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The Conflict between Radical Islam and the West

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Introduction

Terrorism has existed and exists in many societies. However, it cannot be ignored that the great majority of devastating terrorist acts of international terrorism in recent years has been perpetrated by radical Islamic groups. These groups are wide-spread throughout the Muslim world, and their roots penetrate deep into many Muslim societies. The diverse manifestations of “radical Islam” present intertwined religious, social and political agendas. They include: overt political Islamic movements with radical agendas; local underground movements which focus on toppling their own governments; nationalist movements which have adopted the Islamist banner for the sake of rallying domestic and international (Muslim) support; Jihadist groups which call for a “defensive *jihad*” to expel the “Crusaders” from Muslim lands; and groups which call for reinstating the Caliphate and then renewing the “offensive *jihad*” for Islamization of the entire world. All of these groups have in common an ideological hostility towards the West, which is perceived not only as “infidel” but also as corrupt, godless, and a conspiratorial and diabolical force which conspires to corrupt the Muslims and to rob them of their identity and their religion. Most of these groups focus on their own domestic agendas; however, it is their endorsement and/or tacit justification of extreme violence and terrorism against the West, which has placed “radical Islam” on the agenda of the Western world.

Attempts to uncover the fundamental causes of the visceral hostility that “radical Islam” demonstrates towards the West have identified a long list of “underlying causes” or “driving factors”: “Poverty” (or inequality of distribution of wealth); alienation; absence of democracy and oppressive autocratic regimes; national or cultural humiliation; colonialism, military defeat; social and economic encroachment of the West as well as political issues such as the Palestinian issue; the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia and in the Gulf; and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, not one of these causes on its own nor any combination of them can be said to give rise to wide-scale terrorism. Many of them are common to the “third world” in general while some political grievances are distinctive to the Muslim or Arab world, but none of them stand alone as colossal claims that no other nation has endured; Tibet is occupied and colonized and so do many Basques and North Ireland Catholics see themselves in that status, Sri Lanka, the Chiapas in Mexico lay claim to political and social discrimination, and so on. In many of these countries these circumstances have given birth to local terrorist movements, but in no other case has such a movement spread to encompass co-religionists or ethnic relations from different areas, identified the entire Western world (or any other civilizational bloc) as its nemesis, nor have they attacked targets outside of their home countries. None of those cases have given birth to religious-based ideologies that justify a no-holds-barred terrorism. Therefore, terrorism in Muslim societies cannot be explained as the result of political and socio-economic factors alone. Cultural-dependent factors such as religious mores, attitudes towards violence in general, traditions of tolerance or intolerance towards “others” must also be taken into account

This study addresses the following questions: what are the sources of this conflict between radical Islam and the West (or the rest of the world), what are the possible directions of this conflict and what policy recommendations can be offered. In this context, this study not only tackles the question “why” the phenomenon has arisen, but also the equally salient question of “why not?”. Why have societies with similar social, political and economic conditions **not** produced similar antagonism towards the West? Even more tantalizing is the question why has the extreme radical narrative taken root in some Muslim societies and

not in others? Why have some Muslim societies given birth to modernizing reformist movements and others to reactionary conservatives and fanatical radicals?

This study is a culmination of one year of intensive research performed by think tanks in Israel and the U.S., with contribution of researchers from India, Thailand, and a number of Muslim countries. In the framework of the project, studies were prepared on a wide gamut of issues which affect the questions: what are the sources of the conflict between radical Islam and the West? What are the directions that this conflict may take? And what proposals can academicians offer for mitigating or defusing the conflict? This report represents an attempt to bring together the collective wisdom of these studies and of a series of “brainstorming” meetings, which took place with the active participation of various experts. The specific conclusions are the responsibility of the authors alone.

The Islamic Dimension

How “Islamic” is Radical Islamism?

There is a natural reluctance to identify acts of terrorism with the *bona fide* teachings of one of the world's great religions or to recognize the derivation of the *jihad* phenomenon from the tenets of Islam. However, while Islamic radicalism also has certain characteristics of a social and political protest movement, it is basically an ultra-orthodox movement, which knows what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of the Almighty and how Muslims should behave. The radical (Sunni) version of *jihad* and the relations with the West stands, on solid Islamic ground. Much in it is reactionary and based on revival of anachronistic tenets that have been practically taken out of circulation, but little is revolutionary.

The distinction between Sunni and Shiite concepts here is important, since Khomeini's doctrines of law of the scholars (*velayet-e faqih*) and *jihad* do represent a departure from the traditional Shiite doctrines. Shiite Islam has traditionally been less extremist and radical than the Sunni brand. The acceptance of suffering and passive expectation for return of the Hidden Imam as the *Mahdi* who will then bring them justice has precluded activism. The pluralism of **Shiite Islam** allowed for continuous reform (through the method of direct exegesis from the sources – “*ijtihad*”), and adaptation along with a strong emphasis on the priority of “public interest” (*maslaha*) as a driving force for decision-making.

Whatever the political causes of popular antagonism of Muslims towards the West may be, the radical Islamic doctrine is quintessentially religious. It is defined as such by these movements themselves, who see themselves as conducting their struggle not according to a Realpolitik political calculus, but according to the will of God, and in the framework of Islamic law. Its political theology seems to be a sort of **religious Fascism**. It is supremacist, idealizes the historic stage of the dawn of Islam; “**re-actualizes**” **historic collective myths**; it is **totalitarian** in essence; rejects liberal democracy, glorifies war and death, and emphasizes the collective over the individual. It sees a certain period in the past as the apogee of the history of the Nation (*Umma*, in this sense – the Muslim Nation) and strives to re-engineer the present so as to reconstruct that ancient period. The religious dispute with western civilization is extensive and reminiscent of the complaints of 20th century fascism towards its enemies. Intrinsic elements of this civilization such as political pluralism, democracy, and materialism are frequently stigmatized—not necessarily by the radicals alone – as the epitome of polytheism (*shirk*) and the rejection of the principle of “sovereignty of Allah” in favor of “sovereignty of the people”.

All of these elements are amplified and exploited by the radicals for their own political goals, but at the same time, they are deeply rooted in Islam. The prevalence of suicide attacks by Islamic terrorists is evidence of the deep-seated faith of the terrorists themselves in the rewards awaiting them after their act of martyrdom. These are not brainwashed members of a “cult” but Muslims; their actions derive from fundamental beliefs, absorbed in the course of an orthodox Islamic education. This fact has a bearing on any discussion of the “life expectancy” of the present wave of radical Islamic terror. The seeds of the Islamist terrorist are planted at an early age and come to fruition later on in life.

At the same time, radical Islam is a patently opportunistic movement. The essence of the radical Islamic terrorism is the exploitation of faith: faith in the veracity of the interpretations of the scripture, which command the acts of terror (*jihad*), and faith in the reward for obedience to those commands. Islam is the most accessible basis for mobilization of mass support for a political cause. It provides Muslims with a “tool box”

for collective and personal behavior. The religious dimension does not detract from the political dimension of the conflict; rather it superimposes a religious dimension, which precludes mechanisms for compromise inherent in pure “political” conflicts. The terminology, moral, and legal arguments and concepts of warfare are all religious. It is this religious nature of Islamic radicalism that distinguishes it from other forms of extremist post-colonial “anti-Westernism”.

The popular **distinction between “radical Islam” and “moderate” or “mainstream” Islam** implies that the former constitutes a sort of heterodox sect, and that there exists a clear border or firewall between the two: superiority in numbers and orthodox legitimacy of the latter. These assumptions though do not reflect the complex relationship between a conservative mainstream and a purist and zealous avant-garde which is not cut off from the main body. There is no doctrinal “firewall” between the two, and the basic principles and religious doctrines which guide the radicals in their struggle against the “infidel” (*kafir*) world are not perceived by mainstream Muslims as heretic, sectarian or heterodox. Much of the debate within Islam, therefore, focuses not on the Islamic authenticity of the principles, but on the methods and timing of their implementation. Since orthodox Sunni Islam never went through a reform that formally relegated anachronistic elements of the religion to a historical context, and replaced them with updated concepts; all texts and concepts remain formally valid, though they may be dormant.

Consequently, the relationship between the main body of Muslims and the various radical trends suffers from asymmetry in favor of the latter:

1. **Radicals can evoke common religious narratives and beliefs and to present logic that mainstream orthodox Muslims find difficult to refute.** For most orthodox Muslim scholars, there is nothing in the beliefs or actions of the radicals, which excludes them from the community of the faithful. This communality of principles facilitates the radicals’ efforts to recruit popular support and new members for the hard core. At the same time, it makes it difficult for “mainstream” Muslim clerics to comply with demands to categorically denounce and disown acts of terrorism (i.e. *jihād*) in Islamic terms.
2. **The “mainstream” often suffers from a sense of inferiority towards their zealous co-religionists**, who are willing to endure physical hardships in order to carry out the precepts of the faith to their natural conclusion.
3. While classic Islamic jurisprudence limited the scope of justified rebellion against incumbent (Muslim) rulers, it also reduced rebellion to a civil offense, and did not allow rulers to declare the rebels as heretics. This built-in mechanism against accusing other Muslims of heresy (*takfir*) developed in the early days of Islam as a means to prevent doctrinal controversies from deteriorating into mutual accusations of *takfir*. Today it plays into the hands of the radicals. **While the radicals make frequent use of the accusation of heresy towards the incumbent regimes that they are bent on toppling and towards their ideological opponents, the former is constrained by tradition to treat the “rebels” with leniency as misguided, but not apostate Muslims.**

This dilemma is evident in the terminology that the moderate orthodox Muslims use to denounce acts of terrorism. In most of these condemnations, the classic clear categories of duties and prohibitions are frequently circumvented, and the terminology that is used does not infer an unequivocal sentence. The terms used include such expressions as: “a forbidden criminal deed”; “reprehensible”; “grave transgressions”; “great crimes”;

“transgressing the limits”; “going to the extreme”; “allowing that which is forbidden”; “corruption upon earth”; “strife”; “great harm and inconvenience caused to the innocent”; “a mistake, ignorance and falsehood”; a “grave criminal act that Islam does not approve of and no one should applaud”; “acts that the total effect of which none can comprehend except Allah”; and merely “not of Islam”. The Islamic basis for prohibition of attacks on civilians usually presented are the Qur’anic verses “No person shall bear the burden of another” (6:164); “Whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men” (5:32); and “Fight for the sake of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities” (2:190). Terrorists may be dubbed criminals or misguided, But in none of the *fatwas* of prominent mainstream *‘ulama* – have they been condemned as apostates or heretics.

During the crucial era of the modern meeting between Islam and the West in the 18th and early 19th Centuries, **Sufi brotherhoods** played a pivotal religious and social role in the Muslim world. They responded to the challenge of Western superiority and the decline of governance in their countries by adapting themselves into new religious structures, including educational societies, popular associations, economic enterprises and political parties. At the same time, the challenge of Western philosophy also encouraged Sufi thinkers to re-evaluate traditional Islamic concepts. However, the very same penetration of Western values which provided the Sufi brotherhoods with opportunities also contributed to their decline; the age of secular rationalism in the Muslim world de-legitimized religious mysticism and the modern Western-style secular nation states on one hand, and their fundamentalist and leftist rivals on the other hand, took control of civil society. Nevertheless, the Sufi tendency survived in many Muslim countries.

Sufism has a composite relationship with Sunni Islamic fundamentalism. Some of the founders of the large fundamentalist movements and the heads of many of the Salafi movements – Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Hasan al-Banna and others had Sufi backgrounds. This is evident in much of the Muslim Brotherhood terminology – the “guide” – (*murshid*), and the “oath of allegiance” – (*bay’a*), to the leader and in the personalization of the religious experience – including such collective duties as *jihad*, which was, for most of the history of orthodox Islam, the prerogative of the political leader to decide upon.

However, Sunni Sufi Islam today is much more identified with moderate and reformist Islam. Many of the founders and leaders of moderate and reformist movements came to their convictions by way of their Sufi orientation. The relative moderation of the establishment Turkish Islam is also widely accredited to its Sufi roots. The spread of Islam to Indonesia was also intimately connected to the proselytizing by Sufi teachers, whose mystical messages found fertile ground in that part of South-East Asia. The quintessence of Sufism – individualization of the rapport between the believer and God, downplaying the communal nature of Islam and placing the onus of religious decision and action on the individual and particularly legitimizing different ways to reach God – is an anathema to the Islamic fundamentalist narrative, which emphasizes the community, the *Umma* and *Shari’a*.

Therefore, it is no surprise that despite the Sufi elements, which have influenced many fundamentalist movements, Sufism is for those very same Salafi movements a primary ideological nemesis inside Islam. Sufism is denounced in countless Wahhabi and Muslim Brotherhood tracts, and is persecuted by the Islamic establishments of the Arab world (it fares better in non Arab Turkey and Shiite Iran). The conflict between Islamic fundamentalism and Sufism is not one sided. Many Sufi groups see themselves in direct conflict with the Wahhabis, and present themselves consciously as a platform for

confronting the radical worldview. It is clear to the leaders of the Sufi *Tariqas* that if the radical worldview prevails, their brand of Islam will be declared heretic and they will be eradicated.

Islamic Legitimacy of *Jihad*

In order to truly understand the process of political and social legitimization of terrorism, it is necessary to understand the theological traditions of *jihad* in classical Islam, the perception of these traditions in contemporary Islam and their re-activation by radicals. A central issue in the legal thinking of radical Islam is the distinction between the “Abode of Islam” (*Dar al-Islam*) and the “Abode of War” (“*Dar al-Harb*”). This distinction often serves as the basis for legal rulings, which justify terrorism. It is not, however, an unambiguous doctrinal tenet. Views of the distinction between Islam and the “other” include the following:

- The most radical view, held by *takfir* movements virtually eliminates the category of *Dar al-Islam*. In their view, since all Muslim countries are ruled by corrupt apostate regimes, they have ceased to be “Muslim”; their regimes are *kuffar*, and their citizens have sunken into a state of *jahiliyya* (the ignorance and barbarity of the truth of Allah that preceded Islam).
- A classic fundamentalist view held by most Wahhabi and Hanbali Sheikhs and by most *jihad* movements implies a sharp dichotomy between *dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*.
- A traditionalist view defines *Dar al-Islam* as any place which is ruled by *Shari’a*. All other countries are *Dar al-Harb*. This of course raises questions regarding the status of Muslim countries which are ruled by secular regimes. This definition is widely used as the basis for the justification of *jihad* against secular Muslim regimes.
- A position held by the *Muhajirun* movement maintains that the concept of *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* are no longer relevant as the former implies the existence of the Caliphate, and the latter cannot exist without the former. Notwithstanding, when Muslim land is occupied by *kuffar*, this country becomes *Dar al-Harb* or *Dar al-Ghasab* (usurped land).
- A moderate position exists among scholars residing in the West, according to which *Dar al-Islam* is any country in which a Muslim may freely practice his religion. In accordance with this interpretation emigration (*hijra*) from *Dar al-Harb* is only an obligation in the case of fear for one’s right to practice Islam or for one’s life or property due to his being a Muslim. Otherwise, if a Muslim may practice Islam freely in his place of residence, despite that the place happens to be secular or un-Islamic, then he will be considered as living in a *Dar al-Islam*; where not only is he not obliged to emigrate, but it may be better for him to remain there in order to practice *da’wa* (preaching Islam).
- A reformist definition, which forgoes the category of *Dar al-Harb* altogether and divides the world into *Dar al-Islam*, and *Dar al-Kufr* or *Dar al-Da’wa* (the places where a Muslim must spread Islam through *da’wa* – in lieu of *Dar al-Harb*). *Dar al-Islam* in this case is any country in which there is a Muslim majority even if the ruler does not completely abide by Islam. *Dar al-Kufr* or *Dar al-Da’wa*, is any country in

which the majority is non- Muslim.¹ Other reformists propose new categories such as *Dar al-‘Ahd* or *Dar al-Sulh* (countries with which there is a treaty or peace), *Dar al-Islah*, *Dar al-Durura* (land of necessity) or *Dar al-Aman* (land of safe sojourn).

All the categories discussed above are legitimate in Islam for determining the attitude towards non-Muslim countries and populations and are rooted in Islamic *fiqh*. The early distinctions of “*Dar al-‘Ahd*” and “*Dar al-Kufr*” instead of *Dar al-Harb* reflect a development during the growth of the political power of the Islamic State that tempered the original contrast of “we” and “they” with political Realpolitik. Modern radical Islam though reverts to what it perceives as the “original” concepts – the sharp dichotomy of *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, or “us” and “them”

The internal debate regarding *jihad* produced a wide range of Muslim attitudes towards this issue – from radicals who believe that the time is ripe to renew an active *jihad* for spreading Islam in the world by the sword, to those who see the present stage as a defensive *jihad* aimed only at expelling the infidels from what lands they consider as Muslim; those who limit acts of terrorism to recently “occupied” Muslim lands, and those who justify terrorism in the lands of the infidels themselves; those who accept the justification of *jihad*, but subordinate it to practical considerations and prefer to defer the conflict until such time that the Muslims will become strong; and those who utterly reject the idea of a terrorist – or other – conflict with the non-Muslim world.

Classic Islamic thought distinguishes between such a *jihad* and an “offensive” or “initiated” *jihad* for spreading Islam and converting infidels.

- The “**offensive *jihad***” is a “collective duty” of the community of Muslims to pursue the infidels into their own lands, to call upon them to accept Islam and to fight them if they do not accept. It can only be implemented under the command of an Islamic Ruler – the Caliph – who appoints believers to guard the borders and sends out an army at least once (some say twice) a year. As long as the Caliph has appointed Muslims to perform this duty, it is fulfilled and it is not incumbent on the rest of the Muslims in the community.
- The “**defensive *jihad***” is an individual duty for all Muslims to defend Muslim lands when the infidels prepare to attack them, or when they attack and occupy them, or when Muslims come into proximity of “infidels” on the battlefield. In contrast to the former, this is an individual duty. As such, it is no less a religious imperative than the other five “pillars” of Islam: the statement of belief – *Shahada*, prayer, fasting, charity and *Hajj*. It becomes a *de facto* (and in the eyes of some a *de jure*) “sixth pillar”; a Muslim who does not perform it will not inherit Paradise.

The latter form of “defensive *jihad*” is the basis for most jihadist doctrines today, including that of al-Qa’ida. However, the definition of “defense” in most of these doctrines is wide enough to encompass what would normally be considered offensive strategies; they include, defense of the religion and dignity of the Muslims and the duty to protect the “oppressed upon the earth” against their oppressors. A major strength of this doctrine of “defensive *jihad*” is its definition as an “individual duty” incumbent on each and every Muslim – man, women and child, freeman and slave – in the area of the occupied

¹ *Fatwas* by Sheikh Faysal Mawlawi, August 29, 2002, www.islamonline.net/fatwas/english/FatwasDisplay.asp?hFatwasID=72774

or threatened Muslim land. As such, it is not elective and cannot be fulfilled by proxy. When viewed as an “individual duty”, participation in *jihad* in one way or another (by fighting, financing or preaching) becomes a prerequisite for entrance to Paradise in the Afterlife. Being a duty prescribed by the Prophet, *jihad* has intrinsic value regardless of its circumstances. It is not a necessary evil, but a religious duty regardless of its context and, as such, pleases God. By waging *jihad* against the infidels, the Islamists reconstruct the past and divert the path of history back to the “straight road”.

