

**Fighting Islamic Terrorists with Democracy:  
A Critique**

**A Monograph**

**by**

**William E. Stebbins, Jr.**

**United States Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**AY 06-07**

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved*  
*OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 21-05-2007		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> AMSP Monograph		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> July 2006 - May 2007	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Fighting Islamic Terrorists with Democracy: A Critique				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> MAJOR William E. Stebbins Jr. (U.S. Army)				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Advanced Military Studies Program 250 Gibbon Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Command and General Staff College 1 Reynolds Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b> CGSC	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> See Abstract.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> GWOT Strategy; Islam; Democratization of the Middle East; Terrorism; Islamic Terrorism.					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  UNLIMITED	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  72	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Kevin C.M. Benson, COL, US Army
<b>a. REPORT</b> UNCLASS	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UNCLASS	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UNCLASS			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b> 913-758-3302

# SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

## MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

MAJ William E. Stebbins, Jr.

Title of Monograph: Fighting Islamic Terrorists with Democracy: A Critique

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Timothy Challans, Ph.D. Monograph Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin C.M. Benson, COL, AR Director,  
School of Advanced  
Military Studies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D. Director,  
Graduate Degree  
Programs

## Abstract

Fighting Islamic Terrorists with Democracy: A Critique by MAJ William E. Stebbins, Jr., United States Army, 72 pages.

The response of U.S. foreign policy to the volatile rise of global jihadism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks has been sweeping and multifaceted. One key pillar of U.S. strategic response has been the active promotion of Western representative democracy in those regions of the Islamic world identified as jihadist centers of incubation (namely: Afghanistan and Iraq).

This objective—*commitment to establishing representative democracies in Afghanistan and Iraq*—has required, and continues to require, an impressive investment of U. S. resources, political capital, and international goodwill. In light of such continuing investment, the salient question that his monograph explores is whether the pursuit of representative democracy is a feasible and profitable, or quixotic and damaging project for U.S. strategic interests.

Upon examining the minimum requirements for representative, pluralistic democracy compared with both the insistence of Middle Eastern nations to enshrine the Qur'an as the constitution of the state and the fundamentalist (therefore *literal*) interpretation of the Qur'an—the interpretation held by Islamic *jihadiyyeen* terrorists—the conclusion reached is that not only is democratization of the Middle East an ill-suited strategic project, it *exacerbates* the emergence of Islamic terrorists.

Instead of pursuing democratization of the Middle East, our nation should focus all resources upon neutralizing those terrorist organizations which pose the greatest threat. This monograph shows that strategies attempting to indirectly and comprehensively defeat Islamic terrorists by drastically changing the political environment in which they are thought to emerge is based upon false assumptions and invalid arguments.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: Middle East Democratization STRATEGY .....	6
CHAPTER 2: Islam and Human Governance .....	17
Qur'an the Constitution .....	17
Theocracy .....	19
Justice and Equality .....	19
Human Rights.....	23
The Myth of Shura as Analog or Antecedent of Democracy .....	27
CHAPTER 3: THREAT AND DYNAMISM OF iSLAMIC JIHADIYYEEN IDEOLOGY .....	30
CHAPTER 4: ISLAM AND WESTERN DEMOCRACY: COMPATIBLE OR INCONSONANT? .....	52
Government's Purpose .....	53
A Divine Constitution.....	59
Political Discourse and Debate.....	61
CONCLUSION .....	63
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	73

## INTRODUCTION

A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about...

President Woodrow Wilson, 1913

On 11 September, 2001, nineteen Islamic terrorists hijacked four commercial airliners using them as suicidal *shahid*<sup>1</sup> projectiles targeting nationally significant symbols of power in the United States. Three of the four aircraft slammed into their targets resulting in the catastrophic collapse of the World Trade Center and a blazing gouge in the Pentagon. The fourth aircraft was heroically diverted from its target, instead crashing into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The synchronized hijackings caused over 2900 deaths—a figure surpassing that of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and ushering in a more pronounced, publicly-acknowledged phase of ongoing *jihad*<sup>2</sup> against the *dar al-harb*.<sup>3</sup>

Although understood to be yet another in a series of progressive attacks by Islamic *jihadiyyeen* (jihadists)<sup>4</sup>, the 9/11 martyrdom operation eclipsed previous attacks in scale of carnage and sophistication and decisively focused the nation's consciousness on both the reality of Islamic terrorism in the homeland and the immediate demand for retaliation. The noxious fruits of Islamic terrorism in a rapidly globalizing world would no longer be so casually ignored by the American public.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Shahid*, often translated as the Arabic equivalent for the English term 'martyr'. Essentially, (without going into the prolific nuances of this volative topic), a *shahid* is a Muslim who gives a testament or witness of his devotion to Islam by being killed (or killing himself and others), in defense of his faith.

<sup>2</sup> *Jihad* is the Arabic transliteration of the Qur'anic concept of "Holy War" waged against the *kuffar*, "infidels/ unbelievers". Although commonly explained to represent not just *physical* warfare, but also a sense of *personal struggle*, this latter sense is not the most common, contextual usage of the term in the Qur'an nor the *Hadith*. In fact, in the first centuries of Islam, the term and concept was overwhelmingly used in physical sense: as a tool of war leveraged by the caliphs with clerical sanction.

<sup>3</sup> Arabic for "House/Abode of War". Islam views the world in dichotomous terms. *Dar al-harb* is the unbelieving part of the world where and against which wars of *jihad* are permissible and mandated. The *dar al-Islam*, "House or Abode of Peace", on the other hand, is the term for the sphere of the believing world that is fully subordinated to Islam.

<sup>4</sup> Note the plural Arabic term *jihadiyyeen* will be used hereafter in reference to those Islamic terrorists, Sunni or Shi'a, who advocate the violent doctrine of *jihad* in our times to bring about various ideological and eschatological goals. *Jihadiyyeen* will be examined in more detail in chapter 3.

The ensuing, multifaceted response could be simplified into two categorical projects: military retaliation against those directly responsible, and Middle Eastern (specifically Iraqi), democratization. The first, military retaliation against al-Qaeda and their symbiotic host, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, was expected and overwhelmingly supported by most of the international community. The second response, unlike the first, took much of the world by surprise and was not largely endorsed: preemptive regime change and aggressive democratization of the Middle East, with the underlying intent of drying up an ideological swamp thought to incubate and nurture Islamic terrorists on the order of the 9/11 *jihadiyyeen*. This audacious strategic project, initially pursued in Afghanistan in the vacuum left by the temporarily displaced Taliban regime, was surprisingly extended into Saddam Hussein's Iraq—a nation then purported to actively support international terrorism and possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Assisting the Afghan people create a new government was a logical and morally necessary sequel to our military retaliation against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. However, extending our post-9/11 response into regime change and democratization of Iraq was seen by many as a categorically *different* national project and one of dubious linkage with al-Qaeda and the events of September 2001.

Criticism of this second pillar of national strategy has ranged the gamut from the political to the pragmatic. One of the more cynical, perhaps hyper-exaggerated views is articulated by Pakistani-born political author and commentator Tariq Ali, contributing editor for the *New Left Review*, who sees this in this strategic a decision “to use the tragedy [of 9/11] as a moral lever to re-map the world.”<sup>5</sup> Less melodramatically, Dr. Marc Sageman, former foreign service officer and terrorist expert with firsthand experience with Afghan mujahedin, certainly sees this strategy “chang[ing] the Middle East landscape,” but cautions that such geopolitical recasting has made

---

<sup>5</sup> Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity*, (London: Verso, 2003), xiii.

Iraq “the litmus test...[determining] the size of the pool of potential young volunteers for the *jihād*.”<sup>6</sup>

It is to this second strategic pillar in the recently de-christened ‘*Long War*’<sup>7</sup>—promotion of Western-imagined, representative government in assumed terrorist seedbeds—that I address this monograph.

As one surveys the history of modern day Iraq and Afghanistan—a region that has witnessed a dizzying myriad of diverse peoples and conquerors, from Mitannites to Asshurites, Hittites to Assyrians, Elamites, Medes, Persians, Babylonians, Parthians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Sassanids, Hejaz Arabs, Seljuks, Mongols, Ottomans, and Ba’athists (to name but a few)—one quickly realizes that authoritarian governance has been the enduring rule and not the exception. Of all historical forms of governance experienced in the region, pluralistic, representative government unfettered by colonial manipulation, religious domination, or the personal agenda of megalomaniacs is one form largely alien to its peoples.

Although a truly democratic, non-colonial (politically autonomous), Western model of governance has never been part of the Iraqi experience, and although there appear to be no successfully-thriving, non-authoritarian Islamic democracies in the Middle East to date—these do not necessarily condemn the project. Still, these facts should at least give us reflective pause.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 183.

<sup>7</sup> As reported April 19, 2007, new CENTCOM Commander, Admiral William Fallon approved rejection of the term *Long War* as a title for the GWOT. The title, coined by Fallon’s predecessor, General John Abizaid, was devised to convey the magnitude of time estimated to defeat the Islamic extremism of al-Qaeda and similar fundamentalist Islamic groups. Rejection of the title was predicated on the assertion that by categorically defining the GWOT in terms of a lengthy *ideological* struggle, the result would be a continuing distraction from more immediate benchmarks of success. This would, then, seem to imply that said benchmarks are not of an *ideological* nature. However, if we assume that the President is correct when he asserts that the GWOT is just that—an *ideological* struggle—then one wonders if key benchmarks should not also be *ideological*?

<sup>8</sup> Some would contest this pointing to the examples of Turkey and Iran. As to the former, claims that Turkey represents a shining example of secularism and democratic governance within the Islamic-Arabian-Middle Eastern demesne fail to account for widespread religious persecution in the country and the growing influence of Prime Minister Erdogan—a politician whose Islamic proclivities earned him prison time and a ban from public office in the 1990’s. As the seven year presidential term of President Footnotes continued on next page.

Such reflection is especially important before decisively committing our armed forces and national treasure in but one isolated region of the world working towards a quixotic solution for a misdiagnosed problem. While one cannot fault the wisdom of seeking an encompassing response that addresses not only the immediate physical manifestations of the threat, but also the environment that supposedly nurtures it, one *can and should* find fault with evidence of undue haste and nescient optimism in selection of strategic responses. Just because one *can* do something does not imply that one *should* do something. Although it was within our national capability to invade Iraq, overthrow Saddam Hussein, and begin the process of persuading the Iraqi people to develop an indigenous, culturally-nuanced version of American governance does not imply that the project was a prudent, advantageous, or even appropriate GWOT response.<sup>9</sup>

Examining the extensive nature and implications of this contra-*jihadiyyeen* strategy, several important questions arise: First, what is the specific nature of the threat against which we are applying this strategy? President Bush calls the GWOT “the decisive ideological struggle of our time,” pitting “those who believe in freedom and moderation” against “extremists who kill the innocent, and have declared their intention to destroy [the American] way of life.”<sup>10</sup> If we are indeed engaged in a parlous ideological clash, then few things are more important than correctly identifying and understanding the enemy and his ideology. This monograph will challenge key assumptions we have made concerning the enemy.

Second, is the establishment of inchoate democracies in Iraq, Afghanistan (and conceivably other Middle Eastern nations), logically tied and causally linked to defeating the

---

Ahmet Neced Sezer draws to a close on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Erdogan’s party has publicly endorsed and is working to seat Turkey’s foreign minister Abdullah Gul, as president. Gul, himself a devoted Islamist and ally of Erdogan, if seated, is expected to work in conjunction with Erdogan to establish sweeping pro-Islamic legislation.

As to the latter, Iran’s clerically-supervised form of government that enshrines the Qur’an as the highest law of the land, though perhaps appearing democratic and pluralistic to some, is in reality a drastic departure from the Western concept of governance which places the highest priority on the concept of separation of church and state.

<sup>9</sup> GWOT: Global War on Terror.

Islamic *jihadiyyeen* threat? Is the pursuit of democracy in the Middle East a project promising greater assurances of stability in the historically troubled region? More specifically, what is the validity of the presupposition that Western-styled, democratic governments in the Middle East would result in environments largely inhospitable to terrorist incubation? Further, does historical evidence support this assumption? What do the demographics of the 9/11 *jihadiyyeen* suggest concerning this? Assuming an acceptable democracy begins to emerge, what would this signify to *jihadiyyeen* leaders and what pushback might we anticipate? Further, would implantation of a Western heretical innovation within *dar al-Islam* represent a brazen affront to worldviews of existing *jihadiyyeen* throughout the Middle East thus stimulating greater terrorist recruitment and precipitating further attacks on U.S. interests?

After exploring the above, this monograph will conclude that the conflation of securing our nation from Islamic terrorists with the project of democratization of regions from whence they originate is an unnatural marriage. The Middle East democratization project will be found to be without substantial, promising historical precedent. Further, not only will the overall strategy be shown to be one established on unfounded assumptions accepted in abeyance of Middle Eastern history, this monograph will suggest why the strategy is actually laboring *against itself* in a dangerous counterintuitive dynamism. In other words, the longer and harder we push, prod, and encourage representative, pluralistic democracy in the Islamic heartland, the more ideological traction we freely (and perhaps unknowingly) grant the recruiting efforts of the violent *jihadiyyeen* our nation rightly expects us to defeat.

---

<sup>10</sup> President's Address to the Nation, 10 January 2007; Available from: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01.html> Internet. Accessed 15 January 2007.

## CHAPTER 1: Middle East Democratization STRATEGY

Before we analyze the accepted presuppositions and logical arguments underpinning our nation's GWOT strategy of Middle East democratization, we must first review it. To this end, we will examine the statements of the President of the United States followed by a review of U.S. strategic documents officially articulating this aspect of our strategy.

In an October 2006 television interview the President stated that he saw the problem *clearly*, that the current struggle was not one of religion, but “a struggle between people who have subverted a great religion to meet their own ambitions and kill” and that as a nation we have the capability to emplace “systems...that end up marginalizing radicals and extremists.”<sup>11</sup> The systems referred to are those that ostensibly accompany Western-style, democratic governance. This was a reaffirmation of points delivered months earlier in a speech at Kansas State University: “We got a strategy...[that] will yield a victory. And the strategy is political security and economic in nature... See, we're in an ideological struggle. It's very important for the students here to understand that there is an enemy which has an ideology, and they're driven by an ideology... their view of the world... is the *exact opposite* of our view of the world.”<sup>12</sup>

From these comments, a few insights may be gleaned. First, although the President is adamant that the GWOT is an ideological struggle, he has been keen to distance and differentiate *jihadiyyeen* from assumed “mainstream” Islamic ideology. Whether this separation is factually warranted or not will be explored in chapters two and three. For the time being, we will simply acknowledge that this is viewed as a clash of antithetical ideas—ours and the terrorists—with an impassable divide between the two.

Further, he sees our strategy, which ostensibly possesses the innate ability to neuter the ideology of the terrorists, as having a political as well as an economic component. *Why a political*

---

<sup>11</sup> Bill O'Reilly interview with President Bush, 17 Oct 06, FOX News Network. Available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,221975,00.html>

*component?* Because it is assumed that lack of political freedom and effective governance has resulted in a mass population of disgruntled, politically voiceless young men ripe for terrorist recruitment. *Why an economic component?* An integral assumption is that given better economic opportunities, these potential recruits will not sympathize with and embrace an otherwise magnetizing *jihadiyyeen* message.

This strategic approach was reemphasized on the Whitehouse website in 2007 informing us that “[t]o win the War on Terror, the United States will continue to lead an *expansive international effort to...create a global environment inhospitable to violent extremists and their supporters*” (italics added).<sup>13</sup> This echoes the President’s views posted on the same website: “We will defeat the terrorists and their hateful ideology by spreading the hope of freedom across the world. ... The security of our nation depends on the advance of liberty in other nations.”<sup>14</sup> And before the U.N. General Assembly in 2006: “For decades, millions of men and women in the region have been trapped in oppression and hopelessness. And these conditions left a generation disillusioned, and *made this region a breeding ground for extremism*” (italics added).<sup>15</sup>

This net of assumptions produces a strategic hypothesis or narrative for action. Our strategy for national security lies in defeating the antithetical ideology of the terrorists by promoting alternative ideas. It is assumed that our Western ideas will be found to be of a higher quality: that they will be seen to engender hope, equality, economic growth, and lasting peace. *Jihadiyyeen* ideology (again, assumed *not* to be that of mainstream Islam), is expected to wane in direct proportion to our promotion of Western, representative democracy throughout the Middle East. Democracy, then, is seen as the vehicle for conveying our superior ideology. As these ideas take root and democracy begins to flower in the region, former terrorist seedbeds will transform

---

<sup>12</sup> President Bush’s speech at Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, 23 January 2006, Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060123-4.html>

<sup>13</sup> Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/nationalsecurity/>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

into environments inhospitable to their growth. Islamic *jihadiyyeen* ideology will increasingly lose its former appeal and, with accelerating democratization and globalization of the people, deteriorate into regionally-manageable and containable levels.

