

JIHAD IN THE INTERNET

PROTECT III: Doing Business Amidst New Threats

6-7 March 2008

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

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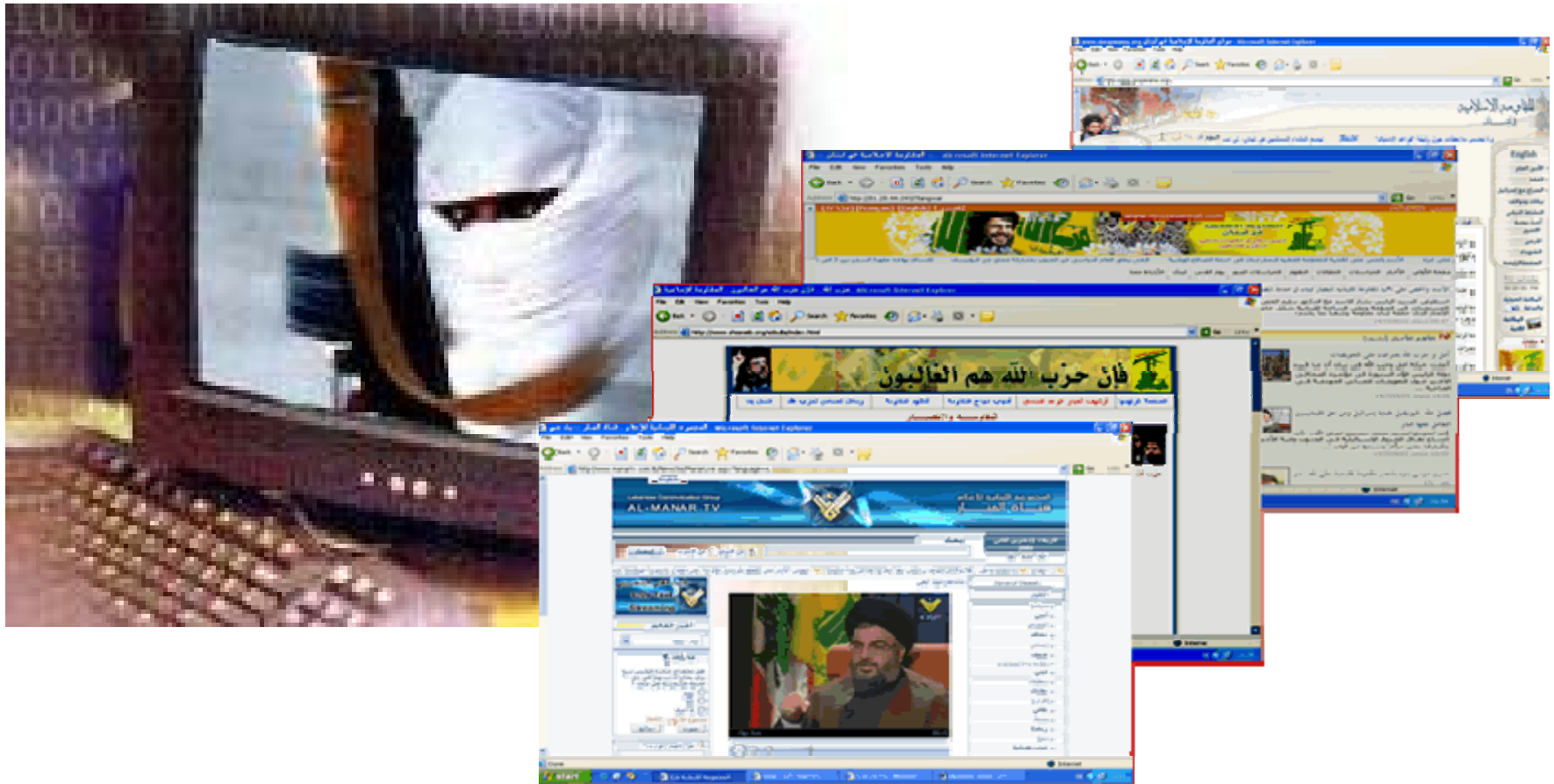


What is cyber terrorism?

The premeditated use of disrupted activities or the threat thereof against computers and or networks with the intention to cause harm or further social, ideological, religious, political or similar objectives or to intimidate any person in furtherance of such objectives.



Art by Mike Werner



Terrorism and the Internet



Abraham Lincoln:

“a government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion, can change the government, practically just so much”.

