



Institute for Islamic Strategic Affairs

NEO-JIHADISM AND THE ISLAMIC STATE'S EVOLVING TACTICS



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Abstract

With continued airstrikes targeting the Islamic State, the dramatic advances the group made in 2014 have significantly slowed. Yet, the particular neo-jihadi trends exemplified by the Islamic State are now apparent in their latest tactical approach aimed at consolidation of power and survival. The Islamic State's tactics may look different than those of a year ago, but their aspirations remain the same; regional dominance in Iraq and Syria alongside a strong takfir doctrine. However, over the past year the group has seen considerable success in franchising their brand name out to jihadi groups across the entire Middle East and beyond, and this may represent a new element in their regional strategic approach in preserving the caliphate's territorial gains.

Introduction

The Islamic State's wanton violence and gruesome execution methods directed at non-Muslims and Muslims alike, is largely what propelled the group onto the world stage with such force in 2014. But another element responsible for their notoriety, and in many cases popularity amongst Sunni radicals, is their hard-line ideology regarding the Islamic caliphate.

It is this ideology that garnered so much support from groups like Boko Haram, Tehreek-e-Khilafat and Jamaat Ansar Bait al-Maqdis while simultaneously drawing harsh rebukes and condemnation from other groups, especially al-Qaeda¹. Meanwhile, comments by the Obama administration about the Islamic State being “not Islamic”, “terrorists pure and simple” and “an ideology, not a regime”, did little to convince the world media that the US and western powers had a handle on the situation, or that they even understood the guiding ideology. On the contrary. Western powers seemed stumped by the Islamic State's ideology as US Major General Michael K. Nagata conceded in December 2014 saying, “we have not defeated the idea. We do not even understand the idea”.²

The Obama administration's seemingly uninformed descriptions for the Islamic State drew criticism from all corners of the media world. Alaistar Crooke, a former MI6 officer, argued that the US understanding of the Islamic State not being “Islamic”, was false due to there not being a central

authority that defines “true Islam”. Moreover, he pointed out that to label the Islamic State as an ideology and not a regime was clearly wrong. Labelling al-Qaeda as an idea, he contended, would have been correct, but the fact that the Islamic State controls an area larger than the size of Britain, with the goal to “establish God's "principality" here and now”, does little to support what “western bluster about "thugs" and "mindless killers" would imply”.³

Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi and Amarnath Amarasingam of the Middle East Forum echoed Crooke's sentiments saying, “to argue that ISIS isn't "Islamic" in a normative sense is to argue, to some degree, that salafism isn't a branch of Islam and that jihad isn't a noble concept in the religion, arguments that are false and misleading, and severely hinder attempts to understand these movements properly.”⁴

Nor should the Islamic State be lumped together with groups like al-Qaeda and simply be deemed terrorists. As Audrey Kurth Cronin points out, “ISIS is not al-Qaeda ... ISIS represents the post-al-Qaeda threat.”⁴ While the Islamic State undoubtedly uses terror as a tactical imperative, definitions of terrorism are usually reserved for non-state actors.⁵ Instead, the IS conduct themselves at the least as a quasi-state, directly confronting enemy forces in an often conventional military way. However, it is not only in their military approach that they emulate a state. They have state-like institutions, control infrastructure, maintain a well-equipped army, have internal revenue sources, have a functioning governing body and even made attempts at printing their own currency.^{6 7}

The reason western attempts at defining the Islamic State have largely failed is because the Islamic State is not simply a horde of marauders, but rather adheres to a highly developed yet contentious stream of Islamic thought. Islamic State members are certainly not “mindless killers”, and in fact, after interviewing supporters and recruiters for the Islamic State, Graeme Wood remarked that “they spoke with an academic precision that put [him] in mind of a good graduate seminar.”⁸ Their ideology can certainly be disputed. Nonetheless, the group is motivated by, and operates under the premise of a well-thought-out understanding of Islamic theology and jurisprudence. A rigid adherence to this ideology is necessary for their survival and maintaining whatever legitimacy they possess in the eyes of their own supporters. As part of that ideology is the idea of the caliphate.

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Ideas of the Caliphate

The etymological base of the Arabic word khilafah, or caliphate, is essentially “successor”. This notion of the successor to the role of caliph over the Muslim world is, in fact, the origin of the Shia – Sunni split, as Sunnis insisted on Prophet’s successor being his most senior companion, Abu Bakr, whilst the Shia insisted on a direct family member, Prophet’s cousin Ali.

