Terrorism/Counterterrorism Paper

The False Hope of Coexistence: Why Conflict Will Persist Because of Global Jihadists

WWS 712:

Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and the Global Jihad

Woodrow Wilson School – Princeton University

Michael R. Kelvington

18 July 2016

Contents

Introduction

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are
endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are
Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."[1]*

Only days prior to his death, Thomas Jefferson penned one of his final letters on June

24th, 1826. He responded to Roger Weightman, the mayor of DC who invited him to attend the

celebration of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Though

his health prohibited his attendance, it did not prevent him from reflecting on the decisions the

founding fathers of the United States made in the earliest moments of our country when the ideas

they believed in were merely an untested theory. His firm belief in America was rooted in:

> "the consolatory fact, that our fellow citizens, after half a century of experience and
> prosperity, continue to approve the choice we made. may it be to the world, what I
> believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all,) the Signal of
> arousing men to burst the chains, under which monkish ignorance and superstition had
> persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings & security of self-
> government. that form which we have substituted, restores the free right to the
> unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion. all eyes are opened, or opening, to
> the rights of man."[2]

His hope was that people around the world would willfully adopt the example of America's

democratic republic as a framework for how best to govern and secure individual freedoms.

Jefferson's optimistic hope bears a stark contrast to the goals and objectives of the 21st

century Sunni global jihadist. According to Sayyid Qutb, a leader of the modern Islamist

movement, jihadis vehemently disagree with America and the concepts transcribed into our

founding documents. He wrote "all nationalistic and chauvinistic ideologies which have

appeared in modern times, and . . . all man-made individual or collective theories have proved to

---

[1] *United States Declaration of Independence.*

[2] Thomas Jefferson, "Thomas Jefferson to Roger Weightman, June 24, 1826," *The Library of Congress,* accessed March 23, 2016, http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/214.html.

be failures."[3] In his view, the entire modern world is "steeped in *Jahiliyyah*," meaning the people of the world who do not ascribe to the Islamic worldview live a life ignorant of divine guidance.[4] The global jihadists' objective is inherent even in the word "Islam," which means "to bring human beings into submission to God."[5] They see themselves as the "vanguard" that must reconstruct the current world order and revert it to the time of Islamic political power when the prophet Muhammad established his caliphate on the Arabian peninsula.[6] They use the concept of *jihad* to justify the violence they inflict upon their opponents. They offer the world a simple choice: submit or die.

Global jihadists carry with them "a religious fervor combined with an un-Western degree of patience that produces a lethal and unbelievably resilient commitment to its cause. And the jihadists will not be negotiated with. For this enemy it truly is a question of 'them or us.' They will not be stopped unless someone stops them."[7] Despite rhetoric calling organizations like the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda "un-Islamic," they are anything but. To global jihadis, "Islam is not only a matter of faith and practice; it is also an identity and loyalty . . . that transcends all others."[8] They are an extreme strain of Islam that cannot be negotiated with or appeased, and they are unwavering in their beliefs. <u>Conflict will persist for years to come because of the absolute nature inherent to the global jihadist ideology and America's inability to form a coherent counterterrorism strategy; we fail to appropriately identify our enemy and dismiss their motivations as mere rhetoric rather than as a credible threat.</u>

---

[3] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (New Dehli: Islamic Book Service, 2002), 8.

[4] Qutb, *Milestones*, 11.

[5] Ibid., 45.

[6] Ibid., 12.

[7] Dr. Sebastian Gorka, *Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War*, (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2016), 34.

[8] Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, (New York: Random House, 2004), 17.

The Violent Evolution of Classical Jihad

The term "Islamophobia" is often thrown around in political discussions within the Western world. People tend to fear elements in life they are unfamiliar with or do not understand. With Muslims only making up small percentages of most Western countries, many Westerners do not know or interact with Muslims in their daily lives. Much of what they know about Muslims is skewed by what is presented on the news, which is often negative and presented in the context of atrocities global jihadist groups perform. A recent Pew Research poll shows, over the past five years there has been a trend showing "concerns about Islamic extremism are growing in the West and in countries with significant Muslim populations."[9] To highlight the underlying fear captured in the term "Islamophobia," we see in the chart below, citizens worried about Islamic extremism "are higher across the Western countries surveyed than they are in the Muslim countries surveyed."[10] Humans fear the unknown and misunderstood, which begs the follow up question: Is any of this fear warranted?
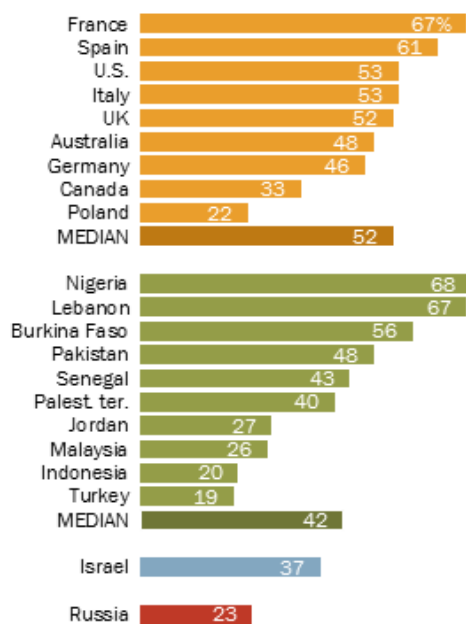
---

[9] Jacob Poushter, "Extremism Concerns Growing in West and Predominantly Muslim Countries," *Pew Research Center*, published 16 July 2015, accessed 15 May 2016, http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/07/16/extremism-concerns-growing-in-west-and-predominantly-muslim-countries/.

[10] Ibid.

Western Nations More Worried about Extremism than Countries with Significant Muslim Populations

Very concerned about Islamic extremism in our country

Country	%
France	67%
Spain	61
U.S.	53
Italy	53
UK	52
Australia	48
Germany	46
Canada	33
Poland	22
MEDIAN	52
Nigeria	68
Lebanon	67
Burkina Faso	56
Pakistan	48
Senegal	43
Palest. ter.	40
Jordan	27
Malaysia	26
Indonesia	20
Turkey	19
MEDIAN	42
Israel	37
Russia	23

Question wording: "How concerned, if at all, are you about Islamic extremism in our country these days? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about Islamic extremism in our country these days?"

Figure 1: Pew Research Center poll based on Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey.[11]

Studying the global jihadist ideology will likely not diffuse much of the fear people have of those they see consistently in the news, but it helps to understand global jihadism as a specific, radicalized strain of Islam, and not representative of the entire Muslim world. The term *global jihadism* is defined as "a synonym for [worldwide] 'militant Sunni Islamism,' while Islamism is defined broadly as 'Islamic activism.'"[12] Under this definition, Islamic radicals use *jihad* more as it "refers to literal warfare, to the use of force against the infidel, and for many years 'jihad' was also used to refer to fighting those Muslims who disagreed with the current emperor and to

---

[11] Poushter.

[12] Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism Since 1979*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

fighting those non-Muslims who refused to convert or submit to the rule of Islam."[13] While many define *jihad* as a "holy war," based on these definitions, an objective person can see why a better definition might be, in their eyes, that they are fighting a "'just war' – a war that is justified for Muslims because it is meant to free other people from falsehood and lead them to truth."[14] To appreciate the absolute ideology of the global jihadist, one must first understand the concept of their struggle.

