

THE CAUSES OF VIOLENT JIHADISM

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Executive Summary

The United States is currently in a struggle against violent, self-described “jihadists” who have struck at the United States and U.S. interests across the globe. In order to develop sound, workable, and sustainable policy responses, we must understand both the nature and the scope of the challenge.

Violent jihadism has three core causes:

- a crisis of legitimacy in the Muslim world brought on by economic stagnation, population pressures, failures of political institutions, and disputes over the interpretation of religious texts;
- the foreign policies of the United States and other Western countries toward the Arab and Muslim world;
- pathological dynamics within the Muslim world which promote beliefs in conspiracy theories, unsubstantiated rumors, and anti-Semitism.

In addition, a key finding of this report is that our jihadist enemies are not cynical manipulators of faith, but rather, genuinely religious individuals whose interpretations of Islam are grounded in both scholarly interpretation and historical movements. Furthermore, they are respected by a significant percentage of the Muslim world.

This study of violent jihadism yields three important policy recommendations:

- American public diplomacy efforts must be refocused from providing timely, clear governmental responses to the development of relationships with credible interlocutors who can communicate American values indirectly.
- We need to develop better sources of knowledge about the social systems that support violent jihadism. There is a knowledge gap about the connections between mass beliefs and operational terror networks.
- Our attempts to delegitimize violent jihadism by securing condemnations from mainstream clerics and governmental leaders only serves to reinforce the radicals’ claims that these elites are tools of American imperialism. We must be much more cautious about how we wade into theological disputes.

This report is the first of three reports that will be issued by the American Security Project’s research program on “Securing America in an Age of Terror.” The next report will assess how the United States is performing in the struggle against violent jihadism since 9/11. The final report will be a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy.

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Introduction

On September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by violent jihadists affiliated with Al Qaeda. Though this was the first time many Americans had heard of Al Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden, the roots of this movement can be traced back to the 1950s. Despite nearly six years of a so-called “war on terror,” the United States is no closer to a solution to this challenge than it was on the day prior to 9/11. This study, the first of three major reports by the American Security Project’s program on “Securing America in an Age of Terror,” examines the causes and scope of the challenge posed by violent jihadism.

The broad outlines of the conclusions are simple: there are multiple causes for violent jihadism and there are multiple communities that make up both the active and tacit elements of the movement. Beyond those broad conclusions, however, there remain stunning gaps in our knowledge of the threat. In addition to making assessments about the challenge, this report will highlight the issues that are sources of major debates in the research on jihadism and areas where the empirical record is too sparse to allow for any but the broadest of generalizations. This report seeks to examine many of the key issues identified as causes of jihadism, but does not claim to be comprehensive.¹ Rather, the focus is on those issues we consider the most significant.

Definitions

The challenge faced by the United States has been variously described as a threat posed by terrorism,² violent extremism,³ Islamo-fascism,⁴ Salafism, Wahhabism,⁵ bin Ladenism, Qutbism,⁶ and Takfirism.⁷ None of these terms quite accurately captures the policy problem highlighted by 9/11. “Terrorism” and “violent extremism” are too broad. As a practical matter, terrorism is a tactic used by various groups around the world, some of which, historically, have been allied to the United States. Violent extremism also does not narrow the scope of the problem down to a manageable size. Mao’s Red Guards were violent extremists, but beyond the scope of the issue at hand. “Islamofascism” is rhetorically aggressive, but practically meaningless. Indeed, one could easily imagine a relatively peaceful, or at least minimally anti-American, movement that would be both fascist and Islamic, perhaps such as the Akramiya movement in Uzbekistan.⁸ Salafism and Wahhabism are too general to be useful terms, referring, as they do, to movements within Islam to practice the religion as it was practiced in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. These movements may or may not promote violence and may or may not be anti-American at any given time. Bin Ladenism is too closely linked to one man, and the movement, as will be discussed below, both predates him and is likely to continue beyond his demise. Qutbism, which reflects a belief in an individual duty toward jihad, and Takfirism, which reflects a rejection of un-Islamic influences, have both been directed mostly at internal reform rather than international violence.

In this report, and in future projects in this research program, we use the term “violent jihadists” or “violent international/transnational jihadists” to define the threat. We use the term “jihadist,” because it is the term many of the groups that sponsor anti-American violence use to define

themselves, but also because it connotes an active striving to achieve a goal. We limit our inquiry to violent groups because “jihad” can also refer to any number of activities to become a better Muslim, including charitable giving, living in conformity with Islamic law, and performing rituals that are central to the faith.⁹ We focus, furthermore, on transnational or international groups because, while we may be concerned, for reasons of human rights, regional stability or access to oil, with the actions of purely domestically-focused groups, those issues ought to be conceptually separated from the challenge of groups that would use violence against the United States or U.S. interests abroad.

Jihadism is related to, but not synonymous with, the broader movement, “Islamism.” The Islamist movement seeks to replace secular politics with rule by Islamic law and the imposition of Islamic cultural values as the governing norms in society.¹⁰ The Islamist movement is global, and its effects can be seen wherever there is a significant community of Muslims. While not always taking the form of outright rejection of non-Muslim values, it does often promote a serious set of tensions. However, it is important not to conflate the two terms.

Sources of Violent Jihadism

There are three broad schools of thought in the debate over the sources of violent jihadism. Though not mutually exclusive, these represent three distinct sets of emphases about the nature of the problem. The first school of thought focuses on internal factors of the Muslim world. These dynamics include economic stagnation, population pressures, failures of political institutions, and disputes over the interpretation of religious texts. The second school of thought focuses on factors external to the Muslim world, in particular the foreign policies of the United States and other Western countries toward the Arab and Muslim world. The third school of thought is less clearly defined. It focuses on how various dynamics in the Muslim world – such as distrust of formal sources of news – help shape perceptions of the outside world that promote a siege mentality and violent response. Each of these three schools of thought will be examined in detail below.

In all three schools of thought there are interlocking processes at work that generate violent international jihadism. First, there is a set of grievances that create pressure for political action. This creates a fertile pool of recruits for those who choose to use violence to further these political aims. Second, a lack of progress addressing these grievances, over time, serves to (a) delegitimize political elites, (b) encourage the formation of groups willing to use violence to achieve their ends, and (c) legitimize violence by virtue of association with a well-established set of political demands. Third, a process develops that serves to internationalize the grievances. This process can either arise from (a) the “realization” that the issue is actually the fault of outsiders or (b) the assessment that, while outsiders may not be the cause of the problems, outside support for unresponsive political authorities is the key factor in preventing an indigenous response. The existence of generalized grievances also provides opportunities for outsiders – such as radical clerics and terrorist operatives – to expand the movement and recruit local operational cells.