The split was cemented almost immediately following Prophet’s death, and has persisted to this

day. Nonetheless, within the respective Sunni – Shia ideas of the successor, there has still not been a general agreement on how a caliphate should be organised or even exactly what the conditions are for one to be established. One of the issues regarding the notion of a caliphate is largely found in Islam's dualistic roles for the caliph in which he neither assumes solely the role of a political administrator, nor that of a spiritual leader, but rather both simultaneously. The conditions that a caliph must meet are indeed rigorous.⁹

He must be of the same Qurayshi tribal stock as the Prophet, be morally upstanding, be of sound body and mind and he must possess authority.¹⁰ Authority in this context can be viewed as religious authority as well as worldly, implementable authority. The Arabic for this kind of authority is *amr* and is described in Quranic text as descending from God. It can be compared to a

commission given by a king, essentially bestowing God's authority on the recipient of *amr*.¹¹

The various caliphates that existed throughout Islam's history have been mired in civil war, theological disputes and assassinations. From the period of the prophet's death and the establishment of the first caliphate in 661 AD until the dissolution of the caliphate of the Ottoman Empire in 1924, there have been a host of caliphates, the legality of many of which is still disputed amongst Muslims today. Notably, almost none of the caliphates

throughout history ever governed the entire Muslim world, save for the earliest, the Rashidun caliphate. Subsequent caliphates largely held power only in certain regions and were often at odds with other emirates or caliphates throughout the Middle East, North Africa or the Iberian Peninsula. Come the late medieval period, Islamic empires maintained the title 'caliphate' but largely ignored specific Islamic legal and religious dictates.¹²

In the Sunni tradition, only between the 7th and 13th centuries are the caliphs universally recognized as legitimate, ecumenical rulers. Furthermore, the Hadith of the Twelve Successors asserts a total of only twelve caliphs from the Quraysh tribe. It is this belief that has allowed the Islamic State to disavow the Ottoman Empire, as their leaders were neither Qurayshi, nor did they fully implement Sharia law down to the letter.¹³ The Islamic State believes their leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, to be the eighth caliph.

Because the stipulations for the formation of a caliphate were never clearly laid out, the Islamic State base their understanding of the caliphate on the earliest in Islamic history; Muhammad's rule and the subsequent Rashidun caliphate.¹⁴

The Islamic State is certainly within its theological boundaries to reject certain past caliphates, such as non-ecumenical ones and the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the Islamic State's objections to the authenticity of certain past caliphates may do much to explain the violence and mass executions witnessed in the media. The Islamic State cannot

ease up on its harshness to apostates, non-Muslims and deviant Muslims, lest they fall into sin themselves. It is of the utmost importance to adhere uncompromisingly to every aspect of Sharia, as they see it. This lends them, at least in their own eyes, legitimacy in their caliphate aspirations and claims.¹⁵

The fact that Baghdadi is of Qurayshi extraction, or at least it cannot be definitively shown that he is not, only serves to bolster their hard-line conviction even more.¹⁶ And, apart from being Qurayshi, implementing strict Sharia, being physically and mentally sound, Baghdadi also ticks the 'authority' box as, according to the Islamic State, he holds a PhD in Islamic law from the University of Baghdad.¹⁷ Since the declaration of the caliphate on June 29, 2014 he also has the worldly authority that comes with governing physical territory and a population, and this is a precondition for his legitimacy as caliph.¹⁸

Islamic State's Ideology

At the core of the Islamic State's ideology is a strict and uncompromising adherence to a strain of Islamic thought known as jihadi-salafism. Salafi ideology is based on a particularly "extremist and minoritarian reading of Islamic scripture that is also textually rigorous and deeply rooted in pre-modern theological tradition".¹⁹ Salafism espouses purifying the faith from all elements deemed un-Islamic such as apostate sects like Shiism and those Muslims engaging in democratic processes.²⁰ However, while

most Sunni jihadi entities adhere to a jihadi-salafist ideology, not all are equally extreme in their application. Al-Qaeda are certainly a salafist group, but, according to Cole Bunzel, “if jihadism were to be placed on a political spectrum, al-Qaeda would be its left and the Islamic State its right”.²¹