Islamic extremists believe they achieve the goals and objectives of their strategy through the concept of jihad. Diving deeper into the hermeneutics of the actual word *jihad*, one can see it is actually "derived from the Arabic root for 'struggle' and not from the usual word for war. This gives a clue to the significance that the Qur'an and the hadith assign to it, for jihad was never meant to be warfare for the sake of national or person gain, but rather struggle for the sake of God and on His path alone." The closest comparable concept to jihad as defined as an internal struggle for Christians would be the concept of sanctification, where followers of Jesus try to "be Christ-like" through their actions and lifestyle as a reflection of their beliefs.

The term *jihad* has two main definitions: "the first deals with the internal struggle to follow God and do all that He has commanded. The second is to engage in an external struggle (fighting) with others to bring the Truth (Islam) to mankind."[15] Jihad theology also highlights four different varieties of *jihad* including "jihad of the heart, mind, tongue and sword."[16] While the "greater struggle" is the "jihad of the heart" consisting of the inner struggle to be a righteous

---

[13] Gorka, *Defeating Jihad*, 59.

[14] Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 21.

[15] Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy*, 20.

[16] Gorka, 60.

follower of God, it is the external, "lesser struggle" the global jihadist ideology hones in on, also known as "jihad by the sword."[17]

"Jihad by the sword," is most important when examining our enemy because in recent decades, it has become "the foundation of the global jihadist ideology that threatens America."[18] *Jihad* as an armed struggle is derived from verses within the Qur'an. The primary text, known as the "sword verse" directs believers to "slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush" (Qur'an 9:5).[19] Their sacred text later instructs the followers to "[f]ight those who believe not in God and the Last Day and do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden – such men as practice not the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the Book – until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled" (Qur'an 9:29).[20] It is from these verses global jihadists derive their mission and marching orders. Brigadier General S. K. Malik, a leader in the Pakistani Army in the late 1970s, stated in his book, *The Quranic Concept of War*, "the Holy Quran has given a comprehensive treatment to its concept of war . . . [and] the Quranic philosophy of war is infinitely supreme and effective. It strikes a perfect balance between war and policy."[21] "Jihad by the sword" is the foundation by which the global jihadists build their strategy, starting with the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya.

As a 13th century Islamic scholar, Ibn Taymiyya focused his teachings on the violent, external jihad. He declared "not only should the Islamic nation fight all heretics, apostates,

---

[17] Gorka, 59-60.

[18] Ibid., 60.

[19] Bernard Haykel, "The Laws of Jihad," (lecture presented at Radicalization Conference, Princeton, NJ, June 01-03, 2015), slides 2-3.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Brigadier General S.K. Malik, *The Quranic Concept of War*, accessed 07 May 2016, http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/Articles/Quranic%20Concept%20of%20War.pdf, 1.

hypocrites, sinners, and unbelievers (including Christians and Jews) until 'all religion was for God alone,' but also any Muslim who tried to avoid participating in the jihad."[22] By this definition, the violent struggle in the name of God could not only be against unbelievers but also fellow Muslims, including their own leaders and governments, starting with the Mongols during Ibn Taymiyya's lifetime. Based on his concept of *jihad*, he issued a religious ruling, known as a fatwa, against the Mongolian leadership. He stated, "it is known by necessity from the religion of the Muslims . . . that whoever permits the following of a religion other than Islam, or the following of a Sharia other than the Sharia of Mohammad, then he is a *kafir* [unbeliever], and it is like the *kufr* [blasphemy] of one who believes in part of the Book [the Koran] and then disbelieves in another part of the book."[23] This directive to the global jihadists leaves Arab governments who cooperate with the US especially vulnerable to criticism and attacks as the "near enemy" to the true believers of Islam.

Jihadis divide the adversaries of their struggle as fighting against both a "near enemy" and "far enemy." The development of the "near enemy" involves conflict against one's own government when it becomes an apostate regime that, in the eyes of the jihadi, deviates from the teachings of the Qur'an and no longer governs by the sacred text and *shari'a law*.[24] The "near enemy" is typically an intra-state conflict, most predominantly depicted today by the civil war being fought within countries such as the Islamic State in Iraq, Jabat al-Nusra in Syria, and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen.

Centuries after Ibn Taymiyya's writing, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab added to this doctrine by declaring "a Muslim was not obliged to follow anyone except God and Muhammad;

---

[22] Habeck, 21.

[23] Gorka, 62.

[24] Nelly Lahoud, "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Jihadist Ideology," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 3, Issue 10, October 2010, 2.

the Qur'an and sunna were supreme."[25] Wahhab believed in the theological doctrine of *tawhid*, "the belief that God is one and that He has no partners: the founding principle of Islam and the point of departure for the entire religion."[26] The teachings under Wahhabism emphasize "the oneness of God, rejects Islamic legal scholarship that does not draw narrowly on the Qur'an, *sunna*, and *hadith*, and questions the legitimacy of interpretations of Islam that are more accepting of practices such as visiting the tombs of saints and adopting foreign dress."[27] Wahhab believed *tawhid* was comprised of three sorts, primarily being the lordship of God and the belief "He could have no associates or partners who shared this divine attribute . . . [that] no human being could make laws or alter in any way the shari'a that He had granted to mankind, for to do so was to set oneself up as a god in the place of the true divinity."[28] This makes infidels and even Muslims who stray from the fundamental teachings of Taymiyya and Wahhab as heretics.

The other kind of tawhid Wahhab proposed was "the uniqueness of God's worship."[29] Based on God's unparalleled lordship and uniqueness of worship, "any objects or people that are entreated, that have prayers directed at them, or that are given any of His attributes have taken His place. Any Muslim who engages in this sort of activity has become an unbeliever and should be treated as such, that is, fought and killed."[30] This puritanical viewpoint explains the past destruction of images and shrines by Sunnis and the erasure of historical sites by the Islamic State such as Jonah's tomb near Nineveh, or modern day Mosul. It also encapsulates why Shi'a Muslims, with their veneration for saints, specifically Ali, and the power and influence wielded

---

[25] Habeck, 23.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Daniel Byman, *Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement*, 70.

[28] Habeck, 23.

[29] Ibid., 24.

[30] Ibid.

by Shi'a clerics, are vehemently opposed and persecuted by Sunni jihadists. This behavior would later be mirrored by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and in Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's sectarian violence and target selection by al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).[31]

The holistic approach to Islam, as a way of life in all facets, conflicts with the traditional Western concept of the separation of church and state. Ironically, in the throes of a hyper-sensitive 2016 election cycle, America's founding fathers embedded this concept in the founding documents to prevent the tyranny of the majority and "mob rule" from oppressing minorities. Global jihadists seek to exploit this value and see it as both a weakness of the Western world and a sin in their worldview.[32]

To contrast Taymiyya and Wahhab's doctrine against Christianity as another monotheistic religion, one can see how it conflicts with the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament of the Bible. Christianity follows the guidance of Christ that directed when asked whether or not His followers should pay taxes, Jesus responded in Mark 12:17, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."[33] Later, Peter, one of Christ's twelve disciples, encouraged Christians in 1 Peter 2:13-14 to submit to civil institutions, governing bodies, and "every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." The disparity between the two religious perspectives and their directives makes it easier to understand why Islamists and jihadists reject Western values, institutions, and the current world order. By subscribing to any aspect of it, they become

---

[31] Habeck, 24-25.