Internal Sources of Violent Jihadism

Economic Factors

For the past two decades, economic growth has been largely stagnant in the Arab world.¹¹ The exceptions have been due to oil wealth which has ebbed and flowed as world prices have fluctuated. The combination of corrupt and inefficient bureaucracies that stifle free enterprise and the boom and bust cycle of oil revenue have created dysfunctional economies that cannot provide adequate opportunities to the vast numbers of young people in the Arab world. The level of education in much of the Arab world is quite high, and the expectations gap for individuals with secondary schooling is significant.¹²

High expectations and economic frustration have increasingly become externalized due to the impact of globalization. The developing world has long complained that international trade is a double-edged sword. Poorer nations are forced to rely heavily on the extraction of non-renewable resources which results in environmental degradation and low-wage industries that suffer from a long-term tendency to weaken in terms of trade relative to high-wage, high-productivity industries.¹³ This intellectual critique has been married in recent years to a more visceral response to affluence in the West, which is now broadcast by an increasingly globalized media. Though, as a practical matter, there is little the West could do to promote economic development given the bureaucratic impediments in place throughout the Arab world, the resentment bred by economic factors is significant. Indeed, even within Arab countries, income stratification is significant enough to be a source of frustration. Polling data suggests that, while frustration over economic conditions is high, most Arabs tend to blame their own regimes – in some cases blaming nepotism and other forms of favoritism – rather than external actors.¹⁴ However, as with the other factors this report will examine, economic frustration need not be a prime motivation for all radicals in order to be important. Rather, it is one of several factors that create a pool of angry, frustrated individuals with, perhaps, the time and inclination to join radical movements.¹⁵

For Muslims living abroad, particularly in Europe, the expectations gap has taken on an increasingly radical flavor as many Muslims see themselves as victims of active discrimination, which, as a practical matter, they are.

While it is easy to overstate the impact of economics on creating an atmosphere conducive to violent jihadism, it should be noted that Indonesia and Malaysia, usually considered home to a more moderate brand of Islam, have also had some of the most robust economic growth in the Muslim world over the past 20 years as well as some of the lowest measures of income inequality.¹⁶ These two factors have minimized tensions by providing social mobility and opportunity. But opening up a country to the influence of globalization, increasing social mobility, and expanding the reach of markets domestically can all serve to exacerbate the tensions between traditionalists and modernizers.

From Qutb to Bin Laden. Modern jihadists trace their philosophy to the writing of Sayyid Qutb, a leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and early 1960s. His core argument was that Muslims had a duty, individually, to strive – engage in jihad – against governments that placed human law over the law of God. His views ultimately led to his being imprisoned and executed by the Egyptian government, though he influenced the conspirators who ultimately assassinated Anwar Sadat. Qutb was focused on the “near enemy” – those Arab governments that rejected Islamic law in favor of various forms of secularism. Osama bin Laden, by contrast, came to believe that jihad had to be directed not against Arab governments primarily, but rather against those external powers – notably the United States – that supported and sustained these illegitimate local regimes.

Sources: Sayyid Qutb, *Signposts on the Road* (1964) & Osama bin Laden, “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places” (August 1996)

Traditionalists and Modernizers

In addition to economic tensions, there is a battle between forces of modernity and those of traditionalism. Those two terms are inherently value-laden, but are used so commonly by individuals on both sides of the divide that there is no point in trying to redefine the terms. The modernists tend to generally value secularism, freedom of speech, equality or near-equality for women, democracy, and economic development. The traditionalists tend to focus their attention on public morality and legal systems based on Islamic law, with the resultant limitations on other elements of modernity, constrained democracy for instance, since men cannot legislate changes to God’s law. Interestingly, both camps are motivated by similar perceptions of the weakness and backwardness of the Muslim world.¹⁷ The modernists propose to change that by embracing the modern and transforming their societies.¹⁸ The traditionalists harken back to a golden age when, led by legitimate rulers in accordance with the dictates of Islam, the Muslim world was united as a great power with a strong military, thriving scientific establishment, and a rich and diverse culture.¹⁹

Part of the challenge is that secularism, especially in the form of nationalism in the political sphere and statism in the economic, has failed much of the Islamic world. Free markets and democracy have never been given a chance in much of the Islamic world, but to the extent that these innovations are lumped together with the previous “Western” inventions, it is difficult for these forces to gain real traction. The failure of a “Western” model, albeit one based on Eastern bloc concepts, has opened the door for an “Islamic” model instead.²⁰ Indeed, one of the few countries where there seems to be genuine enthusiasm for trying the “Western” model of reform is Iran, which has lived through the failure of both a statist, secularist model under the Shah and now the failure of an “Islamic” model under the mullahs.²¹

The United States, and the West in general, is associated with the modernizer’s position, though incompletely. Because the United States has also been willing to support authoritarianism in the pursuit of stability, it has lost credibility in the Muslim world on the issue of political reform. The result is that the United States has become linked, in the minds of many, solely to the most unpopular elements of modernity – authoritarian secularism, the weakening of public morals, and the exposure of fragile economies to the rigors of international competition.²²

Population Dynamics

Unlike the West, where this sort of divide often pits more traditional elders against non-conformist youth, in virtually every community of Muslims around the world today the dynamic is much more complex. In many cases, the radical traditionalists are the young, who reject the secularist leanings of their parents' generation.²³ Given the fact that most Muslim countries have population distributions that trend heavily toward youth, this is a significant dynamic.

There is debate over whether the beliefs of young people are a function primarily of ideas or of material factors. One school of thought claims that youth radicalism is a function of a spiritual reawakening.²⁴ Another school of thought suggests that instead the main dynamics are generational, with children choosing a different path from that of their parents.²⁵ Still another school of thought focuses on the factors already described, most notably the lack of economic opportunity which causes massive unemployment and underemployment leading to frustration and radicalization.²⁶ As a result, it is difficult to predict how population factors will affect support for jihadism.

However, when one considers the challenges of ecological degradation and resource depletion, the problem of rapidly growing populations with a skew toward youth paints a potentially dire picture of the future of the region. In much of the Muslim world, rapid population growth is occurring at the same time as ecological problems are growing. Water scarcity in particular may be a significant cause of tension and the issue may further destabilize and radicalize politics in many countries. At the very least, it seems likely that a large pool of potential recruits for radical movements will continue to exist.²⁷

The Role of Religion

Many analysts engage in a form of mirror-imaging when they assume that Muslim societies are motivated primarily by such issues as economic opportunity. While material factors clearly play a role in setting the context for the rise of radicalism, the specific form of this radicalism is deeply lodged in a particular set of movements regarding the meaning and interpretation of Islamic teachings. Of particular interest, within Islam there is a religious schism reminiscent of the Reformation in Europe.

Many analysts have underestimated the importance of this religious schism.²⁸ However, one of the most revolutionary aspects of the current jihadist movement is the claim of the jihadists to be able to perform legitimate scriptural analysis. Traditionally, in Islam, the right to interpret the Koran and Sunnah was lodged with the ulema, the community of scholars. Current radicals claim that both the Koran -- the revelations of the Prophet Muhammad -- and the Sunnah -- the record of his deeds -- can be interpreted individually by righteous Muslims.²⁹ It is a similar argument to that made during the Reformation in Christianity.

While it is tempting to simply classify Osama bin Laden as a heretic and cynical abuser of his faith, the problem is that his position on scriptural interpretation may, in fact, be an increasingly common and powerful one. Once the monopoly on scriptural interpretation is broken, it becomes increasingly difficult to return to traditional hierarchical processes.³⁰ This is a serious concern because much of the Western response to bin Ladenism on religious terms has been to try to line up as much of the mainstream ulema as possible against him. However, if what we are witnessing is, in fact, an assault on the traditional ulema's role, then this approach is unlikely to succeed at best and is profoundly counter-productive at worst since it tends to reinforce the radical's critique of the ulema as out-of-touch bureaucrats.

