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## ON THE BALANCE OF ISRAEL'S NATIONAL SECURITY

### "ISRAEL AT SIXTY: TESTS OF ENDURANCE"

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## Islamist Strategic Thought: Project Summary

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Shmuel Bar (Team Leader)

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THIS PAPER REFLECTS THE OPINIONS OF ITS AUTHORS ONLY
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# Islamist Strategic Thought

## Project Summary

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Submitted to: DOD/ONA

Islamist Strategies Project

Institute for Policy and Strategy, Herzliya

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## Executive Summary

The close affinity between the religious and political in Islam, the religious motivation of these movements and the prevalence of apocalyptic rhetoric make it difficult to draw a picture of their political and military strategies as distinct from their religious convictions. There is no doubt however that these organizations do act on the basis of a perception of strategic priorities. This study is an attempt to glean from these movements' writings a coherent picture of their strategic thought on key issues relating to the conflict with the West.

In the strategic writings of the different movements, one may distinguish between three levels of agreement and diversity:

1. **The sources of the Strategic Vision** are basically common to all Islamic movements – Sunnis and Shiites alike. They are based on Islamic sources as the guidelines for social, political and strategic matters.
2. **The strategies for implementation of those goals**, which differ from one stream to another and from one theatre to another.
3. **Tactical local responses** in which specific circumstances have the upper hand in dictating modes of action and thinking.

Analysis of the Islamist strategic literature leads to identification of **six “pillars” of Islamist strategic thinking**. These “pillars” appear in most Islamist streams in some degree. They are: the **religious-“legalistic” pillar** (the underlying belief regarding the commandments of Allah to the Muslims in regard to relations with the “infidels” and Jihad); **the apocalyptic pillar** (the belief in the link between the Jihad and the impending “end of days”); **the political pillar** (a quasi-secular analysis of the political balance of power between the Muslims and their enemies, which is the basis of strategic and operative prioritization of the enemy); **the military pillar** (military analysis of targets and opportunities), the **pillar of Jihad**; and the **pillar of Martyrdom**.

The **“religious pillar”** is predominant in Islamist strategic writings. The strategies of the Islamist movements have a broad common denominator in the unambiguous narrative that all issues – religious, political or military – must be directly derived from the sources of the Koran, Hadith and *Shari’a* rulings. The underlying assumption of all Islamist movements that there is nothing in modern situations that cannot be judged by analogy to the rulings and behavior of the Prophet creates a common basis for debate between the different trends – a debate which can be found – either overtly or between the lines – in these texts.

In addition, the **“apocalyptic pillar”** of Islamist strategy plays a growing role and it coexists with some tension with the strategic discourse which emphasizes the constant shifts in the tactical situation of Islam and takes into account that Islam may suffer setbacks. Since 11 September 2001, there has been a swell in apocalyptic interpretations of current world events. The “glorious raids” of 11 September and the American occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq were subsequently viewed as “signs”

that have been foreseen of the imminent apocalypse (*ashrat al-sa'a*). In this context, the Jihadi movement identifies itself with the elected group that merits the grace of God (*al-ta'ifa al-mansura*). *Al-ta'ifa al-mansura* is expected, according to the eschatological events, to achieve military victory over its enemies and fill the central role of fulfilling the ideal of Islam on earth. Statements and actions by the incumbent President of Iran, Mahmud Ahmadinejad seem to indicate that at least he and his close affiliates are motivated by a Mahdivist vision of the world being on the threshold of the End of Days, with their role being to expedite the re-appearance of the Hidden Imam. The implication of these motivations that may be inferred is that people with such a faith may not be deterred from actions that may even precipitate a nuclear war. However, this trend – while it exists – runs counter to the mainstream of Shiite religious history. It is the exception and not the rule of Shiite religious thought and is even foreign to the Khomeinist doctrine that rules Iran.

The **political pillar** of Islamist strategy is evident in both Sunni and Shiite strategies – both of which show a strong sense of Realpolitik and an understanding of the current balance of power. Writings of both Sunni and Shiite (mainly Iranian) strategists are replete with detailed analyses of the “my”, his alliances, his strengths and his weaknesses. This analysis is the basis for the discussion of **prioritization of targets, policy of terrorism** and general policy towards different parties. The “**military pillar**” is evident in the fact that Islamist writings are replete with military analysis of the pros and cons of various courses of action.

The “**pillar of Jihad**” is a key element of consensus in the strategic discourse between the different Islamist movements. Ideologues of all camps distinguish between a “defensive jihad” for liberation of Muslims from the threat or occupation of infidels, and the “initiated jihad” “until religion (in the world) is Allah’s”. The existing Sunni consensus is that the former is now in effect whereas the latter can be revived only after the re-establishment of an Islamic regime (a Caliphate) which will lead the Muslims in Jihad. However, Jihad is not viewed as a “necessary evil” but as an aim in itself. Since the definition of defense has been extended in Islamist thought to include not only actual military occupation of a Muslim land but also “spiritual” or economic occupation, the presence of Western clothing, Western businesses and economy, Western media et alia, the concept of the defensive jihad no longer seems restricted to a war that comes to an end once the “infidel” military occupation comes to an end.

In the Shiite doctrine of Jihad, as manifested in Iran and its proxies (Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi Shiite movements) Jihad is not a means alone to obtain a political objective but a “pillar” of faith, a means to test the belief of the Muslim by putting him through trials and tribulations (in emulation of the Imams Ali and Hussein) and is the path towards unity with Allah’s will; it serves the interests of the believers, and doing so fulfills the Islamic obligation to serve the community (over and above the individual) and it “pays” as it will be rewarded in this world by Allah who will give the believers victory. The Shiite concept of Jihad views the “**initiated jihad**” (*al-jihad al-ibtida'i*) is in abeyance pending the re-appearance of the Hidden Imam. Therefore the military jihad, in the eyes of Shiite movements, can only be a **defensive jihad** (*al-jihad al-difa'i*), which is a duty for all Muslims when they face aggression. This defensive Jihad however is not a spontaneous defense of the homeland, but a decision

to be taken by the Ruler-Jurisprudent (*vali faqih*). He – and he alone –has the capability and authority to weigh all considerations and to take the decision whether the jihad should proceed or not. The *vali faqih* may “suspend” jihad (for example: Iran’s Jihad against Iraq during the Iraq-Iran war) on the basis of Realpolitik and “public interest” (*maslaha*) of the (Iranian) people.

Finally, the Salafi-Jihadi movement has inherited from the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) the “**pillar of martyrdom**” (*shahada*), not as a necessary evil but as “a consummation devoutly to be wished”. This belief is a key element in the development of Islamist strategy as the classic military obligation of a commander to restrict his own casualties is not paramount. Shiite ideological texts also stress the essence of Jihad as a “doctrine and a program of action”, through which a Muslim may “sacrifice his life for the sake of Allah and attain paradise”. “Martyrdom for Allah’s sake” is the greatest reward that is accorded to a *mujahid*. The role models of Hizballah are the Imams ‘Ali and Hussein, who went into battle knowing they were heavily outnumbered and that they were going to become martyred.

The **perception of the enemy**, its definition, the laws of war against it and its rationale, be it a defensive, deterrent or initiated war – are a pivotal component of Islamist strategy. In the light of the growing central role of the inclusion of the Shiites in the category of the “enemy” in Salafi-Jihadi strategy and operational behavior, it is difficult to draw a common picture for Sunni and Shiite movements. In general, though, for all Islamist movements the enemy of Islam comprised of both local and external entities who are either overt or secret allies of each other. From the standpoint of Sunni Jihadist thought the enemy of Islam is comprised of two concentric and inter-related circles of conflict:

- In the inner-local circle the World Jihad conflict is with the Arab and Islamic regimes, “the apostates who have abandoned Islam” (*murtaddun*) and the Shiites (the “turncoats” or *rafidi*).
- In the outer circle the conflict is with “infidels” (*kuffar*) – the “Crusaders”, (i.e. the West) and the Jews (Zionists).

Like Sunni radicalism, the Shiite brand defines the “enemy” first and foremost by its link to the West. The United States, Britain and Israel are an “axis of evil”, whose intention is to topple the Islamic regime – in collaboration with many of its Arab neighbors. This struggle between Iran and its enemies is seen by the regime as an existential Manichean clash between forces of light and forces of darkness.

The differences between the visions of the different Islamist movements are evident in the different paradigms that they present for the structure of the future Islamic order. Five main paradigms can be distinguished: (1) the “mainstream” Muslim Brotherhood; (2) The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood; (3) the Caliphate idea presented by the Jihadi-Salafi stream and Hizb al-Tahrir; (4) the model of the Iranian Revolution; (5) nationalist Islamic movements in Central Asia.

The strategic vision of the **mainstream of the Muslim Brotherhood** represents a “lowest common denominator” to which most of the other movements can agree,

though they would add elements of their own. The Islam regime of the Muslim Brotherhood however is clearly a regime of *Shari'a*, not fundamentally different to that proposed by the Salafi-Jihadi stream. An exception to this is the **Syrian Muslim Brotherhood** that emphasizes the “intentions” of *Shari'a* and the need to adapt it to “human experience” and speaks of pluralism as the intention of Allah.

**Hizb al-Tahrir** had been for decades the key proponent of the Caliphate concept as the goal of its struggle. It presents a comprehensive view of the Caliphate that will rule the Muslim world – ultimately the entire world. After the establishment of the Caliphate, all non-Muslims will be obliged to render tribute (*jizya*) to the Muslim Caliphate and in exchange for that, they will enjoy the Caliphate's protection. If someone or some nation will refuse to pay *jizya*, the Caliphate will declare Jihad against them.

**The Caliphate model** has become a central tenet in the al-Qa'ida ideology as well and it is becoming more and more accepted in other “mainstream” Islamist movements. This is noteworthy as until lately these movements have not made any serious attempt to define a paradigmatic concept of leadership; they preferred to the pitfalls inherent in the Caliphate model (who will be the Caliph, attitude vis-à-vis non-Muslims, the duty of offensive Jihad) and focused on the **principles** of Islamic governance, allowing for the continued paradigms of rule (sultanate, kingship, tribal inheritance, etc.) as long as they govern according to those principles. This is not to say that the restoration of a Caliphate is already the agreed common goal of all these movements; however, it is no longer the idiosyncrasy of one marginal group. The very sense of potential victory brings the various organizations to delve into the question of the paradigm of the Caliphate as the final goal.

**The Iranian paradigm** stands alone. The doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih* was never meant to be restricted to the Shiite world. Khomeini united his concept of governance by the jurisprudent with religious and nationalist principles, establishing a regime that had a “manifest destiny” to promote the national interests of Iran (which are identical with those of the Muslim *Umma*) and to liberate Muslims from the yoke of Western Imperialism. At the core of this outlook lies the idea of Pan-Islamism as a force that will destroy the existing international system as expressed in Khomeini's statement which became a slogan: “neither East (USSR and Communist ideology) nor West (US and Capitalism)”.

Finally, the cases of **nationalist movements of the former Soviet Union** can be seen more as “Islamist Nationalism” than “National Islamist” movements. Their goals therefore tend to emphasize the local and the nationalistic and remain vague regarding the “Pan-Islamic” facet of their ideology.

Most Islamist movements tend to focus on the “here and now” in their day to day strategic writings. This can be attributed to the fact that except for the Jihad in Iraq, none see themselves as on the verge of taking power and they are embroiled in the day to day reality of the struggle with the incumbent regimes. Areas of operational tactics widely discussed in Islamist writings include:

1. **Priority of targets** – which Western powers are more susceptible to pressure and, if hit by terror, will withdraw from Islamic lands.
2. **Classification of targets** – various Islamist strategists have dealt with the Islamic legality of attacking the economic infrastructure of Muslim countries (particularly oil). This was widely considered a red line that Islamist organizations did not cross even in the bloody Jihad in Algeria, but has recently been crossed in Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Another popular area of discussion is the issue of attacking Shiites (in Iraq).
3. **Classification of weapons** – much discussion in these documents deals with the ruling concerning types of weapons and tactics – suicide bombing, hijacking of aircraft (do the rules relating to prisoners of war in Jihad apply then to the passengers?), and WMD. On this latter issue, very little has been written.