It is the Islamic State's extreme understanding of the salafi tradition that sets the ideological pretext necessary in ushering in the caliphate through essentially seventh century warfare traditions. And that is how the Islamic State's particular salafist interpretation should be understood; as fuelled by an obsession with the application of a medieval code of conduct. As a point of maintaining religious purity, the Islamic State cannot deviate from the governing precepts laid down by the Prophet and his immediate successors. In fact, Graeme Wood remarked that, “much of what the group does looks nonsensical except in light of a sincere, carefully considered commitment to returning civilization to a seventh-century legal environment, and ultimately to bringing about the apocalypse”.²²

Despite certain methodological and ideological differences between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, certain doctrinal elements overlap between the two groups, especially where the Islamic caliphate is concerned. In fact, one of al-Qaeda's charter aims is the eventual establishment of an Islamic caliphate; “eventual” being the operative word. Al-Qaeda's methods have been slow and steady, with the goal of degrading western and secular Arab influence over time until the point when a caliph can be announced. This approach focuses on the “far-

enemy” and was always intended to take time. Osama bin Laden certainly never expected to see a caliphate in his lifetime.²³

Unlike al-Qaeda, however, the Islamic State was not content to see the caliphate established decades down the line. This is where the Islamic State veer off from al-Qaeda, and is also largely their appeal to both militants and the ultra-conservatives. The Islamic State believe the caliphate can and should be established now; a territory under a caliph, the land to which all pious Muslims must emigrate and the man to which all must swear baya'a (allegiance). Baghdadi spelled out the need for Muslims to reinstitute the caliphate, saying it was a duty that had been lost for centuries that Muslims sin by losing it and must constantly seek to re-establish it. The idea of Muslims coming to the end of their life without pledging baya'a to a caliph is certainly considered sin by the Islamic State. Their foundational reasoning for this is based on the saying, that “to die without pledging allegiance is to die *jahil* (ignorant) and therefore die a “death of disbelief”.²⁴

This explains the Islamic State's strident efforts to draw in Muslims from all around the world; theological necessity obliges them to emigrate to the lands under a caliph. This multi-ethnic, mono-religious vision of the Islamic State was clearly delineated by Baghdadi in a speech in which he described the caliphate as a “state where the Arab and non-Arab, the white man and black man, the easterner and westerner are all brothers. It is a khilafah that has gathered the Caucasian, Indian,

Chinese, Shami, Iraqi, Yemeni, Egyptian, Maghribi (North African), American, French, German, and Australian. Allah brought their hearts together, and thus, they became brothers by His grace, loving each other for the sake of Allah, standing in a single trench, defending and guarding each other, and sacrificing themselves for one another.”²⁵

Further bolstering the Islamic State's beliefs and indeed self-belief are the prophetic elements in the Islamic texts, which they consider point at their emergence as a preeminent factor in Islamic eschatology. Their belief that Baghdadi is one of the predetermined twelve caliphs in history has created a situation in which the Islamic State acts out of a prophetic understanding of itself, in theory, making failure not possible.²⁶

Islamic State Tactics as Dictated by Ideology

It is by this ideological token that the Islamic State is compelled into not only conducting jihad, but specifically the kind that is aimed at the acquisition of territory. This ideology naturally impacts the way they operate militarily. The Islamic State largely employs two quite particular tactical approaches, which had allowed for a certain amount of predictability in terms of their actions. This is because the Islamic State doesn't operate solely under the normalcy of terroristic jihad as practiced by the likes of al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda typically

undertakes surprise, hit-and-run operations. But the caliphate is intrinsically linked to territory, making al-Qaeda style sorties and unviable means of taking and controlling territory. Rather, the Islamic State operates largely as a conventional army by subsuming territory and implementing their authority, whilst using terroristic tactics as a provocative measure or when on the back foot.