In this ideology, the “offensive *jihad*” has not been abandoned on the doctrinal level; since it remains an obligation for the Muslims as a community, which not only can be performed under a Caliphate, but is also one of the primary duties of the Caliph (according to some traditions, refraining from *jihad* is grounds for deposal of a Caliph). Hence, the reinstatement of the Caliphate is in the eyes of many radical movements, a major goal. This goal of the restoration of the Caliphate should not be confused with the less interim goal of establishing a state run by *Shari'a* (e.g. the Muslim Brotherhood). The former implies both revival of the offensive *jihad* and the imposition of one brand of Islam on all Muslims in the Caliphate, whereas the *Shari'a* can “tolerate” more political pragmatism regarding *jihad* and a higher level of Islamic pluralism within the state.

In general terms, *jihad* is the Islamic parallel of the Western concept of *bellum iustum*, – “just war”. This doctrine contains two well-defined categories: “*ius ad bellum*,” which lays down the principles by which a war is legally justified; and “*ius in bello*,” which defines permitted and forbidden behavior towards the enemy during combat and afterwards. This second category deals with a wide variety of issues, such as the legality of different weapons, immunity of persons, prisoners of war, and the distinction between combatants who may be targeted with intention to kill or incapacitate them and non-combatants, who may not be harmed intentionally, since not being involved in warfare.

Islamic law addresses all these issues, the most prominent of them being:

1. **The very definition, current implementation, and area of application of the state of *jihad*.** Is *jihad* one of the “pillars” (*arkan*) or “roots” (*usul*) of Islam? Does it necessarily imply military war, or can it be perceived as a duty to spread Islam through preaching or even the moral struggle between one’s soul and Satan? If it is the former, then what are the necessary conditions for *jihad*? Does a state of *jihad* currently exist between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*? And how can one define *Dar al-Islam* today, in the absence of a Caliphate? Is the rest of the world automatically defined as *Dar al-Harb* in which a state of *jihad* exists, or do the treaties and diplomatic relations, which exist between Muslim countries and “infidel” countries (including the charter of the United Nations) change this?
2. **Who must participate in *jihad*, and how?** Is *jihad* a personal duty (*fard 'ayn*) for each and every Muslim under all circumstances or is it a collective duty (*fard kifaya*) that can be performed only under the leadership of a leader of all Muslims (*Imam, Khalifa, Amir al-Muaminun*)? Is it incumbent upon women? On minors? May a Muslim refrain from supporting his attacked brethren or obey a non-Muslim secular law, which prohibits him from supporting other Muslims in their struggle?
3. **How should the *jihad* be fought?** The questions in this area relate inter alia, to: (A) is *jihad* by definition an act of conflict against the actual “*kuffar*” or can it be defined as a spiritual struggle against the “evil inclination”? If it is the former, must it take the form of war (*jihad fi-sabil Allah*)? Or can it be performed

by way of preaching and proselytizing (*da'wa*)? (B) Who is a legitimate target? Is it permissible to kill noncombatant civilians — women, children, elderly, and clerics; “protected” non-Muslims in Muslim countries — local non-Muslims or tourists whose visas may be interpreted as Islamic guarantees of passage (*aman*); Muslim bystanders? (C) The legitimacy of suicide attacks (*istishhad*) as a form of *jihad* in the light of the severe prohibition on a Muslim taking his own life, on one hand, and the promise of rewards in the afterlife for the *shahid* who falls in a *jihad* on the other hand. (D) The weapons, which may be used. For example, may a hijacked plane be used as a weapon as in the attacks of September 11 in the light of Islamic prohibitions on killing prisoners? (E) The status of a Muslim who aids the “infidels” against other Muslims. (F) The authority to implement capital punishment in the absence of a Caliph.

4. **How should *jihad* be funded?** This subject relates to the transfer of *zakat* (almsgiving) collected in a community for *jihad fi-sabil Allah* (i.e., *jihad* on Allah’s path or military *jihad*), the precepts of “war booty” (*ghanima* or *fay*) and the fifth (*khums*) of the spoils which must be handed over to the public treasury.
5. **The behavior of a Muslim towards the *kuffar*** – The existence of a state of *jihad* raises the questions regarding support of the *kuffar* by purchasing their products, performing acts which call for loyalty to their countries, serving in their military, spying for them etc.

The Role of the Scholars and Islamic Jurisprudence

Radical Islamists do not base their cause on blind faith but on meticulous rationalization of their goals and means through the use of accepted Islamic traditions. Foremost among the ideological “tools” of radical Islam is Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The pivotal role of the Islamic scholars (*ulama*) and of Islamic jurisprudence derives from the legalistic nature of Islam. Recognizing the limitations of any human being in determining the “orthodoxy” of an individual, Islam focuses on “orthopraxy”. It offers total rule of law (*Shari’a*) by providing not only a revelation of divine will, but also a highly detailed legal code which regulates the entire scope of human behavior on both the private and the collective level.

The need for legal justification is particularly critical when acts of violence, which would normally be considered cardinal sins may be deemed religious obligations if performed in the context of a legitimate *jihad*. To resolve this contradiction, radicals rely on the traditional “tool box” that the Islamic *fiqh* provides: the Islamic demarcation of the world into *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*; interpretation of “*jihad*” as a military struggle and as an integral tenet of Islam; defining *jihad* as an “individual duty” under defensive circumstances; allowance for killing; concepts of martyrdom (*shahada*) and the eschatological anticipation of the final victory of Islam.

In medieval Islam, this supremacy of *Shari’a* did not preclude philosophical or moral rumination. Various schools of Islamic legal thought did leave room for tools based on rational reflection and public good. The Wahhabi school, which appeared in the 18th century declared war on all these trends in Islam and called for literal and unquestioning acceptance of the directives of Islam, as they existed in the days of the Prophet. In doing so, it delivered morality exclusively into the hands of the legal scholars and made it entirely dependent on exegesis from the textual sources. Private and public behavior, morality and immorality, can all be regulated by the precepts of *Shari’a*. All religious and moral issues

can be deduced from the sources of *Shari'a* by way of casuistic analysis, and clear instructions can be given regarding right and wrong.

The “legalization” of moral issues raises the question of **personal accountability** in Islam. Is a scholar who provides an erroneous ruling, or a Muslim who follows him, held as having committed a sin? If the misleading opinion is intentional, its author is guilty of the heinous sin of *istihlal* – “forbidding that which (Allah) permitted,” or “permitting that which (Allah) forbade” (Qur’an 9:37). On the other hand, Islam is exceptionally tolerant of honest mistakes of *ijtihad*. Islamic law is not a finite codex, but an accretional body of legal thinking, which preserves minority thinking alongside wide consensus. A scholar who errs in good faith nevertheless enjoys his reward for having made an effort to comprehend the will of God. Likewise, God will be lenient with a Muslim who has followed such a ruling in good faith since God “knows his intention”. This attitude leaves both spiritual leader and follower without blame even in case of a legal decision, which was patently incorrect and resulted in a cardinal sin.

The principles of *fiqh* are brought to bear in the practical world through the issuing of *fatwas* – legal opinions or rulings – written or oral – on a specific subject that dispel uncertainty, and show the clear path for behavior on the chosen subject. Ideally, a *fatwa* can only be given by a scholar with a wide knowledge of *fiqh*. *Fatwas* have been issued by behest of rulers in order to accord legitimacy to their policies and generally, the ‘*ulama*’ tended to defer to the rulers’ perception of the interest of the Muslim community as a basis for their own judgments. At the same time, *fatwas* have been a standard tool in the arsenals of Muslim rebels and insurgents for ages: they were issued by the Wahhabis in the Arabian Peninsula, by the Mahdi in Sudan, and by Muslims in India against the British and in Indonesia against the Dutch, to name only a few. The importance of the legal dispensation that these *fatwas* provide the individual terrorist cannot be underestimated.

While traditional Islam does rely to a great extent on the validity of legal rulings, not all the schools are equally committed to the letter of the text. Of the four main schools of jurisprudence, the Hanbali school, practiced in Saudi Arabia, is the most literal in its interpretations, whereas the Maliki school common in Northern Africa and the Shafi’i school, prevalent in South-East Asia, tend to be more flexible. Since all the schools originated in the Arab world, it seems – as will be discussed further on – that the ethnic and social environments have been instrumental in determining which legal version would be accepted and developed. Whenever Muslims found themselves living in culturally and religiously pluralist environments, they tended to adopt legal thinking which facilitated accommodation with said places.

Crisis of Authority

In Muslim societies the ‘*ulama*’ have traditionally played a variety of roles: they were a legislative branch of society which, by interpreting the sources of the Law created new duties and prohibitions; a judicial branch that passed judgment on violators of the law; and “crowners of kings” – providers of religious legitimacy to the executive leadership. During most of Islamic history, the jurists and the rulers have complemented each other; the legitimacy that the clerics provided as guardians of the law was rewarded by the rulers with worldly benefits. Occasionally the two “branches” of Islamic government conflicted, usually though, to find a new balance and *modus vivendi*. This *modus vivendi* accorded the ruler (*Imam*, Caliph, “*wali al-amr*”) a kind of “veto” over religious decisions of his ‘*ulama*’ in the area of “political jurisprudence” (*siyar, fiqh siyasi*).

The success of radical Islam can be attributed, to a great extent, to a vacuum of modern secular or moderate religious leadership caused by a **crisis of religious and political legitimacy and authority**. The fragmentation of leadership within the Arab and Muslim world is the result of a loss of a source of legitimacy: nationalism has gone bankrupt, while liberalism, which was never quite popular, is linked to the negative image of the United States as a result of a perception of American hostility to the Muslims. The rise of modern secular regimes, which based their legitimacy on revolutionary ideologies, and repressive security apparatuses, and not on Islam, broke the traditional bond between the temporal ruler (Imam or Caliph) and the *'ulama*. The clerics no longer shared power with the rulers, but were nevertheless called upon to support them.

An important result of the above has been a steady decline of the Sunni orthodox **religious establishments**. Having been systematically emasculated by the regimes, they also lost public legitimacy and authority due to their support for those dictatorial and oppressive rulers. This situation imposes on them a delicate balancing act: to maintain their relationship with the regimes. On one hand, they are obliged to support them as a counter-balance to radical opposition; on the other hand, they must counter accusations that they have become “rubber stamps” of unpopular and un-Islamic regimes, and answer to the challenge of the non-establishment clerics. Unable to join the radicals’ attacks on the regimes, the clerics attempt to woo the public back by radicalizing their own positions vis-à-vis the West and Israel.

The rejection of Western values of democracy by Islamic radicals notwithstanding, this crisis has triggered a kind of religious “democratization” or “privatization” of *fiqh*. The loss of political leadership contributes to a process of de-centralization of religious authority. In the absence of political leaders who can outline the political *fiqh*, these issues are referred to the *'ulama*; and in the absence of a strong centralized religious authority, there is an increase in the number of politically oriented *'ulama*.

The loss of legitimacy of the regimes, and of their Islamic establishments along with the growing exposure of the public to issues which were once perceived as “high politics” (and hence not the concern of the average Muslim), created both a greater “demand” for such religio-political guidance, and a “shortage” of such guidance. In the absence of legitimate political leaders who can outline political interest, this “demand” is filled by the non-establishment *'ulama*. This trend has resulted in the emergence of a “supermarket” of “scholars,” who issue religious rulings and legitimize various ideologies. An increasing number of *'ulama* are issuing *fatwas* in matters related to the concept of *jihad*.

The nature of the new relationship between clerics and rulers differs from one country to another. In no case, however, is it a bilateral relationship; both the regime and the Islamic establishment have to take into account, as terms of reference Islamic pressure groups, non-establishment *'ulama*, popular political forces which use Islamic rhetoric to strengthen their positions vis-à-vis the regime, and radical Islamic opposition, on one hand, and Western pressure on the regimes to restrain their religious institutions, on the other hand. To understand the dynamics of these relationships, it is worthwhile to look at a number of case studies: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria.

- In **Egypt**, al-Azhar existed for a thousand years before the regime and enjoys substantial prestige in the Muslim world. This status restricts the ability of the regime to impose its will on such an institution.
- In **Saudi Arabia** the founder of the Kingdom had been accepted as the Imam of the community, and as such, his understanding of the interests (*maslaha*) of the community

was not to be questioned. The close relationships – including family relations – between the royal family and the *'ulama* also facilitated regime control. This has since changed. Ibn Sa'ud's successors did not have his charisma or his control over the *'ulama*, and the current Saudi leadership has lost effective control over the rank and file of the *'ulama*.

- In **Jordan**, there is no such institution. The lineage of the royal family coupled with the intentionally bureaucratic nature of the Islamic establishment guarantees complete regime control over that authority.
- In **Syria**, the regime has stifled all secular opposition while cultivating Islamic institutions of its own so as to reinforce its legitimacy vis-à-vis the challenge of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The passivity of the Islamic establishments and regimes of the Middle East in the face of the radicals is evident. When the basic interests of these regimes were in danger, they proved their ability to coerce religious establishments, and even radical Sheikhs to rule in a way commensurate with their needs; however, few of them show any inclination to join a global (that is, “infidel”) war against radical Islamic ideology. Muslim regimes also hesitate to crack down on the religious dimension of radical Islam, and satisfy themselves instead with dealing with the political violence alone. Thus, they trade tolerance of *jihad* for local calm, and lose ground to radicals in their societies. The attacks of September 11 did force the Muslim regimes to take stands and to deal with their tolerant policies vis-à-vis *jihad* movements in their countries. However, their “collaboration” with the West in counter-terrorism is detrimental to their domestic stability. As a result, many regimes compensate their Islamic opposition by ceding to them spaces in society – judicial, educational etc. These policies constrain the regimes even more.

The age of information has opened up a new venue for the Muslim to acquire religious instruction without having to come in direct contact with the Sheikh that he or she is consulting with. The Internet now allows a Muslim to send a query to any learned Sheikh by E-Mail, and to receive his ruling either directly or in the public domain of websites dedicated to such *fatwas*. These websites vary according to the leanings of the institution they represent, and the personalities of the Sheikhs involved in them. Some are “establishment” sites which represent renowned Islamic institutions or prominent individual Sheikhs, and provide general Islamic instruction for the mainstream orthodox Muslim, including responses to queries on the rules and regulations of *jihad*; others are sites which are dedicated to *jihad* and include religious instruction and *fatwas* almost exclusively on the issue of *jihad*. The latter do not always provide the identity of the supplicant or of the “*Sheikh*” who gives the *fatwas*, thus compromising the authority of the *fatwas* themselves. Online *fatwas* also have a tendency to be recycled; questions which have already been raised and answered are re-posted, and the former response is posted with it as if it was given on that date. As a result, occasionally a *fatwa* by a prominent Sheikh may be posted at a given date even after his death.

The crisis of authority and the consequent weakness of “mainstream” leadership are well demonstrated in a recent *fatwa* issued by the Fiqh Council of North America and endorsed by 140 Muslim groups, leaders, and institutions. The *fatwa* determines that: (a) all acts of terrorism targeting civilians are *haram* (forbidden) in Islam; (b) it is *haram* for a Muslim to cooperate with any individual or group that is involved in any act of terrorism or violence; (c) it is the civic and religious duty (*wajib* – a duty which derives from *Shari'a* and not directly from the Qur'an) of Muslims to cooperate with law enforcement authorities to protect the lives of all civilians. This *fatwa* can be compared to a *fatwa* issued by lay

Spanish Muslims after the attacks in Madrid. The latter declared all those who perpetrate acts of terror or murder of innocents and those who justify such acts or provide legal religious endorsement of such acts as “apostates”, and specifically declared Bin Laden an apostate for “permitting that which Allah has forbidden” (*istihlal*). The endorsers of the American *fatwa* though, demonstrated their sense of subordination to the religious centers of the Muslim world. In their quest for consensus, they had to water down any religiously “operative” edict. They could not declare terrorists as apostates (*takfir*), and they certainly could not dare declare all those who justify terror as apostates since that would apply to many of the leading clerics in the Muslim world. Finally, the *fatwa* leaves the sticky question of the duty to cooperate with authorities (ostensibly – collaboration with infidels against Muslims) unresolved by declaring it a “civic duty,” and a duty imposed by *Shari’a* (not a Qur’anic duty). It may be argued that the sense of subordination towards the religious centers of the Muslim world binds the hands and tongues of the American Muslim leaders, whereas the more assimilated Spanish “lay” Muslims felt less obliged to reach a consensus with the more radicals.

The Jihadist Doctrines

Modern fundamentalist Islam was born of the conflict between the principle that Islam should encompass all areas of life and provide all the answers for the lives of Muslims and the political, social, economic and military challenge of the Western world. The jihadist doctrines (plural, as there is not one uniform doctrine) take the basic tenets of *jihad* in Islam and the postulates of the fundamentalist trends to their logical conclusion. The radical Islamic case against the West is part and parcel of this conclusion. The most common accusation against the West in radical Islamic circles is of “occupation” of Muslim lands. However, a deeper reading of Islamist ideological texts shows that “Western occupation” is interpreted not only as Western military occupation, but also as the West’s economic, cultural and moral presence. Western culture is held responsible for encouraging the neo-*jahiliyya*, by imposing its own values and corrupting the Muslims, and leading them down the road to heresy (*kufir*).

Western culture is, in this context, the strategic enemy of God, of the Muslim *Umma*, the “prime cause” of the decline of the Muslims, and the corruption of Islam. The Islamic principle that “Islam is supreme and none is above it” created a cognitive dissonance when faced with present-day Western superiority. The only logical conclusion, therefore, is that the (Judeo-) Christian West – portrayed as a “Crusader Kingdom” has usurped Islam’s “birthright” of cultural and technological predominance, with the intent of keeping the Muslims in a state of economic and technological backwardness; subjecting them to colonialism, patronizing mandates and economic exploitation. The Muslims, having compromised their religion, are helpless in the face of this onslaught; only if they renew their total obedience to Islam, as in the days of the Prophet, will they be awarded with victory.

