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Contemporary Operational Environment Update

Inside The Jihadi Mind

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Jan 27, 2004

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Know Your Enemy

“If you know yourself but do not know your enemy, you will sometimes meet with victory, sometimes with defeat. If you know your enemy but do not know yourself, you will sometimes meet with victory, sometimes with defeat. But if you know yourself and you know your enemy, you will be victorious on a hundred occasions.”

Sun-Tsu
(The Art of War)

“Those who have a warped mind, a mind of discord, have been defeated from the beginning.”

Morihei Ueshiba
(Founder of Aikido)

“Muslims look forward to death the way Americans look forward to life.”

Osama bin Laden
(Islamic Terrorist)
Inside The Jihadi Mind

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- YOUR Motivations

\[\text{Jihad, Arabic: “Struggle”} \quad \text{Jihad, Arabic: “Warrior”} \quad \text{Islamist, English: Islamic Extremist}\]

Individually as in “spiritual struggle”, Collectively as in WAR

IMPORTANT NOTE: The use of Terms.

This briefing addresses a delicate, and sensitive issue: the idea of religious warfare as such as the one being prosecuted against the United States and its allies by a particular group of religious extremists. It is CRITICAL to distinguish the terms used in this briefing. Like any religion, the religion of Islam is broadly interpreted in a variety of ways by different people and groups. These terms will help clarify this briefing.

This briefing refers to “ISLAM” and “ISLAMIC” to refer generally to the broad range of religious, cultural and socio-economic values and assumptions that are shared among the diverse adherents to the Islamic faith.

This briefing refers to “ISLAMISTS” (“Islamic Fundamentalists”, “Fundamentalists”, “Extremists”) and requires that these terms be understood to refer to those Islamic extremists who have, by their words and actions, defined themselves as the enemies of all that is NOT in agreement with their view and are currently executing a violent campaign against those who do not share their agenda – primarily the U.S. This term does NOT refer to “all Muslims” nor Muslims of any particular denomination or sect of the broader religion of Islam. It refers ONLY to those Muslim extremists who are engaged in using violent means to expand the influence of their particular view of Islam. Some of these religious, and socio-political views are shared among most or even all Muslims. However, those views which have motivated Islamist, Fundamentalist Extremists to violent action are generally shared ONLY by those groups.

“JIHAD” is an Arabic term that is used for any “struggle” INCLUDING warfare. It is frequently interpreted in a religious context as “Holy War” but CAN mean “struggle” as in a struggle to overcome a personal limitation or a “struggle” to understand a new point of view.

“JIHADI” is one who struggles or “fights”. In the context of a religiously inspired “Holy War”, a “Jihadi” is a “Holy Warrior”. 
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Religious/Sociological Outlook

**Religious Motivation**

- Ultimate Justice
- Fatalism: Guaranteed Victory (on earth)
- Guarantee of "Heaven"

**Sociological Values**

- Oppressed = Good
- Good = Assured Victory
- Victory = "Heaven"

How Do These Motivations And Values Impact On The Operational Environment?

Islam a profoundly comprehensive and complex system composed of religion, politics, law and social development. Like any religion or ideology, Islam has always perpetuated a set of sociological assumptions which are the result of its religious dogma. Islam expresses profound concern for the "oppressed" and in the process recognizes the inherent "Good" of those people who are "oppressed" and seeks therefore to redeem them into its own complex world view. At the same time, the religious dogma provides the essential values to the sociological and political domains to guide their functioning. The result is a symbiotic loop, a mutually supportive set of social values and religious motivations.

Religious Characteristics of Motivation

Ultimate Justice = God will make a perfect world, the poor and oppressed will be empowered
Fatalism = The religious view that all actions and events are pre-destined and inescapable
Guarantee of Heaven = Islam offers guaranteed "paradise" ONLY to those who die while fighting for the faith

Sociological Values Underpinning Motivation

Oppressed (which has come to identify the economically disenfranchised) are Good; oppressors (any nation or group who are empowered) are Evil
The Good (the oppressed) are assured a predestined victory over the Evil (the oppressors) in Islam
Victory in the ultimate sense will be established when Islam rules the earth and has subdued all of Allah’s enemies (the rich, oppressor nations)

These factors form the primary motivations of the modern Islamist Jihadi (warrior) and underlie most or all of his decisions and actions.
Operational Environment - Critical Variables Addressed

- Ideology Impacts Upon:
  - Sociological Demographics,
  - Nature of the State
  - Regional/Global Relationships,
  - Economics
  - Information
  - Individual Motivation

People function collectively.