Furthermore, to the extent that legitimacy for scriptural interpretation may come from a commitment to radicalism and to personal sacrifice, the dynamics of religious legitimacy may be becoming increasingly problematic.³¹ Preaching radicalism and the promotion of violence is increasingly the source of legitimacy for popular clerics. In the past, clerics who preached violence had to first earn legitimacy either through great scholarship or personal sacrifice. Among a new generation of radical clerics, it is their commitment to violent jihadism as an ideology that gives them legitimacy in the first place. This is not a general indictment of Muslim clerics, but rather refers to a subset of populist radicals who are challenging the legitimacy of mainstream moderate clerics.

Any successful strategy for dealing with religiously-motivated terrorism will need to address the processes of legitimate scriptural interpretation in the Muslim world.

The Near Enemy and the Far Enemy

In the language of the jihadist movement, the “near enemy” refers to “apostate” Muslim regimes that refuse to institute pure Sharia law. These regimes are widely seen as brutal and corrupt, even among non-jihadists. The “far enemy” refers to the United States and the West generally. The concept of the near enemy and the far enemy is of crucial importance because it allows the jihadists to bridge the gap and make common cause with large numbers of moderate Muslims who do not otherwise support the goals of the jihadist movement.³²

For committed jihadists, war with the far enemy has always been seen as inevitable. Driven by the injunction to spread the faith, by the sword if necessary, the precursors to the current jihadist movement always planned for a time when, having unified the Muslim world, they would be able to take the fight global. This appeal to a global war for the sake of Islam naturally only attracted support from the fringe of the population.

One of the great innovations of the current jihadist movement has been to reverse the priority placed on the near enemy and the far enemy. Whereas traditionally the goal was to unify the Muslim world first, current jihadists believe it is imperative to strike first at the West which they claim sustains in power oppressive secular regimes throughout the Muslim world. The spread of this concept has served to unite extremists with moderates. While a great many moderates would reject the notion of a global war to spread the domain of Islam, other moderate reformers

have begun to accept the idea that reform in the Middle East will be difficult to achieve as long as the United States in particular supports oppressive regimes.³³ Moderates and radicals may have different long-term goals, but they are united in their anger at the United States and the West. Though moderates may not agree with the use of violence to force a U.S. disengagement, they are often sympathetic to the sentiments of the radicals.

External Sources of Violent Jihadism

The factors discussed thus far focus primarily on issues within the Muslim world that create support for jihadism. Though each factor must undergo a process of internationalization in order to justify striking out at perceived external enemies, the roots of the problem lie within those Arab and Muslim societies. As a result, they are considered more intractable problems because, as a matter of strategy, the West can only hope to encourage reform or act to mitigate the externalization processes. Analysts who focus on internal factors tend to be more pessimistic since they have fewer direct policy levers to effect change.

An alternative assessment of jihadism focuses on factors external to the Arab and Muslim worlds, and in particular focuses on the foreign relations of outside powers. This avenue of approach is controversial in many circles, as it seems to some to be “blaming the victims.” However, since American foreign policy and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute are often cited by jihadists as justifications for violence, it is crucially important to examine the arguments in some depth.

The Suffering of Muslims Internationally

Jihadist writings often portray the lot of Muslims internationally as an endless series of outrages. These writings often include a litany of complaints ranging from civil rights abuses of individual Muslims in Western countries to cases of near-genocidal situations, as in Bosnia and Chechnya. In this narrative, all sorts of disparate events are linked together. The massacres at Sabra and Shitla by Maronite Christians and the Assad regime’s atrocities at Hama, both in 1982; the suffering indirectly caused by sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s; the plight of the Palestinians; and discrimination against European Muslims are all seen as part of a global pattern of abuse and oppression. Often, the blame for these actions is laid at the door of the United States, which either through action or inaction is supposed to have had a hand in what is seen as a campaign against Muslims. This argument is the source of the popular allegation that the United States is responsible for the deaths of 10,000,000 Muslims worldwide.³⁴

Linking this argument to a claim of self-defense allows jihadists to assert a moral justification for virtually any attack against U.S. interests or allies. It also serves as a recruiting tool. This image of Islam under attack from a remorseless and unyielding enemy is tremendously effective at mobilizing resources and recruits for anti-American activities.

American Foreign Policy

A common theme in studies of jihadism is the role of U.S. foreign policy in encouraging radicalism.³⁵ On the surface, there is a great deal of validity to this perspective. The United States has supported Israel. It has supported oppressive authoritarian regimes. The United States has placed troops in the Middle East and, with the war in Iraq, invaded and occupied an Arab state, destroying an authoritarian but stable country and replacing it with anarchy. Even when the United States has been seen positively, as in the case of supporting the independence of Afghanistan in the 1980s, U.S. foreign policy has seemed opportunistic, as demonstrated by the abandonment of the Afghans after the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989.

However, it would be easy to overstate the independent influence of American foreign policy as a cause of jihadism. The problem with blaming U.S. foreign policy is that the challenge for the United States is as much the perception of American foreign policy as the reality of it. Individuals with an affinity for the jihadist movement tend to interpret all U.S. actions in the most hostile and conspiratorial light possible. The U.S. humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1992 is seen as an invasion. The failure to respond in Bosnia until 1995 is seen as evidence of disinterest in the fate of Muslims. The decision to work with a coalition of Arab states to reverse the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is seen purely as an attempt by the United States to humble a powerful Arab country and seize Arab oil. When the United States is absent from the Israeli-Palestinian peace process it is seen as abandoning the Palestinians to a brutal occupation, but when the United States becomes involved it is seen as a biased intervention to suppress Palestinian rights.³⁶ Activity is condemned, but so is inactivity. As long as the jihadists and their supporters assume the worst about the United States, any policy change is likely to be interpreted as either a duplicitous ploy or a sign of weakness.

With those caveats, however, there is no doubt that American foreign policy is widely cited in public opinion polls as a major cause of discontent with the United States. Furthermore, while some American analysts have sought to discount these findings as the result of cynical propaganda, jihadist groups have been successful in painting American foreign policy in a very negative light throughout much of the Muslim world.

The War in Iraq

The Bush administration has argued that the war in Iraq is a central front in the “war on terror.” At first, this was clearly a dubious argument. The links between Saddam Hussein’s regime and terrorist groups were minimal.³⁷ Four years into the intervention, however, the relationship between Iraq and violent jihadism has become more complicated.

