The Concept of Deterrence in Arab and Muslim Thought – The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt

Working Paper

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Executive Summary

As part of the project looking at Islamic legal and historical elements that have implications for deterrence in a nuclear Middle East, this study explores the subject from the angle of mainstream Sunni Arab Islamists, namely the Muslim Brotherhood (and not al-Qa'idaQa'ida or other jihadi groups). The paper aims to address three questions:

- How do Sunni Arab Islamists understand deterrence?

- What are their perspectives on the possession and use of nuclear weapons?

- Given their doctrine of self-sacrifice in jihad, can jihad be deterred?

Rad' is deterrence + compellence: Islamism is a worldview holding that one must return to the Qur'an, and the actions and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad in order for Islam to prosper again as it did in the seventh century, and for its adherents to be real Muslims Qur'an. Everything an Islamist believes or does should have a precedent or a justification in the Koran or in the Prophet's sayings or deeds. When Islamists seek to formulate the principles of an Islamic military doctrine, they glean from the history of the military conflicts conducted by the Prophet Muhammad or by his companions under his command or inspiration.

In Sunni Islamist writings, the term _rad'_, the Arabic term for deterrence, is used to convey two ideas. One is similar to the Western concept of <u>deterrence,</u> the threat of the use of force by one party to convince

another party to refrain from a certain action because of the consequences of taking said action. Deterrence in this sense is defensive and passive—it seeks to prevent an adversary from militarily attacking you or your assets or allies.

The second idea embedded in the term *rad'* is close to the concept of the threat of the use of force for compellence, as Professor Thomas Schelling defined it, namely, Inducing the rival's withdrawal, or his acquiescence, or his collaboration, by an action that threatens to hurt.[1] The Sunni Islamist writers use the term *rad'*, then, not only to convey deterrence, but also to convey the use of military threat and of other means. *Rad'* is employed in order to terrorize and weaken the enemy's resolve and capabilities to resist, eventually making the enemy capitulate without war. They describe a wide range of strategies that the Prophet Muhammad employed as "deterrence." These strategies sought not only to neutralize any intention on the part of the enemy to attack, for fear of the price, but also to neutralize the enemy's capabilities to fight. Such strategies included denying the enemy the initiative, disrupting his preparations, stripping him of allies, pressuring him economically, and killing influential figures in the enemy's camp. There is a widely quoted saying by the Prophet Muhammad about this strategy, "I was given victory by fear from me which spread as far away as one month's journey" ("*Nusirtu bi-al-ru'b masirat shahr*"). Thus, one can win the war just by sufficiently frightening the enemy.

What is the Arab Sunni Islamist perspective on the possession and use of nuclear weapons? Most Sunni-Arab Islamist scholars agree that Muslims should possess non- conventional weapons, including nuclear, necessary to win wars. However, there is debate among them regarding the use of weapons of mass destruction. Some argue that Muslims can use any kind of weapon they possess to fight their enemy, if the enemy might use such weapons against them (more specifically, Muslims can use them in a preemptive strike), or if victory cannot be achieved without the use of such weapons. Some scholars go farther, arguing that Islam permits the use of such weapons, even if victory can be achieved with conventional weapons alone.

These scholars issue their rulings based on an examination of the seventh century and the arsenal employed by the Prophet Muhammad. Conventional warfare in that era was men fighting each other in an open field with swords and spears, thereby only injuring combatants. The seventh century equivalent of non-conventional or mass-destruction weapons were methods employing catapults, flooding, burning, or throwing snakes and scorpions into fortifications that sheltered the enemy, and necessarily comprised noncombatant casualties, and the indiscriminate destruction of property.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, a leading Muslim Brotherhood (MB) scholar and preacher, who as a rule rejects the use of weapons of mass destruction, permits their use when Muslims face an existential threat, especially if the enemy possesses such weapons and portends to use them against Muslims. The Muslims are then permitted to take the initiative and move first to make the fatal blow in self-defense, al-Qaradhawi rules. He qualifies this permission, however, by restricting it to defensive jihad *(jihad al-daf')*, namely in defense of Muslim lands against non-Muslim invaders; it is not to be applied in offensive jihad, when Muslims seek to conquer new lands from the infidels (*jihad al-talab*).

This could mean that Muslims could justify using nuclear weapons against Israel because, according to al-Qaradhawi and the prevalent Islamist thinking, Israel is an occupying power and the struggle for the liberation of Palestine is a defensive jihad. Further, Israel is believed to poses non-conventional capabilities.

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[1] Schelling, Thomas C., "Arms and Influence", New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1966, p. 80.