[32] Boaz Ganor, *Global Alert: The Rationality of Modern Islamist Terrorism and the Challenge to the Liberal Democratic World*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 1.

[33] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in New King James Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

apostates within their own ideology and teachings, and are subject to the same punishments carried out daily by terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State.

The danger hidden within the Wahhabi doctrine is the leeway provided by Sunni scholars to extract the Qu'ran and *hadith's* true intent. Westerners tend to "look at the relationship between Wahhabism and contemporary militancy as a causal one . . . [however, it] is not a political doctrine, but a living theological tradition, interpreted and contested by successive generations of scholars."[34] Wahhabism becomes a toxic framework when it becomes politicized, which is exactly what Hassan al-Banna, Abdul A'la Mawdudi, and Sayyid Qutb, as 20th century Islamic scholars and adherents Taymiyya and Wahhab's teachings, did to advance the jihadist cause. It was also their teachings where the modern emergence of the absolute ideology of the Sunni global jihadist takes shape.

Salafism, Shari'a, and the Return to Literal Translation

After 19th century European colonialism chipped away at Muslim held territory, and the later collapse of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924, Muslims struggled with the concept of a secular pan-Arabism in the decades that followed to create a new identity. After the loss of the caliphate, Muslims sought a way to bring together the *umma*, the community of believers, which would serve as a counterbalance to secular Arab nationalism. What sets the Sunni global jihadist apart from other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) is not just their capacity to carry out horrific acts of barbarism, rather it is their Salafist interpretation of the Qur'an and adoption of an absolute ideology unwilling to negotiate with anyone but true believers that makes them so threatening.

---

[34] Hegghammer, 5.

Muhammad Rashid Rida, a 19th century revivalist and transitional figure, brought Taymiyya and Wahhab back to the forefront of Islamic scholarly thought. Along with their beliefs, Rida and others saw Salafism as a method to reclaim Islamic prestige in the world by engaging in "purifying Muslim society in accordance with their teachings . . . the designation Salafi [became] prestigious among Muslims, because it denotes *the* earliest and therefore authentic version of Islam—the Islam of the 'pious ancestors.'"[35] This also points back to the concept of Ibn Taymiyya's *takfirism*, where Islamists declare other Muslims to be apostates within their own religion, a form of excommunication for those they deem to be "un-Islamic" or untrue to one's own faith.[36] Instead of conforming to modernity and multiculturalism that accompanied globalization, takfirism and the purification of the faith is the global jihadis' violent method of resisting changes within the Muslim community.

Modern global jihadi groups, including the Islamic State, are part of a "Jihadi-Salafi movement, which means that its members adhere to the strict literalist interpretation of the texts of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. They privilege armed struggle (jihad) as a means for implementing their austere, intolerant, and muscular vision of Islam."[37] Salafism and its fundamental approach to understanding the literal text of the Qur'an and *hadith* were viewed as a method to return Islam and the *umma* to its previous global stature of prestige.

Salafism is the origin of their literal interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith* and where strict enforcement of *sharia law* originates. *Shari'a*, which translates to "the way," is the Islamic legal system grounded in the words of the Qur'an, *hadith*, and the *sunna*, or example of

---

[35] Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 33.

[36] Hegghammer, 75.

[37] Bernard Haykel, "The Seventh Annual Ernest May Memorial Lecture: The History and Ideology of the Islamic State," *Blind Spot: America's Response to Radicalism in the Middle East*, eds. Nicholas Burns and Jonathon Price, (Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2015), 22.

Muhammad.[38] More extensively, *shari'a* is "the Holy Law, which deals extensively with the acquisition and exercise of power, the nature of legitimacy and authority, the duties of ruler and subject, in a word, with what we in the West would call constitutional law and political philosophy."[39] One way the global jihadists utilize Islamic law to achieve their agenda is by utilizing the *ulema*, or Islamic clergy, to issue religious decrees, or *fatwas*, to justify their actions as a legitimate measure under their jihadi struggle.

Unlike Shi'a, who have a relatively structured hierarchy through the mullahs in Iran similar to the priesthood in Catholicism, the Sunni have no such hierarchy. This provides the Sunni global jihadists the freedom to "arrogate to themselves the right to pick and choose which authorities they will listen to, as well as the right to interpret and apply the sacred texts for themselves whenever convenient."[40] This makes it easy to contextualize the streamlined "justice" the Islamic State can carry out their atrocities, literally crowning themselves judge, jury, and executioner in Syria and Iraq. Under Islamic tradition and law, Muhammad ordained recourse of *ijtihad*, meaning "exertion," or a broad interpretation of reasoning. *Ijtihad* gave Muslims a way to develop Islamic law that was not covered within the text of the Quran. To become a *mujtahid*, or one who is capable of interpreting Islamic law is not codified, which essentially means in their eyes anyone with an undetermined level of education and Islamic scholarly credentials can garner power.[41]

---

[38] Gorka, 62.

[39] Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, 8.

[40] Habeck, 43.

[41] Aron Zysow, "Shari'a," *Islam: A Short Guide to the Faith*, eds. Roger Allan and Shawkat M. Toorawa, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 45.

One unique facet of Islam is the "religious law of Islam abrogates the divinely ordained laws that preceded it."[42] The Qur'an was not "sent down" to the Prophet Muhammad all at once, but rather over the course of approximately twenty years. Under the belief of *naskh*, or abrogation, "later revelation can change or even nullify earlier revelation."[43] Today, many scholars break the Qur'an down into "two distinct—and contradictory—halves: the 'peace verses,' sometimes referred to as the Meccan verses, and the 'war verses,' or Medinan verses."[44] It is easy to explain away the global jihadist's behavior as a lifestyle based on self-selecting quotes from their sacred texts, but based on their belief in the order of God's revelation and the history of Prophet Muhammad's life as a crescendo of violence, one can objectively appreciate the manner in which they derive their violent tendencies. In Graeme Wood's famous *Atlantic* article, "What ISIS Really Wants," he interviews Professor Bernard Haykel from Princeton University. During their discussion on the Islamic State, Haykel states, "Slavery, crucifixion, and beheadings are not something that freakish [jihadists] are cherry-picking from the medieval tradition . . . [rather they] are smack in the middle of the medieval tradition and are bringing it wholesale to the present day."[45]

To appreciate the violent motivations behind global Jihadi-Salafis, one must understand their ultimate goal: "to make Muslims as powerful as they once were, before the relatively recent dominance of the West over the globe. To do this, it is not sufficient to educate Muslims about the tenets of the faith; one must engage in acts of violence, both individual and collective, against

---

[42] Zysow, "Shari'a," 43.

[43] Habeck, 44.

[44] Gorka, 58.

[45] Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, March 2015 Issue, accessed 14 May 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/.

the enemies. Only by terrorizing the enemy . . . can victory be attained."[46] But to understand

why their hatred, aggression, and violence are aimed at the United States and its allies, one must

examine the Islamic scholars of the 20th century who built upon the jihadist teachings of

Taymiyya, Wahhab, and Rida, specifically Sayyid Abdul A'la Mawdudi, Hassan al-Banna, and

Sayyid Qutb, who helped bridge the gap between the classical and global jihad ideologies.

