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UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM:
RELIGIOUS & POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

by

CHRISTOPHER CUSANO
B.A. University of Central Florida, 2004

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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Houman A. Sadri

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism in the twenty-first century has had one of greatest effects on the status quo of international relations, peace and war. It has become the “specter” of our era and in many instances, it has been referred to as the predominant threat of modern civilization. Furthermore, it has the potential to drastically change the world we live in. For these reasons it has rightfully earned our attention and focus.

Many efforts to understand terrorism have fallen short of recognizing the underlying causes. In many cases, acts of terror have either been of purely political motivation or have had socioeconomic conditions cited as the primary factor contributing to its occurrence. Some research has delved into the topic of the psychological makeup of terrorists while other attempts have looked at Islam itself – dealing primarily with the textual references to war. Over the past decade terrorism research has progressed a significant deal due to the security importance of the issue and consequently the sheer number of academics and politicians who have developed an interest in it. There still appears to be, however, significant gaps in the research, particularly from the Western academic and political fronts where it is greatly needed.

When it comes to particular interpretations of certain Islamic topics as well as the political grievances of the Muslim world, the West has largely failed in its analysis and understanding of the far-reaching effects these both have on terrorism and its propagation. This research will set out to begin filling these gaps by focusing on two

primary topics: a) the theological basis being cited as an Islamic position and used to justify today's acts of terrorism; and b) the commonly cited political grievances that the advocates of terrorism have built their arguments upon. It is the hypothesis of this research that these two critically important issues are amongst the major contributing factors to acts terrorism. Unfortunately they have largely been ignored and in some cases exacerbated by our very own attempts to thwart terrorism. Thus it has become even more significant and important that we reassess our strategies in order to slow and eventually reverse this continuously growing threat of our era.

This research will attempt to explain what I hypothesize are the most prevalent factors that have contributed to the development of terrorism in modern times. I contend that there are both influential religious and political dimensions to current acts of terrorism that are too often overlooked because of a lack of interest in Islamic theology as well as the fear of appearing to be a terrorist sympathizer or anti-patriotic. There is undeniably a religious dimension to terrorism which is amongst the most influential factors in answering why it is happening. It is a particular ideology that has been the glue which is used to fit together arguments and provide justifications to such acts of terror. At the same time, to pass the burden off so simply without listening to and understanding the political grievances of the advocates of terrorism would make the goal of eradicating terrorism quite unrealistic. While this research will cover these important points, it should not be mistaken as providing legitimacy or justification to any religious or secular group attempting to rationalize terrorism as an ideology nor the individual acts themselves.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين ، والصلاة والسلام على إمام الأنبياء والمرسلين سيدنا محمد ، وعلى آله وأصحابه
أجمعين ، من تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين

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LIST OF ARABIC AND NON-ENGLISH WORDS

- ʿAbbasid* – dynasty that ruled most of Islamic world; overthrew the *Umayyads*
Ahadith – pl. *hadith*
Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama`ah, – lit. “people of the tradition and the group;” see *Sunni*
Al- Ghuloo wal-`Itidaal – lit. “excessiveness and moderation”
Al-Qaeda – lit. “the base” or “the foundation;” militant Islamic group
Al-Wahhab – lit. the title “The (Most) Loving;” one of the names of God Islam
Al-Walaa’ wal-Baraa’ – lit. “loyalty and disavowal” or “association and disassociation”
Aqeedah – lit. “belief;” Islamic creed
ʿAshari – follower the Islamic theology traced back to Abu al-Hasan al- Ash’ari;
stresses metaphorical interpretation and revelation as requisite for knowledge
Athari – follower of a particular Islamic theology traced back Ahmad ibn Hanbal and
Sufyan al-Thawri; stresses textualism and avoiding unnecessary interpretation
Baghdad – lit. “God given” in the Farsi language; capital of Iraq; capital of Islamic
Deobandi – follower of the Islamic scholars originally from Deoband, India
Empire under the *ʿAbbasid*
Fatamid – Arab *Ismā`īlī Shi`i* dynasty that ruled much of the Islamic empire from Egypt;
followed the *ʿAbbasid* dynasty
Fatāwa – pl. *fatwa*
Fatwa – religious edict
Fedayeen – group of developed highly skilled political assassins from the *Hashshashin*
Hadith – recorded sayings from the Prophet Muhammad
Hajj – pilgrimage to Mecca
Hanafi – follower of the *mathab* of Imam Abu Hanifa
Hanbali – follower of the *mathab* of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal
Hashshashin – group of assassins who were followers of Hassan-i Sabbah, a missionary
convert to the *Nizari Ismā`īlī Shi`i* sect
Hijrah – the emigration of the Muslims to Medina in 622 AD/CE
Hijri – after *Hijrah* (AH); year in the Islamic calendar
Hudood – criminal punishments in Islamic law
Ijaza – lit. “permission;” authorization to teach a subject
Ikhwani – follower or part of *Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen*
Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen – lit. “the Muslim Brotherhood;” politically and socially active
group in Egypt founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna
Ismā`īlī – followers of particular *Shi`i* branch of Islam; second largest branch after the
Ithnā`ashariyya (twelvers)
Ka`ba – lit. “cube;” black cube in Mecca seen as first house of worship; Muslims pray
in the direction of this
Khalīfa – lit. “vicegerent” or “deputy;” caliph; leader of the Islamic Empire

Khalistan – lit. “land of pure” (same as *Pakistan* in Farsi); proposed Sikh homeland centered in Punjab, India

Khawārij – Kharajites; lit. “those who exited;”

Khulifāt – pl. *Khalīfa*

Kūfah – city in Iraq; one of original centers for Islamic knowledge

Maliki – follower of the *mathab* of Imam Malik

Mathab – school of legal thought with a particular methodology for deriving Islamic law

Maturidi – follower of a particular Islamic theology traced back to Abu Mansur Al Maturidi; stresses natural human reasoning

Mecca – holiest Islamic city; birthplace of Prophet Muhammad; location of the *Ka’ba*

Medina – lit. “city;” “city of the Prophet;” second holiest city in Islam; place where Muslims migrated to from Mecca during persecution;

Minhaj – lit. “way” or “path;” approach to Islam but not a sect

Narodnaya Volya – lit. “People’s Will” in Russian

Nizari Ismā’īlī Shi’i – largest branch of the *Ismā’īlī Shi’i*

Qaramita – Qarmatians, Carmathians, Qarmathians, Karmathians; lit. “Those Who Wrote in Small Letters;” *Ismā’īlī Shi’i* break-off group centered in eastern Arabia during the late 9th and early 10th century CE

Qur’an – religious scripture in Islam

Salaf – the pious predecessors (of the first three generations) of the Prophet Mohammed

Salafi – lit. “one who follows the predecessors (*Salaf*);” self-ascribed term of Muslims who try to follow the ways and interpretations of *Salaf*

Shafi – follower of the *mathab* of Imam Shafi

Shi’i – of the *Shi’a* sect (lit. “faction” [of Ali]); believe position of *Khalīfa* was to be from the family of the Prophet making Ali the first rightful heir to the throne

Sufi – one who follows a path of *tasawwuf* (purification)

Sunnah – lit. “tradition;” sayings, actions or approvals of the Prophet Muhammad

Sunni – follower or part of *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama’ah*

Sunni – lit. “one who follows the *sunnah*;” the largest branch in Islam

Takfeer – to excommunicate; to cast outside the fold of Islam and declare non-Muslim

Takfeeri – lit. “one who excommunicates (makes *takfeer*);” non-self-ascribed term applied to Muslims who engage in excessive *takfeer* of other Muslims

Taliban – lit. “students” in Pashto (lit. “two students” in Arabic); political and religious Sunni Muslim movement that ruled over Afghanistan from 1996- 2001

Tawhid – oneness of God; the core Islamic belief that God cannot be divided into parts

Umayyad – the first dynasty of the Islamic Empire; from the lineage of the third caliph, Uthman ibn Affan

Usool al-Fiqh – the origins and fundamentals of the law

Usool at-Tafseer – lit. “the origins/fundamentals of exegesis” (of the Qur’an)

Wahhabi – lit. “one who follows *Wahhab*;” non-self-ascribed term for the followers of the religious leader Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab

Zaidi – followers of a particular *Shi’i mathab*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The New Yorker published in 1991 that “there are a good many people who think that the war between communism and the West is about to be replaced by a war between the West and Muslims.”¹ In response, Professor John Esposito warned that “at the dawn of the twenty-first century it is important that the vacuum created by the end of the Cold War not be filled by exaggerated fears of Islam as a resurgent ‘evil empire’ at war with the New World Order and a challenge to global stability,”² but eventually would concede that “fear of the Green Menace...may well replace that of the Red Menace.”³ In just ten years’ time, that vacuum which Esposito highlighted would be fulfilled in the course of an infamous Tuesday morning. For some years what remained speculation on the part of some, and fear on the part of others, had now become reality.

As the Cold War began to thaw, the Pentagon would be pressed to locate the next major source of conflict in the world and “to prevent the reemergence of a new rival”⁴ that could become a credible threat to U.S. dominance. Debate ensued throughout academic and political circles bringing discussion to the notions of rogue states and two-front wars. Come September 2001, most of those debates would fall to the wayside as the U.S. prepared for its first real battle of the new century.

¹ William Pfaff, “Help Algeria’s Fundamentalists,” *The New Yorker*, January 28, 1991.

² John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2.

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴ The Nuclear Vault, “Prevent the Reemergence of a New Rival,” George Washington University: The National Security Archive, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb245>. (February 1992, draft Defense Planning Guidance leaked to the *New York Times* and published March 8, 1992. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb245/doc03_extract_nytedit.pdf).

By 2008, the Pentagon had officially declared this new conflict, commonly known as “the War on Terror,” stating that “for the foreseeable future, winning the Long War against violent extremist movements will be the central objective of the U.S.”⁵ This threatening terrorist movement was described as being one that “seeks to overturn the international state system” because it “rejects the rules and structures of the international system.”⁶ What was seen to be at stake was more than just the peril of war, it was the status quo. And until today that status quo – an international state-based system characterized by Western dominance and U.S. hegemony – is being challenged by a handful of armed Muslim groups.

Most academics have vigorously argued against the “Clash of Civilizations” theory due to its simplicity and its drawing of definitive lines. The events over the past decade, however, have left very little doubt or difference of opinion about the suggestion that a major ideological battle in the world has begun between the Western Nations and brazen Muslim organizations. While it has been proposed that this is actually a “clash among civilizations” instead of an all-out “clash of civilizations,”⁷ there is nevertheless a noticeable contest between two competing ideologies characterizing the current international scene and many of its crises.

We can point towards other struggles in the world that continue to take life and fuel war or threats that loom upon the horizon. We can also further complicate the

⁵U.S. Department of Defense, *2008 National Defense Strategy*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, June 2008.

<http://www.defense.gov/news/2008%20National%20Defense%20Strategy.pdf>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Berkley Books, 2003), xliv.

international scene viewing it as multipolar with power-sharing groups across the globe. Doing so, even if legitimate, ignores a difficult reality. By merely looking at the focus of foreign policies of the worlds' superpowers, where their money is being spent, and over what issues the greatest tension in the political, academic and religious worlds exists, we can quickly conclude that the dominant theme is this intra-ideological conflict between a Western secular and liberal democracy and a particular interpretation of Islam and its politically-oriented doctrines, but not simply the West versus Islam.

These contentions are in no way intended to paint an entirely apocalyptic picture. They are not proposed to ignore the complexities that do exist, or to draw a line in the sand assigning entire peoples and nations to one side or the other within a Manicheistic framework. Furthermore, this is not even to say that terrorism is actually the single greatest threat to world stability and U.S. national security – that may not be the case. But rather it is merely to clarify the reality that terrorism has clearly become the greatest contemporary issue of concern and even controversy, in both international politics as well as domestic politics of many nations. It is for this reason I have decided to undergo the research which follows and touches upon what I believe to be two of the most important yet inexplicably ignored factors contributing to terrorism.

Hypothesis

The issues surrounding terrorism are quite broad and varied, and while this research will be approaching it from a particular angle, it will cover many topics with the intention of putting “terrorism” into a context by which it may be assessed and dealt with at political, religious, academic, and even personal levels. Much of the material that lies ahead may be neither popular nor easily swallowed; it is not, however, intended to be such. This is intended to be a unique piece of research that still remains true to its objective academic nature. And while this research will inevitably retain some level of subjectivity, we will be looking at well-documented historical, political and religious facts. Theories will be put forth based upon these facts, and tested in some cases, while others will be left open for discussion merely to help form a framework in which terrorism can be analyzed. Ultimately, I will be creating a hypothesis and testing it through empirical evidence.

My hypotheses and the subject of this research is two: H₁) an improper interpretation of particular Islamic concepts and principles has allowed for a religious interpretation in which terrorism is possible, and H₂) the West’s discounting and ignoring of the Muslim world’s political grievances has created an environment that is very favorable to the development and spread of terrorism.

I believe that some of the more detailed contributing factors have been a) the general rise and spread of Islam in response to a growing secularization of society and

influence of secular institutes; b) the Muslim world's failure to understand and implement specific Islamic junctions dealing with relations, war, and the sanctity of life; c) overwhelming global conditions and pressure upon the Muslim world; and d) heavily-vested Western economic and political interests in the Middle East. All of these and more are part of a larger picture that can be summed up into our two main contributing factors of religious interpretation and political repression.

Variables

The dependent variable, or what we are seeking to understand, is "terrorism." This is essentially the deliberate targeting of civilians and non-combatants (this will be discussed in greater detail with a final definition provided in the following section). There are two main independent variables that I believe to be amongst the most important factors contributing to terrorism. The first is the religious independent variable – an improper understanding of particular Islamic concepts. These are mostly related to human interaction and dealings as well as war, conflict and jihad. They have been overlooked within Muslim communities despite their significant importance and relevancy to today's current affairs. The second main independent variable is the political variable – Western negligence of the Muslim world's political grievances. These come in the form of Western military occupation, stationing and offensives, as well as its corporate presence

and economic exploitation of Middle Eastern natural resources all in the face of vehement popular opposition.

Independent Variables

Our main two independent variables, as mentioned above, are improper interpretation of particular Islamic concepts and Western negligence of the Muslim world's political grievances. Our first independent variable IV_1 will be understood within the context of the individual Islamic concepts. The null hypothesis NH_1 for IV_1 is that there is no relationship between it and terrorism, DV. We will reject the null hypothesis NH_1 if there appears to be particular unorthodox opinions related to the treatment of others that can be come to by unsound legal methodologies. In the absence of full religious explanations provided by terrorists, we are assuming that what we analyze herein are some of the ways acts of terrorism committed in the name of Islam have been justified.

The level of success in marketing these ideas toward Muslims will not be covered in this research. Future research that focuses on recruitment itself should take into account the theological foundation of this recruitment and how readily it is accepted by Muslims even if they are not active in planning or participating in terrorist attacks themselves. That is because this implicit support serves as providing legitimacy to those

actively involved in terrorism and helps for a popular opinion that makes speaking out against terrorism both unpopular and difficult.

Our second independent variable IV_2 is Western negligence of the Muslim world's political grievances. This variable will be understood from the perspective of the accused terrorists. Their statements will be listed and then their particular grievances reorganized and categorized according to their topics. The null hypothesis NH_2 for IV_2 is that there is no relationship between it and terrorism, DV. We will reject the null hypothesis NH_2 if there appears to be factual data to back up these grievances and if they are accepted as legitimate by the Muslim World, not just the accused terrorists.

Potential rebuttals and weaknesses in these claims will be mentioned, however it is not the focus of this research. The West's rebuttals, when they do exist, have rarely provided logical and factual data that challenge the claims made by terrorist groups, nor do they appear to have been accepted by the majority of the Muslim world and particularly those who are calling to terrorism, the subject of this variable. Although it will not be covered, future statistical studies should address the extents to which these political grievances resonate in the Muslim world and to which it justifies particular acts of retaliatory violence in peoples' minds.

Dependent Variable – Defining Terrorism

While each of our independent variables will have an entire chapter dedicated to it – defining them in detail, organizing their specifics, ascertaining their legitimacy, and determining their relationship with terrorism – our dependent variable of terrorism will only be discussed in similar detail in this section. Because of that and the importance of the subjective nature of its definition, this section will seek to answer precisely what “terrorism” is, whether there are varying definitions and interpretations of the term, what potentially can influence these definitions, and finally what form of terrorism will be referred to within this research. Throughout the rest of this research, we will work with the definition provided here and make assumptions on the basis of that definition and the context in which we are working – terrorism done in the name of Islam.

“Terrorism” as we generally understand it, is something that has existed for thousands of years. It has been a means by which a party influences and intimidates its enemy, usually through acts of physical violence that incite fear. Terrorism can be officially or unofficially related to armed conflict and war, it may or may not be state-backed or state-initiated, and it may be actual violence or just the threat of violence.

A clear example of terrorism related to armed conflicts is that which is presently taking place in Iraq related to the war and subsequent occupation of Baghdad. On the other hand, an example of one not directly related to war or an armed conflict is the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995. In the former case, the acts of resistance of the Iraqi

civilians and militias in their varying forms (whether they necessarily be classified as terrorism or merely battle strategies) are done within the context of war. In the latter case, however, according to a letter written to Fox News in 2001, the bombing was an isolated incident which was a “retaliatory strike; a counter attack, for the cumulative raids (and subsequent violence and damage) that federal agents had participated in over the preceding years (including, but not limited to, Waco).”⁸ The attempted bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 is also similar in this respect. Thus we can find terrorism both in the form of a systematic resistance or in that of an isolated attack.

Some acts of war carried out by governments would also be considered “terrorism” had they been performed by individuals, such as the dropping of the atomic bombs in Japan. The difference is that states have a type of recognized authority to declare and fight wars which individuals or non-state actors do not. This is an important consideration, as it indicates the subjectivity involved in determining which authorities are legitimately allowed to use physical violence and consequently what we end up considering as terrorism.

Sometimes simply the threat of acts of terror, especially with the precedence of previous action, can also be considered terrorism. This is most commonly seen with particular parties making statements against entire nations with their intent to physically harm them or their politically-sensitive targets. The vast majority of *al Qaeda* videos, for example, fall into this realm.

⁸ FOX News Network, “McVeigh’s Apr. 26 Letter to Fox News,” FOXNews.com, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,17500,00.html>.

Truly, there is no standard definition of terrorism as it differs between time periods, peoples, and related contexts. After assessing over one-hundred definitions in 1999, Walter Laqueur concluded that the “only general characteristic generally agreed upon is that terrorism involves violence and the threat of violence.”⁹ After analyzing approximately one-hundred different definitions myself (of “terrorism” and in some cases “terrorist”) more than ten years later, I concur with Laqueur’s summary of the general characteristics of “violence and threat of violence,” as common to all definitions. I do, however, also believe that of the definitions which exist today, the vast majority do have more common points than simply these two.

In order to compare some of these definitions before choosing a standard one to work with, I have included below those that are amongst the most practical, recognized, unique, historical, modern, or unusual definitions which were readily accessible to me. From them I will attempt to come to a conclusion as to where the similarities and differences lie and what aspects of the definitions can be agreed upon. They have been broken down into categories with the most important aspects of each definition highlighted in bolded letters.

⁹ Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6.

US Government Bodies

U.S. Department of State

Premeditated, politically motivated violence **perpetrated against noncombatant**/*/ targets **by subnational groups or clandestine agents**, usually intended to influence an audience.

/*/ For purposes of this definition, the term “**noncombatant**” is interpreted to include, in addition to **civilians, military personnel** who at the time of the incident are **unarmed or not on duty**.¹⁰

U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation

The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.¹¹

U.S. Department of Defense

The calculated use of **unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence** to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.¹²

¹⁰ *Foreign Relations and Intercourse, U.S. Code*, Title 22, Ch. 7, sec. 2656f(d), <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2000/2419.htm>.

¹¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *U.S. Code of Federal Regulations*, 28, sec. 0.85, http://www.fbi.gov/publications/terror/terror2000_2001.htm.

¹² Defense Technical Information Center Online, “DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 12 April 2001,” United States Department of Defense, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/t/7591.html.

2002 U.S. National Security Strategy

Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents.¹³

USA PATRIOT Act

Activities that (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the U.S. or of any state, that (B) appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping, and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S.¹⁴

Foreign Government Bodies

The British Terrorism Act 2000

The use or threat of action where— (a) the action falls within subsection (2), (b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and (c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

(2) Action falls within this subsection if it— (a) involves serious violence against a person, (b) involves serious damage to property, (c) endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action, (d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety

¹³ National Security Council, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," The White House, September 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss.pdf>.

¹⁴ *USA Patriot Act*, Statutes at Large 376, sec. 802 (2001), http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ056.107.

of the public or a section of the public, or (e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.¹⁵

The Supreme Court of India

Peacetime equivalents of war crimes.¹⁶

Major Organizations, Conventions & Conferences

League of Nations Convention (1937)

All criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Terrorism Act 2000*, Introductory Part 1, sec. 4 (2000),

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000011_en_1#1.

¹⁶ Alex P. Schmid. 2003. Definition of terrorism in Criminal Appeal No. 1285 of 2003 Madan Singh vs. State of Bihar. Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction, Supreme Court of India, (2003),

http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CCEQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sacw.net%2Frights%2Fjudgementjehanabad.doc&ei=PSUZPTTOoGB8gb38rH9AQ&usq=AFQjCNF8g_B657zVk8AF9EH5p5JDPump2g.

¹⁷ League of Nations Article 1.1, "1937 Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism," League of Nations, 1937.

<http://www.jur.uib.no/ansatte/joreh/temasider/internasjonalisering/Convention%20on%20terrorism%201937.pdf>.

United Nations General Assembly (1994¹⁸, 1999¹⁹)

Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them

United Nations Security Council (2004)

Criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the **intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages**, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or **compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act**.²⁰

The Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism (1998)

Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs **in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda** and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or **placing their lives, liberty or security in danger**, or **seeking to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property** or to **occupying or seizing them**, or **seeking to jeopardize a national resources**.²¹

¹⁸ United Nations Resolutions 49/60, *Measures to eliminate international terrorism*, United Nations General Assembly, 1994, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/49/a49r060.htm>.

¹⁹ United Nations Resolution 51/210, *Measures to eliminate international terrorism*, United Nations General Assembly, 1996, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/51/a51r210.htm>.

²⁰ United Nations Security Council Resolution, *Resolution 1566*, United Nations Security Council, 2004, [http://www.undemocracy.com/S-RES-1566\(2004\)/page_1](http://www.undemocracy.com/S-RES-1566(2004)/page_1).

²¹ Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice, "The Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, April 1998: Definitions and General Provisions," Council of Arab Ministers, <http://www.al-bab.com/Arab/docs/league/terrorism98.htm>.

Darul Uloom Deoband Anti-Terrorism Conference (2008)

Any action that targets innocents, whether by an individual or by any government and its agencies or by a private organisation anywhere in the world constitutes, according to Islam, an act of terrorism.²²

Dictionaries

Merriam-Webster

“The **systematic use of terror** especially as a means of coercion”²³ with terror itself in one definition (most related to this context) as being defined as “violent or destructive acts committed by groups in order to intimidate a population of government into granting their demands.”²⁴

The Glossary of Sociology

Use of violence to achieve political ends. Many would restrict the definition to include only those acts committed by non-government groups, but state terrorism is also a major factor in the social world.²⁵

²² Darul Uloom Deoband, “Anti-Terrorism Conference, February 2008,” Darul Uloom Deoband Anti-Terrorism Conference, <http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/news/1203779820news.htm>.

²³ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, “Terrorism,” 2010, Merriam-Webster Online, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/terrorism>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Babylon Online Dictionary, “Terrorism,” 2009, Babylon Online, <http://dictionary.babylon.com/terrorism>.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)

The **practise of coercing governments to accede to political demands by committing violence on civilian targets**; any similar use of violence to achieve goals. (n.) The act of terrorizing, or state of being terrorized; a **mode of government by terror or intimidation**.²⁶

The Gale Group's "-Ologies & -Isms"

1. A **method of government or of resisting government** involving domination or coercion by various forms of intimidation, as bombing or kidnapping. 2. The state of fear and terror so produced. — terrorist, n., adj. — terroristic, adj.²⁷

Universities

University of Princeton

Terrorist - a **radical** who employs terror as a political weapon; **usually organizes with other terrorists in small cells; often uses religion as a cover for terrorist activities**.²⁸

²⁶ *Webster's Dictionary*, "Terrorism," Revised ed. 1913.

²⁷ Gale's Literary Index, "-Ologies & -Isms," The Gale Group,
<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/LitIndex;jsessionid=26A162F6C21EA60A84C12B522037E8B3>.

²⁸ Princeton Wordnet, "Terrorism," Princeton University,
<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>.

The ICONS Project at the University of Maryland

Criminal act that is undertaken with the purpose of achieving political gain. It **may or may not be directed against a particular government**, and it **may or may not be state-sponsored**. Defining terrorism is a very controversial subject because of the differing motivations of those who practice it...²⁹

Miscellaneous Organizations & Websites

Jewish Agency for Israel

Acts of murder and destruction **deliberately directed against civilians or military in non-military situations**.³⁰

Aeroflight

Terrorist - one who utilizes the systematic use of violence and intimidation to achieve political objectives, **while disguised as a civilian non-combatant**. The use of a civilian disguise while on operations **exempts the perpetrator from protection under the Geneva Conventions**, and consequently if captured they are liable for prosecution as common criminals.³¹

²⁹ ICONS Project, "Terrorism," University of Maryland, http://www.icons.umd.edu/reslib/display_glossary#T.

³⁰ Department for Jewish Zionist Education, "Terrorism," The Jewish Agency for Israel, www.jafi.org.il/education/hasbara/glossary.html.

³¹ Aeroflight Glossary, "Terrorism," AeroFlight, www.aeroflight.co.uk/definitions.htm.

Startsurfing Doublespeak Encyclopedia

Terrorist - **often names for rebel, revolutionary, or folk heroes, especially by oppressive governments.**³²

National Association for Information Destruction

A psychological strategy of war for gaining political ends by deliberately creating a well-founded climate of fear among the civilian population. Such a strategy may be used by an occupying army on the occupied population. Many terrorist acts, especially against an occupying military or against illegal occupants are acts of war or resistance, and not terrorism.³³

Scholars & Authors

Bruce Hoffman (1998)

The word “terrorism” is **politically and emotionally charged.**³⁴

Adrian Humphreys (2006)

There is the famous statement: **“One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.”** But that is grossly misleading. It **assesses the validity of the cause when**

³² Doublespeak Encyclopedia, “Terrorism,” Start Surfing Encyclopedia, www.startsurfing.com/encyclopedia/d/o/u/Doublespeak.html.

³³ Terrorism is Terrorism, “Terrorism.” Uruknet.info, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=m22910&hd=0&size=1&l=x>.

³⁴ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (Columbia University Press, 1998), 32.

terrorism is an act. One can have a **perfectly beautiful cause** and yet **if one commits terrorist acts, it is terrorism regardless.**³⁵

Carsten Bockstette (2008)

Political violence in an asymmetrical conflict that is designed to induce terror and psychic fear (sometimes indiscriminate) through the violent victimization and **destruction of noncombatant targets (sometimes iconic symbols)**. Such acts are meant to send a message **from an illicit clandestine organization**. The purpose of terrorism is **to exploit the media in order to achieve maximum attainable publicity** as an amplifying force multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience(s) in order to reach short- and midterm political goals and/or desired long-term end states.³⁶

Schmid and Jongman (1988)

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of **repeated violent action**, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, **for idiosyncratic**, criminal, or political **reasons**, whereby—**in contrast to assassination**—the **direct targets of violence are not the main targets**. The **immediate human victims** of violence are **generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets)** from a target population, and **serve as message generators**. **Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention**, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.³⁷

³⁵ Adrian Humphreys, “One official’s ‘refugee’ is another’s ‘terrorist’,” *National Post*, January 17, 2006, World News Section, Canadian Edition.

³⁶ Carsten Bockstette. “Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques,” George C. Marshall Center Occasional Paper Series (2008), http://www.marshallcenter.org/mcpublicweb/MCDocs/files/College/F_ResearchProgram/occPapers/occ-paper_20-en.pdf.

³⁷ Schmid, Jongman et al., *Political terrorism: a new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories, and literature* (Amsterdam: North Holland Transaction Books, 1988), 28.

Raffoul Saadeh (2009)

A terrorist act is an organized act that sprouts from **victimized individuals** who have struggled severely and find **no other way of opposing a government, country, or even a set of rules**, and make an **emotional and psychological decision** to operate and achieve certain political objectives using violent methods of activism.

Daniel D. Novotny (2007)

An act is terrorist if and only if (1) it is committed by an individual or group of individuals privately, i.e. **without the legitimate authority of a recognized state**; (2) it is **directed indiscriminately against non-combatants**; (3) the goal of it is to achieve something politically relevant; (4) this goal is pursued by means of fear-provoking violence.³⁸

Jack Gibbs (1989)

Terrorism is illegal violence or threatened violence directed against human or nonhuman objects, provided that it: (1) was undertaken or ordered with a view to **altering or maintaining at least one putative norm** in at least one particular territorial unit or population; (2) had **secretive, furtive, and/or clandestine features** that were expected by the **participants to conceal their personal identity and/or their future location**; (3) was **not undertaken or ordered to further the permanent defense of some area**; (4) was **not conventional warfare** and because of their concealed personal identity, concealment of their future location, their threats, and/or their spatial mobility, the participants perceived themselves as less vulnerable to conventional military action; and (5) was perceived by the participants as contributing to the normative goal previously described (supra) by inculcating fear of violence in persons (perhaps an indefinite

³⁸ Edward V. Linden, ed., What is Terrorism?, vol. 8, *Focus on Terrorism* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2007), 23-32.

category of them) **other than the immediate target of the actual or threatened violence** and/or by publicizing some cause.³⁹

Organizing the Definitions

There are several noteworthy conclusions that we can arrive at from an assessment of these different definitions; the conclusions of primary importance are as follows:

- 1) The general understanding of the word “terrorism” has not changed drastically in any way over the past one-hundred years, if not longer.
- 2) Although the definitions often seem subjective, some general defining characteristics are quite consistent across most interpretations.
- 3) The specifics of any definitions affect what actually is included as terrorism and what is not. The more specific the definition is, the narrower the scope of what can possibly be defined as terrorism.
- 4) States and official state bodies have provided the least specific definitions of terrorism whereas authors, scholars and other independents have provided the most specific.
- 5) Many recent definitions of the word appear to be deductively arrived at by observing what is already considered terrorism then constructing a definition

³⁹ Jack P. Gibbs, “The Conceptualization of Terrorism,” *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 2 (1989), <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2095609>.

based on this. This is opposed to terrorist acts being inductively classified as such based on a pre-determined and agreed-upon set of criteria.⁴⁰

- 6) Definitions differ based on the perspective of and work focus of the writing/reporting body.

