread. Your enemies have become weaker than they were yesterday – by Allah’s grace – and
are growing weaker and weaker, and all praise be to Allah.”

17. The Perfect Storm

What started as an explosive movement in Iraq has now suddenly turned into a global
phenomenon that the West and the democratic world as a whole is ill-equipped to deal with.
“This is a core principle of my presidency: if you threaten America, you will find no safe
haven.” Obama, September 2014

“As they carve out an area of safe haven, this will be a launching point for attacks on
America, the West, and attacks globally.” RAND Corporation, March 2015

The pledges of allegiance that are now being announced on a seemingly monthly basis
from Islamic groups around the world to the Islamic State are exactly what every mujāhid
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prayed for and a nightmare scenario for the military and political leaders of the democratic world. The incredible growth of the Caliphate and the fact that it is a living, breathing entity with thousands of square miles of territory has given Muslims around the Middle East, Asia, and Africa the belief and confidence to take up arms, pledge their loyalty, and launch operations with a unity and strength of purpose that has simply not been seen before.

What started as the most explosive Islamic “group” in the modern world has rapidly evolved into the most explosive Islamic movement the modern world has ever seen.

Nothing on this scale has happened this big or this quick before. Huge swaths of Pakistan, Nigeria, Libya, Yemen, and the Sinai Peninsula are all now united under the black flag of tawhīd, gelled together as one by the Islamic State. Mujāhidīn of Afghan provinces that were the scenes of fierce fighting for over a decade costing America trillions of dollars are now, less than six months after America “withdrew” with its tail between its legs, loyal to the Caliphate.

The mujāhidīn of West Africa control much of Nigeria and their attacks are intensifying, pushing back an exhausted and smashed national army that is now is in a virtual state of collapse. They declared allegiance to the Caliphate in March, and they are the same group, remember, that Obama claimed just last year was being successfully pushed back by American intervention policy. Indeed, he claimed that the same model (cutting finances, recruitment tools, and the will to fight) that worked so “well” in the degradation of the mujāhidīn there before their pledge of allegiance, would work just as well on the Islamic State.

Some things just don’t work out as planned. The energy behind this movement is fearsome. A single lion can kill an antelope but a pride that is hungry and cunning enough can, if they work closely together, take down an African elephant. As groups of mujāhidīn
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from around the world join forces, so the strength behind the Islamic State puts them in a position to devour much larger prey.

The West and its allies have, once again, been caught completely by surprise as they now find themselves fighting not just one enemy in Iraq and Shām, but now an international army of mujāhidīn numbering hundreds of thousands in different countries, whole continents apart. It’s taken the coalition the best part of a year to put together a campaign against the Islamic State that is only now seeing a Shia mob supported by coalition aircraft make moves against Tikrit, but that’s old news before it’s even begun. Why focus on Tikrit when the Middle East, Africa, and Asia are now on fire?

And this movement shows no sign of abating. Indeed, this quickening, this coming together of Islamic groups sharing the same focus and purity of belief is only intensifying. And the more groups that join, the stronger the movement becomes.

As the groups evolve from splintered cells each waging their own wars to a single, unified body, it becomes a force of immense power, like a snowball that rolls down a mountain getting larger until you end up with an avalanche. The more outfits work together, so they can use each other’s skills and strengths to fill in the gaps until there are very few weak points.

“Say one group is very good at bomb making and the other group is very good at propaganda,” says Jonah Blank from the US “think-tank” RAND Corporation. “If you put the right bomb in the right place for the right propaganda effect, that can be far more important than either of these things on their own.”

“This isn’t just propaganda,” said Gary Bernsten, a former CIA intelligence officer on an interview with Fox News on 9th March. “ISIS has billions of dollars. They have a network of communications for reaching out to these groups. And it shows you how deadly and effective ISIS is. They are truly the most successful Sunni terrorist group in history because they’ve carved out a space for a nation state, and these other groups recognize that. It shows Obama’s
statement that ‘this isn’t Islam’ is a false narrative. ISIS has been brilliant at selling itself to
the hundreds of millions of people out there looking for a message.”

And what of Obama of late? In all honesty, I haven’t seen what the Nobel Peace
prizewinner has been commenting on recently, but he can’t be having much fun. “This
strategy of taking out terrorists who threaten us, while supporting partners on the front lines,
is one that we have successfully pursued in Yemen and Somalia for years,” he said last
September. I do not have any information on the current situation within Somalia, but Yemen
is exploding, the Islamic State is already taking advantage of the chaos there, and it is clear
nothing has been “successfully pursued.” The American embassy has been closed for more
than three months now, out of fear “terrorists” might attack it, as the country descends into
further chaos. Would you like those words served with relish or pickle, president?

“[Obama] cited US policy in Yemen and Somalia as a successful illustration of what’s in
store for Iraq and Syria – a one-two punch of US air power with local ground forces. But
Somalia is a failed state and Yemen is hardly a healthy one; both remain incubators of
dangerous terrorism,” wrote the Washington Post in reply to the president’s statement. And
that was eight months ago before large portions of the Muslim world took up arms.

And as the Islamic State seizes weapons from the American and Iranian backed proxies
whom its mujāhidīn massacre, it gets hold of tanks, rocket launchers, missile systems, and
anti-aircraft systems. Acquiring aircraft would be the logical next step. It’s the plot of a
political Western horror film.

What’s happening now is a pooling of skills and experience that poses the greatest danger
the West has seen in modern times. When you have that amount of battle-hardened mujāhidīn
all cooperating and exchanging information for the first time under one flag, the potential for
operations on a previously unseen level rises exponentially.
Let me throw a hypothetical operation onto the table. The Islamic State has billions of dollars in the bank, so they call on their wilāyah in Pakistan to purchase a nuclear device through weapons dealers with links to corrupt officials in the region. The weapon is then transported overland until it makes it to Libya, where the mujāhidīn move it south to Nigeria. Drug shipments from Columbia bound for Europe pass through West Africa, so moving other types of contraband from East to West is just as possible. The nuke and accompanying mujāhidīn arrive on the shorelines of South America and are transported through the porous borders of Central America before arriving in Mexico and up to the border with the United States. From there it’s just a quick hop through a smuggling tunnel and hey presto; they’re mingling with another 12 million “illegal” aliens in America with a nuclear bomb in the trunk of their car.

Perhaps such a scenario is far-fetched but it’s the sum of all fears for Western intelligence agencies and it’s infinitely more possible today than it was just one year ago. And if not a nuke, what about a few thousand tons of ammonium nitrate explosive? That’s easy enough to make. The Islamic State make no secret of the fact they have every intention of attacking America on its home soil and they’re not going to mince about with two mujāhidīn taking down a dozen casualties if it originates from the Caliphate. They’ll be looking to do something big, something that would make any past operation look like a squirrel shoot, and the more groups that pledge allegiance the more possible it becomes to pull off something truly epic.