The priority of the original radical movements was to combat the symptoms of the decline **within** Islam. The primary frame of reference of radical Islamic ideology was not the “infidels,” but the Muslims themselves. These were struggles inwards into Islam, and not against the West. Their primary adversaries were the secular states and other representatives of the neo-*jahiliyya* – Muslim liberals, Sufis and secularists. In order to achieve the long-term goal of the Caliphate, sinful and apostate rulers must either accept the Islamic paradigm or be swept aside and Muslim society had to be re-Islamized. On the practical level as well, most acts of terrorism of radical Islamic movements until the early

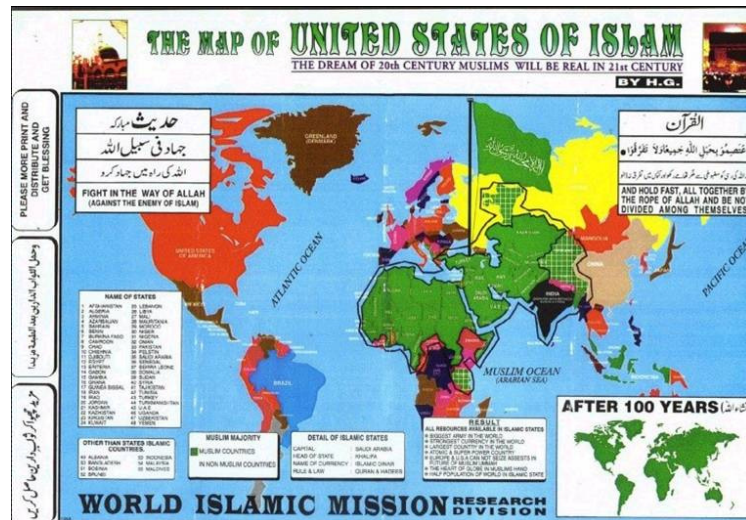
1990's were directed against other Muslims and not against "infidels". In this context, Western civilization is the enemy because of its corrupting influence on the Muslims.

In the wake of the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union and the sense of an almost apocalyptic success, the tendency to deal directly with the "strategic enemy" grew. The defeat of the Soviet Union, and its subsequent fall was attributed to the willingness of the *Mujahidin* to struggle against all odds; and in doing so to prove to God their total faith in Him. The defeat of the Soviet Union was viewed as no less than a sign that God desired the Muslims to continue on the road of *jihad*. The formal *casus belli* against the West is that "occupation of Muslim lands" has continued for centuries (since the first defeats of the Muslims in Europe) and since there is no "statute of limitations" for the Islamic identity of a land, all lands that were once Muslim must be returned to Islam, no matter when they were "occupied," and what their current population is. The "occupation" puts into effect a state of "defensive *jihad*". Such a *jihad* is an "individual duty" for each and every Muslim in the "occupied" countries. However, though the doctrine of "defensive *jihad*" exists in classic Islam, it did not, in the past, result in a "world *jihad*" movement with an offensive strategy. The doctrinal innovation in the contemporary *jihad* movement is that this "individual duty" is no longer incumbent on the Muslims of the "occupied" countries alone, but, given the length of time of the "occupation", on all Muslims everywhere.

This doctrine was first translated into an internationalization of a *jihad* during the struggle against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan; the cross-pollination – first in Afghanistan and later in other theatres of *jihad* –and the recruits to the *jihad* from different countries cemented it. It determined that: (a) there are many theatres for *jihad*, which have been neglected for centuries (Andalusia, Southern France, the Balkans, parts of Poland, Kashmir, Hyderabad, Assam, Nepal, Burma, Behar, and Junagadh Afghanistan, Palestine, Kashmir, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea are such theatres mentioned in Islamic texts); (b) Since *jihad* has become an "individual duty," any Muslim must fulfill this duty in any of those theatres, regardless of his personal origins; (c) The enemy is waging a vicious global war against the Muslims, wantonly murdering Muslim innocents, and therefore the Muslims must respond "in kind".

All the above relates to the doctrine of "defensive *jihad*". While this doctrine is the main backbone of contemporary Islamic anti-Westernism, the ambition to realize the goal of making Islam the only world religion is also to be found in many of the jihadist movements, including those, which have defined their struggle primarily in defensive terms. This goal is inherent in writings by al-Qa'ida and Messianic "Caliphocentric" organizations such as Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami and Muhajirun. It is based on the belief that success in defeating the "infidels" in the defense of Muslim lands, is interpreted as a sign from Allah that the time is ripe to reunite the Muslims and to proceed on an "offensive *jihad*" for Islamization of the world.²

² For example a statement by Omar Bakri Muhammad, the leader of the Muhajirun, that the "banner of Islam" will ultimately fly over Downing 10. Similar statements have been made by Sheikhs in the Netherlands, Germany and other European countries.



The main four trends that have converged into modern Islamic radicalism include: 18th century Arabian **Wahhabism**, 19th century **Salafism**, the early 20th century political theories of the Egyptian **Muslim Brotherhood** leaders, Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb and the late 20th century activist legacy of the Jordanian-Palestinian leader of the **Afghani Mujahidin**, Sheikh ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam. All these trends are manifested within al-Qa’ida.

1. **Wahhabism** arose as a struggle for the primacy of the Qur’an and the ideas of the “unity of God” – *tawhid*, and in order to purge Islam from polytheism – *shirk*. It saw itself as the “true” orthodox Islam. In essence, it was a religio-political movement with a “tops-down” approach to reforming Islam by taking power and imposing its concepts of Islam “by the sword”. The essence of Wahhabism is the rejection of the Western world and its innovations. It was founded by the coalition of the al-Sa’ud family and the Islamic revivalist, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, with the goal of purging Islam from innovations and corruptions. It perceives the earliest period of Islam as a paradigm of perfection and attempts to imitate that period. In doing so, it is “a-historical”. The cumulative increments of Islamic history are at best interpretations of this paradigm, and at worse innovations that distanced the Muslims from it and hence should be rejected. The Wahhabi attitude towards the Qur’an is, therefore, entirely literal. The Qur’an was created on the dawn of creation with the knowledge of what will come to pass, and therefore, nothing in it can be read in historic context or lose its validity in the modern world.
2. **Salafism** (lit: “forefatherism”), on the other hand, was originally a philosophical – not a military or political movement. It emerged as a reformist school founded by Muslim thinkers with wide acquaintance with the Western world (Muhammad ‘Abduh, al-Afghani and Rashid Rida). Like Wahhabism, it also claims to revive the Islam of the Prophet and his companions (*al-salaf al-salih*). However, unlike the Wahhabi out of hand rejection of all Western influences, the original Salafists sought to meet the challenge of modern needs by reinterpreting the original sources in the light of those demands through “leapfrogging” historic juristic precedents and existing authority. This was done by “opening the gates of *ijtihad*,” and allowing virtually any learned Muslim to perform exegesis from the original sources, and to interpret the will of God.
3. The **Muslim Brotherhood** emerged as a response to what they perceived as the “apostasy” of Muslim rulers who had led the *Umma* astray into a neo-*jahiliyya* (the state of ignorance of the word of God which preceded the mission of the Prophet). It opted for a “bottoms-up” approach to reform. It placed the emphasis on a gradual

reform of Islamic society by creating a Muslim civil society. Which they hoped would eventually re-Islamize the “modern *jahiliyya*” into which Muslims had sunken and then – the regimes would fall into their hands like a ripe fruit. But despite its gradualist philosophy, the Muslim Brotherhood also gave rise to a jihadist branch – that of Sayyid Qutb.

4. The **Afghani Mujahidin** movement “internationalized” the budding radical Islamist trend. It brought together Muslims from all over the world to fight a *jihad* in a theatre which belonged to none of them. Whereas all the previous trends were “inward looking,” and directed their zeal towards other “apostate” Muslims, the *Mujahidin* movement was specifically organized to struggle against the “infidels” and to eject them from a Muslim land. Once this precedent had been set, it was only natural that it be applied to other theatres. The lesson of the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (and its subsequent demise) was that the Muslims have the power, by their faith and the fervor of *jihad*, to expel the “infidels,” and to regain Muslim lands for the Muslim *Umma*.

The convergence of all these trends formed a jihadist movement which incorporates elements of all of them: it is purist and literal in its interpretation of the texts of Islam and emulates the behavior of the first generation of Muslims like the Wahhabis; it accepts the Salafi doctrine of renewal of *ijtihad* for solving problems which do not have immediate solutions in the texts; it subscribes to the Muslim Brotherhood beliefs in “recruitment” of the Muslim society and the “bottoms-up” transformation of Muslim countries (though, simultaneously holding on to the Wahhabi “tops-down” paradigm); and it internationalizes the struggle according to the legacy of the Afghani Mujahidin.

An important element in almost all of the above radical Sunni trends is a visceral **animosity towards Shiite** (and other heterodox) Muslims. This element has been highlighted recently in the wake of the Sunni-Shiite conflict in Iraq. While this conflict may be viewed in social terms as a struggle by a deposed political Sunni elite against a new elite which has taken over the country with the aid of an outside power and by virtue of its majority; or in sectarian and ethnic terms as a conflict between a Sunni Arab minority and a Iranian-oriented Shiite ethnic majority in alliance with non-Arab Kurds which threatens to overthrow the social primacy of the former, it must also be viewed as a reflection of the wider phenomenon of Wahhabi hostility towards the Shi’a.

The conflict has exacerbated over the last years and manifests itself in an increase of anti-Shiite rhetoric on the part of Wahhabi radicals. For them, the Shiites are near-heretics, natural allies of Shiite Iran, who have come to power in Arab Iraq on the points of the American bayonets, and through an alliance with the secular and non-Arab Kurds, ostensibly in a democratic process, but actually in order to promote the American plan for a Greater Middle East, in which the Arabs will be diluted in the non-Arab components (Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Israel) and Islam will lose its status. This development is viewed from the radical wings of the Sunni world as a severe challenge, not only to the predominance of the Sunnis in Iraq, but also to their dominance in the Muslim world in general.

One main element in the jihadist view of *ius in bello*, which sets it apart from codes of war in other cultures, is its **intentional targeting of non-combatants**. This does not necessarily derive from a classic Islamic law of *jihad*, but neither does it clearly contradict it. Classic Islamic law does not recognize a category of non-combatants as immune, *per se* but focuses on levels of inviolability, distinguishing between the enemy who **must** be killed

and cannot be spared until the battle is over, and those who enjoy **immunity** and therefore “whose blood is prohibited”. The latter may be either (1) Muslims and non-Muslims who have treaties with the Muslims that must be respected, or (2) those who may become property of the Muslims such as women and children, or (3) those whose physical or spiritual conditions render them incapable of harming the Muslims, such as the aged, mentally retarded, cripples whose handicap clearly precludes their participation in battle, monks in cloisters, etc. Hence, while all those whom it is forbidden to harm are non-combatants, not all non-combatants are immune from harm by virtue of this status.

Jihadist scholars also take advantage of the loopholes and precedents in Islamic jurisprudence, which permit **killing immune persons** in the name of the necessities of *jihad*. Modern Jihadist doctrine justifies killing of ostensibly protected persons either by citing these loopholes, or by portraying the contemporary enemy in a fashion that annuls the status of immunity. The non-combatants who are targeted are “able to fight” (hence not immune), participate in the war by proxy, by virtue of their being part of a democratic political system and, in any case, the Islamic principle of *lex talionis* demands that enemy civilians be killed in a ratio of 10:1 in retribution for the killing of Muslim civilians. This logic serves radical scholars in justifying not only murder of civilians, but also mutilation of bodies, and even use of weapons of mass destruction.

An interesting case in point of the centrality of legal rulings which has emerged in the wake of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, is the debate regarding the **killing of Muslims** as collateral killing in the course of a *jihad*. This debate focuses on the concept of *tatarrus*. This concept (literally – “shielding”) originated in the writings of the 12th century Sheikhs Abu-Hamed al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya. The concept was recently revived by al-Qa’ida (Ayman al-Zawahiri in his essay “The Rule for Suicide-Martyr Operations” and al-Qa’ida leader in Iraq, Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi), which justifies the killing of Muslims in the course of *jihad*. The rationale is that “... although spilling sacred Muslim blood is a grave offense, it is not only permissible but it is obligatory in order to prevent more serious adversity from happening, suspending or abandoning *jihad* (or) handing over the land and people to the unbelievers ...”. A number of modern scholars have elaborated on this justification, and argue that the broader interest of the *Umma* requires the expulsion of the U.S.-led forces from Iraq, and that the killing of innocent Iraqis in whatever numbers is of no concern to the combatants, whose place in paradise is assured. Other scholars however are deterred by the implications of a blanket justification of *tatarrus*, and determine that each individual case must be referred to a higher scholar. Or limit it to conflicts between regular armies, killing Muslims who are in the hands of the enemy or even deny it altogether. In any case, the jihadists cannot be satisfied with determining their strategy for deterring other Muslims by targeting themselves as well, but feel the need to provide a legal justification for the acts.

Organization and Leadership

The radical Islam phenomenon is characterized by a “set” of phenomena or forces, most of which are Sunni. Some of these are quite far from the pure radical Sunni paradigm. There are also Shiite movements inside this “set”. The organizational attributes of Shiite organizations tend to differ from the Sunni movements. The very existence of the concept of a senior cleric who serves as the “model of emulation” (*marja’ taqlid*) for his followers, the authority of such a spiritual leader, and the demand that he be a highly learned scholar all limit the scope of the “lay leaderships” which plague the radical Sunni scene. The subordination of the lay Sunni Muslim to the *‘ulama* in fundamentalist and radical

movements, though, bears a similarity to the Shiite paradigm, since the members of these movements may pledge an oath of fealty or allegiance (*bay'a*) to their leader. This allegiance indicates acceptance of the leader as both spiritual guide and temporal leader. His ruling then is not only a juridical opinion, but an operational diktat.

Like any wide spread ideological movement, the various radical Islamic trends can be viewed as a series of concentric circles, with the smaller “**hard core**” activists at the center, surrounded by the **active supporters** (and financiers), **potential allies** drawn from a milieu of ideological movements with similar agendas; and finally a mass passive, but **sympathetic population**. The relative “width” of each band differs from one organization to another; the greater the legitimacy of the “hard core” in a society (and immunity from the regime), the “wider” the inner band is. In other cases, the outer circle is the “widest”. Examples of the former are Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah – both of which operate in a supportive political milieu, which provides social and economic benefits for members of the “inner core”. Al-Qa’ida is the epitome of the latter, whereas the Muslim Brotherhood is located between these two extremes. The mutual influence of the inner and outer circles on the behavior of the organization is accordingly; the larger the inner core is, the greater its success in imposing its will on the public.

Command and control patterns in radical Islamic organizations appear to be more of a franchise than a hierarchical society. Since the loss of Afghanistan as a safe haven, al-Qa’ida has “morphed” into an even more multi-polar organization. This is evident in the large number of “independent” or “local” terrorist cells, which subscribe to the al-Qa’ida ideology but have little direct contact with the infrastructure in Afghanistan. The simile of a “franchise” – “McQa’ida” – is useful; it carries the same logo and basic menu everywhere, but in each country the management is autonomous and there is an adjustment of product and menus to local tastes. The ideological maneuvering space of a “McQa’ida” however is rather narrow, as the Arab world as a source of inspiration is still very strong and prohibits any substantial deviation. The attacks in London may be interpreted as a symptom of this organizational metamorphosis. In the past, there was evidence that the leadership of al-Qa’ida viewed the ideological infrastructure in the UK as too strategically important to endanger by performing terrorist attacks. The fragmentation of leadership allows for implementation of different strategies by separate branches of the same basic organization.

This multi-polarity of command and control reflects the wider phenomenon of fragmentation of religious authority in the Islamic world and the plurality of religious rulings, which has been described above. It also feeds off the social diversity of the various groups that are drawn to the radical Islamic ideologies. A relatively large portion of the radical activists are “organizationally mobile”, absorbing new ideological components (often from the internet without even coming in contact with the “leaderships” who are spreading those ideas), and forming new local organizations. This tendency is compounded by the “Lone Ranger Syndrome”; the individual or small group which has absorbed the ideology and acts on it without any specific instructions.

The failure of moderates to rally support for their positions does not derive as much from the fact that their **theocratic arguments** are weak, but from the **weakness of their leadership** as opposed to the radicals. The preponderance of legal reasoning in radical writings notwithstanding, supporters of radical sheikhs are not convinced by such arguments as much as with the charisma of the leaders. This is evident in the ideological heterogeneity of the phenomenon of radical Islam.

Therefore, future processes will also be determined, to a great extent, by leadership of radicals and moderates alike. This leadership is ostensibly a religious one, however, it

increasingly does not derive its authority from the depth of its Islamic knowledge, but from its charisma. An authoritative and populist leader has considerable influence, for good and bad. The prime example of this type of leadership is Bin Laden himself, whom Muslims from various backgrounds accept as a leader and as a political and ideological symbol. He does not engage in a pure Islamic discourse, but rather in an Arab-political one, using Islamic legal methods. His leadership is ostensibly a religious one, however, it does not derive its authority necessarily from the depth of its Islamic knowledge, or from his status as a religious scholar (*'alim*). BinLaden's leadership gains its authority from his charisma as a commander (*amir*), who struggles for the triumph of Islam and for conquests that will return the Muslims to their previous glory. He, and many others in the global *jihād* movement do not possess the encyclopedic knowledge of the Qur'an, *Hadith*, and *fiqh* that used to confer authority on a scholar, nor are they constrained by moderating traditions which appear in such sources. They base their rulings upon a limited selection of Qur'anic verses and previous scholars' rulings along with extensive use of free exegesis from the Qur'an (*ijtihad*).

The Ethnic Dimension

The emergence of Islamic radicalism in local situations tends to result from a juxtaposition of the global and the local. As global a phenomenon that radical Islam seems to be, its particular manifestations are notably local. This is not surprising. Islam in itself tends to vary from one country to another, and orthodox customs in one Muslim society would sometimes be considered as bordering on heresy in another. Islamic identity and customs are affected by language, ethnic environment, status as minority or majority, Sufi or other traditions, eclectics, and the level of friction between the Muslim and surrounding groups, to name a few factors. Sometimes ethnic customs are incorporated into the religion so deeply that few are aware that they are not original and universal tenets of Islam. This “localization” of Islam occasionally creates a form of “Islamist Nationalism”, which is akin to – but not identical with – the world jihadist movement represented by al-Qa’ida.

This diversity of Islam gives rise to such questions like, why has radical Islam arisen where it has, and why not in places where it is less prevalent. Why have societies with similar social, political and economic conditions not produced similar antagonism towards the West? What are the factors in those societies in which radicalism has not found wide support which inhibited it from taking root? Particularly, we may ask, are these culture-dependent ethnic factors, which cannot be exported or cloned, or do they derive from predominance of a different – but equally legitimate – tradition of Islam?