Persons who share similar motivations, expectations, fears, desires, etc. are found in societies that form around those shared values. When compiled we can refer to these characteristics as “ideologies”. Religious ideologies like sociological, political and economic ideologies are shared among collectives such as nations, tribes, social classes, religions, etc. These ideologies often form the foundations of a modern state but are also at the root of many ideologically driven external organizations such as terrorist groups. These ideologies have broad impacts upon the operational environment:

- The shared sociological, political and/or religious ideologies impact upon the a nation or a terrorist group by informing it’s priorities and guiding its decisions. Societies, whether national or composed of smaller entities are defined by shared values and so the Social Demographics of a group or a nation are evident in their actions, laws, structure, and the limits they place on these things.

- The Nature of The State is largely determined by the values inherent in the ideologies embodied in the state’s concept of itself - whether consciously or unconsciously. For example, the laws of the state represent the values of the state itself. As another example, in a terrorist organization, the structure as well as the activities of the group will generally manifest their ideology.

- The ideology of a state or group will impact upon how that state or group will interact with other states in the realm of Regional and Global Relationships. Groups and states with shared ideologies will always tend to support each other and to assist each other in furthering their common agendas.

- Those same ideologies impact upon the Economics of the state (or group) by informing the priorities of such specific things as military spending, taxation and limits on trade for example.

- To the degree that the state controls the media of the nation, the values of the state are reflected in the media and Information sources available to the people. Thus, Information becomes a tool for propagating the values of the shared ideology.

Today it is possible to examine these variables of the Operational Environment by observing how states and external organizations choose to behave in each of these areas. For example, the theocracy of Iran has placed the military under religious leadership. Alliances are formed in the arena of international relations based upon common enemies as well as shared economic and social values. An example of this may be seen in the animosity for the United States shared by Cuba’s leaders and those of Iran. An open society by definition tolerates a multiplicity of views in all areas from religious to political while a more ideologically "pure" society will often focus on systematically eliminating any and all dissenting views.
A Brief History of Islam

1. Early Period (610 – 1517)
   - Foundation of the Community
   - Expansion & Growth
   - At the Limits: Conflict with the West
2. Ottoman Empire
3. Modern Reformation (Fundamentalism)

Islam spread by multiple means among the Arabs and beyond:
Islam owes its successful propagation to:
1. Religious Fervor
2. The resulting socioeconomic reforms
3. Political intrigue
4. The sword

For a brief review, we can divide the history of Islam into 3 eras: the Early Period, the Ottoman era and the Modern Reformation

1.) This period includes the Founding of the “Ummah” or “community”, the later rulers including the he Caliphs, up through the Crusades.
   
   The Caliphs include principally the competing Umayyad and Abbasid rulers. During this time Damascus became the capital of an Islamic world which stretched from the western borders of China to southern France. The later Abbasids arose and dominated the world of Islam for about 500 years. They shifted the capital to Baghdad. This era produced a number of powerful dynasties such as the Fatimids, Ayyubids and Mamluks who held power in Egypt, Syria and Palestine

   After the Abbasids captured Damascus, Islam expanded to Spain and N. Africa. The Umayyads migrated to Spain to found Umayyad rule there, thus beginning the golden age of Islam in Spain. The Umayyads ruled over two centuries until they weakened and were replaced by local rulers. Meanwhile in North Africa, various local dynasties held sway until two powerful Berber dynasties succeeded in uniting much of North Africa and also Spain in the 12th and 13th centuries. Muslim power continued to decline in Spain until the last Muslim dynasty was defeated in Granada in 1492 thus bringing nearly eight hundred years of Muslim rule in Spain to an end.

   In the early Thirteenth Century, the Mongols devastated the eastern lands of Islam and ruled from the Sinai Desert to India for a century. But they soon converted to Islam and became known as the Il-Khanids. They were in turn succeeded by Timur and his descendents who made Samarqand, (in modern Uzbekistan) their capital and ruled from 1369 to 1500.
Inside The Jihadi Mind

A Brief History of Islam

- Early Period
- **Ottoman Era (1290 – 1918)**
  - Height of Expansion
  - Geo-cultural Diversity
  - Beginning of Apostasy
  - Ultimately Defeated by the West (WWI)
- Modern Reformation

2. The Ottoman Empire

In 1453 Mehmet the Conqueror captured Constantinople and put an end to the Byzantine empire. The Ottomans conquered much of eastern Europe and nearly the whole of the Arab world, only Morocco and Mauritania in the West and Yemen, Hadramaut and parts of the Arabian peninsula remaining beyond their control. They reached their zenith of power with Suleyman the Magnificent whose armies reached Hungary and Austria. From the 17th century onward with the rise of Western European powers and later Russia, the power of the Ottomans began to wane as European Colonialism took root around much of the world, including the Arab and Muslim world. But they nevertheless remained a force to be reckoned with until the First World War when they were defeated by the Western nations. Soon thereafter Kamal Ataturk gained power in Turkey and abolished the six centuries of rule of the Ottomans in 1924 supplanting the last unified Muslim empire with a secular government.

