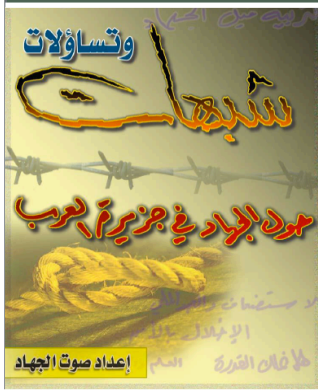
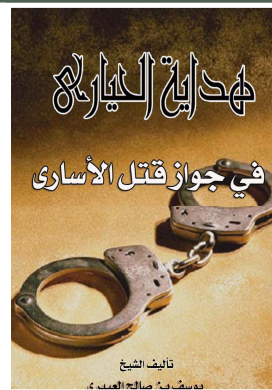


Towards a Curriculum for the Teaching of Jihadist Ideology



أهمية الجهاد
في نشر الدعوة الإسلامية
والزود على الطوائف الضالّة فيه

مكتبة
علاء الدين بن عبد الله



Part I:

Introduction - Problems of Perception

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The Jamestown Foundation

Towards a Curriculum
for the
Teaching of Jihadist Ideology

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October 2010

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THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION

Published in the United States by

The Jamestown Foundation

1111 16th St. N.W.

Suite 320

Washington, DC 20036

<http://www.jamestown.org>

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	2
<i>Structure and Methodology</i>	4
A note on terminology	5
A note on translation and transliteration	8
<i>Introduction</i>	9
The definition, rise and implications of radical Islam.....	10
Implications of the analysis deficit	113
<i>Chapter One – Problems of Perception</i>	15
False assumptions on the nature of the struggle	15
The ‘root cause analysis’ fallacy.....	16
Failure to name the enemy	19
The narcissism of western analysis.....	21
The damage wrought by root cause analysis.....	22
The definition deficit – the need to study the ideology.....	23
The role of ideology in defending the case for militant jihād	25
Evidence for a normative role of jihadist ideology	27
<i>Notes</i>	30

Preface

GIVEN the demonstrated ability for jihadism to survive defeat in the field it would appear obvious that it is at least as important to defeat jihadism *intellectually* as well as militarily. Military analysts will argue that the key to success in asymmetric conflicts against ideological extremists has always been not to rely on the physical battle to defeat them but upon the psychological struggle for the hearts and minds of the communities from which they derive their recruits, resources and safe havens. The prioritization of intellectual defeat is actually underscored by former members of jihadist movements themselves, arguing that while military reverses can be explained away by the appeal to a struggle that is taking place on a long-term scale, ideological justification cannot brook defeat at any point.¹

The importance of this intellectual dimension has been demonstrated not only by the discovery, by security investigations, of the pivotal role played by radical imams trained in establishing doctrinal underpinnings for militancy,² but also by the morale stress to jihadi sympathizers registered in the wake of the recent ‘recantations’ by high-profile jihadist ideologues. Yet while the United States has dedicated significant effort toward protecting itself against attack from Islamist militants, it has spent far less effort countering the ideology that inspires their acts, or taken seriously radical Islamism’s highly focused body of intellectuals and ideologues who legitimize the movement to the Muslim public. To date there have been insufficient attempts at the level of researchers, intelligence officers and academics to examine the phenomenon focusing on the intellectual tools used by the Islamists themselves, or the arena of debate in which they are making their case. This has led to the development of systems and directions of analysis that base themselves on a number of erroneous points of departure, and which threaten to blunt the edge of any initiative aimed at countering this ideology.

To mount an effective challenge will necessarily require a detailed knowledge of the intellectual terrain and the mental universe of the *mujāhidīn* and how this integrates with its broader target audience. But while there are some excellent works on the phenomenon of jihad – its historical development and modern manifestation in Islamist militancy – there are fewer works that set out to describe ‘jihadism’ itself, that is, the mindset of its proponents and their view of the world which underpins, and is informed by, their ideology.

This study accordingly makes a special endeavor to illustrate the nature and depth of what is a revolution like no other, and elucidate its radicalizing processes, by featuring samples of what amounts to a ‘curriculum’ of ideological materials, *fatwās*, treatises, books and encyclopedias, all excerpted and translated from primary sources that are freely available online, and which seamlessly educate, and potentially transform, the reader from armchair *mujāhid* to committed foot-soldier in the cause. It is an attempt at mapping a *mentality*. To do this I have intentionally not taken a ‘historical development’ approach to jihadism. The point is to present an account of *jihadist ideology*, not an account of the jihad ideology as it has developed over the centuries, and to avoid miring the reader in a morass of biographies. As students of jihadism will know, behind the various manifestations of Islamist radicalism, there is actually a very large degree of agreement on ideological and doctrinal starting points. In the face of commonly held assumptions, scholars of Islamist ideologies are now speaking of more overt ‘convergence’, conditioned by political facts on the ground.³ The ideology of jihadism, while exhibiting numerous nuances depending on the degree of political engagement in this mix, or the historical rôle

played by theorists, is more consistent than many might believe, simply because the streams all draw from the same sources, and in turn act as tributaries to them. These channels are also porous, in that the sympathizer can wander from one to the other and back without fear of contradiction or compromise.

Therefore the primary purpose of this study is to investigate these common starting points, not the divergences, and seek understanding of the common denominator ideology. Minor differences in emphasis will therefore not be given too much consideration in this study. Instead, I have isolated its operative features and have made reference to any historical development of a feature only where this is relevant to demonstrate its robustness to criticism, on the grounds of its claimed authenticity to the broader Islamic tradition.

The second purpose of this work is to highlight the implications of the ideological ingredients, by illustrating its intellectual depth, internal coherence and robustness in the face of challenge. Contrary to the observations of some, jihadism is neither flimsy nor merely a modernist by-product of 20th century stresses, but rather makes a point of rooting itself deep within the body of Islamic tradition and is very adept at negotiating the seams. By understanding the potency of its attraction and taking it seriously as an intellectual movement, the hope is that a more thorough groundwork can be laid to the construction of a consistent counter-message to Islamist radicalism, one that will benefit from greater penetration and higher precision.

Such a counter-message cannot be left to deprogramming or de-radicalization initiatives targeted against active militants. Due to the nature of this ‘revolution’ and its cultural claims to authenticity, the counter-message must embrace the broader communities to which jihadism seeks to justify itself and make its appeal. These broader communities are no longer their own affair. As an ideology with stout and impervious ramparts, Islamist radicalism is highly indigestible and toxic to all environments, irrespective of their cultural affiliation or religious denomination.

Which brings us to the third purpose of this work, this being to demonstrate that a challenge to Islamist radicalism cannot be sought, or take place, within the Islamist / Salafist arena, as if the solution lies there – in this nearest-but-one ideology to militant extremism. The best that could be achieved by this is to put the ideology ‘on hold’, or merely apply brakes to its naturally radicalizing trajectory. I say ‘naturally’ since the point of Islamism / Salafism is to mount an epistemological and hence political challenge to modernity. This challenge is naturally an imperative that cannot be surgically extracted, and is one that, equally by its very nature, can only be radical in the proper sense of the word.

This work therefore sets itself a number of tasks: to flag up the erroneous course of western analysis on the phenomenon of jihadism; to identify the true nature, spectrum and purposes of jihadism; to examine the source of its ideological resilience; to demonstrate how the ideology applies itself in the Muslim and non-Muslim environments; to identify the intellectual arena in which this unique form of revolution is taking place and illustrate the radicalization process from its primary source materials.

It is the author’s sincere hope that the present study will contribute to increasing public and professional awareness of the nature of jihadism and Islamist radicalism, and provide an accessible aid to accelerating the pace of research.

Structure and Methodology

On the subject of western studies on jihadism, the aim was to avoid the danger of this Report turning into an extended reading list. An explanation of the main lines of thought in studies on jihadism would have required an elaborate annotated bibliography, the annotations amounting to a commentary – much on the lines of the jihadist *Curriculum* proper. It was deemed therefore more useful to present the study of the Report in the form of chapters illustrating the contexts in which jihadism is taking its present form. Thus the religious / legal framework of the jihad movement is detailed in Part II, (*The Doctrinal Frame*) in two chapters, the first examining the dynamics of Salafism itself (the matrix of its offshoot ‘Jihadi-Salafism’) and the second detailing how the Salafist currents of thought transformed themselves into the political activism of the current wave of jihadism.

The following two chapters of the next section, Part III - *The World through a Jihadi Lens*, detail the application of that activated ideology to what *mujāhidīn* propagandists refer to as *al-wāqi‘*, the ‘reality on the ground’, both in terms of the jihadists’ view of that reality in history and their ideological positions as a universalist political mission in areas outside the Muslim heartlands.

The Curriculum (Part IV), it should be said, is not made up of works of western authors, but is taken from the traffic on websites and from recommendations and reading lists of jihadist themselves, and is therefore a *jihadi* curriculum. This means that many works that would be considered ‘essential reading’ in educational and academic institutions, may not appear there. Since this is a study of *jihadism*, as an intellectual and religious movement, and not a study of jihad insurgency, it means that while works with a tactical purpose may be featured, it is their ideological and doctrinal content that is analyzed, not their methodology of violence. On the other hand I have not taken the route of compiling a ‘literary history’ of jihad, since this would not equate to a curriculum. Instead I have taken a leaf out of the priorities established and listed by the jihadists themselves, as featured in their reading lists and ‘jihad education’ monographs posted online. Again, I have been careful not to leave the reader with an extended reading list without there being an explanatory context for the choice of the works. Rather I have structured the *Curriculum* section as a narrative to explain why the works chosen are representative, and where they sit in the corpus of literature and polemic. I have provided commentaries to contextualize the materials with a view to providing a working model for a ‘radicalization curriculum’ for use in academic and educational institutions. The commentary is of particular importance since many of the works are yet to be translated from the Arabic – although every effort has been made to include texts in translation where possible (for further details on the structure and purpose, see *The Selection of the Texts, Part IV*, below).

The aim of this work is to provide a window on the mindset of the jihadist and Islamist thinkers, to illustrate the conception of history, the operative factors in their reality and the reasoning processes they employ to justify themselves. As a portrait of a movement that is in the full flight of development, there will inevitably be areas where the coverage may appear uneven, but it is hoped nonetheless that the overall representation given will reproduce fairly the spectrum of thought.

A note on terminology

Muslim Fundamentalists

The term *Fundamentalist* implies a category of intellectual process – one of returning to the core fundamental texts of faith for points of reference – and as such is not confined to Islam. The tendency is one of prioritizing the ‘*sola scriptura*’ instincts of the individual over the historical ‘*taqlīd*’ (‘scholarly transmission’) heritage of the collective. In Islam it varies with the intensity of the believer’s conservatism, so that the term has been applied both to Salafist and traditionalist thinkers, the latter taking their starting point from a perception that legal theory attained to its perfection in the medieval period and that the norms of that era should constitute the fundamentals of Islamic thought of any subsequent age. While its use is waning in the West out of concern for its origin as a term denoting a tendency among some Christian believers, it is gaining currency in the Middle East since the Arabic equivalent *usūlī* (from *usūl*, the ‘roots’, ‘sources’ or ‘fundamentals’) calls to mind *usūl al-dīn*, a branch of Islamic studies focusing on the fundamental sources, the First Principles on which Islamic law is based. The qualification of ‘Islamic fundamentalist’ therefore does not stereotype Muslims, since it describes merely an Islamic variant of a tendency of religious conservatism.⁴

Salafis, Salafists

The term *Salafist* mostly overlaps with the term Muslim fundamentalist, but denotes a particular intensification of the tendency, and intentionally focuses upon the legitimizing effect of adherence to a paradigmatic community, that of *al-salaf al-sālih*, the ‘pious predecessors’ of the first generations of Muslims. It has the advantage of being a term coined by the group to refer to themselves, important enough for it to be the subject of dispute with its extremist wing of Jihadis, who refer disparagingly to non-Jihadi Salafists as ‘fake Salafists.’ As such the association with the ideological starting points of the Salafists is accurate. An alternative view exists, that the use of the term ‘Salafism’ is inadvisable since it gives the jihadist the respectability of a label of a pious group of reformers. Nevertheless, I have taken the view that Salafism is a heuristically useful term because it is a readily recognizable denominator, signifying a specific form of religious engagement with the world (for more on this see section II, the *Doctrinal Frame*, below).⁵

Wahhābis, Wahhābists

This, by contrast, is generally a much less accurately employed term. Although the meaning of the term Wahhābism is not synonymous with that of Salafism, being rather a methodology for the application of Salafist thought and, as such, the first lasting attempt at creating in the Muslim world a political structure on the basis of a fundamentalist religious doctrine, albeit under the control of a monarchy. It has therefore become common practice to use the term Wahhābi to denote the ‘state Salafis’ of the Saudi establishment. However, the term ‘*Wahhābīyyūn*’ is not in fact employed by the Saudi scholars themselves, who prefer the use of terms like ‘*Muwahhidūn*’ (‘Proponents of *Tawhīd*’) both from a reluctance to be denoted by a mortal scholar (the founder Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb) and an unwillingness to be associated with the historical excesses of the movement against non-Wahhābis.⁶ Its use persists, however, among mainstream Muslims aiming to denigrate Salafis as a modern, inauthentic and intellectually parochial movement, and often becomes extended to unrelated groups such as the Taliban.