Different cases of the spread of radical Islam in a variety of national environments indicate an inter-relationship between culture, social structure, historic political circumstances and consensual religious doctrines. In short: different Muslim communities have absorbed and adapted different schools of jurisprudence and religious doctrines according to their own culture and socio-political situation. The austerity of the Hanbali school – and later of strict Wahhabism – could be implemented in the austere and uniform surroundings of the Arabian Peninsula much easier than in the complex multi-ethnic and religiously diverse setting of India and Indonesia. Strict rulings regarding the interaction with “polytheists” are easier to maintain when the prospect of meeting such a person is nil. The level of commerce and openness of the given society to the outside world also plays a role; Islam reached South and South-East Asia with trade boats not with gunboats, and Asian Islam remained receptive to later doctrines and philosophies that came with civilizational intercourse. Islamic radicalism, however is not uniform even throughout the Arab world. The global *jihad* scene is dominated by Saudis, Egyptians, and Algerians. The absence of Palestinians from this movement is telling; Palestinian Islamism was born as part of national movement, and remains anchored in national goals, notwithstanding its formal commitment to general Islamic agendas.

Radical Islamism in its purest form is vehemently opposed to nationalism. Nationalism is perceived as a form of idolatry, placing the allegiance to the “nation” (which may include non-Muslims), above the loyalty to the Muslim *Umma*. The exclusive trans-national identity of the Muslim *Umma*, and the prohibition of collaborating with “infidels” – even if they are fellow citizens of the same country – against fellow Muslims have deep roots in Islam. These roots arose from the necessity in the time of the Prophet to bind the new Muslims to their new Nation through abrogation of their prior tribal affiliation. The Muslim is enjoined to show loyalty toward Muslims and to distance himself from infidels, according to the principle of *al-walaa wa-al-baraa* (loyalty and distancing).

This principle is at the core of the “internationalization” of the *jihad* movement and the occurrences of Muslims from different countries who come together for acts of terrorism in a country of which none of them are natives. This principle entails mutual liability between Muslims from different countries, and at the same time absolves Muslims of any contradictory loyalty towards their countries of citizenship. The dilemma arising from the above goes beyond the common dual allegiance dilemma of an individual whose country of adoption is at war with his country of origin or with his co-religionists. It places a question mark over the duty of Muslims living in non-Muslim countries to abide by the conditions of their *aman* in that country.

The Arab influence on non-Arab Islamism

The most widespread, ambitious, and violent of the radical Islamic movements are the ones acting in the Arab world. It has been argued that this observation may be related to the Arabs’ sense of their special place in Islam, and the particular bond between its fate and their own. After all, Revelation (the Qur’an) was given to Arabs in Arabic and made them a world power. Many non-Arab Muslims also tacitly accept the special status of the Arabs, and are hence prone to accept the Islamic authority emanating from Arab religious authorities. While Westernization of Muslim culture may be perceived by a non-Arab Muslim as a transformation of cultural elements, which he received from the Arabs; for the Arab Muslim, it is perceived as imposition of a foreign culture on his own. To the extent that this argument is sound, it is understandable why radicalism is so strong in the Arabian Peninsula, where Islam originated.

While the phenomenon of radical Islamism has spread across the globe, its source is intimately connected to the Arab ethnic component in the Muslim world, either through direct “export” of radicalism or indirect influences. The lions share of Islamic terrorism and expressions of hostility towards the West are to be found among Arab Muslims. Conversely, expressions of Islamic moderation, reform, and cooperation with the West seem to be stronger in the non-Arab parts of the Muslim world. The radical religious trends among Muslims in Central and South-East Asia almost invariably lead back to Arab – particularly Saudi, Egyptian or Yemeni influences. Prime examples of this phenomenon are to be found in the Caucasus, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand:

1. In **Chechnya**, the Arab *mujahidin* tried to turn the Chechen rebellion from a national struggle to a full-fledged trans-national Islamic *jihad*. At one point the Chechen leadership attempted to reduce the Arab involvement in their struggle. It was clear to them that allowing the Chechen cause to become an endless Islamic *jihad* against the infidels would preclude any practical political gains.
2. In **Indonesia**, Arab immigrants, especially Hadramis, or Arabs of Yemeni descent, have played a predominant role in importing and disseminating ideas of radical Islam, which were previously foreign to the local Islamic culture. The Hadramis, being deeply involved in the trade between the Middle East and South-East Asia, played a significant historical role in the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian world from the 15th Century on. For centuries the Hadramis have been looked up to by Indonesian Muslims (particularly the *santri* or traditionalist) as models of Islamic piety and orthodoxy. Many leaders of radical Muslim groups in Indonesia have been of Hadrami origin, among them: Abu Bakr Ba’asyir, the spiritual leader of Jama’ah Islamiyah; Abdullah Sungkar, who founded, with Ba’asyir, in the late 1970s, the “Ngruki Network”; and Ja’far Umar Thalib, who headed Laskar Jihad in its *jihad* against the Mollucan Christians on the authority of seven *fatwas* – six from Saudi Arabia and one from Yemen – that justified such a *jihad* as an “individual duty”. It is noteworthy that

Laskar Jihad did not find – or did not feel the need to find – one local scholar to add his support to the *fatwas*. Along with the physical migration of Arabs, ideas originating in Arab Islam also found their way to Indonesia. Wahhabi doctrine had already enjoyed some degree of appeal among Indonesians through Wahhabi schools and texts which were translated to Indonesian, as were the texts of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, (Hasan al-Banna, and Sayyid Qutb), and of the Pakistani Jama'at-i-Islami (Abul-A'la al-Mawdudi).

3. The ongoing struggle in the south of the **Philippines** of the various Moro organizations is another case of “Islamist nationalism” which has given rise, through association with radical Islamic elements from Arab countries, to full-fledged radical Islam. The leaders of the MILF and Abu Sayyaf Group had either studied in al-Azhar (Cairo) or in Mecca, or had come into contact with the radical doctrines during their participation in the *jihad* in Afghanistan. In **Thailand**, there was a sense that Thai Muslims are inherently different and are not easily radicalized. Muslims lived in Thailand since the 14th Century in relative harmony with the rest of the country. The radicalization of Thai Muslims has been attributed to the opening of Thai Muslim society to Arab, Pakistani, Malaysian and Indonesian influences.

“Islamist Nationalism” – The Caucasus Case

Despite the negative attitude of radical Islam towards nationalism, it plays a formidable role in some theatres of *jihad*. This is the case in Chechnya, in the Uighur movement of western China and in the Moro movement of the southern Philippines and others.

In the Caucasus, radical Islam has failed to take root, with the exception of Chechnya and – to a certain extent – multi-ethnic Daghestan. Therefore, the cases of the Caucasus region may provide some observations regarding the interplay between Islam and nationalism; the responses of different Muslim societies to the vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet regime and ideology; the weight of local contexts in determining whether a region deteriorates into violence (Chechnya and Ingushetia-Ossetia) or remains stable (in North West Caucasus and to a lesser degree also in Daghestan); and the interaction between indigenous Islamic Sufi traditions and imported brands of radical Islam. Some salient observations in this regard are:

1. **Ethnicity, Nationalism and local interests maintain precedence over the trans-national Islamic identity.** This is clearly evident in the Caucasus, where the strong nationalist rallying call for unification of national homelands or achieving national independence/autonomy took precedence over all other competing ideologies. Thus, the Islamic identification became a complementary factor, subordinated to primary ethno-nationalist goals. Although the first Chechen war left physical destruction and a political, social, and moral vacuum which enabled the foreign Wahhabi “Jihadists” to grow and spread their vision and influence; they seem to have never transcended a tenth of the population. Outside Chechnya they succeeded to form allies only among a few disgruntled elements in Daghestan. In both cases the Islamic rallying call served specific ethnic and nationalist goals and groups.
2. **The sense that existing political-administrative units could provide a platform for nationalist sentiments and expression of local interests (albeit, taking into account the interests of Moscow) is a source for stability.** Conversely, the closing of alternative avenues for political activity and – even more importantly – for expression of national, social, and (moderate) religious identity strengthens the call of Wahhabi radicalism. Under Yeltsin such a space was maintained, thus enabling relative stability

in the North-Western Caucasus, and in Daghestan despite the political, economic, social and psychological upheaval following the dissolution of the USSR, and the wars in Abkhazia, Chechnya, South Ossetia and between the Ingush and Ossets.

3. **In contrast, the absence of vehicles for local expression plays into the hands of radical elements.** The centralistic, activist, and forceful policies of the Putin administration seem to have restricted the space for local players and expressions and downgraded local administrative autonomy, and are thus starting to push even relatively secular and moderate populations into the arms of the radicals. These policies included: the decision to send the army back into Chechnya; the use of force against the “Wahhabis”; crack-downs on ethno-national organizations, including the very moderate and secular expressions of Circassian ethno-nationalism, and the perception of any expression of Islamic Identity as “Wahhabism” (for example: in Kabardino-Balkaria). At the same time, following the lead of Moscow and other FSU governments, local authorities in the Caucasus (for example: Daghestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia) began to exploit the scepter of the “Wahhabi” threat to delegitimize all opposition. All of this contributed to the loss of this “space” for local expression, and opened the door for the radical Islamists who offered a transnational form of struggle in lieu of the ethno-national alternative. While the radical manifestation of this struggle had failed (Chechnya), in many areas of the Caucasus ethno-national activists saw an opportunity to pursue their goals under a Russian umbrella. The influence of such attitudes, however, seems to lose power with Moscow's “strong hand” in the region. Meanwhile, the blockade of Chechnya pushed Chechen radicals to look for new venues for their struggle, hence, co-option of national opposition groups under the banner of Islam is again becoming a realistic option.
4. **Sufism – particularly in countries where it is deeply embedded in local traditions – can be a potent bulwark against radicalism.** In Chechnya and Daghestan the Russian authorities struck an alliance with traditional Sufi Islam in their common struggle against the “Wahhabis”. In Daghestan, where the support for staying with Russia had been strong to start with, and the infrastructure of local Islamic (and Sufi) traditions is strong, this policy has born some fruit in promoting stability. In Chechnya however, it has only exacerbated the fragmentation and polarization of Chechen society without really solving the problems. One explanation for the differences between the North-Western Caucasus and Daghestan may be in the relative absence of deeply rooted Islamic institutions in the former, along with the weakness of local ethnic identities. In these societies, the relations between Islam and ethno-nationalism are still in flux. Theoretically this can offer a future scenario of Islamic identification beyond ethno-national identity – if not as a deep source of identity, at least as an escape from poverty and oppression.

Indonesia – Traditions of Pluralism

Probably the paradigm of moderate Islam in South-East Asia is Indonesia. The Indonesian case seems to disprove the argument that a critical mass of social troubles in a Muslim country will automatically bring about popular support for the radical Islamic solution. Almost all the commonly cited conditions for the flourishing of radical Islamic fundamentalism do exist in the Indonesian context: cultural bewilderment in a changing world; a feeling of distress in increasing alienating urban centers; economic hardships; the annoyance of the luxurious life of the elites; the wide spread phenomenon of corruption; the intensification of inter-ethnic and inter-sectarian tension and conflicts; political

ambiguity following the current transitional period of building a new democratic polity out of an authoritarian one.

Nevertheless, radical Islam has failed to capture the imagination of the majority of Indonesian Muslims. It is the moderate and tolerant type of religious belief that largely dominates the Muslim mainstream in Indonesia; has played a significant role in building a civil society and democratic polity in Indonesia; and in raising its voice against radical fundamentalism with a clarity and volume quite unlike any parallel in the Arab world. Historically, Muslim intellectuals from other parts of the Islamic world have preceded Indonesian intellectuals in formulation of liberal Islamic themes and perceptions. But whereas in other Muslim communities in the world liberal Islamic thinking has been primarily the occupation of a small number of intellectuals, in Indonesia the voice of liberal Islam has proved itself to be influential and has inspired the entire Islamic discourse in Indonesia. A point in case is the rise of the Islamic party – the PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, The Prosperous Justice Party). In a bid to appeal to the urban upper and middle class, the PKS campaigned strongly in the parliamentary elections of 2004 on universal themes like moral reform, anti-corruption, clean politics, and socio-economic equality, leaving its Islamic agenda in the background. As noted above, the infiltration of radical fundamentalist ideas into Indonesia can be largely explained by the transmission of such ideas from the “center” of the Islamic World, the Arab world in particular, to Indonesia through cross-regional and global networks, as well as, by their diffusion through the archipelago due to varied local conduits and networks of dissemination.

The singularity of the Indonesian case warrants an attempt to uncover its origins. Some of these seem to be:

1. **Indonesian society** with its varied religions, cultures, and ethnics served as a “cordon sanitaire” against religious extremism and intolerance. The Muslim mainstream in Indonesia seems to be strongly loyal to ideals of plurality and tolerance. Certainly, millions of *abangan*, the “syncretists”, still constituting the majority (about two thirds) of Indonesia’s Muslims, cannot accept by definition Islamic radical ideas. They are known in Indonesia also as Nominal Muslims, or Statistical Muslims (*Islam Statistik*) in the sense of being Muslims for state statistics only, but through “pure” radical Islamic eyes they are likely to be viewed as Muslims in name alone.
2. A pre-independence **tradition of intellectual and organizational pluralism** in which neither the courts nor the *‘ulama* exercised a monopoly of power over the moral and intellectual life of the Muslim community.
3. **The ideology of the Pancasila**, based on the idea that Islam does neither require a mixture of divine values with secular state matters, nor to regulate every aspect of life. Rather, Islam should provide moral values that serve as the basic and general guidelines for human life. The *Pancasila*, it was argued, ought to be regarded as similar to the al-Madina Charter, the contract that was signed by the Prophet Muhammad, the Jews, and the polytheists, granting Muslims the right to rule Medina, but enfranchising all the inhabitants of the city as members of a single *Umma* (in a sense of political community), and thus guaranteeing their rights. This model is still perceived among adherents of liberal Islam as the correct model for integration of Islam into the state.
4. The theological **concept of ijtihad**, the independent theological reasoning, seen as an imperative theological approach for contextualization of the religious text into contemporary circumstances.

5. **Sufi influence** on Islam in the Indonesian archipelago, which has contributed to the shaping of pluralistic tradition.
6. **Liberal Islamic education**, particularly through the role played by the highly prestigious Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN, “State Institutes of Islamic Religion”). This Islamic institute for higher education was considerably expanded in the Suharto era. Over the years many thousands of students have been taught at the IAIN of the ideals of the state, including pluralism and religious tolerance. The curriculum has exposed them to various Islamic schools of law and theology, to other religions, and to modern sciences. To this we should add that the wide educational infrastructure of both Muhammadiyah and the NU (Nahdatul Ulama), as well as the welfare components they possess, enabled them to promote their concept of pluralistic and tolerant Islam. This ironically is the same way that the radical movements in other parts of the Muslim world have succeeded in taking control over segments of society.

India’s Muslims – Realpolitik of a Minority

Another example of localized Islamic doctrines for co-existence with non-Muslims can be found in India. This case is of particular interest in light of the fact that Hindus are – by any Islamic criterion – “polytheists,” and therefore according to purist attitudes a totally unacceptable category of “infidels,” and India has been engaged in hostilities with neighboring Muslim Pakistan and fighting an Islamic oriented uprising in Kashmir for decades. It is therefore interesting that as far back as the founding of India and Pakistan, the main organization of the Indian ‘*ulama* – Jam’iyyat-i ‘Ulama-i Hind – supported the Indian National Congress, and opposed the Muslim League’s call for Muslim separatism. The concept that was coined at the time – “united nationality” (*muttahida qawmiyyat*) clearly distinguished between the “spiritual *Umma*” of Islam, to which all Muslims belong, and the racial or territorial Nation in which the Muslims of India are partners with the Hindus. The Islamic justification for this concept was based on the Prophet’s early experience in al-Madina when the “Covenant of al-Madina” (*Ahd al-Umma*) established that all parties to the Covenant are “one nation”. After partition, this ideology was developed to justify opposition to migration to Pakistan. On the basis of the Prophet’s life in Mecca before the *hijra*, when faced by the sight of pagan idols, he declared “To you your religion and to me mine (Qur’an 109:6). The conflict between India and Pakistan after partition also forced the leaders of India’s Muslims to clarify their view of Pakistan as a foreign country, and to re-write the story of Muslim history in India in a manner which emphasizes the national identity of the Muslims.

Observers of Indian Islam have pointed at various origins for the relative moderation of this large Muslim community. These explanations elucidate on the co-existence between Hinduism and Islam from the early days of Islamic presence in India; the moderate Shafi’i school dominant in India; the intellectual independence of the Indian Muslims, which made them less dependent on religious and intellectual imports from the Arab world; and the ratio between the Muslim and Hindi populations, which deters the Muslims from an antagonistic attitude.

Though Indian and Pakistani Muslims share a common intellectual, ethnic and religious heritage, the above picture of Indian Muslims, contrasts sharply with the high level of radicalism and anti-Westernism among Pakistani Muslims.

Turkey – Secularized Islamism

The accession to power of an Islamic party in Turkey has been interpreted both as a model of benign Islamism which can accommodate Western liberal mores and democratic practices, and as an example of an Islamist party coming to power by democratic means in order, ultimately, to subvert liberal society, Islamize it, and eventually to abrogate democracy in its Western sense.

While it seems that only history will decide the above controversy, it is clear that Turkey's secularism – imposed from above as it may have been – has been resilient enough to preclude forced Islamization, even with an Islamic party in power. The very act of separation of religion and politics, which had been imposed on Turkey upon the founding of the modern Turkish state has created “rules of the game” that do not exist in any Arab Muslim country. Other facets of Turkish Islam, which reduce the potential for radicalization of Turkish Islam, are the strength of Turkish nationalism, a sense of superiority vis-à-vis the Arabs (former vassals of the Ottoman Turks) which weakens the influence of Arab Islam and Wahhabism in Turkey, and the prevalence of Sufi practices in Turkish Islam. In addition, the fact that Turkey is already recognized as a member of the Western community by virtue of its membership in NATO and its candidacy to join the European Union seems to serve as a bulwark against the more strident and populist forms of anti-Westernism.

At the same time, it is clear that the Turkish paradigm is *sui generis* in the Middle East; it cannot be applied to weaken radical Islam or anti-Westernism in Arab countries in the region.

Iran – Between the Islamic and Aryan Identity

While Iranian animosity towards the West is colored in highly religious terms, it is no less nationalistic. Iranian attitudes towards the West are influenced by a constant tension between Persian and Islamic identities, and between conflicting self-images of national superiority and subjugation. Iranian national identity projects a sense of superiority towards its Arab neighbors and pride of its pre-Islamic imperial past; it links Iran to a primordial “Aryan” world of settled civilization, far superior to the “primitive” nomadic Arabian culture, but at the same time, one that has been conquered, and humiliated by outside forces. This identity is the source of ambivalence towards Western culture – a culture which, on one hand, springs from common sources of the indigenous Iranian civilization and is worthy of admiration for its achievements in the very areas which Iranian culture prides itself (science and arts), and on the other hand, has dominated Iran and humiliated it. This ambivalence has evoked the simile of Iranian civilization to a body that is affected by a poison or virus of the West (*gharb-zadeggi* or “Westoxicated”).