<u>Can Jihad be deterred?</u> Jihad plays a central role in the MB doctrine. Sheikh Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, made the practice of jihad as actual fighting a key pillar of faith, as essential as individual religious obligations like prayer and fasting. Moreover, he sought <u>to neutralize deterrence by turning death from a threat to a hope.</u> Al-Banna extolled death and martyrdom as an important end of jihad. He taught that the Qur'an has commanded people to love death more than life and that martyrdom is the shortest and easiest step from this life to the life hereafter.

The question then arises: Can a MB government that has nuclear weapons be deterred from using them in holy jihad to liberate Palestine? If one seeks death for Allah's sake as the way to salvation and eternal happiness in the hereafter, can one be deterred by the threat of death in what is defined as holy jihad?

The record of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood during the last four decades demonstrates that the movement has been thinking in pragmatic terms about the balance of powers, avoiding making moves that could put its existence at risk, even for the sake of advancing its Islamist objectives. This pragmatism grew out of the fact that its actions against the Nasser regime in the 1960's led it to the verge of extinction.. As such, we believe that when it is in power, the MB will avoid the use of nuclear weapons if it is certain that the movement's destruction will result.

What is the bottom line? Overall, when the Muslim Brotherhood is in power, for example in Egypt, it will strive to acquire nuclear arms, or at least military nuclear capabilities. It will employ its possession of such weapons or capabilities for deterrence in the classical sense of the term, to dissuade its enemy from attacking it. However, the MB is also likely to rely on its possession of those weapons or capabilities to produce compellence, or to oblige its adversary to take or to avoid taking certain actions for fear of the consequences. Theoretically, it may even consider using such arms in a preemptive strike against Israel. It will not be deterred merely by a threat of casualties on a large scale among the country's population, but by a threat to the movement's very existence.

Yet these observations do not reflect the thinking of a political organization <u>in power</u>. Once in power, the MB's thinking with regard to the nuclear issue and to deterrence will be influenced not only by religious edicts, interpretations of Islam's history and the organization's own historical experience, but also by a host of other factors, like the positions of other domestic actors, domestic economic constraints, and external constraints. Still, the elements mentioned above will serve as the foundation on which the strategic thinking of the Islamists in power will develop.

Introduction

As part of the project looking at Islamic legal and historical elements that have implications for deterrence in a nuclear Middle East, this study explores the subject from the angle of mainstream Sunni Arab Islamists, namely the Muslim Brotherhood (and not al-Qa'ida or other jihadi groups). The paper aims to address three questions:

- How do Sunni Arab Islamists understand deterrence?

- What are their perspectives on the possession and use of nuclear weapons?

- Given their doctrine of self-sacrifice in jihad, can jihad be deterred?

This study examines concepts of deterrence in Sunni Arab Islamist thought, meaning that it does not explore Shiite, non-Arab, or non-Islamist thinking. One must keep this in mind, because for Arab Islamists the relevant history that provides a source of authority is the history of the early generations of Islam. They view the military history of the Arab campaigns in the first generations of Islam, particularly those led or directed by the Prophet Muhammad as their model, not the histories of the Ottoman or Safawi militaries.

Until the wave of uprisings in Arab countries that started in 2011, Sunni Arab Islamists only have ruled in two countries: a conservative Wahhabi trend rules Saudi Arabia and a regime somewhat influenced by a splinter MB faction rules Sudan. Nevertheless, these two regimes have not engaged in a nuclear deterrence doctrine. Until 2011, the MB movement in general was an opposition movement in the Arab states, and in many of them, it was under various degrees of persecution, and therefore had little use for such a doctrine when preoccupied with the organization's survival.

Consequently, there is a very small body of literature by Sunni Arab Islamists about deterrence, and the number of writings that deal with nuclear doctrine and nuclear deterrence is even smaller. Those few instances that deal with nuclear deterrence are mostly the work of Islamist legal scholars, whose interest is confined to whether or not the possession and use of nuclear weapons are permitted by the Shari'a, and not of military strategists, nuclear experts, or international relations scholars.

This is changing now, as MB national branches are in the process of reaching power in one Arab country after another. In Egypt, for example, the MB is expected to take power when the transitional period ends by July 2012. Once established in power, the nuclear issue, which is high on the regional agenda, will take its place on the agendas of the MB governments too. This study should therefore be seen as preliminary and should be followed up after the Islamists are in power, examining the ways in which they express themselves on this issue, as well as at their actual conduct in power.

Chapter One:
What is deterrence?