20th Century Interpretation Spawns 21st Century Global Jihadism

Pan-Islamism became the 20th century concept many Salafists would rally around, which

politically manifested itself in three ways: "caliphism, foreign policy coordination and popular

mobilization."[47] The Indian Muslim scholar Sayyid Abdul A'la Mawdudi's key contribution was

the idea of politicizing Islam, "with the goal of establishing a truly Islamic state, whose subjects

would live in accordance with the prescriptions of the Koran."[48] His teachings also included

Islam as the holistic approach to every facet of life. He wrote, "Islam is not a 'religion' in the

sense this term is commonly understood. It is a system encompassing all fields of living. Islam

means politics, economics, legislation, science, humanism, health, psychology, and sociology."[49]

Mawdudi's teachings became influential, mainly because of his key consumers, Hassan al-Banna

and Sayyid Qutb.

Banna and Qutb were both Egyptians who, like Rida and Mawdudi, resisted Western

culture and sought to create an Islamic state. However, their methods differed. Hassan al-Banna

experienced the decline of his religion and blamed Western concepts such as nationalism,

constitutionalism, capitalism, and socialism. Unlike Qutb, who later rejected Western

---

[46] Haykel, *Blind Spot*, 24.

[47] Hegghammer, 17.

[48] Gorka, 65.

[49] Ibid.

civilization altogether, Banna sought to take these concepts and give them an Islamic spin.

Banna's ability to see the West as a threat, both intellectually and physically, caused him to

develop the idea that a popular uprising through a social reformation was necessary to eradicate

the "mental colonization" of Muslims by Western influence.[50] His assertion was "that the

civilization of the West, which was brilliant by virtue of its scientific perfection for a long time,

and which subjugated the whole world with the products of this science to its states and nations,

is now bankrupt in decline. Its foundations are crumbling, and its institutions and guiding

principles are falling apart."[51] Banna believed the way to reverse the course of Western

influence was through Islamic education, specifically through *da'wa*, or "missionary work,"

pointing back to Muhammad's call to spread Islam around the world. However, Banna's focus

was less on unbelievers and more towards Muslims who had drifted away from the religion,

which would be the core and strength of the Muslim community that could then direct their focus

and aggression towards unbelievers.[52]

While education was key to altering the mindset of the Muslim world, Banna's concept

of *da'wa* also included the concept of *jihad*, specifically a key concept many global jihadists use

in their own writing, which is the notion of *fard 'ayn*, an "individual duty" that obligated all

Muslims to contribute to the external struggle of a just war against infidels. His original focus

was on the "near enemy" of the Egyptian government, where he directed his focus through the

establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood. But his intention was to "expand to liberate every

piece of Islamic land that was under foreign dominion," and later spread to the rest of the

---

[50] Habeck, 30.

[51] Hassan al-Banna, "Toward the Light," *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts From Al-Banna to Bin Laden*, eds. Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 58.

[52] Habeck, 31.

world.[53] Banna believed the Islamic world was at a crossroads, and that a rejection of the

Western world was necessary because "the way of Islam, its principles and its fundamental

assumptions, is the only way that ought to be followed, and toward which the present and future

nation should be oriented."[54] Jihad for Banna became a "social duty God had delegated to

Muslims so that they would become an 'army of salvation' to rescue humanity and lead them

together on one path."[55]

While most of Banna's work focused on his *da'wa* and the establishment of social

Islamic institutions, as a way to both usurp the similar Western model to influence the world

through international institutions, the Muslim Brotherhood also had a secret armed element that

brought their concept of jihad to first the British occupation force, and later to the secular

Egyptian government. After the assassination of the Egyptian prime minister in 1948, Egyptian

police hunted down members of the Muslim Brotherhood and had them killed, including Banna.

In the decades that ensued, the Brotherhood publically declared they would no longer openly

support armed conflict against Arab governments; however, the Muslim Brotherhood has been

the impetus of many radical jihadi offshoots, including Hamas, which has focused its energy and

aggression on liberating Palestine and the evisceration of Israel.[56] Though Banna's death was a

significant short term blow to his organization, his legacy and ideas lived on through another key

member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb.

Sayyid Qutb built upon al-Banna's writing, but with a more radical twist having much

more serious ramifications for the Western world, specifically the United States. It was Qutb

who became a chief developer in the construction of the US as the "far enemy" and "Great

[53] Habeck, 31-32.

[54] Banna, "Toward the Light," *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, 57.

[55] Habeck, 33.

[56] Ibid., 34.

Satan" based on his experience within the US and what he believed to be a corrupt, materialistic, secular society steeped in ignorance of the divine guidance he called *jahiliyyah*.[57] Qutb viewed the US as the proponent for Banna's "mental colonization" of Western ideals and likened it to the embodiment of Satan, where he is "neither an imperialist nor an exploiter. He is a seducer, 'the insidious tempter who whispers in the hearts of men.'"[58] To Qutb, the US was not just a competitor in the "war of ideas," it was the epitome of everything wrong with the the Islamic world. He initially believed Arab governments, as the "near enemy," ruled in the model of "Arabic *jahiliyya*, a classic Islamic term for the period of paganism that prevailed in Arabia before the advent of the Prophet and Islam." But later, Qutb saw the influence of the US as the root cause of the problem and therefore, the deserving object of jihadi aggression and violence.

The Dividing Line: The Absolute Ideology of the Sunni Global Jihad

Global jihad networks are set apart from most other terror organizations because of their absolute ideology. Most terror organizations have an end state they want to achieve, a severe grievance they want addressed, or a government they want to delegitimize. But a global jihadist is unwilling to negotiate and will not bend on their totalitarian ideals to have Islam rule over the entire world. Islamism, specifically the Sunni global jihadist ideology, cannot coexist within the current global framework because they see it as illegitimate; this includes any man-made government or institution, specifically derived from the West. In the Islamic State's first publication of their government magazine, *Dabiq*, they declare the arrival of a new era:

---

[57] Qutb, *Milestones*, 10-11.

[58] Lewis, 78-81.

"Soon, by Allah's permission, a day will come when the Muslim will walk everywhere as a master, having honor, being revered, with his head raised high and his dignity preserved. Anyone who dares to offend him will be disciplined, and any hand that reaches out to harm him will be cut off. **So let the world know that we are living today in a new era.** Whoever was heedless must now be alert. Whoever was sleeping must now awaken. Whoever was shocked and amazed must comprehend. The Muslims today have a loud, thundering statement, and possess heavy boots.
They have a statement to make that will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism, and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy, and uncover its deviant nature."[59]

They have no desire to assimilate or deviate from their course. In the eyes of the global jihadist, Qutb's declarations within his writing renders liberalism, democracy, and any government or institution that adheres to these ideologies *haram*, or unclean. Therefore, global jihadists are not beholden to the traditional realm of global affairs including international institutions like the United Nations, governing statutes of international law, and even the UN adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Qutb plainly stated, the jihadi's "foremost objective is to change the practices of this [*jahili*] society. Our aim is to change the *Jahili* system at its very roots—this system which is fundamentally at variance with Islam, and which, with the help of force and oppression, is keeping us from living the sort of life which is demanded by our Creator."[60]

Like the Salafists, Qutb looked to first generation Muslims for how to live his life and return the Muslim world to the intentions of God and the Prophet Muhammad. He viewed the Qur'an and *hadith* as the "clear spring from which the first generation Muslims quenched their thirst . . . [and] the only mold in which they formed their lives."[61] This made any other writings, beliefs, doctrines, or creeds invalid and unfit to be implemented, specifically if it was not derived

---

[59] *Dabiq Magazine*, [Islamic State translated English edition], issue no.1, 2014, accessed 10 May 2016, https://halummu.wordpress.com/category/dabiq-magazine/, 5.