Remember, all of this has happened in less than a year. How more dangerous will be the lines of communication and supply a year on from today? If the West completely failed to spot the emergence of the Islamic State and then the allies who so quickly pledged allegiance to it from around the world, what else of massive significance are they going to miss next?
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Let me finish with a quick example of the sheer motivation of the Muslim fighters the West now finds itself up against. The other day I had the opportunity to meet one charismatic fighter from an Arab country. Educated and intelligent, he told me with disgust that some of his blood brothers are serving soldiers in an Arab regime army. “I talk to them once every few months on the telephone,” he said. “They are my blood brothers, so I speak to them and advise them in hope that they might change. If they refuse, then inshā’āllāh I will get the chance to kill them all on the battlefield. They fight for a tāghūt regime that loves America while I fight for Allah. Who is the stronger one?”

It was an awe-inspiring and humbling example of how the West can never win this war. Perhaps once there was a chance that an attack inside the West or on Western borders by the Islamic State could be averted through negotiations, but no longer. As the territory of the Islamic State crosses from one border to another like a wildfire that is burning out of control, it’ll be only a matter of time before the Islamic State reaches the Western world.

18. The law of Allah and the laws of men

Issue 10, Pages 50-52

The Mujāhid Shaykh Abū Muhammad al-‘Adnānī ash-Shāmī – may Allah protect him and make him a thorn in the throats of the apostates, munāfiqīn, and “theorists” – said, “We likewise renew our call to the soldiers of the factions in Shām and Libya. We call on them to think long before embarking to fight the Islamic State, which rules by that which Allah revealed. Remember, O you afflicted by fitnah, before embarking to fight the Islamic State, that there is no place on the face of the Earth where the Sharī‘ah of Allah is implemented and the rule is entirely for Allah except for the lands of the Islamic State. Remember that if you were able to capture one hand span, one village, or one city from it, the law of Allah in that area would be replaced with the laws of men. Then ask yourself, ‘What is the ruling on someone who replaces or is a cause for the replacement of the law of Allah with the law of
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1239 man?’ Yes, you become a kāfir because of that. So beware, for by fighting the Islamic State you fall into kufr whether you realize it or not’’ [O Our People Respond to the Caller of Allah].

1242 Did the Islamic State innovate a new nullifier of Islam as alleged by the contemporary evil scholars whose hearts Allah has wiped out and with whom the Ummah is being afflicted in this era?

1245 The Messenger of Allah said, “Indeed Allah has guaranteed me to take care of Shām and its people” [Sahīh: Reported by Imām Ahmad from Ibn Hawālah]. Khuraym Ibn Fātik al-Asadī said, “The people of Shām are Allah’s whip on Earth. He takes retribution through them from whomever He wills and however He wills. Their munāfiqīn are forbidden from overpowering their believers. Their hypocrites won’t die except due to anxiety, fury, or sorrow” [Al-Mundhirī said in “At- Targhīb wat-Tarhīb,” “At-Tabarī narrated it marfū’ and Ahmad mawqūf and the latter is perhaps more correct. Its narrators are trustworthy”].

1252 It is Allah’s blessing upon Shām and its people that the Islamic State entered the blessed land of Shām and caused the plot of the Syrian National Coalition and its councils to fail. It conquered some of the towns and villages in Shām, like al-Bāb, I’zāz, ad-Dānā, and others which used to be ruled by the Nusayrī regime and then by the resistant parties like the Free Syrian Army and its allies who resisted the Sharī’ah and its rulings. Thus, the Islamic State ruled those towns and villages with what Allah had sent down on His Messenger established in them the hudūd, commanded the good, forbade the evil, and judged between the people by the Sharī’ah.

1260 Therefore, the groups of apostates, hypocrites, innovators, corruption spreaders, rebels, and partisans – having diverse hearts but allied to one another – thought, evaluated, plotted, collaborated amongst each other, and all of them participated in the concocted treachery… A
few supposedly “neutral” groups remained outside of this coalition, like a confused lamb,
neither with this side nor the other, and Allah’s help is sought.

In the beginning, the wicked Sahwah Coalition in Shām consisted of “Jaysh al-Mujāhidīn,”
the “Islamic Front,” “Jabhat Thuwār Sūriyā,” the Free Syrian Army, and the Jawlānī front.

After that, Allah blessed Shām and its people by repelling and reversing the Sahwah
Coalition’s plot and by granting the Islamic State authority in the blessed land of Shām and
strengthening its religion – the religion of the cheerful warrior – in ar-Raqqah, al-Barakah, al-
Khayr, Halab, Hims, and elsewhere. Then the conquests expanded in the east, thus ‗Irāq was
liberated in Mosul, al-Anbar, al-Fallūjah, Salāhuddīn, Karkūk and elsewhere. And its soldiers
continue to hope for Allah’s further support and the conquest of Constantinople and Rome.

The Islamic State did not conquer a city or village after this malicious plot except that it
ruled it by the Sharī‘ah of Allah. When the parties of deviance in ar-Raqqah consisting of
“Ahrār ash-Shām” and the Jawlānī front (or what is now known now as “Liwā’ Thuwwār ar-
Raqqa”) plotted against the muhājirīn and ansār in it and acted treacherously against them, the
muwahhid mujāhidīn expelled them from it, humiliated. Then they spread the authority of the
Sharī‘ah over the complete wilāyah. They enforced prayer, collected zakah, and founded the
Hisbah to command good and forbid evil. They executed the hudūd, judged in their courts by
what Allah revealed, returned the rights of the oppressed, fought the kuffār and apostates, and
enforced the jizyah upon Ahlul- Kitāb. Thus, ar-Raqqah witnessed what it had not witnessed
before from the rulings of the Sharī‘ah. Likewise was the case of the other cities and villages
of the Islamic State, may Allah increase its glory and humiliate its enemies.

Yes, no doubt that the Islamic State conquered some of the areas, which used to be ruled
by other than what Allah revealed, areas which were ruled by the laws of the kāfir Baath
Party, then by the laws of the factions and by their corrupt doubts and false claims. Then these
areas were subjected to the authority of the Sharī‘ah and the enemy confirmed so even before
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the friend. The Islamic State was even accused of “rushing” the enforcement of the Šarī‘ah laws, “burning the stages,” “disregarding the benefits and harms,” and “not caring about gradual implementation.”

There is also no doubt the lands ruled by the Sahwah Coalition now are not ruled by what Allah revealed and the “best” of these lands is where there are committees that they’ve dubbed “šarī‘ah committees” to give an illusion of Šarī‘ah while they are in reality committees afflicted with fitnah and which do not rule by the Šarī‘ah except for a few laws codified by their laws, like the “Unified Arabic Law,” which is called to by some of the factions, or laws which do not irritate the coalition partners nor the “common people,” as is the case with the committees that do not establish the had upon the individual apostates such as those who mock Allah or His Messenger or those who abandon prayer. They do not establish the hadbb‘ī hadd with ta’zīr (a censure for sins that do not have a specified hadd).

Their authority is almost limited to affairs of reconciliation between the people and even in this domain the strong have the upper hand over the weak.