Anger at American actions in Iraq is now one of the key factors supporting the recruitment of individuals into jihadist groups. Though the evidence is anecdotal, it does seem as though the Iraq war has replaced the plight of the Palestinians as the cause celebre of Islamic radical groups.³⁸ There is undoubtedly much cynicism in the use of the issue by jihadist leaders – who, after all, were no friends of Saddam’s regime – but there is no doubt that anger at the United States over

Iraq is both deep and broad throughout both the Arab and Muslim worlds. This dynamic complicates American efforts to “win hearts and minds” and limits the ability of pro-American governments to work actively and openly with the United States. The resentment felt in much of the world over American unilateralism and perceived over-reliance on force has been heightened by the Iraq war, and has complicated efforts to work even with long-standing American allies on other issues related to the struggle against violent jihadists.³⁹

Though, strategically, the war in Iraq has been a disaster, it is possible to overstate the impact of the war on the sources of support for violent jihadism. Radical groups have been very effective in using a long series of varied grievances to promote their cause. At various points, these groups have focused on secularism, statism, and corruption in 1960s Egypt; Arab accommodation toward Israel after 1973; Israeli complicity in the massacres at Sabra and Shatila; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; American troops in Arabia; the suffering of Muslims in Bosnia and Chechnya; the plight of the Palestinians during the two intifadas; and now, of course, the war in Iraq. As a result, it seems likely that in the absence of the war in Iraq, some other issue may have taken center stage. Other issues might not have been as effective as the war in Iraq has been in motivating opposition to the United States, but the long history of radicalism and violent jihadism suggests deeper roots and causes than any specific policy, no matter how misguided.

Israel and Palestine

Clearly, the on-going Israeli-Palestinian dispute is a significant factor in the strength of the jihadist movement. However, going beyond the truism that this dispute serves to destabilize the Muslim world, there are many outstanding questions about the long-term connection to jihadism.

American support for Israel is the Israeli-Palestinian issue’s connection to anti-American jihadism. The central argument is that as long as the United States is seen as playing a biased role, it will never be able to make headway in the war for the hearts and minds of the Arab world. This may be true as far as it goes, but it implies a procedural view of the American role rather than a substantive one. In other words, there is a critique that the problem is that the United States has not been sufficiently involved in trying to broker some agreement. However, during the late 1990s, the Clinton Administration took a proactive role toward helping solve the dispute, including offering to use American intelligence assets to monitor implementation of agreements and help develop confidence-building measures between the two sides. The positive effects of this were muted, however, because of continuing debate over the legitimacy, viability, and details of a two-state solution.

As a practical matter, the nature of the settlement will be as important as the simple existence of an agreement. American involvement could be counter-productive, from the standpoint of reducing anti-Americanism, if the resultant agreement is seen as illegitimate, which is likely to be the case with any agreement that seems to ensure the permanent survival of Israel as a Jewish state.⁴⁰ After all, would the existence of an independent Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank, even one conforming to the 1967 “green line” and with all settlements dismantled, defuse

the tension caused by the Israeli-Palestinian dispute? It may. However, we need to be aware of three additional substantive factors that are often cited about the dispute. First, there is the problem of the right-of-return. Absent some right for Palestinians to return to Israel proper and reclaim lost property, there will always be some who consider the situation unjust. Second, given existing anti-Semitism in the region and calls for Sharia law, it is likely that the status of Israeli Arabs will continue to be a source of tension.⁴¹ Indeed, even without anti-Semitism and concerns over the Sharia, the existence of ethnic divisions within a country often cause tensions within diaspora communities. Third, there were no occupied territories or settlements prior to 1967, and yet Israel found itself at war with all of its neighbors. Regardless of the additional indignities heaped upon the Palestinians since, there remains a solid core of rejectionists who consider Israel itself an illegitimate and illegal last bastion of colonialism. These rejectionists may not comprise a majority of Palestinians, but neither is jihadism a majority movement in the Muslim world.

Supporters of Israel often seek to downplay the link between jihadism and lack of progress on Israeli-Palestinian issues. While it is true that many in the Muslim world have either cynically sought to leverage the issue for their own benefit, such as Saddam Hussein, or emphasized it only when seeking to broaden the appeal of their message, as in the case of Osama bin Laden, it is also true that the issue has a deep, visceral significance to virtually all Arabs and most Muslims around the world. The strategic challenge, however, is to identify the key elements of this significance in order to ascertain whether the problem is the Israeli occupation of the territories, or the existence of Israel itself. It may be that as long as Israel exists in any form, many Arabs will feel humiliated and angry, and support groups that lash out at external enemies.

Mixed Causes

There are other factors in the Muslim world that help sustain the violent jihadist movement. These factors are broadly cultural and are difficult to address with any specific policy initiative. Nonetheless, these factors play a significant role in laying a receptive foundation for jihadist activities.

Conspiracy Theory and the Rumor Mill

Although the rise of Al Jazeera is beginning to change this dynamic, the media in most Muslim countries is tightly controlled and governments are considered illegitimate by many. As a result, the public profoundly distrusts formal sources of news.⁴² Instead, there are two public information dynamics that have little analogue in the West. The first is the role of conspiracy theories. The public's view of politics in many Muslim countries is largely that they are plagued by competing self-interested conspiracies.⁴³ As a result, the dominant mode of political analysis is to pose the question, "Who benefited from the action?" as a way to ascertain the truth. In the case of the 9/11 attacks, for instance, most Muslims in the Middle East and South Asia do not believe that Arabs were involved. After all, who benefited? Not Al Qaeda, which was attacked and scattered. Not the Taliban, which was removed from power. Not the Arab nation as a whole, which has found itself under siege and suspicion. This mode of thinking explains why many are

prone to believe that the 9/11 attacks were some sort of conspiracy hatched by the Israeli Mossad in conjunction with a cabal of American oil companies. According to a 2006 poll,⁴⁴ only 15% of Pakistanis believe Arabs carried out the 9/11 attacks. That number was 32% in Egypt, 16% in Turkey and Indonesia, and 39% in Jordan. Among Europeans, only 17% of British Muslims believe Arabs were behind 9/11. Only in France did a plurality of those polled accept the role of Al Qaeda, and then only by a 48-46% margin. These results highlight the difficulty of any sort of American outreach effort, since any message put out by the United States will have to compete against a pervasive skepticism of official or governmental communications.

The second dynamic is the role of rumors. Individuals in Arab societies may not trust official sources of information, but they do trust their family, friends, close acquaintances, tribal and clan leaders and, in many cases, religious authorities. In the West, we see a shadow of this dynamic with the role of blogs. Some bloggers are actually talented journalists who just happen to work for a new media, but others are simply crackpots. In the Arab world, public opinion is often formed in response to the informal distribution of bizarre rumors. The rise of Al Jazeera is a welcome development in this area. Though also prone to report rumor as fact, Al Jazeera does, on the whole, subscribe to the principle of independent, fact-based reporting. The rapid growth of this news channel may signal a movement away from informal rumor to verified reporting as a major source of news for much of the Arab world.

Anti-Semitism

The issue of anti-Semitism is politically charged. Accusations of anti-Semitism are often used to discredit critics of America's Israel policy and as a result there is a great deal of skepticism about the label. That said, one simply cannot come to grips with the challenge of jihadism without considering the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in the Muslim world. Throughout the Muslim world there is evidence of wide-spread, virulent anti-Semitism, unseen in the Western world since World War II.⁴⁵ In mainstream state-sponsored media, educational materials such as textbooks, and popular discourse, Jews are commonly portrayed as the cause of virtually every calamity. Jews are described as parasites, conspirators, enslavers, and murderers of children. This is not just a critique of Israel's policies, but a characterization of Jews that bears more than a passing resemblance to Nazi propaganda.