Given this working hypothesis, it is particularly curious that one of the demonstrably pivotal and enduring *jihadiyyeen* seedbeds is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and yet this Islamic kingdom is not, as logic would seem to warrant, a prioritized target of our democratization efforts. The epicenter of an exceedingly fundamentalist, globally-proselytizing strain of Sunni Islam (*Wahhabism*), oil-rich Saudi Arabia gave rise to none other than billionaire Usama bin Laden as well as the majority of 9/11 *jihadiyyeen*, lending credence to what Sageman and many others have demonstrated: that the patriarchs of violent *jihadiyyeen* movements do not, almost as a rule, emerge from environments of personal deprivation. Although this theory of terrorist causation is widely promoted, its lack of factual support relegates it to the realm of myth.

It constitutes an enormous leap of logic, then, to take the factual demographics of the 9/11 *shahids* (financially-solvent, educated men) and subsequently postulate that we *could* suffer similar terrorist attacks by groups of *dissimilar* origin (poverty and ignorance) in the future. To then build upon this assumptive framework and embark upon a democratization, environmental revivification strategy, while ignoring, at least one *known* incubatory environment (Wahhabi Saudi Arabia), is to pose a “solution” for an unrelated, speculative problem.

If the remedy was accurately related to the proximate, culpable cause of the disease, then the demonstrable facts of 9/11 would necessarily require our nation to focus a great deal of attention upon the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its zealous, global promotion of *Wahhabism*. Ironically, this *jihadiyyeen* nursery is largely ignored. The democratization aspect of our national strategy attempts to solve not the empirical, demonstrable problem (state-sponsored *Wahhabism* as well as derivative, rogue *Wahhabi* ideologues), but a weakly-postulated, highly-speculative

---

<sup>15</sup> President before the U.N. General Assembly in 19 September 2006, Available at: Footnotes continued on next page.

one. In so doing, we are arguably enabling the real problem—*that which precipitated 9/11*—to strengthen, allowing *Wahhabi jihadiyyeen* time and space to reconsolidate for their next wave of attacks.

Leaving this problem for the time being we will turn to four pivotal publications: the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, September 2006; the National Security Strategy, March 2006; the September 2006 document, *9/11 Five Years Later: Successes and Challenges*; and the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq, November 2005. These publications provide the official, national-level articulation of U.S. strategy in the War on Terror and reveal key assumptions accepted in the development of our Middle East democratization project.

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism details the **first** assumption—one reflecting the President’s conceptual view that the battle of ideas is at the core of winning the war and that the quality and content of our ideas have the power to “transform the embittered and disillusioned either into murderers willing to kill innocents, or into free peoples living harmoniously in a diverse society.”<sup>16</sup> Further, the document goes on to say that this ideological battle “*defines the strategic intent*” of our strategy in this critical endeavor.

Some ideas truly do have the power to transform lives; therefore it is imperative to understand the true nature of the ideas vying for supremacy on the battlefields of the GWOT. We must avoid buying into the prolific mythology that accompanies political correctness. If it is accepted that this is a protracted clash of irreconcilable ideas, then to incorrectly frame ideas advanced by the enemy, to dismiss all threatening, genocidal statements as mere “rhetoric”, or to misjudge the impact our alternative ideas will have on both the enemy and the various populations he seeks to court promises great potential for calamitous, long-term consequences.

---

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/mideast/>

<sup>16</sup> George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), 7.

The fundamental challenge associated with this aspect of our strategy lies in trying to confirm the assumption that establishment of quasi-Islamic, pluralistic democracies throughout the Middle East would effectively neutralize (even prevent acceptance of) *jihadiyyeen* sentiments and movements. This monograph will show that this assumption betrays a degree of unfamiliarity with and nescience of *jihadiyyeen* ideology *specifically*, Middle Eastern history *generally*, as well as regional sentiment *contemporarily*.

Dr. Walid Phares, senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) in Washington, D.C. and former professor of Middle East studies, offers an interesting perspective on this contextual ignorance: “Stunningly, while radical Islamists publicize their deep antidemocratic statements and declarations in the open (mostly in Arabic), apologists for the jihadist within the Arabic and Muslim world and their counterparts in the West argue that the violence displayed by the various Salafist and Khomeinist groups is fueled by injustices, not by antidemocratic ideologies. The Western audience is fooled into assuming that if these injustices were addressed, the jihadist would integrate with the democratic political process.”<sup>17</sup>

Is this assumption—that the quality of *our* political and economic ideas can transform the hearts of the *embittered and disillusioned* of the Middle East into peoples *living harmoniously in a diverse society*—factually worthy of acceptance? That simply the introduction and inculcation of ‘*right*’ ideas (i.e. our Western ones) is enough to morph the hearts and minds of an embittered and disillusioned population such that they will shun Islamic *jihadiyyeen* ideology? This is optimistic speculation at best. It assumes that human beings regardless of race, religion, culture, and language would welcome the core ideas underpinning American governance if simply exposed to it.

It seems to assert that the people of the Middle East simply need the benefits of Western political education to slough off extremism. It assumes that the economically deprived of the

---

<sup>17</sup> Walid Phares, *The War of Ideas*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 67.

region are globally resentful and self-alienated, not having been exposed to a set of ideas and environmental conditions, which, upon discovery, will be openly embraced to their ebullient liberation.

Unfortunately, these assumptions downplay the possibility that the *jihadiyyeen* progenitors might be, in fact, educated, traveled, and rational actors who've examined other cultures and political systems and deliberately chosen against them. It sadly ignores that many *jihadiyyeen* leaders were, and are, highly-educated, affluent members of society. As we will see later, Islamic *jihadiyyeen* fervently believe in what they view as a divinely-ordained ideology of global conquest. Accordingly, one is struck at the implicit arrogance in thinking that Western voices—voices colored with centuries of crusader and colonial baggage (real as well as *perceived*), can simply introduce ideas that will largely resonate within the Islamic world to the downfall of the *jihadiyyeen* cult. This thinking assumes that if just enough democracy and its sister, free market economy, take hold for just long enough, an increasing quality of life will serve to isolate jihadist Islam. It assumes that the 'higher quality' of our ideas, if pursued, cannot fail but begin providing a surrogate for extremism, thus ushering in a new age of non-literal, pacifistic Islam.

In fact, it may be that such Western ideological promotion will simply *fuel further jihadiyyeen antipathy*—proving, in their minds, the veracity of their invested beliefs. It may be that the more we attempt to push and impose our Western ideals of governance on the Islamic world at large, the more the salafists' ideology will gain traction on the Middle Eastern street. This monograph will attempt to explain that our ideas *may* supplant those of the Islamic demesne if and only if the Middle Eastern masses move to discard a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith. To date, we have yet to witness such a profound ideological shift and question whether such a shift is even within the realm of possibility.

Although taken up in greater detail in subsequent chapters, in the interest of framing the argument it is necessary to flesh out subordinate assumptions upon which this major assumption

is erected. The **second** assumption is found in the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq<sup>18</sup> as well as the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism: that the terrorist ideology consists of a narrow body of beliefs that oppress, enslave and exploit their own people. We are told that “the terrorists seek to impose a single set of narrow beliefs.”<sup>19</sup> Further, this corpus of Islamic belief “has been twisted and made to serve an evil end...”<sup>20</sup> We will see that *jihadiyyeen* ideology is anything but interpretively *narrow* and *twisted* from source documents. Rather, it is a comprehensive, coherent system based upon a literal, non-abrogated interpretation of the Qur’an. Further and unfortunately, the document defines the adversary in a generic way, as “terrorists” without an accompanying effort to categorically refine them. No effort is made to explain why *these* particular terrorists, among a multiplicity of variegated terrorists worldwide, have declared war on the West generally, and the United States, specifically. In a *war of ideas*, such ambiguity is not helpful: specifics must be addressed in order to inform the strategy adopted.

The West is repeatedly fed a diet of assurances that the basic, universally-agreed-upon, foundational tenets of Islam (as found in the Qur’an and Hadith) are antithetical to those devotedly held by the *jihadiyyeen*—that their *narrow view* of Islam inaccurately reflects general Islamic ideology. As will be demonstrated, this assumption is groundless *regardless* of ones’ interpretation of Islamic holy writ. Political sensibilities aside, we are not aided in effectively defeating salafist terrorists by refusing to accurately diagnose the problem. If *knowing the enemy* is an uncontested, timeless martial maxim, then ignorance of the enemy is inexcusable.

In this vein, Islamic apologists attempt to label violent *jihadiyyeen* as *fundamentalists* as opposed to, ostensibly, those Muslims who are not. This mantra has been chanted innumerable times. But Ibn Warraq, like the Middle Eastern expert Bernard Lewis before him, deplored the

---

<sup>18</sup> George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005), 4: Terrorists hold to a “perverse ideology.”

<sup>19</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), 11.

use of the term “Islamic *Fundamentalist*” as if it spoke to a small subset of radical literalists within the larger community of Islam, insisting that the vast majority—of *all* Islamic sects—still take the words of the Qur’an quite literally. By *definition*, he insists, a Muslim is a fundamentalist. This point will be brought out further in chapter four.

Our **third** strategic assumption—that poverty and global un-connectedness produce masses of *embittered and disillusioned* persons motivated to create and lead terrorist organizations—has been accepted without sufficient empirical support. As we will see in chapter three, Sageman, Phares, and others inform us that contrary to contemporary mythology, *jihadiyyeen* (especially the ideologues, leaders, and key operatives) are simply not the natural, consequential results of Middle Eastern poverty and desperation. Once established (usually by well-educated, affluent to semi-affluent men), *jihadiyyeen* groups are unquestionably successful in finding recruits amongst the destitute; however, such organizations are generally not created by the poor, nor do they rely exclusively—or even primarily—upon this demographic group for their existence and ongoing lethality.

A **fourth** assumption is the belief that all human beings want to be free and that, more importantly, we all define *freedom* and *liberty* in the same way. This assumption is demonstrably false. A brief example in the realm of religious liberty is illustrative. In the United States, freedom of religion imputes to all citizens the inalienable right to worship (or not worship) according to the dictates of one’s conscience without fear of coercion or interference. In Islamic nations operating under *shari’a* law, this is not the same understanding. We will see in chapter two that Islam legislates freedom *from* unbelief—a drastically different idea. This construct temporarily provides for the *toleration* of other religions within restrictive limits. Thomas Paine, pamphleteer of the War for American Independence, understood that “[t]oleration is not the opposite of intolerance, but is the counterfeit of it. Both are despotisms. The one assumes to itself

---

<sup>20</sup> George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Footnotes continued on next page.

the right of withholding liberty of conscience, the other of granting it.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, though both use the same phrase in the public forum, ‘*freedom of religion*’, actions and policies of each respective system throughout history display that we are *not* referring to the same concept. This ambiguity of concepts enshrouded in prevaricative language is problematic and conveys to numerous other categorical areas as we shall see.

Although it is exciting at times to challenge convention and to push for the very limits of the doable, it can also be quite risky. When stakes are high, such endeavors require supporting evidence to at least suggest of possible success. In 1961, when our nation accepted President Kennedy’s challenge to send men to the moon, the daring enterprise was undertaken with solid empirical science under its belt. NASA scientists and engineers were convinced, based on mountains of testing and data, that the odds for success were great. In contrast, the daunting project of implanting and nourishing a relatively benevolent, representative form of quasi-Islamic democracy in the Middle East has no such historical, empirical mountains of data upon which to engender confidence. One has to but briefly survey the history of the Middle East to conclude that, with the sole exception of Israel, the democratic project has been an unqualified failure.

Further, even if a Muslim Middle Eastern democracy took root, there is no evidence to suggest that democracy would *in any way* neutralize the proliferation and traction of *jihadiyyeen* ideology. In other words, when pressed for proof of a causal linkage... we have *none*. This linkage solely resides in the realm of optimistic political speculation.

Marina Ottaway, senior associate in the Carnegie Endowment’s Democracy and Rule of Law Project, cautions that ‘[d]emocracy assistance programs are based on a concept of how democratic transitions take place that owes a lot to theory and relatively little to concrete

---

Printing Office, 2005), 10.

<sup>21</sup> Irving Bryant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist*, (New York: Bobbs Merrill Company, 1941), 249.

evidence...because the number of well-established democracies is relatively small...' <sup>22</sup>

Ottaway's comment was global in scope. Had she confined it to the Middle East she would have had to conclude that the number is nil.

Further, she challenges the assumption that nascent democracy is energized by a liberalization of a country. In other words, securing the power of people to debate the existing government and to challenge its former political *modus vivendi* is no guarantee that pluralistic democracy awaits in the wings. Rather, what results is wholly dependant on the type and content of national sentiment existing in the minds of detractors—in our present case, Islamic, religio-cultural sentiment antithetically opposed to Western democracy. <sup>23</sup>

Before we proceed to chapter two we will revisit the assumptions of our democratization strategy:

*If* terrorists do not necessarily emerge from poverty, then this strategy may be inappropriate.

*If* the 911 threat (and its fellow travelers) are the work of Islamic salafi *jihadiyyeen* (i.e. we were not attacked by a conventional nation state), and if the leaders, ideologues, and key operators of such *jihadiyyeen* groups do not necessarily emerge from poverty, then this strategy may be inappropriate.

*If* Western liberal democracy is not a consonant, ideological, and cultural fit for the Islamic Middle East, then this strategy may be inappropriate.

*If* superimposition of Western liberal democracy upon the Middle East is seen in such a way that it strengthens *jihadiyyeen* claims that the West in general, and the U.S. in particular, are imperialist infidels by virtue of their demonstrated actions, then this strategy may be inappropriate.

---

<sup>22</sup> Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 11.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*: 9.

*If* we have a confluence of one or more of these assumptions subsequently rendered false, then we may have to face the unpleasant prospect that our democratization strategy is propelling us into exponentially parlous times.

The remainder of this monograph will further explore these assumptions that we might arrive at a useful, informed conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2: Islam and Human Governance

A page of history is worth a volume of logic.

Justice Oliver Wendell Homes, Jr. (1921)

Now that we've briefly surveyed salient aspects of American GWOT strategy (specifically, the promotion of a form of governance our national strategists assume beneficial for mollification of Middle Eastern turmoil), we now examine enduring facets of historical Islamic governance. Thus informed we will be better able to identify challenges and cultural tensions we are likely to encounter as we pursue our strategy. Our goal is not an exhaustive study of this complex subject, but a focused examination of those key issues anticipated to be inconsonant with those of Western governance. Further, we will bear in mind that while Sunni and Shi'a maintain divergent views, they also agree in many points.

Dr. Hammudah Abdalati, a Sunni sociologist and former member of al-Azhar University's Department of Islamic Culture in Cairo, Egypt offers several widely-accepted insights into the bedrocks of Islamic governance. He argues that the political system of Islam is not a theocracy empowered by a specific ruling class of clerics, nor is it a democracy, but "something different from all that."<sup>24</sup> In his effort to explain the unique characteristics of Islamic governance he distills several principles.

### Qur'an the Constitution

"This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah."<sup>25</sup>

First, every deed of the community "must be inspired and guided by the Law of God, the Qur'an, which is the constitution chosen by God for His true servants."<sup>26</sup> Abdalati quotes Qur'an

---

<sup>24</sup> Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in Focus*, (Delhi: Afif Printers, no date given), 130.

<sup>25</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali (translator), *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, (Beltsville: Amana Publications, 1997), 17. (Qur'an 2:2) Note: All Qur'anic references in this monograph will be taken from this translation.

<sup>26</sup> Abdalati, 130.

5:47-50: “And if any do fail to judge (or rule) according to what God has revealed, they are the unbelievers...they are the wrong-doers...they are the rebels.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, a dichotomy between the spiritual and the temporal is not recognized in the authentic Islamic world which is viewed as *deen wa dawla* (religion *and* state). Which is to more specifically say that the *Islamic* faith is not separated from the realm of governance: other religions emphatically are. Separation of church and state is a uniquely Western construct widely disdained by Middle Eastern scholars and categorically condemned by the Qur’an.