Every party has its suspicions and claims. Some of them say that the establishment of the Šarī‘ah incites the enemy against the people of Shām and they fear to be afflicted by adversities. Others say the greater good dictates not to establish Šarī‘ah and that the harm in its establishment is greater than the benefit in establishing it! Yet others falsely call to ignorant politics under the pretext of “siyāsah shar‘iyyah.” And from them are those who’ve tied the establishment of the Šarī‘ah to the agreement of the party’s leader or the consultation with and satisfaction of the local people regarding the one who will establish the Šarī‘ah. Some of them are those who reject the Šarī‘ah or most of it like the secularists, modernists, and the Ikhwān. Amongst them are those who belittle it. They refer to the collection of zakāh and jizyah as “taxes,” the enslavement of mushrik women and taking them as concubines as “fornication,” the implementation of the hudūd as “foolishness,” the
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manifestation of enmity towards the tawāghīt and mushrikīn as “insanity,” and the execution
of the hadd upon the apostate as a “crime.” Some of them say that the “liberated areas” are dār
harb and that it is not allowed to establish the Sharīʿah there until war has ended.
Accordingly, they have testified against themselves and spared us the need to clarify their
status.

19. A Call to Hijrah

Amirul-Muʾminin said: “Therefore, rush O Muslims to your state. Yes, it is your state.
Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis. The earth is Allah’s.
{Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants.
And the [best] outcome is for the righteous}[Al-ʾAʿraf: 128]. The State is a state for all
Muslims. The land is for the Muslims, all the Muslims. O Muslims everywhere, whoever is
capable of performing hijrah (emigration) to the Islamic State, then let him do so, because
hijrah to the land of Islam is obligatory.”

20. Regime Targets Ar-Raqqah

The regime continued its aggression against the city of Ar-Raqqah, carrying out an
airstrike on Wednesday, the 27th of Shaʿban, which targeted the market and resulted in 30
shuhada’ and 36 wounded including women and children. On the morning of Monday, the
25th of Shaʿban, the Nusayri regime carried out an airstrike in Ar-Raqqah, resulting in five
shuhada’ and multiple wounded, all of them civilian casualties. A second airstrike on the
same day targeted the industrial district causing extensive damage to civilian property. Later
in the evening, the mujahidin of the Islamic State launched mortars into the regime’s Division
17 army base. The mortars made direct hits against the base. The following morning, two
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violent explosions rocked the Division 17 army base after being targeted once more by the Islamic State.

21. News

Issue 1, Pages 46-47

Wilayat Kirkuk - Sha’ban 24: The mujahidin have completely liberated the district of Hawija, less than 50km south of the city of Kirkuk.

Wilayat Al-Anbar: As the campaign of Asadullah Al-Bilawi pushes forward, the mujahidin of the Islamic State continue to liberate more and more territory, consolidate their gains and win the support of the masses. The past two weeks saw the successful liberation of a number of regions including Al-Qaim, 'Anah, Rutbah, and Rawah. May Allah continue to grant victory to Amirul-Mu'minin Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi and the lions of the Islamic State.

22. The Islamic State in the Words of the Enemy

Issue 1, Pages 23-33

Douglas A. Ollivant, former Director for Iraq at the US National Security Council, and Brian Fishman former Director of Research for the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point – two American crusaders – wrote an article titled “The Reality of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” a short time before the Islamic State’s liberation of Mosul as well as other important cities and towns in Iraq. Here are excerpts from the article: “Out of the crucible of the Syrian civil war and the discontent in Iraq’s Sunni regions, something new is emerging. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is no longer a state in name only. It is a physical, if extralegal, reality on the ground. Unacknowledged by the world community, ISIS has carved a de facto state in the borderlands of Syria and Iraq. Stretching in a long ellipse roughly from al-Raqqah in Syria to Fallujah in Iraq (with many other noncontiguous “islands” of control in both Iraq and Syria), this former Al Qaeda affiliate holds territory, provides limited services,
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dispenses a form of justice (loosely defined), most definitely has an army, and flies its own flag.” “Finally, this new reality presents a challenge that rises above a mere counter-terrorism problem. ISIS no longer exists in small cells that can be neutralized by missiles or small groups of commandos. It is now a real, if nascent and unrecognized, state actor—more akin in organization and power to the Taliban of the late 1990s than Al Qaeda. The group does not have safe haven within a state. It is a de facto state that is a safe haven.

23. The Islamic State Is a True Imamah

The Islamic State is the entity that most emulates the millah of Ibrahim with regards to imamah in the areas where it exists. It has carried out the command of Allah – as much as it can – in the best possible manner. It established the religion in the areas where it exists and continues to pursue this effort vigorously. All this, after Allah had granted the imam of The Islamic State the blessing of performing hijrah and fighting jihad in His cause, on top of already having been characterized by his noble lineage, sound intellect, and a prestigious level of knowledge and religious practice. As such, it is not fitting for anyone, whoever he may be, to seek to demolish the building that the sincere men of the Ummah made so much effort to construct and strengthen over the course of many years. Furthermore, no one – regardless of his virtues – even dreams of convincing the lowest ranking, sincere soldier of The Islamic State to abandon this mission for the sake of some ambiguous initiatives or for the sake of nothing at all. It is not even the right of Amirul-Mu’minin himself to order that The Islamic State be nullified and for the situation to return to what it previously was.

Allah (‘azza wa jall) states in the Qur’an after granting imamah to Ibrahim (‘alayhissalam), {And who would turn away from the religion of Ibrahim except one who makes a fool of himself. Truly, We chose him in this world, and indeed in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous.} [Al-Baqarah: 130] So we can see from the context of these
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verses that imamah is from the millah of Ibrahim (‘alayhis-salam), and that whoever turns
away from it is turning away from something that’s a part of this great millah. The millah is
the path that is followed in its entirety, and the path that Allah chose for Ibrahim (‘alayhis-
salam) and his progeny thereafter is the path of imamah – both religious and political – as
much as they’re able to do. And upon every scholar who calls to, or writes about, the
obligation to follow the millah of Ibrahim (‘alayhis-salam), is to not detest the imamah of The
Islamic State today, and to not seek to undermine it or destroy it. And upon them is to
understand that The Islamic State – on account of what Allah has blessed it with of victory,
consolidation and establishing the religion – is regarded as an unquestionable imamah. As
such, anyone who rebels against its authority inside its territory is considered a renegade, and
it is permissible to fight him after establishing the hujjah against him (i.e. clarifying his error
to him with proof).