When Sunni Arab Islamists deal with the concept of deterrence, they take their cues from the context that they find relevant. This authoritative context is their history, namely the history of the early generations of Islam, the age of the Islamic conquests, which quickly turned some unknown tribes in the backyard of the Byzantine Empire into a world power, and made Islam the central element of Arab identity. When some of them describe Islam's early military campaigns, they use the term *rad'*, the Arabic term for deterrence, to convey two ideas:

- One is similar to the Western concept of <u>deterrence</u> - the threat of the use of force by one party to convince another party to refrain from a certain action because of the consequences of taking said action. Deterrence in this sense is defensive and passive - it seeks to prevent an adversary from militarily attacking you or your assets or allies.

- The second idea is close to the concept of the threat of the use of force for <u>compellence</u>, as Professor Thomas Schelling[2] defined it, namely, inducing the rival's withdrawal, or his acquiescence, or his collaboration, by an action that threatens to hurt. The Sunni Islamist writers use the term *rad'*, then, not only to convey deterrence, but also to convey the use of military threat

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[2] Ibid.

and of other means. *Rad'* is employed in order to terrorize and weaken the enemy's resolve and capabilities to resist, eventually making the enemy capitulate without war.

Sunni Islamist writing about deterrence usually starts from a famous Qur'anic verse which, in reference to the infidels, says:

> "(Against them) make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the cause of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly" (Surah 8 verse 60).

A study of the concept of deterrence as it is reflected in the military history of Islam during Prophet Muhammad's lifetime, published on a Sunni Islamist website,[3] argues that "the" Islamic deterrence plan consists of power-building and of planning that takes into account multiple confrontation scenarios and ways to scare the enemy and paralyze its movements and effectiveness, partly or fully. The military campaigns and expeditions undertaken during Prophet Muhammad's age reflected the implementation of the doctrine of deterrence *(nadhariyyat al-rad')* in several forms.

One form of deterrence was created by sending military expeditions that were a show of force and did not involve real fighting except for limited skirmishes and a few casualties, in order to frighten the enemy. Deterrence was achieved by a show of force, according to the study, in the Battle of Tabuk (in the Northwest of what is now Saudi Arabia). This was a very large military expedition, which the Prophet initiated and led in October 630 with the intention of engaging the Byzantine army. The battle eventually did not take place because the Byzantine army and its allied Arab tribal forces were not there, but the event became a victory for the Muslims, because they ventured so far north and were ready to fight the Byzantine army. As a result, the Muslim army gained a strong reputation and many Arab tribes shifted their loyalty from Byzantium to the Muslims.

What is described as deterrence in this episode is the improvement of the strategic balance in favor of the Muslims due to their show of force and willingness to fight. In this example, the battle was not waged, but the Muslims did not make empty threats -they came prepared to actually fight.

Another form of creating deterrence, according to the study, was real fighting that was intended to deter the enemy, to paralyze its movements, and to prevent it from considering aggression. An example put forth by the study of real fighting intended to deter the enemy is the Battle of Badr (March 624), the first major battle between the Muslims and the people of Mecca. Even though they were outnumbered, the Prophet initiated this battle, and the Muslim forces were victorious. The purpose of initiating this battle, the study says, was to deter the enemy from even considering aggression against the Muslims.

The objective of deterring the enemy, in the sense of dissuading it from attacking, was sought achieved in this case not only by the threat of the use of force but also by its actual use.

A third type of deterrence is the disruption or abortion of the enemy's preparations to attack by military expeditions sent for that purpose.

Putting economic pressures on the enemy and besieging it economically in order to weaken its material strength and pressure it to capitulate is also described by the study as a form of deterrence. This was enacted by Muslim military expeditions that were sent to threaten the trade routes of the Mecca people,

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[3] Dr. Muhammad Mahzun, "Mafhum al-Rad' min khilal al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah" (The Concept of Deterrence through the Prism of the Prophet's Biography), http://hayran.info/articles.php?catid=94&id=928, February 19, 2009.

whose trade with Syria and Ethiopia was their economic backbone and therefore dependent on safe routes for their caravans.

Deterrence is also created by <u>wresting the initiative away from the enemy</u>, according to the study. An example is the Battle of the Trench (*Ghazwat al-Khandaq*, March-April 627), in which a much superior Mecca force arrived to attack the Muslims in their stronghold in al-Madinah, but the Muslims had dug a trench in preparation, which rendered the attacking cavalry useless. The long siege that ensued ended with a Muslim victory.

Another way of creating deterrence is by <u>stripping the enemy of allies</u>, whose support strengthens their resolve. With this in mind, the Prophet established agreements with neighboring tribes in order to secure their cooperation, or at least neutrality, between the Muslims and their enemies.

Finally, another form of deterrence was created by the Prophet, according to the study, by <u>ordering the assassination of key figures in the enemy camp</u>, and particularly of persons who had an influence on the enemy's morale and resolve.