This divinely-bestowed constitution is empowered by *shari’a* law: the encompassing, normative address of Islam to its faithful. *Shari’a* literally means, “*path to the watering hole*” and is divided into four main schools of Sunni jurisprudence or *madhahib*: Hanafite, Malikite, Shafi’ite, and Hanbalite.<sup>28</sup> It is derived four sources: the Qur’an; the *Sunna* (normative example), of the Prophet Muhammad as expressed in the *Hadith*; *ijma*, (consensus of the Muslim *umma*),<sup>29</sup> and *qiya*, (reasoning by analogy). *Shari’a*, then, is held as divine law defining the mandatory and forbidden and suggesting what is improper.

Given the above, citizens who break the supernaturally-revealed law of the land enter into a dangerous place. John Esposito, professor of Religion and International Affairs at Georgetown University, explains this further: “To break the law is a transgression against both society and God, a crime and a sin; the guilty are subject to punishment in this life and the next.”<sup>30</sup> Dr. Caesar Farah, professor of history at the University of Minnesota adds that “[t]he role of the

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid: 131.

<sup>28</sup> In 1959 during a relatively short period of Sunni-Shi’a reconciliation, the rector of Sunni Islam’s most prestigious university, al-Azhar University in Cairo, issued a fatwa recognizing Shi’a law as a fifth legitimate school of Islamic law.

<sup>29</sup> *Umma*: Arabic for the ‘community of believers’.

<sup>30</sup> John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, Revised Third Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 88.

*Shari'ah*... may be likened unto a combination of canonical law and the 'law of the land' ... [that] compels respect for itself.”<sup>31</sup>

## Theocracy

Although Abdalati maintains political Islam is not a *clerically*-administered theocracy, yet it is nevertheless a theocracy. This categorization cannot be avoided when the view is held that Allah reigns sovereign over the Islamic state, having extended his constitutional instructions to his subjects in the Qur'an.<sup>32</sup> Esposito notes that “God [Allah] is the sovereign ruler of the world, head of the human [not just *Muslim*] community, and its sole legislator.”<sup>33</sup> Committed to this rubric, the Qur'an as divinely-inspired constitution is forever above human critique and revision. As Allah's revealed word, it may not be scrutinized nor amended by man. Further, if the Qur'an is the very constitution of the Islamic state, non-Muslims within this *de facto* theocracy are perpetually bound to its religious injunctions without possibility of eventual reform. To even suggest change to that handed down by Allah is to invite severe repercussions.

## Justice and Equality

As might be expected within the context of an Islamic government empowered by *shari'a* law, justice exists for those conforming and obedient to Islam, i.e. for *Muslims*. Abdalati points out that the aim of the Islamic State is to dispense justice for all citizens without regard to demographic differences to which is customarily added the following caveat: “...so long as they [minority citizens] are law-abiding and peaceful...in conformity with the stipulations of God in His constitution, the Qur'an.”<sup>34</sup> It is an interesting yet easily missed qualification echoed by most Islamic political apologists. The clever caveat means that justice in the Islamic state is extended

---

<sup>31</sup> Caesar Farah, *Islam*, Sixth Edition, (Hauppauge: Barron's Educational Services, Inc., 2000), 160.

<sup>32</sup> Abdalati, 131.

<sup>33</sup> Esposito, 87.

<sup>34</sup> Abdalati, p131.

only to those who remain peaceful, abide by all laws, and conform to God's Qur'anic requirements. It is an odd twist to the concept of justice. In the ideal Western construct, justice is uniformly extended not just to law-abiding citizens, but also to those who transgress the law. In fact, punishment of the criminal in accordance with publicly codified laws *is* one manifestation of the outworking of proper justice. Criminality does not grant license to the authorities to treat the law breaker in any subjective, arbitrary fashion.

Dr. Phares elaborates on the Islamic concept of justice: "Since justice is perceived as *ilahi* (divine) only, those who serve it are legally not responsible to any other level of representation, neither to the people nor to such secular institutions as may exist...Courts of Sharia (*Mahakem Shari'ya*) do not answer to any power in the civilian realm."<sup>35</sup>

Related to this conception of dichotomous, religiously prejudicial justice is the stratification of society imposed by Islam. This issue in and of itself could fill a voluminous study, so we will simply distill a few illustrative examples, bearing in mind the question of whether this Islamic sense of 'equality' accords with Western conventions.

First, we note that women are not equal in Islam the way the West understands equality. We will continue to explore this, but here we will simply note that women are unequal in many ways including inheritance rights,<sup>36</sup> the relative value of a woman's testimony in court,<sup>37</sup> extraordinary requirements for women to prove rape in court,<sup>38</sup> the right of the wife to be physically abused by their spouse,<sup>39</sup> license given to *men* to enter into *mut'a*, "temporary marriage" with "temporary wives" for an exceedingly short period of time<sup>40</sup>, and others.

Secondly, there is a unique characteristic of Islamic governance according to Abdalati, which is refusal of any non-Islamic party to control the state, or of anyone but a Muslim to

---

<sup>35</sup> Phares, 88.

<sup>36</sup> Qur'an 4:11.

<sup>37</sup> A woman's testimony is worth half that of a man's. See Qur'an 2:282.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Bukhari Vol. 3, Bk. 52, no. 2661.

<sup>39</sup> Qur'an 4:34

assume the office of president. He cites Qur'an 4:141: "And never will God grant to the Unbelievers a way (to triumph or rule) over the Believers." Thus, the divinely bestowed Islamic constitution warns that Allah will not permit unbelievers to rule over the community, or *umma*, of believers. To flout this divine stricture by opening governance to all citizens irrespective of faith, is to knowingly defy Allah the sovereign. One can then see how Abdalati's—and ultimately the Qur'an's—definition of *justice* does not include equal opportunity of non-Islamic minorities to seek election or appointment to a nation's highest offices. This view is reflected, for example, in Syria's constitution which requires the president of Syria to be Muslim.<sup>41</sup>

Further, the Muslim ruler of an Islamic state is not to be viewed as the sovereign, but as Allah's representative who receives his legitimacy based upon his *obedience to the Qur'an*—the divine constitution. In other words, the leader of an Islamic nation receives his legitimacy not from the people, but from his own religious piety. As such we will explore in chapter four how the Islamic version of the *social contract theory* substantially differs from the Western in that the citizens elect their ruler, (or have one imposed upon them,) based upon his ability to enforce the Qur'an within the state. His contract is with the Qur'an, not his constituents. It is implicitly accepted that the people (i.e. *believing Muslims*) will be properly cared for and led commensurate with the leader's obedience to the Qur'an.

At this juncture, some may question how this is different from the President of the United States deriving his authority from the Constitution. The difference is manifold. First, the Constitution is held to be wholly manmade—not *divine*—and therefore subject to ongoing critique and amendment. Further, Article VI of states that the "Laws of the United States...and all

---

<sup>40</sup> This Shi'a practice derives its authority from al-Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 67, 5117-18.

<sup>41</sup> Syrian Constitution, Chapter 1, Part 1, Article 3. Available at: <http://www.damascus-online.com/history/documents/constitution.htm> Note that as the *Qur'an* is the highest constitution—the divinely infallible constitution from which human constitutions derive their authority and legitimacy, there exists no need to fully and explicitly explain all aspects of governance in the human models. Those more volatile topics frequently go unmentioned for political expediency's sake. Once the declaration is made that a nation is an *Islamic* state, and that the *Qur'an* is the ultimate constitutional authority, then one needs to

Footnotes continued on next page.

Treaties made, or which shall be made...shall be the supreme Law of the Land...”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, not only is the Constitution the law of the land, but there is also acknowledgment that additional (manmade) treaties and federal laws shall be considered as such. This construct permits the volition of the polity to continuously modify their instruments of government to reflect the quality and content of their thoughts. No such latitude is embedded in the Islamic construct. Since the Qur’an is simultaneously the constitution as well as the infallible word of Allah, nothing can share its place as the law of the land. Nor can it be amended, as that would imply imperfection in Allah’s revelation to man.

Therefore, as opposed to what we find in Article VI of the American Constitution, we find the following words in the Constitution of Iraq: “Islam is the official religion of the state and it is a fundamental source of legislation: No law that contradicts the established provisions of Islam may be established.”<sup>43</sup>

This circular construct of government posits exclusivity of national leadership within the community of Muslim believers who derive their legitimacy from obedience to Qur’anic precepts—obedience only believing *Muslims* can exhibit, thus ensuring leadership is effectively closed off to unbelievers.

The Muslim leader in good standing with the Qur’anic contract is then divinely entitled to complete support and cooperation from the citizenry, the absence of which would be considered as “an irresponsible offense...as against God Himself.”<sup>44</sup> Although a president of an Islamic state may conceivably lack clerical credentials or training, the Qur’an esteems him Allah’s vice-regent, zealously guarding the faith and enforcing its Qur’anic strictures. Striking similarities with

---

understand the *Qur’an* and its various regional interpretations in order to fully grasp the political implications thus enshrouded.

<sup>42</sup> Constitution of the United States of America, Article VI. Available at: [http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_transcript.html)

<sup>43</sup> Constitution of Iraq, 2005, Article 2:1. Available at: <http://www.iraqigovernment.org/Content/Biography/English/constitution.htm>

<sup>44</sup> Abdalati, 132.

all instances of the marriage of church and state throughout human history, including the inevitable abuses that result, are instructive. Human history seems to have shown that men invested with such lofty authority often abuse their supposed divine office to the detriment of the citizenry. As such, one need not look far within the Middle East to find numerous authoritarian and semi-authoritarian leaders who masquerade as democratic leaders but without the attendant, manifest fruit of democratic benevolence extended to their people.

Abdalati sums up his understanding of the spirit and essence of Islamic governance:

“Thus, the political system of Islam is fundamentally different from all other political systems and doctrines known to mankind, and the ruler is *not to govern the people according to their own desires*. He is to serve them by making [Islamic] justice a common law, by making their genuine obedience to the Sovereign Lord of the universe a regular function of the state...” (Italics added.)

<sup>45</sup> This idea of Islamic governance, if held by the majority Islamic community, is vexingly problematic for those political strategists who would venture to introduce representative, pluralistic democracy within the Islamic realm. Abdalati’s understanding of an Islamic leader, (at any level of government) is one who does not necessarily represent the desires of his constituents, but who serves them by *enforcing genuine* obedience to Allah. How *genuine* obedience of the citizenry to a religion can be *enforced* by a temporal ruler is a thorny question left unanswered by Abdalati. Further, it is one *that would not even be asked* in a Western democracy.

## Human Rights

The next facet of governance we will analyze is that of how human rights are addressed in the Islamic demesne. Specifically, do Islamic governmental models as informed by the *shari’a* provide for and guarantee mutual respect and rights of *all* citizens regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or any other distinguishing feature?

---

<sup>45</sup> Abdalati, 134.

In 1948 the U.N. codified human rights expectations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), however, this document did not gain widespread appeal among declared Islamic nations. In fact, it was massively disdained such that forty-five foreign ministers of the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference countered with their own Islamic understanding of human rights, issuing the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI).

The CDHRI declared that “[a]ll human beings are Allah's subjects, and the most loved by Him are those who are most beneficial to His subjects, and no one has superiority over another *except on the basis of piety and good deeds.*” (Italics added.)<sup>46</sup> In other words, there is superiority among human beings commensurate with demonstration of Islamic piety and performance of good deeds. This accords perfectly with our previous analysis of who may rule Islamic nations: only believers faithfully abiding by the Qur’an. In the U.S., the presidency is limited to natural born citizens. In the Islamic state, being a natural born citizen is not enough—one must also be a believer in good standing in the “official” state religion. This exclusivity is thus mirrored in the CDHRI which explicitly acknowledges a belief in *superiority among human beings commensurate with Islamic piety.*

Article two of the CDHRI states that, “[I]f life is a God-given gift and the right to life is guaranteed to every human being... and it is prohibited to take away life except for a *shari’ah* prescribed reason.”<sup>47</sup> We first note that appreciation of the Islamic culture as it manifests itself in the life of Middle Eastern nations is woefully incomplete without an understanding of *shari’a* law. Secondly, this understanding of *shari’a* law is necessary to understand the Islamic understanding of the *right to life.*

---

<sup>46</sup> Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI), 5 Aug 1990, Article 1b. Available at: <http://www.religlaw.org/interdocs/docs/cairohrislam1990.htm>

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, Article 2a.

**Equality.** The CDHRI also informs us that “woman is equal to man in human dignity, and has her own rights to enjoy as well as duties to perform, and has her own civil entity and financial independence, and the right to retain her name and lineage.”<sup>48</sup> The wording is exceedingly important and reflects ideas fully explicated in the Qur’an. It does *not* say that women and men are coequals. It says that they have equal *dignity*, but that women have *their own rights, their own unique duties, their own defined civil entities*. These tightly prescribed gender parameters are to be found, of course, within the corpus of *shari’a* law.

Farah offers that “[t]he Qur’an recognizes women as equal to men in *religiosity*...” (Italics added.)<sup>49</sup> This is an oblique way of constructing precise limits to the “equality” extended to women, in this case, simply to matters of faith. Ongoing examples of gender inequality in purportedly democratic Islamic nations continue. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of January, 2007, Egypt’s leading mufti, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, published an official fatwa stating that *shari’a* law forbids women from assuming the position of head of state as that position requires leading Muslims in prayer—a task forbidden of women.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to gender inequality, there also exists pronounced religious inequality: “His being a non-Muslim does not lower his status or drop him down to second class citizenship, as long as he obeys the common [Sharia] Law of the State and exercises his rights in a responsible manner...”<sup>51</sup> Once again we note the attending caveats.

**Education.** The Cairo declaration also addresses child-rearing and education: “Parents ... have the right to choose the type of education they desire for their children, provided they take

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, Article 6a.

<sup>49</sup> Farah, 398.

<sup>50</sup> Available at the website of the Progressive Muslim Union of North America: [http://www.pmuna.org/archives/2005/04/approvals\\_of\\_wo.php](http://www.pmuna.org/archives/2005/04/approvals_of_wo.php) Note that in March 2007, the sheikh issued a further “explanation” to clear up what was apparently an “unclear” fatwa: “[It] only applied to the traditional role of caliph as both secular head of state and imam of the Muslims, not to the head of a modern state.” Since the caliphate was terminated in 1924, one wonders why the sheikh issued an official fatwa applicable only to an office defunct for over 80 years? Available at: <http://www.dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=6088>

into consideration the interest and future of the children in accordance with ethical values and the principles of the Shari'ah.”<sup>52</sup> Once again, the importance of understanding the *shari'a* asserts itself and we note that the type of freedoms bestowed by Islamic law are never truly open-ended.

Article 9a declares the state as directly responsible for religious education. This is not to say a balanced overview of the world's religions, or even an overview of the religions of a nation's minorities so as to achieve a sense of understanding amongst the citizenry, but education of *Islam*—the official state religion--whereby citizens may “uncover the secrets of the Universe for the benefit of mankind.”<sup>53</sup> An interesting parallel is found in none other than Plato's *The Statesman*, where Socrates and a stranger are discussing the place of the ruler in the education of his subjects. The stranger remarks that the ruler “keeps the power of direction to himself. [And that] the only form of training he will permit is the one by which the educator produces the type of character fitted for his own task of weaving the web of state.”<sup>54</sup> It would appear that the Platonic and Islamic concepts of government-controlled education are quite similar. It is instructive (in both cases) to note what Socrates agreed as the fitting result for those pupils of the state who failed to comprehend (or bow the knee to) the official curricula: “These the king expels from the community. He *puts them to death or banishes* them or else he *chastises them by the severest public disgrace*.... Furthermore, he makes [them] *slaves* to the rest of the community.” (Emphasis mine.)<sup>55</sup> Curious parallels with Islamic history and theology cannot be ignored.

**Freedom of Religion.** Article 10 expressly forbids worshippers of any religion other than Islam to discuss their faith with Muslims—i.e. freedom of religion is not to be tolerated: “Islam is the religion of true unspoiled nature. It is prohibited to exercise any form of pressure on man or to

---

<sup>51</sup> Hassan Hathout, *Reading the Muslim Mind*, (Burr Ridge: American Trust Publications, 1995), 136.

<sup>52</sup> CDHRI, Article 7b.

<sup>53</sup> CDHRI, Article 9a.