The United States epitomizes the most dangerous aspects of the Western Civilization – both corrupt and attractive. It is at once the object of both popular admiration and ideological animosity. On one hand, the Iranian national ethos admires material – and notably commercial – success, and the U.S. is the epitome of such success in the modern world. On the other hand, American civilization is viewed as the external evil force that aspires to corrupt the culture of Iran through its materialistic culture and its popularity among Iranian youth.

The Iranian regime is a major supporter of radical Islamic organizations – both Shiite and Sunni. Here too lies a contradiction between the policy of the regime and popular perceptions; the percentage of Iranians who totally rejected the moral or Islamic

justification of the 9/11 attacks was higher than in any other Muslim country where such polls were taken (except for Turkey).³

³ Gallup Poll, July 30, 2002: Iranian Reactions to September 11.

Socio-economic Factors

A major social factor in the spread of Islamic radicalism is the **breakdown of traditional sources of social authority** in societies with relatively young populations. This is a source of both the power of attraction of radical ideologies for youth, and the reaction of the Islamic establishment and conservative elements to what is perceived as the “Westernization” of the youth. The conflict between Islam and the West is often described as a clash of values. The “Clash of Civilizations” is too, in essence, a clash of values, insofar as a major portion of the attributes of a civilization is composed of its social values. In public opinion polls in Muslim countries Western influences are popularly identified with vulgarity, immorality, blatant sexuality and indifference to religion.⁴ The main attribute of Western culture that is popularly appreciated is its technology.⁵ It is to this that the Egyptian Islamist thinker, Sayyid Qutb referred to as “intellectual and spiritual colonialism”, warning the Believers that the enemies of Islam may attempt to disguise the conflict as an economic, political or racial struggle.⁶

A pivotal concept behind the social etiology of the radical Islamic grievance against the West is “shame” in its diverse connotations (humiliation, embarrassment, impairment of honor). The leitmotif of the West as threatening the “honor” of the Muslims is central in Islamic discourse. Behind this stands a set of concepts of honor which include family honor, collective dignity, national pride, and a desire to achieve a legitimate sense of cultural superiority in a situation which belies that sense.

The clash of cultures between the West and Islamic fundamentalism did not erupt in September 2001, nor was it discovered by Samuel Huntington in 1993. It started much earlier, when Western ideas began to infiltrate into the Islamic space, and it became highly threatening when mass media, and especially satellite TV channels, started bringing the Western style of life into almost every Islamic home, tent, living room, or rather, bedroom. The clash of values is taking place inside Islamic societies, inside the Islamic family, and inside the Islamic soul. The internal clash between traditions and modernism has caused a large number of negative phenomena, such as tension between generations, especially between fathers and their daughters who strive to adopt Western patterns of behavior, between husbands and wives, and between any person and what he or she might perceive as an older set of values, according to which he or she was brought up. The relevance of Islamic teachings, values, traditions and habits to the modern Muslim life is challenged in many Islamic societies, especially in the cities of homeland Arab states and in Muslim immigrant populations living in the West. Hence, Western imperialism, as Islamic fundamentalists see it, is not merely territorial occupation or economic hegemony, but rather cultural dictatorship, since current Western values are fundamentally opposed to all that is sacred in the eyes of every Muslim committed to his tradition. Therefore – according to some radical Muslims – Islam has no other choice but to wage a *jihad* against those who threaten the values of personal modesty and family stability, basic values in Islamic tradition.

For decades, the West had penetrated Muslim politics but the household had remained “immune” to this penetration. The relationships within the household remained in line with the traditional paradigm, despite the changes outside. The infiltration of the West into the

⁴ Gallup Poll, March 12, 2002: Poll of the Islamic World: Perceptions of Western Culture.

⁵ Gallup Poll, March 28, 2002: What do Islamic World Residents Like about the West.

⁶ Reuven Paz, Islamists and Anti-Americanism, MERIA, vol. 7, no. 4 (December 2003).

inner sanctuary of the household escalated over the last decades to the level of a threat of foreign penetration, which changes a community's norms, upsetting the basic assumptions of social hierarchy and behavior. Messages contradictory to the traditional Islamic worldview are carried into the family through mass media, and the household has no firewalls to protect itself. One of the main agents of these messages is satellite TV. The combination of accessibility of the messages, and their acceptance by the youth and the women poses a threat to a highly defined system of norms and to the predominance of the traditionally dominant members of the family unit. This threat triggered a natural defense mechanism and a desire to reject the "corrupting" Western values. The West therefore, may be likened to the Sirens of the Odyssey – a dangerous "magnet", which once succumbed to, will jeopardize core values of Islamic society – foremost among them, **family values, the status of women and the authority of the elders.**

The potential for change in the **social status of women** is both a major grievance leading to radicalism and anti-Westernism, and a catalyst for change. It is difficult to distinguish between attitudes towards gender issues, which derive from Islamic law, and those which result from local or tribal traditions (*'urf*; *'adat wa-taqalid*) which have no connection to Islam. Therefore, violations of the latter are commonly interpreted as breaches of the former. The proliferation of women's organizations in the Muslim world in the last decades, prominence of female movie stars in the Arab cinema industry and female public literary and political figures, laws banning polygamy and forced child marriages, Western values of sexual equality portrayed on satellite TV and of course, the access to the internet are all seen as attempts to incite Muslim women to abandon traditional Islamic mores. Islamic spokesmen lash out at the connections between local women's organizations and foreign organizations as "cultural imperialism" and as a Western attempt to woo Muslim women away from Islam and attack plans, in coordination with international agencies, for family planning.

Poverty and lack of economic horizons are frequently cited as major social sources of Islamic radicalism. These are, no doubt, causes of the attraction of Muslim youth to radical Islamic ideology. Where rational modes of coping with the situation offer no balm, the religious *deus ex machina* becomes more popular. This is a solution in which the believer needs only to "take arms against a sea of troubles", without necessarily having a rational strategy for victory, and then God will provide victory in return for the devotion of his believers. However, the spiritual, ideological, political and even military leaders of the radical Islamic movements tend to belong to the economic and social elites. Isn't the definition of the leaders as "elite" exaggerated a bit? Most of them belong to the middle class and the lower-middle class in most Arab and Muslim nation-states. Nevertheless, they derive popular support from the "masses". This suggests that while **economic transformation** may be a necessary condition for the fight against Islamic radicalism, it is not a sufficient condition to uproot it.

Yet one more societal characteristic of many Muslim societies which contributes to the rise of radical movements is the near absence of an effective secular and liberal "**civil society**" as a "middle echelon" between the citizen and the State, a provider of services and identification. In Muslim countries, that very role is played by the Islamic forces. Non-Arab Turkey, Iran, and Indonesia witnessed the emergence of a secular and liberal civil society which withstood the vicissitudes of military dictatorships, whereas in the Arab world the development of the civil society was disrupted by the military regimes which took power since independence.

Education at the early formative years is a key tool for the radical movements. The indoctrination at an early age of the radical narrative – or of a “mainstream” narrative which can be exploited later on to convince the potential recruit of the validity of the radical position – is performed through school networks, role models of youth who performed acts of “martyrdom”, children’s books, and other forms of socialization of an early age. At the same time, there is a great dearth of secular child-oriented literature in Arabic which is not directed towards religious socialization. The argument that Western children’s literature would not attract Muslim Arabic speaking children contradicts the well known attraction of Western TV programs – ostensibly no less “foreign” to the minds of the Muslim youth who watch them avidly (albeit to the chagrin of their elders who view them as a corrupting factor).

The weakness of **national identity** as a personal and communal focus also plays a central role in encouraging Islamic identity and radicalism. In parts (particularly the Arab portions) of the Muslim world, the State has failed in providing a sense of identity and affinity. The Palestinian case is *sui generis* and in any case it is not the “nation-state” which generates Palestinian national identity, but the national struggle and even there, a supra-national Islamic ideology of the struggle is popular. At the same time, Pan-Arabism (in the Arab world) and Communism have lost their appeal.

Failure of Muslims in the “Diaspora” to **integrate/assimilate/develop a local identification** with their new homes also has a radicalizing effect. The Muslim immigrant sector in the West, but particularly in Europe is one of the primary hothouses of radicalism and animosity towards the West. Many of the second generation Muslims no longer accept, as their fathers did, a status of a tolerated minority, and are searching for a new identity. This identity-deficiency leaves the field open for the identification with an amorphous trans-national “virtual *Umma*” in lieu of the lost national identity of the countries of origin, on one hand, and that of the not-yet-accepted countries of residence on the other hand. Connectivity to the countries of origin through internet and particularly satellite TV strengthens the bond of the immigrant to his mother country and weakens the development of a bond with particular local interests.

Two main models of relations between Western majority cultures and Muslim immigrants can be described: (a) the British form of declared pluralism and the Dutch concept of “integration” while maintaining ethnic differences and; (b) the paradigm (epitomized in France) of forced integration through uniformity of appearances (the *hijab* controversy) and de-communalization of religion. Neither have established a balance between civil and ethnic identity or succeeded in mitigating the attraction of second generation Muslims in Europe to radical Islam. It may be argued that globalization and modern media *has put paid to* attempts to maintain a balance between local identification and extra-national identity. The second-generation immigrant who lives in an immigrant community in Europe speaks the language of his former homeland and is exposed to broadcasts, preaching and literature, which bind him intimately to his home country, is more prone to develop a sense of alienation to his adopted country.

Paradoxically, **globalization of ideas** in the Muslim world has not mitigated radicalism and may even have contributed to its rise. It affects the intensity and spread of radicalism among Muslims in three conceivable ways:

1. As a **grievance** that triggers a radical response to what is perceived as Western “neo-colonialism” (“The Lexus and the Olive Tree”). Wide sectors of society within the Muslim world live without hope of betterment, and put the blame for their malaise on the West. It may be argued that the bitterness towards the West has grown during a

period in which the West has tried to make amends for earlier intervals of colonialism and exploitation. Is the exacerbation of the grievance just the result of more exposure to the West?

2. As a **vehicle for transfer of information**, news, ideas and ideologies across countries and cultures and thus enabling a “cause célèbre” in one area to radicalize Muslims in remote parts of the world. It is noteworthy that in this case, globalization of ideas and empowerment of the individual has become an anti-democratic tool. Exposure of the Muslim masses to the pictures of Western affluence, in contrast to their own plight only adds to this response.
3. As a **generator of a trans-national identity** – a sort of “virtual *Umma*” – in lieu of the lost national identity of the countries of origin, on one hand, and that of the not-yet-accepted countries of residence on the other hand.

Social support for *jihad* is a major factor. If acts of terrorism do not meet with support within a society, the terrorists are marginalized, and find recruitment and clandestine activity more difficult. As the acts meet with higher levels of support the terrorists are encouraged and allow themselves to radicalize both their ideological platform and their acts. Unlike the small maverick terrorist organizations of the 1970's and 1980's, which acted outside society, and did not expect society to understand their avant-garde mission (Brigatti Rossi, Weathermen, Bader Meinhoff, Japanese Red Army, Aum Shinrikyo, etc.), most of the *jihad* movements (with the exception of some *takfiri* movements) act within the fold of Muslim society. The dividing line between terrorism of such small organizations and a widespread and deeply rooted terrorism (or a pro-terrorist society) is to be found in social and religious legitimization and “political correctness” for support of terrorism. This is manifested in the many cases of mothers who feel the need to declare pride in their children who blew themselves up, while one may assume that their real feelings are quite different. This may be compared (with all due reservations) to the pressure on the individual in a democratic country to express support for his country's soldiers in time of war. Public opinion polls indicate that the events of September 11 and their aftermath have not brought about a de-legitimization of terrorism. There is a wide consensus in the Muslim world in favor of terrorist attacks against Israel and a general approbation – or at least non-condemnation – of suicide attacks.

Terrorist attacks may have a contradictory effect on the popularity of the radical cause. On one hand, Osama Bin Laden became a folk hero after having given the U.S. a “bloody nose” in a series of terrorist attacks culminating in the 9/11 attacks. The fact that he has not yet been killed or apprehended despite all the American efforts only enhances his status. On the other hand, there have been a number of cases in which terrorist attacks in Muslim countries have proven counter-productive to the popularity of those organizations. In Egypt, when the public felt that attacks against tourists were compromising an age old tradition of protection of visitors (not to mention the tourist industry), this helped put pressure on *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya* to declare a cessation of violence. More recently one could cite the wide protests in Morocco in the wake of the terrorist attacks there, which helped the King implement reforms.

Social legitimacy of terrorism gives rise to the legitimization of criminal elements in society. *Jihad* is a “criminality laundry”: it allows people who are anti-social and violent to give vent to these tendencies with impunity and under the “cover” of a legitimate (*jihad*) cause. The chaos, which *jihad* generates becomes in itself fertile ground for recruitment of new *mujahidun*. This is apparent in the West Bank and Gaza, and has been abundantly proven in the method of the *jihad* movement in Iraq for recruiting terrorists.

An aspect, which is closely related to social approbation of terrorism, is the **economic support** provided by the middle and upper class of Muslim society to jihadist organizations. This support is linked to both social and religious benefits that the contributor to *jihad* accrues: on the social level, a businessman who is known as supporting *jihad* enhances his status in the wider circles that support *jihad*; on the religious level, “*jihad* by money” is an established form of *jihad* which can, under certain circumstances, come in lieu of “*jihad* with one’s soul” or “*jihad* by sword”. If, as the radicals claim, *jihad* is an individual obligation in the present circumstances of the Muslim world, the contributor of money to *jihad* has executed his duty.

The Political Dimension

The close affinity between the religious and political in Islam makes an attempt to isolate political causes of Islamic radicalism difficult. However, it is possible to characterize the political strategy of the radical groups. Eschatological tendencies notwithstanding, the “mainstream” of radical Islam, as embodied in al-Qa’ida and its affiliates, believes that it has a practical agenda which will achieve its political aims. The political analyses of *jihad* movements prove that within the general religious and eschatological framework, the *jihad* movements manifest a high level of strategic practicality.

The Islamist political grievance towards the West is both a **historic** and current complaint; the West is taken to task, for what it **did** in the past, for what it **is doing**, and for what it **is**:

1. The **historic grievance** relates to the history of the political relations between the two civilizations, beginning with the Muslim victory over Byzantium, followed by the Crusades, and culminating with colonialism, patronizing mandates, economic exploitation, and Western support of Israel. It is claimed that a major source of the animosity is the perception of Muslims that an erstwhile “primitive” Christendom has usurped their “birthright” of cultural and technological predominance, and this is only compounded by their current frustration over their present economic and technological backwardness. If this is true, though, why did this perception become so strong in the last decades, though the balance of power has been in favor of the West for centuries?
2. This sense of historic grievance is compounded magnified by **contemporary events**: Nevertheless, the main political factors relevant to the spread of Islamic radicalism include: historic grievances and images, current events such as Afghanistan, Iraq, the war on terror, the campaign to prevent non-Western (i.e. Muslim) countries from achieving military nuclear capabilities, The Broader Middle East Initiative, Western support for Israel, and the identification of the West with oppressive Muslim regimes. All of these are viewed as initiated by the West with the aim of subjugating the Muslims. These inevitable perceptions notwithstanding, many ploys used by radicals to add fuel to the fire are based on statements and actions by Western countries which are interpreted as deliberate affronts to Islam (the use of the word “crusade” or condescending utterances). In this context, statements by Western leaders “explaining” to Muslims what Islam really is or calling for reform are frequently counter-productive.

In general, the political causes are complementary to the social, religious and ethnic-nationalist causes. Neither the historic nor the current grievances are unique to the Muslim world; Asian civilizations (Hindu, Japanese and Chinese) have histories of local supremacy no less than Islam and have been culturally “colonized” by the West. Furthermore, in many regions, the prime political factor that gives rise to radical Islamic movements is ethnic and nationalist, as described above, and the “general” causes play a marginal role.

Despite the marginal role of politics in the etiology of radical Islam it plays a central role in the strategies of radical organizations. On one hand, on the ideological level, it is difficult to prioritize *jihad* or to value one theatre of *jihad* or the struggle against a specific enemy higher than another. In their videotaped statements, Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zuwahiri lash out equally at all: Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, the Egyptian and Pakistani regimes, the Palestinian Authority, etc. Ideologically, there seems to be no territorial epicenter for their worldview (such as Iraq or Palestine). All are equal “symptoms” of a larger syndrome which is the “crusader” attack on *Dar al-Islam* and the collaboration of Muslim leaders with the Crusaders.

On the other hand, the goals of the jihadist organizations seem to evolve with political circumstances. Although he was of Palestinian-Jordanian origin, 'Abdallah 'Azzam ruled that the *jihad* in Afghanistan takes precedence even over the *jihad* in Palestine. The arena for the performance of the duty of *jihad*, in his eyes, was not to be chosen on the basis of emotion, but according to a political-military calculus, "It is our opinion that we should begin with Afghanistan before Palestine, not because Afghanistan is more important than Palestine ... but there are some pressing reasons that make Afghanistan the [preferable] starting point. (1) The battles in Afghanistan are still raging and have reached a level of intensity, the likes of which have not been witnessed ... (2) The raising of the Islamic flag in Afghanistan is clear, and the aim is clear: 'To make Allah's words uppermost.'"⁷ Bin Laden's videos and speeches from the mid 1980's on seem to indicate that his original motivation was to rid the Arabian Peninsula of the corrupting American influence. He explained this focus (as opposed to concentrating on liberating Palestine) on the basis that, "the occupation of the two holy places is nearer than the occupation of the Aqsa Mosque, and this made it more important, given its role as the direction of prayer of all Muslims."⁸ Later on, he gradually adopted a stance of existential conflict with the West in a dichotomist world and a desire to re-enact the conflict between early Islam and Byzantium – a conflict which ended in the subjugation of Byzantium. It is not abnormal that a leader who achieves success – perhaps beyond his imagination – turning into the catalyst for a complete change in the world order, may evolve his goals to suit his new status.

This strategic methodology of al-Qa'ida is elaborated on in an exceptional document published by the "Media Committee for the Victory of the Iraqi People (Mujahidin Services Centre)," – "The *Jihad* of Iraq – Hopes and Dangers". The document determines that military force alone will not chase the US out of Iraq, and economic and political pressure is necessary. Political pressure can be brought to bear through reducing the number of allies of the U.S. in Iraq. The document analyzes the domestic situation in three countries, which have forces in Iraq – the UK, Spain and Poland – and proposes to focus on pressure on the first two through attacks in their own territory.⁹ Some radical Islamic leaders around Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi have even outlined a more strategic game plan based on seven stages to be implemented until the final victory of Islam over the West in 2020: the first phase ("Awakening") was epitomized by the attacks of 9/11 and made the Islamic movement a central player on the global scene; the goal of the current second phase ("Opening the Eyes") from 2003 until 2006, is to make al-Qa'ida a "mass movement"; the third phase ("Arising and Standing up") will take place between 2007–2010, and will focus on terrorist destabilization of the existing Muslim regimes; in the fourth phase from 2010–2013 the moderate regimes of Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and others will be toppled; in the fifth phase (2013–2016) a new world order based on an Islamic Caliphate as a world power and the weakening of the United States and Israel will take form; in the sixth phase – until 2020 – total confrontation will take place; and in the seventh phase ("Decisive Victory") Islam will prevail.¹⁰

Current political events are widely interpreted in the Muslim world in terms of complex **conspiracies** which draw their inspiration from two centuries of Western Machiavellian

⁷ Ibid. p. 31. Does this footnote refer to Reuven Paz's article?