In contrast to the “gradualist” and relatively pragmatic strategy of the MB and its affiliates and the need of the Iranian Revolution to take into account the interests of the Iranian state, the Salafi-Jihadi stream espouses a more proactive and dynamic strategy. The key elements of this strategy as compiled for various texts are:

- All the Western countries are in the category of bilad al-harb (enemy lands) – a definition that accords complete freedom of action and justifies the use of any possible means to inflict damage. The enemy’s “people, blood, money and women’s honor (a’raduhum) are permitted to Muslims, as they were to the Prophet Muhammad in his wars against his enemies.”
- Striking against the enemy’s centers of economic and military power and symbols: the objective is not only to strike at the enemy’s arrogance but also to inflict tremendous material damage and cause collapse. The obligation is to bring about change by the use of force and not influence policy because of political aims. The attacks of 11 September illustrate this mode of attack.
- Extending military actions: al-Qa’ida has set itself the aim of attacking American targets throughout the world. In effect, actions of this kind have been executed in several continents, but the most serious warning is in taking the front into the heart of enemy territory in order to bring about collapse.
- Adopting unconventional tactics in the war against the enemy by employing creative and unconventional thinking, such as the use of the enemy’s own methods to attack it. In this context the most important method touches upon numerous groups of suicide fighters that will undertake acts of sacrifice designed to bring about collapse.
- Use of propaganda and psychological warfare together with military force.
- Use of the “Threat of Force” method: the most notable example of this was when bin Laden asserted the right to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. However, the main thrust of his plans is on the actual use of weapons against his enemies. Armed violence and military force are the principal and almost only means, in contrast with other means of influence he mentions, but in effect the “life of kill and battle” is the main thing.



- Decentralization of Jihad in the way the al-Qa'ida elements and its allies conduct and execute it; each independently in its own in accordance with prevailing circumstances.

A compilation of different discussion regarding the stages of the Jihad looks, more or less, as follows:

- Awakening the Masses: This phase began in earnest on 11 September 2001 and continues with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The goal is to broaden the ranks of the Jihadi movement and generate local opposition to the “apostate regimes”.
- Attrition – this stage is aimed at bleeding the West economically, militarily, and politically until it disengages from the Muslim lands altogether and severs its alliances with the “apostate regimes” (in this context, some texts bring the historic examples of the abandonment of South Vietnam and the Shah’s regime as cases in point).
- Control of Iraq – The Jihadi-Salafi thinkers perceive the battle for the fate of Iraq as a historic, not to be missed opportunity of controlling this theater so it can be used as a stepping stone to expand Jihad to adjacent theaters, their occupation and unification under an Islamic Caliphate.
- Toppling “apostate regimes” – this stage focuses first on the “inner circle” of susceptible regimes such as Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan. The revolutionary nature of the Jihadi strategy – in contrast with the more “gradualist” Muslim Brotherhood strategy – is based on the principle that there is no hope for reform of a “Muslim” country ruled by “apostate rulers” in order to adapt it to the Islamist model, but rather only a “all out” revolution and the reestablishment of the Islamic state, from top to bottom.
- Taking control over the formerly “apostate” lands – this stage is considered to be one of the most sensitive as the breakdown of the old regimes will most probably be followed by a breakdown of law and order. Establishing Shari’a Law – In this stage, new regimes will be formed based on Shari’a. These regimes may not necessarily be identical in form and only in a later stage will unity be achieved.
- Purging all Western influences from the Muslim world – This stage includes the total liberation of all Muslim lands ruled by infidels such as Palestine, Kashmir, and al-Andalus (Spain).
- Re-establishment of the Caliphate – This will be the final phase of organizing the Muslim world that will then allow for the final confrontation with the West.
- Final Conflict – This phase is the final one which is in many Jihadi texts intertwined with eschatological allusions.

Since its inception, **the Islamic regime in Iran** has been committed to Jihad and to “propagation of Islam” (*tablighi eslami*) or “Export of Revolution” (*sudur inqilab*). Iran’s support of terrorist organizations serves a number of goals:

1. To maintain its commitment to Khomeini's doctrine of Jihad and “Export of Revolution.

2. To pose a threat to Israel both for ideological reasons and in order to deter Israel from acting against it.
3. To further Iran's national objectives of hegemony in the Gulf and the Sunni Arab world, by promoting Islamist opposition to the pro-Western regimes in those countries.
4. To serve as a strategic deterrent against the US as long as Iran lacks a nuclear deterrent by posing a threat of widespread terrorism in retaliation to acts of hostility towards Iran. The military asymmetry between Iran and the coalition of its enemies and the assessment that nothing can move them from their goal of toppling the regime bring the regime to the conclusion that Iran's only possible response is the use of "sub-conventional" warfare – terrorism. This includes attacks on Israel from Lebanon, taking Israel hostages, support of Palestinian terrorism, and occasional use of international terror to demonstrate a "long arm" capability commensurate (*mutatis mutandis*) with that of its enemies to hit Iran.
5. To enhance Iran's standing in the eyes of radical Sunni Islamist organizations as the only state willing to challenge Israel and the US, to draw them into its orbit and accord Iran a foothold in the heart of the Arab Middle East.
6. To serve as a bargaining chip to trade when the time is ripe in return for concessions on other issues important to itself; this is exemplified in Iran's links with al-Qa'ida, despite the Wahhabi anti-Shiite ideology of that organization.

In contrast to the Sunni Jihadi–Salafi concept of defensive Jihad, the Shiite interpretation of this concept is not a spontaneous defense of the homeland, but a decision to be taken by the Ruler-Jurisprudent (*vali faqih*). He – and he alone – has the capability and authority to weigh all considerations and to take the decision whether the Jihad should proceed or not.

A small number of Jihadi-Salafi intellectuals have addressed the question of weapons of mass destruction. This discussion focuses on the legalistic permission to use such weapons (that may kill Muslims as a corollary of killing infidels, etc.). The basic justification for Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad al-Fahd's *fatwa* regarding the permissibility of WMD is reciprocity: the behavior of the United States against the Muslims is such that it warrants use of weapons of mass destruction. The argument in favor of acquiring nuclear weapons is not unique to the radical margins of the Islamist movement. As long as nuclear weapons are held by the enemies of the Muslims (the United States, Israel, or any other nation), it is the **Islamic duty of all Muslim countries to acquire such weapons**. A Muslim regime that does not fulfill this duty is a sinner and may be guilty of "corruption (*fasad*) on earth".

# Introduction

The close affinity between the religious and political in Islam and the predilection of radical Islamic organizations towards religious motivation makes it difficult to draw a picture of these organizations' political and military strategies as distinct from their religious convictions. The use of apocalyptic rhetoric for motivation of followers is also not easily distinguished from the real expectations and practical plans of radical leaders. There is no doubt however that these organizations do act on the basis of a perception of strategic priorities. In other words; "This is madness but there is a method in it".

This study focuses on the main radical Islamist movements and ideological trends. The sources of the strategic thinking of Islamic movements are found in essays and books – much of which is distributed over the Internet. These movements are not monolithic ideological churches, and there is a degree of diversity even within those which avow the same final goals. At the same time, it is frequently difficult to define the borders between them. Shiite radical ideologies are also dealt with here. While the Sunni movements are clearly non-state movements, radical Shiite ideology and strategy is essentially an extension of the Iranian state. This study examines the ideological elements and how they interact with Iranian national strategy.

Much of the underlying ideology of the more radical Sunni movements can be found in great detail in the tenets of "political Islamist" movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. The inherent logic of the latter seems to lead almost inexorably to the conclusions of the former. The ideology and strategy of these movements are not static; they change with the ebb and tide of the fortunes of the struggle that they represent, diverge and converge with the emergence of new consensual ideas that take root in their actual or target constituencies.

The questions posed in this study relate to a wide spectrum of strategic, operational and tactical issues connected to Islamist strategic thought and planning. Are there long term strategies that transcend the goal of "defense of Muslim lands" and aim at Islamization of the world? Are there comprehensive concepts of a future Islamic Order? If so, what will be the status of minority Muslim sects and non-Muslims in such a regime? What will be the relations between Islam and the West after the triumph of the former? How do these movements view the stages towards the strategic goals and interim goals? Is there evidence of operational thinking for managing the conflict with the "infidel" West that draws upon strategic perceptions? How does this thinking affect the prioritization of theatres and targets, willingness to enter into coalitions, the choice of weapons, particularly WMD? Finally, is there evidence of a convergence of these strategies into a common radical Islamic strategy of a wide range of radical Islamic movements?

The project engaged a large number of experts in Israel and the US who participated in a series of round tables and discussions (see Appendix A). This summary draws on these discussions and the papers that were submitted, however, it does not necessarily reflect the views of all the participants and the final conclusions are on the responsibility of the project leader alone.

# Sources of Islamist Strategic Thought

## The Pillars of Islamist Strategy

Important strategic issues are discussed in the radical Islamic literature and have a key role in the crystallization of strategies of those organizations. Strategic thought is not always readily identified; it is frequently embedded in religious and philosophical tractates, which seem to have little to do with practical strategic planning. The texts of this strategic thought are not written by military strategists but by senior religious authorities both in the Sunni and Shiite worlds. Indeed, it is almost impossible to separate the theological and political sources of Islamist strategy. In the eyes of the Islamist, the distinction between the two is artificial in any case, as the latter is but the reflection of the will of Allah – the actions of humans and “tests” that He poses before His believers.

In the strategic writings of the different movements, one may distinguish between three levels of agreement and diversity:

1. **The sources of the Strategic Vision** are basically common to all Islamic movements – Sunnis and Shiites alike. All the streams of “radical Islam” (including the “mainstream” Muslim Brotherhood movements) have in common near exclusive reliance on Islamic sources as the guidelines for social, political and strategic matters, rejection of Western values and cultural innovations and a view of the West as a contaminating force that must be opposed.
2. **The strategies for implementation of those goals** differ greatly. Despite the consensus regarding the primacy of Islamic sources in defining political matters, the understanding of this principle brings the Muslim Brotherhood to turn to political activism, Hizb al-Tahrir to focus on the philosophy of the restoration of the Caliphate, whereas the traditional Salafi-Wahhabi trend to emphasize the back-channel influence of the clerics over the regime. Conversely, the same vision of Islamization of the political system brought Khomeini to invent a system based on handing over total temporal power to the Shiite clerics.
3. **Tactical local responses** in which specific circumstances have the upper hand in dictating modes of action and thinking. The diversity becomes even more pronounced when we focus on geography as well as ideology.

The common ideological Weltanschauung notwithstanding, the degree of political flexibility of the Islamist movements in implementing their strategy differs from one theatre to another. Different circumstances and stimuli give birth to a similar phenomenon due to the common Islamic tradition. However, in each country or region, the phenomenon varies according to factors such as Islamic leadership, local traditions and collective identities, the identity and strength of the enemy, means available for the Islamists and targets. This diversity hampers organizational uniformity. Islamist organizations have not been able so far to form an “Islamist International” and even do not aspire to form such an International and do not even debate the issue seriously. Even the long standing forum of the “International Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood” which purports to represent the “world

movement” of the Brotherhood has little or no influence on the policies of the national MB movements.

One conclusion from reading the texts of the various movements is that the more “conservative” and less “radical” the movement is, the greater diversity exists between its branches and ideologues. The radical worldview tends, conversely, to be much more uniform and less adaptable. It appears that the diversity that characterizes the MB and its offshoots derives primarily from its core self image as a political-social movement with a strong survival instinct that dictates a Realpolitik attitude and adaptation to the social and political environment in which each movement exists. The Jihadi-Salafi movements on the other hand tend to be more similar to each other in their reading of the strategic situation and their practical conclusions regarding the struggle. This may be attributed to the limited number of strategic thinkers – most of them from the Saudi-Arabian or Egyptian milieu (either by birth or by education) – and the influence of these thinkers on the rank and file of the Jihadi movement.

Analysis of the Islamist strategic literature leads to identification of **six “pillars” of Islamist strategic thinking**. These “pillars” appear in most Islamist streams in some degree. They are: the **religious-“legalistic” pillar** (the underlying belief regarding the commandments of Allah to the Muslims in regard to relations with the “infidels” and Jihad); **the apocalyptic pillar** (the belief in the link between the Jihad and the impending “End of Days”); **the political pillar** (a quasi-secular analysis of the political balance of power between the Muslims and their enemies, which is the basis of strategic and operative prioritization of the enemy); **the military pillar** (military analysis of targets and opportunities), the **pillar of Jihad**; and the **pillar of Martyrdom**.

### *The “Religious” Pillar*

The strategies of the Islamist movements have a broad common denominator in the unambiguous narrative that all issues – religious, political or military – must be directly derived from the sources of the Koran, Hadith and *Shari’a* rulings. The underlying assumption of all Islamist movements that there is nothing in modern situations that cannot be judged by analogy to the rulings and behavior of the Prophet creates a common basis for debate between the different trends – a debate which can be found – either overtly or between the lines – in these texts.

The basic principles of most of these texts are identical: the conditions under which a defensive Jihad is in force and the implications of that situation for the duty of Muslims to take part in it. The discussion in the majority of these texts is not over the legitimacy or relevance of these texts to the modern struggle, but over the hermeneutics of those texts and the courses of action that should be derived from them. Sunni and Shiite Islamists alike subordinate their strategic planning to the legal rulings of the scholars/clerics that either lead the organizations or support the leaders. The issues that are brought to the final judgment of these scholars include such issues as: the very definition, current implementation, and area of application of the state of Jihad; who must participate in Jihad, and how; what are the rules of engagement of the Jihad; how should Jihad be funded; the behavior of a Muslim towards the *kuffar* and other similar questions.