<sup>54</sup> Plato, *Statesman*; as found in: Steven M. Cahn, *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*, (Oxford University Press, 2002), 309.

exploit his poverty or ignorance in order to force him to change his religion [Islam] to another religion or to atheism.”<sup>56</sup> This is further bolstered by article 22: “Everyone shall have the right to express his opinion freely in such manner as would not be contrary to the principles of the Shari’ah. Everyone shall have the right to advocate what is right, and propagate what is good, and warn against what is wrong and evil according to the norms of Islamic Shari’ah. Information is a vital necessity to society. It may not be exploited or misused in such a way as may violate sanctities and the dignity of Prophets, undermine moral and ethical values or disintegrate, corrupt or harm society or weaken its faith.”<sup>57</sup>

Somewhat hypocritically, Farah points out that the “*Shari’ah* sanctioned the residence of Muslims in non-Muslim lands provided they were permitted to carry on their religious duties unencumbered,”<sup>58</sup> and yet within Islamic states, this same “unencumbrance” is not extended to believers of other faiths.

Finally, as if the case for understanding *shari’a* law and its integral importance in Islamic governance has not been sufficiently made, we are informed that “all the rights and freedoms stipulated in this Declaration are subject to the Islamic Shari’ah...[which] is the only source of reference for the explanation or clarification of any of the articles of this Declaration.”<sup>59</sup>

## **The Myth of Shura as Analog or Antecedent of Democracy**

Many Islamic political apologists have argued that the Islamic concept of *shura*, or *consultation*, is a fitting analog of the Western democratic paradigm—one that can be built upon to form a modern, democratic Islamic state. Dr. Hassan Hathout, an Egyptian physician who emigrated to the United States and co-founded the Islamic Center of Southern California, even

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 309-10. It is also instructive that, as opposed to Islamic and Greek philosophy, the American forefathers instead drew primarily upon *Roman* heritage where the rule of law and respect for authority was paramount.

<sup>56</sup> CDHRI, Article 10.

<sup>57</sup> CDHRI, Article 22, a-c.

<sup>58</sup> Farah, 155.

suggests that the Qur'anic concept of *shura* is, in fact, "the forerunner of democracy."<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, however, the Qur'an only mentions *shura* nine separate times in only six *ayats*, (verses). Of those nine occurrences, *only two* are clearly used in a context related to human governance. In other words, oddly meager Qur'anic support for a concept of governance that Dr. Abdalati regards as "so fundamental in Islam".<sup>61</sup>

The noted Lebanese Oxford scholar Albert Hourani is not as convinced that Muhammad instituted a tradition that could be seen as the forefather of representative democracy, noting that "he exercised authority over his followers less by regular government than by political manipulation and personal ascendancy." Further, Hourani points out that "there was no elaborate administration or army, simply Muhammad as supreme arbiter."<sup>62</sup> Bernard Lewis concurs, recognizing that the concept of *shura* "has never been institutionalized, nor even formulated in the treatises of the holy law..."<sup>63</sup>

It must be pointed out that the Islamic concept of *shura*, where a leader consults others before making a decision, is simply not analogous to that dynamic in Western democratic governments where representatives are elected to represent the views and opinions of their constituents for given terms of office. The context of *shura* given in the Qur'an is simply one in which a leader consults with advisors. For example, prior to the pivotal Battle of Badr in 624 A.D. Muhammad, in consultation, (*shura*) with a small group of his followers, changed his original tactical plan. The next day they were victorious. Centuries later, this simple incident is revered as an example of inchoate democracy demonstrated in the life of the prophet. But is this really an embryonic forerunner of representative democracy? In Qur'anic context, *shura* is not characteristic of representative governance but is a timeless, general activity; one that even

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, Articles 24-25.

<sup>60</sup> Hathout, 56.

<sup>61</sup> Abdalati, 134.

<sup>62</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, (New York: Warner Books, 1991), 19.

<sup>63</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 89-98.

absolute monarchs and autocratic rulers employed from time immemorial. Consulting a cadre of advisors prior to battle is not *democracy* regardless of how one frenetically manipulates it in a revisionistic search for historical precedent. Kings of antiquity have sought advice from councils of war as early as recorded accounts exist, and yet few would find in such consultations, the glimmer of representative, pluralistic governance.<sup>64</sup>

Now that we've briefly canvassed those important points of characteristic government in the Middle Eastern Islamic cultural demesne with which we anticipate friction, we will next examine how current Islamic *jihadiyyeen* adversaries capitalize on their religious convictions and interpretation to energize those friction points our national strategy attempts to ignore.

---

<sup>64</sup> For example see Biblical accounts in 2 Kings 18:20 and Nehemiah 6:7.

## CHAPTER 3: THREAT AND DYNAMISM OF ISLAMIC JIHADIYYEEN IDEOLOGY

I don't think you can overstate the importance that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism will have to the rest of the world in the century ahead...  
Ronald Reagan

And we remind you of the words of God Almighty: "If you do not go out and fight, God will punish you severely and put others in your place, but you cannot harm Him in any way."  
Usama bin Laden quoting Surah 9:39 <sup>65</sup>

The preceding chapters examined our post 9/11 national strategy and compendiously surveyed enduring aspects of Islamic governance. Anticipating, then, that a national strategy promoting what will culturally be viewed as an inconsonant political system within *dar al Islam* will necessarily experience protracted frustration and irreconcilable disconnects; this chapter further reveals that simple promotion of this strategy plays directly into the hands of the salafist *jihadiyyeen*. In a twist of tragic irony, the strategy that seeks to bring peace and stability to the region by virtue of extending unprecedented political rights and opportunities to the people simultaneously lends profound recruiting traction to the terrorists.

Pursuant to understanding why this is so, we must examine worldview specifics of the adversary. A proper starting point is clarification of terms. Sloppily choosing labels to define our adversary establishes cognitive shackles which seriously hamper our efforts and solution sets. We will not, therefore, fall into the trap of labeling threat entities simply by the acts they commit—i.e. *terrorists*. "Terrorist" is too general a term, and is counterproductive in helping us accurately define and understand those with whom we are told we are at war. Instead, as footnoted in the introduction, we will use the plural Arabic noun *jihadiyyeen* referring to those Islamic terror groups, Sunni or Shi'a, who advocate and act upon the violent Qur'anic doctrine of *jihad* to forcibly, in *this* life, advance a variety of ideological and eschatological goals. Key among these

commonly-held, trans-sect goals is an idealized future defined as the entire earth conquered and subjugated by Islam and brought into the *dar el Islam* through the physical actions of the religious faithful. “And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere...”<sup>66</sup> In his 2007 State of the Union address, President Bush acknowledged that this future goal transcends multiple sects within the Islamic faith, representing “different faces of the same totalitarian threat.”<sup>67</sup>

This religious totalitarianism threatens the entire *dar el harb* because the literal words of the Qur’an require it to do so, and the *jihadiyyeen*, as “fundamentalists”, act upon the literal interpretation. Our first descriptive term, *fundamentalist*, narrows our taxonomic aperture and denotes that our adversaries accept, and act upon, the *fundamentals* of their faith as articulated in the *literal* words of the changeless Qur’an. This is an important idea and one where slapdash use of the term in contemporary society hampers our efforts at precision. In the United States, the word *fundamentalist* is often used in a pejorative sense for a religious individual perceived to be slavishly tied to a narrow, uncompromising view of the world and prepared to act in accordance with those exclusivist beliefs. However, despite its modern usage we note that the term, in its original, historical sense, meant nothing more than to strictly and literally adhere to a set of basic, “fundamental” principles.<sup>68</sup> In light of this, whether a fundamentalist is to be viewed in a positive or negative light, then, requires a further examination of the *content* of beliefs held.

The term *fundamentalist*, then, describes the *jihadiyyeen* quite accurately. The content of *jihadiyyeen* fundamental, essential beliefs are derived from literally-interpreted propositions found in the Qur’an and Hadith.

---

<sup>65</sup> Bruce Lawrence, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*, translated by James Howarth. (London: Verso, 2005), 18.

<sup>66</sup> Surah 8:39.

<sup>67</sup> As available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070123-2.html>

<sup>68</sup> The historical origins of the religious label, *fundamentalist*, and *fundamentalism* emerged in the 1920s as a result of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy in the United States. Curtis Lee Laws, writing in the Baptist Watchmen Examiner, 1920, coined the term *fundamentalist* as a Christian who held

Footnotes continued on next page.

Graham Fuller, former CIA Vice-Chairman of the National Intelligence Council and Middle Eastern expert, defines *fundamentalists* in the Islamic realm as those ‘accepting the narrow, literal, and intolerant interpretations of Islam, but [who also] go an extra step in either promoting utopian visions of a pan-Islamic state or advocating violent action.’<sup>69</sup> Given this definition, the strictest strain of Islamic fundamentalists may be found in the Sunni *Wahhabist* tradition, also known as the *salafiyya* movement.<sup>70</sup>

Fuller describes these religious zealots as accepting the *narrow, literal, and intolerant* interpretations of Islam, reflecting an important nuance that, as we saw above, continues to obfuscate our understanding of the *jihadiyyeen* and how we might counter the threat they pose. His choice of words—*narrow* and *literal*—are redundant terms; nevertheless he joins them into a pejorative coupling. In any system of faith predicated on assumed holy writ, those who adhere to a *literal* interpretation of scripture, by definition, *narrow* themselves to precisely what the written scriptures reveal and nothing more. One cannot be a *literalist* if one dismisses the contextual, written words of scripture and instead ‘widens’ his understanding of divine intention beyond the boundaries of the words. As such, the adjective *narrow* is an essential distinction, not necessarily a pejorative one, and yet, regardless of religion or denomination, this is how “fundamentalism” is almost universally portrayed.

Examined critically, one must conclude that these fundamentalist *jihadiyyeen* are at least consistent. They are not only clear in what they believe, but they act accordingly. In fact, Christianity requires the same follow-through of its adherents where James 2:26 points out that *faith without works is dead*. Rather than immediately deriding fundamentalists of any

---

to five fundamental, theological non-negotiables. The word was not used in a religious sense prior to his editorial, but has since taken on a new, pejorative connotation divorced from its original definition.

<sup>69</sup> Graham Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 48.

<sup>70</sup> *Salafiyya* derives from the root noun, *salaf* meaning ‘ancient one’ referring specifically to the Prophet Mohammed’s companions—those pillars of the faith considered to have lived and embodied the pure Islam to which faithful Muslims must return. The term is said to have been coined by the Syrian Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935), a pioneer of the Islamic modernist movement. Salafists urge a return to the pristine, authentic faith of the Prophet’s companions.

metaphysical tradition as unsavory elements of society in visceral, knee-jerk fashion, one would be better served to analyze the *content* of the fundamental beliefs such individuals act upon. One is hard-pressed to find a life of consistency in a person who holds to a set of beliefs but fails to live by them. Fundamentalism, if it must be cognitively reduced, at least implies an attempt at *consistency*—a quality non-fundamentalists lack. The challenge, then, remains to delve below shallow superficialities and examine *content*.

Bertrand Russell once remarked that it is not so important *what* you hold, but *how* you hold it. However, with little effort one can see that *both* aspects are equally important—regardless of the topic discussed. As it concerns our examination of religious beliefs acted upon in the sphere of history (and therefore germane to our analysis of the *jihadiyyeen*), we postulate four possibilities:

1. Peaceful religious content + peacefully “held” or acted upon. [Consistent]
2. Peaceful religious content + violently “held” or acted upon. [Inconsistent]
3. Violent, intolerant religious content + peacefully “held” or acted upon. [Inconsistent]
4. Violent, intolerant religious content + violently “held” or acted upon. [Consistent]

A few illustrations may be helpful. An example of the second possibility, where peaceful content is held in a violent, therefore inconsistent way, may be found in the Council of Clermont, 1095 A.D. when Pope Urban II, the proclaimed human mouthpiece of God and vicar of Christ, used his assumed divinely-sanctioned and infallible position of authority to rally support for an offensive “liberation” of the holy land. Without once referring to Biblical scripture (wherein is contained *peaceful* content that would not justify said invasion), we are told that Urban resorted to emotional, human arguments to effect his purpose. He promised unconditional salvation for those who would be slain.<sup>71</sup> He was successful. This success was further consolidated by a

---

<sup>71</sup> Compare this “holy war” promise of unconditional eternal salvation with that of Qur’an 9:111: “Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for their (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Footnotes continued on next page.

dynamic referred to later (and which is a striking parallel with Islam today): that the common man lacked the linguistic skills to avail himself of knowledge of holy writ. Vulnerably beholden to clerical authority for understanding of God’s word (written in Latin), dispossessed of any right to question the interpretation handed down from Rome, thousands upon thousands of ignorant men, women, and even children, sewed cloth crosses to their garments and initiated a grievous series of illicit and brutal wars under the assumed mantle and will of Christ—a series of expeditions which current *jihadiyyeen* reference in their diatribes today.

Another combination, (also inconsistent), is that where violent religious content is held in a peaceful way. This represents the dynamic at work in the lives of “moderate” Muslims. The violent, non-abrogated passages of the Qur’an—passages which require the faithful to segregate from, humiliate, and even kill Christians and Jews <sup>72</sup> or those which permit husbands to physical beat disobedient wives <sup>73</sup>—are held by many Muslims the world over in a peaceful way. How is this done? They are rationalized away or ignored. Just as there are legion Christians who have a very shallow knowledge of Biblical content, there are many Muslims possessing but a very elementary working knowledge of the Qur’an. Add to this the fact that the *authentic* Qur’an exists only in classical Arabic, <sup>74</sup> and you further dwindle the pool of those with solid understanding of Islamic theology. Finally, many Muslims read and understand what the Qur’an articulates, but as they are not prone to violence, those individuals with a peaceful, benevolent nature either ignore the passages demanding violence as proof of piety, or are moved to search out a non-literal

---

Law, the Gospel, and the Qur’an: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme.”

<sup>72</sup> Qur’an 2:190-3; 4:76, 101; 5:51, 54; 8:12, 15-17, 39, 65; 9:5, 14-15, 29, 39, 73, 123; 47:4 and others. Qur’an 8:12: “Remember the Lord inspired the angels (with the message): ‘I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instill terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them.’ ” Also note Qur’an 8:52 which calls non-Muslims “the worst of beasts”—dehumanization at its worst.

<sup>73</sup> Qur’an 4:34.

<sup>74</sup> Note that in any language but the classical Arabic, the Qur’an bears the title “*The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*” as the Qur’an is not held to be the actual Qur’an unless written/ published in Arabic.

hermeneutic thus giving them theological wiggle-room to avoid the constellation of violent Qur'anic commands.

Clearly, only violent religious content held or acted upon in a violent way is consistent. This lethal combination of violent, jihadist content coupled with a consistent, literal “holding” of the content, is precisely what we witness in the *jihadiyyeen*. Further, the internal logical consistency of this approach to Islamic writ, when coupled with a myriad of negative motivators—for example, ongoing Western occupation of Muslim lands (seen by the *jihadiyyeen* as neo-Crusaderism/ neo-colonialism)—strongly resonates in the souls of some Muslims and can quickly build with time and any perceived injustices wrought by the *kufar*.

Fuller concludes his definitional troika with the term *intolerant*, thus apparently disclosing pro-Islamic sympathies. The assumption accepted here is that fundamentalists are, by virtue of their commitment to the literal words of God, *intolerant*. While it does not logically follow that literalism necessarily implies intolerance as opposed to simple, amicable disagreement, this is Fuller's conclusion. But he is in much company, for even in the U.S., Christian fundamentalists are stereotyped into caricatures of intolerance. As it applies to our study of the *jihadiyyeen*, however, this mental predisposition concludes that such Islamic terrorists are *intolerant*—to the point of actively killing infidels—as a result of treating the Qur'an literally.

*Jihadiyyeen* are violently intolerant, but the root of this implacable hatred is not “fundamentalism” per se, which is simply a hermeneutical methodology or *modus operandi*. The root of intolerance is the *content* of what is literally believed and then consistently acted upon. This may seem like a shaving of hairs, but as will be shown, it is absolutely central to analyzing the ineffectiveness of certain aspects of our national strategy in addressing the *jihadiyyeen* threat.

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism states that “[t]errorism ultimately depends upon the appeal of an ideology... Islam has been twisted and made to serve an evil end,

as in other times and places other religions have been similarly abused.”<sup>75</sup> This is an interesting statement oft heard in political circles, but we do well to challenge this notion. If Islam has been hijacked and ideologically contorted by the *jihadiyyeen*—a subset of Muslims who define themselves as acting upon the *literal* interpretation of the Qur’an—then we must ask: *from what standard of Islam has this unwarranted deviation taken place?* In fact, when one reads the Qur’an and Hadith, one is struck by the avoidable fact that the *jihadiyyeen* are not acting in dissonance with what has been written. As fundamentalists, their starting point is a literal, contextual hermeneutic! In fact, we can easily watch their actions, read their prolific statements, and compare it with the words of the Qur’an. We find that they are, indeed, acting in logical consonance with their scripture. If Islam has been twisted, the only position one can take is that it has been twisted *away* from a non-literal, subjective Islamic ideology back *into* the realm of the demonstrably literal.