In summation, what the study conceives of as deterrence is actually a wide range of strategies. These strategies seek not only to neutralize any <u>intention</u> on the part of the enemy to attack, for fear of the price, but also to neutralize his <u>capabilities</u> to fight by denying it the initiative, by disrupting its preparations, by stripping it of allies, by pressuring it economically and even by eliminating key enemy figures.

This must be understood against the backdrop of the basic strategic reality of the time. The Prophet Muhammad had a revelation and tried to promote it to fellow tribesmen in Mecca, but when they refused to adhere to his vision and rejected him, he shifted to creating an independent power base and used it to spread his revelation and establish the state of Islam by force. The Muslims were the force seeking to change the status quo in Arabia—the political and economic, as well as religious arrangements. They were on the offensive, whereas the Mecca people sought defensively to preserve the status quo, even if they initiated attacks on the Muslims in some cases. The Prophet's strategic objective, therefore, was not to deter his enemies from attacking his community of believers, but to destroy those enemies' military power, occupy their holy town of Mecca, and force them to accept Islam. This is the reason why deterrence in this context goes beyond a defensive notion and encompasses everything that is required to render the enemy incapable of resisting the Muslim forces.

According to another treatise on the Islamic concept of deterrence,[4] the Islamic military doctrine defined the goal of the deterrence strategy in two quotes. One is the Qur'anic verse (quoted above), "Make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies." The other is an adage attributed to the Prophet (a reliable *hadith*): "I was granted victory by fear (spread by Allah) as far as one month's travel" (*nusirtu bil-ru'b masirat shahr*). This adage is widely interpreted to mean that Allah struck fear in the hearts of the Prophet's enemies even when he was at a great distance, a month's travel, away from them. According to the treatise, these two quotes mean, that the objective of preparing the military force is to frighten the enemy; displaying the military force will trigger the enemy's fear and subsequently will lead to the achievement of victory, therefore this is most effective way to implement the Islamic mission (i.e. to spread Allah's word).

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[4] http://rwafd.com/vb/t35845.html.

The treatise points to Khalid Ibn al-Walid (592-642), a commander of Muslim forces under Prophet Muhammad, and his two first successors, as typical examples of the deterrence strategy: Khalid won by his name as much as by his sword. His name would reach his enemies before he and his forces would, and it would terrify them to such a degree that their forces would disintegrate and their resolve would collapse. The Muslims' objective would thus be accomplished without actual fighting, the treatise says.

The treatise also points to the way this deterrence doctrine was implemented by the Islamic state in the age of the strong Caliphates, the Umayyads and the Abbasids. Each summer, the Caliph would display the Islamic state's military power by attacking the lands of Europeans, in order to frighten and terrorize them, and thus make them accept what was imposed upon them (for example, the payment of a poll tax to the Caliph).

Deterrence, then, is conceived of as the building and displaying of military force in order to achieve victory without actual combat.

Another writer argues that deterrence, in the sense of making Islam's enemies afraid of the Muslims' military power, should have additional results beyond making those enemies avoid attacking the Muslims. It should make the enemies avoid helping other enemies of the Muslims against them, fulfill all the duties required of them, and perhaps - as they are overwhelmed by Islam's manifest power -adhere to Islam and to the belief in Allah and his Prophet.[5] Again *rad'* is clearly conceived of here as compellence.

Implications

"Make ready (your strength)," the first part of the Qur'anic verse that epitomizes the Islamic concept of deterrence, appears on the Muslim Brotherhood's logo, alongside two crossed swords.

On December 10, 2006, MB students wearing black hoods performed martial arts at a protest in Al Azhar University in Cairo. This was a show of force in reaction to the involvement of Egypt's security apparatuses in the student associations' elections, held at universities across Egypt the month before. The show of force was clearly intended to deter the security apparatuses from such interference. Eventually, it led to an acceleration of the regime's crackdown on the Brotherhood, even though the organization's leaders claimed the actions were carried out by the students without the leadership's authorization.

When the MB comes to power in Egypt, its military strategies will be inspired by the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions and successors in Islam's Golden Age. Its concept of deterrence will be influenced by the notion, described above, that deterrence is the building and displaying of military force in order to make the enemy capitulate. It will see military nuclear capability not only in the defensive sense as a deterrent against external threats, but also as a force to be built and displayed in order to terrorize the enemy into capitulation.

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[5] Ahmad Abu al-Wafa, "Al-Rad' fi al-Nazariyah al-Islamiyyah lil-'Alaqat al-Dawliyyah", http://www.islamfeqh.com/Nawazel/NawazelItem.aspx?NawazelItemID=1213.