Islamists

The term dates back to the early 1970s and was coined to explain a series of post-19th century Islamic movements which highlighted and promoted the political dimensions of Islamic belief. Scholars noted the use of contemporary political terminology among Muslim writers of this tendency and argued the case for its essential modernity. The writers themselves, however, stand in a line of Islamic reformist movements that date back to before the 19th century, and which were largely archaizing responses to the pluralistic dispositions of the Mughal and Ottoman empires in their period of decline. While the emphasis was on reform and the greater application of reason to faith in the face of the decadence of jurisprudential thought and its accommodation to monarchic systems that had little Islamic legitimacy, the political dimension of the reform also implied militant *jihad* against ‘negative innovations’ such as Sufism, as well as external threats from the encroachments of the western powers.

Today the term has a fluidity of meanings and this is both its demerit and advantage. On the broadest level ‘Islamism’ now denotes Islam conceived in its political application and encompasses a wide range of opinions and tendencies ranging from the quietist to the activist end of the scale, from such activities as aiming to increase the ‘Islamic referent’ in social and political life or implementing welfare reform in accordance with Islamic law, to transformational activities such as seeking to overthrow a secular government for the purpose of establishing an Islamic state. The term, however, is not without its detractors. Some

Muslim objections to the term focus on a reticence to see a word derived from ‘Islam’ given a political extremist twist. Moreover, Arabic has trouble distinguishing morphologically an equivalent of ‘Islamism’ from ‘Islamic’. Neologisms attempting this distinction, such as *islāmawīyya*, have not achieved general currency. However, in English the term ‘Islamism’ is useful in that it can be used to refer to the more politically oriented wing of the Islamic spectrum in general and thus makes a distinction between Islam as such and its contemporary radical offshoots.⁷ In addition, the ‘-ism’ ending immediately sets the term apart from ‘Islam’ or ‘Islamic’, thus removing the ambiguity. The term ‘*political Islam*’⁸ has also been considered by some to be problematic since the use of the adjective ‘political’ implies that there is such a thing as non-political Islam, which runs up against the common perception that Islam is essentially political in its promotion of justice and law in the public space. Even so, I take ‘political Islam’ to be an acceptable term since the nature of Islamic political participation in the Muslim world is still being debated and therefore it implies a position that is being taken on the matter. While most Salafist groups would distance themselves from political participation, it is nevertheless true that Islamists base their conceptions on a Salafist starting point in Islam, rather than on any other trend. This work therefore uses the term ‘Islamism’ or ‘political Islam’ to refer to the political application of Islam as construed along Salafist principles.

Radical Islam, Radical Islamism

Analogous to the above is the use of the adjective ‘radical.’ The term ‘radical Islam’ is already in common use to describe political Islam but objections have been voiced that it is ill-defined and a subjective term, in that it may be used for those who merely express significant dissent from prevailing norms. The problem lies in the nature of the dissent and who it is that is undertaking the defining. Those who would claim that the term should only apply to activists who adopt violent methods will need to explain why those who reject violence but who nonetheless promote a radical message are not to be considered equally ‘radical’ and the object of initiatives for counter-radicalization.⁹ While the debate on this remains to be resolved, it would at least be advisable, for reasons of clarity, for each user to provide their own definition. This would appear to be axiomatic but a number of discussion papers have questioned this position, arguing that the decision as to what constitutes ‘radical’ behavior in non-Muslim states is only to be made with reference to the norms of the country of origin of the Islamist activists.¹⁰ The danger here is that by leaving the definition unstable like this we effectively leave the definition to be made for us by those who would seek to change the center ground of Islam to one that fits a political end, and moreover a political end that does not take into account the conditions of the state in which they are resident. Given that the term ‘Islamism’ can cover a range of activities, the use of the term ‘radical’ can help the definition greatly, by denoting an intensified form of its political objectives – that is, the wing of Islamism that eschews political obligation to the nation-state and instead directs ultimate loyalty to the global Muslim community, the *umma*. I take this type of radical activity to be destructive to cohesion, and as such analogous to political violence. The word ‘radical’ therefore provides a useful bridge between promoters of a radical message of political transformation and militant activists acting upon that message, and it is in that sense that it is being used here.

Jihadis, Jihadists, Mujāhidīn

The term *jihādī* or its related forms, is here used to refer to the violent extremists of the *Salafīyya-Jihādīyya* school of thought, otherwise denoted by such terms as ‘neo-fundamentalists.’ Although it is the most common denominator adopted by adherents of this school, use of the term *jihādī* has become controversial of late, with attempts to remove its use from discourse in order not to lend the tendency the luster of Islamic respectability, since the verb form from which it is derived – *jāhada* – means ‘to strive’, and is used much more broadly in Islamic discourse than in the context of militancy.¹¹ However this study uses the term the way that Arab media commentary uses it, where no ambiguity is felt in employing the term at times to define a doctrinal concept, at other times to define the radical group, depending on the context.¹² Well-meaning, but misplaced, western sensitivity as to the use of the term, such as that it be used to denote a non-militant signification alone,¹³ will not affect Muslim usage of it (for whom use of these labels does not imply approval of their acts) and Muslims do not look to non-Muslims for guidance on the application and usage of terminology specific to their faith. Needless to say, any conditions placed by Muslims or non-Muslims on the usage of the terms *jihādī*, or *mujāhid* will not affect the militant extremists’ adoption of the term for themselves since it is their firm conviction that they alone hold to the true practice demanded by their faith, and this will necessarily imply that their own interpretation and use of language is the authentic one. With this in mind, the proposition that militant extremists will in some sense ‘gain credibility’ from non-Muslim misuse of this or any other term is fantastical. Nor is the proposal to replace the term *jihād* with the term *hirāba* – on the grounds that the former is a legitimate, authorized and ‘positive’ doctrine, whereas the latter refers to unauthorized, premature hostilities waged by *muḥsidūn* (‘spoilors’) any less misguided, since it implies that such a thing as a ‘genuine’ war against a religious enemy in the 21st century can exist and be considered legitimate in international law. The

word *jihādī* is therefore adopted as a useful shorthand term for what would otherwise have to be referred somewhat clumsily as ‘extremist militant Islamist’ or some suchlike combination.

Similar debates on terminology also take place within the jihadist current. Objections have been voiced that jihad is simply an aspect of worship much like the other fundamental obligations of Islam, yet we do not equally see terms such as *al-Salafiyya al-Salātiyya* (‘Prayer Salafism’) or *al-Salafiyya al-Zakātiyya* (‘Zakāh Salafism’). Supporters of the term acknowledge the ambiguity, but maintain that the objection misses the point. The term, argues one jihadist commentator,¹⁴ “also embraces those who have never undertaken jihad, such as Abū Qutāda and al-Maqdisī. The issue is that those who are named by *al-salafiyya al-jihādīyya* are taking care to combine two elements ... The first is adherence to the method of the *Salaf* in how they derive their conclusions (*istidlāl*) and in their creed – this makes them ‘Salafists’ The second is jihad as a methodology of change and a means to empowerment – this makes them Jihadists.” The other objection to the term is that naming the tendency *jihādī* implies that they are concentrating on jihad to the exclusion of other Islamically legitimate conduct in the cause of the empowerment of the faith, and that they thus neglect learning, education, *da‘wa*, the purification of belief and other matters. The commentator’s answer to this is that “it is unacceptable that such a shortcoming be implicit in the name. Their concentration on jihad is not to the exclusion of legitimate matters, for they hold to these and other things too. They are in fact simply specializing in jihad, as mentioned earlier, more than other supporters of the Sharī‘a and those toiling on behalf of the faith, and the reference to *jihād* in their name is merely to distinguish them from others, not to separate the tendency off from other obligations of Islamic law.”

Since Jihadism draws its inspiration from many sources, from the doctrinal frame of the Salafists and the political frame of the Islamists, the drawing of strict lines is therefore less relevant and can prove artificial. This study will therefore use all three terms on the understanding that they form parts of a particular spectrum of thought, alternating according to which part of the spectrum is being highlighted.

Totalitarian

In a survey of this nature it is inevitable that comparisons will be made to other systems of thought, in order to illustrate some in-working mechanisms. As a result the term ‘totalitarian’ will crop up. This is also a term that is not without its problems and its misuses, particularly due to the loss of its original meaning after becoming part of the armory of Cold War propaganda and invective. An important point to remember is that while it necessarily embraces authoritarianism and despotism, the term ‘totalitarian’ is not simply synonymous with it. The famous political theorist Hannah Arendt, in her work *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, noted how totalitarian regimes were not to be understood merely as tyrannies but as new forms of government, and new forms of political ideology. Modern theorists define totalitarianism as a total allegiance to a sacralized conception of a State, a ‘vision whose realization would consist in a complete transformation of the very character of human existence’.¹⁵ It is one which, in turn, offers the believer the reassurance and comfort of a single interpretation and meaning to the past, the present and the future destiny of the community, as history is held to move toward an immutable future, whether this movement be the struggle of a race, a class or a belief system. The ‘total’ ideology, the claim to a commonality of identity of state and society, comes as a direct response to the disconcerting open-endedness of the liberal, atomized, democratic understanding of the community and its identity. It seeks the subordination and homogenization of the governed, and offers a world view that is self-contained, even hermetically sealed from the vagaries and challenges of a pluralist world and a pluralist intellectual heritage. It is in this sense, one that is outlined by Islamist thinkers such as Mawdūdī and Sayyid Qutb – an ideology that actively seeks to mold and control not only the public sphere, but also the private life, thoughts and morals of its members to its dominant ideology – that the term ‘totalitarian’ is meant here.

A note on translation and transliteration

I have left titles of Arabic words consulted in Arabic script (since there does not seem to be much point in transliterating them, as opposed to translating them). With the exception of translations of Qur'ānic passages (where I have generally used the versions of Marmaduke Pickthall or Yusuf Ali) passages taken from the Arabic are my own translations, unless otherwise stated.

The terms Qur'ān, Hadīth, Shi'a, *mujāhidīn* have been preferred over Koran, Hadeeth, Shia, mujahideen unless these form part of another author's quotation or composition title.

Proper names which are not common currency, where they first occur and in the index, are spelled with diacritic markings for the vowels and the 'ayn letter in order to ease familiarity with them where, without this familiarity, some confusion might occur. Following the first occurrence, they are spelled without diacritic accents. For example: Mawdūdī – Mawdudi; 'Abd al-Wahhāb – Abd al-Wahhab; al-Zawāhirī – al-Zawahiri.¹⁶

Arabic terms are also treated in this manner. The preference has been to cite these in the nominative (*raf'*) case, which will account for terms such as *al-ikhwān al-muslimūn* (as opposed to *al-ikhwān al-muslimīn*) and *Al Muhajiroun*. Terms which have become common currency are not so treated, cf. *mujāhidīn*, *Bedouin*, *Fedayeen*.

Less familiar terms, or those which are not likely to become common currency (such as *'aqīda* or *isnād*) are left with diacritic accents.

Introduction

“It’s like the old game of Space Invaders ... when you clear one screen of potential attackers, another simply appears to take its place.”¹

NINE years after the attacks of September 11th 2001, any observer of news reports that continue to highlight acts of violence carried out in the name of an abstraction – often expressed in terms of a call to ‘raise Islam’s banner high’ – would be forgiven for despairing of finding an answer to the questions of what it is that the perpetrators want and how it is that, in the face of a series of reverses in the field, the current of jihadism seems not to be waning, or checked, but even to be in the ascendant.

For while there are few who would doubt the value of the security response to the jihad phenomenon and the violent activities of terrorist cells, the threat posed by jihadist militant groups seems not to have been significantly impacted as to their morale or ability to recruit and replace losses. The continuing vigor of jihadism, not only in collapsed states such as Afghanistan and Somalia, and in Iraq, but also in flashpoints in the North-West Frontier regions of Pakistan, Algeria, Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria attests to this. Sympathy for the aims of jihadist groups appears to be holding firm throughout the Middle East and the wider Muslim world. Even more perplexing, given the political and economic environments in which they live, is the increasing evidence of sympathies for jihadism among Muslim communities in Europe and the United States. And yet this support seems to be detached from their personal circumstances and opportunities, and immune to the vicissitudes of Al Qaeda’s performance, or that of any other militant group raising the banner of Jihad. As one counterterrorism official put it:

“The demographics of those being arrested are so diverse that many European counterterrorism officials and analysts say they have given up trying to predict what sorts of people are most likely to become terrorists.”²

The question that gnaws equally at the mind of the analyst, the security professional, the academic and the general public is what can the attraction be, particularly to Muslim youth, of an ideology that restricts them, impoverishes them, or even sends them to an early grave? An anti-modern ideology, moreover, that seems to find its natural home in the enriching, mind-expanding 21st century world of the Web? Some basic errors in our starting points are being perpetuated that leave us floundering for answers.