This common denominator can be found in all Islamist movements – Sunni and Shiite alike. Due to the divine nature of the sources – Islamist thought, the room for independent interpretation and adaptation to modern reality is narrow and marginal and where it does exist must derive from the way of life and customs of the Islamic patriarchs (*al-salaf al-salih*) or the “companions” (*al-Sahaba*) of the Prophet for the Sunni movements (the Shiites do not worship all the companions) and the Imams, the descendants of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib for the Shiite movements. Any idea, concept or religious ruling in this literature in the individual, social or political spheres is binding and sanctified and becomes the Word of the living God by basing it on citations of rulings from the Koran or the Hadith. Its application – a sacred duty, whether it be individual, societal or through Islamic rule. Deviation from its application may bring about a declaration that the deviate, whether an individual or rule – is an apostate that has abandoned the Muslim community and whose fate is death. This inflexible and uncompromising religious approach has turned the followers of the Jihadist stream into totally loyal people who obey any order or religious ruling, especially the one calling for Jihad and self-sacrifice for its sake.

### **Sunni Movements**

The **Sunni movements** are all inspired by the same religious sources: medieval authorities such as Ibn Taymiyya and later intellectuals and leaders that have written since the early 1980s. The essence of the principles of these movements can be expressed in the original slogan of the Muslim Brotherhood – *Al-Islam Huwa al-Hall* (Islam is the Solution). This slogan was formulated originally to help mobilize the masses for revolution in the Arab (Muslim) countries, but evolved into a concept of political struggle with the West as well, both within – land of Islam and outside of it.

Hence, the struggle conducted by the “Afghan Arabs” for the liberation of Afghanistan from Soviet occupation in the 1980s was not a mere military struggle but a divinely ordained crucible of faith for the Muslim Mujahidin for forging the Jihad movement, and enriching the doctrine of Jihad. As the hand of God was seen in the victory over the Soviet Union, the implications of that victory were also viewed in the context of the divine and not the mundane. The strategy that developed in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was therefore based first and foremost on religious grounds.

The battle taking place today over the fate of Iraq is in fact the continuation of the same outlook, and fuels the preservation and development of Jihad strategy. However, the theatre of the Iraqi Jihad has added significance. In the parlance of the Jihad movements themselves, the Iraqi Jihad takes place in the “heart of the Muslim World”, in the land of the Caliphs and in close proximity to the Holy Land of the Hijaz. This location bears a religious meaning that the Jihad is coming closer to its core goals: liberation of the Holy Land from infidel control. It is this proximity that fires the imagination of potential *mujahidin* and reinforces the religious dimension of the struggle.

## Shiite Radicalism

The forging of the strategy of **modern Shiite radicalism** bears some similarities to the Sunni instance. The crucible of Shiite radicalism was not Afghanistan and the USSR, but rather the victory of the Islamic Revolution over the regime of the Shah – and by extension over the United States. The sense of intoxication of the Afghani Mujahidin in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union – analogous to the sense of immunity that Khomeini reflected after the Revolution (“America cannot do a damn thing”). This sense of immunity though was tempered in Iran by the burden of preserving the national interests of Iran and by the suffering incurred during the Iraq-Iran War. The differences in religious principles between Sunnis and Shiites affected the development of the two movements; whereas Sunni doctrines draw on a tradition of supremacy, Shiite doctrines reflected the status of the Shiites as the “oppressed upon earth” and an ingrained need to incorporate realistic and pragmatic considerations of “public interest” (*maslaha*) in their political and strategic thought.

Moreover, the guiding principles of Shiite radicalism are much clearer and canonized than the Sunni counterpart. In essence all radical Shiite movements stem from the doctrine of Ayatollah Khomeini and accept his principle of *Velayat-e Faqih*. The national strategic interests of Iran are projected by extension into the strategic thought of almost all Shiite radical movements – from Hizballah in Lebanon to the Mahdi’s Army in Iraq.

The upper layer of the Iranian ideology of “Export of Revolution” is (Pan-) **Islamism**. The Iranian Revolution did not portray itself to the Muslim world as a “Shiite” revolution, but as an **Islamic** Revolution for Muslims throughout the world. This inclusive attitude is part of Khomeini’s original doctrine even before the Revolution and was set forth by him in countless documents and speeches. Khomeini did not restrict his revolutionary vision to re-Islamization of the Muslim *Umma*, but saw in the Islamic regime in Iran a basis for renewing the spread of Islam to the “oppressed” peoples around the world.

The general Islamic frame of reference of the regime entails a belief in the universalism of the Islamic mission of the Revolution. Hence, the ideology of the regime motivated the various arms of the state to forge alliances against the “world arrogance” (i.e. the United States) not only with groups and states whose ideologies were closely compatible with that of Iran, but also with any element, which saw the US as a nemesis. Consequently, the “Islam” that the Iranian regime markets to Sunnis in Central Asia, South-East Asia and Africa is a “neo-Shiite” (“Shi’a-Lite”) ecumenical Islam which is designed to be palatable to all Muslims – Arabs and non-Arabs, Sunnis and Shiites, and through which even heterodox sects (e.g. Alawites) are to be brought back into the fold. This Islamic model highlights the Shiite self-image as the faith of the “oppressed”, as opposed to the corrupted Islam of the Gulf Arabs, which are linked to the “oppressor”.

## ***The “Apocalyptic” Pillar***

### **Sunni Movements**

Since 11 September, there has been a swell in apocalyptic interpretations of current world events. The “glorious raids” of 11 September and the subsequent American occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq were subsequently viewed as “signs” that have been foreseen of the imminent apocalypse (*ashrat al-sa’a*). These omens join previous signs that have already appeared: the spread and increase of licentiousness, prostitution, alcohol consumption and killing. The world is now in the last of a series of stages to be endured by the nation and about which the Prophet spoke. In the present era Muslims live in conspicuous inferiority compared to the superiority of the infidels but the triumph of Islam is assured. This triumph will be manifested both through spiritual ascendancy of Islam over infidelity, and through military victory of Islam (by Jihad) over the entire world, which will then become *dar al-Islam*. The “End of Days” is conditional on these victories and therefore the Jihad cannot be open to any compromise. Hence, Jihad will continue until the Day of Judgment.

The clash between Islam and the “crusading” West occurs, according to the Jihadi writings, not only in the present dimension, but in an eternal dimension that began between the two sides with the birth of Islam and is destined to continue until the eschatological events of the “End of Days”. The “apocalyptic pillar” of Islamist strategy is not as apparent or prevalent as the religious-juristic pillar but it has played a major role in Islamic movements as far back as the movement of the Mahdi in Sudan and the attack on the great mosque in Mecca by Juhayman al-Utaybi and the self-styled Mahdi – Muhammad bin ‘Abdallah al-Qahtani in 1979. More recently, the tendency is to integrate eschatological elements in the Jihadi doctrines. This is effected through citation of signs relating to the Last Day (*al-yawm al-akhir* or *yawm al-qiyama*) and linking them to contemporary events.

In this context, the Jihadi movement identifies itself with the elected group that merits the grace of God (*al-ta’ifa al-mansura*). The extensive literature on *al-ta’ifa al-mansura* creates a mystic aura around it: it begins with the *Sahaba* and continues to exist – at times explicitly and others implicitly – until the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyama*). It possesses superior qualities and is immune to all evil. The fact that it has now surfaced and is identified in our generation with the Jihad and Mujahidin groups indicates that we are now living in a period of omens presaging the Day of Judgment at the End of Days. *Al-ta’ifa al-mansura* is expected, according to the eschatological events, to achieve military victory over its enemies and fill the central role of fulfilling the ideal of Islam on earth. The main theater of events in which *al-ta’ifa al-mansura* will operate is *al-Sham* (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and the Sinai). Then *al-ta’ifa al-mansura* will spread to the Arabian Peninsula. It will continue to operate until it fulfills the role imposed on it. The Mahdi will join forces with *al-ta’ifa al-mansura* and will conquer the land of Sham (Syria-Lebanon-Palestine) and then, together with Jesus will fight the anti-Christ (*al-masih al-dajjal*). This stage of the apocalypse is followed in some of the writings by a cataclysm (which in some of the descriptions resembles a nuclear holocaust) after which chaos will prevail and the era of the cosmic verses in the Koran (Sura 41) will begin.



Cosmic phenomena will occur and on the same day the beast (*al-dabba*) will depart from the land (Sura 27:82), and shortly after that the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyama*) will come.

The apocalyptic dimension coexists with some tension with the strategic dimension which emphasizes the constant shifts in the situation of Islam and takes into account that Islam may suffer setbacks. The two approaches appear to be given to mutual tension, but in fact complement one another. The Jihadist Salafiyya intellectuals have a clear interest in focusing on the present-day dimension of the clash in order to reinforce their followers on the one hand, and encourage them to embark on a counter-attack on the other. At the same time, the apocalyptic message plays an important role in bolstering the morale of the *mujahidin* who should not lose heart, knowing that victory is guaranteed.

While the Jihadi literature shows more propensity towards apocalyptic ideas, these ideas can also be found in “mainstream” Islamist movements such as the MB. Thus, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi himself saw that “the signs of salvation are absolute, numerous, and as plain as day, indicating that the future belongs to Islam and that Allah's religion will defeat all other religions... the conquest of Rome and the spread of Islam till it includes all that is in night and day... prelude to the return of the Caliphate.”<sup>1</sup> The West, the United States, and Israel are likened to the ancient tribes of ‘Ad and Thamud, which rejected the message of Mohammad and were therefore annihilated, or to Pharaoh’s Egypt, to which Allah sent a series of plagues, finally drowning his troops in the sea.<sup>2</sup>

### Shiite Radicalism

Much attention has been paid lately to the apocalyptic dimension of Shiite radicalism. Iran since Khomeini has witnessed a revival of interest in, and an eagerness for the return of, the Mahdi (the “Rightly Guided One”, the Muslim savior). Statements and actions by the incumbent President of Iran, Mahmud Ahmadinejad seem to indicate that at least he and his close affiliates are motivated by a Mahdivist vision of the world being on the threshold of the End of Days, with their role being to expedite the re-appearance of the Hidden Imam. The implication of these motivations that may be inferred is that people with such a faith should not be deterred from actions that may even precipitate a nuclear war.

However, this trend – while it exists – runs counter to the mainstream of Shiite religious history. It is the exception and not the rule of Shiite religious thought and is even foreign to the Khomeinist doctrine that rules Iran. The return of the Hidden Imam (in occultation since 873) was deferred until the end of history, hence effectively neutralizing apocalyptic Mahdivism. Historically, the Shi’a has been one of the most resolutely *anti-messianic* movements in Islam. It has been consistent in

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<sup>1</sup> Fatwa: Yusuf al-Qaradawi, “*Mubasharat fi Intisar al-Islam*,” (Portents for the victory of Islam) 1 April 2002, <http://www.islamonline.net/fatwa/arabic/FatwaDisplay.asp?hFatwaID=2042>.

<sup>2</sup> Fatwa: Sheikh al-Khudhayr, 21 September 2001, quoted in *MEMRI, Special Report 25* (2004). [http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR2504#\\_edn12](http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR2504#_edn12); <http://saaidd.net/Waratah/khudier/k5.htm>.

ostracizing all Messianic movements for messianic restoration. From the burning of medieval *ghulat* to the execution of 19<sup>th</sup> century Babis and persecution of the Bahais, Shiite orthodoxy has been extremely effective in putting down Mahdist movements. It should be noted however, that all these cases were in the context of those who claimed to be intermediaries between the community and the Imam, and thus were claiming, in essence, the mantle of Prophecy. The undercurrent of belief that the Imam was not totally incommunicado for his devotees and it is possible to “hasten” his advent remained throughout the ages. Today it can be found in writings associated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard for whom it is not clear to what extent this is a key tenet.

The jurists of Shiite Islam also played a pivotal role in discouraging such ideas; during the middle ages, they had become an anchor of religious stability. The Shiite clerical establishment based their authority on the occultation of the Imam and the absence of any person who could claim that he served as a conduit for communication with him. Over the centuries the clerical establishment succeeded in suppressing any religious tendency that dared to call for “hastening” the advent of the Imam or claimed direct communication with him. Traditional Shiite doctrine based itself on inference of the will of the Imam through erudite reading of the religious texts and carefully regulated exegesis of sacred texts by only the most highly initiated *mujtahidin* – not direct revelation. Even Khomeini himself did not dare claim to have direct communication with the Hidden Imam. The power of the *'ulama* eventually paved the way for the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the future of this Revolution in the eyes of its “old guard” at least is contingent on continuing to keep the Imam in total occultation. In this light, Ahmadinejad’s emphasis on the imminent advent of the Mahdi is quite foreign even to the radical doctrines of revolutionary Iran.