Chapter Two:
Deterrence and nuclear weapons

There are few references to nuclear deterrence doctrines in Sunni Arab Islamist writings. References to non-conventional weapons rarely go beyond the question of to what extent their possession is in conformity with Islamic law.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, probably the most influential Sunni Islamist jurist and preacher, whose roots were in the MB and deeply influenced its ideology, issued in 2009 what is perhaps the most comprehensive study of jihad from the point of view of Islamic law and tradition.[6] For him too, the point of departure concerning deterrence is the Qur'anic verse "Make ready your strength…" which, in his view, means that Muslims should prepare all the weapons and military equipment necessary to win wars.

These weapons, he said, are chemical, biological, and nuclear. Al-Qaradhawi ruled that in principle Muslims should not <u>use</u> those weapons of weapons of mass destruction because the destruction that they create makes no distinction between enemy combatants and non-combatants. Islam forbids the killing of non-combatants, and the use of those weapons entails the destruction of animals, plants, and buildings, which Islam forbids as well. Yet the Muslim nation has to <u>possess</u> nuclear weapons in order to deter and scare its enemies. The possession of nuclear weapons by bitter enemies like the US and the Soviet Union, or by India and Pakistan, has prevented the eruption of wars between them, al-Qaradhawi reasoned.[7]

Yet there is a debate among Sunni scholars regarding the <u>use</u> of weapons of mass destruction. Some argue that Muslims <u>can use</u> any kind of weapon they possess to fight their enemy, <u>if the enemy might use such weapons against them</u> (i.e. they can be used by Muslims in a preemptive strike). They are also permitted to use them <u>if victory cannot be achieved without the use of such weapons</u>, even if it entails the killing of non-combatants and the destruction of animals, plants, and buildings. Some scholars go further, arguing that Islam permits the use of such weapons even if victory can be achieved by the use of conventional weapons. The debate is based on precedents from Islam's early wars and from traditions (*hadith*) where the equivalent of non-conventional or mass-destruction weapons were methods employing catapults, flooding, burning, or throwing snakes and scorpions into fortifications that sheltered the enemy, and necessarily comprised noncombatant casualties, and the indiscriminate destruction of property.

Thus, Imam al-Shafi'i (760-810), the founder of the school of religious law carrying his name (to which many in the Muslim world, as well as Sunni religious scholars adhere), ruled that if the enemy entrenches on a mountain or in a fortress or a trench, it is permissible to attack with catapults, fire, serpents, or scorpions. He permitted combatants to drown their enemy in water, including even women, children, and monks, and to set fire to their trees and buildings. The precedent quoted by al-Shafi'i for this ruling was the Prophet's use of catapults against the town of Ta`if, in spite of the presence of women and children, and his cutting and burning of the trees of the enemy in several battles.[8]

Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909-1997), the founder of the Islamic Liberation Party (*Hizb al-Tahrir*), a radical Sunni movement, argued that Muslims are permitted to use nuclear weapons in their wars even if the enemy did not use it against them first. In the same vein, it has been argued that Islamic law permits the use of any weapon, because the Qur'an did not specify any particular weapon to be used by the Muslims

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[6] Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, <u>Fiqh al-Jihad</u>, Dirasah Muqarinah li-Ahkamihi wa-Falsafatihi fi Dhaw` al-Quran wal-Sunnah, Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 2009 (In two volumes, 1660 pp.).

[7] Al-Qaradhawi, Vol. 1, pp. 555-556, 612-613.

[8] Ibid, pp. 614-615.

when it called them to fight (for example: "Fight for Allah's sake", Sura 2 verse 190; "Fight them wherever you find them," Sura 2 verse 191). Since there is no prohibition in the Qur'an of any weapon, then all weapons are permissible even if the enemy did not use those weapons first, and if victory can be achieved without recourse to the most dangerous weapons.[9]

Yet even al-Qaradhawi makes an exception to his rejection of the use of weapons of mass destruction. Their use, he wrote, is permissible in the case of necessity (*dharurah*). To permit that which is prohibited because necessity requires it is a commonly accepted practice by Muslim jurists and is a reflection of Shari'a's realism, he wrote. For this exception to apply, an existential threat should face Muslims, especially if the enemy possesses such weapons, and threatens to use them against the Muslims. The Muslims then can take the initiative and move first to make the fatal blow, in self-defense. <u>Al-Qaradhawi thus permits a first strike if Muslims feel threatened.</u> He qualifies that permission, however, by restricting it to defensive jihad (*jihad al- daf'*), specifically in defense of Muslim lands from invading infidels. It is not applicable in offensive jihad, that is when Muslims seek to conquer new lands from the infidels (*jihad al-talab*).[10]

This raises the question of the definition of existential danger (and of who should define it). In addition, this would mean that Muslims should use nuclear weapons against Israel the moment they possess them because, according to al-Qaradhawi and the prevalent Islamist thinking, Israel is an occupying power and the struggle for the liberation of Palestine is a defensive jihad. Further, Israel is believed to poses non-conventional capabilities.