One can certainly indicated some impediments that have hampered the counter-terrorism response. These include intelligence methodology failures, such as pursuing a *regional* focus on the threat, and placing too much emphasis on classified, as opposed to open-source, materials. Another obstacle has been the unwarranted emphasis on seeking out root causes to explain the phenomenon of Islamist militancy. Such an emphasis is partly a product of established habits, since western analysis is geared to revolutionary movements born in a western cultural context, for which explanations based on underlying economic or social causes, or on nation state/territorial claims have in the past proved adequate.

The truth is that the revolutionary movement of 21st century Jihadism is of a depth and complexity unprecedented in the history of totalitarian struggles. Unlike the contests waged in the 20th century, the jihadist movement is a revolt not just against the political or economic order, but *the entire mental universe underpinning modernity*. Yet in the war of ideas this fundamental fact is being obscured by the

intricate dynamics of internally developing Islamic thought and the issue of Muslim identities and their place in the world community, turning what should be a straight concern of intellectual emancipation into something charged with political and cultural significance. Faced with such a minefield, western analysis has preferred to work on more familiar territory, channelling its resources into establishing the metrics of group dynamics, individual alienation or the collective response to western political behaviour, as if doggedly holding to an article of faith that there is something that must be pushing youths to extremism, instead of something which has any internal intellectual coherence of its own and which might be pulling them into it.³

It is a failure that stems from a certain cultural arrogance that Islamist militancy must all in some way be a response to what the West does and thinks, instead of deriving its impulses from factors internal to the historical and cultural experience of the Islamic world. Yet the more one delves into the issue, the more the humbling fact is revealed that the contemporary manifestation of militant jihad is not the start and end of the matter, but part of a long-developing intellectual civil war, in which the West is at best peripheral.

The definition, rise and implications of radical Islam

The principal failure, therefore, is the inability to date to identify the core problem as one of a competing *cultural* program. At its core, the movement of radical, politicized Islam is an ideological movement with a revolutionary impulse that seeks to fundamentally alter the religious, intellectual and political complexion of Muslims worldwide towards a more pristine and ‘Islamically authentic’ form – an original, divinely sanctioned, winning template that will restore the lapsed political, military and economic fortunes of the Muslim world.

The rise of fundamentalism in general is a response to the globalization of ideas and the conflict with systems of thought that call into question some fundamentals of religious belief. For the Muslim world the conflict has been particularly painful and sudden, since it was coupled with physical manifestations of political, technological and cultural decline.⁴ What distinguishes Islamic fundamentalism further, however, is the complicating factor of a faith and a culture that envisions its role as definer, being in the ignominious position of seeing its world being defined for it.

Radical Sunnīs see themselves principally as ‘reformers’ of what has become a degenerated Islam, the punishment for which degeneration has been the headlong decline in political and economic prestige that the Muslim world has undergone over the past three centuries. To reverse that decline and Islam’s current lack of normative status in the modern world, Muslims must return to the winning formula and practices established by the ‘pious ancestors’. It is this headlong plunge into the past to secure its future that characterizes the Salafist movement and its ideological offspring, and which marks out radical Islam as unique among contemporary revolutionary movements.

By reforming back to this model, radical Sunnīs see as inevitable the restoration not only of its religious and pietistic features, but also of its political structures. Above all, the model is provided by the nascent *Umma* or ‘Nation’ first established by the Prophet Muhammad at Madīna, continued faithfully under the conditions of the early Caliphate, and therefore held to constitute the ideal political structure. This structure is to be governed in accordance with the Sharī‘a and extended globally to all humanity through the waging of *jihād* under the logic of the struggle of Truth over Falsehood, and the removal of obstacles that are preventing humanity from ‘reverting’ to its true, primordial Muslim status.

While Muslim history bears witness to numerous reform movements that sought purification to a more pristine, ‘Arabian’ model in the face of the temptations of cultural and intellectual diversity, the sense of cultural and political defeat accelerated in the 19th century and generated currents of reform that are collectively denoted by the term *al-Nahda* (‘The Resurgence’). However, while the élites of the Muslim world embraced the task of modernization and development with enthusiasm, to many of their compatriots the constituents of this Renaissance appeared to require the ingestion of elements that overstretched the definition of Islamic faith and culture as they understood it. This meant that while Arab nationalists focused on emancipation from the imperial powers, Muslim reformers were exercised by something they considered more insidious than territorial occupation – *intellectual* colonialism. Their struggle, as they saw it, therefore had to incorporate a struggle against the intellectual starting points of modernity, which they conceived of as an extraneous, impious construction.

A conspicuous expression of this anxiety was the formation in 1928 in Egypt of the organization known as the Muslim Brotherhood. In step with the priorities of its founder members the organization played a limited role in the anti-colonial struggle, out of suspicion of the secular type of political structure that the resistance was aiming to install in place of the foreigner. The movement subsequently presented significant challenges to the development of Arab nationalist governments during the mid-20th century. Over the past four decades, however, with the general disillusion with the political failure of Arab nationalism and of socialism, the influence of the Brotherhood’s Islamist political message has increased.

The Muslim Brotherhood, along with its sister organization the Jamiat-i Islami in South Asia, have played the role of midwife to a number of jihadist movements by providing the intellectual and political training for their founders and ideologues. All of these movements, though differing with the mother organizations in matters of tactics and medium-term strategies, do not differ on matters of core religious doctrine, and so they can effectively be viewed as manifestations of a single collective ideology, whose common aim is the establishment of the Islamic State.

The current political status of the Arab Middle East – military defeat, economic stagnation, intellectual sterility and consequent porosity to currents of culture which they have played little or no part in shaping – provides the ideal arena for Islamists to vindicate their diagnosis of the failure and their formula for recovery: the ‘re-Islamization’ of Muslim society at all of its levels. Their diagnosis, to be sure, is eclectic, but this eclecticism is adroitly dressed in the language of piety and the divine promise of revival of a Golden Age, and being expressed in a series of abstractions divorced from time and place, such a promise is never invalidated through any demonstration of inconsistencies. The success is palpable; over the last four decades radical Islamist ideology has made its voice increasingly audible among the currents of contemporary Islamic thought and continues to maintain the initiative, to the point of displaying greater public vitality than any other trend in the Muslim world. The political and cultural stresses of the Arab Middle East have acted as the cradle of Islamist reaction to the challenges of modernity and pluralism, and still today the region remains as the epicenter of jihadist thought, providing the model and the validation for related movements across the world.

The consistent feature of Islamist thought – the pre-occupation with the restoration of Islamic ‘unity’ as a common front against a perceived cultural and political attack – has implications not just for the community of Muslims worldwide as such, but for the global community as a whole. The corollary of a universal reform is the restoration of Islam’s universal mission to dominate. It is important to understand the difference between a religious obligation to ‘spread the Truth’ (something which is shared by other religious communities) and the Islamist obligation to achieve *political* dominion. For the Islamists, the

‘religious obligation’ effectively starts and ends with these political aims – the issue of whether Christians and Jews choose to ‘revert’ to Islam or not is neither their practical, nor their ideological, concern.

The point ... is not to force people to accept the Truth without their believing in it without the choice, rather it is to have the leadership and their followers use force to remove the obstacles impeding the access of Truth to human minds – for if the Truth with its evidences and proofs reaches these minds, they may choose to do accept it or refuse it and take responsibility for the results of their refusal, which would include God’s painful punishment for them for their refusing the Truth after it was demonstrated to them with proofs.⁵

The primary obligation is to ensure that Islam *defines the political, legal and public space*. This definition is what constitutes the Islamists’ religious ‘universalism,’ and it must perforce embrace both the domestic and global arenas.

The starting points of radical Islam have always made a clash with the United States something inevitable, irrespective of its foreign policies in the Muslim world. Sayyid Qutb’s experience of living in America in 1948, at a time when its foreign policy was actively *opposing* the influence of the colonial powers in the Middle East, convinced him that it constituted a prime enemy for Islam due to its value system of liberalism and democracy, in that they threw down an open challenge to Islam as a way of life, and to God as the only law-giver:

This transference of sovereignty occurred ... by allowing men to unduly arrogate to himself the right to establish values, to legislate, to elaborate systems, and to take positions, all without regard to divine ethics ... Now to oppose the rule of God in this way is to be *the enemy of his faithful*.

Both Sayyid Qutb and Abū al-A‘lā Mawdūdī in the 1960s stated openly that there were two enemies of Truth: the atheistic communism of the Soviet Union and the liberal democracy of the United States. With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 the Islamist spotlight inevitably focused on the United States, as the only remaining power putting up any significant obstacle to the divinely-sanctioned logic of Mankind’s inexorable reversion to Islam and its acquiescence in Islamic rule. It is under this conceptual framework that American behavior and policies were henceforth to be viewed: the erosion of values through profane cultural exports, the support for the Jewish enemies of Islam in Israel, the subversion of Iran’s Islamic revolution, the support for anti-Islamist regimes, the entry of troops on Arabian soil at the first Gulf War in 1991. The Islamist diagnosis was unequivocal: they are Crusades, all of them, in everything but name.

Islamism’s ideology of expansion embraces necessarily another dimension – radicalization of Muslims resident outside the Muslim majority states. The states of western Europe in particular, where there are already relatively large and growing Muslim *diaspora* communities, are seen by groups such as al-Qaeda not only as a source of financial support or political shelter, or as a fecund exporter of new recruits, but as an active arena itself of expansion. The implications of radicalization in these communities are highly significant for the security and stability of these states in a number of ways.

Firstly, western Muslims, many of them non-Arab, are vulnerable to the Arab-dominated Islamist propaganda which makes efficient work of undermining their inherited traditions, in favor of a more ‘authentic’ Islam whose doctrinal contours are not fully familiar to them. Their ability to resist the ideological program is all the weaker since they face the accusation of hypocrisy through ‘contamination’ from their western environment. There are statistically fewer alternative voices of authority to mount an

effective defense. Secondly, Islamists are able to operate and pursue their objectives entirely legally within a democratic system which is uncomfortable with the prospect of policing ideas. Failing the ability to challenge the western states directly, Islamists employ the highly successful tactic of disengagement from civic participation and promoting cultural self-isolation under the ostensibly pious guise of safeguarding the purity of the faith from contamination. While these radicalizing communities turn their backs on participation, or demand ever greater concessions to their cultural exceptionalism, the inevitable effect is to undermine, if not the legal and security mechanisms, then at least the social mechanisms of the democratic state. This erosion of social coherence will eventually place non-Muslim members of the host community in a position of vulnerability, in preparation for a time when the tactics of confrontation to liberal democracy and secularism can be more overtly expressed (see Chapter Six: *The Mujāhid in the West*).

Implications of the analysis deficit

The result of western misconceptions to date as to the nature of the threat has allowed the Islamist radicals to progress unhindered on the *ideological* front, leaving the indoctrination factory intact, and to pursue their strategy to establish radical Islamism (the effective springboard for militant jihadism) as the *established form of Islam* both in the Muslim majority states and in the western diasporas. There has already been some success registered in this endeavor. For instance, in the United Kingdom some consideration was given to the possibility co-opting Islamists and Salafists into the anti-Jihadist campaign. Former head of the Metropolitan Police's Muslim Contact Unit Robert Lambert called for a

‘partnership with Muslim groups conventionally deemed to be subversive to democracy and negotiation by those groups with Muslim youth drawn to Al Qaeda terrorism’⁶

on the grounds that

‘Salafis and Islamists often have the best antidotes to al-Qaida propaganda once it has taken hold.’⁷

The logic, as argued by Lambert, is that genuine Muslim moderates have ‘neither religious nor political credibility’⁸ and the state should therefore refrain from making value-judgements about the nature of politically-minded Islamists and their beliefs, in the hope that this trade-off will deliver security as these Islamists, if they were so-minded, would act to influence others to refrain from acts of violence.

The problem is that [this] isn't working. Not only is it failing to achieve its stated objectives, in many places it is actually making the situation worse: a new generation is being radicalised, sometimes with the very funds that are supposed to be countering radicalisation.⁹

Opaqueness and confusion as to the spectrum of Islamic belief has also allowed Islamists to prevent the forming of a true debate on what are and what are not acceptable expressions of Islam in western societies and has granted immunity to their erosion strategies against democratic culture. The result has been some examples of misplaced support in the name of tolerance which have undermined the cause of moderate Islam, such as discussions on cultural exceptionalism issues and the possibility of permitting some limited applications of Shari‘a.¹⁰

Meanwhile others have assumed that ‘water will find its own level’ and that the experience of living in a democracy, or exposure to more enlightened, pluralistic counter-arguments, on the basis of the strength

and quality of these ideas alone, will suffice to defeat radicalism. Yet this is illusory since the Jihadists are able to immunize themselves through a series of ideological filters and ‘identity walls’ (see Part III, Chapter 4 below) which claim religious truth for their cement, and against the challenge presented by currents of modernism and emancipation, they seek to weave together both Arab and Muslim identity seamlessly with more apocalyptic issues of salvation.