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism then compares this fundamentalist *hijacking* of Islam to other supposedly similar events in the life of other religions. One cannot escape the likely allusion to the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In fact, this historical comparison has compelled some to see in it a potential solution to the threat of *jihadiyyeen* ideology; suggesting that Islam needs to undergo its own *Reformation*. This idea is grievously flawed. The Reformation witnessed an upsurge of European theologians protesting extra-Biblical, non-literal innovations of the Roman Catholic church, from the sale of indulgences to papal authority itself, and demanding a wholesale return to the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of God’s word. Those vanguards of the Reformation demanded literal Biblical proof as the sole authority for tradition and Christian life and would no longer yield to the pronouncements of a mere man who claimed to speak with the authority of Christ, and yet repeatedly contradicted the clear teachings of the Bible. Thus, the Reformation’s project was

---

<sup>75</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 10.

about leaving the manmade and subjective, and returning to the divine, objective, literal word of God.

To say that Islam must undergo its own Reformation would then, by analogy, require it to also return to the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the Qur'an—*but this is what the jihadiyyeen have already done!* The *jihadiyyeen* already champion this position—a return to the authority of a literally-interpreted Qur'an. Their violent actions are derivative of Qur'anic verses literally “held”. It is therefore in Western interests that Islam *not* continue to undergo a Reformation (which has already begun), but a *Deformation*—a movement *away* from the literal to the subjective and non-literal. Literal interpretation of the Qur'an presents intractable clashes between the world of Islam and the world of unbelievers. Only through a mass social movement *away* from the literal writings of the Qur'an and Hadith may the more unpalatable, exceedingly intolerant and violent injunctions be avoided.

Socially conditioned as we are in modern times to blindly accept literalism, or the belief in absolutes, as narrow-minded and intolerant, we are herded as unthinking cattle into cognitive cages: unable to thoughtfully scrutinize Islamic scriptures in order to understand what they actually communicate to those who take them literally. When we read passages of the Qur'an that convey implacable violence against unbelievers, or that bestow upon the husband the inalienable right to physically beat disobedient wives, and others, we are conditioned to find solace in trite, politically-correct rationalizations that *authentic* Islam is not what Westerners plainly read in Islamic writ. We are advised to reject the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the written word championed by Usama bin Laden and his fellow travelers, and instead believe that Islam has *evolved* to a modern, peaceful manifestation of the faith. Many in the West are inclined to superimpose or mirror-image their own pluralistic, culturally-accepting worldview upon the Middle East, banishing the suggestion that Islam may, in fact, espouse—in the literal hermeneutic—implacable violence directed against unbelievers. One witnesses violent protests throughout European capitals in response to mere cartoons, the recurring burning of automobiles

in French cities, the murder of Christian schoolgirls by Islamists in Indonesia, the execution of adulteresses in Saudi Arabia, and other religiously-inspired, repugnant acts, rationalizing it away as mere aberrations.

This enslaving cognitive cage leads us to view the *jihadiyyeen* as abnormal Muslims espousing an Islam that *simply cannot be the true faith of nearly a billion of the earth's population*. They are seen as radicals who have hijacked the otherwise peaceful religion of Islam. Such cognitively-challenged presuppositions in the political realm unfortunately permit us to advance quixotic strategies of democratic transformation in the Middle East, oblivious—*self-blinded*—to the inherent dangers involved. And although we may be blind to the diametrically-opposed nature of our respective ideologies, the *jihadiyyeen* are not. Further, the Muslim populations whom they seek to persuade and recruit from are not ignorant of the cultural and religious barriers that we so cavalierly dismiss.

*Jihadiyyeen* are intolerant because their scriptures convey, in a literal sense, intolerant content. As stated above, it would be in our national interest to witness an Islamic *Deformation* away from a literal interpretation of the Qur'an, for in its literal interpretation, one is hard-pressed to find any measure of tolerance, equality, and trans-societal respect generally recognized as prerequisites for effective representative, pluralistic government. We do not, however, see such a deformational movement afoot. In fact, the *jihadiyyeen* strive to motivate the *umma* to return to an unfettered, literal knowledge of what their scriptures require of them and to be obedient to its mandates. They are implored to be not *rationalizers*, nor simply *hearers* of their word, but *doers* of their word.

A third useful term widely used to help define the Sunni *jihadiyyeen* is the word *salafist*, from the Arabic noun, *salaf*, meaning 'ancient one' and referring specifically to the original cadre of the Prophet Mohammed. This intimate circle has been historically revered as the exemplary model of Islamic faithfulness and religious purity. Contemporary *salafists* are those possessing a deep desire to return to the authentic faith of Islam's founding fathers. It is this pious Sunni

subset, hearts pining for an idealized Islamic past, who constitute much of the current threat. Fuller's conclusion that the Islamic *jihadiyyeen* threat is Sunni in origin accords with that of Sageman who finds the Shi'a and Afghan mujahedin communities singularly missing.<sup>76</sup> This definitional aspect is important because in order to know their ideology, one must be familiar with the ideologues whose works they read and cite.

One must not, however, conclude that *jihadiyyeen* ideology is confined to Sunni Islam. In his book *The War of Ideas*, Walid Phares details in depth how the rise of Sunni salafists in the twentieth century instigated a similar, almost competitive development which came to be known as *Vilayet e Faqih* (mandate of the wise).<sup>77</sup> He informs us that “[w]hile Salafi Jihadism focused on the main Soviet enemy in the 1980s, Khumeini Jihadism engaged the American enemy during the same decade.”<sup>78</sup> Vali Nasr, professor at the Naval Postgraduate School and senior adjunct fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, also notes this parallel emergence within the otherwise quietist theology of the Shi'a, calling it a “Sunnification” of Shi'ism: “Shias felt the pull of this [heroic] image and either became Sunnis or else began to practice Shiism as if they were Sunnis.”<sup>79</sup>

As a categorical net, ‘Islamic fundamentalist *jihadiyyeen*’ is a moniker wide enough to capture both Sunni and Shi'a derivatives but detailed enough to highlight crucial specifics. They are “Islamic” as it pertains to their faith. They are “fundamentalist” in that they ascribe to a literal hermeneutic. Finally, they are “*jihadiyyeen*”, implying that, in accordance with the literal interpretation of the Qur'an, they are devoted to pursuit of physical jihad in order to bring about the promised Islamic conquest of the entire world.

We now have to confront the assumption that Islamic *jihadiyyeen* incubate in stagnated, underprivileged environments. This assumption is a critical one to review as it represents a main

---

<sup>76</sup> Sageman, 119.

<sup>77</sup> Phares, 92.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 37.

artery in the heart of our nation's global counterterrorism, GWOT strategy. If one accepts the assumption that Islam is innately, intrinsically peaceful and couples it with the assumption that social malaise, shunted opportunities, and economic stagnation yield exponentially fertile ground for the emergence of violent personalities prone to pervert and manipulate a 'peaceful religion' in order to vent emotional steam, as it were, then the conclusion reached which produces a strategic hypothesis for action is that this swamp of potential hatred may be drained with the advent of Western-styled representative government. Or so the strategy plods.

Is this assumption to be granted? Is it empirically substantiated? Dr. Phares bemoans the fact that "intelligence estimates, five years after 9/11, still link the rise of jihadism to poverty and global attitudes instead of seeing it as a result of mass mobilization by *jihadiyyeen* ideologues and movements."<sup>80</sup> When one reviews the profiles of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers who consummated the capstone event triggering our nation's global reaction, we find that they did not, in fact, fit the assumed stereotype. Stephen Schwartz, American journalist and executive director of the Center for Islamic Pluralism, reminds us that the hijackers:

"...were not poor people from refugee camps on the West Bank or in Gaza. These were not people who had grown up feeling some sort of grievance against Israel and the United States because they lived in difficult conditions. These were not people from the crowded and disrupted communities of Egypt or Pakistan, or people who had experienced anti-Islamic violence in the last 20 years and had therefore turned against the United States. These people had grown up in a country that Americans often think of as our most solid and dependable ally in the Arab world—the kingdom of Saudi Arabia."<sup>81</sup>

Steven Emerson, American journalist and executive director of The Investigative Project which compiles data on violent Islamist groups in the United States, agrees, stating that "the tiny

---

<sup>79</sup> Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007), 58, 83.

<sup>80</sup> Phares, 248.

percentage of fundamentalists who resort to terrorism are often relatively affluent and elite.”<sup>82</sup> Sageman’s research into terror networks likewise refutes the socially-palatable myth that “terrorism is a product of poor, desperate, naïve, single young men from third world countries, vulnerable to brainwashing and recruitment into terror.”<sup>83</sup> If one accepts this stereotypical fable, then one will seek to ameliorate the problem with environmental improvement strategies aimed at identified terrorist nurseries (notwithstanding our “hands off” approach to the confirmed Wahhabist nursery of Saudi Arabia). If one accepts the notion that terrorists, by and large, are victims of brainwashing, then one’s solution will be to counter the content of their *jihadiyyeen ideas* with pro-Western, pro-globalization, pro-democratic *ideas*, seeing these individuals as nothing more than helpless pawns caught in an ideological tempest, blown this way and that by every ideological wind. It cannot be underestimated: *one’s accepted presuppositions drives one’s solution set.*

The 9/11 terrorists performed their nefarious acts under the banner of al-Qaeda, brainchild of wealthy Egyptian physician Dr. Ayman Zawahiri. Usama bin Laden, recognized leader of Zawahiri’s Islamically-focused movement, himself hails from a billionaire Saudi family. Islamic Jihad, like al-Qaeda, was also founded by a physician, Fathi Shiqaqi. On the other end of the ledger, we must point out that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, former leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq until his death in 2006, did hail from the poverty-stricken backwaters of Jordan, but his was a derivative organization. In other words, he represents one of the population of destitute recruits who gravitate to *jihadiyyeen* organizations once established. As stated previously, *jihadiyyeen*

---

<sup>81</sup> Stephen Schwartz, “Radical Islam in America,” *Imprimis*, May 2004: Available at <http://www.hillsdale.edu>

<sup>82</sup> Steven Emerson, *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us*, (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 222.

<sup>83</sup> Sageman, Marc, *Understanding Terror Networks*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004, p69.

movements generally emerge from the upper middle class to wealthy classes of society and although they welcome recruits from those mired in poverty, they are not *reliant* on them.

What can be concluded of this? Almost without exception, the leaders and patriarchs of modern Islamic *jihadiyyeen* terrorist groups have been affluent Arabs. Once establishing their organizations, they then eagerly recruit, in part, from the poor and destitute of the Middle East. What we do not find, however, are poor, emotionally volatile Middle Eastern men standing up regional and international terrorist organizations: they tend to gravitate to such groups, not establish them.

Sageman concludes his demographic analysis of the global salafi *jihadiyyeen* community as “generally middle-class, educated young men from caring and religious families, who grew up with strong positive values of religion, spirituality, and concern for their communities... [They] did not come from poor backgrounds...their education was modern...they were not ‘brainwashed’ into fanaticism...[and] the large majority...were married...and most had children.”

<sup>84</sup> This flies in the face of current terrorist demographical mythology and we ignore it to our strategic peril.

Oddly enough, despite the fact that the majority of the 9/11 *jihadiyyeen* were from Saudi Arabia, despite the fact that Usama bin Laden hails from Saudi Arabia, the U.S. strategic spear imbedded itself not in the Saudi Kingdom, but in Afghanistan and Iraq. The 2006 national document, *9/11, Five Years Later*, states that before the 2001 attacks the United States “did not openly challenge repression and restricted liberties in the Arab world, prioritizing stability, yet stability was not the outcome—the lack of freedom in the region meant anger and resentment grew, radicalism thrived, and terrorists found willing recruits. Today, democracy and freedom are an integral part of the U.S. agenda globally.”<sup>85</sup> This statement is wildly inconsistent at best.

---

<sup>84</sup> Sageman, 96-97.

<sup>85</sup> George W. Bush, *9/11 Five Years Later: Successes and Challenges*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/waronterror/2006/waronterror0906.pdf>

Given that the preponderance of the 9/11 *jihadiyyeen* were Saudi Arabian, have we logically focused the crosshairs of the GWOT upon the kingdom of Saudi Arabia? Have we used this empirical data to assist us in confirming or denying our assumptions regarding which environments give rise to violent Islamic *jihadiyyeen*? Or have we instead conformed to the old approach of pursuing stability in whatever guise it appears (including authoritative, repressive monarchies)—an approach specifically derided in the above document!

What is it that empowers salafi *jihadiyyeen* such that their ideas appear to achieve greater traction than the ideas proffered from Western democracies? In trying to answer this we find that the *jihadiyyeen* capitalize on four mechanisms that empower and grant wide Middle Eastern acceptance to their ideology. These mechanisms seem to ensure greater public reception for the *jihadiyyeen* message as opposed to ours.

The first dynamic is the content of the Qur'an itself. That the Qur'an is written in classical Arabic means that most Middle Eastern Muslims are, and will likely continue to be, unable to read it for themselves. Therefore, they are beholden to their local imams or mullahs for an interpretation and exposition of their holy book. This is strikingly similar to the experience of Christians within the constructs of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages when holy scripture was to be found only in the Latin language: therefore inaccessible to the common man.

Great papal consternation and opposition accompanied efforts to translate the Latin Vulgate into common vernacular. In a similar vein, Muslims do not consider translated copies of the Qur'an to be holy, but are instead universally called, "*The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*". This reveals an understanding that the true precepts of the Qur'an can only be purely understood in the original, classical Arabic. As occurred in the pre-Reformation Roman church model, when clerics alone possess the ability to decipher the original language of holy writ, a powerful lever of manipulation is extended over the faithful.

And here is where the parallel between "fundamentalist" worshippers seeking to understand the Qur'an and the Bible—both written in tongues foreign to the vast majority of

worshippers—breaks down. All fundamentalists are *not* the same. Regardless of how diligently one translates the Qur'an from the Arabic, the message delivered again and again is one of mandatory, foreordained global conquest and forcible subjugation of Christians and Jews. Taken literally, the Qur'an gives over one hundred imperative commands to believers (without distinction) to slay infidels:

Qur'an 47:4: Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: Until the war lays down its burdens. Thus (are ye commanded): but if it had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted retribution from them (Himself); but (He lets you fight) in order to test you, some with others. But those who are slain in the Way of Allah—He will never let their deeds be lost.

One notes that in Surah 47, where we find the above *ayat* or verse, there is no specific context limiting the audience to whom this injunction to decapitate unbelievers is addressed. The audience expected to carry out this command are Muslim believers in all ages of human history who anticipate passing a divine test. Another *sword verse* is Qur'an 4:76: "Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject Faith Fight in the cause of Evil: So fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan." In this case the audience is clear: *those who believe*. It is not limited to believers of Mohammed's time, or believers fighting on the sacred peninsula of Saudi Arabia, or believers fighting popish crusaders. It calls upon all *those who believe*—an audience spanning all time from the giving of the verse to the final victory of the *dar al Islam*. And what are Muslims, without distinction, required by Qur'anic injunction

to do? Believers are commanded to *fight in the cause of Allah* which is further defined as fighting *against the friends of Satan*.<sup>86</sup>

On the other hand, translations of the Bible from its Aramaic, Hebrew, and Koine Greek yield no such unlimited, violent imperatives requiring contemporary believers to take action. An example often cited is 1 Samuel 15:2-3: “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ”<sup>87</sup> As opposed to the open-ended, universally-applicable Qur’anic verses above, this Biblical example tightly limits the command to a specific, non-transferable audience. Taken *literally*, in the manner of a *fundamentalist*, unless you are a second millennia B.C. Jew preparing to fight king Amalek and his subjects, having been personally and *verbally* directed to do so by the Lord of Hosts, then this command does not apply to you nor to any other contemporary Christian for that matter. A person attempting to use 1 Samuel 15:2-3 as divine authorization for martial action does so only by accepting a non-literal, non-fundamentalist hermeneutic where he subjectively substitutes his personal enemies for Amalek, himself for king Saul. All other Old Testament injunctions to warfare are similarly fenced by detailed, unambiguous *context*. If one ignores the context, *anything* is possible in the subjective, non-literal world—until reality catches up.