While there is apparently a consensus that Muslims should possess nuclear military capabilities to deter enemies who possess similar capabilities, some argue that nuclear weapons should not be used, for example, for the following reasons:

- Their use would entail widespread destruction, in violation of the Qur'anic command "Do not cause destruction on earth" (*Sura* 2 verse 11), and would entail the killing of innocents and the destruction of animals and plants, all of which are prohibited by many a *hadith.*

- According to a strong *hadith*, the Prophet forbade the spreading of poison in the lands of the polytheists, and if this is forbidden, one can deduce that the use of nuclear weapons would be forbidden as well because their effect is incomparably more destructive.[11]

Chapter Three:

Can Jihad be deterred?

The doctrine: Utmost priority is not to life, but to death (for Allah's sake)

Even in mainstream orthodox Sunni doctrine, Muslims are in a constant state of war, or jihad. There are two types of jihad define the individual Muslim's obligations. When Muslim lands are attacked, every Muslim should participate; jihad then is an individual religious obligation (fardh ayn). The other type of jihad has an objective of spreading Islam until it dominates the world, which is an objective that is ongoing, and unending. This jihad is the responsibility of the ruler, and a sufficient number of Muslims should take

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[9] Ibid, pp. 616-620.

[10] Ibid, 624.

[11] Sheikh Husein al-Khashn, "Al-silah al-Nawawi fi al-Mizan al-Fiqhi,"
http://www.islammoasser.org/articles.php?Action=Details&CategoryLevel1ID=117&CL1TypeID=9&PHPSESSID=2c973ff3b64fc510d18d26835761697c.

part in it in order to ensure its success; this type of jihad is a collective, not individual, religious obligation (*fardh kifayah*). However, the jihad to expand the realms of Islam should be ongoing. In Islamist thinking about warfare, <u>it is not possible to deter Muslims from conducting the holy war to spread Islam</u>.

It was even said that jihad has a benefit for the call to Islam (da'wah): When Muslims fight to defend Islam, Islam's greatness is revealed as a religion in which Allah buys the souls of the faithful in exchange for giving them paradise, and this attracts non-Muslims to join Islam.[12]

Sheikh Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, whose legacy is still the leading inspiration for the Brotherhood and for Islamist groups and trends that came out of it, made the practice of jihad as actual fighting a key pillar of faith, as essential as individual religious obligations like prayer and fasting. Moreover, he <u>neutralized deterrence by turning death from a threat to a hope</u>.

Thus, al-Banna extolled death and martyrdom as an important end of jihad. Jihad, he preached, is an obligation that continues until Judgment Day, and this is what was meant by the Prophet when he said: " He who died without having actually raided [namely did not see combat for Islam] or without having had the intention to raid, died a Jahiliyah death" (namely died as a non-Muslim, Jahiliyah being the Muslim term for the pre-Islamic age in Arabia).[13] Al-Banna taught that the Qur'an has commanded people to love death more than life, that victory can only come with the mastery of what he called "the art of death," and that by fighting and dying in the name of Islam the Muslim Brother was sure that his noble death had elevated him to the ranks of the pious heroes of Islam. Indeed, for the Brother, martyrdom is the shortest and easiest step from this life to the life hereafter[14].

Al-Banna ended his "Epistle on Jihad" with the following epilogue:

> "The nation which excels in the art of death, and knows how to die a noble death, will be granted by Allah valuable life in this world and an eternal bliss in the hereafter. The powerlessness, which has debased us [Muslims], is the result of love of this world and hatred of death. Prepare yourselves to a great deed and wish death, so that you will be given life.

> Know that death cannot be escaped and happens one time only, and if you make your death for the sake of Allah you will gain this world and be rewarded the hereafter…Work to achieve the noble death so that you will win complete happiness. May Allah give us and you the honor of dying as martyrs for his sake."[15]

Al-Banna eventually implemented what he preached and died in the course of jihad. He was assassinated in revenge for the assassination of the Egyptian Prime Minister, Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi (December 1948), and has become a model of martyrdom venerated by generations of MB.

Al-Banna put the famous verse "Make ready your strength…" in the context of the MB's final objective, which is to bring Islam to dominate the world. This domination should be achieved by firstly liberating Muslim lands, setting up Islamic states in them based on the MB's principles, and then uniting those states under a rightly Guided Caliphate (*khilafah rashidah*, namely a recreation of an Islamic Utopia along the line

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[12] Ahmad Abu al-Wafa, "Al-Rad' fi al-Nazariyah al-Islamiyyah lil-'Alaqat al-Dawliyyah", http://www.islamfeqh.com/Nawazel/NawazelItem.aspx?NawazelItemID=1213.