Without a knowledge of the mental geography of Islamist radicalism – of the starting points, core foundations, areas of strength and weakness, and the internal points of tension – any attempts to confront the phenomenon will continue to fall victim to these ideological filters and identity walls, and any counter-ideology program that is attempted will be doomed to irrelevancy and failure. To meet the task of protecting humane, universalist values, counter-ideology initiatives will therefore need to undertake a thorough re-investigation of what constitutes the internal intellectual mechanisms in Islamist radicalism, how they differ from our own, and how they can be deconstructed from within, in their own arenas, using their own terms of reference and authority, in order to ensure the ‘mental defeat.’

Chapter One – *Problems of Perception*

Western liberals, who prize reason, are subject to the tendency to explain away beliefs they consider unreasonable ... extremism [they argue] cannot triumph because it does not make sense.

D. MacDonald

False assumptions on the nature of the struggle

FOR SOME time now security and counter-terrorism operatives have come to the conclusion that they have been confronting and intercepting fully formed jihadists, but that these are merely at the end of a long-term ideological training process that produces them – which means that they continue to replace themselves at a rate faster than they can be intercepted. Needless to say, this production process has yet to be tackled efficiently. Analysis, such as it is, of this revolutionary phenomenon is hampered by habits formed from earlier contests. Western security organizations are familiar with revolutionary movements born in a western cultural context. They are therefore prone to prioritizing issues familiar from these experiences, and seeking causality in the spheres of economic and social development, or territorial claims relevant to the nation state.

The fact that this disarray is occurring has everything to do with a failure to grasp the starting points and the robustness of the *ideological and intellectual infrastructure* of the jihad phenomenon. The problem is that most analysis on jihadism is fixated on the militant violent fringe manifestation of what is in fact a massive social engineering project which the radical ideologues are undertaking. In this vast project the West is little more than a side-show, but in our self-absorption, we have largely assumed that we *are* the arena.

This opacity on the starting points of jihadism has left us unable to understand why jihadism is so resilient. The language, to the contemporary reader, appears so antiquated, the political program so anachronistic, the argumentation so arcane, that for many commentators the ideology surely could not possibly occupy the attention of thinking people. One author of an excellent study on the origins of al-Qaeda,¹ himself indicates the intellectual and hermeneutical problems of western analysis when he sums up the organization's ideology:

The organization was constructed from rotten intellectual bits and pieces – false readings of religion and history - cleverly and deviously fitted together to give the appearance of reason. ... al-Qaeda's sophistry is rudely displayed for everyone to see. Although it likely will continue as a terrorist group, who could still take it seriously as a philosophy?²

Part of the confusion as to the aims and purposes of al-Qaeda comes from the failure to understand that al-Qaeda is not the start or the finish of the phenomenon of jihadism, but is in fact part of a much wider movement which defines itself in the language (and not just the slogans) of faith. It has gained its staying power from the fact that, far from being a recent phenomenon that is 'reacting' to political events dictated by the western powers, jihadism is a product of a decades-long intellectual civil war. Defending their

corner in this contest has demanded considerable intellectual investment from the jihadis. We ourselves have only lately been drawn into this civil war in all its unfamiliar mental territory, and thus remain disorientated and unprepared to understand it and challenge it.

The ‘root cause analysis’ fallacy

A result of institutional failure to investigate Jihadism in depth has been the ingestion of a number of false assumptions concerning the origins of the phenomenon. These assumptions promote an approach that prioritizes recent and largely western-originated underlying causes to Islamist violence, or assumes the primacy of western agency in the unfolding and resolution of the problem. The consequent focus away from the self-definition of the *mujāhidīn* leads to confusion concerning the nature of the threat, which impacts seriously on the prospects for counter-terrorism and the promotion of reform. More thoughtful voices, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, have opposed these false assumptions:

It is unfair and simplistic ... to claim that it is Western policy that lit the fuse for [the September 11, 2001] events. Without a theological position justifying the rejection of the mainstream position, the frustration with orthodoxy would have led to a frustration with religion - and then to a search for secular responses. That alternative theology does, however, exist.³

Nevertheless, the familiarity of the western-focused terrain for analysts, combined with the unfamiliarity and complexity of the line of research that is opened up by the alternative, have left the investigation patchy and of inconsistent quality.

This starting point has dominated media commentary which continues to promote the erroneous “root cause analysis” of Islamist terrorism, by which the phenomenon is explained in terms of socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty, racism against, or cultural displacement of, migrant communities, or alternatively in terms of Middle East democracy or U.S. foreign policy in the region. These starting points have proved unhelpful in providing answers — not least for the problems of timing (jihadism predates 9/11 and Afghanistan by decades) and lack of evidence of economic deprivation or racial victimhood of the perpetrators, either in the Middle East or in western communities. Nevertheless, the standard commentary on Islamist violence is that the phenomenon is exaggerated and that Muslims are being unfairly targeted.

While statements from groups such as al-Qaeda distributed for a western audience demonstrate awareness of this root cause debate, jihadis themselves provide no raw material for it. Even a cursory reading of the number of jihadist materials made available in English is enough to demonstrate that the world view, justification and aims of the jihadis correspond remarkably little to western perceptions of the phenomenon.

For instance, the assumption made by supporters of the root cause analysis approach that the jihad will wither on the vine with the eventual resolution of national or territorial issues, contradicts the statements by jihad leaders that speak of a much broader agenda. For Bin Laden the activities of western powers in the Muslim world are symptoms of something far more important than mere loss of territory or humiliation, they betray the one and only cause: the clash of Faith and Disbelief, of Truth and Falsehood. This contest for supremacy is total and unremitting, whether or not the western enemy seeks ‘mutual understanding,’ dialogue or repudiates cultural imperialism. “It is part of our religion to impose our particular beliefs upon others,” argues Bin Laden, “whoever doubts this, let him turn to the deeds of the

Companions when they raided the lands of the Christians and [the Caliph] Omar imposed upon them the conditions [of *dhimmitude*].”⁴

The comments of former Islamists illustrate this mismatch of cause and effect. Shiraz Maher, a former member of Hizb al-Tahrir dismisses the common western analysis thus:

The largest suicide campaign in history was waged in Iraq by non-Iraqis. This is because those who volunteered for this course of action believe that Islam is under attack -- this means that this is a *religious* conflict in minds of those perpetrating the acts, not a conflict about colonialism or nationalism or any other ‘ism’.⁵

Although Islamist movements may emerge as a response to social conditions, they cannot be written off as mechanical reflections of social or economic concerns. Once engaged in the vocabulary of faith, then discourse acquires an intellectual autonomy all of its own. It becomes a discourse of a cause – the enforcement of God's Word – that disdains to reconnect with the banal materialisms of the socialist, the nationalist, the third-world anti-hegemonist:

As such we would be making a serious mistake if we applied a vulgar type of reductionism to the discourse of the Islamic movements and assumed that they did not really mean what they were talking about, or if we tried to impart a purely socio-economic significance to their discourse. Economic, social and political factors may *give rise* to specific movements at specific times, but such movements soon have a logic and a life of their own and their discourse certainly appears to their members to be self-sufficient and self-contained.⁶

The religious essence of the struggle (leaving aside how tendentiously jihadists interpret the demands made upon them by their faith) is continually emphasized by the jihadists themselves as justification for their cause. “Jihad in the path of Allah,” according to Ayman al-Zawāhirī: “is greater than any individual or organization. It is a struggle between Truth and Falsehood, until Allah Almighty inherits the earth and those who live in it.”⁷ Theirs is an eternal struggle to which they in their generation are making their due contribution, reviving what has become a ‘neglected duty’ – the neglect being responsible for the current failure of Muslims to enjoy supremacy. Bassam Tibi is at pains to stress this fundamentally religious motivation:

We need to take the Islamic self reference of these jihadists seriously. The religious image the jihadists have of themselves as “the true believers” is not an expression of cynicism, but rather sincere true belief, even though their action might contradict orthodox religious doctrines. Understanding this is pertinent, because it is basic to the effort to enable ourselves to grasp the current historical phenomenon of the religiously legitimated terrorism under issue. The religious legitimation is neither instrumental nor does it serve as a camouflage for covering otherwise criminal acts⁸

Given the permanence and pedigree of this struggle, charges hurled against them of ‘terrorism’ or ‘distortion’ of their faith will not sway them. Their behavior, with all its indiscriminate victims is justified to themselves by their understanding of the example set by the Prophet, an argument which they feel trumps whatever personal sensibilities one might entertain. For Bin Laden, if terrorism constitutes unjust aggression against the lives and property of non-combatants:

such by necessity must apply to and include the Prophet who assaulted the lives, properties, and women of the infidels, who were living in secure and settled cities. As did his Companions after him ... Thus our Prophet and his Companions and the righteous forefathers have all now become ‘terrorists.’⁹

If western analysts demonstrate confusion on what the aims of these new revolutionaries are, Jihadists themselves have no doubt as to what motivates their enemy. “The West is ultimately hostile to Islam” according to Bin Laden,

because it knows that Islam is hostile to it ... and it is avenging itself against Islam for giving infidels but three options: Islam, *jizya* (poll tax), or the sword ¹⁰... it is bent on pulverizing the Muslims, since first learning of this enterprise ¹¹

Such bold, unambiguous statements of intent are not rare or concealed in obscure tracts, they populate the Internet *passim*, as one would expect from an ideology that is seeking to alter and dominate Muslim identity. All of which makes the persistence of western confusion itself perplexing. A particularly terse appraisal of the western tendency to avoid taking the enemy into account, and their own starting points, is given by former member of the Egyptian *Al-Gamā'a Al-Islāmiyya* Dr. Tawfīk Hamīd, who states:

“I can tell you what it is not about. Not about Israel, not about Iraq, not about Afghanistan. They are mere excuses ... Muslim terrorists kill and slaughter not because of what they experience but because of what they believe ... The first thing you have to understand is that it has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with poverty or lack of education ... I've heard this poverty nonsense time and time again from Western apologists for Islam, most of them not Muslim by the way. There are millions of passive supporters of terror who may be poor and needy but most of those who do the killing are wealthy, privileged, educated and free. If it were about poverty, ask yourself why it is middle-class Muslims — and never poor Christians — who become suicide bombers in Palestine ... Stop asking what you have done wrong. Stop it! They're slaughtering you like sheep and you still look within. You criticize your history, your institutions, your churches. Why can't you realize that it has nothing to do with what you have done but with what they want.”¹²

As for the argument that extremism is the product of the policies of the west, or even specifically of the counter-terrorism policies, the Muslim scholar Tawfīque Chowdhury, himself a conservative, puts it like this:

Hundreds of years before the anti-terrorism policies of the West, approximately 1400 years ago, Muslims were fighting the intellectual battles that terrorism presented in the battle between the Khawarij of the past and companions of the Prophet. This continued throughout the ages – where independent Muslim scholars presented the best defense against distorted terrorist ideologies.¹³

Root cause analysis generally fails to take into account the doctrine of *al-walā' wal-barā'* ('Loyalty and Renunciation') which forms the central core of the jihadist ideology. The doctrine prescribes essential and eternal hatred for the infidel, irrespective of the latter's behaviour past, present or future. The primacy given to this doctrine by jihadism, even over other considerations that might logically appear to be more pressing, is demonstrated by Ayman al-Zawahiri himself. In his book *Knights under the Banner of the Prophet*, he states:

Making the masses of the Islamic nation understand *al-walā' wal-barā'* will require a long time, and our enemies will not give us that time. Therefore, we must use jihad in Palestine as a means of making the Islamic nation understand *al-walā' wal-barā'*¹⁴

The one takes precedence over the other. Since this doctrine is of crucial importance to jihadism it is treated in detail later (on this see Part II, Chapter 3 below) but it may be summed up as constituting the strongest refutation on its own of root cause analysis.

There is considerably more to Islamism and Jihadism, therefore, than meets the eye. They are founded upon doctrinal imperatives that conflict with universalist principles shared by most of the peoples around the globe. Indeed, there is also a significant dimension to the current wave of jihad conflict that is based on deeper epistemological starting points, dissonances which position the struggle as one that is set against the mental edifice of *modernity itself*, to which more attention should be drawn than is presently the case. Understanding these starting points will go a long way towards explaining some apparent contradictions and curious pre-occupations in the ideology of the jihad. In the context of the failure of western analysis to understand the true ‘root causes’ of the jihad phenomenon, the comments by the Jordanian political commentator Shaker al-Nabulsi are illuminating:

We are blind fools, our minds disabled by ignorance, if we continue to believe that the daily bloodbaths in the centre and south of Iraq are caused by the American occupation of that country. If terrorism were caused by American occupation, where was the foreign occupation of Morocco that needed to be resisted with booby-trapped cars and suicide bombers? Where was the American military occupation of Algeria?