The consequence of this anti-Semitism is significant. First, it makes any negotiation or accommodation with Israel difficult to achieve. This dynamic justifies hard-liners within Israel and sustains Arab rejectionists as well. The lack of progress on a settlement of the Palestinian question, in turn, justifies the anti-Semitism that, in part, blocks a solution. Second, the demonization of Jews implicates the United States as an enemy of Islam. In much of the rhetoric in Muslim countries, either the United States is controlled by Jews or is using the Jews for its own nefarious purposes. In either case, attacks on the United States or American interests become justifiable as a defensive measure. Third, the mode of analysis that sustains anti-Semitism also promotes a conspiratorial view of politics. For many Muslims, their worldview is shaped by the perception of malevolent conspiracies that seek to destroy Islam and impoverish and enslave Muslims. This, of course, in turn justifies the creation of counter-conspiracies as a defensive measure.

MAPPING THE COMMUNITIES

The Muslim World

Committed Jihadists

There have been four generations of the modern jihadist movement. The first generation focused on internal reform in the Muslim world. It separated itself from the mainstream, which included a broadly popular Islamist movement, by its willingness to use violence against opponents. The culmination of this generation was the successful assassination of Egyptian president Sadat in 1981. This first generation was motivated by frustration with the failure of Arab governments to govern according to Islamic law and their weakness in confronting Israel. These radicals tended to be well-educated, and were motivated by numerous religious commentaries, most notably by 13th century scholar Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya as interpreted by Sayyid Qutb in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁶ The core of Qutb's arguments was that Arabs had fallen into a moral corruption and were being kept there by their secular leaders and docile clergy. He called upon all Muslims, individually, to struggle to restore the standing of the Arab people by promoting rule according to the Koran. The central innovation was the claim that jihad was an individual obligation, not just a collective duty in response to calls from legitimate governments. The lack of legitimate government was precisely what justified, indeed demanded, individual jihad. Because this generation of jihadists was quite public in its views, it was also relatively easy to suppress. Qutb himself was executed by the Egyptian government, and the security measures adopted in the wake of the Sadat assassination were sufficient to suppress the movement for a time.

The second generation of jihadists was composed of the committed young men who ventured to Afghanistan to help fight the Soviet invasion. Though inspired, in part, by religious commentaries, most seem to have been motivated by a more general desire to help fellow Muslims. A key transition in jihadism occurred at this time as the movement changed from an elite, ideologically motivated group to a mass organization with a large-scale recruitment and mobilization apparatus. For many Arab governments, the second generation of jihadism was a welcome development. Not only did it allow these governments to curry the favor of the United States by supporting an anti-Soviet initiative, it also allowed them to export dissent. The second generation of jihadism came to an end with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and the ultimate victory of the Taliban in that country's civil war.

The third generation of jihadism is the bin Laden generation. Bin Laden, and many men like him, became radicalized as part of the anti-Soviet campaign. With the defeat of the Soviet Union, they turned their attention again to reform in their home countries. The atmosphere remained inhospitable, however. Rather than continue to try to engage their own governments, this generation adopted the strategic orientation of striking at the "far enemy" as a way to weaken their domestic opponents. Many countries tacitly tolerated the operation of these "far enemy" jihadists because, although clearly dangerous to their own control, the threat at home

was long-term. This allowed for a continued exportation of the threat. Operating in a less friendly environment, however, did push the jihadist movement to adopt more sophisticated tradecraft, most notably in terms of cell-organization, financing and money-laundering, and covert recruitment and training. Jihadism became an underground conspiracy, but one of large reach. While some jihadist leaders remain clearly influenced by scholarly arguments (Qutb and Ibn Taymiyya are widely quoted in jihadist texts), the foot-soldiers of jihad were largely recruited among disgruntled young men. Some of these young men were veterans of Afghanistan. Others were frustrated by the lack of economic opportunity and political freedom at home. Still others were animated by dismay over public morals. Many were driven by a desire to help fellow Muslims, in particular Palestinians in the wake of the first intifada (1987-1993). Finally, some were motivated by deep feelings of “humiliation,” a catch-all term for resentment of Western wealth and power, the American intervention in Iraq from 1991 to the present, and the continued American involvement in the Middle East. This discourse of humiliation also found fertile ground in the disaffected Muslim communities in Western Europe and led to the formation of viable cells in European cities and the recruitment of some committed jihadists of British citizenship, among others.

We still know very little about the fourth generation of jihadism. Following the disruption of jihadist networks after 9/11, the movement seems to have transformed again. This time the form of jihadism seems to be small, independent organizations, relying on the ideology of jihad, but otherwise motivated by local particularities. The implication is that future successful counter-terrorism approaches will need to be even more finely tailored to specific targets than ever before. Given the difficulty of segmenting policy approaches in a globalized world, the challenge to policy makers is significant.

Active Supporters

The active supporters of jihadism can be divided into two groups, with government or quasi-governmental support on one hand, and support from individuals on the other.

We know more about the causes of governmental or quasi-governmental support.⁴⁷ Here we can identify two key dynamics. The first, already alluded to, is the desire of many authoritarian Muslim countries to export dissent. This is done both by encouraging domestic radicals to focus on the “far enemy” and by the deliberate scapegoating of external enemies. Various states essentially encourage a focus on the “far enemy” by differential policies of repression for groups fomenting domestic disruptions compared to those calling for international jihad. Radicals calling for domestic change are often arrested, tortured and, frequently, executed. Those calling for international jihad are, at most, harassed and exiled. This serves to channel dissent. U.S. policy has also tended to shape jihadism due to a reluctance to press Middle Eastern and South Asian governments to introduce democratic reform. The net effect has been that the United States has acted as a safety valve, taking upon itself the wrath of frustrated populations, in order to sustain stability in the region. This may no longer be a strategically wise choice.

The scapegoating of external enemies takes many forms, but there are three in particular worth mentioning: the use of educational systems, the role of the government-controlled media, and the

The Making of a ‘Martyr.’ Hasib Mir Hussain was born and raised in a Muslim household in Leeds, England. He played soccer and cricket in school. But it was not an ideal childhood. The Matthew Murray comprehensive school he attended was riven by racial divides – “It was always whites against Asians and there were so many fights.” By the end of his school days, Hasib had turned heavily to religion. He began attending mosque regularly. He wore robes and grew his beard out. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and when he returned, frequented with Shehzad Tanweer and Mohammad Sidique Khan. Khan was apparently a cell organizer. He had traveled to training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Along with Germaine Lindsey, these four detonated a series of bombs in London on July 7, 2005. Hasib was a classic recruit – young, frustrated, and alienated.

Source: David Williams, “Young and British: The London Suicide Bombers,” *Daily Mail*, July 13, 2005.

dynamic of message segmenting. In virtually every Muslim country, the textbooks used in schools focus heavily on the claim that the Muslim world has been the target of a systematic campaign of oppression and looting by the West.⁴⁸ These texts emphasize the impact of colonialism, tracing its roots back to the Crusades. They stress the predatory nature of Western capitalism and, in particular, its appetite for Middle East oil. And they stress the connection and support of Western governments for Israel. These broad themes are reinforced in the government-controlled media (there is little freedom of the press in most of the Muslim world), both in terms of sensational coverage given to Western and Israeli “outrages,” and in terms of editorial comment that spreads rumors and conspiracy theories. Message segmenting occurs when leaders give quite different messages to domestic audiences than to international audiences.