[60] Qutb, 21.

[61] Ibid., 16.

from God including the entire framework laid out by the Western world. Qutb believed "no

political system or material power should put hindrances in the way of preaching Islam. It

should leave every individual free to accept or reject it, and if someone wants to accept it, it

should not prevent him or fight against him. If someone does this, then it is the duty of Islam to

fight him until either he is killed or until he declares submission."[62] Despite the relative peace

and prosperity liberalism and democracy has brought to the world since the end of World War II,

the jihadists reject the very idea because the concept was not derived from Allah and the Qur'an.

Qutb explained in *Milestones*, the means to their ends is accomplished by abolishing "the

existing system and to replace it with a new system which is in its character, principles and all its

general and particular aspects, is different from the controlling *jahili* system."[63] As a harbinger

to future jihadi terror organizations like the Islamic State, he stated the method in which this

occurs is by having an organized movement "come into the battlefield with a determination that

its strategy, its social organization, and the relationship between its individuals should be firmer

and more powerful that the existing *jahili* system."[64] The global jihadists will not be satisfied

until the current world order has been usurped by their version of governance, and *jihad*, through

the evolution of its definition and use throughout Islamic tradition, becomes the rallying cry for

all true believers.

On 6 October, 1981, another jihadi writer, Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, along with

four other assassins, sought to change the landscape of the Middle East and send a message to

the "near enemy" within the Muslim world. While the assassination of the Egyptian president

Anwar Sadat was tragic, the true underlying message of Jama'at al-Jihad (the Jihad Group) was

---

[62] Qutb, 57.

[63] Ibid., 46-47.

[64] Ibid., 47.

written in Faraj's manifesto, *al-Farida al Gha'iba* (The Absent Duty). While Faraj, as a twenty-seven-year-old electrical engineer was not known as an Islamic scholar, he deeply impacted how the term *jihad* would be used in the future. His challenge to all Muslims who were "absent" in fulfilling their duty of jihad resonated with a wide audience. Additionally, he sought to connect jihad as a duty that held the imperative "to fight infidels by force of arms."[65]

Faraj accelerated the evolving definition of jihad. Jihad is routinely translated improperly as a "holy war," yet its true meaning more closely resembles the words "struggle" or "strife." If the original meaning was supposed to reflect fighting or war, it would have been known as either *qital* or *harb*. Regardless of its original intent, Faraj sought to once and for all redefine the "struggle" and eliminate "all textual ambiguities and interpretive complexities in an effort to delegitimize the multiple meanings jihad has carried for Muslims past and present."[66] As a believer influenced by the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya, al-Banna, Mawdudi, and Qutb, he saw all previous definitions and debates about the term jihad as a distraction from the present mission of fulfilling the "neglected duty" of jihad, specifically against the "near enemy." He, like Qutb, saw modernity as "a condition of moral bankruptcy that, although Western in origin, has come to corrode the umma from within as a result of so-called Muslim rulers who claim for themselves the sovereignty that belongs exclusively to Allah."[67]

In his manifesto, "The Neglected Duty," Faraj declared *jihad* as the duty of every individual Muslim to fight, and by fight, he clearly laid out the definition as "confrontation and blood."[68] He also breaks down *jihad* into three aspects that are not successive in nature, but are rather ongoing obligations of the faith, including "Jihad against one's own soul, Jihad against the

---

[65] "Muhammad 'Abd Al-Salam Faraj," *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, 321.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., 322.

[68] Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, "The Neglected Duty," *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, 340.

devil, and jihad against the infidels and the hypocrites."[69] He also highlights the global jihadists'

supreme honor, dying as a martyr for the cause, and by engaging in the small act of jihad one

receives a great reward in the afterlife.[70]

Faraj explicitly cites the Qur'an, based on his understanding, to justify his beliefs and

definition of jihad. On the obligation of jihad, he stated "fighting is prescribed for [all

Muslims]" (Quran 2:216).[71] He also quoted Ibn Taymiyya, who wrote, "any group of people that

rebels against any single prescript of the clear and reliably transmitted prescripts of Islam has to

be fought, according to the leading scholars of Islam, even if the members of this group

pronounce the Islamic confession of faith."[72] Faraj clearly delineated the opponents of their

struggle and put a target on their backs.

Faraj lays out the priorities for *jihad* as combating the "near enemy" first, then shifting

focus to the imperialists as the "far enemy." During this struggle, he declares three key areas of

focus: "To fight an enemy who is near is more important than to fight an enemy who is far . . .

Muslim blood will be shed in order to realize this victory . . . [and] the basis of the existence of

imperialism in the lands of Islam are [Muslim apostate] rulers."[73] Faraj explains his intent in a

very methodical process, where jihadists had to "concentrate on [their] own Islamic situation: we

have to establish the rule of God's religion in our own country first, and to make the Word of

God supreme . . . There is no doubt that the first battlefield for jihad is the extermination of these

infidel leaders and to replace them by a complete Islamic order." This roadmap for global jihadi

success is copied by other global jihadi terror organizations, as evident by the execution of this

---

[69] Faraj, 341.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 340.

[72] Ibid., 336.

[73] Ibid., 336-337.

strategy by the Islamic State, which launched their offensive in 2014 and quickly declared an Islamic caliphate within the boundaries of their newly gained territory.

Like other jihadists, Faraj also cites "the verse of the sword," but with a twist. Feeding off of previous Quranic scholars' interpretations of the verse, he cites that this verse "canceled every treaty between the Prophet . . . and any infidel, and every contract and every term."[74] He uses the concept and logic of abrogation to declare any prior verses of scripture pointing to the possibility of coexistence or peace with infidels to be null and void. In fact, he declares even the debate to be "superfluous to repeat the abrogation of the command to live in peace with the infidels at each Qur'anic passage (where this is relevant)."[75] This makes infidels and apostates within Islam opponents in his fight involving "confrontation and blood," an absolute tenant of future global jihadists who read Faraj, including a similar scholar from Palestine deeply involved in the Soviet-Afghan War in the 1980s.

Holy War Inc.—Production of Persistent Conflict

Abdullah Yusuf Mustafa Azzam, described by some Western analysts as "the godfather of jihad," was an Islamic cleric involved in recruitment for the Afghan mujahedin. Also known as "the imam of jihad" by radical Islamists, Azzam played a central role in the development of the global jihadist movement during the Soviet-Afghan War, along with his protégé, Usama bin Laden. Azzam conceptualized the coining of *jihad* as a battle cry by rebranding it as the individual duty of all Muslims, usurping the formal requirement to be declared by a caliph. This streamlined the process for Muslims fighting in conflicts against infidels or apostate regimes to

---

[74] Faraj, 337.