At the height of European colonial expansion in the 19th century, most of the Islamic world was under colonial rule with the exception of a few regions such as the heart of the Ottoman empire, Persia, Afghanistan, Yemen and certain parts of Arabia. But even these areas were under foreign influence or, in the case of the Ottomans, under constant threat. After the First World War with the breakup of the Ottoman empire, a number of Arab states such as Iraq became independent, others like Jordan were created as a new entity and yet others like Palestine, Syria and Lebanon were either mandated or turned into French colonies. As for Arabia, it was at this time that Saudi Arabia became finally consolidated. As for other parts of the Islamic world, Egypt which had been ruled by the descendents of Muhammad Ali since the 19th century became more independent as a result of the fall of the Ottomans, Turkey was turned into a secular republic by Ataturk, and the Pahlavi dynasty began a new chapter in Persia where its name reverted to its eastern traditional form of Iran. But most of the rest of the Islamic world remained under colonial rule.
3. The Modern Islamic Reformation or “Awakening”.

Islam, once a vast civilization seen as the reign of God on earth by its adherents is found in the early 20th century to be broken and fragmented by European colonialism and war with the West.

Muslims did not wish to gain only their political independence. They also wished to assert their own religious and cultural identity. From the 18th century onward, Muslim reformers appeared upon the scene who sought to reassert the teachings of Islam in their purest form and to reform society on the basis of these Islamic teachings. One of the first among this group was Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, who hailed from the Arabian peninsula and died there in 1792. This reformer was supported by Muhammad ibn al-Sa’ud, the founder of the first Saudi state. With this support Muhammad ibn ’Abd al-Wahhab was able to spread his teachings not only in Arabia but even beyond its borders to other Islamic lands where his reforms continue to wield influence to this day.

In the 19th century Islamic assertion took several different forms ranging from the Mahdi movement of the Sudan and the Sanusiyyah in North Africa which fought wars against European colonizers, to educational movements such as that of Aligarh in India aiming to reeducate Muslims. In Egypt which, because of al-Azhar University, remains to this day central to Islamic learning, a number of reformers appear, each addressing some aspect of Islamic thought. Some were concerned more with law, others economics, and yet others the challenges posed by Western civilization with its powerful science and technology. Wahabism had begun to expand throughout the Sunni world in the late 19th century.

In the 20th century various Islamic factions responded to what they saw as an apostasy of their religion (evidenced by the gradual failure of great Islamic empires; like the Ottomans) turned to more fundamental forms of Islam. In 1928 the Muslim Brotherhood was established in Egypt. This organization aimed principally at social and moral reform based upon Islam, and turned into a political group beginning in 1939. By 1948 thousands of mosques were sending fighters to rout the fledgling state of Israel. Shi'ite revolution in Iran of the 1970s and continuing with the Sunni Mujahadeen at war with Russia in Afghanistan saw a continued expansion of the “Islamic Awakening”. By returning to a fundamentalist theology, Muslims began en masse to see the opportunity for a rise of their religion to the ascendancy in the world, promised in their scriptures. With the fall of Russia in Afghanistan and the establishment of a fundamentalist shar’ia government there, the Jihadis around the world began to see that it was possible to defeat a great world empire and to fulfill the destiny of Muslims promised in the Koran and the Hadiths.
The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism

- Modern Fundamentalism
  - Shi’a Fundamentalism
  - Resurgence of Wahabism

- Materials of Islamic Fundamentalism
  - Koran
  - Hadiths
  - Fatwas

Since Western influence (commercial, cultural and religious) had penetrated more deeply into the fiber of Islamic society, organizations gradually grew up whose goal was to reform society in practice along Islamic lines and prevent its secularization. These included the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al-muslimin) founded in Egypt and with branches in many Muslim countries, and the Jama’at-i Islami of Pakistan founded by the influential Mawlana Mawdudi. These organizations began as peaceful cultural groups and had sought to reestablish an Islamic order through education. During the last half century, however, as a result of the frustration of many Muslims in the face of pressures coming from a secularized outside world, many have sought to reject the negative aspects of Western thought and culture and to return to an Islamic society based completely on the imposition of the Shari’ah. This has taken the form of the Shi’ite Revolution in Iran in the 1970’s and the resurgence of Wahabism among the dominant Sunni denomination.