What is being resisted in Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, and other parts of the Arab world is not American military occupation. If that were the case there would be terrorist attacks in Qatar, where the American military has been firmly established for some time. It is not foreign military occupation that the terrorists are bombing, but the flower of modernity.¹⁵

Overall the root cause analysis approach is an unsupported assumption which is burdened a number of fundamental flaws. For instance, It has long been established that the economic deprivation argument has failed to account for the attraction of jihadism to economically successful Muslims (doctors and engineers being preeminent among the leaders) and failed to address the issue of chronology, that the modern manifestation of jihadism is itself a phenomenon that has been building up for many decades.¹⁶ The theory also fails to address the political reference points of jihadism (none of which are Arabist or anti-colonial) or the antipathy of jihadism to nationalist struggles (beyond what Dr. Walid Phares terms an opportunistic “swimming with the Third World crowd”).¹⁷ Root cause analysis also confuses irredentist with global jihad – a particularly egregious example being one strain of British analysis of the problem as a form of Northern Ireland conflict, resolvable by the same means: by allowing radical Islamists and jihadists ‘a slice of the cake.’ However, the most serious deficits are those which are caused by a failure to take into consideration the jihadists’ own account of the struggle – their presentation of their case as something essentialist and unconnected with specific militant groups and their indifference to the denomination of their cause as ‘defensive’ or ‘offensive’ jihad. Nowhere in root cause analysis is any consideration taken of the jihadists’ own version of root causes, as encapsulated in the doctrine of *al-walā’ wal-barā’* and its core position within militant confrontation and internal erosion strategies.

Failure to name the enemy

Rather than get to grips with this internal doctrine, the tendency has been to keep with externals. An example of this tendency is the pre-occupation with language. The premise of the Department of Homeland Security’s “*Terminology to Define Terrorists*” advisory is that sympathies to Islamist terrorism are stirred up by the use of terminology that offends broader Islamic sensibilities, such as the use of the term *jihad*, *mujāhid* or *Islamist* to refer to the politicized ideology or to terrorists.¹⁸ That is, that Muslim youth are not drawn into violent extremism by the internal attraction of an ideology but rather propelled into it by some clumsy impoliteness in the use of language. Similarly, in the United Kingdom,

the use of the terms ‘jihadist,’ ‘Islamist terrorist,’ ‘Islamist extremism or ‘jihadi-fundamentalist’ has been discouraged in favor of deliberately unspecific terms such as ‘criminals and murderers’.¹⁹ The thinking behind these initiatives is that if western governments employed a vocabulary that avoided any links between terrorism and any form of Islam, it would ‘counter the message that Islam justified such attacks.’ All this may be well-intentioned but it is largely irrelevant. The doctrine and cultural of Jihad predates 9/11 by a long stretch and it has not been influenced in any way by popular perceptions of the term *‘jihād’*, whether in the East or in the West.

Indeed, three principal points may be raised in objection to this policy. Firstly, on the matter of ‘cultural sensitivity,’ reading any Arabic language newspaper, and seeing how Muslims in the Middle East use the term, should be enough to dismiss this argument. Contrary to claims made in the West, Muslims across the globe are in no ambiguity as to what is meant by Jihad as a doctrinal religious term, and Jihad as meant by groups such as al-Qaeda. Western analysts ought to think twice before adopting the position of seeking to teach Muslims to take a look at how they use their religious language. Secondly, the jihadists do not seek legitimacy, or fear de-legitimization from non-Muslims. It is highly wishful thinking that the propagandists would be impeded in their appeals by this linguistic discipline, or that their panoply of ‘Islam is under siege’ propaganda is so thinly supplied that it would be statistically depleted by this. Instead, they are content to argue their case on the basis of Islamic tradition and authenticity, and construct it upon broader undisputed starting points as to the obligation of jihad either as a responsibility of the community (*fard kifāya*) or one that devolves onto the individual (*fard ‘ayn*). This constitutes the entirety of their mental arena and their battle for legitimacy in this arena is between themselves and the broader Muslim community. Thirdly, the proposal to replace the term *jihād* with the term *hirāba* – on the grounds that the former is a legitimate, authorized and ‘positive’ doctrine, whereas the latter refers to unauthorized, premature hostilities waged by *mufsidūn* (‘spoilors’) – implies, as mentioned earlier, that such a thing as a ‘genuine’ war against a religious enemy in the 21st century can exist and be considered legitimate in international law.

At best it is an example of western analytical community looking for peripheral issues to engage with rather than getting to grips with the active recruitment to the Jihadist cause by the force of ideologues talking and distorting Islamic religious concepts to political ends. At worst, it is an example of deflecting attention away from the proper study of Jihadism and the identification of the concept of Jihadism as itself the problem, rather than any ‘inappropriate’ application of the term. Terms such as *jihadist* or *Islamist* are identifications of gradations of the threat, without which a counter-position cannot become established.²⁰ Not only does this pre-occupation with sanitizing vocabulary sanitize the discussion beyond any degree of usefulness, it can actually close down investigation altogether. The above terms are not descriptive of Islam or Muslims, and avoidance of their use is not only unwise but marches precisely in step with the purposes of groups such as al-Qaeda, since it implies that what the jihadists are doing is inseparable from the belief of all Muslims, and that it is authentic, authoritative and thus inexorable.

Reluctance to identify the greater source of the threat – an ideology as opposed to a specific group – is what is increasingly coming to inform policies at the highest levels. There is a perilous misconception implied in this reticence – that the refusal to discuss the relationship between Islam and militant jihad (the bread and butter of radical Islamist propaganda) will in some way weaken their case and diminish their platform, instead of simply leaving the field open to them and unchallenged. Islamist radicals thrive on the opaqueness of the distinctions between Jihadism and Islam, and it is the *lack* of public debate on these distinctions that is keeping them blurred.

A parallel with another form of supremacist ideology highlights well the current disarray when it comes to Jihadism and its goals, and the dubious wisdom of attempting to see a distinction between violent and non-violent exponents of the movement:

20th century America found that all that worked against white supremacy was total ideological confrontation ... America did not seek to merely 'contain' the Ku Klux Klan terrorist organization in the 1960s-1980s; it challenged the root ideology that provided their basis. A white supremacist who renounced terrorism, but continued to seek 'non-violent' political measures promoting white supremacy, segregation, etc., was still not accepted ... The war of ideas required confrontation, not 'engagement' that would legitimize an anti-equality, anti-freedom ideology.²¹

The confrontation then was forthcoming. Now, however, the reticence to engage with the ideology of Jihad comes from a misplaced sense of non-qualification for the debate. If this were a matter of ignorance of the minutiae of Islamic law, this would be understandable enough. But the surrender occurs far before it gets into that territory and is motivated more by fear of causing offence through 'saying the wrong thing.' Not only does this sanitize the discussion beyond any degree of usefulness, it can actually close down debate altogether. The abdication was deplored by a UK policy paper:

Why leave the political task of challenging extremist ideas to Muslims? Surely combating the political challenge of Islamism is something non-Muslims can also contribute to? The assumption is that only Muslims can fully relate to each other ... This essentialist notion leaves Muslims isolated as a group and consigned to an intellectual and cultural ghetto. Even worse, it sends the signal that non-Muslim, 'Western' ideas are not really for them.²²

The establishment of 'no-go areas' to non-Muslim analysts in particular isolates Muslim progressives and is a process which Islamist intellectuals and activists would certainly be eager to endorse. The retreat from universalism in moral values implied by these western state initiatives contrasts starkly with the perceptions of Muslim progressive commentators. The former *mufī* of Marseilles Soheib Bencheikh, for instance, is dismissive of the capitulation of western commentators:

Islam must be criticized, just as Christianity was criticized during the Enlightenment. Islam is a message destined for all humanity. It is therefore not the property of Muslims alone ... Not criticizing Islam constitutes a form of segregation.²³

Worse still, the refusal to challenge Islamism with ideas and concepts drawn from other intellectual heritages concedes defeat to the Islamists since it betrays a lack of confidence about our ability to win the argument rationally:

It is almost as if we have given up trying to tell young people what is wrong with Islamism, and we are instead trying to convince them that such ideas are simply 'un-Islamic,'²⁴

thus again removing the subject from the arena of debate.

The narcissism of western analysis

The propensity of western commentators to 'look within', as detailed above, seems to be a response to the frustration at the failure to explain jihadism by applying analytical habits inherited from earlier anti-totalitarian struggles. Nature abhors a vacuum, and our analytical nature is no different. If we do not have the analytical tools relevant to the object of study, or if they seem to falter, the temptation is to simply

fabricate them and invent our own cause and effect relationships. In many ways this is an evidence of western narcissism, as it were, the disbelief that political players could have entirely different starting points from its own, or independent from what the West does and what the West thinks. Both ends of the political spectrum are guilty of this. The left believes that the Islamists' enmity to the West is due to the latter's faults and failures (imperialism, racism, exploitation), while the right maintains that the hatred is directed at the West's virtues and success (freedom, prosperity, opportunity).²⁵

But beyond the unhelpfulness of these starting points in providing answers, there are deeper consequences to the exercise of this set of attitudes. For instance, asking the question: "*Why do they hate us?*" has the following effects:

- *It avoids the task of investigation:* Those who ask the questions "Why do they hate us?" have already decided what the answer is: there must be a western provocation. Focusing attention on finding this provocation diverts energy and resources from investigating the nature of the threat itself.
- *It panders to western arrogance and self-absorption:* It implies only *we* can be the operative actors in the world arena. The others can only react to what we do.
- *It underrates the jihadists:* if they can only react, and lack self-motivated action, they must be devoid of intelligence and independent initiative. They must, in short, be stupid people. We therefore need not take them seriously.

An additional demerit of this approach to cause and effect is the implied insult to Muslims and belittling of Islamic civilization. If all Muslims are held to be victims of the West's actions, then the terrorist 'response' is to be considered an automatic, predictable response from the Islamic mainstream, a community that lacks the moral fiber to react in an alternative fashion, being brittle and in some way 'pre-primed' for violence. The corollary of this line of thinking would be that Islam must in some way constitute a lower form of civilization, in which violent revenge is to be expected, and therefore not to be unequivocally condemned (in the way that it would be for other civilizations). In this sense root cause analysis supports a 'clash of civilizations' position. Tarek Fatah, founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, puts the case succinctly:

There is a tremendous amount of white guilt. The intelligentsia in this country in a selfish way tries to assuage this guilt. It caters to the most idiosyncratic behaviour of the immigrant and practices the racism of lower expectations. It sets standards of behaviour for our community, but when dealing with immigrants and especially the Muslim community, it does not expect them to live by the same standards.²⁶

The damage wrought by root cause analysis

The consequences of this essentialist thinking are more serious than mere pandering to western vanity. The effect is to hand over the initiative to the extremists without a contest. For if Islamist terrorism were nothing more than a Muslim 'backlash' we would have to accept that there is nothing we can do, that jihadism is a naturally existing, permanent phenomenon which we must live with and absorb into our international systems. In this case we would have to accept that jihadis are speaking for all Muslims and that we have to acquiesce in their claims to form the true, authentic orthodoxy of Islam.

The implications of this abandonment of universalism and the adoption of a culturally particularist view of values is to ignore the existence of, or isolate, Muslim progressives and crush any of their hopes for reform. Dr. Tawfik Hamid is actually quite forthright on the contribution of the proponents of root cause analysis make to the prospects of Islamists' success. These 'non-Muslim priests of enlightenment', he argues, have come actively and passively, to the Islamists' defense and have become obstacles to reforming Islam:

They find socioeconomic or political excuses for Islamist terrorism such as poverty, colonialism, discrimination or the existence of Israel. What incentive is there for Muslims to demand reform when Western 'progressives' pave the way for Islamist barbarity?

He cites the interesting phenomenon of selective outrage,²⁷ noting how western self-criticism, by avoiding focusing upon subjects worthy of similar expressions of criticism in the Muslim world, obstructs the prospects of reform. Western appeasement and self-criticism in the face of Islamist demands simply exacerbates the problem:

The apology [is] perceived by Islamists as weakness and concession ... this makes the efforts of Muslim reformers more difficult. When Westerners make politically-correct excuses for Islamism, it actually endangers the lives of reformers and in many cases has the effect of suppressing their voices.²⁸

That the *mujāhidīn* smell success and vindication through this cultural self-flagellation can, once again, be seen through reading their views. The muddle of media and academic opinion, and the confusion on causes and effects, spells for them western ideological collapse, a harbinger for their expansion. Nevertheless, despite the comments from the inside, opposition, even hostility, persists towards interpreting the phenomenon of Jihadism other than by using root cause analysis as the point of departure. The problem is well illustrated by the political scientist Bassam Tibi who attempts to alert Europe to the reality of Islamism. Faced himself with accusations of Islamophobia, Mr. Tibi (a Syrian Muslim resident in Germany) notes how:

... it is most disturbing to see how writers who try to warn about the totalitarian character of Islamism are defamed as racists. This wrong-headed political correctness prevents any honest discussion about the subject.²⁹

The definition deficit – the need to study the ideology

What all of the preceding indicates is that the defeat of jihadism cannot be confined to isolating active militants or deprogramming or deradicalization initiatives. Due to the nature of this 'revolution' and its cultural claims to authenticity, counter-measures must embrace the broader communities to which jihadism seeks to justify itself and make its appeal. The key to success in asymmetric conflicts against ideological extremists has always relied not on the physical battle to defeat them but upon the psychological struggle for the hearts and minds of the communities from which they derive their recruits, resources and safe havens.³⁰ The aim of counter-ideology is to sever the link between the adversary and the contested audience. Any success achievable in Influence Operations will therefore depend upon the ability to mount an effective competition to the radical discourse, using narratives that are culturally sensitive and relevant. To do this requires a detailed knowledge of the intellectual terrain and the mental universe of the *mujāhidīn* and how this integrates with the broader target audience.