[13] Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman, <u>Manhaj al-Islah wal-Taghyir 'inda Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin</u>, Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wal-Nashr al-Islamiyyah, 2006), p. 96.

[14] Richard P. Mitchell, <u>The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood</u>, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 207-208.

[15] <u>Majmu'at Rasa`il al-Imam al-Shahid Hassan al-Banna</u> (The collection of the Epistles of the Martyred Imam Hasan al-Banna), Alexandria: Dar al-Da'wah, 2002, p. 280.

of Islam's golden age under the Prophet and the first four "rightly guided" Caliphs, which was the age of rapid expansion). That Caliphate will liberate Muslim lands still under occupation and spread Islam until it dominates the globe. Every inch of land in which a Muslim says, "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is Allah's messenger" is a precious part of the Muslim homeland, al-Banna said, and Muslims should struggle with all their force to liberate it. Spain, Sicily, the Balkans, Southern Italy, and the Aegean Sea islands are all Islamic lands that should be returned to Islam, and the Mediterranean and Red Seas are Islamic lakes, which should be returned to that status.[16]

The radical MB thinker Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) further developed these ideas , calling for an Islamic movement of jihad, which should pursue not only defensive jihad but also an offensive one whose goal is to spread Islam throughout the world. For the Muslim, pursuing jihad means a life of hardship, torment, and sacrifice and even death by torture for the sake of implementing Allah's will. The believer's reward is not in this world but in paradise, he taught. Indeed, he paid with his life for his beliefs, executed by the Nasser regime.

Implications

These teachings have two implications for this study. Firstly, if one seeks death for Allah's sake as the way to salvation and eternal happiness in the hereafter, one can hardly be deterred by the threat of death. Secondly, once in power and in possession of nuclear capabilities, the MB are likely to start thinking about how to use or leverage that capability for the liberation of Muslim lands. For example, they might try to leverage that capability to liberate the European lands listed by al-Banna, and the display of force in order to achieve compellence will be one of the options they might employ.

Like the Prophet and his followers, who sought to change the status quo, the MB too seeks to change the status quo in which infidels occupy Muslim lands, Muslims are disunited, and the holy task of spreading Islam's domination around the world is blocked by the West's technological, military, economic, and political supremacy. Endowed with nuclear capabilities, MB leaders are likely to feel that Allah has handed them with a game changer, a means for overcoming the West's supremacy and for changing the status quo.

Yet Hasan al-Banna's and Sayyid Qutb's legacies have been implemented in different ways. Some have interpreted them as calling for jihad at any cost. For example, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad organization (al-Jihad al-Islami) and the Egyptian Islamic Group (al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah), as well as a number of smaller groups, inspired by those legacies, embarked from the late the 1970' until the mid-1990's on a strategy of terror against the Egyptian regime even though the balance of power was clearly in favor of the regime, which eventually overpowered them. Ultimately, they revised their doctrine and rejected violence. Those among them who insisted on continuing the jihad moved out to form al-Qa'ida.

The members of those jihadi groups started their career in the MB in the 1970's, and they left the Brotherhood because it refused to adopt violence - opting instead for proselytization and political activity as its strategies of Islamizing society and reaching power. The leaders of the MB too were disciples of al-Banna and Qutb, but they made the strategic choice not to pursue armed jihad because of their interest to acquire power. In the 1950's and 1960's, the Brotherhood was severely curtailed by the regime when the organization, or parts of it, resorted to violence against the regime. Under the presidency of Mubarak, the MB was under constant repression, which included frequent arrests of both leadership and regular

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[16] Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman, Manhaj al-Islah wal-Taghyir 'inda Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wal-Nashr al-Islamiyyah, 2006, pp. 311-314, 330-331.

members and confiscation of property, leading many in the movement to urge the leaders to respond by force—but they did not, for considerations of balance of powers. They understood that the balance of power was clearly in favor of the regime. Their guiding principle has been that the utmost priority is the organization's survival, and therefore any action that might put the Brotherhood's survival at risk must be avoided, even at the cost of suffering.

Prioritizing survival

Prioritizing survival, like any other MB strategy or action, is based on Shari'a judgment. There is a debate in Sunni Islamic jurisprudence over whether, or under what conditions, Muslims are allowed to flee the enemy. The Qur'an clearly prohibits fleeing from the battleground:

> "O you who believe! When you meet those who disbelieve, in a battlefield, never turn your backs to them. And whoever turns his back to them on such a day - unless it be a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a troop (of his own) - he indeed has drawn upon himself wrath from Allah. And his abode is Hell, and worst indeed is that destination!"[17]

However, according to one of the most influential MB jurists today, Sheikh al-Qaradhawi, who in general tends to emphasize the long terms interests of the Ummah: fleeing the enemy or surrendering to it are not only permitted but obligatory if required to protect the Ummah from being annihilated when facing a stronger enemy or one possessing superior weapons.[18]

The prioritization of survival implies that the possession of nuclear weapons will not automatically make the MB immune from deterrence. They could still be deterred, if they assess that the possession of those weapons does not assure its survival. Thus, certainty that by using nuclear weapons will trigger a nuclear attack upon itself would then be a deterrent.