We know relatively little about the causes of individual active support for jihad. Our knowledge of the jihadists themselves comes from their public pronouncements, investigations following

attacks, and their own confessions when captured. Thus, there is a knowledge gap in the study of terrorism. We have information about mass beliefs, and we have some information about how specific groups operate, but our knowledge of the processes by which mass frustration turns into operational organizations is limited. In other words, we understand some of the inputs and outputs, but we do not have a clear sense of terrorism as a complete system. Our understanding of terrorism support structures is a prime example.

Active supporters who, nonetheless, refrain from direct participation in violence are harder to study because they tend to remain out of the spotlight. We do know that some of these active supporters are individuals within or close to the ruling elites. Members of the Saudi royal family are the most visible examples; their support for Palestinian suicide bombers and charities that funnel money to Al Qaeda has been amply documented.⁴⁹ These elites are presumably motivated in part by the same dynamics that motivate state toleration or support of externally-focused radicalism. As individuals, they are also driven by religious and ideological motivations as well as their own personal situations. For some individuals, the injunction for Muslims to engage in charitable acts and to provide shelter to the needy clearly also plays a part. To the extent that the educational system, media, and state elites promote the view of Muslims as victims, active support for jihadism is often justified as self-defense. Unfortunately, much of this is speculative. Studies of support for jihadism often rely on aggregate survey data. This is useful for understanding some of the general society trends, but is of limited utility in understanding the particular motivations of specific individuals.

Tacit Supporters

Much of the challenge in the struggle against violent extremism is that it is difficult to get much cooperation from the population as a whole in Muslim countries. While active supporters are driven by similar motivations as violent jihadists, tacit supporters – whose support often comes from inaction rather than action – seem to be driven by a different set of concerns.

First, there is clearly broad-based sympathy with the macro-level goals of the jihadist movement if those goals are defined as domestic reform, resistance to Israel, and a restoration of the pride and strength of Muslim peoples everywhere. Second, because many governments in the Muslim world are authoritarian and corrupt, much of the population is reticent to turn to the authorities. Lack of transparency and due process, and the wide-spread use of torture, have undermined the legitimacy of local governments. Third, while relatively few Muslims support the violence used by radicals, many see it as a legitimate response to violence used by local governments, and by the United States, Israel, and other perceived “enemies of Islam.”⁵⁰

The gap between broad-based sympathy for the cause and quite narrow support for violence against civilians is the source of the vast discrepancy regarding the scope of the problem. Analysts are forced to rely on extremely indirect means to ascertain the number of potential supporters of jihad in any given country. For instance, analysts try to measure support for fundamentalism by counting the number of men wearing full beards in formal ceremonies, such as the graduation photos of university students and cadets.⁵¹ Other methods include the use of content analysis for specific phrases in public speeches that are presumed to send intelligible, though subtle, messages of support to extremists. The methodology of the study of jihadism resembles Kremlinology during the Cold War when Western analysts pored over pictures of May Day parades to see who was standing next to whom on the Lenin mausoleum. It is an inexact science at best.

Tacit Opponents

The largest difference between tacit supporters of jihadism and its tacit opponents is an ethical judgment about the legitimacy of violence, in particular the use of terror against civilians.⁵² Linked to that is a strategic assessment about the utility of violence. In many Muslim communities, there is a sense that violence is counter-productive. For example, among Palestinians there is a general consensus that attacks on Israelis have made things worse. Some Palestinians continue to support violence, however, because they believe that presenting a unified front is useful, and others do so simply out of a desire for revenge.

There are three important dynamics that explain why many Muslim opponents of violence remain tacit opponents, expressing their frustrations privately rather than actively opposing jihadism. The first is fear. Jihadists do not just use violence against governments or external enemies. They also use violence, and the threat of violence, against individuals in their community whom they suspect of working with the authorities. The inability of governments to protect individuals living amongst the jihadists contributes to a dramatic muting of resistance to violence.

Second, many Muslim are convinced that presenting a united front against external enemies, in particular, is strategically valuable and that arguments about tactics ought not undermine this unity. This is particularly true in the more embattled Muslim communities, most notably among the Palestinians, though it should be noted that even Osama bin Laden has explicitly embraced cooperation with “heretical” Shiites in order to present a united front against the United States.⁵³

Third, as with the tacit supporters, many tacit opponents of terror nonetheless support the radicals’ macro-level goals. There is a perception that even though they may commit morally reprehensible acts, their “heart,” so to speak, is in the right place. In other words, opposition to terrorism ought not be mistaken for support for the United States.

Active Opponents

There are in all Muslim countries at least some activists and government leaders who oppose jihadism openly and publicly. The activists are brave individuals who risk their lives and standing in their communities by challenging violent thugs. They are often motivated by religious commitments and more general secular norms. Threats of violence often chase them to the West, where they lose some credibility as authentic Muslim voices. Additionally, Middle Eastern governments are suspicious of these individuals, who are often as critical of oppressive governments as of radical jihadists. The dynamics of emigration and lack of state support serve to undermine the active opponents of jihadism.

The other opponents of jihadism are the state governments and state-employed clergy in many Muslim countries. Protectors of the status quo and elite privilege, these groups are often aggressive in their attacks on jihadists. Unfortunately, their tactics and lack of sympathy for the jihadist cause of reform undermine their credibility. The more authoritarian governments seek to suppress jihadism, the more legitimacy they give to the radicals.

The Non-Muslim World

The challenge of jihadism in the non-Muslim world largely consists of cells of individuals who take advantage of sympathetic enclaves and civil liberties in order to plan and execute terror attacks. We see many of the same dynamics as in the Muslim world, but there are some key differences.

- First, in the West, jihadist groups seem to have shallower support structures. Most terrorists and jihadists recruited in the West have been disaffected young men recruited into small, radical mosques or often into small religious study circles. The implication is that jihadism is not yet a mass movement among Western Muslim communities, and might be curtailed through careful intelligence and investigation measures.⁵⁴ Greater efforts at integration may ease tensions, but ultimately there will always be a pool of disaffected among the young prone to recruitment into radical cells – as well as cults, gangs, drug subcultures, and so on.

Polling Data From the Muslim World

Views of attacks against civilians

	Often Justified	Sometimes Justified	Rarely Justified	Never Justified
Pakistan	12	13	19	46
Lebanon	26	13	19	33
Jordan	24	33	31	11
Morocco	8	5	5	79
Indonesia	2	13	18	66

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 17- Nation Survey, Spring 2005

- Second, Muslims in the West are torn between a desire to join the mainstream and concern over protecting their cultural heritage and values. Especially in Europe, this concern over culture and values – including such hot-button issues as the wearing of the head scarf – becomes a self-reinforcing dynamic. Europeans use Muslim separateness as an excuse for discriminatory treatment, and Muslims use discriminatory treatment to justify measures to assert a distinct identity.
- Third, the civil liberties issue complicates the matter of an effective response to terror networks. Clearly, jihadists use the protections of Western civil liberties to act in the United States and Europe.⁵⁵ This produces a backlash that justifies the use of invasive investigation and surveillance as well as preventive detentions in some European countries. But these restrictions on civil liberties, often seen as discriminatory in Muslim communities, cause Muslims to turn a blind eye to radicals in their midst. This issue is complicated further by the fact that civil liberties are valued for reasons that are completely separate from the terrorism issue.
- Fourth, the Israeli-Palestinian issue, often crystallized with crude forms of anti-Semitism, creates a clear wedge between Muslims and Western governments, particularly the United States.