This is the position that The Islamic State adheres to in spite of facing many tribulations
as a result, which keep getting fiercer and fiercer.‘Abdur-Rahman Ibn ‘Abd Rabbil-Ka’bah
narrated, saying, “I entered the masjid and there was ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Al-
’sitting
in the shade of the Ka’bah with people gathered around him, so I came to them and sat before
him. Then he said, ‘We were on a journey with the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa
sallam), and we stopped at a place. Some of us were setting up our tents, others were
competing in shooting arrows, and others were grazing their animals, when an announcer of
the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) called us to gather for prayer. We
gathered around the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and he said, ‘Indeed,
no messenger has come before except that it was his duty to guide his people to what he knew
to be good for them, and warn them against what he knew to be bad for them. The wellness of
this Ummah of yours is in its beginning. In its end, it will be afflicted with tribulations and
with things that you disapprove. There will be tribulations, each one eclipsing the one before
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1412 it in severity. There will be tribulations [so severe] that the believer will say, ‘This will be
1413 what destroys me.’ Then it will end, and another tribulation will follow, and the believer will
1414 say, ‘This is the one [that will actually destroy me]. This is it.’ Whoever wishes to be saved
1415 from the fire and enter paradise should die believing in Allah and the Last Day, and should
1416 treat people the way he wishes to be treated. Whoever pledges allegiance to an imam, giving
1417 him his hand in sincerity, should obey him as much as he is able to. And if another man
1418 comes forward disputing his legitimacy, then strike that other man’s neck.” [Recorded by
1419 Muslim]

1420 This hadith was difficult on those who heard it from amongst the salaf (pious
1421 predecessors), specifically the part having to do with the issue of imamah and the ruling on
1422 the one who rebels against the leaders of the Muslims. The reporter of the hadith says, “So I
1423 came close to him and said, ‘I beseech you in the name of Allah, did you hear this from the
1424 Messenger of Allah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)?’ So he extended his hand to his ears and
1425 his heart, and said, ‘My ears heard it and my heart fully grasped it.’ So I said to him, ‘Your
1426 cousin Mu’awiyah is ordering us to consume one another’s wealth unjustly and to kill one
1427 another, whereas Allah says, {Oh you who have believed, do not consume one another’s
1428 wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves
1429 [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful.} So he was quiet for some time. Then
1430 he said, ‘Obey him concerning what is obedience to Allah, and disobey him in matters
1431 involving disobedience to Allah.”’ [Recorded by Muslim]

1432 Therefore, we will continue to obey the imam as long as he orders us to obey Ar-Rahman
1433 (the Most Merciful). But if he orders us to disobey Allah, then we won’t obey those orders.
1434 Likewise, we will strike the neck of anyone – whoever he may be – that attempts to usurp his
1435 leadership, and we will remain patient in the face of such tribulation with the help of Allah
1436 Al- Hakim (the Most Wise) and Al-Mannan (the Most Gracious). So let those inclined to such
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[...]

Umar ibn al-Khattab (Radiyallahu ‘anh) said, “There is no Islam except with jama’ah, and no jama’ah except with imarah (leadership), and no imarah except with ta’ah (obedience).” [Sunan ad-darimi]

24. In the Words of the Enemy

Issue 2, Pages 31-32

On “12 June 2014,” the crusader John McCain came to the senate floor to rant irritably about the victories the Islamic State was achieving in Iraq. He forgot that he himself participated in the invasion of Iraq that led to the blessed events unfolding today by Allah’s bounty and justice. McCain had this to say:

"I come to the floor this morning with great sorrow and great concern and even deep alarm about the events that are transpiring rapidly in Iraq. ISIS the most extreme, Islamist organization - radical terrorist organization- now controls at least 1/3 of Iraqi territory and is rapidly gaining more. The areas of Fallujah, Mosul, Tikrit, they are on the outsides of Samarra… with these victories ISIS controls a swath of territory that stretches from the Syrian-Turkish frontier in the north, down the Euphrates river, all the way down to the Iraqi city of Fallujah just forty miles west of Baghdad. And of course hourly they are experiencing greater gains while the Iraqi military and police seem to be dissolving before our very eyes. ISIS social media published pictures of their fighters demolishing the sand berm, which hitherto marked the border between Syria and Iraq - an interesting symbolic gesture. They also released… ISIS released footage of large numbers of weapons and armored military vehicles being received by members in Eastern Syria, confirming fears that the looted weapons would fuel the insurgency on both sides – both Syria and Iraq. Sources in the Syrian
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City of Hasakah confirmed that large numbers of trucks – convey of trucks – arrived late on Tuesday and were met by senior ISIS figure Omar al-Checheni.

25. Hijrah to Sham is from the Millah of Ibrāhīm

Issue 3, Pages 10-11

The hijrah of the strangers to Shām was in adherence to the path of Ibrāhīm (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) who established for them the tradition of declaring enmity and hatred towards the mushrikīn and their tawāghīt. Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (radiyallāhu ‘anhumā) said that Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “There will be hijrah after hijrah. The best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah. Then there will remain on the earth the worst of its people. Their lands will cast them out, Allah will hate them, and the fire will gather them together with the apes and swine” [hasan – reported by Imām Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Hākim]. The Prophet’s statement, “And on the earth will remain the worst of the people [to the end of the hadīth]” refers to the period after “Allah sends the pleasant breeze and it causes every person who has so much as the weight of a mustard seed of faith in his heart to pass away. Then there will remain only those who have no good in them whatsoever” [Sahīh Muslim].

In another narration, “So it [the breeze] grasps them under their armpits, taking the soul of every believer and every Muslim. And there will remain the worst of the people, having intercourse as donkeys do [in front of other people as they watch]. So it is upon them that the Hour will be established” [Sahīh Muslim]. And in another narration, “Allah will send a cold breeze from the direction of Shām, so no one will remain on the face of the earth with so much as the weight of a mustard seed of goodness or faith in his heart except that it takes him. Even if one of you were to enter into the center of a mountain, the breeze would enter into it, until it takes him. Then there will remain the worst of the people, who have the agility of birds (in their haste to commit evil and satisfy their lusts) and the wits of vicious, predatory
animals (in their hostility and oppression of one another). They do not know any good, nor do they denounce any evil” [Sahīh Muslim]. This pleasant breeze takes the souls of the believers everywhere on the earth: al-Hijāz, Iraq, Yemen, Shām, and so on. It will be sent forth a number of years after the demise of the Dajjāl and the passing away of the Masīh ‘Īsā (sallallāhu ‗alayhi wa sallam). Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullāh) said, “Islam in the end of times will be more manifest in Shām. […] So the best of the people on the earth in the end of times will be those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah, which is Shām” [Majmū’ul-Fatāwā]. Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullāh) also said, “So he informed that the best of the people on the earth are those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah, in contrast to those who pass through it or leave it. O Europeans, the Islamic State did not initiate a war against you, as your governments and media try to make you believe. It is you who started the transgression against us, and thus you deserve blame and you will pay a great price. You will pay the price when your economies collapse. You will pay the price when your sons are sent to wage war against us, and they return to you as disabled amputees, or inside coffins, or mentally ill. You will pay the price as you are afraid of travelling to any land. Rather you will pay the price as you walk on your streets, turning right and left, fearing the Muslims. You will not feel secure even in your bedrooms. You will pay the price when this crusade of yours collapses, and thereafter we will strike in your homeland, and you will never be able to harm anyone afterwards. You will pay the price, is made to wherever the Messenger is and left an impact. And the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah, has been made for us equal to the land of our Prophet’s hijrah, because hijrah to Madīnah was discontinued after the conquest of Makkah” [Majmū’ul-Fatāwā]. Abdullāh Ibn Hawālah (radiyallāhu ‘anh) said that Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Matters will run their course until you become mobilized armies: an army in...
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Shām, and an army in Yemen, and an army in Iraq.” Ibn Hawālah said, “Choose for me [which army to join] if I reach that time.” He said, “Go to Shām, for it is the best of Allah’s lands, and He draws His best slaves to it. And if you do not, then go to your Yemen and drink from your wells. For Allah has guaranteed me that He will look after Shām and its people.”