[75] Ibid.

appeal to the entire Muslim community for assistance and opened the floodgates for the Afghan

struggle and future conflicts to foreign fighters.[76]

In 1984 he wrote the book, *In Defense of the Muslim Lands*, which cemented his stances

that became the foundation of al-Qaeda's global jihad ideology. Beginning with the first chapter,

the reader begins to see ties to previous jihadi scholars, starting with a quote from Ibn Taymiyya

stating, "The first obligation after Iman is the repulsion of the enemy aggressor who assaults the

religion and the worldly affairs."[77] Adding to Taymiyya, he stated, "Neglecting the jihad is like

abandoning fasting and praying, more than that, neglecting the jihad is worse in these days . . .

[and in the circumstance of *Fard Ayn,* even] takes precedence over the *Fard* of Hajj."[78] Aside

from one's declaration of their faith, nothing was more sacred to the militant Islamist than jihad.

Echoing Faraj's message in "The Neglected Duty," Azzam points out the earliest Islamic

leaders were followed later by Muslims who neglected the rules laid out in the Qur'an and *hadith*

by Allah. Of the backsliding taking place in the Muslim world, none was more serious than "the

forgotten obligation of fighting."[79] Azzam outlines jihad as *fard*, or "compulsory, obligatory

duty," of which there are two kinds: *fard ayn* which holds the "greatest degree of obligation" and

fard kifaya which is "initially compulsory, but voluntary upon fulfillment of specific

conditions."[80]

Azzam also postulated that Allah sent his messenger Muhammad as the last prophet who

was supposed to bring the religion of Islam "victory by the sword and spear."[81] He then backs

---

[76] Gorka, 66-67.

[77] Dr. Abdullah Azzam, *Defense of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation After Iman*, 1984, accessed 15 April 2016, http://thegorkabriefing.com/book-defense-of-the-muslim-lands-by-dr-abdullah-azzam/, chapter 1.

[78] Azzam, *Defense of the Muslim Lands*, chapter 3.

[79] Ibid., chapter 1.

[80] Ibid., glossary.

[81] Ibid., chapter 1.

up his claim by citing a quote from Muhammad in a hadith narrated by Ahmad and Tabarani stating, "I have been raised between the hands of the Hour with the sword, until Allah the Exalted is worshipped alone with no associates."[82] This rhetoric hardly sounds like an ideology intended to allow religious tolerance and multiculturalism, nor does it sound like an adversary willing to reconcile.

In waging jihad against the *kuffar*, or infidel, Azzam breaks the struggle down into two types: offensive and defensive jihad. The defensive jihad is relatively straightforward and involves the invasion of the *kuffar* on Muslim soil, as was the case in the conflict of the Soviet-Afghan War, as well as Palestine according to Azzam's writing. Under these circumstances, *jihad* becomes an obligatory mandate on the entire Muslim community for *fard ayn*, with the goal of expelling the infidels from the Muslim territory. *Fard ayn* under defensive jihad circumstances require the *umma* to drop everything and come to the aid of their fellow Muslims, requiring "children [to] march forth without the permission of the parents, the wife without the permission of her husband and the debtor without the permission of the creditor."[83] Under the defensive struggle, the obligation "spreads in the shape of a circle from the nearest to the next nearest . . . until it becomes *Fard Ayn* upon the entire world."[84]

The offensive jihad is not extensively covered in his book, but he does plant seeds hinting at indiscriminate terror by stating that in offensive jihad, fighting becomes *fard kifaya* with the minimum requirement of appointing believers to guard borders, and the sending of an army at least once a year to terrorize the enemies of Allah."[85] This is coupled with later discussion regarding martyrdom and possible suicide bombing while fighting against an aggressor. As for

---

[82] Azzam, chapter 1.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

martyrdom, Azzam cites a *hadith* narrated by Ahmad and Abu Daud declaring, "Whoever is killed protecting his wealth, he is a martyr. Whoever is killed protecting his blood, he is a martyr. Whoever is killed protecting his family, he is a martyr."[86] The justification for indiscriminate targeting of infidels includes the declaration by Ibn Taymiyya stating, "If with the *Kuffar* there are pious people from the best of mankind and it is not possible to fight these *Kuffar* except by killing them, then they are to be killed as well . . . [additionally] if the aggression of a Muslim aggressor cannot be stopped except by killing him, then he must be killed, even if his transgression is over a fraction of a dinar."[87] Under these teachings, Azzam channels the writings of Sayyid Qutb and equates jihad to "*Da'wah* (missionary work) with a force, and is obligatory to perform with all available capabilities, until there remains only Muslims or people who submit to Islam."[88] These absolute declarations eliminate the possibility of negotiations, reconciliation, or compromise; theirs is a zero sum game.

The transition from defensive jihad by way of guerrilla warfare in conflict zones to the indiscriminate targeting of offensive jihad is where the classical and global jihadists part ways, and where, in the mid-1990s, Usama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and their organization Al Qaeda, codified their doctrine for global jihadism.[89] From this perspective, the global jihadist sought to take their fight to the enemy, both at home and abroad, specifically to America as the "far enemy." In this regard, bin Laden believed "the fight against non-Muslim powers involved in the oppression of Muslims as more important than the fight against corrupt Muslim governments."[90] This is a key disparity in the al-Qaeda strategy when contrasted with the

---

[86] Azzam, chapter 1.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Hegghammer, 7.

[90] Ibid.

strategy of the Islamic State. While both envision an end state with an established Islamic caliphate governing the entire world, bin Laden focused on the United States as the "Great Satan" that needed to be dealt with prior to the establishment of the caliphate.

Evidence of the influence of militant Islamic scholars such as Sayyid Qutb and Abdullah Azzam on the development of the global jihad ideology propagated by al-Qaeda is the presence of their published works on Usama bin Laden's bookshelf the night of the US raid on his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan in May 2011.[91] Had Azzam not been killed by a bomb in Peshawar in November 1989, he likely would have been the leader of al-Qaeda rather than Usama bin Laden. However, his death paved the way for bin Laden's rise to prominence as the leader of the global jihad movement, which made drastic gains in the 1980s due to the protracted Soviet-Afghan War, where he and Azzam worked together through the creation of the "Services Bureau." Azzam served as the leader and ideologue while bin Laden bankrolled much of the endeavor as the organization's financier. Utilizing his Saudi contacts, bin Laden fundraised and recruited Arab volunteers for the Afghan mujahedin, in addition to his limited role as a fighter.[92]

In 1989, with a developed jihadi ideology, credibility from his combat experience, and a rolodex full of contacts, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia in search of the next fight. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, bin Laden pleaded with the Saudi minister of defense, Prince Sultan, to lead a contingent of Muslims to expel Saddam Hussein's forces. Instead, Saudi Arabia decided to call on its Western allies, led by the United States to protect the holy lands of Islam. After a few regional endeavors in Yemen and his subsequent expulsion from Saudi Arabia, bin Laden temporarily set up camp in Sudan before he wound up in Afghanistan where he turned his

---

[91] Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "Bin Laden's Bookshelf, accessed 14 May 2016, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/resources/bin-laden-bookshelf.