⁸ Henry Munson, "Islam, Nationalism and Resentment of Foreign Domination," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. X, No. 2, (Summer 2003), pp. 40–53.

⁹ *Iraq al-Jihad – Amal wa-Akhtar*. pp. 25–33. The document was published before the attacks in Madrid and London.

¹⁰ Fouad Hussein, *Al-Zarqawi – al-Jil al-Jadid lil-Qa'ida*, Jordan, 2005. The book is based on interviews with Islamist prisoners associated with al-Zarqawi.

meddling in the Middle East. This interpretation is amplified by radical forces. The receptivity of Muslims to conspiracy interpretations of events may be attributed to a combination of cultural, religious, social and psychological elements. On the cultural level, it may be linked to the belief, evident mainly among Shiites but existing in Sunni doctrines as well, in the struggle between good and evil (Satanic) forces in the world and an assumption that appearances of whoever is perceived as the enemy, hide ulterior and dark motives. Conspiracy theories also provide ready explanations for a reality that is perceived as unjust, a collective defense mechanism in times of national weakness and humiliation and an effective means to preclude collective soul-searching. Probably one of the most revealing of these theories is that which refuses to recognize al-Qa'ida's responsibility for the 9/11 attacks on the basis of a "qui bono" analysis; since Israel and the U.S. "benefited" from the fallout of the attacks, they must be the work of the secret services of those countries.

At the same time, the conspiratorial worldview engenders a **deep suspicion towards any gesture**, and an unwillingness to believe in simplicity of motives and statements. Therefore, **aid by Western countries to Muslim countries** has not succeeded in mitigating their negative image. It is frequently presented as latter-day colonialism with the aim of imposing Western culture on the Muslims and eradicating their own culture. Even the Western support of Muslim Bosnia, and aid to Muslim Tsunami stricken South-East Asia is given a conspiratorial interpretation.

While the Israeli-Arab conflict is a popular battle cry for galvanizing radical Islamic groups, it seems that this issue was a marginal cause in the emergence of Islamic movements, and was treated by them as just another symptom of Western domination. One pivotal question is the role of the Arab-Israeli or Israeli-Palestinian conflict in shaping Muslim opinion on the Western world. It seems that this issue was marginal in the local Islamic movements, and was treated as just another symptom of Western domination. In Muslim public opinion, the West is accused of support of Israel against the Palestinians to the same extent that it is accused of "unfairness" towards the Muslims in general.¹¹ In other words, the Palestinian issue is seen as a symptom of the Western conspiracy against the Muslims, and not as a leading cause. This is expressed in the tactics of radical organizations. As noted above, 'Abdallah 'Azzam issued a *fatwa* in which he ruled that it is preferable to go to a *jihād* in Afghanistan than in Palestine. Sa'id Hawa saw Israel as an example of a "religious State". It was also rather marginal in the propaganda of al-Qa'ida until September 11, though it became more prevalent after September 11. For modern radical movements Israel is alternatively seen as both the tool of the United States for launching aggression on the Muslims, and the force behind American policy. The identification of **present-day oppressive regimes in the Muslim world** with Western political culture or Western support also contributes to the growth of radicalism and fuels the antagonism towards the West. In fact, all the present political regimes in the Muslim world, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, are based on elements of Western political structures, but fail to provide their citizens with the *raison d'être* of those structures – human rights and civil liberties.

¹¹ Gallup Poll April 2, 2002, Islamic Views of the US: The Palestine Factor.

State Players

While radical Islam is a quintessential anti-establishment movement, it has been exploited over the last decades by a number of Muslim states to bolster their own flagging legitimacy, and to further their external political goals. Towards these ends, a number of Muslim states have cultivated and exported various brands of Islamic radicalism. State support of Islamic radicalism takes diverse forms. These include:

1. Direct involvement of the state in promulgating a state ideology through the organs of the state. This is the case in Saudi Arabia (export of Wahhabism), Iran (export of the revolution), Sudan (under Turabi), Pakistan (under a number of regimes), and Afghanistan (under the Taliban).
2. Laissez-faire (laissez is much more commonly used than laisser) policies towards radical movements and the religious establishments in support of radical ideologies. This is the case of Egypt, where al-Azhar plays a significant role in fanning anti-Westernism; and in Pakistan, which allows its Islamic establishment to recruit support for *jihad* in Kashmir, Afghanistan and elsewhere.
3. Overt support of foreign radical movements, along with brutal suppression of domestic radicals. This is the case in countries such as Syria and Libya. In Libya – and more recently in Syria – the regimes have realized the dangers of such a marriage of convenience and have begun to crack down on some radical elements.

The involvement of state players in spreading radical Islam raises two important questions:

1. What role does the promulgation of radicalism play in those states?
2. To what extent is this state support critical for the continued spread of radical Islam?

For the Saudi and Iranian regimes, promulgation of radical Islam is an inherent part of state ideology and of the internal mechanism of the regimes. Both regimes base their claims for legitimacy on their Islamic policies, and their status as a model of Islam – a status that obliges them to spread their message to the rest of the Muslim world. Many of the official organs of both states are also geared for the mission of spreading each model of Islam. These include educational systems, government sponsored “NGO’s”, military and security apparatuses, the Foreign Service, etc. The deep involvement of all these organs in promoting radical Islam makes any shift in these countries’ positions difficult, if not politically impossible.

Summary

Causes of Islamic Radicalism

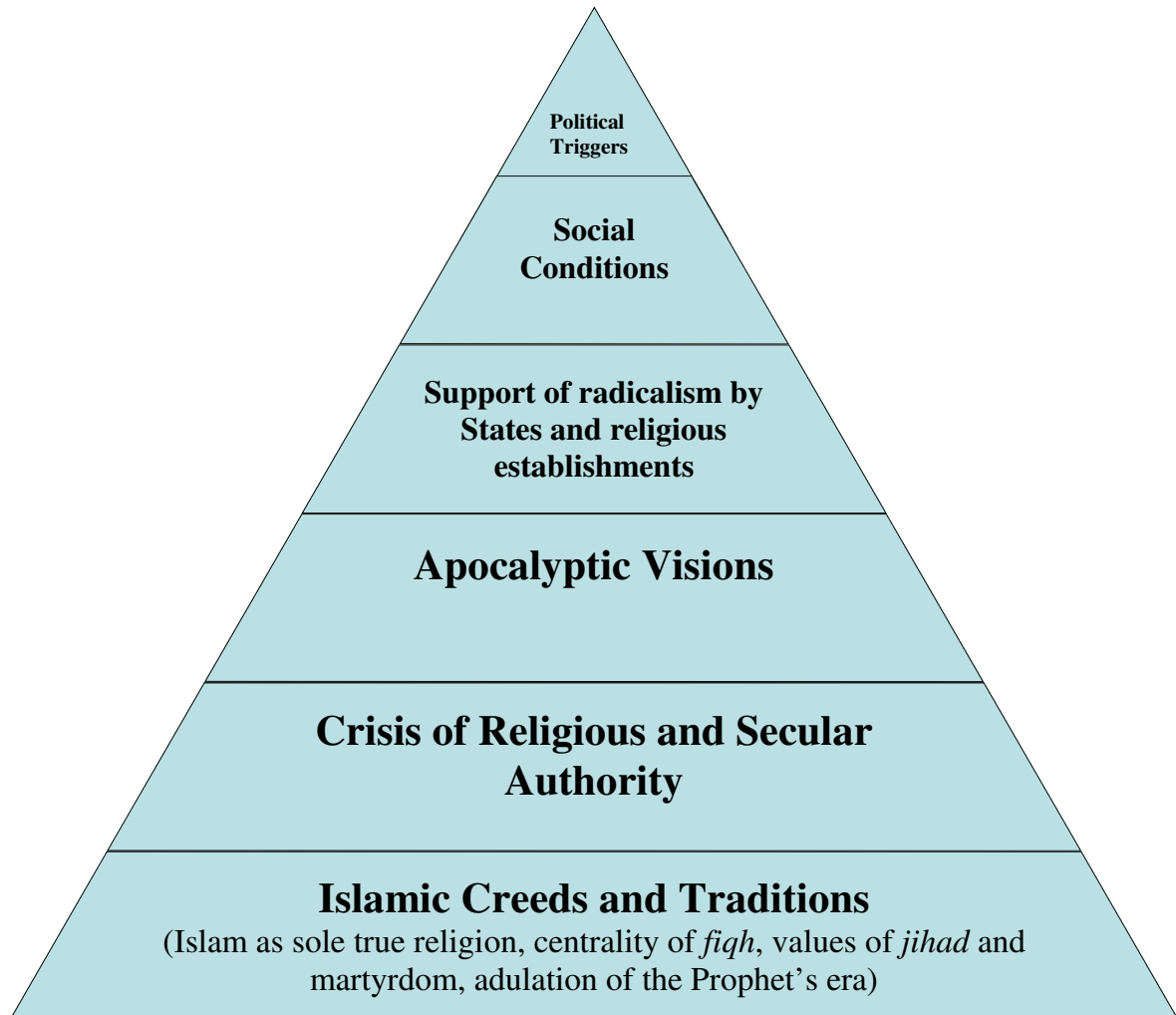
The hostility of radical Islam towards the West cannot be explained by social, political or economic circumstances alone. It is instructive to look at the various “causes” which are cited for the phenomenon in relation to non-Muslim societies in which some of these causes also exist – occasionally in even greater intensity than in Muslim societies. All of these factors together have not created similar movements of such intensity or global objectives. The social, economic, and political causes exist in various societies which, while some of them have bred terrorism, it has not spilled over into global terrorism. Examples are in abundance: Irish, Basque and Kurdish nationalist terror may certainly accuse the U.S. and other Western countries of support of the UK, Spain or Turkey, but none have developed a policy of terror outside of their immediate targets. Tibet has been arguably occupied, colonized, and oppressed more than any Middle Eastern Muslim society, but has not generated a terrorist movement at all; combinations of poverty, political suppression and even genocide exist in abundance in all of Africa much more than anywhere in the Arab world, but no trans-national terrorist movement has emerged out of Africa.

An etiology of the radical Islamic phenomenon therefore must be based on a concatenation of a number of underlying culture-dependent factors: the infrastructure of traditional Islamic doctrines, which do not exist in other cultures; the special role of the Arabs in Islam and in promoting radical Islam throughout the Muslim world; the crisis of religious and temporal authority which Islam suffers from since the beginning of the 20th century; and the exacerbation of the friction with the West as a result of the large increase in Muslim immigrants in the West. It is a natural conclusion of the axioms of modern fundamentalist Islam – Wahhabi, Muslim Brotherhood or Salafi.

The motivation, objectives, strategy and tactics of the jihadist movement are quintessentially religious; this does not imply that practical political considerations do not play a role. The jihadist doctrine is replete with sophisticated analysis of political and military situations including proposals for action. Action however is subordinated to religious justification.

The wide appeal of the radical Islamic narrative and its call for struggle against the West feeds off a supportive religious narrative which is constructed and disseminated by the representatives of the mainstream and official religious establishments, as well as authorities both within the Muslim world and in the West. This narrative accepts the basic premises of the radicals regarding the inherent supremacy of Islam, the corrupted and corrupting nature of the “infidel” civilization, and the legitimacy of the principle of *jihad*. The radical leader builds on these premises and takes them one step further to justification of action.

The *Jihad* Phenomenon: Root Causes and Exacerbating Factors



Triggers of radicalism in a society which integrates all the above factors may be political events. However, it appears that even far-reaching political events cannot generate the phenomenon in the absence of charismatic leadership. The appeal of such leaders, who dare to propose unambiguous and absolutist answers to the problems of their constituency is enhanced by the crisis of authority, which plagues the Muslim world and the instability of the existing regimes. Paradoxically, the call for democratization exacerbates the sense of fragility of those regimes, and the appeal of the Islamists as the likely alternative.

The argument that **democracy** is a barrier to radicalization must be examined. The Broader Middle East Initiative is based on the belief that the absence of democracy in Arab and Muslim countries is a major factor in the success of radicalism in those countries. There is ample evidence that links oppression and lack of civil and human rights to the spread of radicalism, the examples of Syria, Chechnya, Uzbekistan and China's policy in Xingjian show how suppression of all opposition and dissent has left the field wide open to radical Islam. However, democracy alone has not shown that it can reverse the trend. Autocratic regimes tend to leave scorched earth in the realm of liberal civil society, leaving the Islamic

movements, basing themselves on the mosques and the Islamic infrastructure, as the sole real contender in any future electoral contest.

One school of thought views “moderate Islamist” movements as authentic representatives of democratic tendencies in their countries and proposes to allow them – or even to aid them – to gain power and to accept that an Islamic paradigm of government with certain facets of democracy could be the alternative to the existing regimes. In the West, democracy and liberalism flourished only after politics was liberated from religion. In the Muslim world, the few countries in which such a separation was implemented (Turkey, Indonesia) have achieved more progress on the road to liberal democracy than others. The fact that the West personifies this political concept seems to make it even more of an anathema to the Islamic establishments, which risk losing their grip over politics. In this context, political interest of the Islamists, the non-Islamic opposition groups (Arab nationalists, socialists, communists), and the regimes themselves make strange bedfellows in rejecting democratization as proposed by the West.

One of the more salient conclusions is the predominance of Arab Islamic radicalism within the general space of Islamic radicalism, and the pivotal role played by the Arab world in encouraging radical Islam in other Muslim theatres. In the Arab world, “Islamism” seems to play a role of a “**surrogate Arab nationalism**” in the wake of the demise of Pan-Arabism. The identification of Islam with the Arabic language and culture strengthens the tendency of Arabs to view Islamic revivalism as the revival of their own collective identity. Westernization of Muslim culture may be perceived by a non-Arab Muslim as transformation of cultural elements, which he received from the Arabs, whereas for the Arab Muslim, it is perceived as an imposition of a foreign culture on his own.

The varying level of susceptibility of non-Arab Muslim societies to the radical narrative may be rooted in a number of the following factors:

1. **Asian “paganism”** may, paradoxically, be a moderating factor. Muslims in Asia have regular social intercourse with Hindus, Buddhists, and followers of Confucius, making a fundamentalist “*Jihad*” ideology impractical. The “impracticality” of “Islamizing” all of the Indians or the Chinese restrained the relations between medieval Islam and those societies, and apparently still does so today.
2. Societies in which there are strong **Sufi traditions** tend to emphasize personalization of Islam and the existing Sufi “civil society”, rejecting imported Salafi and Wahhabi concepts. However, Sufism has a complex relationship with Islamic fundamentalism, being both an ideological basis for some of the early fundamentalists and for the Muslim Brotherhood, and an ideological adversary of the modern fundamentalist and radical movements. Today, Sufi and modernist schools, which limit *jihad* to a spiritual struggle or *da’wa*, remain out of the mainstream of Islamic orthodoxy.
3. Societies such as Indonesia, which have traditions of **intellectual and organizational pluralism**, separation of religion and State (*Pancasila*), and the use of *ijtihad* are less susceptible to the religious logic of the radical narrative.
4. In countries where there are **strong indigenous religious authorities**, radicalism imported from the Arab world has made fewer inroads. Conversely, in societies that have lost their indigenous Islamic traditions, there is more willingness to accept “imported” traditions and authority, and the **special status of the Arabs** and authority

emanating from Arab religious authorities. This weakens the “immune system” of those societies and makes them susceptible to radical “contagion”.

Possible Future Trends

The main drivers of the conflict between radical Islam and the West as described above will not vanish in the near future. Social factors do not change overnight; nor can a breakthrough in economic growth or prosperity in the Arab world be expected. Of the political drivers, it may be assumed that the massive American presence in the Muslim and Arab world (particularly in Iraq and in the Gulf countries) will continue for the near future, and that this presence will persist as serving as a main battle cry of the radicals. There may be progress towards a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but any "progress" – short of total destruction of Israel – will not satisfy the radical elements.

Future trends will involve a number of areas:

1. Issues of religious and political legitimacy and authority in the Muslim world.
2. Potential for a moderate Islamic “backlash” against the radicals.
3. Potential for a radical Islamic takeover of a Muslim country and prospects of a “domino effect”.
4. Issues relating to the war against terror, consequences of disappearance of radical leaders etc.
5. Ramifications of possible conflict resolution or flare-ups (Israel, Iraq).
6. Possible future theatres of *jihad*.

Legitimacy and authority in the Muslim world

The decline of political legitimacy of the veteran Arab regimes – particularly those seen as under pressure of the West for democratization – may be exploited by the radicals to strengthen their own relative weight in society. This will be evident particularly in countries such as Egypt, the Gulf States, Syria, and to a lesser extent – Jordan. Similarly, taking advantage of the weakness of the Palestinian Authority, it may be expected that the Islamic groups will strengthen their hold in the Palestinian society and politics. What about Islamic Hamas's control of the PA?

The search for religious legitimacy will probably intensify the struggle of “one-upmanship” between “street Islam” and the religious establishments. This struggle will continue to be characterized by political pressures upon members of the religious establishments to fall into line with the radical forces. One can expect the continuing weakening of the latter in light of the trend for “popularization” of religious authority. Under such circumstances, it is unlikely that the challenged and enfeebled religious establishments would dare challenge the radicals on the core issues of *jihad* and the attitude towards the West and Israel, and expose themselves to charges of being “agents” of the United States, the West and the Arab regimes.

The most immediate examples of pivotal states in which a legitimacy crisis, that may potentially bring radical Islamic movements to the helm are Syria and Saudi Arabia:

1. In **Syria**, the danger stems from the very nature of the regime as Alawite. The heterodox nature of the Alawite religion has been the Achilles’ heel of the administration. Whereas radical Islamists in other Muslim countries had to prove the individual deviation of their rulers or regimes in order to warrant declaring them as

infidels (and hence, legitimizing rebellion), the viewing of the Alawites as non-Muslims facilitates justification of rebellion. Therefore, from an early stage, the Asad regime set as one of its primary objectives to boost its Islamic credentials and the Islamic legitimacy of the Alawites in general. This has been done in various ways: *fatwas* declaring the Alawites as Shiite Muslims; emphasizing the orthodox Islamic behavior of the President himself; and a process of “Islamization” of the Alawites themselves through building of Sunni style mosques and minimizing any reference to a distinct Alawite religion or Alawite region. Nevertheless, since the death of Hafez al-Asad, and increasingly since the fall of the Iraqi regime, the infiltration of anti-Alawite and anti-Shiite Wahhabi elements into Syria has intensified. These elements find resonance in the north of the country, which was the heart of the Muslim Brotherhood rebellion of the 1980’s. The weakening of the regime will contribute to the ascendancy of these elements. At the same time, the traditional Muslim Brotherhood of Syria remains a potential force, partially as claimants for national leadership – if and when the regime falls – and partially as rivals of the even more radical Wahhabis.