[sahīh – reported by Imām Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd, al-Hākim].

So those who left their tribes – the best of Allah’s slaves – rallied together with an imām and a jamā’ah upon the path of Ibrāhīm. They gathered together in the land of malāhim shortly before the occurrence of al-Malhamah al-Kubrā, announced their enmity and hatred for the cross worshippers, the apostates, their crosses, their borders, and their ballotboxes, and pledged allegiance to the Khilāfah, promising to die defending it. Then, they were opposed and forsaken by “the wise ones,” the “theorizers,” and “the elders,” who labeled them as being khawārij, harūriyyah (a branch of the khawārij), hashāshīn (a heretical ismāʿīlī sect), the grandsons of Ibn Muljim (the khārijī who killed ‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib), and the dogs of Hellfire!

So if the muhājirīn of the Islamic State in their thousands are the dogs of Hellfire, then who are the ones referred to in the hadīth as being “those who break off from their tribes” and “the best of Allah’s slaves”? Apart from them, there are no other muhājirīn left in Shām, except for a small number whose hearts yearn for the Islamic State and for giving bay’ah to the Imām. Then there will remain outside of the Islamic State only he who is obstructed from it by mountainous waves of envy and arrogance, so that he drowns in the methodologies of the hypocrites, the rumormongers, and the weak-hearted, and he aids the sahwāt of apostasy, following rukhas (concessions) on his path to heresy. We ask Allah for forgiveness and well-being in this life and in the hereafter.

26. In the Words of the Enemy

Issue 3, Pages 35-36
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On 7 August 2014, the crusader, apostate Barack Obama announced to the world the continuation of the American crusade against Islam and the Muslims of Iraq, only to prove to his followers that there is no difference between his partisan politics and that of his predecessor – Bush – apart from cosmetic, superficial touches. His decisions also expose the hypocritical politics of America that only serve the interests of their Jewish ally, Israel, and their own capitalist gluttony. So while genocide is committed by the Maliki, Asadi, and Israeli forces against the Muslims via systematic massacres, chemical warfare, rape, and starvation by siege, Obama watches with euphoria. However, when his brothers in Yazidi Satanism and Peshmergan Zionism are killed, he panics. Obama had this to say:

"Today I authorized two operations in Iraq – targeted airstrikes to protect our American personnel, and a humanitarian effort to help save thousands of Iraqi civilians who are trapped on a mountain without food and water, and facing almost certain death. Let me explain the actions we are taking and why. First, I said in June, as the terrorist group ISIL began an advance across Iraq, that the United States would be prepared to take targeted military action in Iraq if and when we determined that the situation required it. In recent days, these terrorists have continued to move across Iraq and have neared the city of Irbil, where American diplomats and civilians serve at our consulate and American military personnel advise Iraqi forces. To stop the advance on Irbil, I’ve directed our military to take targeted strikes against ISIL terrorist convoys should they move toward the city. We intend to stay vigilant and take action if these terrorist forces threaten our personnel or facilities anywhere in Iraq, including our consulate in Irbil and our embassy in Baghdad. We’re also providing urgent assistance to Iraqi government and Kurdish forces so they can more effectively wage the fight against ISIL.

Second, at the request of the Iraqi government, we’ve begun operations to help save Iraqi civilians stranded on the mountain. As ISIL has marched across Iraq it has waged a ruthless campaign against innocent Iraqis. And these terrorists have been especially barbaric towards
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religious minorities, including Christians and Yazidis, a small and ancient religious sect.

Countless Iraqis have been displaced and chilling reports describe ISIL militants rounding up families, conducting mass executions, and enslaving Yazidi women. In recent days, Yazidi women, men, and children from the area of Sinjar have fled for their lives. And thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, are now hiding high up in the mountain with little but the clothes on their backs. They’re without food. They’re without water. People are starving and children are dying of thirst. Meanwhile, ISIL forces below have called for the systematic destruction of the entire Yazidi people below which would constitute genocide.

27. Indeed Your Lord is ever Watchful:

By the Official Spokesman for the Islamic State

Issue 4, Pages 6-9

A short time before the formal expansion of the American crusade into Shām, the official spokesman of the Islamic State – Shaykh Abū Muhammad al-‘Adnānī ash-Shāmī (hafidhahullāh) – gave a momentous speech inspiring the Muslims, terrifying the crusaders, and reminding all with Allah’s promise. Alhamdulillāh, a number of matters unfolded almost immediately after the speech in obedience to the leaders of the Islamic State, including the capture of crusaders in Muslim lands and their subsequent execution, the killing of crusaders in their homelands, and the conquering of new areas in Iraq and Shām despite the crusader airstrikes. At the same time, the Arab tawāghīt, the sahwāt, the quasi-jihadists, and mock mujāhidīn exposed their duplicity and hypocrisy once again for no sincere Muslim to be left in the dark with doubt. And all praise is due to Allah the Lord of the worlds. What follows are some of the most important excerpts from his speech.

“O soldiers of the Islamic State, what a great thing you have achieved by Allah! Your reward is upon Him. By Allah, He has healed the chests of the believers through the killing of the nusayriyyah and rāfidah at your hands. He has filled the hearts of the disbelievers and
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hypocrites with rage through you. What a great thing you have achieved by Allah! Who are you? Who are you O soldiers of the Islamic State? From where have you come? What is your secret? Why is it that the hearts of the East and West are dislocated by their fear of you? Why is it that the chest muscles of America and its allies shiver out of fear of you? Where are your warplanes? Where are your battleships? Where are your missiles? Where are your weapons of mass destruction? Why is it that the world has united against you? Why have the nations of disbelief entrenched together against you?”

“So know that – by Allah – we fear not the swarms of planes, nor ballistic missiles, nor drones, nor satellites, nor battleships, nor weapons of mass destruction. How could we fear them, while Allah the Exalted has said, {If Allah should aid you, no one can overcome you; but if He should forsake you, who is there that can aid you after Him? And upon Allah let the believers rely} [Āli ‘Imrān: 160]. How could we fear them, while Allah the Exalted has said, {So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers} [Āli ‘Imrān: 139].” “Therefore Allah will give you victory. Indeed, Allah will give you victory. By Allah, Allah will give you victory. So guarantee for us two matters, and we will guarantee you – by Allah’s permission - constant victory and consolidation. First, do not oppress anyone nor be content with oppression by being silent about it and not raising the matter to those in authority. Second, do not become conceited or arrogant. This is what we fear from you and fear for you.”