Today in every Muslim country there are strong movements to preserve and propagate Islamic teachings. In countries such as Saudi Arabia, Islamic Law (Shar’ia) is established and is seen as the reason for the prosperity, development and stability of the country. In other countries not under Islamic Law however, most of the effort of the radical Islamic movements is spent in making possible the full application of the Shari’ah so that the nation can enjoy prosperity along with the fulfillment of the faith of its people. Today we see the widespread desire for Muslims to have the religious law of Islam applied and to reassert their religious values and their own identity. This has fostered the “return” to “fundamentals” including a strictly literal interpretation of the authoritative texts of Islam:

The Koran – The Koran is interpreted differently by different groups of Muslims. It is regarded by the Islamists as the literal, explicit and un-equivocated words of God to be understood and obeyed in their simplest most literal form.

The Hadiths – These are the written documents detailing the oral traditions of Islam and its prophet.

Fatwas – These are rulings from the Imams (Shi’ite) and the Mullahs (Sunni) leaders rendering authoritative interpretations of the Koran and Hadiths as applied to specific matters such as politics, war, law, religious practice, etc.
While the leaders and “middle management” of the Islamist movements are generally from the middle and upper classes of Muslim nations, the majority of these Islamic Fundamentalists are poor, disenfranchised, and disempowered within their own societies. Islamists from all economic classes view the more moderate rulers of their countries as corrupt, compromised and worse, apostate – astray from the principles revealed by God himself for the governance of God’s community: Dar al Islam (“the world of Islam”). The enormous differences in political and economic power between what they see as the virtuous, pious and Godly poor on the one hand and the opulent decadence of the wealthy ruling class on the other is an affront to the fundamental precepts of Islam as they see it. This simply should NOT BE, according to them, since the Koran and the Hadith promise victory to those obedient to the precepts of Islam. Nevertheless, these profound socio-economic differences persist in the Islamic world. This has bred a sort of collective cognitive dissonance among Islamists which serves to motivate them to “make things right!”

The vast and growing youth bulge evident in the broader Islamic world is producing generations of unemployed and, given the increasing technical standards of the modern world, unemployable young men. These men are typically at the peak of their physical abilities, psychologically pre-disposed toward territorial behaviors, and on the verge of what should be the life of a productive adult. But the socio-economics of their cultures do not permit them to advance to that stage of their lives. The frustration is consuming. They view the decadence of their political leaders as the result of their compromise with “Dar al Harb” the non-Islamic world – the West, the enemies of Islam as they understand it.
To the Islamic Fundamentalist the Koran is the explicit word of God giving direct orders regarding every aspect of life. Among the highest aspirations of Islam is to proselytize. Therefore when a disenfranchised and impoverished young man is taught by a religious authority to heed the words below in their most literal sense; he sees in this cause a reason to fight and to hope for a better world. In the Koran young Muslim men are directed to passages such as the following:

- "Make war on them (non-Muslims) until idolatry shall cease and God’s religion (Islam) shall reign supreme" (Sura 8:39)
- "Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fights in the cause of Allah, - whether he is slain or gets victory – soon shall We give him a reward of great value" –(Sura 4:74)
- "Fight against such of those... who... do not embrace the true faith, until they pay tribute out of hand and are utterly subdued"
- "Prophet, make war on the unbelievers and hypocrites and deal rigorously with them" (Sura 9:73)

Such words when seen as the actual, literal, explicit words of God make perfect and obvious sense to someone deprived of the benefits of the modern world, limited in world-view and oppressed by "corrupt apostates" who are making compromises with the "unbelievers and hypocrites" and fully justify the actions of terrorists before God himself!

Islam also provides a political model which, when applied literally, functions in profound contradiction to the normative democratic-style of rule of the Western world. In strict Islamist governments (such a the Taliban), the rule of the clergy is absolutely supreme. The Imams and Mullahs and Sheiks are seen as selected by God to rule. A challenge to the religious leadership is seen as a challenge to God. Any form of government which does not enthrone Islamic leaders as the supreme governmental authority is seen as part of the “Dar al Harb” – the “world of war” outside Islam, yet to be conquered for God. Any territory ONCE under Islamic rule is regarded as sacred ground (Dar al Islam – the world of submission, ie to God). Thus again the primacy of Israel since the Levant was at one time ruled by Muslim law.

