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IF THE ISLAMIC STATE (IS) IS DEFEATED AS A TERRITORIAL ENTITY, THE MAIN ASPECT THAT SETS IT APART FROM AL-QAEDA – ITS CLAIM TO BE A STATE WITH ACTUAL TERRITORY – WILL BE GONE. THIS MEANS IS WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO INVITE MUSLIMS TO JOIN ITS PROJECT IN SYRIA OR IRAQ, BUT WILL BE FORCED TO RELY ON TERRORIST ATTACKS AROUND THE WORLD.

This shift in IS's policies can already be seen, but is likely to increase as the organisation loses more territory. From that point on, several scenarios are possible.

One scenario is that IS continues to operate as an alternative to al-Qaeda, with its local branches in countries such as Libya and Nigeria. Given that both organisations will have roughly the same goals, they are likely to merge. Another scenario is that IS will dwindle and al-Qaeda will rise again. Still another option is that they will continue to be rivals, with IS continuing to try to set up a state. Any of these scenarios, and potentially others, are possible.

Given the tensions between al-Qaeda and IS and the inhibitions that some IS supporters are likely to have had about IS's increasingly violent policies, any future efforts to set up an Islamic state are likely to be slightly different. There is a strong sentiment among many Jihadi-Salafi scholars and leaders that an Islamic state is a very good thing in principle, but that it should not be executed the way IS did it.

This analysis of the situation may result in more careful ways of going about establishing an Islamic state the next time an opportunity arises. In other words: for Jihadi-Salafi critics of IS, the collapse of the latter has the potential to be a major 'I told you so' moment.

In Jordan, there is the additional difficulty of intra-Jihadi-Salafi rivalry. The two main Jihadi-Salafi scholars in the country (and probably in the world) – Abu Qatada al-Filastini and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi – have been strongly against IS from the beginning.

A large number of Jihadi-Salafi activists, however, disagree with them and still have fresh memories of the rivalry between their local hero – Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi – and al-Maqdisi. While they see the former as a brave fighter who was willing to walk the talk, the latter is seen by them as an armchair jihadi who, when push came to shove, was not willing to support the jihad in Iraq.

Moreover, al-Maqdisi often stressed the need to set up an Islamic state, rather than just engaging in attacks without

lasting results. When IS came along, it seemed that a sustained effort to do what al-Maqdisi had always wanted – setting up an Islamic state – was finally being made, yet al-Maqdisi again refused to support it because he saw IS as the epitome of the "extremist" policies that he had always rejected.

To some supporters of al-Zarqawi, this was proof that al-Maqdisi was hypocritical and not supportive of Jihadi-Salafism. To al-Maqdisi himself, however, the fall of IS is likely to be seen as proof that he was right all along. Due to the extent of support for both positions, neither of these narratives is going to become entirely dominant in Jordan, with both co-existing uneasily for some years to come.

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