As this work attempts to demonstrate, Jihadism cannot be understood without identifying the religious core, irrespective of how responsibly or tendentiously this core is adapted to the user's purposes. All of the shades of radical Islam are characterized by fundamental doctrinal principles. Since the movement's beginnings these principles not only serve to define and elaborate their agendas but also constitute an important source of the appeal that it continues to exercise over the Muslim public. The efforts made on jihadi websites to defend the high ground with recourse to Scripture (see Section *Immunization* below) reflects this role of doctrinal propriety, as does the recent controversy on the 'recantation' of former spiritual leader of the Egyptian *Gamā'a Islāmiyya* Sayyid Imam ('Dr. Fadl')³¹ and the strenuous efforts made by Ayman al-Zawahiri to refute him.

While study of the ideology cannot provide advance warning for the future tactical actions of jihadis – since these are too heavily influenced by organisational imperatives and local tactical conditions – the ideology does define the end goals of the jihadist groups and provides the vital justification for determining, intensifying and perpetualizing enmity. One of the problems faced by counter-terrorism is the constantly developing map of groups, of varying stamp and intensity, subscribing broadly to Islamist aims. The wave of Islamist militancy once chiefly represented by al-Qaeda is now understood to be no longer monolithic, but one which now embraces different cell structures and ideological trends. Such plurality is by no means unique to radical Islam,³² but the tendency towards factionalization is strongly countered by a central feature of the ideology that defines the unity of its purpose. This central feature is religiously construed – a salvific mission to rescue humanity from its disastrous trajectory, one that is characterized by its repudiation of *tawhīd*. The term is regularly and somewhat lamely translated in the western media as 'monotheism' but its significance is somewhat deeper than can be conveyed by the static sense of 'single' or 'unique,' and has rather more of an *active* meaning as 'the affirmation of uniqueness,' as if the term could be translated as 'exclusivization' or 'singularization.' It turns up regularly in the discourse of the jihad whenever the word 'jihad' hits the media and accompanies every declaration, every manifesto, every statement of responsibility following the latest atrocity against civilians and combatants. It forms, more often than not, a part of a militant group's self denomination, such as *The Lions of Tawhīd*, *The Brigades of Tawhīd*, or *The Pulpit of Tawhīd and Jihad*.

This slogan of 'singularization' is a pointed accusation against the collective infidel world, that it is failing to ensure the uniqueness and singularity not only of God, but also of the implications of this singularity in theocratic rule. It lies at the heart of the jihadists' bitter denunciations of secularism, how 'man-made' legal systems and the separation of religious and political spheres stand in direct contradiction to the Faith,³³ since these destroy the *tawhīd al-hākimiyya* – the indivisible identification of sovereignty with God. And this accusation of *lèse-divinité* defined by the abandonment of *tawhīd* stands upon deeper intellectual foundations, since it just as equally presupposes the indivisibility of knowledge itself and condemns the western separation of this into divine and non-divine sciences. This western 'marginalization of the natural order' is a favorite theme of jihadist analysis, which sets as its manifesto the overturning at all costs of the pagan, antireligious trajectory of democracy,³⁴ or the whole intellectual enterprise of modernity.³⁵ Here is where the jihadists' mental turning point is located, where they part company with modernity in a very real, deep sense.

The role of ideology in defending the case for militant jihād

As the following Section will highlight, the major pre-occupation of jihadism is to demonstrate its *authenticity*, and the samples of the *Curriculum* illustrate how well prepared the *mujāhidīn* are to fight the doctrinal pamphlet war (which is now mostly conducted online). A particular focus of this endeavor is the case the radicals make for violent jihad. Al Qaeda's declaration of jihad in 1996 represented some very clear departures from Muslim precedent. The fact that they were able to make the declaration, and convince enough Muslims to join the cause, or acquiesce in their activities, has much to do with the considerable doctrinal groundwork laid for that departure by the work of radical Muslim scholars during the previous decade.

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of ideology in the defense and promotion of the jihad, and the greater importance, in terms of the longevity of the movement, held by its scholars and thinkers over their more famous men of action, such as Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.³⁶ While these latter will remain on the level of symbols long after they have passed away, the contribution of scholars such as Abū Muhammad al-Maqdisī will forever constitute the true force of the jihad. Indeed, underestimation to date of their role, and lack of attention to the foundations of their argumentation, has only lent the movement greater resilience. For as long as these thinkers continue to operate without significant challenge within this hiatus,

it makes it rather effortless for some like al Maqdesi or Abu Qatadah to respond to, or convince 'countless numbers' from among their followers ... The best-case scenario for those who read those arguments or listen to them is that the young man does not heed the propositions of al Maqdesi and the likes of him, but in his heart there will always be a little 'what-if'.³⁷

What is somewhat puzzling is that despite constant reference by jihadists to ideological starting points, the importance of ideology in determining the behavior and aims of the *mujāhidīn* is yet to be universally accepted. Many western analysts and commentators do not take the ideology of al-Qaeda seriously, in comparison to factors of economic deprivation or the lack of democratic systems in the Muslim majority states. Others continue to regard the phenomenon as directly related to the behavior of western powers in the Middle East and dismiss the motivation as having any religious starting points, considering the jihadist 'ideology' to amount to little more than:

- a religious issue with limited application and staying power when confronted with the realities of power politics
- an intellectually flimsy reproduction, with a religious packaging, of older 20th century totalitarianisms.

Still others have acknowledged that the root cause analysis explanation may be insufficient, but still do not see evidence of ideology influencing the actions of the foot-soldiers on the ground, given that these are not necessarily great readers of theological and ideological tracts. More relevant, they maintain, is the rôle of personal grievances and motivations. That argument is less convincing than it first sounds:

This is somewhat like trying to divine the reasons for a war by observing the soldiers in the trenches, rather than by referring back to the respective principles for which the two sides are fighting. How much of the Nazi ideology could one have come to understand by interviewing German soldiers at the Battle of the Bulge?

If most *mujāhidīn* have not read Sayyid Qutb,

that is no more relevant than saying that the rank and file of the Nazi party had not read Alfred Rosenberg or Nietzsche. It did not matter if they had not. They were nonetheless under the control of a regime animated by the ideology based on the ideas of such thinkers.³⁸

In fact, the position of education in the jihad is of such importance that, for some in the movement, it risks overshadowing the militant activism. One London-based ideologue, Abu Baseer al-Tartousi, is careful to underline that the two are inextricably interwoven:

There has been much talk about education and Jihad as two methodologies contradicting each other ... But there is no contradiction ... The finest fields of education that load the soul with the concepts of honor and faith are the fields of Jihad in God's path! ... But those who raise the slogan of 'education (or education and purification) first', as something to stand in the way of fulfilling one's obligations to jihad in God's path ... or to the jihadist movements and their activities to transform [society] – these have simply not understood the nature of this faith.³⁹

A fundamental mistake made by those who denigrate ideology and belief systems as useful analytical tools is to refuse to take totalitarians at their word. The point was succinctly made by Douglas MacDonald:

“Western liberals, who prize reason, are subject to the tendency to explain away beliefs they consider unreasonable. ... [surely] extremism cannot triumph because it does not make sense. Therefore the Bolsheviks and their successors were not really after global communist revolution, even though they said they were. The Nazis would not really commit armed aggression and genocide, even though they advocated both.”⁴⁰

This incomprehension is due to a reluctance to accept that humans can behave in a manner at odds with post-Enlightenment rationality. The avowed statements of totalitarians are passed through 'conceptual filters' that remove the offending elements and replaced with underlying 'real' motivations. These will be for tangible and concrete goals, and ones that are based on *interests*. These interests are perforce malleable and can be bargained over and compromised as in liberal political systems. But if such things draw liberals and rationalists, they do not hold the same attraction for totalitarians such as Islamists and Jihadists, who think in terms of *moral imperatives* and goals that are fixed and unassailable.

Part of the problem is the limited quantity of material available to the general public. The majority of this material consists of summarized treatments of the latest al-Qaeda statement (often with the religious content filtered out). For example, a report in April 2008 on al-Zawahiri's response to an 'Ask al-Qaeda' questionnaire posted on the chat forums highlighted those elements of interest to the western reader: questions posed to al-Zawahiri on the killing of innocents and the lack of attacks against Israel. The author of the report then commented that:

The questions and answers were otherwise relatively uninteresting and aimed at Islamic insiders.⁴¹

The importance of the 'relatively uninteresting' materials – doctrinal propaganda in a religiously conceived conflict – and the fact that the 'Islamic insiders' are actually those that constitute the entirety of the intended audience (and not the westerner) was clearly not understood.

Yet it is a mistake to think of jihadism as flaky due to the flakiness or opportunism of these commentaries to us. Communication to the West is just one, peripheral, strand of the jihadist propaganda war. In the anti-Western propaganda, which we are so keen to digest and extrapolate, the 'ultimatums' or attacks are

there simply to gain prestige as international players. Moreover, statistically these materials are not significant in comparison with the vast body of ideological materials circulating (primarily in Arabic⁴²) to sympathizers on the internet. For it is through honing its muscles over a decades-long intellectual civil war that the jihadist revolutionary movement has equipped itself with strong intellectual tools – strong enough to challenge the weight of entire civilizations, not least the civilization of mainstream Islam. This is where the center of gravity of their ideological endeavor lies, and any message delivered to the West is a peripheral matter at best.

The belief system underpinning the jihadis is neither arcane nor obscure. It is a serious, well-argued, academically and ideologically coherent intellectual system painstakingly constructed over decades. These ideological works have direct strategic and operational relevance to the course of the jihad. The works are designed to attract the turn anyone sympathetic to the militants' world view, and:

- detach him from his social and intellectual environment,
- undermine his self-image hitherto as a practising Muslim,
- introduce what the ideologues term the 'real Islam',
- re-script history in terms of a perennial conflict.

After this major task has been achieved, the ideological training towards the Jihadi-Salafist world view is merely a matter of:

- centralizing jihad as his Islamic identity,
- training him not only militarily but also doctrinally and psychologically as '*mujāhid* man',
- defending doctrinally the behavior of the *mujāhidīn* against criticism and maintaining the moral high ground.

Evidence for a normative role of jihadist ideology

The indications that doctrinal matters are crucial to the cause of Jihadism both on an ideological motivation and strategic military level, are not hard to find. One may take the example of Algeria. The merger of the GSPC with al-Qaeda in 2008 was universally accepted by the rank and file of the *mujāhidīn*, and this was entirely due to issues of doctrinal propriety, particularly over the issue of whether suicide bombings were Islamically legitimate. An Algerian writer at the time observed that:

a large number of the terrorist network leaders have decided to suspend their activities and wait for a guidance, or *fatwas*, from *ulemas* in the Salafist movement. This is why highly-regarded Salafist imams have been pressed to provide religious legitimacy for such actions.... members have demanded that the leader ... justify his suicide attack strategy with religious arguments.⁴³

Absent this justification, Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) found itself greatly prejudiced by the silence or active criticism of the religious elite. By October 2008 the leader of AQIM Abd al-Malik Droukdel found himself having to sack the 'al-Qaeda mufti' in Algeria, Rashid Zerami (Abu al-Hasan al-Rashid), the head of AQIM's religious committee in charge of armed combat, due to his voicing doubts as to the propriety of suicide bombings and kidnappings of Algerian businessmen and their relatives in order to obtain ransom payments⁴⁴. In September 2009 Droukdel felt sufficiently troubled by the issue to write to

the jihadist ideologue Abu Muhammad al-Maqqisi (who had declared his opposition to suicide attacks) to ask for ‘clarification.’⁴⁵

In his popular work *44 Ways of Supporting Jihad* the Yemeni scholar Anwar al-Awlakī confirms the value of such doctrinal underpinning:

There are scholars who are willing to speak out the truth ... The fatwas of these scholars should be widely distributed to the masses. There are many young brothers and sisters who agree with the methodology of the mujahideen but they are not willing to fully embrace it until they see scholars approving this methodology. At the end of the day the masses are followers and they would like to see scholars guiding them.