In terms of territorial acquisition, the Islamic State employs an offensive strategy of attrition whereby

they weaken the opponent through prolonged attacks on military bases and checkpoints, as well as personal executions of prominent military personnel. The weakening effect on morale cannot be overstated but this type of approach, coupled with their tendency to target multiple fronts at once, effectively overwhelms their opponent and undermines their defensive capabilities.²⁷ This approach is used as a means of territorial gain once the opponent has been

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sufficiently weakened. But as Charles Lister of the Brookings Institute points out, “such operations require a more favourable environment in which shaping operations can create the conditions necessary for acquiring and consolidating territory”.²⁸

Amid continued bombardment of Islamic State held areas, such tactics' effectiveness is largely negated, as the space to conduct such operations is greatly diminished. In such cases the Islamic State has

shown proficiency in a second form of tactical implementation that comprises a similar terroristic approach to that of al-Qaeda. This tactic is one of mass urban attacks and is conducted against non-Muslim military and civilians as well as those whom the Islamic State deems apostates such as the Shia community and in certain cases even Sunnis. An important factor in this style of attack is that the Islamic State can maintain such a front while they are both on the offensive and defensive, owing largely to the cell-based nature of the operations and the lack of a territorial element. Campaigns like this serve as a means of intimidation.²⁹ But, perhaps more importantly, they serve to draw the Shia community into a fight which the Islamic State believes is an imperative element in the prophetic apocalyptic literature. Islamic historian Will McCants pointed out that sectarian conflict resonates powerfully in today's sectarian wars because the early Islamic apocalyptic prophecies are intrinsically sectarian.³⁰

Islamic State Tactics as Dictated by Necessity

Amid continued airstrikes and with the looming threat of losing territory, the Islamic State has apparently been forced to implement an alternative military approach. Essentially, as the nature of their fight changes, so must their tactics. What once looked like a group with a single focused ambition, an Islamic caliphate in the Levant, has now seemingly branched out into an international group with affiliates fighting under their banner from North Africa to the fringes of South Asia.³¹

These developments pose the question, why does this jihadi entity, for whom specifically territory in the Levant constitutes the core of their ideological backing and self-perceived legitimacy, seem to be expanding into places like Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Afghanistan? Does this apparent change in tactics signal a change in their overall objectives, or is it simply a tactical manoeuvre aimed at creating an international buffer zone and consolidating power in Iraq and Syria?

Unlike al-Qaeda, the Islamic State's very existence is contingent upon its control of territory. A caliph must be able to enforce his authority for him to be considered one, so the Islamic State cannot slink into an underground organisation the way al-Qaeda can. This would be to simultaneously forfeit its claim as a legitimate caliphate and also its claim as a central figure in the apocalyptic traditions of the Islamic texts.

This is the predicament of the Islamic State; neither can they sustain their largely conventional tactics of attrition and acquisition nor can they afford to become a wholly underground terror network. And, it seems they have settled somewhere in between. The Economist described the elusive capabilities of the Islamic State inside their own Iraqi/Syrian territories, whereupon suffering heavy opposition in one region of the country, Islamic State fighters will emerge in another, fighting on a different front. The Islamic State's loss of Tikrit and their subsequent rapid and forceful move into the Palestinian Yarmouk suburb near Damascus was likened by the

Economist to a “game of whack-a-mole”.³² It seems their best survival strategy in Iraq and Syria is a defensive one in the areas they control, and a general elusiveness and unpredictability otherwise.

If it is fair to conclude that the Islamic State's foremost concern is with their caliphate in Iraq and Syria, is there an actual strategy behind their presence in other countries?

The Islamic State's international factions seem to display a degree of sophistication previously not assumed. The claiming of the Shiite mosque bombing in Yemen, for example, was the single most devastating terrorist attack the country had ever witnessed as more than 140 people were killed.^{33 34}

Commentators were amazed at the level of planning that must have gone into the attack, especially considering the Islamic State presence in Yemen had been up to that point considered negligible.

But these international Islamic State offshoots are not necessarily controlled from the top down. As Bernard Haykel, Princeton's foremost expert on Islamic State ideology told IISA, just because jihadi factions in other countries affiliate with the Islamic State “does not mean the [Islamic State] are directing specific attacks in these countries or have a relationship of command-and-control with these groups that are affiliating with them”.