Having said that, it is not clear how strong the Mahdivist doctrine that Ahmadinejad represents is and particularly what its hold is in the Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) and the most influential schools in Qom. Without the apocalyptic component, Iranian pragmatism may be neutralized by the fact that martyrdom tends to be identified in Shiite lore with the death of the Imam Hussein – the “Prince of Martyrs”. The essence of his act is perceived as the antithesis of Realpolitik and the triumph of moral values over the egotistic wish for life. This Weltanschauung, without regard to Mahdivism has a destabilizing potential in the event of a nuclear impasse.

### ***The “Political” Pillar***

The political pillar of Islamist strategy is evident in both Sunni and Shiite strategies – both of which show a strong sense of Realpolitik and an understanding of the current balance of power. Writings of both Sunni and Shiite (mainly Iranian) strategists are replete with detailed analyses of the enemy, his alliances, his strengths and his weaknesses. This analysis is the basis for the discussion of prioritization of targets, policy of terrorism abroad and a general policy towards different parties.

The priority accorded to concentrating the war and cultural effort against one enemy or another varies in accordance with global circumstances and existing

opportunities, and is the result of strategic calculation on the one hand, and existing opportunities and constellations on the other. Thus the 11 September terror attack against the World Trade Center in Manhattan was carried out after the focus had been shifted from the internal enemy – due to operational difficulties in waging a war against it – to the external enemy that was perceived as an attractive target and unprepared. At the same time, there is evidence of an assessment that such an attack would have an effect of precipitating wide support for the Jihad movement within the Muslim world.

### ***The “Military” Pillar***

The Islamist writings are replete with military analysis of the pros and cons of various courses of action. This can be clearly seen in the discussion of acquisition of WMD and the advantages and disadvantages of suicide attacks. This aspect is discussed below (operational thinking).

The distinction between the “gradualist” MB movements and the Jihadi-Salafi trends is particularly apparent in their attitudes towards the “military” pillar. While the debate that took place some time before 11 September 2001 and in its wake about the religious legitimacy and political wisdom of suicide attacks has been decided in favor of those who favor them, the different movements and even elements within each movement debate three main issues: the legitimacy of killing other Muslims in the course of a Jihad (*tatarrus*); the legitimacy of killing non-Muslims in Muslim countries outside of the theatre of Jihad (the issue of a “protected alien” – *musta’min*) and justification of terrorist attacks in the West proper. While much of the debate over these issues is couched in juristic terms, behind the religious language lays solid military logic.

### ***The “Pillar of Jihad”***

A key element of consensus in the strategic discourse among the different Islamist movements is the role of Jihad. The role of this concept in Islamist strategy does not differ radically in its Sunni and Shiite manifestations. The objectives of Jihad however and the leadership of Jihad are different.

### **Sunni Movements**

The focus in the Salafi-Jihadi strategic thinking on Jihad and martyrdom as the prime means for achieving the Islamist goals can be found in the basic ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Ideologues of all camps distinguish between a “defensive Jihad” (*jihad al-daf’ / jihad al-difa’*) for liberation of Muslims from the threat or occupation of infidels, and the “initiated Jihad” (*jihad al-talab wa-al-ibtida’*) “until religion (in the world) is Allah’s” (Sura 2:193). The former is incumbent on each and every able Muslim man, woman and even child of the country under occupation, and it has precedence over the other duties (*fara’id*). On the other hand, the latter is deferred until the unification of the Muslim *Umma* under a leader as it is, in essence, a “collective duty” and not an individual one. It is noteworthy that there is no clear reference to this distinction in classical sources and its modern usage is generally attributed to the writings of Sheikh ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam in the light of the Afghani

Jihad. Even classical Wahhabi ideology does not at all separate between one form of Jihad to another, and therefore the Jihadists clearly deviate from the original Wahhabiyya, which concentrates the power to decide upon Jihad on the Imam (the King), not on religious clerics. All Islamist movements – Sunni and Shiite alike – concur that under the current circumstances the defensive military *Jihad* (Jihad for the sake of God – *jihad fi sabil Allah*) is a personal duty (*fard ‘ayn*).

On the other hand, few movements have dealt in depth with the issue of “offensive Jihad” – *jihad al-talab wa-al-ibtida’*. ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam, the prophet of the Jihad doctrine, and intellectuals that followed him have pointed out that ultimately the Jihad will not end until the rule of Islam is achieved over “*dar al-harb*”, the Islamic Caliphate is re-established, and the Word of Allah is supreme throughout the world. Lately some al-Qa’ida oriented books have dealt with the subject, reiterating that the final goal is the Islamization of the entire world. Most Islamist movements, however, shy away from this subject. It may be that a sense of victory in Iraq will fuel the desire to widen the scope of the goals and to deal with the renewal of the offensive Jihad “until the word of Allah is supreme”.

The present general MB position is that while defensive Jihad to liberate occupied Muslim lands is an individual religious duty, offensive Jihad is not in effect. Sheikh al-Qaradawi stated clearly after 11 September 2001 that “we” are not in the stage of *jihad al-talab*, but in a defensive Jihad. *Jihad al-talab*, he said, can take place only when there is an Islamic Caliphate. Similarly the eminent Tunisian Sheikh Rashid al-Ghannushi rejects Jihad at this stage as a means to force Islam on mankind, and is designed only to repulse aggression on the *Umma*. Al-Ghannushi rejects the legal argument used by al-Qa’ida to justify attacks on civilians in Western countries, namely the principle of reciprocity (*al-mu’amala bi-al-mithl*) for what Western governments do to Muslim peoples, stating that this contradicts the Islamic principles of punishment, which forbids punishing a person for a wrong committed by another.

Hence, Jihad in the parlance of the Jihadist movement is at the present stage of the conflict primarily a means of defense against the enemies of Islam that will evolve later on into a strategy for attack. **However, Jihad is not a “necessary evil” but is also an aim in itself.** Prominent in the literature is the raising of Jihad to the status of an obligation, when only the principle of faith in God itself is loftier.

The ideological and practical debate between the different Islamist movements in this context seems to be over the conditions which “trigger” this Jihad and whether or not there exist conditions that may bring it to an end (or to a cease-fire – *hudna*). Since the definition of defense has been extended in Islamist thought (as far back as Sayyid Qutb) to include not only actual military occupation of a Muslim land (Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Palestine, etc.) but also “spiritual” or economic occupation, such phenomena as Western clothing, Western businesses and economy in Muslim lands, Western media et alia, the concept of the defensive Jihad no longer seems restricted to a war that comes to an end once the “infidel” military occupation comes to an end. The “heretication” (*takfir*) of Muslim regimes (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan) by many of the Jihadi-Salafi stream so as to consider those countries “occupied” by “apostates” imposes a state of “defensive Jihad” in those countries. This is where the Jihadi-Salafi stream ostensibly parts from the Muslim Brotherhood.

The latter does not accept the ruling of *takfir* against incumbent regimes. However, by accepting the principle that failure of the Muslims under attack or occupation causes the Jihad to become an individual duty for a growing periphery of neighboring Muslims, the MB accepts the underlying principles that guide the strategic view of the Salafi–Jihadi movement. Since the Muslims of the above mentioned "occupied" lands (not to mention the occupation of Andalus) have not repelled the "infidel occupiers", the MB interpretation leads to the same conclusion of al-Qa'ida, that Jihad has become a personal obligation for all Muslims throughout the world.

Furthermore, the weapons and means that the Muslims may (or must) avail themselves of are the same for both types of Jihad. Therefore, the distinction between them for purposes of analyzing Islamist strategy becomes blurred. The texts dealing with the defensive Jihad debate whether all citizens of the "occupying power" should be regarded as "combatants" (*ahl al-qital*) and whether there is religious justification for attacks outside the borders of the "invaded" Muslim country ("raids" – *ghazawat*). This can be exemplified in the Egyptian MB's position the terrorist attacks in Sinai, which could be seen as directed against Israel, or against Westerners, or against the Egyptian regime, and were carried out by a *takfiri* group (Jama'at al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad). The MB did not condemn the attack on Taba (October 2004) as it was directed against Israelis ("tourist occupiers"); it was a response to the "atrocities" of Israel in Palestine and of the US in Iraq, and therefore was a defensive Jihad. In his reaction to the next attack, on Sharm al-Sheikh (23 July 2005), the Egyptian MB General Guide, Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, remarked that the aggression and wars perpetrated by global Imperialism against the world's peoples gave birth to the culture of violence and terrorism, but he also condemned the attacks, saying that they contradicted religion and religious law. This condemnation was repeated in 'Akif's response to the 24 April 2006 attacks on Dhahab, only this time the sympathy for the terrorists' motivation was dropped, probably because most of the victims were Egyptians, and it was clear that this time it was an attack on the state and not a defensive Jihad. Unlike Taba, the Sharm al-Sheikh and Dhahab bombings were called in the MB publications "terrorist operations" (*'amaliat irhabiyya*).

## Shiite Radicalism

The Shiite concept of Jihad differs from the Sunni Salafi-Jihadi concept in two main areas: the causes and goals of Jihad (what are the "threats" towards Islam that warrant Jihad) and the leadership of Jihad.

In the Shiite doctrine of Jihad, as manifested in Iran and its proxies (Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi Shiite movements) Jihad is not a means alone to obtain a political objective but a "pillar" of faith, a means to test the belief of the Muslim by putting him through trials and tribulations (in emulation of the Imams Ali and Hussein) and is the path towards unity with Allah's will; it serves the interests of the believers, and doing so fulfills the Islamic obligation to serve the community (over and above the individual) and it "pays" as it will be rewarded in this world by Allah who will give the believers victory.<sup>3</sup> The Shiite concept of Jihad views the "**initiated jihad**" (*al-*

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<sup>3</sup> See Na'im Qassem, *Hizbullah, The Story from Within*, (London: Saqi books, 2005), pp. 34–39.

*jiḥād al-ibtida'i*) is in abeyance pending the re-appearance of the Hidden Imam. Therefore the military jihad, in the eyes of Shiite movements, can only be a **defensive jihad** (*al-jihad al-difa'i*), which is a duty for all Muslims when they face aggression. In this latter matter, the Shiite concept corresponds to the Sunni Salafi-Jihadi one.

In contrast to the Sunni jihadi-Salafi concept of defensive jihad, however, the Shiite interpretation of “defensive Jihad” is not a spontaneous defense of the homeland, but a decision to be taken by the Ruler-Jurisprudent (*vali faqih*). He – and he alone – has the capability and authority to weigh all considerations and to take the decision whether the jihad should proceed or not. The *vali faqih* may “suspend” jihad (for example: Iran’s Jihad against Iraq during the Iraq-Iran war) on the basis of Realpolitik and “public interest” (*maslaha*) of the (Iranian) people. The leaderships of Iran’s proxy organizations, however, do not have the authority to determine the “public good” and they must turn to the *vali faqih* who is the Iranian Supreme Leader – Khamene’i.<sup>4</sup> His understanding of “public interest” though is not necessarily congruent to the interests of Lebanon or Iraq in general, the Shiites of Lebanon or Iraq or even of Hezbollah or the Mahdi’s Army as organizations; he takes into account the wider context of the conflict between Islam (or at least Shiite Islam) and the West, and implicitly, the primacy of Iran’s national interest over all others.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, proxy movements are expected to be willing to risk losses of its own for the greater good as defined in Iran. This principle may be relevant at a time when Hizballah sees itself as waging a war in the framework of a larger confrontation between the US and Israel on one side and Iran (and the “Muslims”) on the other side.

On the other hand, the subordination of the Shiite Jihad to a state leadership allows for room for maneuver in determining whether the jihad should take the form of actual fighting or alternative forms of preparation for jihad which are equally important at a time that actual fighting is in abeyance (of course based on the orders of the *wali faqih*). These include “patience and steadfastness” (*sabr wa-sumud*), training, self-education and the “jihad of construction” (*jiḥād al-binaa'*) Jihad is also described as activity which plays a societal role, as its very nature (the willingness of the individual to sacrifice himself) it demonstrates the primacy of the needs of society rather than those of the individual alone: religious piety; independence and protection of the homeland against the avarice of the idle imperialists; and the struggle to abolish oppression.<sup>6</sup>

### ***The “Pillar of Martyrdom”***

Jihadist Salafiyya beliefs sanctify the value of self-sacrifice for God (*istishhad*) and perceives it as deriving from the duty of Jihad. Self-sacrifice brings with it reward: assurance of reaching the next world, or paradise. Hence there is nothing loftier than Jihad and self-sacrifice except for the faith itself, and there is no greater reward than fulfilling these two commandments. Al-Qa'ida is in contention with the

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> This is not seen as a capricious or cynical preference. Khomeini himself ruled that the continued existence of the Islamic Regime in Iran takes precedence over all other duties and considerations. This is because that is the only regime that can protect Islam, and its destruction would be in great danger for Islam in general.