If one chooses to subjectively interpret posted speed limits one may *temporarily* achieve speeds of one hundred miles per hour...until the state highway patrol *imposes* a proper, literal interpretation of the traffic laws. If one chooses to subjectively (non-literally) interpret federal tax

---

<sup>86</sup> Muslim apologists often refute such conclusions as myopic, un-informed diatribe by Islamophobes seeking proof for their views where none exist. They claim that context is ignored and verses that appear violent are “cherry-picked”. However, an excellent test in such cases is to ask the apologist two questions: (1) What, then, is the *exact* context of a given verse? (2) If said verse is abrogated (no longer normative for contemporary Muslims), then what verse or verses abrogate the violent verse in question?

<sup>87</sup> All Biblical verses in this monograph taken from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995).

codes such that one fails to send the proper, legal monetary remittance, one's bank account and criminal record will be drastically altered when the IRS forces literal compliance with the tax code.

Drs. Ergun and Emir Caner, former Muslim emigrants from Turkey and sons of a Sunni cleric, explain the difference between Islam's normative injunction to *jihad* and the Old Testament's historical account of genocide: the latter "[historically] *describes* the slaughter of past peoples as a judgment ordered individually by God in an unusual situation. The Bible does not *prescribe* slaughter. The Qur'an indicates that holy war is not merely historical fact but a present reality (surah 4:101). Second, the Old Testament enemies treated without mercy were evil because of their actions, not because of their religion. The Qur'an defines implacable enmity in religious terms (surah 5:51; 9:29)." <sup>88</sup>

In this important vein and intimately related to the West's strained relationship with the Middle East; a proper translation of and adherence to the Christian Scriptures offered *no foundation or rationale* for Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont, 1095 A.D., and his pontific successors to prosecute the Crusades!

The unfortunate, lingering result has been that the Crusades are repeatedly pointed to by various Muslims as proof of ongoing infidel aggression against the Muslim world—aggression that purportedly continues unabated to this day. Caner and Caner note that "many people quickly point out the Crusades as evidence that medieval Christians were still in the business of slaughter a thousand years after the life of Christ. This is true, not because their killing was supported by the Bible but because they adopted Islamic theology as their own. For example, as early as 833, popes began promising Christian warriors that they would obtain heaven if they died in battle.

---

<sup>88</sup> Emir Fethi Caner & Ergun Mehmet Caner, *More Than a Prophet: An Insider's Response to Muslim Beliefs About Jesus and Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 94.

Such a promise has no support in the Scripture, but it does have backing in the Qur'an and Hadith.”<sup>89</sup>

Salafi *jihadiyyeen*, then, *are* literally empowered and divinely ordered to embark upon violent, global *jihad* against all non-Muslim nations of the earth without distinction or limiting parameters. Their holy books, taken literally, not only encourage, but demand physical, violent *jihad* from true believers.

Put another way: among the religions of the world, only the religion of Islam, as articulated in its holy book and taken *literally*, encourages adherents to embark upon religiously-mandated genocide,<sup>90</sup> encourages suicide in this pursuit,<sup>91</sup> followed by male-oriented, sensual rewards in heaven for obedience.<sup>92</sup> An example is Qur'an 9:111 “Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth...Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme.” Similar content is found in Qur'an 4:74: “Let those fight in the cause of Allah Who sell the life of this world for the hereafter. To him who fighteth in the cause of Allah—whether he is slain or gets victory—Soon shall We give him a reward of great (value).” And one from the hadith of al-Bukhari: “I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>90</sup> Qur'an 4:89 “...seize them and slay them wherever ye find them; and (in any case) take no friends or helpers from their ranks...”; 8:12, 65; 9:5 “...slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them...”, 9:29 “Fight those who believe not in Allah...”, 73, 123; 47:4.

<sup>91</sup> Qur'an 2:154; 4:74, “To him who fighteth in the cause of Allah—whether he is slain or gets victory—Soon shall We give him a reward of great (value).”; 9:111; 14:3, “Those who love the life of this world more than the Hereafter...they are astray by a long distance.”; al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Bk. 56, No. 2818, “Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords (jihad).”

<sup>92</sup> Qur'an 78:31-33 where “voluptuous/ high-bosomed women” are promised; 37:40-48; 44:54; 52:20; 55:56-57; 56:12-38. It is interesting to note that the Qur'an repeatedly describes Paradise in sensual, erotic terms that would appear to resonate only with *men*.

<sup>93</sup> al-Bukhari, Vol. 1, Bk. 2, No. 25.

This is a fact, documented in Islamic writ itself, notwithstanding the unpleasant and impolitic nature of honestly confronting it. However, this fact is commonly ignored, downplayed, refuted, or parried with apoplectic charges of Islamophobia and racism—*not* on the basis of critical study of the Qur’an in light of the concept of abrogation (*naskh*),<sup>94</sup> but on the basis of either true ignorance, or conformation to political correctness and fealty to multiculturalism. Regardless of *why* this well-substantiated fact is ignored, it so remains. No other religion on earth literally mandates such conduct of its faithful in its holy books.

Phares draws attention to this important dynamic. “[J]ihadists are mobilizing radicalized Muslims...to follow ‘the injunction of Allah,’ and hence no [public relations] campaign can defeat them unless it defeats the premises of the jihadi ideology.”<sup>95</sup> In other words, Islamic *jihadiyyeen* appeal to the literal word of Allah—the Qur’an—wherein is found the unbounded imperative to wage physical, global *jihad*. And unless one can somehow convince Muslims to move away from the literal interpretation of their holy book, what may be termed an Islamic *Deformation*, then one cannot defeat the ideology.

A second powerful mechanism of *jihadiyyeen* appeal is the lightning rod issue of Israel and the Jews. Almost without exception, all nations wherein terrorists are recruited for the salafi *jihadiyyeen* cause are openly anti-Semitic. They are raised and nurtured in environments where the Jews are cast as subhumans who have illegally conspired to wrest Palestine from the hands of her supposedly rightful owners. Qur’an 2:65 equates Jews—those “who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath”—as “apes, despised and rejected.” Qur’an 5:60 instructs that some Jews had been “transformed into apes and swine” by Allah for worshipping evil. Further, Qur’an 5:64 teaches

---

<sup>94</sup> Abrogation is that Islamic doctrine where a chronologically later verse supersedes and therefore renders obsolete, an earlier (older) passage.

<sup>95</sup> Phares, 248. See also Qur’an 9:39-39 as well as Hadith collection of Abu Dawud, Bk. 23, No. 3,455: “If you have made a solemn pledge, but then follow cows’ tails and are happy with your lot and abandon the jihad, God decrees humiliation for you and will not remove it until you return to your religion.”

that Jews are “accursed” in whom Allah places “enmity and hatred,” and 4:161 attests that a “grievous punishment” has been prepared for them.<sup>96</sup>

Add to this cauldron of hate the fact that the United States has been Israel’s strongest supporter, and one begins to see that the salafi *jihadiyyeen* have fertile soil for planting seeds of anti-American sentiment. Farah, writing in 2000, says that the “United States, thus, wittingly or not, has become the country most hated by Islamic activists...[because] since the formation of the State of Israel, [it] has followed a consistent policy of excessive cordiality and favoritism toward Israel.”<sup>97</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that ideas emanating from a perceived *Christian* nation who is simultaneously a fervid supporter of Israel, the arch-enemy of Islam, will face momentous resistance. The *jihadiyyeen* capitalize on this Qur’anic position; they advance anti-American, anti-Zionist arguments that cannot be refuted on the basis of Islamic holy writ.

The third catalyzing mechanic is the perception of an ongoing occupation by Western infidel powers in *dar al-Islam*. Usama bin Laden referenced this unacceptable condition in a letter addressed to an American audience written in October 2002: “Your forces occupy our countries; you spread your military bases throughout them; you corrupt our lands, and you besiege our sanctuaries, to protect the security of the Jews and to ensure the continuity of our treasures.”<sup>98</sup> This reiterates his earlier thoughts articulated in 1995 in a letter addressed to the Wahhabi clerics of Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden declares that “the invasion by the American and western Crusader forces of the Arabian peninsula...[is a] momentous event unprecedented both in pagan and Islamic history.”<sup>99</sup> “Eject the polytheists from the Arabian peninsula,” says the hadith of al-Bukhari, 2.932 and Murdin, 3.089. Thus the simple *presence* of Western, non-Muslim forces in the *dar al-Islam* represents an emergence that must be challenged by “true believers”.

---

<sup>96</sup> See also Qur’an 5:51.

<sup>97</sup> Farah, 417.

<sup>98</sup> Lawrence, 164.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 16.

Fourth, ideological ire of the salafists is kindled into a blue flame by the belief that the purity and authenticity of Islamic life (which encompasses all aspects—political, religious, familial, etc.) has been corrupted. Corruption of the ideal is reflected in the relative backwardness and turbulence of the Middle East in general. *Jihadiyyeen* conclude that Allah has bestowed upon them the blessings of oil; however, their unfaithfulness has taken such potential for strength and global dominance and instead transformed them into weak states beholden to imperial infidels. This corruption stems from unfaithfulness to Islam. It is a deviation from Islamic authenticity and therefore the salafists posit initial, ultimate blame on the wayward, faithless *umma* themselves. They believe that the only way to resuscitate their society and reinvigorate the superior destiny promised them by Mohammed himself is to return to a life of purity and eradication of all bad influences. This purging would necessarily require an abrupt amputation of Western, Judeo-Christian, neo-Crusader, imperialistic influences, *not* a continued flirtation with Western ideas of governance, materialism and increasingly loose moral standards.

Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), Egyptian Islamist and key intellectual leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood reiterates this idea in his widely-quoted book, *Milestones*: “Islam cannot fulfill its role (as world leader) except by taking concrete form in a society, rather, in a nation...IF Islam is again to play the role of the leader of mankind, then it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original form... [currently it is] buried under the debris of the man-made traditions of several generations... crushed under the weight of those false laws and customs which are not even remotely related to the Islamic teachings...”<sup>100</sup>

Given ongoing globalizing trends, the fundamentalist religious agenda of the *jihadiyyeen*, if embraced and followed with action, would serve to increasingly alienate them from much of the global community. This, however, would be an Islamic ideological alienation, not a geographic one, for their Qur’anic eschatology informs them that the destiny of Islamic peoples is

---

<sup>100</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (Damascus, Syria: No publisher, no date given), 9.

to subjugate the entire world under the banner of Islam. Thus, in pursuit of this perceived divine mandate, the *jihadiyyeen* are totally unwilling to compromise or negotiate.

## CHAPTER 4: ISLAM AND WESTERN DEMOCRACY: COMPATIBLE OR INCONSONANT?

What's being undertaken here is difficult, complex, it's [an] enormously challenging process to defeat the terrorists and to build relatively stable allies in countries that have little or no history of representative government, that lack the civil institutions and the capabilities that many of us take for granted here, that have little or no experience with an effective criminal justice system, that lack legitimate financial institutions and where for decades the local police previously had served not to protect as they do in our country, but as notorious instruments of the state...<sup>101</sup>

Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld

Western observers of the Middle East do not... appreciate the different traditions which make up the politics of this region. They assume that all the surface trappings of nation-statehood—the parliaments, the flags, and the democratic rhetoric—can fully explain the politics of these countries, and that tribalism and brutal authoritarianism are now either things of the past or aberrations from the norm: the lesson of Hama or Halabja or South Yemen is that they are not.<sup>102</sup>

Thomas Friedman

Having surveyed both the basics of both Western, representative democracy as well as Islamic governance, we will now highlight those conceptual and practical areas of diametric opposition. We will discuss four such areas which, in combination, offer incredibly bleak prospects for a counter-terrorist strategy of Middle Eastern democratization to achieve its aims. These four are the purpose of government, the nature of the constitution, the necessity for political debate, and the issue of equality in society and before the law.

Despite much of the prolific public debate, when one examines the issues unfettered by political nuance one finds that the American form of government and the form derived from and empowered by the Qur'an are completely antonymous. It is not the case that they are simply

---

<sup>101</sup> Pentagon Briefing with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld (10/26/2006) as available at: <http://www.capitalnews.org/>

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Friedman, *From Beirut to Lebanon*, (New York: Random House, 1989, 1990, 1995), 103.

*different* (in a value-neutral fashion). They are fundamentally, irreconcilably opposed. Those who propose a possible marriage of liberal democracy with the tenets of Islam are simply uninformed as to the actual tenets of one, the other, or both, or suffering from a case of unwarranted hyper-optimism.

## Government's Purpose

Islam views the purpose of government to facilitate believers in achieving the prophesied end state which is the successful global conquest of Islam.<sup>103</sup> This doctrine is so central to Islamic theology that the content of Qur'an 9:33 is repeated three times: "It is He Who hath sent His Apostle with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it)."<sup>104</sup> In other words, the Qur'an teaches that *dar al-Islam*, (the world of Muslim believers living under Islamic governance), is destined to ultimately conquer *dar al-harb* in totality. Dr. Abdalati summarizes Islamic ideology as one "aimed at world submission to the Will of God and world confinement to the limits of God's Law..."<sup>105</sup> Others have pointed out that simply the fact that the term *dar el harb* exists, and that it is set in contrast and opposition to *dar al Islam*, reveals a mental construct of global dichotomy perpetually existing in the minds of Muslims. This construct in place, Muslims are already *predisposed* to pursue the logical extension of that construct with the proper theological prodding.

Put another way: Not agreeing that the purpose of government is to bring about maximum freedom by restraining human lawlessness, it instead assumes an intrinsically good *umma* invested by Allah with a divine mission to bring about global Muslimization. Islamic government, then, exists to *guarantee* success of this mandate. This necessarily requires a degree of suppression of the exercise of what many Westerners might call *true* volition. The Western

---

<sup>103</sup> Qur'an 8:38-39, "...And fight them [unbelievers] on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah together and everywhere..."; al-Bukhari, Vol. 1, Bk. 2, No. 25; Bk. 8, No. 392; Vol. 4, Bk. 56, No. 2946; Vol 9, Bk. 88, No. 6924; Bk. 96, Nos. 7284-85.

<sup>104</sup> Qur'an 9:33; 48:28; 61:9.

concept of volition threatens the Qur’anic political mandate as it bears with it the potential to deviate from the Qur’anically-prescribed global goal. Championing true volitional freedom permits and enables true religious freedom; not temporary religious *toleration*—a thing altogether different. As such, in the Qur’anic construct, religious stratification of society necessarily follows. The purpose of Islamic government is, in essence, a *religious* one, therefore it does not surprise us that religious categorization and differentiation of the citizenry follows. “Those who resist Allah and His Apostle will be among those most humiliated.”<sup>106</sup>

Islamic government provides the necessary vehicle within which believers extend the one true religion to all of earth’s inhabitants as mandated. As we have seen, numerous are those open-ended, un-bounded Qur’anic passages mandating believers to wage jihad against the unbelievers and denizens of *dar al-harb* in order to bring the truth of Allah to the far reaches of the earth and make the world *free* for propagation of the truth. The *harbi* (unbelieving denizens of *dar al-harb*) are expected to respond to this violent missionary activity by accepting Allah’s truth and converting. Those who refuse to convert in this global campaign are then to be executed without mercy or reservation.<sup>107</sup> In other words, in the Islamic eschaton, *man* plays a proactive part in bringing about the prophesied outworking of future events. *Man* executes judgment for contrary metaphysical conscience in this life. This contrasts sharply, for example, with the Judeo-Christian eschatological construct where such judgment is not the prerogative of man, but is reserved for God alone, (and thus permits citizens of different faiths to respectfully co-exist).

*Why is this important and what does it have to do with our strategic project?* First, although many Muslims may not be intimately aware of the theology articulated by a literal

---

<sup>105</sup> Abdalati, 140.

<sup>106</sup> Qur’an 58:20.

<sup>107</sup> Qur’an 33:60-62: “Truly, if the Hypocrites [unbelievers], and those in whose hearts is a disease...desist not...They shall have a curse on them: whenever they are found, they shall be seized and slain (without mercy). (Such was) the practice (approved) of Allah among those who lived aforetime: No change wilt thou find in the practice (approved) of Allah.” This last ayat (62) is exceedingly instructive—it clearly states that the preceding injunction—the slaying of Hypocrites—will not be abrogated in the future.

understanding of the Qur'an, the attack on 9/11 was carried out by those who *did*. Therefore, when we aim at introducing or extending 'stability' to the Middle East by means of democratization, and simply acquiesce to the inclusion of the Qur'an as the overriding, preeminent constitution of neo-democracies, we display our ignorance of what this inclusion entails. The literal interpretation of the Qur'an provides open, unlimited authority for individual believers to engage in jihad against unbelievers until the world is brought into global 'peace'. Recognizing this, bombastic presidential statements calling for the destruction of the state of Israel take on different possibilities.<sup>108</sup> The Western knee-jerk to downplay such pronouncements as mere 'rhetoric' may be drastically wrong. It may be unwise to mirror image our own Western logic upon the Islamic world. Instead, we must be cognizant of their empowering ideology and sufficiently informed to be able to discern potential perils that may exist if we help foster fledgling democracies insistent on enshrining the Qur'an as a cultural requirement for their government.