“Thereafter know that a trial, sifting, and selection, are necessary between one period and another, for some people have entered your ranks who are not of you and are only claimants. And thus some disorder has occurred. So it has become necessary for a trial to come, expel the filth, and purify the ranks. We ask Allah for forgiveness and wellness. Also, pride and conceit has entered some of our souls, and thus some of us transgressed and oppressed others. So it is necessary for the sins to be expelled, so that you may return to your Lord. Allah has
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loved the mujāhidīn, and so there is no choice but for Him to take some martyrs. We ask
Allah to make us of them, not from the disgraced nor those afflicted [in their religion].”

“O America, O allies of America, and O crusaders, know that the matter is more dangerous
than you have imagined and greater than you have envisioned. We have warned you that
today we are in a new era, an era where the State, its soldiers, and its sons are leaders not
slaves. They are a people who through the ages have not known defeat. The outcome of their
battles is concluded before they begin. They have not prepared for a battle since the time of
Noah except with absolute conviction of victory. Being killed – according to their account – is
a victory. This is where the secret lies. You fight a people who can never be defeated.”

“And so we promise you by Allah’s permission that this campaign will be your final
campaign. It will be broken and defeated, just as all your previous campaigns were broken
and defeated, except that this time we will raid you thereafter, and you will never raid us.
We will conquer your Rome, break your crosses, and enslave your women, by the permission
of Allah, the Exalted. This is His promise to us; He is glorified and He does not fail in His
promise. If we do not reach that time, then our children and grandchildren will reach it, and
they will sell your sons as slaves at the slave market.”

“So mobilize your forces, O crusaders. Mobilize your forces, roar with thunder, threaten
whom you want, plot, arm your troops, prepare yourselves, strike, kill, and destroy us. This
will not avail you. You will be defeated. This will not avail you, for our Lord, the Mighty, the
Prevailing, has promised us with our victory and your defeat. Send arms and equipment to
your agents and dogs. Prepare them with the most modern equipment. Send them very much,
for it will end up as war booty in our hands by Allah’s permission. You will spend it, then it
will be a source of regret for you, then you will be defeated. Look at your armored vehicles,
machinery, weaponry, and equipment. It is in our hands. Allah granted it to us. We fight you
with it. So die in your rage. [Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people]
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from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then
they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved – unto Hell they will be gathered}

[Al-Anfāl: 36].”

“You claimed to have withdrawn from Iraq – O Obama – four years ago. We said to you
then that you were liars, that you had not withdrawn, and that if you had withdrawn that you
would return, even if after some time, you would return. Here you are; you have not
withdrawn. Rather you hid some of your forces behind your proxies and withdrew the
rest. Your forces will return greater in number than they were before. You will return and
your proxies will not avail you. And if you are not able to return, then we will come to your
homeland by Allah’s permission.”

“O Americans, and O Europeans, the Islamic State did not initiate a war against you, as
your governments and media try to make you believe. It is you who started the transgression
against us, and thus you deserve blame and you will pay a great price. You will pay the price
when your economies collapse. You will pay the price when your sons are sent to wage war
against us, and they return to you as disabled amputees, or inside coffins, or mentally ill. You
will pay the price as you are afraid of travelling to any land. Rather you will pay the price as
you walk on your streets, turning right and left, fearing the Muslims. You will not feel secure
even in your bedrooms. You will pay the price when this crusade of yours collapses, and
thereafter we will strike you in your homeland, and you will never be able to harm anyone
afterwards. You will pay the price, and we have prepared for you what will pain you.”

“Dear Muslims, America hasn’t come with its crusade in order to save the Muslims, nor
does it spend its wealth in spite of the collapse of its economy and burden itself in order to
arm and train the sahwah councils in Shām and Iraq out of compassion and fear for the
mujahidin from the “cruelty of the khawārij,” and out of support for them as they allege. {I
wish my people could know!} [Yāsīn: 26]. Do the crusaders rush to the support of the
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mujahidin fighting on the path of Allah, and rush to rescue and save them from the khawārij?

“Live long enough and you’ll see strange things!” Woe to my people! When will they remember?”

“So O muwahhid, do not let this battle pass you by wherever you may be. You must strike the soldiers, patrons, and troops of the tawāghīt. Strike their police, security, and intelligence members, as well as their treacherous agents. Destroy their beds. Embitter their lives for them and busy them with themselves. If you can kill a disbelieving American or European – especially the spiteful and filthy French – or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it may be. Do not ask for anyone’s advice and do not seek anyone’s verdict. Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military, for they have the same ruling.”

“So O muwahhid… O you who believes in walā’ and barā’… will you leave the American, the Frenchman, or any of their allies to walk safely upon the earth while the armies of the crusaders strike the lands of the Muslims not differentiating between a civilian and fighter? They have killed nine Muslim women three days ago by striking a bus transporting them from Shām to Iraq. Will you leave the disbeliever to sleep safely at home while the Muslim women and children shiver with fear of the roars of the crusader airplanes above their heads day and night? How can you enjoy life and sleep while not aiding your brothers, not casting fear into the hearts of the cross worshippers, and not responding to their strikes with multitudes more? So O muwahhid wherever you may be, hinder those who want to harm your brothers and state as much as you can. The best thing you can do is to strive to your best and kill any disbeliever, whether he be French, American, or from any of their allies.”

“Finally, we do not want to forget to direct a message towards our Muslim people and brothers from the Kurds in Iraq, Shām, and elsewhere. Our war with Kurds is a religious war.
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It is not a nationalistic war – we seek the refuge of Allah. We do not fight Kurds because they are Kurds. Rather we fight the disbelievers amongst them, the allies of the crusaders and jews in their war against the Muslims. As for the Muslim Kurds, then they are our people and brothers wherever they may be. We spill our blood to save their blood. The Muslim Kurds in the ranks of the Islamic State are many. They are the toughest of fighters against the disbelievers amongst their people.”

28. Remaining and Expanding

On the 17th of Muharram 1436, the world heard announcements from the mujāhidīn of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen, Sinai, Libya, and Algeria, pronouncing their bay’āt to the Khalīfah of the Muslims, Abū Bakr al-Husaynī al-Baghdādī (hafidhahullāh). All of them announced uniformly:

“Allah – the Exalted – said, {And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided} [Āl ‘Imrān: 103]. And Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Whoever dies while not having a pledge of allegiance, dies a death of jāhiliyyah” [Sahīh Muslim on the authority of ‘Imrān]. Therefore, in obedience to the order of Allah (‘azza wa jall) and in obedience to His Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), ordering not to divide and to stick to the jamā’ah, we declare the bay’ah to the Khalīfah Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Awwād Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qurashī al-Husaynī, pledging to selflessly hear and obey, in times of hardship and ease, and in times of delight and dislike. We pledge not to dispute the matter of those in authority except if we see obvious kufr concerning which we have proof from Allah. We call the Muslims everywhere to give bay’ah to the Khalīfah and support him, in obedience to Allah and actualization of the unheeded obligation of the era.”

They then each gave their own piece of advice and wisdom concerning the obligation of unifying under the banner of the Khilāfah. The mujāhidīn from Algeria advised the mujāhidīn
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everywhere:

“We especially remind the mujāhidīn who sacrificed all that is dear and precious, offered their souls without hesitation, and called out, ‘Our mission and goal is to establish Allah’s Shariah on the Earth and Khilāfah upon the methodology of prophethood.’ So why do you delay this now? We ask you by Allah, does this delay bring joy to the believers and anger the kuffār? Or the opposite?”