<sup>6</sup> Various pamphlets found in South Lebanon.

religious establishments that refute what is known by al-Qa'ida as "*istishhad*". Furthermore, it is attempting to globalize the idea of *istishhad*. Today, this idea serves al-Qa'ida as its principal weapon in the battle for Iraq, and more recently it began using it in the Maghrib.

The Salafi-Jihadi movement has inherited from the MB the ideal of martyrdom (*shahada*), not as a necessary evil but as "a consummation devoutly to be wished". Hasan al-Banna even argued that Jihad was the second pillar of faith after the testimony of faith that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger, and recapitulated the *hadith*, that "He who dies and has not fought, and was not resolved to fight, has died a *jahiliyya* death."<sup>7</sup> Martyrdom is central to Jihad. Allah grants a "noble life" only to that nation which knows how to die a noble death".<sup>8</sup> Death is an art (*al-mawt fann*) and the Muslims are obliged to prefer it over life if they desire victory.<sup>9</sup> This tenet of the MB makes it difficult to draw a sharp difference between it and the Salafi-Jihadi trends regarding issues such as suicide attacks.

## Shiite Radicalism

The core belief in radical Shiite ideological texts (mainly based on Hezbollah texts which were written in Iran) is the centrality of jihad as a "doctrine and a program of action", through which a Muslim may "sacrifice his life for the sake of Allah and attain paradise". Martyrdom "for Allah's sake" (*shahada*) is not a necessary evil but the greatest reward that is accorded to a *mujahid* and the pinnacle of jihad. Hizballah documents quote the saying attributed to the Imam 'Ali <sup>iph and founder of the Shi'a</sup> that: "Jihad is one of the gateways to paradise, which Allah has opened unto His most loyal believers [only]." The role models of Hizballah are the Imams 'Ali and Hussein, who went into battle knowing they were heavily outnumbered and that they were going to become martyred. Hizballah itself is, therefore, dedicated to that principle and is portrayed as a paradigm of self-sacrifice, willing to ignore all "pragmatic" considerations out of commitment to Allah.<sup>10</sup> The *mujahid* derives his power from his "revolutionary sentiment". The *mujahid* does not succumb to deprivation, but rather challenges it. This is the secret of the victories of Islam throughout the ages.<sup>11</sup> The slogan of Hizballah – "For verily Hizballah (the Party of Allah) will overcome,"<sup>12</sup> relates specifically to the dauntlessness of the organization in its waging of jihad.

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<sup>7</sup> "Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun wa-'Awdat al-Sahwa al-Islamiyyah," (The Muslim Brotherhood and the Reawakening of Islam [www.ikhwanonline.com](http://www.ikhwanonline.com), 10 July 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 206-207.

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

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Jihad* (Pamphlet found in South Lebanon), The Imam Khomeini Cultural Center, Harat Huriek, Beirut.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Surat al-Ma'ida (5:56). The context of the verse is the warning against "taking Jews and Christians as friends" and the prophecy that Allah will choose those who "love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, wage jihad for Allah's sake and do not fear censure" to be victorious.

## Key Movements and Thinkers

### *Sunni Ideologues*

The Sunni Islamist movements all base their ideology on the sources of the Muslim Brotherhood and/or those of the Wahhabi movement in the Arabian Peninsula. This ideology interprets Muslim history as a process of deterioration since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and particularly after the abolition of the Caliphate). The culprit for this situation is the infiltration of Western mores and culture.

The literary sources of Islamist strategic thinking are readily available on the Internet and in book stores across the Muslim world. The discussion of strategic issues is most evident in the writings of “mainstream” Islamist movements, which have “research centers” that perform strategic research (such as those affiliated with the **Muslim Brotherhood** in Egypt). The Muslim Brotherhood is an ideological movement which encompasses a number of organizations in different Arab countries (mainly Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Sudan and Palestine – Hamas) with offshoots in other countries including the West. The main sources of strategic writings of this type are prominent clerics such as Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Egypt/Qatar), Hasan al-Turabi (Sudan), Sheikh Rashid Ghannushi (Tunisia/London), Tariq Ramadan.

**The World Jihad movement** led by al-Qa'ida has been particularly prolific in developing a corpus of strategic thinking. While this has not been processed into one consensual document, and remains hidden in different treatises and ideas, certain common elements can be discerned. This literature focuses mainly on addressing the definition of the enemy and its nature, the global view of relations between Islam and the outside world, the ultimate aims and the ways and means of attaining them. This thinking also deals with apocalyptic ideas from which it may be inferred – and sometimes it is even explicitly stated - that the present era is approaching End of Days in which redemption and victory over its enemies are predicted. In any event, the Muslims are called upon not to remain indifferent but to take the destiny of the *Umma* and their divine mission into their own hands and fulfill their mission of local and global jihad in which victory is promised by Allah.

Some of the prominent strategists of this stream are Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Abu Mus'ab al-Najdi, Abu Basir al-Tartusi, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Fares Ahmad al-Shuwayl al-Zahrani (Abu Jandal al-Azdi), Nasser bin Hamad al-Fahd, 'Ali al-Hamid, and the late Yusuf al-'Ayiri. Their writing focused on the methods for implementing re-Islamization of the Muslim world (the Jihad against "apostate" regimes), the milestones towards victory over the "infidel" West and the strategic goal of the Islamist movement, including the model for the future Order of the Islamic world after the victory over the West (e.g. the Caliphate model). Other authors affiliated with al-Qa'ida in Iraq (such as Abu 'Abdallah Ahmad al-'Imran al-Najdi, Abu Muhammad al-Hilali and others whose true identity is not clear) deal directly with the strategy in Iraq. Arguably the most authoritative – if not best-formulated – strategy can be found in the writings of the second in command in al-Qa'ida – Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri.



Another Sunni movement with prolific writings on the “strategic goals” of the movement straddles the divide between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi-Jihadi stream. This is **Hizb al-Tahrir** (HT) in Central Asia. HT strategic writing is far more detailed and elaborate than that of either the Muslim Brotherhood or the Jihadi-Salafi trend insofar as the description of the goal of the Islamic regime is concerned. Its founder, Taqi al-Din al-Nabahani produced a “constitution” of the Caliphate as far back as the 1950s and the party continues to present a comprehensive world view and strategy.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Shiite Ideologues***

As noted above, Shiite strategy – **Iranian doctrine of “Export of Revolution”** – stems primarily from the writings and oral statements of the Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini. Khomeini’s main views were expounded many years before the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Tehran in his book *Islamic Governance (Hukumat-i Islami va Velayat-i Faqih)*, which called on the clergy to take upon themselves not only spiritual authority but political authority as well (the basis of the principle of *Velayat-e Faqih* or ‘Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists’).

The “Mahdist” doctrine can be found at the level of much less definitive texts: sermons of certain clerics, some of the writings of a number of Ayatollahs and the ramblings of the present Iranian President Ahmadinejad (who is neither an ideologue nor a scholar). Some apocalyptic writings and focus on the hastening of the Imam’s advent can be found in writings associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard.

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<sup>13</sup> Examples of these are books such as *Minhaj*, which deals with how the party intends to found a Caliphate and *Nizal al-Islam* which describes the Islamic regime in great detail.

# Identification of the Enemy

The **perception of the enemy**, its definition, the laws of war against it and its rationale, be it a defensive, deterrent or initiated war – are a pivotal component of Islamist strategy. In the light of the growing central role of the inclusion of the Shiites in the category of the “enemy” in Salafi-Jihadi strategy and operational behavior, it is difficult to draw a common picture for Sunni and Shiite movements. In general, though, for all Islamist movements the enemy of Islam is comprised of both local and external entities who are either overt or secret allies of each other.

## Sunni Movements

From the standpoint of Sunni Jihadist thought the enemy of Islam is comprised of two concentric and inter-related circles of conflict:

- In the inner-local circle the World Jihad conflict is with the Arab and Islamic regimes, “the apostates who have abandoned Islam” (*murtaddun*) and the Shiites (the “turncoats” or *rafidi*).
- In the outer circle the conflict is with “Crusaders”, (i.e. the West) and Zionism.

The two circles are, as noted, inexorably linked. The former are the “agents” of the latter in the Muslim *Umma* and the latter are the strategic hinterland of the former. The enemy is assessed in religious terms and analogous with the war fought against it by the Prophet Muhammad. It is therefore not new but the continuation of the same enemy of the Prophet from the inception of Islam: the *kuffar* without – the “infidels” (*kuffar*) and the traitor within – the “apostates” (*murtaddun*). These latter may be “natural apostates” (*murtadd fitri* – a born Muslim who has left Islam) or “local apostates” (*murtadd milli* – a Muslim who had not been born a Muslim, who has recanted and abandoned Islam). The enemy is amorphous, yet persistent in its worldview, its nature as “corrupter of the faith”, its hatred of true Islam that follows the path of *al-salaf al-salih*, and its cohesion into a single camp.

According to the Jihadist worldview, Islam’s war against these enemies from within and without is an ancient one and is inherent to Islamic military history. This confrontation was at the root of the wars that the Prophet waged against the original apostates and the tribes that abandoned Islam (the “*ridda*” wars). The conflict however is not restricted to the purge of Islam from the “*dar al-kuffar*” column” but it is rooted in the concept of the clash of civilizations that will continue until the End of Days. Hence there can be no recognition of a world order built upon international bodies, treaties, agreements and conventions. All of these are rendered worthless as civilizations are, by their very existence, doomed to be constantly at war with each other until the ultimate victory of Islam. For Islam, this is an existential war. In the balance is not only the physical existence of Muslims, but also the existence of belief in the unity of God and its rule in the world. This *Umma* is bound up in the concept of *al-wala’ wa-al-bara’a*, whose literal and conceptual meaning is absolute belief in God on the one hand, and on the other, disavowal of anything representing apostasy, whether it be idolatry or concepts drawn from the outside world and assimilated into Islamic society, such as nationalism, democracy and socialism. Hence

Islam's war is not only directed against a physical, concrete enemy, but against an ideological enemy in the form of apostasy and the abovementioned imported concepts.

1. The "enemy" in the eyes of all Sunni Islamist movements is composed of four main groups:
2. **The West**, led by the US, who are following and implementing the anti-Muslim Judeo-Christian political culture.
3. **The Jews, the Zionists and Israel**, which believe in the same Western concepts and influences the global anti-Muslim/anti-Arab attitude and the conflicts initiated by the "Crusaders".
4. "Apostate" Muslim regimes and rulers.
5. **Heterodox and secular or "atheistic" Muslims** in general – Shiites (*al-Murji'a* and *al-Rafida*), Alawites, Kurds. This group has become more central in Salafi-Jihadi strategy since the war in Iraq.

The strategic writings of the different movements deal with the different goals towards each of these groups:

The goal towards **Israel** is total eradication – sometimes of the Jews in general, based on Koranic verses and Hadiths which seem to indicate that the Jews are the servants of Satan, the *Dajjal* – Anti-Christ – and that their total destruction can hasten the "Last Day" and the final victory of Islam.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, most Jihadi texts do not focus on the conflict with Israel and tend to see Iraq as the main pivot of the Jihad. This lack of an Israeli focus is evident in the absence of a real effort (except on the part of Hamas and other Palestinian and Lebanese movements) to perform attacks against Israeli targets. This justification for this marginalization of the Palestinian problem had been set down by 'Abdallah 'Azzam himself during the Afghani Jihad in the 1980s.

Regarding the **West** the goal that transpires from the Jihadi strategic writings is an integrated military-economic defeat. In numerous Jihadi texts, the power of the West and particularly of the US is described as deriving from economic domination. The goal is therefore to attack targets that can cause severe damage to the Western economy, to drain its resources in an incessant war on terror and to drag the US into a series of "quagmires" that will generate stronger sentiment against it in the Muslim world and increase recruitment for the Jihad and opposition to the pro-American regimes. A debate exists within the Jihadi camp about legitimization and practical benefit from terrorist attacks in Western countries. Some thinkers (such as Abu Basir al-Tartusi) consider such attacks as both illegal and ill-conceived. Others see them as an essential component in the strategy of Jihad.

The strategy towards Muslim "apostate" rulers is more Here the MB and the Salafi-Jihadi stream are in true ideological disagreement. The former

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<sup>14</sup> "The (last) hour will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them. A Jew will hide behind a rock or a tree, and the rock or tree will call upon the Muslim: 'O Muslim, O Slave of Allah! There is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'" Sahih Muslim, Book 041, No. 6985.

rejects the idea of *takfir* on the religious level and sees conflict with the strong incumbent regimes as counter-productive. However, even within the Salafi camp there are differences. This can be seen in the differences between some of the Salafi Sheikhs in Saudi Arabia who denounced the attacks inside the Kingdom and the debate in Jordan about the attacks by Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi in 2005. It is the last group however which seems to really split the Islamist camp. The MB in general (with the exception of the Syrian and Lebanese branches) do not perform *takfir* of the Shiites and Alawites. Even within the Jihadi camp and al-Qa'ida itself there had been a debate about the wisdom of acting against the Shiites at this juncture.