We saw in chapter two that the notion of Islamic superiority became engrained in the Muslim religious and cultural consciousness, but this Qur'anic truth suffered a demoralizing blow in the 19th century, when the Ottoman Empire weakened and Muslim-ruled lands quickly came under the rule of *kuffar*: Tunisia and Algeria by the French, Egypt and Sudan succumbed to British control, and the Balkans vied for independence. The wake of World War I witnessed a terminally-weakened Ottoman Empire subsequently dominated by Western, "Christian" nations and Kemal Ataturk's termination of the impuissant caliphate in 1924. The dissolution of the caliphate—despite its effete state—massively shocked the *umma* at large who were religiously and historically conditioned to accept Muslim superiority as certain destiny. In accordance with Qur'an 3:26, the conclusion reached by many was that Allah's patience with his errant believers

---

<sup>108</sup> Iranian President Ahmadinejad has issued numerous statements calling for the destruction of the state of Israel including 3 August, 2006: Available at: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=2269525>.

had run out. Islamic religious lethargy had reached unacceptable levels resulting in Allah's temporary alteration of the inevitable course of history until proper faith returned. "...Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest..."

This religious narrative has persisted to this day and explains much. It is a narrative which elucidates the disconnect between Muslims' Allah-promised supremacy, dominance, and blessing contrasted with the perceptions (real and perceived) of their current reality: impoverishment, domination by Western powers, and their own martial impuissance. This disturbing recognition of atrophied Muslim power in comparison to that of the unbelieving sphere of the 'Christian' West helped forge the worldviews of contemporary Muslim intellectuals and provided fertile seed for the recruiting efforts of fundamentalist *jihadiyyeen* eager to regain the promised blessings of superiority.

Given an understanding of this crucial historical framework, one can see how concepts of Western pluralistic democracy pushed by entities largely viewed as infidel proselytes and crusaders of Christendom—that *supra-national religious empire that hastened the current delay of total Islamic dominance*—will never gain heartfelt acceptance by a certain percentage of the population. This certain percentage of Muslims—one may never know how many there are—believe that Western domination of Islamic lands is merely divine discipline from Allah to stimulate an Islamic awakening. They hold that Islamic unfaithfulness facilitated Western occupation of the *dar al Islam* in modern times. As such, accepting Western-peddled ideas and governmental constructs is expressly *not* the answer to regional or global stability in the minds of those finding their truth in the literal Qur'an.

The ongoing question then remains: *How many in the Middle East hold to this worldview; to this religious interpretation of history?* It is an unanswerable question. Further, it is largely irrelevant in that great masses of Muslims thus persuaded are not required to further the *jihadiyyeen* agenda. It only took nineteen men and the passive support of peripheral others to bring about the slaughter of 9/11, less than ten *jihadiyyeen* operators to pull off the 7/7 public

transportation attacks in London in 2005; and less than thirty suspects are linked to the 3/11 Madrid train bombings that occurred in 2004. In other words, relatively small numbers of devoted and patient *jihadiyyeen* can wreak terrorist mayhem in the West. Mass numbers of terrorists are not required to pose a continuing threat.

Integral to the monumental problem posed of trying to establish a Western form of government on a culture religiously programmed to think in terms of global religious conquest and eventual pan-Islamism, is a second, equally daunting problem—it is a culture where a division of mosque and state is seen as an heretical innovation (*bid'a*) of the *kuffar*.

As we have seen, fundamental to our understanding of equality and freedom is the strict proscription against the church wielding governmental power. The marriage of any one religious denomination to the state is entirely antithetical to our Western concept of governance. America's forefathers well understood that the marriage of miter and sword produced an implacable, tyrannical offspring and therefore took great pains to establish protections against it.

James Madison, widely regarded as the Father of the United States Constitution, “looked upon liberty of conscience as the fundamental factor in freedom of religion, and religious freedom, to judge from the concentrated attention he gave it, as the fundamental freedom. In this thought he followed the aphorisms of Harrington, who greatly influenced his thinking: ‘Where civil liberty is entire, it includes liberty of conscience. Where liberty of conscience is entire, it includes civil liberty.’ ”<sup>109</sup>

To simply overlook this foundational doctrine of American governance today and instead attempt to find, impose, or empower a semi-suitable surrogate in an Islamic theocratic model is to not understand the spirit and importance of this principle at all. When, in the course of our neoteric GWOT strategy, we promote an Islamic form of quasi-democracy that brazenly declares Islam the state religion and the Qur'an as the constitution, our honored conceptual bulwark of

freedom and equitable human governance is hastily and unconscionably cast aside. If this strategic project of ours is to attempt to bestow upon others the fruits of our beneficial experience—our *ideas*—then one would be hard-pressed to highlight a more important idea than this. And yet, in Iraq and Afghanistan we have so passively acquiesced to empower a tried formula of tyranny.

While it cannot be argued but that the Iraqi people must determine how they will be governed, if their affinities essentially revert back to old, familiar ruts of enslavement, then our strategy is ineffectual. We recall that our strategy is to “defeat the terrorists and their hateful ideology by spreading the hope of freedom across the world. ... [That] the security of our nation depends on the advance of liberty in other nations.”<sup>110</sup> One wonders how supporting the proven tyrannical construct of mosque fused with state advances liberty? How does overlooking this vital, protective governmental safeguard bequeath a new era of freedom to formerly oppressed people?

In this vein, accepting this egregious compromise and then standing behind the government that espouses it as if it were just a mere *cultural difference*, one thing is certain: we can expect to encounter many more examples of religious tyranny such as that of Afghan Christian convert, Abdul Rahman, 41, who was sentenced to death in March of 2006 for leaving the Islamic faith. It wasn't until the international community interceded upon Afghanistan's judicial proceedings and whisked him off to Italy that his life was spared. As the embarrassing events plodded along, U.S. State Department spokesman Scott McCormack informed reporters, “We have underscored also to Foreign Minister Abdullah that we believe that tolerance and freedom of worship are important elements of any democracy.”<sup>111</sup> Abdullah might have

---

<sup>109</sup> Irving Bryant, *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist*, (New York: Bobbs Merrill Company, 1941), 243.

<sup>110</sup> President George W. Bush, July 4, 2006, As available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/nationalsecurity/>

<sup>111</sup> As available at: [www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/03/22/afghan.christian/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/03/22/afghan.christian/index.html)

underscored to McCormack that the Qur'an prescribes *death* for apostates, and as *shari'a* is enshrined in Afghanistan's constitution, they were only acting in accordance with their laws—laws Washington abetted and empowered. Qur'an 2:217 threatens believers that "...if any of you turn back from their faith and die in unbelief, their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the hereafter; they will be companions of the fire and will abide therein." This warning is then built upon by a Hadith which commands: "Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him."<sup>112</sup>

Was this case a mere aberration latched onto by the press, or does this portend future events that will result in our failure to strongly urge these young democracies to adopt constitutions divorced from religion? Is this the new ideological climate of freedom our men and women are fighting and dying to grant to the peoples of the Middle East? In an Islamic state presided over by *shari'a* law, peaceful co-existence of religious adherents as *equals* in a pluralistic society is simply *not* one of the permissible options.

## **A Divine Constitution**

The ubiquitous acceptance in the Middle Eastern Islamic world of rule by Allah—the only recognized sovereign—via a human intermediary closely supervised by a clerical body, introduces immediate and vexing tensions with the fundamental Western concept of the Rule of Law. Essentially, a core attribute of the Rule of Law is that governmental authority is only legitimate when operating under a corpus of law that is written and publicly disclosed for the citizenry to see, understand, and, if perceived to be unjust, peacefully challenged for amendment.

Under the Islamic paradigm a problem emerges which engenders profound distance between Islamic and Western models. As the Qur'an is written in classical Arabic—therefore largely inaccessible to the Middle Eastern public (and beyond)—and as the Qur'an is held to be the preeminent constitution of Islamic government; the corpus of Qur'anic Law, then, is not publicly nor easily disclosed for all citizens to objectively reflect upon.

---

<sup>112</sup> Al-Bukhari, vol. 9, book 88, no. 6922.

The common Middle Eastern citizen, if a generalized category may be permitted, depends upon the local cleric who, presumably, has achieved a fluency in Qur'anic Arabic. That the clerics are largely the only ones able to really read the Islamic state's constitution yields a situation hostile to the concept of an *informed citizenry* integrally involved in their own governance by a social contract.

Further exacerbating this problem of constitutional transparency is the fact that the religion of Islam in all of its major sects (at least outwardly) denounces the concept of a sanctioned *priesthood*, or *formal* clerical class. The result: the local imam or mullah may or may not be fluent in classical Arabic. He may have achieved his clerical credentials by dint of personality instead of linguistic mastery, therefore our common Middle Eastern citizen is subject to a wide variance of interpretations of Allah's Qur'anic precepts—the very precepts presupposed to be at the constitutional core of Islamic governance.

In the American model of representative democracy, law is proposed, debated, and adopted or rejected—always subject to further review and amendment. The Constitution of the United States was never presupposed to be the infallible articulation of God's intent for human governance. The framers of the Constitution ensured it contained the dynamic *potential* and *future* vitality to protect the rights of all citizens, regardless of race, religion, or gender; and this was accomplished even in the midst of a period when equal rights required immediate attention.

This point cannot be overemphasized: A key reason the United States Constitution possessed necessary future potential for successfully extending equal rights and protections to all citizens, even while codified in a time of lingering British imperial practices such as the slave trade, for example, was that the document was never presumed to be the infallible, literal articulation of God's will for human governance. It was acknowledged from the start to be a finite, human creation based upon the combined intellects of fallible human beings. The authors recognized that the citizenry of the nation would necessarily have to live and grow with the Constitution—amending it as they saw fit—and then accepting the results of their subsequent

changes. Whether succeeding generations of Americans built upon the skeleton with healthy muscle, or diseased, putrid flesh was entirely in the volition of the citizenry manifest through the quality of their elected officials.

On the other hand when a nation establishes what they hold to be Allah's inerrant, infallible word as the preeminent, ultimate constitution of their nation, they have necessarily enthroned it above criticism, above debate, above amendment. This is entirely antithetical to the Western constitutional concept in the most important of aspects. The issues that then *necessarily* emerge in a nation deriving its legitimacy from what they hold to be Allah's immutable and perfect word—a word written in an Arabic inaccessible to most Middle Eastern citizens are these: First, who are those who are even able to read said divine constitution? Second, of those able to read it, who are those theologically qualified to articulate the meaning behind the divine words to the citizens? Third, if there exist a multiplicity of sects within the nation, which sect will articulate the correct or accepted meaning of the constitution's truth if there are debates or theological differences of opinion?

### **Political Discourse and Debate**

A natural result attending a government that establishes Allah's infallible word as the constitution is an inevitable tendency to curtail political dialogue. Enlivened political debate of the issues carries with it the potential for challenging the status quo—for critiquing the divinely inspired. This cannot be permitted and therefore clashes with an enduring principle of Western democracy: that of the expectation and welcoming of public discourse and debate on the important issues of the day. The principle empowers freedom of conscience in that citizens need not acquiesce in their viewpoints, even after laws have been passed and judicial verdicts have been handed down. Complying with existing laws, citizens with minority opinions still have every right to continue pursuing the persuasion of the body politic with the aim of eventually

prevailing. In part, it was this very dynamic that eventually permitted inequities in American society—suffrage, slavery, etc—to be corrected.

In the Islamic world, this principle is seemingly not encouraged. Dr. Abdalati explains that after an arbitrary period of time allotted for public discourse has passed, those with minority opinions must totally capitulate to the dictates of the majority. “If the individual takes an independent attitude on a certain matter of public concern and finds the majority taking a different attitude, *he must in the end side with the majority* to maintain solidarity and cooperation, provided the majority’s decision is not contrary to the [*shari’a*] Law of God...he is bound to go along with them...”<sup>113</sup> Abdalati points to Qur’an 3:102-105 for proof of this principle which states that this minority acquiescence is necessary in order to avoid divisions among the citizenry. On the other hand, peaceful differences of opinion in human governance is a welcomed tension in Western democratic governance. Although citizens must obey laws passed, they nonetheless are entitled to maintain contrary opinions and pursue acceptance of their opinions in the arena of orderly political debate without fear of suppression.

As long as Islamic governments esteem *shari’a* law as the law of the land which preserves inviolate Islam as *the* established and official religion, the result will be a system that may have democratic, pluralistic window dressing, but will be inherently prejudiced, intolerant, and semi-authoritarian. These types of governments are not ones into which we should invest our national treasure—for moral as well as pragmatic reasons.

---

<sup>113</sup> Abdalati, 136.

## CONCLUSION

Although we sought to do the right thing—and believed we were doing the right thing—in my judgment, hindsight proves us wrong. We both overestimated the effect of South Vietnam’s loss on the security of the West and failed to adhere to the fundamental principle that, in the final analysis, if the South Vietnamese were to be saved, they had to win the war themselves. Straying from this central truth, we built a progressively more massive effort on an inherently unstable foundation. External military force cannot substitute for the political order and stability that must be forged *by* a people *for* themselves.

114

Robert S. McNamara

Reflecting upon the war in Vietnam, former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara conceded that the war was established upon an *inherently unstable foundation*. Persuaded that they were doing the *right thing*, two successive administrations attempted to obviate the unstable foundation by erecting a *progressively more massive* edifice upon it. It was a costly edifice valued at anywhere from \$500-900 billion and over 58,000 American dead. McNamara concluded that the war’s failure lay in accepting an unstable foundation. That foundation—the indigenous will, capacity, and proclivities of the Vietnamese people—could or would not be cajoled or coerced to conform to American strategic desires simply by the sustained increase of external military force.

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism informs us that the battle of ideas is the very essence of the GWOT. We are told that our Western ideas have the power to “transform the embittered and disillusioned ... into free peoples living harmoniously in a diverse society.”<sup>115</sup> In other words, once again we are ostensibly seeking to do the *right thing*, building an increasingly extensive, daring edifice upon two uncertain foundations. These foundations are the citizenry of Afghanistan and Iraq.

---

<sup>114</sup> Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, (New York: Times Books, 1995), 333.

<sup>115</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 7.

Now, over six years and \$500 billion <sup>116</sup> invested into this war of competing ideologies—one fought against an ever-morphing litany of global enemies unrestricted by national boundaries—a legitimate question to ask (and one that should have been asked from the beginning) is: *What is the quality of the two foundations? Which is to really ask: Are our foundational presuppositions with respect to our Middle East democratization strategy true?*

How has our promotion of Western democratic ideas been received thus far? Have the various populations within those selected countries largely accepted our ideas? Have our efforts begun to dilute ancient sectarian bitterness, ameliorate poverty, and neutralize general disillusionment? Or is the foundation upon which we now build weak, brittle, and unable or unwilling to bear our Western edification? More importantly, how effective has this democratization strategy been with respect to defeating international Islamic terrorism?

This monograph has attempted to show that the clear and present threat our nation faces—that which precipitated 9/11—was not a conventional, state threat, but a global, non-state, terrorist network conceived by educated, affluent *jihadiyyeen* who do not come from, nor are negatively motivated by penurious environmental conditions.

As such, Middle Eastern environmental, social, and political issues are *not* the causal heart of the *jihadiyyeen* emergence. Islamic *jihadiyyeen* angst is primarily empowered by the content of their religious ideology. Tragically, our GWOT strategy sidesteps this reality and instead focuses upon Middle Eastern political and economic revivification, exercising blind, unwarranted faith in the assumption that this will somehow emasculate the *jihadiyyeen* threat.

However, pursuing an unpopular Western political strategy in the Middle East that does not address the *actual* threat to our nation, not only squanders finite resources of all types, but further guarantees al Qaeda and likeminded *jihadiyyeen* groups the ability to find considerably

---

<sup>116</sup> Stephen Kosiak, “The Cost and Funding of the Global War on Terror (GWOT)”, Testimony, United States House of Representatives Committee on the Budget, 18 Jan 2007, 2.

more recruits. Our strategy exponentially deepens their recruiting pool as it confirms perceptions vigorously preached by *jihadiyyeen* ideologues who successfully color us as imperialist infidels once again invading the *dar al-Islam*, superimposing our heretical governmental constructs, installing our imperial puppets, and plundering Muslim resources. Real or perceived, the narrative is daily strengthened. Each accidental, collateral death of an Iraqi citizen, each isolated incident of indecency (Abu Ghraib, Haditha, Guantanamo), each cultural *faux pas*—regardless of the unintentionality—buttresses this perception.