2. In **Saudi Arabia** the challenge to established Islamic authority is even more imminent. The symbiotic relationship between the Islamic establishment and the royal family was based on the acceptance of the King as the “Imam” – the temporal ruler that determines the political interest of the community. This has since changed. Ibn Sa’ud’s successors did not have his charisma or his control over the *‘ulama* and the current Saudi leadership has lost effective control over the rank and file of the established *‘ulama*. At the same time, the establishment of the *‘ulama* themselves have lost much of their authority vis-à-vis lower level *‘ulama* (the “Awakening *‘ulama*”), and the preachers, and local leaders who take advantage of the innate radicalism of the population to strengthen their own local political positions.

Other countries, albeit less centrally located, and therefore with less impact on the rest of the Muslim world, are also in danger. These include Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

In light of the above, one might ask what role – if any – can the Islamic establishments in Muslim countries play in staying the tide of radicalism? One can expect the continuing weakening of religious establishments in Arab and Muslim states in light of the pluralism in the religious authority sphere. Thus, it is unlikely that the religious establishments, which feel inferior to, and threatened by the radicals, would dare challenge these radicals – especially not as messengers of the United States, the West and the Arab regimes that are being accused by the radicals as Western “puppets”. It is the weakening of the religious establishments, combined with a sense of strengthening among the radicals that create political pressures upon members of the religious establishments to fall into line with the radical forces. Their inferior position vis-à-vis the radicals does not allow them to wage an ideological war against them. Nevertheless, radical *‘ulama* have taken positions against even more radicals.

What role would the religious establishments in Muslim countries play were those countries to undergo processes of democratization and the regimes would receive their legitimization from the people? One opinion is that they may integrate into the democratic balance of power (i.e. the Catholic Church in predominantly Catholic countries such as Ireland or Italy; the Anglican Church in Britain). Another possibility is that they would merge ideologically with the non-establishment *‘ulama*. The reactions would probably differ from one country to another.

Potential for a Moderate Islamic Backlash

Alongside the vociferous voices of the radicals there exists a relatively small number of Islamic scholars who call for reform of one sort or another in Islam, and updating Islam or reconciling it with the West. These scholars include: "Westernized" Muslim clerics who live in the West, and have accepted various Western values – foremost among them democracy and human liberties; some portions of the "Wasatiyya" movement in Saudi Arabia; regime-oriented scholars in Jordan and Syria who promote, in the name of their regimes a moderate and non-confrontational version of Islam as a direct response to the radical narrative which threatens those regimes; indigenous liberal Islamists such as in Indonesia and India; and Sufi leaders in the West and in the former Soviet Union (primarily in the Caucasus). The main issues on the agenda of these different trends are – in differing levels of emphasis – how to provide Islamic legitimacy to values such as democracy, equality between Muslims and non-Muslims in an Islamic society, women's rights, and to a state of permanent peace between Islam and the West. The "tool box" of most of these trends remains that of traditional Islam. In defense of their interpretation, the more conservative of these scholars invokes existing sources of Islamic *fiqh* such as *hujja* (demanding proof), *ra'i* (opinion), *ijtihad*, *maqsid* (the "intention" behind the Qur'anic injunctions), *maslaha* (public interest), and *jadial* (debate). The bolder and more "reform-oriented" scholars call for a revisionist view of Islamic history in order to uproot the radical narrative which feeds off the violent elements of the history and revival of schools such as the Mu'tazila and the Irja' which provided tools for a more moderate interpretation.

These trends however remain a minority – in many cases such as in Saudi Arabia and Egypt – they are even persecuted for their positions by the Islamic establishment. Therefore, the likelihood of an Islamic *Kulturkampf* over the relations with the non-Muslim world seems low. The strength of the Islamist camp is more frequently a result of the personal charisma of the religious leader than of the strength of his argument. Religious debate between moderates and radicals should not be expected to produce meaningful results. No moderate Islamic scholar has emerged in the Arab world who can lay claim to trans-national Islamic repute. Moderate scholars living in the West will not become real sources of authority for all Muslims, as Muslims in the Middle East tend to see them as compromised by the pressures of the non-Muslim governments in the countries in which they abide. Initiatives for severe condemnation in Islamic terms of al-Qa'ida may occur, but these will come from "Westernized" Muslims, and not from eminent religious scholars. The chances that respected Islamic institutions will declare judgments of *takfir* (declaring a Muslim a heretic) against the radicals are slim.

Religious scholars who reflect moderate views regarding the integration of Muslims into the West (*fiqh al-aqalliyat* – minorities' religious law trend) include some scholars who take a radical position on the matter of *jihad* (e.g. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi). These radical views are a kind of compensation for taking the more moderate views in the day-to-day issues. It is likely that this situation will not change, and that the sheikhs of the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* group will not automatically become allies for the fight against the radical concept of *jihad*.

The prospects of liberal democracy and liberal civil society taking root and developing into a real antagonist of the radical Islamic narrative differ from one country to another. In general, secular civil society is not expected to take a leading role in the Muslim world in the near future, at least not in its Arab part. In the Muslim world, radical Islamic movements take some of the tasks of civil society, although they do not conform to the Western definition of such a society. The liberal civil society in the Muslim world is in

constant retreat, and this is a trend that is not expected to change. The role of the secular civil society will be greater in Muslim Asia than anywhere in the Middle East. However, within the Middle East the Syrian-Lebanese theatre may have the potential for both a renewed civil society and a mellowed (and chastised) Islamic movement. The Sufi roots of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood together with its experiences from the 1980's may bring it to moderate its positions.

Is it possible that the Islamic effect of the Middle East on Muslim communities in the West and in South-East Asia might decrease? Or is it possible for a reversed course that might lead to a peripheral effect on the center of the Muslim world? Both possibilities seem highly unlikely. One can assume that the center will not ask the periphery for spiritual guidance or leadership. The reasons for that are as follows:

1. Peripheral Islam lacks real Islamic substance, and shapes its Islamic models according to local cultural and ethnic materials. This is why a form of liberal Islam has taken root in some peripheral Muslim countries.
2. Arab feelings of superiority in Islam are accepted almost universally also by non-Arabs. The most indicative case is Indian (historically, nowadays mainly Pakistani) Islam: while it has been an important center at least since the 17th Century and influenced the "central" Arab center, it has done so mainly through the acceptance of Arab superiority up to the point of self effacement.
3. Radical Muslims will not accept ideas coming from Western Muslims, particularly when it seems that there has been a degradation of the Islamic identity in the West, due to the fact that religious scholars are under severe constraints in the habitual surroundings.
4. Islamists will not accept the basic principle that maintains the superiority of the French or the American identity over the Muslim, something that is accepted by Muslims who wish to integrate within the Western culture.

Consequences of Islamic Forces coming to Power

According to one thesis, a policy of engagement with the "conservative" (i.e. Muslim Brotherhood type) Islamists and their participation in the democratic process in the Muslim/Arab world would bring the Islamic forces to participate in the political process and, inevitably, moderate them through the need to cater to the needs of their constituencies. The cases of Islamist participation in democratic (or quasi-democratic) processes in the Muslim world (Jordan, Egypt, PA?) or Islamist movements which have come to power or maintained power through non-democratic means (Iran, Sudan) have not proven this thesis. In any case, pragmatism towards the existing regime in order not to provoke it to act against them does not mean that those movements will change their positions towards the West. In the cases of Egypt and Jordan, the involvement of the Islamic movements in the domestic political process actually brought about an exacerbation of the stances against Israel and the West.

The question arises what could be the effects of the implosion of one or more of the existing regimes in the Arab world (as opposed to its being toppled by an outside force), and the rise to power or to power-sharing of a fundamentalist (Muslim Brotherhood type) political force in such a country? Is a "domino effect" relevant to the radical Islamic phenomenon? While the existence of a fundamentalist Islamic state which deals in "export of revolution" would definitely encourage domestic Islamic radicals in other countries, an outbreak of a radical Islamic wave in the aftermath of a victory of an Islamic movement in one of the vulnerable states (e.g. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt) is highly unlikely.

Previous cases of “revolutionary” radical Islamic regimes did not succeed in “infecting” their neighbors to any great extent and eventually they ran out of steam. The Sudanese regime of ‘Umar Hasan al-Bashir gave up Islamism and its radical mentor, Hasan al-Turabi. The Islamic regime of Iran has lost its popularity among the majority of its citizens. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan never had full sway over the entire country, and did not succeed in mobilizing wide support against the American invasion which toppled it. In all the above-mentioned cases the Islamic regimes did not become a role model to be followed in other countries. The barriers were and have remained national (it is difficult for one country’s leader to become a popular leader in another country), and cultural (basic differences with regard to Islamic customs in each country). The de-centralization of leadership and authority is also an obstacle to such a development; there are not – and apparently will not be – any charismatic Islamic persona who can become a true trans-national Islamic leader.

Ramifications of the “War on Terror”

The “war on terror” will continue to be both an inhibitor and a motivator of radical Islamic trends.

1. As an inhibitor – military successes will make it more difficult for terrorists to operate in the open; political leaders will be under pressure to cooperate in the war or be branded by the West as supporters of terror.
2. As a motivator – its very success will drive home to the general Muslim public the sense that their leaders are collaborating with the West against Muslims and will enhance the image of the *jihad* groups as heroes fighting against great odds.

Iraq will continue to be an academy for terror and a magnet for jihadist groups, pacification of Iraq and Afghanistan would have an inhibiting influence on the trends of radical Islam. Decapitation of radical organizations will also have a positive short term effect (the very need to exhaust resources on evading decapitation inhibits activity as has been seen in the case of Hamas vs. Israel). However, in the long run, the departure of an authoritative figure will not eliminate his *post mortem* “spiritual” sway. This is where the jihadist leadership model differs from the European fascist leadership model in that it ended with the leader’s death (the cases of Hitler and Mussolini and the cases of secular Arab terrorist organizations, e.g. Wadi’ Haddad, the “Western Sector” of Abu Jihad). If Bin Laden merely “disappears” and there is no proof of his death, it may only strengthen the myth, as some kind of a Sunni “missing Imam”. Hence, “targeting the head of the snake” on every level may narrow the capabilities of a specific organization, but it will not destroy it as was the case in secular organizations.

The attacks of September 11 were a watershed event for the Muslim world. The question is raised whether a new series of attacks or a new type of attack has the potential to change positions in the Muslim world either in support of or against the *jihad* movements. In some cases attacks (as in the attacks in Morocco and London) may become watersheds that alienate the majority of the Muslim population from the radicals.

Disruption of the financial networks of the Islamic organizations is widely perceived as a primary means to weaken those movements. This assumption warrants a deeper look. On the operational level, the actual terrorist activity of these organizations is inexpensive and extremely cost-effective. Even the most impressive success in disrupting transfer of funds would probably do little more than dent those operations. Furthermore, many of the organizations are no longer dependent on a flow of external funds and can finance their operations from their own self-generated funds. Nevertheless, the flow of funds plays an

important role in building the overt superstructure of those organizations – a superstructure, which provides social and political legitimacy, public support, and indoctrination of a steady reservoir for recruits.

A common question is whether deterrence theories – albeit modified – may be relevant to the war on terror, and the struggle against radical Islam. Success in the war on terror will be contingent on real achievements in disrupting the infrastructure of the radicals, and not on traditional perceptions of deterrence-compellence. Such perceptions are based on aversion to risk which creates a pragmatic sense on the part of a leader or a leadership that they run the risk of losing it all by an uncalculated action. In the radical Islamic model of action, there are multiple decision-making centers, and a lack of direct link between the leader who issues an order (e.g. to carry out a terror attack) and between the populations that suffer from retaliation to the attack (e.g. American military response).

A central question is: to what extent are radical Islamic movements susceptible to deterrence? Four prominent characteristics of the radical *Weltanschauung* limit the effectiveness of classic deterrence towards them; the nature of *jihad* as an “individual duty” and the religious prohibition on “suspension” of such a duty; apocalyptic expectations; “globalism”; and multi-polarity.

Islam prohibits, in general, suspension of duties, which have been prescribed by God (though Shiite doctrines are more flexible than Sunnis in this regard and are more willing to integrate “necessities” and “public interest” into their calculus). The religion does this barring an overwhelming necessity which would make continuation of *jihad* a catastrophe for the *Umma* or the specific community. The willingness to challenge superior force is generally perceived as a commendable act. Radical Islamic tracts are replete with narratives of companions of the Prophet (whose behavior should be emulated) who charged into entire armies, knowing that they are totally outnumbered, but proving in such acts their complete “submission” to God and reliance upon Him and Him alone. This model of behavior is related to a collateral “reward” that God is assumed to bestow upon the *mujahid* who acts undeterred, both by according him victory in this world, and Paradise in the next. Whether or not the leaders of the radical movements personally ascribe to this belief is a moot question; it is part of the indoctrination of the rank and file, and they are expected to act accordingly.

Radical Islamic doctrines have a tendency towards the “Messianic”, the eschatological, and apocalyptic, which restricts the responsiveness of its believers to considerations of pragmatic politics on the strategic level. The goal of the radical Islamic movements is to create a new Utopian world order in which it is clear who are the servants of God and who are His enemies. Preachings of the radicals contain many apocalyptic allusions and citations of signs related by the Prophet regarding the coming of the Last Day (*al-Yawm al-Akhir*” or “*Yawm al-Qiyama*”), linking them to contemporary events. The West, the United States, and Israel are all likened to the ancient tribes of ‘Ad and Thamud, which according to the Qur’an rejected the message of Mohammad and were therefore annihilated, or to the generation of Noah, which Allah decreed to be drowned. According to this view, the clash between Islam and the West is imminent, inevitable, existential, and can end only in the victory of Islam and the decline of the “infidel” civilization. The September 11 attacks encouraged such similes; the U.S. was likened to ancient Egypt, to which Allah sent a series of plagues, finally drowning Pharaoh’s troops in the sea. If the “end is nigh” no mortal threat can be effective.

The second trait of radical Islamic doctrine, which affects its susceptibility to deterrence, is its self-image as a “global” entity. In classic deterrence theory, an entity’s willingness to cause damage to the other side is tempered by its expectation of reprisal. Radical Islamic doctrines stress the trans-national nature of the movement; each Muslim country or theatre of *jihad* is perceived as no more than one battlefield among others. Reprisals of the enemy towards that theatre – even if they are devastating – are “local” defeats and do not justify capitulation. Moreover, this doctrinal “trans-nationalism” is mirrored in the composition of the jihadist organizations. Most are “foreign legions,” comprised of members from a variety of national backgrounds, who more often than not, operate in a theatre which is not their home country. This make-up reduces their sensitivity to retaliation, which mainly affects the population of the theatres of *jihad*.

There is a case for the argument that decapitation alone is not effective on the strategic level because of the organization's loose structure; it may narrow the capabilities of the organization, but it will not destroy it, as was the case in secular Arab organizations (e.g. Wadi’ Haddad, Abu Jihad). Cases in point are the Islamic regime, which was founded by Khomeini, and did not cease to exist after his demise, and Amal and Hezbollah in Lebanon, which remained intact even after the deaths of Musa al-Sadr and Hussein Musawi respectively. While these are Shiite cases, strengthened by a tradition of a “hidden Imam”, this may be the case for Bin Laden as well. If he “disappears”, it may only strengthen the myth, as some kind of a Sunni “hidden Imam”.

Finally, deterrence is contingent on the existence of a unified command and effective control. Even before September 11 the level of command and control of the al-Qa’ida network over its operatives was not total. This has been heightened by the disruption of the command structure in Afghanistan, and the “franchising” of al-Qa’ida described above. Therefore, even were all the command structures of the radical organizations identified and effectively deterred, the deterrence would not affect individuals or small groups.

Possible Conflict Resolution

A peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be a severe blow to the radical Islamic worldview insofar as it would probably reduce the active support of the population (certainly the Palestinian population) in the “*jihad* option”. However, ideologically it would be seen as another Western plot to continue to control the Muslim world through “Pax Americana”. No solution of the Palestinian problem, short of the elimination of the State of Israel will be acceptable to the radicals.

Pacification of the Iraqi arena with involvement of the Sunnis would also lower the level of assiduous support for active *jihad*. However, as noted above, the core object of the radical doctrine remains the existing order in the Muslim world. The drive for *jihad* against Western presence in the Muslim world will continue independent of removal of military occupation.

Possible Future Theatres

The global agenda of “world *jihad*” is in a constant state of flux, and therefore an attempt to define trends in regional terms is not always useful. The fundamental ideology of the *jihad* movement calls for the waging of a *jihad*. Therefore, wherever there is a theatre of *jihad* and conditions that enable it, it will develop. The development of a *jihad* arena depends to a large extent upon leadership. This is a result of the “I fight, therefore I exist,” phenomenon.

Ostensibly, there is a wide-spread identification with the entire *Dar al-Islam*, thus joining in *jihad* for the liberation of a far-away land is like a patriotic response of someone whose

land has been invaded. But, many of the radical groups have developed an ideology that calls for participation in *jihad*, *per se*, and hence for active engagement in developing theatres of *jihad*. The fact that we are focused these days on a *jihad* in an Arab country (i.e. Iraq) does not mean that this is where *jihad* will focus on in the future. For years, Afghanistan had been the center of *jihad*, and afterwards Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya and Kashmir (where fighting between Muslims and Hindus has been going on for more than five decades). Central Asia might come up again as a center of *jihad*. At the same time, the “Sunni triangle” in Iraq might become the new “Afghanistan”.

When we deal with the radical Islam phenomenon, we usually refer to the jihadist current, or what is known as “global *jihad*”. As a matter of fact, there is a link between this current, and the *da’wa* current and the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The former evolves from within the latter, and in Muslim states and societies the latter defends the former’s rights (demonstrations against extradition and cooperation with the United States, pressures on the governments, etc.).

The Western demand for reform and democratization is widely perceived as a direct assault by the West on the religion of Islam, after having corrupted Muslim society and family values. The call for universal enfranchisement and participation of women and minorities is seen as an attack on the predominance of the male Arab Muslim Sunni in his society and an attempt to subordinate Islamic law to an imported secular law.

There is no doubt that many scholars, and certainly many lay Muslims, do not personally subscribe to the radical narrative. They have not as yet, however, proposed an alternative. It is in the home field of this presumed silent majority that the main battle is taking place, and as long as it does not enter the fray, the battle cannot be won.

Despite the strategic repercussions of the attacks of September 11, the lion’s share of “*jihad*” has taken place in Muslim countries deemed by the radicals to be under Western domination. Success of the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan may provide justification for increased emphasis on the European and American theatres. The extension of the Iraqi theatre to Europe is already evident in the attacks in Madrid and London.