Assessing the Scope of the Problem

Is the problem of violent jihadism getting better or worse? As a practical matter, this is an extraordinarily difficult question to answer. There are relatively few discrete data points, and each provides only limited insight into the general question.

The first, and more obvious, data point is the trend line in terms of numbers of terror attacks by jihadist organizations. While the numbers tend to fluctuate to a certain degree from year

to year, the trend is both unmistakable and alarming. Attacks by Islamic radical groups have increased both in number of incidents and numbers of casualties since 9/11.⁵⁶ In part, this is a function of the decentralization that has accompanied the rise of “fourth generation” jihadism, which has increased the difficulty of detection, while making the organization of attacks both easier and cheaper, since the groups are local and hence do not require sophisticated processes for international communication, travel, and financing.

The second data point is the number of suspected terrorists who are killed, captured, or arrested.⁵⁷ From this number, it may be possible to infer the number of cells and plots disrupted. This number, unfortunately, is of limited analytical value. Just as more arrests domestically can signal either better law enforcement or worsening criminality, eliminating terrorists either demonstrates better counter-terror processes or simply the presence of more terrorists.

The third set of data points is polling data. A great deal of the work on terrorism has relied on these measures, but they are tremendously limited in utility. Ultimately, judgments about violent jihadism based on polls rely on a vast number of analytical inferences that may or may not be warranted. Polls are subject to various biases based on how questions are posed and the respondents’ beliefs about the nature of the questioner and the aims of the poll. Respondents may exaggerate their support for extremism as a form of bragging, or may suppress it out of a desire for privacy. Polls do a poor job, on the whole, of assessing intensity of preferences. In domestic political polling, it is possible to narrow the range of potential errors by sub-classifying individuals based on whether they are registered or “likely” voters and to further refine that by adjusting results based on the history of past polling data matched against election results. Even then, the science is imprecise. In the case of polling data on jihadism, we simply do not have enough empirical information to assess the nature or extent of the gaps in the data. What percentage of individuals who believe terrorism is justified in fact give support to terrorist organizations? Does it vary based on their identification of certain issues as more important than others? Does it vary based on age or socio-economic status? Is support for Islamism a good predictor of support for jihadism? We simply do not know the answer to those basic questions.

At this juncture, there are three broad schools of thought about the general trendline of the jihadist threat. The first school of thought is closely associated with the Bush administration, which claims great progress in the “Global War on Terror” since 9/11. The Administration claims that not only has terror become less legitimate, but that its actions in Afghanistan and Iraq have significantly downgraded the capabilities of jihadist networks by capturing and killing numerous terrorist leaders and by eliminating key safe havens that allowed the movement to function in the first place.⁵⁸ A second school of thought suggests quite the opposite. Pointing to the weakening of Islamism in countries such as Algeria and Iran, some analysts suggest that the upsurge in jihadist terror in the late 1990s was a last spasm of a dying movement. Many analysts in this school suggest that although Islamism was dying in the 1990s, American actions since 9/11 – most notably, human rights abuses such as those at Abu Ghraib and the legally problematic confinements at Guantanamo – have reinjected life into the movement. It is possible, of course, that both of these positions have some truth to them, namely that the United States did degrade existing networks significantly while at the same time easing the process of recruiting for new networks. The third school of thought – favored by this study’s author – is that both Islamism and jihadism are movements based on deep economic, political, social, and cultural trends and that any judgments based on one or two cases or short time periods are likely to misinterpret the nature of the problem and ascribe too much significance to short-term variations.

Conclusions

There is a fundamental governance crisis in the Muslim world that stretches beyond state government into the realm of religious matters. This governance crisis creates a “legitimacy gap” into which various radical movements have effectively moved.

Different communities within the Muslim world have different relationships with violent jihadism. Any serious policy response must acknowledge the differences and not be lured into simple, one-size-fits-all strategies. At the very least, strategy in the “war on terror” must include numerous mitigation tactics to neutralize unintended, but predictable, consequences of our actions.

We need to take the religious roots of terrorism and extremism seriously. While it is comforting to accuse violent radicals of cynicism, it is more important to acknowledge that many of the jihadists are genuinely religious. Furthermore, it is imperative to examine the nature of the theological debates in the Muslim world in order to craft a viable response.

The tacit supporters and opponents of terror, by their inaction, provide effective sanctuary for radicals. While it may be possible to make these communities jump off the fence, it is likely that under pressure many would become active supporters of violent jihadism. These groups need to be handled very carefully because, while they may oppose violence, they may also support some of the core goals of jihadist movements.

Understanding of the specific effects of the various identified causes of violent jihadism remains incomplete. As a result, there are many unresolvable, on-going debates about the nature of the challenge that serve to complicate the development of appropriate policy responses.

Endnotes

1 For instance, this report does not explicitly examine President Bush's claim that jihadists strike the United States because they "hate freedom." There is virtually no support in the analytic or scholarly communities for that assessment, so we have chosen not to focus on that particular claim.

2 President George W. Bush declared a war on terror in his message to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001. "Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated." George Walker Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People (September 20, 2001).

3 This term was floated as a trial balloon by the Bush Administration in May 2005. Though ultimately rejected by the administration, it remains a favored term by many analysts. Susan B. Glasser, "Review May Shift Terror Policies: U.S. Is Expected to Look Beyond Al Qaeda," *Washington Post*, May 29, 2005, p. A01.

4 Christopher Hitchens was among the first prominent writers to use some variation of this term, which has now become popular among conservative commentators. He has written, "the bombers of Manhattan represent fascism with an Islamic face." Christopher Hitchens, "Against Rationalization," *The Nation* (posted online September 20, 2001). Available at <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20011008/hitchens>.

5 For a good discussions of Salafism and Wahhabism in the current struggle, please see Mohammed Ayoob, "Political Islam: Image and Reality," *World Policy Journal* (Fall 2004) and Jason Burke, "Think Again: Al Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2004.

6 William McCants (ed.), *Militant Ideology Atlas*, Executive Summary (U.S. Military Academy: Combatting Terrorism Center, 2006), p. 10.

7 For a good discussion of Takfirism and its role in inspiring current anti-American terrorism activities, please see Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2002), pp. 70-73.

8 For a good discussion of Akramiya, see the summary of the Carnegie Endowment's event on Akramiya, posted at <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&id=881&prog=zru>.

9 David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

10 Barry Rubin (ed), *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003). This volume provides a useful overview of the movement as it stands today.

11 Farrukh Iqbal, *Sustaining Gains in Poverty Reduction and Human Development in the Middle East and North Africa* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006), pp. 1-20.

12 Iqbal, pp. 37-38.

13 Craig Murphy, *Emergence of the NIEO Ideology* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1984).

14 James Zogby, "Attitudes of Arabs 2005: An In-Depth Look at Social and Political Concerns of Arabs" Arab American Institute, Zogby International, Young Arab Leaders, p. 15.

