

Analyzing the Politico-Religious Order of The 'Islamic State'

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Abstract : The 'Islamic State' (IS) is one of the most successful jihadist groups in the modern history. The 'Islamic State' strives to realize the idea of erasing the borders between Muslim countries and establishing a wide Islamic caliphate. The 'Islamic State' is based on religious unity and opposition to existing political order. In this paper, the main argument is that the 'Islamic State' is characterized by two significant tendencies of state-building: preservation and change. The methodology of this study is based on the process tracing method and the analysis of primary sources: decisions, announcements and speeches of religious leaders of the Islamic State, slogans, rituals and symbols, audio and video clips produced by the Al-Hayat Media Center, films distributed on YouTube, as well as the content analysis of Dabiq`s articles (IS official Journal) and nasheeds (jihadi songs). The major findings of this study indicate that in practice the 'Islamic State' uses the same socio-political functions typical to the modern state (preservation), but introduces a different religious-ideological content (change). On the one hand, there is a preservation of the principles of existing modern state. Even with the rejection of secularization, globalization, and nationalism, there is an establishment of typical modern nation-state patterns. It is still a state entity, which has an ideological infrastructure, territory, population, governance and a monopoly on the use of violence, security services, justice system, tax collection, etc. All these functions characterize the modern state, and despite the desire of the 'Islamic State' to create a new kind of state, it reminds patterns of the typical modern nation-state. As for the religious-ideological content of the new state, here we can see a tendency of great change. The 'Islamic State' aims to create an Islamic caliphate which would allow the establishment of religious law and order, under a big commitment to return civilization to a seventh-century environment. The 'Islamic State' favors the fight against Western culture and its liberal ideology. It supports the struggle for global jihad against the unbelievers. Today, despite the territorial 'contraction' and the undermining of the organization's governance in Iraq and Syria, the 'Islamic State' continues to maintain its brand among jihadist activists around the world.

Keywords : Islamic State, Islamic caliphate, modern nation-state, religious law and order

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