

Abstract

The Threat from Decentralized Terrorism

Al-Qa`ida has increasingly advocated acts of individual terrorism. From speeches by senior al-Qa`ida leaders to articles in the English-language *Inspire* magazine, the terrorist group is seeking to convince Westerners that they can be part of al-Qa`ida without leaving their home. Rather than travel to Pakistan or Yemen for training, one can “be al-Qa`ida” by plotting a terrorist attack that best achieves the group’s aims in the specific local context. Is this a sign of al-Qa`ida’s strategic advancement or tactical desperation?