Chapter Four:
Other factors influencing deterrence

Deterrence and national pride

On August 18, 2011, a series of cross border terrorist attacks on Israel's southern Highway 12 near the Egyptian border led to the killing of eight Israelis, and of five Egyptian soldiers, who according to Egypt were killed by Israeli forces chasing the terrorists across the border. In an official statement (August 24), the MB reacted by urging the Egyptian government to take a "decisive and deterring decision which will match the people's dignity and Egypt's honor." They continued, calling for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador, the withdrawal of the Egyptian ambassador from Israel, a halt to the gas exports to Israel, and abrogation of the Qualifying Industrial Zones agreement with Israel (under that agreement, over 700 Egyptian companies enjoy duty-free status with the US, making revenues exceeding $1 billion a year).[19]

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[17] Sura 8 (The Spoils of War), verses 15, 16.

[18] Al-Qaradhawi, Vol. 1, pp. 666-671.

[19] http://www.ikhwanonline.com/new/Article.aspx?ArtID=90060&SecID=0, August 24, 1011.

National pride and honor, then, are values that should be defended even at the price of violating international agreements and incurring economic losses.

Deterrence and civilian casualties

In MB writings about war, civilian casualties incurred by Muslims do not count as a determining factor for the course of the conflict. Thus, an article on the Gaza War (December 2008-January 2009) between Israel and Hamas described the war as a great success for Hamas, citing among other reasons the negligible number of casualties among Hamas fighters, while the civilian casualties, the article said, "do not count for the war's result." It said further that the 400 civilian casualties in the war are a small number compared to 2000 who drowned when an Egyptian ferry sunk in the Red Sea, or the 35,000 who perish annually in Egyptian traffic accidents.[20]

This attitude may be linked to Islamist positions regarding the question about whether it is permitted to fight an enemy that uses non-combatant Muslims as human shields (*tatarrus*) knowing that by fighting the enemy, those human shields are likely to die. The medieval legal scholar Ibn Taymiyyah ruled that it is permitted to fight in this case if failing to fight might cause harm to the Muslims, and other scholars supported this position. Ibn Taymiyyah is a major influence in Sunni Islamist thinking, including that of the MB; since the 1980's, the Sunni jihadi groups have used this position to justify terror attacks in Muslim countries.

Sheikh al-Qaradhawi, who represents the Islamist mainstream, found that fighting the enemy, even at the price of killing Muslim hostages or human shields, is permissible if avoiding the fighting will involve a bigger harm than the death of the human shields, like the enemy entering Muslim lands. The death of the human shields is the smaller harm, he said, while the Muslims' defeat is the bigger harm, and the principle in Islamic jurisprudence is to accept the smaller harm in order to prevent the bigger one, he concluded.[21]

This could imply in the context of strategic deterrence that Muslim non-combatants are expendable if their death is required to serve a higher purpose. Then, a threat to civilian population in order to deter or compel Islamists might prove ineffective.

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[20] http://www.ikhwanonline.com/new/Article.aspx?ArtID=43734&SecID=0, January 1, 2009.
[21] http://www.hayran.info/articles.php?catid=95&id=512, October 4, 2008.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that the Muslim Brotherhood in power, for example in Egypt, will strive to acquire nuclear arms, or at least military nuclear capabilities. It will employ its possession of such weapons or capabilities for deterrence in the classical sense of the term, that is dissuade its enemy from attacking it. However, it is also likely to rely on its possession of those weapons or capabilities for compellence, i.e. to oblige its adversary to take or to avoid taking certain actions for fear of the consequences. Theoretically, it may consider using such arms in a preemptive strike against Israel. It will be deterred not merely by a threat of casualties on a large scale among the country's population, but by a threat to the movement's very existence.

Yet these observations do not reflect the thinking of a political organization in power. Once in power, the MB's thinking with regard to the nuclear issue and to deterrence will be influenced not only by religious edicts, interpretations of Islam's history, and the organization's own historical experience, but also by a host of other factors, like the positions of other domestic actors, domestic economic constraints, and external constraints. Still, the elements mentioned above will serve as the foundation on which the strategic thinking of the Islamists in power will develop.