[92] Omar Saghi, "Introduction," *Al-Qaeda In Its Own Words*, eds. Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 18-19.

attention and violent aggression towards the United States as the "far enemy," and its ally, Saudi Arabia, which he blamed for the collapse of the Islamic caliphate under the Ottoman empire.[93]

On 23 August 1996, Usama bin Laden, declared a defensive jihad on the United States where he called on the Muslim world to "expel the polytheists from the Arabian peninsula."[94] Straight out of Sayyid Qutb's playbook, he painted Muslims as victims of Western influence, and were under attack by the American infidels who occupied the Islamic holy land during the 1990s. Similar to Abdullah Azzam's writings, he advocated for a defensive jihad, basing his argument and violent advocacy against the United States because "the people of Islam have been afflicted with oppression, hostility, and injustice by the Judeo-Christian alliance and its supporters. This shows our enemies' belief that Muslims' blood is the cheapest and that their property and wealth is merely loot."[95] Further blaming America as the leader of the West, stating the that plight of the Muslim world "has happened before the eyes and ears of the world, but the blatant imperial arrogance of America, under the cover of the immoral United Nations, has prevented the dispossessed from arming themselves. So the people of Islam realized that they were the fundamental target of the hostility of the Judeo-Crusader alliance."[96] For the remainder of his lifetime, bin Laden would focus his energy on the United States as the "Great Satan."

Bin Laden took the meaning of *jihad* as a holy war, as defined by Faraj and expanded on Azzam's concept of fighting guerrilla warfare in a defensive jihad to expel infidel invaders from Muslim lands, and morphed it into a justification that brought the global ideology to its present state. In fact, bin Laden's "great historical significance is that he managed to change jihad from

---

[93] Saghi, *Al-Qaeda In Its Own Words*, 22-23.

[94] Osama bin Laden, "Declaration of Jihad," *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*, ed. Bruce Lawrence, (New York: Verso, 2005), 24.

[95] Bin Laden, "Declaration of Jihad," *Messages to the World*, 25.

[96] Ibid.

guerrilla warfare in faraway lands to the mass murder of civilians on the soil of Western

nations—especially America,"[97] culminating in the attacks on September 11th, 2001. Global

jihadism thrust itself onto the international stage, killing almost 3,000 Americans in a single

morning. That morning, many Americans asked themselves, "Why would anyone carry out such

unconscionable acts of terror on innocent civilians?" Fifteen years later, it is a question

Americans continue to ask about the Islamic State, an organization with differing methods, yet

cut from the same jihadi cloth.

The Hubris of America's Perception

America is perceived by many in the international community as a unifying power that

created or affirmed many institutions since World War II and spread democracy beyond the

western hemisphere. Americans tend to view the world through a liberalist lens, regarding the

United States as a global force spreading democracy and goodwill to the far reaches of the

planet. In 2005, former Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice attributed the advancements made

through American grand strategy enacted after WWII to the promotion of democracy and

American values. She also highlighted how "[m]ajor states are increasingly competing in peace,

not preparing for war . . . Together we are building a more lasting and durable form of global

stability: a balance of power that favors freedom."[98] However, despite the relative security

formed through America's democratic peace theory, including the incorporation of international

institutions and the promotion of international law and human rights, threats to our security and

---

[97] Gorka, 68.

[98] Condoleeza Rice, "The Promise of Democratic Peace," *The Washington Post*, published 11 December 2005, accessed 09 January 2016, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/09/AR2005120901711.html, 1.

way of life persist predominantly from non-state actors and international terrorist organizations fueled by the global jihadist ideology.

Secretary Rice argued, "When people, goods and information traverse the globe as fast as they do today, transnational threats such as disease or terrorism can inflict damage comparable to the standing armies of nation-states."[99] Violent extremist organizations (VEOs) pose the greatest threat to America, namely, the persistent conflict with radical Islamic extremism and the ideology of global jihad, and are facilitated by failed and weak states utilized as safe havens and staging areas to export violence. President Obama reinforced this perception in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech. He claimed our democratization promoted the "ideals of liberty and self-determination, equality and the rule of law have haltingly advanced. We are the heirs of the fortitude and foresight of generations past, and it is a legacy for which my own country is rightfully proud."[100] However, what matters more than how we perceive ourselves, is how others perceive us, and it is the global jihadists who roundly reject every facet of our way of life.

Only by looking through the lens of our most radical adversaries can we understand their strategy. In doing so, we should reflect on the shortcomings of the current US counterterrorism strategy, specifically its inability to effectively address the ongoing war of ideas with a counter-narrative. While it is true the territory under Islamic State control in Iraq and Syria is slowly contracting, the disconcerting fact is their ideology continues to spread and inspire attacks in 26 different countries on five different continents within the first three months of 2016.[101]

---

[99] Rice, 1.

[100] President Barack Obama, "Remarks of the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize," Oslo, Norway, 10 December 2009, accessed 18 October 2015, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/obama-lecture.html, 2.

[101] Elliot Friedland, "Brussels: What We Can Learn From Today's Attacks," *ClarionProject.org,* published 22 March 2016, accessed 26 March 2016, http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/three-takeaways-brussels-attacks.

Opponents and critics, including jihadists such as Sayyid Qutb and Usama bin Laden, regard America as a polarizing hegemon imposing its will and way of life on many unwilling to accept it. America's influence, in the form of both hard and soft power, is magnified by ongoing globalization and access to the Internet, making US encroachment on the global landscape a direct threat to differing culture, livelihood, and more specifically, radical ideology. These aspects of America's persona feeds the Sunni global jihadist's narrative that man-made ideas, secular materialism, and international institutions are inconsistent with the world they are attempting to establish, branding us the leader of a "Judeo-crusader alliance" with which they are unwilling to coexist.[102]

The False Hope of Coexistence

While it is true the United States is not at war with Islam, it is also true we are at war with militant Islamists, specifically global jihadist organizations unwilling to negotiate or accept any manifestation of the Western world. Global jihadism is a small fraction of Muslims across the globe, but to dismiss them as "un-Islamic" is a false narrative that conflates our understanding of their ideology and the theology they rely on for both motivation and propaganda. Failing to heed their warnings, appreciate the absolutism of their doctrine, and the sustainability of their long term strategy of persistent conflict dooms our National Security Strategy, specifically our counterterrorism efforts. Understanding that global jihadists value patience, we must acknowledge we are in a multi-generational conflict, one that cannot be won through only military means, and one that must be won from within the Muslim community to have a lasting effect. It is a long war which will require America to adjust its strategy against the Islamic State

---

[102] Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Knights Under the Prophet's Banner," *Al Qaeda In Its Own Words*, 202.

and other global jihadist groups and employ all its instruments of national power, specifically in the information domain. However, with humility, the US must understand the issue extends well beyond the perceived threat global jihadists pose to our its interests. America must recognize the problem is bigger than its own concerns, and in some aspects, beyond its own reach. There is no silver bullet for this crisis.[103]

In a war of ideas, perception matters. US strategists and foreign policy makers must understand how our enemy views global affairs and their own strategy so that we can deconstruct it, rather than "second imaging" their ideology viewed from our perspective.[104] Believing al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are irrational savages committing random acts of barbarism could not be further from the truth. We must acknowledge global jihad networks are rational and executing the marching orders of the ideology to which they subscribe.[105] To combat this strain of enemy, specifically the Sunni global jihadists, we must understand their ideology, because "ultimately, we cannot efficiently fight organizations that we do not understand."[106] However, we must also recognize as outsiders to the problem, that our ability to affect immediate positive change in the Muslim community to eradicate the global jihadist ideology is extremely limited.