The mujāhidīn from the Arabian Peninsula informed the muwahhidīn of their lands that they no longer needed to travel far to perform jihād under the banner of the Khilāfah:

“Therefore, O people of tawhīd in the Arabian Peninsula, the truth has appeared and prevailed. So come to your State and rally around your Khalīfah. O muwahhidīn in the lands of al-Haramayn, glad tidings, for the jihād that you prepared your saddles for has arrived to the doorsteps of your homes, and no borders will inhibit you from reaching it, nor will any passports or visas prevent you from achieving it.”

The mujāhidīn from Libya directed the Muslims to the obligation of unity and refuted doubts against this obligation:

“We pledged allegiance because there is no cure for khilāf (differing) other than the Khilāfah. Likewise, we call every Muslim towards this good, for indeed, it is even more infuriating for the enemies of Allah. By Allah, our rallying under one leader is harder on the enemies of Allah than a thousand victories on the battlefield. And do not be deceived by the desertion of the deserters. Ibn Hazm (rahimahullāh) said, ‘As for he who says that the imāmah is not valid except with the approval of the Ummah’s dignitaries all across the various lands, then this is false, because it is asking for something that is unachievable, is not within anyone’s capability, and is the most tremendous of burdens, whereas Allah does not burden anyone with what is beyond their scope. Allah says, {And He has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty} [Al-Hajj: 78].’”
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The mujāhidīn of Sinai reminded the mujāhidīn of the obligation of unity under the Khilāfah:

“As for my message to my mujāhid brothers on all the fronts, what do you desire? What do you aspire for? After a state was established for Islam and the Muslims and a Khalīfah and Amīr for the believers was appointed, suddenly you lag behind by not supporting it and you forsake it by not standing beneath its banner, at a time in which the world has completely gathered against it. What is wrong with you? What is your excuse, O mujāhidīn? Your unity is strength and your division is weakness. Its might is your might, if only you understood. There is no good in you if they reach it and harm it while you have a single breath left. And I do not think you will allow such to happen. So settle your matter, gather yourselves, and support your state, for you depend on it and it depends on you. By Allah, it is upon the clear truth and supported by Allah, the Mighty, the Strong. So fear Allah, your Lord. Do not let Shaytān deceive you with his propaganda and slander. Indeed, he is a clear enemy to you.”

The mujāhidīn of Yemen counseled the Muslims with the prophetic advice and order for the times of division:

“Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alay hi wa sallam) had given us glad tidings of Khilāfah upon the methodology of prophethood. And indeed, by Allah, we have seen it as a Khilāfah upon the methodology of prophethood. And when we heard the trumpets of the Jews and Christians the callers upon the gates of Hellfire – we answered the order of Allah’s Messenger (radiyallāhu ‘anh) said, ‘The people used to ask Allah’s Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) about good, and I used to ask him about evil, fearing that it might overtake me…’ In the hadīth, he says, ‘Is there any evil after this good?’ He responded, ‘Yes, callers upon the gates of Hellfire. Whoever answers them will be throw into it by them.’ He said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, describe them to me.’ He said, ‘They are from our skin and speak with our
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tongues.’ He said, ‘So what do you order me with if I reach that time?’ He said, ‘Stick to the jamā’ah of the Muslims and their Imām’ [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim].’"

Then on the 20th of Muharram 1436, the Khalīfah Ibrāhīm (hafidhahullāh) officially announced the acceptance of their bay’āt, the establishment of wilāyāt, and the nullification of all parties and groups therein. In one of the most powerful addresses given since the establishment of the Islamic State, he said, ‘Glad tidings, O Muslims, for we give you good news by announcing the expansion of the Islamic State to new lands, to the lands of al-Haramayn and Yemen… to Egypt, Libya, and Algeria. We announce the acceptance of the bay’ah of those who gave us bay’ah in those lands, the nullification of the groups therein, the announcement of new wilāyāt for the Islamic State, and the appointment of wulāt for them.’"

Prior to the announcement of the new wilāyāt, a number of groups in Khurāsān, al-Qawqāz, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and elsewhere had pledged their allegiance to the Khalīfah, and continue to do so daily. The Islamic State announced the acceptance of the bay’āt from all of these groups and individuals – may Allah accept their noble oath and keep them firm upon their covenant, free of falter – but delayed the announcement of their respective wilāyāt, while recognizing that some groups from the aforementioned lands are larger and stronger than a few of those related to the newly announced wilāyāt. This delay should end with either the appointment or recognition of leadership by the Khalīfah for those lands where multiple groups have given bay’āt and merged, or the establishment of a direct line of communication between the Khilāfah and the mujāhid leadership of lands who have yet to contact the Islamic State and thus receive information and directives from the Khalīfah. May Allah bring glad tidings from these lands and others soon and fill the believers’ hearts with further joy.

The Khalīfah Ibrāhīm said: ‘We also announce the acceptance of bay’āt given by the groups and individuals in all of those mentioned wilāyāt and others. We ask every individual
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amongst them to join the closest wilāyah to him, and to hear and obey the wālī appointed by
us for it.”

Thus, after the passing of eight years since the establishment of the Islamic State in
Ramadān 1427, the unfaltering mujāhidīn brought delight to the heart and soul of every
muwahhid on the surface of the Earth through their unity and expansion. This achievement
was just an issue of patience, as Rasūlullāh (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Know that
there is much good in being patient in the face of what you dislike, that with patience comes
victory, that with suffering comes relief, and that with hardship comes ease” [Sahīh: Reported
by Imām Ahmad on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās]. However, some people expect blatant,
material results to come spontaneously. They are those who Rasūlullāh (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa
sallam) described with his words, “But you are a people who hasten” [Sahīh al-Bukhārī on the
authority of Khabbāb], and because they did not see this expansion days after the
announcement of the Islamic State eight years ago, but instead saw the Sahwah conspiracy
and the withdrawal of much of the Islamic State to the Anbār desert, they lost hope in the
victory promised by Allah to the muwahhid mujāhidīn. And sufficient for us is Allah, and He
is the best Disposer of affairs.

Now those who carried on with patience – despite what they faced of imprisonment,
pursuit by kāfir intelligence and security agencies, distance from friends and families,
poverty, the death of companions, and injuries – have reaped the fruit of their efforts for the
benefit of future generations of Muslims all over the world. May Allah preserve these patient
leaders and soldiers, and reward them with great good on behalf of Islam and the Muslims.
Each of these new lands is important for the future expansion of the Islamic State and
provides it with greater experience and further resources.