In this context, an increasingly important dimension is the Anti-Semitic motif in radical Islamic narrative. This motif is progressively legitimized among Muslim publics in Europe, a phenomenon that might cause more targeting of Jews.

The Sunni-Shiite conflict may also influence the directions of radical Islamism in both communities. A wider Sunni (or Wahhabi)-Shiite conflict may affect Islam’s relations with the West, and even have positive consequences in that it would harness the Shiites to a struggle against the radical Wahhabis.

In this matter two approaches prevail:

1. On the one hand, there are those who think that ideology is put aside, and both Sunnis and Shiites are going in a direction of political compromise, both in Iraq and Lebanon. This assessment is based on the trend for rapprochement between Sunnis and Shiites which is promoted by Iran on the one side and al-Azhar on the other.
2. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the clash between Sunnis and Shiites will intensify, and that the Sunni-Shiite conflict in Iraq bears the seeds of a wider conflict in which the Shiites may also take the initiative and abandon the traditional Shiite tendency towards passive defense. As the Iranian Revolution gave rise to a new Shiite self-confidence and willingness of various Shiite communities to assert themselves, this recent Shiite predominance in Iraq may have a similar effect by

encouraging strengthened Shiite demands for equality in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia. Such a development would probably add fuel to the fire of the anti-Shiite tendencies in the Sunni gulf and among Wahhabi-type Islamist movements.

Key Findings and Policy Recommendations

A number of causes of the conflict between radical Islam and the West have been identified in the chapters above. A taxonomy of these causes can offer a matrix for the following distinctions:

1. Primary or secondary nature of the causes – some are primary causes – necessary conditions for the evolvement of a jihadist movement – and others are contributing causes which together fulfill the sufficient condition when the former exists.
2. Causes which can be eliminated through political, social or military action within a reasonable span of time, and those which are either almost immutable or need generations for implementation.

	Primary Causes (necessary Conditions)	Secondary Causes (contributing conditions)
Invariable or long-term Causes	Basic Islamic texts and textual basis for <i>jihad</i> Self images and Arab culture Wahhabi–Salafi interpretations	Social structure of Muslim society Structural Economic factors
Variable Causes	Radical Leadership Crisis of religious and secular Authority Absence of “firewalls” between radicals and mainstream	Political Conflicts State Support and tolerance of Radicalism Weakness of moderate regimes

Policy recommendations should give priority in addressing the dark shaded area (variable primary and secondary causes), and then to the light shaded area (long term secondary causes). This cannot be done by political, economic, or military means alone; cultural and religious elements can only be dealt with by cultural and religious tools. The need to make use of these tools though seems both foreign and futile to Western strategic thought. The “religious” arsenal available to the West is limited. The attempts to deny the historic validity of militant Islamic traditions by reformist re-interpretation of Islam and revisionist reading of Islamic history will never gain sufficient credence in the Muslim world to undermine the traditional reading of Islam. Recommendations for religious action should address ways to emphasize existing orthodox doctrines, which contradict the radical narrative rather than attempt to invent reformist doctrines.

The recommendations of this study refer to steps that may be taken by the U.S. and the West directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, and perceived as “indigenous”. Some of these steps may be efficacious if implemented prudently and without overt Western

involvement. This is particularly true regarding the religious area, where foreign (“infidel”) involvement is *a priori* counter-productive. Therefore, an effective “war of ideas” against the radical narrative calls for in-depth understanding of the workings of Islamic religious intercourse, modes of authority and leadership, and the honing of sophisticated methodologies of psychological operations and disinformation.

The urgency of dealing with the spread of radical Islam calls for emphasizing short term measures. However, it should be remembered that much of the present spread of radical Islam was due to short term policies; the belief of Arab regimes that they could cultivate the Islamists as a counter-balance to leftist opposition; or of countries like Pakistan where the Mujahidun movement played a key role in the conflict with India over Kashmir; or the U.S. and UK support of the Mujahidun movement in Afghanistan. Any short-term policy should be assessed in the light of its potential effects on long-term policy as well.

The following list of policy recommendations refers to steps which may be taken in regard to four main categories of the two shaded areas. These categories are:

1. Religious and ideological issues relating to the radical ideology and the behavior of the mainstream.
2. Political issues relating to political conflicts and dealing with states from which radical ideologies are spread – either intentionally (state support) or out of weakness.
3. Social issues.
4. Military and security issues.

Religious and Ideological Issues

Key Findings

The conflict between radical Islam and the West is rooted in a variety of causes but its implacability is rooted primarily in religious narratives and dictates. The West is facing a “religious war” with Islam for the first time since the Middle Ages, and must arm itself with the appropriate means. These include defining areas of religious beliefs which are intolerable, imposing limits on freedoms of expression, and association and active involvement in the religious controversies within the camp of the adversary. These means are foreign to Western political philosophy, and contradict basic values of Western democracy, such as separation of religion and state, and the belief in individual responsibility. Under the circumstances, such contradictions may be the lesser evil.

Radicalism is not confined to a marginal extremist group outside of the Muslim consensus. Its potency derives from the wide active and passive ideological support it enjoys within the Muslim world, and its conformity to accepted norms of Islamic jurisprudence. Any strategy must target not only the hard core of the terrorist organizations and the population which is already radicalized, but also the mainstream population which is – by virtue of orthodox Islamic doctrines – easy prey to radical recruitment.

The real war against Islamic radicalism can only be fought within the Muslim house itself and by Muslims. However, the Muslim world – particularly the Arab part of it – suffers from a chronic deficiency of moderate religious and secular leadership. This vacuum is filled by the radicals with the mainstream religious establishments competing by radicalizing their own views. This calls for developing a policy for the crisis of authority. Such a policy can be based on providing incentives and disincentives to strengthen clear-

cut moderate positions by existing authorities, and encouraging the growth of new authorities with economic, political and religious clout.

Since 9/11 Muslims and non-Muslims have called for an urgent reform in Islam in order to purge modern Islam from atavistic vestiges of its more violent legacy, and to put Islam into synch with the mainstream of global civilization. However, the need to stem the tide of radicalism within Muslim society cannot wait for reform, and should rely on the dormant “tool box” of mainstream orthodox Islam. While reform is a commendable long-term goal, it appears for the time being, to be a chimera. The very demand for reform is widely perceived in the Muslim world as another form of Western intervention within Islam, now assailing the religion of Islam directly instead of merely corrupting the Muslim society and family. Furthermore, religions are naturally conservative and slow to change, and when they do it is the result of either traumatic historic events or personalities of great authoritative religious leaders (the destruction of the Jewish Temple, Martin Luther, Papal reforms in Catholicism). Otherwise, change is usually due to incremental developments, subject to reactionary backlashes. Ironically, collective traumas in modern Islam and popular leaders have frequently led the way to radicalization and not to moderate reform.

What is called for at the present stage therefore is not reform, but a clear disengagement on the part of the mainstream Islam from any justification of terrorism according to the accepted Western definition, and a willingness to clearly demarcate the borders and to set up a firewall between the mainstream and the radicals. The traditional building blocks of a religious firewall – in religions in general – are threats of excommunication in this life and eternal damnation in the next. In Islam this translates to declarations that the radicals have distorted the tenets of Islam to such a degree that they have become “heretics” (the practice of *takfir*). This is, in essence, a form of a “war of apostasy” of the orthodoxy against the radicals. Until now, the offensives of the radicals have not been met with commensurate threats of “excommunication” or declarations of *takfir*. An unequivocal disengagement from any justification of violence, and a willingness to clearly demarcate the borders between the mainstream and the radicals may take the shape of *fatwas* that declare that justification of *jihad* under the present circumstances is a corruption of the roots of Islam (*usul*), and an act of heresy; and that physical, moral, or financial support of terrorism is a cardinal sin and condemns their perpetrators to eternal hellfire. For every *fatwa* that promises paradise to those who engage in *jihad*, an authoritative counter-*fatwa* is needed that threatens hellfire for those acts.

Recommendations

1. **To deal with radical clerics** with ties in the West by drawing a clear “line in the sand” between legitimate religious beliefs, and those which will not be countenanced, notwithstanding their valid roots in religious doctrines. This calls for clarifying to Muslim religious establishments and clerics in the West that they can no longer allow themselves to enjoy both worlds: being members in a Western ecumenical society; and providing legitimacy to a terrorist ideology. This implies:
 - A. Legal steps against clerics who declare even conditional or post factum support of acts of terrorism. Declarations of support or approbation for acts of terrorism or anything short of a blanket denunciation in Islamic terms of such acts should disqualify those individuals and institutions, or even be the basis for legal actions against them.

- B. Promoting sanctions on the international level against *jihad*-oriented clerics, and barring those which call for violence – however obliquely – from any academic or ecumenical debate or rapprochement.
 - C. Reinterpretation of the boundaries of freedom of religion to include criminalization of acts and statements, even if based on scriptures that justify terrorism.
 - D. Redefining the principle of personal criminal culpability to cover religious leaders for the acts of their flock as a result of their spiritual influence.
 - E. To enhance the independence of Muslim clerics in the West, and to wean them from their tendency to accept authority emanating from the Arab world by strengthening their status in their constituencies.
2. **To cultivate moderate schools of orthodoxy** and centers of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in the West and in the virtual space to counteract the radical influence of similar institutions (European Council of Fatwa, fatwaonline.com) and the existing ambivalently radical mainstream institutions (al-Azhar; Um al-Qura). These should be supported through clandestine funding, permission for forming religious institutions, and the facilitation of travel.
 3. **To cultivate research and promulgation of the tools within orthodox Islam which may be used to mitigate radicalism** through interpretations compatible with contemporary circumstances without resorting to reform. These include, inter alia: the methodology of localization of *fiqh* embodied in the “law of the minorities” school; traditional methods for voiding a text of its general implications by way of the principle that later verses in the Qur’an occasionally “abrogate” earlier ones (*naskh*), or by linking of a specific verse to a “specific” (historic) event (*takhsis*); revival of *ijtihad*, rationalist neo-*Mu’tazili* doctrines and a focus on *da’wa* and *jadat* as the means for confronting the “infidels” and the “apostates”, interpretation of the Qur’an according to the “reasons for revelation” (*asbab al-nuzul*); and interpreting *jihad* as exclusively an act of state.
 4. **To encourage certain “heterodox” tendencies.** Foremost of these are some schools of Sufism. In some of its manifestations, **the flexible and adaptive character of the Sufi brotherhoods may potentially be one of the most efficacious tools in the indigenous Islamic “tool box” for countering radicalism.** It emphasizes the mystical, the personal and the “next world” as the core of the religious experience as opposed to Sunni orthodoxy, which emphasizes the practical, the collective and politics – hence power – of this world.
 5. **To cultivate traditional “quietist” Shiites in Najaf and Qom** against the Khomeini doctrines promulgated from Qom. This can be done through facilitating the movement and fundraising (*khums*) of the moderate Shiite leaders in countries which have large Shiite populations.
 6. **To manipulate arrested radical leaders by:**
 - A. Exploiting their state of being incommunicado to send deceptive ideological and operational disinformation.
 - B. Coercing them to declare changes in their ideological positions. For example – to adopt pragmatic religious arguments about the nature of *jihad*, that, while anti-Western, eschew terrorism based on *maslaha* – i.e. that the present time is inopportune for waging a terrorist war because of the consequences to the Muslims.

7. **To encourage moderate Islamic schools in Asia** (particularly Indonesia), which have shown themselves capable of holding a considerable inherent capacity for compromise and moderation. These schools however have almost no influence in the Arab world but they can help stem the tide of “Arabization” of their own nationals.
8. **To engage mainstream Islamic institutions in de-legitimizing the radical narrative** and thus undermine the consensus that keeps them within the fold of mainstream Islam.
9. **To set clear parameters for denunciation** and criminalization of terrorism in Islamic terms. These terms should include *takfir* and incrimination of the terrorists in capital offenses according to Islam. In practical terms, this calls for clear and binding *fatwas* that contradict the radical's narratives and declare support of the *jihad* ideology and acts as acts of heresy.
10. **To make clear and unequivocal rejections of terrorism a staple demand in ecumenical meetings and dialogs.**

Political Issues

Key Findings

While the political factors cited as the causes of Islamic radicalism are complementary and not primary causes; reducing the level of political tension in the Muslim world can reduce the appeal of radicals. The main conflicts in this regard are: Iraq, Afghanistan, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Chechnya. Other conflicts (Philippines, western China – “East Turkistan”, etc.) continue to be perceived as legitimate *jihads*, but do not attract the same level of attention as the previously mentioned. To deal with the political causes of radicalism it may not be necessary to actually solve all aspects of those conflicts. A “political horizon” is however, needed, as is a sense of movement into a more favorable future.

A major political factor is the weakness of allies – be the regimes, religious establishments or moderate clerics living in the West. Conventional wisdom warns that the weaker an ally is, the greater the danger that pressure for active involvement in the war on terror or crack-downs on domestic Islamists will be counter-productive. This is frequently an image of assumed affected weakness. When the same regimes saw it necessary to crack down in order to preserve themselves, they manifested considerably greater resilience. Their tolerance of overt radical ideological action frequently reflects a tactic of allowing the radicals a niche for activity in order to prevent them from acting against the regimes themselves. A political strategy towards allies in the Muslim world should not exempt them from taking risks in order to take all necessary steps against radicalism.

A common argument is that the West should remove its support from regimes, which do not stand up to Western standards of freedom, civil rights, and democracy. Such a strategy would inevitably replace moderate and cooperative pro-Western but non-democratic regimes with radical Islamic anti-democratic regimes.

Recommendations

11. **To hold governments accountable for the behavior of religious institutions** which are financed by the state, and of clerics who are appointed by the state and on its payroll. The declarations of these institutions should be considered as official no less than declarations of any other organs of state. Regimes in Muslim countries have proved that, when it served their own self-interests, they had the means to impose their will on their religious establishments. Only when governments are faced by real damage incurred by these institutions, will they be forced to risk confrontation with

them and to give up the benefits of a “pressure valve” that the radical declarations of these institutions provide.

12. **To encourage gradual political evolution** towards democracy but no “instant democracy” for countries with weak political bases. The absence of strong secular civil societies in most of these countries precludes Western-style democratic dynamics and increases the chances of radical Islamic movements (e.g. the Muslim Brotherhood) to gain power, based on their monopoly of non-governmental instruments for mass mobilization. Premature democratization (or at least election processes for regime change as opposed to the civil rights side of the process) in Muslim societies that are not yet ripe for it can be counter-productive (in the Arab world there are the Algerian case and the Hamas case as examples, and a familiar European example is Weimar Germany).
13. **To encourage national identity as an antidote for radical Islamic tendencies.** Central Asia and the Caucasus are a good example for the effects of national identity and regime’s power on radical Islam. In countries where there is a strong national and ethnic identity, radical Islamic tendencies diminish. Encouraging democratization and de-centralization in these countries might reduce the attractiveness of radical Islam.
14. **To fund social and educational institutions** under state auspices, or of liberal secular movements in lieu of the institutions of the Islamic movements, which serve as a reservoir for future terrorists. This infrastructure consists not only of the religious schools (*madrasas*), but includes networks of social aid, hospitals, etc. which dominate the space of the civil society in the Muslim world due to the absence of alternative voluntary institutions.
15. **To attach clear conditions to aid provided to Muslim societies.** The attitude of “no-strings” that the West has adopted in providing aid to Third World societies has not proven itself effective in the Muslim world.
16. **To disrupt the financial support of radical Islamic movements.** Not only physical disruption of the flow of funds, but de-legitimization of contribution to those movements or institutions affiliated with them should be a prime goal.
17. **To disrupt the educational system of the radicals and their *da’wa* (propaganda) apparatus.**
18. **To act in the international arena** to put an end to the casuistic global debate in various international forums for reaching a legal “consensus” on a definition of terrorism which will be acceptable to supporters of *jihad* as well.
19. **To enact legislation** to facilitate civil suits against financial, cultural, and religious entities which knowingly aid and abet radical organizations.
20. **To institutionalize and regulate** the collection and allocation of “*zakat*” monies so as to preclude transfers to radical groups.
21. **To encourage Muslim states to oppose the Arab dominance in Islamic circles.**
22. **Direct oil profits to social needs within the Muslim world.**

Social Issues

Key Findings

Social grievances such as poverty, discrimination, and government indifference to basic needs of the population are all complementary factors in the growth of radical Islam. Amelioration of the social tensions in Muslim societies can reduce the appeal of the radicals.

One way to combat the sense of alienation that permeates Muslim communities in the West is by “naturalization” of Islam in the West, and absorbing it into the fabric of Western society. Until now, Islam exists in the West as a “colony,” separate from the rest of society, and lacking a sense of identification with the surrounding culture. Naturalization of Muslims in the West can be compared to the sense of self confidence that Jews in the United States feel vis-à-vis Israel and the religious authorities of Israel; they have their own institutions and do not feel the sense of inferiority that Muslims feel towards the Islamic institutions of the Arab world.

Radical narratives are inculcated in Muslim societies through the involvement – frequently exclusively – of the radical movements in education for early aged children. Children’s books in Arabic show, for example, a picture of a severe dearth of liberal education for the formative years.

Recommendations

23. **Wean Muslims in the West away from negative influences of their home countries.** This calls for active integration of Muslims, and the creation of a sense of identification in their respective adopted societies. This can be done inter alia through enlisting Arab Muslims into the foreign services, and using them as spokesmen on ME and Islamic affairs.
24. **Use caution with the use of motives for the empowerment of women.** A central theme in the drive for democratization is the issue of equality for women and religious minorities. However, while this pressure may bring some of those sectors into the sphere of pro-liberalism, these are not the sectors which are generating radicalism and conflict. At the same time this campaign is perceived and presented by radicals as part of the Western strategy to undermine Islam. It may be therefore that the emphasis on this agenda is counter-productive to the goal of moderating the conflict.
25. **To engage in massive media propaganda to undermine support for radical groups, including sophisticated disinformation campaigns.** (TV series for Ramadan like the ones broadcast this Ramadan throughout the Arab and Muslim world)
26. **To focus on the younger generation** which has not yet been radicalized. This should include lavish endowment of primary education, publication of books in target languages for the young with implicit positive messages.

Military and Security Issues

Key Findings

Military force is both a means to combat the terrorist manifestation of the radical Islamic ideology, as well as a catalyst for an even stronger radicalization. This does not mean that it should be abandoned, but it does mean that its limits should be duly recognized.

Recommendations

27. **To continue military and covert activity**, including targeted killings of select radical leaders and targets.
28. **To target radical leaders on the basis of an individual analysis** of the different options for neutralizing them: targeted killing, capture and detention (with or without publication), public trial, and/or use in disinformation.
29. **To take into account that setting target dates for troop reduction in Iraq and Afghanistan** without having achieved stability in those countries the reduction of troops may encourage the radicals and be perceived as a replay of the hasty Soviet retreat from Afghanistan that was one of the main sparks of the present *jihād* movement.

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