To sum these up simply, terrorism is generally understood to entail certain actions and intentions. There are some basic agreed upon principles that have withstood time, but there are also some inconsistencies and discrepancies which exist between definitions. These are found particularly between the definitions of authoritative bodies versus those of individuals. The way a definition is crafted allows one to be selective in labeling what is and what is not terrorism. A serious concern is the potential for political motives to alter what should and shouldn't be defined as terrorism. Furthermore, the media can become a prime assistant in the propagation of particular interests. This is a noteworthy consideration when determining what constitutes terrorism, and while outside the scope of this research, it should definitely be amongst the points considered when forming opinions and ultimately policies.

While many definitions of "terrorism" exist and there has not been, nor likely ever will be, an agreed upon definition, there are some consistent themes and concepts that transcend the conflicting mandates of governmental entities, international bodies and agreements, classical dictionary definitions, and the words of authors and scholars. Some of the common factors in defining terrorism are:

⁴⁰ Dr. Maurice Godwin, "Brief Discussion on Inductive/Deductive Profiling," Godwin Trial & Forensic Consultancy, <http://www.investigativepsych.com/inductive.htm>.

- A) Violence or the threat of violence
- B) Creates a state of terror, fear or panic
- C) Its means are intimidation, influence or coercion
- D) Happens in the pursuit of political, social, ideological, and/or religious goals
- E) Targets governments, civilians/the general population/society or non-combatants

There are also a handful of very useful and insightful additions to this definition which have been provided by some unconventional sources that may not be seen as “legitimate,” which include:

- F) The immediate targets are not the main targets⁴¹
- G) Psychological strategy of war⁴²
- H) Politically/emotionally charged⁴³
- I) Validity of it is based on the act itself and not the cause⁴⁴
- J) Communication between victim and assailant are used to manipulate the audience⁴⁵

According to some sources, terrorism must also be:

- K) Illegal/criminal/illegitimate/without (state/recognized international) authority
- L) Organized/systematic/pre-meditated

⁴¹Schmid, Jongman et al., 28.

⁴² Terrorism is Terrorism.

⁴³ Hoffman, 32.

⁴⁴ Humphreys.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

- M) Repeated⁴⁶
- N) Indiscriminant
- O) Unconventional⁴⁷
- P) Secretive/furtive/clandestine⁴⁸
- Q) Carried out by sub-national, clandestine, paramilitary or private (non-state) groups/individuals
- R) Against a state
- S) Does not further the permanent defense of an area⁴⁹
- T) Peace-time equivalent of war crimes⁵⁰

And in some cases, may be:

- U) Carried out by victimized individuals with a lack of other tangible options
- V) Method of government⁵¹
- W) Method of resisting government⁵²
- X) Used by occupying forces or illegal occupants⁵³
- Y) Resistance against occupying forces or illegal occupants⁵⁴
- Z) Often using religion as a cover⁵⁵

⁴⁶ Schmid, Jongman et al., 28.

⁴⁷ Jack P. Gibbs, "The Conceptualization of Terrorism," *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 2 (1989), <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2095609>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Alex P. Schmid.

⁵¹ Gale's Literary Index.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Terrorism is Terrorism.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Who Defines? Who Contextualizes?

The Politics of Labeling

The main problems that arise in defining terrorism are neither the linguistic discrepancies nor the fact that the definition may occasionally undergo a process of development. The major issue is that the bias of the body defining terrorism is forever intertwined with the wording of said definition.

The discrepancies which exist, particularly in the definitions of authoritative bodies, allow for a significant amount of politically-motivated and directed uses against selective targets. When this does happen, the media can become a prime assistant in the propagation of particular policies and interests. As Brian Jenkins notes, “if one party can successfully attach the label terrorist to its opponent, then it has indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint.”⁵⁶

As terrorists also often seek to exploit media attention, the response by virtue of necessity will as well. In doing so, it becomes a battle between legitimacy and illegitimacy of not only actions themselves, but causes as well – whether or not it is explicitly stated. Bruce Hoffman comments on Jenkins’ viewpoints, stating that:

⁵⁵ Princeton Wordnet.

⁵⁶ Brian Michael Jenkins, *The Study of Terrorism: Definitional Problems* (RAND Corporation, 1980), 10.

Hence the decision to call someone or label some organization ‘terrorist’ becomes almost unavoidably subjective, depending largely on whether one sympathizes with or opposes the person/group/cause concerned. If one identifies with the victim of the violence, for example, then the act is terrorism. If, however, one identifies with the perpetrator, the violent act is regarded in a more sympathetic, if not positive (or, at the worst, an ambivalent) light; and it is not terrorism.⁵⁷

And thus those parties, who are able to utilize available media outlets to their advantage by appealing to both the logic and sympathy of people, win this initial battle of propaganda. This is a major point of consideration when observing which labels are applied to certain groups and actions. In other words, we should not be swayed by the propagation of terms and language we encounter in the media, but instead arrive at our conclusions on the basis of the reality of what is happening and its conformity to a true definition of terrorism.

State versus Non-State Terrorism

One of the primary means by which we ignore some forms of terrorism is legitimizing unjustified state violence and de-legitimizing the desperate resistance of an oppressed people. This is apparent when simply observing what is addressed in most of

⁵⁷ Hoffman, 23.

the definitions given by authoritative bodies versus those given by individuals. For example, in 2002 Andre Byrnes concluded regarding the United Nations' conventions dealing with terrorism that:

they all focused on actions by non-State actors (individuals and organisations) and the State was seen as an active ally in the struggle against terrorism - the question of the State itself as terrorist actor was left largely to one side

In contrast, we see many definitions of terrorism given by independents that include such factors as “victimized individuals” “against an occupying military” in an “asymmetrical conflict.” If we were to ask those who are most commonly accused of terrorism what they define as terrorism, certainly we would receive a different definition than those we find in the comfort of the mainstream western world of academia.

Furthermore, had we lived amongst the peoples and communities from which alleged terrorists hail, we would more than likely begin to understand the legitimacy of their definitions of terrorism, while still not necessarily the legitimacy of their actions – a very clear and important distinction to make. This is why those who have spent significant time on the ground often have vastly different perspectives on what defines terrorism versus those who enact policy to fight terrorism.

Deduction versus Induction

Another important factor in the process of formulating a definition of terrorism is the differentiation between deduction and induction. Aside from the required historical precedence which the original term “terrorism” was derived, there has been a tendency to deductively derive this term from the actions that we wish to describe. This is primarily because:

- 1) the actions are continuously (although slowly) developing and thus new innovative forms of terrorism need to be included in the definitions (and in some cases specifically referred to) and
- 2) there is a desire to include certain events or actions by specific peoples within the framework of terrorism and to exclude others

The second point is where the problem lies. Therefore to move away from an operational bias, I recommend an inductive approach to defining terrorism. In other words, we must definitively determine what constitutes terrorism and then to apply it across all actions and parties equally without restraint or prejudice. This is a more scientifically sound process to approaching the field of political science and has been the recommended approach for this reason in other fields as well such as criminology.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The Critical Thinking Co. Staff, “Guide to Inductive & Deductive Reasoning: Induction vs. Deduction,” The Critical Thinking Company, <http://www.criticalthinking.com/company/articles/inductive-deductive-reasoning.jsp>.

Operational Definition

After all of this, we need to come to a decision of what terrorism is within the context of this research. I'd like to refer back to the five agreed upon components of terrorism (A - E), primarily that terrorism is the targeting of governments or civilians with violence (or the threat of) intended to create fear or panic by means of intimidation to obtain political, social, ideological, and/or religious goals. When assessing both what we commonly consider terrorism and the responses to it, I'd like to be able to refer back to this definition.

Lastly, there is a need to put this definition into context to explain what exactly this research will be covering. We will be discussing terrorism as defined by the above definition in the context of "Islamic extremism." Essentially we are covering these actions, which fit our definition, that have been committed by Muslims who are drawing their justifications from Islam itself. From this point forth, when "terrorism" is mentioned, it will be within this context unless otherwise noted.

Strength of Relationship

I believe the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable to be "real" and strong. A relationship may not appear, however – that is the dependent variable may not exist – until each independent variable reaches a certain

level. There may also be a required accompaniment of other supporting independent variables. Terrorism and indiscriminate killing is a fairly new concept to Islam when compared to other extreme factions within other cultural and religious traditions because the conditions required for it to exist – our political and religious independent variables – may not have existed simultaneously to the extent required for terrorism to become evident.

Direction of Relationship

The direction of the relationship, based on the way we setup our variables, is anticipated to be positive. That is, as both independent variables increase – improper understanding of particular Islamic concepts and Western negligence of the Muslim world's political grievances – the dependent variable – terrorism – should be expected to increase as well.

Inevitably this is a very subjective measurement and the qualitative nature of this research will not allow for the calculating or measuring of terrorism or terrorist attacks in relation to the presence of our dependent variables. This, however, may be a worthwhile approach for future research.

Research Design

This research will consist of two separate analyses of our dependent-independent variable relationship – religious and political. To determine whether or not a relationship exists and qualitatively to what extent, we will first have to accurately define all our variables, then research and organize our individual variables in depth, analyze the accuracy and legitimacy of what those variables entail, and finally conclude if the presence of those variables lend credence to a relationship between each one and terrorism.

In order to do this in the religious realm – what was outlined above in respect to our variables and how they will be analyzed and tested – we will be required to do the following: determine the relevant and cited religious topics, provide a general introduction and overview to each of these topics, describe their importance and relevancy to terrorism, cite the common oriental misconceptions when applicable, provide the traditional and orthodox perspectives on the topics when relevant, cite the positions on these topics taken by those advocating terrorism comparing the similarities and differences between these positions when available, conclude as to the legitimacy of these positions, and finally determine whether or not these differences indicate a relationship between terrorism and particular interpretations of Islam.

From a political standpoint, we will need to analyze the actual source statements, interviews and videos which are accessible from the main proponents of terroristic

activity as well as those who have been accused of terrorism. These include Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Adam Gadahn, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Anwar al-Awlaki, and Mullah Omar. The most politically explicit statements will be highlighted then categorized and broken down into sub-topics. These sub-topics will be expounded upon from what we propose to be an outsider's perspective. We will then attempt to determine a) whether these arguments are held by simply the proponents of terrorism or if they are held by the Muslim population in general, b) how legitimate these arguments are in light of readily available research, and c) potential weaknesses in these arguments. In the conclusion we will revisit the different derived topics theorizing to what extent these arguments can and are being used as recruitment tools for the spreading of terrorist activities and the supporting of this ideology in general.

All of this will be done from three different levels of analysis. At the individual level, we will be looking at our accused terrorists and the roles that an individual can play in his or her interpretation and derivation of Islamic rulings. At the state level, we will be addressing foreign and domestic policies that may be contributing to the proliferation of terrorism as well as the Muslim world's role in dealing with terrorism. At the systemic level, we will be dealing briefly with the notion of civilizations and how it has appeared at times that there has become a standoff between the West and the Muslim world.

Scope

The phenomenon of terrorism has been extensively researched and written on in the past 20 years, with a particular focus on the events of the last 8-10 years. Although many of the topics found within this research have been previously addressed, in most cases they have failed to discuss or even acknowledge the depth of each respective issue. This research will inevitably fall short of being able to cover each subject with due diligence and required attention. It will, however, seek to introduce these issues to the reader and consequently demonstrate the importance of them in order to lay the groundwork for the much needed additional research in these particular areas.

There are two main sections (Chapters 3 and 4) which will be covered in this work, one dedicated to each independent variable. The following chapter (Chapter 2) will discuss terrorism in today's discourse, the significance of this research topic, its place amongst the current literature, and similarities between different types of modern and historical acts of terrorism. Finally the conclusion (Chapter 5) will cover the results of this research as well as potential policy recommendations.

Chapter 2 will be dedicated to understanding terrorism within a brief historical context covering: a) terrorism within today's discourse; b) this research within the currently available literature; c) the importance of understanding its political, historical and religious dimensions in detail; and d) how the research which follows can provide a framework to resolving terrorism on multiple levels.

Historically, there have been splinter groups in all religions that have taken their scriptures out of context and used them in defense of some predetermined and often unrelated end. The justifications put forth by the current advocates of terrorism within Muslim societies are not an anomaly but instead merely an example of such occurrences. There will also be noted other religious-based acts of terrorism mentioned that have happened outside of the realm of Islam and the Muslim community. We will be noting how similarities and differences may be drawn between these two groups of actions in order to further understand the issue at hand.

Of particular interest and focus in this research will be those groups who may represent the resurrection of old ideologies and violent factions from Islamic history. The most well-known examples of the past are the *Khawārij* that originally formed during the reign of the third and fourth *Khulifāt* of Islam and have continuously reappeared since then. The Qaramita during the 3rd and 4th centuries after *Hijri*, and the *Hashshashin* assassins will all be discussed.

The third and potentially most important topic of this research is religion. Religion forms the foundation upon which nearly every conversation and argument about acts of terrorism carried out by Muslims is built. While it is indeed extremely important to look towards the foundation of Islam when dealing with this problem, legitimate research needs to be carried out with a critical and objective eye in order to ascertain the truth about what Islam says regarding these concepts and why Islam is often cited as the root cause of terrorism.

Chapter 3 will thus address some of the most relevant and critical topics within Islam that have a direct effect on calls for violence. By drawing from a variety of classical Arabic and modern English sources as well as the most recent discussions surrounding “Islamic terrorism” the chapter will assess the religious arguments being put forth by those calling for the acts of violence we commonly refer to as terrorism. In some cases, these arguments have been based upon unorthodox interpretations of particular religious topics that violate well-established and agreed upon principles. In other cases, they are drawing upon topics that have not been formally addressed on a scholarly level in hundreds of years and require re-evaluation. Chapter 3 will include different general approaches to Islam, specific religious texts with their traditional and non-traditional interpretations, the process by which texts are interpreted (and whether or not these are being followed), and how other Islamic principles are being understood and applied.

The next chapter will cover the political factors of terrorism. Many of the reasons cited by the advocates of terrorism and their parties are related to the seemingly unjust politics in their localities. Some proponents of violence in the name of religion say that they have undertaken these acts in order to fend off or change the politics of both foreign and domestic powers. Bin Laden is a prime example of this having cited on numerous occasions what his political grievances were and eluding to his goal “to direct U.S. policy.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Wa’el al-Ibrushi, “Interview with Abu Hamzah al-Masri,” interview by Rose al-Yusuf (Cairo, EG 28 October 2000), *FBI Report*, (Fall 2000): 16-17.

Chapter 4 will discuss these political gripes and grievances being used by those calling to terrorism. Their legitimacy will be evaluated from an historical and purely political basis. In other words, we will ask whether there is an historical precedence to indicate that these are not just claims or conspiracies and if these are truly political realities or mere misunderstandings.

Finally, this research will conclude in Chapter 5 with policy implications for this country and well as others. It will address concerns of military-based solutions, those which relate to diplomatic resolutions, and finally non-conventional and multi-lateral approaches to solving terrorism.

CHAPTER 2: TERRORISM IN TODAY'S DISCOURSE

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

– President Reagan⁶⁰

It is the focus of every major media outlet, the primary topic that much of foreign policy revolves, a major concern for a significant portion of the Western public, and the most likely over-arching theme for which this era will be remembered. Terrorism in the context of "Islamic fundamentalism" has become the focus of America and the West's "War on Terror."

The stakes are as high as they have ever been for this nation and perhaps higher. As with every previous ideological and great military war, losing the "war on terror" would spell more than defeat for our nation-state; it would spell utter disaster and collapse. In many ways it is more than military dominance that is at stake, it is "civilization" itself and the way Western societies have become accustomed to understanding and defining it. In no way can this topic be treated lightly and thus any outright rejection of attempts to understand terrorism at its core could be both fatal and regretful.

Rohan Gunaratna in his thorough research on terrorism stated that, "the perspectives of the historian and the political scientist are both essential in understanding

⁶⁰ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Pocket Books, 1990), 409.

and addressing Al Qaeda.”⁶¹ I believe it is imperative to take that one step further by adding religious scholars to this list. These three areas will be addressed in the research that follows. Each has a very particular importance to it and one would be greatly mistaken to overlook them. While the government, the media, and even the general public have indeed on occasion gone to the “experts” for their opinions on these topics, they have failed in many ways to grasp the depth and details of which each field possesses. Their conclusions, more often than not, have been based on superficial understandings or emotionally-driven conclusions.

Because I do not attest to be scholar in any of these fields, I will refer to them in their respective specialties. I would like to emphasize that it is they that we need to bring our attention to so that we are able to hear and understand the logic of their arguments and the conclusions that they draw. We should not merely listen to political leaders who may have won their positions on the basis of popularity contests or political favors, nor media talk show hosts who hold their jobs on the basis of their ratings within niche communities. My objective in this research will be to bring light to some of these works and reiterate the need to further research these topics, academically and objectively.

⁶¹ Gunaratna, 1.

Significance of Topics

To make this research particularly unique, I will be primarily analyzing two subject matters: 1) the theological argument being used by those committing or calling for acts of terrorism and violence as well as the inclusion of particular Islamic principles that have been ignored or violated by terrorism and its proponents; and 2) the political grievances, requests, and demands that have been and are being made by those involved in or accused of terrorism, and to what extent they have or have not been met – whether these opinions are held merely by the accused terrorists or also by the greater Muslim population, whether they are legitimate, some of the weaknesses in their arguments, and why ignoring them may ultimately be disastrous.

Most of these topics surrounding terrorism are rarely taken into consideration despite the reality that at any historical point in time, when a party was seeking to defeat its perceived or declared adversaries, it would eventually realize the importance of objectively understanding them. As Sun Tzu was reported to have said, “If you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the results of a hundred battles.”⁶² The results of failing to understand the “enemy” are often disastrous – e.g. unnecessary wars that prolong conflict and end in defeat in the place of diplomatic solutions and strategic responses that conclude with a decisive victory – which is what makes understanding the “other” so critical to stopping terrorism.

⁶² Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Lionel Giles, ed. Dallas Galvin (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003), 17.

Theoretical Importance

This research is intended to be theoretically significant because of the unique perspective which it will take: on one hand analyzing the theological basis being used by those committing acts of terrorism and on the other assessing the impact of ignored political grievances.

Most research on terrorism has been done from an outsider's perspective, generally focusing on issues of human psychology related to desires for fame and power or to just fit in, revenge over a fall from global hegemony, or a belief that Islam is an inherently violent religion adamant on challenging all authority. When actually considered from a victim's perspective, research has usually only taken into account concerns over oppression dealt to populations by Muslim governments or socio-economic conditions within terrorists' home countries.

Rarely have researchers put themselves into the shoes of a supposed terrorist – looking at both their theological justifications for their actions and the various politically-related situations which they find themselves in – because of the fear of being perceived as sympathizing and siding with the enemy. The reality, however, is that truly understanding any group regarded as adversaries requires putting yourself into their position as much as humanly possible. If the goal is to conquer or fend off this adversary, understanding them is not merely important but indeed should be the central focus of

research. In the absence of this mentality, any battles won will be nothing more than a deception and a distraction to winning the entirety of the war.

This research will intentionally be done from the perspective and the position of both accused terrorists and the Muslim world. In that respect, it may challenge and even err as to the “world view” being adopted herein. However, the intention of this paper is not to argue for or against either represented side, but instead to explore the perspectives of the side which the West seems to find itself at odds with. Furthermore, in no way does this research argue for the legitimacy of terrorism despite listing and explaining the causes being cited for these actions.

Policy Implications

The policy importance and implications of this research lie in understanding the role, degree of influence and legitimacy of these individuals within the Muslim world and the position in which they fall in respect to both the tradition of Islamic thought and scholarship and the legitimacy of their political grievances. Successfully combating terrorism requires a proper understanding of these and working with those who have the greatest ability to combat it. On the religious hand, it has historically been the Muslims themselves whereas on the political hand it will have to be with those involved in policy making as well as major corporations and even influential religious scholars, among other more traditional means.

Additionally, there has to be a much greater sense of responsible and altruistic foreign policy. Terrorists have explicitly cited the transgressions of the West as a reason for their acts; whereas the West cites similar grievances on its own behalf in order to combat terrorism – violations of freedoms, liberties and rights. Regardless of whether or not we agree with their opinions and stand against their means of retaliation, their calls resonate deeply in the Muslim world and provide an extremely effective tool for recruitment.

Literature Review

Because there are two primary topics here, both need to be addressed. First from the religious perspective, there are very few books (particularly in English; admittedly there are a wide-variety of smaller texts available mostly in Arabic and Urdu) that I believe have comprehensively assessed terrorism from a holistic religious standpoint. In other words, while we can find little pamphlets, videos, and religious edicts written pertaining to very specific topics that are related to terrorism (such as what is jihad, suicide bombing, attacking Muslim governments, targeting non-combatants, etc.), there have been few detailed research efforts made to explain terrorism from beginning to end – the particular beliefs, jurisprudential approaches, social mentalities, scholarly qualifications (or lack of), and particular legalistic rulings that allow for the existence

(and even flourishing) of terrorism and terroristic approaches to solving both global and local problems.

Amongst the most useful in understanding terrorism and its sources from an Islamic perspective is Aisha B. Lemu's "Laxity, Moderation and Extremism in Islam." It is a short bounded publication that provides a very useful breakdown of Islamic extremism and an assortment of Islamic topics related to extremism including its manifestations, causes, and remedies. All of her piece relies strictly on Islamic sources and does not bring politics into the mix. She based much of her writings on Shaykh Yusuf Al Qardawi's "Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism," another critically important piece addressing one aspect and root cause of terrorism.

Shaykh Muhammad Afifi Al-Akiti's "Defending the Transgressed by Censuring the Reckless Against the Killing of Civilians" is a series of religious edicts, or *fatāwa*, that break down rules related to armed conflict in Islam detailing what are permissible and impermissible targets and methods, requirements for conducting jihad, and its various obligatory forms.

"Jihad vs. Terrorism" by Dr. Maher Hathout similarly discusses some rules behind jihad but also deals with some of the misquoted and misapplied verses from the Qur'an while providing their proper historical and situational contexts.

From the traditional Western perspective, many of our sources deal with terrorism from purely sociological, psychological or combative approaches. Some do touch upon the topic of the ideological framework that terrorists, or commonly referred to as

‘jihadists’ in these writings, base their actions. However, little attention is given to whether or not these ideologies have any legitimacy in classical Islamic thought.

Nevertheless, Raymond Ibrahim has added an important piece to the field with his work “The Al Qaeda Reader” in which he has translated many writings from bin Laden and al-Zawahiri that were not previously available in the English language. Some of these offer a considerably useful look into the ideological underpinnings of Al-Qaeda such as with Ayman al-Zawahiri’s very academic piece on “Loyalty and Enmity: An Inherited Doctrine and a Lost Reality” and a series of bin Laden authored papers literally outlining why he has declared war on America.

Rohan Gunaratna’s “Inside Al-Qaeda” deals primarily with Al-Qaeda but also mentions some smaller militant groups and some of the historical beginnings to these groups’ current ideologies and how they differ slightly from one another. He categorizes some of them as being “utopian” and others as “apocalyptic.”⁶³ He occasionally assesses bin Laden’s speeches, gives very simple summaries of their ideologies, and goes into great detail about their recruiting and strategy from political perspectives.

“Knowing the Enemy” by Mary Habeck was a highly reviewed book which talked about the actual ideological beliefs of “jihadis” and what their historical beginnings were. She also includes the political environment as one that has influenced some of their particular beliefs; however it remains a very simple reader in respect to both of these

⁶³ Gunaratna, 124.

topics. It is useful as a general overview, but like many other available books, it does not touch on the specific political issues and events that have influenced these beliefs nor where within Islam those beliefs are grounded. Habeck takes the position that “it is to religion – however misused and abused – that the jihadis regularly appeal when talking about their beliefs or explaining their actions. They mention other issues (especially imperialism, nationalism, and socialism) but from a purely religious viewpoint.”⁶⁴

RAND published “In Their Own Words: Voices of Jihad” by David Aaron which provides a much more detailed overview of ‘jihad’ and ‘jihadis’ from interviews and journal writings to an overview of Islam and the most important scholars over the past 800 years whose writings discussed topics relevant to jihad. It also contains a brief summation through the use of quotes on Islamic topics such as *Al-Walaa’ wal-Baraa’* and *takfeer*, political world views, strategies, and particular attacks. It comes as a useful introductory handbook for those in the academic and political fields who remain fairly unfamiliar with the topic of terrorism.

Some books have positively contributed to the field of terrorism studies by dealing with terrorism from an “insider’s” perspective. One of the most insightful pieces is “Through Our Enemies’ Eyes” by Michael Scheuer, an ex-CIA employee of 22 years and Chief of the Bin Laden Issue Station (“Alex Station”) from 1996 to 1999, as well as Special Advisor to the Chief of the bin Laden unit between September 2001 and November 2004. He makes very insightful analyses of bin Laden’s statements over the

⁶⁴ Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 18.

years noting that “the first step in countering the forces that bin Laden has established is to listen more patiently to what he said in the past and to understand the personal, historical, and geopolitical contexts in which he thought, spoke, and acted.”⁶⁵ He stresses the importance of how bin Laden has been very forthright in his language citing the exact reasons why he has resorted to terrorism. He further provides a useful context with which Americans can understand how bin Laden is viewed in the Muslim world, particularly those of the “bad man/good cause”⁶⁶ John Brown who led the infamous raid on Harper’s Ferry acting as a catalyst for the Civil War, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. It serves to produce a unique view point on this topic and again stresses the importance of analyzing the statements of accused terrorists.

There are additionally a handful of insider books such as Fawaz Gerges’s “Journey of the Jihadist” and Jason Burke’s “Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror” that provides a very useful insight into the notion that “‘Al-Qaeda’ is a messy and rough designation, often applied carelessly in the absence of a more useful term” because it “does not exist.”⁶⁷ He instead favors the idea that Islamic militancy is not a centrally-run operation nor does Al-Qaeda, bin Laden, or any specific individual have a monopoly over terrorism, while at the same time stressing the importance of not discounting these individuals’ roles.

⁶⁵ Michael Scheuer, *Through our enemies’ eyes: Osama bin Laden, radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, Inc., 2003), xviii.

⁶⁶ Scheuer, 6.

⁶⁷ Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2003), 7.

Numerous books offer histories of Al Qaeda and key figures like bin Laden and Zawahiri such as Gerges's "The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global," discussing the aftermath of the jihad in Afghanistan. Peter Bergen elaborates on the events leading up to the embassy bombings and attack on the U.S.S. Cole in his "Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden" and also provides a slightly more detailed historical account of Al-Qaeda in "The Osama bin Laden I know."

In Gerges's more recent "Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy," he details a series of interviews and the events and discussions surrounding them noting "the diversity that lay beneath the sometimes monotonous numbing rhetoric"⁶⁸ in attempting to explain the development of militant attitudes in young Muslims growing up under politically oppressive and socially repressive environments.

Amin Maalouf's "In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong" explores the roles of identities and how they can have an effect on influencing attitudes and behaviors. She mentions the notion that by marginalizing non-mainstream ideas, people can be forced into pushing their own ideas towards extremes. She claims that "when modernity bears the mark of 'the other' it is not surprising if some people confronting it brandish symbols of atavism to assert their difference."⁶⁹

Oliver Roy in his "Globalized Islam" proposes a similar identity-based theory in which neo-fundamentalism, in response to efforts to assert an Islamic identity in a very non-Islamic world, have led to new forms of radicalization of youth.

⁶⁸ Fawaz Gerges, *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 18.

⁶⁹ Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 73.

Getting into writings that have more policy implications are Esposito's post-9/11 works including "Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam" which provides an optimistic yet cautious approach to the War on Terror, citing the importance of understanding the differences between the majority Muslim population and select groups and individuals. He also draws attention to the fact that there are political problems that the Muslim world has with the West, and that bin Laden, like others, "cleverly identified specific grievances against Muslim regimes and the United States that are shared across a broad spectrum of Muslims, most of whom are not extremists. He then used religious texts and doctrines to justify his jihad of violence and terrorism."⁷⁰

Ekaterina Stepanova's "Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects" argues that Islamic extremism cannot likely be countered by moderate Islam on the ideological front nor by traditional military means because it is not a symmetrical battle – militarily nor even in intangible forms, such as psychologically or ideologically. She proposes that only extreme nationalism or the nationalization of Islamic militancy will help purge it because only then will it take on a definitive form which can be countered. There is, however, a more worthy research concept that can be taken from this work – the *development* of terrorism in asymmetrical scenarios.

Bruce Hoffman's "Inside Terrorism" has been revised numerous times and remains one of the more useful books in detailing a comprehensive understanding of terrorism across multiple fronts such as motivations, tactics, and the role of media for not

⁷⁰ John Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 153.

just Islamic terrorism but terrorism in general. He provides policy recommendations to thwarting attacks, specifically suicide attacks, and how focusing on both the motivations and modus operandi are so critical.

Place within the Current Literature

By bringing together these two main topics of religion and politics, this work will fill a gap in a manner and context which is intended to be unique. Outspoken political activists have as well been critical of Western foreign policies, domestic policy and civilian treatment of Muslim governments. Few have linked them directly to terrorism and even fewer have placed them as a potential source of terrorism – that is the fuel for terrorist activities, successful recruitment, and the spreading of its ideological framework.

Some pieces discussing terrorism have covered the history of terrorism and others have documented Muslim history which may include specific incidents and peoples that could potentially be classified as terrorism and terrorists. Religious *fatāwa* have also refuted the claims made by many that are promoting terrorism. Most of these sources, however, simply explain the impermissibility of terroristic activities and provide textual evidence for this but fail to explain the religious sources, interpretations and rulings that are being used as justification by those calling toward terrorism.

No writings, to my knowledge, have actually equally stressed and successfully brought together these two topics with a focus on fully explaining the cited justifications for terrorism, both religious and political.

More specifically, each section will also bring together items which are rarely analyzed and contextualized for the modern threat of terrorism. The religious portion of this work is an assortment of different topics and aspects of Islamic scholarship and law that are being assessed to determine how and where understandings that have allowed for actions of terrorism could have developed. Some of these topics will include *Al- Ghuloo wal-`Itidaal* (excessiveness and moderation), *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'* (loyalty and disavowal), *Usool al-Fiqh* (the origins and fundamentals of the law), *Usool at-Tafseer* (the origins and fundamentals of exegesis and interpretation), and others. Each of these topics will be undertaken with the intent of understanding those issues and texts which are related to the topic at hand.

The political section will openly cite the political grievances and contentions that are held by those inciting terrorism. Some may be legitimate while others not so much. Regardless, they form a world view that is uniquely different from that which we hold in the West. When considered in tandem with a bloody history of political and religious confrontations between the West and the Muslim world, the claims that are being made take on a new light. Furthermore, when coupled with religious prophecy, what is going on today potentially takes on new meanings of epic proportion.

Comparison of Terrorist Ideologies and Groups

This idea and notion of terrorism is one that traverses religious and secular causes. In general it is nothing new; however, the specifics of terrorism today differ from those of the past. It has become such an important topic because of the mere magnitude of the destruction which can be caused by a single individual. Thus a terrorist determined to inflict casualties is both very capable of doing so and difficult to prevent.

There is an importance in making brief note of the historical context which today's terrorism falls. There are both similarities and differences across different types of terrorism that if understood in whole, will help us address the specific issue of terrorism sourcing from Islamic extremism.

Secular Terrorism

It may not have been until the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia that terrorism began to take on the distinct role which it has in modern times. This is because it was not until the modern nation state's rise that insurrection was able to be fully crushed and even prevented through the tight control over communication and organizing. And thus it was this prevention of natural revolt that would have normally otherwise culminated in full

civil unrest and war which led to “terrorism” becoming the only viable option for rebels.⁷¹

It was the French Revolution where the words “terrorism” and “terrorist” first came into use and it was in reference to the “Reign of Terror” instituted by the Revolutionary government. Assassinations of aristocrats and prominent officials and mass public executions were amongst the intimidating and “terroristic” activities that the government carried out.⁷²

In the more modern era, technology empowered “anarchists” often leaned on nationalist identities to their claim for “propaganda of the deed” and the resultant violence against ruling authority. Assassinations of heads of states became both more possible and common place. Some of the characteristics that we associate with terrorism today such as organizing in cells, clandestine activity, and the choosing of violence on behalf of their claimed constituents to bring about change as opposed to large-scale organizing, find their sources in modern terrorist organizations. The Russian *Narodnaya Volya*, or Peoples Will, of the 19th century is one of these and has served as a model for terrorist organizations up to the present.⁷³

⁷¹ Early History of Terrorism, “Early Origins of Terrorism: 14th – 18th Century,” Terrorism-Research.com, <http://www.terrorism-research.com/history/early.php>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Early History of Terrorism, “Entering the Modern Era: The 19th Century,” Terrorism-Research.com, <http://www.terrorism-research.com/history/early.php>.

Religious Terrorism

Religion is a tool that people have used for thousands of years to promote agendas of self-interest and to justify unscrupulous actions. Its legacy includes such things as sacrificial killings, Manifest Destiny, the Crusades, and suicide bombings. Furthermore, terrorism is an action that is not solely associated to religion. Recent reports show that 94% of all terrorist attacks on U.S. soil between 1980 and 2005⁷⁴ and 99.6% of terrorist attacks in Europe between 2007 and 2009 were not attributed to Islamic extremists.⁷⁵ In fact, the vast majority of all these terrorist attacks were not religiously related at all.

Nevertheless, the terrorist attacks which have received the world's attention have been those perpetrated by religious groups, particularly Islamic militant groups like Al-Qaida. Their attacks have proven to be both the deadliest and the most politically influential, effectively mobilizing the militaries of the world's superpowers. This recent wave of Islamic terrorist attacks is neither new nor unique to the Islamic world. While these attacks have been of an elevated catastrophic nature in comparison to any terrorist attacks of the past, the religious reasoning behind them resemble closely, for example, that of the Jewish Zealots during the first century C.E. They engaged in the assassination of other Jews who were collaborating with the Romans in the Iudaea Province, which is

⁷⁴ Loon Watch, "All Terrorists are Muslims...Except the 94% that Aren't," LoonWatch.com, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2010/01/not-all-terrorists-are-muslims>.

⁷⁵ Loon Watch, "Europol Report: All Terrorists are Muslims...Except the 99.6% that Aren't," LoonWatch.com, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2010/01/terrorism-in-europe>.

often seen as the first instance of “terrorism”⁷⁶ and a form of “propaganda of the deed” by inspiring the public in the face of terror to demand change from or revolt against their political leaders.

Today we also find the examples of abortion clinic bombings. In the United States only there have been 619 bomb threats and 4 successful⁷⁷ and 1 unsuccessful⁷⁸ bombings between 1984 and 2007.⁷⁹ Many use the same logic of violence to stop violence and murder to stop murder. While occasionally this may be acceptable across the majority of religions and cultures, it is never a license to kill. When it becomes such, we find these instances where religion is being used to justify violent tendencies that may be merely the result of suppressed anger and not something ordained by or even condoned by religion.

Many other examples exist of religious-based or religiously justified terrorism. In 1985, the Sikh *Khalistan* movement was behind the bombing of Air India Flight 182 killing 329 on board⁸⁰ along with other indiscriminate bombings throughout the 80’s and 90’s.⁸¹ Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese religious group, was responsible for the 1994 Tokyo

⁷⁶ Hoffman, 83.

⁷⁷ Victoria Churchville, “Bomb Suspects Cite Religious Motive,” *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1985, World News Section, Online Edition.

⁷⁸ National Abortion Federation, “History of Violence/Extreme Violence,” ProChoice.org, http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/violence/history_extreme.asp.

⁷⁹ National Abortion Federation, “Incidence of Violence & Disruption Against Abortion Providers in the U.S. & Canada,” ProChoice.org, http://www.prochoice.org/pubs_research/publications/downloads/about_abortion/violence_stats.pdf.

⁸⁰ CBC News Online, “The Victims,” cbc.ca, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/airindia/victims.html>.

⁸¹ The Philadelphia Inquirer, “Gunmen Slaughter 38 on Bus in India in Bloodiest Attack of Sikh Campaign,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 7, 1987, sec. A.

subway attack with sarin nerve gas where 500 were injured and 7 killed.⁸² For the purpose of our brief discussion, however, we will limit ourselves to these few cases.

Historical Islamic Terrorism

Historically, there have been splinter groups in all religions that have taken their scriptures out of context and used them in defense of some predetermined and often unrelated end. The justifications put forth by the current advocates of terrorism within Muslim societies are not an anomaly but instead merely an example of such occurrences. In many ways they are similar to other religious-based acts of terrorism that have happened outside of the realm of Islam and the Muslim community. By noticing both the similarities and differences that may be drawn between them, we may be able to further understand the issue at hand.

Of particular interest and focus in this research will be those groups who may represent the resurrection of old ideologies and violent factions from Islamic history. The most well-known example of the past is the *Khawārij* who originally formed during the reign of the third and fourth *khulifāt* of Islam and have continuously reappeared since then. The *Qaramita* during the 3rd and 4th centuries after *Hijri* and the *Hashshashin* in

⁸²Kyle B. Olson, “Aum Shinrikyo: Once and Future Threat?,” Center for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol5no4/olson.htm>.

the 5th to 7th centuries are also important references to what may be referred to as “terrorism” in Islamic history.⁸³

Khawārij

The *Khawārij*, or Kharijites, are commonly referred back to when assessing the legitimacy of the calls to terrorism by its current advocates. The two groups are usually considered similar in both their theological beliefs and their religiously-backed political reasoning for their attacks. The *Khawārij* were well-known for fighting against the fourth *Khalīfa* of the Islamic Empire, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and attempting to subvert the government. They displayed flip-flop tendencies first demanding that Ali agree to Muawiyah’s proposal for arbitration but then later abdicated from Ali’s army and demanded that Ali must fight Muawiyah to the end. Their call to arms became “No rule but God’s” from a verse in the Qur’an – *The decision is only for Allah* (Qur’an 6:57). They insisted on an incorrect understanding that restricted an interpretation of text where only war (decided by God) could be acceptable whereas negotiations (assumed decided by man) were not. They attempted to assassinate Muawiyah, ‘Amr Ibn Al-As (then governor of Egypt), and Ali who they were successful in slaying. They casted Ali, Muawiyah and their arbitrators Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari and Amr Ibn Al-As outside the fold

⁸³ IslamiCity Prayer Times, “Hijri Date Converter,”IslamiCity, <http://www.islamicity.com/PrayerTimes/hijricconverter1aPartner.htm>.

of Islam for some of their actions and subsequently ruled their assassinations permissible.⁸⁴ Some of the theological explanations for this will be reserved for chapter 3.

Qaramita

The *Qaramita*, or Qarmatians were a group from amongst the *Ismā'īlī Shi'i* that have been remembered for some of their horrendous atrocities committed against the main-stream Muslims during the 10th century. They were responsible for what has been called a “century of terrorism” in the city of *Kūfah*.⁸⁵ They are most infamous for their raid on a caravan of pilgrims returning from the *Hajj* in *Mecca* in 906 C.E. killing 20,000.⁸⁶ They attempted to raid *Baghdad* in 927 and in 930 were successful in sacking both *Mecca* and *Medina*. In *Mecca* they desecrated the Well of Zam Zam with pilgrim’s corpses and stole the black stone from the *Ka'ba*.⁸⁷ They were eventually defeated by the *Abbasids* in 976, becoming extinct shortly thereafter.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Abul Ala Maududi, trans. Shaikh Usama bin Sheikh, *Khilafat-o-Malookeyat* (Lahore: Islamic Publication 1970), 214.

⁸⁵ I.M.N. Al-Jubūrī, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (Gamlingay, UK: Authors Online Ltd, 2004), 172.

⁸⁶ John Joseph Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam* (New York: Routledge, 1978), 130.

⁸⁷ Heritage Society at Ismaili Net, “The Qarmatians in Bahrain,” Ismaili Net, <http://ismaili.net/histoire/history05/history510.html>.

⁸⁸ University of Cumbria Division of Religion and Philosophy, “Qarmatiyyah,” University of Cumbria, <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/islam/shia/qarma.html>.

Hashshashin

Hashshashin is the name given to the group of assassins who were followers of Hassan-i Sabbah,⁸⁹ a missionary convert to the *Nizari Ismā‘īlī Shi‘i* sect, the largest *Ismā‘īlī* branch today. In attempting to spread their branch’s interpretation of Ismailism and fight back their then enemies with a vastly outnumbered force, they engaged in assassinations targeting *Sunni* politicians and scholars who were deemed a threat to their group⁹⁰ along with military commanders and city governors under the *Fatamid* dynasty in hope of forcing political revolution.⁹¹

They developed highly skilled political assassins, known as the *Fedayeen*, trained in what we would likely consider modern-day espionage and pre-emptive surgical strikes aimed at preventing attacks on their forts. They had been trained in different trades, sciences, and languages along with covert infiltration and have been referred to as “sleeper commandos.” They were also known for making coercive threats to accomplish their political goals by slipping knives on their enemies’ pillows while they slept.^{92 93}

A noteworthy trait of the *Hashshashin* was the requirement for them to remain present after an assassination, which was essentially tantamount to suicide. Their display

⁸⁹ Martin Booth, *Cannabis: A History* (New York: Picador Publishing, 2005), 63.

⁹⁰ Anthony Campbell, *The Assassins of Alamut* (Raleigh: Lulu, 2008), 84.

⁹¹ Gerard Chaliand, *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) 68.

⁹² Farhad Daftary, *The Isma‘ilis: their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 324–338.

⁹³ Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2003), 67.

of fearlessness and willingness to die in their cause further struck fear into the hearts of their enemies and helped spread their reputation.⁹⁴

Similarities with Modern Islamic Terrorism

Secular terrorism is generally understood to be left-wing, socialist, or communist in its cause. It has most commonly been revolutionary in its goals and often anarchist in its means. For the most part it is more political in nature than right-wing or religious terrorism with the overall goal most commonly being the replacement of a domestic government or succession from a nation.

In some ways, modern Islamic terrorism shares characteristics with secular terrorism. It is very revolutionary and in some cases quite anarchist or even apocalyptic. Its political goals are clear – world-wide Islamic rule – and it seeks to do this through a complete destruction and replacement of current governments as opposed to reformation of them. It obviously, however, has an entire additional element – religion – which causes it to go above and beyond the often one-dimensional goals and ends that secular terrorism seeks.

In respect to religious terrorism, although it almost always has political undertones (and even overtones), there remains a “moral imperative” that is much more pronounced than in secular terrorism. This is because this form of terrorism is done

⁹⁴ Campbell, 84.

because of a perceived religious duty, and draws upon religious dogmas that are often more concrete than social norms. These can propel an individual to address issues such as abortion, infidelity and religious repression that would not otherwise be a concern with secularists, as well as murder, theft, torture, starvation, and occupation which may or not may be concerns of secular terrorists. In the instance that they are, the difference then will usually be apparent in the solution being proposed – in one case, usually political autonomy or a local revolution, and in the other case, religious rule or protection of minority rights.

There are two main similarities that we can draw from above which modern Islamic terrorism appears to share with general religious terrorism. The first is that their goals are often lofty or likely unattainable. The methods used are often logically incapable of accomplishing the sought after goals. This is first true from a tactical standpoint in terms of the terrorist activities not being a strategic step to meet the expressed objectives. Secondly this is true from an ethical standpoint in terms of losing the moral authority which is being used as both a license for the actions and a rally call to obtain further support.

The second similarity modern Islamic terrorism shares with other sources of religious terrorism is the reasoning by which an attack is justified. This is done by a terrorist either ignoring his or her own religious obligations in reference to peace and violence or by seeking to override them through other texts, using a sort of fallacious

theological reasoning that deduces general principles from contextually-specific rulings. This will be further elaborated upon in the following chapter

Lastly, modern Islamic terrorism also shares important similarities with some of the aforementioned historical incidents of terrorism in the Muslim world perpetrated by various Muslim groups. The first similarity is the political nature of the “religious” terrorism. This is not unique to other religiously-justified forms of terrorism, however it does separate it from certain other groups and causes for terrorism such as that found in abortion clinic bombing.

The second similarity is religion often forms the basis for the cause of rebellion in general but the terroristic activities themselves are aimed at political goals. In the instance of the *Hashshashin*, the reasons for the divisions that existed were differences in the interpretation of the religious transition of leadership within a context of the then modern prophetic developments. The first aspect – religious transition of leadership – is something which is much more relevant to *Shi'i* groups than it is *Sunni* groups but is important in a scenario where charismatic leadership breaks off from main-stream society. On the other hand, the second aspect – prophetic developments – remains extremely relevant to both groups. As pivotal religious, social, political, and natural developments take place in the world, these add importance, credence, and attention to multiple prophetic interpretations of those events. And for this reason, the potential for further divisions under different quasi-religious-political leadership may increase as time passes. Because of that, there needs to be further analyses of how many previous Islamic

groups developed, conducted themselves, came to power, and fell from power. Returning the examples of the *Qaramita* and *Hashshashin*, their rises to power for religious-cited reasons was often accompanied by terroristic activities when traditional militaristic ones were unfeasible. With the *Khawārij*, however, they initially had the means to wage traditional wars and did so.

One stark difference between most of these historically-prominent groups is targeted assassinations. Until now, most acts of Islamic extremist terrorism have been indiscriminate resembling some of the Crusader tactics more than the terrorist tactics of particularly the *Khawārij* and the *Hashshashin*

While the information and assessment in this final section of Chapter 2 will be helpful in the conclusion of this research, there remains a critical need to go back and reassess history in light of new developments in the Muslim world and within the context of today's current events. Comparing modern terrorism with historical religious terrorism will likely produce more relevant counter-terrorism strategies than will be produced by comparing it to 20th century secular terrorism. This is because the former's ideological similarities carry as much weight if not more than the latter's tactical similarities. And although strategic "hard" counter-terrorism measures are indeed important, they merely deal with the problem as it exists instead of solving the problem altogether.

CHAPTER 3: RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF TERRORISM

Until now, at least in the public setting, the West and the Muslim world have failed as a whole to address the true ideological framework from which terrorist groups operate. While there have been many individual efforts by Islamic scholars to refute their religious interpretations and reasoning (which are widely seen as fallacious), such as the recent 600-page fatwa by Muhammad Tahir ul Qadri, there has been little in the way of public discourse on the religious issues at hand, nor any discussions regarding the differing viewpoints on the issue of terrorism in the West.

This chapter will introduce a series of topics that demonstrate differences in religious approaches to the issue. Similarly, it will look at societal factors that may be influential in the adoption of these approaches as well as some of their characteristics. It will then delve into more theological topics that can dictate a Muslim's perspective on his or her role in society and what is required of him or her in respect to social relationships. Finally, we will cover an assortment of texts, their differing interpretations, and the requirements and conditions of the process of interpretation.

Specifically this chapter will cover particular topics and principles within Islam that deal with the formation of alliances, Islamic prophecy and the context in which particular current events are commonly being explained. It will also cover the requirements for the interpretation of religious texts, the orthodox and agreed-upon interpretations of particular verses and traditions found within the sacred texts, as well as

other foundational principles in Islam and how and why they have possibly been compromised or outright violated. It will finish with the consequences of both particular differences in opinions of interpretation in addition to those which relate to deviating from the main body of Muslims and the positions which the majority of the Islamic scholars have held throughout Islamic history.

For the purpose of our religious discussion, we will have to analyze some of the main texts – both modern and classic – that deal with the relevant topics of jihad, allegiance and disavowal, interpretations of the primary sources of Islam – the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* – and also explore *fatāwa* related to the killing of civilians, suicides, and different understandings of Islamic prophecy.

Approaches to Islam

Religion in general can be approached in vastly different ways. In Islam, the belief system is fairly static within what is designated as *Ahluṣ Sunnah wal Jama`ah*, or the people of the *Sunnah* and main body (of Muslims), otherwise known as *Sunni* Muslims. This is what is considered mainstream Islam by the majority of Muslims and the core of its beliefs are consistent across different groups, affiliations, or sects within itself. But even within *Ahluṣ Sunnah wal Jama`ah* there are radically different approaches to the application of Islam within society. This becomes especially relevant to how Muslims interact with others, both Muslim and non-Muslim, practicing and non-

practicing, leader and commoner, those in agreement and those with differing opinions. These differences, when understood and appreciated, are a special key to understanding terrorism. Only recently, and quite slowly have authorities, policy-makers and researchers begun to take into account.

There is also the common misunderstanding that being religious equals having terrorist leanings, and being irreligious takes someone outside the possibility of becoming a terrorist. A Washington Post/ABC News poll conducted March 2006 found that 33% of Americans believed mainstream Islam encourages violence against non-Muslims.⁹⁵ As the Gallop Poll's Special Report on the Muslim World pointed out, "If that were true, it would follow that widespread religiosity in predominantly Muslim countries implies widespread popular support for terrorist acts."⁹⁶ But instead Gallup discovered that only 63percent of "radicals"⁹⁷ attended religious services in the seven days preceding the survey question, whereas only a slightly less percentage of "moderates" – 53 percent – had done so. Only 4 percent more of "radicals" than "moderates" deemed religion an important part of their daily lives– 94 percent versus 90 percent, respectively.⁹⁸

There must then be many more important contributing factors besides "religiosity" that can contribute to someone's susceptibility to supporting terrorism. These factors may include environmental conditions, locality, political mindset, religious upbringing, worldview, and religious understanding to name a few. While this chapter

⁹⁵Dalia Mogahed, "Moderate vs. Extremist Views in the Muslim World," *Gallup Poll*, (2006), <http://www.gallup.com/se/127907/Gallup-Center-Muslim-Studies.aspx>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

will not delve into how to recognize terrorists or potential terrorists, that may possibly be deduced from its contents. Instead it will seek to differentiate the religious methodology of those engaging in and calling to terrorism from those who are not. From this, the threat of terrorism can be better understood and dealt with from personal, policy, and religious-based approaches.

Minhaj

There are often labels thrown out there when referring to Muslims, particularly from within the Muslim community itself. Although their usage may sometimes be frowned upon, they provide a very useful framework for understanding where terrorism may exist (and not exist). Of those ideological labels that are of interest to us, are *Wahhabi*, *Salafi*, *Sufi*, *Deobandi*, *Ikhwani*, and *Takfeeri*. We will also briefly discuss where Al Qaeda and the Taliban fall within these differing approaches.

Minhaj is the word used to describe a Muslim's way or approach to understanding and applying Islam. It is probably the most applicable and useful means of identifying those who call to terrorism and those who do not. *Mathab* describes the legalistic school of thought that a Muslim follows – *Hanafi*, *Shafi*, *Maliki*, *Hanbali* – for his or her particular religious rulings, but does very little in helping to understand terrorism. Not following one at all is often a characteristic of non-traditional thought, however, and because of this it does provide some insight into a Muslim's *minhaj*.

Words like extremist, fundamentalist, and secularist also do very little in helping to understand terrorists except that if they are Muslim, they are highly unlikely to be of the latter category. However, just because someone is labeled an extremist or fundamentalist does not make them a terrorist or potential terrorist because of the subjectivity and lack of depth of these words – particularly “fundamentalist” which really only signifies a Muslim’s adherence to orthodox religious teachings.

Distinguishing between *Shi’i* and *Sunni* is indeed an important consideration as it appears that most of the Muslims calling to acts of terrorism today continue to be of *Sunni* background while those who engaged in similar actions historically were primarily *Shi’i*. What is contained in this chapter is directly relating to *Sunni* Muslims today and may or may not be applicable to *Shi’i* Muslims. There will indeed be a need for separate research to be done in that field.

Other terms such as *Ashari*, and *Maturidi* and *Athari* describe a Muslim’s theological belief system particularly as it relates to understanding God and His characteristics and attributes. And while an important consideration for a Muslim, it is rarely very telling of whether someone is prone to terrorism or not, but this will be discussed below in greater detail.

Wahhabi

Wahhabi is a term that, in modern day, carries very little of its actual historical meaning. The word stems from Mohammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab who helped lead a religious revolution and assisted Mohammed ibn Saud in establishing the first Saudi state at the heart of the Arabian Peninsula. His followers past and present are often referred to as “Wahhabis.” However, it is not a term that they use themselves both because naming one’s self after an individual is seen as detestable in Islam and using the word itself is theologically problematic because *Al-Wahhab* is one of the names of God in Islam.

Many Western authors and article writers use the word *Wahhabi* to loosely refer to the brand of Islam followed by the *Taliban*, *Al-Qaeda*, *Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen*, and other Islamic groups that are either orthodox in their following of Islam, currently engaged in war, have very anti-Western sentiments, or are participating in terrorist activities. This is very misleading and dangerously incorrect. Most of these groups are distinctly different from one other and few of them actually possess characteristics similar to that of the original followers of Mohammed ibn Abdul Wahhab.

Nevertheless, Mohammed ibn Abdul-Wahhab’s legacy lasts until today through the Al as-Shaykh family in Saudi Arabia whose members have held many prominent religious and political positions throughout history. *Wahhabi* can be readily understood to be a rebranding of the teachings of ibn Taymiyyah, one of the great medieval scholars of Islam. He is quoted as referring to being a *Salafi* within his own texts which is meant to

imply following the *Salaf*, or the pious predecessors (of the first three generations) of the Prophet Mohammed. This is the term which is used today amongst subscribers to this *minhaj* and much more relevant than the term *Wahhabi*.

Salafi

Aside from the fact that this is essentially the same theological creed (*Athari*) and the same lineage of followers from within their tradition, the word *Wahhabi* would not be an appropriate term for *Salafis* today. Whereas Mohammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab was very pro-jihad, particularly against self-identifying Muslims (he had made *takfeer* of them for their practices casting them outside the fold of Islam), the current day *Salafis* have placed many restrictions and requirements on *jihad*. So much so, that many Muslims from other commonly-understood as peaceful approaches to Islam have been critical of these religious positions.

The *Salafis* are similar in their *aqeedah* in terms of their understanding of the characteristics and attributes of God along with their positions on both innovation and intercession in Islam. However, they are in fact very far from the most critical aspects within Islam that are the most telling to one assessing the potential for terrorist activity. These are *takfeer* and jihad, both of which the *Salafi* scholars and the majority of their followers shy away from, particularly as how they relate to requirements for ruling by Islamic law and the consequences of not doing so.

Sufi

Sufi is generally used to refer to the Muslims who place a great emphasis on spiritual purification. Traditionally they have not been considered a sect of Islam but rather a people focusing on a particular aspect of the religion. And although at times some groups have seemingly transgressed the borders of Islam (and have been highly criticized for doing so), it is most accurate again to define this word within the realm of being an approach, or a *minhaj*.

There is something particularly unique about these people in that historically they have been the ones most often engaged in jihad while in current day they are amongst the most outspoken against terrorism. Many of the *mujahideen* who fought in Afghanistan, the old Soviet republics, against European colonialism, and against the Mongols were in fact self-identified *Sufis*. Yet today, their scholars are known for having made and signed numerous *fatāwa* against terrorism and specific acts of terror. They have taken a much more conciliatory approach to dealing with the growing differences between the West and Muslim culture and are known to at times to have even gone beyond what Islam prescribes for in most Muslims' estimation. They are, in terms of their majority, perhaps the least apt to make *takfeer* of other Muslims on behalf of either their religious practices or their societal roles (see *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'*) which is a very important consideration when dealing with terrorism.

Deobandi

Deobandis represent scholars of a particular orientation from the sub-continent (Indo-Pakistan) region. While more of a tradition of learning and teaching that stems from Deoband, India, it is important to note here that many of the learned and most orthodox Muslims from the subcontinent would be referred to as *Deobandi* or students of the *Deobandi* scholars. In some ways they lean toward the *Sufis* in terms of their tradition of scholarship that places significant importance on *ijaza* as well as their openness to *Sufi* orders, however they tend to be stricter on particular acts of worship that the *Salafis* criticize the *Sufis* for engaging in, such as religious innovation and seeking intercession. For this reason, many of their students have been incorrectly referred to as *Wahhabi* by Westerners and even other less traditional Muslim groups of their region.

Although they do share similarities in terms of their strictness and views on *takfeer*, they are distinctly different from the *Salafis*. And while they share similar views on *jihād* as *Takfeeris*, their rules of engagement and their labeling of other Muslims as disbelievers, differ significantly as well. This is extremely important because despite popular perception and even the claims of small tribal leaders, Al Qaeda and the Afghani Taliban are two different entities, ideologically and materially. Al Qaeda has become more of an ideology or loose label applied to all of the Muslims participating in defensive warfare, fighting against their own government, and attacking civilians at home and abroad. The Taliban of Afghanistan, on the other hand, are those Muslims who have

simply given their political allegiance to the leader of the country, Mullah Omar. As a result of the invasion of Afghanistan, however, these groups have begun to blend into one another as foreign fighters continue to join the war on the side of the Taliban, particularly the Pakistani Taliban who are themselves yet another (loosely organized) entity. Unfortunately for those active in fighting terror in one way or another, it is becoming quite clear that even these terms – Al Qaeda and Taliban – are practically useless.

Ikhwani

Ikhwani is a direct reference to *Ikhwanul-Muslimeen*, or the Muslim brotherhood. *Ikhwan* is often referred to as the birth organization to nearly all militant Islamic groups currently present, particular Egyptian Islamic Jihad – Ayman al Zawahiri’s former organization – and Al Qaeda, who EIJ joined forces with in the late 90s. While not all terrorists are *Ikhwani* nor all *Ikhwani* terrorists, there is a unique political relationship between them. *Ikhwan* is known for its staunch opposition against the Egyptian government, where it was founded under oppressive rule, and its political power aspirations. Al Qaeda is very similar in this respect in that it has aspirations for political power and looks very poorly upon all current governments around the world, particularly the leaders of the Muslim world.

They diverge, however, in that *Ikhwan* is well known as partaking in current political structures with the purpose of taking them over, whereas Al-Qaeda and terrorist-

promoting organizations view such participation as strictly forbidden. *Ikhwan*, in part because of its domestic origin, has a political methodology of working from inside the system while most terrorist-minded organizations and individuals are staunchly for the complete overthrow of all existing power structures using direct confrontation. Furthermore, historically the *Ikhwan* has been known for uniting Muslims across different theological beliefs for the larger purpose of empowering Muslims and Islam. Terrorists, although they make calls for world-wide Muslim support, their very lax if not deliberate targeting of other Muslims in their attacks gives the impression (at the very least) of them having made *takfeer* of these individuals and intentionally killing them as apostates to the religion

Takfeeri

Takfeeris are essentially these groups of individuals who are very quick to make *takfeer* of other Muslims. Firstly, they declare the leaders of the Muslim countries apostates, therefore mandating their removal on the basis of them not ruling by the law of God. While this holds theological water in traditional *Sunni* thought, such prioritization of this topic is not a popular. Furthermore, the focus and importance (and misinterpretation) given to “ruling by God’s law” is one that the *Khawārij* (mentioned in Chapter 2) were known for.

Secondly, they also make *takfeer* of all Muslims who are perceived to be collaborating with or providing any form of support to these governments (see *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'*). They have combined these beliefs with the belief that it is permissible to carry Islamic *hudood* (punishments) without a *Khalīfa* or Islamic government. They have additionally made it preferable, and in some cases obligatory to kill these individuals – but many examples in early Islamic history could challenge this practice. Lastly, they have made a blanket *takfeer* of an entire people when, again, historical context challenges such a practice and bypasses the requirements for implementing any sort of punishment on apostasy.

They openly profess the belief that it is obligatory to fight and remove these governments in full on the basis of them having left Islam. In some areas such as Algeria, some of these terrorist groups have been labeled apocalyptic because of their world view and violent targeting of any and every one outside of their narrowly-defined groups. Al-Qaeda falls into this *Takfeeri* classification and is on the borderlines of being considered apocalyptic.

They are usually a unique combination of *Ikhwani* political aspirations, *Salafi* jurisprudential methodology, *Wahhabi-Takfeeri* tendencies, Western conspiracy theorists' world view, anarchist political methods, with kamikaze wartime strategies. The reality is while they draw upon many if not all of the aforementioned methodologies, they are a very unique group of individuals as they remain outcasts in both non-Muslim and Muslim societies. In this respect, they again closely resemble the *Khawārij*. Similarly, they also

are adamant on fighting any and all Muslim authority if it has come from their own small group based on principles of *takfeer*, apostasy, and *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'*. From a militaristic perspective, they have adopted similar covert methods of fighting against other Muslims to that of the *Qaramita* and *Hashshashin*, with the exception that they have yet to engage in many targeted assassinations.

In sum, from an Islamic perspective, these individuals have combined between minority opinions while ignoring the requirement of taking opinions that follow the same methodological approach when dealing with one topic. As an example to better understand this, there is a minority Islamic opinion that a marriage does not require two witnesses. There is also a minority opinion that marriage does not require the permission of a woman's male guardian (usually the father). There is also a minority Islamic position that marriage does not require a gift given by the groom to the bride (usually in the form of money). All of these positions are legitimate, yet minority opinions. They were all obtained using different legalistic approaches to reach these conclusion, but if someone was to disregard that and combine all three of them (not requiring any of these things for marriage), then the marriage becomes invalid by all of these methodologies. The closest thing we can relate this haphazard practice of deriving one's own rulings in Islam to in the West, is practicing law without a license. In this case, a "license" is a relevant *ijaza* (covered below).

Spiritual Illness

The state of the heart affects the way one perceives the world around himself or herself. From a religious point of view, one would consider this spirituality. From the Islamic point of view, this would be considered the condition or diseases of the heart, the state of the soul, and control over its base desires. From a purely psychological point of view we could relate all these conditions to rearing, upbringing, environmental factors, and genetics. Either way, we could use adjectives such as anger, hatred, rage, selfishness, arrogance, cynicism, despair, as well as others to describe the condition of a person involved in committing acts of violence against those deemed innocent.

Of all these, some of the biggest diseases plaguing the Muslims today are the blame game, cynicism, and looking at others before looking at the self. This is not a foreign concept to any society or any religion. However, there is a great stress on it in Islam from a few different angles: the notion of being accountable for one's self and not others; granting benefit of the doubt to others; changing that which is within one's ability; and the requirement of people changing themselves before their condition is changed.

There are two main reasons this is such an important issue when it comes to terrorism. The first is that the problems in the Muslim world are being handed off and blamed on the rest of the world and others within the Muslim community (leaders, politicians, religious scholars, etc.). The second reason goes hand in hand with the first,

but is quite the opposite – those involved in terrorism see themselves as taking matters into their own hands while nobody else is.

There is much that can be said about these concepts from both an Islamic perspective and a sociological perspective, but this will take us far outside the scope of this paper. From a policy standpoint, however, which is where all of this should be leading us, there are a few major points and potential ways to address this that will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Societal Factors

Today we live in an interesting predicament where a growing dichotomy exists between religion and secularism. You have on one hand a religious revival amongst those who have turned toward religion to answer the growing amount of questions in an increasingly complicated and deceptive world. On the other we find a secularization and liberalization of a great portion of society which has adopted a utilitarian and progressive interpretation of life and approach toward the development of civilization. In the Muslim world, and even in other parts of the world, these two groups have come into an ideological conflict with each other.

Historically, atheism, secularism, and liberalism were not popular concepts (and in many places throughout much of time weren't even fathomable) as most would profess some sort of religious beliefs and conservative values. Although things swing back and

forth in a society, most of both Western and Muslim nations today find present in their societies a significant amount of openly atheist individuals accompanied by very non-religious concepts and norms being promoted or readily accepted – such as homosexuality, adultery, single-parenting, drug use, etc. Traditionally religious values such as modesty, fidelity, nuclear family structures, and other conservative social norms are being ignored, looked down upon, and even fought against. A primary example we find is the head scarf restrictions and face veil bans increasing throughout Europe and even present to certain extents in Muslim Turkey.

Similarly, there has been a religious revival around the world, and again particularly in the Muslim world. In 1966 Time Magazine ran for its cover picture, “Is God Dead?”⁹⁹ While churches and their attendance have been on the decline in the U.S.,¹⁰⁰ there is also the argument that the West is experiencing a “Second Great Awakening.”¹⁰¹ This may be because the religious amongst society are becoming more active in response to these other declining rates found within Christianity (and increasing rates of conversion in new-age religions). They have come under popular scrutiny by the growing irreligious, but are now possibly rallied in response to world events and the rise of other religious groups, particularly the Muslims. The growing popularity of born-again Christians, new-age Christian churches and televangelists is likely part of this trend.

⁹⁹ Time Magazine Staff, “Is God Dead?,” *Time Magazine*, April 8, 1966, 14, 87.
<http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19660408,00.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, “Trends Among Christians in the U.S.,” ReligiousTolerance.org, http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_tren.htm.

¹⁰¹ Johann Hari, “Why is religion on the rise again?,” *The Independent*, Tuesday 28, 2004, sec. Opinion, <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/johann-hari/why-is-religion-on-the-rise-again-702878.html>.

In the Muslim world religion is becoming apparent and visible in a way that was not as prevalent just fifty years ago. For example, in Egypt head scarves, face veils, and long beads can be seen everywhere; fifty years ago, this was not the case. Talk of the end of times is becoming a more and more popular subject throughout the Muslim world. This is still, however, accompanied by an ever present affinity toward Western lifestyle and non-religious liberal values even in very conservative societies such as Saudi Arabia. The popularity of Western pop culture has increased rapidly due to the internet and satellite television and has helped usher in these alternative values and lifestyles.

There are very few recent social studies on these issues, so my own research in regards to this topic is a result of observation across both American and Muslim societies and speaking with different communities, elders and youth. My best estimate is that socially and religiously speaking, the trend is that norms are being pulled toward the left. There is also, however, a growing but still small group of (primarily Christian) “fundamentalists” that hold a significant and competing influence on different aspects of society and media. On a per person basis, they are increasingly influential and powerful because of their activism. Overall in society, however, the traditional religions are playing a decreasing role.

In the Muslim world, almost the opposite is happening – increasing religiosity throughout most of society with some very publically secular (although rarely anti-religious) figures, primarily in pop culture, and movements often in response to the hard-line religious groups. Those are the groups which make up the final portion of society:

the increasing religious groups that are heavily critical of the remainder of society. Amongst these groups, there are those that find very little acceptance in society neither by the practicing portion of the Muslim community (i.e. its mosques, leaders, schools, and other institutes), nor the less religious portions of society. These are unfortunately the ones most prone to lashing out at the rest of Muslim society and Western nations.

Excessiveness and Moderation

In everything we do, we can be moderate, excessive, or lacking. The importance of being moderate is a topic familiar to classical Islam and one that allows an individual to stay on a straight course, or a middle path. This involves fulfilling one's rights and responsibilities in every aspect of life. This would be impossible to attain if one became extreme in any part of his or her life.

The reason this – excessiveness and moderation or *al-Ghuloo wal-`Itidaal* – is applicable to terrorism is because where there is lack of balance in someone's Islamic practice, there is the possibility that he or she may veer off too far in one direction. These individuals' passions may become so strong in respect to one issue that they overstep their bounds in another. An historical example of this is when the family of Uthman – the third Caliph of the Islamic Empire – demanded justice for his assassination with such fervor that a major civil war and split in the empire ensued. Thus demanding justice for

one individual wrongfully killed lead to the deaths of many, who were in retrospect also wrongfully killed.

In the same respect, those demanding justice for some of the ills that Western nations such as the United States have committed, have become unjust themselves by committing gross atrocities against civilians who have nothing to do with the issue at hand. This is constantly cited by those accused of terrorism, including that of the most recent confession of an accused terrorist, Faisal Shazad on June 21. Among his reasons for attacking the U.S. included the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and drone strikes. And his reason for attempting to kill civilians and children, was that the U.S. government does the same, as though two wrongs make a right, or one wrong in response to another is justified because of the first.¹⁰²

This logic is consistently seen across all confessions to terrorism and all justifications given for the killing of civilians, whether it be from Shazad or bin Laden, Awlaki or Gadahn, as will be seen in Chapter 4. This logic violates particular Islamic principles – such as the killing of innocents and unlawful war – because of an obsession over others Islamic principles – like justice and a right to self-defense. An individual who has overstepped these bounds has become excessive or extreme.

There are numerous explicit proofs in Islam, however, that are both discouragements and even prohibitions on extremism. A few of the most commonly cited are:

¹⁰² Benjamin Weiser, “Guilty Plea in Times Square Bomb Plot,” *The New York Times*, June 21, 2010, sec. Region, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/22/nyregion/22terror.html?hpw>.

“Thus we have made of you an Ummah justly balanced”¹⁰³

“O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things Allah has made lawful to you. But commit no excess, for Allah does not like those given to excess...”¹⁰⁴

“Verily this religion is easy, and none shall be severe in religion but it will overcome him: he shall turn it into a stone and make it a tomb.”¹⁰⁵

“Beware of excessiveness in religion. [People] before you have perished as a result of [such] excessiveness”¹⁰⁶

Aisha Lemu logically states in her “Laxity, Moderation and Extremism in Islam,” built in part off of renowned Sheikh Yusuf al Qaradawi’s “Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism,” “If Allah does not wish us to be extreme in our worship of Him – worship being the reason for our creation – there is no reason to believe that He wants us to be extreme in our conduct towards one another, or in other aspects of our life.”¹⁰⁷ She goes on to create what is a very useful rubric or checklist for both the manifestations of extremism as well as its causes.

¹⁰³ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, trans., *The Qur’an* (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an, Inc., 2001), 13.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 54-55.

¹⁰⁵ Dr. Muhsin Khan, trans., *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 1996), 70.

¹⁰⁶ Nasiruddin al-Khattab, trans., *Sunan An-Nasa’i* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 1997), 237.

¹⁰⁷ Aisha B. Lemu, “Laxity, Moderation and Extremism in Islam,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 7 (1993): 7.

Her “Manifestations of Extremism” include: 1) “Bigotry – “believes he is right and cannot be wrong...cannot tolerate differences of opinion;” 2) “Excessiveness in all things;” 3) “Sternness without consideration of time or place;” 4) “Ill-mannered treatment of people...crude approach to calling people to Islam;” and 5) “Suspicion”¹⁰⁸

These are essentially social, emotional, psychological or character problems that have very little to do with religion. They are destructive and harmful in and of themselves, and even more so when put in the context of an apocalyptic war with the ability to use religion to justify actions and to promote and extol them. These character flaws translate into a free license to kill and massacre. The solution in dealing with these problems and these individuals, however, is not a traditional psychological or sociological approach. Instead, there has to be a use of that which holds legitimacy in their minds – Islam. A lengthier discussion on this topic will be reserved for Chapter 5.

Lemu’s “Causes of Extremism” include:

- 1) “Lack of knowledge of and insight into the underlying purposes, spirit and essence of faith;”¹⁰⁹
- 2) “lack of insight into reality and history as well as Allah’s *sunnah* or way of dealing with them in His creation...the concept of a ‘step-by-step’ approach...has no appeal to the extremists...wants immediate and complete transformation, and has no time for allowing long-term strategies to mature. In the absence of support

¹⁰⁸ Lemu, 10.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 11.

from the majority of Muslims, he may resort to force or precipitate a crisis even though it may cause a setback to the long-term cause of Islam;”¹¹⁰

3) “laxity, indifference to Islamic values and corruption as seen in societies around us” and the youth “not in a position to ‘change things with their hands’ as they have no authority to do so. They lack experience to know how to go about ‘changing things with their tongues’ so they bottle up their frustrations in the hearts until sometimes it boils over. For this some are duly punished, resulting in further frustration...they see many Muslim rulers apparently reduced to puppets in the hands of foreign powers. This generates a feeling of resentment of all non-Muslim foreigners and a suspicion of everything foreign;”¹¹¹

4) “fanned by political oppression.”¹¹²

All of these potential causes deal with either politics or religion, which I also see as being the two most important underlying factors contributing to the prevalence of terrorism, and also two which can be practically dealt with. To sum up what Lemu estimates these causes to be, they are: a) lack of knowledge regarding the purposes of religious rulings; b) lack of understanding of the essence of faith; c) lack of insight into how the world operates in accordance with Divine decree; d) lack of patience in absence of support; e) lack of wisdom in the absence of opportunities for change; and f) political oppression. As we move forward, many of these will be dealt with under different chapters and subheadings.

¹¹⁰ Lemu., 14.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 14-15.

¹¹² Ibid., 15.

Islamic Scholarship

Ijaza

Muslims often say that you can find a fatwa (religious verdict) for whatever it is you want; which is to say, there are religious texts from the earliest days of Islam which if taken in a certain light and explained in a particular perspective, can give supporting evidence to almost any opinion on any issue. This is why those who interpret Islamic texts are supposed to be qualified and essentially ‘licensed’ to do so with an *ijaza*, or an authorization to transmit knowledge. This is characterized by having an unbroken chain of transmission from teacher to student that goes back to the Prophet Mohammed. It is usually given as an authorization to narrate texts on a book-by-book basis. Sometimes it may be sufficient to teach, other times it only serves as a permission to read a text to someone else. There are many different categorizations and classifications which we will not get into, but it will be sufficient for us for the purpose of our discussion to compare this matter to obtaining a degree. Certain *ijazas* carry high distinction as certain degrees may, and others may be unrightfully given or be without worth – as an unaccredited degree may. The purpose, however, behind the *ijaza* and the degree are the same (and understandably so as university degrees are often traced back to Islamic madrasahs) – to validate the knowledge of a student.

It is a tradition held in high regard in the Islamic world of scholarship. Scholars are known for the *ijazas* they hold and the shortness of their respective chains of narrators back to the Prophet Mohammed. It is seen as a matter of prestige, level of trustworthiness, and ascertainable proof to the authenticity of the knowledge being transmitted.

It is not within the scope of this research to explore the nuances of Islamic scholarship; however, it is vitally important to mention it in respect to our topic at hand. There is a serious problem within the Islamic world when it comes to teaching religious knowledge and issuing *fatāwa*. Some of these *fatāwa* include, amongst other things, the religious permissibility to kill civilians and carry out suicide bombings. Most of these *fatāwa* will cite religious texts that seem to clearly indicate the permissibility of such things, but they are often incorrect in their interpretation and application. This is in part, the result of the inability of those issuing *fatāwa* to do so.

From a Western perspective this may appear to be a point of non-interest, just as many other Islamic topics related to terrorism. However, a simple example may demonstrate the relevance: a priest who is heading a church, giving a sermon, or providing religious rulings (particularly if they are controversial or of vital importance), will have his credibility at least partly judged on the basis of where he attended school. Had he been a graduate of Harvard Divinity School, his word is likely to be more trusted. Conversely, had he been totally self-taught, we may question the veracity of his statements. Similar is the case of a professor; one with a doctoral degree from an Ivy

League school is usually held in higher regard with his statements carrying more weight in the academic world than a commoner. This is because these degrees are designed to test for certain criterion that would designate someone a professional or capable to teach or discuss particular topics.

This same notion applies in the Islamic world, and although university degrees in Islamic studies are now being given, an *ijaza* is more of a true measure of someone's scholarship. To return to the relevancy of this topic, the problem that on hand in dealing with terrorism is those who are issuing *fatāwa*, making public statements, and releasing videos that are giving justification to and calling for attacks against civilians are not scholars. They do not carry *ijazas* which are known of, and they simply do not have the authority nor expertise to do so. They are potentially mere commoners issuing edicts of the highest order and the greatest consequence. Much of the world does not realize this, however, and assign authority on the basis of superficial observations such as clothing, beards, weapons, and oratorical skill.

Islamic Law

There are many principles in Islamic law, as there are in Constitutional law or any other type of law. Knowledge of these principles allows a *mufti* to be able to pass a *fatwa* which is sound and applicable to a particular situation. Without such knowledge of these principles, one is at risk of passing an incorrect *fatwa*. This requires extensive training.

These principles cover topics such as the higher objectives and intents of Islamic law, legislative presumptions, legal maxims, and other topics which are all beyond the scope of this research. There is particular relevance that this topic has to terrorism, and I believe it can be shown by briefly outlining one of these subjects, the legal maxims of Islamic law. There is a consensus among all schools of thought (*mathab*) – they are five:¹¹³

- 1) Matters shall be judged by their objectives
- 2) Certainty shall not be removed by doubt
- 3) Hardship shall bring alleviation
- 4) Harm shall be removed
- 5) Cultural usage shall have the weight

One of these is of particular interest to us to demonstrate its relevance to the research topic: “harm shall be removed.” This has been explained by Umar Faruq Abdulla when he states that it “invalidates rulings that lead to harm, even if technically valid.”¹¹⁴ This is a pertinent consideration when it comes to the targets of terrorism whether they are purely military targets where civilians may be or civilian targets in and of themselves.

¹¹³ Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, “Islam and the Cultural Imperative,” Nawawi Foundation, <http://www.nawawi.org/downloads/article3.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Interpretation of Texts

Religion can be used as both a discouraging and encouraging force depending on who is interpreting scripture. Specifically within Islam, it has been left to the scholars to interpret the Qur'an and the *Hadith* (sayings of the Prophet), among other sources of Islamic law, however, in modern times with the decline in religious scholarship, the layman with charisma has become an authority in religion, passing *fatāwa* (rulings) despite lacking knowledge and being untrained to do so. Acts of terrorism and all the religious rulings that deal with death and war unfortunately fall into these *fatāwa*

There are different sciences which are related to the interpretation of Islamic texts. However, the one that most clearly demonstrates the importance of proper interpretation of texts and how that can affect an Islamic ruling, is *Usool at-Tafseer* (The Fundamental Principles of Qur'anic Interpretation). It refers to the different branches of Islamic knowledge that prescribe for an accurate and methodological interpretation of the Qur'an. Historically subjects such as Arabic grammar and syntax, Arabic literature, and different Qur'anic sciences have fallen underneath *Usool at-Tafseer*. Some of these pertinent sciences that relate to these and are required for proper interpretation and application include the reasons for revelation, the abrogating and abrogated verses, and specific and general verses among others.

Thus the application of any text that is not general requires an understanding of these particularities. For example, this why it is also said that to understand verses in the

Qur'an, you refer to other verses in the Qur'an. Some verses may be very general whereas others, dealing with the same topic, specify the conditions.

To take an example, there is specific difference between, “Successful indeed are the believers | Who are humble in their prayers”¹¹⁵ being general verses describing the characteristics of believers and giving them glad tidings and “It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.”¹¹⁶ While again this is only a general description, it requires some sort of interpretation in order to explain how God can be nearer to a human than his or her own a body part – meaning in a metaphorical sense rather than a literal or physical sense. We can also compare these to the often cited:

And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have
Turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight
them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight
you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith.¹¹⁷

This verse has a very specific context which requires knowledge of both the surrounding verses and the historical relevance being used in its interpretation to provide for a very specific and limited application (or even lack thereof).

¹¹⁵ Ali, *The Qur'an*, 219.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 347.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

Thus indeed, interpreting religious texts that require such interpretation in order to be applied, specifically those that are in reference to the treatment and rights of others, is something that requires qualified scholarship or minimally the referencing of trustworthy scholars. One of the most amazing aspects of Islamic scholarship is the depth and breadth of it in comparison to literally any other topic of human intrigue, and furthermore the accessibility of this information. Unfortunately, it has been the case that the Muslims have in large ignored this scholarship and the orthodox and readily available interpretations of the texts.

Allegiance & Disassociation

Most efforts to understand terrorism have either been of a purely political nature or have cited socioeconomic conditions as the primary factor contributing to its motivation. Some attempts have looked at Islam itself dealing primarily with the textual references to war. However, even within the Muslim community there has been very little analysis of the modern-day interpretation of *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'* – allegiance and dissociation or association and disavowal. This is a critical topic that covers political alliances, providing support to allies and enemies, innocence from accountability for others' actions, and association and disassociation with specific peoples and deeds. This section will provide a general overview of these different topics along with its classical, medieval, and modern-day interpretations and opinions.

Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa', or association and disavowal, is considered an integral part of Islam whose rulings have classically fallen under the category of Islamic jurisprudence as related to the rights of minorities and non-Muslims in an Islamic state. It has also, however, more recently been referred to in many manuscripts on *aqeedah* (doctrinal belief) in relation to providing aide to a non-Muslim against a Muslim and how that casts someone outside the fold of Islam.

Shaykh Muhammad Saeed al Qahtani notes that one of the most important requirements of *tawhid* itself (the oneness of God), the cornerstone of Islam, is *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'* and that is essentially “the real image for the actual practice of this faith.”¹¹⁸ Despite being of vital importance to the religion of a Muslim, it is a topic often neglected or very misunderstood. Furthermore, the differences of opinion that exist in its interpretation, especially in the modern time, can have a critical impact on society, particularly Muslim/non-Muslim relationships. For this last reason, *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'* is perhaps the most important part of the Islamic faith that must be explained when attempting to understand the phenomenon of terrorism. It can easily be incorrectly used to set the groundwork for a mindset in which hatred and enmity outweigh compassion and mercy. If taken to the extreme it becomes similar to the notion of dehumanizing your enemy in order to make war and killing of the other more plausible and even easy.

¹¹⁸ Shaykh Muhammad Saeed al-Qahtani, *Al-Wala' Wa'l-Bara' According to the 'Aqeedah of the Salaf* (UK: Al Firdous Publications Ltd., 1999), 8.

The concepts surrounding *Al-Waraa' wal-Baraa'* are found throughout the Qur'an, but it was seemingly never written on as a specialized topic until quite recently. Outside of the interpretations of specific verses the Qur'an, most modern manuscripts go back only as far as Ibn Taymiyyah's "Al-'Uboodiyyah" written between the late 1200s and early 1300's or approximately 700 years after *hijrah*. Ibn Taymiyyah is known as being of one of the great scholars in Islamic history, and amongst the pre-eminent scholars during the medieval times. However, many of his positions and opinions have not been accepted and rather have been quite extensively refuted by other scholars during and since his time. Regardless, some of these opinions are still heavily relied upon particularly in relation to this topic, as we will see.

Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa' is otherwise known as loyalty and disownment. In an Islamic context it refers to loving and hating for the sake of God. More specifically, it is loving, support and allying on one hand and hating, being enemy to, and not supporting on the other hand. In respect to *Al-Walaa'* it refers to the treatment of Muslims by Muslims, the preference given to them, and the feelings toward Islam, its beliefs, and its followers; whereas *al-Baraa'* refers to the treatment of non-Muslims by Muslims and the feelings of enmity toward disbelief and the supporting of it. Ibn Taymiyyah says: "Alliance is the opposite of enmity. Alliance is based on affection and closeness whilst, enmity is based on animosity and distance."¹¹⁹ There are two key aspects to this topic

¹¹⁹ al-Qahtani, 13.

which directly relevant to our topic. The first to be covered is in relation to *al-Baraa'* and the second is in relation to *Al-Walaa'*.

Al-Baraa'

Al-Baraa' can be understood from two different perspectives and the difference between them is quite critical. The first approach toward *al-Baraa'*, is hatred of disbelief itself and the associating of partners with God in worship. The second approach is actually hatred toward not only action, but the people who perform these actions; a very important distinction. According to many recent opinions found in texts, there is no explicit permission to differentiate between people and their actions but instead there is implicit (if not explicit) directives to not distinguish between people and their actions. The *seerah* (biography) of the Prophet Mohammed, however, seems to indicate otherwise. Some scholars have attempted to reconcile between these seemingly contradictory items, however I believe a gap still exists in the proofs provided.

Sheikh Saalih bin Fawzaan al-Fawzaan of Saudi Arabia quotes ibn Taymiyyah in his "Uboodiyyah" as saying "The reality of loving someone is never complete except by having loyalty to the beloved one, that is, to comply with him by loving what he loves and hating what he hates. For Allah loves *al-Eemaan* and *at-Taqwah*, and He hates *al-Kufr*, *al-Fusooq*, and disobedience."

According to Al-Fawzaan, *Al-Walaa'* in an Islamic context means “loyalty to Allaah and whatever he is pleased with as well as friendship and closeness to the believers” and *al-Baraa'* is “freeing oneself from that which is displeasing to Allaah and disowning the disbelievers.”¹²⁰ The obligation of loving the people of *tawhid* (belief that God is one), i.e. the Muslim, and hating the people of *shirk* is derived from the following verse in the *Qur'an*:

There is for you an excellent example [to follow] in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, ‘We are clear of you and of whatever you worship besides Allah. We have rejected you. And between us and you is enmity and hatred forever, unless you believe in Allah, and Him alone.’¹²¹

In reference to this verse, however, it has also been said, “this shows that our [a Muslim’s] detestation is for evil, not for men...”¹²²

‘Abdullah Faisal, an authority in some Islamic circles, describes *Al-Walaa'* to mean “to recognize who your friends are, to love, appreciate and support them in their endeavor to establish the *Deen*” while *al-Baraa'* “means to recognize who your enemies

¹²⁰ Shaikh Saalih bin Fawzaan, *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'* (SA: JIMAS publishing, (1997), 4.

¹²¹ Ali, *The Qur'an*, 373.

¹²² Abdullah Yusuf Ali, trans., *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Beltsville: Amana publications, 2001), 1453.

are and to hate them and exterminate them in their endeavor to get rid of your *Deen, al-Islam.*”¹²³

Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, of whom’s teachings are closely adhered to Saudi Arabia, said:

Islam of a man can never be accepted, even if he abandons polytheism, unless he shows enmity towards the disbelievers and polytheists, as Allah states in Surat al-Muha’dilah, verse 22,

You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred (people).¹²⁴

It is a well-known and documented fact, however, that the Prophet had love toward his non-Muslim uncles al-’Abbas and abu-Talib as is indicated in the following ayah: “It is true thou wilt not be able to guide every one, whom thou lovest; but Allah guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance.”¹²⁵ Renowned scholar ibn Kathir in *tafsir* (exegesis or interpretation of the *Qur’an*) notes in reference to this *ayah*, “It was recorded in the Two Sahihs that this Ayah was revealed concerning Abu Talib, the paternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*, 1453.

¹²⁴ Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, *Majmuat at-Tawhid* (UK: Al Firdous Publications Ltd., (1973), 19.

¹²⁵ Ali, *The Qur’an*, 256.

¹²⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, “Surah al-Qasas,” Tafsir.com, <http://www.tafsir.com/default.asp?sid=28&tid=39279>.

And thus we appear to have a contradiction between some verses in the Qur'an and others – that a Muslim is commanded to hate non-Muslims but the primordial for the Muslim, the Prophet Mohammed, had love for a non-Muslim. Al-Qahtani in his very large work *Al-Wala' Wa'l-Bara' According to the 'Aqeedah of the Salaf* seems to indicate that there is another issue which needs to be addressed under the topic of “Respect for Disbelieving Relatives” but fails to mention this verse or any explanation for how this is possible.

This appears to be a very overlooked and ignored component throughout the quotes mentioned herein and the texts from which they originate. There is as was noted, a failure to distinguish between actions and individuals – that one can hate the action a person does without hating the individual him or herself; in fact it is possible to love him or her as was demonstrated. I believe the missing component arises because there has been a failure to distinguish between those who have taken the Muslims as their enemies and fight them, versus those who have not.

Al-Walaa'

The other important topic at hand is regarding *Al-Walaa'*, particularly as it relates to political alliances. The aspect of this which relates to the topic is the allying with others who are fighting against the Muslims. It is a very critical topic because as Al-Qahtani says, “alliance with the enemies of Allah is i[n] different categories, some

leading to apostasy and utter abandonment of Islam and others are less than that with regard to major sins and infractions upon what is prohibited.”¹²⁷

Ibn Jareer explains the following verse of the Qur’an, “Let not the believers Take for friends or helpers Unbelievers rather than believers”¹²⁸ to mean “O believers, do not take the disbelievers backing them and supporting them, supporting/loving/allying with them on their *deen* [religion] and backing them over the Muslims other than the believers, and exposing them their weaknesses.”

There is both a political and non-political aspect to the topic if *Al-Walaa’ wal-Baraa’*, that is the feelings of love and hatred in the heart and the allying and helping of non-Muslims versus Muslims, or vice versa. To assist a non-Muslim fight a Muslim is tantamount to disbelief and can cast someone outside the fold of Islam. This is the position being used by terrorists to justify attacks against Muslims working for any government.

The logic is that the government has itself helped non-Muslims fight Muslims (for example, the Afghani government assisting the U.S. in fighting the Taliban), and this has cast them outside of Islam. Thus to ally with that government, even as a layman, will also cast that person outside of Islam. This changes the rulings of fighting because not only are the individuals seen as fighting the Muslims (making fighting them back permissible and even obligatory), apostasy also enters into the mix.

¹²⁷ al-Qahtani, 43.

¹²⁸ Ali, *The Qur’an*, 31.

This is a topic beyond the scope of this paper and beyond my expertise and the expertise of most Muslims. This is actually important, however, because those who wage war and are involved in indiscriminate killing of government employees do not necessarily have the qualifications to weigh in on this topic and give a fatwa. Furthermore, the individuals who are being killed have not been personally addressed or questioned to ascertain what they are doing and why. When a companion of the Prophet sent notice to his family in Mecca that the Muslims would be marching to the city with an army in what was intended to be a surprise attack, the Prophet directly questioned him as why he did this before making any ruling in regards to whether this amounted to treason against the state, apostasy, or the like. This is not being done in these cases where suicide truck bombs are being sent into government buildings and offices.

This is a troubling line of reasoning which has been strung together while the conditions to make such rulings and carry out capital punishment have not been met. Many qualified scholars across the Islamic world have spoken against such attacks; these statements unfortunately have not carried much weight.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explore different Islamic concepts and see how they may relate and be relevant to terrorism. There are a number of things we can conclude.

The first is that the typical orientalist identification of Muslims and their attempt to distinguish between terrorist and non-terrorist groups are largely incorrect and inadequate. From an ideological position, terms like *Wahhabi* are misused, groups like the *Taliban* are misunderstood, and neither is in most cases related to terrorism. If we can draw any conclusion from the classification provided here, it is that those who engage in *takfeer*, or the labeling of someone as an apostate, have a mindset which is in many instances a logical prerequisite for someone to commit an act of terrorism.

The second conclusion is that a person's spiritual state, their peace of mind, their optimism and cynicism, etc. all play a role in how an individual perceives society, identifies their role within it, and reacts to it. According to this, in general a terrorist would be more disgruntled, tight-fisted, and critical of those around him or her.

The third thing we can conclude is that societal factors, such as simultaneously growing secularism and religious revivals, can play a large role in helping to shape the perception of someone who may potentially consider terrorism as an option to dealing with changing environmental conditions. According to this, there is a greater likelihood for someone to develop terrorist tendencies living in a society where such a social dichotomy is taking place.

Our fourth conclusion is that a lack of balance in someone's religion can cause him or her to overlook and violate particular principles in the pursuit of fulfilling other principles. One can overstep certain boundaries even while having the intention to do

good, but either not knowing how to do good, or not seeing the means by which they can do so.

The fifth conclusion is that a lack of Islamic scholarship, particularly when it comes to issuing *fatāwa* (religious edicts), is extremely dangerous and unfortunately widespread. It characterizes most of the public figures calling to terrorism and has not effectively been combated by qualified Islamic scholars.

The sixth and final conclusion is that the topic of *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'* (association and disavowal) needs to be readdressed by scholars of today in light of current situations while also referring back to the source texts and early manuscripts. Current interpretations and explanations of this topic may provide the groundwork for hatred and the justification for attacking people in positions of authority or that work for governments.

In sum, I believe there are a handful of religious factors that are contributing to the rise and spread of the terrorist ideology. Looking back at our first null hypothesis NH_1 , I reject it on this basis. These subjects covered are just a few of the major Islamic topics yet there appears to be room for particular interpretations obtained through unsound legal methodologies to give rise to terrorist principles. Thus, we cannot say that there is no relationship between this – IV_1 – and our dependent variable terrorism.

When it comes to these issues, the Muslim world is most capable and most responsible for actually dealing with and solving these problems. The West, however,

does have a role to play, particularly since the West is just as in need of curbing terrorist attacks. These recommendations will be withheld until Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF TERRORISM

“We [Americans] do not consider ourselves threatening. Puzzled when vilified, we assume our accusers must be demented.”¹²⁹

-Ronald Steel

Many of the reasons cited by the advocates of terrorism and their parties are related to the seemingly unjust politics in their localities. Some proponents of violence in the name of religion say that they have undertaken these acts in order to fend off or change the politics of both foreign and domestic powers. Al Qaeda’s Osama bin Laden is a prime example of this, having cited on numerous occasions what his political grievances were and alluding to his overarching goal “to direct U.S. policy.”¹³⁰

While many may not accept this attitude because of its arrogant overtones, we need to recognize that in the political arena, there is a concept of *give, take and negotiation*. Although our country’s mandate may not necessarily intersect with other regimes’ perspectives and agendas, we must realize that working together to obtain a part of one’s goal is better than to obtain none of it at all. This however, is in direct conflict with America’s “we will not negotiate with terrorists” principle.

The process of high-stakes negotiation was a political and military reality that we as a nation became familiar with during the Cold War. But just because we are not

¹²⁹ Ronald Steel, “Blowback: Terrorism and the U.S. Role in the Middle East,” *The New Republic*, July 28 1996, sec. Politics.

¹³⁰ al-Ibrushi, 16-17.

currently dealing with intercontinental nuclear warheads, we should not be deceived into thinking that the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction has been and should forever be relegated to the filing cabinets of history. For those who have comprehensively assessed the threat of terrorism, the truth of this reality is evident.

At the same time, however, we have entered into a period of political turmoil that cannot simply be addressed with the same strategies that were utilized in the previous century; nor can situations be resolved through making the same assumptions within the same political frameworks in order to truly be effective.

Many of our traditional alliances have been brought into question, such as that with Saudi Arabia since 9/11. Previous allies, for example the Iraqi Bathist regime, have now suddenly had their relationship with the United States eradicated. Those whose allegiances America found of benefit and of political advantage to itself yesterday – like the *mujahideen* of Afghanistan – are no longer accepted allegiances today. We have realized this as a nation; that our policies of the previous century need to be critically assessed and potentially altered. At this pivotal point in our nation's history, we need to take this one step further and assess our complete world view and our macro ways of thinking, as hundreds of years of egocentric rashness have brought us to this culminating point in history.

We are now dealing with a different danger than the Soviet Union – an ideology which represents a very bottom-up development as opposed to a top-down one. On the other hand, the threat is just as real as that of the Soviet Union was, if not more so, and

needs to be treated as such. The reasons for its existence, however, are different, and the ways in which we must deal with it are also very different. Unfortunately, our approach demonstrates a failure to have grasped this notion:

Western governments are not interested in the long-term strategy of resolving problems relating to democratisation of the Mideast. Their short-term strategy of paper shuffling and containing the problem takes preference as they know their respective tenures in office are short and the problems can be left to the next government.¹³¹

While the problem may or may not be the democratization of the Middle East, per se, it is related to or at least compounded by a distribution and spread of power away from the traditional bases of power – the long-standing autocratic regimes. The fact that the West has in many cases suppressed democratic movements throughout the Middle East demonstrates both its inability to deal with its consequences as well as its preference of suppressing potential terrorist-related ideologies from taking the reins of powerful governments and deadly militaries. This creates, however, a major conflict of interest. In some cases it is supportive of dictatorships that help further Western interests; however when these regimes fail to do so, the battle cry against them becomes that of democracy. And then when the West does promote democratization, it wants to select who comes to

¹³¹ Mel Frykberg, “Corrupt Arab Regimes – Who is to Blame?,” <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50189>.

power. This promotion of principles only when and where it is of national interest to the U.S. and the West creates an environment of tension and resentment. This is exactly the type of environment where terrorism breeds whether it is ‘Islamic’ or otherwise.

The purpose of this is not to vilify the U.S., whom many view as being the victim of terrorism, but it is instead to shift our focus away from the emotion of mere revenge and a simplistic desire for justice, toward a logical solution that accounts for the prime reasons behind the existence of terrorism.

Let us ask ourselves the following: when was the last suicide bombing in Iraq before the March 2003 invasion? I have come up completely empty-handed in my research, without being able to locate even a single case; however, there have been on record over 1,700 suicide bombings since the invasion in 2003. Debating who is at fault is not the issue at hand. The fact of the matter is that there is a direct correlation here and we don’t need any graphs or statistics to prove that. And although we still have to ask ‘what now’ and whether suicide bombings would subside following a military withdraw, to ignore the fact that these bombings have started in response to the invasion – irrespective of the bombings being wrong – would blind us from ever finding the solutions to them and to eradicating terrorism.

This chapter will seek to answer whether or not terrorism is a reaction or simply an anomaly. It does not seek to place blame, ignore the highly unethical and problematic framework of terrorism, debate the effectiveness of terrorism, or elicit sympathy for the cause. It will simply explore the timeless principle “what goes around comes around.”

Impact of Foreign Policy

“The West’s road to hell lies in approaching the bin Laden problem with the presumption that only the lunatic fringe could oppose what the United States is trying to accomplish through its foreign policy toward the Muslim world.”¹³²

-Michael Scheuer, former CIA

The political landscape is something that we often neglect as an influential factor in group decisions. We fail to take this factor into consideration because we make the assumption as Americans and Westerners, the foreign policy of our governments is always benevolent toward other nations and peoples and that what we know of those policies is the complete and singular reality of them. Unfortunately, this is far from true.

The arm of the U.S. has a very long reach, and a powerful one at that. The policies and interests which are carried by the United States often run counter to those desired by the peoples implicated in those decisions. With power comes great responsibility – and naturally, those in power will always be challenged based on the decisions they make. More likely than not, there will be individuals who resent those in power either simply because they are in power, or because inevitably the decisions of those in power cannot please everyone. Perhaps more deserving of criticism, however,

¹³² Scheuer, 27.

are decisions made only to benefit the decision-makers themselves under the guise of “national interest.”

This is the reality of American foreign policy; it is neither a hidden one nor necessarily a blame-worthy one. A quick survey of the global landscape will reveal much of the world resents many national policies of America and its allies. A plethora of nations feel oppressed and taken advantage of, tormented, abused, and disrespected by the United States. Whether or not we agree with their take is not even important because perception is reality – this perception dictates the reality of terrorism.

Furthermore, the correctness of one’s argument is not always relevant when the opposite party is adamant on their world-view and interpretation. Thus it is unwise to insist on merely changing the opinions of others – something not at all likely to take place unless through drastic modifications of our actions as a nation. And although there may be a specific role for this, we first must adequately understand the opinions, perceptions, and positions of terrorists for what they truly are, followed by understanding the people behind these opinions. The former within its political context will be the topic of this chapter while the latter within its religious context, will be the topic of the following chapter.

The section that lies ahead will outline the grievances which are being cited against the foreign policy of the U.S. and its allies. The purpose of it is to avoid discounting them (as is often done) and instead actually consider how to address them with honesty. If there truly is an expressed interest in bringing an end to terrorism as we

know it, our country needs to be able to respond to the reasons being cited as justification for acts of terrorism. This may require both breaking down these reasons and providing rebuttals, but it may also include this nation becoming more introspective and critical of its own actions and decisions.

The Stated Political Grievances

“The United States has never had an enemy who has more clearly, calmly, and articulately expressed his hatred for America and his intention to destroy our country by war or die trying.”¹³³

-Michael Scheuer, former CIA

This section will outline the actual political grievances that have been stated particularly by the leaders of what have been deemed “terrorist” groups. Those that play the most important role are the quotes of bin Laden, as he has been the most outspoken. His grievances listed have been amongst the clearest and most detailed, his leadership perhaps the most legitimate and respected, and his organization quite likely the most powerful and influential.

¹³³ Scheuer, xi.

Next to bin Laden, the grievances outlined by Ayman al-Zawahiri will be listed. His most recent speeches after having joined bin Laden and focusing his efforts against the West, as opposed to the Egyptian government when with EIJ, are of the most interest to us. Over the past few years, in fact, his speeches have been both more lengthy and common than those of bin Laden.

We will also look at series of lengthy quotes from the speeches of Adam Gadahn the “American Taliban.” He made his first public video against the West in 2004 and just recently released another video this March 2010 calling for individual acts of violence against the United States and Americans. He has been very specific as to the problems he and those in Al-Qaeda have with the United States and its allies. His statements are perhaps the most replete with political and cultural references and grievances against the West. He is by far one of the leading, if not the foremost in familiarity with these topics of all known Al-Qaeda operatives. While his statements may appear awash with hatred, I encourage the complete reading of the statements included herein for those who have not read them. Again, they are indeed perhaps the most detailed set of grievances against the Western nations publicly stated by an accused terrorist.

We will also assess a few comments from Anwar al-Awlaki. While he has not publicly called for any specific acts of violence against the West, he has been very outspoken against U.S. foreign policy. He has been one of the most influential callers to armed resistance against U.S. forces because of his popularity on the internet and through his audio lectures. He is now believed to be working with Al Qaeda in Yemen.

Furthermore, his most recent speeches seem to fall into a very similar ideological approach as those of bin Laden and al-Zawahiri as he seemingly supported both the shooting at Ft. Hood and the failed terrorist attack on Christmas, 2009. Additionally, as Yemen has been gaining significance in the War on Terror, his influence is becoming more note-worthy.

Next will be a few statements made by the deceased Abu Musab al Zarqawi who was the recognized leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.¹³⁴ He reiterates much of what bin Laden and Zawahiri have already stated. His positions, however, are more ideological in nature, regarding those who assist the Americans or the government in Iraq.

Finally we will look at a few of the statements of Mullah Omar, the official leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan. As Afghanistan has been labeled the main front of the War on Terror, his statements and positions need to be understood and paid close attention to.

Categorizing the Grievances

The primary political grievances have been condensed down to six categories, under which there are sub-categories specifically detailing the likely points of reference that we find in the upcoming statements. Before proceeding to these categories or the quotes there are few issues which must be covered. The first is that these quotes have come from a combination of approximately fifty speeches, interviews, video transcripts,

¹³⁴ Zaki Chehab, *Iraq Ablaze: Inside the Insurgency* (London: IB Tauris & Co, 2006), 8.

and written statements. Because they have been selectively pulled from numerous different sources and have been trimmed to one or two sentences in most cases, their context may not be immediately evident. For example, bin Laden often mentions a host of deaths in Iraq. Without even referring back to the original source, it is obvious his reference is to the sanctions imposed on Iraq and the subsequent deaths which were partially a result of insufficient nutrition and medical supplies. There are cases, however, where these may not be as clear and do require us to return to the original sources to deduce the intended meaning. An example of this is when Zawahiri refers to a truce offered by bin Laden. This is in reference to a 2004 statement where bin Laden offered to not attack European countries if they did not attack Muslims. There are also instances where within one statement multiple grievances are mentioned such as Zawahiri's reference to Muslim honor, national resources, and sanctions all in one breath. There are as well particular quotes that are very general and will not fall into the categories which we will be using to further explain the details of the forthcoming political grievances. An example would be the general references to policy, Western military history, misdirected interests as well as accusations of terrorism, injustice, and provocation. Despite the difficulty in categorizing these specific quotations, they have nevertheless been included to help provide a general oversight of the tone, mentality and perspective of each speaker, as well as to have a better understanding where these grievances are grounded. And finally, there are a few statements that are particularly insightful providing recommendations of how America and the West can avoid future terrorist attacks.

For each category, the object of criticism and subject of the actions is “the West” (primarily North American and European governments) and especially the United States. Although these statements have not been listed under their most relevant categories because of the aforementioned reasons, after a brief reading the general topics of their grievances should become evident. The most important and unique portions of these statements have been bolded similarly to what was done with definitions of terrorism in chapter one. We shall start with bin Laden citing all of his grievances and then move down the list adding new, unique, or slightly modified grievances that have been mentioned by each of the subsequent individuals.

The Statements

Osama bin Laden

Neither the United States nor he who lives in the United States will enjoy **security** before we can see it as a reality **in Palestine** and **before all the infidel armies leave the land of Muhammad**¹³⁵

If we **cut off the head of America, the kingdoms in the Arab world will cease to exist**¹³⁶

Find a nationalistic **government that will look after their interests and not the interests of the Jews**. The **continuation of tyranny** will bring the fight to America...look for a serious government that looks out for their interests and **does not**

¹³⁵ Osama Bin Laden, “Declaration of Jihad,” interview by al-Jazeera, October 2001, interview transcript, CNN.com archive.

¹³⁶ Hamid Mir, Interview of Osama Bin Laden, NWF, Pakistan, March 18, 1997.

attack others, their lands, or their honor...ask what their government has done that forced us to defend ourselves¹³⁷

More than one million children died in Iraq and others are still dying...How come millions of Muslims are being killed?¹³⁸

You are not unaware of **the injustice, repression, and aggression that have befallen Muslims through the alliance of Jews, Christians, and their agents**, so much so **that Muslims' blood and their wealthy are plundered by their enemies.**¹³⁹

One of the front's primary objectives was to rid Arab and Islamic territories of U.S. hegemony...compel the United States and those who help it to review their policies on Arab and Islamic issues. This means that the front's objective was to direct U.S. policy.¹⁴⁰

To fight the **Americans, who are protecting the regimes.**¹⁴¹

American history does not distinguish between civilian and military, not even women and children¹⁴²

The **United States** itself is the **biggest mischief maker, terrorist, and rogue in the world**, and challenging its authority will be a good deed in Islam in every aspect.¹⁴³

We treat them in the same way. **Those who kill our women and innocent, we kill their women and innocent, until they refrain.**

If you [Americans] are sincere in your desire for peace and security, we have answered you.

We have **repeatedly issued warnings, over a number of years.** Following these warnings and these calls, anti-American explosions took place in a number of Islamic countries.

Blair's policies will bring more destruction to Britons after the London explosions

¹³⁷ John Miller, "Greetings America: My Name Is Osama Bin Laden. Now That I Have Your Attention...A Conversation with the Most Dangerous Man in the World," *Esquire*, 9 February 1999.

¹³⁸ Osama Bin Laden, "Declaration of Jihad."

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Scheuer, 171.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 172.

¹⁴² Miller.

¹⁴³ Scheuer, 228.

To avenge the slaughter of Muslims by America and its allies in Iraq.

If the American government is serious about avoiding explosions inside the U.S., then let it **stop provoking the feelings of 1,250 million Muslims.**¹⁴⁴

To kill the Americans and their allies -- civilians and military -- is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to **liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim.**¹⁴⁵

We believe that the **biggest thieves in the world are Americans and the biggest terrorists on earth are the Americans.**¹⁴⁶

God knows it did not cross our minds to attack the towers but after the situation became unbearable and we witnessed the injustice and tyranny of the American-Israeli alliance against our people in Palestine and Lebanon, I thought about it. And **the events that affected me directly were that of 1982 and the events that followed -- when America allowed the Israelis to invade Lebanon, helped by the U.S. Sixth Fleet. As I watched the destroyed towers in Lebanon, it occurred to me punish the unjust the same way (and) to destroy towers in America so it could taste some of what we are tasting and to stop killing our children and women.**¹⁴⁷

We, God willing, will continue to fight you and will continue martyrdom operations inside and outside the United States **until you abandon your oppression and foolish acts.**¹⁴⁸

Your security is not in the hands of [Democratic presidential candidate John] Kerry or Bush or al Qaeda. Your security is in your own hands and **each state which does not harm our security will remain safe.**¹⁴⁹

A reaction might take place as a result of the **US government's hitting Muslim civilians and executing more than 600,000 Muslim children in Iraq by preventing food and**

¹⁴⁴ Osama Bin Laden, "Declaration of Jihad."

¹⁴⁵ Osama Bin Laden, "Fatwa entitled Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," interview by World Islamic Front, June 1998, ABC's Nightline.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Osama bin Laden, "Admitting responsibility for attacks on US on September 11, 2001," videotape shown on Al-Jazeera, October 29, 2004, Al-Jazeera Arabiya broadcast.

¹⁴⁸ Osama bin Laden, "Demanding US withdraw from Iraq," audiotape broadcast on Al-Jazeera, October 18, 2003, Al-Jazeera Arabiya broadcast.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

medicine from reaching them. So, the US is responsible for any reaction, because **it extended its war against troops to civilians.**¹⁵⁰

We declared jihad against the US government, because **the US government is unjust, criminal and tyrannical. It has committed acts that are extremely unjust, hideous and criminal whether directly or through its support of the Israeli occupation** of the Prophet's Night Travel Land [Palestine].¹⁵¹

As for their accusations of terrorizing the innocent, the children, and the women, these are in the category of 'accusing others with their own affliction in order to fool the masses.' **The evidence overwhelmingly shows America and Israel killing the weaker men, women and children in the Muslim world and elsewhere.** A few examples of this are seen in the **recent Qana massacre in Lebanon, and the death of more than 600,000 Iraqi children because of the shortage of food and medicine which resulted from the boycotts and sanctions against the Muslim Iraqi people, also their withholding of arms from the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina leaving them prey to the Christian Serbians who massacred and raped in a manner not seen in contemporary history.** Not to forget the **dropping of the H-bombs on cities with their entire populations of children, elderly, and women, on purpose, and in a premeditated manner as was the case with Hiroshima and Nagasaki.**¹⁵²

O American people, I am speaking to tell you **about the ideal way to avoid another Manhattan,** about war and its causes and results. ¶Security is an important foundation of human life, and **free people do not squander their security,** contrary to Bush's claims that we hate freedom. Let him tell us **why we did not attack Sweden,** for example... **We fight you because we are free and because we want freedom for our nation. When you squander our security, we squander yours**¹⁵³

Ayman Al Zawahiri

Our message to you is clear, strong and final: **There will be no salvation until you withdraw from our land, stop stealing our oil and resources and end support for infidel, corrupt rulers.**

¹⁵⁰ Osama Bin Laden, "Declaration of Jihad."

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Osama bin Laden, "Demanding US withdraw from Iraq."

¹⁵³ Osama bin Laden, "Bin Laden Speaks to American People," videotape shown on Al-Jazeera, October 30, 2004, Washington Post, transcript, trans. by Reuters News Agency.

Didn't the lion of Islam, the Mujahid Shaykh Osama bin Laden, may Allah protect him, **offer you a truce so that you might depart from the Islamic lands?** But you were obstinate and were led by arrogance to more crime and your foreign secretary, **Jack Straw, said these proposals deserve to be met with contempt.**

Oh American people, can you **ask yourselves, why all this hate against America and against Israel, why?**

It is **your government which is seizing the people of Iraq and killing them. It is your government which is supporting the rotten governments in our countries.**

We advise them to make a hasty **retreat from Palestine, the Arabian Gulf, Afghanistan and the rest of the Muslim states,** before they lose everything.

Kicking out the invading crusader forces and the Jews will not only happen by demonstrations and by shouting in the streets. Reform and **expulsion of the invaders out of the Muslim land** will only be accomplished by fighting for the sake of God.

Every Muslim in Pakistan must do his or her best in **getting rid of this government, which cooperates with the enemies**

These **policies (of British Prime Minister Tony Blair) will bring them more destruction** after the explosions of London.

The lands and interests of **the countries which took part in the aggression against Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan** are targets for us.

We will respond in kind to all **those who took part in the aggression on Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.**

transferred the fight to the land of the enemy after it continued for long decades transferring this fight to our lands, and after **its forces occupied our lands in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine, and after it continued to occupy our lands for centuries while it was still safe in their land.**

[In a threatening tone, al-Zawahiri said] make sure, you peoples of crusaders alliance, to have **catastrophes hit you. These will be brought to you by the policies conducted by Bush and Blair and their followers. You, people of the Crusaders alliance, we have warned you, but it seemed you want us to drink your death, so taste what you have already given to us. ... it is the same reciprocated treatment.** Are the people in our countries not women and children?

America insists on **humiliating the [Muslim] nation, robbing its resources, and imposing sanctions on it.**¹⁵⁴

We consider the **United States primarily responsible for all these crimes**, and thus it has to bear the bulk of the retaliation¹⁵⁵

Adam Gadahn

the pivot on which the war today between the Muslims and their enemies today revolves Muslim Palestine, which will remain Muslim in spite of Bush and his puppets, in spite of the racist tendencies of the Jewish occupiers and in spite of conspiracies like the Mecca Accord and the Annapolis Conference.¹⁵⁶

Your problem, however, lies in your flawed understanding of what is right and who are the weak and oppressed victims. For the majority of Americans, right is whatever at least one of the three branches of government deems to be right, even if it entails **the killing of thousands upon thousands of innocents, or the violations of the values and principles of which Americans are supposed to hold dear.**¹⁵⁷

For the majority of Americans, right is whatever is deemed to be right by the United Nations Security Council and its American government approved resolutions which have been **responsible for the killing of millions of innocent men, women, and children all over the world.**¹⁵⁸

You also claim to be liberating the peoples from oppression. But today in order to fight the Islamic State of Iraq, and the other fierce mujahideen in Mesopotamia, and try to pave the way for the America loving, Israel protecting secular regime demanded by the Crusader West and its despotic agents in the region, **your government and military is working with former Ba'athists, murderous Shi'ite fanatics, and Mosa'ad backed Kurds and driving an army to generate militias like the Kurd backed Peshmerga, and the so-called Awakening Councils, which commit all sorts of crimes and violate**

¹⁵⁴ Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Militant Leader Urges Holy War on U.S., Israel," videotape shown on *Al-Rai Al-Amm*, July 2, 1998.

¹⁵⁵ Al-Qaeda, "Jihad Group Threatens to Take Revenge against United States," statement recorded by *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, November 2, 1998.

¹⁵⁶ Jeffrey Imm, trans. Laura Mansfield, "Al-Qaeda's Gadahn – Transcript of January 6 Message," United States Action, <http://www.unitedstatesaction.com/blog/imm-articles/072.html>.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

all manners of rights in order to further American and Israeli designs and stuff their own pockets with greenbacks or shekels as the case may be.¹⁵⁹

And today your government and military subcontracted dirty work to international and local **mercenaries who are subject to no law and observe no moral code and have taken hundreds if not thousands of innocent Iraqi and Afghan lives** most recently slaughtering in their trigger-happiness over 60 elementary school students at a sugar factory in Baghlan, Afghanistan according to eyewitnesses and United Nations reports.¹⁶⁰

And why didn't we hear an outburst from them ["angry celebrity female activists"] when ugly crime committed in Chad, by the criminal **non-governmental organization Zoe's Ark** which **kidnapped over a hundred Chadian Muslim children** from their parents' arms **with the intention of selling them in the West as Darfurian orphans** to be brought up as Christian slaves?¹⁶¹

It is said that one is known by the friends one keeps. If so, then what to say of **America**, which in addition to teaming up with the career criminals, psychotics, serial killers to whom I referred just now, also **boasts among its friends, allies, and protégés** some of the world's worst dictators and tyrants, people like the neo-Soviet Vladimir Putin, the devil in human form [**Uzbeki President**] **Islom Karimov**, **the Pharaoh of Egypt Hosni Mubarak**, and **the dictator who is holding on to power by the skin of his teeth Pervez Musharraf**.¹⁶²

This all goes to show that America cares nothing for bringing freedom to the Islamic world and that when it talked about liberation it is thinking of, quote, liberating, unquote, the Muslims from their religion not from the rule of the tyrants who repressed them with America's blessing.¹⁶³

America wants to force upon the Muslims by any means possible the aspects of democracy which are incompatible with true monotheism, like secular constitutions, majority rule, positive law courts, and legislative councils which are at war with God and set themselves up as rivals to him in legislation which is His right alone.

Whereas Muslims need and want Islamic constitutions based exclusively on the Qur'an and Sunnah, Shari'ah courts, and Muslim rule in accordance with God's law.

¹⁵⁹ Imm.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

As for the concepts which are mistakenly considered synonymous with democracy but have their origin in divine law and are present in Islam such as the right of the nation to choose its leaders, such as the accountability of the rulers to the people in the judiciary, and the right of the people to restrain them from oppression and corruption, such as respect for the position and standing of the judiciary, and protection of sanctity and human dignity, America wants none of that for us as evidenced by its open and secret support of the autocratic dictators of our region like Musharraf, Mubarak, Abdul Ben Abdul Aziz, and the rest of the disgusting America loving, Islam hating club of tyrants and torturers.

Haven't you seen how American leaders and their spokespeople describe them as democrats and valued friends and describe the rigged elections and referendums they run as free and fair even as they impose and lift emergency law according to whim and stack the judiciary with local sycophants to sustain their hold on power and clamp down on all opposition and dissent to satisfy their tyrannical craving and kill Muslim women, children, and ulema in the Red Mosque, the Al Jof Mosque, and elsewhere?

“This then is the tyranny which America fosters and supports worldwide and this is why we oppose all calls for democracy whether American or otherwise, not because we hate freedom as the real freedom-haters so hypocritically claim, but because we neither need nor want this unislamic system whose good aspects are present in the divinely ordained system which we are fighting to establish.

I don't mean to imply from the review of the excesses and atrocities completed by America and its allies, proxies, and puppets that America itself doesn't have blood on its hands. Of course not, America talks about truth, justice, and the American way and most Americans think they are the nicest people and greatest nation in the history of the world yet your government and military have for more than 230 years been one of the world's foremost and most prolific liars as well as one of its most unjust regimes and one of the greatest violators of America's professed values.

Today as well as yesterday America's armed forces engage in mass casualty aerial bombing much of which is now fully automated as if you are dealing with money transfers and not matters of life and death. And much of which depends on so-called intelligence from satellites and spy planes which sorry to say don't distinguish between friend, foe, and innocent bystander, in the same way that white phosphorus and depleted uranium also pick their victims indiscriminately.

Today as yesterday America's homesick, half-mad soldiers rape, pillage, and murder then plant weapons and fabricate reports to cover up their evil deeds.

And today, more than ever before America's military and intelligence services are guilty of the most atrocious forms of torture and unlawful and arbitrary detention of innocents in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and elsewhere, including on American soil.

The unspeakable acts the barbaric America interrogators commit in those hellish chambers of torture and cruelty, the horrors and humiliation they visit upon their innocent Muslim victims, and their mocking and desecration of the Islamic religion and persecution of the Muslims for their faith - these atrocities shall never be forgotten nor go unpunished.

When we talk about **the abuse of Muslims for being Muslims**, we're not talking about something secret or unknown or something of which you, the American people, are unaware. No. **You've seen the pictures on television and heard the testimony and read the documents and reports.**

Liberating our prisoners from the blood-soaked talons of the American eagle is a burden which we carry and **our defensive jihad against you will remain our duty as long as there remains one Muslim in American captivity.**¹⁶⁴

One last question for the people of America. Who is it who has led you into the predicament you are in today?

I think you know the answer.

It's that group of fanatics who views the world through a twisted pre-millenious prism formed by its dubious interpretations of Daniel, Revelations, and other books of equally dubious origin.

It's that group of fanatics which claims to be pro-life and cries over aborted fetuses and even embryos but appears to have no qualms about killing children in the womb and even in the cradle on two conditions: that they be Muslim children, and that their mothers and the rest of their family be killed along with them in the Israeli air raid or American missile strike.

It's that group which talks about ethics and morality and criticizes the media at home but sees nothing wrong with ruining the morals of a generation of Muslims by drowning them in a flood of filthy western media to make them single minded slaves of their lusts and desires and thus further enhance the security of America and Israel.

It's that group which feigns distrust and suspicion of United Nations organizations even as it uses it as a tool and vehicle for world domination.

It's that group which is more Israeli than the Israelis themselves.

It's that group which considers Timothy McVeigh, Robert Hawkins, Matthew Murray, and those like them to be depraved criminals while defending their right to bear arms but considers the uniformed child killers of the American Army and Marines and what is known as the Israeli Defense Forces to be heroes.

It's that group which claims to take scripture literally but violates every commandment in the book when to do so serves its interests.

It's that group whose noncompliance with the Biblical and Qu'ranic ban on usury or transactions involving interest has finally blown up in their face or in their faces in the home mortgage crisis which is threatening the economy of America and the world.

¹⁶⁴ Imm.

It's this group of militant fanatics which has taken nuclear armed America to the brink and is hoping to push it over the edge as soon as possible in order to hasten the 7 year tribulation period, the rapture, the second coming, and Armageddon, not necessarily in that order.

And it's this, and it's this group of fanatics that is playing with fire and fiddling with the destiny of the entire world. And because of this well heeled well connected group of militants that you're now in a battle to the death with the Muslims who wouldn't be fighting you today were it not for the political and economic influence and imperialistic designs of these unholy rollers.

These then are your real enemies. So isn't it about time you stood up to them? I don't mean that you should elect the so-called "opposition party" which is merely the flip side of the same coin of oppression and aggression and which also serves the interests of these fanatics through the Jewish lobby and other avenues of indirect control.

No, it's time for you to take the radical, serious, and logical steps which bring results. It's time for you to do whatever it takes to force these fanatics representatives in Washington whether Republican or Democrat to heed the legitimate demands of the Muslims as spelled out by Sheikh Osama bin Laden, Sheikh Ayman al Zawahiri, and others in a series of messages to you and your leaders.

And it's time for you to disown these militant money grubbing fanatics who fill their churches and coffers by scaring people with false prophecies of approach of the end-time tribulations which may or may not occur in our lifetime and whose time only God knows, whereas Muslims are bound by the divine command to altruistically invite to the truth by preaching God's monotheistic message as brought by his messengers and reminding people of the approach of death, resurrection, and judgment which every soul is guaranteed to experience.

So take the logical steps and abandon their corrupt ungodly religion for the simple, moderate, and reasonable religion of Islam. The only way to worship God today after the abrogation and alteration of previous revealed laws, and might I add the only law which they fear, because unlike the pliant, manipulable, man-made legal codes of today, or the abandoned laws of the Bible which are now nothing more than ink on paper, the living, breathing, divine justice of Islam threatens their ill-gotten gains and capital, threatens their war-mongering, and threatens their political influence.

Hence, their never-ending smear campaign intended to give you the wrong impression about Islam. This is a matter of unparalleled importance, so don't wait until it is too late, until you've seen the punishment with your own eyes, and these charlatans or their ruling representatives have disowned you and all ties between you have been severed, upon which you'll wish you could come back to disown them as they have disowned you.

My Muslim brother: **Jihad** is neither the personal property nor the exclusive responsibility of any single group, organization or individual. Instead, it is **the personal duty of every able-bodied Muslim** on the face of this earth, **until the last Muslim**

captive is freed and the last piece of occupied Islamic land is recovered and until Muslims live in safety and security in the benevolent shadow of the Islamic state.¹⁶⁵

Anwar al Awlaki

And in my tribe too, **US missiles have killed 17 women and 23 children, so do not ask me if al-Qaeda has killed or blown up a US civil jet after all this.**¹⁶⁶

Yes, I support what Umar Farouk has done after I have been seeing **my brothers being killed in Palestine for more than 60 years, and others being killed in Iraq and in Afghanistan. And in my tribe too, US missiles have killed 17 women and 23 children, so do not ask me if al-Qaeda has killed or blown up a US civil jet after all this.** The 300 Americans are nothing comparing to the thousands of Muslims who have been killed.¹⁶⁷

This is not now a war on terrorism. We need to all be clear on this. This is a war against Muslims. **This is a war against Muslims and Islam.** Not only is it happening worldwide but it's happening right here in America, that it's claiming to be fighting this war for the sake of freedom while its infringing on the freedom of its own citizens just because they're Muslim.¹⁶⁸

Abu Musab al Zarqawi

The mujahideen will give America a taste of the **degradation you have inflicted on the Iraqi people**¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Pamela Geller, "Gadahn or not Gadahn, That is the Question," Atlas Shrugs Online, http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2010/03/gadahn-or-not-gadahn-that-is-not-the-question.html.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Jazeera Focus Interview, "Interview: Anwar al-Awlaki," Al-Jazeera English, February 7, 2010, <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2010/02/2010271074776870.html>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Anwar al-Awlaki [video], (2010), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiDaJpcPvxU&feature=related>.

¹⁶⁹ Jihad Watch, "Abu Musab al Zarqawi," statements from ABC News, Sept. 2004, <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2006/06/abu-musab-al-zarqawi-in-his-own-words.html>.

We have declared a bitter war against the principle of democracy and all those who seek to enact it.¹⁷⁰

We declare that the **Iraqi army is an apostate, agent army allied to the crusaders and came to destroy Islam and Muslims.** We will fight it.¹⁷¹

Mullah Omar

Our system is the true example of an Islamic system. For the enemies of religion and our country, **this system is like a thorn in their eyes, and they are trying to destroy it under various pretexts.**¹⁷²

However, the **people of Afghanistan will not agree to negotiation which prolongs and legitimates the invaders military presence** in our beloved country. Afghanistan is our home. No one will ever be ready to negotiate with anyone else about ownership of one's home --still more to give share in administration and control of the home and himself ends up becoming homeless, powerless and servant in his own home.¹⁷³

The foreigners have occupied the land of the Afghans by dent of (military) might and savagery. If they want solution of the issue, they should **put an end to the occupation of Afghanistan.** The invading Americans want Mujahideen to surrender under the pretext of the negotiation. This is something impossible.¹⁷⁴

Assessing the Grievances

While it may be a long laundry list of complaints to many, the fact of the matter is that this list is very similar to that of Muslims around the world, whether they have terrorist tendencies or not. Furthermore, this list is growing in size as the U.S. continues

¹⁷⁰ Jihad Watch.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² The Guardian, "Mullah Omar's speech to the Taliban," Guardian.co.uk, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/sep/19/september11.usa15>.

¹⁷³ Bill Roggio, "Mullah Omar rejects negotiations," Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2009/11/mullah_omar_rejects_negotiatio.php.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

to fight its War on Terror and occupy foreign Muslim countries. And lastly, despite what the U.S. government or the American public want to believe, this list has been and will continue to be extremely effective in recruiting further terrorists unless it is directly addressed. The standard has been to toss these issues aside by attempting to discredit their authors through uses of politically-armed terminology. This act in and of itself becomes a further evidence for the legitimacy of the original claims.

And while some of these complaints are outside the realm of government control, terrorists will continue to attack because the public has large-in-part adopted a group thought mentality cited by the government, promoted through the media, and protected by popular public opinion. It has become nearly sacrosanct to question or criticize the fundamental underlying principles of Western liberal democracy and capitalism as well as the chronicles in history which prove to have dubious accounts of their veracity.

With that said, let us look at the four topics which I believe have been most commonly referred to throughout the statements above and most easily addressed. Their importance in respect to the cited grievances will be noted, they will be broken down into further topics which likely are the specific issues that are being referred to (if not already otherwise noted), and they will be detailed with facts and opinions that are commonly cited by Muslims and dissenters alike. A conclusion for each section will follow that will address whether these particular issues are seen as legitimate grievances in the Muslim world or if just by the proponents of terrorism, and what the potential weaknesses in these arguments are. The chapter will wrap up by answering our hypothesis – whether or not

terrorism is at least in part a reaction to these political grievances. These categories are as follows:

- 1) Support for foreign Muslim regimes
- 2) Support for Israel
- 3) Presence and influence of Western corporations in the Muslim world
- 4) Military Operations and Presence and Economic Sanctions

Support for Foreign Muslim Regimes

“Everybody I think understands that the United States means something, that we’ve set ourselves up as a bastion for certain principles and ideals. Everybody I think also understands, including Americans, that we often fall short of those ideals. And so when I look at anti-US sentiment in the Muslim world, when I look at even anger at the United States, I can’t help but also notice how tinged it is with disappointment, with sadness, with a sense even of betrayal of what America stands for.”¹⁷⁵

-Reza Aslan

¹⁷⁵ Gallup Poll, *Who Speaks for Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think* [video], (2010), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bn12s19X8xU>.

As has been stated numerous times by bin Laden, Zawahiri, and the likes, a major reason (if not the most important reason) for terrorist attacks against the U.S. and the West is their support for the governments that rule in the Muslim lands. This is because a) it is perceived that these regimes have been planted to rule over the Muslim countries for the purpose of supporting the West's interests; b) these rulers have displayed many un-Islamic traits and in some cases have done things which may have brought them outside the fold of Islam, making their leadership invalid according to some Islamic Jurists' positions (see Chapter 3 for a greater discussion); c) these leaders have been oppressive toward their people by any measurement and more often than not appear to rule solely for their own interests and not the interests of their people; and d) they have failed in all aspects of leadership over their people who have had no recourse to remove these leaders for, in some cases, decades on end. All four of these points have been referred to numerous times in the above statements. These points are further elucidated below.

Western Planted Regimes

At the Conclusion of World War I, the Ottoman Empire was divided up and ruled over by the colonial powers of Europe, including Britain, France, Italy, and the Netherlands among others. They initially ruled over the empire with their own forces but slowly transitioned and handed off power to newly-established kings from some

historically powerful families and other new and rising ones. The rule of these kings was never seen as legitimate because they were selected by the colonial powers and would stay in close relations with them for years. Many of those powers still associate with past colonial forces. While some of these dynasties such as the Hashemities in Syria have fallen and given way to new forms of governments headed by new tyrants, others such as the Hussein's in Jordan and the Saud's in Saudi Arabia remain and are seen as puppets of the West. They often support Western policies and companies against the will of their own people and often to their detriment. Their lands have been used as launching points for wars against other Muslims, they have taken cordial relationships with leaders of the world waging war against their neighboring Muslim nations, and they have suppressed (and often imprisoned) the voices of their people and scholars who have spoken against them.

The U.S. has been very selective in its choice of which governments and regimes it chooses to support. During the Cold War, it was supportive of the governments and even resistance groups that were either not communist or fighting against communism. These 'proxy' wars that the U.S. and Soviet Union financed and provided military support for resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, and literally over a million if one includes the Korean and Vietnam wars. The two superpowers were not necessarily directly interested in the domestic affairs or human rights abuses that were taking place in the lands they were militarily involved in; they were simply interested in the framework

of government. Governments whose social-economic structures were more similar to those of the enemy were seen as a threat to their own governments and economies.

To this day, a similar mentality and mode of foreign policy exists in the United States. It parades the flags of democracy, yet it enacted an embargo against the democratically elected Hamas. It stands firm on human rights, but Egypt is the second largest recipient of direct U.S. aid since 1975¹⁷⁶ while being both a dictatorship by any reasonable measurement and one the worst violators of human rights in the semi-developed world. The United States claims to be against dynastic rule, yet Saudi Arabia has historically been one of its most intimate allies. It stands against terrorism, yet it is devoted to and heavily funds its ally Israel who is possibly the most heavily criticized state sponsor of terrorism in the world. It was a proponent of the Taliban when they were against the Soviets, but against the Taliban when they established Islamic law across Afghanistan. It was in support of Saddam Hussein while he fought Iran and gassed the Kurds, but against him when the political and economic agendas of the U.S. in the Middle East dictated otherwise.

Whether these are clear black and white instances is not necessarily even the issue, although we will touch on that. The issue is the overwhelming perception in the Middle East (and the world for that matter) – that the U.S. has major double-standards when it comes to choosing alliances because of its national interests. This is one of the main reasons cited for the carrying out of acts of terrorism, yet we have done very little in

¹⁷⁶ USAID, “U.S. Aid to Egypt Totals \$28 Billion in Three Decades”, USAID.gov, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/features/egypt.

the way of responding to it. As we continue to support these foreign regimes, terrorists gain legitimacy in their actions merely because their political observations are grounded in logical reality.

The principles that we promote and hold in high regard as a nation, we seem to overlook at times because of a perceived “national interest.” These principles of equality and justice are in part the same principles that the Muslim world desires but is having withheld from them by their leaders. And unfortunately the U.S. supports many of these leaders who oppress their citizens because “having pliable Arab regimes in power which can be manipulated also suits Western geopolitical interests, especially in regard to the region’s rich oil and gas resources. Added to this is their genuine fear of Islamic fundamentalists taking power.”¹⁷⁷ America fears what democracy may actually bring about in the Middle East, particularly if our hands are not physically there to prevent it – an Islamic revolution – and therefore we continue to support the leaders who also have the ability to continue suppressing these movements.

An Islamic revolution in the Muslim world is perhaps the greatest threat to the international system. Politically, the Islamic caliphate at its prime did not use national boundaries and was one of the largest empires ever established, covering perhaps the most important territories in the world. Economically, a true Islamic empire would not accept paper money that has no gold or silver backing nor would it deal with interest. And although religiously it did not force Islam upon people, it would both be very active

¹⁷⁷ Frykberg.

in calling people toward Islam while also ruling by Islamic Shariah over its territories. The West is not comfortable in accepting any of this, nor is it entirely prepared to deal with these potential changes. If communism was as great of a threat as it was made out to be, then a wide-spread Islamic revolution would be catastrophic to the status quo because it would truly turn the entire international system on its head.

Un-Islamic Rule

Many of the Middle Eastern governments have supported the West against other Muslim countries and groups, and Muslims have died as a result of this. Thus not only have these governments become targets of terrorism, the West has also become a target because it is seen as the fundamental protector of the former.

These governments have in turn provided material, financial, and moral support for the West and have allied with them against other Muslims such as the Pakistani government allying with the U.S. against the Taliban of Afghanistan. This is something very serious in Islam because it can take someone outside the fold of Islam. They may have effectively apostated from the religion by allying against the Muslim community. The majority opinion and traditional interpretation in Islam calls for capital punishment against such individuals, albeit having many preceding requirements that must be fulfilled first (see Chapter 3).

Furthermore, they have committed treason against the Muslims, which covers the other minority opinion that it is actually treason against the Muslim state (not simply apostating from the religion) which is punishable by death. The main caveat here is there is not a *Khalīfa* nor a true Islamic state, so implementation of these punishments cannot be carried out (as many opinions state they are only carried out with these two preconditions). Nevertheless, some Muslims feel it is their prerogative to take matters into their own hands in order to release their people from the shackles that their governments have placed them in and carry out the removal of these corrupt regimes. When these groups receive popular support, which often happens, it gives an appearance of legitimacy and encouragement to carry out these plans and thus attempt coups. The true legitimacy of these actions within Islam has been discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Finally, most of these rulers have not only failed to implement the vast majority of Islamic laws in their countries (while many of the people desire it), they have also intentionally chosen to implement laws that run completely contrary to Islamic law. This poses a serious concern Islamically as ruling by other than Islamic law in the Muslim lands, by the opinion of some religious scholars, will also cast somebody outside of Islam.

Oppressive and Self-Interested Leadership

Most of these dictators rule with ironclad fists and have suppressed rebellion against their rule on multiple occasions such as some of the infamous crackdowns on the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt. They have stolen from the people, taken personal possession over all the lands and its resources, and sold them at paltry prices to the world's greater powers. Many of the rulers have essentially sold the land and resources out from under them and squandered much of the wealth on their own personal possessions. The Gulf states are a primary example of this.

They have also unrightfully imprisoned and tortured their people and have even denied them their religious rights. This last point is something which also may contest with Islamic law (see Chapter 3), as preventing a people from their religious duties may entail a legitimate reason to overthrow a ruler. Those who have spoken out against their rulers for these abuses receive the harshest of all punishment.

Most of these actions are understood to be for the purpose of either benefiting the West directly or merely benefiting themselves. In either case, because of the Western support they receive, tangible or intangible, the West and the United States have become the target of terrorist attacks with the goal of the replacement of these regimes.

It is doubtful that there exists any country in the Middle East (or the world at that) where this does not happen. Many of these nations suffer from extreme poverty while the ruling classes are extremely wealthy. The Middle East, however, represents a unique

portion of the world because of a combination of the understood religious obligation to not cave in to foreign pressure coupled by a newly-founded religious fervor, cultures that are historically known for fighting and revenge, ongoing oppression of its people from its own governments, continual violations of state sovereignty, and long-standing inter-religious conflicts between extreme parties. For this reason, the West's meddling in the affairs of these nations has recently received (and will almost definitely continue to) the greatest violent resistance against it. In many ways Iraq has proven to be the epitomical hotbed of conflict and the hornet's nest of a region which if agitated will release dangerous stings.

Failure of Leadership without Recourse

Throughout the entirety of the Middle East, nations have suffered from severe poverty, a lack of structural and societal development, an absence of social programs, poor education, wide-spread corruption, dismal human rights records, and constant civil strife. The majority of these nations consistently rank in the lowest portion of these measurements across most of these categories. And to make matters worse, these nations do not offer any legitimate political recourse for solving the aforementioned problems, with the ironic exception of Palestine to a small degree.

Despite all of this, and the Western nations' insistence on the importance of democracy and human rights, the West has continued to support these rulers financially,

politically, and militarily. By and large, the people hate their governments, and there is little that they can do about it. Without the previously mentioned support of rulers by the Western world, many of them would potentially collapse or be overrun. But the West and the United States in particular, has been very selective as part of its foreign policy with regards to who it chooses to support and who it does not. When the United States fears an imbalance or a threat to the status quo of the international system, it acts. During the Cold War, it was the spread of communist governments; and unfortunately with growing clarity, today it has been the spread of Islamic governments.

This Western support of failing regimes which deserve to be replaced, along with all the previously cited reasons are being wielded as very powerful calls for terrorist acts against the West and established authorities. Resistance by any means necessary is the name of the game, and unless one side is able to tone down its rhetoric and step back for a moment to assess the grievances put forth by their foes, there will be perpetual violence until one side is finally subdued.

Concluding Notes

Who Held By

The first issue which we want to go back to is who actually holds these beliefs. On one hand, and quite interestingly, the Muslim world overwhelming loves the United

States's freedoms, its culture, its justice, and its economic prosperity – things which its people feel they do not have in their own countries. According to the Gallup Poll “Who Speaks for Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think” the top two things that Muslims around the world admire most about the West are technology and liberty & democracy – the same two things Americans admire most about the West. The grievances, however, that Muslims primarily hold are 1) anger around acute conflicts – Iraq, Afghanistan, and perceived support for Israeli violence; 2) perception of political domination – that the West holds double standards both when supporting dictatorships in the Muslim world and treatment of Muslims in their own countries; and 3) deep perceptions of being disrespected – that Muslims are not treated as equals nor is Islam respected as other faiths are.¹⁷⁸

Furthermore, there is confusion in the Muslim world as to how the U.S., which has historically promoted human rights and liberties more than any other nation in the modern era, has seemed to not only ignore the Muslim world but instead act contrary to its guiding principles by supporting the powerful oppressors over them. As Rezan Aslan points out, “it’s hard I think for the average Egyptian on the street of Cairo to understand why it is that the United States stands not with him but with Mubarak. It’s hard I think for a Palestinian to understand why it is American sentiment is not with him and his suffering and his struggle against occupation but instead is with the powerful.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Gallup Poll.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

While not all Muslims would agree with the few who use Islam to call for the killing and removal of the oppressive rulers, primarily in the Middle East, both parties stand in the same position when it comes to wanting to remove the leaders. It is the means by which this should be done that they differ upon. And while of course the means can mean a world of a difference, the fact of the matter is it is not difficult for the average Muslim to side themselves with an accused terrorist as opposed to with the United States when they feel as if they only have two choices – with or against America. In fact you will find some of the most moderate, non-violent and even not necessarily religious individuals in Middle Eastern countries in support of bin Laden on the basis that he has vocally stood up against the United States and has been able to do so thus far without being imprisoned or executed.

Legitimacy

Looking back, most of these concerns are very legitimate, although not necessarily the responses. A lot of the Muslim countries suffer oppression that we do not in the West, they rank very low on human rights measurements. Similarly, even in nations or regions where Islam is the dominant force in shaping culture, the leaders are usually irreligious, sometimes even working against religion.

The historical aspect of what actually took place during the aftermath of WWI, its numerous treaties, different movements and revolutions, and the coming to power of

particular individuals and families is in fact a very complicated one. The notion that the West merely planted oppressors all over the Muslim lands so that they could ensure control is a very simplistic depiction of reality; however, this perception is grounded in different historical facts and incidents as well as rumors.

Weaknesses

There is undoubtedly an inherent weakness in this argument, which is that most of this is outside of the reach of the United States and it is not their responsibility or business. I believe this is the general attitude of both Western governments and civilians; however, at the same time they overlook the workings of bureaucracy and the corporate world. Particularly in this case, we have examples of U.S. aid given to Egypt, the lack of pressure against governments with abysmal human rights records which the U.S. overlooks, while simultaneously applying pressure to nations like Saudi Arabia and Iran for their religious punishments which come straight from scripture and can even be found in the Bible. This gives the impression that the U.S. is not interested in human suffering and torture per say, but it is only interested in levying cases against nations it is at odds with. While it may even have a legitimate case against particular instances of abuse done in the name of religion in certain countries like Iran and Afghanistan, the truth of the matter is that these nations suffer from less crime, social ills, and reports of torture than the nations that the U.S. routinely supports financially and morally through its friendly

relations. This is a major problem in the Muslim world that is being given nothing but rhetoric as a response, yet these are the very issues which are the cited causes for terrorism.

Support for Israel

“We have forgotten that we have not come to an empty land to inherit it, but we have come to conquer a country from people inhabiting it, that governs it by the virtue of its language and savage culture...Recently there has been appearing in our newspapers the clarification about ‘the mutual misunderstanding’ between us and the Arabs, about ‘common interests’ [and] about ‘the possibility of unity and peace between two fraternal peoples.’ ... [But] we must not allow ourselves to be deluded by such illusive hopes...for if we cease to look upon our land, the Land of Israel, as ours alone and we allow a partner into our estate—all content and meaning will be lost to our enterprise.”¹⁸⁰

- Moshe Sharett, Israel’s second Prime Minister, 1914

Israel’s presence has been a sore spot for Muslims since 1947, if not since the Balfour Declaration of 1917 or even earlier, and understandably so. The West and overwhelmingly the U.S.’s support for Israel in such a one-sided and unrestrained manner

¹⁸⁰ Moshe Shertok, “Friends in Tel Aviv,” (February 12, 1914); quoted in *Haaretz Online*, December 1, 1995, sec. Friday supplement.

is a major problem for terrorist groups and the greater Muslim population. Israel receives about \$3 billion in direct foreign assistance each year, which is roughly one-fifth of America's entire foreign aid budget.¹⁸¹ A large portion of this money is used for military purposes and settlement expansion which is a direct cause of the suffering of many Palestinians.

There are four reasons why the support of Israel is a major issue for the Muslims: a) Israel is killing and oppressing Palestinians, b) Israel is occupying what is seen as Muslim land and is continuously stealing land from the Palestinians to expand their territory c) Israel is often at war with the other Muslim nations surrounding them, and d) Israel has control over Al Aqsa Mosque. We have to put aside for a moment whether or not these contentions are justified, and look briefly at these four contentions that terrorists, and in reality the entirety of the Muslim world have.

Killing and Oppression of Palestinians

Israel was founded on a sour note upon land ruled under a colonial mandate as the result of the Ottoman Empire's defeat and collapse after World War I. The Muslim and in particular the Arab world was already in a state of disgust because of the collapse of the final remnants of Islamic rule in the world – the Ottoman Empire – and the abolishment of the caliphate. The establishment of Israel, whose existence is predicated by a religious

¹⁸¹ U.S. Military Aid to Israel, "U.S. Military Aid and the Israel/Palestine Conflict," If Americans Knew, <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/usaid.html#source>.

belief, in a land that holds the third holiest city to Muslims, was emotionally injurious and insulting. Since then, Israel has remained a thorn in the side of the Muslim world. Its presence has been considered offensive by its very nature, and its violent beginnings and continuous forms of oppression of the Palestinian people elicit strong emotions and reactions from Muslims and non-Muslims alike. A modest description of Israel's beginning is as follows:

In what was at least a partially premeditated military plan beginning in March 1948, Israeli armed forces and Jewish militias razed some 370 Palestinian villages and towns, expelling or forcing the flight of some 750,000 Palestinians. The 100,000 or so Palestinians who remained within the Jewish state were, for the next eighteen years, subject to martial law, alienated from their land and concentrated into small pales within Israel, mainly the Negev and Galilee.¹⁸²

Let us put that aside for the moment, however, and look instead at the current state of affairs. The conflagration continues to escalate and these repeated injuries are perceived as degrading the sanctity of honor. The United States and Israel distance the presumed objectives of stability and peace with every acted upon policy whose basis is that Israel's existence and security is of greater concern and ultimately more legitimately

¹⁸² Graham Usher, "The wall and the dismemberment of Palestine," *The Sage Journals*, 47 (Fall 2006): 11-12.

bona fide than that of Palestine's. The issues have been reflected in numerous U.N. Resolutions:

Aside from the core issues—refugees, Jerusalem, borders—the major themes reflected in the U.N. resolutions against Israel over the years are its unlawful attacks on its neighbors; its violations of the human rights of the Palestinians, including deportations, demolitions of homes and other collective punishments; its confiscation of Palestinian land; its establishment of illegal settlements; and its refusal to abide by the U.N. Charter and the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.¹⁸³

Between 1955 and 1992 UN Resolutions targeted Israel at least 65 times and the Palestinians none. But neither international opinion nor law seem to mean much to Israel as former Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, said: “Israel may have the right to put others on trial, but certainly no one has the right to put the Jewish people and the State of Israel on trial.”¹⁸⁴ There were also an additional 29 U.S.-vetoed resolutions between September 1972 and May 1990¹⁸⁵ demonstrating a sort of collaboration, complicity or at least protection for what Israel does to Palestine and its people.

¹⁸³ U.S. Military Aid to Israel.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Paul Findley, *Deliberate Deceptions: Facing the Facts About US-Israeli Relationship* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1995), 192-194.

This sort of pattern of Israeli violations of international law combined with U.S. complicity or refusal to condemn such actions has continued into the present. News of this seems to go public on a weekly basis such as the most recent allegations of the Mossad having assassinated Hamas military leader Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai on January 20, 2010 using a team of 26 agents,¹⁸⁶ or Israel's recent designation of two Palestinian mosques as "Jewish Heritage sites,"¹⁸⁷ or Israel's plan to have a Los Angeles-based Jewish human rights organization build a "Museum of Tolerance" over the remaining portion of a Muslim¹⁸⁸ cemetery in Jerusalem which has not already had parking lots and roads paved over it.¹⁸⁹

Furthermore, Israel has launched numerous military assaults on densely-populated neighborhoods such as its most recent one in Gaza. There was a reported 1,440 Palestinian deaths in this invasion and bombing of the Gaza Strip between December 27, 2008 and February 5, 2009.¹⁹⁰ Between September 29, 2000 and December 26, 2008 there were also at least 6,348 Palestinians in comparison to 1,072 Israelis who have been killed.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Robert Baer, "A Perfectly Framed Assassination," *The Wall Street Journal*, ed. U.S., February 27, 2010, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704479404575087621440351704.html?mod=rss_Today's_Most_Popular.

¹⁸⁷ Daud Abdullah, "Israel's new war on Islamic sites," *Al-Jazeera English*, March 3, 2010, <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2010/02/2010225111933403649.html>.

¹⁸⁸ Nir Hasson, "Jews and Muslims unite against Jerusalem Museum of Tolerance," *Haaretz*, ed. Online, sec. News, June 7, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1096949.html>.

¹⁸⁹ Isabel Kershner, "Museum Creates New Jerusalem Divide," *The New York Times*, sec. World, February 10, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/11/world/middleeast/11jerusalem.html>.

¹⁹⁰ U.S. Military Aid to Israel.

¹⁹¹ Israelis and Palestinians Killed, "Israelis and Palestinians killed in the current violence," *If Americans Knew*, <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/deaths.html>.

Such news, along with U.S. complacency in the face of international condemnations, is just one of the reasons the U.S. has become the target of world-wide Muslim anger, and in some cases, targeted terrorist attacks. To quote bin Laden again in demonstration of (and not support for) why the U.S. has become the target of Al-Qaeda; he quite clearly and calmly poses the rhetorical question of “why we did not attack Sweden” and follows it with the answer, “because we are free and because we want freedom for our nation. When you squander our security, we squander yours.”¹⁹² Israel is a nation that is overtly oppressive of the people under its control, and those who face a day-to-day struggle on the ground are unable to defend themselves or receive external support. By combining the support of the world powers for this type of regime, it becomes quite clear that this is creating an environment in which violent retaliation is not only possible, it eventually becomes the norm.

Occupation and Confiscation of Territory

“The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”¹⁹³

- Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949

¹⁹² Osama bin Laden, “Bin Laden Speaks to American People.”

¹⁹³ International Humanitarian Law, “Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,” International Committee of the Red Cross, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/385ec082b509e76c41256739003e636d/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5>.

As of July 4, 2009, the Israeli Committee against Home Demolitions estimated that 24,145 houses have been demolished in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza since 1967.¹⁹⁴ According to Peace Now's report, "Aerial Survey Settlements Summary 2006," there are 121 official Israeli settlements. According to their "Periodic Report," May-October 2007, there are at least 106 outposts and more than 50 of them have been built since March 2001.¹⁹⁵ The policies behind the settlements are very clear, as Ariel Sharon alluded to in 1998:

Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we take now will stay ours... Everything we don't grab will go to them.¹⁹⁶

Israel has continued to systematically make 'land grabs' to further expand their territory and has not been secretive or discreet about this, such as its recent announcement of 1,600 new homes in the predominately Arab¹⁹⁷ neighborhood Ramat Shlomo¹⁹⁸ in East Jerusalem announced during a Vice President Biden's visit to Israel. Its leaders have made numerous statements to that extent by which one may easily and fairly

¹⁹⁴ Homes Demolished, "Israeli and Palestinian Homes Demolished since 2000," if Americans knew, <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/homes.html>.

¹⁹⁵ Israeli Settlements, "Israeli confiscation and settlement on Palestinian Land," if Americans knew, <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/settlements.html>.

¹⁹⁶ Agence France Presse, November 15, 1998.

¹⁹⁷ AFP, "Israel orders inquiry into Biden visit upset: official," *Agence France Presse*, March 13, 2010, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hST62I7j50E0wjQbYpHP4Gg9744g>.

¹⁹⁸ Herb Keinon, "Israel relieved after Biden speech," *The Jerusalem Post*, March 12, 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=170812>.

conclude that its official policy is to run the Palestinians out of Palestine entirely. The New York Times published on October 23, 1979, and uncensored version of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's memoirs in which he wrote,

We walked outside, Ben-Gurion accompanying us. Allon repeated his question – ‘What is to be done with the Palestinian population?’ Ben-Gurion waved his hand in a gesture which said ‘Drive them out!’¹⁹⁹

This has been going on for over fifty years, yet no one has stood up against Israel to stop them except those who have no means to effectively do so. In the absence of ability or assistance, they have resorted to ‘terrorism.’ To assume that this is the natural disposition of Arabs or Muslims would be discounting the oppression they live under. The reality is that although this may be the impression we are given through public statements and media coverage, those who order these policies are quite aware that this ‘terrorism’ which exists is a response to oppression and not an aberration nor a disposition. It is simply the resistance of a people who have had their homes stolen that have no other means to resist. As former Israeli Statesman, Prime Minister (1948-53, 1955-63), and commonly referred to as the Chief Architect of the state of Israel and Father of the Nation said quite frankly in 1956:

¹⁹⁹ David Icke, “Time to Tell the Truth about Israel,” The David Icke Newsletter, January 6, 2009, <http://www.rense.com/general84/isz.htm>.

Why should the Arabs make peace? If I was an Arab leader I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country ... There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that? They may perhaps forget in one or two generations' time, but for the moment there is no chance. So it is simple: we have to stay strong and maintain a powerful army²⁰⁰

Additionally, Israel's occupation and militarization of Jerusalem has worsened the situation for Palestinians not only because of the city's religious significance, but also because of its economical and territorial importance. As Edward Said noted:

The closure of Jerusalem to the inhabitants of Gaza and the rest of the West Bank has created great hardship since, as Israel well knows, East Jerusalem is the hub of the West Bank; any design terminally to fortify, isolate, and incorporate it into the scheme of 'separation' now being pursued by the Labor government in effect means amputating it from its natural connections with the rest of the Palestinian territories, as well as gouging out a gaping hole in the territories that would permanently impair them (Said 1995, p. 9).²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Nahul Goldmann, *The Jewish paradox* (U.S.: Grosset & Dunlap, 1973), 64.

²⁰¹ Edward Said, "Projecting Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25 (Autumn 2005): 5-14.

To further its objective of running the Palestinians out of Palestine, Israel has created a nearly intolerable environment such that many of the people cannot endure it for an extended period of time. It has used roadblocks, road closures and checkpoints, all of which have a significant detrimental effect on the quality of Palestinian life. There remain approximately 60 permanent and staffed checkpoints within the West Bank, another 39 checkpoints along the Green Line separating Israel and the West Bank (most of which are actually several kilometers into Palestinian territory), an additional 2008 monthly average of 65 flying (surprise) checkpoints in the West Bank, and over 500 physical obstructions that block access to main roads and redirect traffic toward these checkpoints throughout the West Bank.²⁰²

These numerous checkpoints and roadblocks, in addition to the permanent Israeli “security wall” give the impression of a divide-and-conquer strategy that effectively strangles the Palestinian economy; these are major contributors toward unemployment and poor health of Palestinians. The 2008 unemployment estimate in the West Bank was 16.3%²⁰³ and the 2009 unemployment estimate in the Gaza Strip was a staggering 37%.²⁰⁴

Six years ago it was said by British MPs that “malnutrition rates in the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank are as bad as those in sub-Saharan Africa...They warned that

²⁰² Information on checkpoints and roadblocks, “Permanent internal checkpoints,” B’TSELEM, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, August 31, 2009, http://www.btselem.org/english/Freedom_of_Movement/Statistics.asp.

²⁰³ The World Factbook Publications, “Middle East: West Bank,” Central Intelligence Agency, June 3, 2010, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html#Econ>.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

the Israeli security fence around the occupied territories was ‘destroying the Palestinian economy and creating widespread poverty.’”²⁰⁵ Was it not for international aid, both Gaza and the West Bank would likely be in conditions worse than those in the most poverty-stricken African nations today.

Despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis, Israel’s policy, akin to that of the U.S., continues to impose sanctions that affect entire populations leading to unnecessary death. Just this February of 2010, Martin Kramer, a fellow at the Harvard University’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, described one of the goals of Israel’s sanctions was to “break Gaza’s runaway population growth, and there is some evidence that they have, that might begin to crack the culture of martyrdom which demands a constant supply of superfluous young men” which would solve the issue of radicalization “at its root.” At the same Herzliya conference in 2003, an Israeli government armaments expert Dr. Yitzhak Ravid called for Israel to “implement a stringent policy of family planning in relation to its Muslim population.”²⁰⁶

This is because he, like many policy makers and academics who are part of influential think tanks, in an effort to sweep crimes against humanity under the rug, proclaim that radicalization and terrorism are inherent problems amongst certain groups. However, statistical studies show otherwise; i.e. primarily that terrorism is strongly linked to unfulfilled political grievances in asymmetrical conflicts, such as Ekaterina

²⁰⁵ Ben Russell, “Palestinian Malnutrition at African Levels under Israelis,” if Americans knew, February 5, 2004, <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stats/malnutrition.html>.

²⁰⁶ The Electronic Intifada, “Harvard Fellow calls for genocidal measure to curb Palestinian births,” Arabnews.com, Feb. 24, 2010, sec. Middle East, <http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article22006.ece>.

Stepanova's "Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects." Further strengthening this argument are the both FBI records 1980 to 2005 demonstrating that only 6% of all terrorist attacks on U.S. soil were carried out by Islamic extremists and Europol's "EU Terrorism and Situation and Trend Report" showing from 2007 to 2009 a mere 0.4% of all terrorist attacks under the "Islamist" heading with the vast majority coming from "separatist" groups, clearly a political categorization.²⁰⁷

War with Surrounding Nations

Since 1967 Israel has had numerous military encounters with its neighbors including Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and of course Palestine on a regular basis. Some of these have been explicit provocations or responses to terrorist attacks while many have been defensive conflicts particularly the 1948 War of Independence. Thus in that light, Israel may very well be justified in their actions regarding a vast number of military conflicts that have erupted between it and its Arab neighbors.

With that said, many of those conflicts which continue today have been the destruction of entire neighborhoods and cities including the targeting of infrastructure, schools, UN buildings, and NGO facilities that have resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians in response to stray rockets being fired into Israeli territory by a select group of people. Israel has wreaked havoc and destruction with bombings and illegal weapons on

²⁰⁷ Loon Watch, "Europol Report: All Terrorists are Muslims... Except the 99.6% that Aren't," LoonWatch.com, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2010/01/terrorism-in-europe>.

entire populations such as in Beirut and throughout all of Lebanon where the people had very little to do with the politics of the region.

This sort of state-sponsored terrorism almost exactly mimics that of Al-Qaeda attacks (e.g. the events of 9-11). It similarly fits many of the definitions of terrorism that we covered in the previous chapter. Both these acts of terrorism are meant to force governments or political entities to change their actions through punishing their civilian populations up to a point where the people force their leaders to stop antagonizing their enemies.

With knowledge of this, the U.S still provides approximately \$7 million per day in direct military aid to Israel²⁰⁸ stockpiling close to a billion dollars in weapons within the country in case of a military emergency.²⁰⁹ The U.S. has also just recently entered into a 10 year contract guaranteeing \$30 billion in military aid to Israel.²¹⁰ This situation epitomizes the notion of Muslim oppression by Western-supported powers.

Thus while the U.S. continues to wage its global war against terror by invading entire nations and subjecting millions of people to the consequences of war and occupation, the Muslim world witnesses Gaza and Lebanon systematically terrorized by the Israeli military using American-made and supplied weapons as the entire world stands idle. Somehow 9/11 was terrorism, but the invasion of Afghanistan is not. Somehow the firing of rockets at Israeli cities is terrorism, but the utter desolation of Lebanese cities

²⁰⁸ U.S. Military Aid to Israel.

²⁰⁹ Eng. K. Almallahi, "US expands weapons stockpile in Israel," *The Palestine Telegraph*, February 11, 2010, <http://www.paltelegraph.com/hot-topic/4126-us-expanded-weapons-stockpiling-in-israel>.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

and the Gaza Strip are not. When there is no means to obtain justice, expect revenge. This is a well-known concept in the field of criminology and even international law – retributive justice; however, it appears to remain a foreign concept to many of the world’s powers.

Control over Al Aqsa Mosque

Masjid Al-Aqsa is one of the most sacred places for Muslims. In fact, it is considered the third most sacred mosque after those in Mecca and Medina. Many Muslims dream of being able to pray in the mosque at one point in their lives. It has, however, become increasingly difficult because of the restrictions that Israel places on worshippers entering into the mosque as well as those placed on Muslims from entering into Palestine and Jerusalem altogether.

Currently Israeli police forces control the flow of people entering onto the top floor of the Beitul Maqdis and effectively entering into the mosque itself. On many occasions they have surrounded its entrances and prohibited attendees under a certain age from entering it. This was most recently done again on February 27, 2010, for no apparent reason²¹¹ and has now continued for over two weeks.²¹²

²¹¹ Maysaa Jarour, “Israeli Occupation Forces break into Al-Aqsa Mosque,” *The Palestine Telegraph*, February 28, 2010, <http://networkedblogs.com/p28660150>.

²¹² Press TV Staff, “Israel bars Palestinians under 50 from al-Aqsa,” PressTV, March 14, 2010, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=120761§ionid=351020202>.

Additionally, the Israeli state has dug tunnels directly beneath and around Al-Aqsa mosque. Some of these began in the 70's²¹³ and their digging continues until today. Recently in February 2007, the Archaeological Department of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs began to excavate a site approximately 60 meters from the mosque in search of archeological remains.²¹⁴ In addition, there was a recent incident of a United Nations run school floor collapsing and revealing a tunnel underneath. There has also been mention of some forty homes in the Lodi Sweet and Sloan areas of the city suffering similar incidents.²¹⁵ There continue to be residents of the old city reporting the sounds of people digging underneath their homes in the middle of the night.²¹⁶ The widely-prevalent fear and belief is that Israel is intending to collapse the mosque from underneath so that they will be able build the Third Temple on the temple mount where the Al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques currently sit.

Because of the sacristy of the Masjid Al-Aqsa, freeing it from its 'control' is something which can easily bring Muslims to arms, as fighting for its liberation is understood to be a religious requirement. By preventing access to the mosque, this not only enflames relations with Palestinians and Muslims, but it also becomes yet another ignored grievance on the long list of abuses between the Muslim world and the West and reason for people to fight against the United States.

²¹³ Press TV Staff.

²¹⁴ Jonathan Lis, "Majadele: Jerusalem mayor knew Mugarbi dig was illegal," *Haaretz*, July 1, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/824624.html>.

²¹⁵ Quds Arabic News, "Israeli excavations destroy Jerusalem school," Quds News, January 2, 2009, <http://www.qudsnet.com/arabic/news.php?maa=View&id=93135>.

²¹⁶ AFP, "Jewish plan to return to '2,000-year-old home' slammed: Secret tunnel under Al-Aqsa Mosque exposed," Al-Arabiya News, March 27, 2008, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/03/27/47501.html>.

Concluding Notes

Who Held By

Of the listed grievances, this is by far the most wide-spread and agreed upon concern of Muslims, American support of Israel. Whether you speak with the very religious, the very secular, the extreme, or the moderate, you'll find that this is an issue that has become embedded in Muslim culture, one that is even shared by non-Muslims of ethnic backgrounds that are primarily Muslim. It is even shared by a large portion of progressive and politically active youth. With credit, President Obama has made in his speeches perhaps the most even-handed statements regarding Palestine and Israel; however, politically his actions have fallen far short of what he has spoken about and what the Muslim world, that has largely supported him, has come to expect. This far from being a terrorist-only issue. Politically powerful rhetoric that attempts to tie unguided missiles fired into Israeli territory with the majority of Muslims living in the West demonstrates the use of fallacious and illogical arguments.

Legitimacy

The legitimacy of the argument here is strong based on the statistical evidence provided. However, the concern becomes whether or not Israel's actions are justified.

From a humanistic standpoint, it clearly is not. But from a “realist” perspective that deals more with the potentiality of larger threats, this becomes debatable. The U.S. is then put into the position of determining whether or not taking sides in this conflict is at all worth it. Politically, this is observed from a very high security level and the determination lies in whether one expects the terrorist ideology to truly be something which can bring down the current global international system along with all its norms and perceptions of civilization. While that threat is real, the strategy of how to prevent that from happening may actually be completely opposite from the antagonistic approach that is being currently used. This will be further discussed in chapter 5.

Weaknesses

The weakness of this argument goes back to the issue of whether or not it is at all justifiable. Disproportionate force can be argued for as a powerful deterrent, a collective punishment to persuade a population into making certain political decisions, and an enactment of strategic policies of ‘divide and conquer’ to squeeze the fighting will out of a people. All and all both sides hold the sentiment of “we are correct and you are incorrect, our people are more important than your people.” The difference being, Israel is able to enact the policies that give a sense of legitimacy to their side’s claims. Because this conflict is argued from both sides with facts and passion, dealing with the weaknesses of each side’s position does very little in solving the problem. Instead there

needs to be a practical strategy, from each side, to try to achieve its aims. Stray rockets, for example, launched into Israeli cities from Gaza are not accomplishing any goals that the Gazans have. At the same time, Israel's responses to these rockets have not stopped them either. We'll leave the remainder of this discussion for the final chapter.

Presence of Western Corporations in the Muslim World

Another oft-cited reason for the Muslim world resenting the West is the presence of their corporations. It is a market in a capitalist system we might say. So if there is demand, supply will follow, and that is exactly what has happened. At the same time, however, there always has to be a push to open new markets when old ones begin to saturate. Again, this is the nature of the capitalist system and the Middle East and rest of the Muslim world are subjugated to these systems. This has been by choice, and there is nothing about this which is against Islam. Furthermore, a large portion of the population throughout the Muslim world desires Western products, so it may be difficult to understand how this can even be an issue.

This issue can be approached from many different angles because it has numerous factors that are contributing to this perceived problem. I have, however, identified three somewhat interrelated yet distinct reasons why Muslims, and specifically those listed above vis-à-vis our quotations, have gripes with a Western corporate presence in their lands. These are: a) perceptions of cultural influence and 'imperialism;' b) their products

and services are seen as degrading to society; and c) exploitation of Muslim resources and wealth.

Cultural influence and Imperialism

A large portion, if not the majority of the Muslims love U.S. companies, idolize Western culture, and prefer Western values to those found within their own cultures. Nevertheless, a good portion of the Muslim world, particularly found within the more religious segments of society, do not support Western culture, its lifestyles, or its companies.

This topic of ‘cultural imperialism’ – also referred to as ‘cultural transmission’ and ‘transcultural interaction’ – is a widely debated one, as evidenced just by its different names. This concept revolves around the idea of different peoples’ cultures affecting other cultures. Implicit within the name ‘cultural imperialism’ is the idea that a nation is able to ‘imperialize’ another nation through its culture. This can be effective in terms of creating new markets for corporations to sell their products or to improve the opinion of a nation so its people become less resistant to its military presence (such as the idea with winning ‘hearts and minds’ campaigns) or more favorable to becoming allies instead of remaining enemies.

This applies significantly to the Muslim World, in particular the Middle East, as it does to much of the underdeveloped world. It can be looked at from the angle of

providing economic opportunity and helping social development, while being viewed by others from the opposite perspective of exploitation of the poor and the desecration of unique cultural histories. In truth, it probably encompasses some of each and falls somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. This is because different people have different intentions and we cannot generalize across the entire spectrum of nations, corporations, and politics.

Nevertheless, this is still a concern and should be treated as one. Many individuals have taken the position that the West is being overly sensitive to Muslims and that this is not the West's responsibility. They also believe Muslims just like to complain about everything since they are suffering from a sort of post-empire decline denial and depression syndrome, blaming the rest of the world for their own problems. Although this has some truth to it, this does not describe the entire picture, and thus should not be allowed to define the entire understanding of the issue at hand.

We may ask, 'why is this important?' Even if we uncharitably disregard the loss of human life, let us consider that the U.S. has spent over \$1 trillion on war expenses for Afghanistan and Iraq.²¹⁷ This amount is above and beyond what is already set aside within the Department of Defense, CIA, FBI, and Department of Homeland Security budgets for the 'War on Terror' and 'counter-terrorism' on a yearly basis. From a purely apathetic and economic standpoint, this needs to at the very least be recorded into the

²¹⁷ Bringing the Federal Budget Home, "Notes and Sources: Cost of War Counter," National Priorities Project, http://www.nationalpriorities.org/cost_of_war_counter_notes.

‘costs’ column on the marginal-benefit charts that corporate America is drawing up in order to help determine if our current approach is indeed the most ‘economical’ one.

With that said, I believe it is important to consider the way that corporate America works internationally within a capitalistic framework. If terrorists are citing these issues as causes for their actions, then these issues also need to come under the microscope from a policy perspective. It is not expected that the West or the United States bend over backwards to accommodate the demands of those who have killed their citizens, but it still may prove wise to understand that perceptions of cultural imperialism are in part invigorated within the historical contexts of world domination, colonization and even the crusades.

Degrading Products and Services

Many of the products that enter into the Middle East and the Muslim world vis-à-vis the West are completely foreign to these cultures. Some of the products are as simple as microwavable and preserved food, mass produced toiletries and cosmetics, and heavy industrial products for the development of infrastructure. Most of these products are not of major concern to the Muslim world. Products that revolve around the entertainment and fashion industries, however, are a major concern to the conservative segments of Muslim society. We need to be aware of the fact that Muslim societies contain very

religious and traditional people and customs. We often wrongly interpret these positions that others take as being ‘backwards.’

It is common practice for people in some parts of the Muslim world to drive luxury automobiles and live in very large homes; yet they do not watch television, they dress in very simple and plain garments, they don’t listen to music, and they don’t go the movies. Instead they visit the mosque five times a day for prayer, they attend lectures in the evenings, and spend time in social gatherings under tents in the desert. The Muslim world, even when it has advanced technologically, has resisted social change and remained much more traditional and static in their social values than can be said about the West. This is important to note because there is a much higher proportion of devotedly religious individuals who follow ideological codes similar to those of Orthodox Jews – a type of religiosity that many in the West rarely grasp.

A lot of liberal Western culture that encompasses personal entertainment or alternative lifestyles would be considered unacceptable throughout much of the Muslim world. The West and the Muslim world have different perspectives on things such as alcohol, premarital relations, music, appropriate clothing attire, etc. On the other hand, there are also universal similarities such as an affinity for freedom of speech, right to a fair trial, preservation of privacy, and so on. But we need to distinguish between these two vastly different sets of concepts – those that are universal, and those that are not.

Although a portion of Muslims accept Western culture, many others not only refuse it, but they also take it on as their religious responsibility to make sure Western

culture is rejected by their societies. This is in part due to the concepts of what is private and what is communal being vastly different between orthodox Islamic culture and liberal secular culture. When there is a failure to prevent Western culture from being accepted in the Muslim world, an unfortunate result and consequence of that is anger and in some cases violence.

Thus although this is not exactly a legitimate claim from the perspective of most, it would still seem sensible that the West be sensitive to these cultural factors, even if from a strictly selfish motive of saving itself from undue and even undeserved terrorist attacks.

Exploitation of Muslim Resources and Wealth

“The oil resources [of the Middle East] constitute a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history.”

-U.S. State Department memo, August 1945

Natural resources are often the forgotten source of national power. Whether it is gold, coal, oil, or natural gas, natural resources have the ability to make or break a nation. It has been said that during the 16th century the Spanish empire amassed gold and silver worth a staggering US \$1.5 trillion (1990 terms) from New Spain.

There is currently a global scramble for oil in order to fuel the economic development and military industrial complexes of the world's superpowers. If the U.S. is locked out of cheap oil, it becomes a security threat for them as both China and Russia, particularly if allied together, possess the technology, militaries, wealth, man power, and prowess to compete for global hegemony with the United States and its allies.

The U.S. is paying attention to this potential threat, and has made the Middle East and the Muslim world a means to ensuring its global security and power against all potential threats by securing access to its oil fields. And thus aside from the West's attitude of 'cultural imperialism' that many Muslims already resent, there is additionally a great resentment, both on the part of terrorist groups and the population at large, roused by the exploitation of the oil in the Muslim world which the West is so heavily invested and dependent upon.

Since the conclusion of World War II, the U.S. has been heavily tied to the Middle East, economically and militarily. World War II had consumed nearly one third of U.S. oil reserves²¹⁸ with the Americans supplying 6 out of 7 billion barrels utilized by the Allied forces.²¹⁹ On February 14, 1945 President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with King Abdel Aziz ibn Saud aboard a military vessel to, what has been readily agreed upon by many historians, broker a deal where the U.S. would provide protection of the monarchy in return for exclusive rights to Saudi oil. As then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney said on September 11, 1990 to the Senate Arms Services Committee:

²¹⁸ Michael B. Stoff, *Oil, War and American Security* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 72-74.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 209.

Our strategic interests in the Persian Gulf region, I think, are well known but bear repeating today... We do, of course, have historic ties, especially to the Saudis, but other governments in the region that hark back with respect to Saudi Arabia to 1945, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met with King Abd al-Aziz on the USS Quincy towards the end of World War II and affirmed at that time that the United States had a lasting and continuing interest in the security of the Kingdom.²²⁰

Currently, the United States constitutes only about 5% of the world's population yet it consumes one fourth of the world's petroleum – twenty million barrels per day.²²¹ The U.S. imports about two thirds of this amount to fulfill its demand.²²² For this reason, oil has been one of the most important, if not *the* most important political consideration for the United States over the past fifteen to twenty years when we began to import more than 50% of our consumption.²²³ This dependence on a foreign product to drive the gears of our economy and to fund our war machine has made it America's Achilles heel.

²²⁰ Michael Klare, "Blood and Oil," Media Education Foundation, http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/124/transcript_124.pdf.

²²¹ U.S. Department of Energy, 2003, *International Energy Outlook*, Information Bulletin, March 2003, [http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/ftproot/forecasting/0484\(2003\).pdf](http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/ftproot/forecasting/0484(2003).pdf).

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Oak Ridge National Laboratory Review, "Energy Prophets: U.S. Oil Dependence," Oak Ridge National Laboratory, 1995, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/graphic/2008/07/26/GR2008072601599.html>.

Many presidents have reiterated the vital importance of Middle Eastern oil to the U.S.:

Let our position be absolutely clear. An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. And such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.²²⁴

-President Jimmy Carter, January 23 1980

As long as Saudi Arabia and the OPEC nations there in the East, and Saudi Arabia is the most important, provide the bulk of the energy that is needed to turn the wheels of industry in the Western world, there is no way that we could stand by and see that taken over by anyone that would shut off that oil²²⁵

-President Regan, January 29 1981

Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom, and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of that one man Saddam Hussein

-President George Bush Sr., August 15 1990²²⁶

²²⁴ Jimmy Carter *Presidential Address* [video], (1980), March 10, 2009, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiDaJpcPvxU&feature=related>.

²²⁵ Ronald Reagan, *President's News Conference*, The American Presidency Project, January 29, 1981, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=44101>.

²²⁶ George Bush, *Remarks to Depart of Defense Employees*, The American Presidency Project, August 15, 1990, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18768>.

I know it came as a shock to some to hear a Texan stand up there in front of the country and say “We got a real problem. America is addicted to oil.” But I meant it because it’s a true fact and we’ve got to do something about it now.²²⁷

-President George W. Bush, February 20, 2006

Our enemies are fully aware that they can use oil as a weapon against America. And if we don’t take this threat as seriously as the bombs they build or the guns they buy, we will be fighting the War on Terror with one hand tied behind our back.²²⁸

-Barack Obama, speech, Feb. 28, 2006

This is a very serious political and geopolitical problem that is intricately related to terrorism. The mere fact that the attacks of Osama bin Laden were sparked when his offer to defend the Saudi Arabian Kingdom was declined by King Fahd in favor of American defenses speaks volumes. It was only after the U.S. failed to leave the Kingdom following the Gulf War that bin Laden launched his Khobar, Saudi Arabia against U.S. military installations; the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya; and the U.S.S. Cole in the following years.

²²⁷ George W. Bush, “Economy,” Lecture, Remarks to employees at Johnson Controls Building Efficiency Business, Milwaukee, WI, February 20, 2006, <http://www.nei.org/newsandevents/speechesandtestimony/2006/milwaukeepresbushextended>.

²²⁸ Barack H. Obama, “Oil & Alternative Fuels,” Lecture, Governor’s Ethanol Coalition, Washington, DC, September 26, 2006, <http://www.ethanolmarket.com/PressReleaseBarackObama110408>.

Furthermore, bin Laden has explicitly stated numerous times his disgust for the paltry price being paid to the Muslims in exchange for their oil. To him this is the property of the Muslims and they can use oil however they choose. The United States, however, will not allow that and will take (and has taken) decisive military action to ensure the constant flow of oil out of the Middle East at reasonable prices. Oil is the lifeline of the U.S., its vitality, its blood.

The reality is, this is the case for the entire industrialized world, not just the U.S. China and Russia are two of the major consumers of oil in the world that also pose military threats to the United States. Going back to Dick Cheney's 1990 speech to further emphasize this:

Iraq controlled 10% of the world's reserves prior to the invasion of Kuwait and once Saddam Hussein took control of Kuwait he doubled that to approximately 20% of the world's oil reserves. He was clearly in a position to dictate the future of world-wide energy policy and that gave him a stranglehold on our economy and on that of most of the other nations of the world as well

- Dick Cheney, September 1990

Almost twelve years later, but now as Vice President, Dick Cheney at the Veterans of Foreign War conference used very similar language to reiterate the

importance of oil to the U.S.'s interests and the problem that Saddam Hussein was posing in light of this:

Should all his [Saddam's] ambitions be realized, the implications would be enormous for the Middle East, the United States, and for the peace of the world...armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror and seated atop 10% of the world's oil reserves, Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East, take control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies, directly threaten America's friends throughout the region

- Dick Cheney, August 26, 2002 before the Veterans of Foreign War

And thus to presume that the reason behind overthrowing Saddam Hussein in 2003 was related to the issue of oil, would not be a far stretch. President Bush Sr. made clear that U.S. military intervention in Desert Storm was "about our own national security interests"²²⁹ – that is "Our jobs, our way of life"²³⁰ – as Saddam would have potentially been within striking distance of the Saudi oil fields by moving into Kuwait. The U.S. sent troops to Saudi Arabia because of this. Eventually Bush Sr. was forced to appeal to the public for support through many speeches over the fall of 1990 and did so by labeling Saddam "Hitler revisited" drawing on his "efforts to acquire nuclear weapons,"

²²⁹ Klare.

²³⁰ George Bush.

“totalitarianism and brutality,” and the famously forged story of kids being thrown out of incubators in hospitals “so that Kuwait could be systematically dismantled.”²³¹

Fast-forward twelve years and his son – President George W. Bush – cuts right to the chase and sends General Colin Powell to the U.N. with satellite images of trailers which were supposedly mobile biological weapons factories. Within a short period of time, the U.S. had obtained the public’s consent to go to war and finish up what a decade’s worth of sanctions had not. Although we may hear professional mouthpieces such as Ari Fleisher declare that this had nothing to do with oil, the reality is quite different. As then Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, stated bluntly: “I’m saying it *is* about oil and that I believe it was necessary to get Saddam out of there.”²³²

But all of this should not come as a surprise, as James A. Baker III, U.S. Secretary of State (1989-1992) said, “I’ve been a member of four administrations. In every one of those administrations we had as a written national security policy that we would go to war to protect the energy reserves of the Persian Gulf.”²³³

I believe professor and author Michael T Klare sums up this historical analysis of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East quite well:

²³¹ Klare.

²³² Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve (1987-2006) quoted in Brent Baker, “Bush Went to War for Oil,” Newsbusters.org, September 18, 2007, <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/brent-baker/2007/09/18/abc-trumpets-greenspan-bush-went-war-oil-ignores-his-real-view>.

²³³ James A. Baker III, U.S. Secretary of State quoted in Michael Klare, “Blood and Oil,” Media Education Foundation, http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/124/transcript_124.pdf.

And so when I say that the war in Iraq was about oil, I say this in geopolitical terms in line with the Carter Doctrine, the Eisenhower Doctrine and the Truman Doctrine going back to FDR. What matters to the United States and to all of these presidential doctrines is control over the flow of Persian Gulf oil.²³⁴

Although we may differ in our readings and interpretations of history, this is the interpretation that is held in the Middle East, and consequently the fuel to the fire of terrorism coming out of that region. While the average American does not listen closely to passing presidential press conferences and speeches before congress, we can be assured that those who have declared America their enemy, have listened to them many times over, and are drawing clear conclusions – that their home countries are under assault for their oil.

Concluding Notes

“The biggest reason for our enemies’ control over our lands is to steal our oil, so give everything you can to stop the greatest theft of oil in history...for that will be the death of them.”²³⁵

- Osama bin Laden, December 2004

²³⁴ Klare.

²³⁵ Osama bin Laden, “Bin Laden Speaks to American People.”

Who Held By

Again, this is another perspective that Muslims, particularly Arab Muslims, hold. There is a difference, however, that likely exists between these groups. Our accused terrorists see the decision to allow Western companies into the Muslim world for the purpose of drilling and selling products, as one that has been done to solidify the power of oppressive rulers and to draw people away from their own culture and religion so they become subservient. The average Muslim likely does not see this from the perspective of a conspiracy but sees it as the result of a capitalist system.

Legitimacy

And hence there is legitimacy to the concern from either perspective that is adopted. And like most issues here, the truth likely lies somewhere in the middle and the details reveal the reality of the situation. It is not within the scope of this paper to go through those details and ultimately determine the legitimacy of the argument, but to simply observe it from a general perspective, and primarily a Muslim one to see how the argument can possibly hold as much water as it does in the Islamic world.

There is, however, and needs to be an explicit concern regarding the issue of the value of Middle Eastern oil and its political ramifications. The United States effectively has a military lockdown on the majority of the Gulf with CENTCOM serving as a

regional hub for these protectorate operations. Numerous presidents have both publically and privately conceded the strategic importance of securing oil in these regions. Throughout the years the United States has appeared to attempt to play friendly when it comes to the oil industry, but the reality also exists that there is a point of no negotiation when it comes to the oil supply. If OPEC was to turn off its wells tomorrow there would inevitably be military reprisal. And now some sixty some-odd years into this relationship between Arabian Gulf states and the United States, we may have reached a point of no return; however, the Muslim world cannot lie at fault in the eyes of the West if it were to dictate the conditions of this relationship or even if it sought to cut it off entirely. And because the Muslim world knows that is not the case as much as we do here in the West, there is huge resentment toward the bully stealing lunch money whilst knowing the victims have no legitimate recourse.

Weaknesses

The weakness of the argument put forth by the accused terrorists is different for the drilling of oil and the marketing of other products. In respect to oil, the industrialized West had technological capabilities that were not found in the Middle East fifty years ago and thus had a comparative advantage when it came to actually extracting oil. In the short-term, the Arab nations may have actually benefitted more financially by allowing another nations to be involved in the oil industry so that sales could be pumped to the

levels that reached. In the long-term, however, there is obviously the concern which exists today – that a much more significant amount of money could be made if the Arab nations took total control over all their oil fields and the entire process of oil extraction all the way to its refining and delivery. Political relationships and corporate agreements, however, limit the extent to which this can be done.

In respect to cultural imperialism, it would be short-sighted to explain the expansion of Western markets into the Muslim world as something that is monolithic in its intent and its goals. Different corporations act for different reasons while in the end it is profit that drives them. The Muslim world, like the rest of the world, has taken an interest in Western products despite their benefit and their harm. This is something that lies with the people as it is their role as consumers that is the final determinant of whether a product will succeed or fail.

Military Operations and Presence and Economic Sanctions

This leads us directly into another critically important topic, and that is Western – particularly American – military presence and operations in the Muslim World along with economic sanctions and the killing and oppression of Muslims. Politically, this has been amongst the reasons most cited for terrorist attacks both in the location of those militaries as well as in their respective home countries. In some cases, terrorist acts have been in response to the military's mere presence, while in other cases it has been to repel an

occupation (such as in Iraq) or fight a defensive war (such as in Afghanistan). Islamically, bin Laden and others have had a very strong argument for the obligation to fight and remove Western military bases and troops in the Muslim world, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula (as discussed in Chapter 3). The sanctions on Iraq have been mentioned numerous times by bin Laden while the current-day Israeli-imposed sanctions on Gaza will pose a security threat to the United States and Europe. All of these add to the anger of Muslims and their desire for revenge through any means possible. The fact that terrorism has become a fad and often the only meaningful response Muslims can give to these issues needs to be concern for the West who will bear the brunt of their actions.

Military Operations

From 1980 to 1995 “the United States engaged in seventeen military operations in the Middle East, all of them directed at Muslims. No comparable pattern of U.S. military operations occurred against the people of any other civilization.”²³⁶

More recently since 2001, the U.S. has openly been involved in military operations in the following countries with their listed Muslim population proportion: Afghanistan (99% Muslim), Yemen (99.1%), the **Philippines** (5%), Côte d’Ivoire [the Ivory Coast] (38.6%), Iraq (97%), **Liberia** (20%)/Mauritania (100%), **Georgia (9.9%)**, Djibouti (94%), **Kenya (10%)**, **Ethiopia (32.8%)**, **Eritrea (36.5%)**, **Haiti (< 3%)**,

²³⁶ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 217.

Pakistan (95%), Lebanon (59.7%), and Somalia (98.5%). Every one of the operations into these countries (with multiple operations in certain countries) has been part of the “War on Terror” dealing with: the consequences of the actual war (i.e. the displacement of Iraqis into Georgia), counter-terrorism training, or in response to an Israeli attack on one of its neighbors with the exception of the 2002 evacuation of U.S. citizens in Côte d’Ivoire, protection of the embassy and evacuations in 2003 during the Liberian Civil War, and the deployment into Haiti during the 2004 rebellion.

This is a long list that includes over fifteen separately defined military operations with military intervention into at least eight Muslim-majority (Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Mauritania, Djibouti, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Somalia) and two significant Muslim minority²³⁷ (Ethiopia and Eritrea) countries. Israel itself also adds three unique countries to that list: Palestine, Syria and Jordan (as well as duplicating Lebanon where its intervention was direct and the U.S.’s role was only to rescue its own citizens during the raids).

While we could attempt to assess every individual military operation and offer explanations and even justifications for these interventions, that is both outside the scope of this research and not particularly important in this context. What is important here is for us to take note of the overwhelming amount of American military activity in the Middle East. Within every military operation, even if entirely justified, there will inevitably be numerous mistakes that occur and thus issues of major dispute will arise.

²³⁷ Greater than 25% Muslim by total population

These are the justifications for terrorists' actions just as their actions have become the justification for much of the U.S.'s military operations. Both serve each other in a cyclical nature. Until someone breaks that cycle, the degree to which this becomes a lose-lose situation will only continue to increase as both the number and potentially the severity of attacks increase.

Military Presence

In the Middle East, the U.S has very close relations and particular interests in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. Thus there is reason both to protect and uphold the current regimes in power, and also to ensure they realize that the U.S. military is present in their backyards. The U.S. primarily has economic interests in these countries; however, it also has related interests such as ensuring Islamic risings do not threaten the current power structures which protect these economic interests.

U.S. military bases are often perceived as violations of national sovereignty by the people since the U.S. clearly plays an important (and often selfish) role in the political affairs of that country. The Subcommittee on Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concluded in 1970 that,

“Overseas bases, the presence of elements of United States armed forces, joint planning, joint exercises, or excessive military assistance programs...all but

guarantee some involvement by the United States in the internal affairs of the host government” (p. 20).²³⁸

The U.S. currently runs over 700 military bases in foreign lands²³⁹ that include up to 40 known bases and encampments throughout the Gulf, with the potential of an additional 25 bases in Saudi Arabia, more than 50 in Iraq, a similar amount in Afghanistan, and more bases currently spreading throughout Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan – all of which are Muslim countries.²⁴⁰ And as has been noticed, much of this militarization, if not all of it, has been for the purpose of protecting American interests – the primary ones being related to oil.

Economic Sanctions

The UN Security Council-imposed economic sanctions of Iraq stand as one of the most cited examples of Western oppression of the Muslim world. These sanctions were instituted in order to punish the government but only further punished the civilians who had been already living under an oppressive ruler – essentially collective punishment. This reasoning – the same reasoning which Israel employed to bomb out cities in

²³⁸ Staff, “U.S. Military Bases and Empire,” *The Monthly Review* 53, no.10 (2002), <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0302editr.htm>.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid

Lebanon and Gaza – is as well the exact same logic that terrorists are employing then when they attack the West.

The Oil-for-Food Program, while helpful in alleviating some of the malnutrition of Iraq, stands as the epitome of this oppressive disaster – denying and supplying a starving people food on the basis of their ability and willingness to sell their oil to the West.

Some research estimates reach as high as over 200,000 excess children's deaths just between 1991 and 1998²⁴¹ with other reports citing between 500,000²⁴² to 1.7 million deaths due to the sanctions, the Gulf war and its aftermath.²⁴³ To add further insult to injury, Madeline Albright was quoted on national television as saying “we think the price is worth it” in reference to the children deaths in Iraq.²⁴⁴

Currently, the US has been spear-heading the effort to impose sanctions on Iran (recently ratified by the UN Security Council) and has just begun its own unilateral sanctions as a first step to encouraging the international community to follow suit.²⁴⁵ Israel and Egypt, largely under tacit international approval until the recent Freedom

²⁴¹ Dr. Richard Garfield, “Morbidity and Mortality Among Iraqi Children from 1990 Through 1998: Assessing the Impact of the Gulf War and Economic Sanctions,” *Casi.org.uk*, <http://www.casi.org.uk/info/garfield/dr-garfield.html>.

²⁴² Unicef Information Newslines, “Iraq surveys show ‘humanitarian emergency’,” UNICEF, August 12, 1999, <http://www.unicef.org/newslines/99pr29.htm>.

²⁴³ Global Policy, “Iraq criticizes US, UK,” *Globalpolicy.org*, May 10, 2001, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/170/41919.html>.

²⁴⁴ Douglas E. Hill, “Albright’s Blunder,” *Irvine Review*, 2002, <http://web.archive.org/web/20030603215848/http://www.irvinereview.org/guest1.htm>.

²⁴⁵ Paul Richter, “U.S. Announces unilateral Iran sanctions,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 2010, Politics Section, <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-fg-iran-sanctions-20100617,0,4910720.story>.

Flotilla incident, have been instituting an economic blockade on Gaza that has included at times basic food stuffs²⁴⁶ and medical equipment.²⁴⁷

Concluding Notes

Who held by

Because of our historical experiences and idealistic world-view, in the West we tend to (wrongfully I believe) hold a population responsible for the selection of or inability to reform its government. Furthermore because of our general peaceful existence at home, we fail to understand the serious “human cost” of our government’s policies.

The citizens of the vast majority of Muslim nations do not know the luxury of being able to willfully and peacefully choose their own leaders. Because they live surrounding by it, they are inevitable much more aware of the results of war and sanctions, yet they remain as unable to do anything about it. These concerns of war and sanctions are not just a terrorist’s concern, they are the concern of every person, Muslim or otherwise, who experiences their consequences. The constant presence of military and proliferation of their bases, however, is not as much of a concern for the average person

²⁴⁶ Dion Nissebaum, “Israel Blocks Pasta Shipment to Gaza, and Tensions Boil,” *MClatchy Newspapers*, February 26, 2009, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/world/story/62797.html>.

²⁴⁷ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Gaza strip,” *The Humanitarian Monitor*, April 2010, 8, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_the_humanitarian_monitor_2010_04_english.pdf.

as they tend to get used this and do not immediately feel its effects on a daily basis. This grievance is one that is much more of a problem for the politically active than a typical citizen.

Legitimacy

The U.S. and the West have clearly stated their reasons for going to war and imposing sanctions. Much of the world contends with these reasons, but nevertheless they stand from totally different world views, experiences and priorities and hence their actions are not surprising in the least. The concern in regards to loss of life, civilian casualties, human rights and the like is not unique to any people, and in that sense, these are very legitimate grievances that are being held against the West and the U.S.

The presence of military bases, on the other hand, is a complicated issue and can be approached from many different angles – defense, imperialism, assistance, fighting terror, world policing, etc. From both an Islamic standpoint and a national sovereignty standpoint, however, this is again a legitimate concern despite whether or not the U.S. has its own legitimate reasons for maintaining these.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses in all of these arguments lie in the justifications cited by the West for their actions; however, these justifications need to remain clearly and distinctly different in reason and content from those provided by the accused terrorists, otherwise there is a moral stale mate. If that happens, then we are likely to see a “Clash of Civilizations” take place in which wars, akin to those of the twentieth century, are possible.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate a few points. First is that there has been a failure to objectively take into consideration how particular political situations make for fertile breeding grounds for the development of terrorism. This indeed requires further research to analyze the formation and existence of terrorist organizations as well the frequency and means of their attacks across different cultures and societies. I believe that something will markedly stand out in this research – that a people bound by a unifying cause who have been oppressed over long periods of time without a means to vent nor a means to wage legitimate war, are highly prone to carrying out terrorist attacks.

The U.S. clearly will not be able to meet every demand and grievance stated here. As long as Israel exists and the U.S. provides any sort of support to them, as long as Muslim countries are ruled by outside forces, and as long as the West continues to pursue self-interested policies, there will be reason for terrorists to continue their wanton disrespect for human life. These grievances, however, will carry on to the following generations and likely be pursued until they are adequately addressed.

Ultimately, there has to be a differentiation between those grievances which are legitimate versus those which are not, those which can be met versus those which cannot, and those over which we are willing to negotiate versus those which we are not. These problems will not go away by ignoring them or attempting to discredit those who voice them. They need to be addressed directly and whole-heartedly otherwise they will continue to be a thorn in the side of the Muslim world and a reason for them to fight the West, whether that be in the form of terrorism or even traditional warfare.

I believe that there is a relationship between these political grievances and the presence of terrorism. This is because these grievances are legitimate from a factual standpoint and they also are readily accepted as truth in the Muslim world. And thus returning to our second null hypothesis NH_2 , we reject it on this basis determining that there is indeed a relationship between IV_2 and the dependent variable terrorism. One of the overwhelming reasons for the importance of defining the presence of IV_2 in the way we have is terrorist recruitment. When these grievances appear to be legitimate and are

accepted by commoners as such, recruiting becomes that much easier. This will be revisited once more in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This research will conclude with a brief summary of the main ideas, the goals of this research, and a discussion of its religious and political findings. Then we will touch upon potential courses of action moving forward from a policy perspective - a place with much potential and need for future research.

The Threat of Terrorism

The danger that terrorist organizations pose to the West is both real and menacing, but not mysterious. Their reasons for existing and the reasons behind their attacks have been very clearly defined by their groups' members and supporters. We should not remove the threat analysis from that context. In stressing this fact, terrorism has even been described as "the most advanced international movement in formulating a broad and coherent set of grievances against the West and the 'Western-dominated' international system."²⁴⁸ This is a very serious challenge because until the West addresses those "set of grievances" terrorism will remain a significant force that is empowered by an ideology, and not simply by the people who are currently carrying out acts of terrorism around the world.

²⁴⁸ Mahmood Monshipouri, "The West's Modern Encounter with Islam: From Discourse to Reality," *Journal of Church and State*, 40 (1998): 25-28.

We need to be very careful as a nation that our intentions are clearly outlined and our response to the aforementioned grievances is clearly stated. To continue to walk headfirst into the War on Terror based on a knee-jerk reaction or desire for vengeance, as we seemingly already have, would be catastrophic. Doing so without the proper information or very clearly defined goals, and without having distinguished between Islam and terrorism, would put this nation into a very dangerous situation as Patrick Buchanan warned of nearly 20 years ago:

To some Americans, searching for a new enemy against whom to test our mettle and power, after the death of the communism, Islam is the preferred antagonist. But, to declare Islam an enemy of the United States is to declare a second Cold War that is unlikely to end in the same resounding victory as the first.²⁴⁹

This is because Islam is very different from communism. For one, its adherents vastly out-number those who supported communism during the Cold War. Additionally, a true follower of Islam will not attribute its origin or legislation to mankind while an advocate of communism clearly would. In the eyes of devout or even many non-practicing Muslims, Islam is their central identifying trait; whereas even devout communists may identify themselves first by their nationality or perhaps ethnicity, as an example. Religion can at times be a stronger and more unifying element in the identity of

²⁴⁹ Patrick J. Buchanan, "Is Islam an Enemy of the United States?," *New Hampshire Sunday News*, November 25, 1990.

a person over even his or her ethnicity, citizenry or political orientations. Because of this, to wage war against a religion, or even a particular interpretation thereof, is drastically different than waging war against a political ideology. The Western powers need to understand this with crystal clarity.

Research Goals

The hypothesis of this research was that an improper interpretation of particular Islamic concepts and principles combined with the West's discounting and ignoring of the Muslim world's political grievances has created an environment favorable for the development and spread of terrorism.

To reiterate, the goal of this research was to put terrorism into a context in which it may be assessed and dealt with at political, religious, academic and personal levels. This was attempted by putting the researcher and the reader into the shoes of a Muslim and even in some ways, those of a terrorist. It sought to do this in the religious realm by first analyzing the religious positions and conditions that apply to Muslims that are possible factors in the radicalization and potentiality for adopting a terroristic ideology. The research explored pertinent religious topics, their conditions and where they have failed to be fulfilled, particularly as they relate to those calling toward terrorism from positions of influence.

In the political realm, this research sought to develop a further understanding of terrorism by first analyzing the statements of six different influential figures who have explicitly called for terrorism, implicitly hinted at their support for it, or have been accused of it. With these statements, we were able to divide their political grievances into six categories. These categories of complaints were then researched and supported with oft-cited facts to back them up. We briefly addressed their legitimacy, potential weaknesses in their arguments, and whether or not these grievances were held by the entire Muslim world or just those whom we suspect of terrorism, using the best survey results currently available on the topic.

Research Design

After reviewing approximately one-hundred definitions of terrorism we were able to develop the following working definition – the targeting of governments or civilians with violence (or the threat of) intended to create fear or panic by means of intimidation to obtain political, social, ideological, and/or religious goals. There were many other important additions which could have been made to the definition of terrorism but they were not necessarily agreed upon. There was also a point of concern mentioned for the potential bias that arises by using narrow definitions of terrorism. These were found unfortunately in most authoritative definitions. The specific definitions that provided additional useful descriptions and considerations were those of authors and scholars.

These along with the agreed upon aspects of terrorism were covered and organized in Chapter 1.

The variables which we sought to work with, as mentioned, were terrorism – the dependent variable – and both improper interpretation of particular Islamic concepts and Western negligence of the Muslim world’s political grievances – the independent variables. The null hypothesis would be accepted if there was a positive relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable.

Setting the Stage

Chapter 2 outlined the significance of this research, primarily that the topic of terrorism is of critical importance for the future relationships between the West and the Muslim world, and that this research was attempting to take a unique approach to understanding terrorism by looking at commonly-overlooked religious topics and often controversial political issues. Chapter 2 ended with a quick overview of different types of terrorism within an historical context – secular, religious and Islamic – and where some differences and similarities may lie.

It was determined that secular left-wing terrorism shared some characteristics with modern Islamic terrorism in that they are very revolutionary, anarchist, and apocalyptic. Their political goals are usually their most important aspects (and are therefore very pronounced, namely, overthrowing and replacing the current government.

Other forms of religious right-wing terrorism, on the other hand, shared similarities with Islamic terrorism in having “moral imperative” to take action against particular injustices that may not be of concern to a non-religious crowd. The acts of terrorism under this umbrella are carried out by using some sort of authoritative, textual justification while compromising other restrictions and prohibitions within the same texts. Moral high ground is usually lost in the process but it also depends on the relative severity of the attack versus the perceived violations committed previously by the victim of said attack. The other important similarity discovered was regarding the goals of religious terrorism – they are often lofty and unattainable. The result is a dangerous one – the attacks may continue in the absence of meeting more practical goals.

Finally, similarities were drawn between some examples of terrorism in the history of Islam and those in the present day. Both were similar in that they have very politically-oriented goals – something not common with other forms of religious terrorism but definitely present in left-wing terrorism. The second similarity was closely related; that religion formed the basis for the cause of rebellion, but the attacks themselves were aimed at immediate political goals and not religious ones. Important differences were also noted, primarily that many of the historical examples were by small outcaste *Shi'i* groups versus the *Sunni* ones today (which are as well outcastes but are gaining popular support) and that assassinations were the most common historical form of terrorism. Large-scale indiscriminate killing is if not the most common form today, and also the most noteworthy and disturbing.

Religious Findings

Chapter 3 provided the analysis of the religious independent variable. We first looked at different common categorizations or labels used when grouping Muslims. The first conclusion is that the most common labels used to identify terrorists – primarily Wahhabi and even Taliban – are incorrectly understood and applied and ultimately inadequate in helping to understand terrorism. The most important classification or trait that is useful in separating between those committing terrorism and those who are not is the people or group's tendency to make *takfeer*, or essentially excommunicate someone from Islam.

The second important finding was that a person's mood, state of mind, spiritual state, and general outlook is very telling of someone's susceptibility to adopting a terroristic approach to dealing with problems. Pessimistic, cynical, tight-fisted, highly critical, and the generally hard-hearted are the primary characteristics of someone drawn to terrorism.

The third noteworthy proposition put forth is that a growing social-dichotomy exists between religious and secular groups. This could be a contributing factor to the growing popularity of terrorism. Further research needs to be done in areas where such dichotomies appear to be prevalent (e.g. in cities where mosques and night-clubs can be found in close proximity or where there are drastic and obvious differences in clothing – some very modest and others very revealing). This may occur in cities that have recently

experienced quick changes in culture, or in physical localities that exist between major metropolitan areas and under-developed villages.

The fourth finding is that extremism has multiple causes, some of which are religious in nature, some political, and some social. These religious causes are most related to a lack of knowledge and understanding of Islam (as also discussed later in this chapter), political oppression, lack of options for civic participation (covered in part throughout Chapter 4), and un-addressed levels of social degradation of religious norms (as just mentioned).

The fifth topic dealt with was Islamic scholarship. It was noted that those passing religious verdicts and providing the religious justification for terrorism are legally unqualified. They are not following proper legal methodology, and have incorrectly interpreted different Islamic texts. Some examples were provided to demonstrate how this may be done.

Lastly, the Islamic topic of *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'*, or allegiance and dissociation, was addressed. There were two important discoveries that were made: 1) current scholarship has not distinguished between people and actions nor between belligerents and neutrals, and 2) there is a difference between general relationships and political relationships – a difference which has rarely been addressed in current literature. The conclusions were two: 1) political association, even if indirect or inconsequential, is being used as the justification for terrorist attacks against other Muslims, and 2) this topic needs to be revisited by modern scholars to bridge the gap between (and even possibly

correct) current understandings of this topic in light of the understandings of the earliest texts and records of Islamic history. These discrepancies were also detailed.

In conclusion, the null hypothesis NH_1 is rejected for the religious independent variable IV_1 . That is, there is indeed a real and positive relationship between the misinterpretation and lack of understanding of important religious concepts and terrorism.

Political Findings

Chapter 4 outlined and broke down the statements of six accused terrorists – Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Adam Gadahn, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Anwar al-Awlaki, and Mullah Omar. There are a number of general and specific findings.

The first is that while statements and transcribed speeches from Mullah Omar are not in abundance, those which are available do not match up with those of our other accused terrorists. He never speaks of attacking the U.S. except in defensive terms within the territory of Afghanistan. He has never mentioned the killing of civilians to be something permissible in Islam, but instead mentions the opposite. The only noteworthy statement of his that may be connected to terrorism is regarding suicide operations, but even the mention of these is reserved for military targets. When assessing the connection between Afghanistan and terrorism, this needs to be taken into consideration.

The second noteworthy conclusion is that the remainder of our accused terrorists do not take gripe with the blatant attack on and targeting of civilians. All of them agree on its permissibility, or in the case of Anwar al Awlaki, seem to imply it.

Our third conclusion needs to be that the political grievances of these individuals are very well and very clearly stated. They come from rational actors who are making what they believe to be rational choices based upon a set of evidences that appear to support their claims. Moreover, the West has failed to, yet needs to, respond directly to these.

The fourth point of importance is that most, if not all of these political grievances carry weight and legitimacy in the Muslim world. They are a very effective tool for churning up emotions and eliciting reactions. They ultimately serve as powerful recruitment tools because by and large they are either perceived to be true in the Muslim world or, they simply are true.

Lastly, the absence of readily available outlets to express frustration contributes to terrorism; as well as a lack of opportunities for civic participation, and the inability to fight back in a legitimate, traditional sense are also contributing factors to terrorism. This is mainly because when all options have been exhausted, people act in desperation.

In conclusion, the second null hypothesis NH_2 is also rejected for the political independent variable, IV_2 . This is because there appears to be a relationship between the West's negligence of the Muslim world's political grievances and terrorism.

Policy Recommendations – Solutions Ahead

It is an immense task that the United States and the West will need to undertake in order to defeat terrorism. Ahead of them lies a need to define what exactly is being fought and the challenges to the policies which they have been pursuing for the past half century. Questions will be asked regarding how this all begun, what it is that forms the basis to the argument which is believed to be the correct one, and how to solve and bring an end to terrorism. My hope is that there has been in this research worthwhile considerations and points made which will help in this endeavor.

What follows are recommendations that address both of the independent variables tested in this research. They are based on the findings of the research and are admittedly heavy-handed. Because policies are often not capable of being adjusted overnight, the recommendations provided herein are intended to be goals which I believe if policy was directed at meeting, would help curtail terrorism and its future recruitment. Additionally, some of the policies are notably part of larger objectives and complicated interests. With that said, I do not believe this should complicate the simplicity of many of the widely-held grievances. Ultimately, the West and the United States will have to decide whether those policies are worth some of the costs potentially associated with them.

Foreign Policy

I believe the most direct solution and the one which is in the immediate control of the West is their ability to change foreign policy. Serious and visible changes need to be made, not necessarily to meet the demands of terrorists but to remove the psychological weaponry used to recruit. These political grievances cited by terrorists are indeed held by Muslims throughout the world. They are often seen as legitimate, and the West will remain largely incapable of appealing to Muslims and winning them over unless these grievances are addressed with honesty and serious effort. These efforts must include:

1) Verbally speaking out against oppressive Muslim rulers and refusing to provide them with the financial and military support that keeps them in power. This includes nations that are seen to be suppressing Islamic revolutions like Egypt, and those helping in the war on terror such as Pakistan. Short-term gains will be outweighed by long-term losses. This has been proven time and time again with U.S. foreign policy. For example, support of the Taliban to fight communism created a powerful adversary that the U.S. is now fighting.

2) Selective rhetoric, economic sanctions, and discriminatory foreign policy that may lead to enflaming passions needs to be lessened against regimes that are seen as threats but are instead likely just annoyances. Historically Iraq proved to be an example of this. In retrospect, we may discover that many other nations probably should be considered under this category today. The importance of this lies in the possibility that

terrorism may be a greater threat than organized nations. Nonconventional warfare in the twenty-first century is making this a stark reality.

3) Support for Israel (primarily militarily but also otherwise) needs to decrease, support for Palestine (primarily financially but also otherwise) needs to increase, and there needs to be a truly fair and level approach to dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There is far too much fear and restraint by politicians when talking about Israel and far too much blame placed on the Palestinians. As international support for Israel continues to diminish, the U.S.'s support needs to follow suit or it will be a more likely target for terrorism than other countries who are continuously withdrawing their support.

4) Government and military cannot be the means for obtaining oil contracts and then allowing oil companies to run free in their control over oil sites. Oil companies make astronomical profits. These contracts should be renegotiated when they expire to allow more money to be poured into the development of the Muslim world. The money should not go directly into the hands of corrupt governments. This money can be selectively apportioned for education and basic infrastructure. It must be monitored to verify that this money reaches its destination. It should not be used for anything which is not culturally neutral as that will fuel enmity against the West.

5) The Afghani and Iraqi wars need to be reassessed from square one, top to bottom. These wars are not accomplishing what they sought out to do and they are causing large portions of the Muslim world to detest the United States. This provides

popular support for terrorist groups while it's the opposite that needs to happen – terrorist groups need to be ostracized and cast out from society.

6) Military bases cannot stay behind after wars end. While this is classical strategy of war to control areas and ensure a lasting victory, these bases and having a general military presence are both catalysts for terrorism. These attacks end up killing local civilians as well, who in turn place some of that blame on the targets and not just the terrorists. Reasons for terrorists to attack certain targets should not readily be given. As the number of these targets decrease, there becomes less of a need for recruitment and existence of armed militias willing to carry out these attacks. Additionally, bases and military personnel in highly personal, sacred, and otherwise important places to locals need to be avoided. This is seen as sacrosanct and highly insulting in the Muslim world. In cases like Saudi Arabia where many bases are unofficially present, this can become a legitimate reason for Muslims to wage war – not just terrorists. These need to be removed or eventually militant-ism will spread in every form.

7) The killing of civilians needs to be avoided at every cost. What our policies say, what the media portrays, and what the military actually does are all very different things. Our ethical standards need to be upheld in every situation, even if this means overbearing government oversight of the military. Civilian deaths, particularly in drone attacks, are a consistently cited reason for terrorism. As related to drones, when people have no means to fight back or seek recourse, the incentive for suicide attacks increases exponentially.

Religious Approaches

While there is less the United States and West can do when it comes to the problems the Muslim world is having in its understanding and approach toward Islam, there are ways in which they can help. This should be understood as essentially helping the Muslims rid themselves of terrorism. In line with the findings of this research, the following are possible courses of action:

1) Promote and help fund and organize religious debates. Events such as the Doha Debates were groundbreaking in the modern era, and historically the Islamic world has been known for religious debates. In fact, this is how many of the secessionist movements were ideologically discredited in the public setting. Gross perversions of Islam were proven such in front of the people and accepted because of overwhelming proof provided by scholars. Additionally, debates need revolve around religious scholars and not political figures, new-age authors, or “free-thinkers.” From a religious standpoint, these individuals hold zero credibility. If the intent is to reach those who are using religion to justify terrorism, credible and qualified scholars are the only ones who can prove this is incorrect. Those with alternative viewpoints, even those in support of attacking civilians, should be invited to participate – such as high-profile and highly respected figures like Anwar al-Awlaki. It is only this way that these ideologies will be visibly proven and accepted as being wrong.

2) Promote religious scholarship. Help fund and make easy for Islamic schools run by credible and well-known religious scholars to flourish. Madrasahs run by anonymous figures teach unknown and possibly incorrect things. The famous madrasahs around the world, such as Al-Azhar, do not.

3) Gather the Islamic scholars of the world to meet with Christian and Jewish scholars as well as Western politicians. There should not be a fear to meet with these people, nor vice-versa. The President of every Western nation attempting to fight terrorism should be sitting down with the most prestigious and religiously influential scholars in the Muslim world. This was a common practice in the Islamic Empire and thus the scholars today should not be reluctant to do this, particularly if they do it collectively. These scholars are much more capable of bringing about religious change to eradicate terrorism than are the political leaders of the Muslim world.

Future Research

There is indeed plenty of room for further terrorism and counter-terrorism research. This research was intended to shift the focus, however, of what the current and traditional research has concentrated on. In turn, it shed light on a few new areas that appear to be critically in need of further research. They include:

- 1) Instances of historical terrorism in Islam and rebel groups which created civil strife, particularly the *Khawārij*. This may give insight into the ideology and methods of current terrorist groups
- 2) Social-religious dichotomies in different societies and whether they fuel extremism
- 3) The Islamic topic of *Al-Walaa' wal-Baraa'*, or allegiance and dissociation
- 4) The extent to which the Muslim world (by proportion) agrees with the political justifications being given for acts of terrorism
- 5) Who is being recruited and through the use of what political grievances and religious proofs.

Final Thoughts and Additional Considerations

If the statements cited in Chapter 3 were not sufficient proof that acts of terrorism are in many cases rational choices, my hope is that at least some of the evidence as to the legitimacy of the mentioned political grievances demonstrated that. This, however, should not be misunderstood as legitimizing the acts of terror themselves. The political reasons behind these attacks have been very well stated and documented. Despite this, we have failed to address these concerns because our political approach has treated terrorists as rational instead of rational choice actors. We have subsequently adopted a non-negotiation method of dealing with them. Ultimately this is a major loss because it skirts

the objective of truly preventing terrorist attacks and the loss of innocent lives. This framework has unfortunately been established under the guise of maintaining freedom and liberty, but the reality is domestic policies in response to terrorism have become far greater threats to freedom and liberty than the terrorist attacks themselves.

There is a major and legitimate point of contention with the idea of “negotiation with terrorists” which is the belief that meeting the demands of a terrorist will not deter him from carrying out an attack. Indeed in many cases this is very true, and it is particularly so when it comes to some of the tendencies of these ideological groups today. This was hinted at earlier, that some present-day terrorist groups may display similar tendencies to that of the *Khawārij* who were known for flip-flopping in their political positions in order to maintain a reason to fight. My concern with totally ignoring this approach, however, is that it fuels recruitment. The perspective of appealing to and answering the legitimate grievances of the Muslim world should be adopted in place of responding to the terrorists’ demands. While these are often the same, the focus is on the next wave and the next generation with the intention of preventing an ideology of terrorism from spreading to them.

Additionally, there is a commonly held belief that the grievances held by the Muslim world and terrorists themselves are unreasonable. There is no doubt that there are differences of opinions and perspectives held between the West and Muslim world that revolve around politics. This research did not set out to prove one side of the coin as being more correct than the other. It did, however, seek to demonstrate the legitimacy of

some of the grievances the Muslim world holds and how this can be used by terrorists to support themselves and their recruiting efforts. That is not to say either that the West is completely at fault for the existence of terrorism or the failures of the Muslim world are the result of Western imperialism. As historian, scholar and political commentator Bernard Lewis as well as many others have noted, while the West and other nations may have taken advantage of some of these failures, the Muslim world truly has only themselves to blame for their internal collapse and subsequent vulnerability to the external world. The majority of Muslim scholars would whole-heartedly agree with this – that every difficulty suffered in the Muslim world is actually a result of its own short-comings. But unfortunately in its attempt to solve its own problems and the absence of a *Salahuddin* to help lead the Muslim world out of its stagnation and past its massive civilizational failures, it has a bin Laden willing to take on this role. Despite who is at fault, the West still has to deal with the consequences.

With that said, from a policy perspective we shouldn't overly concern ourselves as to ultimately how legitimate the cited grievances are. The more important aspect of this issue is that they are widely held as being legitimate in the Muslim world. We can take a position where we may attempt to change the popular positions held by Muslims in regard to Western foreign policies, but this will only go so far because of the lack of credibility the West holds when it comes to its relations with the Muslim world and because there are inevitable biases and different perspectives held by each side. The second option is that the West ignore these grievances altogether because it does not see

them as legitimate. My position, as stated, is that this negligence fuels terrorism irrespective of the actual legitimacy of the grievances. The final option, which I hold myself, is that these grievances need to be addressed keeping in mind the goal is to prevent the spread of terrorism not to meet the demands of terrorists. We should further keep in mind that we cannot expect compromises to be made on the opposing side if we are not able to make compromises ourselves. Creating standoffs with those willing to pull the trigger first may prove disastrous.

Religion also plays a major role in all of this as well, but it should be understood that this is a condemnable misinterpretation of religion. The commonly-held secular academic position that this is a case of religion being misused to pursue political goals is true in many respects, but I believe it falls short in accounting for the complexity of the variables we're dealing with. This is firstly because these political goals which are being cited by terrorists are similar if not the same goals held by the majority of Muslims. Many of these goals are very simple such as the right to self-determination, territorial integrity, obtaining basic liberties, and freedom from oppression. While there may be other hidden goals and aspirations for power that are held by terrorists, this should not detract from the goals held by the rest of the Muslim world.

Secondly, to the untrained eye, Islam may appear no different in how its teachings are being taken out of context, however upon further analysis, which this research sought to provide, it is actually understandable how this happens. Anyone can indeed use any religion to seek out political goals, but Islam is unique in that it may be easier to do this

because of the breadth of topics that are addressed within its sacred laws. For example, Islam explicitly deals with things such as war, prisoners, punishment, and political alliances whereas other religions may not. This should not though be taken as an indication that Islam is inherently violent, because the reality is armed conflict does happen and there needs to be rules and boundaries set up to regulate what is permissible and what is impermissible. For the West, things like international law and the Geneva Convention govern these issues. For the Muslim world, Islam itself governs these issues. Although there are clear differences, those differences should not be points of contention because in the end both sets of law protect human rights and human life when interpreted correctly and applied sincerely.

And finally, this research has been but a modest effort to uncover some of the potential factors contributing to terrorism and was not intended to be a comprehensive explanation of what terrorism is and how to solve it. It did in due course, however, attempt to provide some practical recommendations that may help in minimally curtailing the spread of terrorism in the future. And as a final reminder to myself and the reader: the task ahead is indeed a large one, but certainly not insurmountable. The potential solutions, however, may not necessarily be what we expect or even desire, but this should not prevent us from adopting them if in the end, they do ultimately solve the problem of terrorism.

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