29. To the Tawaghit

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As for my message to Doctor Muhammad Morsi, then I say to him: first of all, I ask Allah to relieve you of your suffering, guide your heart, and rectify for you your religion and worldly affair. I also ask Allah to keep your heart firm, fill your heart with certainty, faith, and firmness, so that you support His religion and law without fear or compromise, and that He bestows you with adherence to the statement of al-Mustafā (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), “The best jihād is a word of truth in front of an unjust ruler” and his statement (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), “The leader of martyrs is Hamzah Ibn ‘Abdil-Muttalib and a man who confronts an unjust ruler, orders him with good, and prohibits him from evil, and so the ruler kills him.” And I advise you while sincerely directing this advice towards you and hoping for your guidance, success, and firmness. So I say, you dealt with the secularists and assented to them, with the crusaders and conceded to them, with the Americans and gave them guarantees, with the Israelis and recognized the submissive treaties with them, with Mubārak’s army who were raised upon American aid and you assented to them, and with the floggers from the Interior Ministry and assured them.

So what was the result? Today you are in a great tribulation. Either you hold on to the truth without wavering or budging, and so you refuse the corrupt judiciary, secularist laws, and secularist constitution, insist upon liberating every hand-span of the occupied lands of Islam, refuse to recognize any treaty or agreement that abandons those lands, and promise your Lord that you will openly declare the truth His law obligates upon you, and that you do not abandon so even slightly. Then, I give you good tidings that you will be a hero of this Ummah, and one of its eminent symbols and great leaders. The Ummah will amass in Egypt and the Islamic world behind you in its battle with its enemies. If Allah takes you while you are sincere upon this condition, then have good tidings of a good ending and great reward in your afterlife. So fear Allah regarding yourself, your party, and the masses of the Ummah in Egypt and the rest of the Islamic world who look towards you, waiting to see what you will
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201 do. So do not be slack in supporting the religion and raising the rule of the Sharī‘ah.

Remember the stance of the Imām of Ahlus-Sunnah, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (rahimahullāh) when
he refused to turn back from the truth, so Allah kept the Ummah firm by him thereafter. And
if you continue on in what you are currently upon, then Allah knows best how you will end
up. I ask Allah for me, you, and the rest of the Muslims uprightness upon His religion until
we meet Him while He is pleased with us. [At-Taharrur min Dā’irat al-‘Abath wal-Fashal].

30. Foreword

Issue 10, Pages 3-4

Two weeks ago, on the Friday marking the 9th day of the blessed month of Ramadān, the
Crusaders and the Rāfidah were struck by a wave of attacks in three different regions, one of
them in the crusader city of Lyon. The day of the attacks would come to be known as “Bloody
Friday,” a day that brought more healing to the hearts of the Muslims and the mujāhidīn, and
filled the hearts of their enemies with terror and rage.

In Lyon, a daring Muslim came to the defense of the Khilāfah by storming a French
factory and beheading a kāfir belonging to France, a crusader coalition nation waging war
against the Khilāfah. Two even bloodier strikes were carried out in Tunisia and Kuwait by
wilāyāt of the Islamic State. In Kuwait, a Rāfidī temple was rocked by an explosion set off
by Abū Sulaymān al-Muwahhid, a mujāhid who charged into the midst of the Rāfidah and
punished them in revenge for Ahlus-Sunnah and in defense of the Khilāfah, which the
government of Kuwait is waging war against as part of the crusader coalition. In Tunisia, the
mujāhid Abū Yahyrā al-Qayrawānī made his way into a hotel beach resort in the town of
Sousse with an assault rifle and massacred dozens of citizens belonging to a number of
European crusader states also involved in the coalition waging war against the Islamic State.

These were the latest in a line of attacks carried out over the past year by soldiers of the
Khilāfah around the world – including those from the wilāyāt of the Khilāfah itself – in
response to the Islamic State’s call to fight the mushrikīn wherever they’re found, especially those belonging to the member nations of the crusader coalition, a coalition that fights the Sharī’ah wherever it’s established, seeking to uproot it and replace it with a nationalist democracy. Shaykh Abū Muhammad al-‘Adnānī (hafidhahullāh) stated, “O muwahhidīn in Europe, America, Australia, and Canada… O muwahhidīn in Morocco and Algeria… O muwahhidīn in Khurāsān, al-Qawqāz, and Iran [the Sunnī Kurds and the Sunnī Arabs]… O muwahhidīn everywhere upon the face of the Earth… O brothers in creed… O people of walā’ and barā’… O patrons of the Islamic State… O you who have given bay’ah to the Khalīfah Ibrāhīm everywhere… O you who have loved the Islamic State… O you who support the Khilāfah… O you who consider yourselves from amongst its soldiers and patrons…” “Your state is facing a new campaign by the crusaders. So O muwahhid, wherever you may be, what are you going to do to support your brothers? What do you wait for as the people have become two encampments and the heat of the war increases day by day? O muwahhid, we call you up to defend the Islamic State. Dozens of nations have gathered against it.

They began their war against us at all levels. So rise O muwahhid. Rise and defend your state from your place wherever you may be” [Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful]. The call to defend the Islamic State – the only state ruling by Allah’s Sharī’ah today – continues to be answered by sincere Muslims and mujāhidīn around the world prepared to sacrifice their lives and everything dear to them to raise high the word of Allah and trample democracy and nationalism. In contrast, the jihād claimants in Shām and other regions are prepared to sacrifice the principles of the religion and wage war against the Islamic State in defense of a jāhilī nationalism coated with a thin veneer of “Sharī’ah,” knowing full well that should they succeed in taking any territory from the Khilāfah, that territory would no longer be ruled by Allah’s pure Sharī’ah.
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To further demonstrate the disgraceful nature of these jihād claimants, one only needs to take note that the Muslims who set out to answer Shaykh al-‘Adnānī’s call to defend the Khilāfah often find themselves marching forward alone, with none to rely on for support in their efforts to defend the Sharī’ah except Allah. The jihād claimants, on the other hand, are relatively large groups of well-armed fighters that have the ability to take and hold territory and impose their will. Yet they refuse to establish the rule of Allah despite the strength and consolidation that He has granted them.

In further contrast between the sincere muwahhidīn and the jihād claimants, one can see that the likes of the muwahiddin who terrorized the kuffār on “Bloody Friday” and even before that, are typically vilified and made out to be extremists on the fringes of society, or individuals suffering from poverty, unemployment, or other social issues. Yet they persist in their jihād, not concerning themselves with how they will subsequently be portrayed in the sorcerous media or what the people would say about them. This is simply because they pursue the pleasure of Allah, not the pleasure of the people. The cowardly jihād claimants, in comparison, with their large numbers, heavy weaponry, and their claim of some regions of Shām, are nonetheless afraid of implementing the Sharī’ah lest they offend the people, therefore choosing instead to pursue the pleasure of the people over the pleasure of Allah.

Allah’s Messenger said, “Whoever pleases Allah at the expense of angering the people, Allah will be sufficient for him against the people’s harm, and whoever pleases the people at the expense of angering Allah, Allah will [abandon him and] leave his affair to the people” [Reported by at-Tirmidhī from ‘Ā’ishah]. Thus we renew our call to the sincere Muslims around the world to march forth and wage war against the crusaders and apostates who seek to wipe out the Sharī’ah. March forth, neither fearing the blame of the critics, nor seeking the pleasure of the people, for the hukm belongs to Allah, not the people. {Legislation is not but for Allah} [Yūsuf: 40]