## Shiite Radicalism

Like Sunni radicalism, the Shiite brand defines the “enemy” first and foremost by its link to the West. The United States, Britain and Israel are an “axis of evil”, whose intention is to topple the Islamic regime – in collaboration with many of its Arab neighbors. This struggle between Iran and its enemies is seen by the regime as an existential Manichean clash between forces of light and forces of darkness. The enmity of these countries to Iran is not seen as deriving from Iran's own political behavior but because of the desire on the part of those countries to prevent Iran from achieving its rightful status as a power in the region and to block the path of the Islamic Revolution. The motivation of the US to destroy the Islamic regime is viewed as ideological and not merely political or strategic. The US is a demonic “Great Satan”, unhampered by moral or international constraints, whereas Iran is the main challenge to its hegemony in the Gulf and the Middle East and the foremost threat to Israel. Since Iran is the main threat to US hegemony, it is also the prime target; hence no American administration would accept a settlement that would preclude actions against the regime and any agreement with America's European proxies (the UK, Germany) would be, *a priori*, a deception.

The Iranian (and radical Shiite) definition of the “inside enemy” though is problematic. For the Iranian regime this element is identified with the domestic opposition and the Mujahidin Khalq Organization (MKO). The latter are branded as “*munafiqun*” (lit: hypocrites – those who claimed in the time of the Prophet to be Muslims but betrayed the Muslims and hence are damned – the lowest level of Hell). The tendency of the Iranian Revolution to downplay its Shiite identity has become particularly relevant in the light of the Sunni-Shiite civil war in Iraq and the growing anti-Shiite sentiments in fundamentalist Sunni circles. Despite the burgeoning anti-Shiite attitudes among the Sunnis (and particularly the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia), Iran has not resorted to sectarian Shiite anti-Sunni rhetoric. This was true as well during and after the Israel-Lebanon fighting of summer 2006, which exacerbated – or at least exposed – the Sunni-Shiite rift. Iran has not opened an anti-Sunni front, and rather has launched a counter-attack against all those who are raising the anti-Shiite hysteria. This fact underscores both Iran's ambition to play a leadership role for the entire Muslim world (including Sunnis and Arabs) and the predominance of the Iranian national interest for the Iranian leadership.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Khamene'i: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/EN/index.php>.

## Strategic Visions

The underlying view of the world that guides most Islamist strategic thought is that the Muslim Nation has been humiliated by Western political, cultural and intellectual invasion, its religion corrupted, its political body weakened and its social structure destroyed and it must be restored to true, pure Islam. Hence, the immediate enemy is the West, both as a foreign entity and as an internal “fifth column” within Muslim lands.

This goal is not achievable only by individual or collective spiritual repentance. All the Islamist movements hold a holistic view of integral nature of Islam as religion and state (*din wa-dawla*) which are inseparable; a vision of reinstating Islam in its rightful place; and a number of principles regarding how to make that vision a reality.

In any strategy of long-term goals, one may expect an attempt to define a paradigmatic concept of leadership (Caliph, Imam). In fact, this has not been the case. One may speculate that modern Islamic movements preferred not to fall into the political pitfalls inherent in the Caliphate model: who will be the Caliph; how will he be elected and deposed (Islamic traditions do not provide a clear answer); how would such a model reflect on the Caliphate’s international relations (does an automatic state of Jihad exist as an obligation of the Caliph?); how should heterodox Muslims (including Shiites) and non-Muslims be treated? Should the former be considered apostates according to the neo-Wahhabi doctrines and the latter *dhimmi*? And what about absolute polytheists? These issues can be treated with more latitude in a model which does not have a clear Islamic tradition to guide it. Thus, the **Wahhabi** movement in Saudi Arabia opted for the historic paradigm of a Kingdom and the **Taliban** in Afghanistan founded an “Emirate”. The model of the **Islamic Revolution in Iran** was exempt from considering the Caliphate or the Emirate paradigm as Shiite doctrine rejects usurpation of the functions of the Imam and the very idea of *Velayat-e Faqih* (rule of the jurisprudent) represents an interim substitute until his return.

Therefore, most of the Islamist movements have refrained from presenting one unique legitimate form of government for a future Islamic regime. They have preferred to focus on the **principles** of Islamic governance, allowing for the continued paradigms of rule (sultanate, kingship, tribal inheritance, etc.) as long as they govern according to those principles.

The differences between the different Islamist movements are evident in the different paradigms that they present for the structure of the future Islamic order. Five main paradigms can be distinguished: (1) the “mainstream” Muslim Brotherhood; (2) The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood; (3) the Caliphate idea espoused by the Jihadi-Salafi stream and Hizb al-Tahrir; (4) the model of the Iranian Revolution; (5) nationalist Islamic movements in Central Asia.

### The Mainstream Muslim Brotherhood

The vision of the Muslim Brotherhood was originally put forth by its founder, Sheikh Hasan al-Banna: “We want the Muslim individual, the Muslim home, the

Muslim people, the Muslim government and the Muslim state which will lead the Islamic states, bring together the scattered Muslims and their ravished lands, then carry the banner of Jihad and the flag of the call to Allah until the world will be blessed by Islam's teachings.”<sup>16</sup> This statement continues to be posted today on the website of the Egyptian MB. All Islamist movements can easily subscribe to this strategic goal. At the same time, these organizations implement what they view as a practical agenda which will achieve their political aims. Political analysis in the writings of Jihad movements indicates that within the general religious frame of reference, they are acutely aware of practical political factors.

The paradigm of the **mainstream of the Muslim Brotherhood** represents a “lowest common denominator” to which most of the other movements can agree, though they would add elements of their own. This is due to the very essence of the gradualist doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood, which eschews “putting the carriage before the horse” by proposing a detailed prescription for a regime before the stage of *da'wa* has been accomplished. While the Muslim Brotherhood condemns the abolition of the Caliphate, it is the implementation of *Shari'a* and not necessarily the forming of a Caliphate that defines the Islamic order.<sup>17</sup> The Islamic state is supposed to be bound by three principles: (1) the Koran is the fundamental constitution. The Muslim Brotherhood's vision of the Islamic regime re-interprets the *Shari'a* and denies the jurists (*fuqaha*) and their legal rulings (*fiqh*) any sanctity; rejects slavish worship of tradition; opens the door of *ijtihad* for Muslims to be able to meet their present-day needs; and to the traditional legal principles of analogy (*qiyas*) and consensus (*ijma'*) it added the powers given the Muslim ruler to legislate for the general welfare; (2) the **government** operates on the concept of consultation (*shura*) through the institution of *ahl al-shura* or *ahl al-hall wa-al-'aqd* (though parties were to be abolished as they create disunity and are incompatible with Islam).<sup>18</sup>; (3) the **ruler** is bound by the teachings of Islam and by the will of the people whom he serves as a trustee or agent. The ruler must be Muslim and male, has no hereditary rights, and unless removed for legal, moral or physical reasons his tenure may be for life. He may be called Caliph, Imam, King, or by any other term used in the Koran to designate leadership.

In terms of long term plan of action, timetables, intermediary objectives, and pre-planned alternatives, the branches and ideologues of the MB differ greatly in their view of the circumstances of their struggle, the identity of the enemy that they are set against and the stage of the struggle that they are engaged in within their specific theatre. This is particularly evident in the attitude towards armed struggle. The use of armed struggle against the incumbent Muslim regimes was adopted by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s and by Hamas whereas it is totally rejected by the Egyptian and Jordanian movements. In the former cases, it is justified by the view of the “Enemy” – the Syrian regime and Israel respectively – as totally non-Muslim. Similarly the movements differ in their tactical approach towards participation in

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<sup>16</sup> “*Ahdaf al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*,” (The Goals of the Muslim Brotherhood) [www.ikhwanonline.com/Target.asp](http://www.ikhwanonline.com/Target.asp).

<sup>17</sup> The traditional Muslim Brotherhood view of the reinstatement of the Caliphate is that such a regime is to be created only after the final reunification of the Muslims under one political umbrella. Mitchell, pp. 232-235; Amir Weissbrod, *Turabi: Spokesman of Radical Islam*, (Tel-Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center, 1999) (in Hebrew), p. 97.

<sup>18</sup> Mitchell, p. 261.

elections organized by the regime, alliances with other political forces and acceptance of principles of liberal democracy. Nonetheless, an incremental shift can be perceived in the attitude of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood in respect to armed struggle as a result of its close affiliation with Hamas.

## The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood

While the mainstream of the Muslim Brotherhood remains ambiguous regarding many elements of the proposed regime that may contradict modern principles of democracy, the **Syrian Muslim Brotherhood** has set forth a more detailed vision, undoubtedly affected by its perception that the Syrian regime may indeed fall together with its alliance with non-Islamic forces. This vision is found in the “Cultural Project for Syria of the Future” (“*al-Mashru’ al-Hadhari li-Suriya al-Mustaqbal*”), published in December 2004 by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood - arguably the most ostensibly “progressive” of Muslim Brotherhood movements in the Arab world. This document is a striking departure from the traditional stance of the Muslim Brotherhood; whether it truly represents an evolution of thought or – as opponents claim – dissimulation in order to gain power is unknown. It emphasizes the “intentions” (*maqasid*) of *Shari’a* and the need to adapt it to “human experience” by taking into account the jurisprudence of priorities (*fiqh al-awlawiyyat*) and of the balance between advantages and disadvantages (*fiqh al-muwazanat*). In an apparent contradiction to the Muslim Brotherhood goal of Islamization of the world, the Syrian document speaks of pluralism (*ta’addudiyya*) as the intention of Allah<sup>19</sup> and accepts the idea of equality of all citizens on the basis of the Medina Pact that the Prophet made with the Jews and Christians of that city (which in traditional Islam is seen as annulled).

## The Caliphate Camp –Hizb al-Tahrir

Hizb al-Tahrir had been for decades the key proponent of the Caliphate concept as the goal of its struggle. While the abolition of the **Caliphate** was traumatic and bemoaned by the Muslim Brotherhood, the model was identified until lately mainly with the ideology of **Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami** (HT) and its offshoots (such as the **Muhajirun**). HT presents a comprehensive view of the Caliphate that will rule the Muslim world – ultimately the entire world. This Caliphate is based on the constitution formulated by the movement’s founder Naba’i in the 1950s. HT is probably the only movement – except for the Islamic regime in Iran – which presents such a detailed idea of a future regime. Today, its spokesmen (mainly in Central Asia) tend to promote a vague utopian view of a Caliphate under which social problems such as corruption and poverty would be banished by the application of Islamic law and government. Its public statements tend to be vague on how this will be achieved and do not address the many difficult questions raised by political Islam. After the establishment of the Caliphate, all non-Muslims will be obliged to render tribute (*jizya*) to the Muslim Caliphate and in exchange for that, they will enjoy the

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<sup>19</sup> Quoting verses of the Koran: “Had your God wished so, every one on earth would have become a believer” (Sura 10:99); “I created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you know each other,” (Sura 49:13) and “Had your God so wished, he could have made all mankind one nation” (Sura 16:93).

Caliphate's protection. If someone or some nation will refuse to pay *jizya*, the Caliphate will declare Jihad against them.

## The Jihadi-Salafi Caliphate

The paradigm proposed by a variety of **Jihadi-Salafi** scholars has developed over the last few years – apparently under the anticipation of victory in Iraq – may make the Jihadi movement deal with the issue on a practical level in the near future.<sup>20</sup> The linchpin of the Jihadi-Salafi paradigm is the ultimate restoration of the Caliphate. The war in Iraq has given birth to a revival of the idea of restoration of a **Caliphate** after the victory of Jihad in Iraq and after the “Emirate” that will be founded there will expand to include additional countries.

In formulating their philosophy the radical Islamic movements were less involved in issues related to formulating political, economic and social programs for the Islamic state or Islamic Caliphate. However, there are some signs of increased thinking on the image and foundations of the Caliphate. This is due to the tendency of the leaders of al-Qa'ida to see themselves no longer as only a Jihadist military organization focused on terror as an objective in itself, but also as a political movement which conducts a military and political battle for the establishment of an independent Islamic entity that will ultimately have to be the core of the future Caliphate.