Finally Islamic states are understood by Islamists to be under the direct rule of God (through the jurisprudence of Islamic leaders) via the implementation of Shar’ia or Islamic Law. The implementation of Shar’ia is the primary indicator of Islamic rule to Islamists and those Islamic nations that shun or even compromise Shar’ia are seen as apostate and subject to the righteous over-throw by Islamists.
Inside The Jihadi Mind

The Impact of Islamist *Info Warfare* on Muslim Populations

**Example:** Operation Iraqi Freedom

- Arabic Press Almost Uniformly **Biased**: Mostly State Controlled, Excludes Western View
- Arabic Press Notoriously **Inaccurate**: Reports of Iraqi Civilian Casualties Vary From 350 to 4,000 (as of 03/27/03)
- Strong Coverage of Specific Civilians Injured or Killed
- Wide Dissemination of Explicit, Powerful Imagery
- Strong Emphasis on Coalition Dead, Wounded and Captured

**OE Impact:**
- Increased Animosity to U.S.
- Less Educated, Less Media-Savy
- Youth Bulge: Future Jihadis
- Extremist Views Verified
- Moderates Negatively Effected

With the expansion of technology in the Middle-East and throughout the Arabic and Muslim world, it is natural that those who share the *Islamist* agenda and who are in positions of functional authority in the media are actively slanting the media coverage of events to enhance the *Islamist* message.

One example may be found in the treatment of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” received by the Arabic-language media. While coverage was balanced by SOME sources, the bias and disinformation campaigns were clearly evident as some sources clearly altered facts and added “spin” to their coverage amounting to a disinformation campaign. The net effect was to increase animosity against the United States and her allies among the Arabic-speaking audiences. This was likely to have the most effect on the very class of Muslims most likely to be turned to extremist action: the less-educated and the desperate youth. This was done by portraying OIF in such a way as to verify and validate *Islamist* views. The imagery and rhetoric of the *Islamist*-influenced media was clearly intended to sway moderate, non-Islamist Muslims to at least sympathize if not to actually act in support of the more extreme *Islamist* agenda.
The focus of the Islamist’s anger is threefold. Of primary concern is the re-established state of Israel—the historic predecessor of their own theocratic faith—as a bona-fide nation. At issue is the fact that, to the Islamist, the 1st century Jewish Diaspora was proof that God was now finished with the fickle Jewish nation. The identity as God’s chosen people descended from the biblical patriarch Abraham had been obviously revoked due to their failure to maintain the revelations of God. The mantle of prophecy is seen as having been passed to the Arabs—the alleged descendants of Abraham’s other son, Ishmael. Thus the validity of Islam itself rests at least in part upon the cessation of a Jewish homeland.

However, because Israel is fully recognized by Western nations and also fully supported by the West (and chiefly the United States) it is the West (and again, particularly the U.S.) that is the greater enemy. To recognize Israel is, to the Islamist, synonymous with opposing Islam and therefore God. The defeats issued by Israel to its surrounding Arab/Muslim neighbors in every open conflict since 1948 is recognized by the Islamists as only possible because of the economic, military, logistical and moral support offered by the West to their ancient enemy. Islamists perceive that the US (along with her allies) is the “big brother” to Israel as well as the global neighborhood bully. This makes the West the last major obstacle in the way of the Islamic mandate, as understood by Islamist extremists, to subdue the world for Allah and prepare it for the “Last Day” of judgment before God.

Third, the Modern commercial world is seen by Islamists as voraciously absorbing, homogenizing and conforming all cultures to itself. Islamic extremism is largely a cultural reaction against a dominant emerging modern world culture in which religious, cultural and national distinctions are lost. Islamists look back to the era when Islam’s dominance of the Mediterranean produced the rich cultural heritage, vast centers of learning and the accompanying profound and all-encompassing religion and are EXTREMELY reluctant to simply abandon the idyllic—and possibly revisionist—memories of that golden age all for a series of fast-food restaurants and sports-apparel stores. It is this face-less, commercialized world as seen by Islamists that is fully represented in the democratic, capitalistic and commercially successful nation of Israel and the rest of the non-Islamic world.
The Motivation of the Individual Jihadi

- Various and Complex
  - Nothing to Lose
  - Religious Duty
  - Only Guarantee of Paradise