Yet, while they may not be in direct control of these factions, political instability throughout the Middle East and North Africa can certainly be seen as a

desirable condition for the Islamic State's expansion and indeed survival in their caliphate's heartland. Therefore, franchising their brand name out to other groups in the Middle East and creating a climate of chaos may be exactly what the group is trying to do.³⁵

A telling comment suggesting precisely that, was made by British journalist John Cantile, who after being captured was allegedly pressured into performing as a mouthpiece for the Islamic State. In a video-presentation on behalf of the Islamic State he said, “At some stage, you're going to have to face the Islamic State as a country, and even consider a truce. ... What's the alternative, launch airstrikes in half-a-dozen countries at once? ... They'll have to destroy half the region if that's the case.”³⁶

A year ago the Islamic State's presence was almost exclusively centred in Iraq and Syria, but as their war to hold onto territory becomes fiercer, and more desperate, terrorism abroad and unpredictable manoeuvres in Iraq and Syria seems like their best option. Franchising out caliphate-orientated terror factions to other countries seems like the latest trend in this neo-jihadi group's tactics, and, by creating pockets or, as Baghdadi himself coined “volcanoes of jihad” all around the Middle East and greater Islamic world, the Islamic State has created a situation in which it is nearly impossible to wipe them out.³⁷ And this may very well constitute the next phase in the Islamic State's survival strategy.

To suggest, as Jasmine Opperman of the South Africa-based Terrorism Research and Analysis

Consortium did, that “2015 is the year where we are going to see the IS as a government more than a terrorist organization,” now seems a grievous misinterpretation.³⁸ Perhaps in terms of territorial acquisition, conventional warfare tactics trump terrorism, but certainly as a diversion tactic, terrorism is undeniably effective.

In July 2014, Baghdadi expounded on the virtues of terrorism as a means to an end. He said, "Terrorism is to worship Allah as He ordered you. Terrorism is to refuse humiliation, subjugation, and subordination. Terrorism is for the Muslim to live as a Muslim, honourably with might and freedom. Terrorism is to insist upon your rights and not give them up".³⁹

The Islamic State's recent announcement on eventually gaining an acceptance from international powers, and coming to some sort of peace accord is inherently unviable for the Islamic State themselves. It may be an attempt to bide their time and regain strength but certainly cannot be enacted for a prolonged period. As part of their own theological interpretation, peace treaties can only be put in place for a maximum of ten years, borders are illegitimate and the caliph is required to engage in jihadi conquests at least once a year.⁴⁰

Furthermore, the establishment of a caliphate means “offensive jihad” is an ideological prerequisite, meaning whichever caliph holds the position is

required to wage war and keep expanding.⁴¹ It is not a matter of personal choice, but religious obligation. Choosing not to, means opposing the Prophet's dictates, which is to say, abandoning true Islam and any legitimacy that went with the caliphate. For world leaders the question remains, therefore, just how to deal with the Islamic State, and there is simply no easy answer. After all, to reinforce what John Cantile said, attempting to rid the region of the Islamic State would require “airstrikes in half-a-dozen countries at once [and] to destroy half the region”.⁴²

The outsourcing of their brand name to jihadi actors across the region should be seen, not so much as a means of controlling the greater region, but rather an attempt to preserve the heart and soul of the caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

Islamic State Tactics and Neojihadism

Upon examining the shifting tactics of the Islamic State at a time when they seem, at least to some degree on the back foot, some of their broader ideological features are clear to see. This group, that largely exemplifies neo-jihadi actions, has not changed in this regard. The Islamic State is ultimately still an actor with strong 'regional' ambitions, regardless of the pressure they face from airstrikes and local militias. Contingent upon this regional dominance is the life blood of the Islamic State; their self-perceived legitimacy. In this respect, the Islamic State's methods remain in tandem with the regional focus that typifies neo-jihadism. The outsourcing of their brand name to jihadi actors across the region should be seen, not so much as a means of controlling the greater region, but rather an attempt

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But their regional focus is not the only element in which the Islamic State's evolving methods and tactics stay true to definitions of neo-jihadism. The announcement of the caliphate gave them the ideological impetus and permissibility to wage offensive jihad, and not just in Syria and Iraq. Recent reports of the Islamic State in Yemen announcing the arrival of the caliphate there, and subsequently shooting ten Yemeni soldiers and beheading four others shows this ideological justification to still be alive and well.⁴³ Indeed, it seems that offensive jihad across the Middle East has perhaps become a means of defending territory in Iraq and Syria. But, their activity in Yemen highlights another aspect typical of neo-jihadism, and that is the sectarian element. Being on the defensive in Iraq and Syria has apparently not diminished the need to goad Shiite communities into a fight. Yemen is currently one of the most

hotly waged sectarian conflicts in the entire Middle East, and the Islamic State's overt declarations should certainly be seen as a response to Shiite expansion.