## The Shiite Velayat-e Faqih

The Iranian paradigm stands alone. The doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih* was never meant to be restricted to the Shiite world. Khomeini united his concept of governance by the jurisprudent with religious and nationalist principles, establishing a regime that had a “manifest destiny” to promote the national interests of Iran (which are identical with those of the Muslim *Umma*) and to liberate Muslims from the yoke of Western Imperialism. At the core of this outlook lies the idea of Pan-Islamism as a force that will destroy the existing international system as expressed in Khomeini's statement which became a slogan: “Neither East (USSR and Communist ideology) nor West (US and Capitalism)”. According to this view, the Superpowers are illegitimate players; true Islam, as Khomeini saw it, has been on the defensive for centuries, must defend itself now through force and war, and must expand its borders. The first stage is to establish an Islamic government whose borders are not defined, but clearly exceed the borders of Iran.

The opportunity to manifest Khomeini's ideological outlook into practice emerged following the Revolution in 1979. The idea of "Export of the Revolution", which was adopted as the official policy of the government of Iran, developed a vision of a revolution that offers a universal message to **all oppressed peoples**, with emphasis on nations of the Third World, for whom the removal of the Shah's regime may serve as a successful model for changing human society as a whole and liberating it from enslavement and exploitation. Hence the ideology of “Export of Revolution”

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<sup>20</sup> See for example al-Zawahiri's letter to al-Zarqawi.



places more emphasis on the social and political aspects and less on the Shiite religious-ideological aspects. A “revolutionary world” that would undergo such a change – even through force and radical means – was, in theory, supposed to turn Islam, in general, and Iran in particular, into the dominant force in the world. As a practical expression of this outlook revolutionary Iran maintained, at a later stage, links, and even assisted, non-Muslim guerilla groups, including separatist and Marxist organizations in Greece, Northern Ireland, and Spain. As noted above, though, this vision was tempered by Realpolitik – Tehran’s acceptance of the limitations on its ability to materialize the vision and a political preference for seizing on opportunities and taking advantage of circumstances in different areas that facilitated Iran’s efforts. Hence, the practical focus on the Muslim world as a primary objective and the exporting of the Revolution to Shiite communities as a preliminary stage. This, through the following:

The religious aspects of the strategic doctrine of “Export of revolution” were based on two ostensibly contradictions:

- On the Sunni-Shiite level – obfuscation of the differences between the Sunni and Shiite Islam to facilitate Iran’s own status as a *Ummah* that acts on behalf of all Muslims and at the same time – presenting the Iranian revolution as a model for the Shiites, as brothers in suffering (the epitome of the “downtrodden” – *mostazifan* – dominated and oppressed by the Sunnis) and the antithesis to the Arab-Islamic model of Sunni regimes where Islamic minorities are discriminated against in many respects.
- On the Iranian-Arab level – the revolution was seen as a vehicle for forging strategic assets that enhance Iran’s “self-sufficiency” from foreign powers and expand its influence in its regional hinterland and further abroad. The revolution became a new asset in Iran’s age old belief in its “manifest destiny” to become a predominant regional power. At the same time the success of Iran’s strategy of "Export of Revolution" was conditional on maintaining cordial relations with the Arab world.

## Islamist Nationalist Movements in Central Asia

The cases of nationalist movements of the former Soviet Union can be seen more as “Islamist Nationalism” than “National Islamist” movements. Their goals therefore tend to emphasize the local and the nationalistic and remain vague regarding the “Pan-Islamic” facet of their ideology. These movements generally do not even set clear mid-term goals. Instead, they describe their vision as to: “...free Muslim lands from Russian occupation and then establish a Muslim state” in which ... “every person, who defines himself as a Muslim and wishes to ... live by the laws of the *Shari’a* in freedom and justice, may join ...”

However, there is no description of how this state will look like, except for the wish to implement in it the *Shari’a*. The Wahhabi-oriented movements skirt the issue of how such a state will implement the laws of *Shari’a* on a traditionally Sufi-oriented population.

# Operational Thinking

Most Islamist movements tend to focus on the “here and now” in their day to day strategic writings. This can be attributed to the fact that except for the Jihad in Iraq, none see themselves as on the verge of taking power and they are embroiled in the day to day reality of the struggle with the incumbent regimes. Therefore, if there exists a certain diversity in the area of the strategic goals of the different movements, this diversity is greater in respect to the interim goals and operational level. On this level, radical Islamic movements prove themselves to be quite pragmatic and adaptive.

Probably the most immediate and debated issue of strategic importance for the various Islamist movements is that of the stages and means of the struggle at this junction in time. This issue brings into play basic positions on *takfir*, religious principles such as the prohibition or permission to kill other Muslims, religious-ideological questions regarding the legitimacy of use of various weapons, the Islamic ruling regarding prisoners and hostages and other issues of Islamic law. At the same time, this subject brings into play the strategic assessment of the organizations involved; their understanding of how far they can go in different theatres without incurring an unsustainable backlash.

Areas of operational tactics are widely discussed in Islamist writings, and these include:

1. **Priority of targets** – which Western powers are more susceptible to pressure and, if hit by terror, will withdraw from Islamic lands. This type of assessment was highly developed and published apparently by Sheikh Yusuf al-‘Ayiri in early 2003 – before the attacks in Madrid and seemed to indicate a priority of hitting Spain.
2. **Classification of targets** – various Islamist strategists have dealt with the Islamic legality of attacking the economic infrastructure of Muslim countries (particularly oil). This was widely considered a red line that Islamist organizations did not cross even in the bloody Jihad in Algeria, but has recently been crossed in Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Another popular area of discussion is the issue of attacking Shiites (in Iraq).
3. **Classification of weapons** – much discussion in these documents deals with the ruling concerning types of weapons and tactics – suicide bombing, hijacking of aircraft (do the rules relating to prisoners of war in Jihad apply then to the passengers?), and WMD. On this latter issue, very little has been written.

## The Staged Strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood

The most obviously pragmatic of the Islamist movements is the Muslim Brotherhood. The movement’s strategic gradualism is evident from various historic and contemporary texts, which define the MB as a “comprehensive Islamic body working to establish Allah’s religion on earth; to convey Islam’s call to all the people in general and to the Muslims in particular; to liberate the Muslim homeland from any

non-Islamic rule; to assist Muslim minorities everywhere; to seek to unite all Muslims in one nation; to erect the Islamic state which will implement Islam's rules... to prepare the nation for Jihad so that it stands as one front against the invaders and the enemies of Allah, facilitating the foundation of the Rightly Guided Islamic state,"<sup>21</sup> and spreading Islam, a universal religion, all over the world (mastership of the world – *ustadhiyyat al-'alam*).<sup>22</sup>

From the point of view of its own strategy, the Muslim Brotherhood is only at the first three stages of its struggle. In many countries it has succeeded in "reforming" Muslims and generating a movement for return to an Islamic lifestyle both personally and in society in general. The Muslim Brotherhood has relegated Jihad within the Muslim world (against the regimes) to a later stage. This position though is not so much one of principle (e.g. the prohibition in Islam against civil strife [*fitna*] or the duty to obey "he who Allah has placed above you") but Realpolitik. Most Muslim Brotherhood movements do not view the time as ripe to take over government. The National Islamic Front (NIF) in Sudan has been chastened by its period in power during the 1990s and is cautious not to call for an imminent take over.<sup>23</sup> The experience of unsuccessful Jihad against the Tunisian regime also wrought a change in the position of the Tunisian *Nahda* that had espoused violent Jihad against the regime and then rejected such means.<sup>24</sup> The Jordanian movement, influenced by the more radical trend and its close affiliation with Hamas, has radicalized its agenda for the last decade, but still does not see itself ready to take over the regime. Even Hamas, having won the Palestinian elections in February 2006, is acutely aware of the opposition to its rule and from the moment it won the elections looked for a power-sharing scheme with its secular opponents and did not to take full power. The only MB movement that presents an immediate goal for taking over the regime is the Syrian MB.

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<sup>21</sup> A more updated version of the stages of the strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood can be found in the "Mustaqbal al-Tanzim al-Duwali li-Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin," Wikalat al-Ahram li-al-Sahafa, [www.diwanalarab.com](http://www.diwanalarab.com), 29 January 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Mitchell, p.308.

<sup>23</sup> Hasan Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front of Sudan. Turabi played a leading role in the June 1989 military coup d'état. He explained it, arguing that it was impossible to reach power by peaceful means, because "the Crusader and Imperialist forces preclude the arrival of Islam to power." In fact, he had been preparing for a coup using the military for years and wrote that the Islamists should create the option to take power by force, and to do so they should mobilize the support of the military through political participation and gradual penetration of state institutions. When he was in power, he said that in the first stage of the Islamic experiment, the state should be given absolute authority in every field, and that the vision of an Islamic civil society, running its affairs independently of the government, will materialize only in a much later stage. After his downfall in the late 1990s, Turabi again started rejecting the military means to reach power. At the same time, even after the Hamas victory and the Egyptian MB's gains in national elections, he expressed deep disbelief in the ability of Islamist movements to reach power by democratic means, since the West is committed to preserving its civilization in the face of Islam.

<sup>24</sup> In the 1980s and early 1990s the movement was involved in violent activities against the government. Al-Ghannushi himself, particularly embittered following what he considered as the regime's denying his movement its electoral achievements, reached the conclusion that non-violent political means would not take the Islamists very far, and appealed for the elimination of the rulers, whom he qualified as apostates. "Facing a terrible fate," he wrote, "our nation has only Jihad against the regimes of heresy, tyranny, tribalism, particularism and loyalty to the foreigner." A decade later he wrote that the results of the Jihad against unjust and tyrannical governments were poor and in some cases catastrophic. He did not qualify this kind of Jihad as illegitimate, but pointed to an alternative - seeking change through peaceful means.

## The Salafi-Jihadi Operational Strategy

Even the ostensibly more “ideological” and radical Sunni Salafi–Jihadi movement has prioritized theatres and chosen targets on the basis of day to day assessment and not dogmatically. This can be attributed to the fact that most Islamist movements are so embroiled in the day to day reality, that as long as the political realities of their countries do not come close to an Islamist takeover, their focus remains on their short and medium term tactics and most of them do not develop a clear long term Islamic ideological strategy. Each movement in each country expresses a whole range of opinions, based on each trend’s interpretation of reality.

This discussion is in the background of the position of some of the radical sheikhs (such as Abu Basir al-Tartusi) against terrorist acts outside of the Muslim countries. Most radical Islamic trends are preoccupied with a counter response to the West under the banner of “An Eye for an Eye, a Tooth for a Tooth” (*al-mu’amala bi-al-mithl*), meaning that Muslims everywhere must come and help their Muslim brethren wherever the latter are attacked by the “infidels”, be they Americans or “Zionists”.

In contrast to the “gradualist” and relatively pragmatic strategy of the MB and its affiliates and the need of the Iranian Revolution to take into account the interests of the Iranian state, the Salafi-Jihadi stream espouses a more proactive and dynamic strategy. The key elements of this strategy as compiled for various texts are:

- Freedom of action in dealing with the enemy: the use of any possible means to inflict damage on the enemy on the basis of the logic of spilling the enemy’s blood (*istihlal*) and total rejection of the enemy (*al-bara’a*). Muslims are permitted to inflict any damage whatsoever on countries against which war can be waged (*bilad al-harb*), whose “people, blood, money and women’s honor (*a’raduhum*) are permitted to Muslims, as they were to the Prophet Muhammad in his wars against Quraysh, Bani ‘Uqayl, Bani Nasir and al-Ta’if. In this context, all the Western countries are in the category of *bilad al-harb*.
- Striking against the enemy’s centers of economic and military power and symbols: the objective is not only to strike at the enemy’s arrogance but also to inflict tremendous material damage and cause collapse. The obligation is to bring about change by the use of force and not influence policy because of political aims. The attacks of 11 September illustrate this mode of attack.
- Extending military actions: al-Qa’ida has set itself the aim of attacking American targets throughout the world. In effect, actions of this kind have been executed in several continents, but the most serious warning is in taking the front into the heart of enemy territory (*‘aqr darihi*) in order to bring about collapse.
- Adopting unconventional tactics in the war against the enemy by employing creative and unconventional thinking, such as the use of the enemy’s own methods to attack it. In this context the most important method touches upon numerous groups of suicide fighters that will undertake acts of sacrifice (*‘amaliyyat fida’iyya istishhadiyya*) designed to bring about collapse.
- Use of propaganda and psychological warfare together with military force.