Some would argue that it is not our national prerogative to remake the world in our image. It is, however, ours to defend our citizens against attack. However, just retaliation must target the entity guilty of committing the crime—in this case, *jihadiyyeen* terrorist cells and networks espousing violent anti-American platforms and agendas. It is not within our constitutional mandate to impute to other nations and societies desires for American-type governance as if we know the content of their hearts better than they.

So where to go from here? As the past cannot be undone, the task at hand is to determine how to proceed to legitimately strengthen U.S. national security in the long-term while simultaneously retaining what is left of national moral integrity and consistency of international policy. Unfortunately, we find ourselves gored on the sharp horns of a wicked dilemma. In order to better appreciate this dilemma we must briefly return to the past.

Upon the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Afghanistan in 1989, the United States quietly declared victory and myopically withdrew resources from the region without considering the second and third order effects of rapid departure. Among these effects, the Afghan people were left to the mercy of recently enriched and empowered warlords who subsequently fought for dominance in post-war Afghanistan. In the wake of this internecine tribal warfare, entire cities such as Kabul were ravaged, sending floods of dispossessed refugees throughout the countryside.

Into this chaotic environment emerged the Taliban, a puritanical Sunni-Pashtun entity which brought tyrannical *stability* to large parts of the country. As the Taliban grew in power and

U.S. influence in the country waned, we missed recognizing the magnitude of the emerging threat of the *jihadiyyeen*. Afghan War veterans, buoyed by the perception that Allah had granted them victory over, in their estimation, the greater of the two infidel superpowers, firmly established themselves in Afghanistan and honed their terrorist skills under the protective arms of the Taliban regime.

And thus by declaring victory over short-term objectives (the defeat of the Red Army in Afghanistan) and closing shop, we not only failed to take stock of long-term strategic repercussions *vis a vis* empowering religiously-motivated fanatics, but one may conclude that we failed to demonstrate to the Afghan people that we were fundamentally, ideologically different than the vanquished Soviets who sought to colonize them for their own imperialistic purposes. In other words, after 9/11, our return to Afghanistan was one pre-colored by an existing perception of Americans as self-serving, unreliable infidels. The Afghan people, preyed upon first by the warlords and then by harsh religious zealots, perceived that the Americans could not be counted upon for long term, altruistic indigenous support. In effect, our actions at the close of the Soviet withdrawal in the '80s not only abetted the consolidation of the *jihadiyyeen*, thus indirectly facilitating the events leading up to 9/11, but also ensured that our return in 2001 and subsequent strategic initiatives would encounter great local resistance and friction.

Nor is this self-inflicted hamstringing limited to Afghanistan. Our refusal to help protect the Marsh Arabs of southern Iraq as well as the Kurds from the retaliatory depredations of post-Gulf War Saddam Hussein likewise persuaded Iraqis and their regional neighbors that the United States was not an altruistic international actor, but an unpredictable superpower quite happy to withdraw support when political vagaries thus dictated. Nor was it lost on many in the region that

it was none other than the United States who *initially* empowered the known-thug Saddam Hussein, in his war against Iran. <sup>117</sup>

When one surveys the historical march of our involvement in the Middle East, the larger lesson seems to suggest that *the ends do not justify the means*. Proxy wars executed through surrogates may seem wisely efficient. They may appear at first blush to cunningly solve thorny geopolitical challenges without having to actively and overtly commit American resources and treasure. But all too often they ultimately embroil a nation in a tar pit of unpleasant complexity whose deleterious effects are not fully appreciated until years later.

As it concerns Iraq: Our nation remains gored on the horns of a dilemma. To hastily withdraw from Iraq would yield a laundry list of potential negative results: leaving the Iraqi people vulnerable to the caprice of sectarian, genocidal violence; yielding unmitigated influence to Iranian operatives; emboldening *jihadiyyeen* in Iraq who would interpret our withdrawal as proof that Allah continues to favor their *jihad*, and others. On the other hand, to firmly remain in Iraq ignoring signs of a crumbling or inherently weak foundation would yield a different, but equally lengthy, list of unpalatable results. In other words, it appears to be an unfortunate reality of naming the poison we will ingest.

Therefore, we must take a step back and look at the situation with a macro perspective. We must now focus on the preeminent national goal or objective of the GWOT, namely, defeating *jihadiyyeen* terrorists who have a demonstrated desire and capability to carry out attacks in the United States. We must then likewise resist the quixotic political allure of ushering in an age of democratic peace to the historically-troubled region.

This established as the paramount objective, we must recognize that it would be morally inexcusable to withdraw U.S. forces, resources, and support from the Iraqi people simply as a

---

<sup>117</sup> See John Keegan, *The Iraq War*, (London: Random House, 2004), 67, where Donald Rumsfeld, then Middle Eastern advisor for President Reagan, established relations with Saddam Hussein's regime in the early '80s in order to consolidate an anti-Iranian *ally*.

result of domestic political expediency influenced by looming elections. If we choose to withdraw, it must be for well thought-out, and morally substantiated reasons. Likewise, it would not be prudent to unconditionally extend our involvement in Iraq implacably ignoring clear signals of political and military failure or morally-inexcusable behavior and policies of high ranking Iraqi leaders. To once again return to McNamara's analogy, we must honestly examine the strength of the foundation instead of slavishly building an increasingly costly structure upon an unknown.

If the assumption (and political rhetoric) is correct—that Islamic *jihadiyyeen* and their ideology exists in the very clear minority of the Islamic world, that they are narrowly interpreting the Qur'an in a way that the vast majority of Muslims do not endorse (explosive outrage in 2006 over mere cartoons of the prophet Muhammad notwithstanding), then is there *really* a need to democratize the region to preclude emergence of such few radicals? If *jihadiyyeen* ideology is so diametrically opposed to the 'true', most widely-held tenets and interpretations of Islam, the "religion of peace", <sup>118</sup> then do we really need to be fighting a *war*? If these assumptions are true, then perhaps we have made much more of this than actually exists. Perhaps this is more suitably defined as an ongoing police action where host Islamic nations work to identify and interdict those few misfits of society prone to violence. Perhaps instead of undertaking grand, unprecedented international political experimentation, it would be wiser to work in conjunction with the peace-loving, terrorist-despising Muslim nations of the world in identification and incarceration of the supposedly few *jihadiyyeen* outliers.

Of course, this assumes that our presuppositions about Islam and how it is believed and lived by most Middle Easterners—the foundations upon which we are building our strategy—are

---

<sup>118</sup> Caner & Caner, 193: "The word (*Islam*) is not rooted in the word peace (*salam*) but in the infinitive word *Salama*, which can be translated as either 'the stinging of a snake' or 'the tanning of the leather.' The root word, from which *peace* (*salam*) also comes, is then modified. This changes the meaning emphatically. Hence, the term *Islam* has traditionally been translated as 'submission, surrender, and resignation.' "

correct. But if, for the sake of argumentation, these assumptions are *not* true, I propose that we *still* do not want to pursue a strategy of Middle Eastern democratization for the very *presence* of Western armies seen to be imposing heretical political innovations and economic slavery upon *dar al-Islam* will only exacerbate the problem and give greater traction to Qur'anically-informed *jihadiyyeen* propaganda. In fact, Sageman understands that our continued presence in Iraq is now seen by the indigenous population as an *occupation*, “attract[ing] all potential anti-Western *mujahedin* wanting to fight the infidel who has invaded *dar al-Islam*...[thus] reenergizing the global Salafi *jihad*.”<sup>119</sup>

In fact, this monograph has attempted to show, from different lines of reasoning (Qur'anic, historical, and ideological), that pursuit of Middle Eastern democratization is a strategic endeavor that not only fails to address the problem of violent *jihadiyyeen* but counter intuitively *exacerbates* the threat. As such, it should be dropped as a pillar of our national security strategy and pursued only when foreign nations sincerely ask for such political mentorship and guidance and then follow through with tangible, concrete actions.

But would such a drastic change in our national strategy be interpreted as a defeat by the *jihadiyyeen* and elements of the international community? Of course. But in the light of existing threats and the illogical and resource-draining conflation of counterterrorism with Middle Eastern democratization we cannot allow national hubris to dictate our future path. Honest, informed reason must prevail. We must accept that our extensive efforts to extend the possibility of democratic liberty to the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan is ultimately not what will decide their political realities. *They* have the responsibility to either embrace the core democratic principles and forge their own derivative, culturally-nuanced systems, or reject them and revert back to the familiar ruts of tyranny and oppression. Further, we must recognize that Qur'anic liberty—literally, *freedom from unbelief*—is not the species of liberty we recognize nor are willing to fight

---

<sup>119</sup> Sageman, 183.

for. The rule of law is not equivalent to *shari'a* law. In fact, it is entirely incompatible and irreconcilable with our understanding of democratic, pluralistic, representative, constitutional democracy.

Our national project should not be one where we endorse or empower political machines that stratify their citizens into privileged and inferior categories, subsequently persecuting the latter by way of inequality of rights, taxation, opportunity, or conscience. In fact, given the realities of our national past where injustices were committed against denigrated categories of people, it is totally inexcusable for us to *now*, possessing the wisdom learned from past mistakes, blindly or complicity permit them to be committed again—*with our support!* It is one thing to grant patience and latitude to countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan to work through inevitable growing pains enroute to some form of effective democratic governance; but it is altogether another thing for our nation to overlook outright, unacceptable violations of human dignity, respect, and equality simply to achieve short term goals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

First, conflation of two unrelated projects—hunting down culpable terrorists and Middle Eastern democratization—was ill-advised and, as shown earlier, actually makes the *jihadiyyeen* threat substantially worse. As such, we must uncouple the two projects as a conceptual starting point for establishing future national strategy.

Second, since we are already laboring in Iraq to provide security for the Iraqi people, it would be morally inexcusable to simply withdraw without honoring commitments made. This does not imply extension of an open, unconditional check to the nation of Iraq. On the contrary, the promise of continued support should be conditioned upon clear caveats. Red lines must be established beyond which we will not continue to decisively support Iraq.

In other words, the United States cannot claim to operate with legitimacy and upon the moral high ground if, as occurred in Vietnam, we *de facto* support a regime that perpetrates sectarian violence on its own people. We cannot be in the business of lending legitimacy to, and expending national treasure upon, self-serving, ethnically- and religiously-polarized governments that function in abeyance of the rule of law—rule of law as *we and the majority of the international community understand it*. Government sponsorship (outright or veiled) of death squads is unconscionable and unacceptable as is government-endorsed anti-Semitism. Likewise, any government support, active or passive, of *jihadiyyeen* organizations cannot be tolerated. Neither can government-empowered stratification of society along racial, ethnic, or gender lines. Red lines such as these must be explicitly communicated as nonnegotiables in return for our continued support.

Third, terrorism should be viewed as a *crime* perpetrated by individuals or networks of individuals. Further, like crime, we should not expect it to be purged from existence. This requires a re-conceptualization of the GWOT. It is illogical to declare wars upon proper nouns: *Imperial Japan, Nazi Germany*. It is not logical to declare war on general nouns: *war on drugs, war on crime, war on terrorism*. Such declarations only serve to confuse the nature of the conflict as the citizenry rightfully ask questions such as: *How will victory be declared in the GWOT? Who will sign the instruments of surrender on the enemy side? Are we, at this point, at war with all terrorists?* Terrorism is a crime and should be pursued as such.

Fourth, as opposed to a colossal investment in a foundationless democratization strategy, our resources are better spent, using the crime paradigm, in shoring up national security in our homeland. Such investments include: aggressive patrolling, surveillance, and enforcement of our national borders, increased research and development of the entire family of anti-missile defenses, and the expansion, training, and equipping of all aspects of national intelligence. This does not in any way preclude relentlessly pursuing terrorists worldwide to preempt their attacks, but instead complements such pursuit. Again, using the crime analogy, to make oneself safe from

the depredations of criminals, society not only empowers law enforcement to identify and interdict criminal syndicates before they strike; but citizens simultaneously fortify their homes with redundant locks, security devices, adequate lighting, and other precautions. Foolish is the one who, knowing he lives in a dangerous neighborhood frequented by criminals who have clearly expressed the intent to kill, leaves his doors unlocked at night, his exterior lights turned off, his security system in disrepair. And yet, when our nation drags its feet in securing our extensive and vulnerable borders, are we not doing the same thing?

Robert S. McNamara realized entirely too late that the war he superintended was built upon a foundation of sand. We would be wise to inspect our GWOT foundations—to challenge the ultimate presuppositions we have thus far accepted at face value—and immediately modify our national strategy should we find glaring, unsubstantiated lapses of logic.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Books*

- Abdalati, Hammudah. *Islam in Focus*. Delhi: Afif Printers, no date of publication given.
- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*. Maryland: Amana Publications, 1997.
- Ali, Tariq. *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity*. London: Verso, 2003.
- Bryant, Irving. *James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist*. New York: Bobbs Merrill Company, 1941
- Cahn, Steven M. *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002
- Caner, Emir Fethi and Caner, Ergun Mehmet. *More Than a Prophet: An Insider's Response to Muslim Beliefs about Jesus and Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003.
- Emerson, Steven. *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us*. New York: The Free Press, 2002.
- Esposito, John. *Islam The Straight Path*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 1998.
- Esposito, John and Voll, John O. *Islam and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Farah, Caesar E. *Islam, Sixth Edition*. New York: Barron's, 2000.
- Friedman, Thomas L. *From Beirut to Lebanon*. New York: Random House, 1989, 1990, 1995.
- Fuller, Graham. *The Future of Political Islam*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Hathout, Hassan. *Reading the Muslim Mind*. Burr Ridge: American Trust Publications, 1995.
- Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. New York: Warner Books, 1991.
- Keegan, John. *The Iraq War*. London: Random House, 2004.
- Lawrence, Bruce. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*. London: Verso, 2005.
- Lewis, Bernard. *The Political Language of Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Islam and the West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- McNamara, Robert S. and VanDeMark, Brian. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*. New York: Times Books, 1995.
- Mitchell, Richard P. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, 1969.
- Nasr, Vali. *The Shia Revival*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007.
- Ottaway, Marina. *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003.
- Patai, Raphael. *The Arab Mind*. New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002.
- Phares, Walid. *The War of Ideas*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. Damascus, Syria: No publisher, no date given.

Sageman, Marc. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Sultanhussein, Tabandeh, *A Muslim Commentary on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. London: F.T. Goulding and Co., 1970.

### ***U.S. Government Publications***

Bush, George W. *9/11 Five Years Later: Successes and Challenges*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, September 2006.

Bush, George W. *The National Security Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, September 2002.

Bush, George W. *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, February 2003.

Bush, George W. *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, September 2006.

Bush, George W. *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States: A Strategy for Today; A Vision for Tomorrow*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004.

### ***Internet***

“Afghan Convert Could Be Executed.” CNN.com, 22 March 2006 [cited 15 February 2007]. Available at: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/03/22/afghan.christian/index.html>

Bush, George W. “President’s Address to the Nation.” 10 January 2007 [cited 15 February 2007]. Available from: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01.html>

\_\_\_\_\_. “Speech at Kansas State University.” 23 January 2006 [cited 2 February 2007]. Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060123-4.html>

\_\_\_\_\_. “Speech before U.N. General Assembly.” 19 September 2006 [cited 2 February 2007]. Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/mideast/>

“Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI).” 5 August 1990 [cited 2 February 2007]. Available at: <http://www.religlaw.org/interdocs/docs/cairohrislam1990.htm>

“Constitution of Iraq.” [Cited 10 March 2007]. Available at: <http://www.iraqigovernment.org/Content/Biography/English/constitution.htm>

“Constitution of Syria.” [Cited 10 March 2007]. Available at: <http://www.damascus-online.com/history/documents/constitution.htm>

“Constitution of the United States.” [Cited 10 March 2007]. Available at: [http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_transcript.html)

O'Reilly, Bill. "Interview with President Bush." FOX News Network, 17 October 2006 [cited 15 February 2007]. Available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,221975,00.html>

Progressive Muslim Union of North America. "Sheikh Ali Gomaa" [cited 10 May 2007]. Available at: <http://www.pmuna.org/archives/2005>

Rumsfeld, Donald. "Pentagon Briefing with Secretary of Defense." 26 October 2006 [cited 2 February 2007]. Available at: <http://www.capitalnews.org/>

### *Monographs*

Holland, Diana M. "The War Against International Islamic Terrorism: Who is the Enemy? How Can It Be Defeated?" Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: United States Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 2004.