Bernard Haykel's assertion that the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria may not have a relationship of command-and-control with other Islamic State branches doesn't diminish the benefits that these groups offer to the Islamic State core. Their regional aspirations, offensive jihad and sectarian conflict, in other words the tenets of neo-jihadi action, are only bolstered by the formation of as many offshoots and affiliates in the Middle East as possible. Like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, who have been noted to be taking advantage of the ensuing chaos, the Islamic State only benefit from creating this kind of environment, and, for the foreseeable future, that is what they should be expected to continue doing.⁴⁴

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME:

Scope & Rationale:

Jihadists represent a fraction of the larger mainstream Islamist movement, which dominates the social space in most Muslim societies. Although Jihadism is ‘lethal’, it does not possess a viable broad social base like the Muslim Brotherhood. One silver lining for Al Qaeda, however, is its affiliate organizations. In Iraq, Syria, the Maghreb, Somalia, Yemen, and Egypt, Al Qaeda has won over formidable local allies to its cause, expanding its reach, power, and numbers in the process. This string of mergers is not over. In places as diverse as the Sinai Peninsula and Nigeria, Al Qaeda-linked organizations are emerging.

In retrospect; the death of Osama bin Laden, the onslaught of global war on terror, the Arab revolution and post Arab-revolution crises etc. have seriously impacted on Jihadists landscape which is constantly changing.

Jihadism today is neither transnational such as Al-Qaeda central, nor national i.e. Hezbollah, but regional. It is also increasingly more sectarian. As the Jihadists’ landscape changes; the study and understanding of Jihadism must also adapt to address the developing movement of ‘Neo-Jihadism’.

“Neo-Jihadism is a diverse, syncretic form of global organisation and interaction that emerged from within Islamic Jihadism, is unique to early-twenty-first-centuries, is increasingly sectarian and through its advocacy of violent form of war and selectively literal interpretations of sacred texts, radically differentiates itself from the traditional Jihadist forces, the faith’s mainstream and constitutes a new body of thought and actions”.

Methodology & Research areas/questions:

This programme aims to conduct fact-based analyses of actual and potential uses of militancy and Jihadism as a tactic and belief and the changing concept of ‘war’ in the Muslim world; so that we may provide policy guidance to government officials and private sector decision-makers with alternative policy analyses. The key research questions are:

- How has Neo-Jihadism developed?
- Is Neo-Jihadism a new concept of war or culture?
- How Jihadism is perceived within the Islamic world and does it still carry meanings of a ‘just war’?
- How do its adherents maintain and facilitate it to transcend borders?
- Why have neo jihadi leaders been struggling to advance a coherent and effective response to the events of the Arab Spring and what trends are emerging
- Why, despite strong rhetoric of militancy, have we witnessed little action on the part of Neo-Jihadi groups that have emerged in countries that underwent regime change as a result of the Arab Spring?

Programme Deliverables:

1. Mapping the interplay between militant groups, the states and other external actors

2. A conflict and forecast analysis on current and emerging threats that might change the Jihadist landscape
3. In depth situation analyses on above issues, regional positioning and global powers interests etc.
4. Alternative policy analyses that may serve in policy making on regional and global governance levels
5. Strategic foresight for business and stakeholders that might be involved in the crisis affected regions

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC STRATEGIC AFFAIRS (IISA)

IISA is a think-tank and an intellectual forum for addressing the current and future dynamics of the Islamic-world and its interaction with Western civilisation. Based in London, IISA will create trans-Islamic and global reach. IISA seeks to establish a platform where Islamic-world's dynamics, trends, issue, problems or crises are analysed within the Islamic-world and by working on local models and realities and not against any external standards or perceptions. We will be one of the leading think-tank on the Islamic-world and its role in the contemporary global system. In a short span of time we have attracted great academic support and a reputation for both open and track-II dialogues. IISA is the only think tank initiative that goes beyond national and regional inclinations and addresses strategic and socio-political issues/crises of the Islamic-world in its totality. For more information i.e. our mission statement, current programmes and our academic and regional expertise please visit the following links:

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