- Use of the “Threat of Force” method: the most notable of this was when bin Laden asserted the right to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. However, the main thrust of his plans is on the actual use of weapons against his enemies. Armed violence and military force are the principal and almost only means, in contrast with other means of influence he mentions, but in effect the “life of kill and battle” is the main thing.
- Decentralization of Jihad in the way the al-Qa’ida elements and its allies conduct and execute it; each independently in its own in accordance with prevailing circumstances.<sup>25</sup>

On the eve of the occupation of Iraq, Abu ‘Umar al-Sayf determined that Jihad in the form of long-term guerilla warfare was called for, based on the following rationale:<sup>26</sup>

- Prolonged guerilla warfare is the Achilles heel of modern armies and their weaponry. Israel suffered heavy casualties in guerilla warfare in Palestine and Lebanon.
- The US entanglement in two guerilla wars at the same time in Afghanistan and Iraq, will accelerate its defeat.
- Iraq’s size and the great quantity of weapons in it will facilitate guerilla warfare, cause the disintegration of the enemy and its inability to control the country.
- The defense of Iraq is like defending the nation and the country of those fighting for it, to which the Americans may come. Fighting the Americans equals fighting the Jews. An American defeat equals defeat of the Jews.
- A compilation of different discussion regarding the stages of the Jihad looks, more or less, as follows:
- Awakening the Masses: This phase began in earnest on the 11 September 2001 attacks and continues with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Its goal is to broaden the ranks of the Jihadi movement and generate opposition to the “apostate regimes”.
- Attrition – This stage (*harb istinzaf*) is aimed at bleeding the West economically, militarily, and politically until it disengages from the Muslim lands altogether and severs its alliances with the “apostate regimes” (in this context, some texts bring the historic examples of the abandonment of South Vietnam and the Shah’s regime as cases in point).
- Control of Iraq – The Jihadi-Salafi thinkers perceive the battle for the fate of Iraq as a historic, not to be missed opportunity of controlling this theater so it can be used as a stepping stone to expand Jihad to adjacent theaters, their occupation and unification under an Islamic Caliphate.
- Toppling “apostate regimes” – This stage focuses first on the “inner circle” of susceptible regimes such as Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iraq.

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<sup>25</sup> Diya’ Rashwan (ed.), *Al-Harakat al-Islamiyya fi al-‘Alam* (World Islamic Movements), Al-Ahram Center for Political & Strategic Studies, 2006, pp. 259-262, 263, 265.

<sup>26</sup> Abu ‘Umar al-Sayf, *Maqasid al-Jihad wa-Anwa’uhu* (The Objectives and Types of Jihad), Minbar al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad.

This stage has been referred to sometimes as “tasfiyyat hisabat” (settling accounts). The revolutionary nature of the Jihadi strategy – in contrast with the more “gradualist” Muslim Brotherhood strategy – is based on the principle that there is no hope for reform of a “Muslim” country ruled by “apostate rulers” in order to adapt it to the Islamist model, but rather only a general revolution and the reestablishment of the Islamic state, from top to bottom.

- Taking control over the formerly “apostate” lands – This stage is considered to be one of the most sensitive as the breakdown of the old regimes will most probably be followed by a breakdown of law and order.<sup>27</sup>
- Establishing Shari'a Law – In this stage new regimes will be formed based on Shari'a. These regimes may not necessarily be identical in form and only in a later stage will unity be achieved.
- Purging all Western influences from the Muslim world – This stage includes the total liberation of all Muslim lands ruled by "infidels" such as Palestine, Kashmir, and al-Andalus (Spain).
- Re-establishment of the Caliphate – This will be the final phase of organizing the Muslim world that will then allow for the final confrontation with the West.
- Final Conflict – This phase is the final one which is in many Jihadi texts intertwined with eschatological allusions.

The Jihadi-Salafi thinkers perceive the battle for the fate of Iraq as a historic, not to be missed opportunity of controlling this theater so it can be used as a stepping stone to expand jihad to adjacent theatres, their occupation and unification under an Islamic Caliphate. Although the declaration of the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq by al-Qa'ida in Iraq is high-flown, it is a symbol of these desires.

## Iranian Revolutionary Pragmatism

Tactical pragmatism is not only the hallmark of the Sunni movements, but it clearly characterizes the Islamic radicalism of the **Islamic Revolution in Iran**. This can be exemplified in the way that Iran, which espouses the Export of (Shiite) Islamic Revolution, holds a constant dialogue with reality and has adapted itself to several directions. Since its inception, the Islamic regime in Iran has been committed to Jihad and to “propagation of Islam” (*tablighi eslami*) or "Export of Revolution" (*sudur inqilab*). The former is viewed by the regime as a fundamental Islamic duty and the latter as a prime tenet of the regime's ideology, enshrined in the Constitution and the works of the Imam Khomeini. The targets of these ideological concepts are Israel and the West against whom Jihad is waged and Muslims to whom the Iranian Revolution must be exported.

Terrorism (as commonly defined in the West) has played both a tactical and strategic role in this context. It has served as a tactical weapon in the struggle against the Iranian opposition, the American presence in the Middle East and Israel and as a means to export Iran's influence in the Arab World and in the wider Muslim world.

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<sup>27</sup> See: Abu Bakr Naji, "Idarat al-Tawahush: The Most Dangerous Phase That The Islamic Nation Will Go Through," The Center for Islamic Studies and Research, as viewed on al-Firdaws Website, October 2005.

On the strategic level, it has played a central role in Iran's deterrent posture vis-à-vis its enemies by creating an image of a state, which holds a formidable terrorist capability, which it is willing to employ. This image promoted by justification of (while denying involvement in) acts of terrorism against Israel and the United States, support of Islamic terrorist organizations from all parts of the globe and "predictions" of massive Muslim reaction to American and Israeli policies.

Iran's support of terrorist organizations serves a number of goals:

1. To maintain its commitment to Khomeini's doctrine of Jihad and "Export of Revolution".
2. To pose a threat to Israel both for ideological reasons and in order to deter Israel from acting against it.
3. To further Iran's national objectives of hegemony in the Gulf and the Sunni Arab world, by promoting Islamist opposition to the pro-Western regimes in those countries.
4. To serve as a strategic deterrent against the US as long as Iran lacks a nuclear deterrent by posing a threat of widespread terrorism in retaliation to acts of hostility towards Iran. The military asymmetry between Iran and the coalition of its enemies and the assessment that nothing can move them from their goal of toppling the regime bring the regime to the conclusion that Iran's only possible response is the use of "sub-conventional" warfare – terrorism. This includes attacks on Israel from Lebanon, taking Israeli hostages, support of Palestinian terrorism, and occasional use of international terror to demonstrate a "long arm" capability commensurate (*mutatis mutandis*) with that of its enemies to hit Iran.
5. To enhance Iran's standing in the eyes of radical Sunni Islamist organizations as the only state willing to challenge Israel and the to draw them into its orbit and accord Iran a foothold in the heart of the Arab Middle East.
6. To serve as a bargaining chip to trade when the time is ripe in return for concessions on other issues important to itself; this is exemplified in Iran's links with al-Qa'ida, despite the Wahhabi anti-Shiite ideology of that organization.

In contrast to the Sunni Jihadi-Salafi concept of defensive Jihad, the Shiite interpretation of this concept is not a spontaneous defense of the homeland, but a decision to be taken by the Ruler-Jurisprudent (*wali faqih*). He – and he alone – has the capability and authority to weigh all considerations and to take the decision whether the Jihad should proceed or not.

## **Acquisition and Use of WMD**

A small number of Jihadi-Salafi intellectuals have addressed the question of weapons of mass destruction. This discussion focuses on the legalistic permission to use such weapons (that may kill Muslims as a corollary of killing infidels, etc.). A key Sunni scholar who has published an elaborate treatise on the subject is the Saudi Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad al-Fahd. In May 2003 al-Fahd justified in a long *fatwa* the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) even if children and other Muslims are

killed, and reached the conclusion that the use of such weapons against the United States is obligatory. The basic justification for al-Fahd is reciprocity: the behavior of the United States against the Muslims is such that it warrants use of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>28</sup>

A typical MB reasoning on nuclear weapons takes its cue from the Islamic laws of *al-mu'amala bi-al-mithl (lex talionis)*: "In case these nuclear weapons are used against Muslims, it becomes permissible for Muslims to defend themselves using the same weapon, based on the Koran (Sura 16:126): 'If you punish, then punish with the like of that by which you were afflicted.'" <sup>29</sup> Sheikh al-Qaradawi, on the other hand, went on record in favor of the Muslims acquiring nuclear weapons, but ruled that they should be used as a deterrent, with their actually use forbidden (*haram*).<sup>30</sup>

A rare reference to the question can be found in Hizb al-Tahrir as well. According to Imran Wahed, the leader of the London-centered HT, in the HT journal *Al-Wa'i*: "...According to the *Shari'a*, a Muslim is allowed to use all means and methods against the *kuffar* (infidels) if he intends to destroy them. When a Muslim blows himself up this act is considered as a Jihadic act in the name of Allah. If a [non-Muslim] woman is considered a fighter, a Muslim has the right (according to the *Shari'a*) to kill her. If the enemy uses WMD as it happens nowadays in Palestine, we will definitely use these kinds of weapons too."<sup>31</sup> Wahed indicates in the article that HT *'ulama* (religious scholars) support the use of WMD in theory and though they see no need to use it in the present they may use it in the future.

The argument in favor of acquiring nuclear weapons is unique to the radical margins of the Islamist movement. Even the *Fatwa* Committee of al-Azhar (an orthodox Egyptian state body) maintains that as long as nuclear weapons are held by the enemies of the Muslims (the United States, Israel, or any other nation), it is the **Islamic duty of all Muslim countries to acquire such weapons**. A Muslim regime that does not fulfill this duty is a sinner and may be guilty of "corruption (*fasad*) on earth." The aim of having these weapons is, first and deterrence: to "make the enemies of the *Umma* tremble."<sup>32</sup> The Sheikh of al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi drew an analogy from the ruling of the Caliph Bakr "to fight the enemy with a sword if he fights with a sword and ... with a spear if he fights with a spear." Therefore, had Abu Bakr lived today, he would have instructed that **if the enemy uses a nuclear bomb, it is the duty of the Muslims to use it**.<sup>33</sup>

There does not however seem to be a serious strategic discussion of the implications of use of such weapons. The discussion of WMD per se is mainly

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<sup>28</sup> Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad al-Fahd, "*Risalah fi Hukm Istikhdam Aslihat al-Damar al-Shamil didd al-Kuffar*" (A Treatise on the Legal Status of Using Weapons of Mass Destruction against Infidels) (n.p.) (1 May 2003).

<sup>29</sup> *Fatwa*: Sheikh Faysal Mawlawi, "Using WMD in War: Islamic View," 1 December 2002, <http://www.islamonline.net/fatwa/english/FatwaDisplay.asp?hFatwaID=52398>.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Qaradawi to Qatari TV, (18 October 2002).

<sup>31</sup> *Al-Wa'i*, No. 170 (June 2001).

<sup>32</sup> *Fatwa*: Sheikh 'Ala' al-Shanawih, "*Imtilak al-Asliha al-Nawawiyya Wajib*," (Possessing Nuclear Weapons is Mandatory) (Fax text in handwriting, no source), <http://www.islamonline.net/Arabic/news/2002-12/23/article06.shtml>.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.islamonline.net/islamic/dowalia/alhadath-17-11/alhadath2.asp>, 17 November 1999.



focused on nuclear weapons. Chemical and radiological are generally perceived as legitimate means that do not require special dispensation to use against infidels (see below – Jihad by means of harming economic interests).

The Islamic legality of nuclear weapons became an issue in Iran as far back as the early 1980s.<sup>34</sup> Upon his accession to power in 1979, Khomeini ordered the suspension of the Shah's nuclear program and is said to have issued a *fatwa* declaring that nuclear weapons are "from Satan." While there is no indication of a specific *fatwa* by Khomeini rescinding his previous decision, the nuclear program was revived while Khomeini was still alive. Nevertheless, this position remains force among many of the traditional "quietist" clerics who claim that a consensus (*ijma'*) exists among the senior clerics that the prohibition on nuclear weapons (or WMD in general) is "self-evident in Islam" and an "eternal law" that cannot be reversed, **since the basic function of these weapons is to kill innocent people.**<sup>35</sup> This ruling was behind the Iranian decision not to make use of chemical weapons against Iraq during the war.<sup>36</sup> In September 2003 an additional *fatwa* was issued by the scholars of Qom stating, "Nuclear weapons are un-Islamic because they are inhumane."<sup>37</sup> During negotiations between the three European Nations (the UK., France, and Germany) and Iran over the latter's nuclear program, the Iranians claimed that the Supreme Leader Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i had issued a *fatwa* prohibiting nuclear weapons. In fact, no such *fatwa* had been issued.

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<sup>34</sup> Shmuel Bar, *Iranian Defense Doctrine and Decision Making*, (Herzliya: Institute for Policy and Strategy, 2004), p. 51.

<sup>35</sup> Ayatollah Montazeri, Interview with *Die Welt*, (9 November 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Ayatollah Saanei interviewed by Robert Collier, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 October 2003, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Mustafa al-Labbad, "Pressuring Tehran," *Al-Ahram Weekly* 656 (2003).

## Appendix A

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