15 The criminal justice literature, for instance, shows a strong correlation between unemployment and gang violence, which may have some application to the terrorism issue. See Demetrios Kyriacou, et al, "The Relationship between Socioeconomic Factors and Gang Violence in the City of Los Angeles," *Journal of Trauma-Injury Infection & Critical Care*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (February 1999): 334-339.

16 John Hughes, "Turbulent Indonesia, Moderate Islam," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 14, 2004. Hughes' interpretation is subject to some debate. See for instance, "One Picture of 'Moderate' Islam," Editorial, *Washington Times*, August 28, 2006. Also, World Bank statistics on Gini coefficients. On Indonesian economic policies and poverty alleviation, see Bert Hofman, Thee Kian Wie, and Ella Roderick-Jones, "Indonesia: Poverty Reduction and Economic Challenges," World Bank Case Study. Available at <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/reducingpoverty/case/28/fullcase/Indonesia%20Full%20Case.pdf>.

17 Some "traditionalists" are motivated exclusively by the issue of public morality, but contrary to the claims of some conservative pundits, there is little evidence to suggest that this is the key issue motivating either Islamism generally or violent jihadism. For a contrary opinion, see the controversial argument by Dinesh D'Souza, *The Enemy At Home: The Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11* (New York: Doubleday, 2007).

18 Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London: Pluto Press, 2003). This volume provides a good survey of the trends in modern Arab political thought.

19 An example comes from the Muslim Brotherhood. See Adnan A. Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism* (Westport: Praeger, 2005).

20 This is the thesis of Gilles Kepel [translated Anthony F. Roberts], *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard, 2002). See also, the Rubin, op. cit., which seeks to answer the question of why Islamism failed to spread.

21 A recent poll highlights the complexity of this issue in Iran. Iranians on the whole supported the legitimacy of Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians, but had very negative views of Osama bin Laden. They strongly favored democracy, but only half felt that exposure to outside media was positive. For the full results, see “Public Opinion in Iran and America on Key International Issues,” January 24, 2007, WorldPublicOpinion.org Poll.

22 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 2005. Available at <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=247>

23 This dynamic has waxed and waned at various times. Many educated elites had adopted secularism with a socialist leaning in the immediate aftermath of decolonization. The first generation of Islamists were their progeny. Since then, the pattern has become more complex, and there is now a complex mix of generational divides within the modernizer-traditionalist divide.

24 Mehmood Naqshbandi, “Problems and Practical Solutions to Tackle Extremism; and Muslim Youth and Community Issues,” *Shrivenham Papers*, No. 1 (Defense Academy of the United Kingdom, August 2006).

25 A good discussion of generational dynamics can be found in William Strauss and Neil Howe, *The History of America’s Future 1584 to 2069 Generations* (New York: William Morrow, 1990).

26 Dennis A. Ahlburg, “Population Growth and Poverty,” in *The Impact of Population Growth on Well-Being in Developing Countries*, ed. Dennis A. Ahlburg, Allen C. Kelley, and Karen Oppenheim Mason (Berlin: Springer, 1996), 219-258; Alan Richards, *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism: Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals* (Carlisle PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003).

27 Richard P. Cincotta, et. al, “The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict After the Cold War,” Population Action International Report, 2003.

28 Including President Bush who has repeatedly claimed that our enemies are not “true Muslims” or “genuinely” religious. “The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don’t represent peace. They represent evil and war.” George W. Bush, Remarks by the President at Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. September 17, 2001. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html>

29 Musallam, pp. 137-165. Kepel, pp. 220-221.

30 Though Islam does not have a clear hierarchy of spiritual interpretation as does the Roman Catholic Church, leadership in spiritual matter has traditionally been lodged in a community of formally-trained scholars, thus placing a high bar on entry into religious debates.

31 Christiane Amanpour, "Radical, moderate Muslims battle for young English minds," CNN Behind the Scenes, Jan 22, 2007. <http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/europe/01/17/warwithin.amanpour/index.html>

32 Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: Modern Library, 2003).

33 See Testimony of Statement of Dennis Ross to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States July 9, 2003. http://www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing3/witness_ross.htm

34 There is debate in jihadist circles over whether the U.S. is responsible for 10,000,000 or merely 4,000,000 deaths. The 10,000,000 figure is often ascribed to Nasser bin Hamed al-Fahd, whose website is discussed at Marie-Hélène Boccara & Alex Greenberg, Special Report #35, Middle East Media Research Institute, November 11, 2004. Available at <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR3504>.

35 Michael Scheuer has called the United States Osama bin Laden's "only indispensable ally." Michael Scheuer [originally as Anonymous], *Imperial Hubris* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2004), p. xv.

36 Nevine Khalil, "Blasting America's 'bias'," *Al-Ahram Weekly* Online, Issue No.549 (30 August - 5 September 2001). Khalil quotes Egyptian President Mubarak as saying, "There is complete and blatant American bias in Israel's favour..."

37 *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton), pp. 66.

38 Karen DeYoung, "Spy Agencies Say Iraq War Hurting U.S. Terror Fight," *Washington Post*, September 24, 2006, p. A01.

39 It has complicated relations on other issues as well, including economics. See "Unpopular U.S. Foreign Policies Threaten Revenue, Diminish Global Market Share for Many American-Based Companies" GMI Poll, October 21, 2004. <http://www.gmi-mr.com/gmipoll/release.php?p=20041021>.

40 Hamas, for instance, opposed the negotiations, as they would have locked in place a two-state solution that ensured the continued existence of Israel.

41 See the recent dispute over the entry of a Muslim minister in Israeli cabinet. <http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/01/29/israel.cabinet.ap/index.html>

42 See Freedom House Global Press Freedom Rankings 2006. Available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=271&year=2006>.

43 Daniel Pipes, *Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998).

44 Pew Global Attitudes Project, Spring 2006.

45 Bernard Lewis, "Muslim Anti-Semitism" *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 1998).

46 McCants, op. cit.

47 For a fuller discussion, see Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

48 For an example, see Nina Shea, "This is a Saudi Textbook. (After the Intolerance was Removed)," *Washington Post*, May 21, 2006, p. B01. The full report can be found at <http://www.gulfinsitute.org/IGA051605/IGA-FH-SaudiReport.pdf>.

49 Alfred B. Prados and Christopher M. Blanchard, "Saudi Arabia: Terrorist Financing Issues," CRS Report for Congress, December 8, 2004.

50 Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Global Attitudes Survey, 2002. Available at <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/165topline.pdf>.

51 Benjamin and Simon, pp. 183-205.

52 John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

53 Michael Scheuer, "The Zawahiri-Zarqawi Letter: Al-Qaeda's Tactical and Theater-of-War Concerns," *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 2, No. 21 (November 14, 2005). <http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369830>

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55 The 9/11 terrorists, for example, were able to accomplish their mission in part due to limits on information sharing between U.S. federal agencies. *9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 399-418.

56 Raphael Perl, "Trends in Terrorism: 2006," CRS Report for Congress, July 21, 2006.

57 This data is available form the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. <http://www.tkb.org/>

58 The National Security Strategy of the United States, March 2006. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf>).

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