Currently, we are only treating the symptoms of the disease rather than addressing the root cause of the cancer that continues to spread globally. But rather than approaching the global jihadist ideology as a problem to *solve*, we must realize it is a problem that must be *managed* and *contained*. The most effective way to do this is by maintaining pressure on global jihadists, specifically the Islamic State, through kinetic strikes, limited raids on high valued targets, and

---

[103] Professor Bernard Haykel, interview by author, Princeton, NJ, May 18, 2016.

[104] Professor Jacob N. Shapiro, interview by author, Princeton, NJ, April 05, 2016.

[105] Jacob N. Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 18-20.

[106] Shapiro, *The Terrorist Dilemma*, 25.

supporting allies like the Kurds. But we must also be more active in getting our Arab allies in the region involved, specifically Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, and the UAE. Much of the volatility and conflict in the Middle East is not inherently *with* Islam, rather it is *within* Islam.[107] It is through the efforts of other Muslims, likely including significant bloodshed, that the Islamic State and its global jihadist ideology can lose its luster.[108]

Like communism, global jihadism is an ideology that will take a long time to delegitimize in the eyes of its followers and ardent supporters. But unlike communism, our overt and over-reactive involvement in the effort to diffuse this radical ideology can lend itself to have unintended consequences if we fail to proceed with caution.[109] Although we are a strong world power, the US must accept the limited influence it has in effecting the change needed in the Middle East to kill this ideology; it must come within the *umma*, those who are part of the community and ascribe to the religion of Islam. The best the US can do is continue to lead globally, but assume an active support role in the defeat of this ideology, and continue to conduct trauma management with this disease to prevent its spread to our homeland, kinetically and non-kinetically. Terrorism cannot be completely eliminated, but that does not mean the US and its allies should not formulate an international, long-term, coordinated strategy to limit both the operational capabilities *and* motivation of the global jihadist.[110]

The key distinguishing factor between communism, democracy, capitalism, and the global jihad ideology is the source by which they are derived. The reason some within the Muslim community, such as Sayyid Qutb, turned to jihadism is because they believe every other man-made framework has failed in bringing them peace, stability, and promise, including

---

[107] Dr. Boaz Ganor, interview by author, Herzliyya, Israel, July 18, 2016.

[108] Haykel interview, Princeton, NJ, May 18, 2016.

[109] See original comments on "Islamophobia."

[110] Dr. Boaz Ganor, Lecture on "CT & Security Dilemmas," Herzliyya, Israel, July 11, 2016.

democracy. In this light, they will never turn to Jeffersonian ideals until the global jihad ideology loses its appeal within the disenfranchised Muslim population. The global jihadists point to man-made models of governance and lifestyles due to globalization and American influence and highlight its failure to bring prosperity to the Muslim world.

The current antibody of the ideology is their claim to have inherited a Middle East that has been wrecked by centuries of man-made models and Western influence. Their appeal is through blaming the Muslim world's abandonment of God as the cause that has inflicted them with their present failures and subjugation to Western influence and man-made governance. The global jihadist ideology has experienced enduring success within the Muslim community because they promise their followers by adhering to their radical ideology and joining their cause, they can precipitate a resurgence of greatness for the Muslim world. Fortunately, for the US and its allies, they are "pedaling a fantasy based on a loose memory of history with no legs or substance."[111]

Ultimately, their message promises everything, but is vague in the process by which they will achieve their end state other than through apocalyptic prophesy.[112] The final victory over this ideology can be achieved once the Islamic State implodes, other jihadi terror organizations such as Al-Qaeda are degraded, and voices within the Middle East are courageous enough to point out their failures and move towards a moderate, and hopefully democratic, framework in line with Jefferson's dying wish for the world. Until then, the US must support its Muslim allies and help them accelerate the very apocalyptic ending the global jihadists desire; not for the entire world, but only for those irreconcilables who refuse to coexist in it.

---

[111] Professor Bernard Haykel, interview by author, Princeton, NJ, May 18, 2016.

[112] Ibid.

Bibliography

Allan, Roger and Shawkat M. Toorawa, eds. *Islam: A Short Guide to the Faith*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011.

Azzam, Dr. Abdullah. *Defense of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation After Iman*. 1984. Accessed 15 April 2016. http://thegorkabriefing.com/book-defense-of-the-muslim-lands-by-dr-abdullah-azzam/.

Byman, Daniel. *Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Burns, Nicholas and Jonathon Price, eds. *Blind Spot: America's Response to Radicalism in the Middle East*, Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2015.

Cockburn, Patrick. *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution*. New York: Verso, 2015.

Dabiq Magazine [Islamic State translated English edition]. Issue No.1. 2014. Accessed 10 May 2016. https://halummu.wordpress.com/category/dabiq-magazine/.

Euben, Roxanne L. and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds. *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts From Al-Banna to Bin Laden*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Friedland, Elliot. "Brussels: What We Can Learn From Today's Attacks." *ClarionProject.org*. Published 22 March 2016. Accessed 26 March 2016. http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/three-takeaways-brussels-attacks.

Ganor, Boaz. *Global Alert: The Rationality of Modern Islamist Terrorism and the Challenge to the Liberal Democratic World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

Gorka, Dr. Sebastian. *Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2016.

Habeck, Mary. *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Haykel, Bernard. "The Laws of Jihad." Lecture presented at Radicalization Conference, Princeton, NJ, June 01-03, 2015.

Hegghammer, Thomas. *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism Since 1979*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

The Holy Bible, New King James Version (NKJV). Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.

Jefferson, Thomas. "Thomas Jefferson to Roger Weightman. June 24, 1826." *The Library of Congress.* Accessed 23 March, 2016. http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/214.html.

Kepel, Gilles and Jean-Pierre Milelli, eds. *Al-Qaeda In Its Own Words*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008.

Lahoud, Nelly. "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Jihadist Ideology." *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 3, Issue 10, October 2010.

Lawrence, Bruce, ed. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*. New York: Verso, 2005.

Lewis, Bernard. *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*. NY: Random House, 2004.

McCants, William. *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015.

Meijer, Roel, ed. *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Obama, President Barack. "Remarks of the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize." Oslo, Norway, 10 December 2009. Accessed 18 October 2015. http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/obama-lecture.html.

Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "Bin Laden's Bookshelf," accessed 14 May 2016, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/resources/bin-laden-bookshelf.

Poushter, Jacob. "Extremism Concerns Growing in West and Predominantly Muslim Countries." *Pew Research Center*. Published 16 July 2015. Accessed 15 May 2016. http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/07/16/extremism-concerns-growing-in-west-and-predominantly-muslim-countries/.

Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. New Dehli: Islamic Book Service, 2002.

Rice, Condoleeza. "The Promise of Democratic Peace." *The Washington Post*. Published 11 December 2005. Accessed 09 January 2016. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/09/AR2005120901711.html.

Shapiro, Jacob N. *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

United States Declaration of Independence.

The White House. *National Security Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: February 2015. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.

Wood, Graeme. "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*. March 2015 Issue. Accessed 14 May 2016. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/.