The *mujāhidīn* remain highly sensitive and vulnerable to issues of ideological propriety, and have consequently invested considerable effort in preparation for intellectual and religious warfare. Al-Awlaki goes on to explain the dimensions of this exercise:

We hear some Muslims claiming that the mujahideen lack scholars who support them and they lack a clear strategy and that what the mujahideen are doing is spontaneous and reactionary. Such claims are the furthest from the truth. There are plenty of scholars and strategic thinkers who are supporters of Jihad today ... there is ... an abundance of material supporting Jihad work and offering strategies for it.

What is more, these writings are doctrinally rigorous. They have to be, since the propagandists are engaged in a program of reconfiguring Islam’s center of gravity for the Muslim public. Since this is fundamentally a competition for authenticity and legitimacy, jihadists such as al-Awlaki argue that their adherence to the text and the tradition outstrips that of the traditionalist scholars:

In fact the writings of the scholars of Jihad tend to be the most deeply rooted in sharia because they speak it out as it is, which means they do not need to get involved in ignoring any sharia evidence, twisting sharia texts, and searching for odd opinions as some others may do ... They refer to Quran and hadith and quote the scholars of the ummah such as Ibn Hajar, al Nawawi, al Qurtubi, ibn Kathir, ibn Taymiyyah, and the four Imams. They have nothing to hide or conceal. This makes their works the most clear and the most convincing.

In a cause that they define as religious, going ‘by the book’ is fundamental to the *mujāhidīn*. They may be selective in the books they read, but read they certainly do. In the summer of 2008 the Saudi authorities released information on the level of interventions they had made against nascent and operative cells in the Kingdom. One of these was illustrated, showing the haul of literature confiscated alongside the arsenal of weaponry. The names of some of the works were given, among which the famous *Idārat al-Tawahhush*⁴⁶ (‘Management of Barbarism’) of Abū Bakr Nājī, that outlines the ideological and strategic blueprint for accession to power.

The attack on oil facilities in Abqaiq in February 2006 was accompanied by the publication of a treatise giving strategic and doctrinal justification for the operation. This was al-‘Anazī’s *Rule on Targeting Oil Interests*⁴⁷ which, significantly, bore the subtitle: *A Review of Laws pertaining to Economic Jihad* – an emphasis that indicated the essential role of scholarship on religious law. As ‘al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’ relocated from Saudi Arabia to Yemen, their intention to target energy facilities was once again accompanied by ideological backing: al-‘Anazī’s treatise was duly republished on the internet, as were the online magazines *Sawt al-Jihād*⁴⁸ and *Sadā al-Malāhim* (‘Echo of the Battles’) dedicated to explaining and ideologically justifying the strategic decision.

The combination of elements of strategic literature and religious doctrine in the revolutionary ideology is a conspicuous feature of radical Islam. Perhaps its most convincing demonstration is the *magnum opus* of Abu Mus‘ab al-Suri, the *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*⁴⁹. Sizeable chunks of the 1600-page tome from the jihad’s most strategically-minded author are given over to matters bound up closely with the minutiae of Islamic law and even behavioural ethics, in the cause of the formation of the ideal ‘*mujāhid* man.’

Studying the ideology from the starting point of the Jihadi-Salafists, via their own writings, elucidates the techniques employed by Jihadists and Islamists to defend their case, and undermine - from argumentation couched in conceptual language internal to Islam - the religious identity and affiliation of the activists. More importantly, the study of the ideology allows us to locate the points of tension with more mainstream currents of Islamic belief, highlight their anomalies, and develop greater policy self-confidence on what does and does not constitute legitimate expressions of belief in pluralist societies.

Indeed, it is impossible to fully understand the motivations, manifestations and purposes of radical Islam and the activities of the *mujāhidīn*, or address the challenge these present to U.S. security and foreign policy, without a thorough understanding of its ideological starting points and doctrinal development, or without a sound grasp of the current dynamics taking place within its own mental universe. Even a cursory perusal of these materials is enough to establish the the depth of jihadist conviction in their doctrines, the independence of jihadist starting points and points of reference and the strong resilience of these doctrines to criticism. Familiarity with the doctrinal content also elucidates jihadist behaviour and the meaning of the Jihadi statements to sympathisers and to western opponents, and provides the proper perspective by which to evaluate the internal dynamics and stresses within jihadist ideology (such as the above-mentioned ‘recantations’ of Sayyid Imam).

Nor is the value of ideological study confined to hard security issues. Just how important a knowledge of the ideology is, can be gauged by the growing tendency for western observers to accept Islamists as credible interlocutors for the Muslim communities in the West. Absent a sufficient acquaintance with the ideological spectrum of Islam and its historical elaboration, the general public is perilously exposed to manipulation:

For many Americans, the Muslim Brotherhood’s version is now the “official” and mainstream version of Islam. If a news organization is looking for a spokesman for the Muslims, they usually go to one of the Brotherhood-linked organizations, marginalizing the opinions of traditionalist but non-radical Muslims.⁵⁰

Access to the doctrinal output flags up the continuity of Islamist strategies from militant confrontation, through cultural erosion to demands for ‘cultural exceptionalism,’ and therefore it is vitally important that we develop the intellectual tools to do this investigation for ourselves, instead of relying on someone else’s choice of ‘interlocutors’ who may, or may not, have agendas discordant with our interests.⁵¹

The study of the ideology can therefore be defended for its role in establishing that while the movement of Islamist radicalism and Jihad is not a monolith and comprises a number of different organizations and trends of varying life expectancy, the underlying ideologies are far more consistent, resilient and perennial. They operate to a far longer timescale and admit to vulnerability not to the ephemerality of military reverse so much as to intellectual defeat and the destruction of doctrinal propriety.

Notes

¹ As ex-Jihadist Dr. Tawfiq Hamid put it: “If they hear Westerners saying: ‘it is culture, Islamism is not wrong’, they gain confidence and justification. Because they are convinced that therefore they are not defeated. We therefore need to heavily defeat them mentally too, and encourage this self-doubt and criticism.” (Tawfiq Hamid, speaking at the *Secular Islam Summit* held at St. Petersburg, Florida, March 4-5 2007).

² The point was succinctly made by Louis Caprioli, the former chief of the DST (the French equivalent to the FBI counterterrorism unit), who stated: “there is always a radical imam behind a Muslim terrorist.” O. Guitta, *Middle East Times*, August 31, 2008, reporting on the banning of Saudi imams preaching in Kuwait.

³ On this see the articles by Hassan Mneimneh, ‘Are Islamist Doctrines Converging?’ and Thomas Hegghammer, ‘The Hybridization of Jihadi Groups’ in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 9, 2009.

⁴ On this, see Bassam Tibi, ‘Countering Ideological Terrorism’, *Defence Against Terrorism Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2008, p.126.

⁵ For more on this, see Bernard Haykel, ‘On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action,’ in *Global Salafism, Islam’s New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer, Hurst, 2009.

⁶ Stephen Schwartz notes, however, that “Wahhabis ... often attempt to recast themselves as ‘Salafis’ for the same reason Communists called themselves ‘progressives.’ ... Although they prefer the ‘Salafi’ cover, Wahhabis throughout the Muslim world refer to themselves by that name when the doctrines of their inspirer are challenged.” Stephen Schwartz, ‘Wahhabis or “Salafis”? What’s in a name...’, *The Daily Standard*, December 20, 2006.

⁷ See the comments by Hillel Fradkin: “The great utility and advantage of the term Islamism is precisely that it makes a distinction between Islam as such and its contemporary radical offshoots. In fact, so far as I’m aware its first usage in English about forty years ago was by the late Pakistani theologian and scholar Fazlur Rahman ... His purpose was precisely to draw this distinction and to protect Islam from being confused with radical groups.” Hillel Fradkin, *Islamism and the Media*, March 28th, 2008

⁸ According to the International Crisis Group, ‘the term ‘political Islam’ is an American coinage which came into circulation in the wake of the Iranian revolution. It implied or presupposed that an ‘apolitical Islam’ had been the norm until Khomeini turned things upside down. In fact, Islam had been a highly politicised religion for generations before 1979. It only appeared to have become apolitical in the historically specific and short-lived era of the heyday of secular Arab nationalism between 1945 and 1970. But even during that period it is difficult to speak of apolitical Islam.” See ICG, *Understanding Islamism, Middle East/North Africa Report* N°37, 2 March 2005, p.2.

⁹ A criticism of this minimalist approach is made in Maher and Frampton, *Choosing our friends wisely*, p.29.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell, Michael King, (*The Edge of Violence - A Radical Approach to Extremism*, DEMOS 2010) who argue that one has to “become familiar with the norms of Muslim communities in each country, as these norms represent the baseline on which radicalism can be determined.’

¹¹ See, for instance, the Department of Homeland Security guidance memorandum entitled *Terminology to Define Terrorists*, which argues that one must “avoid helping the terrorists by inflating the religious bases and glamorous appeal of their ideology” by the use of terms such as ‘jihad.’ The argument would imply that terrorists are recruited not by anything intrinsic to the ideology of jihadists, but rather by American advertising of the terrorist threat.

¹² “The public debate and narrative in the Muslim majority countries precisely uses this terminology 24/7. How is it arguable that terms such as al Jihadiyya, al Salafiyya, al Islamiyyun, al Khomeiniyyun, al Takfiriyyun are used in on Arab airwaves, in print and in the blogosphere to depict the radicals, extremists and Terrorists from Morocco to Pakistan, and White House advisors claim such words would offend if used in that sense in English? There is something very odd here. If these terms define the enemy within the Arab and Muslim world, who are we trying to confuse here? The only possible answer is that these words would be banned, so that the American public doesn’t use them not that the Muslim world is offended.” Walid Phares, *Ignoring al Qaeda’s ideology is a threat to US national security*, available at http://www.walidphares.com/artman/publish/article_2814.shtml.

¹³ The argument is frequently made that the ‘greater jihad’ defined as “the spiritual and intellectual jihad to promote knowledge of Divine Revelation” is “the only one specifically mentioned in the Qur’an.” Yet this comes up against the problems of verses such as Qur’an, IX,73: *Yā ayyuhā ‘l-nabiyyu jāhidī ‘l-kuffār*, “O Prophet! *Strive* against the unbelievers (and the Hypocrites, and be cruel to them. Their abode is Hell”), where the term *jāhid* (the cognate IIIrd form imperative of the verb *jhd*, whose *masdar* or verbal noun is *jihād*) is explicitly militant in meaning.

¹⁴ Mu‘tazz Hāmid, أزمة المصطلح (‘The Terminology Crisis’) in قضايا جهادية (‘Jihad Issues’) Issue no.2, pp.8-20.

¹⁵ Roger Griffin, *Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion*, Routledge, 2005, p8.

¹⁶ Vowels with a diacritic accent over them – ā, ī, ū – are lengthened and stressed.

Introduction

¹ R. Cowan and R. Norton-Taylor, ‘Britain now No 1 al-Qaida target - anti-terror chiefs’, *The Guardian*, October 19, 2006.

² “With new plots surfacing every month, police across Europe are arresting significant numbers of women, teenagers, white-skinned suspects and people baptized as Christians – groups that in the past were considered among the least likely to embrace Islamic radicalism. The demographics of those being arrested are so diverse that many European counterterrorism officials and analysts say they have given up trying to predict what sorts of people are most likely to become terrorists. Age, sex, ethnicity, education and economic status have become

more and more irrelevant. C. Whitlock, *Terrorists Proving Harder to Profile, European Officials Say Traits of Suspected Islamic Extremists Are Constantly Shifting*, Washington Post, March 12 2007.

³ One could make a comparison to the Spanish Civil War. This too was an ‘international’ cause. Volunteers came from many parts of the globe, giving up their comfortable lifestyles, to fight in a foreign land. Yet when looking back at the Spanish Civil War most are content to leave it at that. As far as I know there has been no molecular psychiatric analysis of George Orwell’s reasons for upping sticks and going to Spain. We just take it that he and many others like him felt moved to do so for reasons of ideology and a cause.

⁴ This is often referred to as the ‘cognitive dissonance’ between the cultural and religious imperative for superiority, as bearers of the True Faith, and the logic of divinely bestowed preeminence, with evidence on the ground to the contrary.

⁵ وليس المراد من هذه النتيجة أن يستعمل أهل الحق القوة لإكراه الناس على قبول الحق الذي عندهم واعتقاده بدون اختيار منهم، وإنما المراد اتخاذ قادة الحق وأتباعهم هذه القوة لإزالة السود التي تعترض وصول الحق إلى عقول الناس، فإذا وصل الحق بحججه وبراهينه إلى تلك العقول، فأهلها بالخيار بين أن يستجيبوا لذلك الحق فيقبلوه، أو يرفضوه ويتحملوا نتائج السباق إلى العقول، ‘The Race for Minds’), السباق إلى العقول, Dr. ‘Abd Allāh Qādirī al-Ahdal, رفضهم التي منها عذاب الله الأليم لهم، لرفضهم الحق بعد أن قامت عليهم الحجة به. 308: Internet edition dated June 18th 1998.

⁶ R. Lambert, ‘Empowering Salafis and Islamists Against Al-Qaeda: A London Counterterrorism Case Study’ in *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol.41, No. 1, January 2008, p 31-5.