" Muslims look forward to death the way Americans look forward to life” - Osama bin Laden

The victims of the current state of affairs in the Islamic world are the poor, the disenfranchised, those without any real hope of a better life. Increasingly they are young men, ripe for recruiting by organized groups executing Jihad in the world in order to expel the Western infidels from holy Islamic turf and to expand the world of Islam. The average young man in many Muslim lands from Palestine to Pakistan is afforded little or no reason to live. He is surrounded by others who have never had a reason to live. Like his friends, he has little or even nothing to lose. By contrast, Islam holds out the promise of an ultimate guaranteed victory over those who caused his plight as well as an eternal paradise surrounded by beautiful women in lush gardens.

There is no guarantee of salvation or heaven in Islam; Islam promises nothing to anyone... with one exception. The only persons guaranteed salvation (‘paradise’, -Heaven) are those who fight or die in battle for the cause of Islam. The Koran itself promises:

"Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fights in the cause of Allah, -whether he is slain or gets victory- soon shall We give him a reward of great value." – Sura 4:74

To those who have attained paradise many promises are made:
"As for the righteous, they shall surely triumph. Theirs shall be gardens and vineyards, and high- bosomed virgins for companions: a truly overflowing cup.” - Sura 37:40-48
“...They will sit with bashful, dark-eyed virgins, as chaste as the sheltered eggs of ostriches.” - Sura 44:51-55
“...Yes and We shall wed them to dark-eyed hoursis. (beautiful virgins) - Sura 52:17-20
“...They shall recline on couches ranged in rows. To dark-eyed hoursis (virgins) we shall wed them... “- Sura  55:56-57

"In them will be bashful virgins neither man nor Jinn will have touched before. Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny ?" - Sura 55:57-58

In order to understand their motivations, it is critical to understand that Islamist Muslims of the Fundamentalist variety believe every word of these promises without the slightest equivocations.
The various sects of Islam, in their oral tradition, and from the Koran, maintain a complex and intricate eschatology (Study of End Times, similar to the Bible’s Book of Revelation) dealing with the end of the age and the coming of a great world leader, or Mahdi to usher in the kingdom of God on earth.

The Prophet Muhammad himself prophesied about several events that will occur just before the advent of the day of judgment. Among these, Mohammad has foretold the advent of one of his descendants, Al Mahdi (the guided one), which will occur when Muslim believers are severely oppressed in every corner of the world. The Mahdi will fight the oppressors, unite the Muslims, bring peace and justice to the world, rule over the Arabs, and lead a prayer in Mekkah at which Isa (Jesus) will be present.

"It has been well known (and generally accepted) by all Muslims in every epoch, that at the end of time a man from the family (of the Prophet) will without fail make his appearance, one who will strengthen the religion and make justice triumph. The Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi. Following him, the Antichrist will appear, together with all the subsequent signs of the Hour (the Day of Judgment), as established in (the sound tradition) the Sahih. After (the Mahdi), Isa (Jesus) will descend and kill the Antichrist; or, Jesus will descend together with the Mahdi, and help him kill (the Antichrist), and have him as the leader in his prayers."


Islamic furor in past eras has resulted in many who claimed to be this great future world leader. Various Muslim leaders leading revolts against colonial era powers granted themselves this exalted title, no doubt in order to gain credibility and leadership among their followers. It is interesting to note that some of the detainees currently held at Guantnamo Bay have told interrogators they joined bin Laden's al-Qaida offensive because they think he is the "awaited enlightened one" and teh islamic internet is full of bulletin boards proclaiming Bin Ladin as the Mahdi. Many of the terrorists crossing the border into Iraq with al-Qaida ties are doing so because of their belief in this Islamic prophecy. Saddam Hussein thought of himself as the potential unifying factor of all Arabs and thus possibly as the Mahdi.

The potential of the appearance of this galvanizing figure has had tremendous impact upon the individual and collective motivation of the jihadists and mujahadeen. With each Muslim leader showing himself strong against the West there are have been and always will doubtlessly always be those Islamists who believe the time of the Mahdi has come.
Inside The Jihadi Mind

Islamist Perceptions & Motivations…?

- How would YOU feel if this was Kansas City, MO.?

- How would YOU feel if this was Atlanta, GA?

- Are Islamist Motivations Different From Ours…?

Discussion
Inside The Jihadi Mind

Your Perceptions…?

• …When it WAS YOUR homeland being attacked.

• How **DID** YOU feel…?

**Know Yourself… Know your Enemy**

Discussion