Advantages of Internet for Terrorism

- Easy access
- Little government control
- Potentially enormous domestic and foreign audiences
- Anonymous communications
- Rapid information exchanges
- Low costs
- Multimedia platforms (videos, music, forums)
- The ability to influence other mass media that rely on the internet for information

Use of Terrorism for Internet

- To wage psychological warfare
- Create publicity and spread propaganda
- Gather intelligence
- Fundraise
- Recruitment
- Communicate and coordinate with operatives and supporters
- Share information
- Plan attacks

إلى الشعوب الأوروبية: رسالة من الشيخ أسامة بن لادن (حفظه الله)



All praise is for Allah, who didn't
create the Creation for nothing



As-Sahab

The As Sahab: Media and Production Arm of the Al Qaeda

As Sahab

- The Al Qaeda promotes its long-term strategic agenda through a public relations and media company known as the **As Sahab Foundation for Islamic Media Publication**
- As Sahab which means “cloud” in Arabic, is considered a fitting name for a company whose operations are both fluid and nebulous.

Videos Produced

Year	# of videos	Frequency
2001	1	365
2002	6	60.8
2003	11	33.2
2004	12	30.1
2005	16	22.8
2006	42	8.7
2007	97	3.8
2008	4*	6.7

* As of January 27th, 2008

As Sahab

- Through these videos, the Al Qaeda has been successful in deliberately exploiting the fears of the public on their terrorist capability.

General Information

- The videos taken of Bin Laden and others were shot in remote locations
- Raw footage is physically transported to a second location where it would be uploaded to the internet
- The video is either physically carried or is sent digitally to the As Sahab's post-production facility where it is edited and the graphics, sub-titles and backgrounds are added

Progression

- The completed videos are then uploaded onto various websites and the address is published in internet forums where sympathizers copy and further distribute the video files
- It is believed that by using the As Sahab, the Al Qaeda can consolidate its media releases under one banner which allows for better coordination and uniformity of content

Technology and Process

- The quality of As Sahab's videos indicates that they are produced with modern equipment by competent technicians.
- The videos now display many of the features common in professional media productions such as standardized logos, digitally inserted backgrounds and subtitles which are often in English.
- The use of the internet to post statements from the Al Qaeda is a change from the network's old way of getting its messages to the public.

Key Trends

- In the past, Al Qaeda used the dead-drop method
- With the use of the internet, the group is also taking advantage of the global communications network by transforming itself into a group that can operate anywhere.
- The internet also became part of their outreach since it enables them to gain a wider audience and get in contact with more people

Key Figures

- The camera operators and technicians of As Sahab are probably the most trusted members of the Al Qaeda
- The As Sahab is critically important to the core leadership

Key Figures

- Ayman al-Zawahiri
- Adam Gadahn – “Azzam the American”
- Abu Yahya al-Libi



Content

- Specific messages aimed at different audiences
- Military operations
- Propaganda – Preaching for Jihad, Use of Koranic Verses
- The As Sahab has become the Al Qaeda's means of making a strategic impact on the world outside of the Afghan-Pakistani border regions.

Sample Video



FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- The continuous radicalization of would-be members of terrorist groups is considered as whole new threat altogether
- Terrorists have been successful in using the internet to spread its radical ideology
- Radicalization will eventually escalate to acts of terror or violence in an environment or situation that allows it to thrive

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- Businesses have provided many of the targets for terrorism mainly for the following reasons:
 - Soft targets because they are less well protected
 - Profitable targets as in the case of kidnappings and extortion
 - Symbolic targets, symbolizing the economic strength of a country

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- More terrorists are becoming more knowledgeable about computers and reliant on technology
- Businesses should be on alert as to how terrorists would use these weapons to launch attacks against them
- In 2007, it was observed that there was an increasing trend for cyber attacks to be politically motivated but that most of the attacks were launched for financial gain

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- In November 11, 2007 Islamic hackers tried to launch an attack against 15 websites said to be critical of Islam.
- The attacks fizzled out after special security measures were taken but there is the belief that radical Islamic hackers are moving up in the learning curve and could cause more serious trouble in the future.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- There is a perception that businesses would be defenceless in the face of illicit exploitation of the internet by terrorists
- The reliability of information systems and the capacity to deter, disrupt or exploit malicious internet activity will require developing capabilities proactively and responding in a timely manner to emerging threats in cyberspace.

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