⁷ R. Lambert, ‘Ignoring the lessons of the past’, *Criminal Justice Matters*, 73, September 2008, p. 23. His choice of interlocutors is not infallible. He has voiced support of non-violent Islamists, citing the case of Daud Abdullah, the Deputy Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) who was recently attacked by the government for endorsing “a Hamas call for attacks on foreign troops, including possibly British troops, if they try to intercept arms smuggled into Gaza.” (A. Travis, ‘Hazel Blears’ standoff with Muslim Council overshadows new anti-terror launch,’ *The Guardian*, March 25 2009).

⁸ Shiraz Maher and Martyn Frampton, *Choosing our friends wisely, Criteria for engagement with Muslim groups*, Policy Exchange, 2009, p.53.

⁹ Maher and Frampton, *Choosing our friends wisely*, p.5. The authors also point to a fundamental confusion in the UK police forces on how to deal with radicalism, citing an unsuccessful attempt by West Midlands Police to prosecute the media broadcaster Channel 4 for airing a documentary highlighting hate speeches in British mosques on the grounds of their being excerpted ‘out of context’ and thus broadcasting material ‘sufficient to undermine community cohesion.’ (*Choosing our friends wisely*, pp.53-4).

¹⁰ According to a recent report published by the UK think-tank *Civitas*, (D. M McEoin, *Sharia Law or ‘One Law for All’? London*, 29 June 2009), there are now at least 85 Sharī‘a courts operating in the United Kingdom, arbitrating on domestic, marital and business disputes, making decisions under Sharī‘a law beyond their legal remit and suggesting a ‘creeping’ acceptance of Sharī‘a principles in British law. The disarray in the United Kingdom is characterised by the comments by the archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who in 2008 said that formal recognition of Sharī‘a law ‘seemed unavoidable’.

Chapter One

¹ Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower, Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, New York 2006.

² Lawrence Wright, ‘The Rebellion Within, An Al Qaeda mastermind questions terrorism,’ *The New Yorker*, June 2, 2008.

³ Shaykh Abd al-Hakim Murad, *Bin Laden’s Violence is a Heresy Against Islam*, in www.islamfortoday.com.

⁴ R. Ibrahim, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, New York: Broadway, 2007, p.51.

⁵ Shiraz Maher speaking at the First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence, 17-18 January 2008.

⁶ Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam, Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, Routledge, 1998, p.125.

⁷ Ibrahim, *op.cit.*, 182. Ayman al-Zawahiri goes on to say: “Mullah Muhammad Omar and Sheikh Osama bin Ladin – may Allah protect them from all evil – are merely two soldiers of Islam in the journey of jihad, while the struggle between Truth and Falsehood transcends time.”

⁸ Bassam Tibi, ‘Countering Ideological Terrorism’, *Defence Against Terrorism Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2008, pp.109-110.

⁹ Ibrahim, *op.cit.*, 58.

¹⁰ Ibrahim, *op.cit.*, 42.

¹¹ Ibrahim, *op.cit.*, 55.

¹² M. Coren, ‘Hot for Martyrdom,’ *National Post*, November 3, 2006.

¹³ The *khawārij* (‘Kharijites’) were a group who ‘seceded’ from the armies of ‘Ali on the grounds of objection to his agreement to submit to arbitration during a dispute, thereby suggesting that his authority was not absolute and non-negotiable. The term is commonly used to denote those whose excess takes them out of the fold of Islam.

¹⁴ Lafif Lakhdar: *European Muslims Should Adopt Universal Values*. Ayman al-Zawahiri has also authored himself a work specific to this doctrine: ‘الولاء والبراء، عقيدة منقولة وواقع مفقود’ (*Al-Walā’ wal-Barā’, an Inherited Doctrine but a Forgotten Reality*) December 2002.

¹⁵ The quote continues: “Where modernity has found fertile soil to grow the flower of civil society, the weed of terrorism is attempting to strangle it. But what is happening now is not against the presence of foreign troops as much as it is against the escalation of the growing trend of modernity and liberalism, which wants to establish a state of modern Arab civilization to get rid of this darkness that has been sweeping the Arab world politically, culturally and socially.”

¹⁶ Cf the comments by Tawfik Hamid: “This [root cause] analysis cannot convince any rational person that the Islamist murder of over 150,000 innocent people in Algeria--which happened in the last few decades--or their slaying of hundreds of Buddhists in Thailand ... could have anything to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict.”

¹⁷ Walid Phares, *Future Jihad, Terrorist Strategies Against the West*, New York, 2005.

¹⁸ Two academics at the National Defense University, Douglas Streusand and Harry Tunnel, wrote a study entitled *Loosely Interpreted Arabic terms can promote enemy ideology*. This was based on a study published by a Washington lobbyist Jim Guirard: *Hiraba Versus Jihad in the American Muslim*. August 2003.

¹⁹ In February 2008 the UK government Research, Information and Communication Unit (RICU) put out guidelines ministers and civil servants to help them talk about terrorism without offending Muslims, arguing that that this was “not about political correctness, but effectiveness - evidence shows that people stop listening if they think you are attacking them.” Philip Johnston, ‘Don't mention Islamic terrorists, says guide’ *Daily Telegraph*, February 4 2008.

²⁰ “They are the vital identification codes for the entire web engaged in war, indoctrination, incitement and Terrorism first against Muslim societies and also against Western and American democracies. These are ideological and political identifications of the threat without which US national security would be as blind as if during WWII word such as Nazism and fascism or during the Cold war, words such as Soviets and Communists, would have been dropped from the rhetoric.” Walid Phares, *Ignoring al Qaeda's ideology is a threat to US national security*, available at http://www.walidphares.com/artman/publish/article_2814.shtml.

²¹ Jeffrey Imm, ‘British Ignore Jihad and Islamic Supremacism to Their Peril,’ *Family Security Matters*, September 2 2008.

²² M. Mirza, A. Senthikumaran and Z. Ja'far, *Living Apart Together, British Muslims and the paradox of multiculturalism*, Policy Exchange, 2007, p.93.

²³ “Il faut critiquer l'islam comme on a critiqué le christianisme pendant le siècle des Lumières. L'islam est un message destiné à l'humanité entière, il n'est donc pas la propriété des musulmans ... Ne pas critiquer l'islam est une forme de ségrégation.” See Soheib Bencheikh, ‘OUI «On a le droit d'être hostile à cette religion»’ in *Le Parisien*, October 3, 2006. Bencheikh was nominated Grand Mufti of Marseille in 1995. He is a member of the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (Council of French Muslims) since its creation in 2003 and is celebrated in France for his support for secularism and for calling for ‘the de-Arabisation’ of Islam.

²⁴ *Living Apart Together*, 94.

²⁵ Bin Laden himself put paid to this theory with his statement, broadcast by al-Jazeera, in October 2004: “Security is an important pillar of human life. Free people do not relinquish their security. This is contrary to Bush's claim that we hate freedom. Let him tell us why we did not strike Sweden, for example.”

²⁶ P. Lungen, ‘White guilt’ helps Islamists, moderate Muslims say’, from the online article at http://www.cjnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16381&Itemid=86.

²⁷ “Americans demonstrate against the war in Iraq, yet decline to demonstrate against the terrorists who kidnap innocent people and behead them. Similarly, after the Madrid train bombings, millions of Spanish citizens demonstrated against their separatist organization, ETA. But once the demonstrators realized that Muslims were behind the terror attacks they suspended the demonstrations. This example sent a message to radical Islamists to continue their violent methods.” T. Hamid, ‘The Trouble With Islam’, *The Wall Street Journal*, April 3, 2007.

²⁸ T. Hamid, *The Trouble With Islam*.

²⁹ Wente, M: ‘Germans may regret ignoring ‘prophet’ in their midst,’ *The Globe and Mail*, December 14, 2006.

³⁰ “A successful rebellion could be accomplished with only 2% active support among the population, providing the remaining 98% either sympathised with, or acquiesced in, guerrilla activity” – T.E Lawrence.

³¹ Sayyid Imam ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Sharīf (‘Abd al-Qādir bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz), a founder of the Egyptian Jihad organization imprisoned in Cairo, and better known as ‘Doctor Fadl,’ released in November-December 2007 a ten-part document called *ترشيد العمل الجهادي في مصر والعالم* (‘*Redirecting Jihad Activity in Egypt and the World*’) in which he made criticisms of al-Qaeda and de-legitimized their activities in both Muslim and western states. The criticism had weight since he is also the author of *العمدة في إعداد العدة* (‘The Mainstay for Preparation’) which formed the core text in jihadi training. Yet in his ‘recantation’ he nevertheless states that “that jihad is [a commandment that is] in force until Judgment Day is nigh, and that the Islamic Caliphate is coming before the appearance of the Mahdi” (Article 15).

³² Communism, for instance, was represented by different factions of Soviet/Stalinist, Trotskyite and Maoist forms.

³³ A good example is: Abu Hamza al-Masri: *Allah's Governance on Earth and Ruling by Man-Made Law*. And Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi: *الشرعية الدولية ومناقضاتها للشرعية الإسلامية* (‘International Law and its Contradiction to Islamic Law’).

³⁴ One of the major elaborations of this was made by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi in his work: *الديموقراطية دين* (‘*Democracy is a Religion*’), which bases on the *tawhīd al-hākimiyya* doctrine an analysis underpinning the aggressive suppression of democracy as a mortal enemy of Islam, as mortal as a competing, false religion.

³⁵ This is not in itself exotic, since it is the default intellectual universe we were all living in up to the 14th century before the split was made between the realms of divine and natural knowledge. The last embers of this struggle is going on today in the current Creationism - Darwinism debate.

³⁶ The CTC publication *Militant Ideology Atlas* has made a particularly strong case for this prioritization. CTC November 2006.

³⁷ Mshari al-Dhaydi, ‘The Contemporary Godfather of Islamic Extremist Ideology,’ *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, November 25 2006.

³⁸ R. Reilly, ‘Thinking Like a Terrorist’, *Claremont Review of Books*, Spring 2009, p.32.

³⁹ Abu Baseer al-Tartousi, *الجهاد، التربية أولاً*. أم الجهاد (‘*Education first, or Jihad?*’) Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, n.d.

⁴⁰ D. MacDonald, *The New Totalitarians: Social Identities and Radical Islamist Political Grand Strategy*, Strategic Studies Institute, January 2007, 4-5.

⁴¹ Alfred Hackensberger, 'Al-Qaeda's PR strategy on the internet: Free propaganda.'

⁴² A point lamented by the American scholar and al-Qaida jihadist Anwar al-Awlaki in point no. 42 of his *44 Ways to Support Jihad*: "Arabic is the international language of Jihad. Most of the Jihad literature is available only in Arabic and publishers are not willing to take the risk of translating it. The only ones who are spending the money and time translating Jihad literature are the Western intelligence services...and too bad, they would not be willing to share it with you. Arabic also happens to be the predominant language of the foreign mujahideen in every land of Jihad so without it you might end up talking to yourself. It is important for the mujahideen to be able to communicate through a common language and Arabic is the proper candidate."

⁴³ Nazim Fethi for Magharebia in Algiers – 18/04/08.

⁴⁴ Droukdel replaced him with Abu Asim.

⁴⁵ Nazim Fethi, 'Al-Qaeda's Droukdel seeks religious support for terrorism', *Magharebia* 24th September 2009.

⁴⁶ "The *Management of Barbarism* may be considered among the most important texts shaping the Jihadi Movement, along with Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones on the Way*, Faraj's *The Neglected Duty*, Juhayman al-Utaybi's writings, Ayman al-Zawahiri's *Knights*, Sayyid Imam/Dr. Fadl's three books, Suri's "Syrian Experience," and three books by Maqdisi."

⁴⁷ The *حكم استهداف المصالح النفطية* was republished online on 26 February 2006, two days after the Abqayq attack.

⁴⁸ Volume 30 of *Sawt al-Jihād* was an edition that turned its entire coverage to the 'oil weapon.'

⁴⁹ دعوة المقاومة الإسلامية العالمية : In fact, virtually half of the Second Part of the work focuses on character and behaviour, right down to whether the true mujahid should 'swear at animals'.

⁵⁰ Hussein Haqqani, 'The Politicization of American Islam,' *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 6. The motto of the Muslim Brotherhood ought to be enough to clear up any opacity: "Allah is our objective; the Prophet is our leader; the Qur'an is our law; *jihād* is our way; and dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope." Their alumni include the Afghan jihad ideologue 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām and the mastermind of the September 11th attacks Khālid Shaykh Muhammad.

⁵¹ The 'Explanatory Memorandum' composed in May 1991 by member Muhammad Akram outlined the Brotherhood's purposes in the United States: "*Understanding the Role of the Muslim Brother in North America*: The process of settlement in America is a Civilization-Jihadist process with all [that] the word means. The Brothers must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and "sabotaging" its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers (هو نوع من أنواع الجهاد العظيم في إزالة وهدم المدنية أو الحضارة الغربية من داخلها و "تخريب" بيوتها الشقية بأيديهم وأيادي المؤمنين) so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions."