

## **Countering Terrorist Ideologies Discussion Papers September 2005**

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# **Countering The Ideological Support For HT And The IMU: The Case Of The Ferghana Valley**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Ferghana Valley consists of portions of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The chief problems of that Valley include the absence of democracy, the presence of acute economic underdevelopment, and a high degree of repression. These conditions are generally considered to be contributing to the popularity of extremist movements. Two such organizations are the focus of this study: *Hizb ut-Tahrir-e-Islami* or *Hizb Tahrir* (the Islamic Liberation Movement or HT), and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). HT is a radical Islamist party, but it is not Jihadist in orientation. Its purpose is to establish the Caliphate (*Khilafah*) in Central Asia and elsewhere in the world of Islam. The proposition of creating a Caliphate is a radical one; however, HT insists that it intends to achieve its purpose through peaceful means only. The IMU is a pan-Islamist and Jihadist party. As such, it intends to overthrow the governments of the Ferghana Valley through violent means (i.e., through the use of militant Jihad). Indeed, it has exploited the repressive governing style of the governments and the acute economic underdevelopment of the area to launch a number of armed attacks in those countries in the late 1990s and 2000.

The US involvement in Central Asia in the 1990s has been sporadic, and has not been guided by a coherent strategy. It was only after the terrorist attacks on its homeland on September 11, 2001, that the United States decided to seek the establishment of military bases in the region. Even then, the administration of President George W Bush was not focused on developing a coherent counterterrorism strategy that encompassed Central Asia and Afghanistan.

This study sketches out a counterterrorism strategy for the United States in the Ferghana Valley. In essence, such a strategy should be called an anti-terrorism strategy, because it is much more comprehensive than America's present counterterrorism emphasis that drives its global war on terrorism.

Considering the fact that the United States is resolute about advocating democratic reforms in the Muslim Middle East, it is perceptibly easy to develop the metrics of similar reform for the Muslim Ferghana Valley

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(indeed, for Central Asia as a whole). America's anti-terrorism strategy in the countries of that region ought to be focused on the promotion of political pluralism (i.e., gradual liberalization), advocacy for the evolution of moderate and traditional Islam, allowance for the unimpeded functioning of conventional opposition parties (including moderate Islamic parties) and, equally important, the introduction of economic reforms and implementation of massive multilateral economic assistance programmes in Central Asia in general.

In the absence of such policies, challenges to the continued stability and, indeed, to the very survival of the regimes of the Ferghana Valley promise only to escalate in the coming months and years. Toward the end of March 2005, the rule of President Askar Akaev of Kyrgyzstan was suddenly ended as a result of a strong political protest. Then in May 2005, there was a political demonstration in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan. Even though the government of President Islam Karimov put down that demonstration, the future of his government looks uncertain, due to the resultant major loss of life (unofficial sources reported the number of deaths to be between 700-1,000, including women and children).

The growing economic pluralism in the People's Republic of China is putting inexorable pressure on political pluralism. China, though still a communist state, is slowly opening up its political system. The countries of the Ferghana Valley may be able to pursue a similar path if the United States continues its steady pressure on them to introduce measures aimed at promoting economic and political pluralism. That might be the best defense against terrorism that remains a major source of turbulence and instability in the Ferghana Valley.

## **Section I: The Study**

### **What is the Problem?**

The Ferghana Valley is where the battle of Talas was fought between the Arab warriors of Abbasid Caliphate and those of the Tang Dynasty of China. This battle marked the victory of Islam. During Soviet days, it was purposely divided in such a way "that Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Kyrgyzs were found on all sides". This policy also enabled the Soviet authorities to be continuously "called upon by the people in the region to help them manage conflicts that were bound to emerge as a result of these artificial divisions".<sup>1</sup> Since the implosion of the Soviet Union into five independent states in Central Asia, this valley straddles three countries, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Today, the Ferghana Valley comprises seven administration provinces: three Uzbek (Andijan, Ferghana and Namangan), three Kyrgyz (Batkan, Osh, and Jalalabad), and one Tajik (Sugh, which was formerly known as Leningrad). The best way to profile the Ferghana Valley is by outlining a cumulative picture of three countries that formulate it.<sup>2</sup>

Uzbekistan is the world's second largest exporter of cotton, and a large producer of oil and gold. Since its independence in December 1991, the inequality of income in that country has sharply increased. Its economy still follows the Soviet pattern of command economy, with subsidies and tight control over production and prices. The government of Uzbekistan

has shown a marked and sustained reluctance to remove export and currency controls within its already closed economy. The unemployment rate is listed as six percent. "While this figure appears relatively low by international standards," according to one source, "the significant informal sector (estimated at between a third and a half of the economy) engaged in less productive activities suggests that there are bottlenecks in labor absorption, including impediments to private sector development." It goes on to add, "Employment growth during 2004 remained stagnant."<sup>3</sup>

Tajikistan has the dubious distinction of having one of the lowest per capita gross domestic products among the 15 former Soviet republics. Sixty per cent of its population is reported to live in abject poverty. Cotton is also the most important crop. The civil war (1992-1997) has seriously damaged an already weak industrial infrastructure, which led to a marked decline in industrial and agricultural production. Tajikistan has reported a sustained economic growth since 1997, its economy is still quite fragile, with high rates of unemployment estimated at 40 per cent in 2004,<sup>4</sup> weak governance and uneven implementation of structural reforms.

Kyrgyzstan is also a poor country with a predominantly agricultural economy. Its government has been quite receptive to carrying out market reforms and land reform. It also reported a high estimated unemployment rate of 18 per cent for 2004.<sup>5</sup> However, this country's economic reforms has been interrupted as a result of a political coup in March 2005.

The Ferghana Valley remains one of the potential hotspots of Central Asia. What happens there "for better or worse has widespread ramifications for the region as a whole". Because of its "ethnic diversity, the highly concentrated and growing population including a high percentage of youth, high rates of unemployment and widespread economic stress, complex borders in a region occupied by parts of three newly sovereign states, and its recent history of tensions," this region remains a potential source of regional instability.<sup>6</sup>

The Ferghana Valley has the largest population in Central Asia (up to 250 inhabitants per square kilometre, as compared to an average of 14 inhabitants per sq km in Central Asia.<sup>7</sup> The political consciousness of the general population toward Islam is on the rise. It is also a region where there have been several outbreaks of conflict involving different ethnic groups and the IMU, which was labelled as a "terrorist" organization by the US government in 2000. Regarding the Ferghana Valley a Central Asian specialist wrote, it "exhibits the most vivid example of the Islamic evolution taking place throughout the region and exposes Afghanistan's ideological impact on Central Asia. This is a hard, rural place, with cotton fields worked with sweat and picked by hand. The people are desperately poor. They see little that the new national governments have done to help their lives. Dissatisfaction is high, the lure of Islam as an answer to their dreary existence is strong."<sup>8</sup>

**Islamist and terrorist organizations, the nature of their strategic goals and the threats they pose**

All Islamist political groups in Central Asia base their perspectives of political change on Islam. The work of at least four Islamic thinkers stands out as highly relevant in this regard. The first one is Sayed Qutb of Egypt, whose notion of battle against *Jahiliyya* (state of ignorance) is at the heart of the stated rationale for global Jihad of al-Qaida and all Islamist groups that emulate it.<sup>9</sup> Any political system that is not based on the Quran and *Hadith* (statements of the Prophet of Islam), said Qutb, is not operating in accordance with the *Shariah* (laws of Islam), and is based on Jahiliyya. Jahili societies, he argued, intend to crush true Islam, and should be annihilated by *Jihad bil saif* (holy war by sword) and be replaced by true Islamic regimes. He reinterpreted Jihad to mean the permanent conflict between the Islamic system and all contemporary political systems. Two South Asian Islamic scholars, Abul Ala Maududi and Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, also describe Islam as a perpetually revolutionary ideology, with the power to change contemporary societies and rebuild them in conformity with its own tenets and ideals. Another Egyptian Islamist, Abul Salam Faraj, the founder and the theorist of Egyptian Al-Jihad, raised the status of militant jihad to the sixth pillar of Islam.

What emerges from the preceding are the notions of militancy, absence of compromise and flexibility, and an insistence on creating a society of Islamic Puritanism by radically altering the extant power structure. The basic strategy of all Islamist groups is to alter political status in the Ferghana Valley. The two pan-Islamist groups determined to bring about political change are HT and the IMU.

### ***Hizb ut-Tahrir-e-Islami or Hizb Tahrir (HT)***

The founder of HT was a Palestinian named Taqi-Uddin Al-Nabhani. This party was initially established in Jordan in the early 1950s in East Jerusalem. Like all *Salafi* movements (i.e., movements that pursue a reliance on the traditions of the salaf, or the pious ancestors of the days immediately following the death of the Prophet of Islam), HT staunchly believes that the sanctity of Islam was shattered because of a general tendency in the world of Islam to deviate from the practices of the Prophet of Islam and his companions. Thus, its strategic objective is to revitalize that glory by returning to the purest form of Islam. For this reason, HT advocates the establishment of a Caliphate. As explained in one of its press releases: “The *Khilafah* is the global leadership for all the Muslims in the world. Its role is to establish the laws of the Islamic Shari’ah and to carry the call of Islam to the world. It is a model completely distinguished from any other ruling style such as democracy, theocracy or monarchy. The Shari’ah that is applied in founding the ruling, in caring for the citizen's affairs, and in the external affairs is from Allah. It is a system of unity not a system of union. The system of government in Islam, which is the system of *Khilafah*, is a unitary system of one state and not a federal system. Muslims all over the world are not allowed to have more than one Islamic State.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, HT “has a vision of uniting Central Asia, the Xinjiang Province in China, and eventually the entire Ummah [Islamic world community]....” under the Caliphate.<sup>11</sup>

At least in Central Asia, HT is very secretive, largely as a result of highly repressive practices of the Uzbek regime of Islam Karimov. Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid, who is considered one of the most authentic

sources on HT and other matters regarding Central Asia, states that this movement “is so secretive and decentralized that its leaders haven't revealed themselves even to their own supporters, and only one member of each of the organization's five-man cells is in contact with a member of another cell.”<sup>12</sup> In his book, *Jihad*, Rashid further elaborates on the organizational structure of HT. He writes that, at the local level, members of HT are organized in small *Daira* (Arabic for cells; the Uzbek word for it is *Halqa*). Each *Daira* comprises 5-7 members and is headed by a *Mushrif*. Members of each *Daira* only know each other. The *Mushrif* is the person who knows or can contact individuals at the higher level of the organization. Each city or district may have one or more organizations, whose leaders are called *Musond*. *Musonds* are under regional leaders, *Masul* (person in charge). *Masuls* are directly under the country leader, *Mutamad*.<sup>13</sup>

### **HT operates on the basis of a three-stage tactic**

The First Stage: In order to form the party group, this stage is focused on culturing or educating people to believe in the ideas and the methods of the party.

The Second Stage: In this stage, the party members interact with the *Ummah* in order to let the *Ummah* embrace and fully incorporate Islam in their private and public affairs.

The Third Stage: This stage is focused on establishing Islamic government by “implementing Islam generally and comprehensively and carrying it as a message to the world.”<sup>14</sup>

### **How does HT see itself and how does it present its goals for public consumption?**

HT perceives itself as a party that is on the right path of establishing a worldwide Islamic Caliphate. As Rashid notes, “Indeed, the group’s aim to create a single, worldwide Islamic government can best be described as Islamic radicalism’s closest equivalent to the Western concept of globalization”.<sup>15</sup> HT envisages the governments of the Ferghana Valley countries as illegitimate, misguided and anti-Islamic in orientation.

In principle, all governments would have problems dealing with political organizations that offer radical change of the magnitude of establishing a Caliphate. The highly authoritarian governments of the Ferghana Valley know no other way of dealing with HT except outlawing it and brutally suppressing anyone who is even remotely suspected of supporting that organization. Consequently, HT has no alternative but to remain highly secretive. This makes it hard for anyone to develop a definitive judgment on whether it has remained a non-violent entity. Indeed, in the highly charged post-9/11 era, the orthodox wisdom is edging toward the proposition that, perhaps, it is not really dedicated to the principle of peaceful change. Such a suggestion also stems from the following two reasons. First, it is hard for anyone to imagine that a radical change of the scope of replacing the existing governments with that of a Caliphate would be entirely peaceful. Second, given the proclivity of the governments of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to suppress the activities of HT by using violent tactics, it is hard to fathom that the

functionaries of that organization would rely on non-violent responses indefinitely.

Viewing HT's ideology from the perspectives of that party itself, it is possible that the party would acquire a large following in Muslim polities, if it were allowed to operate openly and without any obstruction from government. It seeks an educated following, and eschews appealing to the uneducated and rural masses of Central Asia. In that sense it is often described as an elitist organization. Its literature discusses various aspects of Islamic theology in a rather straightforward and thoughtful fashion. It does mention the doctrine of Jihad, but not in terms of a strategy to capture political power. On the other hand, it discusses in detail the notion of *Ijtihad* (renewal and reinterpretation). In the context of Islamic theology, *Ijtihad* is a concept that promotes peaceful change.<sup>16</sup>

How does HT communicate with its audience and its sources of financing? On a worldwide scale, HT communicates with its audience through a heavy use of modern technology, such as fax machines, computer discs, and the Internet. That medium serves as the main channel for the distribution of its propaganda, literature, leaflets and messages. Even within Central Asia, it relies heavily on such technologies as photocopy machines, videos, computers and heavy use of e-mail for propagating its messages to those who have access to such technologies. It communicates with the masses by distributing leaflets, where modern communication facilities are not available. Its favorite propaganda letter, "Shabnama" (night letter) is printed at night and "is pushed under people's doors like a newspaper". "Posters are also slapped up on village walls even on the walls of police stations."<sup>17</sup> In addition, it also relies on social and secretive networks in the Ferghana Valley to distribute its messages. According to one source, "Activists distribute leaflets and books that often contain scathing criticisms of regional governments. They also rely on underground meetings rather than public speeches. These techniques make Hizb ut-Tahrir operatives hard to find and to silence. They also let the Hizb ut-Tahrir members send messages more quickly than the government can suppress or discredit them."<sup>18</sup>

According to HT's website, "The organization is entirely financed by its activists and we do not accept any financial assistance whatsoever from any government authority. Since Hizb ut-Tahrir's work relies upon the dissemination of thoughts, the costs of operating are minimal, as thoughts cost nothing."<sup>19</sup> Still, it is also suspected of receiving funds from South Asian and other Gulf and Muslim charities and even some Muslim governments.

### **How is HT received by its target support audience?**

Given the highly closed nature of the region, it is difficult to independently assess the nature and the extent of the popularity of HT in the Ferghana Valley. The media reports on the issue have their own obvious and latent biases. Keeping this in mind, according to reports by RFE/RL, there is limited support for HT in Central Asia.<sup>20</sup> But the increased authoritarianism in the region and the brutal style of government is helping that organization. According to David Lewis of the International Crisis Group in the Kyrgyz city of Osh, HT is feeding on discontent, especially among the young who are attracted to it as an alternative form

of political expression. He adds that HT's influence "should not be exaggerated as it has little public support in Central Asia". Its core constituency is the Uzbek territory.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, there is another report that describes the increased activism of HT in Tajikistan this way:

Hizb ut-Tahrir, the nonviolent but banned Islamic movement that Central Asian presidents often invoke as a terrorist threat, is increasingly active in Tajikistan, especially in the capital, Dushanbe. Tajik authorities are taking steps to counter the movement's efforts to expand its appeal. The rise of Hizb ut-Tahrir's profile is also a source of concern for mainstream Islamic political leaders, including Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) leader Said Abdullo Nuri, who on September 4 [2002] portrayed the movement as a threat to Tajikistan's stability.<sup>22</sup>

A Kyrgyz journalist, Alisher Khamidov, also presents a positive portrayal of the reception of HT among its followers:

Central Asian governments have also employed local media outlets and state-controlled clergy to counter HT's messages. However, such efforts have not yielded significant results, as both the state-supported clergy and the media lack credibility among the wider public... Unlike state supported clergy members and government officials, HT activists enjoy a reputation as highly honest, incorruptible, and determined individuals.<sup>23</sup>

A more meaningful way to comprehend how HT is being received by the population of that area is to examine how popular the notions of the separation of religion and politics, and Islamic governance are in the Ferghana Valley. According to one study,

Opinions on the feasibility of the separation of Islam from governance vary throughout the region. The basis for differentiation lies primarily in how people define their identity. Muslim identities are stronger in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and the south of Kyrgyzstan, and less so in the north, where nomadism has been much more significant. The stronger the Muslim identity, the smaller the space tends to be between religion and the state. In all three countries, both government officials and the official Islamic establishments routinely express support for a separation of Islam from the state.<sup>24</sup>

On the issue of Islamic governance, which is one of the chief objectives of HT, the same study notes, "There is a lack of popular support for Islamic governance in Central Asia, but support for secular liberal democracy also seems fragile."<sup>25</sup>

Based on the preceding, even though there are mixed reports of the popularity of or the support for HT, the organization operates in an environment where it is capable of bringing its message to the populace. The notion of Islamic governance has a good chance of finding sympathetic ears as long as the existing governments fail to improve the political and economic quality of life of their citizens.

### **Strengths and weaknesses of HT:**

The chief source of HT's strength is its firm belief that it is on the right path. One of its leaflets states, "Hizb ut-Tahrir will never be destroyed, by Allah's Leave... It should be known that it never happened in the past, nor will it happen now, or happen in future that Hizb ut-Tahrir will be destroyed... Despite campaigns of oppression, intimidation, and arrests, and attempts to destroy the Hizb undertaken by the [Muslim] regimes, Hizb Tahrir derives its strength from Allah...and the Ummah, which



increases in strength and popularity day after day.”<sup>26</sup> The major reason for whatever popularity HT has in the Ferghana Valley stems from the fact that it is determined to keep the focus of its audience on the political repression in the region. Whatever popularity it currently enjoys is likely to be diminished once political pluralism starts to evolve there. Until that happens, HT is likely to operate in an environment that is not at all hostile from the viewpoint of its audience.

In assessing the popularity of this organization, its critics tend to ignore an important fact. The Ferghana Valley, indeed, the whole of Central Asia, is a region where the orientation and knowledge toward Islam has been systematically suppressed under the former Soviet Union. It is also a region where current governments are systematically ensuring that a controlled version of Islamic education (which is derisively described as “official Islam”) is offered to the general populace.

In such a controlled milieu, HT has assigned itself the task of enhancing the knowledge of Islam. The Islamic knowledge and orientation offered by the religious scholars affiliated to HT are judged by independent sources as decidedly superior to the ones provided by half-educated “official imams”.<sup>27</sup> HT’s rationale is that, once Muslims become increasingly aware of their religious heritage and become its practitioners, the chances of the attainment of its own objective of the establishment of the Caliphate would also increase. Such an expectation is based on, at best, wishful thinking, or even naiveté. The increased knowledge or commitment on the part of the residents of the Ferghana Valley, or even Central Asia, provides no guarantee that they would also become supporters of the establishment of the Caliphate.

Another source of strength of HT in the Ferghana Valley is its anti-Americanism. Even though Central Asia has not been traditionally known for a high manifestation of anti-Americanism, that reality might be changing as a result of the general unpopularity in the Muslim world of the continued US occupation of Iraq. There is little doubt that HT is capitalizing on this reality. Thus, despite insisting that it favours peaceful change, its rhetoric is becoming increasing shrill and vitriolic. One of its leaflets issued in June 2003 states

“America has been seduced by the illusion of power. She gives no credence to anything other than her interests, however much harm she causes to others. She rejects any international agreement, whatever it is, if it does not put her above everyone else. That is why she has refused to sign up to the international court for war crimes, fearing that this may be extended to her soldiers... The United States, encouraged by the unexpected ease in occupying Afghanistan and Iraq, has begun talking openly about reshaping the Muslim world according to her criteria and design. She has begun to draw up plans to break up the Muslims’ lands along federal or decentralist forms, which will shake and weaken the unity of the state. What is taking place in Afghanistan and Iraq attests to this. Also talk by politicians in the Arabian peninsula is paving the way for this, under the pretext of preserving security, fighting terrorism, women’s rights and extremist (thoughts) stemming from the education curriculum.”<sup>28</sup>

In another leaflet entitled, "Annihilate the Fourth Crusade", it says, "O Noble Islamic Ummah! Undoubtedly, George Bush's declaration of war against the Muslims of Iraq is a declaration of war against the entire Islamic Ummah, because the Muslims of Iraq are an inseparable part of the single Islamic Ummah." It adds,

The rulers of the Muslims have betrayed the Ummah and deceived the Muslims by claiming that they are against the war on Iraq. The people did not believe their false speeches as the reality of their actions were plain to see. Despite their alliance with America, America despises the rulers of the Muslims and has no regard for them. Thus she ignored their pleas for a United Nations' resolution, no matter how flimsy, to cover their compromised position and protect themselves from the wrath of the Muslims, revengeful against America and her allies. Despite all of this, America neither paid heed to their pleas nor made allowances for their compromised position. They collaborated with America, Britain and the enemies of Islam, thinking that these forces will defend for them their thrones and save them from this Ummah's retribution. They have forgotten the inevitable doom that awaits them just as it awaits all of the traitors who preceded them in allying with the kuffar [non-believers] and the enemies of Islam.<sup>29</sup>

HT's decision to exploit anti-Americanism to build its own base of support in the region is a highly tenable tactic, when viewed from its perspectives. It is convinced that the United States would not radically alter its policy of supporting the current governments of the Ferghana Valley anytime soon. Thus, its adoption of contentious anti-American rhetoric is not likely to hurt its cause. If the Bush administration is to adopt the role of a force for change in Central Asia—an unlikely development—HT is also expected to adjust its own rhetoric accordingly.

### **The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan**

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is a pan-Islamist Jihadist party, whose presence and influence in the Ferghana Valley is felt even in the post-9/11 era. It was declared as a terrorist organization by the United States in 2000. As a Jihadist party, it was originally committed to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan. However, later on, it expanded its scope of violent activities to include the other Central Asian countries. The political leader of this party is Tahir Yuldeshev, a Mullah. He was originally affiliated with the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) of Tajikistan; however, he broke from it around 1998, when that party, at the conclusion of a civil war in 1997, agreed to become part of the conventional political process in that country. Yuldeshev also played a crucial role in establishing a link between the IMU and al-Qaida in 1999, when the Taliban were in power in Afghanistan.

The military strategist and commander of the IMU was Jumaboi Ahmadzhanovitch Khojaev, also known as Juma Namangani. He is described in the Western lexicon as a "born-again Muslim". His commitment to Islam and Jihadism did not have long roots. What he lacked in terms of his long-term commitment to Islam, he made up for by emerging as a committed jihadist, carrying out numerous guerrilla attacks in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

During the US invasion of Afghanistan, Namangani was reportedly killed in November 2001. There is little doubt that Namangani's reported death—if it is true—has caused ample demoralization within the ranks of the IMU. However, the overall environment of utmost political repression, the utter absence of avenues of political participation, a general discouragement or condemnation of even conventional observance of Islamic rituals, proclivities for terrorism, and, above all, acute economic underdevelopment have been serving as sources of sustenance, indeed, limited popularity of the IMU in the Ferghana Valley. This is especially true in Uzbekistan.

The expressed goal of the IMU is destruction of the regime of Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan. The current regimes in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are also its targets, but the toppling of those regimes has not been assigned as high a priority as that of Karimov.

In the late 1990s, the IMU established a strong linkage with al-Qaida and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and thereby became an important player in carrying out regional Jihad in Central Asia, Chechnya, and the Xinjiang province of China. Yuldeshev was reported to have travelled extensively in Pakistan, Afghanistan and in the Persian Gulf region in order to establish networks with al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, and received funding from all friendly sources from countries of that region. Between 1997 and 2001, the IMU worked assiduously to establish its operating base inside Central Asia. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President George W Bush, in a speech on September 20, 2001, linked the IMU with al-Qaida. As such, targeting and eliminating the IMU leadership and functionaries have become important objectives of the United States' global war on terrorism.

Even though the IMU forces suffered a major setback during the military clashes with the US and the forces of the Northern Alliance in 2001, its own forces are reported to have gathered strength at the time of this writing (August 2005). The strategic objective of the IMU remains to oust the current regime in the countries comprising the Ferghana Valley. In this sense, it also remains an important regional terrorist group.

### **How does the IMU see itself and how does it present its goals for public consumption?**

The IMU envisages itself as an organization that is determined to topple the most corrupt and anti-Islamic governments of the Ferghana Valley and establish an Islamic government (a Caliphate) from the Caspian Sea to Western China (Xinjiang province). In this goal, it fully supports HT. However, unlike HT, it is resolute about using violence to achieve its objectives.

It should be noted that the political objectives of the IMU go well beyond the Ferghana Valley. It has demonstrated in the late 1990s that it aims to establish an Islamic government throughout Central Asia. For instance, in 2000, there were reports of the IMU's alliance with two new groups, the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan (IMT), and the Islamic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (IMK). However, at least the public discussion of those groups virtually disappeared from Islamist websites in the post-9/11 era. There are two alternative explanations for this. First, those groups are still

evolving, but lying low because of the continued presence of US forces in Central Asia, and are biding their time before they strike at existing governments. Second, the post-9/11 political environment is such that those groups, as a tactical manoeuvre, decided to bring about organizational integration with the IMU, and may break away to carry out their own terrorist activities in the future, when they feel less threatened.

In May 2001, Namangani reportedly launched a political party called the Hizb-e-Islami of Turkestan (Islamic Movement of Turkestan), which was expected to serve as an umbrella organization, subsuming all Islamist parties of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It was reported to be behind several terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Indian-administered Kashmir, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>30</sup>

The IMU, like HT, is fully committed to the Wahhabi doctrine of Islamic Puritanism. Reports of its membership state that it contains Chechens and Uighurs, aside from Uzbeks, Pakistanis, Kyrgyz, Tajiks and “Afghan Arabs (i.e., Arabs who fought in the US-sponsored war against the former Soviet Union, when it occupied Afghanistan between 1979-1989). The pan-jihadist predilections of the IMU are also apparent in the fact that Tahir Yuldeshev traveled to Saudi Arabia in the late 1990s and picked a Saudi of Uzbek origin, Zubyr Bin Abdur-Raheem, as head of the religious leadership of the IMU.<sup>31</sup>

The IMU’s goal of establishing a Wahhabi-style Islamic government was not likely to attract much popular support, if the Ferghana Valley were under democratic rule. However, since it is being ruled by autocratic regimes, people tend to view the IMU as a force for change. Even then, it is hard to imagine that Muslims of the Ferghana Valley would want to bring an end to political repression carried out by the extant secular regime, only to be suppressed under the tyranny of a Wahhabi autocratic rule that the IMU persistently promotes.<sup>32</sup>

### **How does the IMU communicate with its audience and its sources of financing?**

The safest mode of communication for the IMU is through the Internet and through the use of various Islamic “chat houses”. Since no one knows who is at either end of the “electronic conversation”, no one knows the significance of what is being communicated. Second, the terrorist groups have become so sophisticated in encrypting their messages that even the spoken words do not communicate the real meaning of the conversation. The upside of such a means of communication is that it remains the safest way to correspond with hard-core supporters without the risk of being exposed to the security forces of Central Asia and elsewhere. The chief disadvantage of using electronic means of communication in Central Asia is that it is simply not widely available. That region of the world still remains in the information “dark ages”, because of the very closed nature of the governments that have little-to-no-use for electronic media.<sup>33</sup>

As an affiliate of al-Qaida, the IMU is not likely to have much trouble reaching worldwide groups of supporters. This is especially significant when one considers the latest cyberspace tactic used by al-Qaida, whereby ad hoc websites pop up on the internet giving instructions and

sending messages to its supporters for carrying out terrorist attacks and for conducting related activities. Such websites do not exist for long, to avoid being tracked down by international law enforcement agencies.<sup>34</sup>

The IMU is the most widespread and well-financed terrorist group. Central Asia's proximity to the "Golden Crescent" (comprising Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) and the "Golden Triangle" (comprising Myanmar, Laos and Thailand) makes it the most popular route of narcotics trafficking. The IMU has cleverly exploited this reality to earn hard cash. It still uses its connections with al-Qaida, and relies heavily on narcotrafficking over a number of Central Asian routes in order to finance its activities.

In order to fully comprehend the durability of the IMU's sources of financing, one has to keep in mind the role of seven factors idiosyncratic to Central Asia since the implosion of the Soviet Union. First is the common regional language, Russian, that lowers the linguistic barriers to this trade. Second, the proximity of the Ferghana Valley to the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle. Third, porous borders and rugged terrain among Central Asian countries and Afghanistan (which has emerged as a major narco-state, with 60 per cent of its economy based on opium) have made the job of anti-drug enforcement quite difficult. Fourth, the central location of conflict-wrecked Tajikistan has made it a place where narco-terrorist forces conduct their business without much fear from the law enforcement authorities. Fifth, "the stricken economies throughout the region that make officials and ordinary citizens easily amenable to bribes".<sup>35</sup> Sixth, the long-standing nature of the drug trade in Central Asia that was prospering before the IMU came into existence. Finally, "Government repression of Islamic opposition groups in all five Central Asian republics has promoted an extremist religious-political underworld that has expanded those networks for its own purposes".<sup>36</sup>

A very good way to understand the strategy of the IMU is to understand the notion of "shell state", which was most effectively used by the late Yasser Arafat first in Jordan in the late 1960s. When the PLO was expelled from Jordan in 1970, he was equally effective in using the shell state strategy in Lebanon in the 1970s. According to that strategy, a terrorist group uses a country with a high state of instability to weaken or even destroy the socio-economic infrastructure managed by the existing government and replace it with one of its own. The infrastructure is then used to further strengthen the presence and popularity of that terrorist group in that state. The terrorist group also monopolizes all other avenues of illegal economic activities. Funds thus created are used to purchase weapons, and to distribute funds to buy loyalty from local politicians or warlords.

The ultimate purpose of this strategy is to confront the existing government, either through a number of guerilla-type attacks aimed at further weakening the government's grip on law and order, or by launching one major attack aimed at "decapitating" the top leadership. Al-Qaida successfully utilized this strategy in Afghanistan during the Taliban rule in the 1990s, and is reported to be using it now in Somalia. Given its powerful ties with al-Qaida, it will be no surprise to find out that the IMU is working assiduously on this strategy and is only biding its time

to strike at an opportune moment of its own choosing, first in Uzbekistan, and then in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>37</sup>

### **How is the IMU received by the target support audience?**

Given the sustained high level of political repression, the IMU's message for political change may get a positive reception. However, this may not be translated into automatic support for its advocacy of militant Jihad. According to one ICG report, "only 3.6 per cent of those surveyed in Uzbekistan believed that *jihad* is the use of force to protect Islam from non-believers; 4.9 per cent said that force can be used only in critical situations and 12.9 per cent that it is not acceptable to use force to protect Islam. Furthermore, 9.2 per cent said it could never be used against their own government. A strong majority (60.1 per cent) did not know about *jihad* at all or were reluctant to discuss it."<sup>38</sup>

The same study notes that 37.8 per cent of the Tajik respondents were unfamiliar with the concept of Jihad, "but the rest usually said that it is acceptable if Islam is under threat, but not against one's own government". It adds, "Nearly a third (32.5 per cent) believed that *jihad* is acceptable to defend one's self against non-believers or in critical situations; 8.4 per cent replied that it is never acceptable to wage *jihad* and 14.8 per cent that it should never be waged against the government." It goes on to note, "More people in Tajikistan think that *jihad* should not be used against the government than in Uzbekistan or Kyrgyzstan, possibly because of the associations of the Islamist factor in the country's civil war".<sup>39</sup>

Regarding Kyrgyzstan, the same study reports that its survey results "are somewhat different because of the less important role of Islam in general. Many people were unfamiliar with *jihad* (47.9 per cent). Those who knew about it usually considered it acceptable to use force if Islam was under threat by non-Muslims or if otherwise prescribed in the Koran. Nearly 30 per cent believed that *jihad* is not acceptable under any conditions, while 10.1 per cent thought it permissible in critical situations or against non-believers. Some Kyrgyz believe that their fellow citizens think of *jihad* more as warfare than do Uzbeks or Tajiks because of their Mongol heritage."<sup>40</sup>

What emerges from the preceding is that the Jihadist message of the IMU is not getting much positive reception in the Ferghana Valley at large. This reality presents great opportunities for a systematic promotion of moderate Islam and democracy in the region.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of the IMU**

As a jihadist organization, one cannot speak of the IMU as having strength of its own. Such a characteristic is usually related to conventional political parties or organizations for change. Even HT qualifies to be called an organization for change, especially because—while remaining a party that advocates radical political change in the form of the establishment of the Caliphate—it espouses such a change only through peaceful means.

Keeping this distinction in mind, it is safe to argue that the chief strength of the IMU is that it is operating in closed societies and under autocratic

rules. When people suffer from government tyranny, they may look with hope at other political entities that are offering different solutions to their misery. Even in this context, the IMU does not have much of a political platform to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the region. All that the IMU offers is the establishment of a Caliphate. It says nothing about what plan it has to make the Ferghana Valley (or Central Asia as a whole) an integral part of the increasingly globalized world. When the entire world is becoming increasingly complex, interconnected, and interdependent, no argument for the establishment of a Caliphate from the seventh century is likely to sound like a viable alternative. Only as long as people continue to suffer under deteriorating economic conditions, will they envision the IMU as some sort of alternative. However, the moment political liberalization and economic progress become regular phenomena in Central Asia, the IMU will either have to radically alter its political platform or face the option of becoming irrelevant. In this sense, the autocratic regimes really hold the key.

## **Section II: What is the Response?**

### **A. From the Ferghana Valley States**

The Ferghana Valley countries depict HT and the IMU as “terrorist” organizations. They also describe these organizations as “Wahhabist” entities. By using those phrases, the Central Asian countries want to convey the message that those organizations intend to conduct Jihad. Even though HT is a strong advocate for radical change it does not believe in attaining its objective through violence. As such, it is not generally regarded as a terrorist organization. The IMU, on the other hand, is determined to topple the governments, especially Uzbekistan, through terrorist acts.

The Ferghana Valley countries have adopted a number of internal and external measures to control or even eradicate both HT and the IMU. Domestically, all state activities to cope with the challenge coming from Islamist or terrorist organizations fall under the general rubric of “controlling Islam”. This is an age-old tactic that was fervently used under Czarist Russia, and then by the Soviet Union.

As heirs of the Communist era, the current rulers have demonstrated a great aptitude in implementing the very same policies to tackle the “Islamic challenge”. These rulers remain ambivalent toward Islam. They are eager to use it to legitimize their rule, but want to emphasize only its cultural heritage. At the same time, however, they manifest the Soviet elite’s version of traditional hostility to Islam because of the resolutely secular nature of their regimes. Consequently, one witnesses the demonstration of the Soviet era mentality, whereby there are persistent clashes “with newly assertive religious groups or individuals who claim a greater role for Islam in political and social life”.<sup>41</sup>

Uzbekistan (and Turkmenistan) have “the most restrictive legislation on religious activity in the region”. The Committee of Religious Affairs (CRA) is in charge of overseeing all religious activities in Uzbekistan. This is not a decisionmaking body; it only implements decisions made by Karimov. The CRA controls the *Muftiate* (the Muslim Spiritual Board), “which in

turn controls the Islamic hierarchy, the content of imams' [religious leaders'] sermons, and the publication of Islamic materials".<sup>42</sup>

The response of the government of Tajikistan toward Islam and the Islamist party is quite different, since it is the only state where an Islamic party, the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), is legal. However, in the recent past, "many of the same issues that face Uzbekistan have appeared, with growing government interference in religion, and fears that repression and interference will provoke radicalization of small parts of the population". And, "unlike other Central Asian states, Tajikistan has no Muftiate; instead, those responsibilities are placed on the Islamic Centre of Tajikistan..."<sup>43</sup>

Kyrgyzstan has had the most unperturbed attitude toward the notion of "control" of Islam. However, toward the late 1990s, the government clamped down on the missionary activities of Islamic organizations.<sup>44</sup>

The external (or regional) response of the Ferghana Valley states was to join an organization whose explicit aim was to fight regional terrorism. The Shanghai Five—formed in 1996 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan—emerged as such a body. As members of that body, the countries of the Ferghana Valley became involved in developing a common front to fight "three evils": terrorism, religious extremism, and separatism.<sup>45</sup> The Shanghai Five changed its name to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June 2001.<sup>46</sup>

It is interesting to note that the organization was formulated by the two great powers of the region—China and Russia—as a forum to promote their strategic interests and, more to the point, to focus on the major contentious issues that were then part of the great power rivalry. Thus, the communiqué of the SCO in June 2001 expressed concern over the then impending decision of the United States to abandon the 1972 ABM Treaty, and America's resolve to build national missile defence and theatre missile defence systems, and the legitimacy of the PRC as the sole representative of both mainland China and Taiwan. Those issues were of less concern or interest to the Central Asian members of the SCO. However, those countries understood that they would have to go along with the strategic concerns of their powerful partners.

To be sure, China and Russia also were interested in suppressing the secessionist movements within their own borders involving the Uighurs and the Chechens, respectively. However, they were more interested in using the SCO "to eventually build a new regional security architecture that reinforces each other's territorial integrity".<sup>47</sup> At the same time, Beijing and Moscow wanted to retrench the American interests in Central Asia as a whole.

Thus, the SCO never really emerged as a forum where counterterrorism strategies were developed to fight the IMU. The SCO developed periodic military exercises aimed at counterterrorism. Even then, the thrust of those exercises was to suppress the Uighurs in the Xinjiang province, or to capture or harass the Uighurs who escaped their homeland and took refuge in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In general, the Western assessment



of the SCO—which is quite accurate—is that it could not marshal any military answer to the problems related to regional terrorism.<sup>48</sup>

Authoritarian regimes are not known for their sophistication about developing strategies to influence the “hearts and minds” of a populace. About the only thing they have been historically known for developing are crude propaganda campaigns, which assume that citizens are uninformed enough to fall for their propaganda. In Central Asia, the propaganda campaigns have only one dominant theme. They adamantly state that all Islamist organizations are terrorists and Wahhabis. As such, if those terrorists/Wahhabis were to come to power, they would take the country back to the seventh century. The Ferghana Valley governments had an effective propaganda tool, the Talibanization of Afghanistan between 1997-2001. They could have effectively used the human suffering under the Wahhabi rule of the Taliban to remind their citizens how miserable their lot would be if the IMU or even HT were to capture power. However, governments have not been able to cash in on exploiting that theme. One predominant reason may be the fact that, considering the low quality of life under the secular but brutal and repressive regimes, the description of life under Talibanization might not have sounded much worse.

#### **B. From the United States**

In the immediate aftermath of their emergence as independent states after the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1990, the United States’ involvement in Central Asia was characterized by the absence of any clear-cut and systematic strategic thinking. Washington got involved in the region largely to make sure that Iran did not succeed in implanting its own model of Islamic government. The US supported the entry of Central Asian states into Western organizations and became somewhat involved in eliciting Turkish support in countering Iranian influence and in promoting the Turkish model of secular democracy. Since Russia did not show much enthusiasm for dominating the strategic affairs of Central Asia in the early 1990s, the United States’ involvement in that region was not driven by any urgency to make its own presence felt.

The nexus between the Taliban and al-Qaida, and the resultant activities of pan-Jihadism in the late 1990s in Central Asia and its contiguous areas, slightly altered the picture for the United States. The top decisionmakers paid some attention to Central Asia, but without taking many visible steps to get involved. Even when China and Russia established the Shanghai Five and then the SCO, the United States largely remained on the sidelines. Of course, Washington’s involvement in the pipeline issue related to the Caspian Sea oil reserves was an exception.

It was only when the US needed bases in Central Asia to carry out its military operations aimed at dismantling the Taliban regime of Afghanistan that the administration of President George W Bush decided to alter its strategic approach. The US sought military bases, and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan were only too eager to provide such facilities. As one study points out, the Central Asian states accepted the Sino-Russian domination of the SCO “more out of need than desire”.<sup>49</sup> However, they viewed the US’ overtures as opening up new vistas of military and economic assistance. More important, the Bush

administration's clarion call of "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists," was interpreted by the states of the Ferghana Valley as an unambiguous signal that America would spend its military might in eradicating the "terrorist" forces in their region.

Apart from the clarion call, the Bush administration did not bother to elaborate on its counterterrorism strategy in Central Asia. In the absence of an explicit strategy, one has to interpret the meaning of Bush's global war on terrorism for Central Asia. In this sense, it is safe to say that America's strategy had the following features:

Bases in Kyrgyzstan (Manas, where 1,500 US troops were stationed in 2005), Uzbekistan (Khanabad, where 900 US troops were stationed in 2005, and a base for German units in Termez, and a land corridor to Afghanistan for humanitarian aid via the Friendship Bridge at Termez), and Tajikistan (which permitted the use of its international airport in Dushanbe for refueling, and which also hosted a small French unit) were regarded as symbols of America's resolve to stay in the region.<sup>50</sup>

Passage in late 1999 of the "Silk Road" language in Public Law 106-13 served as a source of America's "enhanced attention and aid to support conflict amelioration, humanitarian needs, economic development...democracy, and the creation of civil societies" in the South Caucasus and Central Asian states.<sup>51</sup> The March 2002 declaration of US-Uzbekistan strategic partnership included "nonspecific security guarantees."<sup>52</sup> Even though the United States is faced with the major issue of developing a strategy to "win hearts and minds" of Muslims all over the world, that campaign is anything but a shining success anywhere in the world of Islam. It will be quite a while before such a campaign will be developed for Central Asia. In terms of developing its public diplomacy campaign, the Bush administration has neglected that region of the world, largely because it has remained preoccupied with crafting such a campaign for the Middle East and South Asia, where it is actively fighting its global war on terrorism. US policies—especially America's war on terrorism—are given from high-to-very-high negative ratings in public opinion polls.<sup>53</sup> Despite this reality, Uzbekistan is a rare exception. In that country, according to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, 85 per cent of the Uzbeks give the US a positive rating, and about 35 per cent "hold a very favourable view of the US."<sup>54</sup>

### **Effectiveness of America's counterterrorism strategy**

The effectiveness and speed with which the United States was capable of dismantling the Taliban regime has created a genuine fear amidst all terrorist forces of that region, and especially in Central Asia. In this particular instance, the United States' military action spoke louder than any proclamation of counterterrorism strategy (or the lack thereof). One of the chief outcomes of the US military operation in Afghanistan is that the IMU has decided to lie low in the Ferghana Valley for the time being. At the same time, it should be clearly understood that the IMU has not at all gone away. Neither has HT. As long as Central Asia and especially the Ferghana Valley remain regions of low economic development and high unemployment, they also serve as fertile places for extremist organizations of all stripes, including terrorist ones. When people live under acute economic misery and intense political repression, they envision other alternatives—including the alternatives offered by the

Jihadist or terrorist organizations—as those worth trying. In that sense, the mere fact that HT and the IMU are offering an Islamist option makes both of them serious challengers to the existing political status quo. As long as people are willing to try those other options, the region will remain potentially highly unstable.

### **Section III: Conclusions**

#### **A. The Islamist Side**

Both HT and the IMU used their pan-Islamist ideology to underscore the commonality of Islam as a unifying force among all states in Central Asia. Whatever success these organizations experienced was the outcome of the autocratic nature of the regimes in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the depressed economic conditions there. Of the two, HT is likely to be more successful because of its continued emphasis on its non-violent *modus operandi*. That is also one reason why HT has gained sympathy among the populace within the Ferghana Valley. The IMU, however, has received palpably less popular support because of its practice of militant Jihadism or terrorism, which is not at all popular.

The greatest disadvantage that both groups face within the political environment of the Ferghana Valley is that they advocate the establishment of a caliphate or an Islamic state. It should be clearly understood that even the most committed and religiously oriented Muslims have a jaundiced view of all suggestions related to the creation of an Islamic government. In an increasingly globalized world—where interconnections and interdependence are a *sine qua non* of daily living—1400-year-old notions of religious purity are not likely to be sold as the major political objective. Besides, there are also high chances that by overthrowing the existing autocratic order and by supporting the Islamist groups, the masses of the Ferghana Valley would be trading a secular but enslaved lifestyle for a religious and still enslaved lifestyle.

Why, then, are HT and the IMU continuing to receive popular hearing or even support? One explanation may be that the people are fed up with their current conditions—i.e. life under oppressive and corrupt and incompetent regimes—and are hoping that the alternatives presented by the Islamist parties may be less miserable and more tolerable.

The Islamist groups explain themselves to their target population by using the language of Islam. HT and the IMU explain away the causes of the backwardness of the world of Islam in general (not just the backwardness of Central Asian countries) as an outcome of—as well as the “punishment” for—deviating from “pure” Islam. And the promise of the return of the golden age of Islam will be fulfilled only when Muslims follow the path of their pious ancestors (*Aslafi*).

In the information age, HT, more than the IMU, relies on the Internet, on the international media to make known its ideological position, and to spread information about the day-to-day specifics of the political brutality and repression that the existing Central Asian regimes are perpetrating. When a political coup ousted the regime of President Askar Akaev in

Kyrgyzstan, HT issued highly publicized statements that the new regime is essentially as anti-Islamic and corrupt as the one it replaced.

The strength of HT and the IMU is the fact that their messages are heavily peppered with the language of Islam. As people's knowledge and orientation toward Islam increases, their messages are likely to be closely scrutinized. At that time, the religion-based strength of the Islamist parties might turn into weakness, when people realize that a heavy dose of Islamic Puritanism may not be a panacea for what ails their polities.

## **B. The Ferghana Valley States**

Any question related to countering terrorism in the Ferghana Valley should be examined by focusing on the countries of Central Asia, the members of the SCO, and the United States. There is little doubt that of the three sets of actors, the countries of the Ferghana Valley themselves have been largely clueless about finding realistic solutions to challenges related to their continued survival. Their leaders remain inside their comfort zone by categorizing all Islamist forces as "terrorists" or Wahhabis. Those phrases were invariably used by the communist leaders to condemn all Islamic forces that challenged the communist takeover of their territory in the 1920s. In addition, they also developed a response typical of leaders of all authoritarian systems in dealing with challenges to their authority and legitimacy. After labelling them as terrorists, they use all their energy and focus to eradicate them. Since authoritarian systems never learned to negotiate or persuade the forces of the opposition into becoming allies, or at least serving as loyal opposition, the only other option is to arrest all the opponents, force them into political exile, or eradicate them. The governments of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan have adopted these measures quite unsuccessfully against HT and even against the most visible terrorist organization of this area, the IMU.

Countries of the Ferghana Valley snapped up the opportunity to join the Shanghai Five. Even though China and Russia—as the major powers in that organization—had more intricate political agendas than fighting the terrorist organizations of their area, the Central Asian states still envisaged the Shanghai Five as the chief tool to fight regional terrorism.

The SCO members had economic cooperation as part of their general agenda. In addition, they focused on military cooperation, building counterterrorism institutions in member states and enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of the forces of the member countries, and even holding periodic war games to fight and defeat terrorist attacks. Despite these endeavors, the SCO did not prove effective in countering the guerrilla-type attacks of the IMU. It was largely as a result of the US invasion of Afghanistan that the IMU became a weakened entity.

The SCO is an organization that has as its members two very large and militarily powerful states—China and Russia—and four small and militarily weak countries—Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. They are all using that organization to promote varied agendas, both regionally and globally. As major states, China and Russia's global agenda, more often than not, is likely to get a major share of that

organization's attention. This reality has remained the Achilles heel of the SCO.

In addition, China and Russia wish to use the SCO to carry out their ongoing strategic competition with the United States. For instance, China wants to use that forum to bring to the world's attention the dynamics of the reunification with Taiwan, an issue of peripheral interest to Central Asian states. In the July 2005 meeting of the SCO, China and Russia publicly asked the United States to establish a timetable for redeploying its military forces from Central Asian military bases. The fact of the matter is that the Central Asian states are not interested in the withdrawal of US forces from their territory.<sup>55</sup> They know only too well that their mere presence in the region is serving as a major deterrence against the terrorist activities of the IMU.

### **C. The United States**

If the United States did not pay much attention to engaging Central Asian countries prior to September 11, 2001, it has made considerable progress in that direction since. Under the general rubric of the global war on terrorism, the region is emerging as being of utmost significance to the United States. President Bush had rightly observed in 2002 that failing or failing states serve as mushrooming places for the steady growth of transnational terrorism. Afghanistan was the ultimate proof of the correctness of that observation. Considering that all Central Asian countries could be categorized as failing states, there is no way the United States would be able to minimize (much less terminate) the dynamics of its involvement.

The second reason why the US cannot afford to lessen its involvement in Central Asia is the fact that that area is close to two of the most significant regions of global narcotics trade, the "Golden Crescent" and the "Golden Triangle". The direct connection between transnational terrorism and the global narcotics trade has long been established. If the United States is to win its war on terrorism, it has to remain focused on eradicating the opium trade in the Golden Crescent, a region where its forces are currently deployed. It cannot achieve that objective by lowering its presence in Central Asia.

The third reason why the United States cannot afford to leave Central Asia is that an important aspect of America's global war on terrorism is the promotion of public diplomacy to win the hearts and minds of Muslims all over the world. Central Asia is one of the major Muslim regions of the world and one where anti-American sentiments are not high.

### **Endnotes**

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<sup>2</sup> For an overview of Central Asian politico-economic conditions, see Ehsan Ahrari, *The New Great Game in Muslim Central Asia* (Washington, D.C. McNair Paper #47); and Ehsan Ahrari, "The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington," *Journal of International Affairs*, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001932685>.

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- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> “The UN Ferghana Valley Development Programme,” <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/53/162.html>.
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- <sup>8</sup> Alec Rasizade, “The New ‘Great Game’ in Central Asia after Afghanistan,” *Alternatives*, Summer 2002, <http://www.alternativesjournal.net/volume1/number2/rasizade.htm>.
- <sup>9</sup> Even though Jihad is a multifaceted concept, al-Qaida defines it only as “holy war.”
- <sup>10</sup> Media Office of Hizb ut-Tahrir, <http://www.Hizb ut-Tahrir .info/english/about.htm>.
- <sup>11</sup> Ahmed Rashid, “The Hizb ut-Tahrir,” *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, pp. 115-136.
- <sup>12</sup> Ahmed Rashid, “Asking for Holy War,” [http://www.iicas.org/english/enlibrary/libr\\_22\\_11\\_00\\_1.htm](http://www.iicas.org/english/enlibrary/libr_22_11_00_1.htm).
- <sup>13</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, op. cit., pp. 115-136.
- <sup>14</sup> Stages of Hizb ut-Tahrir, <http://Hizb ut-Tahrir .org/english/definition/messages.htm>.
- <sup>15</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, op. cit., p. 121.
- <sup>16</sup> Concepts of Hizb Ut-Tahrir, especially see pages 16-17, <http://hizb-ut-tahrir.org/english/books/mafahem/mafahem.pdf>.
- <sup>17</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, op. cit., p. 121.
- <sup>18</sup> “Banned Islamic Movement Increasingly Active in Tajikistan,” <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav090502.shtml>.
- <sup>19</sup> “What is Hizb ut-Tahrir?” <http://forum.mpacuk.org/showthread.php?t=2048>.
- <sup>20</sup> Antoine Blau, “Central Asia: Is Hizb ut-Tahrir a Threat to Stability?” RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 23 Aug 04, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/08/f270f4fe-f8b2-4b5a-acf8-087e22cbea2e.html>.
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- <sup>22</sup> “Banned Islamic Movement Increasingly Active in Tajikistan,” op. cit.
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- <sup>24</sup> “Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia?: Priorities for Engagement,” International Crisis Group Report #72, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/072\\_ca\\_is\\_radical\\_islam\\_inevitable.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/072_ca_is_radical_islam_inevitable.pdf), p. 12.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 11.
- <sup>26</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir will never be destroyed, by Allah’s Leave,” <http://www.Hizb ut-Tahrir .info/english/leaflets/2005/march0405.htm>.
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- <sup>28</sup> “America’s domination of the international situation is a danger to the world and only the Khilafah can save it,” <http://www.khilafah.com/home/category.php?DocumentID=7308&TagID=3>.
- <sup>29</sup> Communique from Hizb ut-Tahrir, “Annihilate the Fourth Crusade,” <http://www.khilafah.com.pk/leaflets/030320iraq.html>. Also see, “George Bush’s Third Crusade against the Muslims,” <http://www.Hizb ut-Tahrir .org/english/english.html>.
- <sup>30</sup> James Purcell Smith, “The IMU: Alive and Kicking?,” [http://www.cacianalyst.org/view\\_article.php?articleid=1761](http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=1761).
- <sup>31</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, op. cit., pp. 145-148.
- <sup>32</sup> Also recall the low level of support for Islamic governance discussed earlier in this study.

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- <sup>33</sup> The most promising aspect of the evolving information revolution in Central Asia is presented in the following essay that describes the use of the Internet during the Andijan political demonstrations of May 2005: "Internet Access and Training Program (IATP)," <http://www.irex.org/programs/iatp/about/index.asp>.
- <sup>34</sup> For al-Qaida's capabilities of conducting cyberwar, see "What are al Qaeda's capabilities?" <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cyberwar/vulnerable/alqaeda.html>.
- <sup>35</sup> "A Global Overview of Narcotics-Funded Terrorist and Other Extremist Groups," Library of Congress, May 2002, [http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/NarcsFundedTerrs\\_Extrems.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/NarcsFundedTerrs_Extrems.pdf), p93.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid. See especially pp. 89-98.
- <sup>37</sup> For a detailed background of these issues, see Loretta Napoleoni, *Terror Incorporated*, (NY: Seven Stories Press, 2005); Napoleoni, "Money and Terrorism, Strategic Insights, Volume III, Issue 4 (April, 2004), <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/apr/napoleoniApr04.asp>.
- <sup>38</sup> "Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia?," op.cit., p. 15.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 16.
- <sup>41</sup> Islam and the State, op.cit., p. 3.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6, passim.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-16, passim.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-31.
- <sup>45</sup> Qingguo Jia, "The Success of the Shanghai Five: Interests, Norms and Pragmatism," [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/jiafinal.htm#\\_ednref5](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/jiafinal.htm#_ednref5).
- <sup>46</sup> "Shanghai Cooperation Organization," <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm>.
- <sup>47</sup> Sean L. Yom, "The Future of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~asiactr/haq/200204/0204a003.htm>.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> In addition, Turkmenistan provided "blanket overflight and refueling privileges for humanitarian flights," and "Kazakhstan provided overflight rights and expedited rail transshipment of supplies." Jim Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests," Congressional Research Service, updated Jan 21, 2005, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/43391.pdf>.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> "American Public Diplomacy in the Islamic World," Remarks of Andrew Kohut to The Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing, February 27, 2003, <http://people-press.org/commentary/display.php3?AnalysisID=63>.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> It should be noted that, on August 1, 2005, the government of Islam Karimov asked the United States to withdraw its troops from its base in Uzbekistan. The US was given one year to carry out that action. That measure was in retaliation to the Bush administration's criticism of the massacre of civilians in the Andijan region of that country last May. "US told to quit airbase after criticizing protest massacre," Timesonline, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,11069-1716162,00.html>.

# **Countering Terrorism: Hezbollah's Appeal**

## **Fariborz Mokhtari**

### **Introduction**

The name Hezbollah (Hezb-Allah -party of God) did not originate with Shiite groups in Lebanon, now commonly associated with the term. Hezb-Allah first appeared in its modern political context during the Iranian Revolution of 1978 as a pro-Khomeini slogan that rhymed with the ayatollah's first name which means spirit of God: "Hezb faqat Hezbollah, Rahbar faqat Rohollah -Party, only God's party - leader, only God's spirit."<sup>1</sup> The general meaning associated with the name at the time was that of adherence to Islamic rule under Ayatollah Khomeini's guidance as chief theologian & Islamic jurist. The founding of a political movement in Lebanon by that name was not realized until 1982, partly as a reaction to Israel's invasion of Lebanon. The movement has been known as Islamic Jihad, Revolutionary Justice Organization, Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, and Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine. Liberating Lebanon, Palestine and Arab lands have been stated goals of the movement. The movement's centre for policymaking is a consultative council - Majlis al-Shura, headed by a cleric, Shaykh Hassan Nasr-Allah. Hezb-Allah has a long and violent history, but it has since 1992 appeared to be re-forming itself, to participate in Lebanon's parliamentary elections, and to resemble a political party with a military arm while maintaining a network of charitable institutions. Despite this evolution, the movement retains a militia force of 20,000<sup>2</sup> and has not repudiated violence, past or present.

Hezb-Allah has been charged with the suicide bombings of the US Embassy in April 1983, the US Marine Barracks in October 1983, and US Embassy Annex in September 1984 in Beirut. Three Hezb-Allah members are among FBI's most wanted terrorists for hijacking a TWA plane in 1985 and killing a US Navy diver onboard. Hezb-Allah has been linked to several kidnappings and detentions (of US, Israeli and Western hostages), an attack on Israel's embassy in Argentina in 1992, bombing of Israel's cultural centre in Buenos Aires in 1994, and capture of three Israeli soldiers in the autumn of 2000. The evidence of a Hezb-Allah-sponsored, pro-Syrian demonstration in Beirut on 8 March (after an anti-Syrian rally precipitated by former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's assassination on 14 February 2005) suggests an influence that can mobilize hundreds of thousands at short notice.<sup>3</sup> Hezb-Allah has received substantial financial, military, political, and organizational assistance from Iran and diplomatic, political, and logistical support from Syria.<sup>4</sup> Evidence suggests, however, that the movement may be in the midst of a transition.

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## **A Defining Moment**

The attacks of September 11, 2001, changed the United States and altered international relations forever. For the United States the greatest impact was perhaps psychological: a sudden realization of US vulnerability. The United States had for two hundred years – certainly prior to the Cold War - relied on its geographical advantage as a country protected by two oceans and two benign neighbours to keep hostilities far away from its borders. While military forces of most countries were designed and deployed to secure national boundaries, US forces were prepared by the second half of the twentieth century to project power and face foes around the globe. The US attitude towards the use of force, one may argue, had to a large extent been based on the success of this strategy and the territorial invulnerability it implied, despite the emergence of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The events of September 11, 2001, however, illustrated a new type of vulnerability that the United States' overwhelming forces could not deter. The country's unmatched security forces had failed to stop a series of attacks on US soil. A few civilians armed with nothing more lethal than box-cutters had exploited advanced Western technology and access to global communication systems to attack the United States within its borders. By doing so, they transformed the comfortable feeling of security into an angry sense of urgent vulnerability. September 11 was a defining moment in the United States, as significant as defining moments in other nations' histories. To face the threat, the United States has reexamined evolving assumptions regarding ethical limitations of the use of force – a matter of much continuous consideration, never settled. The United States accepted voluntary limitations on its own unilateral use of power following WWII in order to create a system of multilateral alliances. The system was to foster collective defence and a stable international environment. But the combination of voluntary restraint, alliance-building, and military deterrence proved inadequate against extremist organizations that emerged after the Cold War. The centres of terror were suddenly separated from states and could easily move from place to place and strike anywhere at any time. Furthermore, they had few fixed assets and held millennial goals making them oblivious to deterrence as previously perceived. The emergence of this threat therefore forced the United States to reevaluate ethical and political assumptions underlying the international order it had itself sponsored. The results of this reevaluation appeared in the US National Security Strategy published by the Bush Administration in September 2002.

The use of terror as a means of exercising political power is perhaps as old as the human species. The cult of the Assassins (hashashin –smokers of hashish), founded by Hassan Sabbah – the Old Man of the Mountain - that terrorized the Middle East and parts of Africa and Central Asia from the eleventh to the end of the thirteenth century is one of the best known. The cult's public doctrine with references to religion and an Islamic sect (the Ismailis), differed from that of its leaders, who upon achieving the heights of "enlightenment" were freed from religious and moral obligations. The leaders, one may presume, could thus justify political assassinations without the pangs of moral or religious consciousness. Other terrorist groups include Jewish Zealots of the first century in Palestine; The Thuggee of the seventh century in India (the cult of Kali); Narodnaya Volya (People's

Will) of the nineteenth century Russia; extremists in Serbia who triggered WWI by assassinating Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in 1914; and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine with its first hijacking of a commercial airliner on 22 July 1968, among others.<sup>5</sup> To study terrorism, and to construct long-term strategies to counter it, considering terrorist organizations (e.g. Hezb-Allah) in a larger context is necessary.

### **Law, Ethics, & Extremism**

The concerns related to the Global War on Terrorism, which may be more accurately called a "campaign against global extremism", reflect a kaleidoscope of perceived ethical implications. The philosophical and the intellectual aspects of warfare are inevitably linked to the legal and the operational ones (e.g., rules of engagement). The concepts of *jus ad bellum* (justice of war) and *jus in bello* (justice in war) address justification for going to war, versus justification for the manner in which the war is carried out, but the distinction is too often not made. Attempts at ethical streamlining often bear unsatisfactory outcomes and oversimplification may result in bureaucratic incidences of injustice against vulnerable individuals or minorities.<sup>6</sup> Defining terrorism as illegal, for example, does not point to a solution, for it addresses a symptom. The desired focus ought to shift to a search for a cure, or, better yet, prevention. What makes one a terrorist? What determines the attacks terrorists consider? What is the essence of terrorism? To know terrorists, one has to view them through their own eyes. Is terrorism in its essence a legal or a political problem? Does "the war on terror" mean different things to different people? To respond to terrorism, one must comprehend the grounds for action. Is any action justified? Are international laws adequate? Are ethical concerns relevant?

One may question whether a terrorist leader's mind allows any limits to the infliction of harm. If in a terrorist leader's mind all perceived enemies are "infidels", the potential targets of terrorism are guilty by definition. Furthermore, an argument with a terrorist would be of little utility, for a common moral basis necessary for a meaningful discussion would be lacking. The solution may be found in addressing terrorist leaders' potential audiences, likely supporters, and possible recruits. The absolutist stand of terrorists should not precipitate absolutist policies by the governments that resolve to confront them. There is more than a grain of truth in the saying that "terrorism is theater," for it is fundamentally designed to coerce public opinion. One may indeed question whether terrorism as we know it could exist without the modern media. Thus, a level-headed approach should lower society's anxiety and avoid the feeling of a social emergency.

Countering one absolutist stand with another will escalate social apprehension which in itself is damaging to the government on which the population depends for its peace of mind. John B Judis has argued that US leaders have consistently described "the nation's role in the world in religious terms". When a nation's policy is defined as good versus evil, there is no room left for resolution short of one side's annihilation. He argues that US presidents' positions, e.g. President Franklin Roosevelt's "there never has been - there never can be - successful compromise between good and evil,"<sup>7</sup> illustrates the point. US leaders have consistently referred to the United States as "God's chosen nation - from Abraham Lincoln's "the last, best hope on earth" to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's indispensable nation." They have asserted that the United States has a mission or a calling to

transform the world. From Senator Albert Beveridge on the annexation of the Philippines: "God marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the redemption of the world," to presidential candidate Richard Nixon: "America came into the world 180 years ago not just to have freedom for ourselves, but to carry it to the whole world," to President George W Bush in April 2004 "as the greatest power on the face of the earth, we have an obligation to help the spread of freedom..." They have insisted that in implementing the above mission the United States has, and is, "representing the forces of good over evil".<sup>8</sup> The formulation of the above ideas, Judis argues, creates a "framework that is defined in religious terms," with a tendency to "gravitate toward absolute dichotomies... and an immediate resolution of conflict. A realistic, yet flexible approach, avoiding Armageddon-like events," he suggests, would be more likely to achieve the society's objectives.<sup>9</sup> Judis's argument merits consideration, but it may not be as universally valid as suggested. That President George W Bush has frequently invoked God in his statements may not appeal to an ardently secular audience, but if well articulated, may in fact resonate with the people of faith, regardless of religion, nationality and culture. If terrorism is a tactic, it follows that it remains useful for only as long as it is effective. A tactic no longer of use, is readily (and quite logically) abandoned unceremoniously.

### **Individual Responsibility**

Aristotle stated that laws are not made for the good as the virtuous do not desire to do anything less than good. The aim ought to be the elevation of virtue in society in general, through education of moral standards. Aristotle believed that proper behaviour depended on character rather than laws and regulations.<sup>10</sup> The poignant point to emphasize here is the individual's sense of responsibility which may have been eroded as legality rather than ethics has become the standard of good citizenship. Ultimately however, it is likely that ethical arguments and policies, as well as their implementation, are our most effective instruments in combating terrorism.

Although moral arguments are not likely to convert the Osamas of the world, they are essential for they affect the populations that the likes of Osama bin Laden try to influence; and they form the basis for justifying actions against the likes of bin Laden in our own backyard as well as his. In presenting arguments against terrorists, sensitivity to the language used is important. The use of correct terms (misguided revolutionary rather than Islamist, terrorist rather than jihadist) and cultural symbols (campaign rather than crusade) are crucial; and serious attention to religious convictions and anti-colonial sentiments are important. While bin Laden's actions are reprehensible, he manipulates cultural icons effectively and he speaks in an idiom understood locally. Those who viewed al-Qaeda as simply against the American principles of freedom and justice may have misunderstood the basic appeal of al-Qaeda, which is presented as protecting the holy lands of Islam and the *umma* - the Moslem community of believers. Al-Qaeda presented, for instance, the presence of non-Moslems, personified by the US military presence in the Hijaz region of Saudi Arabia, as an attack upon the liberty of Moslem believers. Al-Qaeda thus claimed it attacked the United States and its allies to liberate the holy lands of Islam. Al-Qaeda's aim seen from its own perspective may be congruent with principles of freedom and justice. Arguments against Al-Qaeda directed at Al-Qaeda's potential supporters that overlook linguistic and cultural subtleties will inevitably fall flat and eventually prove ineffective.

Interpretations of the words of God through second or third-rate clerics with political ambition is demonstrably suspect. "The devil can always quote scripture to his use, and there is never a shortage in any faith of texts justifying the use of force."<sup>11</sup> Rather than allowing terrorists to adjust religious doctrine to rationalize their goals we should subject their arguments to "the genuine interrogation of the true faith".<sup>12</sup> We must consider the Divine Command argument going all the way back to Abraham<sup>13</sup> (because the people we wish to reach do), but illustrate that inflicting harm through third or fourth parties has no place in that Command. If our campaign against terrorism appears immoral or illegitimate, the task of confronting terrorism is undermined. Conversely, if our approach is accepted as moral and legitimate, it will in time, be effective in influencing potential terrorists.

Consequently, the United States must justify its behaviour and criticize its opponents with equal vigor. It is imperative to articulate ethical grounds for actions, for US citizens demand it. Factual issues could be clarified and legal matters persuasively explained. Issues concerning national self-interest, however, require further analysis. A country might have the moral right to do something but choose not to do so – for instance if the cost is perceived to be exorbitant. It is important to clarify honestly that in the realm of realistic foreign policy there is no moral *obligation* to do good at any cost. There is of course a moral obligation to do no harm, but to do good – as the 2005 tsunami in Asia illustrated, is *voluntary*. That is to say, the United States, as well as all countries ought to formulate foreign policies that are designed to be good for all. International expectations, however, must be realistic for no nation would approve of its government treating its national resources as a global charitable institution. The global nature of the threat posed by extremism must be shown with clarity and consistency if it is to gain universal acceptance.

Four distinct audiences are to be targets of our well-calibrated message: the domestic audience, the Western Allies, the Islamic world, and the non-Muslim, non-Western world. That is not to prescribe four different messages, for doing so would be hypocritical, and very likely to be found out as such. It is to say, however, that the message, in order to be clearly comprehended by different audiences, may require different forms of expression. We must articulate the right message, but what is correct in our way of thinking may not resonate in other societies. An official US State Department interpreter who had accompanied his boss to a meeting with an Arab President told the author a story that illustrates the point. The Arab president had his own interpreters with him at the meeting. The US secretary of state, in a show of sincerity, seasoned his private conversation with common baseball expressions that baffled the president and caused his interpreters to give up in despair and embarrassment. We must find common values that transcend our differences.

One such approach may be found in Natural Law, to afford us a meaningful common basis for discourse. Considering that battles between terrorists and governments are fundamentally over public opinion, we should steer away from extreme measures of arbitrary arrest, preventive detention, torture under any name, and deportation..., for they clearly play into the hands of the enemy.<sup>14</sup> The French Army's tactics in Algeria, we may recall, were condemned by the French as the anti-terror violence there proved to be a two-edged sword. The French won the battles but lost the war despite having wiped out the National Liberation Front (FLN) antagonists. A calm, collected, level-headed government policy with the

appearance of "business as usual", in responding to a terrorist crisis may appear counter-intuitive, but it denies the terrorists the attention they so badly seek.

## **A Global Campaign**

Countering extremism is not an exclusively American fight. UN Security Council Resolution 1368, passed the day after the September 11 attack, declared any act of terrorism a threat to international peace and security. A follow-up Resolution 1377 stated that acts of terrorism endanger "innocent lives and the dignity and security of human beings everywhere, threaten the social and economic development of all states and undermine global stability and prosperity".<sup>15</sup> Thus the moral and legal basis to define terrorism and terrorists as common enemies of humankind exist. Establishing a potent universal jurisdiction for legal action against the common enemy, therefore, should not be too far away. Fighting terror, if understood to be everybody's fight, persuades all nations to join in the effort. The persuasion, however, will not be effective if it champions only the American defining moment, indifferent to those of others. Historic similitude and cultural symbolisms could help shape a sympathetic global attitude. It is worthy of note that a hand may be overplayed and that even insurgents are not immune from doing so. The Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, despite their brutality and persistence, finally realized that terrorism may have worked as a tactic but failed as a strategy.<sup>16</sup>

It may be useful to view terrorism as a social ailment that may affect the strong as well as the weak, just as an Olympic weight-lifter is as susceptible to certain virus infections as is a child. The most effective cures could not overlook the role of the body's own immune agents. We must be willing to accept the unpleasant truth that our effectiveness against terrorist organizations too, requires at the very least cooperation of the countries in which the groups are to be found. The prerequisites for the cooperation however, are the willingness of that nation and its government to be helpful. The governments may be enticed but the peoples must arrive at a consensus to hold all acts of terrorism devoid of legitimacy "in the same light as slavery, piracy and genocide".<sup>17</sup>

A strategy to counter terrorism must include education. War, after all, must be a thin slice of a greater strategy. We may never manage to eradicate terrorism absolutely, but education – properly understood and broadly defined - is the most important long-term prescription to build character in the Aristotelian sense, to marginalize terrorists, and to contain terrorist tendencies. Undiluted liberal arts education is particularly important in reinforcing ethical values. Let us not forget that many terrorist leaders have advanced degrees, but their education has often been of the black-and-white type of learning. With a long-term approach, liberal arts education – educating well-rounded generalists - does matter. The statement, "education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity," is worthy of contemplation.<sup>18</sup> Our recent penchant for specialization and "professional studies", may have been the starting point of the flourishing industry that seeks, promotes and utilizes legal loopholes that are strictly speaking not necessarily right, yet legal. The counsellors who advise students to select college majors that promise high income should contemplate the counsel of Confucius that "the superior man thinks of virtue; the inferior man thinks of comfort. The superior man thinks of what is right; the inferior man of what will pay."

The evidence that Aristotle was right is all around us. Our modern democratic emphasis on rules, bureaucracies, regulations, laws, rights and litigation under the premise of equality in pursuit of liberty, has diminished in our society both virtue and liberty. The importance of character has depreciated further by specialization and division of labour for the sake of efficiency. The cost of that efficiency has been the fragmentation of responsibility. Millions of individuals labour every day to perform tasks so minute the ethical implications of them are impossible to determine. The thousands of bureaucrats involved in investigating, branding, arresting, imprisoning, torturing, fining, executing, expropriating, building weapons of mass destruction, and other questionable tasks are oblivious to the implications of their work precisely because their duties are minute fragments with which they do not identify. The armies of minor functionaries who collect and file people's personal information every day are undiscerning to the consequences of a deportation order to be issued to a refugee whose application for political asylum may be pending. Fragmentation of tasks, whether through commissions or political assembly-lines lessens if not removes individual responsibility for acts of inhumanity. Such industrial organization with information-age technology, coupled with an expansionist political bureaucracy, may – as history has shown - create nightmares of frightening proportions.<sup>19</sup>

The proponents of swift and efficient governance should not overlook the possibility of swift and efficient injustice meted out on massive scales. Most unfortunate is the emphasis on *Positive Law* to the exclusion of *Natural Law*. Proponents of Natural Law hold that its concepts are known to all human beings as they emphasize the distinction between right and wrong. In contrast, Positive Law –that is to say man-made law, requires the services of multitudes of legal experts to interpret, argue and bargain before a final resolution is reached.

Richard Weaver argued "[t]here is ground for declaring that modern man has become a moral idiot... For four centuries every man has been not only his own priest but his own professor of ethics, and the consequence is an anarchy which threatens even that minimum consensus of value necessary to the political state".<sup>20</sup> Weaver's view regarding the "superiority of an ideal",<sup>21</sup> is compelling, for it suggests the germ of understanding our modern, seemingly educated terrorist's alienation. The nihilistic motives of terrorists in search of a moment of powerful glory, "a moment of violence that will transform a penniless nonentity into an avenging angel," must be understood.<sup>22</sup> That psychological need for an instant of power and glory is a matter to be addressed urgently. Urgency however, is not an excuse for rashness. Isaiah Berlin, a philosopher who had tasted turmoil in his own lifetime, warned that

... the ultimate ends of life are many, and even within one culture and generation; that some of those come into conflict, and lead to clashes between societies, parties, individuals, and not least within individuals' themselves... And if we understand how conflicts between ends equally ultimate and sacred, but irreconcilable within the breast of even a single human being... can lead to tragic and unavoidable collision, we shall not distort the moral facts by artificially ordering them in terms of some absolute criterion; recognizing that not all good things are necessarily compatible with one another.<sup>23</sup>

Michael Oakeshott recognized two types of knowledge – technical knowledge consisting entirely of formulated rules or principles, and practical or traditional knowledge that cannot be formulated in rules. Paul Franco referring to Berlin and

Oakeshott argues that “The essence of rationalism is that it denies the epistemic value of practical knowledge. Rationalism consists in the belief in the sovereignty of technique, which is not the same thing as the sovereignty of reason per se.”<sup>24</sup> Claes G Ryn further argues that genuine statesmen are flexible and compromising with a willingness to put themselves in the other fellow’s shoes, “rather than considering doing so deplorable and the only worthwhile task to cleanse the fellow through decontamination” of the bad old ways of traditional societies.<sup>25</sup> The arguments thus imply a greater need for generalists with the intellectual facility to think broadly, rather than specialists with a fashionable emphasis on technology with what is called nowadays “professional training”. Admiral James B. Stockdale, a US Navy aviator shot down over Vietnam in 1965 and imprisoned in Hanoi for seven and a half years wrote in 1978,

Most of us prisoners found that the so-called practical academic experiences in how to do things, which I am told are proliferating were useless. I'm not saying that we should base education on training people to be in prison, but I am saying that in stress situations the fundamentals, the hard-core classical subjects, are what serve best.<sup>26</sup>

If a legitimate state of war with al-Qaeda exists, we need a morally admissible standard for “unconventional warfare”, and the hard core classics could be valuable. It is ethically appropriate to pursue a campaign against terror. Credibility demands however that the United States as well as other countries respond to terror without ambiguity. Doing so may require a new body of law to address unconventional war, covert operations, and espionage. Such a formulation will involve international legal and philosophical expertise, cultural awareness, and political courage. It will also take time. Nevertheless, an international convention to formulate legal guidelines to be ratified by all countries may be a valuable first step towards a global agreement.

## **Expectations**

The man in the global street expects the United States to state its position clearly, act accordingly, justify its conduct, and remain consistent. The United States, with its large and diverse nation, however, cannot speak with a single voice easily. The media as well as interest groups actively seek and reflect different views and interpretation,s making a singular consistent picture on behalf of the United States impossible. Commentators often misuse terms in their public statements which may be picked up instantaneously and spread worldwide. A fine lawyer with little knowledge of military justice for instance, may overlook distinctions between terrorists and uniformed soldiers, or laws of war and battlefield rules of engagement.<sup>27</sup> Yet law does not have to be confusing. Natural law in particular is generally understandable to all whether military or civilian, Christian, Jew, Muslim, or Buddhist, for it is based on human reason.

Claiming our common Judeo-Christian-Islamic heritage to emphasize our philosophical points of convergence will be helpful. Mainstream Islamic jurists – as well as some revolutionaries – have rejected the interpretation of the Koran<sup>28</sup> and the concept of jihad (which stands for exertion, primarily against the shortcomings of the self) put forth by terrorists in every Moslem country. At the Islamic Conference in Spain on 11 March 2005, for instance, a large number of Moslem theologians issued a strict religious opinion (Fatwa), identifying Osama bin Laden as an apostate (kafir).<sup>29</sup> But extremists have dismissed the theologians as lackeys

of the ruling elites who themselves are accused of having sold out to Western imperialists. A sound and consistent argument skilfully delivered will eventually prevail, for to deny that is to ignore the human capacity for learning.<sup>30</sup> John Stuart Mill, on the "Liberty of Thought and Discussion" suggested that in not articulating a case "If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error".<sup>31</sup> We should neither refrain nor be weary of articulating our message in the best way possible. For a nation that has mastered the art of successful marketing the most frivolous of merchandise, marketing reason ought not to be so daunting a task.<sup>32</sup>

It is worth noting that Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus) are common names among devout Moslem families. An interested party is far more likely to find bridges connecting us through Islam than barriers keeping us apart. Consider Islam's basic obligations: 1) Belief in one God. 2) Prayer. 3) Charity - giving alms. 4) Fasting - at certain times of the year and giving the food not consumed to the needy. 5) Pilgrimage. None of the "Five Pillars of Islam" are alien to the Western religious convictions. Abu-Nasr Mohammad Farabi (circa 870-950), the famed Islamic philosopher known as *the second teacher* (after Aristotle) considered "war as an end in itself [to be] the supreme vice that can have no place in the regime whose end is the supreme virtue". There may also be numerous virtuous nations with different religions, Farabi taught. "By presenting divine laws, jurisprudence, and theology as parts of political science, he [Farabi] pointed to the possibility of a neutral discussion of all religions or sects and of the features common to them all."<sup>33</sup> Renewed interest in the classics of Eastern as well as Western philosophy may reawaken new generations of all nationalities to appreciate the existing wealth of accumulated knowledge at their disposal. Familiarity with Farabi's teachings, for instance, is as important for us in the West as it is crucial for the societies in which terrorist masterminds recruit.

Judgments in regard to when and how one should go to war are to be within the boundaries of prudence. Reasonable preemption is not inconsistent with prudence, and prudence and the importance of ends are not divorced from the tradition of just war. Confusion results when the distinction between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* are not made. Awareness of the just approach is an ethical consciousness involving legal, social, economic, and political considerations. Following a just approach is not only right but also prudent for it facilitates reconciliation after, and fair treatment of combatants during, the conflict. Prudence, as Michael Ignatieff argues, holds that in public policy what works may not be always right and what is right might not always work. If rights are to bow to security "there had better be good reasons, and there had better be clear limitations to rights abridgement".<sup>34</sup>

Terrorism may be described as a form of urban insurgency for the similarities (of terrorism and insurgency) are significant. Terrorism and insurgency are political acts that seek objectives through violence. War differs from terrorism and insurgency in that it is a legal remedy of last resort. Since antiquity, civilized peoples the world over have recognized the necessity of using force in the name of justice, and have delineated concise rules and limits on how and when force may be legitimately used.<sup>35</sup> Every civilized society has recognized some restrictions on the use of force. That recognition collectively underlines the principles that constitute what is often called the Just War Tradition. That tradition directly and indirectly influences current international law on the conduct of war. The Just War Tradition holds that war can be declared only by a lawful government; that it must



be declared publicly to give the other side a chance to meet demands in order to avoid violence; that there must be a just cause for going to war that could not be resolved any other way; and that the means employed must be proportional to the cause. If war becomes inevitable, the Just War Tradition calls for attacking only military targets.

Terrorism rejects the entire legal framework of war. Terrorist acts are mostly premeditated political acts aimed at civilians, for maximum psychological impact, and are carried out by organized yet elusive groups. Terrorists don't conform to the Just War Tradition principally because they don't limit themselves to legitimate targets. Terrorists may be viewed in several categories: *Nationalist*, *Religious*, *State-Sponsored*, *Radical* (leftist extremist), *Reactionary* (rightist extremist), and *Anarchist*. Religious terrorists resort to violence in pursuit of divine commands as they define them, in search of sweeping changes. Nearly half of the terrorist groups identified in recent years have been religious and not all related to Islam. Aum Shinrikyo of Japan, the Jewish group affiliated with the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, and some white supremacist groups in the US, are examples. State-sponsored-terrorists are foreign policy tools of certain states wishing to wage war on adversaries through surrogates. The current regimes in Iran, Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria and the former regime in Iraq are recognized examples, having supported Hezb-Allah, the Abu Nidal Organization, and the Japanese Red Army. Radical terrorists wish to destroy capitalism to establish a socialist society. The German Baader-Meinhoff Group, the Japanese Red Army, the US Weathermen, and Italy's Red Brigade fit in that category. Reactionary terrorists seek to abolish liberalism and liberal democratic governance. Neo-Nazis & neo-Fascists appear to defy reason and celebrate instinct and racial supremacy. Anarchist terrorists, most active in 1870-1920, but reappearing in movements denouncing globalization, consider any external (involuntary) regulation of human conduct contrary to liberty, and wish to abolish all governmental institutions to replace them with free, unrestricted volunteer associations. In 1901, a Hungarian anarchist assassinated President William McKinley of the United States. Thus viewing Moslems as suspects and relating terrorism to Islam are demonstrably wrong.

Terrorists murder innocent people intentionally and seek safety in places impossible to attack without endangering other innocent lives. Terrorists thus shield themselves with the assurance that government forces wishing to fight back will have to violate the same moral principles for which they fight the terrorists in the first place. The Just War Tradition, it is argued, recognizes this dilemma, as discussed by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and later by Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologica*. The basis for solving the dilemma is the acknowledgement that an act may have two consequences: an intended good effect and an unintended bad one (the Doctrine of Double Effect). Thus an action may have both a good and a bad effect and still comply with the Just War Tradition, provided certain conditions are satisfied. First, the bad effect must be unintended; second, it must be proportional to the good effect; and third, those performing the action must try to minimize the bad effect *even if it means increased risk to their own combatants*.<sup>36</sup> Given the two choices, not to strike back, or strike while adhering to the tenets of the Just War Tradition, the US has generally chosen the path of avoiding harm to innocent noncombatants. Could a liberal society steel its will to accept that what appears neat in theory may not turn out so in practice? Sir William Blackstone, the noted English jurist, argued that since a pirate renounces all benefits of society and government and reduces "himself afresh to the savage state of nature, by declaring war against all mankind, all mankind must declare war against him".<sup>37</sup> The

argument is sound, except that it may lead to a doctrine of equivalence, opening the door to authorized state retaliation against terrorist groups.

Consider the hypothetical extreme case of a terrorist gang taking hostages to trade for their imprisoned terrorist comrades and killing the hostages one at a time to hasten the government's capitulation. Would society support the government's retaliation by killing the incarcerated terrorists in a similar manner to stop the murder of the hostages? Would doing so serve the higher interests of a liberal society? Considering that terrorist acts are mere tactics and most terrorists manipulated instruments, one may anticipate the possibility of gradual transformation through acquired wisdom and maturity.

### **Hezb-Allah: Terrorist or Political Party?**

Although closely linked to Iran, it is not accurate or realistic to assume that all Hezb-Allah activities are ordered or approved by Iran's clerical rulers. Those who assert that Hezb-Allah's every movement is orchestrated by the rulers in Tehran should recall that it was Hezb-Allah that blew the cover off what became known as "Iran-Contra Affair" in 1986. Former national security advisor Robert McFarlane had already travelled to Tehran and US weapons had been shipped to Iran. At the same time, Hezb-Allah had maintained a freeze on abductions of Americans and released three hostages. Hezb-Allah leaders, however, wanted to put an end to their patron's direct dealings with the United States. A little known magazine published in Baalbek – a Hezb-Allah controlled part of Lebanon - reported the top-secret arms-for-hostages deal on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, unravelling the initiative.<sup>38</sup>

More recently, there is reason to suggest that Iran's assistance to Hezb-Allah has been dwindling, which may explain at least in part Hezb-Allah's increasing eagerness to participate in electoral politics and considering the possibility of disarmament. Iran's role in Lebanon may also be on the wane. Iran reportedly deployed 2,000 Revolutionary Guards to protect Lebanon's Shiite population after Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, but began a gradual withdrawal five years ago and reportedly left Lebanon almost entirely (15-20 personnel may have remained) by April 2005.<sup>39</sup> Iran's president Mohammad Khatami after meeting with French President Jacques Chirac in Paris on 6 April 2005 stated that "Hezbollah constitutes a real force in Lebanon and this party symbolizes resistance in the face of foreign aggression. The good relations that we have are of a nature to help resolve the problems in Lebanon."<sup>40</sup> The relationship between Iran's current regime and the Hezb-Allah is a two-way street. Still, Iran's support has been crucial for Hezb-Allah's financial, political, and military survival. Hezb-Allah's presence on Israel's border on the other hand, has offered Iran a forward deterrence capability against potential Israeli air attacks.

Whatever its origins, Hezb-Allah is more than a terrorist organization today. It is an effective political party with parliamentary representation (the parliamentary elections of June 2005 resulted in 72 seats for Hariri-Jumbalat alliance, 35 seats for Hezb-Allah & Amal Shia alliance, and 21 seats for General Aoun and his allies);<sup>41</sup> and a social movement with scores of charities, medical facilities, schools, a seminary (Najaf College), and a popular television broadcasting station. It controls 60 per cent of Lebanon's Shiite municipalities and may accept ministerial posts in the country's next government.<sup>42</sup> Indications generally suggest that Hezb-Allah is trying to enter Lebanon's mainstream politics. "It was Lebanese flags, rather than

the banners of their party, that they brought to the mass rally in Beirut on 8 March. There was a moment of silence at that rally for Hariri, and a message to the opposition that Hezbollah wants a share of the country's power... The Lebanese opposition to Syria is at peace with Hezbollah's political role."<sup>43</sup>

Hezb-Allah's popularity and prestige, particularly among Lebanon's poor Shiites - politically disenfranchised for decades before the country's civil war, ought not to be overlooked. Hezb-Allah filled a vacuum by providing public services as well as a powerful political voice for a population whose government had failed them. The June 2005 elections clearly showed Hezb-Allah's popularity among Lebanon's voters. On Sunday 5 June, Hezb-Allah supported candidates outpolled their nearest challengers by 10 to one, and the turnout was greater than in the 2000 elections. Every seat contested in the Sunday 5 June election - the national elections are conducted over four Sundays - was won by either Hezb-Allah or Amal (a Shiite based party allied to Hezb-Allah) candidates.<sup>44</sup>

The movement, however, faces a period of transition. Although open resistance to Israel's occupation of Lebanon gained the movement both respect and legitimacy in the region and Hezb-Allah's leaders and supporters assumed credit for having driven Israel out of Lebanon, Israel's withdrawal has removed much of Hezb-Allah's reason for maintaining its militia and its militancy. The question of whether keeping Hezb-Allah's armed militia is justified, for example, arose nearly two years before Hariri's assassination. The issue culminated for the US in the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, which gave President George W Bush authority to impose sanctions against Syria, with implications for Hezb-Allah's armed wing. President Bush in his State of the Union Address of 2 February 2005 asked Syria to leave Lebanon. On 15 March 2005, he stated, "I would hope that Hezbollah would prove that [it is] not [a terrorist organization] by laying down arms and not threatening peace".<sup>45</sup>

General Michel Aoun, a Lebanese Christian who left his country in 1991 for exile in France until May 2005, declared on 14 May that Hezb-Allah could be convinced to disarm in accordance with a UN resolution and the desire of the United States. Shaikh Hassan Nasrallah stated in an interview with the French Newspaper *Le Monde* published on the same day that his group was "quite ready to discuss all subjects with Lebanese parties, including the arms of the Islamic Resistance."<sup>46</sup> In addition, Israeli sources have confirmed a noticeable drop in Hezb-Allah's profile and its encouragement of Palestinian groups to conduct terror attacks. While Israel's intelligence community earlier had publicly accused both Iran and Hezb-Allah of inciting violence and obstructing this summer's planned disengagement, a member of the Israeli General Staff revealed to Israel's *Haaretz* on 6 April 2005 that the predictions had proven inaccurate,<sup>47</sup> although isolated incidents have occurred.<sup>48</sup>

*Haaretz* reported on 4 April 2005 that a number of meetings between a Western unofficial delegation and senior members of Islamic organizations in the Middle East and East Asia had taken place in Beirut in late March. The Western delegation included the former EU envoy to Palestine and veteran MI6 agent Alistair Crooke; RAND consultant Graham Fuller, Fred Hof, associated with the Mitchell Report; Geoffrey Aronson of the Foundation for Middle East Peace; Mark Perry of Jefferson Waterman International - a former advisor to Yasser Arafat; and a retired senior CIA official. Moussa Abu Marzouq, deputy to Hamas leader Khaled Meshal, two members of the organization's diplomatic bureau, Sami Khater and Osama

Hamdan, represented Hamas. Nawaf Musawi, head of the Hezb-Allah's foreign relations department spoke for that organization. Abu Marzouq and his colleagues reportedly stated that in late 2003 they offered to halt attacks on civilian Israelis (excluding settlers in territories). Then deputy director of the CIA George Tenet, according to the report, travelled to Cairo for talks about the offer, but Israel rejected the deal. Despite the rejection, no Israeli was harmed for three months, until Ismail Abu Shnab was "assassinated". Musawi asserted "there is nothing in Hezbollah's ideology that makes an enemy of the Jews and it will respect any agreement that is reached between the Palestinians and Israel. Our enemy is the occupation, especially the occupation of Muslim holy cites in Jerusalem." According to Haaretz, he compared Hezb Allah to the Irgun and the Stern Gang at the founding of Israel. "After Israel leaves the Shaba Farms on the Golan, Hezbollah will proclaim an end to Israeli occupation of Lebanon and becomes part of Lebanon's regular army..." The report concluded that Middle East scholar and former special advisor to heads of Shin Beth Security Service Mati Steinberg "agreed that an Israeli withdrawal from Shaba would enable Hezbollah to move from being a problem to being a solution".<sup>49</sup>

The Lebanese polled in April 2005 on the subject of disarming Hezb-Allah expressed mixed views:<sup>50</sup>

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Hezb-Allah should be disarmed.

	All	Maronite	Sunni	Shiite
Agree	6%	18%	3%	---
Agree, if peace exists	18%	17%	28%	14%
Only if Hezbollah Agrees	31%	51%	28%	6%
Disagree	41%	8%	31%	79%

Do you support or oppose the US pressuring Syria to disarm Hezbollah?

	All	Maronite	Sunni	Shiite
Support	26%	53%	14%	9%
Oppose	61%	29%	70%	82%

The Lebanese June 2005 elections confirm that Hezb-Allah's political support is significant. More importantly, the United States has support among the Lebanese that could be enhanced or may be squandered. Recognizing and respecting Lebanon's political dynamics of change is crucial in forcing Hezb-Allah to either return to its terrorist tactics, or seizing the opportunity to purge itself and its inglorious past policies. The possibility that the United States may have to deal with Hezb-Allah as a political party, and that the political party may in fact be in a position to help the United States, is not entirely farfetched. If so, a deliberate but determined policy will serve the US strategic interest better than a testy, absolutist approach.

## What Is To Be Done Now

Faced with terrorism, a government must act. The best solution, as is often the case with most problems, is prevention which requires allocation of considerable resources at times that terrorism may not appear to be a national concern. To focus on preventing terrorism when terrorism does not appear threatening requires heroic efforts by the national leadership, always facing fierce competition for limited resources. Preventing terrorism, much as preventive maintenance, is likely to be

postponed in favour of addressing more pressing issues of the moment. Unfortunately, when terrorism bursts on the scene, the nation is often unprepared, surprised, angry, and inclined to blame the government. Sudden allocation of resources after a terrorist act, to invest in preventive measures, however, will not address the crisis in its entirety. What is then a government to do when faced with a terrorist crisis?

First, it must recognize that a terrorist recruit is likely to have experienced a personal crisis, with a deep sense of frustration. Such personalities are particularly vulnerable to indoctrination, which they often receive in prison systems. Recent research findings reveal that a high percentage of terrorists had been incarcerated for petty crimes at some point. Prisons are often schools of terrorism, recruiting new inmates who may know little about the religion or the ideology in the name of which they commit terrorist acts when freed from incarceration. The recruiters are experienced, influential characters who are familiar with the prison system, and are in touch with the outside through cell phones and computers.<sup>51</sup> Governments must, therefore, take a hard look at their prison systems to prevent their institutions of rehabilitation from functioning as universities for terrorism.

Second, a government must not over-react for doing so plays into the hands of the terrorists. Calm but effective anti-terror policies judiciously applied with the appearance of business as usual – as opposed to an emergency, would be best.

Third, it should recognize that time is of the essence and personal, partisan, and departmental rivalries should be sacrificed – at least for a time, for the greater national interest. Any division among the ruling elite will be cleverly exploited by crafty manipulative terrorist or insurgent organizations.

Fourth, lessons learned from previous insurgencies must be reviewed and relearned. Repeating the mistakes of previous generations is asinine, costly, and contrary to the national interest.

Fifth, winning the allegiance of the population from whom the terrorists are recruited and among whom they hide, must be a priority. This is easier said than done of course, but essential. The success of this step in regard to the terrorist is as a fish thrown out of water.

Sixth, fighting terrorism requires specially educated, trained and equipped units for traditional armed forces would be as efficient in countering terrorists as conducting micro-surgery on an eye using butcher knives and axes. Such units require flexibility, mobility and mental preparedness to adjust to changing terrorist tactics with superior agility.

Seventh, counter the opponents' advantage of familiarity with its base of operation by physically separating them from the population that supports them, occupy the zones of their previous operations by visible overwhelming presence, and persuade the population to turn against the terrorists, to see them as tormentors rather than liberators.

Eighth, accept that human intelligence is irreplaceable, even with the fanciest of technological miracles. Gadgets and technological devices are in essence "things" that could never replace an intelligent human mind familiar with cultural nuances, languages and human sentiments.

Ninth, calm down the population's fears and anxieties by emphasizing normalcy and "business as usual". Declaration of emergency, emergency legislation, extralegal measures, fiery speeches and flooding public places with specially armed and uniformed personnel will add to the sense of social anxiety and may create a crisis mentality bordering on mass psychosis.

Tenth, take the war to the terrorist and avoid mistakes, for every little infraction, every mistaken arrest, every misdirected raid, and every mistargeted bombing will strengthen the terrorists who will turn them into propaganda boons.<sup>52</sup> The above steps will neutralize a terrorist or insurgent group but will not cure the social ailment. The cure requires education, preparation, commitment, constant vigilance and plenty of time. Combating terrorism after a terrorist threat has already exploded ought to constitute much more than military or police action.<sup>53</sup>

## **Conclusion**

For better or worse, in the current campaign against terrorism the focus is on west Asia, commonly called the Middle East – a colonial term in its origin.<sup>54</sup> At a time that mutual understanding is essential, neither side sees the other as it seen by itself. The "Middle Easterners" would like to see the United States as a former exploited colony that has managed to liberate itself by a militia against a superior well-trained and well-equipped military force. They like to see the United States as a former agricultural developing country that has managed to industrialize and achieve great technological heights as well as wealth. In short, they like to see the United States as a model to emulate. By the same token, they expect the United States, because of its past colonial history, to be more sympathetic towards them than towards the former colonizers. The United States, however, does not commonly view itself as a former colony with reservations against former colonizers. The United States celebrates the Fourth of July and glorifies the War of Independence, but also holds the "British cousins" as the closest of allies rather than defeated former masters. To be perceived as replacing British or French colonial rulers in the region will not foster endearment. To be seen as a champion of fairness as in the Suez Crisis of 1956 – checking the British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt, will.

There is also a philosophical divide that separates the United States from the "Middle Easterners". As Robert Nozick has pointed out, one may observe the current distribution of resources broadly defined, through either a *time-slice view* (similar to a snap-shot of the present to be subjected to some preconceived pattern of just distribution), or a *historical view* (which considers everything present intimately linked to the past and thus affected by it).<sup>55</sup> The United States, satisfied with its great power and wealth, has reason to gravitate towards a "time-slice view" of things. The aggrieved, on the other hand, have a greater penchant for a "historical view", thus keeping the memories of their past alive. Addressing the many problems of the Middle East, therefore, requires a genuine consciousness of the two different perceptions of justice.

In the war on terrorism vigilance is required to safeguard societies against terrorists but even more vigilance is necessary to protect liberal democracies against corrosion from within. In our enthusiasm to find a quick solution to the social disease of terrorism, we may easily turn the prescribed cure into a more serious malady. We could, if not vigilant, win battles beyond our borders yet lose the war at

home by undermining liberal democracies within our own societies. That would indeed be a compound calamity.

Finally, we must recognize that terrorism is a tactic and as such a mere instrument to impose upon societies, irrespective of race, nationality or religious confession. To assume terrorism to be anything other than a method used in a struggle mires us in the endless debate confusing the tactic used versus the justice of the conflict. Terror may be used to impose an ideology upon a reluctant society, but it is not an ideology nor has it an ideology of its own. Some terrorist organizations are death cults with inverted values that hold love of life to be a manifestation of weakness. If a cult member's own life is to be sacrificed the lives of potential victims (in his mind) could not be any more valuable.<sup>56</sup> Such characters may be beyond the reach of reason, but we should not give up on the potential recruits desperately in search of meaningful lives. To seek an "ideology of terrorism" is to misconceive ideology. To study terrorism one must distinguish recruiters from recruits. The recruiters of terrorism devise and constantly fine tune schemes of predators lurching on a herd's fringes. The recruits are the prey, the weak and the lonely, fallen behind or edged away to the fringes, made vulnerable to sinister predators on the look out, waiting for opportune moments.<sup>57</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rouhollah –rouh-Allah, means spirit of God, which happened to be ayatollah Khomeini's first name.

<sup>2</sup> The Economist, March 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 2005, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> The number of Hezb-Allah supporters turned out were conservatively estimated at 500,000. The Economist, March 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, p. 47, c.2.

<sup>4</sup> Russell D. Howard & Reid L. Sawyer, Terrorism And Counterterrorism: Understanding The New Security Environment (Guilford, Connecticut: Mc Graw-Hill/Dushkin, 2004), p. 510, 511.

<sup>5</sup> "Terrorism: Q/A," Council on Foreign Relations [http://cfrterrorism.org/terrorism/introduction\\_print.html](http://cfrterrorism.org/terrorism/introduction_print.html), p. 2 (Page 2 of 4).

<sup>6</sup> This is a particularly serious tendency in times of crisis. Consider for instance the typecasting of all Middle Easterners after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, or the internment of US citizens of Japanese descent during WWII, facilitated by bureaucratically enabled mass production of injustice...

<sup>7</sup> John B. Judis, "The Chosen Nation: The Influence of Religion on US Foreign Policy" Policy Brief #37, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2005, [www.CarnegieEndowment.org](http://www.CarnegieEndowment.org).

<sup>8</sup> John B. Judis. P. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> John B. Judis. P. 3, 5. Judis presents a chart, "The Framework of US Foreign Policy in which he records the following

Period	Mission	Adversary	Means
Pre-revolutionary Colonial America (1600-1776)	Millennium	Papal antichrist	Example as "city on the hill"
Revolutionary & expansion Founding era alliances (1776-1815)	Empire of Liberty	Old world tyranny "hellish fiends" (Native Americans)	Example, continental without entangling
Manifest Destiny (1815-1848)	Christian civilization	Savages or "children" (Native Americans)	Example, continental expansion w/o entangling
Imperial America (1898-1913)	Christian civilization	Barbarians & savages (Filipinos)	Overseas expansion w/o entangling alliances
Wilsonian Internationalism (1914-1919)	Global democracy	Autocracy & imperialism	International organization and alliances
Cold War, liberalism (1946-1989)	Free world	Communism	International organizations and alliances
Bush & neoconservatism	Spread of	International	Unilateral action with

(2001- )	freedom	terrorism, radical Islam	ad hoc alliances
<sup>10</sup> Bradley C.S. Watson, "The Western Ethical Tradition and the Morality of the Warrior," <u>Armed Forces &amp; Society</u> , Fall 1999, Volume 26, Number 1, p.55.			
<sup>11</sup> Michael Ignatieff, <u>The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of terror</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 123.			
<sup>12</sup> Michael Ignatieff, <u>The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 123.			
<sup>13</sup> F. Mokhtari, ed. <u>Ethics &amp; Terror</u> , proceedings of a conference, 19 December 2002 sponsored by the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington, DC. This paper and much of its contents are inspired by the presentations at the conference. The author is indebted to all participants.			
<sup>14</sup> Michael Ignatieff, p. 18.			
<sup>15</sup> Joseph McMillan, "Apocalyptic Terrorism: The Case for Preventive Action," <u>Strategic Forum</u> , Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), National Defense University (NDU), Post 9/11 Critical Issues Series, No. 212, November 2004, p. 3.			
<sup>16</sup> Michael Ignatieff, p. 68.			
<sup>17</sup> Joseph McMillan, "Apocalyptic Terrorism," p. 2.			
<sup>18</sup> James Bond Stockdale, Vice Admiral, USN, Ret., quoted in "The World of Epictetus: Reflections on Survival and Leadership," published in <u>The Atlantic Monthly</u> , April, 1978 and Malham M. Wakin, ed. <u>War, Morality, and the Military Profession</u> Second Edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), p. 21.			
<sup>19</sup> Richard M. Weaver, <u>Ideas Have Consequences</u> , (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 56, 64. Brinton states "The government of the Terror is a dictatorship by commission." Crane Brinton, <u>The Anatomy of Revolution</u> , New York: Vantage Books, 1965), p.171.			
<sup>20</sup> Richard M. Weaver, <u>Ideas Have Consequences</u> , (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 1-2.			
<sup>21</sup> Richard M. Weaver, p.2.			
<sup>22</sup> Michael Ignatieff, p. 113.			
<sup>23</sup> Issiah Berlin, "Historical Inevitability," in <u>The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays</u> , edited by Henry Hardy & Roger Hausheer, (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux), p. 176, quoted in Paul Franco, "Oakeshott, Berlin, And Liberalism," <u>Political Theory</u> (August 2003) v. 31, No. 4, p. 488.			
<sup>24</sup> Paul Franco, "Oakeshott, Berlin, And Liberalism," <u>Political Theory</u> (August 2003) v. 31, No. 4, p. 491.			
<sup>25</sup> Claes G. Ryn, "The Ideology of the American Empire," <u>Orbis</u> , (Summer 2003) v. 47, No. 3, p. 390.			
<sup>26</sup> James B. Stockdale, p. 21.			
<sup>27</sup> Such questions, one may recall, were raised regarding Afghan detainees after the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.			
<sup>28</sup> Hezb-Allah's spiritual leader Shaikh Mohammed Fadlallah condemned the September 11 attacks "as incompatible with Islamic law and perversions of the true meaning of jihad." See "Terrorism: Q&A," Council on Foreign Relations, <a href="http://cfrterrorism.org/groups/hezbollah_print.html">http://cfrterrorism.org/groups/hezbollah_print.html</a> , Page 3 of 4.			
<sup>29</sup> "Free Muslims Against Terrorism, Kamal Nawash, President, <a href="http://www.freemuslims.org/">http://www.freemuslims.org/</a> , Page 1 of 3, March 27, 2005.			
<sup>30</sup> The 2005 tsunami and the international response for relief illustrated the point well.			
<sup>31</sup> John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," Richard T. gardner & Andrew Oldenquist eds., <u>Society and the Individual: Readings in Political and Social Philosophy</u> (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc, 1990), p. 301, c.2.			
<sup>32</sup> A colleague critical of the Iranian clerics once stated in jest that the most effective marketing experts throughout history, have been the clergy. Perhaps our business schools can learn a thing or two from seminary schools.			
<sup>33</sup> Leo Strauss & Joseph Cropsey, eds., <u>History of Political Philosophy</u> , Third Edition, (Chicago: The U of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 221, 224. Farabi was an Iranian who wrote in Persian as well as Arabic. His name has been erroneously recorded by some familiar only with his works in Arabic as Al-Farabi.			
<sup>34</sup> Michael Ignatieff, p. 8, 9.			
<sup>35</sup> The Chinese philosopher Laotse, in the <i>Book of Tao</i> , written in the 6 <sup>th</sup> century BC, notes the following about the legitimate objectives of war: A good general effects his purpose and stops... Effects his purpose but does not take pride in it. Effects his purpose as a regrettable necessity. Effects his purpose but does not love violence.			



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The Hindu *Book of Manu*, written in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, states the following about who can legitimately be attacked in war: 'When the king fights with his foes in battle, . . . let him not strike one who joins the palms of his hands in supplication, nor one who flees, nor one who sits down, nor one who says "I am thine," nor one who sleeps, nor one who is disarmed, nor one who looks on without taking part in the fight, nor one who has been wounded, but in all cases let him remember the duty of honorable warriors.'

Plato, in his *Republic*, provides the following limitations on the use of violence when fighting in cities other than one's own: 'They will not ravage Greek territory nor burn habitations, and they will not admit that in any city all the population are enemies, men women and children, but will say that only a few at any time are their foes, namely, those who are to blame for the quarrel. And on all these considerations they will not be willing to lay waste to the countryside, since the majority of the inhabitants are their friends, nor to destroy the houses, but will carry the conflict only to the point of compelling the guilty to justice...'

One more quotation, taken from Marcus Tullius Cicero, a famous Roman politician and philosopher, writing about just causes for resorting to use of force during the first century BC: 'A war is never undertaken by an ideal state, except in defense of its honor or its safety... Those wars what are unjust are undertaken without provocation. For only a war waged for retaliation or defense can actually be just. No war is considered just unless it has been proclaimed openly and unless reparation has first been demanded.'

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, this is precisely what is happened in Afghanistan. Rather than massive air strikes against the population, the attacks were aimed narrowly at military targets. Rather than an extended air and artillery campaign designed to attack the will of the Afghans, the US and its allies limited their attacks and conducted ground operations to unseat the terrorist regime. There is substantially more risk to US soldiers in a ground operation compared to dropping bombs from 15,000 feet or firing cruise missiles from hundreds of miles away. Avoiding the risk by putting innocent noncombatants in harm's way, however, is certainly not legitimate. Did innocent Afghan civilians die as the result of our military actions? Certainly. But civilian casualties were unintended side effects of our actions aimed at legitimate military targets; the number always to be kept to a minimum by carefully attacking only military targets.

<sup>37</sup> Commentaries on the Laws of England, IV.5.iii, 72, quoted in Joseph McMillan, p. 2, c. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Timothy Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), p. 188-189. Colonel Oliver North who oversaw both the Iran initiative and assistance to Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries (Contras), it was revealed, had overcharged the Iranians to fund the Contras.

<sup>39</sup> VOA News, 13 April 2005, based on a *Washington Post* report citing US and European officials. <http://www.voanews.com/english/2005-04-14-voa12.cfm?renderforprint=1>, page 1 of 1.

<sup>40</sup> Associated Press AP, Wednesday, April 06, 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Ya Libnan, Monday June 20, 2005, [http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2005/06/lebanon\\_electi\\_2.php](http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2005/06/lebanon_electi_2.php).

<sup>42</sup> "The Influence of Shia Clergymen," *The Economist*, April 23-29, 2005, p.46.

<sup>43</sup> Fouad Ajami, "The Autumn of the Autocrats," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2005, p. 29, 31.

<sup>44</sup> Nora Boustany, "Hezbollah and Its Allies Celebrate Win in Regional Vote," *The Washington Post*, Tuesday June 7, 2005, p. A17, c.1.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.angusreid.com/polls/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewItem&itemID=6914>. Fouad Ajami, "The Autumn of the Utocrats," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2005, p. 27, 28, 29, 31.

<sup>46</sup> *Khaleej Times Online*,

<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2005/April/middle...> p. 1 of 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Haaretz* <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=561482>, Page 1 of 2.

<sup>48</sup> On Friday 14 May 2005 "IDF planes, gunships and tanks destroyed Hezbollah posts in Lebanon, in response to Hezbollah shelling of IDF positions." *Haaretz*, May 15, 2005,

<http://www.haarets.com/hasen/objects/pages/printArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=575884>, Page 1 of 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Haaretz*, " Hamas wants power, Hezbollah has already won,"

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=566574>. p. 1-5.

<sup>50</sup> Zogby International/Information International/The Arab American Institute. Methodology: Interviews with 600 adults in Lebanon.

<sup>51</sup> Research conducted in Spain, Turkey and Israel, presented at the Istanbul International Conference on Democracy and Global Security, June 9-11, 2005. Some 60 percent of terrorists arrested in Turkey had been in prison before. Research findings by Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger of University of Haifa, Israel, "The Culture of Death: Terrorist Groups and Suicide Bombing," presented on 10 June 2005, panel 24; Alan Daniel, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, USA, "Terroriswt Recruitment in European Prisons," panel 32; and Samih Taymur, Turkish National Police/University of North Texas, USA, "Terrorist Recruitment," were particularly compelling.

<sup>52</sup> See Robert R. Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters*, Spring 2004, p.16-28.

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<sup>53</sup> For an expanded discussion of the steps mentioned also see Fred T. Krawchuk, "Combating Terrorism: A Joint Interagency Approach," Landpower Essay, No. 05-1 (Washington, DC: An Institute of Land Warfare Publication, AUSA, January 2005), [www.ausa.org](http://www.ausa.org).

<sup>54</sup> The term is so commonly used that it has lost its colonial significance. Few now a days stop to ask Middle East in reference to what? Only with Europe designated as the center, the near or middle or far east would have meaning.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia," in Richard T. Garner & Andrew Oldenquist eds. Society and the Individual: Readings in Political and Social Philosophy (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990), p. 337-352, from Nozick's Anarchy, State and Utopia (1974).

<sup>56</sup> Michael Ignatieff, p.127.

<sup>57</sup> I am indebted to my colleague Dr. William Olson for the analogy of the herd, the predators and the prey. See Susan B. Glasser, "Martyrs in Iraq Mostly Saudis: Web Sites Track Suicide Bombings," The Washington Post, Sunday May 15, p. A1, c1-A25, c1.

# **The Global Islamic Insurgency: Saudi Arabia in its Crosshairs**

Richard L. Russell\*

*Liberating the Muslim nation, confronting the enemies of Islam, and launching jihad against them require a Muslim authority, established on a Muslim land, that raises the banner of jihad and rallies the Muslims around it. Without achieving this goal our actions will mean nothing more than mere and repeated disturbances that will not lead to the aspired goal, which is the restoration of the caliphate and the dismissal of the invaders from the land of Islam.*

—Ayman al-Zawahiri

*By God's leave, we call on every Muslim who believes in God and hopes for reward to obey God's command to kill the Americans and plunder their possessions wherever he finds them and whenever he can. Likewise we call on the Muslim ulema and leaders and youth and soldiers to launch attacks against the armies of the American devils and against those who are allied with them from among the helpers of Satan.*

—Osama bin Laden

*For Osama bin Ladin, 2001 marks the resumption of the war for the religious dominance of the world that began in the seventh century.*

—Bernard Lewis

*As a tradition of statecraft, the just war argument recognized that there are circumstances in which the first and most urgent obligation in the face of evil is to stop it. Which means that there are times when waging war is morally necessary to defend the innocent and to promote the minimum conditions of international order.*

—George Weigel

The Bush administration for the past several years has declared that the United States is embarked on a “war on terrorism”, but that conceptualization is too ambiguous and open-ended to be of much use for crafting strategy. As Eliot Cohen wryly comments, the concept of a Global War on Terror “makes as much sense as if Americans had responded to Pearl Harbor by declaring a global war on dive bombers”.<sup>1</sup> “Terrorism” after all is a means of warfare, not an entity or organization that can be killed as an objective in war. Declaring a war on terrorism is akin to

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declaring a “war on war”, which is all too reminiscent of Woodrow Wilson’s naïve goal of waging war World War I to “end all wars”. The United States will never be able to extinguish “terrorism” from the planet any more than it could “end all wars” or extinguish the resort to violence that has been a staple of human affairs for thousands of years.

Proponents of the “war on terrorism” slogan counter that ending terrorism is an achievable objective and that it could eventually be made to go the way of slavery or piracy as practices that are not accepted by international norms of behavior. At first glance that argument might seem plausible. But if one considers it more deeply, the analogy is empirically false. Although it does not capture media headlines, slave trades—especially for the sex industry—as well as piracy on the high seas in Asia are practices that still plague the planet.

By declaring a “war on terrorism” the United States has set for itself an impossible objective for any strategy. A more direct and useful strategic declaration would have been that the United States is at war with al-Qaeda and any organization, network, or nation-state that aids and abets al-Qaeda operations. Such a direct statement of strategy would have cut to the heart of a major threat to American national security interests and would have been more readily accepted and understood at both home and abroad as a legitimate American policy. It would have clearly articulated our national objective of seeking out and destroying the organization responsible for the slaughter of some 3,000 civilians on American soil. It would have been a foundation for strategic planning which sets a vital interest—to kill al-Qaeda operatives and destroy their bases of operation—a goal that is within the reach of American power.

If the United States is to successfully deal with the formidable threat posed by al-Qaeda, it needs to be clear-eyed about identifying the enemy, his strategic objectives, and bases of political, economic, and military support. It is commonplace today to view al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization, which implies that it is a small and *ad hoc* network akin to a criminal gang that periodically raises its head to commit acts of violence directed principally against civilian targets. But viewing al-Qaeda from this frame of reference does not do our adversary justice. The United States would be strategically wiser to recognize al-Qaeda as a global Islamic insurgency armed with a worldview and ideological support that finds fertile ground throughout the greater Middle East. Al-Qaeda’s strategic objective is to topple the existing political, military and economic order in the Middle East—especially in the Persian Gulf in Saudi Arabia—at the expense of regional and global American interests and power.

### **America’s Confused and Tattered Strategy**

The essence of strategy is equating ends and means. And in this equation, the United States has a large hole to dig itself out of because the “war on terrorism” slogan creates more confusion than clarity for Americans at home as well as security partners abroad. By calling for a war against “terrorism” the Bush administration has caused a relentless debate in the United States and among global security partners as to what was meant by “war on terrorism” and diverted political capital from efforts to destroy al-Qaeda.

Our security partners in the Middle East are often sympathetic, albeit more often privately than publicly, about waging war against al-Qaeda but worry that the “war

against terrorism” means that the United States will eventually turn its military attention to Palestinian groups such as the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic *Jihad* which were not responsible for the 9/11 attacks and have refrained—so far, at least—from attacking the United States. Our security partners also worry that the United States could take up arms against another nation-state in the Middle East such as Syria or Iran under “war on terrorism” auspices much as the United States did with Iraq even though Saddam had not colluded with al-Qaeda on the 9/11 attacks.

The United States’s strategic posture would have been on a much sounder foundation had President Bush in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy formally declared war on al-Qaeda and vowed to destroy that loosely knit global Islamic insurgency that had been waging war on the United States many years before 2001. No American or Congressman could have resisted the president’s call to track down and kill those responsible for slaughtering nearly 3,000 American souls on our territory and to destroy its infrastructure, as well as to threaten any state or transnational group that aided and abetted al-Qaeda.

The formal declaration of war too might have clarified the United States’s treatment of captured al-Qaeda fighters. Had the United States treated al-Qaeda fighters as prisoners of war beginning with the campaign in Afghanistan and given them full protection of the Geneva Conventions, we might have avoided the devastating international backlash in the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay scandals which have profoundly undercut the United States’ moral stature and efforts to battle—politically and militarily—al-Qaeda. Al Qaeda has skillfully leveraged prisoner abuse scandals as potent propaganda tools on its websites to gain regional public support, win new recruits, justify its kidnappings and beheadings of “infidels”, and motivate suicide bombers.

American strategic thinking was further convoluted by casting the threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s regime as an appendage of the al-Qaeda threat. President Bush had ample strategic reason for considering Saddam a threat. Saddam had blatantly violated United Nations Security Council resolutions and the terms of the 1991 ceasefire arrangement with his ballistic missile development programmes and violations of international sanctions.<sup>2</sup> The strategic challenge posed by Iraq, however, would have been best kept discreet from the “war on terrorism” rubric. The political linking of Iraq and al-Qaeda only added controversy and debate and another distraction from an American national interest in removing Saddam from power before he could again rise to threaten the Gulf. If there was one real linkage between al-Qaeda and Iraq, it was that the President’s impressive rise to the 9/11 challenge gave him the political capital needed to make a bold and courageous decision to oust Saddam, a decision that had been avoided for more than a decade.

The aftermath of the impressive military campaign that ripped through the Iraqi military in several weeks has been nearly forgotten as the daily headlines cover the chaos in Iraq. And what had been discreet problems of al-Qaeda and Iraq have bled together with the militant Islamic insurgents flocking to Iraq in what they see as the central battlefield for killing the infidels in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century much as Afghanistan had been in the closing legs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The United States is on the cusp of making more strategic mistakes. Washington’s zeal for the promotion of democracy in the greater Middle East might, contrary to expectations, strengthen the power of al-Qaeda. If Egypt, for example, were to have

open and fair elections in the next several years, the Muslim Brotherhood which sympathizes more with al-Qaeda than with the West could conceivably rise to dominate the post-Mubarak power structure. Imagine the detriment to American national security interests should Egypt lend passive or even active support to al-Qaeda and like-minded groups. The same could probably be said for open and free elections in Pakistan. And perhaps most dangerous of all, open and fair elections in Saudi Arabia could bring more directly and centrally into the national security organs of the Saudi state the Wahhabists, who are the intellectual and material benefactors of al-Qaeda.

The governments in the region need to diffuse internal political pressure by liberalization, not revolution which is what real democracy would signify in the region. Although Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are poor test cases for the rapid arrival of democracy, the small Arab Gulf states appear to be modestly successful test beds for the easing of traditional societies and cultures into the globalization era. But if political and economic reforms are pushed too fast, these societies could rupture and the upheavals undermine American strategic interests. The United States seems to have all too readily and conveniently forgotten the legacy of Iran, where the Shah's rapid push toward modernization was a major cause of the political backlash that fuelled the Iranian revolution.<sup>3</sup> Americans too have neglected to study Irish philosopher Edmund Burke's warnings about the destabilizing consequences of the masses surging for democracy and coming to power as they had in the French Revolution.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, should Washington's calls for democracy in the Middle East come to naught in terms of real political reforms, those committed and would-be reformers at the grass roots levels in Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are likely to become disillusioned. As it stands today, they find American calls for democracy with "free and fair elections" for all peoples in the greater Middle East hypocritical as long as Washington continues to treat with the regimes in Cairo, Islamabad, and Riyadh.

These regimes also have a mixed performance in dealing with the al-Qaeda threat. While Egypt has consistently and violently suppressed al-Qaeda and its sympathizers inside Egypt, Islamabad and Riyadh have played duplicitous games with its al-Qaeda sympathizers at home and with the United States abroad. The regimes in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have long nurtured militant Islamic groups for their own domestic political legitimacy even though these domestic power blocks provide the ideological and material support for al-Qaeda, which detests both President Musharraf and the Saudi ruling family. Pakistan, for example, ostensibly cooperates with the American effort to capture al-Qaeda and Taliban figures, but Musharraf's interests lie in minimally helping the Americans to keep them supporting his regime. He does not want to cooperate aggressively, worried that if the United States is successful in destroying al-Qaeda, Washington's interest and largesse—in military and economic assistance—in Pakistan will fade much as it did after the withdrawal of Soviet forces from neighbouring Afghanistan. As Michael Scheuer explains Pakistan's duplicity, "President Musharraf will move army units into the tribal areas to placate Washington—as he did in the fall of 2003 and early 2004—but odds are they consistently will be just a bit tardy when opportunities arise to capture or destroy major al Qaeda or Taleban targets. Stability and peace in the tribal belt must be Islamabad's top priority, whatever the wishes of the Americans."<sup>5</sup> As he elaborates, "These units will stage enough operations and spill enough blood to satisfy US demands for 'action'—and thereby avoid giving US leaders a basis for unilateral action inside Pakistan—but they will not take actions

that risk capturing bin Laden or Mullah Omar, events that would offend Pakistan's Gulf benefactors and foment armed conflict with the Pashtun tribes."<sup>6</sup>

And if the complexity of these dilemmas were not bad enough, the United States has to be on guard for a future "Sadat" scenario. The Muslim Brotherhood in a bold attempt to take power in Egypt infiltrated the Egyptian military and assassinated President Sadat. Such a scenario could again take place in the region. The United States knows too little about the political composition of the militaries in Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia and should not be confident that al-Qaeda has not penetrated them in order to one day threaten the regimes with *coup d'état*. In fact, there is some anecdotal information that portends dangers in this regard. Many of the *jihadi* blowing themselves up in Iraq are Saudis, and some of them have been in the Saudi National Guard,<sup>7</sup> the institution responsible for guarding the Royal family from a coup. Junior officers in the Pakistani army and air force were involved in two al-Qaeda-orchestrated assassination attempts on Musharraf in December 2003.<sup>8</sup> If al-Qaeda were to pull off a "Sadat" scenario in Egypt, Pakistan, or Saudi Arabia, the United States would face a major reversal in strategic interests in short order.

### **Seizing Up Al-Qaeda as an Ideologically Motivated Insurgency**

American strategy runs the risk of remaining confused and convoluted if it continues to see *jihadi*s as mere terrorists and not the vanguard of a global Islamic insurgency with a special area of operations in the greater Middle East. American policy makers would be near-sighted if they view al-Qaeda only as an organization facilitating far flung human suicide bombings in Washington, New York, London, Madrid, and Baghdad and miss the movement's strategic objectives. The characterization of al-Qaeda as a "terrorist" group connotes a small band of social misfits hell bent on using terrorist attacks to kill and maim innocent civilians in a haphazard fashion. But these connotations gravely underestimate a political decision-making body, informed by a militant Islamic worldview that has strategic objectives to achieve with the use of violence directed against its perceived adversaries, whether official government representatives, soldiers, diplomats, or civilians. While al-Qaeda lacks the configuration of a modern nation state—at least, not yet—it still has a strategy that must be fully grasped if it is to be effectively destroyed.

Insurgency better captures the nature, threat, and challenge posed by al-Qaeda. Bard O'Neill ably defines insurgency as "as struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses *political resources* (e.g., organization expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics."<sup>9</sup> By David Galula's definition, "an insurgency is a *protracted struggle* conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order."<sup>10</sup> The US Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Operations* manual describes a phenomenon that aptly applies to al-Qaeda as "subversive insurgency" in which the insurgents gain power "from social dissatisfaction and government failure to meet the aspirations of the people. A mass movement encouraged or directed by a hard insurgent core, develops slowly in a long evolutionary process until armed fighting occurs through a percipient event."<sup>11</sup>

Insurgents use terrorism as a tool to achieve political goals, and the terror is not an end in itself. As O'Neill explains, insurgents use terrorism as a form of warfare "in which violence is directed primarily against noncombatants (usually unarmed civilians), rather than operational military and police forces or economic assets (public or private). The active units of terrorist organizations are normally smaller than those of guerillas, being composed of individuals organized covertly into cells. Their actions are familiar, consisting of such things as assassinations, bombings, tossing grenades, arson, torture, mutilation, hijacking, and kidnapping. While the targets of such violence may at times be arbitrary, often they are carefully chosen in order to maximize their political impact."<sup>12</sup>

To be sure, the dividing line between terrorism and insurgency is a blurred one. But, as Edmund Burke once observed, so is the dividing line between twilight and dark and yet we are able to tell the difference between the two. O'Neill distinguishes terrorist groups from insurgent or guerrilla groups in that "Guerrilla warfare differs from terrorism because its primary targets are the government's armed forces, police, or their support units and, in some cases, key economic targets rather than unarmed civilians. As a consequence, guerrilla units are larger than terrorist cells and tend to require a more elaborate logistical structure as well as base camps in the rural areas."<sup>13</sup> Clearly these characteristics of a guerrilla group or insurgency characterize al-Qaeda operations over the past decade, and even more starkly on 9/11 and afterwards. Al-Qaeda engages in attacks against noncombatants as terrorist groups are wont to do, but it also takes on military, government, and economic targets, as evident in operations in Saudi Arabia against National Guard and police positions, against a US warship in Yemen, and against American soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And al-Qaeda is using the classic forms of insurgency. As T E Lawrence laid out his philosophy for insurgent warfare in the Middle East, he ably contrasted it with traditional, mobile-conventional warfare. "Most wars are wars of contact, both forces striving to keep in touch to avoid tactical surprise. Our war should be a war of detachment: we were to contain the enemy by the silent threat of a vast unknown desert, not disclosing ourselves till the moment of attack."<sup>14</sup> As Lawrence elaborated, "In character these operations were more like naval warfare than ordinary land operations, in their mobility, their ubiquity, their independence of bases and communications, their lack of ground features, of strategic areas, of fixed directions, of fixed points."<sup>15</sup> Although al-Qaeda's leadership appears not to have studied Lawrence's philosophy of warfare, it has stumbled across it in waging insurgent warfare against the Soviets in Afghanistan and now against the Americans in Iraq and against the Saudis in the Arabian Peninsula.

Al-Qaeda's operational characteristics as an insurgent or guerrilla group—vice a terrorist group—are not lost on the most sophisticated of students and scholars. Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, for example, argue that "The truth is that Al-Qaeda is a dynamic ideological movement, part of a growing global insurgency."<sup>16</sup> Scheuer persuasively elaborates that "the threat America faces from bin Laden is not the episodic terrorist campaign typical of those perpetrated by traditional terrorist groups. It is rather a worldwide insurgency against 'Christian Crusaders and Jews', which is being waged by groups bin Laden has controlled, directed, and inspired."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps Daniel Byman has most succinctly and accurately captured the threat: "Al Qaeda is probably best defined as a religiously inspired, global insurgent movement that often uses terrorist tactics."<sup>18</sup>



Al-Qaeda's pursuit of death and destruction are aimed at achieving a grandiose militant Islamic vision of power and politics, especially in the greater Middle East, and to wield power over the West which al-Qaeda's worldview blames for the blights of the Arab world. As Michael Doran astutely observes, "Al Qaeda's long-term goals are set by its fervent devotion to a radical religious ideology, but in its short-term behavior, it is a rational political actor operating according to the dictates of realpolitik."<sup>19</sup> And the essence of realpolitik or political realism is the pursuit of power. Along these lines, Byman judges that "Bin Laden's grievances are focused on power—who possesses it, why it is used, and (in his judgment) how it is abused".<sup>20</sup>

Al-Qaeda's ideology has a powerful and wide appeal in the Middle East, an essential ingredient for an effective insurgency. Galula astutely recognized the role of ideology in an insurgency when he wrote that "The Insurgent cannot seriously embark on an insurgency unless he has a well-grounded cause with which to attract supporters among the population".<sup>21</sup> As for al-Qaeda, Rohan Gunaratna explains that bin Laden and his key deputy al-Zawahiri "are followers of the Salafi strand of Islam, which is associated with Wahhabism" and that the "The Salafi strand aims to return the entire nation to the sublime Koran and the Prophet's authentic Sunnah. It also strives to revive Islamic thought within the boundaries of Islamic principles (meaning the presentation of realistic Islamic solutions to contemporary problems) and to establish a true Islamic society governed by Allah's laws."<sup>22</sup> According to Gilles Kepel, the salafists evoke "their effort to imitate their 'pious forefathers' (*salaf*), companions of the Prophet who led an exemplary life."<sup>23</sup> The key, according to Scheuer, to understanding bin Laden's "actions and appeal, is his belief that Islam and the Muslim world are being attacked by a more modern, powerful, and predatory version of the medieval Catholic Crusaders: the United States, Britain, or the West generally, allied with Israel, India, and Russia, and supported by apostate Muslim regimes. Armed with his version of reality, bin Laden has said that Muslims are required by God to wage *jihad* to defend themselves, their creed, and their land against the new Crusaders."<sup>24</sup> Brian Jenkins identifies the crux of the issue: "The Enemy here is an ideology, a set of attitudes, a belief system organized into a recruiting network that will continue to replace terrorist losses unless defeated politically."<sup>25</sup>

The region is ripe with wounded pride and perceived insults from the West that fuels anti-American sentiment and primes populations to passively support al-Qaeda and provide the seedbed for active insurgent recruits. The Pew Trust, for example, in extensive polling assesses that "In the Muslim world, opinions about the US have been negative for decades, but in recent years that broad dislike has taken on an aspect of outright fear. In a 2003 Pew survey, majorities in seven of eight predominately Muslim nations said they believed the US may someday threaten their country—including 71% in Turkey and 58% in Lebanon."<sup>26</sup> A 2003 public opinion poll in Saudi Arabia found that 95% of those polled had either a very or somewhat unfavourable view of the United States while only a minuscule 4% had a favourable view.<sup>27</sup>

The Islamic insurgency is waging a *jihad* against the United States which it sees as the global infidel and its Middle Eastern security partners which al-Qaeda views as apostates. Walter Laqueur assesses that "On the whole, violence is sanctified in Islam if it is carried out against infidels or heretics 'in the path of Allah.' On the philosophical-religious level, there is no room for nonbelievers in the Islamic system, even if minorities are temporarily tolerated. The faithful live, at least in theory, in a permanent state of war with the non-Islamic world, and this will

change only if and when the nonbelievers have accepted the one true faith.”<sup>28</sup> Bernard Lewis elaborates that, “According to Islamic law, it is lawful to wage war against four types of enemies: infidels, apostates, rebels, and bandits. Although all four types of wars are legitimate, only the first two count as *jihad*. *Jihad* is thus a religious obligation.”<sup>29</sup> Lewis observes that Islamic teachings distinguish between offensive and defensive war: “In offence, *jihad* is an obligation of the Muslim community as a whole, and may therefore be discharged by volunteers and professionals. In a defensive war, it becomes an obligation of every able-bodied individual. It is this principle that Usama bin Ladin invoked in his declaration of war against the United States.”<sup>30</sup>

Some observers, especially moderate Muslims, argue that *jihad* is misunderstood or mistranslated by the West to mean “war” when it is more correctly understood as meaning “struggle”. By in large, however, *jihad* more often than not refers to war rather than the more temperate definition. “For most of the recorded history of Islam, from the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad onward, the word *jihad* was used in a primarily military sense,” according to Professor Lewis.<sup>31</sup>

Some observers judge that the threat posed to the West is not simply a small portion of the global Islamic community who are militant fundamentalists, but comes from Islam as a whole. Samuel Huntington, the intellectual architect of the “clash of civilizations” hypothesis, is probably the most articulate and sophisticated scholar of this school of thought. He argues that “The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the US Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposed on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West.”<sup>32</sup>

Even if the validity of Huntington’s thesis is debated in the West, bin Laden and his lieutenants readily embrace it as reality and explicitly call for a global Islamic war against Christians, Jews and apostates. Boiled down to its core, “For bin Laden and those who follow him, this is a religious war, a war for Islam and against infidels, and therefore, inevitably, against the United States, the greatest power in the world of infidels,” according to Bernard Lewis.<sup>33</sup> Bin Laden publicly spelled out the goals of al-Qaeda’s global insurgency in a *fatwa* or ruling published as a “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for *Jihad* against the Jews and the Crusaders” in February 1998 which argued that “To kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military, is an individual duty of every Muslim who is able, in any country where this is possible, until the Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] and the Haram Mosque [in Mecca] are freed from their grip and until their armies, shattered and broken-winged, depart from all the lands of Islam, incapable of threatening any Muslim.”<sup>34</sup>

Power, ideology, and wounded pride are the engines driving al-Qaeda’s strategy more directly than economic stagnation in the Middle East. To be sure, al-Qaeda finds recruits among young men, especially in the Middle East, who are idle, frustrated, and face dim prospects for economic livelihood but these conditions in of them selves would not be enough to generate the large numbers of suicide bombers that al-Qaeda does. As Michael Mazarr assesses, “Economic decline, the deprivation of freedom, and general desperation and lack of hope are, in fact, precisely

the problem. But it is the mindset produced by this situation—a mindset to which radical extremists of all sort have always appealed, and for which the radical dogmatists stand ready to offer a framework of blame and hate and violence and totalitarian politics—that seems the more proximate cause of the threat we now face.”<sup>35</sup>

The common wisdom that the “root causes” of terrorism lie in poverty, unemployment, and inequality rests on empirically shallow grounds. Laqueur notes that “The experts have maintained for a long time that poverty does not cause terrorism and prosperity does not cure it. In the world’s 50 poorest countries there is little or no terrorism” and “In the Arab countries (such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but also in North Africa), the terrorists originated not in the poorest and most neglected districts but hailed from places with concentrations of radical preachers.”<sup>36</sup> In contrast, sub-Sahara Africa and Latin America also suffer from political and economic problems, but do not produce young men who figure as prominently in al-Qaeda ranks as do young men from the Middle East and South Asia. And many of the 9/11 conspirators hailed from middle class backgrounds, not from the poorest levels of Middle Eastern societies.

Another commonly, and overly, voiced diagnosis is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a “root cause” of al-Qaeda’s insurgency. Many commentators seem to suggest that if only Israel negotiated a peace with the Palestinians, al-Qaeda would lay down its arms. But here again, Laqueur offers some iconoclastic thinking: “Osama bin Ladin did not go to war because of Gaza and Nablus; he did not send his warriors to fight in Palestine. Even the disappearance of the ‘Zionist entity’ would not have a significant impact on his supporters, except perhaps to provide encouragement for further action.”<sup>37</sup> Palestinians, moreover, so far have not shown up as foot soldiers in al-Qaeda ranks nor have al-Qaeda foot soldiers shown up in droves in the front lines of Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Similarly, many commentators have argued that the United States needs to pull its military forces out of the Persian Gulf to lessen al-Qaeda’s appeal. But alas, reality clashes with that common wisdom as well. Even though the United States removed its forces from Saudi Arabia after the 2003 Iraq war, al-Qaeda has yet to lessen its efforts to target the United States or its allies as evident from the suicide bombings in Madrid and London. In short, al-Qaeda’s religious war against the West is on whether or not the United States has military forces in the Middle East.

The al-Qaeda insurgency is especially powerful because it has successfully tapped the tools of globalization to include air transport, telecommunications, and computers to maintain and manage a global Islamic insurgency.<sup>38</sup> As Thomas Mockaitis observes, “The current threat differs from earlier insurgencies primarily in scope and complexity. Previously insurgents operated in a local arena; now they act on a global stage.”<sup>39</sup> The combatant commander of American forces in the Middle East, General John Abizaid, likewise assesses that “The enemy has a virtual connectivity we haven’t seen before with guerrilla groups.”<sup>40</sup> And al-Qaeda has proved itself to be an international insurgency par excellence with supporters and operations in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe.

### **Prowling for Territorial Sanctuary**

Two critical factors for the success of any insurgency are sanctuary and popular support. As Lawrence observed, “It seemed that rebellion must have an unassailable base, something guarded not merely from attack, but from the fear of

it” and “It must have a friendly population, not actively friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel moments to the enemy. Rebellions can be made by 2 per cent active in a striking force, and 98 per cent passively sympathetic.”<sup>41</sup> As Laqueur notes, “Bases are needed for guerrilla units to recover from their battles, to reorganize for new campaigns and for a great many other purposes”.<sup>42</sup> These other purposes include recruitment, training, indoctrination, planning, and arming personnel.

Al-Qaeda leaders appreciate the importance of sanctuary for their insurgent forces. Bin Laden’s right hand man Ayman al-Zawahiri drawing on his experience of attacking the Egyptian government wrote in his book *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner* that “A jihadist movement needs an arena that would act like an incubator where its seeds would grow and where it can acquire practical experience in combat, politics, and organizational matters”.<sup>43</sup> Benjamin and Simon point out that “A core tenet of al-Qaeda’s strategy is that radical Islamists must gain control of a nation, from which they can then expand the area controlled by believers. Holding a state, in their view, is the prelude to knocking over the dominoes of the world’s secular Muslim regimes.”<sup>44</sup> Al-Qaeda lost, only temporarily from its viewpoint, a safe haven in Afghanistan and is working to take it back. Al-Qaeda too is working to perpetuate a state of chaos in Iraq, hoping to control the post-Saddam government and to exploit the country as a hub for insurgent operations.

Al-Qaeda’s ideology dictates that attacking the states viewed as “apostate” is a high strategic objective for the insurgency. The greatest apostate regimes in the regime from al-Qaeda’s perspective are in Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. As Doran judges al-Qaeda’s strategic perspective, “In order to save the world from depravity, it is imperative to topple these rulers from power immediately. In this project, al Qaeda sees itself as one military arm of the enclave of true believers. Its overriding priority is to carry out Islamic revolution by whatever means available.”<sup>45</sup> As Jonathan Stevenson captures the objectives, al-Qaeda seeks to overthrow the “near enemies” of the Arab regimes, especially in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, that have close relations with the United States making them “apostate” states and inimical to Islam.<sup>46</sup>

Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are also high priority targets for al-Qaeda because they are recognized as pillars of American power and policy in the Middle East. Zawahiri, for example, has called for “the earth-shattering event, which the west trembles at the mere thought of it, which is the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Egypt. If God wills it, such a state in Egypt, with all its weight in the heart of the Islamic world, could lead the Islamic world in a *jihad* against the West. It could also rally the world of Muslims around it. Then history would make a new turn, God willing, in the opposite direction against the empire of the United States and the world’s Jewish government.”<sup>47</sup>

It is ironic and tragic that American security partners have each in their own way contributed to the toxicity of the al-Qaeda insurgency. Cairo ruthlessly repressed the Islamic insurgency as it fomented unrest in Egypt in the 1990s. The security environment in Egypt was so difficult there that al-Qaeda metastasized like a cancer and moved elsewhere in the region. Pakistani and Saudi intelligence services were the godfathers for the rise of the Islamic militants during their *jihad* against Soviet forces and the Americans helped them along in the determination to inflict damage on the Soviet Union in its occupation of Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup> These states in varying degrees are now trying to slay a hydra monster that they all had once nurtured.

Insurgencies in general make for especially bloody warfare and the coupling with al-Qaeda's militant Islamic ideology will likely give the United States and its regional security partners a hard, protracted, and bloody long-term struggle. Insurgencies manifest themselves in a ruthlessness and barbarism that is all too often overlooked by observers. Laqueur is a notable exception when he astutely observes that "guerrilla war is an excellent outlet for personal aggression, it provides opportunities for settling accounts with one's enemies, and conveys a great sense of power to those hitherto powerless. While sadism has never been official guerrilla policy, there has always been more deliberate cruelty inflicted in guerrilla wars than in the fighting of regular army units, subject to stricter discipline."<sup>49</sup> And this brutality fuels terror that "is used as a deliberate strategy to demoralize the government by disrupting its control, to demonstrate one's own strength and to frighten collaborators."<sup>50</sup>

Lewis notes that the Islamic rules of war "against the apostate are very much harsher than those governing warfare against the unbeliever. He may not be given quarter or safe conduct, and no truce or agreement with him is permissible."<sup>51</sup> He emphasizes a point that is especially pertinent to Saudi Arabia which is charged with apostasy by bin Laden: "The principle of war against the apostate, however, opened the possibility of legitimate, indeed obligatory, war against an enemy at home, which in modern times has been developed into a doctrine of insurgency and revolutionary war as a religion obligation and a form of *jiḥād*."<sup>52</sup> Al-Qaeda's methodical throat slitting and decapitations of foreigners in several attacks in Saudi Arabia perhaps portends the barbarity of the brutal warfare yet to come more directly against the Royal family.

In sum, notwithstanding al-Qaeda's formidable capabilities to reconstitute using 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, at the end of the day, the control of territory remains a critically important feature for a potent insurgency. And one of al-Qaeda's strategic goals is to overthrow apostate regimes in order to gain control—not just a permissive operating environment that it has had in the past in Sudan and Afghanistan—to marshal the full resources and power of a modern nation-state. As General Abizaid rightly concludes, "The clear military lesson of Afghanistan is that we cannot allow the enemy to establish a safe haven anywhere."<sup>53</sup> American strategy in the campaign against al-Qaeda—or any other Salafist *jiḥād*ist organizations that might move in to fill the breach as al-Qaeda falters against an American-led campaign—must be to ensure that the Islamic *jiḥād*ists never gain control of geopolitically important nation-states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. These states, unfortunately, are riddled with weaknesses and vulnerabilities that al-Qaeda and its affiliates are all but certain to bore in on in the coming years and even decades.

### **America's Vulnerable Centre of Gravity in Saudi Arabia**

Al-Qaeda leaders make plain their strategic objective of capturing territory in the Middle East to anchor their global insurgency. Al-Zawahiri portrays this strategic goal vividly by arguing that victory for the Islamic movements against the world alliance cannot be attained unless these movements possess an Islamic base in the heart of the Arab region and that mobilizing and arming the nation will be up in the air, without any tangible results, until a fundamentalist state is established in the region. He admits that this task will not be easy, but argues that it is the hope of the Muslim nation to restore its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory.<sup>54</sup>

Al-Qaeda places high priority on attacking the regimes in Egypt and Pakistan, but its leadership is likely to view Saudi Arabia as the centre of gravity in its war against the West and apostasy. The al-Qaeda leadership sees the Saudi-American relationship as defiling Islam's holy shrines in the kingdom and resents what it sees as the American and Saudi royal family's exploitation of the kingdom's oil wealth. Al-Qaeda no doubt judges that the overthrow of the Saudi regime would be a devastating reversal of American power in the Middle East, would portend the overthrow of the regimes of the other Arab Gulf states and Egypt, and give al-Qaeda the prestige of caretaking the holy sites, and the wealth and territory needed to expand its influence in the Gulf and beyond. As Benjamin and Simon keenly observe, "For Usama bin Laden, Saudi Arabia is the essential field of *jihād*. It is also increasingly vulnerable."<sup>55</sup> The United States, moreover, is heavily dependent on Saudi Arabia's oil wealth to fuel its economic power while Washington has no such dependence on the regimes in Egypt or Pakistan. In short, and to paraphrase Clausewitz, al-Qaeda sees Saudi Arabia as the United States' centre of gravity in the Gulf.

Al-Qaeda is popular inside the kingdom which gives the insurgency fertile grounds for recruitment and operations. As Byman judges, "Support for al-Qaeda itself appears strong in much of the Kingdom".<sup>56</sup> Veteran Middle East correspondent Thomas Lippman observes, "There appears to be a large pool of poorly educated, narrow-minded, violence-prone men who are steeped in the religious absolutism that the regime itself has promoted for 20 years, principally to reestablish its Islamic religious credentials" and "The messages they hear from the country's xenophobic religious establishment—anti-Western, anti-Semitic, anti-feminist—reinforce their convictions".<sup>57</sup>

The Saudi religious establishment, the Wahhabists, and the Saudi royal family have a longstanding relationship based on mutual interests and benefits. As Roy explains, "Each needs the other, the monarchy for legitimacy, the clergy for funding and to ensure its religious hegemony in the kingdom (against Shias and other Sunnis). The clergy enjoy wide autonomy; it is dominated by the Sheikh family, while there are no members of the Saud family among the *ulama*."<sup>58</sup> But while the Saudi royal family relies on the Wahhabis for political and religious legitimacy, the Wahhabis also provide ideological legitimacy to al-Qaeda. Roy puts his finger on the core issue: "The predicament of the Saudi monarchy is that the main contestation of its authority comes from within its basis of legitimacy; the Wahhabis. However regular the crackdowns against the dissents, the *esprit de corps* of the Wahhabi clergy ensures a paradoxical freedom of expression."<sup>59</sup>

The Saudi regime was in a state of denial in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks of the threat posed by al Qaeda to its own security. The Saudi leadership was extraordinarily slow in recognizing the militant Islamic insurgency attacking both the United States and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef, for example, as late as November 2002 declared in an interview to an Arab Gulf newspaper that there were no al-Qaeda cells in Saudi Arabia as well as repeating his earlier allegation that Israel was behind the 9/11 attacks.<sup>60</sup> These comments coming from the head of Saudi internal security organs hardly suggest a cold eye analysis of the threat, needed to undertake a decisive and sustained counterinsurgency campaign in the Kingdom.

The al-Qaeda insurgency since 9/11 stepped up attacks in Saudi Arabia making the threat hard to ignore even for an aged and lethargic political leadership. The Saudi leadership is old and conservative and it remains to be seen if it has the grit

to fully take on the insurgency, especially because al-Qaeda has deep pockets of political and monetary support inside the Kingdom. As Byman rightly points out, “The Saudi government is highly personalized, with institutions often being little more than a brittle shell surrounding one individual. Decision making is highly centralized, and the number of competent bureaucrats is low.”<sup>61</sup> While the western press touts the new and “reform-minded” King Abdullah, he is eighty-two years old and unlikely to undertake anything beyond marginal reforms to Saudi society and government or to challenge the Saudi religious establishment any more than his predecessor.<sup>62</sup>

Some Saudi princes in the generation after that of King Fahd, King Abdullah, Crown Prince Sultan, and Interior Minister Nayef might more clearly see the dangers posed by al-Qaeda and the militant Islamic ideology to which the regime has wedded its political fortune. The former Saudi ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan is a notable figure in this regard. In summer 2004, Bandar wrote an exceptional article in the Saudi government newspaper *Al-Watan* in which he called for Saudi public support for waging a *jihad* against al-Qaeda in the kingdom. Bandar wrote in uncharacteristically stark and realistic terms that “War, ultimately, means tragedy, pain and sacrifice. The harder, faster, more determinedly and more aggressively a war is fought, the fewer the casualties.”<sup>63</sup> Bandar warned that the war was waged “hesitantly, in hope that [the terrorists] are Muslim youths who have been misled, and that the solution [to the crisis] is that we call upon them to follow the path of righteousness, in hope that they will come to their senses—then we will lose this war.”<sup>64</sup>

It is uncertain how much influence younger and aggressive princes the likes of Bandar will have in shaping the regime’s counter-insurgency campaign. Given the influence accorded seniority and consensus in Saudi decision-making, smart money would put odds on the regime failing to wage an aggressive counter-insurgency campaign. The aging leadership is more likely to opt instead for a conciliatory approach to al-Qaeda and its Wahhabi ideological backers to preserve their hold on power even at the risk of paving the way for the war-loosing strategy envisioned by Bandar.

Al-Qaeda had largely not conducted major operations inside the Kingdom with the notable exception of the bombing of a Saudi National Guard building in 1996. Some observers suspect that the Saudis may even have bought al-Qaeda protection with lavish funding so long as the insurgency conducted operations against American interests outside the Kingdom.<sup>65</sup> Al-Qaeda abruptly changed gears in May 2003 when it killed 35 people—including nine suicide bombers—people in bombings of three housing compounds for foreigners in Riyadh. It launched another bombing in November 2003 against a compound in Riyadh that housed Arab families in which 17 people were killed.<sup>66</sup> These attacks marked a watershed in that many in the Royal family shifted from sympathizing with al-Qaeda to seeing the insurgency as a threat to the House of Saud’s power.

Al-Qaeda insurgents were emboldened by the success of their 2003 attacks and have since mounted an array of diverse operations in the Kingdom.

- A Riyadh police headquarters in April 2004 was struck by a suicide car bomber who killed 4 policemen and wounded 148 people.

- Insurgents in May 2004 went on a shooting spree at a petrochemical company in Yanbu on the Red Sea and killed 6 westerners and one Saudi. Three of the gunmen apparently worked at the company and used their entry passes to gain access to the target. One body was dragged behind a car through city streets.
- Also in May, three al-Qaeda insurgents stormed a residential compound of foreigners in Khobar and carefully separated Muslims from non-Muslims and executed 22 foreigners. The insurgents escaped through a police cordon which raised suspicions of collusion between the insurgents and the police.
- In a bold move, al-Qaeda insurgents in December 2004 attacked the US Consulate in Jeddah and killed five consulate staffers. Four al-Qaeda gunmen also were killed.
- Smaller Al-Qaeda insurgent attacks in 2004 included the following; a German citizen was gunned down on a Riyadh street; an American expatriate was kidnapped and beheaded; a BBC cameraman was killed and his colleague seriously wounded; and insurgents killed an Irishman, a Briton and a Frenchman in separate attacks.<sup>67</sup>

The insurgents no doubt are trying to spark an exodus of expatriates working in the security and oil sectors of the economy to demonstrate their power as well as to undermine that of the Saudi regime.

Al-Qaeda's internet displays of operations vividly show the frailties of Saudi security services to increase new recruits to al-Qaeda ranks, encourage active insurgents, and increase passive support for the insurgency from a larger swathe of the Saudi populace. The insurgents are especially adept at posting the grisly videos of the execution of foreigners or infidels. Despite al-Qaeda attacks that have killed Saudi civilians and Saudi security personnel, a sizable minority of the Saudi public probably remains receptive to al-Qaeda's militant ideology and goals. And al-Qaeda's internet propaganda is a powerful tool for cowing and intimidating the Saudi majority and security forces who support the Royal family.

Al-Qaeda's use of terrorist attacks over the past two years in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere is designed, in part, to broaden its global appeal. As Galula astutely noted of the use of terror by insurgencies, "The purpose is to get publicity for the movement and its cause, and by focusing attention on it, to attract latent supporters. This is done by random terrorism, bombings, arson, assassinations, conducted in as spectacular a fashion as possible, by concentrated, coordinated, and synchronized waves."<sup>68</sup> These words, written in the late 1960s, appear prophetic in the aftermath of al-Qaeda's global operations in 1998 against the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the 9/11 attacks, and more recently operations in Madrid and London, and they probably portend similar future operations in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi al-Qaeda insurgents, moreover, are now gaining combat experience in operations against US and Iraqi forces in Iraq. If they survive battle, many will return home as an infusion of combat talent for al-Qaeda's insurgent ranks inside Saudi Arabia, which probably, in turn, will lead to a surge in operations inside the Kingdom. Young Saudis are eagerly responding to calls for *jihad* in Iraq and make up a large proportion of the al-Qaeda suicide bomber population there. Twenty-six



Saudi imams in November 2004 signed a statement urging Muslims to join the insurgency against US forces in Iraq.<sup>69</sup> This fact belies the Saudi regime's claims to have tempered the *jihadi* zeal of its religious establishment. Saudi nationals are heavily represented in lists of al-Qaeda suicide bomber posted on various websites that the insurgency uses to attract more recruits.<sup>70</sup> As John Bradley warns, "The ideological bonds that tie the insurgents in Iraq and Saudi Arabia have been made explicit. Those who beheaded American Paul Johnson in Riyadh signed their claim of responsibility 'the Fallujah Brigade'".<sup>71</sup>

While the al-Qaeda insurgency in Saudi Arabia may be making progress toward more ambitious and sustained operations in the kingdom, the capability and reliability of Saudi internal security forces are in doubt. Saudi security forces have had their ranks penetrated by militant Islamists in the past. Troops from the Saudi National Guard, the regime's key forces for protecting the Royal family, were involved in the bloody 1979 uprising at the Grand Mosque in Mecca.<sup>72</sup> The Saudis may claim that they have learned from past mistakes and do better now in vetting their security forces of militant Islamists. Such a feat, however, would be extremely difficult because militant Islamic ideology is deeply and widely pervasive in the kingdom, especially in the lower socio-economic rungs of Saudi society that provide the bulk of Saudi security and military force personnel.

Some anecdotal information indicates that al-Qaeda has already penetrated Saudi security forces. Scheuer reports, for example, that during the 2001 American military campaign in Afghanistan an al-Qaeda computer was recovered that contained classified Saudi government documents apparently stolen by al-Qaeda sympathizers in the Saudi government.<sup>73</sup> The May 2003 bombings against the Riyadh residential compounds depended on a significant level of insider knowledge of the three targets which was almost certainly provided by the Saudi security detail at the compound.<sup>74</sup> The November 2003 attack on another Riyadh residential compound also suggested that Saudi security services have been penetrated because they drove a Saudi special security forces car and were dressed in police uniforms.<sup>75</sup> Although the depth of al-Qaeda penetration of the Saudi military and security services is uncertain, there is no doubt of the Saudi religious police's allegiance to al-Qaeda: "It is an open secret than many of them, if not the vast majority, support Osama bin Laden."<sup>76</sup>

While there has been a lull through much of 2005 in major al-Qaeda operations in Saudi Arabia, it may just be the calm before the storm. Bin Laden in December 2004 called for a new phase in his campaign to oust the regime in Saudi Arabia. He publicly urged followers via an internet-released audiotape to mount a peaceful revolution while he also called on them not to miss a "golden and unique opportunity" to kill Americans in Iraq. Bin Laden added that if the peaceful revolution failed then Saudis would have no choice but to resort to violent attacks against the Royal family.<sup>77</sup> Bin Laden may have been emphasizing "peaceful" in this audiotape to dampen negative Saudi public opinion caused by past al-Qaeda operations that caused the deaths of Saudis as well as foreign infidels. A fair number of Saudis view the killing of foreigners inside the kingdom as legitimate and justified while they oppose al-Qaeda operations that kill Saudis.

### **Washington Between a Rock and a Hard Place**

The relative lull in al-Qaeda attacks in Saudi Arabia in 2005 in comparison to the bloody attacks of 2003 and 2004 might indicate that Saudi security forces have

gained the upper hand against the insurgents, at least for the time being. Saudi forces might have disrupted al-Qaeda's operational tempo with the capture or killing of perhaps hundreds of al-Qaeda cell leaders and members.

On the other hand, al-Qaeda operations in Saudi Arabia just might be taking a back seat as insurgents focus on the battle in Iraq. As we have seen in Iraq, the insurgency is an intelligent and nimble one with the flexibility needed to rapidly adapt and evade government counter-insurgency measures. Riyadh might not have to wait long before Saudi *jihadi*ists begin returning home to regroup for attacking Saudi Arabia's security forces, political and economic infrastructure, and expatriate communities.

The Saudi regime is in an acute counter-insurgency conundrum. It must reduce the ideological power and influence of al-Qaeda, a fair amount of which comes from the religious segment of Saudi society from which the Saudi royal family gains its political legitimacy. This will be a formidable political task, especially for the cautious and consensus building group of octogenarians that head the Saudi regime. The jury is out as to whether or not the Saudi regime has the grit, determination, courage and discipline needed to diminish the role and influence of the Wahhabists who are aiding and abetting al-Qaeda.

From the United States' perspective, we tend to be an optimistic and idealistic people and when we look at the Middle East today we see "freedom on the march" with the end of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. Through our lenses shaded with a romanticized view of the benefits of democracy and liberty we project linearly the flourishing of democracy in the future Middle East. From our worldview, we believe that the proliferation of democracies will both reduce the incidence of war between states as well as dissipate the political repression that gives rise to the militant Islamic ideology which we see as the seed bed for the global Islamic insurgency spearheaded by al-Qaeda.

This American prophecy could all too easily come crashing down on the hard desert rocks of Middle Eastern realities. The prophets among mortals are few and far between and our common wisdom's ability to reliably predict the future is slim to none. History has a nasty and persistent habit of progressing non-linearly. History, moreover, is all too often pitted with stubborn dilemmas and predicaments that defy easy solutions. More often than not, the march of history can be tweaked into more constructive paths, but seldom, if ever, controlled.

The best of American intentions could bring about even more difficult dilemmas and predicaments in the future. In our zeal to export democracy we run the risk of fomenting revolutions rather than prudently pushing and pulling the liberalization of traditional Arab societies. Some of the smaller Arab states are already modernizing and liberalizing at relatively breakneck speeds which equates to less than a generation of twenty-five years. Too fast an acceleration of reform could easily create political backlashes that create instabilities that could be greater sources of injustice than current political systems. In our ideological commitment to the export of democracy we forget that democracies too are prone to excesses in international politics. Democracies can succumb to the siren's call of militant nationalism. And while they may be slow to embark on war, once engaged they can levy force against adversaries well beyond the bounds of political prudence.

The grand American strategic balancing act will be to encourage liberalization and increase political space in countries such as Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but not so fast or ambitiously to cause the existing institutions, such as they are, to collapse into anarchy leaving political vacuums to be filled by militant Islamists. Today we worry that the Taliban is reconstituting to challenge the government in Kabal, but imagine if we had to worry that a Taliban-like group were seizing the reins of political power in Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. These states, unlike Afghanistan, exercise real geopolitical power in the greater Middle East. A resurrected Taliban regime in Afghanistan that harboured al-Qaeda would be a child-like naissance in comparison to a fully Wahhabist-controlled regime in Riyadh that would control a quarter of the world's proven oil reserves. For all the vices, weaknesses, duplicities, and hypocrisies of the Saudi Royal family, they might still be a moderating influence on the Saudi body politic.

To some observers these scenarios are mere speculation and not grounds for serious concern. But such a sanguine view is probably based more on a worldview based on the 24/7 news cycle than a sober appreciation of history. The Middle East may overall be glacially paced in major political transformations over a wide span of time, but when change does occur it tends to come in volcanic eruptions that few anticipate in advance. Few enjoying the lifestyle and living standards of Beirut in the early 1970s would have predicted Lebanon's precipitous nose-dive into the primordial combat of the civil war in the 1980s, the devastation from which the country is still recuperating. Few too would have predicted as late as 1978 that the Shah's regime was teetering on the cusp of extinction. The point is that the United States must always work to guard against the next volcanic eruption in the region. And that is especially true for Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia where Washington's "war on terrorism" tent is pitched.

That is not to say that Washington for the sake of tracking down al-Qaeda and its accomplices must yield all to its partners in Cairo, Islamabad and Riyadh. Even though the Bush administration's rhetoric on promotion of democracy is high, it still pays too much deference to Egyptian, Pakistani and Saudi interests. President Bush especially has been effusive in his praise of General Musharraf in his efforts on the war on terrorism and has even given him a reward of new F-16 purchases. Musharraf, however, has inexcusably not allowed the US access to A Q Khan to gauge the full magnitude and depth of his nuclear weapons supply network. One plausible and even probable explanation is that Musharraf has much to hide, including his own complicity with A Q Khan's nuclear weapons-related exports. The US needs to work with Musharraf, but does not need to kiss his ring or ease back on critical American national interests such as countering the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

George Kennan famously argued for the Cold War policy of containment that the United States only had to be true to itself to prevail in the long term over its adversary. Kennan's wisdom of yesterday is true today and for the future. The United States' best course for countering the allure of military Islamic ideology in the Middle East is to exercise a steady hand at the helm of statecraft while working to improve our own society and welfare at home to serve as the "city on the hill" example for others. If we allow ourselves to become captive of our own political ideology to the disregard of power realities, we will become in the eyes of the world not an example to emulate but a hypocritical creature to deplore. Notwithstanding the whirlwind of conferences and task forces on the role of public diplomacy, ultimately the most powerful weapon in the American arsenal against the global Islamic insurgency is the unvarnished truth. And over the longer, generational

time frame the truth will expose the brick and mortar of lies upon which the barbaric global Islamic insurgency is built.

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# **Localising Political Islam For Minority Muslims**

Muhammad Haniff Hassan

## **Introduction**

Undoubtedly, Political Islam<sup>1</sup> is one of the leading contemporary security issues that political leaders and scholars have to grapple with. In his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington suggested that future sources of conflict will be found between various civilizations, and that the Islamic civilization is one of the most serious threats and challenges to Western civilization. Islam in Huntington's perspective encompasses the political dimension. It can be deduced, then, that the Islam which he views as a threat to Western civilization refers to Political Islam; that the political expression of Islam is a threat to the security of Western countries in particular, or to Western modelled countries, which are characterized by secular democracy.<sup>2</sup>

Other writers have also described Islam as the "green peril", the "green menace", the "spectre" and the "enemy" after the fall of communism.<sup>3</sup> A study of Muslim terrorist groups' ideology, Al-Qaeda in particular, will show that the political dimension of Islam is an essential aspect of it. Violence is a tool to achieve political objectives, which are the establishment of the Islamic caliphate or Islamic state, to facilitate the implementation of the *syariah* law and subjugation of non-Muslims under the rule of Muslims. These necessitate armed rebellion against infidel or apostate governments.<sup>4</sup> Political Islam in such a context does create a security threat to governments.

This paper seeks to propose that one of the ways to de-securitise Political Islam in the context of minority Muslims living in non-Muslim countries is by contextualising it to the local realities. This approach does not seek to fundamentally debunk the notion of Political Islam. The basic assumption is that Political Islam is an unavoidable reality for today and the future. It will persist, whether one likes it or not. There will always be a significant segment of the Muslim community who subscribe to the idea. In today's globalised society, minority Muslims in any many parts of the world cannot be shielded from external influence and the development of Political Islam.

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## Why Focus on Minority Muslims?

This paper focuses on minority Muslims because it is a significant segment of the present Muslim *ummah*. It is a segment that has not been given due attention, nor distinctly identified, because Islam has closely been associated with its traditional countries in the Middle East, and with the Arabs. Minority Muslims here refers to Muslims who are citizens of non-Muslim countries, or countries which do not belong to the Organisation of Islamic Conference. Minority Muslims are significant because they are estimated to be 30% of Muslim population in the world today.<sup>5</sup> Also, the number is expected to grow due to the migration of Muslims and conversion of local Europeans, making Islam a fast-growing religion in the Western world.<sup>6</sup>

Minority Muslims are also a strategic target for Al-Qaeda propaganda because winning over their support will:

- facilitate Al-Qaeda's plans to launch operations and bring the battle to non-Muslim countries regarded as hostile, such as America and some European countries
- assist its operation elsewhere by giving access to safe sanctuaries, financing and recruits from the minority Muslim community. The Madrid train bombing<sup>7</sup>, London bombing<sup>8</sup> and the discovery of several plots in Singapore,<sup>9</sup> Germany<sup>10</sup> and France<sup>11</sup> are some examples.

Al-Qaeda seeks to manipulate the identity dilemma faced by minority Muslims; between being Muslim and citizen of the state, and the perceived common discrimination against minority groups.

It is important to see minority Muslims as a distinct segment in counter-ideology work because of the different context that they live in. It will be argued later that this different context and reality offer opportunities to minimize the potential threat, from the Islamic theological and jurisprudence point of view.

Another opportunity also arises from the increased awareness and efforts by minority Muslims in Europe, America and other countries to integrate with the mainstream society in the non-Muslim countries where they live.<sup>12</sup> The new generation of Muslim migrants are increasingly making attempts to entrench their roots in the country that they live in and dissociate themselves from the past and historical context of their forefathers.<sup>13</sup>

Muslim thinkers and religious scholars, increasingly, recognize minority Muslims as a different segment of Muslim *ummah* in which their different context requires different solutions and approaches for their problems,<sup>14</sup> thus, the idea of special *fiqh* (jurisprudence) for minority Muslims<sup>15</sup> and the establishment of European Council for Fatwa and Research.<sup>16</sup> By treating Muslim minorities as a different segment of Muslim *ummah*, more fitting approaches and strategies can be devised. This will increase the effectiveness of counter-ideology work.

Admittedly, minority Muslims are also diverse in many aspects. In Europe and America, minority Muslims consist of various ethnic groups such as Arabs, Turks, South Asian sub-continents and local Caucasians, whereas in places like

Singapore, Cambodia and Thailand, Muslims are generally of one ethnic group. But the first important step is to identify that the minority Muslims are a distinct segment of Muslims' *ummah* as a whole, before attempting to divide them into smaller sub-segments. This segmentation is a corollary to the idea that understanding different contexts in which Muslims live: politically, historically and socially, is essential in counter-terrorism and counter-ideology measures.

The paper attempts to present a view that if minority Muslims can localise or contextualise Political Islam to their reality, or if they can be guided on how Islam allows contextual constraints to moderate their political aspirations, the current perceived security threat could be reduced. This will eventually allow counter-terrorism and counter-ideology to focus on other areas.

### **Can Political Islam be Localized or Contextualised?**

The answer to this question is absolutely yes. Being contextual is one of the fundamental characteristics of Islam. This means Islam takes into account the reality of the time, environment, individual and other factors in determining rules and in practising religion. Hence, the ruling for a certain matter may be different due to differences in reality. This applies whether the rule is a general policy for society, or specific to an individual or a particular group only.<sup>17</sup>

A good Muslim is not only one who is able to uphold the fundamentals of the religion but also able to contextualise the teachings when the need arises and where necessary. This is based on the following arguments:

1. Islam was revealed gradually to Prophet Muhammad over 23 years.

The main reason behind this incremental approach was to ensure that the revelation catered to the context and the development of the Muslim society then.

A good example would be the implementation of alcohol prohibition in Islam. Consumption of alcohol was a deeply entrenched habit among the pre-Islamic Arabs. It would have been difficult to immediately and totally prohibit them from drinking alcohol.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Islam started by criticising the habit.<sup>19</sup> Later on, it prohibited Muslims from consuming alcohol when they wanted to perform prayer.<sup>20</sup> Only after 15 years of the revelation, did Islam finally prohibit Muslims from consuming alcohol totally.<sup>21</sup>

During the first thirteen years after the prophethood of Muhammad, before the migration to Medina, most of the revelation was on matters pertaining to faith and conduct. This was to suit the context of the Muslims who were weak and under persecution in Mecca. Much of the revelation on criminal justice and business transactions started only after the migration to Medina. By then, Muslims had already established their political power, and had the need and the authority to implement those social aspects of justice.

2. Abrogation in Islam.

Islam allows for abrogation. Some of the *syariah* laws were abrogated due to the changing circumstance of the Muslim society. The prohibition of alcohol is an example – *syariah*'s earlier stance of mere dissuasion was abrogated in favour of complete prohibition.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Practise Islam within one's own capacity.

The Quran says:

“Allah does not impose upon any soul (a duty) but to the extent of its ability; upon it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and (the evil of) what it has wrought.” (The Holy Quran, 2:286)

To the extent of its ability' implies that Islam recognizes constraints faced by Muslims in practising the religion. Islam acknowledges that human beings may be inherently limited in their capacity. Thus, Muslims are only obliged to strive the best that they can, and not beyond limits which are against logical and rational constraints. This is the essence of contextualism in Islam.

To demand from Muslims beyond what is realistic and practical, is against the principle of justice, a fundamental attribute of Islam and God Himself.

### 4. The application of *rukhsah* in Islamic jurisprudence.

*Rukhsah* refers to a provision in the *syariah*, which allows exemptions from a general rule, in the event that the rule involves or causes a debilitating difficulty. The exemption is specific to the need.<sup>23</sup>

Islam has various check-and-balance systems to ensure convenience in practising it. One of these is *rukhsah*. The Quran says:

“So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief” (The Holy Quran, 94: 5)

The prohibition against drinking alcohol may be used to illustrate *rukhsah*. Consider the case of a stranded traveller who has lost his way and cannot find any water to drink except for alcohol. If his situation is so critical that he will die without that drink of alcohol, then alcohol is not prohibited. In fact, the rule of drinking alcohol has then changed from prohibited to compulsory, because Islam does not allow a human being to endanger himself and cause destruction to his body. In Islam, the obligation to preserve one's life must be prioritised above the prohibition of alcohol. The same goes in a situation where alcohol is used for the treatment of a particular ailment when there is no better alternative to it.

*Rukhsah* allows the *syariah* to cater to the varying context faced by man. It provides flexibility for Muslims when they face different situations.

### 5. Context is always part of the *ulama*'s consideration in issuing *fatwa* or religious ruling.

One who studies the opinion of the earlier *ulama* will find that they changed their *fatwa* from place to place, time to time, and for one person to another. That is to give due consideration to different situations *vis-à-vis* space, time and person. Ibn Qayyim wrote:

“The existing laws are of two types. One, which will not change from its original form, whether due to time, place or *ijtihad* of the *ulama*; such as the '*wajib*' [obligatory] ruling on various obligations, the '*haram*' [prohibited] ruling on various prohibitions, the *Hudud*

[Islamic criminal law] rulings decreed by '*syara*' [Islam] for various crimes and the like. These are not open to change or *ijtihad*, which contradict what has been stipulated. The second type are those that may change with the current needs, based on time, place and situation, such as the ruling on *ta'zir* [punishment other than *Hudud* and *Qisas*], its varieties and characteristics."<sup>24</sup>

It was reported that during a famine Umar, the second Caliph after Prophet Muhammad, suspended the implementation of the *Hudud* law, which required that the hands of convicted thieves be cut off. He feared that the offences could have been committed due to hunger caused by the famine. Umar knew that *Hudud* could not be implemented if there were any doubts, and that particular context had cast serious doubts on the malice behind that act.

In Singapore, the Fatwa Committee of the Islamic Religious Council issued a *fatwa* disallowing organ transplants in 1973. The *fatwa* was later changed in 1986 because the advancements in medicine have changed the basis of the *fatwa*.<sup>25</sup>

#### 6. Various maxims in Islamic jurisprudence.

The existence of the following maxims in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) is also testimony to the adaptability and flexibility of Islam:<sup>26</sup>

- Difficulty allows relief
- Harm must be eliminated
- The origin of a ruling on a certain (non-worship) matter is *halal* unless there are arguments (*dalil*) on its prohibition
- When any arrangement becomes restricted, it will be made flexible
- A crisis allows the prohibited
- There is no *haram* (forbidden) if there is crisis, and there is no *makruh* (permissible but discouraged) if there is necessity
- If you have to choose between two types of harm, the bigger harm should be overcome by choosing the lesser harm
- *Hudud* may be aborted because of doubt
- The extent of a need is assessed on the crisis, whether it is general or specific
- Prioritise a confirmed benefit above a doubtful one
- Prioritise a bigger benefit above a smaller one
- Prioritise a collective benefit above that for an individual
- Prioritise multiple benefits above single ones
- Prioritise a permanent benefit above a temporary one
- Prioritise the essence of a benefit above its form
- Prioritise a stronger future benefit above a weak current one
- Harm may not be eliminated with a similar harm or a bigger one
- May sustain a lesser harm to avoid a bigger one
- May sustain a specific harm to avoid a general one
- A small harm may be forgiven to achieve a bigger benefit
- A temporary harm may be forgiven to achieve a permanent benefit
- A definite benefit may not be abandoned because of a doubtful harm.

The above maxims demonstrate that Islamic practices are also regulated by a dynamic system of priorities. This is because the shifting elements in any ecology

will continually change priorities, subject to the consideration of *maslahat* (benefit) and *mudarat* (harm) in Islam.

The *ulama's* decision-making frameworks of *Maqasid Syar'iah*,<sup>27</sup> *Dharuriyat*,<sup>28</sup> *Hajiyat*,<sup>29</sup> *Tahsiniyat*<sup>30</sup> and various other concepts illustrate how extensive prioritising is in Islam. The various procedures in *fiqh* stated earlier signify prioritisation, for instance, prioritising the elimination of a bigger harm than a smaller one, or eliminating a general harm than a specific one.

Finally, Yusuf Al-Qardhawi wrote that among the blessings from God is the existence of some verses in the Holy Quran that are ambiguous, and hence allow for various interpretations and understanding. These give a wide opportunity to anyone who needs to make various considerations, or choose an opinion that he feels is closer to the truth and the objectives of the *syariah*.

Certain opinions may be suitable at a certain time but inappropriate at another, suitable in a particular environment but not in another, suitable in a certain situation but not in another. Different views (*ijtihad*) have their own foundation and arguments, and each has its truth. With various views of the *ulama* available, Muslims may choose one, which is, in their opinion, of stronger and more immediate benefit according to their social situation and time. Any expert on *fiqh* will vouch that this is legitimate, as there is consensus that one cannot dispute a *mujtahid* (expert on Islamic laws) in matters of *ijtihad*.<sup>31</sup>

The above suffices to highlight that being contextual is a fundamental characteristic of Islam. But like any other religion, Islam possesses fundamentals that are absolute and unchangeable. What remains in contention are:

- what are the absolutes that may not be changed,
- in the event that absolutes are not feasible, exactly when may *rukhsah* be applied, and
- how contextualisation is to be carried out.

### **Basic Concept Underlying Political Islam**

The concept underlying Political Islam is the belief that Islam is a way of life. It is a comprehensive religion governing all aspects of human life, with no separation between any of the aspects.<sup>32</sup> This concept is based on the following:

1. The Quran says,

“And I have only created Jinns and men that they may serve Me.” (The Holy Quran, 51:56)

This verse stresses that mankind was created with the objective of worshipping Allah.

2. The Quran also says,

“And, behold your Lord said to the Angels: I will create a vicegerent on earth.” (The Holy Quran, 2:30)

This verse explains that Man was made a *khalifah* (vicegerent) of this world and hence, carrying out this role constitutes an act of worship to Allah. It must, however, be done based on Islam as Allah Almighty says,

“Indeed, the religion before Allah is Islam.” (The Holy Quran, 3:19)

“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).” (The Holy Quran, 3:85)

Thus, to the proponents of Political Islam (the Islamists)<sup>33</sup> once a Muslim understands that the very purpose of life on this earth is to worship God and that it must be done according to the teachings of Islam, he will understand that Islam permeates all aspects of human life.<sup>34</sup> This characteristic of Islam is known as *syumul* (comprehensive).

Yusuf Al-Qardhawi wrote:

“Indeed, *syumul* permeates time in totality, life in totality, and all aspects of human life in its entirety... it is a thesis for all time and generations, and not just for a certain period or era... it is a thesis that speaks to all humanity, all nations, all races, and all social classes. Indeed, Islam is a thesis for all mankind. It is also a thesis for every level of human of life and its existence... It is a thesis for mankind in every aspect of life.”<sup>35</sup>

The concept of *syumul* in Islam has been summarised by Hasan Al-Banna in the first of his 20 *Usul* (Principles), as follows:

“Islam is a comprehensive system which deals with all spheres of life. It is country and homeland, or government and nation. It is conduct and power, or mercy and justice. It is a culture and a law, or knowledge and jurisprudence. It is income and wealth, or gain and prosperity. It is *jihad* and propagation, or army and cause. And finally, it is true belief and correct worship.”<sup>36</sup>

This pervasiveness of *syumul* may be seen from the variety of books on *fiqh* and etiquette in Islam. These books discuss diverse topics in life from hygiene, to the relationship between husband and wife, affairs of the state, matters of justice and social regulations. Consequently, Islamists say Islam does not accept detaching any aspect of life from the guidance of religion. Allah says,

“O you who believe! Enter into Islam completely.” (The Holy Quran, 2:208)

In the Holy Quran, Allah condemned the people of the past who believed in part of His teachings and rejected the rest:

“Then is it only a part of the Book that you believe in, and do you reject the rest? But what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life? – and on the Day of Judgement they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty. For Allah is not unmindful of what you do.” (The Holy Quran, 2:85)

The Islamists view that since it is a way of life, Islam certainly includes politics because politics is part of the reality of life. It is the responsibility of every Muslim to implement Islam in politics or to participate in politics in accordance with the principles of Islam. Hence, a Muslim cannot separate Islam from politics or politics from Islam.<sup>37</sup> Besides the inherent implications of *syumul* itself, there are other arguments that Islam includes political aspects. Among them are:

- a. God created man to be the *khalifah* (caliph/vicegerent) on earth. The word *khalifah* itself means power and leadership, as the Quran says;

“Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as he granted it to those before them; He will establish in authority their religion – the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (live) to one of security and peace: ‘They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me.’ If any do reject the Faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked”. (The Holy Quran, 24:55)

- b. God made some of his prophets kings and leaders, for example the Prophets Daud (David) and Sulaiman (Solomon). Even Muhammad was not only a prophet, but also the political leader of Medina.
- c. The teachings of Islam cannot be implemented in perfection without political power to implement its criminal laws and justice.

Hasan Al-Banna said:

“We are calling out to you, our people, with the Qur'an in our right hand and the Sunnah in our left, and the deeds of the pious ancestors as our example. We invite you to the teachings of Islam, the laws of Islam and the guidance of Islam. If, in your eyes, this seems ‘political’, then so be it; but it is our ‘policy’. And if the one who summons you to these principles is considered a ‘politician’, then we are the most honourable of men, and praise be to Allah, in ‘politics’! And if you wish to call this ‘politics’, say what you like, for names will never harm us and our goals stand unveiled.”<sup>38</sup>

Ultimately, Islamists argue that Islam, as a way of life, differs from secularism. The difference is one of principle. Secularism segregates the role of religion from matters of society and state, limiting it only to the personal sphere and to places of worship. In contrast, Islam has guidelines for all aspects of life and demands its believers’ commitment to all its teachings. Therefore, whatever the form of secularism, whether it be one which totally rejects the role of religion in society, or one which limits it to just the moral aspects of society, or one with the purpose of eliminating religion from society, or one which accepts religion to secure harmonious living, it is, in principle, conflicting with the concept of religion in Islam.

Unlike the European experience, secularism was never a critical success factor for the Muslim *ummah*.<sup>39</sup>

### **Factors to Consider for Contextualisation**

Political Islam has to operate within its own ecology. Ecology refers to the environment as it relates to living organisms.

In principle, religious scholars are in consensus that *fatwa* and *ijtihad* should apply according to the reality and context in question, so long as they are consistent with the principles and methodologies that are recognised by the scholars.

For Political Islam to operate in the appropriate ecology requires an appreciation and understanding of the ecology in which Muslims exist. This, in turn, requires an understanding and appreciation of the roles of the elements and organisms within that ecology. Muslims also need to distinguish the more significant elements and their roles, whose oversight may eliminate *maslahat* and produce *mudarat*.

Once Muslims are familiar with all the important elements, it is time to measure them against the standards of Islam with regard to the principles and the *siyasaḥ syar'iyah*.<sup>40</sup> These principles serve to guide the *ummah* in their practice of Islam, with clear awareness of the elements within their own environment or the ecology as a whole.

For example, if Muslims were to regard the minority position of Muslims as an important element of the ecology, they should place it against the standards of Islam and produce principles of operationalising Islam relevant for the minority position of Muslims in their country.

But what are the elements that shape the ecology of Islam in a particular country? This is a question that requires in-depth study and research, which is beyond the capacity of this writing. However, the following list of important factors for minority Muslims consideration in Singapore can be an example for other minority Muslims in other countries:

1. There are about 400,000 Muslims in Singapore representing 15% of the population. Nevertheless, Muslims form the largest minority group here.
2. Muslims in Singapore are predominantly Malays. This is unlike the Muslim minority groups in America or Europe, which are less homogenous. In these countries, the Muslim population consists of people from different cultures and countries of origin.
3. The dominant group is Chinese, who are mainly Buddhists.
4. The government practises democracy that in general provides the citizens with a fair amount of freedom. While there have been criticisms of Singapore's democratic system and the existing government, Muslims can safely say that the government do not practise the dictatorship style of government typical of former Yugoslavia. Neither are the Muslims here persecuted for their religion or race, unlike the Muslims' plight in Chechnya.
5. In practising secularism, the government ensures a non-partisan approach when it comes to religious matters. This is to ensure religious harmony. While Islam is critical against secularism as a philosophy, Muslims should distinguish the secular practices in Singapore from those practised by Kamal Atatürk, which privileged secularism to the extent of desecrating symbols of Islam.
6. Singapore has a society that is cosmopolitan, open and urban by nature. These characteristics have been fortified by the effects of globalisation. As a result, Singaporeans are affected by events happening around the world and not just influenced by internal factors or their immediate environment. Globalisation



offers Muslims in Singapore a wealth of resources and opportunities, as well as unbridled access to information and misinformation.

7. Although Muslims in Singapore are still lagging behind economically, they have the benefit of living in an advanced developing economy and financial centre.
8. Singaporeans are generally affluent with a relatively high gross income.
9. Muslims in Singapore are surrounded by other Muslim groups that together, form a majority in this region. For example their neighbour, Indonesia, has the largest Muslim population in the world.
10. Muslims in the region have been experiencing a revival – a return to the fundamentals of Islam.

### **Contextualising Islamists' View Towards Secularism<sup>41</sup>**

While secularism refers to the segregation of the role of religion from the affairs of society and the state, within secularism itself there are various models and schools of thought. Hence, there are varied opinions on the exact nature of the relationship between secularism and religion. These range from moderate to extreme; depending on the extent they allow religion to play a role in the life of man. Briefly, the two distinct schools of thought are:

- a. The school of thought which limits the role of religion to within the individual and personal spheres of life, and to places of worship, without being against it, and even recognises the role of religion in building character in man.
- b. The school of thought which altogether denies any role for religion, is against all basic religious concepts such as the existence of God, the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell, and which strives to separate or eliminate religion from man's life.

Understanding that there are various schools of thought within secularism, and analysing each one independently, is important in deriving the appropriate judgement and treatment for any one of them. S Abid Hussein wrote:

“There is serious misunderstanding among our people, especially among Muslims, as to what is secular thought or secularism. They presume that this philosophy (secularism) absolutely rejects religion as a necessity in life. However, secularism need not oppose or marginalise religion. Many people who honestly believe in the academic and political aspects of secularism, do respect religion as something noble... Nevertheless, in the end, in the Christian countries, they (the clergymen) finally accept a Secular State on the grounds that such a State recognises religious values as the basis of its struggle, even though the State is not founded on religious belief - at the very least, it is based on the principles of reasoning and the experience of religion.”<sup>42</sup>

Such an understanding will allow Muslims to determine the *maslahat* (benefit) and *mudarat* (detriment) of a particular school of thought more accurately.

Being practical and contextual in nature, Islam drives Muslims to recognise the following realities:

- a. In many parts of non-Muslim countries, the Muslim community enjoys reasonable freedom in practising their religion.

- b. While Muslims believe in the comprehensiveness of Islam, the socio-political realities of minority Muslims indicate that the possibility of practising the comprehensive Islam in non-Muslim countries is remote. Due to this, minority Muslims need to choose more appropriate and beneficial priorities.
- c. Not all secularism practised by governments is in the form of anti-religion. Some governments adopt secularism as a non-partisan (*neutral*) policy that the government does not take the side of any religion in order to ensure inter-racial harmony.

The existence of a Muslim community under the rule of a non-Muslim government, or a government that is not fully Islamic in nature, is not new. There are at least three precedents:

- a. Some of the companions of the Prophet lived in Ethiopia under the patronage of a non-Muslim authority, with Prophet Muhammad's blessing. In the beginning, their stay there was to seek asylum from the persecution they faced in Mecca. However, they continued to stay there for 6 years after Prophet Muhammad established the Islamic state of Medina.<sup>43</sup>
- b. Najasyi (Negus) remained as the King of non-Muslim Abyssinia (Ethiopia), although he had embraced Islam.<sup>44</sup> Ibn Taimiyah wrote:

“And Najasyi (Negus), he certainly could not have judged with the laws as contained in the Quran. Indeed his people did not allow him to. Many Muslim individuals were elected as judges among the Mongols and even as leaders, for whom there were matters of justice that they wished to implement but were not able to do. In fact, they were prohibited from doing so. And Allah does not burden one unless it is within his capabilities. Therefore, Najasyi and the likes of him are people who are happy in heaven, although they did not commit to the *syariah* of Islam to the extent they were not capable of, because they ruled with what they were capable of.”<sup>45</sup>

- c. Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) served as a minister under a non-Muslim king.<sup>46</sup>

These precedents exemplify the realities of Muslim life in an environment where Islam cannot be practised in total. They also demonstrate that Muslims facing non-ideal situations are granted *rukhsah* (exemptions). In these precedents, the Muslims contributed their best efforts to safeguard the common good, that is, to ensure justice and freedom. Furthermore, the Quran and the *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammad's traditions) did not comment negatively on any of these three incidents.

Although Muslims are obliged to live Islam comprehensively, as argued by the Islamists, their inability to do so does not mean that their faith or status in God's eye will be lower than that of other Muslims because they are obligated to strive only within the constraints imposed upon them. Minority Muslims today face common reality of living under the rule of non-Muslims and secular government.

Secularism adopted by governments takes many forms. In many countries, like Singapore for example, secularism is not the secularism which is anti-religion. Rather, it is similar to that which took shape in the other countries of Western Europe like the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It allows freedom for Muslims similar to that for believers of other religions. They have the right to believe, practise, teach and propagate their religion (Islam).

The Indian secular constitution includes several values central to Islam, such as spiritual freedom, freedom of thought, and the universal spirit of brotherhood which does not discriminate race and colour, upholds justice in the legal, social and economic aspects as basic rights, and makes all these as the most important objectives to be achieved by India. It also allows the Muslim citizens of India the opportunity to propose changes to anything in the national constitution or the norms of the nation itself, which in their eyes, may seem to be against the values of Islam, and to ask for other Islamic values to be acknowledged and ratified.<sup>47</sup>

Dr. Azzam Tamimi also wrote:

“Today it is estimated that about one third of the Muslims in the world are minorities in the countries they live in. Under normal circumstances, where the majority of the population in a given country are Muslims, it is the duty of Muslims to endeavor to establish Islam in their lives at the individual and collective levels, at society and state levels. However as the minority, the best option for the Muslim community, in the opinion of leading Islamic scholars of today, would be to work towards the establishment of a secular democratic government that will respect human rights and guarantee security and freedom of expression and belief. In this case, Muslims serve their interests by being party to consolidating the civil society which they live in. Doing so would be the best guarantee for their freedom of worship and freedom of choice... One of the great accomplishments of secularism is the space it provides for pluralism and a reasonable degree of coexistence. Muslims should recognise that the presence of millions of them in majority non-Muslim societies today for the first time in such big numbers, is the fruit of several factors including the secularist revolution, which liberated the state from the hegemony of the church. In fact, until an Islamic *shura* (consensual) system of government is established, the second best alternative for Muslims is a secular democratic. Under such a system of governance, it is agreed to respect the fundamental rights of all people without discrimination, without commitment to religious frames of reference. What matters in such a system is that despotism is checked.”<sup>48</sup>

Based on the above, while the Islamists argue that secularism does not fundamentally conform to Islamic teaching, such a stand need not necessarily produce hostility and confrontation against a secular state. Muslims can co-exist and accept this situation, so long as the freedom of religion is guaranteed, in line with country’s constitution and international conventions without jeopardising their principles.

### **Contextualising The Aspiration for an Islamic State<sup>49</sup>**

Muslims must acknowledge the context of minority Muslims and their reality. Appreciating such context does not go against the principle of Islam, in fact it is part of Islamic teachings. Hence, the aspiration for an Islamic state should be considered in that light.

Muslims should understand that politics is but one of the various facets of Islam that need to be presented and established. In a situation where Muslims have so much to say about Islam, but are limited by resources, it is important that they stress the right priorities in presenting Islam to the public. Even if a Muslim agrees with the Islamists that rejecting or denouncing the notion of Islamic state as an integral part of Islam is against the teaching of Islam, nevertheless, speaking of an Islamic state and setting the objective of establishing it in non-Muslim countries where Muslims are minorities do not serve the priorities either. Pursuing such an agenda does not augur well with the characteristic of Islam as a practical and realistic religion for all mankind.

In the context of minority Muslims, the priority is to safeguard the free and peaceful environment, which allows them to practise the basic obligations of the religion in the spirit of democracy, and to promote a civil society.

The inability to establish an Islamic state here, or to live under its rule, does not mean that minority Muslims will be inferior to that of other Muslims. This is because it is only obligatory for Muslims to work within existing constraints. The Quran says:

“On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear.” (The Holy Quran 2: 286)

The story of Najasyi (Negus) provides good lesson for minority Muslims. Although Najasyi was a Muslim, he could not come out openly as a Muslim, nor could he implement the laws of Islam because of opposition from his people. Yet, upon Najasyi's death, Prophet Muhammad described him as a pious man and a brother to the believers. He had remained in Abyssinia as king to protect the Companions who migrated there, and to uphold the level of justice that he was able to. The Prophet commanded that prayers be carried out for Najasyi. If he was not considered a Muslim, Prophet Muhammad could not have commanded that prayer, as it is a last rite of honour specifically for Muslims.<sup>50</sup> Prophet Muhammad's statement and action demonstrate tacit endorsement for Najasyi (Negus)'s actions.

### **Coming to Terms with Living In a Non-Islamic Country<sup>51</sup>**

Accepting the reality and embracing the above contextual position requires minority Muslims to come to terms with living in a non-Islamic country and environment. With a proper knowledge of Islam, coming to terms with the issue should not be a problem at all. Many of Prophet Muhammad's companions traveled far away from the Muslim community and lived with other communities to spread the message of Islam. This was how Islam eventually spread all over the world. The arrival of Islam in the Malay Archipelago and China were clear examples. Without living with other communities, Islam could not have spread peacefully in China, southeast Asia and many other parts of the world. Thus, it is illogical to view that living in a non-Islamic environment is fundamentally unIslamic and wrong.

Admittedly there are *ulama* who rule that living in a non-Islamic country is not permissible but most of them are from the Maliki school of jurisprudence. Hanafi, Syafi'i and Hanbali schools of jurisprudence allow residing in a non-Islamic country. However, their ruling is conditional on the extent that the religion, as well as the self-worth and property of Muslims, may be placed in jeopardy by so doing.

If a Muslim is weak, such that he is not able to practise his religion and is afraid his religion may be jeopardised in a non-Muslim country, then it is *haram* (forbidden) for him to reside there, regardless of whether he had moved from a Muslim country to a non-Muslim country, or if he embraced Islam in a non-Muslim country. It is obligatory upon him to migrate. If he is unable to do so immediately, then it is not obligatory till all obstacles to migrate are gone. If a Muslim is able to practise his religion and is safe in a non-Muslim country, then it is *mubah* (permissible) for him to stay.<sup>52</sup> Their stand is based on the verse in the Quran:

“When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: ‘In what (plight) were ye?’ They reply: Weak and oppressed were we on earth.’ They say: ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?’ Such men will find their abode in Hell - what an evil refuge! Except those who are (really) weak and oppressed – men, women and children – who have no means in their power, nor (a guide-post) to their way. For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive: for Allah does blot out (sins) and Allah is Oft Pardoning, Oft Forgiving. He who forsakes his home in the cause of Allah, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious ...”(The Holy Quran 4: 97-100)

A close study of the verses will show that these they cannot be used as the indisputable argument for forbidding residence in a non-Islamic country because it is possible to interpret it the other way, to allow living there. The *ulama* who allow Muslims to live in non-Islamic countries view that *hijrah* (migration) is obligatory only for those who are not able to practise their religion.<sup>53</sup> Therefore one who is able to practise his religion may remain in a non-Islamic country.

The view was supported by the practice of the Prophet Muhammad. He allowed several of those who embraced Islam later to remain in Mecca and not migrate to Medina. It was related that a companion of the Prophet by the name of Abu Nu`aim embraced Islam. When he wanted to migrate, his tribe appealed to him not to, as he contributed towards caring for the orphans and widows of his tribe. In return, his tribe promised to defend him should others threaten him. He postponed his migration. After he finally moved to Medina, Prophet Muhammad responded to his story, “My people chased me out and wanted to kill me, whilst your people protect and defend you.”<sup>54</sup>

This *hadith* (Prophet’s saying) demonstrates that if one is not afraid his religion will be jeopardised, then he is allowed to stay with his people who are non-Muslims. Najasyi stayed with his people in Abyssinia as a Muslim ruler living among non-Muslims. So it was with the companions of the Prophet who sought protection there. They only came back to be with the Prophet six years after the Islamic state of Medina was established.<sup>55</sup>

A Companion by the name of Fudaik said to Prophet Muhammad: “Indeed, many people allege that anyone who does not migrate will be destroyed.” Prophet Muhammad said, “O Fudaik! Establish prayers, pay *zakat*, avoid evil doing, and stay wherever you like with your people.” Fudaik said, “I assume that Prophet Muhammad also said ‘(Then) you are as those who migrated.’” (Related by Ibn Hibban and Al-Baihaqi)

Prophet Muhammad said:

“If you meet your enemies among the unbelievers, call them to three things; whichever one they choose, accept from them, and restrain yourself. Invite them to move from their place to the place of the *Muhajirin* (those who have migrated). Tell them that if they do so, for them the rights of the *Muhajirin*, and on them, the responsibilities of the *Muhajirin*. If they refuse and choose their place of abode, tell them they are the same as the Bedouin Arabs among the Muslims. The laws of Allah are just as applicable to them, but not for them the booty of war.” (Related by Muslim)

This illustrates that for those who embrace Islam in a non-Islamic country, it is only recommended for them to migrate to a Muslim country. If they do not do it, there is nothing wrong with that.

This group of *ulama* views that the *hadith* (the Prophet’s saying) which connote prohibition do not indicate absolute prohibition. If it was absolute, it will contradict with the above *hadith*.

Sheikh Jadal Haq, Sheikh Al-Azhar, issued a decree (*fatwa*):

“If a Muslim feels that his religion is safe and he is able to practise it freely in a country with no religion or in a non-Muslim country, it is allowable for him to stay. If he fears for his religion, morals, property or self-worth, then it is obligatory for him to move to a country where he can be safe.”<sup>56</sup>

Based on the above and the reality of minority Muslims in a non-Muslim democratic countries, Muslims should not take living in their country negatively. The fact is, there is no country whether Muslim or otherwise, perfectly fulfilling all the conditions that will allow Muslims to practise their religion in total. Wherever a Muslim goes today, he will face a situation that demands his striving to help achieve an ideal Muslim community.

All these strengthen the argument that staying put in a non-Muslim country is not disgraceful to Muslims. It does not make one a Muslim of lower status compared to those who live in Islamic countries.

In fact, there are more opportunities to share the message of Islam in such a country. This gives more opportunities to earn rewards from God, as mentioned in the *hadith*:

“By Allah, if Allah guides someone through your efforts that is better for you than a red camel.” (Related by Al-Bukhari)

“Anyone who starts a good practice, then for him the reward for that effort, and also the reward for the person that learns from him.” (Related by Muslim)

If Islam allows Muslims to remain in a non-Muslim country and if they choose to live there, it is then important for them to build their outlook and basis of thinking on the commitment to stay there. They should then participate constructively in developing the country, without neglecting the responsibility to offer constructive advice and criticism, consistent with the practice of democracy, justice and Islam

itself. Islam should not become a factor that imposes psychological or other difficulties on Muslims in coexisting with non-Muslims or in non-Islamic country.

### **Concluding Remarks**

What has been said should not be assumed to be an effort to silence Muslims' voice and stiffen their activism. By appreciating realities, Muslims do not necessarily become passive in the society or apprehensive in engaging in matters pertaining to politics.

Good Muslims, Islamists or not, should not condone evil doing in society. But based on the above arguments, two main important points need to be noted.

First, even in the worldview of the Islamists, the Islamic state is but one of many obligations to be fulfilled by Muslims. Thus, based on the realities, instead of pursuing the aspiration for the establishment of an Islamic state, Muslims should engage the political domain of the society on issues of justice, corruption, rule of law, respect for human rights, civil liberties, cultural, social and economic development, which are important in Islam too. These are the practical and relevant issues in the context of minority Muslims. They are also amongst the priorities of Islam and represent common goals with any politically inclined citizens.

There are also many social issues that cry out for the attention of concerned minority Muslims in their country. Politics is not the only area that Muslims need be concerned with, or channel their activism to. The comprehensiveness of Islam as viewed by the Islamists themselves comprises social and political aspects of life. It is not too far-fetched to assume that in the context of non-Muslim democratic countries, social activism should generally be given priority over political activism. There is nothing stopping minority Muslims in their country from campaigning against gambling, casual sex, alcohol addiction, drug consumption and prostitution, for example as long it is done in accordance with the law.

The second point concerns the approach to achieving change. In the effort to change the realities which do not fit with Islamic principle and teachings, Muslims should take up a more universal approach and position. Efforts for change need not necessarily be presented in religious language and not merely on the basis of the authority of religion or tradition, but on the basis of rational observation and argument.<sup>57</sup>

There is another dimension to ensure the success of contextualising Political Islam in Singapore. Rachid Ghannochi wrote

“The real problem lies in convincing the 'other', that is the ruling regimes, of the principle of 'the people's sovereignty' and of the right of Islamists -- just like other political groups -- to form political parties, engage in political activities and compete for power or share in power through democratic means.”<sup>58</sup>

If the political elites harbour the idea that Political Islam is inherently a security threat to the country and hence should not be allowed to manifest itself in the society in any form, or that Islam and politics should never be mixed, then they themselves are actually living in a non-realistic view.<sup>59</sup>

Political Islam is not a monolithic phenomenon. Not all Islamists seek to establish an Islamic state, and not all of them seek to establish it by revolutionary or military means.<sup>60</sup> Ibrahim A. Karawan wrote:

“It is important at the outset to make two sets of distinctions. The first distinction is between *Islamic* groups (which focus on individual redemption and social reform) and *Islamist* groups (which focus on gaining state power). The second distinction is between *political Islamist groups* (who use peaceful means to obtain power) and *militant Islamist groups* or MIGs (who strive to seize state power through violent means).”<sup>61</sup>

Political Islam is a reality of today but will be a growing trend in the future of southeast Asia. Thus, it will affect minority Muslims, however one attempts to prevent it. Opening up space for the emergence of a contextual or moderate strand of Political Islam should be considered as an option to prevent all Islamists from being pulled to the extremists’ camp.

It is understandable if non-Muslims do not agree with the worldview of the Islamists and the notion of the Islamic state. The question is: does this disagreement necessarily cause conflict or disharmony or threaten one’s survival?

Even without Political Islam, differences between Muslims and non-Muslims remain. Political differences exist in real life, not within the purview of Political Islam. In many countries, democrats and socialists-communists compete with each other for political power without necessarily causing security threats. Admittedly, Political Islam may be a problem for political practitioners, but a political problem should not be treated as a security problem.

Islamists who are committed to peaceful political and democratic process must be viewed in the context of the pluralistic nature of a society and political players, the civil society and basic rights. Examples of such Islamists are the Refah Party in Turkey<sup>62</sup>, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party) in Indonesia and PAS in Malaysia. In spite of various labels thrown on them such as fundamentalists, the ups and downs of their political endeavour and often being oppressed by the ruling regimes, they remain committed to the democratic and peaceful process.

The political elites must also realise that encroachment of religion into politics is not necessarily due to the emergence of Political Islam, instead, it may also be caused by the encroachment of politics on the religious domain. Since the emergence of secularism, the line that separates religion and politics has always been ambiguous.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, in today’s context, the state has tremendous power to interfere in what is traditionally the personal and private domain of its citizens, to the extent that the institutions enabling the cultivation of religious virtue become subsumed within (and transformed by) legal and administrative structures linked to the state. Thus, the (traditional) project of promoting and preserving religion will necessarily be “political” if it is to succeed.<sup>64</sup> An example is the establishment of Islamic Religious Council by the Singapore government under whose supervision religious institutions such as mosques and *madrasahs* (religious schools) fall. In implementing Compulsory Education (CE) policy in Singapore, the government agreed to accept Singaporean Muslims’ demand that Muslim children enrolled in



local full time *madrasahs* be exempted on condition that the total annual enrolment to the *madrasahs* is capped at 400 children only. For *madrasahs* to qualify as designated schools, which allow them to continue admitting children exempted from CE at primary 1, they have to meet certain benchmarks related to the Primary School Leaving Examination held by Singapore Ministry of Education.<sup>65</sup> This, thus, requires *madrasahs* to revamp their original curriculum so as to implement the national primary school curriculum for English, Mathematics and Science subjects.<sup>66</sup>

While contextualising Political Islam is important, such efforts must also be supported by a positive attitude from the political elites to allow for fruitful dialogue, constructive engagement and civil space. James Turner Johnson was quoted:

“Islamic normative thinking does not separate the religious from the political and is derived from the Koran. This is a fundamental difficulty between the West and the world of conservative Islam. Johnson says: ‘We can’t understand how they can have a society where religion and politics mix and they can’t understand why we don’t. And we fault each other for these characteristics.’”<sup>67</sup>

In conclusion, theologically, contextualising Political Islam is possible. However, its success will depend on the attitude and mindset of minority Muslims and the political elite. It is also important to mention again here that if the true grievances of minority Muslims, such as discrimination against them based on their ethnicity and religion, are not addressed, the effort to contextualise Political Islam in the mind of minority Muslims will not achieve the intended result.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Political Islam here refers to the idea that Islam and politics are two inseparable parts (*din wa daulah*) and the establishment of Islamic state for full implementation of *syariah* is an obligation to Muslims wherever they live. Its proponent is known as Islamist. See Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Thomson-Gale, New York, 2004, vol. 2, 536-40; John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 151; M. A. Faksh, Islamic Fundamentalist Thought: An Analysis of Major Theoretical Formulations, in *Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology* edited by Bryan S. Turner, Routledge, London, 2003, vol. IV, pp. 167-71; Lawrence Davidson, *Islamic Fundamentalism: An Introduction*, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2003, pp. 12-7.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1997, p. 45-8, 102, 109-11, 184. See also Bernard Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage”, in *Policy*, Summer 2001-2002, pp.17-26, available at <http://www.cis.org.au/Policy/summer01-02/polsumm01-3.pdf> (27 July 2005).

<sup>3</sup> See Leon T. Hadar, “The “Green Peril”: Creating the Islamic Fundamentalist Threat”, in *Policy Analysis* No. 177, 27 August 1992, available at <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-177.html> (27 July 2005); uskael Sezgin, “Does Islam pose a threat to the West?”, in *Perceptions Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 5, no. 2, June-August, 2000, p. 63; Esther Webman, “The Undiminished Threat of Political Islam”, available at <http://www.dayan.org/islam2000.pdf> (27 July 2005); Martin Bright, “Terror, Security and the Media”, in *Guardian Unlimited*, 21 July 2002, available at <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/libertywatch/story/0,1373,758265,00.html> (27 July 2005); John Esposito, “Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace”, in *Current History*, January 1994, available at <http://www2.iuu.edu.my/deed/articles/espo.html> (28 July 2005); Richard Sokolsky and Tanya Charlick-Paley, *Nato and Caspian Security: A Mission Too Far*,

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- <sup>5</sup> M. Ali Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today*, Mansell Publishing, London, 1986, pp. 238-41.
- <sup>6</sup> "Fast-growing Islam winning converts in Western world", in *CNN*, 14 April 1997, available at <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9704/14/egypt.islam/> (27 July 2005); Barr Seitz, "Fastest Growing Religion Often Misunderstood", in *BICNews*, 13 December 1997, available at <http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Islam/islam21.htm> (27 July 2005); M.M. Ali, "Muslims in America: The Nation's Fastest Growing Religion, in *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, May/June 1996, available at <http://www.washington-report.org/backissues/0596/9605013.htm> (27 July 2005); Craig S. Smith, "Where the Moors Held Sway, Allah is Praised Again", in *the New York Times*, 21 October 2003, available at <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Park/6443/Fastest/moors.html> (27 July 2005); "Muslims in Western Europe", in *the Economist*, 8 August 2002, available at [http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=1270416#abroad\\_at\\_home\\_by\\_satelite](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=1270416#abroad_at_home_by_satelite) (27 July 2005); Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, "Do Muslims Not Belong to This Christian Europe?", in *the Independent*, 16 December 2002; Uwe Siemon-Netto, "Faith: Islam's Third Run For Europe", in *UPI*, 12 November 2002, available at <http://www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=20021210-101508-1152r> (27 July 2005).
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- <sup>12</sup> Pergas, *Moderation in Islam in the Context of Muslim Community in Singapore*, Singapore, 2004; Muhammad Haniff Hassan, *Muslim...Moderate...Singaporean*, Alkhair Mosque Management Board and Perdaus, Singapore, 2003.
- <sup>13</sup> See Tariq Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, The Islamic Foundation, United Kingdom, 2002; M.A Muqtedar Khan, *American Muslims: Bridging Faith and Freedom*, Amana Publication, Maryland, 2002; Mohamed Siddique Seddon, Dilwar Hussein and Nadeem Malik, *British Muslims: Between Assimilation and Segregation: Historical, Legal and Social Realities*, Islamic Foundation, United Kingdom, 2004; Mohamed Siddique Seddon, Dilwar Hussein and Nadeem Malik, *British Muslims: Loyalty and Belonging*, Islamic Foundation, United Kingdom, 2003.
- <sup>14</sup> See M. Ali Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today*, Mansell Publishing, London, 1986.
- <sup>15</sup> See Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Fi Fiqh Al-Aqalliyat Al-Muslimah: Hayat Al-Muslimin Wast Al-Mujtamaat Al-Ukhra*, Dar Asy-Syuruq, 2001; Muhammad Sulaiman Tubuliyak, *Al-Ahkam As-Siyasiyah Li Al-Aqalliyat Al-Muslimah Fi Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, Dar An-Nafais, Lebanon, 1997.
- <sup>16</sup> See European Council for Fatwa and Research official website available at <http://www.e-cfr.org/eng/> (27 July 2005)

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- <sup>17</sup> See Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Usul Fiqh Al-Islami*, Dar Al-Fikr, Damsyik, 1986, vol.2, p. 1116. See also Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Al-Khasais Al-'Ammah Li Al-Islam*, Maktabah Wahbah, Cairo, 1977, pp. 233 – 7.
- <sup>18</sup> Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Al-Khasais Al-'Ammah Li Al-Islam*, pp.170-3.
- <sup>19</sup> See The Holy Quran, 16:68 and 2:219
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, 4:43
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, 5:90
- <sup>22</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Usul Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, vol. 2, pp. 936-7.
- <sup>23</sup> Asy-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, Dar Al-Fikr, place not cited, date not cited, vol.1, p. 210
- <sup>24</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauzi, *Ighatsah Al-Lahfan Fi Ma'abid Asy-Syaitan*, Al-Maktab Al-Islami, Beirut, 1987, vol.1, p. 488.
- <sup>25</sup> See the fatwa at [www.muis.gov.sg/rservices/oom\\_files/1.doc](http://www.muis.gov.sg/rservices/oom_files/1.doc) (27 July 2005)
- <sup>26</sup> Each of these procedures requires detailed explanations as to its basis, application and exceptions. As it is not the objective of this paper to discuss the procedures, the explanations are not included here. It is important not to use the procedures literally. Detailed explanations on these procedures may be found in these references:
- Jalaluddin As-Suyuti, *Al-Asybah Wa An-Nazair*, Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyah, Beirut, 1979.
  - Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Fi Fiqh Awlawiyat Dirasah Jadidah Fi Dhau' Al-Quran Wa As-Sunnah*, Maktabah Wahbah, Kaherah, 1995, pp. 28 – 30.
  - Mukhtar Yahya & Fatchurrahman, *Dasar-dasar Pembinaan Hukum Fiqh Islam*, PT Al-Maarif, Bandung, 1993.
- <sup>27</sup> This means the general objectives of the *syariah*, which are to:
- Safeguard religion
  - Safeguard life
  - Safeguard the mind
  - Safeguard progeny
  - Safeguard property
- See Asy-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, pp. 2-4.
- <sup>28</sup> It refers something that is required as a necessity to safeguard the *maslahat* (needs) of religion and the world, its absence will cause damage and destruction to life. See Asy-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, p. 4.
- <sup>29</sup> It refers to something that is required as a convenience in life, its absence will cause hardship, but not destruction. See Asy-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, pp. 4-5.
- <sup>30</sup> It means something that is good or complementary to have, but its absence will not cause hardship or destruction. See Asy-Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, p. 5.
- <sup>31</sup> Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Al-Khasais Al-'Ammah Li Al-Islam*, p. 231-2.
- <sup>32</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestone*, available at [http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/milestones/hold/chapter\\_3.asp](http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/milestones/hold/chapter_3.asp) (28 July 2005). See also Abu Al-'Aala Al-Maududi, *Islamic Way of Life*, available at [http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/islamic\\_way\\_of\\_life/index.htm#b2](http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/islamic_way_of_life/index.htm#b2) (27 July 2005).
- <sup>33</sup> The Islamist here means any person who subscribes to the idea that Islam and politic are two inseparable parts and the establishment of Islamic state is an obligation to Muslims wherever they live in.
- <sup>34</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestone*, available at [http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/milestones/hold/chapter\\_5.asp](http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/milestones/hold/chapter_5.asp) (28 July 2005).
- <sup>35</sup> Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, *Al-Khasais Al-'Ammah Li Al-Islam*, pp. 99-105.
- <sup>36</sup> Hasan Al-Banna, *The Message of the Teachings*, available at [http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/tmott/index.htm#understanding](http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/tmott/index.htm#understanding) (27 July 2005)
- <sup>37</sup> Abu Al-'Aala Al-Maududi, *Islamic Way of Life*, available at [http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/islamic\\_way\\_of\\_life/index.htm#b14](http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/islamic_way_of_life/index.htm#b14) (27 July 2005).

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<sup>38</sup> Hasan Al-Banna, *To What Do We Invite Humanity?*, available at [http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/to\\_what\\_do\\_we\\_invite\\_humanity/index.htm#foreword](http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/to_what_do_we_invite_humanity/index.htm#foreword) (27 July 2005)

<sup>39</sup> Dr Azzam Tamimi, *Islam & Secular Society*, available at <http://www.ii-pt.com/web/papers/society.htm> (27 July 2005). See also *Can Islam Be Secularised*, available at <http://www.ii-pt.com/web/papers/secularism.htm> (27 July 2005)

<sup>40</sup> *Siyasah Syar'iyah* means Islamic Public Administration Policy

<sup>41</sup> Adaptation from Seminar Paper 1 presented in Convention of *Ulama* organised by PERGAS on 13 – 14 September 2003 written by the writer of this paper. The paper was translated to English and published in *Moderation in Islam in the Context of Muslim Community in Singapore*, Pergas, Singapore, 2004, pp. 108-15.

<sup>42</sup> S. Abid Hussein, *The Destiny of Indian Muslims*, Asia Publishing House, New York, 1965, pp. 170-5, 195-202. See also Sean L. Yom, *Islam and Globalization: Secularism, Religion and Radicalism*, available at [http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/IPG/IPG4\\_2002/ARTYOM.HTM](http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/IPG/IPG4_2002/ARTYOM.HTM) (27 July 2005)

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Katsir, *Al-Bidayah Wa An-Nihayah*, Maktabah Al-Ma'arif, Beirut, 1984, vol. 3, p. 205.

<sup>44</sup> Imam Al-Bukhari related that Prophet Muhammad commented of Najasyi' (Negus)'s death, "Today died a pious man." This *hadith* (the Prophet's saying) is proof that Najasyi (Negus) had embraced Islam, otherwise Prophet Muhammad would not have done the *solat ghaib* (last prayers in absence) for him. It is also an argument (*dalil*) for Muslims to live among non-Muslims, if they are not afraid for their religion. See Ibn Katsir, *Al-Bidayah Wa An-Nihayah*, Maktabah Al-Ma'arif, Beirut, 1984, vol. 3, p. 77. See Sulaiman Muhammad Tubuliyak, *Al-Ahkam As-Siyasiyah Li Al-Aqalliyat Al-Muslimah Fi Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, Dar An-Nafais, Lebanon, 1997, p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Taimiyah, *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, Matabi' Ar-Riyadh, Riyadh, 1372H, vol. 19, p. 218-219.

<sup>46</sup> See the Holy Quran, 12: 55-56.

<sup>47</sup> S. Abid Hussein, *Kaum Muslimin Di Negara Sekuler India*, in ed. John Donahue and John Esposito, *Islam & Pembaharuan Ensiklopedia Masalah-masalah* (transl. *Islam in Transition, Muslim Perspectives*), C.V Rajawali, Jakarta, 1984, p. 304.

<sup>48</sup> Dr. Azzam Tamimi, *Islam & Secular Society*; available at <http://www.ii-pt.com/web/papers/society.htm> (27 July 2005)

<sup>49</sup> Adaptation from Seminar Paper 1 presented in Convention of *Ulama* organised by PERGAS on 13 – 14 September 2003 written by the writer of this article. The paper was translated to English and published in *Moderation in Islam in the Context of Muslim Community in Singapore*, pp. 117-27.

<sup>50</sup> See Ibn Katsir, *Al-Bidayah Wa An-Nihayah*, vol. 3, p. 77. See Sulaiman Muhammad Tubuliyak, *Al-Ahkam As-Siyasiyah Li Al-Aqalliyat Al-Muslimah Fi Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, Dar An-Nafais, Lebanon, 1997, p. 51.

<sup>51</sup> See *Moderation in Islam in the Context of Muslim Community in Singapore*, pp. 224-36.

<sup>52</sup> Cited by Muhammad Sulaiman Tubuliyak, *Al-Ahkam As-Siyasiyah Li Al-Aqalliyat Al-Muslimah Fi Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, p. 49. See Al-Jassas, *Ahkam Al-Quran*, Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiah, Beirut, 1994, vol. 2, p. 305. See Al-Kuhji, *Zad Al-Muhtaj Syarh Al-Minhaj*, Idarah Ihya' At-Turats Al-'Arabi, Qatr, 1987, vol. 4, p. 329. See Ibn Taimiyah, *Majmu' Al-Fatawa*, vol. 28, p. 240. See An-Nawawi, *Raudhah At-Talibin*, Al-Maktab Al-Islami, Beirut, 1985, vol. 10, p. 282. See Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut, 1992, vol. 10, p. 505.

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Azim*, Dar Ihya' Al-Kutub Al-Arabiyyah, Cairo, vol. 1, p. 542. See also Al-Baidhawī, *Tafsir Al-Baidhawī*, Istanbul, 1988, vol. 2, p. 163.

<sup>54</sup> See Ibn Sa'ad, *At-Tabaqat Al-Kubra*, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1985, vol. 4, p. 138. See Ibn Al-Atsir, *Usud Al-Ghabah Fi Ma'rifah As-Sahabah*, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut, 1989, vol. 4, p. 570. See Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isabah Fi Tamyiz As-Sahabah*, Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Arabi, Beirut, vol. 3, p. 537.

<sup>55</sup> Ibn Katsir, *Al-Bidayah Wa An-Nihayah*, vol 4, p. 205.

<sup>56</sup> Cited by Muhammad Sulaiman Tubuliyak, *Al-Ahkam As-Siyasiyah Li Al-Aqalliyat Al-Muslimah Fi Al-Fiqh Al-Islami*, p. 54. See *Majallah Al-Azhar*, vol 6, 63rd year, Jumada Al-Akhirah 1411H, December-January 1991, p. 618.

<sup>57</sup> S. Abid Hussein, "Kaum Muslimin Di Negara Sekuler India", in *Islam & Pembaharuan, Ensiklopedia Masalah-masalah* (transl. *Islam in Transition, Muslim Perspectives*), edited by



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John Donahue and John Esposito, p. 304; Khurram Murad, *Da'wah Among Non-Muslims in the West*, available at [http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online\\_library/books/dawah\\_among\\_non\\_muslims\\_in\\_the\\_west/p4.htm](http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/dawah_among_non_muslims_in_the_west/p4.htm) (27 July 2005).

<sup>58</sup> Rachid Ghannouchi, "The Participation of Islamists in a Non-Islamic Government", in *Power Sharing Islam*, edited by Azzam Tamimi, London, Liberty for Muslim World Publication, 1993, p. 63.

<sup>59</sup> Sean L. Yom, *Islam and Globalization: Secularism, Religion and Radicalism*, available at [http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/IPG/IPG4\\_2002/ARTYOM.HTM](http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/IPG/IPG4_2002/ARTYOM.HTM) (27 July 2005)

<sup>60</sup> Sana Abed-Kotob, "The Accomoditionists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1995), pp. 321-39. See "The Preface", in Montasser Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda*, Pluto Press, London, 2004, pp. xii-xvi. See also Cheryl Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies*, RAND Corporation, 2003, pp. 1-14. See also See G.H Jansen, *Militant Islam*, Pan Books Limited, London, 1979.

<sup>61</sup> Ibrahim A. Karawan, *Violence As A Strategic Choice: The Case Of Militant Islamist Groups*, p. 1, available at [http://www.oquirrhinstitute.org/gs\\_karawan.html](http://www.oquirrhinstitute.org/gs_karawan.html) (27 July 2005). See also Hilal Khashan, "The New World Order and the Tempo of Militant Islam", in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1. (May, 1997), pp. 12-4.

<sup>62</sup> See M. Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey", in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 1. (Oct., 1997), pp. 63-82.

<sup>63</sup> Sean L. Yom, *Islam and Globalization: Secularism, Religion and Radicalism*, available at [http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/IPG/IPG4\\_2002/ARTYOM.HTM](http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/IPG/IPG4_2002/ARTYOM.HTM) (18 Oct. 2004)

<sup>64</sup> Charles Hirschkind, "What is Political Islam?", in *Middle East Report*, no 205, Middle East Studies Network: The Politics of a Field (Oct. - Dec.), 1997, pp. 12-4.

<sup>65</sup> Singapore Ministry of Education, *Compulsory Education*, available at <http://www.moe.gov.sg/ce/exempt.htm> (27 July 2005).

<sup>66</sup> See also Singapore Ministry of Education press release on 15 August 2000. Available at <http://www.moe.gov.sg/press/2000/pr15082000.htm> (27 July 2005).

<sup>67</sup> Jane Lampman, "Morality and War", in *Christian Science Monitor*, vol. 93, issue 222, 11 October 2001, p. 14. She was citing James Turner Johnson, professor of religion at Rutgers University.

# **It's the *Story*, Stupid: Developing a Counter-Strategy for Neutralizing Radical Islamism in Southeast Asia**

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It is increasingly accepted that real progress in the current global war against radical Islamist terrorism requires more than just application of military and law enforcement measures against individual terrorist cells, their leaders, their funding and logistics pipelines, as well as their immediate support network. Over and above these important, real-time, immediate counter-terrorist approaches, there is also a pressing need to neutralize the overarching radical Islamist ideology that animates both terrorist networks of militants, leaders and operational support cells, as well as the wider constituency of relatively less active sympathizers who more or less buy into the ideology driving the active terrorists. Failure to neutralize this ideological “Story” or mobilizing meta-narrative, would mean that terrorist networks could suffer losses at the hands of security forces, but still replenish their ranks with ideologically committed fresh recruits from the wider “constituency of hate”. The threat of radical Islamist terrorism would therefore be self-sustaining. In recent weeks implicit recognition of the need to develop counter-strategies for targeting the radical Islamist Story has been evidenced by the apparent shift in official US terminology utilized to characterize the current conflict. Instead of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), it seems that certain circles in Washington now prefer the term Struggle against Violent Extremism (SAVE). We may be tempted to suggest that US strategic planners finally seem to be shifting from a “direct”, operationally-focused counter-*terrorist* grand strategy against Al Qaeda and associated radical Islamist terror networks, toward an “indirect”, broader-based counter-terrorism grand strategy seeking to drain the ideological wellspring from which Al Qaeda and similar networks sustain their movements.

This essay lauds the apparent shift in US grand strategic focus, and attempts to articulate how a SAVE campaign may be devised for application to the so-called “Second Front” in the war on terror: Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia, as is well known by now, not merely straddles some of the world’s most important waterways, but is home to more than 200 million Muslims, or 20 per cent of the global Muslim population. In addition, Southeast Asian Islam, impelled by the circumstances of history to be overwhelmingly progressive and tolerant, has long been seen as an excellent example of how 21<sup>st</sup> century Muslims may successfully mesh Islamic traditions with secular, pluralistic, capitalist modernity. Nevertheless, as recent

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events have shown, Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and the Philippines, has also been the site of radical Islamist terrorist attacks, perpetrated by networks like the Al Qaeda-associated al-Jemaah al-Islamiyah (JI). In addition, an ongoing Islamist insurgency in Buddhist Thailand's largely Muslim south, although thus far not apparently fomented by JI, nevertheless seems ripe for exploitation by external jihadi elements, either from JI or even further afield. This essay argues that as elsewhere, the key to counter-terrorism success in the Southeast Asian theatre lies in targeting the JI/Al Qaeda "Story" of a global Islamic community under attack by a nefarious "Jewish-Crusader Alliance" – a euphemism for the US, Israel and allied regional governments – both Muslim and secular.

The essay develops the argument in the following fashion: the first section unpacks more systematically the assertion that it is the radical Islamist ideology or Story that represents the true centre of gravity of the terrorist threat both within Southeast Asia and elsewhere. The second section then attempts to shed light on the diversity of Southeast Asian Islam, identifying, more or less, the point at which the Islamic faith per se becomes transmuted into a politically driven if religiously-garbed ideological Story, which in some extreme cases can become further transmogrified into the violent jihadi Islamism reminiscent of JI and Al Qaeda. The third section proposes a comprehensive counter-strategy for neutralizing radical Islamism in Southeast Asia. It essentially argues for the systematic articulation of a *Counter-Story* that both delegitimizes the Al Qaeda/JI meta-narrative whilst simultaneously – over time – promoting the idea that Muslims in Southeast Asia (and elsewhere for that matter) can practise their faith, authentically and in an unfettered manner, within secular, pluralistic political systems. An effective Counter-Story, it will be seen, would need co-ordinated reinforcement from "propaganda-minded" policy actions in other spheres as well.

### **It's the Story, Stupid**

To understand why the heart of broader, medium-to-longer term counter-terrorism approaches (as opposed to shorter-range, real-time counter-terrorist methodologies) requires targeting terrorist Stories, it is necessary to look again at the old topic of the "root causes of terrorism". To be sure, the phrase – despite its frequent appearances in both academic treatises on terrorism as well as in policy discourse – is generally over-used and in danger of losing its analytical utility. In fact some may even argue that the phrase never had any utility at all. However, it may be possible to rescue the concept of root causes by thinking in terms of a hierarchy of causes. Before doing this, however, it is necessary to more systematically unpack the phrase "root causes of terrorism". First we need to look at "terrorism" in some detail. What would be a useful "working definition" of this phenomenon? I would suggest the following: "the use or threat of use of extranormal violence against non-combatants for political purposes". The basic and irreducible essence of terrorism is, as Lenin put it long ago, "to terrorize": to create a climate within a specific community, of paralyzing, extranormal, extraordinary fear (one thinks of in this respect the gruesome beheadings of civilian hostages in Iraq), a level of fear and anxiety so great that it disrupts the normal everyday functioning of society; a level of fear so great that people are too scared to do the things they need to do on a daily basis, such as sending their children to school and to take the train or bus to work. Moreover, it would be fair to assert that, especially in today's context of religiously motivated terrorism, terrorists also generally seek to create such a level

of fear and suspicion that people begin to treat others from different ethnic or religious origins *abnormally*.

Ultimately, terrorism succeeds if and when it atomizes the community, decomposing it into its discrete units, into the individual families and clans of religious or ethnic groups living in mutual suspicion of one another; where the level of overarching social linkages across cultural, ethnic or religious lines are reduced to minimal to non-existent. If a terrorist network can attain this state of affairs and in the process induce economic paralysis - always a function of social paralysis - then that terrorist network can be said to be successful. In short, that is what is meant when it is asserted that the essence of terrorism is to "terrorize". But there is more. If the essence of terrorism is to terrorize, then the means or methodology by which terrorism terrorizes has to be via communication, in particular, political communication. Ultimately, terrorism is a form of political communication. It is political because it represents an attempt by a terrorist network, purporting to act on behalf of the wider community it emerges from, to compel another community or target audience to change its behaviour in ways consistent with the interests and objectives of the terrorist network. Paraphrasing the German war philosopher Clausewitz, the terrorist network seeks to *impose its will* on the target audience or community.

Some elaboration is in order. A terrorist network may want, for identity reasons, to liberate a geographical region from centralized administrative and/or bureaucratic control; or perhaps a terrorist network may seek greater control over educational, linguistic and cultural affairs within a region. Perhaps the terrorists want to seize political power and replace the incumbent regime and engineer a change in relative distribution of wealth and status between different communities. Or perhaps the terrorists seek to set up a state based on a religious or ideological agenda. The point is, regardless of the actual economic, religious, ethnic, nationalistic or ideological reasons a terrorist network may have for engaging in terrorist behaviour, the ultimate motivating dynamic, or root cause, is always political. Again, paraphrasing Clausewitz, terrorism, like war, is always a continuation of politics by other means, because it is all about political communication; it is about compelling the other side to change its policy and behaviour in ways the terrorist organization wants. Terrorist networks remain intrinsically political entities even today, despite the religious/ideological veneer that seems to characterize the likes of Al Qaeda and JI.

If it is accepted that all terrorism is at root a political exercise, then, advancing a step further, it could be suggested that there probably exists a hierarchy of root causes of terrorism. Politics, defined in the classic Clausewitzian sense as the desire to impose one's will on the other party, would be the first-order root cause par excellence: terrorism, to reiterate, despite surface appearances, is always in the end about compelling a target community to change its mind and its behaviour in ways the terrorist wants. In other words, it's about power. But that's not all. There also exist two more tiers of root causes, it could be said. The second-order root cause relates to what we have termed the "Story". To recapitulate, the Story may refer to those mobilizing metanarratives or ideologies that enable terrorist leaders to offer potential recruits an explanation for their felt grievances, as well as a programme of action to ameliorate those grievances by restructuring society in accordance with a normative vision of what the "just society" ought to be. To this end a Story-as-Political-Ideology really ought to have three elements: first, a diagnosis of why society is suffering. The diagnosis may be materialistic, as in the



case of communism, which emphasized class inequalities as the wellspring of societal injustices. Or the diagnosis may be nationalistic (eg “we are not in control of our own affairs and our destiny - this is bad”). Or the diagnosis may be religious (“this society is in trouble because we have deviated from God’s path”). Second, the Story must identify a *scapegoat*: the party on which one can blame society’s ills. For the communists it was the capitalist owners of the means of production; for the Nazis it was the Jews; for the Christian Identity movement it has been the allegedly Jewish-dominated US government and for Al Qaeda and JI it is the “Jewish-Crusader Alliance”. Having a scapegoat is extremely functional as it represents an “evil” enemy against which drastic action, even terrorist action, is seen as both politically necessary and morally justifiable.

It is in this connection that the study of religious cults is so valuable, in light of today’s context of religiously inspired terrorism. Cults are very effective in generating the “us-versus-them” binary worldview that fuels radicalized ideologies and ultimately, in extreme cases, even terrorism. Religious cults foster a powerful Story of cosmic war in three ways. First, they are usually led by charismatic leaders who meet the regressive need of many people for an idealized “superparent” figure to offer guidance and meaning in life. It is telling in this regard that the Singapore government white paper on JI asserted that some JI detainees had found it “stressful” to be critical, evaluative and rational, and had relied on their JI *ustaz* to show them the path to be better Muslims. Second, religious cults insist on blind obedience to the leader’s interpretation of truth and suppress dissent. Dissenters are ostracized and precisely because cults offer their followers psychic relief through the provision of structure, certainty and social bonding with other members, it is very unlikely that dissenting voices can gain ground; they are far more likely to be smothered by a combination of intense peer pressure and groupthink processes. Third, religious cults tend to devalue outsiders. Their members tend to isolate themselves from the religious mainstream. For instance, in the Singapore JI case, members tended to meet in homes rather than mainstream mosques and they exhibited a sense of exclusivity that they alone had knowledge of the true Islam. Similarly, Christian Identity militias in the United States tend to stay in remote rural locales, aloof from the wider community and society. Physical isolation expedites the construction of an alternate reality - the Story, in short.

If the desire to compel the other party to comply with one’s agenda is the first-order root cause of terrorism and the existence of a Story justifying terrorist behaviour is a second-order root cause, what would be the third-order root cause? There are in fact third-order root causes. These would be the various, familiar grievances that many analysts have identified as drivers of terrorism in various localized contexts: relative socioeconomic deprivation; political repression; perceived ethnic and religious marginalization; revenge; and US foreign and security policy. This list is by no means exhaustive. Basically at the level of third-order root causes a multitude of factors can cause people to think that “Something is not right”, or “I am not happy” or “Things just cannot go on like this” or “Life is so unfair”. What is important to recognize is that these individuals could come from a wide cross-section of backgrounds, which makes profiling a real problem: unemployed or underemployed urban and rural workers as well as professionals, engineers, academics and other relatively well-heeled groups. What, however, ties these individuals together is that they tend to be found in a state of profound soul-searching. What in particular sparks this intense introspection is well nigh impossible to pin down. There is no such thing as the *main reason* why somebody

would become restless, dissatisfied and upset. Maybe these individuals have never been vocationally successful; maybe they are angry at the injustices they witness the members of their ethnic or religious community endure daily; maybe they can no longer stomach the subtle and not-so-subtle racism and discrimination of the workplace and the wider social milieu; maybe they feel guilty about having lived dissolute lives and now desire a “closer walk” with God. Any combination of these factors could produce the intense soul-searching and consequent emotional vulnerability.

The point is, there are many possible third-order factors that may render individuals vulnerable to the attractions of the second-order root cause: the Story. Following terrorism expert Walter Laqueur, in other words, ideology and psychology go together. And in today’s context, once these unhappy, unsettled individuals get sucked into the closed circle of the religious cult that has developed a political agenda and has religiously legitimated terrorist methods in pursuit of that political agenda (one thinks in this respect of Al Qaeda and JI), a line would have been crossed. The process of transformation of some of these individuals from relatively ordinary members of society into religiously motivated terrorists capable of killing non-combatants as well as engaging in suicide attacks would have got underway. Central to this process would be the Story. The Story, in other words, remains the centre of gravity. Clausewitz held that the centre of gravity of the enemy is always “the hub on which everything depends”. If, like some military analysts, it were accepted that what Clausewitz meant by this was that the centre of gravity refers to the focal point of a system – the point which holds the entire system in place, then it is not hard to see that it is in fact the Story – our second-order root cause - that holds terrorist “systems” of leaders, recruits and constituencies of support together. Once the Story is delegitimized and discredited, the terrorist system loses its internal coherence and disintegrates into its component parts. Paraphrasing Bill Clinton’s 1992 presidential campaign slogan, we could therefore say that in counter-terrorism the most important thing to remember is that: “It’s the Story, Stupid”.

### **Typologies of Southeast Asian Islam**

Thinking in terms of the radical Islamist Story that animates the likes of JI in Southeast Asia signals the importance of being sensitive to the types of Islam that exist in the region. It has to be reiterated at the outset that there is no such thing as a monolithic Islam in the world today and not all Muslims are terrorists. By the same token, while most Southeast Asian Muslims are tolerant, there is a very small minority who may pose a security problem to regional states and Western interests, not so much because of the acts they may or may not have committed but because of the Story they believe in. What follows is an attempt to make sense of the various categories of Muslims resident in Southeast Asia, distinguished according to the personal religious beliefs, or on the other hand, ideological Stories, they hold about Islam. In discussing each category, one has to keep in mind that these are Weberian ideal-type analytical constructs to aid analysis. In real life, it is not impossible that, say, a Liberal Muslim may well hold similar opinions to National Jihadis on for instance the US invasion of Iraq. This does not mean that the Liberal Muslim is at all to be equated to the National Jihadi and regarded as a security threat. In fact, as we shall see, the Liberal Muslim, among others, is probably part of the long-range solution to radical Islamism in Southeast Asia.

The operating assumption here is that radical Islamist terrorism is rooted in Islamist ideology (or Story) rather than Islam per se. While all Islamists are Muslims, not all Muslims are Islamists. Islam, like all great faiths, seeks to transform the individual. Islamism, like all political ideologies/Stories, seeks the capture of state power as the prelude to transforming entire societies. This is a crucial distinction. Based on this analysis we can identify six more or less analytically distinct ideal-type categories of Muslims in Southeast Asia, strung out along a continuum, from non-conservative to ultra-conservative/extremist: Nominal Muslims, Liberal Muslims, Salafi Muslims, Islamists, National Jihadis and Global Jihadis. Nominal Muslims in Southeast Asia refer to those whose religion does not really define who they are. They eat pork without any problem, smoke and drink, may or may not fast during Ramadan and mix very easily across ethnic and religious lines. A good example of Nominal Muslims would be the so-called *abangan* Muslims, the largest group of Muslims in Indonesia. Nominal Muslims come from all class backgrounds and politically they tend to support secular political parties such as Golkar and PDI-P in Indonesia and UMNO in Malaysia. Nominal Muslims have no problem living within a secular political framework, cheek by jowl with people of other faiths and backgrounds. Nominal Muslims may even consider religious Muslims with some bemusement and the relative narrow-mindedness of the jihadis with contempt.

Moving further to the right of the continuum, we come across Liberal Muslims. In contrast to the Nominal Muslims, Liberal Muslims would consider Islam as an important part of their identity. Accordingly they would fast during Ramadan, avoid eating pork and drinking alcohol, and may dress conservatively. However, some Liberal Muslims would argue that religion is a private affair and should not be imposed on others. More than that, they would argue that Islam should be contextualized and adapted to local conditions. In this vein, Abdurrahman Wahid, more popularly known as Gus Dur, former Indonesian president, Islamic scholar and one-time leader of the rural-based and largest Muslim mass organization Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), has called for an Indonesianized Islam, and dismissed the whole notion of an Islamic State as an alien concept originating in the Middle East. Gus Dur believes that Islam and liberal democracy are compatible, and co-existence with other faiths is entirely possible. In fact, NU's Central Leadership (PBNU) recently argued that interfaith prayer was perfectly permissible, and that a "large section of NU followers and a section of its ulamas" have engaged in this activity with members of other faiths.<sup>1</sup> What is forbidden, in the PBNU estimation, is for Muslims, during interfaith prayer sessions, to "pray in the name of a god of another religion".<sup>2</sup> Liberal Muslim intellectuals, moreover, like Ulil Abshar Abdallah, lobby for an Islam that is dynamic, many-textured and adaptable to a variety of local contexts and even earned the ire of Islamists for promoting the idea that "Islam has many colours". Liberal Muslims, who would be considered *santri* (devout) in Indonesia, the biggest Muslim country in the world, incidentally, would vote for political parties like the NU-linked PKB in Indonesia and UMNO in Malaysia. Liberal Muslims would encourage Nominal Muslims to have a more serious attitude to Islam but they would heavily criticize the Islamist and jihadis for their rigid, dogmatic approach to Islam.

Moving even further to the right of our continuum, we would come across the Salafi Muslims. These would be Muslims whose faith is the primary determinant of their identity. In contrast to Liberal Muslims, Salafis would argue that under the concept of *tawhid* or unity of God, there is no sacred and secular divide and God's sovereignty extends to all spheres of life. They would be considerably conservative

in diet and dress (generally but there can be exceptions) and observance of rituals. In subtle contrast to the Liberal Muslims, Salafis would be relatively more attentive to policing of identity boundaries. Thus while they would interact socially with non-Muslims, there would be more of a social distance between them and non-Muslims than would be the case with Nominal Muslims and Liberal Muslims. A good example of this would be dining with non-Muslims. Salafis, more than Liberal Muslims and Nominal Muslims, would insist on using separate utensils and *halal*-only cuisine. This may prompt in some cases separate dining arrangements between Salafis and non-Muslims. Salafis, moreover, would take a sterner stance on interfaith worship than Liberal Muslims. The Salafi-oriented quasi-governmental Indonesian Islamic Council or MUI, for example, pointed out recently that in regard “to faith and religious worship, the Muslim community is obliged to adopt exclusive attitude [sic] in the sense of being forbidden to mix the faith and religious worship of the Muslim community with the faith and religious worship of other religious followers”.<sup>3</sup> However, while Salafis emphasize the preservation of identity purity in relation to other faiths, this is not taken to extremes. Hence MUI did stress that “in regard to social problems that is [sic] not connected to faith and religious worship, the Muslim community shall adopt [sic] inclusive attitude, in the sense of engaging in social relations with the followers of other religions insofar as this does not incur mutual disadvantage”.<sup>4</sup>

Salafis, in a technical sense, would be considered neo-fundamentalists. That is, on balance they would emphasize personal piety rather than articulate a political programme for restructuring society according to any normative vision. In short, to Salafis, on balance Islam would still largely be constructed as a personal faith rather than an ideological Story diagnosing society’s ills, identifying a scapegoat and putting forth a political programme for remedial action. A good example of a Salafi Muslim leader is the Indonesian Muslim intellectual Nurcholis Madjid. While he calls for an Islamized Indonesia, his Islam-as-personal faith-rather-than-political-ideology standpoint was well encapsulated in his well-known slogan: “Islam Yes, Islamic Parties, No”. The Salafi movement in Indonesia would be represented by the urban-based Muhammadiyah mass organization, the second-largest Muslim mass organization in Indonesia. Politically, Salafis would vote for parties like PAN, which is affiliated to Muhammadiyah. Salafi Muslims can also be found amongst the relatively more religious right wing elements of UMNO in Malaysia. A more controversial example of a Salafi-oriented political party would be the increasingly popular PKS or Justice and Prosperity Party, led by urban middle-class university-educated professionals who, instead of calling for an Islamic State, lobby instead for “clean government” and a more morally pure society.

It is to the right of the Salafis that we encounter arguably the first stirrings of concern. This is where we encounter the Islamists: those Muslims who articulate a political agenda for restructuring society according to a normative vision they have extracted from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. While Salafi Muslims call for greater personal piety and over time the gradual Islamization of society from the bottom-up, Islamists, while accepting, practising and endorsing the call for personal piety, would go a step further and call for the setting up of an Islamic State, so as to Islamize society from the top-down. Even more than the Salafis, moreover, Islamists exercise a great concern for policing identity boundaries with other faiths; and the social distance with non-Muslims would be considerably more in evidence. Islamists, such as Abu Bakar Bashir (or Baa’syir) of the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), it should be recognized, would hold that Muslims can only practise their faith authentically under Shariah Law, and the latter requires

the existence of an Islamic State.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in Malaysia the Islamist political party PAS has declared publicly that “establishing an Islamic government is as important as establishing the daily rituals of Islam”.<sup>6</sup> This does not mean that Islamists are necessarily violent, though. In Indonesia, for example, Islamist mass organizations such as MMI in Java and KPSI in Sulawesi lobby for an Islamic State but through *dakwah* (proselytisation) means such as rallies and publications. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) is, like the PKS, growing very fast in urban centres of Indonesia, and espouses radical ideas such as democracy and the nation-state as un-Islamic and the need to restore the global Islamic caliphate. HTI however remains non-violent.

While the Islamists may seem at first glance to be unproblematic because they are non-violent, the argument here is that it is precisely the Stories they espouse that raise concerns. What the Islamists possess, in far greater measure than Salafis, Liberal Muslims and Nominal Muslims, is a binary worldview dividing the world into the Darul Islam (House of Islam) and the Darul Harb (House of War). In this construction the Muslims (Us) are always to be separate from non-Muslims (Them). Worse, interfaith relations, though non-violent, would not necessarily be cordial. MMI and incidentally (and tellingly) alleged JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir’s binary worldview in this respect is of interest. He once declared during a sermon:

God has divided humanity into two parts, namely the followers of God and those who follow Satan...God’s group are those who follow Islam, those who are prepared to follow his laws and struggle for the implementation of sharia law...Meanwhile what is meant by Satan’s group are those people who oppose God’s law, who ...throw obstacles in the path of the implementation of God’s law.<sup>7</sup>

Bashir was emphatic in declaring that there was no hope of conciliation between true Muslims who believed in the complete implementation of the Shariah and those that opposed this:

We would rather die than follow that which you worship. We reject all of your beliefs, we reject all of your ideologies, we reject all of your teachings on social issues, economics or beliefs. *Between you and us there will forever be a ravine of hate and we will be enemies until you follow God’s law* (emphasis mine).<sup>8</sup>

Rigid, binary worldviews such as the ones encoded in the Islamist Story tend to lend themselves to what social psychologists call the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE): we (Muslims) are always more righteous in relation to them (non-Muslims). Precisely because the Islamist Story lends itself to the FAE dynamic a pathway from rigid if non-violent Islamism to rigid and violent jihadi Islamism opens. This is thus the problem: Islamists today may well, in certain circumstances, become the jihadis of tomorrow.

And this is why to the right of the Islamists in Southeast Asia we naturally find the relatively small number, region-wide, of Jihadi Islamists. The latter can be divided into National Jihadis and Global Jihadis. National Jihadis have developed the Story that this process of Islamizing society and defending Islamic interests can only be attained through willingness to use force. Some National Jihadis, such as

the Islamic Defender's Front (FPI) in Indonesia, therefore use force to "morally cleanse" society from social ills such as gambling, alcohol and vice. Other National Jihadis employ force to defend Muslim constituencies who are being attacked by Christian militias, such as Laskar Jihad, Laskar Jundallah and Laskar Mujahidin in the Maluku and Sulawesi conflicts in eastern Indonesia of 1999-2002. Yet other National Jihadis have sought to set up national Islamic regimes by force, such as the historic Darul Islam movement in Java, South Sulawesi and Aceh, Indonesia between 1949 and 1962 - and more recently the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Aceh province in Sumatra, Indonesia; the Pattani United Liberation organization (PULO) in southern Thailand and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the southern Philippines.

Much more recently, National Jihadi organizations seeking Islamic regime change include the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) and the Rohingya Solidarity Organization in the Arakan region of Myanmar. It is to the right of the national Jihadis that we find the Global Jihadis: Jihadi Islamists who have developed the Story, through direct or indirect participation in the Afghan Jihad against the Soviets in the 1980s, that local Southeast Asian jihads should be part of the overall Al Qaeda-led cosmic struggle against the "Jewish-Crusader Alliance", led by the US, Israel and their putative allies in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. National Jihadis generally target the so-called "near enemy" of government and security force personnel - or Christian civilians attacking Muslims. In contrast, Global Jihadis, such as those within the Mantiqi (Region) 1 faction of JI, as well as the Mindanao-based and Al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), target Christian and Western civilians in bars, shopping malls and other public places in relatively indiscriminate fashion. It was a Global Jihadi Story that motivated the Al Qaeda attacks against the American "far enemy" on September 11 2001; it was a similar Global Jihadi Story that motivated the JI attacks in Bali (October 2002) and Jakarta (August 2003 and September 2004) in which scores of civilians, Western and non-Western, were killed. The current ASG/JI threat to urban centres in the Philippines stem from a Global Jihadi Story as well.

In sum, when one looks at Southeast Asian Islam from a counter-terrorism standpoint, it is important to know which constituencies pose the threat. While some analysts may focus attention on the overtly violent National and Global Jihadi categories of the continuum that has just been outlined and fleshed out, it is argued here that that would be too limiting. If one were to accept the premise that in counter-terrorism, the key task is to attack the Story, then one has to enlarge the analytical focus to start with the non-violent but not less problematic Islamists. This is because the rigid, binary, us-versus-them worldview embedded in the Islamist Story represents the true initial pathway from non-violent to violent extremism. Devising a counter-strategy for neutralizing radical Islamism in Southeast Asia must thus start with a Counter-Story to attack the ideological meta-narratives emanating from not just National and Global Jihadi constituencies but even the Islamist milieu as well.

### **The Counter-Story: Devising Strategic and Tactical Information Campaigns**

It may be useful at this juncture to reiterate a few key points in the argument. First, it is crucial to distinguish Islam the great Faith from Islamism the political ideology. In our terms, Islam the Faith is not to be equated with Islamism the

Story. More than that, the thrust of the argument here is that as far as the Southeast Asian theatre is concerned, it is probably the case that apart from Nominal Islam, Liberal Islam and Salafi Islam (which is on balance, still more Faith than Story) offer the form of Islams that are worth cultivating and forging inter-faith linkages with. As a corollary, it is probably important to recognize that not just violent Jihadi Islamism, but rigid and exclusionary Islamism, despite its ostensibly non-violent veneer, can also be problematic. Muslim communities in Southeast Asia should hence be encouraged to delegitimize politics-driven Islamist Stories in all their permutations. In short, Southeast Asian Muslims should be encouraged by their own community leaders to be better Muslims, not better Islamists. To this end, it is suggested that to counter Islamist and Jihadi Islamist Stories, energy and resources should be poured into helping Southeast Asian Muslim communities develop a Counter-Story with two components: a strategic information aspect and a tactically-oriented, psywar aspect as well. The aim of the strategic information component of the Counter-Story would be to promote Liberal Islam and especially neo-fundamentalist, Salafi Islam as the “legitimate” forms of Islam endorsed by the Prophet.

While progressive Liberal and Salafi Muslim leaders and NGOs should take the lead in putting their message across, they could well be assisted to spread their message in ways that would be authentic to the urban centres and rural hinterlands of Southeast Asia. Technical and financial assistance could be channelled to friendly Southeast Asian governments and/or Muslim NGOs to set up websites and newspapers as well as producing inexpensive VCDs and DVDs containing attractively and authentically crafted messages and sermons that would strike a chord amongst audiences in urban and rural mosques, madrassas (religious schools) and pesantrens (religious boarding schools in Indonesia) as well as secular university campuses, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Thailand and the southern Philippines. Moreover, content analysis could be done of the exclusionist rhetoric of not just the overt Jihadi movements but also even Islamist parties and mass movements such as MMI and HTI, as well as other secular university campus-based student movements. While this may not sound politically correct, the *iron logic of the binary worldview* compels us to the conclusion that long-term success in the Struggle Against Violent Extremism requires taking the ideological battle to not just the violent extremists but the non-violent extremists as well. This is why it is imperative to close down the public space for not merely Jihadi Islamism, but Islamism in all its manifestations.

A particularly important aspect of the strategic information campaign would be not so much inter-faith but rather intra-faith dialogues between Islamists/Jihadi Islamists and Liberal/Salafi Muslims, something that is already occurring to an extent in Indonesia. Intra-faith dialogue can be very important in neutralizing the construction of binary worldviews that tend to be propagated in, for instance, certain pesantrens linked to JI, such as the Pondok Pesantren Al-Mukmin school, founded by JI spiritual leaders Abu Bakar Bashir and the late Abdullah Sungkar in the early 1970s. While the relatively cloistered Al-Mukmin teaches a curriculum that has both Islamic and secular subjects, it is the informal curriculum, or “general culture” of the pesantren, that, in combination with the general aloofness of its students from the wider community, breeds the us-versus-them worldview that lays the groundwork for future radicalization of some (if not all) graduates. Visiting journalist Tracy Dahlby, for instance, shed light on the highly xenophobic culture of the pesantren simply by glancing at students’ sandals:<sup>9</sup>

When we reached the front steps of the school and I bent down to remove my shoes as custom required, I couldn't help but notice that the dozens or so pairs of cheap plastic sandals scattered around the base of the stairs all had interesting little pictures or symbols of some kind etched in ballpoint pen on their insoles. When I took a closer look, however, my heart gave a thump – the little symbols were in fact crude renditions of the Holy Cross and the Star of David.

Dahlby's guide explained: "So students can always step on them".<sup>10</sup>

Hence what is needed, as Al-Mukmin alumnus, the *Jakarta Post* journalist Noor Huda Ismail argues, is greater institutionalized exposure of the members of cloistered constituencies such as Al-Mukmin to difference. This injunction translates into exposure to different interpretations of key concepts such as jihad through curricular reform, or by visiting *ustaz* (or religious teachers) from other *aliran* (theological streams); dialogues with alumni that have become successful in the secular world; and in general greater contact with and more access to information about the outside world.<sup>11</sup> The basic point in dealing with specific, physically isolated religious schools, especially boarding schools, would be to open up the vistas of its members by humanizing the Other. When Christians and Jews are seen more as fellow human beings than "disembodied" abstractions, the potential for radicalism and ultimately terrorism is decreased.<sup>12</sup> Comparative religions scholar Charles Kimball correctly argues that at the heart of healthy religion is the willingness of teachers and followers to ask questions, and to challenge dogma. Absolute truth claims and blind obedience are two signs of corrupted religion.<sup>13</sup> Corrupted religion can easily generate Stories that encourage the insular, parochial hatred that animates National and Global Jihadis.

Strategic information campaigns designed to discredit the Islamist, National and Global Jihadi Stories by promoting Liberal/Salafi understandings of Islam as a personal faith rather than a political Story need supplementing by more tactical psywar techniques as well. To this end it would be useful to emphasize the contradictions between the words and deeds of Jihadi Islamist leaders. An excellent psywar opportunity in this connection was presented by the public trials in Jakarta of JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir in mid-2004. To aid the state prosecution, Singaporean and Malaysian authorities provided video testimony by JI militants who had been detained under each country's internal security regulations. While the testimony itself was later seen as not very useful in the case against Bashir, what seemed to be missed by analysts was the sense of betrayal on the part of the detainees. They responded with dismay to Bashir's refusal to acknowledge his ties with them, and many of them wept on tape, lamenting that they had been used and then discarded by Bashir once they were captured. Such material could and should be used by local Muslim community leaders to warn their flocks against the dangers of joining networks like JI, which have political rather than religious agendas.

Another potentially powerful psywar weapon, again emphasizing the contradiction between Jihadi Islamists' pious rhetoric and the horrifying reality of their actual operations, would be extensive publicity of the civilian, especially Muslim civilian, casualties of jihadi attacks. In this connection, it is well known that the August 2003 Marriott and September 2004 Australian embassy JI attacks in Jakarta killed more Indonesians than Westerners. This, according to Indonesian police, has led



to internal dissension within JI ranks.<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing, two Malaysian JI bomb makers, Azhari Husin and Noordin Mohammad Top, who were intimately involved in these two attacks, are on the run in Indonesia. It is possible to exploit psywar techniques to drive a wedge between Azhari and Noordin, who are motivated by a Global Jihadi Story that tends to encourage wanton targeting of innocents, and many rank and file Indonesian JI militants, who hail from historic Darul Islam backgrounds and are motivated by National Jihadi Stories that are comparatively more focused on government and security force regime targets.

### **Supporting the Counter-Story: Indirect Domestic Grand Strategy**

As mentioned earlier, a SAVE campaign in Southeast Asia must be fashioned as an indirect grand strategy. In the classic formulation as suggested by Andre Beaufre in the mid-1960s, while in a direct strategy military means would be the primary instrument of national policy, in indirect strategy non-military measures would be the primary instrument, with military measures playing an important but supporting role. In other words, while GWOT represents a direct counter-terrorist grand strategy, SAVE, with its emphasis on countering extremism rather than extremists, would represent a relatively more indirect counter-terrorism grand strategy. With this conceptual understanding in hand, it is possible to recognize that while articulating a systematic, well-conceived Counter-Story with its strategic and tactical information elements is key to the neutralizing radical Islamism in Southeast Asia, the Counter-Story cannot be applied in a grand strategic vacuum. It needs reinforcement by orchestrated policy activity in other domains. In the domestic domain, the credibility and authenticity of the Counter-Story in the eyes of local Muslim communities needs shoring up by appropriate “propaganda-minded” activity in both narrowly focused counter-terrorist operations as well as broader domestic governance.

It is very important that within national jurisdictions, counter-terrorist operations involving law enforcement and military personnel are conducted with one eye on their potential political impact on the wider Muslim community. This is in essence what is meant by the term “propaganda-minded”.<sup>15</sup> In countering the radical Islamist terrorism that motivates the likes of Al Qaeda and JI, it would be wise to avoid a firepower-heavy military strategy that is likely to cause significant civilian casualties, despite the “smartness” of one’s high-technology weaponry. This is because radical Islamist ideology makes the point that one reason why terrorism against Western civilians is justified is because Western military powers appear to consider the blood of Muslims as “cheap”. To quote from a radical imam’s sermon in a Sydney mosque, someone who apparently influenced the Australian JI militant Jack Roche:

Brothers and sisters - what are you living for? What are we doing here? What’s happening in the world? Go to Iraq today and see your brothers and sisters...Their heads are being blown off, their legs are being amputated, their arms, their bodies, their meat is being thrown off their bodies...We’re too scared to go to jihad. What are you living for?

Hence any inadvertent civilian casualties from counter-terrorist operations in the region would generate what we may term political oxygen that can be exploited by eager radical Islamist ideologues to empower the Story of an Islam under siege and

having no choice but to fight back using all available means. When actual, felt experience seems to confirm the binary, zero-sum, National or Global Jihadi Story, it would not be surprising to see Nominal, Liberal and Salafi Muslims, as well as Islamists, swing well over to the extreme end of the continuum, tip over the brink and fully embrace the “logic” of Jihadi Islamism, be it National or Global. This possibility compels one to conclude that there can be no such thing as a purely military-operational solution to radical Islamist terrorism. The political dimension, in the sense of the impact of military operations on popular Muslim perceptions of national governments, must always be considered. In this connection, it should not be surprising that part of the reason why the current radical Islamist insurgency in Thailand’s south remains very serious is precisely because it has been partially fuelled by military excesses during counter-terrorist operations. In particular the heavy-handed April 2004 attack on the historic Krusik mosque as well as the deaths in security force custody, six months later, of scores of detained Muslim protestors who had been fasting during Ramadan, all constituted political oxygen that inadvertently empowered the insurgent Story of a hegemonic, Buddhist central government in Bangkok intent on keeping southern Thai Muslims marginalized economically, socially and politically. Little wonder that the insurgency seems to show no sign of abating, and worse, even seems “ripe for foreign exploitation” by Global Jihadis.<sup>16</sup>

Propaganda-mindedness is important not merely in the conduct of counter-terrorist operations aside, but even the attitudes and behaviour of non-Muslim security force personnel in direct daily contact with Muslim communities. Non-Muslim police and military should recognize that what they say or do could have wide-ranging political effects. As an example, it has been said that at times the behaviour of Israeli sentries toward Palestinians at checkpoints in the Occupied Territories tends to generate resentment and ill will. There is one documented case in February 2002 where a 20-year old Palestinian woman from al-Najah University in Nablus – Darine Abu Aisha - who felt humiliated at such a checkpoint later became a suicide bomber. Propaganda-minded military behaviour on the ground may thus be one way of avoiding “blowback” of this sort.

The credibility and authenticity of the Counter-Story relies not just on propaganda-minded counter-terrorist operations and security force behaviour, but also imaginative, propaganda-minded governance as well. The question here is how seemingly unrelated policy activity in a range of public policy domains may willy-nilly provide the mindsets and grievances (read third-order root causes) that can be securitized by skilful Islamist ideologues through integration into the Story, thereby transforming disaffected individual Nominal, Liberal and Salafi Muslims, as well as Islamists, into National and/or Global Jihadis. In this regard, propaganda-minded governance is needed to forestall the onset of grievances and states of mind that serve as meat and drink to charismatic radical Islamist ideologues. Hence propaganda-minded governance in support of the all-important Counter-Story would have to be pretty wide-ranging. It would involve ensuring, *inter alia*, the provision of broad-based universal education to foster not just the technical, professional expertise to encourage industrial development and economic growth but importantly, a liberal, critical-minded slant of mind, quite able to challenge absolute truth claims in any social sphere. Propaganda-minded governance would also involve the provision of adequate social welfare nets to encourage strong families and eo ipso the well-adjusted, psychologically balanced children that grow up into well-adjusted, psychologically balanced and relatively cult-resistant adults. It would require effective social redistribution programmes that maintain an

equitable distribution of wealth and public goods amongst the various ethnic/religious groups in society. It would also involve well-conceived cultural policies that safeguard the language and customs of the various communities, thereby forestalling the possibility of ideological entrepreneurs exploiting, systematizing and crystallizing widely held if inchoate community perceptions, of Muslims being “second-class citizens in their own country”. It is worth reiterating that serious shortcomings, singly or in combination, in any number of these domains could well be securitized by skilled agents provocateurs showing how these grievances or third-order root causes fit snugly into the Story. It is at precisely this point that the journey of some disgruntled individuals toward becoming terrorists begins. Care must thus be taken to ensure that as far as possible, grievances and mindsets that empower the radical Islamist Story are neutralized at source.

### **Supporting the Counter-Story: Indirect International Grand Strategy and Enhanced Public Diplomacy**

In a globalized, wired-up world shrunken and rendered virtually real-time by satellite news television channels such as CNN and Al Jazeera, it should not be surprising that the credibility and authenticity of a Counter-Story designed to neutralize radical Islamism in Southeast Asia would be affected, sometimes seriously, by events and occurrences outside the Southeast Asian theatre. This is precisely why the injunction to be propaganda-minded has to apply not merely to Southeast Asian governments and their security forces, but also to the allies of these governments, in particular the target of radical Islamist invective and terrorism: namely the US and Israel. This would imply, for example, the importance of propaganda-minded counter-terrorist operations in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. That the “collateral damage” arising from US military strikes in these countries has deadly implications for Southeast Asian security was clearly evinced by convicted Bali bomber Imam Samudra. Samudra, when asked for reasons why he had helped plan and execute the attack that killed 202 civilians in Bali, mainly Australians, replied that it had partly been in response to the thousands of Afghan civilian deaths that had been caused by Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001. Samudra, echoing the stock Global Jihadi Storyline that the “American terrorists and their allies” must learn that the blood of Muslims is by no means cheap, pointed out later in his memoirs published at the end of 2004, that if the US military and allied forces kill Muslim civilians, then American and allied civilians in Southeast Asia would be targeted and killed too – and as we have seen, very frequently, Southeast Asian citizens get killed as well.

In general, propaganda-minded US foreign and security policy in the wider Muslim world would go a long way toward strengthening the Counter-Story campaign within Southeast Asia. At the moment this does not seem to be happening. The Abu Ghraib prison scandal that broke out in Iraq in 2004 is a case in point. The political fall-out from that terrible case of command failure will, according to even President Bush’s political advisor Karl Rove, take a generation to dissipate. The fall-out from Abu Ghraib was so global that apparently Muslims even in embattled southern Thailand were talking about it.<sup>17</sup> In addition, soon after the April 2004 Krusik mosque attack by Thai security forces, VCDs of jihads in conflict zones like Chechnya, Palestine and Bosnia were found to be circulating in the Thai south. This author himself witnessed an Al Qaeda videotape in Arabic, found in circulation in the Thai south, employing visuals of the 12-year old Palestinian boy Mohammad

Dura who was killed along with his father in a fire fight between Israeli forces and Palestinian gunmen in 2000. It should be noted in this respect that JI often uses atrocity propaganda to empower its Global Jihadi Story and recruit new militants. It is thus vital that the extra-regional sources of political oxygen that can be used by Southeast Asian Global Jihadi networks to empower their Story be choked off. In this regard any effort by the international community, especially the US and Israel, to secure a just settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict; the political stabilization of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the settlement of open sores such as Kashmir and Chechnya, may well have salutary effects on the balance of influence between the progressive Muslim Counter-Story and the radical Islamist Story.

Finally, the Counter-Story in Southeast Asia can also be strengthened by more sophisticated and nuanced public diplomacy efforts by Washington, designed to showcase how millions of Muslims have integrated well into secular, pluralistic political systems worldwide, especially in Southeast Asia itself; as well as the myriad, genuine ways in which the West has assisted Muslim peoples in the past, viz. the Camp David accords of 1978 that paved the way for peace between Israel and Egypt; the 1995 Dayton accords that saved thousands of Bosnian Muslim lives; the NATO humanitarian intervention in Kosovo in 1999 that saved thousands of Kosovar Albanian Muslims; and most recently, the liberation of Afghanistan from the oppressive, medieval Taliban regime.

### **SAVE-ing Southeast Asian Islam: The Four-Step Counter-Strategy for Neutralizing Radical Islamism in Southeast Asia**

In sum, in the spirit of the apparent new US grand strategic thrust of SAVE, devising a counter-strategy for neutralizing radical Islamism in Southeast Asia requires four key steps: first, recognizing that of the Southeast Asian Muslims, the problem arises from those variants that represent more of a political ideology than a personal faith, which means that both non-violent Islamism as well as violent Jihadi Islamism ought to be stigmatized and marginalized by wider Muslim communities in the region. Second, precisely because the radical Islamist Story represents the centre of gravity of radical Islamist terrorist “systems” in Southeast Asia, what is needed above all is an indirect grand strategy that constructs a powerful Counter-Story emphasizing the relatively greater legitimacy of Liberal and Salafi Islam. In short, the Counter-Story should promote Islam-as-faith rather than Islam-as-political-ideology. Third, in order for this progressive Muslim Counter-Story to gradually gain credibility with regional Muslim audiences and thereby take root over the medium to long term, “propaganda-minded” real-time, counter-terrorist operations as well as more general governance within national domains in Southeast Asia are essential. Fourth, and finally, propaganda-minded counter-terrorist operations and foreign policy on the part of the international community toward the wider Muslim world, particularly on the part of the US and Israel, would, along with enhanced and nuanced public diplomacy campaigns showcasing the ways in which America and the West have tried to be Islam’s friend rather than the adversary caricatured by the Global Jihadis, would have salutary effects. In the final analysis, the success or failure of the SAVE campaign against radical Islamism in Southeast Asia will depend on the degree to which the progressive Muslim Counter-Story trumps the radical Islamist Story amongst regional Muslim communities. Paraphrasing Sun Tzu, this campaign will be won by wisdom, not just force alone.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> KH A. Hasyim Muzadi, NU Central Leadership Reaction to MUI Fatwa, 5 Aug. 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> MUI Fatwa no. 7/MUNAS VII/MUI/II/2005 on “Religious Pluralism, Liberalism and Secularism”, 29 July 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Speech by Ustaz Abu Bakar Bashir, 1 Aug. 2003.

<sup>6</sup> *The Islamic State Document* (Bangi, West Malaysia: PAS, 2004), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Neighbour, *In the Shadow of Swords*, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Neighbour, *In the Shadow of Swords*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Dahlby, *Allah's Torch*, p. 229.

<sup>10</sup> Dahlby, *Allah's Torch*.

<sup>11</sup> NH Ismail IDSS Talk.

<sup>12</sup> J. Harold Ellens, “Revenge, Justice, and Hope: Laura Blumenfeld’s Journey”, in Ellens, *The Destructive Power of Religion, Vol. 4: Contemporary Views on Spirituality and Violence*, ed. by J. Harold Ellens (London and Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), pp. 227-235.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), pp. 41-99.

<sup>14</sup> A point made during a counter-terrorism seminar held between 15-16 August 2005 in Wellington, new Zealand.

<sup>15</sup> The term “propaganda-minded” was coined by A.D.C. Peterson, the Director-General of Information Services, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, in 1952, at the height of the insurrection of the Communist Party of Malaya against the British colonial government of the time. See Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds, 1948-1958* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> A point made to the author by a veteran Thai politician in Singapore, 20 August 2005.

<sup>17</sup> A point made by an IDSS researcher who had been undertaking fieldwork in southern Thailand in early 2005.

# **Al-Manar and Alhurra: Competing Satellite Stations and Ideologies**

Anne Marie Baylouny

The current US administration has identified the Lebanese Islamist group Hizbullah as a key threat and the group's media a source of increasing anti-Americanism. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld blamed Al-Jazeera, the leading Arabic language news station, for encouraging Islamism by broadcasting beheadings of hostages in Iraq, a charge the station denies.<sup>1</sup> In President George Bush's State of the Union address in 2004, he focused on Arab television stations he claimed are responsible for "hateful propaganda" against the US. The stations distort news and show explicit images producing anti-Americanism.<sup>2</sup> Al-Manar, a satellite television service launched by the Lebanese Hizbullah, is one of those stations. The US maintains that al-Manar is anti-Semitic and promotes hatred, and lists Hizbullah as a terrorist group.

To counter what is viewed as the promotion of anti-Americanism, hate and terrorism, the administration banned al-Manar from American airwaves in December 2004, though legally, the basis for banning the television station was due to its role in aiding Hizbullah, not its messages.<sup>3</sup> The US launched its own television station, Alhurra, to compete with messages from Arab media outlets in general. Are these efforts likely to succeed, winning the hearts and minds of Arab and Muslim TV watchers? To answer this question, an analysis of Hizbullah's appeal is necessary. What messages is the station actually carrying, and with which constituencies do they resonate? How does banning the station affect their credibility? I analyze al-Manar's ideology and link it to its bases of support. I then examine the American actions to counter this ideological influence, and how those attempts are received in the Arab world.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to previous reports of al-Manar's broadcasts, my study did not find overt support for suicide bombings or attacks on Americans or Israelis. Most coverage was comparable to other stations. The basic character of the station mainly comes through in the spots, fillers between programmes, which highlight negative American policy and military actions in the Middle East and the power of the resistance (Hizbullah) to protect Lebanon against incursions. Al-Manar has recently moderated its more extreme rhetoric, with the goal of increasing Hizbullah's presence in Lebanese domestic politics, as interviewees claimed.

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Indeed, research for this study was partly conducted during the period of parliamentary elections in Lebanon. If moderation has progressed with political participation, the finding is far-reaching, demonstrating a non-confrontational method of mitigating an organization's radical stances.<sup>5</sup>

Al-Manar's stance can be interpreted as the frames or messages of a social movement, geared to encourage attitudes which spur action and involvement. These messages centre on Palestine, the continuing threat posed by Israel, American bias in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the power and importance of community solidarity, and pride in Arab culture and the achievements of the Islamic Resistance (Hizbullah's armed wing), which have strong resonance in the Arab world. Alhurra's message is intentionally opposite to these and is interpreted as another element in the western siege against Arab culture. As such, its presence adds to the polarization of Arab and American messages and perspectives. Ironically, messages communicated on the station are increasingly rejected as propaganda. Viewers watch Alhurra to identify the American spin, while they follow al-Manar to learn the dangerous truths banned by the Americans.

### **The Problem: Hizbullah and al-Manar's Media Ideology**

Hizbullah was officially established sometime between 1982 and 1985<sup>6</sup> as an umbrella group uniting religious Shi'a groups in Lebanon in the wake of the Israeli invasion. Its military wing is called the Islamic Resistance. The group benefited from significant Iranian aid, military and financial, and advocated the establishment of an Islamic state. To this end, during the Lebanese civil war Hizbullah utilized suicide bombings, and is accused of sponsoring or undertaking terrorist actions in the early 1990s in Latin America. The organization is officially listed by the US as a terrorist organization. While they are pro-Iran, they are anti-Taliban and anti-bin Laden.<sup>7</sup>

After the end of the Lebanese civil war, Hizbullah transformed itself into a domestic political party, and is now viewed as legitimate by Lebanese of all confessional stripes. Debates over the Ta'if accords resulted in forsaking the goal of an Islamic state and cooperating with other religious groups and parties in Lebanon.<sup>8</sup> Hizbullah has participated in elections in truly democratic fashion, allying with other religious groups, including Christians, and encouraging its members to vote for them. Its social service provision and anti-corruption stance have strengthened its base of support among all groups. The party currently holds 14 seats of a 128-member parliament.<sup>9</sup>

Most importantly, the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon in 2000 due to Hizbullah's attacks on Israeli soldiers in the south, and the concomitant disbanding of the South Lebanon Army funded by Israel, was seen as a unique event demonstrating the power of the group and its commitment to Lebanese sovereignty. Many Lebanese leaders agree that disbanding Hizbullah's militia, now numbering only a few hundred paid soldiers, is not an urgent priority, although they would like to see the militia disarmed. The group itself maintains that its resistance helps to prevent incursions into Lebanese territory or meddling in its affairs. Israeli occupation of the disputed Sheb'a farms is cause for the continued existence of the resistance armed forces. Arabs repeatedly refer to Hizbullah's victory: it is responsible for Israel's only forced military withdrawal from the territory. The group's resistance

role has earned it acclaim in the Arab world, which elevates its tactics as a model to emulate. Further, this role has tamed much of the historical animosity between the Sunni and the Shi'a, the Shi'a having long been viewed as a heterodox sect. For its part, Israel views Hizbullah as a prime adversary, despite the group's currently limited domestic role.

Some observers maintain that Hizbullah suffered a crisis of identity when Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon because the movement lost its key issue and rationale. This conclusion is misplaced. The centrality of Palestine and concern for specifically Lebanese domestic politics were key issues prior to the end of the civil war and the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, but they became increasingly prominent with those two events. Further, both these concerns enable Hizbullah to broaden its image to include other confessional groups and increase its following in domestic electoral politics. Featuring the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the potential for Israeli incursions underscores the group's chief accomplishment, the successful resistance against Israel in southern Lebanon. Rather than experiencing an identity crisis, Hizbullah simply altered the emphasis in its relations with Israel from liberation to protection of Lebanese land.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, neither the group nor its constituency is single-focused.<sup>11</sup> Hizbullah has specifically national concerns (what is termed Lebanonization) and its own foreign policy priorities. While Hizbullah remains relatively close to Iran, its ties to the country both ideological and material have diminished since the end of the civil war. Globally and nationally, the organization is focused on securing a place for Shi'a, who have traditionally been marginalized and repressed. With its successful resistance against Israel, Hizbullah has effectively mainstreamed the Shi'a, creating a greater acceptance of them by Sunnis than ever before. Previously, the Shi'a were viewed as passive in their widespread political exclusion and economic repression. Hizbullah's advocacy of resistance altered the image from victim to equal by seeking political empowerment based on communal solidarity and pride,<sup>12</sup> an ideological change pioneered in Lebanon before the civil war by Musa al-Sadr.

Domestically, the organization is popular for its provision of social services, in stark contrast to the Lebanese state's lack of provision for the poor. These services are furnished to all those living within areas where the organization functions, regardless of confession. Politically, Hizbullah maintains a developmentalist, pro-poor ideology. Like other Islamist groups, corruption is one of its main themes. Hizbullah lobbies for more services from the government, and highlights the lop-sided reconstruction of the country which is overwhelmingly concentrated in the rich areas outside the reach of the poor. The counter-demonstration by Hizbullah after Prime Minister Hariri's assassination, in response to the one focusing on the Syrian occupation, was held in the expensive, reconstructed downtown area to underscore the differing assessment of the country's priorities.<sup>13</sup> This pro-poor and anti-materialistic theme is communicated by al-Manar and appeals to a wide swathe of the public that cannot afford the upper class lifestyle widely promoted in Beirut. That lifestyle is also viewed as promoted by international capitalism and the US, making its rejection one of the main perceived differences marking the boundaries of the other.

Hizbullah's other main focus is the Palestine-Israel conflict. Particularly after the Israeli withdrawal and the advent of the second or al-Aqsa intifada later that same year, Palestine has become an increasingly central focus of the organization. The group appeals to the Palestinian refugee camp population, who have strong practical incentives to ally with the Shi'a group. On a practical level, Hizbullah



views the Palestinian conflict as an opportunity to expand its base of support.<sup>14</sup> It seeks to recruit among the Palestinians, and use their numbers in its competition with the other major Shi'a party in Lebanon, Amal. The Palestinians, who are overwhelmingly Sunni, have been drawn to Hizbullah's concern with Palestine. Their status in Lebanon is increasingly insecure and they are searching for a place within the country's closed political and social system. To this end they have begun to differentiate themselves from the general category of "foreigner", which includes Filipinos,<sup>15</sup> and embrace the previously-rejected category of refugee as a bargaining position for civil rights.<sup>16</sup> Further, tens of thousands of Shi'a Palestinians from southern border villages were naturalized in 1994, counter to the government's widely broadcast position against naturalization or *tawteen*. A number of Sunni Palestinians were then naturalized, presumably to maintain the sectarian balance.<sup>17</sup>

The Palestinian cause resonates in the Arab and Muslim worlds, particularly in the absence of any country to defend the Palestinians or resist Israel, outside of Hizbullah's success in southern Lebanon. While al-Qaeda used Palestine as a mobilizing issue to unite its disparate Arab Afghans in the international sphere, Hizbullah's use of Palestine has domestic roots and uses. The movement was officially announced on the anniversary of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre, in which civilians from two Palestinian camps in Beirut were killed by a Christian militia under Israeli army cover.<sup>18</sup> The central theme of Palestine and Jerusalem resonates not only among the Shi'a and Palestinians in Lebanon, but with the Sunni population more broadly. Its continued use grants Hizbullah further legitimacy, and allows it to expand its domestic constituency.<sup>19</sup> As a result, with its Shi'a base and support from many Sunnis, Hizbullah is now widely accepted by the Lebanese population. Ninety-nine percent of Lebanese Muslims view Hizbullah as a legitimate resistance<sup>20</sup> and the 8 March 2005 demonstration after the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri fielded between 600,000 and one million demonstrators in support of the party.<sup>21</sup>

The theme of Palestine also unites Lebanese across confessional lines. Fairouz, the famed Lebanese singer, has numerous popular songs about Jerusalem and Palestine. Lebanese Christians, while harboring no affection for Palestinians themselves, also feel the power and pull of the loss of Palestine, and 74% of Lebanese Christians view Hizbullah as a legitimate resistance. The Lebanese Army used its one semi-successful battle in the 1948 war against Israel's formation, the battle of Malikiyya, as the foundation myth serving to unite the many confessions. The power of this battle turned the armed forces into a national institution, from its origins as a colonial army, and created a collective identity to prevent fragmentation during most of the civil war.<sup>22</sup> In the first decade of Lebanese independence, when Muslim and Christian military cadets were so divided as to be unable to agree on a name for their class, a tradition upon graduation, they could agree only on one – the name of "Palestine."<sup>23</sup>

### *Al-Manar*

Hizbullah began its television station al-Manar in 1991 broadcasting only locally in Lebanon. In May 2000, al-Manar began transmitting by satellite. Al-Manar is generally available throughout the Arab world on satellite, and in Lebanon over land. The station is banned in Europe and the United States. The station now has bureaus and correspondents around the world, and is most famous for its broadcasts of Hizbullah attacks on Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon. Polls list al-Manar as one of the top four news stations in the Middle East.

To date, the main research on al-Manar was done by Avi Jorisch of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. His work emphasized the station as a terrorist one, dangerous to the US and Israel, overtly teaching and promoting terrorist techniques and airing anti-Semitic and anti-American messages. Jorisch concludes that the station's core mission is to promote terror, hatred and radicalism. Unlike al-Jazeera, he states, there is no redemptive value to al-Manar's coverage; it is undiluted propaganda, wholly dictated by its militant funder, Iran.<sup>24</sup> He claims that the station is active in the incitement to violence, providing video instructions of suicide bombing techniques.<sup>25</sup> Broadcasts during the months al-Manar was studied here did not confirm such instruction programmes.

While based on research, Jorisch's work is polemical and alarmist, drawing conclusions not supported by the data or lacking contextual knowledge of many of the references. For example, Jorisch jumps to conclude that al-Manar does not air commercials on its satellite version because advertisers desire to hide their support of the station from the "prying eyes of US-based viewers".<sup>26</sup> A lack of context is apparent in his assessment of one phrase used by the station, "Jerusalem, we are coming," which he interprets as a threat. The line actually comes from a well-known song by Fairouz, about religious unity around worship in Jerusalem as a city of peace.<sup>27</sup> Jorisch had extensive access to al-Manar's officials and programme directors, an openness they now regret, as Jorisch subsequently led the international campaign against al-Manar. Station officials are now wary of interviews and researchers.

Al-Manar is funded by Hizbullah, and though precise costs or amounts are not known, one source put the annual cost of running the station at \$10-15 million.<sup>28</sup> Funding from Iran dropped dramatically after the end of the civil war and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. Meanwhile, Hizbullah has increased its revenue from non-Iranian Shi'a and Lebanese sources. Revenue comes from expatriate remittances, donations and tithes. (As a religious party, Hizbullah receives tithes of one-fifth of income from its constituents.)

Al-Manar must be placed within its domestic and regional context. Lebanon has numerous television stations, each with its own ideological stance. These stations proliferated during the civil war, creating more than 50 land-based stations. That number decreased after the war to a dozen or so, of which only have satellite capability.<sup>29</sup> When al-Manar was licensed, the government simultaneously granted a license to a Christian religious evangelical station, Télé-Lumière, to maintain a confessional balance in the country's media.<sup>30</sup> Unlike commercial stations elsewhere, Arab satellite television does not generally subsist through its advertising. Stations are politically geared and funded. Particularly in Lebanon, each major political trend has its own station, which at times the leader personally finances. Revenue from advertising does not generally cover expenses, a condition true of many Lebanese television stations.<sup>31</sup> While ads are of secondary importance, they do serve a purpose. They indicate the market where the station is popular. Most ads on Arab satellite television are aimed at the Gulf market.

Al-Manar relies particularly little on advertising. A station with a mix of global and local supporters, like al-Manar, is theoretically attractive to advertisers. However, the station reportedly turns down 90% of potential advertisers due to their violation of its standards. It will not accept commercials for alcohol, tobacco, or ones in which women are presented as objects for sale or temptation.<sup>32</sup> Further, advertising on the station is less attractive to Gulf advertisers for political reasons, since the

Shi'a are seen as a distinct community separate from the Gulf one.<sup>33</sup> Until 2004, ads were broadcast only on the land-based station, not the satellite. Among their advertisers were big American and European companies. A scandal brought this to the attention of the US Congress, which accused the companies of aiding terrorism, and the American and many European advertisers withdrew their commercials.<sup>34</sup>

Currently, ads on al-Manar are infrequent and few, airing mainly in prime time. They are local and regionally-based. On the land-based station, ads are for local clothes, shoe and toy stores, along with other retail stores and a Lebanese cellular phone company. Several manufacturing companies advertise cleaning detergents, air conditioning products and food products of European origin. On many of these, non-veiled women are shown. In addition, the station airs announcements for social service organizations and schools run by Hizbullah, computer and sports classes, summer school and Quran classes. There are even fewer commercials on the satellite version. Local advertisements are eliminated and only ads for basic food products, cleaning and air conditioning goods were observed during this research.

### *Broadcast Coverage*

Al-Manar<sup>35</sup> (Lighthouse) is one of the top stations in the Arab world, seen as enacting a new version of politically independent media.<sup>36</sup> At the 8<sup>th</sup> Cairo Television and Radio Festival, al-Manar won the most awards of all the competitors. The Lebanese Media Group, which includes al-Manar and al-Nour radio (also Hizbullah affiliated) won four and nine awards respectively.<sup>37</sup>

The station identifies itself as “qanat al-muqawama”, the station of the resistance, and has been labelled “resistance media” by one Arab editor.<sup>38</sup> Some of al-Manar’s programming, particularly promotional spots, as expected, decry Israel, emphasize the right and ability of the Islamic Resistance to defend the country, and highlight flaws committed by the US. But the remainder, the majority of the station’s air time, is generally unbiased. Indeed, much of the programming is educational and modernizationist, and finds parallels in western public broadcasting such as PBS. The station’s ideological stance includes promoting a public role for women within an Islamic framework, advocating for the poor and moderate in income, emphasizing community solidarity, lobbying for government social services, and solidifying the place of the resistance and its fighters in Lebanese society.

The content of the station’s broadcasts has not remained constant but evolved along with Hizbullah’s political position and opportunities for participation in the Lebanese government. With the prospect of gaining a cabinet position with the 2005 elections, the station’s more extreme rhetoric became muted. Differences between the satellite and land-based coverage have decreased as al-Manar and Hizbullah sought to broaden their appeal to non-Shi’a communities and to solidify their political position in Lebanon.

Further, the station has won acclaim by not limiting its interests to its own confessional group. According to an official at the Lebanese Ministry of Information, al-Manar has a strong community following, perhaps the strongest, because the station hosts interviews of persons from all political trends and confessions. Al-Manar remains neutral in these “Crossfire”-type programmes, he stated, in order to increase its viewership. These shows are key to the station’s attractiveness. Al-Manar compared favorably to other stations which merely advertised their own

political viewpoint, excluding alternative trends from airtime.<sup>39</sup> The religious aspect of the station is not overt compared to other religiously-affiliated stations, according to most audience opinion. Religious explanations and discussions are minimal. Al-Manar reiterates its religious identity mainly through broadcasting the call to prayer, and like other stations includes more religious programming during Ramadhan.

Entertainment programmes or serials are of short duration, as is common in the Arab world, often only a few dozen episodes. The channel purchases and airs inexpensive Egyptian and Syrian serials, many historically oriented, about life during Ottoman times. Another series, “Ashna wa shufna,” is a comedy typical of other Arab stations. One, for which the station received fierce international criticism, focused on the Jews in history, called *The Diaspora* or “al-Shattat,” and contained factual inaccuracies.<sup>40</sup> This was a Syrian-made drama that the station said it purchased quickly without viewing the entire series in advance. Whether this is true or not is less important than the station’s realization that airing the series was a mistake.<sup>41</sup> Other well-liked programmes deal with historical issues, such as the programme on Mary, the mother of Jesus (Sitt Maryam).

Numerous programmes seek to educate, showing scientific interviews on meteors and geology, new technology from the US, and “Discovery”-style programmes on animals, which focus on the needs of the constituency, cow milking technology for example. Spots on Arab countries and their history are frequent. Some of the programming is public service-oriented. A spot announcement promoted obeying the law – “Do not go against the law”.

### *Palestine*

The station is clearly centered on Israel and the Palestinians, including extensive coverage of Israel’s actions, a stance consistent with what observers have described as Hizbullah’s preoccupation with knowledge about its adversary.<sup>42</sup> It is perceived to be speaking out for the Palestinians, the “underdog,” against the Israeli oppressor, and airs events and viewpoints not seen on other stations.

Al-Manar helps to break the myth of the Israeli army’s invincibility and resurrects the idea of resistance for the Arabs.<sup>43</sup> Hizbullah military operations were broadcast, covered by al-Manar reporters “embedded” with them. These episodes of Israeli troops killed in southern Lebanon were initially shown on al-Manar,<sup>44</sup> and aired on Israeli TV only later.<sup>45</sup> To reinforce its victories, mainly for its own constituency, the station’s psychological campaign “Who’s next?” shows Israeli casualties and a blank space for future soldiers.<sup>46</sup> The station broadcasts some spots in Hebrew, aimed at demoralizing the Israelis. Arguably, this programme affects the group’s Lebanese constituency more than it does the Israelis, providing evidence that Hizbullah is indeed active in combating the enemy, even on the media front. By promoting Hizbullah’s accomplishments against the Israelis, al-Manar fulfils a fundamental task for a successful social movement, convincing its members that success is possible. Indeed, Hizbullah created a feeling of victory in the Arab world, shared by Christians and Muslims alike, that translated into popularity for al-Manar.<sup>47</sup>

Viewers seeking news on Palestine turn to al-Manar. Some observers assert that the station’s broadcasts are crucial to the sustenance of the intifada.<sup>48</sup> However, two indirect factors could be construed as aiding the intifada. First, al-Manar’s

reiteration of Hizbullah's success against the Israelis can be interpreted as a model for others to follow, as indeed it has been throughout the region. Second, the station focuses much of its news and entertainment on Israel and the Palestinians. News and interviews come straight from the Palestinian territories and feature Arab perspectives on events rather than Israeli. Interviews include those in Islamist groups such as Hamas, leading observers to conclude that al-Manar is serving as a voice for terrorism. Another reading would be consistent with the view of al-Manar as an opposition or resistance media, covering the non-dominant perspective.<sup>49</sup> Other programmes highlight the historical actions of Israelis, seeking to uncover their crimes and terrorist actions, such as the Spider House, Terrorist-Zionist Crimes, and others.<sup>50</sup> Information and interview programmes focus on the Palestinian right of return in international law.

Since the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, the station's emphasis has switched from fighting Israel to supporting the Palestinians and protecting Lebanon (and the Shi'a) by resisting future Israeli incursions. Spots imply that resistance means being watchful, thus Hizbullah is the vanguard of protection for the sovereignty of the Lebanese state. Spots on the station highlight the resistance activities, demonstrating Hizbullah soldiers in hiding watching the border with Lebanon. "Bil-murraad" (In the lookout) states that no one can approach the border without being detected; a bird is shown getting near the border, it is trapped, and then the remains of soldiers' uniforms are seen. Another one reiterates that 425 resolutions attempted to get Israel out of Lebanon: one resolution succeeded in getting Israel out – *al-muqawama* (the resistance). In another, a woman is shown sleeping at night, another woman sitting next to her baby sleeping in the crib. All eyes are sleeping, but there are eyes watching out for your safety – the eyes of *al-muqawama*. One spot states, amid dramatic music, "al-quds fi khatr" (Jerusalem is in danger).

Some spots equate the resistance's protection with the protection of Lebanon ("himaya al-muqawama, himaya lubnan"). One spot states that in this time, we are all responsible for our brothers and community – do not forget the martyrs and resistance fighters. Another touts the resistance as safety for the generations. Others tie the culture of the simple, traditional Lebanese people to support for the resistance. A spot shows children playing, men smoking *arghileh* (water pipe), women cooking in traditional pots, and Lebanese celebrations before showing the resistance. In another, an Israeli is shown killing people, while old men and Hizbullah soldiers resist. The messages and ideology mirror those used by armies in other parts of the globe, touting the suffering of the soldiers on the citizens' behalf, the respect due to soldiers, and soldiers' own self-respect and pride earned through military service. Other segments recount Israel's incursions into Lebanese and Arab soil, and Hizbullah's responses. The station broadcasts celebratory spots to its martyrs, Imam Hussein, and occasionally Ayatollah Khomeini. Award ceremonies for injured fighters who completed job retraining are also shown.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is highlighted in al-Manar's lighter "human interest" programming as well. Game shows such as al-Muhimma (the mission) are centred on contestants seeking to enter Jerusalem and answer historical questions mainly on facts to do with Israel and other resistance organizations. In two series (al-'Aidun and Yatathakkarun), Palestinian elders recount oral histories, telling stories of village life in the homeland.<sup>51</sup> Another programme reunited a Palestinian family who moved from Beirut to Gaza with the members of the family who stayed in Lebanon. Along with pictures and direct interviews, the interviewer discussed how the individuals remember their family, family stories were recounted, and they

discussed the pain of *ghurbeh* (being far away) and the feeling of *hanin* (nostalgia) for family.

### *News Coverage*

Daily broadcasts begin with the news and a review of the headlines in differing papers across the ideological spectrum. This type of coverage is common on Arab stations. In news, the station emphasizes events in Iran, Palestine, Iraq and US foreign politics. There is a clear anti-Israeli bias. Jewish interests are seen as powerful in determining US policy and electoral outcomes. Israel is viewed to be behind the banning of al-Manar in France, and American reports from the Congressional Research Service are used to support the assertion of AIPAC (pro-Israeli) and Saudi funding of American elections. Potential threats against the Arab and Muslim worlds are reported. The station communicates the idea that Israel is hegemonic in the region, tightly connected to the US, and that Israel and the US want a weakened Lebanon and Syria, unable to resist Israel's actions. Iraq was targeted to fragment the country, not make it sovereign.

Al-Manar follows American domestic and foreign politics closely, with a special interest in the Arab world. Regarding US positions on Lebanon, one spot states, "This is how the US deals with UN resolution 1559" (calling for Syria to withdraw from Lebanon), while depicting a man holding a large wooden stick the size of a bat, tapping it hard against his hand, menacing and ready to strike. This is followed by another scene, with the words "and this is how the US treats UN resolutions regarding Israel". The screen shows a man picking the petals of a daisy and states: it applies, it does not apply, it applies, and so on. As in alternative reporting in the west, the Bush administration is seen as anti-Muslim, and Christian Zionists as behind much of those policies. The station distinguishes between Christianity ("true" Christianity) and the actions of Zionist Christians. Regarding the US presidential elections, the station's position was that no difference among candidates existed. Bush and Kerry shared an American strategy, while their methods might differ.

News reports from Iraq are clearly opposed to US action there: "the American occupation army". Actions against the Americans in Iraq are reported and resistance in Fallouja is followed closely, along with terrorist actions against the Iraqi people by the resistance there. The latter are depicted in all their tragedy. Details of torture, indictments and alleged rapes by American troops are reported, and more importantly, the station quotes American media reports regarding those issues. Further, while the US emphasizes the threat facing it in Iraq to mobilize domestic support, al-Manar spins this same fact as a positive, demonstrating the power of the opposition.

In addition, al-Manar programming highlights any mistakes or faux pas of the US. It emphasizes that Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib are not being discussed in the US nor are those responsible punished. Lawsuits and problems about the Pentagon that are reported in the US press are carried by the station. Importantly, American moves to correct problems are also reported, such as the Congressional meeting to research events at Guantanamo Bay. Flaws in the US are emphasized, such as discrimination against blacks, the American Indians, and slavery in history. Spots and filler segments highlight negative actions of the United States. One historical piece, "WAR," focuses on US invasions of other countries. Another shows UN proposals favourable to Arabs, and a US veto on them.

In other foreign policy issues, Syria is praised for its support of Hizbullah's fight against Israel, and the relation between Syria and Lebanon is viewed as complimentary. The Saudis are condemned for not financially helping others and being corrupt. Religiously, differences between Sunnis and Shi'a are papered over as not consequential. The station's coverage of Iraqi elections was generally perceived as balanced, without bias for a particular candidate.<sup>52</sup>

Regarding Iran, the station cannot be regarded as merely a mouthpiece for that regime. After the new Iranian president was elected, the station like others, including Alhurra, focused on the question of how his conservative stance would affect policy. In particular, the question of gender relations was discussed. Interviewees refuted the idea that the new president would, or could, segregate the sexes in public. They stated that his record in office as governor of Tehran has not reflected such extremism, and civil society, including numerous women in parliament, is too developed to return to policies characteristic of previous harsh times.

### *Local Politics*

In domestic politics, al-Manar stresses the Hizbullah ideology of developmentalism and the need for state services. It emphasizes unemployment, corruption, and the need to cross confessions and join together as a nation. No sectarian animosity was detected. On the contrary, Christians and subjects involving Christians were treated respectfully. This cross-sectarian character was noted in interviews. Town hall type programmes are also produced and aired by the station, such as Nafitha 'ala al-mujtama' (Window on the community). People gather and express their opinions on particular social problems and other topics.

During elections in Lebanon, the spots focused on the importance of voting and Lebanese unity. The elections were spun as an affirmation of democracy, a message to the US, counter to the interests of Bush, the US and Israel. "Your vote protects Lebanon," a spot stated ("sawtak biyahmi Lubnan"). Another spot advertised "wihda Lubnan," or one Lebanon. However, the power of the Shi'a community in Lebanese voting was reiterated, in both a get-out-the-vote perspective and one which sought to remind those elected of the Shi'a role in their victory.

Community solidarity and the need for cooperation are emphasized. In Ahl al-medina (the People of the City) people in a city were challenged to live alone for three days, without speaking to anyone, in order to win a prize. Not a reality show, the series was acted, with a clear moral point emphasizing community. Upon the announcement of the contest, all stores and schools closed. Everyone wanted to win the prize, so teachers left their posts and butchers closed shop. The city was paralyzed. The series demonstrated, in the style of an after-school special, that such a situation was unsustainable. After a few hours, the community decided that they could not live without a social life, and that no one would get the prize. The programme demonstrates the believed contrast between the individualism of the west and the Arab and Middle Eastern value of community.

### *Women and Morning Programmes*

At least half of the announcers and programme hosts are women, all veiled (with the *hijab*, the scarf covering the hair). However, not all the women appearing on the

shows are veiled, and commercials (on the local station) show women unveiled. Al-Manar states that it rejects all advertising which depicts women as objects.

Al-Manar shows health and household programmes that are popular and relevant. Mornings, after the news, are devoted to a weekly theme, usually geared toward women. One week discussed child rearing, how both mother and father have roles in child socialization. Professors discussed their psychological perspectives on the family and children. Another tackled the problem of what to do when a child does not want to go to school. Other episodes discussed plant arranging, summer fruit, and new women writers. One segment hosted a local clothes designer who utilizes intricate sequin patterns in her clothes.

The programme al-Lu'lu al-sagheera (The little pearl) documents a day in a woman's life, emphasizing the role of mother and teacher of her children. The programme shows how she manages to live frugally as a widow, how the children (two boys and two girls) are taught, their daily schedules, traditions, and the role of religion in daily life. She rejects commercialism and western culture, without it being mentioned by name, and stays away from Beirut, the home of much materialism.

In another programme, a seventeen year old girl envies the Christians she sees who dress well, have nice cars, and meet boys. Questioning and rejecting her own family's poverty, she obtains work in a boutique in Beirut. Her mother objects to this work, but she proceeds. She wears western clothes and does not veil. She meets a man and marries him. He becomes a strict Muslim and demands that she quit work and wear the veil. She does so, and discovers that her mother and the people of her village respect her again. She finds fulfilment and happiness, and obtains a job, sanctioned by the community, cleaning a school. Reunited with her mother and village, she blames herself for her lost time in Beirut living a western lifestyle. She takes religious classes and speaks to school children about her negative experience in Beirut amid the commercialism and materialism. In contrast to her position at the outset of the series, she expresses her gratitude for being a Muslim and for her humble life.

Segments of the programme Mashakel wa hulul (Problems and solutions), aired during Ramadhan, discussed difficulties a family could have and propose solutions. The segments aided parents in socialization tactics for their children, teaching them to keep their own problems away from their children, how to talk to children to prevent them from misbehaving, and emphasizing the importance of education for children, equating it to alleviating the suffering of the community. One segment discussed women's rights in Islam. Another showed children asking their parents to help poor families, as was done in the Prophet's times. A segment stressed the centrality of the martyr's children and their education, because they are seen as a role model for others.

### *Children's Programmes*

Children's programmes are varied and appear to resemble public television elsewhere in the world. There are cartoons, computer-generated "Teletubbies"-style shows, and puppet shows that promote non-smoking. Other programmes for children include American movies such as Rain Man and Disney cartoons.<sup>53</sup> Some programmes are religiously-oriented. One game show centres around children's knowledge of the Quran. The show involves Palestinian and Lebanese children



averaging 8-12 years of age, over half of whom were girls, competing to recite verses.<sup>54</sup>

Other shows for children focus on and reiterate the need for a resistance. Asdiqa' al-manar (Friends of al-Manar) is a game show set as a pretend war game, with youngsters 10-15 years old fighting with pretend weapons (guns, grenades, swords, arrows) against an enemy that appears western. It is understood that this enemy is Israeli. The children, Shi'a and Palestinians from the camps, shout, "God is great," as they cross over outdoor territory to meet the enemy across the bridge. The fighters maintain the moral high ground by enacting a form of brotherhood among the fighters, sharing their food, bonding with each other. The series Fatat al-muqawam al-Quds (Jerusalem Resistance Boy) involves a young fatherless boy (a recurring theme) who wants to find his father who went missing in a war. To do so, he learns to fly planes, starting with paper airplanes, then with flying school lessons. Unable to find his father, he joins the military – Hizbullah's Islamic Resistance – and tries to recruit his friends to join. Religion is not mentioned in the series. The boy's mother praises him, while she herself is depicted traditionally dressed, advising her daughters to stay clear of western influences and keep to the southern and rural areas instead. The village sheikh is not clearly Sunni or Shi'a, but is a voice of wisdom.

### **Response: Banning al-Manar and Launching Alhurra**

The US response to al-Manar has been to ban it entirely from the US and to promote its own channel, Alhurra, to compete for Arab audiences.<sup>55</sup> The station was intended to move "the people of the region away from extremism and violence and toward democracy and freedom".<sup>56</sup>

#### *Banning al-Manar*

The campaign in the US and Europe to remove al-Manar from satellite stations began with an opinion piece in the *Los Angeles Times* in October 2002. The piece accused American companies who advertised on the station of promoting terrorism.<sup>57</sup> PepsiCo, Proctor and Gamble, and Western Union were cited as advertisers on al-Manar's local broadcasts (the satellite broadcast at the time was commercial free). This was followed by a letter to Congress to put pressure on these companies, using the opinion piece as support.<sup>58</sup> The advertisers pulled out, and pressure to ban the transmission of the station itself increased. At the same time, al-Manar was under siege in Europe. Having agreed not to air messages inciting hatred, the French Audiovisual Council granted the group a licence, with a warning to stick to its word.<sup>59</sup> However, it was indeed banned from French airwaves and European ones in general, followed quickly by an American banning of the station in December 2004.<sup>60</sup>

The immediate reaction of the banning of al-Manar in Lebanon was defiance. In response to France's ban, fifty cable operators in Beirut halted the French station TV5.<sup>61</sup> The Lebanese Minister of Information declared it censorship of any opposition to Israel, and students demonstrated in support of al-Manar.<sup>62</sup> The banning was criticized by Reporters Without Borders, who warned against confusing anti-Israeli positions with the fight against terrorism.<sup>63</sup> Al-Manar voluntarily stopped broadcasting several days before the ban was to take effect, a move that prevented other stations on the same satellite network from being removed from the airwaves as well. This action won the station praise from other

networks and its watchers, fuelling the image of the station as sacrificing for others.<sup>64</sup>

### *The US's Alhurra*

As a counter to the negative image produced by Arab media stations, the US stepped up and altered its participation in public media. A triad of new US media were launched in the Arab world: a satellite TV station, a radio station called Radio Sawa, and Hi magazine, which together are publicly funded through a half a billion dollar grant to the Broadcasting Board of Governors, producers of the Voice of America. Alhurra, or “the free one”, is the commercial free satellite TV station launched on Valentine’s Day 2004. The station itself was allocated \$102 million start up funding,<sup>65</sup> \$62 million for first year by Congress, and \$40 million more for an Iraq-specific station.<sup>66</sup> Fifty-two million dollars were proposed for the station in 2005, and \$652 million requested for international broadcasting in 2006. This includes the proposed expansion of Alhurra to European forums and the creation of a Farsi (Iranian) language satellite station.<sup>67</sup>

Alhurra is targeted at the general public, especially those under the age of 30, in contrast to previous US public diplomacy efforts which were geared toward elites.<sup>68</sup> Alhurra’s broadcasting includes cooking and fashion shows, entertainment, geographic and technological programmes, documentaries and news.<sup>69</sup>

There have been complaints about the station from its beginning. The station’s first guest was President Bush, who, according to some media observers, was fielded “softball” questions only. Other criticism is that the station has ignored topics of importance to Arab viewers. Breaking news is particularly problematic. Alhurra was broadcasting a cooking show when Sheikh Yassin was assassinated by Israel, and in contrast to all the Arab television stations, Alhurra remained with its original programming. The other stations switched to cover the breaking news. The station’s director later admitted this was a mistake.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the Cairo Khan el Khalili terrorist incident that killed three tourists was not covered for over an hour after other stations had switched.<sup>71</sup> These problems prevent the station from becoming a news source in times of crisis.

The station’s news coverage is markedly different from that of other stations in the area. It does not air interviews with leaders of terrorist groups, such as the Taliban, in conformity with Congress’s mandate.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the station does not air negative aspects of the coalition presence in Iraq, or attacks on journalists, but will occasionally show the victims of terrorism. The spin of events also differs. People are not “martyred” but killed, and the station does not call terrorism “so-called terrorism” as other Arab stations do. Further, the common greeting used by Arab channels, *al-sallamu ‘alaykum*, viewed as religious, is avoided in Alhurra, whose hosts instead say “welcome back”.<sup>73</sup>

Alhurra relies heavily on western-produced and sub-titled programmes. Recently, it has begun to address this issue, adding more local material, including town-hall type debates and coverage specifically geared to the elections in Iraq, Palestine, and the US (“Iraq Decides, Palestine Decides, America Decides”). Alhurra’s promotional spots emphasize elections and protest in the Arab world. One spot ends with King Abdallah of Jordan saying in English that “we” are making the Middle East a better place, after pictures of the Syrian President Bashar al-Asad and Syrian troops

leaving Lebanon. Other spots show Iraqis voting and Egyptian and Lebanese protestors.<sup>74</sup>

The station's most popular shows are its non-news coverage, including travel, documentary, fashion, cinema and music programmes. It also has interviews with local fashion designers and writers. Hollywood events such as the Golden Globes and the Emmy awards are broadcast (live), along with baseball and football games to draw more male viewers. But the increase in such coverage is criticized by the Broadcast Board of Governors, the oversight body for Alhurra, since the station was intended for news. Mouafac Harb, the station's director, defends the fashion programmes, saying that people in the Middle East should see that there is a "grand and beautiful world" beyond their borders.<sup>75</sup>

For many critics, the station's limitations in coverage call into question its objectivity, neutrality and the basis for its credibility.<sup>76</sup> The lack of images of prisoners in the Abu Ghraib scandal significantly tainted the station's image. Interviews conducted by one writer in Lebanon indicated that not showing Palestinians' tragedies and Israelis as oppressors is a reason for not watching.<sup>77</sup> For some, Alhurra confirms that the US has embraced the promotion of propaganda more commonly associated with the dictatorial and Soviet regimes.<sup>78</sup> But according to Jon Alterman, Middle East Director of the Center for International and Strategic Studies, the presumption that information provided by the US government would be authoritative in the Middle East is flawed. The Middle East has long been used to government propaganda, and Alhurra appears as such to many.<sup>79</sup>

Alhurra is faced with what one writer described as an "existential" problem,<sup>80</sup> which results in the station either appearing to be the old-style government-sponsored propaganda, or evading Congress' dictates. It cannot be critical of the US due to its structure and organizational funding, but to effectively draw viewers from other stations for news coverage it must cover a variety of viewpoints as the others do, which inevitably involve criticism of US policies. Currently, the station treads the line between, partly since Congress is unable to directly monitor its broadcasts, which are in Arabic.<sup>81</sup>

The plethora of media alternatives complicates the question of what Alhurra adds. The station was intended by the US government to cover new and difficult issues presumably avoided by other Arab stations. However, Marc Lynch's recent research demonstrates that such an assessment of Arab television is false. Indeed, Arab satellite stations regularly cover difficult and presumably taboo subjects, including Islamist movements, torture in local prisons, censorship, corruption, women's rights, government repression, and economic problems such as unemployment and child exploitation.<sup>82</sup> In fact, this new coverage is heavily slanted toward self-criticism of Arab society.

My survey of Alhurra's content found it to be heavily weighted toward statements by American officials. Bush's speeches were covered extensively, occasionally taking up most of news broadcast time. Interviews with American officials about American events were translated and shown in Arabic. American military officials in Iraq were interviewed when events occurred in Iraq, and Israeli officials spoke on events in southern Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority. Reporting a clash between Hizbullah and the Israeli army in Southern Lebanon, newscasters stated that the Israelis knew it was coming, that it was not a surprise to them. This is important since the knowledge and competence of the Israeli army have been discredited by its unsuccessful occupation of the area. Coverage of the military

skirmish focused on the Israeli side, showing Israeli soldiers preparing for war. Newscasters discussed the “message” that Israel was attempting to send. This contrasts with al-Manar’s coverage of the same event which focused on Palestinians and the effects on them. Similarly, al-Manar’s report on the clash between Hizbullah and Israel in southern Lebanon highlighted domestic effects. The perspectives of the two stations are diametrically opposed. In one, Israelis and Americans speak and act, they interpret news and events. In the other, Palestinians, Lebanese and Iraqis have voice and agency.

Shortly after the new Iranian president was elected, Alhurra’s talk shows focused on the president and the specific questions of whether Iran is a dictatorship, even if it holds elections, and whether the extremism of the new president is Islamic or not. The station also focused on whether the new regime would alter arrangements between men and women in Iran, preventing them from sitting next to each other, for example.

Another talk show presented the difficult question of poverty in Morocco, and what caused it. Could corruption be the problem? No, the station’s interviewer and interviewee concluded. Corruption could not possibly cause all of the poverty. The cause lay elsewhere. This is significant since corruption is one of the main themes of Islamist movements in the Arab world, including Hizbullah.

### **Conclusion: The Effectiveness of Countering al-Manar**

Is banning al-Manar and promoting an alternative likely to increase support for and knowledge of the US? Banning al-Manar in fact promotes the idea that the station is airing news deemed unfit for American viewers, and in the process, inflates the presumed power of al-Manar and empowers it as an alternative to US views and propaganda. Promoting Alhurra enhances the credibility of Arab media, which are seen to be airing uncomfortable truths so dangerous the US has taken the trouble to counter them.<sup>83</sup> Further, the widespread view that al-Manar was banned due to pressure from Israel and pro-Israeli organizations discredits the United States’ proclaimed neutrality and its democratic values of press freedom. This reinforces the sense of being “besieged” by a global Israeli campaign.<sup>84</sup>

Alhurra’s problems begin with its name, viewed as condescending and inappropriate.<sup>85</sup> “The free one” assumes the traditional US stance of representing the better society and further contradicts its journalistic nature. Critics argue that it cannot be free if owned by the state. Alhurra has also been criticized for lacking cultural appropriateness, being unable to resonate with the audiences, and broadcasting without market research (or advertising) to determine audience reception.<sup>86</sup>

#### *Audience and Viewership*

Numerous sources cite al-Manar as one of the prime sources of news in the Arab world, particularly about Palestine. The top four news stations, which capture 70-80% of satellite viewers, are al-Manar, al-Jazeera, LBC (Lebanese Broadcasting Company) and Abu Dhabi TV.<sup>87</sup> According to the Jerusalem Media Communication Center, the majority of Palestinians watch al-Jazeera, Abu Dhabi, and al-Manar.<sup>88</sup> Jorisch reports a poll in 2003 which found those in Jordan turned first to al-Manar for news of Palestine (28%), followed closely by al-Jazeera (27.5%).<sup>89</sup> A lecturer in

Cultural and Women's Studies at the Palestinian Birzeit University stated that she watches al-Manar to hear news of Palestine, when the Palestinian Authority itself is silent.<sup>90</sup> One man stated that the station represents the moderate Muslim – not extreme, but focused on issues close to the average Muslim's heart.

My interview data show that, although there is a major trend of individuals watching all news stations keeping in mind the ideological leanings of each, al-Manar audiences are largely determined by national community. This trend crosses religious boundaries in Lebanon, including Shi'a and Christian Maronites. Some refuse to watch al-Manar, rejecting all things religious, and these often watch the Christian-affiliated station LBC. Others are very attracted to the station, citing its good programmes. Some individuals state that yes, the station does air some extreme statements, but also many good points not found elsewhere. Many Sunni Muslims in Lebanon have differences with the station over al-Manar's close relationship with the Shi'a and the Da'wa party in Iraq. In the Palestinian camps, with few exceptions, al-Manar is widely popular due to its coverage of Palestine and news there.

In Jordan, the overwhelming feeling is that al-Manar shows the truth. Palestinians in Jordan have enormous faith in the station, particularly after Israel left southern Lebanon. Islamists in Jordan (Sunnis) are attracted to the news coverage. They remain, however, wary of the station's Shi'a character. The news they feel is varied in coverage, and the station honest in its identity: it blatantly proclaims its stance as against Israel and the US in Iraq. This is respected.

Poll results on Alhurra, as reported to Congress, show the station's apparent success. However, these conclusions are unsupported by wider data and other polls. An ACNielsen and Ipsos-Stat poll claimed that 34% reported watched Alhurra in the week before the survey. They were not asked how much they watch or if they turn to the station during a crisis. This is particularly important given the viewing characteristics of Arab audiences, who watch numerous channels for limited amounts of time each, complicating conclusions about viewer patterns and ratings.<sup>91</sup>

Alhurra is broadcast only to the Middle East, and is less available than al-Manar. It is available in Jordan, Iraq and Egypt for those owning satellites. However, some satellite providers do not offer it and there is heavy pressure on them to keep the station off.<sup>92</sup>

Even accounting for the smaller possible viewing population, numerous surveys contradict the rosy poll results presented to Congress. A survey by Zogby International and conducted by Shibley Telhami in June 2004 across a number of Arab countries found that al-Jazeera and al-Arabiyya are primary news sources. None, in fact, gave Alhurra as their first choice for news; a small amount, 3.8%, picked it as a second choice.<sup>93</sup> These results accord with my results in Jordan of the station in comparison and negative contrast to Arab coverage (see below). A Palestinian poll found only 1.1% watched Alhurra, whereas over 58% viewed al-Jazeera, 12% al-Manar, and 10% al-Arabiyya. Gallup's poll concluded that 6% of Iraqis watched Alhurra in the previous week. A survey by the Arab Advisors Group found fewer Egyptians watched the station (3%) than viewed BBC World (5%) or the government's Nile News (9%). Al-Jazeera again scored 88% of the public in that poll, and al-Arabiyya in second place trailed with viewership of 35%.<sup>94</sup>

It is also important to note that consuming American media is not the same as accepting the American perspective presented. Audience polls indicate that around a quarter of Jordanians and Saudis do watch Alhurra at least once a week but it is not a primary source of news for them.<sup>95</sup> For Radio Sawa, an ACNielsen survey revealed that 11% of Egyptians 15 years of age and older and 40% of Kuwaitis listened once a week. However, whether these individuals' attitudes toward the US changed as a result, or if perhaps they listened out of a pro-US stance to begin with, was not addressed.<sup>96</sup> Another survey of satellite users in greater Cairo found that most viewers (over 64%) felt Alhurra was not trustworthy as a news source; college-educated viewers trusted the station a bit more than those with only a high school diploma.<sup>97</sup> In comparison, almost 86% felt al-Jazeera was trustworthy, and almost 67% felt CNN was trustworthy.<sup>98</sup> Tellingly, only 8% of Alhurra's small viewing public deemed the station's coverage could be trusted.<sup>99</sup>

The most common audience reaction to Alhurra in Lebanon is indifference. It is seen as just another station, in a populace that has long learned to identify the ideological bias of the station and adjust accordingly. Many have never heard of the station, or if they have, they find CNN more credible. In Beirut, Christians report that they like Alhurra, believing it is more reflective of their interests in the way that al-Jazeera is for Muslims.<sup>100</sup> Recent interviews indicate that for the majority of the population in the Muslim areas, Alhurra is "all but dead".

Street interviews in Cairo demonstrated that the predominant impressions of the station were either indifference or attraction to the fluff and public interest programming, not news. Some felt the channel was low quality; others compared it to their own state-sponsored media. Many were hostile. The majority felt the channel was boring.

There were a variety of other ambivalent to negative responses to Alhurra. Some viewers, I found in Jordan and Lebanon, watched it only to compare the news with Arab media coverage and determine the difference. My interviews in Jordan accord with one interviewee in the Cairo survey who asserted that the channel is viewed as Israeli. Another interviewee stated that, in his opinion, the premise that the channel would make Arabs like the US is flawed, since if that were the case, the popularity of US movies would have done the trick long ago. Another respondent believed that Arab governments should ban the channel.<sup>101</sup>

My interviews concluded that the opinion of the stations is determined largely by ethnic or national identity lines. Palestinians do not trust Alhurra, and if they do watch it all, it is to see how differently the news is presented and compare it to other stations. Throughout Lebanon and Jordan people overwhelmingly believe that Alhurra shows them what the US wants them to know. Young Iraqis living in Jordan have hope in the US plan for Iraq and therefore watch Alhurra to see the American point of view. Older Iraqis' opinions generally accord with Jordanians in this regard, and are not sanguine regarding their country's future. These views translate into perspectives on the television station. Some believed that Alhurra was attempting to impose and convert Arabs to American ideas. The few who had a positive opinion of Alhurra mentioned only the entertainment coverage or the cultural interview programmes.

The effect of satellite TV such as al-Jazeera and al-Manar is questionable. One study failed to find a correlation between satellite television and attitudes toward the west. In fact, the most critical attitudes toward the west came from those countries with the lowest percentages of satellite TV viewers. While only 26% and

58% respectively of Egyptians and Jordanians have satellite television, these populations were the most negative toward the west. Lebanese and Palestinians, 84% and 85% of whom have satellite television, were less critical.<sup>102</sup> In particular, the view of the conflict between the west and the Muslim world as a religious one, a view often promoted on satellite television stations, has not translated into like attitudes among the populace. The study reiterated the view that Arabs triangulate multiple media sources with their own pre-existing beliefs and values.<sup>103</sup> Arabs have long experience with state-owned media, censorship and propaganda. As a result, ironically, they judge the station by democratic journalistic standards: its separation from government.<sup>104</sup> The history of biased media has created a populace of critical viewers, distinct from patterns among many western audiences.<sup>105</sup>

### *Polarizing the Issue Space*

Jorisch and others offer a number of recommendations that would further polarize the environment. They advocate isolating Hizbullah and al-Manar, and criminalizing anyone dealing with them and all countries where the station has bureaus.<sup>106</sup> Such actions would further polarize the Arab world, and add credence to “opposition” media such as al-Manar. In a globalized information technology world, perspectives that resurrect the besieged and victimized identities of Arabs and Muslims are impossible to eradicate. In the absence of al-Manar, another forum would develop.

The policy conclusions of this study counter those seeking either to promote Alhurra as a solution or who see nothing lost in its presence.<sup>107</sup> On the contrary, this study indicated that the presence of Alhurra sets up a counterpoint and identifies particular views as clearly American, making rejection of those ideas clearer and adoption of alternative ideas more accepted. Alhurra adds to the sense of siege currently in the Arab world, the feeling of being targeted by an American attempt to alter their ideas, culture and values. Ironically, proof is demonstrated in the launching of Alhurra itself.

The American offensive against al-Manar may prove to be counterproductive. The muting of al-Manar’s extremism over time supports the alternative policy of engagement and political inclusion. Former Ambassador Rugh maintains that US officials should participate in existing stations, in effect entering the debate and creating dialogue among the players, not one-way monologues.<sup>108</sup> By denouncing those stations as anti-American instead, the US is sending a message that free speech is only allowed when it is favourable to the US.<sup>109</sup> Not only does this reinforce feelings of a double-standard on the part of the US, but it sets up the US station as a government-sponsored propaganda outlet with which Arabs are familiar and have rejected. An increasing number of Arabs reject anything merely because it comes from the US, with the American stamp on it; this transfers onto messages from Alhurra. Thus al-Manar has benefited from the presence of Alhurra, as opposing messages are deemed not credible and al-Manar increasingly trustworthy in comparison. Similarly, some argue that for the Iraqi elections to have an effect outside that country, they had to be viewed on al-Jazeera, not Alhurra.<sup>110</sup>

Al-Manar both represents the ideas of its audience and attempts to alter them, to spur the constituency to action. A part of this process is altering their self-concepts from victim to empowered and proud. Tactically, many of the emphases of al-Manar can be viewed as effective frames for mobilizing against a militarily superior enemy.

Importantly, the presence of Alhurra bears witness to the effectiveness and power of Arab media, since they were so dangerous the US was pushed to legitimize itself, to defend itself against counter-claims.<sup>111</sup> This demonstrates the fallibility or weakness of the opposition (the US), a necessary ingredient in drawing recruits to a movement.

Alhurra cannot replace stations such as al-Manar. The two offer differing symbols and messages. Al-Manar promotes community identity, solidarity and a modest lifestyle. Alhurra demonstrates the extravagance of western capitalism. Al-Manar gives voice and pride to the victims, and shows victory against an enemy. Alhurra's interviews are from the point of the view of that enemy, rubbing salt in the wound, as it were. Al-Manar does not conform to stereotypes of it (or of Hizbullah) that it marginalizes women or injects religion in all its programming. On the contrary, the station highlights practical problems of women and solutions proposed by them. The overwhelming majority of children's, entertainment, scientific and technological programmes are identical to those on any other station, American or otherwise. Where programmes differ in ways peculiar to the station, they communicate an alternative concept of the common good which relies heavily on the local community, a perspective the American station does not offer. If Alhurra succeeds in obtaining a serious audience, it will be among the upper class only. Yet the stations have more in common than they differ. Neither is commercially supported, and neither can claim to be unbiased: both explicitly seek to communicate a message funded by political considerations.



## Appendix



The magazine clip has the Alhurra channel's logo.

From: *Daily Arabic Media Report*, prepared by the Center for International Issues Research for OSD-Policy, 2 August 2005. From Jordanian media source, cartoonist Naser Jafari, and featured on the *al-Jazeera* Arabic language website.

## Endnotes

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<sup>4</sup>This research was undertaken with the aid of several (Arab) researchers watching al-Manar between November-December 2004 and May-June 2005 in the United States, Lebanon, and Jordan. Alhurra was viewed in June 2005. Around 50 random street interviews were conducted in Lebanon and Jordan on both al-Manar and Alhurra during June 2005. I supplemented this qualitative research with numerous survey conducted on Arab media.

<sup>5</sup>I use the terms extremist and radical to describe, respectively, intolerant, rejectionist viewpoints and advocacy of the use of violence.

<sup>6</sup>The exact date of its founding is debated.

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# **Ideology in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism: Lessons from combating Al Qaeda and Al Jemaah Al Islamiyah in Southeast Asia**

Rohan Gunaratna

## **Part I: Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

Ideology is a powerful message that motivates and propels ordinary human beings into action. Ideology, a dynamic and an evolving belief system, is created by the interpretation of events by ideologues. Ideology, not poverty or illiteracy, is the key driver of politically motivated violence.<sup>2</sup> Ideology frames organizational structure, leadership and membership motivation, recruitment and support, and shapes the strategies and tactics adopted by the group.

Jihadi ideologues and group leaders craft their ideology by interpreting, reinterpreting or misinterpreting religion and politics. Ideology is used to attract and retain recruits as members, supporters and sympathizers. The personal history and worldview of an individual may make him or her more or less susceptible to a particular terrorist or extremist ideology.

Using ideology, contemporary Jihad groups recruit followers from a cross-section of society – the rich, the poor, the educated and the less educated. To generate both recruits and support, they indoctrinate their potential and existing support base. Ideology is inculcated by disseminating it in the form of information or propaganda using lectures, speeches, pronouncements, writings, etc.

To counter the threat posed by a group, its operational infrastructure must be dismantled and its conceptual infrastructure eroded. As terrorism is a vicious by-product of ideological extremism, government and society must develop an ideological response to make it difficult for terrorist groups to replenish their human losses and material wastage.

## **Framework**

In the post-9/11 environment, the centrality of ideology in political violence, especially terrorism, has become increasingly evident both to analysts and to policy and decision makers.<sup>3</sup> To counter terrorist ideology and to provide an alternative

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ideology, it is necessary to know its key ideologues, organizational structures, the evolving ideology, and the target audience – the community.

## **The Threat Landscape in Southeast Asia**

To understand the appeal of a narrow segment of Southeast Asian Muslims to wage jihad, this paper will focus on the ideologies of al Qaeda and al Jemaah al Islamiyah (JI). The evolving ideologies of these two jihadi groups - advocating global and local jihad campaigns - have profoundly transformed the region's threat landscape.

Since its formation on September 10, 1988, al Qaeda, the chief proponent and practitioner of global Jihad, established a robust presence in Southeast Asia. Al Qaeda's unique ideology significantly influenced JI, a faction of Darul Islam, a local jihad group, into becoming a regional group with a global focus. Although operationally JI is still a regional group, its focus is identical to al Qaeda i.e. attacking targets of the US, its allies and friends. The ideological transformation of local and regional jihad groups to emulate al Qaeda's vision and mission of a global jihad is the most significant development in the post 9/11 environment.

Although the operational capability of al Qaeda has severely weakened during the past four years, the ideology of global jihad articulated by Bin Laden and his group serves as a catalyst for 30-40 Asian, Middle Eastern and African jihad groups and for numerous cells in the West. After al Qaeda's attacks on America's most iconic landmarks on 9/11, many jihadists increasingly view al Qaeda as a pathfinder, model for emulation, and the vanguard of the Islamic movement. In Southeast Asia, JI is increasingly seen as the model by existing and emerging local jihad groups. The major shapers of ideology in Southeast Asia are al Qaeda and JI.

## **Part II: Al Qaeda**

Al Qaeda is a jihad organization with a global reach. In keeping its original mandate, its principal aim was to inspire and incite Islamic movements and the Muslim masses worldwide to attack those who threaten Islam and Muslims. In defence of Islam and its adherents, al Qaeda conducts attacks on iconic targets of the US, its allies and friends to inspire and instigate a perpetual campaign. Although al Qaeda does not enjoy widespread support among the Muslim masses worldwide, it seeks to exploit the anger, suffering and the resentment of Muslims against the United States. America's lack of understanding of the Muslim world – for instance its invasion of Iraq - has given a new lease of life to terrorism and extremism. Considering the support for the global jihad movement in Asia, Africa, Middle East, and elsewhere, the campaign has been a partial success. While al Qaeda conducted one major attack every year prior to 9/11, al Qaeda and its associated groups conducted one attack every three months after 9/11. Many of these groups today seek to emulate al Qaeda tactics, and more importantly believe in the global jihad. The most hunted terrorist group in history, has spawned several similar groups.

Al Qaeda inherited a global infrastructure from the anti-Soviet multinational Afghan mujahidin. Its real strength is not al Qaeda membership per se but its overarching highly appealing ideology. Instead of building support for al Qaeda the

group, it seeks to reinvigorate the global jihad movement.<sup>4</sup> In addition to training its own members – 4,000 (October 2001 estimate, Western intelligence community), al Qaeda, Taliban and other groups trained 20,000 members in its camps in Afghanistan from 1989 to 2001. Most of the mujahidin that fought against the Soviets disagree with al Qaeda and its associated groups.

Today, al Qaeda's real power is the disparate groups it had trained, financed, armed and most importantly ideologized. The al Qaeda network (al Qaeda group + its associated groups) and ideologically affiliated cells comprise the al Qaeda movement. Since al Qaeda attacked America's most iconic landmarks, the threat posed by al Qaeda has been surpassed by the emergence of a global jihad movement, consisting of al Qaeda and other groups that advocate global jihad. The global jihad movement has four overlapping components.

First, al Qaeda group was established by Osama bin Laden, the unofficial representative of the Saudi Kingdom to the Afghan jihad. Abdullah Azzam, Bin Laden's Palestinian-Jordanian mentor, was the ideological father of al Qaeda. The group's global jihad ideology has great appeal to both associated groups waging the local jihad in conflict zones and radicalized Muslim cells in the migrant and diaspora communities of the West. Also known as al Qaeda core, al Qaeda central or al Qaeda classic, post-9/11 al Qaeda group is operationally weak but ideologically potent.

Second, al Qaeda's operationally associated groups consist of an umbrella of 30-40 Asian, African, Middle Eastern groups. Also known as the al Qaeda network, al Qaeda provided these groups with training, weapons, finance and ideology in Pakistan, Sudan, and Afghanistan; in conflict zones such as Bosnia, Chechnya and Minadano; and through the Internet. They hold declared or undeclared membership of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders formed in February 1998. They include the Salafi Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), Takfir Wal Hijra (TWH), Tawhid Wal Jihad (al Qaeda of the Two Rivers), Laskar-e-Toiba (LeT), al Jamaah al Islamiyah (JI), and Abu Sayyaff Group (ASG).

Third, al Qaeda's ideologically affiliated cells. These are operationally unconnected to al Qaeda but driven by an ideology of global jihad articulated by it. "The Supporters al Qaeda"<sup>5</sup> the cell responsible for the bombing of the trains in Madrid on March 11, 2001, and the disrupted British cell led by Omar Khayam<sup>6</sup> were self financed and independent of al Qaeda's operational control. The post-Iraq robust Islamist milieu in North America, Europe and Australasia is transforming support cells to execution cells.

Fourth, Sunni groups operationally unconnected with al Qaeda but steadfastly advocating global jihad. This category could be violent or non violent, for instance extremist groups – Hezb-ut-Tehrir, al Mahajaroon in the UK – and violent groups – Laskar Jihad and Front Pembela Islam in Indonesia. Some of these groups have publicly criticized bin Laden and al Qaeda but they believe in global jihad.

As a result of US-led global action, al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden has severely weakened. Nonetheless, the high-impact 9/11 attack, US-led coalition intervention in Afghanistan, the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, the media reporting on Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay have strengthened support for likeminded associated groups and cells as well as Islamist groups unconnected to al Qaeda. Exploiting suffering, resentment and anger of the Muslims, the terrorist and extremist groups

are now able to replenish their human losses and material wastage and continue the fight. Al Qaeda has morphed from a group of 3-4000 members in October 2001 to a movement of several tens of thousands. Today, the global jihad movement, consisting primarily of Sunni groups connected or unconnected to al Qaeda, is even more robust.

The threat is not monolithic. The global jihadists present a multidimensional threat against the US, its allies and friends. The global jihadists challenge the infidel (non Muslim) and the apostate (Muslim) regimes. The threat is both ideological and kinetic.

### **Al Qaeda's History in brief**

Osama bin Laden alias Osama Mohammad al Wahad alias Abu Abdallah alias al Aaqa was born in 1957. Son of the late Mohammad bin Awdah bin Laden from Yemen, bin Laden grew up in Saudi Arabia. His father became a construction magnate and renovated the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The richest non royal Saudi family, the Bin Ladens are highly respected by both the Saudi royal household and the public.

After graduating from University in Saudi Arabia, bin Laden became deeply religious and assisted the Islamist movement against the communists in Yemen. After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, he arrived in Pakistan and subsequently in Afghanistan to assist the Afghan groups in their protracted campaign. In 1984, Dr Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian Jordanian, who came to oppose the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan, founded *Maktab al Khidmat lil Mujahidin al-Arab* (MAK), known commonly as the Afghan Service Bureau. MAK provided significant assistance to the Arab mujahidin and to their families. Bin Laden joined hands with Azzam, who became his mentor. As MAK's principal financier, Bin Laden was considered the deputy to Dr Azzam. At the height of the foreign Arab and Muslim influx into Pakistan-Afghanistan from 1984-1986, Bin Laden spent time traveling widely and raising funds in the Arab world. Azzam recruited several thousand Arab and Muslim youths to fight the Soviet presence, and bin Laden channelled several million dollars' worth of financial and material resources for the Afghan jihad. MAK operated independently of Western and Pakistani governments that assisted in the fight. MAK rarely interacted with the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, but it tapped into the vast Muslim Brotherhood network and the resources of the Saudi government.<sup>7</sup> The fighting and relief efforts were assisted by two banks – Dar al Mal al Islami, founded by Prince Mohammad Faisal in 1981 and Dallah al Baraka founded by King Fahd's brother-in-law in 1982. The banks channelled funds to 20 NGOs, the most famous of which was the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO). Both IIRO and the Islamic Relief Agency functioned under the umbrella of the World Islamic League led by Mufti Abdul Aziz bin Baz.

Immediately before the Soviets withdrew, Azzam and Bin Laden decided to form a vanguard group – al Qaeda al Sulbah - that could unite the whole Muslim world into a single entity. Azzam was the ideological father and the intellectual leader but gradually bin Laden took over.<sup>8</sup> Bin Laden's initial worldview was shaped by Dr Azzam, formerly of the Muslim brothers. Towards the end of the anti-Soviet Afghan campaign, Bin Laden's relationship with Azzam deteriorated. The dispute over Azzam's support for Ahmad Shah Massoud, who later became the leader of the Northern Alliance, caused tension. Bin Laden preferred Gulbuddin Hekmatyar,



former Prime Minister and leader of the Islamic Party (Hizb-i-Islami), who was both anti-communist and anti-western. Furthermore, together with the Egyptian members of al Qaeda, Bin Laden wished to support terrorist action against Egypt and other Muslim secular regimes. Having lived in Egypt, Azzam knew the price of such actions and opposed it vehemently. Azzam and bin Laden went their different ways. In Peshawar, Pakistan, Azzam was assassinated by the Egyptian members of al Qaeda.

Following his death, the ideological vacuum was filled by Dr Ayman al Zawahiri, the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. A professional medical practitioner and a qualified eye surgeon, Zawahiri became both bin Laden's doctor and mentor. After Azzam's death, bin Laden took over MAK and then transformed it. Using MAK trainers and camps, Bin Laden built al Qaeda. Al Zawahiri, a well known hardliner, became his deputy and the principal strategist of the jihad movement.

Before it was popularly known as such, al Qaeda is a concept attributed to Syed Qutb in his writing as "*al-qaedah al-sulbah*" (The Solid Base). This term refers to the successful early Muslim generation who received education and guidance from the Prophet Muhammad in the house of Arqam Bin Abi Arqam. They were companions of the Prophet whose devotion and commitment towards the Islamic struggle against Arab pagans were unparalleled by later generation. They became a source of inspiration and model for Muslims to emulate. Because of their success as well as testimony of their excellence by the Prophet. In conceptualizing al Qaeda, Azzam drew from the pages of Islamic history. In general, what he did was to define its composition, aims, and purpose in view of the struggle of an Islamist movement after the victory over the largest land army in the world – the Soviet military. While the concept was transformed to meet the changing landscapes it was never intended to be a terrorist organization.<sup>9</sup>

### **Al Qaeda's features under Osama Bin Laden**

Al Qaeda is not a conventional organization but a transnational network. It does not rely on state sponsorship but multiple sources of support. It is a highly patient organization promoting a multigenerational campaign. These three characteristics made al Qaeda an unprecedented threat and an unpredictable adversary. The meticulous and exhaustive preparation of attacks makes al Qaeda truly unique. Unlike governments, al Qaeda is not event but campaign driven, making it a strategic threat. As al Qaeda makes careful preparations investing significant time and energy, without sound intelligence the timely prediction of its attacks is nearly impossible. Al Qaeda does not believe in immediate reaction to an attack carried out against it. Al Qaeda doctrine stipulates that it should always wield the initiative. Al Qaeda decides when and where to attack. After US fired 70 cruise missiles into Afghanistan in 1998, al Qaeda decided to strike America at home using US airplanes, an operation that would take three years to plan, prepare and execute.<sup>10</sup>

Immediately after September 11, al Qaeda planned to attack Heathrow airport using aircraft hijacked from Eastern Europe and US financial targets using UK as a launching pad. These plans were disrupted in Pakistan and UK. Two successive waves of strikes in London in July 2005 suggest the appeal of al Qaeda's call that "it is the duty of every good Muslim to wage jihad". Al Qaeda's real strength is to meticulously study the gaps in security and strike at targets that will have strategic implications.

## **Al Qaeda Ideologues**

The founding charter of al Qaeda was formulated by Abdullah Azzam probably in late 1987 and early 1988 and published in Al Jihad, the principal journal of the Arab mujahidin in April 1988. He envisaged al Qaeda as an organization that would channel the energies of the mujahidin into fighting on behalf of oppressed Muslims worldwide, an Islamic “rapid reaction force”, ready to spring to the defence of their fellow believers at short notice. Azzam described his original concept:

*“Every principle needs a vanguard to carry it forward and, while focusing its way into society, puts up with heavy task and enormous sacrifices. There is no ideology, neither earthly nor heavenly, that does not require such a vanguard that gives everything it possesses in order to achieve victory for this ideology. It carries the flag all along the sheer, endless and difficult path until it reaches its destination in the reality of life, since Allah has destined that it should make it and manifests itself. This vanguard constitutes Al-Qa'idah al-Sulbah for the expected society.”<sup>11</sup>*

The forceful words articulated to shape the organization did not generalize the means to include terrorism. He was a firm believer that “the end does not justify the means”. Jihad as he saw it was invoked as a religious obligation in defence of Islam and Muslims against a defined enemy, not a speculative one. This is best demonstrated in the Afghan-Soviet war, to which he dedicated his life immediately before his death. Any attempt to speculate beyond this perimeter, would be out of proportion. Azzam rejected a proposal by MAK’s Egyptian members – Abu Ubaidah al Banshiri, Abu Hafs alias Muhammed Atef, and subsequently Dr Ayman al Zawahiri – to utilize jihadi funds to train mujahidin in terrorist techniques and tactics. He went so far as to issue a fatwa (religious decree) ruling it as a violation of Islamic law. Azzam was against the killing of non-combatants and would never endorse the current terrorist tactics.

The same, however, cannot be said of Dr Ayman al Zawahiri. He is the person largely responsible for the al Qaeda’s mutation into what it is today. He not only filled the vacuum left by Azzam but transformed Bin Laden from a guerrilla who killed soldiers to a terrorist who killed civilians. Before al Zawahiri joined al Qaeda, he was already a practising terrorist, the mastermind of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, one of the most deadly organizations in the Middle East. al Zawahiri’s experience against oppressive and repressive political regimes in Egypt made him “battle hardened”, compelled to continue the struggle against the present day *jahilia* at all cost.<sup>12</sup>

With the mobility of al Qaeda leaders confined to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, Abu Musab al Zarkawi in Iraq has emerged as al Qaeda’s de-facto operational commander. Zarkawi seeks to wage a global jihad but disagrees both with Bin Laden and Zawahiri on the issue of the Shias. While al Qaeda core would like Zarkawi to target the new Iraqi government and the coalition forces, Zarkawi also targets the Shias. Nonetheless, both Zarkawi’s and his mentor’s – Abu Mohammed al Maqdisi – commitment to global jihad is unequivocal.

## **Al Qaeda's Worldview**

Al Qaeda's worldview has changed over time. It perceives the US and Israel leading a global conspiracy against Islam and the Muslims, and perceives American hegemony as affecting the Muslim nation. Al Qaeda detests America's presence in the Arabian Peninsula, especially in Saudi Arabia; US support for the Israel state; US assistance to pro-Western dictatorships around the Middle East, and since the first Intifada in 1987 Bin Laden highlighted the neglected future of the Palestinians. Al Qaeda blames the US for everything and holds the US government, American people, and US foreign policy responsible for bringing chaos to the Muslim world. The only way the Muslim nation could live under the shade of Islam, al Qaeda ideologues argue, is to be united and work towards the establishment, by force if necessary, of an Islamic nation adhering to the rule of the Caliphs. It is with this in mind that Bin Laden issued the 1988 fatwa. Al Qaeda targets both non Muslims and Muslims that do not share al Qaeda's worldview. To Bin Laden and al Qaeda, it is a religious duty of Muslims around the world to wage jihad on the American land, American citizens, Israel and Jews. After 9/11, the targets include US allies, primarily Europe, Canada and Australia and friends, primarily Muslim countries that support the West. Those Muslims who do not heed this call are declared apostates, people who have forsaken their faith.

Al Qaeda's main aim is to establish Islamic states wherever Muslims live. The methodology for achieving this is jihad. Al Qaeda's ideology, often referred to as "jihadism", is marked by a willingness to carry out armed struggle against those who in their view try to prevent the establishment of an Islamic state. "Jihadism" is at odds with nearly all Islamic religious thought. "Jihadism" as practised by al Qaeda has its origins in the Middle East. As a concept, it is often associated with the work of two modern Sunni Islamic thinkers: Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab and Syed Qutb. Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab<sup>13</sup> was an 18<sup>th</sup> century reformer. He claimed that Islam had been corrupted a generation or so after the death of the Prophet Mohammad. He denounced any theology or customs developed after that as non-Islamic, and in doing so tried to reform more than 1,000 years of religious scholarship. He and his supporters took over what is now Saudi Arabia, where Wahhabism remains the dominant school of religious thought. Syed Qutb is an Egyptian scholar of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. He declared Western civilization an enemy of Islam and denounced leaders of Muslim nations for not following Islam closely enough. He preached that jihad should be undertaken not just to defend Islam, but to purify Islam. Other contemporary ideologues – Abu Mohamed al Maqdisi, Abu Qatada al Filastini and Abu Hamza al Masri – contributed significantly to al Qaeda's worldview.

As an extension of these ideologies, al Qaeda often couches its grievances in "Third Worldist" terms familiar to any contemporary anti-globalization activist, often framing modern political concerns, including social justice, within a divine and religious narrative. Jihad in the form of armed struggle in the name of God then becomes the means to attain freedom and rid the ummah of injustice. It is a way to punish the cruel as they have inflicted cruelty upon the ummah.<sup>14</sup> The jihad they wage is a "defensive jihad" in the face of perceived aggression by the enemies of Islam and the Muslims. The presence of US and other non-Muslim troops in Saudi Arabia after the 1991 Gulf War was a turning point in the life of Bin Laden. Although the US troops established a presence at the invitation of the Saudi royal family, Bin Laden justified his fight by renewing his commitment to "defensive jihad". He publicly criticized the Saudi royal family and alleged that their invitation of foreign troops to the Arabian Peninsula constituted an affront to the sanctity of

the birthplace of Islam and a betrayal of the Global Islamic community.<sup>15</sup> As the Saudi government rendered him stateless, Bin Laden advocated violence against it and the United States. As it was difficult to strike inside Saudi Arabia, Bin Laden's ire increasingly focused on the United States. Following a period of exile in Sudan and Afghanistan his radical views sharpened. Jihad to al Qaeda followers was deemed justifiable in order to defend the dignity and pride of the nation, a noble duty which had been neglected by the Muslim leaders. Al Qaeda's conviction to political ideology couched in religious terms is therefore not easily swayed by cheap promises and materialistic gains. So long as there is no sincere attempt to meet its demands, al Qaeda will have sufficient support for the continuity of the jihad.

In May 1996, after Bin Laden moved from Sudan to Afghanistan he became more violent. He issued a declaration of war against the United States in August 1996. By moving to Afghanistan, he became an internationally recognizable figure with the opportunity to openly present his views. As the leader of al Qaeda, he underlined its resentment towards the US, described as the "alliance of Jews, Christians, and their agents".<sup>16</sup> Even though he did not possess Islamic religious credentials or authority, Bin Laden issued a fatwa in 1998. He claimed that the United States had made "a clear declaration of war on God, His messenger, and Muslims"<sup>17</sup> through its policies in the Islamic world. This is another example of al Qaeda's jihad ideology which set the organization in motion.

With jihad comes the belief in martyrdom. Al Qaeda's operatives firmly believe that Allah guides and rewards those who sacrifice themselves for a noble cause. They are ever willing to sacrifice themselves without hesitation. The notion of a noble and blessed death achieved through martyrdom has been firmly embedded in their collective psyche. They view their acts as a sacrifice which is needed in order to achieve the goal of establishing the religion of Allah on earth. Their struggle yields one of the two things: victory or martyrdom.

The *baiah* or the pledge of allegiance serves as an assurance that those affiliating themselves to the organization are committed to the organization's ideology. By instituting it, the organization is freed from conceptual problems arising from differences in opinion. To a certain degree, through it an acceptable level of uniformity is maintained which contributed to the organization's stability and ease of management and administration.

They also have the notion that "true Islam or pure Islam" can only be established if the essence of Islamic society and its fundamentals are instituted. This requires the setting up of an Islamic state. Of course to achieve this end, the present Muslim society needs an Islamic movement which will provide leadership and the spiritual guidance.<sup>18</sup> The Islamic movement is needed to keep in check the threat posed by a global conspiracy, trying to eradicate the Muslim identity by spreading godless and atheistic views among the Muslim masses. The arguments articulated in support of the ideology provide additional momentum for it to travel far and wide. As a result, a pan-Islamic ideology developed. In view of the prevalent animosity and prejudice against Islam, and the western hegemony, Islamic governments can never be established through peaceful solutions and cooperative councils. The battle concept was total war, "by pen and gun, by word and bullet, by tongue and teeth".<sup>19</sup> Re-creating the Caliphate thereby uniting the whole Muslim world into a single entity, is a logical conclusion drawn by al Qaeda to help bring the Muslim communities out of this dilemma.<sup>20</sup>

## **The Impact of Ideology: the Driving Force**

What actually motivates al Qaeda is not power, wealth or fame but an ideological belief in their struggles.<sup>21</sup> The trap to be avoided by Western scholars is the common assumption that al Qaeda and other jihad groups are driven by publicity in pursuit of their broader goal.<sup>22</sup> These groups fight existing governments they perceive as hostile to Islam and governments that have departed from the course of God and refused to apply the Shari'ah. They feel that their mission is legitimate and embark on actions which reflect the bitter historical and practical experience of those involved in the struggle.

To build support for their fight against the West, al Qaeda presents a common grievance that Muslims are the ones on the receiving end and therefore actions against the Muslim's enemies are worthy. Drawing lessons from the worldwide Muslim response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, al Qaeda ideologues now seek to unite the Muslims in a jihad against the West. In the last century, the many *mujahidin* factions that existed allied together to face the Soviets, a common enemy. They put aside their differences. Muslims could, regardless of nationality, fight side by side and attain victory for all. The individuals that filled the ranks of the *mujahidin* during this war, who came from all strata of society proved that greater achievements could be attained through unity based on common objectives. Momentous events such as the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, the defeat of the Soviet army in Afghanistan, the collapse of communism, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War precipitated the creation of over one hundred contemporary Islamist movements in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, the Caucasus, the Balkans.

Although demonized in the Western media, Bin Laden is seen by his followers and those who fought with him in the Afghan war thus:

*"He not only gave us his money, but he also gave himself. He came down from his palace to live with the Afghan peasants and the Arab fighters. He cooked with them, ate with them, dug trenches with them. This is Bin Ladin's way. His credentials include fighting in the famous battles of the whole Afghan war. In these battles the mujahidin came out victorious convincing them how the Soviet's huge military machine could be defeated by unconventional methods."*<sup>23</sup>

The victory is often interpreted by al Qaeda ideologues as the will of men being singlehandedly defeated by the will of God. The internalization of the victory brought about a feeling of power derived from the belief that their effort had received divine legitimacy and a clear indication that the path they had taken was guided. Bin Laden's followers believe that it was the action of the *mujahidin* primarily supported by the Muslim world that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War. They also believe that the US had achieved its goal of becoming the sole global superpower through what Bin Laden and his fellow *mujahidin* had achieved in Afghanistan. Bin Laden later justified his actions by stating that MAK and its Islamist allies were being persecuted by "an ungrateful US" which had also taken credit for the defeat of the Soviets.<sup>24</sup>

The presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s at the height of the Gulf War and likewise the US military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq were perceived by al Qaeda as acts of aggression.<sup>25</sup> Such perceptions generated widespread support and propelled al Qaeda forward, and helped it transform into its present

state. The US-led coalition intervention in Afghanistan has been instrumental in decentralizing al Qaeda's members but also dispersed them across the globe. Fragmentation and difficulty in communication with the central command forced them to reorganize into smaller, manageable and fluid groups which focused on attack against American interests worldwide as a form of retaliation. The US invasion and occupation of Iraq has widened the theatre of conflict. Today, there is unprecedented support for jihad groups, including al Qaeda. The deteriorating situation in Iraq is producing greater unity among disparate groups and galvanizing greater support for extremism and terrorism.<sup>26</sup> Today, al Qaeda working with Abu Musab al Zarkawi's Tawhid Wal Jihad has urged its followers to target both the domestic governments and Western interests.

## **Strategies and Tactics**

Al Qaeda's ideology seeks to move, incite and mobilize the Muslim nation until it reaches a revolutionary ignition point. Although even 9/11 failed so far to effectively mobilize Muslim support, there exists a significant dissatisfaction with the United States and its foreign policy amongst the many Muslim societies in the Middle East and Islamic world. The trend is rising and will be used to further the cause. Al Qaeda's ideology has created a network of autonomous cells. To circumvent the governments' technical means of intelligence-gathering, they cleverly reverted to one-to-one contact, primarily via couriers. This explains why al Qaeda's German, British, Spanish, Dutch and Belgian cells acting in concert was discovered only during post facto investigations into the background of Muhammad Atta and the other 9/11 conspirators. Even after 7/7, it is very likely that there are other unknown cells in the UK functioning independently.

Al Qaeda has a unique structure combining highly centralized ideological indoctrination and coordination on one hand, but highly decentralized and self-sustaining practical activity on the other. In al Qaeda structure, Bin Laden is the Emir, essentially the military commander, whereas al Zawahiri is the strategic thinker, the ideologue.<sup>27</sup> Even so, they still allow the peripheral organizations plenty of flexibility. The militants felt that striking at the Arab regimes' Western sponsors (the "far enemy" as opposed to the "near enemy") would be the best means to improve local conditions. This strategy, which bin Laden and those around him aggressively advocate, remains contentious among Islamic radicals, especially in Egypt.<sup>28</sup>

They differ significantly from more traditional terrorist organizations in that they do not depend on state sponsors. In addition to mounting its own operations, al Qaeda operates as a franchise by providing financial and logistical support, as well as name recognition, to terrorist groups operating in such diverse places as the Philippines, Algeria, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Tajikistan, Somalia, Yemen, Kashmir and Iraq. Local groups may act in the name of al-Qaeda in order to bolster their own reputation – even if they are not receiving support from the organization. Cooperation amongst groups has been known to exist. In addition to JI, MILF, Abu Sayyaff Group for instance often acted as a local liaison providing safe houses for visiting al Qaeda operatives.<sup>29</sup> The al Tawhid wal Jihad in Iraq group is another example.

Today, the al Qaeda infrastructure has been destroyed. Nonetheless, the group is capable of conducting attacks as lethal as 9/11. Although Bin Laden and his associates are scattered or have been arrested and killed in great number, the

organization has survived and the ideology is intact.<sup>30</sup> Although Afghanistan is no longer a central hub for Islamic militancy, al Qaeda's worldview that "it is the duty of every good Muslim to wage jihad" is keeping the struggle alive. Al Qaeda's concept of global jihad to gain support from politicized and radicalized Muslims has worked to an extent sufficient to sustain a terrorist campaign. This radical internationalist ideology – sustained by anti-Western, anti-Zionist, and anti Semitic rhetoric – has adherents among many individuals and groups, few of whom are currently linked in any substantial way to bin Laden or those around him. They merely follow his percepts, models and methods. They act in style of al Qaeda, but they are only part of al Qaeda in the very loosest sense. With the diffusion of al Qaeda ideology, especially after 9/11, the threat has moved beyond the group and the individual. Israeli intelligence services now prefer the term "jihadi international" instead of "al Qaeda"<sup>31</sup> and the British Special Branch refer to al Qaeda and its associated groups as "international terrorism".<sup>32</sup> Although al Qaeda and its associated groups have been destroyed in Europe and North America, an al Qaeda movement of networked individuals has survived. These individuals, when mobilized by committed and experienced individuals, ensure periodic attacks.

### **Al Qaeda's current disposition**

After it had played such a vital role in the defeat of communism, Afghanistan was neglected by the international community. Afghanistan became the crucible where contemporary jihad groups were spawned and shaped. After the Afghan-Soviet war, the mujahidin who returned to their homelands joined opposition political parties, religious bodies and other groups. They campaigned against dictatorial Muslim rulers and corrupt regimes. They wanted to replicate their success by creating Islamic states. Their very presence to a certain extent served as a catalyst for religious debate, social instability and political unrest. While non-violent campaign turned violent, violent campaign escalated. As a result many governments imprisoned the Afghan veterans, and others were denied entry, expelled and made stateless.<sup>33</sup> The US invasion of Iraq, the US overreaction to 9/11, has created a new land of jihad, increasing the threat severalfold. Although there are under 100 al Qaeda leaders and members in Iraq and under 1,000 Afghan trained terrorists in Iraq, the very act of invading a Muslim land has produced and continues to produce terrorists and extremists. It is vital that the counter terrorism community understand this.

More than the group, al Qaeda's ideology poses an unprecedented threat. The global challenge is to challenge the ideology. Western strategy comes in the form of targeting its leadership, crippling its command and control, and disrupting its current and future support bases. Four years after 9/11, the West has had very limited success. Al Qaeda remains a capable organization, infrequently packing surprises. It must be tackled in an unconventional way – a blend of hard and soft power. Only by using military force with ideological appeal can a wedge be driven between the terrorists and the potential followers. It is central that the counter terrorism community understand that without marrying hard power with soft power, the al Qaeda led Jihad movement cannot be defeated.

Especially after the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, America's war against terrorism is perceived by Muslims all over the world as unprecedented assault on Islam. They feel besieged by America. The American response is primarily military. It failed to bring the historical, ideological and social dimensions into its calculations. No doubt America has the material resources to extend its influence

everywhere but it lacks the ideological and moral fibre to sustain this kind of domination. Here one could see the scenario whereby material power is confronting spiritual and ideological power. Therefore, it is not surprising that al Qaeda almost always challenges Western secularism and capitalism represented by America with Islam's basic body of literature, the Quran and the Sunnah. For Muslims worldwide, these are both extremely rich and powerful. In the ongoing battle against Islamist terrorism there is a pressing need to appreciate the full strategic significance of Islamic world view and spirituality.

In a campaign against global jihad, the US-led Western governments should think strategically. Most jihad organizations have meagre resources and often it is the over-reaction of states that has empowered them to evolved into formidable foes. The invasion of Iraq, though entirely justifiable from a humanitarian perspective, has made this task more difficult. Several new groups have spawned and existing groups have strengthened themselves. The mistakes in Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo Bay must not be repeated.<sup>34</sup> The unintended consequences of US actions have increased the ideological power of the violent Islamists. If countries are to win the war on terror, the US-led coalition must eradicate existing enemies without creating new adversaries. Many experiences in counterinsurgency warfare attest that it makes good sense to target the enemy and to win over the general population. Whilst counter terrorist and counter insurgency campaigns must be conducted with the end objective of victory, retaining public support at all times is central.

It helps to remember that the protagonist, Bin Laden, who conducted the 9/11 operation is still alive and is directing his efforts at attracting those Muslims who have hitherto shunned his extremist message. As a master propagandist, he attempts to take the moral high ground. He knows that only through mass participation will he reap the fruit of success. Mistakes made in the "war on terror" could very well contribute to his worldview receiving immeasurably more support around the globe than it did three years ago, let alone 15 years ago when he began serious campaigning. The objective is to eliminate the threat of terror, or at least to manage it in a way that does not seriously impinge on the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Bin Laden's aim is to radicalize and mobilize. If those directly responsible for conducting the campaign are hasty in their decisions, actions and reactions, Bin Laden will continue to achieve his goals of further politicizing and radicalizing the Muslims, jihad ideologues and Bin Laden believe that time is in their favour. Although the threat has moved beyond bin Laden, the fact that Bin Laden is still alive and pontificating is a reminder that the Western strategy to fight al Qaeda is flawed.

The success of the war on Islamist terrorism depends heavily on how the threat is perceived and the campaign is managed at the policy, strategic, operational and tactical levels. As a start, the West in general and the US specifically must reflect upon their current and past policies towards the Muslim world, in particular the Middle East. More equitable policies and treatment will preserve our collective wellbeing and interests instead of pursuing selfish gains at the expense of others. In effect, the US should seek to change the reality in the Middle East and beyond. It is the only country that has the military, diplomatic, political, and economic power to do so.

Mainstream Muslims should be encouraged to fight the Muslim leaders who use and misuse religion for their political ends. Islam is a way of life and from the perspective of the Muslims the teaching of the Quran and the Sunnah is adhered to



in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come. In short, the Quranic thesis is that all life, being God-given, is a unity, and that problem of the flesh and of the mind, of sex and economics, of individual righteousness and social equity are intimately connected with the hopes which man may legitimately entertain with regard to his life after death. If this could be understood and accepted, then the dominating effect of Islamist terrorism which is condemned by Islam itself could be prevented from interfering with the discussion on Islam, and therefore allow a meaningful dialogue to be developed.

Once this is achieved grievances could be more effectively addressed, thus eliminating the possibilities of their being manipulated and catapulted into terrorism. The Islamic world must be allowed to decide whether or not to emulate the more successful Western secular models but never lock, stock and barrel; rather in a conscious manner, making adjustments where necessary in an attempt to apply them to local conditions. Mutual respect must always be there and a gradual change must be insisted upon. Learning to respect and safeguard each other's dignity applies in this case. Outward differentiation in the form of moral preferences must not diminish the global mutual desire to create a better world for all. Without a better understanding of the threat, the West cannot effectively sustain the campaign against the multiple jihad and Islamist movements.

### **Part III: Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyyah**

Of the contemporary terrorist groups, one of the groups closest to al Qaeda is JI, southeast Asia's most active terrorist group. JI ideology evolved through three phases. In the first phase, the local jihad phase, Darul Islam (DI), the predecessor of JI, campaigned for an Islamic state in Indonesia. During this phase, DI attacked several Indonesian targets. In the second phase, the regional jihad phase, JI campaigned for an Islamic caliphate in southeast Asia. During this phase, JI conducted several attacks in the region. In the third phase, the global jihad phase, JI campaigned for global jihad. During this phase, JI directly targeted or assisted al Qaeda to target the US, its allies and its friends. JI ideology was driven and shaped by political space and operational opportunities.

This paper reviews Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyyah' ['The General Guide for Islamic Group] commonly known as the PUPJI.<sup>35</sup> The founding charter of JI, PUPJI contains the core of JI's ideology. Furthermore, the thoughts of some of the prominent leaders of JI, debriefing of JI members, JI-al Qaeda relationship, and JI operations are considered.

### **Context**

Like many jihad groups active on the international arena, JI began as a local jihad group and evolved into a global jihad group. After the leadership was forced to relocate from Indonesia to Malaysia, it came into contact with other foreign jihad groups. To advance its own agenda and that of the region, JI transformed itself into a Southeast Asian jihad group. After participating in the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad, JI came into contact with al Qaeda, and thus shared its vision of global jihad. JI today is driven more by its newly acquired mission of a global jihad rather than its original mission to create an Islamic state in Indonesia or an Islamic caliphate in southeast Asia.

After September 11, JI is credited as conducting the second worst terrorist attack. Emulating Al Qaeda, JI conducted a coordinated simultaneous suicide bombing in the tourist resort of Bali killing 202 persons on October 12, 2002. The bombings of Sari Club and Paddy's café in Bali were followed by several other attacks including the suicide bombing of the Marriot hotel and the Australian Embassy, both in Jakarta, Indonesia. As the JI training camp Jabal Kuba in Mount Kararo in Mindanao, Philippines is still active, JI still retains significant capabilities to conduct terrorist attacks in the region.

## **Background**

Since its detection in Singapore in December 2001, JI has suffered significant losses throughout southeast Asia. Nonetheless, the JI terrorist network is still active and poses a significant threat both regionally and internationally. Due to its training, financial and operational links to Al-Qaeda, JI developed as one of the most dangerous groups in the al Qaeda family. The historical roots of JI can be traced back to the rebellion led by Darul Islam (founded in 1949) in Indonesia which fought for an Islamic state in the 1950s. Over time, DI splintered and JI emerged as its most violent faction. Although individual DI members are co-opted by JI, DI as a group has abandoned violence. For instance, DI leader of West Java Rois recruited DI member Heri Golun who became the suicide bomber of the Australian High Commission in Jakarta in 2004.

JI's origins can be traced back to the DI movement in the early years of the Republic of Indonesia. DI opposed the secular nature of Sukarno's regime. To establish an Islamic state of Indonesia, DI fought the Sukarno regime from 1948 to 1962. Motivated primarily by politics, the DI rebellion in West Java was led by Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosuwirjo. Before the Second World War, Kartosuwirjo was active in Muslim nationalist politics in the then Dutch East Indies. He felt unhappy with the pre-independence political manoeuvring of Masyumi's components, and in 1947 began gathering his militia members together in West Java.

In 1948, Kartosuwirjo announced the establishment of the Islamic Army of Indonesia (Tentera Islam Indonesia: TII) and proceeded to fight the newly formed Indonesian republic. For the next thirteen years he continued his struggle to establish an Islamic state. When Kartosuwirjo was arrested in 1962, the rebellion was finally crushed. During Suharto's years in power, beginning in 1966, Gen. Ali Moertopo reactivated DI to protect Indonesia against the danger of communist infiltration across the Indonesian-Malaysian border in Borneo.

In order to discredit activities by the Islamists which could affect the elections in 1977, some 185 people believed to be members of Komando Jihad, a group sharing Kartosuwirjo's ideals were arrested by the government by mid 1977. The founders of JI, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir were amongst them. Both were deeply involved in dakwah (proselytisation) activities. Although they were never a part of the original DI, they fully endorsed its aims. Due to their meetings with Haji Ismail Pranoto (Hispran in short) who was accused of leading the Komando Jihad, both of them were charged with having been inducted into DI by Hispran. It is no secret that both of them were known for making statements urging disobedience to secular authority and not to acknowledge the validity of the Indonesian constitution. Sungkar and Ba'asyir rejected Pancasila as the state ideology and dared to criticize Suharto's government. Sungkar and Ba'asyir were tried in 1982

and sentenced to nine years in prison for subversion. Subsequently their sentences were reduced on appeal to three years and ten months. Facing imminent re-arrest, they fled to Malaysia. Sungkar was then-Indonesian president Suharto's number one enemy.

### **Formation of JI**

In Malaysia, Sungkar also identified a number of sympathetic businessmen willing to take on Indonesian workers and supporting the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia. In an effort to seek additional funding for their cause, Sungkar and Ba'asyir went to Saudi Arabia. Contacts were also established with the mujahidin in Afghanistan. This opened the gateway for JI members to be politicized and radicalized – JI members were trained militarily and exposed to armed jihad.

In Malaysia, Sungkar and Ba'asyir managed to gain support from Malaysians for their cause. This gave them the strength to form their own organization. After a dispute with the Indonesian-based DI leader named Ajengan Masduki, Sungkar formed JI in 1993. Sungkar's new group did not initially have a name but by 1995 Sungkar's followers were formed into small groups consisting of 8 to 10 members who would hold weekly meetings, and they were known as al Jemaah al Islamiyah.<sup>36</sup> Members of his first small cell included Riduan Isamuddin alias Hambali, Abdul Ghani, Jamsari, Suhauime, Matsah, Adnan and Faiz Bafana.<sup>37</sup> The weekly meetings of JI included koranic studies as well as activities to prepare members for jihad. JI was a more tightly structured organization than DI, but still having the same aim to set up an Islamic state in Indonesia. Although JI ideology evolved, like DI JI believed that through jihad an Islamic state could be established in Indonesia. Only later did their ambition grow into creating a pan-Islamic state in Southeast Asia.

### **JI's world-view expressed in the PUPJI**

In the introduction of the PUPJI, the Central Leadership Council of Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyyah wrote that God has outlined a number of set principles for mankind to lead their lives. Firstly, the aim of man's creation is to worship Allah alone.<sup>38</sup> Consequently all worldly possessions, time, energy and thought must be channeled towards this end.

Secondly, human existence on earth is to serve as God's vice-gerent.<sup>39</sup> In this respect, man is responsible for ensuring that the earth is managed and developed within the confine of God's laws. He thus is required to prevent, eliminate and fight all acts of corruption on earth as a result of the implementation of a way of life which falls outside the domain of God's law.

Thirdly, life on earth is a test to filter and sieve members of the human race in order to determine who has performed the best deed. Good deeds are judged based on the fulfilment of two fundamental requirements, namely sincerity towards God and emulating the Prophet in life's endeavour.

Fourthly, the apostles of God were sent by Him to establish the *dien*. The meaning of 'establishing the *dien*' or '*Iqomatid Dien*' according to the exegetes (*Mufasssirun*) is to establish a way of life based on the unity of God (*Tauhid*) which relates to establishing Islam in all its aspects, as explained by the companion of the Prophet

Muhammad, <sup>c</sup>Abdullah bin <sup>c</sup>Umar in his commentary of the *Surah Al-Fatehah*, which according to him include <sup>c</sup>*aqidah* (Islamic creed), <sup>c</sup>*ibadah* (act of worship) and *manhajul-hayah* (way of life).

The Prophet Muhammad in discharging his duties as the messenger of God has successfully integrated both the physical and spiritual aspects of life in total submission to the worship of God. His examples were then emulated by the Rightly-guided Caliphs, the other companions of the Prophet and later generations with varying degrees of success. Nevertheless the Muslim ummah still manage to retain a separate polity, coloured by their strong conviction towards Islam.

The fall of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 marks the beginning of an era where the Muslim community is exposed to moral decadence caused by modernity and a secular system. In order to correct this, JI, claiming to be one of the Islamic revival movements having the above world-view, strove to re-establish the Islamic caliphate as a solution.<sup>40</sup>

### **What is JI's Ideology and why?**

In general, JI ideology refers to the comprehensive and mutually consistent set of ideas by which JI makes sense of the world. It is an attempt by them to provide some explanation of how things have come to be as they are and some indication of where they are heading as a basis to guide their action. It also provides criteria for distinguishing truth from falsehood and valid arguments from invalid according to their perspective, and some overriding belief in what they are doing to which they may make a final appeal when challenged by outsiders. Although JI ideology relies on the Quran, the Sunnah and the interpretation of the venerable forefathers (*Salafush-Sholih*), it must be stressed that it is by no mean a definitive interpretation of Islam and representative of the views held by the Muslim scholars.<sup>41</sup> This implies that it has its limits, that it is just one set of interpretation among others, and that it can be quite distinct from the truth and inconsistent with the general principles of Islam which allow an independent judgment to be made with full cognizance of the changing political, social and economic landscapes.<sup>42</sup>

In their understanding of Islam as a universal religion, JI preaches the need to practise Islam in its totality which is referred to as *Islam Kaffah*.<sup>43</sup> Within this framework they hope to achieve peace in the worship of God in the widest sense of the word by accepting the Quranic guidance not only towards the spiritual good of the hereafter but also towards the good life – spiritual, physical and social – attainable in this world.

In giving their struggle further credibility, the concept of '*Al Wala' Wal Bara*'<sup>44</sup> which specifies whom they consider their friends and enemies, are knitted into the fabrics of the Islamic creed (*Aqidah*), providing religious justification and legitimacy for their actions. In logical pursuance of this line of thinking they felt the obligation to rid the world of polytheism, falsehood and oppression so that mankind is guided to the highest level of morality and civilization by the establishment of the Islamic state.

The present state of the Muslim ummah, without the potent central leadership in religion, politics and military once enjoyed during the time of the prophet and the Rightly-guided Caliphs, warrants the setting up of the *daulah Islamiah* as an

ideological state based on the holistic Islamic teachings. Its establishment would then ensure unity between religion and state, correcting the polarity caused by the dichotomy between the profane and the sacred caused by secular ideologies.

In pursuing this aim, JI stressed the need for individual Muslim to be in a group (*Al-Jamaah*). This according to them is a necessary precursor to the establishment of an Islamic state. Under this ideology, the individual Muslim is required to pledge allegiance (*Al-Bai'ah*) in order to be officially a member of JI. With this pledge, JI members become obligated to listen (*Al-Sam'ul*) and obey (*Al-Ta'ah*) to the best of their ability in matters which do not constitute a sin to God, to the Amir as the leader of the group and other appointed leaders (*Mas'ul*). When these conditions are not satisfied, the person concerned is disqualified from being a member and is seen as having committed a sin by dishonouring his *ba'iah*.<sup>45</sup>

In providing JI's members with the milestones towards the direction of establishing the Islamic state, *Iman* (belief), *Hijrah* (emigration in the way of God), *I'dad* (preparation for the struggle in the way of God) and *Jihad* (struggle in the way of God), the stages the Prophet Muhammad were reported to have gone through in calling people to the fold of Islam were presented as the path along which JI treads. Alternatively, this path which is also described as the method employed in JI's struggle is also known as the path of *dakwah* (inviting or calling people to worship God by following the Messenger of God), *tarbiyah* (education), *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) and *jihad*.<sup>46</sup>

In essence, JI is a group which is a staunch supporter of Islamic rule and jihad. They constantly urged Muslims to go to war against the enemies of Islam who resisted the application of Islamic law, by appealing to the doctrine of jihad, emphasizing the meaning of armed struggle. Initially, the need to resist the threat represented by secular, anti-Islamic regimes was aimed at the Indonesian government but in its later development included Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. A key figure in promoting this ideology, Abu Jibril, alias Fikiruddin (Fihiruddin) Muqti, alias Mohamed Iqbal bin Abdurrahman, in his lectures went so far as to call for the setting up of a "Nusantara Islamic State" (*Daulah Islamiah Nusantara*), together with preaching *jihad* and the desirability of dying as martyr.<sup>47</sup>

### **What motivated them?**

Drawing conclusion from JI's ideology, their motivation could be classified into three main categories: religious, political and socio-economic. On closer examination, religion appears to be the main component which provides the much needed common platform in gelling Muslims of different nationalities and social background together for a common cause. More often than not, religious texts are quoted to explain, educate and motivate JI's members into commitment. Fear in divine retribution and hopeful for the rewards in the hereafter are instituted via lectures given by charismatic lecturers, causing JI's members to view JI's struggle as being synonymous to Islam's.<sup>48</sup>

The strong religious overtones in JI's ideology therefore eclipse all other types of motivation, be it political or socio-economic. The end result is a group driven by the belief that their actions are validated and legitimized by Islam, hence the need to support it with undivided loyalty. This was evident in Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's address during the Mujahidin II Congress, held in Surakarta, Jawa Tengah on 10 – 12 August 2003. In mentioning historical facts of the Indonesians' struggle for

independence from the Dutch, he highlighted that the underlying intention of their struggle is to practise the Sharia so that the obligation to worship God is fully realized. He reasoned that the freedom to practise the Sharia in its totality was inhibited during the Dutch, English and Japanese rule.<sup>49</sup> The same line of reasoning could also be traced to Egypt's *Gamaa Islamia* who ruled that it is a religious obligation to fight against political regimes that refuse to implement the Sharia.<sup>50</sup> The vision of Syed Qutb in this respect is no different.<sup>51</sup> Having different parties speaking about the same thing, all quoting from Islam's rich sources certainly gave JI the extra religious mileage and superficial correctness to fuel their struggle.

The '*Ushulul Manhaj Al-Harakiy Li Iqamatid Dien*'<sup>52</sup> which are the methodological principles to establish the *Al-Dien* which formed the primary foundation of JI's ideology, was evidently drawn and crystallized from religious sources. The extensive use of the Arabic words with religious connotations even when the PUPJI is written in the Indonesian language leaves little room for doubt of the presence of religious motivation at its core. Therefore, the arguments presented in support of JI's ideology and actions naturally follow the same path.

According to the White Paper, the psychologist concluded that many JI members turned to leaders like Ibrahim Maidin as they wanted a "no fuss" path to heaven. They wanted to be convinced that in JI they had found "true Islam" and freed themselves from endless searching as they found it stressful to be critical, evaluative and rational. They believed they could not go wrong, as JI's leaders had quoted from holy texts. The psychological profile of the JI's members (e.g. high compliance, low assertiveness, low in the questioning of religious values, and high level of guilt and loneliness) suggested that the group of JI's members was psychologically predisposed to indoctrination and control by JI's leaders and needed a sense of belonging without close attachments. Some were altruistic and wanted to help the ummah. Others wanted to accumulate "points" for a place in heaven.<sup>53</sup>

Seeking God's pleasure and the promise of martyrdom if they died in the cause of *jihad* in trying to establish the Islamic state with which JI's members believe a better life in the hereafter is secured are some of the reasons powerful enough to motivate them. These are the contents of the lectures Mohammad Iqbal Bin Abdul Rahman, alias Abu Jibril an Indonesian who is a permanent resident of Malaysia, gave to the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) which according to the allegations against him could encourage them to overthrow the legitimate Malaysian government through armed struggle.<sup>54</sup>

Politically and from the socio-economic perspective, JI's members owe their motivation to the fact that the establishment of the Islamic state is seen as a promise to a better government and system which are harmonious with the tenets of Islam. Under Islam-friendly condition, justice and equality will prevail and an environment conducive towards the total submission to God in all of life's endeavours will be created. The experience of JI's leaders like Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir during Suharto's time bears testimony to this. They were arrested, tried and sentenced to jail for subversion. The policy of *azas tunggal* or "sole basis" Suharto's government implemented was viewed as a violation of Islamic law, hence the need for a group, "Jemaah Islamiah" committed to the strict implementation of Islamic law, to correct the government's wrongdoing.

The *jihad* against the Soviet Union in the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989) was interpreted as a positive development of *jihad* that provided inspiration, experience, network and global mobility as well as increasing the military capability of the many groups that had participated in the war. JI is no exception to this, as the members of the group including senior members holding leadership appointments were trained and involved in this war.<sup>55</sup>

### **The strategies they adopted**

To ensure its survivability various strategies were adopted by JI to deal with every possible situation they might encounter at every stage of their struggle. Their formulation helps to increase the chances of achieving what they set out to do and for this purpose the PUPJI clearly spelt out in the *Al-Manhaj Al-Harakiy Li Iqomatid Dien* (The Progressive Methodology In Establishing The Religion) and *Al-Manhaj Al-Amaliy Li Iqomatid Dien* (The General Operational Guide In Establishing The Religion) the broad guidelines for JI's members to follow.

*Al-Manhaj Al-Harakiy Li Iqomatid Dien* reveals that JI have divided their struggle into three stages, namely preparation to establish the *Daulah* (Islamic State), the setting up of the *Daulah* itself and from there the establishment of the caliphate.

During the first stage, the formation of the *jamaah* (group) supersedes the formation of the group's various capabilities and its employment. The formation of the righteous leadership who supposedly are the core people is an integral part of this formation. They not only lay the groundwork but also construct and design the group. In ensuring that the group can continue their metamorphosis undisturbed, JI adopts secrecy in whatever they do. These include operating on a need-to-know basis. The investigation by Singapore's Internal Security Department (ISD) of the JI members detained uncovered that they operate as a clandestine organization, complete with code names and "JI-speak"<sup>56</sup>. To prove the point, most of the 2000 arrests to date have been foot soldiers with no knowledge of operations or the organization.<sup>57</sup>

Discipline and obedience amongst the members is ensured under the scope of developing the faith. Listening and obeying the leadership is also inculcated through *Amar ma'ruf, nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) and *hisbah*, which serve as thermostats in controlling fluctuations in the members' commitment. Members are obligated to collectively ensure compliance and refrain from deviation from directives issued by the leadership.

With these firmly in place, JI began developing their strength in education which confers the ability to systematically instill, expand and change the world-view, emotion, desire and practice of those following their programmes towards becoming more Islamic, which in JI sense means jihad to set up an Islamic State<sup>58</sup>. *Dakwah* or missionary work is an attempt by JI to reach out to the masses, to communicate their ideology and popularize *Islam Kaffah* that exposes the Muslim community's shortcomings, both in terms of understanding and practice of 'true Islam'. The feeling of guilt from exposure is capitalized, to bring about further understanding of JI's explanation on Islam and in the process providing a platform for getting new members or at least their alignment with JI's cause, thus neutralizing animosity.

*Tansiq bainal jama'at* is another strategy whereby JI collaborate with other Islamic groups that share their world-view. Various studies on JI have shown that JI is

willing to forge alliances domestically, regionally and globally to remain potent and able, in order to achieve their aim. The link with Al-Qaeda, MILF and KMM are possible manifestations of it. Even the formation of Rabitatul Mujahidin could be interpreted in this light.

*Tamwil* which is mentioned in the PUPJI without details, could be translated as financing JI's activities. It is done by collecting *infaq*, a monthly contribution compulsory upon JI's members who are working. Additional funds are derived mostly from foreign donations, and some may have come from al Qaeda for specific operations, according to the ICG Indonesia Briefing, 8 August 2002.

*Jihad Musallah*, if translated as armed struggle, is the most dangerous strategy employed by JI. It indicates JI's willingness to develop military capabilities to wage war in order to establish the Islamic state. Some of JI's members were trained in Afghanistan and MILF military camps and after their graduation either planned or were involved in terrorist attacks. The disclosure no doubt provides clear indication of JI final transformation no matter how mild and harmless it seemed at the start.

### **JI-Al Qaeda Nexus:**

Gradually, JI's involvement in Afghanistan grew. The shared experience in Afghanistan not only provided the members with military training but also strengthened the spirit of Islamic brotherhood. They came into contact with Maktab-il-Khadimat (MaK) led by Abdullah Azzam, and after his assassination, al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden and other Afghan groups that received foreign mujahidin from all over the world that came in defence of Afghanistan. As a result their ideology became concretized, their motivation grew stronger and their strategies more refined. The mujahidin's victory in Afghanistan over the Russians without the slightest doubt gave them confidence and to a certain extent notion of similar victories in the future. Unlike the other southeast Asian Islamist groups, JI at this stage was an ideological hybrid. JI was influenced strongly by Egyptian Islamists known for their radicalism. JI developed strong orientation towards the Middle East, notably Saudi Arabia. In particular, the ideology of *al Gamaa al Islamiyah al Masri* (The Islamic Group of Egypt) and to a lesser extent *al Islamiyah al Jihad al Masri* (Egyptian Islamic Jihad) influenced JI thinking and structure.<sup>59</sup> In the mid 1990s, at the time when JI ideology was taking shape, Dr Ayman al Zawahiri, the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad visited and spent time engaging the JI leadership in Malaysia. In the second half of the 1990s, Sungkar and Bashir visited Pakistan. Sungkar met Bin Laden on three occasions.

JI developed into one of the most dangerous terrorist groups after it gradually developed close operational ties with al Qaeda. The relationship was forged by Hambali, an Indonesian cleric, who as a child aspired to be an astronaut. During early 1980s, while living in Malaysia, Hambali became a follower of Sungkar. Through his contact with Sungkar, Hambali was invited in 1986 to go to Afghanistan for training and to support the mujahidin. While Hambali spent the next two months in Karachi awaiting further instructions, he met a number of individuals from Indonesia including Zulkarnaen who also became close to al Qaeda.<sup>60</sup> In early 1987, Hambali and his colleagues underwent two months of military training with Ak47s, MAC-1s, handguns, 60MM mortars and RPGs.<sup>61</sup> After Hambali returned to Malaysia in mid-1988, he travelled to the Philippines (Tawitawi) as a missionary and lived with a local Muslim family in 1991. During this time, he met Samsuddin, an Indonesian who subsequently brought him to the



MILF Camp Abubakar. He also met the then MILF leader Salamat Hashim at the camp at that time. After 9 months in the Philippines, he returned to Malaysia via Sabah and proceeded to Selangor.

In 1994-1995, Hambali came into contact with Khalid Sheikh Mohommed, who subsequently masterminded the 9/11 attack, and other important al Qaeda members, including Wali Amin Khan Shah, who worked with Ramzi Ahmed Yousef to destroy 12 US airliners over the Pacific. From 1995-1997, Hambali's involvement with al Qaeda deepened and he was subsequently asked to head Mantiqi I replacing Ba'asyir who then became the head of the Markaz. Markaz was the governing body that oversaw all JI organizations, which were made up of regional groups or mantiqis. There were originally only two Mantiqis – Mantiqi I which covered Malaysia and Singapore; and Mantiqi II which covered Indonesia, Sabah and the Philippines. Mantiqi III later covered Kalimantan, Mindanao and the southern Philippines and Sulawesi. There was a Mantiqi IV which covered Australia; however this Mantiqi consisted of only about 20 members, all of whom were Indonesian nationals residing in Australia.

In 1998, the Markaz consisted of Sungkar, Ba'asyir, Zulkarnaen, Rushdan and Mukhlas. Apart from serving as Markaziah Board members, these individuals also served in the JI Shura majelis (consultative council), which influenced the JI activities from a Koranic perspective. Mantiqi I was headed by Hambali, Indonesian national Fati headed Mantiqi II and Nasir Abas headed Mantiqi III. There were four Wakalahs or areas under the control of Mantiqi I - Perak, headed by Murad; Singapore, headed by Ma Selamat Kastari; Johor, headed by Wan Min Bin Wan Mat; and Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. In 1997-98, JI primarily focused its activities on funnelling money to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines. This changed in 1998 when the Markaz decided to start sending members and military equipment to Southern Philippines. From Mantiqi I, groups of Malaysians were sent to MILF camps for training and to support their Muslim brothers. Indonesian JI operative al-Ghozi was the JI's primary contact in the Philippines and Zulkarnaen was responsible for sending groups of Malaysian and Singapore members to the Philippines. Almost all the leaders were Afghan trained – they were the key decision makers.

## **Post-Sungkar JI**

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, Sungkar and Ba'asyir returned to Indonesia to continue their struggle. When Sungkar, the charismatic leader of JI, died in 1999, Ba'asyir succeeded him. This caused some unhappiness. The younger members of JI - Hambali, Abdul Aziz alias Imam Samudra, Ali Gufron alias Muchlas - saw Ba'asyir as too weak, too accommodating, and too easily influenced by others. Ba'asyir believed in the militant and the political track. Together with Irfan Awwas Suryahardi, Bashir founded the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) in August 2000.<sup>62</sup> This faction led by Suryahardi could be regarded as the political faction of JI. Suryahardi's brother Abu Jibril alias Fikiruddin (Fihiruddin) Muqti alias Mohamed Iqbal bin Abdurrahman was one of the key ideologues of JI and Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (Association of Militants of Malaysia: KMM) then living in Malaysia. MMI was an umbrella group of Islamist groups campaigning for the enforcement of Shariah. The JI hardliners led by Hambali saw the formation of MMI as a betrayal of Abdullah Sungkar's political analysis that JI should remain underground in their struggle to set up an Islamic state. The Hambali led group was of the opinion that accommodation with a non-Islamic political system could

contaminate the faithful and was forbidden. This faction could be regarded as the political faction of JI. Ba'asyir on the other hand saw it as an opportunity that must not be wasted. Ba'asyir, who had relocated to the village of Ngruki, where he headed the Pondok al Mukmeen, led a third faction in Solo, Central Java. The Ba'asyir faction can be regarded as the radical faction of JI.

Despite the differences, the three JI factions – political (Yogyakarta-centric), radical (Solo-centric), and terrorist (Malaysia-centric) - cooperated and at times collaborated with each other. They all shared the common belief that an Islamic state must be established in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia. They were divided on the methodology. The JI political faction believed in political struggle, JI radical believed in the political and the militant, and JI terrorist believed in the militant. The bulk of the JI terrorist faction were Afghan trained and were the closest to al Qaeda. As JI increasingly came under the influence of al Qaeda, JI tactics included terrorist means. Ba'asyir had no objection to the conduct of terrorist operations but also saw the merits of investing in the political struggle. While meeting prominent leaders of the Indonesian government including its then Vice President Hamzah Haz, Ba'asyir continued to admire Bin Laden and followed his ideals, repeated his rhetoric, and supported al Qaeda operations in Southeast Asia. Despite the differences in opinion JI functioned as a network of Islamic radicals extending across Southeast Asia, led by Indonesian nationals. For effective functioning, JI maintained a loose structure characterized by the four territorial divisions known as mantiqis.<sup>63</sup> Although these formal structures have been dissolved and mantiqi one dismantled, JI cells are still organized around the mantiqi structures.

In 2000, JI created Rabitat-ul-Mujahidin (Legion of Mujahidin), an umbrella of Southeast Asian Islamist and nationalist groups engaged in armed struggle. Its members included Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Free Aceh Movement (GAM), Rohingya Solidarity Organisation, Arakan Rohingya Nationalist Organisation, Jemmah Salafiya (Thailand).

Like al Qaeda, the vanguard of the global Islamic movement, JI aspired to be the vanguard of the Southeast Asian groups. It wished to lead the way in the region. Most of the JI leaders who serve on the highest rung of the organizational ladder are protégés of Abdullah Sungkar. Many of them were alumni of the Pondok al Mukmeen in the village of Ngruki, one of the most famous pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Central Java. They are mostly Indonesian nationals living in Malaysia, and veterans of the anti-Soviet resistance or, more frequently, the post-Soviet period in Afghanistan. A trusted second tier, who share many of those characteristics, appear to be assigned as field coordinators, responsible for delivering money and explosives and for choosing a local subordinate who can effectively act as team leader of the foot soldiers. The bottom rung, the people who drive the cars, survey targets, deliver bombs, and most often risk arrest, physical injury, or death, are selected shortly before the attack is scheduled. They are mostly young men from pesantrens. The schools that provide the recruits are often led by religious teachers with ties to DI rebellions of the 1950's or to the Pondok al Mukmeen.

### **Al Qaeda Influence deepens**

Prior to his death, Sungkar sent Hambali to Karachi to meet Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of 9/11. The purpose of the meeting was to deepen the already established ties and arrange for JI members to travel to Afghanistan to

receive training. Hambali made two trips to Pakistan in 1999 – the first trip alone and the second he was accompanied by JI senior operative Faiz Bafana. From 1998-2001, Hambali funnelled some US\$12,000 to the MILF and some US\$18,000 to Muslim fighters in Ambon, Indonesia. JI operated a Malaysian government sanctioned/registered NGO called Jamah al Ehsan, which raised money to be sent directly to Ambon. JI participated in the Christmas eve Church bombings in Indonesia in 2000, the MILF Manila train bombing in the same year and the attack against the Philippine Ambassador to Indonesia. On the 2000 December Manila bombings, JI provided US\$4,000 to carry out the bombing of a train in Manila in 2000. Although coordinated by al Ghazi, the actual bombing was carried out by Philippine JI member Mucklis, who later participated in the Bali bombing. The attack against the Philippine ambassador to Indonesia was also a JI operation. Al Ghazi was primarily responsible for this operation and JI provided some US\$4,000 for it.

Because of ongoing investigations in Indonesia and Malaysia, Hambali and his wife left Malaysia and travelled to Afghanistan via Bangkok using his true name Malaysian passport and with \$5,000 cash. After arriving in Karachi, they proceeded to Kandahar where they stayed for one month. While in Afghanistan, Hambali's primary contacts included Mohommed Atef, alias Abu Hafs, the military commander of al Qaeda (killed in November 2001) and Khalid Sheikh Mohommed. Increasingly al Qaeda relied on JI, specifically Hambali, who held both al Qaeda and JI appointments.

At the request of al Qaeda, the JI network in Australia recruited and funded Jack Roche, an Australian Muslim convert to bomb Israeli and Jewish targets in Australia.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, to assist al Qaeda's anthrax program, Hambali recruited Yazid Sufaat, a US trained biochemist and a former Army Captain from Malaysia, who came to Afghanistan in June 2001. Yazid participated in a one-month training course and then began working with Hambali supporting the anthrax program in Kandahar. When the US-led bombing campaign started in Afghanistan in October 2001, Hambali briefly met Yazid in Karachi before his return to Malaysia and they discussed the continuing anthrax program in Indonesia. Yazid was arrested by the Malaysian Special Branch upon his return to visit his wife in Malaysia; Hambali who was living with his wife was arrested in Thailand by the Thai Special Branch. During this period, Hambali had provided al Qaeda funds to cells in Indonesia to bomb Bali and other targets.

With assistance, close interaction, dual membership, JI had almost become an appendage of al Qaeda. During a decade at least, a very important component of JI had come under the operational as well as the ideological control of al Qaeda. For instance, JI Chief Singapore Mas Selamat Kastari planned to hijack an Aeroflot plane from Bangkok and crash it on Changi International Airpor in Singapore, a clear al Qaeda tactic. He chose a Russian plane to express his anger at the Russian treatment of his Chechen brothers, a conflict steadfastly supported by al Qaeda. This is reflected in the attacks on Bali in 2002, Jakarta Marriot in 2003 and the Australian High Commission in 2004, all Western targets. After the arrest of Hambali, the terrorist faction of JI is led by Dr Azahari Hussein and Noordin Muhammed Top. They constantly refer to Iraq, including in the communiqué written by Noordin Muhammed Top immediately after the Australian High Commission bombing in 2004. Southeast Asians influenced by JI and al Qaeda will travel to Iraq to participate in the campaign against the US.<sup>65</sup> A significant proportion of JI members believe in al Qaeda ideology and continue to actively participate in al Qaeda's avowed mission of global jihad.

## **Part IV: Response**

There must be greater international and domestic cooperation within and between government and agencies engaged in fighting terrorism and extremism.<sup>66</sup> Without targeting ideological extremism, terrorism will continue. The link between ideological extremism and terrorist action should be understood. It is a cycle. Extremism breeds violence. Without controlling extremism, the threat of terrorism cannot be managed. Extremism fuels terrorism, and in turn, terrorism fuels extremism. Each attack, successful or not, breeds support among the extremists for greater violence. To combat extremism, a robust ideological response must be developed.

Until now, the ideological or intellectual battle has been overlooked. There has been no effort to ideologically target al Qaeda and JI and other comparable groups that apply religious justification to legitimate and authenticate their terrorist activities. No effort must be spared in bridging the gaps arising from different world-views and their implementation. Programmes which explore and encourage efforts to diminish the sources of mistrust and misunderstanding that harm relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim must be carried out. This includes mobilizing moderate Muslims to empower those who advocate cooperation and non-violent solutions to conflict. The aim is to marginalize the militants and extremists who advocate intolerance.<sup>67</sup>

The stress must always be on the prevention, management and resolution of conflict in the form of a conversation, not a monologue, where clear and truthful messages could be exchanged and examined with sincerity.

The renewed vigour shown by the Muslim community in seeking to deepen their understanding and practice of Islam must not be equated with extremism. It is an attempt to find answers in Islam on the many challenges they face in the rapidly changing world. The Muslims need to contemporarize their understanding of Islam, preserving the five essential values of religion, lives, intellect, progeny and property.

In order to have a united voice against terrorism the moderate Muslim majority must remain well organized and single minded on this issue. Divergent views on many religious issues must be prevented from blooming into terrorism when a consensus could not be reached. The challenge here is to build and maintain institutions of authority for Muslims to refer to for enlightenment. Likewise, for those who are already in possession of greater Islamic knowledge a platform for intellectual discourses must be prepared, to channel differing opinions constructively.

Educating the public on the ideologies, organizations and terrorist tactics without blaming Islam and the Muslims must be done both formally and informally, so that they are prepared to be a part of a collective force against terror. They are strategic partners in it and recognize that they have more to lose than gain if the political and economic stability is upset.

### **The Al Qaeda-JI Nexus**

Had JI leadership remained in Indonesia, it might very well have remained a local jihad group. After the JI leadership moved to Malaysia, the support from Muslims

living in Southern Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines made the JI leadership expand their mission to include Muslim Southeast Asia and beyond. As a direct result of al Qaeda contact, JI members began to think and act like al Qaeda. JI fully shared al Qaeda's vision of a global jihad and heeded bin Laden's call to attacks Jewish and Crusader targets. JI hosted the al Qaeda members that planned the USS Cole attack and two 9/11 pilots, including its deputy operational commander Nawaf al Hazmi in Kuala Lumpur in January 2000.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, JI hosted Zacariya Moussoui, an al Qaeda suicide pilot now in US custody. Both the pre-and post 9/11 JI target selection included US, British, Australian and Israeli targets. Thus even before 9/11, JI had adopted al Qaeda's model of global jihad. As in several other cases, al Qaeda's overarching dominant ideology was successful in "hijacking" JI's parochial ideology.

The JI ideology, although uses religion as its base, is not necessarily true to the principles and spirit of Islam. The complexity and interconnectedness of the modern world requires Islam to be accepted as having the potential to provide solutions to contemporary problems. Dialogues, research and cooperation in which Islam and Muslims are partners could contribute towards the creation of a better world. The ability to articulate different and at times conflicting views must be a basis in finding solution. Deliberations must be made without bias and placing public interest above self-importance or narrow national interests.

### **Managing the Threat**

Terrorism is a vicious by-product of extremism. As such, it is essential to counter ideological extremism. The three approaches to combating this threat in the immediate (1-2 years), mid (5 years) and in the long term (10 years) are to invest in (1) operational counter terrorism, (2) strategic counter terrorism and (3) conflict resolution respectively.

**Operational Counter Terrorism:** During the first three years after 9/11, the US-led model for fighting terrorism has largely been the Rumsfeld approach, named after the determined US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Until now the US strategy is to target terrorist operational or execution cells as opposed to their ideological motivations and intentions. After 9/11, governments invested in developing their operational counter-terrorist capabilities, increased the budgets and expanded the numerical strength of their intelligence communities and enforcement authorities. As a result, governments were able to monitor a larger number of suspected terrorists, collaborators, supporters and sympathizers and conduct timely arrests. By targeting terrorist cells planning and preparing attacks, governments have reduced the imminent threat to the immediate. Post 9/11 investment in operational counter terrorism degraded terrorist capabilities in the US and elsewhere. Nonetheless, there was little or no investment strategic counter terrorism as opposed to operational. Strategic counter terrorism advocates government actions that seek to reduce the political and operational space for terrorism to spawn and sustain.

**Strategic Counter Terrorism:** The strands of strategic counter terrorism are in ideological, educational, media, legislative and financial responses.<sup>69</sup> The key is to counter the extremist ideology that triggers, drives and justifies terrorism. Like ideological response to terrorism, which exposes the deviant teachings of al Qaeda and its associated groups, initiatives in educational response seeks to make it difficult for terrorists and extremists to use the current Islamic school system to

politicize and radicalize Muslims. As one of the methods by which terrorist ideologues recruit members is to subvert the madrasahs, it is necessary to institute measures preventing the spread of extremism through these institutions. Similarly, it is essential to establish an ethic against terrorism and extremism in the wider society. To build communities that abhor violence, it is necessary for governments to work with the media to counter political extremism and violence. The media has played such an important role in formally and informally educating the public and raising their awareness about disease and famine. Similarly with the legislative response to terrorism.

**Resolving Regional Conflicts:** Likewise, there has been limited investment by western governments in understanding the value of resolving the regional conflict zones that spawn and sustain terrorism and virulent ideologies. To reduce the threat of political violence in the international system, it is essential for the international community to develop the capability to end regional conflicts through political negotiation. Regional conflict zones – Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, Mindanao [Philippines], Maluku [Indonesia], Poso [Indonesia], Algeria, Afghanistan and Iraq – are the biggest producers of human rights violations, internal displacement, refugee flows and terrorists. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the 1970s and 1980s produced terrorists and spilled over to neighbouring countries; Afghanistan produced the largest number of terrorists in the 1990s and today. International neglect of regional conflicts, thinking that the warring parties will fight each other and exhaust themselves, a prevalent notion in the West, proved wrong when al Qaeda organized a strike against post-modern US from pre-modern Afghanistan.

As most politically motivated groups adopted violence due to circumstances, if the right opportunities are created many terrorist groups will negotiate, join mainstream politics and end the violence. By developing capabilities to facilitate negotiation and by actively mediating between warring factions, the space for ideological extremism and political terrorism can be significantly reduced. However the relevant knowledge and tools for building peace processes must be developed and resources allocated.

Like economically motivated violence – crime – the citizens of the world are beginning to live with politically motivated violence – terrorism. Like other threats confronting humankind, by making certain investments, the threat of terrorism too can be managed. It is a resilient and an intractable threat. Therefore, it must be dealt with broadly and strategically. Three years after 9/11, the time is right for governments worldwide to assess the successes and failures in the fight against terrorism and extremism. Operational counter terrorism has been successful to the point of keeping the number of attacks to a manageable level, but insufficient to counter the strategic threat posed by the jihad movement. Without preventing the ideological politicization and radicalization of the Muslim communities in the migrant diaspora of the West and the territorial communities of the south, the threat will persist. Building the capabilities to fight the strategic campaign require greater political will and public understanding. Investment in building capabilities to end catalyst conflicts is central to reducing especially the long term threat.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>For their invaluable guidance, I wish to thank my colleagues Dr. Graeme P. Herd and Col. Nick Pratt,

George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies; and the George Marshall Centre, Garmish, Germany; Paul Smith, Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, Hawaii, US; and Ustaz Mahfuh Halimi of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore.

<sup>2</sup> In the pre-9/11 environment many scholars attributed terrorism to poverty and lack of education. Osama Bin Laden, Emir-General, Al Qaeda comes from the richest non-royal Saudi family and Dr Ayman al Zawahiri from one of the most educated families in Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> Three years after 9-11, as the US strategy on “war against terrorism” began to fault, the US government is now seeking craft its campaign as “a struggle against violent extremism.”

<sup>4</sup> Osama bin Laden kept the name of Al Qaeda a public secret until the US attacked Afghanistan in October 2001. As such, he did not focus on building support for Al Qaeda, the single group, but for the wider jihad movement, throughout the 1990s and beyond.

<sup>5</sup> Briefing by CNI, the Spanish Intelligence Service, December 2004

<sup>6</sup> Briefing on Operation Crevice, SO 13, New Scotland Yard, December 2004

<sup>7</sup> Al-Qaeda (Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism, 9 January 2004), p. 1. Available: <http://jtic.janes.com>.

<sup>8</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda Global Network of Terror* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report provides insight into the operation including the different phases and time lines.

<sup>11</sup> Abdullah Azzam, “Al-Qa’idah al-Sulbah,” *Al-Jihad*, 41, April 1988, p. 46. The original text in Arabic was translated into English by Reuven Paz, the then Academic Director, International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism, Israel. Abdullah Azzam, *Iklan al-Jihad* (Peshawar, Pakistan : Maktab Khidmat al-Mujahidin), pp. 95 – 131.

<sup>12</sup> See published extracts from Ayman al-Zawahiri’s book, “*Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*” by Al-Sharq al-Awsat, 02 Dec, 2001, London.

<sup>13</sup> “Syeikh Muhammad bin ‘Abdul Wahab (1115-1206H/1701-1790M)”, available at <http://media.isnet.org/islam/Etc/Wahab.html> (accessed 6 December 2004).

<sup>14</sup> “Translation of Osama’s videotape”, *Al Jazeera TV*. 30 Oct. 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Fisk, “Interview With Saudi Dissident Bin Ladin” *Independent* (London), July 10, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> “Declaration of Jihad Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Mosques,” *Al Islah* (London), Sept. 2, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> “Text of Fatwa Urging Jihad Against Americans,” *Al Quds Al Arabi* (London), Feb. 23, 1998. The fatwa argued that defensive jihad was necessary “in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem]

and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip [the US and Israel]

<sup>18</sup> “Al-Qa’idah al-Sulbah”. Translated by Reuven Paz from *Al-Jihad*; No. 41, April 1988, p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> Al Qaeda Training manual recovered by the British Police in Manchester, n.d. n.p. p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Gunaratna., p. 21.

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- <sup>21</sup> IDSS Commentaries, "Osama and Azzarqawi: Rivals or allies" by Bouchaib Silm, 55/2004, p. 2.
- <sup>22</sup> Gunaratna, p. 3.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 21.
- <sup>24</sup> Interviews with Al Qaeda members, 1999-2.
- <sup>25</sup> Christopher M. Blanchard, "Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology", CRS Report for Congress (Nov 16, 2004), pp. 5-6.
- <sup>26</sup> Az Zawahiri videotape broadcasted by Al Jazeera, available at <http://alsaha.fares.net/sahat?128@209.WcGqojKhRA5.0@.1dd6a9e9>.
- <sup>27</sup> "The Essence Of Al Qaeda: An Interview With Saad Al-Faqih", The Jamestown Foundation, 04 Aug, 2004. Available at <http://www.ladlass.com/intel/archives/003908.html>.
- <sup>28</sup> Jason Burke, "Think Again: Al Qaeda", Foreign Policy (May/June 2004), p. 2. Available: <http://www.foreignpolicy.com> [2004, October 11]
- <sup>29</sup> Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani (GMIP – Pattani Mujahideen Movement). 31 Oct. 2002. Available at : <http://jtic.janes.com>.
- <sup>30</sup> Of the original 3-4000 members at 2001, under 500 are still alive or active. ICPVTR database on Al Qaeda Wanted, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, August 2005.
- <sup>31</sup> Jason Burke, "Think Again: Al Qaeda", Foreign Policy (May/June 2004), p. 1. Available: <http://www.foreignpolicy.com> [2004, October 11]
- <sup>32</sup> Interview, Keith Weston, Director, Police International Counter Terrorism Unit, Thames House, London, November 2004.
- <sup>33</sup> Gunaratna, p. 5.
- <sup>34</sup> Nat Hentoff, "Kangaroo court in Guantanamo Bay", Chicago Sun-Times, 5 December 2004.
- <sup>35</sup> 'Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyyah' ('The General Guide For Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyyah'), International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, 2004. ICPVTR was the first institution to recover, fully translate, and analyze the JI guide.
- <sup>36</sup> Debriefing of Hambali, Central Intelligence Agency, August 2003
- <sup>37</sup> Debriefing of Hambali, Central Intelligence Agency, August 2003
- <sup>38</sup> The meaning of the Quranic verse in Arabic, "And (tell them that) I have not created the invisible beings (jinn) and men to any end other than that they may (know and) worship me", Q.S. 51: 56 in the PUPJI, Nidhom Asasi Muqaddimah, p. 13.
- <sup>39</sup> "And lo! Thy Sustainer said unto the angels: "Behold, I am about to establish upon earth one who shall inherit it (khalifah)", Q.S. 2:30.
- <sup>40</sup> PUPJI, Muqaddimah, pp. 3 – 4 and Chapter 2, Article 4 of the Nidhom Asasi, p.14.
- <sup>41</sup> The phrase, 'Jama'atun minal-Muslimin' which appears in the PUPJI, Chapter 1, Article 2, p. 14 is a clear admission of this.
- <sup>42</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, ISIM, Netherlands in his 'Traditionalist and Islamist pesantren in contemporary Indonesia' a paper presented at the ISIM workshop on 'The Madrasa in Asia', 23 – 24 May 2004
- <sup>43</sup> PUPJI, p. 13 and 'Pidato Amanah Amirul Mujahidin Ust. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir' read during the Mujahidin II Congress, 10-12 August 2003, published by Wihdah Press, Jogjakarta.
- <sup>44</sup> Ushulul Manhaj Al-Harakiy Li Iqomatid Dien's seventh principle, PUPJI, p. 5 and Muhammad Saeed al-Qahtani, 'Al Wala' Wal Bara' According To The Aqeedah Of The Salaf' translated by Omar Johnstone available at [www.islamworld.net/wal.html](http://www.islamworld.net/wal.html). Mentioned by Muhamad Nursalim in his Faksi Abdullah Sungkar Dalam Gerakan NII Era Orde Baru, thesis to meet the requirements of S2 (Master's Degree) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Solo, 2001, p.22 as one of the two books which shaped Abdullah Sungkar's Tauhid Paradigm.
- <sup>45</sup> PUPJI, Chapter 10, Article 30 – 33, p.18.
- <sup>46</sup> PUPJI, Chapter 2, Article 5, p.14. These are further explained in the documents, attached to the PUPJI under the titles, 'Pembinaan Al-Iman' pp 8-10, 'Amar ma'rif dan nahi munkar' pp 15-17, 'At-Tarbiyah' pp 20-21, 'Ad-Da'wah' pp 22-23, 'Pembinaan Hijrah' pp 24-26 and 'Pembinaan Jihad' pp 26-29.



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<sup>47</sup> *Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The case of the "Ngruki Network" in Indonesia*, ICG Indonesia Briefing, 8 August 2002, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> 'The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and The Threat of Terrorism', White Paper published by Ministry of Home Affairs, Republic of Singapore, 2003, pp. 15 -17.

<sup>49</sup> 'Pidato Amanah Amirul Mujahidin Ust. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir', pp. 5 – 6.

<sup>50</sup> <sup>C</sup>Ishom Darbalah and <sup>C</sup>Ashim <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Maajid. *Al-Qaul Al-Qathi<sup>C</sup> Fi Man Imtana<sup>C</sup>a An Al-Syara<sup>C</sup>i*.

<sup>51</sup> Dr Ahmad Mosuli. *Al-Ushuliah Al-Islamiah Dirasah Fi Al-Khitab Al-Ideoloji Wa Al-Siyasi<sup>C</sup>Inda Sayyid Quthb*. Egypt : Al-Tiba<sup>C</sup>ah Wa Al-Nasyr Wa Al-Tauzee<sup>C</sup> Wa Al-I<sup>C</sup>lan, 1993, pp. 202 – 215.

<sup>52</sup> PUPJI, pp. 5 – 6.

<sup>53</sup> White Paper, p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> Fauzan Al-Anshari. *Saya Teroris? (Sebuah "Pleidoi")*. Jakarta Selatan : Penerbit Republika, 2002, p.7.

<sup>55</sup> White Paper, pp. 4 – 5 & 10.

<sup>56</sup> White Paper, p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> Dr. Zachary Abuza. (2003). *The State of Jemaah Islamiya and US Counter-Terror Efforts in Southeast Asia*. Available :

[http://wwwc.house.gov/international\\_relations/108/abuz1029.htm](http://wwwc.house.gov/international_relations/108/abuz1029.htm) (2004, Oct 12).

<sup>58</sup> White Paper, p. 15.

<sup>59</sup> Interview, Abu Bakar Bashir, Central Prison, Jakarta, August 2005

<sup>60</sup> Debriefing of Hambali, Central Intelligence Agency, August 2003. Zulkarnaen is the current military commander of JI.

<sup>61</sup> Debriefing of Hambali, Central Intelligence Agency, August 2003

<sup>62</sup> In his inaugural statement Amirul Mujahidin Ustadz Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, called for the Application of Islamic Law. He said: "We still believe that if the application of Islam law is not obstructed, there will be peaceful life in this nation. Everyone will get justice from Allah and get great benefit from the teachings of Muhammad. However, if the application of Islamic law is obstructed, and the aspiration of Muslim is unfairly blocked, Muslims have the right to fight. For MMI, there are only two alternatives: the application of Islamic law or death in the way of jihad fi sabilillah (jihad in the way of God)."

<sup>63</sup> Indonesia Backgrounder, How The Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates, ICG Asia Report No. 43 Jakarta/Brussels, December 11, 2002, p.1.

<sup>64</sup> Interview Jack Roche, Hakea Prison, Perth, August 2004.

<sup>65</sup> At this point of time, there is only interest. The Asharq al Awsat reported that an Indonesian group recruited 300 volunteers to fight the Americans in Falluja, Iraq. Available at <http://www.asharqalawsat.com/> [2004, November 30]. Interviews with different jihad groups in Indonesia throughout 2005 revealed that there were jihadists that wanted to go to Iraq but lacked funds and the organization to travel.

<sup>66</sup> Most measures proposed to increase security are to contain terrorism such as access to high value detainees, ASEAN extradition treaty, create financial intelligence units; criminalize terrorist financing; increased cooperation between intelligence services and law enforcement agencies; and provision of incentives for job creation. Dr. Zachary Abuza, "The State of Jemaah Islamiya and US Counter-Terror Efforts in Southeast Asia", pp. 12 - 14

<sup>67</sup> News Release, "New Team of Muslim World Experts at Institute", *United States Institute of Peace*, 19 October, 2004.

<sup>68</sup> 9/11 Commission Report.

<sup>69</sup> These are the projects developed by Singapore's International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies.

# **Transnational Security Crime In Latin America: Building Up Cooperation In The Andean Ridge**

Boris Saavedra

## **Introduction**

Latin America in recent decades has been relatively free of interstate conflicts, even though the internal scenes of most countries of the area were hardly immune to armed struggle. However, this relatively favourable context has not meant that confidence among the neighbours is a hallmark of international relations among Latin American states. The region is traditionally one of considerable distrust and the fact that this lack of confidence does not break out into open conflict more often should not lead us to the conclusion that this is a zone of peace.

Even if today's Western Hemispheric strategic environment is fragile it is peaceful in stark contrast to many other third world countries. There are no real military threats between neighbours. Democracy is the goal and the accepted model for government in the region. There are two major threats facing the world and particularly the Western hemisphere: first, the lack of control of national territory and the people in it fairly and justly; second, internal factions or non-state actors seeking violent change within the borders of the state.

Today's security and stability requires a call for a coordinated and cooperative multilateral application of national civilian and military instruments of power. The bottom line is that a unifying and realistic common agenda for western hemisphere security is needed. **The main objective of this paper is to demonstrate that the use of institutional confidence-security-building measures (CSBM) is a fundamental tool for security cooperation in an asymmetric environment characterized by transnational security crime.** The current interest in application of CSBM is a manifestation of the growing concern for peace and security among the nations' leaders, particularly in the Andean ridge.

There are CSBM of first, second, and third generations based on changes in the strategic environment, goals achieved in its execution, mechanisms used, and the most important aspect, continuity in implementation. CSBM represent the basic mechanism and the starting point of the logic that will allow cooperation combating these non-traditional threats. There are some goals to be accomplished in parallel such as: stable political-military relations; educating civilians and military in CSBM to create a critical mass of experts to communicate and educate society at large;

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educating and training the armed forces in joint and combined operations; creating the culture of inter agency coordination, etc.

There is a chain of causality that explains the logic that needs to be followed in achieving security cooperation. The starting point should be building CSBM within the nation. Second, inter agency coordination should be a new culture that needs to be introduced within the state and also at international level; the international inter- agency coordination introduces another element in the game which is the international integrated organizations establishing programmes to exchange expertise, intelligence, and other resources fostering CSBM to enhance cooperation fighting non-traditional threats, particularly illegal drug trafficking and terrorism.

There is a tendency in the region to develop Defence White Papers, which is a good step to reinforce mutual trust and confidence. However, these good written intentions need to be materialized with the application of institutional CSBM at national and international level.

Defence establishments in Latin America, particularly in the Andean ridge, have been impacted among other things by four major elements: democracy, market economy, technology, and the strategic environment in the middle of a global system characterized by speed and connectivity of developments. In recent months, the historically troubled but chronically neglected nations of the southern crescent of the Andes-Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia - have made international headlines for the clear signs of political instability due to the lack of sound management of political leaders in combination with unacceptable corruption, faltering economic reforms and deepening social distress, as well as opposition demagogues who have unseated a president in each of the three nations.

On the other hand, insurgency and terrorist groups have a drug-fuelled armed conflict raging in Colombia. A political crisis plaguing oil-rich Venezuela represents another challenge to the security environment in the region. These developments fall under the radar of most US policymakers and outside observers. However, we should remember the turbulent past with the warning of a possible return to violence, instability and a fertile ground for transnational crime such as: terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and organized crime. Indeed these circumstances demand a new cooperative security architecture that could provide opportunities to improve the ways and means to respond to those threats and challenges. It should be emphasized that CSBM are fundamental instruments to achieve this security cooperation.

## **Hemispheric Security Environment**

One would expect to see a high level of cooperation among the countries of Latin America. Diplomatic speeches and declarations after summits of regional political leaders expressing the magnificent common cultural heritage, the mutually supportive struggle against overseas rule, a shared history of relative peace, similar concerns and perceptions of threat and a number of other elements are held in common. To some extent all this is true. The region in recent decades has been relatively free of interstate conflicts, even though the internal scenes of most countries of the area were hardly immune to armed struggle.

It is not true however, that this relatively favourable context has meant that confidence among neighbours is a hallmark of the international relations between Latin American states. The region is traditionally one of considerable internal distrust and the fact that this lack of confidence does not break out into open conflict more often should not lead us to the conclusion that this is a zone of peace. Rather we should realize that many factors contribute to the lack of full scale war, including a remarkable degree of US dominance that began in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century but was effective at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Central America and South America, as in the case of the Venezuelan embargo of 1902-07 by Great Britain, Germany, and several other powers because of the government's failure to meet its debts. On two occasions, European warships bombarded the ports. The US successfully threatened the Europeans with the *Great White Fleet*. The US in the aftermath dominated Venezuela economically. By 1907, Venezuela had met the obligations to those powers. The Inter American Defence System with all its limitations provides a legal framework that allows peaceful settlement of conflicts. But peace is really more due to topographical and geographical restraint on warfare; deep logistical weaknesses in all Latin American militaries, and many other economic and social factors limited effective power projection.

Even if today's western hemispheric strategic environment is fragile due to the lack of consensus on how to deal with the current security situation, it is in stark contrast to many other third world areas. In this hemisphere even if we have tension between states there are not real military threats between neighbours. Democracy is the goal and the accepted model for government in the region. This is important because democracies tend to look out for the welfare of their people, seek positive relations with their neighbours, and most importantly usually do not make war against each other. However, democracy by itself is not enough, legitimate governance or responsible democracy is necessary to generate the capability to manage, coordinate, and sustain security and development effectively.

There are two major threats facing the world and particularly the western hemisphere. First, the lack of control of national territory and the people in it fairly and justly, and second, internal factions or non-state actors seeking violent change within state borders. The current chaotic and global strategic environment is the reflection of a general lack of legitimate governance and civil-military cooperation. Therefore, instability and criminal anarchy are the general consequences of unreformed political, social, economic and security institutions and concomitant misguided governance.

In October 2003 in Mexico, the Organisation of American States (OAS) adopted a new concept of hemispheric security through the passage of the *Declaration on Security in the Americas*. According to the declaration, "the security threats, concerns, and other challenges in the hemispheric context are of diverse nature and multidimensional scope, and the traditional threats include political, economic, social, health, and environmental aspects."<sup>1</sup> This new definition broadens the traditional concept of security by including new and non-traditional threats. It incorporates democracy, the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law, and multilateralism as shared values of the hemisphere's states. In addition, it recognizes the concept of human security to reaffirm the importance of protecting human life.

The traditional military threat of external aggression retains credibility, but not the urgency it once had. Today's foe is the terrorist, the drug trafficker, the arms

trafficker, the document forger, the international crime boss, the environmental degradation, and the money launderer. These new threats are planted, grown and nurtured in the fertile ground of ungoverned territories particularly in rural areas. The argument in general is that these ungoverned territories are common in failing and failed states, which become the breeding ground for instability, criminality, insurgency, regional conflict, and terrorism.

The tendency persists in most centres of defence studies in the region to educate leaders under the traditional approach of national and regional security. Now that the unconventional threat is so closely linked to national defence, civilian and military leaders in the defence sector must be trained to recognize the problem. Military organizations must be able to work across a much broader field of activities than those of the conventional and traditional military setting. Civilian and military leaders today must understand the real nature of the threat in order to rethink the ways and means to confront these new threats with scarce resources in a multidimensional approach. However, there is a risk of remilitarization of internal security in the last few years, beginning with the involvement of the armed forces in roles that do not correspond to the defence of the state. This could derail efforts by the governments of the region to subordinate the armed forces to civilian democratic institutions.

The lessons from more than 50 years of bitter experience suffered by governments and people show that struggles against all forms of asymmetric warfare often fail. According to Max Manwaring, responsible governance required four things. First, state failure is a process, not an outcome: the state loses the capacity and/or the will to perform its essential governance and security functions. Second, if we focus only on the capacity to govern, we may lose sight of the fact that the state and its institutions may lack effective legitimacy. Third, a tendency resulting from the focus on state failure has been to concentrate attention on complete state collapse; that is, the so-called failed state. Fourth, perhaps most important, responsible governance concerns the manner of governing rather than the fact of governing or the legal international recognition that a given regime represents a sovereign state.<sup>2</sup>

Corruption is a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that provides fruitful ground to criminal and terrorist activities. By illegally diverting state funds, corruption undercuts services such as health, education, public transportation, or state security and defence capability that is required to combat terrorism. The diversion of scarce resources by corrupt parties affects a government's ability to provide basic security to its citizens moreover, it can jeopardize the state's ability to encourage inter agency coordination and international cooperation against terrorism.

## **Narco Traffickers And Terrorist Groups In The Andean Ridge Of South America**

Terrorists and drug trafficking organizations have shown within the global system a considerable flexibility in adjusting their operations, tactics, and locations in reaction to the government efforts. The linkage between terrorists and drug trafficking are clear. According to Thomas Friedman,

“Around the year 2000 we entered a whole new era: Globalization 3.0 where the world is shrinking from size small to size tiny and flattening the playing field at the same time. And while the dynamic force in

Globalization 1.0 was countries globalizing and the dynamic force in Globalization 2.0 was companies globalizing the dynamic force in Globalization 3.0 - the thing that gives it its unique character - is the newfound power for individuals to collaborate and compete globally and the lever that is enabling individuals and groups to go global so easily and so seamlessly is not the horsepower, and not hardware, - but software - all sorts of new applications - in conjunction with the creation of a global fiber-optic network that has made us all next-door neighbors. Even worse, Globalization 3.0 different than previous ones is driven not only by individuals but also by much more diverse - non-Western, non-white group of individuals. Therefore, the institutions combating each of these two illicit activities need to work together in a close coordination and cooperation to reduce the opportunities of drug traffickers to finance terrorists and other illegal organizations in their criminal activities.”<sup>3</sup>

## **History and Background**

In the 1960s after a long period of political confrontation and dictatorship, with governments students, left-wing intellectuals, and Catholic radicals hoping to emulate Mao in China and Fidel Castro’s communist revolution in Cuba, ELN and FARC were funded in Colombia. A third Colombian terrorist group is the United Self Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC), operational since the late 1970s and supported by both landowners and drug traffickers. During the 1990s, AUC expanded its reach and now operates throughout central and western Colombia. The Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*, SL) terrorist group originated in 1969 in Peru, but 17 May 1980 (the date of the first Peruvian national election after 12 years of military rule) commemorates the start of the group’s armed struggle, and some of the most violent attacks have been timed to mark this date. SL operated until 1999, when its main leaders were arrested, but it emerged again in 2001. The other terrorist group that operated in Peru is *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA) founded in 1984 by two university students who had left SL for ideological reasons.

## **Political ideology**

While still professing political doctrine based on the communist ideologies of Marx, Mao and Lenin, insurgents who use terrorism in Latin America and particularly in the Andean Ridge of South America show that some of the groups’ political ideas are hazy at best, makeshift at worst. It is likely that this ideology is used mainly as a glue to hold the organization together and to indoctrinate new recruits. Although the ideology does not play a significant part in the formation, organization and policy of these insurgent and terrorist groups, it would be completely inaccurate to portray them as nothing more than drugs cartels as some governments and many in Washington have tried to do. The leaders of these organizations do not live in luxury and are not motivated by the desire to amass a huge personal fortune. For them it is all about power.

Most insurgent and terrorist groups that operate in the Andean Ridge, such as FARC, ELN, SL and MRTA say that they represent the rural poor against the wealthy classes and oppose American influence in their countries through the privatization of natural resources, multinational corporations and justified violence. However, the case of the AUC in Colombia provides the landowners who finance it with some social services and with defence against leftist insurgents. The group has

also entered Colombian politics, and it is involved in and profits from the drug trade. The aim of MRTA is to rid Peru of imperialist influences, replacing the central government with a Marxist structure and removing all symbols of foreign influence. In particular, the group has voiced anger about the US and Japanese presence in the country. In contrast with SL, MRTA does not aim to liberate or hold territory, but to instigate a popular revolution through establishing local power bases.

### **Foreign Bases/Supply lines**

Since the breakdown of peace talks and the launch of the war on terrorism; the **FARC** has found itself on the US State Department's international terrorism list, and its official foreign emissaries have had to go underground following years of overt international diplomacy in Europe and Mexico. The US also issued indictments as well as extradition requests on charges of drugs trafficking against several FARC commanders, such as military chief Jorge Briceño.

This crackdown appears largely symbolic, however, and has not interrupted supply lines from all neighbouring countries: Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador since the borders are extremely porous. With the funds available to FARC it has had little difficulty in obtaining supplies of any kind. There is also increasing evidence that the FARC is developing networks and even sister rebel groups in other countries, particularly Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru.

The FARC's feeling of security abroad must have been threatened with the arrest in Ecuador in January 2004 of Ricardo Palmera (alias Simon Trinidad), the highest ranking member of the organization ever captured. There is also an ongoing controversy over the arrest of Rodrigo Granda, a member of the FARC's international front. While Colombian authorities said he was arrested on 14 December 2004 in Colombia, evidence is emerging that he was kidnapped in Venezuela and smuggled across the border.

The **ELN** has experienced huge growth during its history. Many villagers who do not actively support the group often co-operate with the guerrillas as they distrust the military and fear reprisals from them. In addition, the ELN has co-operated with other left-wing groups in Colombia. There has also been heightened speculation over the possible ELN relationship with President Chavez in Venezuela. It has been long suspected that Chavez has supported the left-wing objectives of the ELN. Nevertheless, there has been no concrete proof that Chavez ever offered financial or military aid to the guerrillas.

The majority of the ELN funding is derived from extortion or from kidnapping and ransom. In 1998 alone, the ELN obtained USD84 million in ransom and USD255 million through extortion, much of it paid by foreign oil companies through revolutionary taxes charged by the ELN. The ELN is also believed to have accrued substantial funds from the gold and coal industries using similar methods.

Since the 1990s the **AUC** has grown substantially. Its base is in northern Colombia, where the drug traffickers and landowners who support the group hold sway. But today they have extended its reach and now operate throughout central and western Colombia, and also in cities.

Since 2001 SL has re-merged with an active recruitment drive in universities and poor rural communities (where drug funds, rather than brutality, have seen the

group's popularity rise). SL's attempt to regroup has been aided by popular dissatisfaction with Toledo's government, particularly among coca growers, who fear an erosion of their livelihood through coca eradication schemes.

Although some funding of **MRTA** is provided by European and US support networks, it has typically been self-sufficient. Funding has come through robberies and associated crime, kidnapping, extortion (including the collection of revolutionary taxes), and drug trafficking. In recent years, MRTA has been forced back to rural Peru, the location of many of the country's poppy fields. The group has therefore strengthened its ties to the narcotics trade, although this is limited by the small number of MRTA operatives.

## **Regional Strategy**

According to Gaston Chillier and Laurie Freeman, the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted by the OAS in October 2003, created a new concept of hemispheric security that broadens the traditional definition of national defence to incorporate new threats, including political, economic, social, health and environmental concerns, to such an extent that almost any problem can now be considered a security threat.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, given the current security environment in the Andean Ridge and the concept of terrorism as understood by the United States, the gap between the two security visions increases and the implementation of this new multidimensional concept of security constitutes a risk that major regional problems may cause a military response to confront them. In addition, Chillier and Freeman conclude that

“The Sixth Conference of Defence Ministers is a good example of how the OAS's new multidimensional concept conforms to the US security agenda for the region. The conference's declaration, known as the Quito Declaration, refers to the new concept of multidimensional security, but emphasizes the threat of terrorism above all else. Terrorism occupies a disproportionately large place in the declaration compared to other threats or concerns, in a hemisphere where, aside from Colombia, there is not significant terrorist activity.”<sup>5</sup>

## **Communications and Internet**

One of the major characteristics of today's communications is the idea of making the entire world's knowledge, or even just a big chunk of it, available to anyone, anytime, anywhere. In Freedman's terms Globalization 3.0, characterized by the power of individuals and groups to collaborate, is very important because it is the ability to build and deploy one's own personal or group supply of information, knowledge and entertainment without having to go to the movie theatre, radio or through network television. Drug traffickers and terrorists groups in the Andean Ridge are self-empowered with very sophisticated websites that allow them to do what they think is best with the information about their organization, reaching a global audience without any restriction or control. It is very different from anything that preceded it. Radio and TV were one-to-many. The telephone was one-to-one. But the Internet is the ultimate expression of the power of individuals and groups to look at the world, and to do exactly what they want. It has empowered any



group, making disruptive ones with the formation of global communities of ideologies and interests across all international and cultural boundaries.

## **Analysis Of The Security Strategic Environment**

Contemporary security and stability in the Western hemisphere are fragile. Structural problems have been impacted with the evolution of geopolitical conditions on a world scale. Therefore, for this analysis we will begin with the explanation of two major tools used by terrorist today. *Asymmetry and Idiosyncrasy* and most important, what happened in the last decade of the XX century, keeping in mind the historical evolution with its social, political, and economic characteristics. In this manner, we will be able to understand the current security environment in the region at the same time present the perspective found in the analysis of the recent past and its implication in today's security environment.

### **Asymmetry and Idiosyncrasy**

Asymmetry and idiosyncrasy are the combination of tools used by terrorists to achieve their political goals. According to Montgomery C. Meigs, asymmetry means the absence of a common basis of comparison with respect to a quality or in an operational context, a capability. Idiosyncrasy has a different connotation, possessing a peculiar or eccentric pattern. In a military sense, the term idiosyncrasy connotes an unorthodox approach or means of applying a capability, one that does not follow the rules and is peculiar at times in a sinister sense.<sup>6</sup> Today, international terrorist organizations apply the same methodology used by terrorists since the early days; what have changed are the mechanism of attack, and the levels of violence and brutality. Terrorists' agents now weave their slow, purposeful way through the international system of commerce and travel, which is slower still because of the protection of civilian rights, and the general laxness in public security. Terrorists use asymmetric means to cleverly develop idiosyncratic attacks on their targets; in so doing they are changing the operational and strategic environment.

This is the new strategic environment where non-conventional threats represent the most important challenge to our societies. Terrorism, drug trafficking, vigilantism and refugee flows are interconnected, but the most important aspect here is that each time a person buys illicit drugs that person is supporting those other criminal activities. In the western hemisphere drug producers and traffickers hire thugs, gangs and even terrorists to protect their interests.

Another major problem is the idiosyncratic attack. By attacking at a point he selects in an attempt to avoid government response and operational advantages, he also exploits the freedom of movement, the general laxness in public security and the state's weaknesses or blind spots operating in open democratic societies; the terrorist is capable of inflicting harm at will. The enemy also has the ability to continuously evolve new tactics, and due to the cellular and compartmental nature of his support structure, that structure may be eliminated completely once the mission is accomplished.

Hemispheric security cooperation among Latin American countries is complex due to the tension between the political and military elites. That is why the implementation of CSBM in the mid 1970s was effected by the influential role of the

military elite in government. However, in the 1990s, particularly after the conference in Santiago de Chile 1995, the vast majority of the countries under civilian democratic governments gave strong support to the implementation and advance of CSBM due to the limited political influence of the military, economic, social, and political changes, as well as the rise of new threats, and also the challenges to security and political stability in the Western hemisphere.

Today's security and stability require a coordinated and cooperative multilateral application of national civilian and military instruments of power. However, a broadened and realistic definition of national security will require a major revision of the military role to include a controversial protection of the citizen and their government. This is a serious civil-military relations issue because there could be a reversion to past practices in which some military acted as parallel and autonomous political powers superior to that of the civilians.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the United States represents an important point of inflexion in the US security strategy. The change in security strategy and the focus on the global war on terrorism increased the gap between the US and Latin American perception about fighting terrorism. In Latin America even if all countries have suffered terrorist attacks, it is not priority number one as a major threat. However, political support was given to US through an OAS declaration condemning the attack.

In the post-September 11 context, it is clear that the region has been influenced by the new security paradigm and the definition of terrorism as promoted by US policy. The US-led campaign against terrorism has, unfortunately, become a cover for some governments who want to deflect attention away from other more important security problems such as urban criminality, drug consumption in society, corruption in law enforcement agencies, etc.

Another sticking point is that no consensus on the "threat" has emerged. There is strong consensus on a strategic vision of peace, stability, security, prosperity and civil-society in the region. But, with no agreement on the threat, there can be no agreement on a unified ends-ways-means policy and strategy that could contribute directly to achieving that cooperation required to combat terrorism and its associated criminal activities.

The Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted by the OAS in October 2003, broadens the traditional definition of national defence to incorporate new threats. However, this new concept would only enhance Latin America's historic tendency as well as current trajectory towards giving its military greater internal, non-traditional responsibilities.

The lack of political leaders with experience in defence and security issues has been a matter that has taken more importance in recent years; therefore, today universities and other centres for strategic studies have implemented new courses in order to prepare civilians in defence and security issues. The Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies at National Defense University has been one of the leading institutions in the US created to educate civilians in these issues, fostering civil-military relations in democratic societies.

Failing and failed states are characterized by the lack of solid institutions, by corruption, and by illegitimate governance, which all become the breeding ground for instability, criminality, insurgency, regional conflict and terrorism. They can

host “evil” networks of all kinds, whether they involve criminal business enterprises, drug-trafficking, or some form of ideological crusade. The Andean Ridge is on the road to this condition. The longer these conditions persist, the more they and their associated problems endanger the regional as well as the broader hemispheric security, peace and prosperity.

The bottom line is that a unifying and realistic common agenda for western hemisphere security is needed. But before the United States unilaterally initiates “building blocks” based on the Rio Treaty to implement a common agenda, before any proposals for standing military and naval forces for the hemisphere are initiated, and before the OAS is embarrassed into producing some sort of ad hoc security architecture to confront the current and future security environment, a real national strategy should be developed for each of the countries in order to foster institutional CSBMs to fortify credibility and mutual trust at a national level, that will help to create solid cooperation.

### **Building Security Cooperation**

The first effort to create unification in Latin America was by Simon Bolivar, in his famous Jamaica Letter of September 6, 1815 where he outlined many of his beliefs. He expressed his belief in a union of Spanish American countries in order to achieve full freedom. The Jamaica Letter is one of his first public statements about his vision for the future of Spanish America.

The second important step in integration and security cooperation in the Americas was the creation of the Inter American Defence System in March 1942, as a response to World War II. This organization transformed itself into a Cold War organization to counter communism.

Since the middle 1990s a growing global political violence is clashing with global economic integration and is affecting democratic consolidation in the region. New, non-state actors that conduct terrorist and other asymmetric warfare demand coordination and cooperation at national and international levels in order to be efficient and effective against these new, non-conventional threats that affect our societies at large. There are three levels of coordination and cooperation:

The first is at the national level among government institutions, particularly within the armed forces, expressed as joint operations between each of the branches of the military within each country. Joint capability entails information-sharing, planning, and training within the services; this represents the most important and fundamental cooperation and coordination.

The second is between the armed forces and security forces such as the police and customs. Armed forces must, within their constitutional and legal constraints, support and cooperate with the law enforcement agencies in combating these new transnational threats.

The third, among sovereign states at the global level, at the sub-regional level and finally at the hemispheric level. This final level is starting to take hold in our hemisphere. The 5<sup>th</sup> Defence Ministerial Conference of the Americas held in Santiago in November 2002 emphasized the “desire to strengthen inter-institutional and intergovernmental coordination, which permits the preservation and stability of

peace.” Cooperation and coordination among nations are much more complex than just internal communication. They must be built on a foundation of mutual respect and trust and they must be mutually beneficial. Without these precepts, there is no cooperation.<sup>7</sup>

Based on the increasing problem of illegal drug trafficking and terrorism in the Andean region, and on the necessity of mutual respect and trust among countries, the first Andean presidential council on May 23, 1990, decided to create a system of group coordination on the issues of combating illegal drugs and terrorism.<sup>8</sup> Later, in 2001 an Andean Plan of Cooperation was established to combat illegal drugs and the criminal associated activities. In the agenda of this plan was contemplated the use of CSBMs as a small mechanism to achieve security cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

Working together in multilateral exercises and forming trust through transparency are just a few of the confidence- and security- building measures that have formed a structure for multilateral security cooperation in the Americas. However, this mutual trust requires the foundation of a solid institutional CSBM that could assure continuity in order to avoid its disappearance when a critical situation arose. In other words, CSBMs need to be built bottom-up within the national level, to be able to establish them later on at the international level.

## **The Evolution Of Hemispheric CSBMs**

The Western Hemisphere has a long tradition of general cooperation and specific agreements in security and defence issues, outlined above. The Inter American Defence Board is considered an important act of hemispheric security cooperation. On April 30, 1948, 21 countries of the western hemisphere met in Bogotá, Colombia to adopt the OAS Charter to confirm the support of common goals, and to respect all countries’ sovereignty

Even if CSBMs were mentioned in Helsinki in 1975, the real benefit and success of this mechanism began in the 1980s during the Stockholm conference where they were more oriented toward conventional security, with clear definitions of military operations, implementation of mechanism of inspection, verification, evaluation and follow up. At the end of the Cold War the United Nations paid more attention to this mechanism, in order to achieve peace and stability around the world.

In Latin America, CSBMs were not accepted at the beginning because it was a general belief that our region counted on mechanisms allowing for regional peace and stability since the early days of independence. One good example of this mechanism is the Ayacucho declaration in 1974. “On December 9, 1974, eight Latin American nations stated their intention to consider arms limitations. These nations jointly declared the need to create conditions which permit effective limitation of armaments and put an end to their acquisition for offensive military purposes, in order to dedicate all possible resources to economic development.”<sup>10</sup> That represents clear evidence of the overwhelming effort to keep the region in peace and stability. However, most countries by that time were under military regimes, keeping a military focus with respect to defence and security issues.

In more than twenty years of implementing CSBMs in Latin America, there are two crucial points of inflection in security policy in the Western Hemisphere. The first,

which is conceptual, is the Santiago declaration on CSBMs and the second, which is organizational, with the creation of the Security and Defence Commission at the OAS.

Today, we have CSBMs of the first, second, and third generations based on changes in the strategic environment, goals achieved in their execution, mechanisms used, and, most important, continuity in implementation. Therefore, CSBMs represent the basic mechanism, as well as the starting point for the logic that will allow cooperation combating the new threats.

### **Confidence And Security Building Measures In The Andean Ridge**

Fragility, political instability, economic stagnation, a growing gap between poor and rich, drug trafficking, illegal immigration, organized crime and terrorism all characterize the security environment in the Andean Ridge. However, one of the most important problems is personal security, due to the political and socioeconomic conflicts, such as the Shining Path in Peru, the indigenous movements in Bolivia and Ecuador, and fighting economic marginalization born as a consequence of years of severe poverty, discrimination, and violence and the lack of territorial control by the state over extensive areas.<sup>11</sup>

There is a lack of state control over the border areas in the entire hemisphere, but particularly in the Andean region permeability of border areas represent a breeding ground for illegal drug trafficking, arms and human smuggling, and all kinds of criminal activities. The creation of a national strategy in order to fortify public institutions, eradicate corruption, and educate public servants in inter-agency coordination is a major priority.

The year 1989 represents the beginning of the road to a common security policy for the Andean region, due to the complex problem of fighting illegal drugs and terrorism. Discussions of elements in this policy comprise integration, prevention and security. However, it was on May 23, 1990, when the Andean Presidential Council created a coordination group to fight illegal drugs and terrorism in the region. In August 1997, the Andean Community of Nations created the secretariat to take control of security issues. But was not until June 2002 that an Andean Plan of Cooperation against Drug Trafficking and Criminal Activities (APCADTCA) was approved.

This plan of cooperation established, among other things, a social agenda, with specific actions in security issues such as the creation, encouragement and use of CSBMs in the Andean region. However, the implementation of this mechanism has been very slow. The Ecuador-Peru conflict represented the most serious situation, leaving clear among member countries the lack of a common security and defence policy.

The lesson learned at the OAS, particularly in the Hemispheric Security Commission from the Ecuador-Peru conflict; the Ushuaia Declaration in July 1999, creation of the MERCOSUR, and the Bolivian and Chilean peace zone; as well as the acceleration and deepening of free trade between Ecuador and Peru in May 1999, are some of the elements that disclose the common mechanisms that could help to create a common security policy in the region.

For more than twenty years, the CSBMs in the Andean Ridge have been focused on conventional security between neighbouring countries and in border operations, while achieving a lack of general confidence that could have improved a better mutual understanding among the countries. There is a need to improve the education of civilians and military as a CSBM, in order to create a critical mass of experts who will communicate and educate society at large.

## **Conclusions**

In the last sixteen years after the end of the Cold War, the world, the western hemisphere, and particularly the Andean region, has gone quickly through conditions that brought an early change in strategic behaviour. However, the developments since September 11, 2001 have created a watershed in the security strategy that demand a new way of thinking. It is clear that the region has been influenced by the new security paradigm and the definition of *the war on terrorism* as promoted by US policy.

There is a strong consensus on a strategic vision of peace, stability, security, prosperity and civil-society in the region. But with no agreement on the threat, there can be no agreement on a unified ends-ways-means policy and strategy that could contribute directly to achieving the cooperation required.

Most insurgent groups that use terrorism have a clear link with drug dealers and have prioritized safeguarding the organizational structure in order to engage in a military struggle. In other words, insurgent groups sacrifice political goals in order to preserve military strength, which would mean that the ultimate political aim (the social revolution) has been subordinated to safeguarding the existence of the armed group. Today, insurgent groups in the Andean Ridge have lost credibility within their countries because a large gap exists between political rhetoric and results. In particular, the claim to be fighting for the poor and social justice while engaging in criminal activities with drug traffickers and committing atrocities to the population is one of the major complaints.

The interest in the application of CSBMs is a manifestation of the growing concern among the nations' leaders for peace and security. The application according to the geographical, political, social, cultural, and economical conditions of each country or region become, a tendency toward a cooperative security and defence. Even if it has not been officially accepted it looks like the most appropriate mechanism to face the threats and challenges in our hemisphere.

Since the creation of the Inter American Defence Board the majority of security and defence initiatives have been supported by the US: in other words nothing important happens in these matters without the US leadership. However, today there is a general tendency to believe that countries must go beyond the restricted and unilateral vision of the U.S and its fight against illegal drug trafficking and terrorism.

According to Col. USA Joseph R. Nuñez, "security cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires a greater sense of partnership that provides major benefits to all states that participate" in international partnership for security. Therefore, the United States must change its traditional attitude of directing, and be more willing to listen to others. On the other hand, Latin American countries must be prepared to

honour responsibilities that arise from these cooperative agreements. The only way to achieve cooperation requires facing the threats and challenges of today's security environment by building institutional mutual trust and confidence among the countries.<sup>12</sup>

The movement toward a mutual beneficial economic community, a commitment to democracy, and a willingness to face the new, non-traditional threats require integration. There is a chain of causality that explains the logic that needs to be followed in achieving security cooperation. First of all, the starting point should be building CSBMs within the nation, particularly in the armed forces where joint and combined operations capabilities are the first step to improve effectiveness for fighting these new non-traditional threats, followed by CSBMs at the level of government agencies in order to have effective and efficient inter agency coordination. This mechanism is a new culture that needs to be introduced within the state and also at international level. Different agencies in government have a very narrow view of their scope of responsibilities and their relationship. In other words they lack the capabilities to coordinate with each other: for example, the armed forces coordinating with law enforcement in order to track and combat threats within the state or at international level.

Political and military leaders need to establish clear policy guidance in the defence sector, to create a clear joint and combined operations doctrine that they need to introduce in the formal military education and training system. They should create legislation that will support the joint and combined doctrine in the use of the military when it is needed, particularly in order to combat the new threats and challenges.

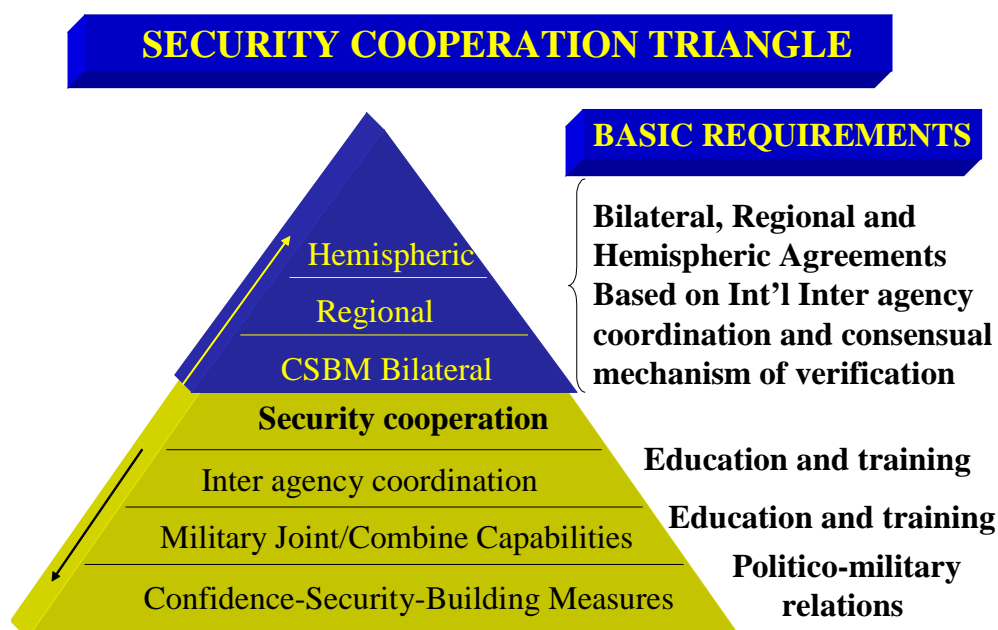
Once security cooperation has been achieved at the national level, and the foundational elements for security cooperation at the bilateral, regional, and hemispheric levels have been established, everything would depend on the international agreements, legislation and generated mechanisms of verification (see graphic).

International inter agency coordination introduces other elements in the game, which are the international organizations such as the United Nations, the OAS, the Andean Community of Nations and MERCOSUR. NGOs represent still more elements. These organizations play a major role by addressing the current security needs for the entire hemisphere, as well as all other economic social, and political projects; therefore, based on the connectivity among these agencies they should work in security cooperation projects with the following criteria:

1. The cooperative security architecture should have a flexible organization in order to be able to quickly respond to problems.
2. The cooperative security architecture should be able to coordinate the assembly and deployment of a multinational force when it is needed for missions such as: humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, combined operations against illicit drug trafficking, counter terrorism, etc.
3. This cooperative architecture must be empowered to act decisively and competently. But with complete respect for state sovereignty and avoidance of one state dominating the agenda and controlling the mission.
4. This cooperative security architecture should be able to protect the other major hemispheric projects without interrupting the dynamic flow of activities.

Defence establishments in Latin America, particularly in the Andean Ridge, have been impacted, among other things, by four major elements: democracy, market economy, technology, and the strategic environment in the middle of a global system characterized by speed and connectivity of developments. Insurgency in combination with drug trafficking is one of the major threats to security and stability in the region. These circumstances demand a new cooperative security architecture that could provide opportunities to improve the response to those threats and challenges. CSBMs are fundamental instruments to achieve the required security cooperation.

## GRAPHIC



## Endnotes

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# **TERRORISM IN THE SOUTHERN CONE: “Prosfictional” View and Power Politics<sup>1</sup>**

Dr Salvador Raza

## **SUBJECT AND APPROACH**

Terrorism in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay) cannot adequately be explained without situating it in its particular political, social and economic contexts and without a comprehensive understanding of the ideology/discourse of the terrorist groups that could guide analysis of the role of violence in them. This paper addresses the dichotomy of terrorists' strategic goals and the threat they pose in the region expressed in two general patterns. The first pattern is primarily **oppositional (or conspiratorial)**, aimed at the overthrow of dictatorial regimes, where terrorism presents itself as a tactic embedded in strategies for either change or continuity, and is practised by governments and revolutionaries alike. Lumped together as urban guerrilla, oppositional terrorism provoked massive government reactions in “dirty wars” using repressive military strategies that resulted in thousands of deaths and disappearances. This first pattern of terrorism is associated with the [limited and incomplete] transition from pre-modern to modern regional socioeconomic structure and the inadequacy of mechanisms for political transition.

The second pattern of terrorism, ultimately **strategic**, lies in the current period of rapid and tumultuous change, challenging the legitimacy of the state on grounds of perceived fundamental structural injustices in an era that promised to herald the end of local ideologies and the beginning of global post-liberal democracies. Terrorism under this second pattern becomes a tactical tool - empowered by drug trafficking and organized crime - in a (pseudo) struggle for social and political justice, the transformation of politics and society, in keeping with the legacy of radicalism (political, religious, etc.). Both oppositional and conspiratorial terrorism become primarily an urban phenomenon, conceptually engendered and politically sustained by students and intellectuals, with logistical (including financial) support from illegal activities.

Both patterns are diffused in recurrent cycles of social turmoil associated with economic failures to sustain developmental and security needs, judged to be the inevitable result of inequities inherent in global capitalism and liberalism. Faith in the efficacy of violence and the willingness to assume risks, rather than tactical differences in the use of force, converges the two patterns; however, the power of ideology in the latter pattern appears to be weaker than it was among the former.

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These concepts will be expanded throughout the text, providing a working definition of the manifestations of terrorism in the Southern Cone based on its strategic objectives – which define its nature – and the ideologies that sustain them. In identifying these two patterns and the difference between them, the aim is to offer some ideas that may assist in the formulation of policies aimed at preventing/containing strategic terrorism in the region. In this connection, this article attempts to go beyond the common wisdom offered by forecasting and prospective analysis<sup>2</sup> concerning the manifestations of this phenomenon in the region, to explore the political developments that a “prosfictional” view<sup>3</sup> can provide in the correlation between the nature of the problem and the alternative responses that can be offered against it.<sup>4</sup>

The intent is to identify veins in an amalgam representative of the emerging environment (economic, political, military, and, perhaps most important, cognitive) in the Southern Cone; veins that only emerge under a broader perspective that “desensitizes” national specificities (to the point of making them irrelevant for analytical purposes). In this sense, the analytical focus used opposes an impartial view of some conclusions repeatedly encountered on the subject in the region, which practically speaking form a “politically correct” posture against the USA. Meantime, without taking on a pro-USA posture, this paper intentionally avoids making any ethical judgment of American policy or of terror/terrorism, or national attitudes, to point out the impacts of (current and anticipated) American policies in the region. The conclusions offered must therefore be considered from the standpoint of their usefulness in providing an alternative reference for the formulation of policies that prevent/contain the emergence of strategic terrorism in the region.

The purpose of the investigation is to explore the nature of the relational nexus between terrorism and the ideological sources that legitimize it. To meet this requirement, the analytical effort was structured so as to seek answers to four questions: (1) What are the strategic objectives of terrorism? (2) What is the ideology that defines and guides the achievement of these objectives? (3) What is the threat posed by the achievement of these objectives? and (4) What are the proposed responses to this threat?

The research for this paper was carried out between October 2004 and July 2005, with field research in various countries, interviews and documentation gathering. It should be noted, for purposes of academic rigor, that the interviews were only possible through a promise of confidentiality to the sources. It is therefore acknowledged that the results are not source-verifiable. On the other hand, it should be noted that after completion of the first draft, the conclusions were submitted to other people (most of them experts on the subject) and it appears that they are in keeping with their own observations and conclusions.

The presentation of the results of this research is structured in four sections. The first section presents a summary of the common delineating aspects of oppositional terrorism manifest in the Southern Cone and of strategic terrorism as a potential threat. The second section attempts to identify aspects of the situations in which strategic terrorism has the potential of emerging, closing with some exploratory conclusions. The third then sets a framework of analysis to contain the current perceptions of terrorism in the region and develops some considerations on the intellectual, cultural, and cognitive aspects of possible “new militants”. While the first section of the work is based on research of the literature, the second mainly

involves interviews and discussions with other academics and students of the subject. This section entails a change in form in order to explain the process of constructing the arguments. The last section reviews the differences between the two different patterns of terrorism in order to expose the nature of the relational nexus between the manifestations of terrorism in the Southern Cone. Throughout the entire text, but principally in the third section, the logic of offensive realism according to Measheimer<sup>5</sup> is used as a theoretical framework, along with the counterpoint developed by Nye concerning “Soft Power”; but without a generalizing merger of the two theoretical constructs. Both are implicitly and indiscriminately used throughout the paper, without further specific references.

## **APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

For the extremist revolutionaries (chiefly Soviet-inspired) of Latin America, the Cuban Revolution called attention to the possibility of civilian “amateurs” overthrowing professional soldiers in a short period of time using guerrilla techniques. Typically, rural guerrilla warfare was carried out by middle-class youths, mostly students, frustrated with their potential for social ascent, initially, and erratically, supported by Cuba through the then-named *Dirección General de Inteligencia* [General Intelligence Directorate] or DGI. In the mid-1960s, there were more than 40 guerrilla training camps in Cuba, graduating more than 5,000 “combatants” per year.

The idea behind this movement was the transformation of the concept of guerrilla action from an instrument of attrition – a tactic within a strategy of action – to an instrument of decision, capable of overthrowing the enemy – a strategy in itself. Associated with this conceptual transformation was the change in the notion that this guerrilla strategy, unlike guerrilla tactics, no longer needed to await the right time to be used. It would create its own potential, thereby providing the opportunity for the revolutionary movement to gain critical mass (from the countryside, in the direction of the urban centres).

Under the influence of intellectual Régis Debray,<sup>6</sup> Latin American guerrilla movements distanced themselves from Soviet theory, advocating three basic points: (1) the political spearhead of revolution would not need to be the communist party; (2) guerrilla warfare was going to create the communist party, and not vice versa; (3) the political and military leadership of the revolutionary movement should be controlled by the guerrilla movement. In a way, the combination of these points led to the notion that the guerrilla movement should run and control its own political party.

Note that our considering terrorism as a tactic of the guerrilla strategy practised during that historical period puts into perspective the instrumental function of terrorism in creating the conditions for the emergence of a revolution (political, socioeconomic and social) – whence the designation “conspiratorial terrorism”; different from what we observe in present-day global terrorism, which is moving away from the notion of a strategy of action aimed at another revolution, and approaching the notion of being a war in and of itself. In other words, while the manifestation of terrorism in the 1960s was a tactical action used to achieve a political objective, today’s global terrorism seeks to define the political environment, whence the designation “strategic terrorism”.

Note, however, that the USA in its global war<sup>7</sup> against terrorism is facing a policy of terror and not just a terrorist tactic, in a conflict polarized by ideologically determined interests.<sup>8</sup> It should therefore be understood that Al Qaeda is making policy – a policy of violence<sup>9</sup>. The formulation of the USA's policies and strategies towards Latin America highlights the fundamental distinction that in the perspective of Latin America – and not that of the USA – the possibility of the re-emergence of terrorism in Latin America is still viewed as the possibility of the (re)emergence of a tactic of action as part of a revolutionary movement. Since, however, there is no longer a political space – or even intellectual environment – for such an emergence, the possibility of the emergence of terrorism in the perspective of Latin America simply does not exist. It is viewed as an American invention!<sup>10</sup>

The old guerrilla militants, actually former terrorists, are now in power. For example, look at Deputy José Genoíno, former chairman of the Workers' Party, the Party in Power in Brazil. The same thing is happening in Uruguay. So the tactical guerrilla action practised by the guerrilla movements is simply losing its relationship to reality. The proof is that the populations of the countries of the Southern Cone were apparently disillusioned with guerrilla groups as a revolutionary spearhead more than with the notion of revolution itself; in other words, disillusioned with violence as a method, not with the expectation of radical changes in a safe environment coupled with development processes.

The Latin American military forces were not prepared to face the challenge posed by the rural guerrilla warfare of the 60s and 70s because their force structures, mainly funded by the Mutual Defense Act signed with the USA, were still using strategies inherited from World War II, in a primarily defensive posture. This situation was aggravated by two factors.

The first involves professional military education, which emphasized geopolitical concepts in which conventional wars of attrition and control of maritime traffic defined strategies of action in hypotheses of regional wars. In this conception, structures based on quick-moving light infantry forces with extensive autonomy and highly aggressive rules of behaviour to combat guerrilla centres were relegated to second place, or even intellectually scorned.<sup>11</sup> The second factor, due to the USA's war in Vietnam, was the drain of the resources (equipment and training) necessary for implementing the traditional strategy of the Latin American armed forces, which led to the end of the Military Assistance Plan (MAP) initiated in 1961.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, these two factors provided opportunities for the guerrilla movement to advance in its purposes.

The guerrilla movements' conquest of spaces (political, intellectual, social, and mainly cognitive), along with the lack of political mechanisms for the transition of power and the weakness of the instrumental potential of the armed forces to oppose guerrilla tactics, led to the exacerbation of a situation of confrontation that ended up creating conditions for the unleashing of military coups with the support of Latin America's middle classes and national leaders.<sup>13</sup> Note that the coups were not engendered in the isolation of the barracks, but in the political environment where the barracks existed. Their development, however, took on other nuances over time.

The decade of the 1970s was marked by the takeover of power by the military forces in Latin America, with the virtual suppression of any free and constitutionally established political opposition. The forces of opposition migrated towards a militant left, with extremist expressions sustained by terrorist acts

supported by Cuba, while the military was supported by the United States.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, while the leftist revolutionary movements left *foquismo* (referring to the term *foco*, meaning torch and signifying the manner in which Fidel Castro and Che Guevara reportedly conducted the Cuban Revolution) behind to engage in urban terrorism, the military forces initiated an intense war of repression based on counterinsurgency techniques.

*Foquismo* called for the establishment of a “sanctuary” in remote, difficult to reach areas where training camps, clinics and arsenals for weapons repair and munitions preparation were established. Inspired by the Cuban rural guerrilla starting with Sierra Maestra, *foquismo* initially proved very efficient in providing lines of action for terror against groups of regular forces and armed forces installations. With the passage of time, these tactics began to prove ineffective, resulting in defeats in remote parts of Bolivia and Peru (in addition to other locations in Central America) and bringing about a gradual transition from folkism to urban guerrilla warfare (denoting a very rapid learning curve and the existence of highly developed mechanisms of information distribution). With this change in their strategy of action, the then-guerrilla movements literally took on the profile of terrorist groups, using terror as a tactic aimed at implementing strategies of action inspired by Carlos Mariguella’s “Manual of Urban Guerrilla Warfare”.

One of the reasons for this change lies in the change in the sources of financing for the activities of these groups, which with the “depletion” of supplies from Cuba (with the exception of training, some weapons, and ideological support) began to explore kidnapping and bank robberies as their major financing activities. This trend changes again when terror takes on the configuration of strategic terrorism, funding itself through organized crime in association with drug trafficking. Another reason was the virtual depletion of countries’ capabilities of financing social programmes in the face of growing urbanization, and the attempt, directed and engendered by the states, to rapidly change from a raw-materials export structure to industrial production.

These two factors resulted in an enormous centralism in national policy-making in Latin America and in the states’ production capabilities, creating conditions in which a coup d’état, when it emerged, could quickly gain effectiveness and capillarity in the control of the states’ entire decision-making and production mechanism. While military takeovers through coups d’état are seen as a reaction (supported by the population) to violence, aimed at creating an environment of national security for the continuation (resumption) of development, they are made possible by the prior virtual failure of a more representative democratic process and a free economy.

In this process, the military forces were implicitly divided into two large groups. The first stayed on a professional trend associated with the countries’ continuing participation in America’s global Cold War strategy (and as appropriate structures of force, organization, equipment, and doctrine) in addition to concern with regional border disputes – the so-called regional war hypotheses, which, for example, had Argentina and Brazil in conflict until the mid-1980s.

Another group “specialized” in the war against terror, state terrorism, that came to be called the “dirty war”. The setup of the elements necessary to implement strategies of action against terror had the advantage of the same elements that created the conditions that made coups d’état effective, quickly leading to the establishment of a highly centralized (and efficient) command, control and

intelligence structure that under coordinated command included police and military capabilities both for armed actions and for “preventive” actions in the strategy to repress terror, in which prisons holding “suspects” took the opportunity to commit enormous human rights violations under the aegis of the concept of national security.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that while war against terror would really assume a joint capability, the armed forces of the first group – those oriented towards conventional warfare – are strongly opposed to the integration of the forces, with the police separate from the military (subordinate to is the right word), and support a “joint” command and control structure equipped with (weak) mechanisms of cooperation under separate commands.

This development reveals one of the major current problems of the fight against terrorism, and expresses its possibilities for solution. During the end of the dirty war in the process of the democratic recovery of states, with the natural disarticulation of integrated terror-fighting capabilities, the articulating logic of conventional warfare took back its dominance in armed forces design. Although adapted, this logic is proving inadequate to face the so-called new threats, which are superimposed on the traditional threats that have continued to be the job of the armed forces.

Although there has been some effort to modernize assets (limited by scarce funding under political pressure), only a new design of the armed forces could respond to the integration demands posed by strategic terrorism, which necessarily requires a reformulation of doctrine and command, control, communications, intelligence, and computational (C4I) structures, supported by a reform of the system of professional military instruction. In other words, attempts to “fix” the armed forces and integrate jurisdictions of other institutions (mainly police) to confront strategic terrorism are faced with a historical legacy that opposes the acquisition of new jurisdictions.

The immediate conclusion is that demands for transformation in the sense of the concept developed by the armed forces of the USA make no sense to the Latin American armed forces, encountering a cultural resistance that sees in this movement the risk of losing their historical function, associated with the risk of the possible resumption of the duties involved in the “dirty war”, for which the military forces are no better prepared than before.

### **Analytical Patterns and Performance Indexes: Historical Evolution**

Based on this data a better comprehension can be obtained of the articulation between the evolution of the perception of the threat of terrorism and the evolution of the performance indexes used to gauge the efficiency of the actions of this threat. These stages can be summarized in the following terms<sup>16</sup>:

- In the 1960s, the analytical effort was aimed at defining patterns of terrorist attacks, and the predominantly descriptive research was based on case studies. Its purpose was primarily to identify effective defences against terror, leading to the construction of performance indexes associated with the number of occurrences/decrease in trends of certain types of terrorist actions, since

governments implicitly decided to defend certain specific targets against terrorist action.

- In the 1970s, with the intensification of violence, the efforts migrated from the types of attacks to the typology of the groups that perpetrated them, so the effectiveness of counter-terrorist strategies came to be gauged in terms of the number of terrorists caught and of actions of specific groups neutralized before they could effectively be unleashed, continuing the reactive strategies of the 60s. These were aimed at breaking up the typical structure then used by terrorists – cells – that limited the damage resulting from the capture of any of their members, while reducing the ability of intelligence services to get to the cells to trace their communications.

- In the 80s, with the start of the processes of democratization, analytical efforts were centered on analyzing the effectiveness of government policies (and less that of operational actions) against the ability of terrorist groups to articulate an effective ideological discourse for new recruiting purposes. Analysis became mainly inferential, with performance indexes aimed at measuring the ability to neutralize actions in specific categories, and with the operational counter-terrorist actions aimed at neutralizing the leaders of the terrorist organizations in those categories. This reflects the start of a change from a reactive to a more proactive posture.

- With the end of the East-West conflict, the analytical focus was no longer centered on the leaders but on the behavioural patterns of the still-active terrorist groups, aimed at destroying their operational capabilities. This change emphasized the need to neutralize support structures (since the leadership had practically been neutralized). This period marks the start of a greater concern with the sources of financing of terror, emphasizing proactive strategies but now aimed more at preventing terrorism than fighting it, and dealing with the signs that terror would be gaining a multinational dimension driven by information distribution mechanisms.

- The current analytical effort expands the concern with the sources of financing from specific groups for terrorist networks and their articulated financing structures; the analysis of the relationships between the nodes of the networks associated with the emergence of new ideological patterns (this paper is based on this pattern), with the performance indexes associated with the ability to prevent actions that give terror visibility and the emergence of new manifestations. Current strategic postures are aimed at longer-term proactivity since the globalization of terror reduces the importance of the spatial dimension. While the strategies of action in this method tend to increase the degree of uncertainty of terror planning, they force the “specialization of terror”, with a more careful selection of targets, exploring the possibility of achieving repeated (sometimes simultaneous) successes within very short periods through more complex attacks before the opposition forces correct their operational failings. At the same time, this creates greater vulnerability for strategic terrorism: dependence on communications for the efficient operation of terrorist networks.

These patterns, taken in combination, leave the impression that mere statements of intent, policy declarations, and even international agreements do not appear to have produced any significant impact on the reduction of terrorist actions. Terrorist actions only appear to decrease with targeted pragmatic actions, and appeared to increase with the increase in the media coverage they received.

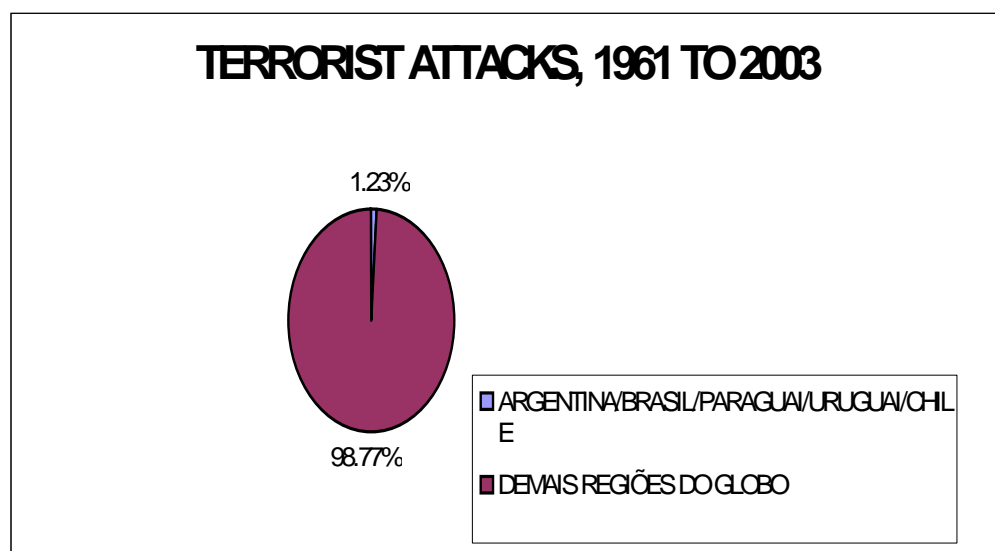
## **“ACTIVE” TERRORISM IN THE SOUTHERN CONE**



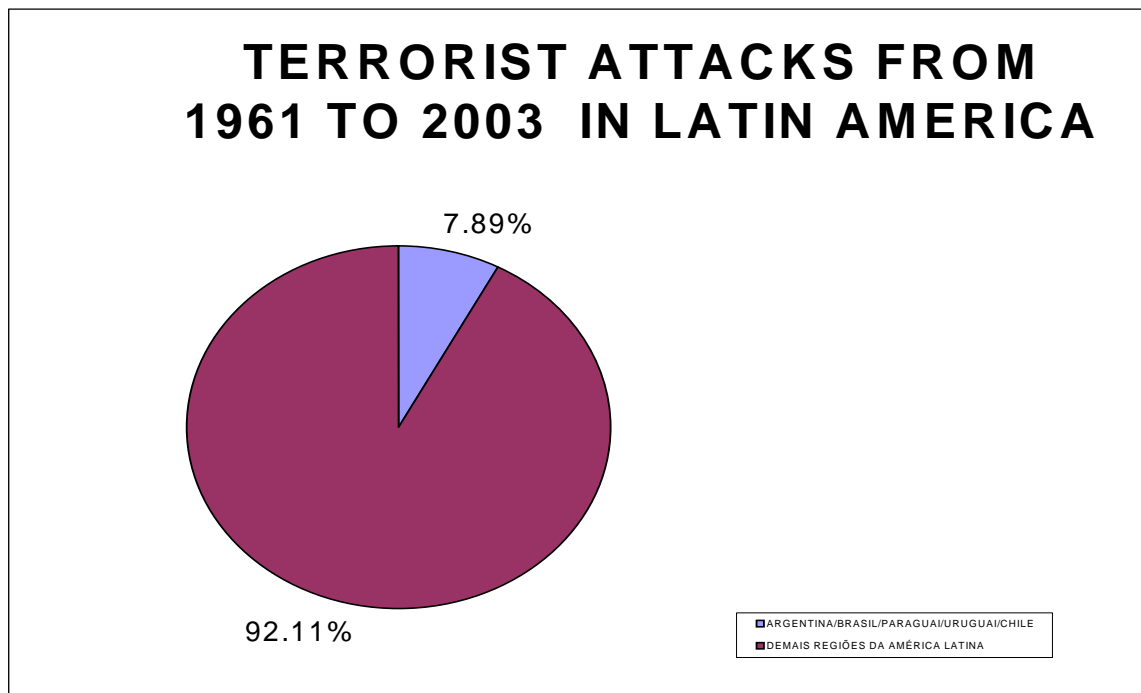
Before any analysis, it is important to contrast the manifestation of terrorism in Latin America, and more specifically in the Southern Cone, with the rest of the world. In the period from 1961 to 2003, 244 terrorist incidents of significant importance were counted,<sup>17</sup> of these, only 3 occurred in the Southern Cone: the attack by the Hizballah Group against the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1994, the kidnapping of the US Ambassador in Brazil by the MR-8 Group in 1969, and the kidnapping and subsequent death of police officer Dan Mitrione in Uruguay in 1970.

Figures 1 and 2 below show these data. Obviously, based on the criteria of inclusion and exclusion of events as terrorist manifestations (or the result of the non-convergence of the definitions used), we have changes in the listings in the data bases. However, even with some minimal variations, either in absolute or relative terms (which is what this intends to show), the indexes of these manifestations are still low. It is important to keep this ratio in perspective throughout the analysis of the evolving trajectory in the Southern Cone, since it will support the conclusions on the typology of the threat of “active” terrorism offered at the end of the section.

**Figure 1 Global Terrorism vs. Terrorism in the Southern Cone**



**Figure 2 Terrorism in Latin America vs. Terrorism in the Southern Cone**



Uruguay is considered the cradle of urban guerrilla warfare (in reality, the first to migrate from rural guerrilla, initially located near the northern border with Brazil, to urban guerrilla centered in Montevideo), with its roots in 1963 and Raul Sendic, founder of the National Liberation Movement (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional or MLN). Its members, intellectuals and leaders of operations and rural movements, were called the Tupamaros; an evocation of the symbolic image of the Incan leader Tupac Amaru II in his (unsuccessful) fight against the Spanish invaders, for their fight aimed at overthrowing the government.

The violence and intensity of the attacks routinely carried out by the Tupamaros against the police and armed forces led military and police personnel to dress in civilian clothing and attempt to “hide out”, like the terrorists, in the very society they were supposed to be protecting. This ended up mixing purposes (reaction of the targets of the terror) and environment, with the result that in 1971 the Tupamaros suffered two major defeats: one at the ballot box, when the population cast a small percentage of the votes for the Partido da Frente Ampla that was supporting them, and another in their own midst with the failure of the effort to expand their operations throughout the country. This second defeat, it is important to note, occurred due to the markedly urban style (mannerisms, language, culture) the terror assumed, with its members losing their identification with the rural population, who treated them like foreigners and refused to provide shelter.

Encouraged by this, the Uruguayan armed forces and police – supported and trained by Brazil and the United States – unleashed an offensive against the leadership of the Tupamaros and ended up destructuring their articulation

capability and leading most of the few survivors to migrate to Argentina and Brazil, to plunge into anonymity, or both.<sup>18</sup>

The plunge of the Peruvian terrorists of the “conspiratorial” era into anonymity is likewise associated (much more obviously) with the imprisonment of Abimael Guzmán, intellectual leader of the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso, SL),<sup>19</sup> a movement that clearly originated in the university environment associated in partnership with union and rural leaders. The Shining Path continues, however, to be an extremely violent armed group operating from bases located in remote regions of Peru, where they also maintain coca farming areas. US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) reports indicate that the group collects “revolutionary taxes” from the region’s coca producers.

In retrospect, the decision not to use foreign forces in the fight against the Tupamaro terrorism was the right one. That alternative was considered as a sort of “regional peacekeeping mission” since the Uruguayan armed forces and police were at one time practically hostages of the Tupamaros, who even had control of certain urban areas of Montevideo.

Among other reasons, that option was discarded in the face of the possibility that such a “peacekeeping mission” could certainly provoke a terror integration movement in the Southern Cone, encouraging the spread of terrorist purposes among the countries of the region against a “foreign” intervention. In that sense, compartmenting the manifestations of conspiratorial terrorism in their own national space, where they had their origin and their ideological and material support, ended up being a factor that contributed to their neutralization (the term defeat would be incorrect). This same analysis is valid for the other countries of the Southern Cone, since they present the same profile.

There is abundant evidence that conspiratorial terrorism in the Southern Cone is inactive. In Paraguay, the violence of counter-terrorist action and the immense force (operational and political) of the intelligence services practically eradicated the organized groups. Until 2002, the intelligence service of Paraguay had practically the same structure – and the same members – that fought the dirty war. Unlike the other countries of the Southern Cone, the military forces have considerable political force. The Tupamaros are practically neutralized, as are the members of Brazilian terrorist groups.<sup>20</sup>

Information gathered during the research showed that their cells are not dormant, they were simply broken up, with the members going into political militancy (weak, it’s true) in legally recognized political parties. Their presence, mainly in the southeastern region of Brazil, still recurs in public universities. However, they are engaged there more for lectures and seminars explaining the past than to present future proposals (although some openly maintain support for the communist revolution, with Leninist and Maoist characteristics).

The sole exception, but even so with very subtle manifestation, is in Peru, where the Shining Path’s capabilities of articulation are still perceived as potentially dangerous, even without the charismatic Guzmán. The unequivocal fact is that conspiratorial terrorism as such does not represent a current threat. Its ideology has become out of touch with the political reality of the countries of the region, as its strategic objectives in fact ended up being achieved: the dominant ideology is leftist, although the government’s practices are pragmatically subordinated to the need for integration in the free economy led by the USA.

The dormant risk is the rupture of the process of democratic transition, with the resulting imbalance of the tenuous forces that are inertializing the activation of the dormant conspiratorial terror structures in support of strategic terrorism and the recovery of power, but now based on an ideology associated with widespread longings for better social conditions associated with an economic structure with a broader distribution of opportunities and advantages. It is only in this sense that there is a perception of a possible association of the manifestations present in other regions of the world, of active strategic terrorism under religious extremism based on very specific interpretations of doctrines of faith. And in a “prosfictional” view, this association is potentially foreseeable due to the conditions offered in some areas of the region.

The geographic triangle of the Triple Border, defined by Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), Foz de Iguacú (Brazil), and Porto Iguacu (Argentina) is recognized as a refuge for Islamic extremists from two terrorist organizations: Hizballah and the Islamic Resistance Movement known as Hamas. This situation reflects the relative ease with which terrorist organizations can infiltrate and remain reasonably out of sight for a long period of time.

In addition, there is evidence that a substantial proportion of the financial resources generated in the region is illegal, manipulated by the Chinese Mafia, which exacts \$8,000 “insurance” for each container that enters the region and \$30,000 for each transaction. Furthermore, there is a sophisticated “industry” of counterfeiting paper money (from all over the world) and credit card “cloning” in the Triple Border region, mainly dominated by Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians, who foster money laundering and, more importantly, a new – and very ingenious – form of financing terrorist activities: cloned credit cards are used to draw small amounts from various accounts and immediately destroyed, leaving no trace of the transaction. The funds are then transported by “messengers”,<sup>21</sup> along with other funds garnered from the religious financing circuit fuelled by draining donations made to the mosques and religious centres by the large population of Arab origin.

The circuit is fed by legal and legitimately donated funds from the region’s population of Arab origin to support humanitarian agencies, primarily in Iran and Lebanon. There is no evidence that some of the funds are diverted to finance terror along their route from the donors in Brazil to the users in the Middle East, or how, where, or by whom it is done. But there are strong indicators that the agencies receiving funds are associated with terrorist activities. For example, the “Prophet Mohammed” Shiite Mosque is led by religious leader Mohamad Hussein Fadllah, who has links to Hizballah, while the “House of Prayers” Sunni Mosque is associated with the Hamas group through the “Wahhabi” sect led by Sheik Atik Al Din Al Athari.<sup>22</sup> The Benificent Islamic Cultural Centre in Foz do Iguacu, where the “Omar Ben Al Khattab” Mosque operates, also has evidence of links with Hamas.

At this time, strategic terrorism has only an outpost for gathering finance and personnel in the Southern Cone. The fact is that although strategic terrorism represents a reasonably homogeneous whole throughout the world, it is not yet operationally manifest (with explicit acts of violence) in the Southern Cone<sup>23</sup>. Nevertheless, given the conditions stated above, if strategic terrorism emerges in the region, although the “theatres of operations” may be in the urban centres, its logistic, social and ideological support will certainly not be there but on the borders, mainly those between Brazil and Paraguay, or Uruguay and Bolivia.

A geo-strategic analysis of the Southern Cone shows that in these regions – unlike the geographic environment of the borders of Chile and Peru – there is a highway development and integration structure that creates the conditions for the flow of low-cost products and services, an abundance of arable land nearby and accessible consumer centres, and a sophisticated banking structure – providing the cash flow to local businesses – linked to the global financial flow structure.

Throughout the past 40 years, these conditions, without – or rather, in spite of state intervention – have developed in these border areas into a movement of transiency and social and economic amalgamation that presents the same profile as other regions of the globe where strategic terrorism has already taken root. These environments are marked by a “dilution” of ethnicities, nationalities and cultures in a restricted geographic space, normally associated with low development indexes, limited possibilities of social ascent, and deficient mechanisms for the accommodation of interests that end up driving the emergence of social dissatisfaction in populations practically living in a vacuum of effective political power. These populations in no way differ from the “brasiguaios” (Brazil + Paraguay), “bolibrários” (Brazil + Bolivia), and “urubráios” (Brazil + Uruguay). In all, there is an estimated population of more than 3 million able-bodied people in these groups.

This situation, since it is certainly not an unknown factor, at least not in the region, should not be over-emphasized. But the existence of mechanisms to develop strategic terrorism in the region is, and the American policies for the region appear to explicitly disregard this explosive situation.

This criterion expands the problematic of prevention/containment of strategic terrorism in the Triple Border region. In other words, the potential problem is more serious or bigger than in the region as a whole, and less and more specific in the Triple Border area, as it is only an early aggravation of an anticipated problem.

Table 1 shows elements of the economic-social configuration of the Triple Borders region, in an attempt to show that the region is a primarily economic pole, based on international trade – almost a small-scale regional Miami. In addition, it should be noted that the notion of the Triple Border as a isolated area lost in the midst of the Pantanal lowlands visited by terrorists is a mere fiction.

**Table 1- Three Borders: Financial Situation**

	<b>Cidad del Este</b>	<b>Foz do Iguaçu</b>	<b>Porto Iguaçu</b>
Population	220,000 (17,000 foreigners)	240,000 (large fluctuations, dominated by Brazilians from the southeast who come in to “stock up” on low-priced products)	35,000 (fluctuates greatly; the city is a tourist centre)

Trade Structure and Movement (estimated)	U\$15 billion per year with the movement of approximately 20,000 containers, the foundation for at least 72 industries employing more than 7,000 Paraguayans and supported by 22 banks, including 13 foreign banks	U\$18 billion/year. These amounts are associated with the trade (mostly illegal) of products received and transferred from Ciudad del Este. About 5,000 small companies trading.	The city operates as a warehouse for bringing products received at Ciudad del Este into Argentina.
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These data show the trade warehouse function the region has assumed, which is responsible for its economic survival. However, what they do not show<sup>24</sup> is the relationship between the volume of business and the funds drained from the region to finance strategic terrorism – estimated at about U\$200,000 per month. This amount is substantial for financing terror.<sup>25</sup>

The figures in the table are not new. There are dozens of reports on them (not all of them agree), many circulating freely on the internet. The aspect to emphasize is that the amount is still a ridiculously small portion of the funds moved in trade (legal or illegal, but not directly linked to terror) in the economies of Brazil and Argentina. For Paraguay, however, the Triple Borders area is a vital source of funds, so any change in this situation substantially alters that country's fragile economic-social equilibrium. For that reason, a policy of preventing/combating terrorism by stopping the flow of these funds to Paraguay must be viewed with extreme care, since it could foster exactly what we want to exterminate: support for terrorism, which would change from limited financial support to unlimited popular support.

In this case it would be more effective to seek broad-spectrum policies (not merely in the area of defence) aimed at helping the countries of the region to establish more efficient political-financial mechanisms for the control and supervision of investment programmes and projects and direct trade. More importantly, the problem of strategic terrorism in the Southern Cone is being treated primarily as a police problem. Those involved in the illegal financial circuit (whether or not linked to terrorism) are treated as outlaws. The police solution excludes any ideological judgment and needs no definition of terrorism for the formulation of criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of those involved in common crime, depriving them of the possibility of treating it as political crime.

Due to this policy option, and given the inadequate training of the police forces for the resulting strategies – much more sophisticated than those aimed at preventing and combating common crime – there is a growing movement towards re-equipping the police, including (re)creating departments specialized in preventing and combating terror. As would be expected, these new tasks are beyond their capabilities, operational patterns, and intelligence resources. For that reason, and due to the still significant presence and influence of military forces in maintaining national security,<sup>26</sup> it would be important to consider the possibility of investing in the modernization of the force design processes within an overall framework of modernization and transformation.

Of course, by induction, this defence reform would influence the adoption of the principles of management in state mechanisms. Frankly speaking, it would be using the reform of the armed forces as a driving factor and foundation for the reform of the state in the direction of greater and more effective control and presence in the financial actions in the Triple Border area. The door to this alternative appears to already be open with the installation of American forces in Paraguay within an agreed framework of cooperation. A long-term task, certainly a difficult one (possibly wrong), but much more acceptable than an intervention that alters the fragile regional economic equilibrium centered not only around the Triple Borders but also throughout all the centres of potential tensions in the border areas of the Southern Cone.

### **Some Exploratory Conclusions**

The evidence presented above makes it possible to conclude that the principal terrorist activities in the Southern Cone are directly related not to the local societies, but to a deep-seated network of organized crime and international terrorism, and the region is being used as a centre of support and fund-raising to finance these activities. Although in the past the revolutionary movements had the support of the national population of the countries where they were operating, and were deeply linked with the lives of the people and with those countries' insertion in the world economy and politics, and were essentially a specific phenomenon but with important similarities to other groups from other areas, the terrorism now present in the region is not representative of that region. Although the old groups represented local society, or claimed to represent it, with its consent and support the terrorism now present in the region is marginal and represents other communities, particularly the Chinese mafia and Islamic extremist groups operating worldwide.

This distinction is of fundamental importance in understanding these processes and combating these activities. In the same way as this region is used for these criminal purposes, other regions of the world could be – and probably have been for some time. Combating this type of financing is combating improper transfers of funds and the counterfeiting of paper money and credit cards, contraband goods, international drug and weapons trafficking, and corruption. But this means combating organized crime, involving efforts by local police, and not specifically counter-terrorist activities.

The links between the terrorist groups operating in the Southern Cone, when perceived, are of short duration, normally aimed at specific operational situations with no connotation of merging objectives or ideologies. On the other hand, the research for this paper did not identify a coordinated regional strategy for combating terror (of the collective security/defence type) deliberately aimed at compartmenting – isolating – the terrorist manifestations of each country within its own space. In other words, no policy orchestration against terror at the regional level is evident; each country has been developing its own strategies in isolation in keeping with the particular characteristics of the violence they have faced.

This does not mean that there has not been intense intelligence sharing and exchanges of material support and instruction among the forces acting against terror (mainly informal). The USA has clearly played an instrumental role in the supply of intelligence, equipment, and training (the now sadly-remembered School

of the Americas, associated in the minds of many in the region with the training of Latin American military forces in the practice of torture).

This appraisal gains relevance with the media reports of a recent decision to station American troops in Paraguay – reports that are denied by both the US government and Paraguay and are clearly inaccurate. This does not exclude cooperation in training, equipment and intelligence against the “new threats” associated with Paraguay’s legitimate interest in seeing in these forces a source of regional development.

The anticipated developments derive from the fact that the American and Paraguayan rationales behind this decision are different, planting the seeds for enormous future problems and conflicts. While the installation of American capabilities in the Southern Cone is being carried out relatively “discreetly”, mainly because the current political situation is dominated by other more immediate topics – led by the political crisis in Brazil, conflicts in the Mercosul, etc. – this construction is obviously very poorly built politically, creating resistance to the construction of operational mechanisms that make it possible to integrate American forces in the national terror control efforts along with the other countries of the region.

This notion makes more sense with the understanding that peace and violence have been fluctuating cyclically throughout the history of the countries of the Southern Cone, and more affected by economic than ideological crises. When governments abuse their mandate, the population supports the guerrillas, and when they prove incapable of advancing the desires of the population the population supports the return to order by the armed forces. If these structural conditions are not changed, there are no convincing arguments against potential “ideological recruitment” for strategic terrorism, regardless of the success or failure of strategies or tactics for combating terror. In the Southern Cone, the issue of preventing strategic terrorism is not military or ideological, it is economic-political-social.

It is very much as a result of this perception that in various intellectual forums in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile,<sup>27</sup> the future of the American presence in Paraguay is seen in a negative light, although all acknowledge that not much can be done in the face of American power and determination. This concern is not completely groundless. It is not at all inconceivable that dormant conspiratorial terrorism capabilities might be incorporated in strategic terrorism, supported by organized crime in association with drug trafficking.

This would certainly be the worst possible scenario for the USA and for the region. Although the American presence makes sense – for the Americans – from the standpoint of defence against strategic terror, it is highly problematic, if not wrong, from the political standpoint because it reveals an enormous misunderstanding of the regional characteristics (particularly cultural aspects and national strategic architectures) that simultaneously foster and neutralize the emergence of strategic terror in the region.

## **“IDEOLOGICAL RECRUITING”**

The study of the factors that lead to engaging in the practice of terrorist violence finds at least three explanatory trends.<sup>28</sup> The first is related to psycho-social



factors, as described by Laqueur and Bion,<sup>29</sup> with two mutually complementary approaches: one viewing manifestations of violence as under the influence of psychotic conditioners; and the other viewing them as induced by the individual's social group dynamic (including the family environment and the closest circle of acquaintances).<sup>30</sup> Post does a good job of capturing the second approach in affirming that "the internalization of a group logic in an individual occurs when he submerges his own identity in that of a group, subordinating individual morals to a group dynamic".<sup>31</sup>

The second trend is also related to socio-political factors, as described by Crenshaw.<sup>32</sup> While Sprinzak calls this trend psycho-political,<sup>33</sup> the distinction is more semantic than substantive because both see the entrance into terrorist militancy as the result of a rational calculation (whether or not by a mind with a propensity to violence) by a person who elects to practise terror because he perceives violence as the only possible alternative for the achievement of his political objectives.

The third trend, although highly controversial and lacking sufficient empirical corroboration, is associated with the emergence of a new cognitive-social revolution of a global nature. This revolution, immersed in the still-confused movement to accommodate new social patterns to globalization and in the emergence of new cognitive patterns under the pressures of the information age, would reconfigure the notion of terror, making it an ideology in itself (and no longer the instrument of an ideology). It would be a revolution of a magnitude similar to the Copernican, the French, or the industrial revolution. According to this trend, the violence used by terror could only be judged by moral principles developed under the aegis of that revolution, allowing religious radicalism (extremism) to uphold its actions as politically correct according to this ethic. If this trend gains any sustenance, terrorism will cease to be a dysfunctional pattern manifest in the environment and become the principal defining force of its own environment, drastically altering not only the notion of terrorism but also making the forms now used to fight it ineffective.

The second trend is the one most widely professed at this time, incorporating the first as a factor to explain psychological patterns shaped in the environment that defines it. Although there are differences concerning the mechanisms of installation of the pathology (one professing a psychological source with social manifestation and the other a social source with psychological manifestation), the two versions explaining the first trend converge in viewing the propensity towards violence as a sort of "relief valve" for a violent personality, with terrorism supplying the stimuli and the environment.

The adoption of the second trend (with the first incorporated in it) as the referential context for this paper makes it possible to understand the motivations for engaging in terrorist acts as an ideological as well as an intellectual manifestation, since the terrorism phenomenon takes on a symbolic connotation based on subjective conditions.<sup>34</sup> In this trend, the group leaders gain relevance in the process of building the perception of the need (ideological justification) and validity (intellectual justification) of the use of violence as a political instrument, normally codified by the ideology the group professes.

While conspiratorial terrorism, in its tactical instrumental function associated with urban guerrilla, has at its core university students and professors (who were those with the best access to information – keeping in mind that at that time, without the

internet, knowledge was normally spread locally, by personal communications, the practitioners of strategic terrorism take on another, more “specialized” profile, since they must handle much more sophisticated operational demands in order to contrive their actions through the enormous obstacle imposed by repressive mechanisms.

Around this intellectual militant core of conspiratorial terrorism are groups of militants from the poor working class and middle class, mainly university students. While this core is not monolithic, the convergence of the interests of its components barely makes it possible to recognize any differentiating aims. So the operational militant groups, unlike the intellectual core, have relatively differentiated characteristics (patterns of action), from common banditry, far from the intellectual core, to the sophisticated practice of psychological warfare, with sophisticated exploration of the media, closer to the core.

This dispersion generates two mutually complementary effects. On the one hand, the dispersion of terrorist actions shows (as was their primary objective) the inadequacy of the forces combating them to ensure individual and collective security. On the other hand, the dispersion of the militant groups’ purposes and operational actions increases the scope of responsibility of the armed forces, with the corresponding need for those forces to specialize and increase their military actions against terrorism, creating a mechanism that strengthens the growing autonomy of the armed forces in defining their own tasks, making them increasingly more autonomous with respect to the political supervision of their actions.

In this environment, businessmen, since they were not the priority target of the psychological warfare unleashed by terrorism (the target was the masses who would come in to strengthen their contingents), saw it as easier, simpler and safer to accommodate to banditry, giving in to the demands for logistical support for which they paid the price in order to be left in peace. Interviews with businessmen<sup>35</sup> revealed that it was not a question of fear of violence that led them to collaborate with terrorism, since they had (and still have) sophisticated and efficient protection by private security agents, but much more a cost-benefit calculation – with the situation of incapability of the armed forces, the cost of paying for terror was less than the cost of the potential property damage.

In spite of the obvious “specialization” of strategic terrorism, it still finds its principal potential source of both intellectual capabilities and future militants in the university environment of Latin America. Therefore, acknowledging strategic terrorism’s limitations in mobilizing and organizing the masses, investigating how university people and the entrepreneurial class position themselves in the face of the demands of strategic terrorism is particularly relevant when one considers that conspiratorial terrorism in the Southern Cone prefers to recruit among specific groups (university students and business leaders) instead of recruiting in society in general, which would increase their exposure and vulnerability.

It must be acknowledged that the environment in which terrorism manifests itself has undergone a profound change. While the period of conspiratorial terrorism was marked by the bi-polarity of the Cold War, strategic terrorism emerges in the unipolarity dominated by the USA. Even at the risk of oversimplification, the magnitude of America’s current power makes it possible to analyze the profile of the new terrorist militants just by considering the impact of the perception of American policies on the definition of this new environment.

It is one thing, however, to analyze what the Americans say, and another to analyze what they think; and even more difficult to analyze what the Latin Americans say and think about the Americans. While the Americans' version of themselves (try as their detractors might to deny it) exhibits an overall coherence between their political actions and declared policies (coherence does not mean agreement, it is important to note), Latin America's version of the Americans is full of contradictions and (try as its defenders might to deny it) imperfections (contradiction does not mean incorrectness, but in some cases only an inadequate explanation of cause-and-effect relationships).

This paper attempts to show the second, and more difficult, perception, to isolate and present to the USA a view from the outside looking in. To that end, a frame of reference is developed below that isolates two well-marked analytical poles: the view called extremist conspirationist and the view called pragmatic idealism. These two views are deliberately built on exaggerated perceptions in order to clearly mark the analytical distinctions between current perceptions of the United States in Latin America. The perception of the role of the United States in the War against Terror is therefore assumed as a variable in the choice of ideological engagement present in the Southern Cone.<sup>36</sup>

## **FRAME OF ANALYSIS: TWO POLAR VIEWS**

The frame of analysis was primarily shaped based on interviews with opinion-forming intellectuals and political and economic leaders, as well as former terrorists and also businessmen who were under pressure from terrorist groups to give them support and/or shelter.

### **Radical Conspirationists**

In Latin America, manifestations of America's posture against terror that fall into the conspirationist view interpret historical facts and identify a sophisticated fabric of cause-and-effect relationships that would explain the extremist and conservative postures manifest in actions deliberately engendered by American leaders to ensure and give continuity to their national interests. This view presupposes an instrumental rationale in American foreign policy.

The re-engineering of history developed by the exaggerated posture of the conspirationist view would sustain a prediction of trends that would justify the need for American intervention (including military) based on the allegation that the population in general (including American) with its short-term vision is not capable of realizing in time the threats already forming against the national security of the USA that would threaten the interests of the free American economy, and the "American way of life" itself. For that reason, American foreign policy should take on an aggressive militant posture in order to guarantee the very survival of the American state, since its population is apparently relatively inert to the terrorist threat, limited in its capability to develop an accurate perception of manifest reality and to generate demands for strategies of action that could more effectively face the challenge that the liberal American ideology must confront.

Since America's declared policy does not express this posture, those who oppose these declared policies found evidence in the scandals that emerged in the 1980s – particularly the so-called Iran-Contra scandals – that would typify American policy

as a *de facto* extremist policy, submerged under an eminently corrupt declared policy carried out by an American leadership devoted mainly to preserving the economic interests of the large corporations that formed the base of the American government. So the fight against terrorism would merely be rhetoric used to pacify the American population; a mere fiction, deliberately created to hide America's real interventionist intentions. The American government would be inducing a distorted view of reality, fostering an intellectual culture that accepts the various manifestations of strategic terrorism as a threat to America's national security.<sup>37</sup>

The conspirationists operate under the presumption that there is no way to stop the fundamentalist threat (Islamic and non-Islamic) manifested by strategic terrorism except by force, because their objectives lie in the context of an all-out war. For example, they cite the declaration of war against America, the "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders" issued by Osama Bin Laden in 1998, denouncing the occupation of "Islamic Lands in the Arabian Peninsula" by pagans and calling on all Moslems that believe in Allah and want to be rewarded in Heaven to obey the orders of Allah and kill all Americans (without differentiating between uniformed and civilian Americans) and pillage their assets, wherever they might be.<sup>38</sup> An all-out war would require an American strategy confronting terrorism with any means – including violent means – to protect American interests. In this sense, the use of "soft power" as configured by Joseph Nye,<sup>39</sup> would simply be a dangerous mistake.

The conspirationist view was clearly mapped out with military personnel, mainly among officers with ranks equivalent to colonel or lieutenant colonel in the reserves. Their positions were obtained from access to internet groups (with restricted password access). Note that the active duty officers interviewed (of the same ranks, and generals) were more affiliated with pragmatic idealism, since they were clearly expressing the "official opinion of their forces".

### **Pragmatic Idealism**

The defenders of the pragmatic idealism view see the conspirationists as suffering from a political pathology, drowning in a historical delirium with no connection to reality. This is the view taken by educated pragmatists, the connoisseurs of the characteristics of American society. For them, the Americans' commitment to their national interests is part of a pragmatic posture in which the war against terror is a political instrument legitimately used by the government within the possibilities that the moral values of American society accept as valid. The idealists discuss the meaning of freedom, but emphasize the notion that the commitment of the USA to freedom entails the moral obligation to act against human rights violations, genocide, incursions against the democratic will, etc. For that reason, the idealists accept the war against terror as the price they have to pay to defend who and what they are. The idealists' defence of the American posture resides in the context of a policy whose guiding principles make the exercise of freedom (religious and civil) the right of everyone.

Interviews with university students, politicians and liberal arts professionals from Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile on the perception of the manifestation of terrorism in the Southern Cone revealed an express affiliation with pragmatic idealism, although in a posture completely unconnected to the American ideal and closer to a generic, almost utopian, idealism. In other words, an idealism associated with the rejection of armed violence as an instrument of policy. It is interesting to note that for this group the notion of terrorism is only perceived in connection with the American reaction to the action of Islamic extremist groups, unrelated to a

more inclusive/comprehensive notion – the majority of the students have already forgotten the rhetoric of the Shining Path group and, for example, cannot relate Abimael Guzmán Reynoso to that movement. In other words, terrorism is what they perceive through the news broadcast by the televised media<sup>40</sup> about the expression of terror and, currently, the expression constructed by Osama Bin Laden.

On the other hand, paradoxically,<sup>41</sup> there is a growing perception (much more predominant among university students, sporadic among politicians, and practically nonexistent in the liberal arts professions) of the need to redefine the concept of terrorism (as a result of the September 11 attack in the USA, the train attacks in Spain and, more recently, the attacks in England). It is interesting to note that the university students asked practically the same questions that oriented this research: which social construct makes terrorism emerge, and which prevents it from emerging? Here, note an extremely important factor: While the emergence of terrorism is assumed to be related to a given social construct, combating it is associated with the need for another social construct.

Once identified, this was the subject of a specific questionnaire with a different group, with interviews only in Brazil due to time constraints. The same premises were confirmed by a significant number of people interviewed (65%), with the addendum (25% of those interviewed) that the dichotomy would not be the result of the questions asked, but the profile (interests) of those involved in the responses. For this group, the knowledge of the social construct that would cause terrorism not to emerge was primarily associated with the international forces of pressure (NGOs and, principally, American interests), while the knowledge of the social construct that would make it possible to combat terrorism most efficiently would be of interest to the government and, more specifically, the armed forces (the federal police, in many instances associated without differentiation with military action). On the other hand, for the population at large, the desired response would be related to another question (not asked): How can things go on in this same situation without the emergence of terrorism in Latin America?

It is important to note that this question, placed in a broader historical context, in a way anticipates the potential for a possible explanation. The intellectual core that fed the perception of the validity of (and the need for) the use of terror as a factor to generate political changes in the past, which was previously associated with the so-called leftist ideologies, is now actually in power, the most obvious examples being Lula's Brazil and Tabaré Vázquez's Uruguay. In other words, the political forces that generated the motivation for conspiratorial terrorism in the past are those that now have the instrumental capability to prohibit its (re)emergence in the form of strategic terrorism. Its manifestation in Latin America, unlike in Europe, would be through networks of relationships, clandestine support and shelter structures, financing mechanisms, etc., that are now dormant in the hands of the politicians in power.

Assuming that this framework is correct, one immediate conclusion would be that the assurance of security (against terror) in Latin America must come from the stability of the democratic process; assuring the leftist groups now in power, and mainly their most radical wings, some guarantee of maintaining the rules of the political game (even though imperfect), inertializing the emergence of ideological postures that again adopt the perception that the only form of getting into power would be through violent action. Accordingly, for American interests, the non-emergence of terror in Latin America depends much more on the maintenance and refinement of democracy – such as, for example, increasing the educational level of

the population and establishing conditions for the development of a truly independent and critical press – than on (military or combined) anti-terrorism actions and even intelligence actions, since this very political stability inertializes the need for intelligence reports – intelligence about the void of terror inaction takes on a nature aimed much more at exploring changes in trends than investigating the facts that guide counter-terrorism actions.

## **SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The operational definitions of conspiratorial terrorism and strategic terrorism appear to adequately capture the dichotomy of the nature of the past and possible future manifestations of the emergence of this phenomenon in the Southern Cone. They make it possible to differentiate their strategic objectives and see how terrorist groups saw (or see) themselves: the former as revolutionaries seeking state power with their current operational capabilities practically nonexistent, and the latter with the potential of developing in the region and seeking to define self-regulated spaces.

In the meantime, faced with the “ideological lethargy” – either pro or con – of the traditional sources of ideological support – the universities – it is obvious that these movements have not been successful in “selling their causes” and have been unable to achieve a recruitment that sensitizes (open or even secret) information systems, mainly because the strategic terrorism upheld by distorted religious fundamentalists finds no ideological referential except in small groups that they support in the capture and transfer of funds and temporary shelter for individuals linked with this type of terror. In other words, strategic terrorism is only finding an echo in social groups that have a cultural reference exogenous to the area of the Southern Cone, and are geographically concentrated. Terrorists from the various factions, when isolated from their communities located in geographic areas isolated from large urban centres, emerge and disappear in the multiplicity of societies and cultures of the Southern Cone. This is an important and little-studied phenomenon, but one that represents the potential for resolving many of the manifestations of strategic terrorism in other regions.

Although on the one hand the recruiting of new “militants” for strategic terrorism has not been observed, on the other hand it is obvious that the flow of information on terror to the region is slowly shaping a perception of terror as being a distant fact, practically foreign to the regional reality, creating a mechanism that strengthens the alienation of the strategic terrorism sustained by religious distortions, depriving its manifestation of ideological legitimacy.

It is clearly perceived that the governments of the countries of the Southern Cone are exploring this perception in two movements; the first in the sense of isolating themselves as much as possible from the “American” Global War on terror, while attempting to avoid any political or financial cost.<sup>42</sup> This movement is reflected in the official political postures that do not acknowledge a potential transition to strategic terrorism in the region, emphasizing that there is no already-configured threat of violent acts of terror, just a potential danger, or “an evil to be avoided!” The second movement is in the direction of establishing preventive strategies according to the following logic: (1) specializing the counter-terrorist intelligence services with the creation (or re-equipment) or special police units, (2) developing random actions of a political nature and repressive character. Note, however, that the strategies of the governments of the Southern Cone are aimed at the

prevention/neutralization of strategic terrorism through police specialization and integrated intelligence, and avoiding the engagement of the armed forces in operational actions.

Since strategic terrorism did not emerge operationally in the Southern Cone, it can be said that the following factors have been effective (without being able to say which or which combination of them is really predominant): 1) efficacy of operational strategies (police repression and integrated intelligence), 2) maintaining the expectation of the continuity of the rules of the political game, 3) ideological and intellectual distancing from the notion of terror (university and middle class isolation from and even indifference to the phenomenon), 4) characterization of the problem as a phenomenon external to the region and dissociated from the local culture (implicitly stated by the media and strengthened by government agencies).

Taking these four points as a reference, some observations and suggestions are developed below to contribute to the needs of USA policy formulation for the region that are simultaneously appropriate to its interests and to those of the region.

Meeting the demand for “qualified” personnel to engage the actions developed from the intentions of strategic terrorism is its principal vulnerability. This is the result of the disappearance of the conditions that contributed to the recruitment of conspiratorial terrorism, without the development of equally effective conditions in the environment. In other words, the second trend explaining the reasons that lead to engagement in terrorist actions no longer finds support among the major social groups that supply personnel for terrorism. Accordingly, creating conditions so that the third trend (global terrorist revolution) does not emerge as an explanatory-cognitive context becomes a strategic alternative. On the other hand, from the standpoint of counter-terrorism strategies, the vulnerability resides in the limitation to equip capabilities for the rapid processing of large volumes of data aimed at identifying associations that lead to the construction of patterns indicating complex non-linear terrorist acts.

While the strategic actions of the USA against terror in the Southern Cone should be better articulated, mainly politically, they should not induce the notion of a defence or security alliance incorporating all the countries of the region. Although this statement seems counterintuitive, the analysis points to the continuity of the same conditions that (*post facto*) made it obvious that this option was inadequate. In other words, such an alliance would end up inducing the transfer of strategic terrorism from other regions to the Southern Cone and primarily, with the eventual emergence of this type of terror, would induce its rapid diffusion to other countries of the region.

On this same line of argument, it should be noted that potential conditions already exist in the region for the development of strategic terrorism centered in the Brazilian border areas, and currently the factors that act against the emergence of terrorism are strongly anchored in the lack of support these actions find in the region due to prohibitive factors generated by the formation of the political power structure and the terrorists’ lack of cultural or political identity with the local population. This does not mean that preventive actions with the indispensable support of intelligence under an inter-agency culture (interagency and international cooperation) are not important. On the contrary, although such actions are fundamental in the short term, in the long term only the continued maintenance and strengthening of the democratic process can ensure the prohibition of the manifestation of terrorism, at least until the old, now-dormant militants and

structures exhaust their capability of rekindling the ashes of the failure of conspiratorial terrorism under the aegis of strategic terrorism.

A corollary of this conclusion, extremely sensitive politically, but important for the USA and the perception of the countries of the region is the obvious fact that this democratic stability requires the continuation of the representativity and prestige of the so-called leftist parties now in power. This does not mean the removal of the mechanisms of democratic alternation of power, but the preservation of the political (and moral) authority of the opposition parties. This casts light on the risks of the current political crisis in Brazil, primarily due to the possibility of spin-off effects in other countries of the region, which does not yet appear to have been well understood in the region or in the USA.

In this same vein, it is highly advisable that the actions taken to neutralize the source of terrorist financing and protection for terrorist militants offered by the Triple Border area be understood in the context of this region's importance to the local economy. If these recommendations are implemented – in the sense of building more effective mechanisms of planning, scheduling and budgeting starting with the modernization of the armed forces – it is extremely pertinent to understand that the problem is much larger than the Triple Border area, since the conditions for the emergence of strategic terrorism in the Southern Cone already exist all along the southern border of Brazil.

Neutralizing this potential threat – which would be explosive and have harmful effects for the region and for the world – requires the integrated economic development of the region, making the Mercosul play a fundamental role in the global war against terrorism. The NAFTA-Mercosul negotiators on both sides appear not to have understood this.

The above remarks point to one fundamental aspect. The actions against the emergence of strategic terrorism in the Southern Cone require the formulation of policies, at the highest level, integrating defence alternatives with economic alternatives which sustain ideological postures that do not threaten regional social and cultural structures. This is obvious, but seems to have been forgotten!

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to express his appreciation to the dedication and commitment of Thiago Fernandes Franco, research assistant, and to the members of the Interdisciplinary Studies Group of the International Relations Course of the Faculdades de Campinas (FACAMP) who provided a remarkable effort in researching and discussing subjects in support of this paper. Many of the conclusions offered here were originated from their ideas, comments, and innovative approaches. They deserve credit for a large part of the development of this article, and the author takes responsibility for any weaknesses.

“Prosfiction” is a term introduced in the area of strategic studies to characterize the logic engine used to for the exploration of future possibilities (forecasting) necessary for military transformation. For some applications of “prosfiction”, see: Terraine, J., *The Smoke and the Fire: Myths & Anti-Myths of War: 1861-1945*. London, UK: Leo Cooper, 1992. Clark, I.F., *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1763-3749*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1993. The term will be contextualized and expanded throughout the text.

<sup>2</sup> Forecasting is based on premises of continuity of patterns recurring over time; which on the one hand depends on the availability of sufficient information about the past, and on



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the other hand imposes a certain degree of inertia in identifying changes. This premise, established by Makridakis, can be found in detail in Makridakis, S.G., *Forecasting: Planning and Strategy for The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. London, UK: Free Press, 1990. p. 9

Trending explores the possibilities of future plausible events conditioned by a set of possible events; these events are selected using criteria of inclusion and exclusion that are part of the same logic (same instrumental rationale) that guides the formulation of future events. In other words, trending is subject to what is considered rational according to the current logic of understanding what terrorism is or could be. Forecasting and trending as important analytical resources end up generating a continuous recycling of analyses and proposals of military and political action formulated based on limited premises. “Prosfictional” analysis, on the other hand, explores new architectures of relationships of past data and trends to construct new possibilities of future developments. It is responsible for guiding exploratory analyses of the logical extremes of possible futures, questioning ends, means, and the relationships between them, so it is only limited by the plausibility of the formulated alternatives – the possibility of their existence – which is a markedly subjective limit.

<sup>3</sup> The “prosfictional” approach is used in this paper as a complement to forecasting and trending in order to create, when necessary, a break with the recurring approaches to terrorism in the Southern Cone, which normally begin from analyses centered in a single country or particular region in order to devise generalizing conclusions (typically resulting in fallacies of generalizations) from them. For this reason, the analysis developed here takes the region as a whole in order to explore new frontiers of analysis, with the understanding that the manifestations of oppositional terrorism originate from national specificities, and with the further understanding that such an approach is imbued with the same weakness encountered in any similar proposal: the validity of the conclusions is limited to the sensitivity of the whole to the variations of its component parts (which limits the possibilities of merging particular aspects into an overall regional view without disregarding the specific nature of the impact those aspects produce).

<sup>4</sup> The limitations to any research on terrorism, principally when there is an attempt to establish cause-and-effect relationships between its manifestations and the context in which they emerge, was very well consolidated by Martha Crenshaw (org). *Terrorism in Context*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania U.P. 1995, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Mearsheimer, J. “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics”. New York: W.W. Norton&Company, 2001. Nye, J. “*Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*”. New York: Public Affairs, 2004. Mearsheimer approaches the implementation of power politics using means of force (*hard power*), while Nye discusses the implementation of these politics through other, more intangible, means, permitting states to achieve their interests.

<sup>6</sup> Debray, R. *Revolution in the Revolution?* London: Pelican Latin American Library, Penguin Books, 1967.

<sup>7</sup> A summary of American political actions in its global war against terror with a focus on Latin America can be found at <http://terrorismo.embaixada-americana.org.br/?action=artigo&idartigo=1144>.

<sup>8</sup> Here we assume the polar opposition between an ideology identified around the principles that structure modern American liberal democracy and another manifested (as a basis or as a development) in religious fundamentalisms.

<sup>9</sup> The term “strategic terrorism” has gained increasing strength in its ability to summarize the manifestations of terrorism as practiced by radical groups such as Al Qaeda. One of its best interpreters is Picco, Giandomenico. *The Challenges of Strategic Terrorism*. Terrorism and Political. Violence 17:11-16 Winter.

<sup>10</sup> This point will be revisited and expanded in the section entitled “Frame of Analysis: Two Polar Views”.

<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that in a way this situation replicates the initial errors committed in the French and English Colonial Wars, in which the traditional “military elite” forged in conventional wars scorned the officers trained in guerrilla combat, while it exalted officers who had been prepared for heroic battles. During the research, it was noted that the military men who had effectively been engaged in the fight against conspiratorial terrorism sought the protection of anonymity in the conventional military forces, with their heaps of operational knowledge – not recorded in open sources – practically lost. Leading to the

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result that in the event of a return to the fight against terror, now strategic in form, the necessary knowledge effectively has to be recreated.

<sup>12</sup> The MAP programme was replaced in 1976 by the International Military Education and Training (IMET) Programme, in which training for the soldiers of Latin America's armed forces began to be offered in American installations instead of in the forces' own national territory, reflecting the concern of the US Congress that in-country training could emulate what had happened in Vietnam.

<sup>13</sup> Evidence of this situation can be found in the discussion of the role of the IPES/BAB, as described in Arns, P. and Wright, J. *Brasil:Nunca Mais*. São Paulo: Vozes, 1985.

<sup>14</sup> Schenina R.L. *Latin America's War: The Age of the Professional Soldiers, 1900-2001*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's Inc. 2003. p. 278.

<sup>15</sup> In all the countries of the Southern Cone, the term "national security" is associated with military strategies against terror. This situation – a sort of collective national unawareness – provokes a reaction – practically a political repudiation – of a necessary and important concept in the construction of policies that take account of the resurgence/fight against strategic terrorism. Note, for example, that Brazil's defence policy is in fact a document embodying a policy of national security. The same is seen in Paraguay and Uruguay, where the demarcation of the limits of civilian-military jurisdictions in the arenas of security and defence is still indistinct and tense. The way to reduce the tension is to not to put the matter up for discussion – which interests the governments seeking a non-confrontational situation, with an implicit recipe of what the armed forces can do, even if they are absolutely disarticulated politically and terribly obsolete in terms of force structures, doctrines, and concepts. The situation is different in Argentina, and more so in Chile, where the effort to discuss the preparation of their defence White Books forced the explanation and definition of civilian-military jurisdictions.

<sup>16</sup> The author thanks Dr. Richard E. Hayes, "Evidence Based Research, Inc." for access to the research material and the discussion on recurring patterns in the prediction of the behaviour of terrorist groups. Although the stages described were based on these patterns, they reflect the analysis conducted for the Southern Cone and in some aspects depart from those originally conceived. In fact, a time delay is observed in the manifestation of these patterns in the Southern Cone compared to those observed in the USA, revealing that apparently the countries of the Southern Cone have emulated the American spearhead in their research efforts.

<sup>17</sup> The US Department of State database – Significant Terrorist Incidents, 1961-2003: A Brief Chronology. Office of the Historian Bureau of Public Affairs. US Department of State. March 2004 – was used to gather these data.

<sup>18</sup> Some interviews that guided the next section of this article were conducted with people who were intimately acquainted with some of these terrorists who had plunged into anonymity for many years and who recently, with the region's democratization movement, allowed their identifies to be revealed, by themselves, in restricted circles. The author is enormously grateful to FFP (university professor and former terrorist group militant), EPM (stage actor, former terrorist group militant), and JLT (retired general and member of the intelligence service engaged in the repression of terrorism) for their trust in revealing, in confidence, facts, dates, names, and relationships, as well as permitting access to personal correspondence, which made this work possible.

<sup>19</sup> Although Peru is not included in the Southern Cone, the example is relevant for purposes of explaining terrorist manifestations around this region, since the mobility of people and information greatly reduces the significance of isolating the Southern Cone from the rest of the Latin American environment, except for analytical purposes. Accordingly, whenever it is deemed appropriate, examples from around the Southern Cone are used to serve as an alert against the possibility of the transitivity and spread of manifestations of terror in the region.

<sup>20</sup> It is worth remembering that intelligence actions alone did not neutralize the terrorist groups, but that the guarantee of a democratic environment and certain economic and social prosperity are necessary conditions for keeping these groups inactive. In addition to intelligence actions, those who aim at maintaining peace and security must put a value on maintaining the region's fragile equilibrium.

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<sup>21</sup> This “modus operandi” was revealed after hundreds of cloned credit cards were discovered in an intelligence-supported operational action of the Federal Police of Brazil in the Triple Borders area.

<sup>22</sup> The information mentioned was kindly supplied by a former officer of the Paraguayan Army. The extensive documentation accessed further included data on various relationship structures between members of the Arab community living in the Triple Border area, the affiliations of Sunni and Shiite radical groups with the Abdallah, Barakat, and Huazi clans, and the relationships of those clans with Arab and Palestinian movements involved in terrorist attacks, as well as the association between the presence of individuals suspected of involvement with financing strategic terrorism with foreign banks in Paso de los Libres. Although relevant, this information was not included in the argumentation of the text because it detracts from the purpose of this study.

<sup>23</sup> Except the event in the Israeli embassy in Argentina.

<sup>24</sup> Informal conversation with agents of the Federal Police of Brazil, who emphasize the low operational cost of a terrorist attack. The author was unable to procure this data, which does not mean that the intelligence services operating in the region do not have it.

<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to note that the official agencies of Brazil do not formally acknowledge the relationship between money-laundering and other crimes and terrorism. For example, see: <http://64.233.161.104/search?q=cache:QLvxu6PhdioJ:https://www.fazenda.gov.br/coaf/portugues/publicacoes/SumarioPublicoRelBrasilGafi2004.pdf+recursos+il%C3%ADcit+na+Tr%C3%ADplice+Fronteira&hl=pt-BR>.

<sup>26</sup> There is an as yet unresolved discussion in the countries of the Southern Cone about the definition of the scope of the jurisdiction of defence, and its inherent tasks. While a movement in the direction of military specialization and professionalization is observed, they are retaining many duties that are confused with the tasks of public safety and development.

<sup>27</sup> The results of these debates are recorded in regional periodicals, and can be followed on internet sites. For example, see <http://www.estadao.com.br/internacional/noticias/2005/jul/29/111.htm> and [http://www.vermelho.org.br/diario/2005/0730/0730\\_base-paraguai.asp](http://www.vermelho.org.br/diario/2005/0730/0730_base-paraguai.asp).

<sup>28</sup> For other classifications and analyses, see, for example, Daniele, Y. (ed). *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* “*The Trauma of Terrorism: Sharing Knowledge and Shared Care, An International Handbook*. Vol. 9, Nos. 1/2 and Nos. 3/4.

<sup>29</sup> Laqueur, W. *The Age of Terrorism*. Boston: Little Brown, 1987. Bion, W. *Experiences in Groups*. London, Tavistock, 1961 in Post, J. *Terrorist Psycho-logic: Terrorist Behaviour as a Product of Psychological Forces*. Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins U.P. 2000.

<sup>30</sup> According to Sebastian Vigliero (in Stanganelli, I.(org). *Seguridad y Defensa en El Cono Sul*. pag. 48, studies conducted in Europe agree in indicating that many terrorists do not exhibit serious pathologies, but a pattern can be perceived of aggressive personality associated with personal frustrations and professional failures, permeated by dysfunctional social behaviours.

<sup>31</sup> Post, J. *Terrorist Psycho-logic: Terrorist Behaviour as a Product of Psychological Forces*. Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins U.P. 2000. p. 31 and 34.

<sup>32</sup> Crenshaw, M. *Terrorism in Context* (org). Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania U.P., 1995. p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> Sprinzak, E “The Psychopolitical Formation of Extreme Left Terrorism in a Democracy: The case of Weathermen. In Reich, W. (ed) *Origins of Terrorism Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998. p. 77.

<sup>34</sup> Reading the text of David Scott Palmer [“The Revolutionary Terrorism of Peru’s Shining Path”, in Crenshaw, M. *Terrorism in Context* (org). Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania U.P., 1995] gains particular relevance, principally because it makes it possible to identify the fundamental role of the leadership of Abimael Guzmán in maintaining the internal cohesion of the Shining Path.

<sup>35</sup> In June 2005, the author interviewed three businessmen, MM, CGR, and RRT, with businesses and ventures in Southern Cone areas subject to the possibility of the emergence of terrorism, who revealed this situation. According to MM, many local businessmen, primarily small businessmen, ended up opting for this practice for two reasons. First, the difficulty of access and risks of making formal contacts with the government to act against the extortion to which they are subjected. Second, even when such contacts are made, the

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responses are inadequate, slow, and for the most part absolutely disastrous. It was obvious during the interview with MM that the armed forces/police are absolutely unprepared to handle the demands of combating strategic terrorism, and that this inadequacy is not merely material, but procedural and, primarily, conceptual.

<sup>36</sup> The option to select the perception of the USA as an intervening variable is no accident; it is the result of a careful choice that ended up finding the other currently used measures inadequate. Although politically sensitive, it makes it possible to gauge degrees of convergence and divergence of ideological profiles with respect to a known reference. On the other hand, the frame of analysis also contributed to a perception of the future degree of acceptability of American policies for the region. Note, however, that this frame is of a nature instrumental to the purposes of this paper, and must be validated with the perception of other analysts and students of the subject. Accordingly, its validity depends on its usefulness for the purpose of identifying the potential conditions of ideological recruiting for terrorism in the Southern Cone.

<sup>37</sup> Chomsky, N. Chomsky, N. *The Culture of Terrorism*. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1998.

<sup>38</sup> Text excerpted from the World Islamic Front Statement - "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders", on the internet at <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>. Picked up in May 2005.

<sup>39</sup> Nye, J. Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2002. Nye defines *Soft Power* as the ability to influence preferences without using direct or explicit force. To that end, the capability of producing *Soft Power* is associated with three factors: culture, political values, and foreign policy.

<sup>40</sup> About 73% of those interviewed reported that they did not read the news about terrorism in the papers because it was repetitive, uninteresting, and unrelated to their national reality, and that they learned about terrorist actions through TV journalism when this news is presented as news blocks at the regular news time. Even students of international relations among those interviewed apparently do not look for the news about terror, since that discussion is outside their scope of interest (there is no formal academic demand for this type of study at the graduate level and very little to the post-graduate level, except for students who are specializing in subjects relating to international security. It can be said that in the Southern Cone general university knowledge about terrorism is superficial, full of preconceptions, and reflects the posture of televised editorials more than a critical consciousness resulting from reading and thinking.

<sup>41</sup> The term paradoxical is used here due to the apparent contradiction of the facts, without it being possible to evidence the relationship between them in the research. In this case, it must be acknowledged that this factor is the result of the research method, aimed more at the perception of the manifestation of terrorism than at the cognitive processes that lead to that perception.

<sup>42</sup> One curious aspect was the "revolt" of Uruguayan public officials against the requirement to establish certain port and airport security procedures that increased their operating costs in response to an American request. In other words, the perception of costs is dissociated from the expectation of benefits.

# **Islamic Radicalism in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: Implications for the Global War on Terrorism**

**Rouben Azizian**

## **Introduction**

The Central Asian governments and the wider international community had hopes that the campaign against terrorism launched by the United States in September 2001 would help eliminate Islamic militancy in the region. Four years later, the campaign claims success in destroying the terrorist base in Afghanistan. However, it has done little to do away with the sources of Islamic radicalism.

Radical Islam in Central Asia is in the midst of sweeping transformations. Despite the loss of their Afghan base, terror groups in the region are adapting and are mounting increasingly potent operations. This transformation has been in the making for some time. Over the past few years, Central Asia's terrorist groups have expanded their geographic reach and intensified their activities throughout much of the post-Soviet space. New alliances have sprouted up as well. According to July 2004 testimony of the head of Tajikistan's National Security Service, Tokon Mamytov, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Tajik and Kyrgyz fundamentalists and Uighurs from Western China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region have joined forces to create a new clandestine umbrella organization, the Islamic Movement of Central Asia. Its purported goal: the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Central Asia.<sup>1</sup>

While regional experts agree that more has to be done to conquer religious extremism in Central Asia, they vary in identifying the direction, substance and form of anti-extremist activity. Some sympathize with Uzbek President Islam Karimov's brutal handling of the Andijan insurgency/protest. Others prefer to engage the Islamists the Tajik way. There are those who see the main problem in an uncontrolled or a too controlled resurgence of Islam. And there are strong believers in social and economic progress as the one and only remedy. The recent series of "orange revolutions" in the post-Soviet space, including Kyrgyzstan, have led to yet another debate as to whether political liberalization

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of Central Asia presents opportunities or liabilities in fighting extremism and terrorism in Central Asia. Finally, the broad geopolitical scene of Central Asia remains complex and obscure. The great powers continue to compete more than cooperate in Central Asian affairs thus enhancing the chances of extremist groups to capitalize on domestic shortcomings, mistrust between Central Asian regimes and incessant geopolitical ambition of powerful outsiders.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of locating the main geographic areas of religious extremism, in the past Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have been traditionally named as the most problematic and explosive. Their high Islamization, along with a suppressive form of governance, were considered objectively conducive to extremist activity. At the same time, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were seen as less problematic due to their nomadic past, high secularization and better governance. Some experts consider Islamic radicalism in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to be an irritant rather a threat. According to Kazakh scholar Nurlan Alniyazov, however, strange as may sound, in areas where Islam has been traditionally present, and where religion has a profound impact on the cultural, spiritual and everyday life, there is a natural resistance to radical movements, which are perceived by the people as something alien to their culture and traditions and unsubstantiated by traditional teachings of Islam. In contrast, fundamentalist groups emerge in the areas where Islam has not deeply spread its roots.<sup>3</sup> As our analysis will demonstrate, Islamic radicalism is on the rise in both Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan and, if not treated seriously and consistently, may develop into a serious threat to the region and beyond. Destabilization in these countries would seriously harm the US strategic interest in particular. After the eventual withdrawal of US troops from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan becomes America's closest military partner in Central Asia. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, remains the strongest economic partner of the United States in Central Asia and perhaps the most promising candidate for political liberalization.

### **Evolution of Islamic Radicalism in Central Asia**

Three successive waves of political Islam have swept over Central Asia during the 15-year period since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The first wave appeared in Tajikistan in 1992, seeking to make the country an Islamic state. The Tajik civil war involved factions, but they were ideological overlaps of secular democracy, nationalist reformism and Islamization. The Islamic rebels belonging to the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) were initially concentrated in the southern provinces of Kulyab and Kurgan Tyube, but incrementally linked up with elements in neighbouring Afghanistan. By 1996 they were operating from within Afghanistan. Alarmed by the ascendancy of the Taliban (leading to the capture of Kabul in 1996) and signs that the Tajik Islamists were increasingly coming under the influence of rival benefactors, Russia and Iran swiftly closed ranks to bring about a Tajik settlement, giving Tajik Islamists a role in the government in Dushanbe.<sup>4</sup>

No sooner than the Tajik settlement came about, the Uzbek militants who fought alongside the Tajik Islamists broke away and linked up with the Taliban. The period from 1996-2001 saw the IMU operating from Taliban-ruled areas

within Afghanistan and stepping up violent activities inside Central Asia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in particular. The IMU was the second wave of political Islam to appear in Central Asia. IMU called for jihad against the established secular regimes, particularly the Uzbek regime of Islam Karimov. The IMU also closely collaborated with al-Qaeda and suffered as a result. In the American military intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001, the IMU's cadres sustained heavy losses and retreated to Pakistan's tribal agencies - along with the Taliban.

At any rate, in the void left by the IMU, a third wave of political Islam has appeared in Central Asia - Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT - Party of Islamic Liberation). Unlike the earlier manifestations of political Islam, HT claims to be a pan-Islamic movement. HT subscribes to the goal of establishing a Sharia-based caliphate in Central Asia and "dividing Russia along the line of the Volga" so as to liberate the "originally Muslim lands".

The three waves also represent three different types or forms of Islamic radical ambition and activity: power sharing with distinct regional and tribal characteristics (civil war in Tajikistan), anti-regime and nationalistic (Islamic insurgency in Uzbekistan) and externally sponsored and supranational (HT). While IMU and IRP are struggling to survive and remain relevant, their strength has been undercut either through efficient military suppression, like in the case of IMU, or through relatively successful integration into the mainstream political process like in the case of IRP. This gives HT an objective advantage in Central Asia. HT also gains from its broad international background and network, its solid experience of legal and illegal propaganda, as well as proclaimed non-violent methods which confuse authorities as to how to deal with it.<sup>5</sup> HT is exploiting the similarity of social and economic grievances in the region as well as the continuing lack of trust and efficient cooperation between the Central Asian regimes in dealing with extremist organizations.

In our opinion, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the most vulnerable to the third wave of Islamic radicalism. Firstly, they largely avoided the first two waves and have not developed a resistance mechanism to extremist slogans. Secondly, their traditional Islamic structures are weak and least prepared to deal with external influences. Thirdly, they are relatively democratic and open as opposed to the other three Central Asian states but not genuinely pluralistic and liberal, yet which provides fertile ground for HT. Finally, the social instability in Kyrgyzstan after the "tulip revolution" in March 2005 and the possibility of similar social disturbances as a result of the forthcoming presidential elections in Kazakhstan offer HT new opportunities for spreading their ideology. Most analysts agree that the most vulnerable areas to HT are the South Kazakhstan oblast in Kazakhstan and Jelalabad, Osh and Batken regions in Kyrgyzstan.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

Kyrgyzstan has been a fertile ground for the growth of fundamentalist Islam. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, it was Kyrgyzstan among the five Central Asian republics that had adopted the most liberal approach toward Islamic

fundamentalist organizations, allowing for example HT to pursue its activities relatively freely. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan's social and economic situation has been deteriorating under the increasingly corrupt regime of Askar Akaev. Thirdly, Kyrgyzstan has common and poorly protected borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the two countries that have been experiencing serious Islamic radicalism. Finally, Kyrgyzstan has a significant Uighur population which has radical anti-Chinese and/or pro-independence aspirations.

Kyrgyzstan's most vulnerable region is its south. The Ferghana Valley faces serious social and economic challenges of overpopulation, unemployment and crime. The Kyrgyzstan territory became a transit area and training ground for militant Islamic groups. The IMU militants infiltrated the Kyrgyz state in the southern region of Batken in 1999, causing a lot of disturbances in the country. The 2002-2003 bombings in the Kyrgyz towns of Bishkek and Osh resulted in the conviction of Uzbek and Kyrgyz nationals who belonged to the IMU and who were trained in Afghanistan and Chechnya. In 2003, repeated attempts were made by the IMU to target the American Embassy in Kyrgyzstan. However, the IMU presence in Kyrgyzstan after September 11 has seriously declined.

Kyrgyzstan also faces a threat from Uighur separatists from the Xinjiang region in western China, who may seize this opportunity and strengthen themselves in Kyrgyz territory. China shares several hundreds of kilometers of border with Kyrgyzstan in the western province of Xinjiang. In November 2002 China conducted military exercises with Kyrgyzstan aimed at helping Kyrgyzstan to eliminate Uighur extremist groups.

It is however HT which has become the main source of concern for the Kyrgyz authorities. Southern Kyrgyz regions – including Osh and Jalalabad, which have large numbers of ethnic Uzbek residents – have traditionally been strongholds of Hizb support. Uzbeks make up 12.9% of the population of Kyrgyzstan and 40% of the population of the Osh region. According to official figures, 92 per cent of Hizb activists are Uzbek.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, Hizb propaganda material has been heavily distributed in cities in northern Kyrgyzstan, including the capital. Hizb leaflets have also been found for the first time in villages in the Issyk-Kul region. Kyrgyz law-enforcement officials report a surge in Hizb leafleting. In addition to distributing materials by hand, Hizb activists are operating late at night, pasting leaflets to lampposts and in public places. The messages contained in the leaflets are confrontational in their tone. "Let's rebel against the faithless," urged one. Others contain strong anti-American messages. "The war that [US President George] Bush started is a colonial war aimed at achieving hegemony and control, imposing influence and reshaping the region according to the new American standards," another leaflet said.<sup>7</sup>

According to Sadykzhan Kamuluddin, President of the Islamic Centre of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and former *mufti* and member of the Kyrgyzstan Supreme Council, Kyrgyzstan alone has about 2,000-3,000 members of HT, suggesting that the HT was numerically strongest in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>8</sup> Officials of a Kyrgyz state commission for religious affairs admit that HT poses a significant "threat to national security."<sup>9</sup> The state commission, which includes



representatives from the Spiritual Directorate of Kyrgyzstan's Muslims and the state commission for religious affairs, works with the staff of the Interior Ministry and National Security Service and routinely provides "analysis of Islamist" leaflets and materials for use in court proceedings against suspects detained for links to the Islamist group. Commission members said the group's activities are increasing, especially in the south of the country.

Apart from carrying out political agitation in the Kyrgyz state, HT has also been accused of terrorist activities, although it has a stated agenda of non-violence. In November 2003, Kyrgyz State Security announced the capture of three HT members planning to blow up the US airbase at Manas. A number of Kyrgyz nationals have been caught as members of the HT with explosives in Russia. Bishkek authorities have also reported from time to time about developing links between extremist organizations like the IMU, the Islamic Movement of Turkestan in Central Asia and HT and between the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and other Uighur separatist groups and the HT.

The government of Akaev had taken several measures to control the spread of radical ideas. One was the adoption of a strict licensing system regulating the publication of religious printed matter, by the Ulema Council, Kyrgyzstan's foremost spiritual body for Islamic affairs. A number of other regulations were also passed by the Kyrgyz State Commission for Religious Affairs to govern religious expression and counter radical elements. In November 2003, the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic issued a ban on four Islamic groups. Henceforth the activity of these groups, which the court officially labeled as terrorist and extremist, is considered illegal within the republic. HT was declared extremist, the Islamic Party of Turkestan, the East Turkestan Liberation Organization, and the East Turkestan Islamic Party were declared terrorist.<sup>10</sup>

The Kyrgyz law-enforcement authorities have responded with a series of raids on the houses of suspected HT members. In Osh, for example, authorities arrested nine local residents in early April 2004 for allegedly distributing Hizb material.<sup>11</sup> Several HT supporters have been arrested in Bishkek. All the detainees are being accused of violating either Article 297 or 299 of the country's criminal code, which forbid efforts to bring about "the forcible change of the constitutional system," and attempts to "foment national, racial and religious enmity". Kyrgyzstan's National Security Service (SNB) shut down an underground printing press in Jalalabad that produced materials for HT.<sup>12</sup> The two-month operation reportedly resulted in the confiscation of 300 leaflets, 400 magazines, and more than 1,000 brochures, most of them printed in Uzbek. The press was located in a private apartment.

In April 2004, the National Border Service opened an Interagency Training Centre, which will focus on training to fight illegal migration and terrorism.

The March 2005 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan once again brought the Hizb ut- Tahrir under close scrutiny by the international community. The anti-government propaganda of HT had some contribution to the public uprising against the Akaev government. At the same time, the Hizb leadership did not

support the new government, as it does not differentiate between interim leaders and former president Askar Akaev's administration. Hizb members view the events of March 24 as a reshuffle of power, lacking any radical policy departure. "We will support people and the government representatives only when they defend the interests of Islam. Disputes between the people and President Askar Akaev's government were part of a democratic ideology which is alien to Hizb ut-Tahrir," according to Dilyor, a Hizb activist in Kara-Suu.<sup>13</sup>

Islamic radicals associated with HT, remain on the sidelines of Kyrgyzstan's revolution, preoccupied with internal squabbling over the underground group's strategy and tactics. Nevertheless, Hizb leaders remain hopeful that the Kyrgyz revolution will ultimately lead to the expansion of the movement's influence, especially in southern Kyrgyzstan.

New Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev has been dismissive of Hizb's ability to influence Kyrgyzstan's political future. Meanwhile, his Prime Minister Feliks Kulov appears far more wary of Hizb's capabilities. In an interview with the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* in April 2005, Kulov warned that Hizb was prepared to take advantage of the "vacuum" created by Akaev's sudden departure from power. The dissonance between the two Kyrgyz leaders can be attributed to their regional allegiances. Bakiyev comes from the south and does not want to emphasize the role of Islamic elements in projecting him to power. Kulov is a northerner and therefore freer in his evaluation.

Public support for HT has however slackened in recent months. One reason for the decline is an intensive government crackdown. Another, perhaps more important factor is the rise in political activism in the country associated with the parliamentary election, especially in southern Kyrgyzstan. People discovered that they could seek redress of economic, social and political grievances through political channels, rather than joining Hizb, which must operate underground. In addition, mainstream Muslim leaders succeeded in putting spiritual issues on the political agenda, enabling public debate on religion's role in society. This significantly reduced Hizb's appeal as an outlet for discussion of spiritual issues. It is precisely that democratic process that some say might have weakened the appeal of HT. Until recently, HT's popularity was partly based on its role as an outpost of dissent in the authoritarian countries of Central Asia. But the revolution gave many Kyrgyz an alternative channel for voicing their discontent. It also gave them a rare opportunity for legitimate political participation. Revolution has made it easier for Muslims in Kyrgyzstan to gather at state-controlled mosques to discuss political and economic problems -- something that was restricted during Akaev's rule and impossible in neighbouring Uzbekistan. With a loosening of such religious restrictions, according to some, the appeal of an underground outlaw group like HT is bound to fade.<sup>14</sup>

Analysts say Kyrgyzstan's March revolution, in addition to dampening HT's appeal, has also deepened an already existing internal split in the group. There have been suggestions that HT is no longer united in the goal of nonviolent methods to achieve its ends. One branch still advocates a peaceful, global Islamic revolution. But another is pressing for a shift to more forceful means

and focusing on revolution in a single country rather than regionwide. "Experts say this split started one to two years before the revolution, when opinions changed within Hizb ut-Tahrir," said Alisher Saipov, an independent journalist from the southern Kyrgyz town of Osh. "These groups emerged after internal squabbling. At present, some HT members say the debate over the method of fighting is ongoing -- as are the splits."<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, the continued tension between the regime and opposition in neighbouring Uzbekistan continues to pose dangers for the stability of Kyrgyzstan. In an interview with the *BBC's Kyrgyz Service* on 7 September 2005, Prime Minister Feliks Kulov partially supported recent charges by Uzbek officials that armed militants might have used Kyrgyz territory as a staging ground before the May violence in Andijan "As regards the accusations by the Uzbek chief prosecutor's office that some militants who took part in the Andijan events were Kyrgyz citizens, my answer is that, to some degree, this claim is justified because there have been cases when citizens of our country, as well as non-citizens, have acquired Kyrgyz passports by paying bribes," Kulov said. Kulov blamed Kyrgyzstan's weak border-protection and security services, but he noted that the government is taking steps to ameliorate the situation. "I think now, together with our partners in the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, with the help of Western nations, we will be able to resolve this problem, tighten border protection and strengthen our fight against drug trafficking," he said. Kulov's remarks contrast with recent statements by other Kyrgyz officials denying the Uzbek claims.

## **Kazakhstan**

The Kazakh leadership is starting to reluctantly admit the growth of religious extremist activity in the country. Earlier on, it was dismissing the danger and somewhat patronizingly suggesting that Islamism was present only in neighbouring Central Asian states. It was supposedly marginal in Kazakhstan and limited to Uzbek and other ethnic minorities, such as the Uighurs, Chechens and Azerbaijanis, but not the Kazakhs.

The Chimkent region of southern Kazakhstan, which borders Uzbekistan, is regarded by the Kazakh authorities as the main breeding-ground for religious extremism in the republic. Kazakh officials speak of the widespread presence of "Wahhabis", a term frequently deployed in Central Asia to describe both Islamic extremists and ordinary Muslims who simply worship outside state-controlled structures. The attention paid by the authorities to Chimkent region in particular is easily explained: the overwhelming majority of the republic's 330,000 ethnic Uzbeks are concentrated in Chimkent region, making up around 18 per cent of its population. Generally, the Uzbeks are far more devout than the Kazakhs, and consequently the number of Islamic radicals among them is much greater.<sup>16</sup>

Several foreign experts have echoed government concerns about the alleged activity of Islamic extremists in southern Kazakhstan. Speaking on 7 November 2001 at the Slavic University in Bishkek, Professor Aleksei Malashenko, a

scholar-in-residence at the Carnegie Moscow Centre, declared that the threat posed by Islamic extremists in Kazakhstan was greater than in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>17</sup>

The terrorist group "Jamaat of Central Asian Mujahideen," which is structurally affiliated with al-Qaeda, has been exposed and dismantled in Kazakhstan. According to Vladimir Bozhko, first deputy director of Kazakhstan's National Security Committee (KNB), the group included four female members, trained as suicide bombers, from the Southern Kazakhstan Oblast. Bozhko added that group members were found to have about 2,000 audio- and videocassettes featuring terrorist propaganda, including messages from Osama bin Laden. The group also had fake passports and equipment to produce counterfeit documents, as well as components for basic explosive devices, ammunition and weapons.<sup>18</sup>

According to Bozhko, KNB operatives identified and detained one citizen of Uzbekistan, Abos Usmonov, who "had received an assignment from abroad and, with his accomplices, he was preparing to organize terrorist acts in Uzbekistan against one of the high-ranking officials of that country". Bozhko also stated that the Jamaat was administered from abroad through appointed leaders - emirs. One of them, Akhmed Bekmurzayev, was killed during the counterterrorist operations in Tashkent in March 2004. The second emir is Zhakshybek Biimurzayev, an ethnic Kyrgyz from Kyrgyzstan; he also had citizenship papers from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Investigators say the latter organized the terrorist attacks in Tashkent in March-April and in July of 2004.<sup>19</sup>

East Turkestan (Uigur) radical groups connected to al-Qaeda and Iraqi insurgents are present in Kazakhstan too. The Uigur community in Kazakhstan is generally unhappy with President Nazarbaev's policy and accuses him of not caring about the plight of Uighurs in China. The government of Kazakhstan, hypersensitive to Chinese reaction, has always distanced itself from the East Turkestan problem and the plight of the Chinese Uighurs, despite the fact that the government's decision to ignore the reprisals against ethnic minorities in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region drew sharp criticism from Uighurs living in the Almaty region. Demands for ethnic solidarity were clearly voiced at the founding Congress of the Interstate Committee of East Turkestan held in Almaty on January 11, 1992. Under pressure from the Muslim population, Kazakh authorities registered the East Turkestan Committee but simultaneously denied registration to the Organization for Liberation of Uighurstan.<sup>20</sup>

The largest group of Uighurs in Central Asia is in Kazakhstan. According to the census of 1999, Uighurs comprised 210, 3000 or 1.4 per cent of total population. 46,7333 Uighurs live in Kyrgyzstan, or about 1 per cent of the total population.<sup>21</sup> The emergence of newly independent states in Central Asia inspired Uighurs both in Central Asia and Xingiang to struggle for independence for Eastern Turkestan, while democratic changes in post-Soviet societies activated the Uighur political movement in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. China has been using its economic and political power to pressure Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to halt external Uighur

influences from penetrating Xingiang. Under Chinese pressure the government of Kazakhstan stiffened its policy toward the Uighurs. As a result many Uighur cultural institutions established during the Soviet Union were closed down. In 1996, even the Institute of Uighur Studies of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences ceased to exist. The hours of Uighur television broadcasts have been limited.<sup>22</sup>

According to Kazakh experts, there are four separatist organizations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan involved in anti-Chinese activities in Xingiang. They are: the Unified National Revolutionary Front of Eastern Turkestan, Organization of Liberation of Uighurstan, International Committee for Liberation of Eastern Turkestan and Yana Ayat. The four groups differ about the tactic of their struggle but basically prefer radical overthrow of government in Xingiang.<sup>23</sup> Konstantin Syroezhkin, however, believes that most of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz members of the radical groups are migrants from China of recent years. They lack education and do not belong to the Uighur elite. They are normally of older age, believe in the break up of China and count on Western support.<sup>24</sup> Further radicalization of the Uighur movement in Central Asia is however possible. There is a great degree of Uighurophobia in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Uighur intellectuals in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan complain that constant attempts are being undertaken to label Uighurs as unpatriotic. They are suspected of trying to create Great Uighurstan that would include parts of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

In October 2004, the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan recognized al-Qaeda, the East Turkestan Islamic Party, the Kurdish People's Congress, and the IMU as terrorist groups, a decision that prohibits them from any activity in the country. The ban on activities of the Islamic Party of East Turkestan and the Kurdish People's Congress was obviously aimed at demonstrating Kazakhstan's support for Chinese and Turkish anti-separatist efforts on the one hand, and the government's commitment to fighting international terrorism on the other.

Some experts, such as Nurlan Aliyazov suggest the presence in Kazakhstan of a little known group of Takfirshilar.<sup>25</sup> The essence of *takfir* (declaration of unbelief or departure from Islam) is a mandatory participation in *Jihad*. The first advocates of *takfir* appeared in Kazakhstan in the mid-1990s after the mass return of Kazakh citizens studying at religious educational institutions in Bashkortostan and Tatarstan. The advocates of the idea of *takfir* in Kazakhstan call themselves *takfirshilar* or Hizbu Takfir. The organization considers the official Board of Muslims of Kazakhstan as infidels. Takfirshilar is mainly composed of ethnic Kazakh citizens. As opposed to HT, *takfir* advocates consider military jihad to be the primary means of achieving their objective - the establishment of an Islamic state. The activities of the *takfirshilar* have not caused serious problems yet. The movement is small in numbers. But the mere presence of such a movement leads to a growing split in the Muslim community of Kazakhstan and the growth of antigovernment and other radical feelings among Muslims.

It is however HT that is becoming particularly worrisome for the Kazakh government as more and more cells are operating in the country. They are also spreading all over the country now and are not limited to the south. The

number of Kazakh members of HT is on the rise too. Most of the new members are attracted to HT for social and economic reasons. Kazakhstan's economic progress may be impressive but it is not even and has in fact led to greater polarization in Kazakh society. In 2004, Kazakhstan arrested and tried more than 60 individuals suspected of participation in HT activities.<sup>26</sup> They were prosecuted under the criminal code for "participating in activities of illegal organizations" and "inciting social, national, tribal, racial, or religious hatred". In March 2005, the Astana City Court ruled to recognize HT as an extremist organization and to ban it in Kazakhstan.<sup>27</sup> The ruling came in response to a request from the Prosecutor-General's Office.

The lower house of the Kazakh parliament voted in May 2005 to adopt stricter anti-terror legislation. The legislation, a set of amendments to 11 existing national security laws, imposes heavier penalties for "extremist and terrorist activities," including "terrorist financing," and introduces more restrictive measures governing the activities and formal registration of religious organizations and political parties.<sup>28</sup> One of the most significant amendments criminalizes the financing of political parties by foreign nationals. The move followed the adoption in February 2005 of a set of laws aimed at countering "extremism".

The new legislation has however alarmed the religious communities of Kazakhstan as well as the human rights groups. The law enforcement agencies have already been accused of expelling Christian and Muslim missionaries. The proposed amendments to Kazakhstan's law on religion would for the first time formally forbid the activities of unregistered religious organizations. A new article will be inserted in the Code of Administrative Offences to punish with heavy fines those leading, taking part in, or financially supporting unregistered or banned religious organizations. This will make it very difficult for small religious communities which are fewer than the number they would need to register. Muslims who want to practise outside the structures of the state-sanctioned Muslim Board would likely face penalties. Kazakhstan would thereby join neighbouring Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in banning the activities of unregistered religious organizations. The new law would also make missionary activities more difficult. Missionary work without the appropriate registration would attract a fine, while foreigners would be expelled from Kazakhstan. Human rights groups have expressed concerns that the definition of "extremism" in the law is so vague that it could be applied to any religious association.

Kazakhstan has positioned itself as a staunch supporter of the war on terror. Kazakhstan is undoubtedly establishing itself as a state actively cooperating in the war on terror and keen to promote an image of itself as being at the heart of Eurasian efforts to create a more stable environment, clearly benefiting domestic economic investment. But at the micro level, experts within Kazakhstan are beginning to question the state's anti-terrorist agenda and demonstrate diverse views on defining its future contours. Dosym Satpayev, Director of the Kazakhstani Risk Assessment Group, has attacked the current domestic system aimed at combating terrorism, claiming it is inefficient. Speaking at a roundtable event in Almaty on October 26, 2004 under the rubric

"An Anti-Terror System in Kazakhstan: Illusions, Reality, and Prospects," he delineated the nature of the present counter-terrorist facade in Kazakhstan. In Satpayev's view, "maintaining the state monopoly over ensuring safety for the individual and society from terrorist threats" forms an impediment to reforming the present system. He continued: "Unfortunately, Kazakhstan lacks a full-fledged anti-terrorist system, which should consist of a whole set of mutually related initiatives both from the state and society."<sup>29</sup>

One challenge facing Kazakhstan, as it seeks to improve its counter-terrorist capabilities, is to formulate a system that engages the public, bridging the gap between the state agencies responsible for counter-terrorism and the general public; one that fosters the close cooperation of the individual in remaining vigilant and understanding the nature of the security environment. At present, security structures and their counter-terrorist work often seem remote from the public. Analytical structures must devote more time and resources to examining the background and emergence of terrorist threats, exploring practical ideas in meeting these threats with an emphasis placed upon preventing attacks and disrupting terrorist activities. Unfortunately, the force component of the anti-terrorist system often becomes absolute and is viewed as a panacea for political extremism, although the special services' forceful operations against extremist and terrorist organizations are only the ultimate measure showing that other resources have been exhausted.

The underlying conviction among Kazakhstan's own experts, therefore, is that the country suffers from an anti-terrorist system that is dated, slow to react to crisis, and often plagued by corruption. It urgently requires greater engagement with the public, more attention to analysis of the origins and evolving nature of terrorist threats, and more efficient information tools. These measures are only possible with the support and direction of the political authorities, which have proven committed to the war on terror at least on the international scene. It now has to internalize this appetite for action and modernize its dated structures and approaches to counter terrorism. What seems encouraging, though by no means conclusive, is the growing awareness of the challenges among Kazakhstan's own experts and analysts.

### **International and regional counterterrorist cooperation**

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been actively involved in international and regional efforts to contain religious extremism and terrorism. Almaty and Bishkek have signed most of the international anti-terrorism agreements and participate in the work of the UN Security Council's Counterterrorism Committee. In January 2005, Kazakhstan hosted the meeting of the Counterterrorism Committee in Almaty. In his welcoming remarks to the participants, Kazakhstan's President Nazarbaev stated that the forceful methods of fighting terrorism were not sufficient. Instead he called to deal with the root causes of the problem, such as human rights violations, poverty and environmental degradation. He also noted the uneven process of globalization and the growing gap between the rich and poor nations as another source of insecurity and instability.<sup>30</sup> President Nazarbaev has been actively promoting

an international inter-religious dialogue. The first meeting of leaders of world and traditional religions was held in Kazakhstan in 2003.

Central Asian states have been trying to energize the counterterrorism agenda of the so far inert Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO), which comprises Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Representatives of the security services from the CACO member states met in Dushanbe on 21 January 2005 to discuss cooperation in combating threats to the region. In a written statement after the session, participants said that they discussed the need for a common list of terrorist and extremist organizations and their known members in the CACO region. According to Tajik Security Minister Khayriddin Abdurahimov, "this would enable the security services to fight terrorism and prevent the activities of terrorist organizations more effectively". The meeting also examined the issue of simplified extradition procedures for citizens of CACO member states involved in terrorist and extremist activities.<sup>31</sup>

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan consider Russia to be their closest partner in dealing with religious extremism and therefore treat the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) which also includes Armenia, Belarus, and Tajikistan as the key regional body in that sense. Kyrgyzstan hosts a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) counterterrorism centre in its capital, Bishkek, as well as a Russian air force base in Kant. The CSTO has set up rapid-deployment forces in the region. At the meeting of heads of CSTO member states in Moscow on 23 June 2005, future steps for strengthening of multilateral military cooperation within organization were discussed. The attending leaders allegedly discussed the possibility of opening a new CSTO military base in Kyrgyzstan -- which presumably would be operated by Russia - - and agreed to the creation of a centre to combat drug trafficking. Speaking at a news conference after the summit, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov said Russia was concerned by "the real terrorist threat in Central Asia".<sup>32</sup> In June 2004, the Kyrgyz, Tajik and Kazakh Border Services held joint exercises along their common borders to improve regional cooperation against terrorists. In July 2004, Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan held *Rubezh 2004* joint military counterterrorism exercises in Kyrgyzstan. *Rubezh 2005* military exercises were held in Tajikistan on 2-6 April 2005. The exercises, involving around 1,000 troops from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, were originally to have been held in Kyrgyzstan on 29 March-2 April.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are also involved in the expanding anti-terrorist activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which also includes China, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. On 15 June 2001, the SCO adopted the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism. The Convention offered the following definitions of the "three evils":

1) "terrorism" means any act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict or to cause major damage to any material facility, as well as to organize, plan, aid and abet such act, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, violate public security or



to compel public authorities or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, and prosecuted in accordance with the national laws of the Parties;

2) "separatism" means any act intended to violate territorial integrity of a State including by annexation of any part of its territory or to disintegrate a State, committed in a violent manner, as well as planning, preparing and abetting such act, and subject to criminal prosecuting in accordance with the national laws of the Parties;

3) "extremism" is an act aimed at seizing or keeping power through the use of violence or changing violently the constitutional regime of a State, as well as a violent encroachment upon public security, including organization, for the above purposes, of illegal armed formations and participation in them, criminally prosecuted in conformity with the national laws of the Parties.

At a summit in Astana on 5 July 2005, the heads of the SCO member states approved a plan for fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism. In the declaration, SCO members pledged not to give refuge to individuals accused or suspected of terrorist, separatist or extremist activities.<sup>33</sup> Tajik President Imomali Rakhmonov proposed at a meeting of the CIS Defence Ministers Council in Dushanbe on 24 June 2005 that the SCO should create rapid-deployment forces.<sup>34</sup> Rakhmonov said that the SCO needs "strong collective rapid-deployment forces to counter international terrorism and religious extremism".

The SCO's antiterrorist cooperation is however impeded by a number of factors. The Chinese formula of fighting all the three evils - terrorism, separatism and extremism, does not fully resonate with other SCO members' interests. Identification of separatists or extremists is particularly problematic. Russia does not want SCO to divert Central Asian states from a close military cooperation within CSTO. Kazakhstan is wary of joint military exercises in SCO and fears general transformation of the organization into a military grouping. The Kazakh officials emphasize the confidence-building nature of the organization. Kyrgyzstan apparently turned down a Chinese offer of a military base on its territory. Acting Deputy Prime Minister Madumarov told a press conference on 29 July 2005 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, where he was on an official visit, that Kyrgyzstan does not intend to host a Chinese military base.<sup>35</sup> According to Madumarov, "The question of deploying a Chinese military base on Kyrgyz territory was raised at a very high level, but Bishkek's position is unambiguous -- we are not prepared to turn the country into a military and political staging ground. We have enough strength and means to defend Kyrgyzstan's sovereignty."

In accordance with the SCO charter and the SCO Convention on Fighting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of June 15, 2001, the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Organization Cooperation (RATS SCO) started functioning from 1 January 2004 in Tashkent. RATS spent most of 2004 and 2005 elaborating the legal and normative basis of the SCO's cooperation in fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism. It has compiled a list of organizations to be banned in the SCO states as well as a list of individuals sought for or suspected of terrorist, extremist and separatist

activities. It is creating a data base to collect and exchange relevant information. RATS has developed a plan of joint antiterrorist exercises of SCO member states. The Centre however encounters a number of difficulties too. Its location in Tashkent and the fact that an Uzbek General is in charge of it at the moment have coloured the activities of the Centre and led to some misunderstandings and problems. Kazakhstan denounced the statement of RATS Director Vyacheslav Kasimov who accused Kazakhstan of giving shelter to terrorists and even stated that “parts of Kazakh territory have been purchased by Osama bin Laden owned companies”.<sup>36</sup> RATS also rushed to support Islam Karimov’s crack down on protests in Andijan even if Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan did not fully share the one-sided Uzbek interpretation of Andijan events and under international pressure allowed the Uzbek refugees to flee from their territories to third countries. In a special statement on 26 May 2005 RATS fully sided with the Uzbek interpretation of disturbances and accused members of "Acromiya" - militant wing of HT, of coordinating the insurgency. It praised the “resolute actions” of the leadership of Uzbekistan.<sup>37</sup>

## **The US role**

The September 11 attacks led the US Administration to realize it was crucial to the national interests of the United States to greatly enhance relations with the five Central Asian countries to prevent them from becoming harbors for terrorism. According to Assistant Secretary of Defense Crouch in testimony in June 2002, “our military relationships with each Central Asian nation have matured on a scale not imaginable prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>38</sup>

Kyrgyzstan provided basing for combat and combat support units at Manas for US and coalition forces (in 2005, US troops reportedly number about 1,500). Uzbekistan provided a base for US operations at Karshi-Khanabad (in 2005, reportedly 900 US troops) and a base for German units at Termez. Kazakhstan provided overflight rights and expedited rail transshipment of supplies. Turkmenistan permitted blanket overflight and refuelling privileges for humanitarian flights. Tajikistan permitted use of its international airport in Dushanbe for refuelling and hosted a small French unit. The United States’ security assistance was boosted to the region in the aftermath of 9/11 but has lessened somewhat in 2003-2005. Security and law enforcement aid was \$187.55 million in 2002, \$101.5 million in 2003, and \$69.6 million in 2004.<sup>39</sup>

The US government has moved to classify several groups in the region as terrorist organizations, making them subject to various sanctions. In September 2000, the State Department designated the IMU as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, stating that the IMU resorts to terrorism, actively threatens US interests, and attacks American citizens. The designation made it illegal for US entities to provide funds or resources to the IMU; made it possible to deport IMU representatives from, or to forbid their admission to, the United States; and permitted the seizure of its US assets. It also permitted the United States to increase intelligence sharing and other security assistance to Uzbekistan.<sup>40</sup>

In August 2002, the United States announced that it was freezing any US assets of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), since the group had committed numerous terrorist acts in China and elsewhere and posed a threat to Americans and US interests. In September 2002, the United States, China and other nations asked the UN to add ETIM to its terrorism list.

On the other hand, the United States has not yet classified HT as a terrorist group. According to the State Department's *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, "despite regional governments' claims, the United States has not found clear links between HT and terrorist activities." Reflecting this view, US officials have criticized Central Asian governments for imprisoning HT members who are not proven to be actively engaged in terrorist activities, and for imprisoning other political and religious dissidents under false accusations that they are HT members. According to a November 2002 State Department fact sheet, HT has not advocated the violent overthrow of Central Asian governments, so the United States has not designated it a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The State Department is monitoring HT because it has "clearly incite[d] violence" since September 11, 2001, such as praising Palestinian suicide attacks against Israel, denouncing the basing of US-led coalition forces in Central Asia, and calling for jihad against the United States and the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, the State Department has urged the Central Asian governments to "prosecute their citizens for illegal acts, not for their beliefs". Reportedly, in late 2004 the US Administration was reassessing its stance on HT.<sup>41</sup>

The US Administration has officially rejected the idea of permanent military bases in Central Asia. According to a November 2002 State Department fact sheet, the United States does not intend to establish permanent military bases in Central Asia but does seek long-term security ties and access to military facilities in the region for the foreseeable future to deter or defeat terrorist threats. The fact sheet also emphasizes that the US military presence in the region will likely remain as long as operations continue in Afghanistan. More recently, the *Washington Post* reported on March 25, 2004, that the Administration may be considering asking Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan for long-term access to military facilities for emergency training and staging by rapid-reaction forces under a new US military basing strategy. The countries might serve as "forward operating sites" with only small US military support staffs or as "cooperative security locations" with no permanent US military presence. During a February 2004 visit to Uzbekistan, Secretary Rumsfeld stated that there were no plans for permanent US bases in the region but that issues of US basing strategy worldwide had been discussed with the Uzbek leadership, including possible "operating sites ... where the United States and coalition countries could periodically and intermittently have access and support."<sup>42</sup>

The US military cooperation with Central Asia is however facing serious challenges due to an angry Uzbek reaction to Western criticism of the Andijan events as well as China's and Russia's growing concern about the US's alleged role in sponsoring "orange revolutions" in Central Asia. In the SCO summit's final declaration on 5 July 2005, the Organization asked the forces in the US-led coalition in Afghanistan to clarify a timeframe for withdrawal from US bases

in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The declaration noted that several SCO countries have "provided their above-ground infrastructure for the temporary deployment of the military contingents of coalition member states." It continued, "Taking into account the conclusion of the active military phase of the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan, the member states of the SCO consider it essential for the appropriate participants in the antiterrorist coalition to decide on the final timeframes for the temporary use of the above-mentioned infrastructure objects and the maintenance of military contingents on the territory of SCO member states."

Soon after, the Uzbek authorities asked the United States to pull all military forces out of the Karshi-Khanabad air base. The decision came only days after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited neighbouring Kyrgyzstan and received assurances from Bishkek officials that the US air base can remain there as long as needed. In an interview with the Kyrgyz newspaper *Litsa* published on 21 July, Kyrgyz National Security Secretary Miroslav Niyazov said that the withdrawal of the US military base from Kyrgyzstan will be possible only when Afghanistan is completely stabilized. He continued, "In this, we must be guided by our national interests and the interests of Central Asia as a region. We will have to manoeuvre in this situation so that our country's security interests, as well as its national, territorial and economic interests are not harmed." While noting that Russia remains Kyrgyzstan's traditional strategic partner, Niyazov stressed, "It is difficult today to imagine our society without the presence of the West and the United States. It would be desirable for us to build equal, businesslike relations with everyone based on goal of developing our country." Despite this reassuring comment, some skeptics believe that the Kyrgyz government treats the United States more like a source of economic help though increased rental fees for the use of the Manas basing facility rather than a genuine partner in combating Islamic radicalism.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is quite clear that the US security cooperation with Central Asian states has reached a critical stage and needs to be seriously reassessed. It is impossible for the United States to continue balancing the counterterrorism and human rights agendas without seriously undermining one or the other cause. The Kyrgyz revolution and Uzbek counterrevolution suggest that a new strategy needs to be elaborated which would acknowledge the emerging extremist threats in Central Asia, the peculiarities of individual Central Asian states and the evolving trends in regional counterterrorism cooperation.

Some of those issues were identified and discussed at the October 29, 2003 *Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the Committee on International Relations of the US House of Representatives*. It was stated by the majority of the experts invited to the hearing that the secular regimes of Central Asia have little to no democratic legitimacy. Most of their rulers are Soviet-era communist party leaders. Almost no political space is left for secular opposition in these states. US objectives are thus jeopardized not only by the authoritarian parties of radical Islamic revolution such as Hizb, but

also by the authoritarian nature of these Central Asian regimes themselves—with their rampant corruption, declining living standards, poor delivery of public goods and services, and stagnant or declining economic growth rates. By governing so poorly and being intolerant and undemocratic, these regimes inadvertently breed religious extremism. The experts' recommendations remain valid today and included suggestions to expand intelligence collection on HT, condition security assistance to Central Asia on economic reform, encourage democracy and popular participation, discredit radicals and encourage moderates. The challenge remains how the US can support secular and moderate Islamic regimes and movements, foster tolerance, and promote freedom of expression and freedom of religion without being identified too closely with oppressive actions of Central Asian regimes. How can the US defeat radical Islamists in the realm of ideals, words, and symbols—not only on the battlefield?

Some, if not most, of these tasks can not be fulfilled in the Central Asian region alone, separate from a consistent and efficient global anti-terrorist campaign. At the same time, the global campaign has to be enhanced by adequate regional effort. There is no evidence of the United States seriously considering anti-terrorism cooperation with China and Russia in Central Asia. If the three nations can find a common language on nuclear developments in North Korea despite their differences of opinion on the North Korean regime, why is not an anti-terrorist forum possible in Central Asia? In Russia's case, it is necessary to separate Moscow's neoimperialist temptations from its genuine concern about radical Islam. China's separatist problem in Xingiang is more likely to be resolved through a gradual political dialogue rather than the activity of Uighur radicals. It is not possible for the United States to continue dismissing or denigrating the SCO which is becoming increasingly active in anti-terrorism. The United States needs to establish some sort of a dialogue with the SCO and recognize the constructive elements in its work. The promotion of the problematic GUAM grouping should be reconsidered as well.

The United States needs to clarify the role of its basing facilities in the Central Asian states. Linking their operation to the campaign in Afghanistan only and at the same time implying a certain broader geopolitical context for their existence discourages the Central Asian states from considering the United States as a key partner in dealing with their Islamic radicals. Parallel to the establishment of constructive relations with the SCO, the United States should make better use of the basing facilities for training regional antiterrorist forces.

Uzbekistan has discredited itself as a key strategic ally of the United States in Central Asia. The United States should therefore reorient itself to a more benign and predictable partner or partners in Central Asia. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan seem to be the best candidates for such a role. The US assistance to these countries would however have to vary. Kyrgyzstan is in a dire need of economic and financial assistance to retain the momentum of the antiauthoritarian revolution. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, needs to be diplomatically and politically assisted in preventing an "orange revolution" through a fair and open presidential election process in December 2005.

Finally, the United States has to review its attitude to the HT extremist organization. Currently, the experts are divided over whether banning it would do more good or harm to the anti-terrorist campaign in Central Asia. Since there seems to be a growing split within the HT ranks, the best option seems to be to designate and proscribe the militant wing of HT. Such a decision will be well received in Central Asia and would at the same time send a message to HT and the Central Asian regimes that the United States continues to distinguish between violent and non-violent political activism.

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- <sup>21</sup> *Almaty Times*, 1 July 2000.
- <sup>22</sup> Ablet Kamalov, "Uighur Community in 1990s Central Asia, in Touraj Atabaki and Sanjyath Mehendale (eds), *Central Asia and the Caucasus. Transnationalism and Diaspora*, London ; New York : Routledge, 2004, p.163.
- <sup>23</sup> *Trends in the Evolution of Extremism in Central Asia*, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003, pp.61-63.
- <sup>24</sup> K.L. Syroezhkin, *Myths and Realities of Ethnic Separatism in China and Security of Central Asia*, Daikh Press, Almaty, 2003, p. 466.
- <sup>25</sup> Nurlan Alniyazov, "The Muslim Board and Muslim Community in Kazakhstan," in *State and Religion in Countries with Muslim Population*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2004, p. 174.
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- <sup>28</sup> *ITAR-TASS*, 12 May 2005.
- <sup>29</sup> Roger McDermott, "Kazakhstan's Future Counter-Terrorist Agenda," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 28 2004.
- <sup>30</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, *www.mfa.kz*, 27 January 2005.
- <sup>31</sup> *Kazakhstan Today*, 22 January 2005.
- <sup>32</sup> *RIA-Novosti*, 23 June 2005.
- <sup>33</sup> *Kazakhstan Today*, 5 July 2005.
- <sup>34</sup> *RFE/RL Tajik Service*, 25 June 2005.
- <sup>35</sup> *Kazakhstan Today*, 1 August 2005.
- <sup>36</sup> *Kazkhinform*, 9 February 2005.
- <sup>37</sup> RATS website, *www.ecrats.com*
- <sup>38</sup> Testimony at a Hearing Entitled: "Balancing Military Assistance and Support for Human Rights in Asia," Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus Washington, D.C., June 27, 2002.
- <sup>39</sup> Jim Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S Interests," *Congressional Research Service*, 12 April 2005.
- <sup>40</sup> *Patterns of Global Terrorism-2001*, US Department of State, May 2002.
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# Countering Islamist Radicals In Eastern Europe

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## SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM

### RADICALISM AND TERROR

Although Islamist radicalism differs considerably from terrorism, their pattern of *cause and effect* should be the guiding principle. Europe, including its Eastern portion, is becoming a breeding ground of a virulent strain of extremists and a frontline in countering them. It is often argued that these are not representative of Islam, the religion of peace, brotherhood, modesty, morality, self-discipline, which they hijacked, instrumentalized and reduced to a political agenda. These arguments are justified, particularly in a propaganda war aiming at hearts and minds, but the deep dogmatic roots of animosity, even holy violence, against infidels and the apocalyptic vision of the world should not be ignored. Islam's Sacred Scripts have not been relativized by an Enlightenment-type or any other reform. This inevitably provokes conflicts with the rest of the world as far as the status of women, homosexuals, other human and minority rights, the free choice of religion or agnosticism, the divine source of legislation are concerned. The Writings can be (mis)interpreted, but no practical effect should be expected from western or even Mideastern clerics challenging the *fatwas* and theological credentials of their radical colleagues. The latter shun the former as heretics and so do many million Muslims worldwide.

By *Islamism* I mean principled Muslim conceptualizations on the role of the individual and the religious community in public life, which cannot be criminalized of course. Despite the overlap *Islamist radicalism* is a different, mostly intolerant and aggressive phenomenon, which may unfortunately be justified from a theological viewpoint. Olivier Roy suggested that de-culturized Islamist terrorism is a postmodern phenomenon which disregards, in actual fact, theology and tradition.<sup>1</sup> This observation applies to a few, and most dangerous, extremists. Yet even they refer to the religious obligation of Jihad, martyrdom and the worldwide confrontation between good and evil.

Although religion is certainly not the single explanatory model of radical Islamist movements, it should not be downplayed. It is closely related to the psychological and sociological profiling proposed by Marc Sageman<sup>2</sup> and, more recently, Michael Taarnby:<sup>3</sup> friendship-, kinship- or discipleship-based groups of previously

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introverted, isolated, frustrated, alienated, "born-again" Muslims, who are spiritually comforted by socializing with each other. Emotionally conditioned and mentally manipulated by their ringleaders the recruits pledge alliance to them and to an imaginary world community (*Umma*), find their purpose in life, place in history and the vanguard of Jihad against their and God's common enemies. Martyrdom may be viewed as the ultimate reward, promised personal fulfilment and the restoration of dignity.

Similar brotherhood patterns have been common throughout the history of Islam, starting by the community of Prophet Muhammad and the Forebears (*Salaf*), whose example the fundamentalists envisage to restore in its full glory. Although most of those Forebears defended and spread Islam by the sword, the Prophet was primarily a spiritual leader, who should not be compared to today's radical recruiters. The Islamist know-how of mindset conditioning works on a worldwide scale, also for its authentic Muslim references and formidable resources. However, the dividing line is thin between hate propaganda, inflammatory mosque sermons, threats to Salafism's critics on the one hand, and on the other, logistical support to terrorist cells, recruiting, hiding, training and cash conduit. This study's geographical scope is limited to Europe's post-socialist portion excluding the Caucasus<sup>4</sup> and Russia<sup>5</sup> where the scale and, to some extent, the character of the problem are different.

## "ETHNIC ISLAM" AND POST-SOCIALISM

For Eastern Europeans terror and radicalism are difficult to comprehend. For almost half a century, the only few terrorists temporarily residing in their region (Carlos, leftist or nationalist Arab warriors) were invited there by the ruling Communist leaderships. Moreover, the latter were the ones who terrorized their subjects and cynically labelled as terrorists those regimes' few armed opponents as Hungary's anti-Communist revolutionaries in 1956. In the socialist era terrorism was perceived as a feature of faraway lands, and so was political Islam. The region's ethnic minorities of Islamic tradition were forcibly and successfully de-islamized, even in Yugoslavia. Tito's Muslim nationality option at the 1971 census was practically unrelated to religion.<sup>6</sup> A 1990 sociological survey<sup>7</sup> showed that Bosnia-Herzegovina's so-called Muslims were even more secular than the Yugoslav average.

Without Islam, Muslim identity is hard to keep for generations. Fewer Bosniaks (Bosnians of Muslim extraction) would have become interested in their roots if their families had not been massacred and raped *as Muslims*, while post-Christian Europe and the United Nations stood aside and watched idly. Some even encouraged the Serbs. If a Muslim woman enters into a sexual relationship with a non-Muslim man and her father or brother let her do so, that is probably the point where they cease to be Muslims. Such mixed marriages and cohabitations were rather common in the Balkans and the Soviet Union, where most alleged Muslims drank, ate pork, did not pray, fast and ignored Islamic law and tradition.

The post-socialist religious revival fell far behind expectations. One wonders to what extent such people can now be regarded as Muslims, particularly if they do not view themselves as such, despite being called Zaynab or Abdullah. Islam is, nevertheless, not considered worldwide as a club you can easily leave, not even if you supposedly joined it only by your birth. In this sense the majority of Europe's Muslims do live in its Eastern, formerly socialist, portion if Tatarstan,

Bashkortostan and Azerbaijan are also taken into account. All this must be kept in mind if one talks of Muslims in this part of the world, which I am also going to do for simplicity's sake.

The Communist police states had practically no experience of terrorism. The Islam they encountered was the opposite of radicalism or militancy: docile, subservient institutions, leaders and meek elderly faithful in the countryside. Harsh prison sentences were pronounced in Sarajevo when, exceptionally, a few Bosniaks had dared to raise pan-Islamic ideas with the leadership of Alija Izetbegovic. Later, as President, he and particularly his associates may not have always behaved as the champions of democracy. Some became dubious entrepreneurs, uninspiring Balkan nationalists, but hardly real radicals, despite the claims of Serbian propaganda.

Ethnic intolerance has been widespread in the whole region. Apparently only the Serbs of the 1990s had the weapons and the determination to *cleanse* those whom they identified as Muslims, regardless of the latter's limited Islamic awareness. This and the Bosniaks' betrayal by Europe made a part of them revisit, or reinvent, the historical religious dimensions of their identity as proposed by a few pan-Islamic ideologists like Izetbegovic himself. Bosnia-Herzegovina's precarious 1992-1995 predicament explained this almost artificial nation-(re?)building and the loud but not very effective "anti-crusade" protests throughout the Islamic world. No similar international Muslim solidarity was later offered to, let alone accepted by, the pro-western Kosovar and other Albanians who, unlike the Bosniak nationalists, did not need Islam to generate nationhood.

Both peoples, as well as other Eastern Europeans of Muslim tradition, have no other realistic choice than their region joining the realm of European democracy. Post-socialist authoritarianism, not Islam, was to be blamed for some of their leaders' arrogance and corruption even if in Sarajevo they used Islamic phraseology and symbols in the bloody early 1990s. These were exploited and grossly exaggerated by their adversaries. Most war-time pan-Islamic sympathies vanished gradually after the Dayton Agreements, and particularly following 9/11, although the Saudi-paid mosques proudly stand there and a lot of women wear headscarves. Radicals do operate in Bosnia, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, but the Bosniak nationalists' responsibility for this should not be overstated.

What else could Izetbegovic have done in 1992-1995 than letting the Mudjahedin fighters in? Their war participation has become an important frontline experience not only for the world's Islamists, but also for its anti-terrorist police and intelligence community. A part of those bearded, mostly Arab, holy warriors may be preparing terrorist acts, but militant Islamism in Eastern Europe should not be restricted to the Mudjahedin at all. Most left at the end of the war. The influence of those who settled in Bosnia was limited to a number of local youngsters as the *Aktivna Islamska Omladina* (Active Islamic Youth - AIY) or the Furqan Association. Intelligence attention is justified as to the Middle Eastern backing these have enjoyed through transnational Islamist "humanitarian" organizations.

## THE CHARITIES

From the early 1990s onwards many foreign Muslim, mostly Arab, charities and proselytizing agencies set up shop in the post-socialist world to spread Allah's word. Most of their representatives happened to be Saudi-paid Arabs. Both

Islamist and Diyanet (secular government) Turkish missionaries assisted their ethnic brothers in those lands in reconstructing their mosques and rediscovering their roots. The Iranian embassies also helped Eastern European Muslims, not only those of Azerbaijan and the few other Si'is. Most Middle Eastern proselytizers were out of touch with post-socialist reality. Their financial resources impressed the impoverished communities they targeted. They built and restored houses of worship and ritual slaughter-houses, provided for the Mecca pilgrimages of a few, distributed copies of the Koran and Islamist propaganda literature in local languages, often awarded small amounts of cash, organized summer camps and religious courses for youngsters, offered them scholarships in Muslim educational institutions in the Arab world and popularized anti-western ideas. With the relative exception of Bosnia this Salafi "re-Islamization" failed, in most cases, due to the secular and hostile environment, women's social responsibilities and freedom, western influence and the missionaries' incompetence. Young Arab immigrants have proved more responsive to their uncompromising anti-American and Judeophobic sermons. As in the West, well-off and determined militants took over many mosque pulpits.

In the early 1990s the ubiquitous Arab preachers may have looked fanatical but not dangerous. Their knowledge of, and commitment to, Islam appeared persuasive, and so did their criticism of Western Europe regarding the Bosnian tragedy. The latter justified both international Muslim humanitarian action and (illegal) weapon shipments to the beleaguered Sarajevo government. The breaking of the immoral UN arms embargo and the Eastern European re-Islamization project were inter-related for a while as the Austrian representative of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth [WAMY] happened to be Izetbegovic's old Sudanese friend: Elfatih Ali Hassanein. He also acted as Director of the controversial Third World Relief Agency purchasing arms and delivering them to Bosnia in 1992-1993. His personal role was probably exaggerated by *The Washington Post* article<sup>8</sup> on him that followed the police search of his Vienna office. Nonetheless, Riyadh-based WAMY operated an impressive network of Arab proselytizers virtually everywhere in Eastern Europe. Its Vienna logistical centre served as the main source of funds, inspiration and propaganda material in various local languages. Elfatih traveled widely in the region to encourage and pay his Arab associates and a number of deserving indigenous Muslim dignitaries. He did not hide his firm Islamist convictions which, in the early 1990s, did not sound as embarrassing as they would today. The same applies to the Arab immigrants who worked for him. Most still live in the region, more or less discreetly since 9/11. Their Judeophobia was repulsive even at that time.

In addition to WAMY, the Islamic International Relief Organization ("Igas") of Jeddah, the Al-Haramain Humanitarian Foundation (Riyadh), the Bin Mahfouz family's Al-Muwaffaq Foundation and the Saudi High Committee for Bosnia presided over by Prince Salman were the main Saudi-sponsored agencies that operated in Eastern Europe.<sup>9</sup> The Sudanese Da'wa Islamiya, the British Islamic Relief, Yusuf Islam's Muslim Aid, the American ICNA Relief and Mercy International, the German (Milli Görüs, immigrant Turkish Islamist) Internationale Humanitäre Hilfe, the Global Relief Foundation, the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF - Chicago) and the Taiba Foundation also provided considerable support to the region's Muslim institutions including local charities as Merhamet (Bosnia, Sandzak), El-Hilal (Macedonia, Kosovo), Irshad (Bulgaria) and immigrant Arab student organizations in almost every country. In Albania alone, more than twenty "international Islamic NGOs" have been active. For the last ten years the

impact of Turkish populist preacher Fethüllah Gülen (Zaman) has been noticeable in the whole region.

Particularly after 9/11, the Bosnian and the international press focused on the Arab charities' personnel. Many of these received Bosnian citizenship for fighting in the Bosnian army's "Mudzahed" Unit, marrying local women or otherwise. Certain former Mudjahedin terrorized the population, engaged in car bombing, hostage taking and armed robbery as did the Franco-Algerian Roubaix gang of Lionel Dumont and Mouloud Boughelane, Sudanese bomber Ahmed Zuhair Handala or Saudi kidnapper Abd al-Hadi Qahtani, the first Director of the Saudi High Committee for Bosnia, who is said to have been killed in Afghanistan in 2001. Saudi "humanitarians" Wael Julaidan, Yasin Kadi, the Tunisian Shafiq Ayadi (the latter two worked for Al-Muwaffaq), and BIF Director Enaam Arnaout were all involved with Bosnian business, banks and investment, besides their missionary work. Most of them personally benefited from the Saudi donations.

Linking charity and proselytism with private finances started earlier, at the time of TWRA, with Elfatih Hassanein's Orient Bank. These radicals eventually returned home to Saudi Arabia, Sudan or disappeared as did the Mudzahed Unit's legendary Commander (*Emir*), the Algerian Abdelkader Mokhtarldji alias Abu Maali. He ran Al-Kifah, "Al-Qaeda's branch in the Balkans". Only Imad al-Misri, the popular financier of Bosnian re-Islamization is in prison in Egypt, where he was extradited in October 2001. The six Algerians deported from Sarajevo to Guantanamo in January 2002 were smaller fish. Nonetheless, Bosnian Salafis (the AIY, *Ensarije Seriata*) protested against their extradition.<sup>10</sup>

These revelations shocked Bosnians and raised questions as to the number of further, unidentified militant Islamists residing in the EU protectorate, their local sympathizers and the role of the Islamic Spiritual Community (ISC - *Islamska Vjerska Zajednica*), the extent of its cooperation with the Saudi High Committee and other charities which employed these ex-Mudjahedin as librarians, lecturers, organizers and missionaries. Most Bosniaks feel embarrassed now and would denounce Salafism if they were encouraged to do so.

Many wonder how Izetbegovic's nationalistic ruling SDA party (*Stranka Demokratske Akcije*) and intelligence service (Agency for Investigation and Documentation) protected Salafis in the 1990s. The trial of AID agent and BIF employee Munib Zahiragic, the interrogation of former interior minister Bakir Alispahic and other investigations shed light on Mafiocracy, the involvement of several corrupt or ideologically committed Bosnian officials, bankers and police. False identities and passports were issued to those "humanitarian" Arabs. Their now well documented cases are symptomatic examples of a new type of unscrupulous militant Islamist, who is able and determined to adapt to, and recruit in, a European environment.

## BOSNIAK SALAFIS

The reportedly 2000-member-strong Zenica-headquartered AIY is a significant organization by Bosnian standards although this figure probably also includes sympathizers. Arab funding, the refugee problem, war reminiscences, high unemployment and the lack of prospects contribute to the AIY's popularity, particularly among students and in the country's central regions, but the organization managed to establish cells everywhere. The AIY's overtly pro-Salafi

stance contrasts sharply with the liberal Hanafi tradition of Islam in Bosnia. Even if the nationalistic SDA Party's elite used its concept of Islam as a mobilizing force and identity separator, Bosniaks remained western-oriented. With very few exceptions, they did not even consider a non-secular state or legislation in the bloody 1990s. Now they do so even less.

Headed by Chicago-educated Mustafa Cerić the religious leadership (ISC) was loyal to the SDA Party, its Nation-concept and pan-Islamism. The ISC is increasingly expected to find a *modus vivendi* with Bosnia's leftist and secular political forces, including women's rights advocates. Numerous European-minded enlightened scholars and dignitaries work in the ISC's ranks and various religious institutions: more than 1000 employees, over 1000 mosques, three academies of teacher training, six high schools, 1400 informal elementary schools and Europe's sole genuine Faculty of Islamic Theology. Several professors expressed concerns over the spread of Wahhabism which they should, with external help, be able to counter.

Sympathies for Salafism, the AIY and similar groups can, nevertheless, be detected within the ISC itself. Arab money is appreciated, also to run the war-torn country's many religious institutions and to build new ones. Moreover, Salafi ideology and anti-American worldview have influenced several hundred Bosniak graduates of foreign Islamic universities, particularly those of Saudi Arabia. Unlike many Muslims worldwide, those of Eastern Europe do not normally regard Islam as an all-pervasive system of norms that should transform and regulate society.

A number of young Bosniaks venerate the Arab Mujahedin for their war services to the country at a time when few Europeans sided with it. The AIY also refers to Islamist puritanism's role in strengthening the youth's sense of social responsibility, family values, combating delinquency, criminality, drug and alcohol abuse as well as extra-marital sexuality, women's vestimentary and other "indecenties", which are always a major Salafi preoccupation. Ideological guidance is provided by the AIY's periodical (*Saff*) and preachers. These are not unambiguously rejected by the ISC.

The ISC's own "Youth Circle" (*Omladinski Krug*) is less influential than "Young Muslims" (*Mladi Muslimani*), the SDA Party's political juniors, are. Muslim student association *Sahwa*, female organizations *Horizont* and *Nahla* are much less political although they also promote what they regard as Islamic traditions, values and principles, which imply clear preferences in public life. Besides the AIY, *Nedwa* and *Selam* are youth organizations that also receive Arab funding. *Nedwa* is, in actual fact, WAMY's Bosnian branch. (*Nadwa* means "assembly" in Arabic.) It builds mosques, holds seminars on Islam, publishes religious books, Islamist reviews and videotapes, encourages learning the Koran by heart, sponsors deserving Bosniak students and sends a number of them to two-week training seminars in Saudi Arabia.

Wahhabi hate speech in Bosnia can be delegitimized only by the Bosniaks themselves, preferably by theologians and the leading personalities of public life, who should be incited to do that. Only Bosniak intellectuals can effectively discredit the homegrown Salafis whose motivations reflect, partly, the crisis of Bosnian society. Young Bosniaks should not be exposed to anti-western, misogynous, intolerant instigation.

Foreign militant Islamist penetration, as the 2002 registration of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's offshoot in Sarajevo as a charity, should be publicly denounced. Arab and Bosnian radical networks may represent a potential for terror by providing human capital, financial and institutional background, logistical support, and free passage opportunities in a country with notoriously poor immigration control.

Even if the AIY has not physically harmed anyone, more should be known about its activities and Middle Eastern contacts. Radical recruiting should be uncovered, preferably with the cooperation of the ISC but even without it. In this respect the contribution of secular Bosniaks should also be expected. For the security threat's decisive religious connotations however, the radicals' anachronistic (markedly Arab) message must be well understood. It is, in actual fact, incompatible with Bosniak nationalism. Terrorism investigations that disregard the religious dimension can only result in press-based listings and superficial descriptions of Islamist groups, at best.<sup>11</sup>

## BY COUNTRIES

The dichotomy and the interaction of Islam-based Bosniak nationalism and imported anti-western Muslim radicalism are not restricted to Bosnia itself as the overwhelming majority of Croatia's, Slovenia's and the Serbian Sandzak's (the Raska Oblast's) ethnic Muslims also identify themselves as Bosniaks. (Those of the Montenegro Sandzak do not.) In Croatia and Slovenia Muslim religious institutions are probably not strong enough to effectively cover up for immigrant Salafi activities although Imam Sevko Omerbasic's Zagreb mosque was a well known center of Arab humanitarian and ideological aid during and after the war.<sup>12</sup>

The majority of the Sandzak's population are ethnic Muslim. Their religiosity has traditionally been more pronounced than Bosnia's. Radical Sarajevo Imams Sulejman Bugari's and Nezim Halilovic Muderis' sermons are popular in Novipazar, where local leaders (Mufti Muamer Zukorlic, his cousin Federal Minority Minister Rasim Ljajic and even their Bosniak party-leader opponent Sulejman Ugljanin) often refer to Muslim-National identity. Funding and instructors from Gulf countries are obviously welcome at Novipazar, its impressive private Islamic University and the Muslim countryside. Hundreds of bearded local youth listen to the Wahhabi message. Biased Serbian reports often describe the Sandzak as the "missing link" in the Islamist Green Transversal stretching from Kabul to Velika Kladusha. Similarly to Bosnia, the Sandzak's religious and political leaders are certainly not Salafis. The attraction of pelf is, nevertheless, rather strong in the poor mafia province. Smuggling, corruption and the lack of genuine police control facilitate the Islamist radicals' task. The Police Chief is the third cousin.<sup>13</sup>

In the Albanian lands pro-American sentiment is palpable among both population and politicians. Kosovo Sunni Muslim Religious Leader Rexhep Boja, similarly to his Montenegro counterpart Rifat Fejzic, strongly condemned Wahhabi indoctrination. Ironically, Wahhabi charities have been encouraged to operate in Kosovo by the unpopular United Nations Interim Administration (UNMIK) to satisfy what it believed to be the traditionally Muslim Kosovars' spiritual needs. Besides undeniable humanitarian relief and mosque constructions, the Saudi Joint Committee for Kosovo and similar Arab organizations have striven to uproot Hanafi and Sufi customs and brainwash young Kosovars, more in the countryside than in the secular cities.<sup>14</sup>

Salafi Jihad should not be confounded with Albanian distrust toward Kosovo Serbs and Slav Macedonians. The Albanian dignitaries' cooperation in reliably identifying radicalism in their midst will be much more difficult to obtain if western terrorism analysts ostensibly label them, for instance Skopje Mufti Zenun Berisha, as Al-Qaeda allies.<sup>15</sup> The misinterpretation of the real threat obstructs its detection and comprehension. Salafis do pay Eastern European youth to attend their courses and to distribute promotional literature and videotapes. This happens everywhere, not only in the Skopje neighborhood of Kondovo and Gazi Baba or Kosovo's Prizren and Djakovica, where Serbian sources indignantly reported such practices from. Local community leaders are needed to isolate and discredit these and other troublesome activities. (Crvena Ruza, Teratikt).<sup>16</sup>

The situation is more alarming in impoverished Albania. After 1997 Salafis could expect no sympathy from the pro-US leftist authorities, which extradited several Arab militants. Wahhabi presence is, nevertheless, still represented by the numerous Arab charities and certain newly built mosques. Tensions divide the country's Sunni spiritual leadership, the Islamic Community (IC) headed by Selim Muca. The events following the unsolved 2003 murder of markedly pro-western IC Secretary-General Sali Tivari reflect the Mideastern-trained young Albanian clerics' vehement criticism of their western-minded colleagues. The latter appear to be on the defensive, while the Arab charities back the former. This does not affect Albanian society at large, which is mostly secular and not "70 per cent Muslim" as it is usually portrayed. The threatening potential of even small radical groups does justify attention to the ways Salafis operate in the country. Islam's oft-discussed instrumentalization in Albania's public life (Organization of Islamic Conference membership, Bashkim Gazidede's role in the early 1990s), Albanian national mind's alleged un-religiosity, Bektashi spirituality, Gheg-Tosk division are less relevant in this respect.<sup>17</sup>

In Bulgaria too, the more than one million ethnic Muslims, mostly Turks, pose little threat. Grand Mufti Selim Mehmed often declares that "We do not want Islam to have an alien shape" although Mideastern funding contributes to his institutions' budget. However, the estimated 20,000 Arabs living in the country, their proselytizing charities which target particularly Slav (Pomak) and Roma Muslims, but also Turks, are food for concern. In autumn 2003 the police dismantled Islamist centres in the south, around Velingrad and Pazardzhik. From time to time, former Grand Mufti Nedeem Gendzhev sounds the alarm bells over the danger of fundamentalism, recruitment and the return of hundreds of Bulgarian students from Arab universities.<sup>18</sup>

Bulgaria's geo-strategic situation and the prospects of US military bases there call for vigilance. For sending troops to Iraq the country was threatened several times by Al-Qaeda, the Tawhid group. Reports on the Netherlands-based Al-Waqf al-Islami's involvement in Bulgaria provoked nervousness despite the official denial of any danger.<sup>19</sup> Saudi-funded and US-terror-listed Al-Waqf built mosques and encouraged missionary work (*da'wa*) in other Balkan countries too, particularly in Albania. Only superficial information has been available on these pan-European Salafi networks.

The number of Arabs residing, legally or illegally, in Romania is much higher. They run Islamic centres mostly in university cities such as Constanta, Iasi, Bucharest and Cluj. As in Bulgaria, it is often unclear what the numerous Middle Eastern businessmen of Romania do there. The October 2004 arrest of Craiova wheeler-

dealer Genica Boerica's Arab associates or the February 2005 detention of the Terom company's Arab employees of Iasi, for money laundering and financing western Islamist terrorists, most probably represent the tip of the iceberg. WAMY supports several Islamist charities in the country as the Islamic Cultural League (LICR), the Semiluna Humanitarian Society, the As-Salam Association and the Taiba Foundation. They claim to popularize Islam and to aid Romania's 70,000 Dobrogea Turks and Tatars who are irrelevant as far as radicalism is concerned.<sup>20</sup>

In Moldova the Calauza Association led by Rustam Ahsamov and Sudanese immigrant Haisan Abdel Rasul is the main *da'wa* organization of Arab students, Tatars, Chechen and Afghan refugees and other Muslim residents. It became famous in July 2002 when the police arrested and beat their leaders for their "fundamentalist" summer camp which Muslim scholars from Saudi Arabia and Moscow also attended. Moldova's authorities refused to register, for several years, the Muslim Spiritual Council headed by Talgat Masaev and the other Tatar community led by Alber Babaev, also in Chisinau. A third group in breakaway Tiraspol is harassed by the local KGB.<sup>21</sup>

If compared with Ukraine's 400,000 ethnic Muslims, immigrant Arab residents represent a tiny minority of 30,000. Due to their foreign financial resources, nonetheless they run a network of twelve regional branches called "Association of Social Organizations Ar-Raid", which expands in neighbouring Moldova too. Its proselytizing and media activities are more significant than those of two other, Saudi-led Wahhabi groups (Birlik and Sunna), which have targeted Crimean Tatars with limited success. The (mainland) Spiritual Department of Ukrainian Muslims (DUMU) of Kazan Tatars headed by Lebanese immigrant Ahmad Tamim also rejects Wahhabism. (The Crimea has its separate leadership: Medjlis and Muftiyat.) For Tatars and other post-Soviet Muslims Islam means little more than the preservation of their ethnic culture, while Ar-Raid articulates an Islamist agenda. Little attention has been paid to it and even less to the unidentified westward migrants from Asia transiting by Ukraine, where they may spend longer periods of time.<sup>22</sup>

The same applies to Belarus which is also on the way of those Muslim migrants. President Lukashenko's readiness to sell weapons to virtually anyone appears to be the main international disquietude as far as Belarus' links to terrorism are concerned. The country's estimated 50,000 post-Soviet ethnic Muslims (Azeris, Tatars, Uzbeks, Kazahs, Tajiks) are rarely radicals. Its few thousand Arab students deserve more attention, and so do those of the three Baltic republics where Islamic presence has been traditionally modest. However, foreign Arab funding enabled recently several smaller local communities to restore old prayer houses and erect or rent new ones. The majority population's distrust of Middle Easterners increased after 9/11.<sup>23</sup>

In pro-American and markedly Catholic Poland anti-Islamist sentiments may also have some religious connotation despite the historical acceptance of the country's 4,000 innocuous Tatars. The 25,000 Arab residents are much more committed to proselytism and better organized. The effect of Salafi literature published in Polish by the Muslim Students' Society cannot be great. Judging by its internal newsletter in Arabic (*Al-Hadhara*) this organization unambiguously rejects western values.<sup>24</sup>

In several Central European countries young females represent a high proportion, if not the majority, of local converts. Most are married to Arab immigrants.



Introducing Islam by indigenous women is, in a mildly racist environment, much more convincing than having this done by dubious aliens. These remain in the background of course. The choice of persuasive non-Arab national Muslim leaders can prove crucial in the media and the xenophobic public sphere. Western-minded Islamic Centre Director Vladimir Sanka of Prague is obviously more accepted by the Czech audience than a foreigner would be in this position. Only 500 are ethnic Czech among the country's 10,000 Muslims. Moreover, they are divided: Sudanese architect Muhammad Abbas Mu'tasima's pro-Salafi General Union of Muslim Students and Moneeb Hassan El-Rawy's Islamic Waqf Association of Moravia distance themselves from Sanka's moderates.<sup>25</sup>

Tensions are even sharper between Zoltan Bolek's Hungarian Islamic Community (mostly converts) on the one hand and Zoltan Sulok's much less pro-western Church of the Muslims of Hungary (with a majority of immigrants) and particularly the overtly anti-western and Judeophobic Tayseer Saleh's Dar as-Salam mosque community on the other. In March 2004 Palestinian-born Tayseer had been arrested and accused of plotting to bomb a Budapest Jewish museum but he was later released. His funds of Mideastern origin remain frozen in a Hungarian bank.<sup>26</sup> Little reassuring is known of the country's several thousand Arab immigrants and those visiting imams, scholars and instructors, who preach intolerance in their prayer houses. As elsewhere, no one protects the moderates from intimidation. Mideastern and Western international Muslim institutions, as the Leicestershire-based Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, side with the radicals.

The not very well documented Slovak Islamic Community of Syrian-born Mohammed Safwan Hasna was denied legal recognition and the permission to build a mosque in old Bratislava. Only 150 of the alleged 5000 members are Slovak.<sup>27</sup> Eastern European authorities may be even less friendly to Islam than their western counterparts are. Slovenian Mufti Osman Djogic also complained of not being allowed to erect an Islamic centre in downtown Ljubljana despite the availability of Arab funds for this purpose.<sup>28</sup>

Information on Eastern European Muslim institutions and prayer houses may prove relevant even if potential terrorists do not necessarily attend them. Other mosque-goers may lead to violent Islamists as the ones known from post-war Bosnia. Uncovering these requires a comprehensive understanding of Salafi reasoning and the post-socialist environment which is, nevertheless, secondary to the markedly Arab ideological roots.

So far the Salafis have tended to avoid confrontation in the region. One can only speculate as to the consequences of radical Islamist violence in it. For their different modern history, Eastern Europeans are less resilient and self-reliant than Westerners are, so terrorism in their countries would probably elicit panic and backlash against Arab immigrants, but not against ethnic Muslims. Such terror attacks would, nevertheless, provoke less international attention which has been, so far, one of the western Al-Qaeda franchise groups' objectives. Coercing governments into sacrificing human rights for security has been another one, but in Eastern Europe there are fewer liberties to sacrifice.

Generalized fear can certainly do a great deal of damage to social cohesion. The divide-and-conquer game, public stress or even hysteria in the post-socialist world would benefit the terrorist cause less than these potentially do in the West. Moreover, blaming poor Eastern Europeans for marginalizing and humiliating the

world's Muslims would not sound convincing. Turning these populations against the United States is not a realistic goal either. Eastern Europe's not necessarily accountable governments, rather than the ordinary people, are usually pro-American. Vengeance for sending troops to Iraq may explain retaliation against Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. Creating chaos and carnage in the region just for its shopping centres', transportation hubs' and energy plants' vulnerability is, nevertheless, a more likely motivation.

Besides the assumed training camps, western intelligence attention to Eastern Europe has focused on the possibility of smuggling explosives, chemical poison or radioactive material from there to the West. This can occur relatively easily. Preventing or disrupting such attempts requires, among other things, more knowledge of, and contacts with, corrupt Eastern Europe's Islamists. Even if they themselves are not violent, they are often well-informed and well-connected. Transnational terror will bomb their way to the negotiating table. They can hardly be thwarted, worldwide. They must be engaged.

## **SECTION TWO: THE CHANCES**

### **FAVOURABLE RESPONSES TO POST-9/11 US STRATEGIES**

In the wake of 9/11, the verbal wrath and sabre-rattling of the US press and public opinion towards Islamists were fully understandable. Venting frustration was needed for moral health, whipping up patriotic fervour, justifying the defence budget, but also to counter the domestic apologists for Islamist radicalism. These, including Islamicist academics, viewed radicalism as a response to the mistakes of American policy, which had purportedly fostered social injustice and other grievances in the Muslim world. Although widely criticized in Western Europe, the half-truths and stereotypes of Arab smearing had probably no fatal consequences. A considerable part of the Arab, and even the Muslim, world thought anyway that Americans had got what they deserved.

Then came the official US rebuttal of the Jihadi claim that America was the enemy of Islam. This is precisely what most Islamists still do believe, that by supporting Israel and corrupt "apostate regimes" in the Muslim world, by its very existence and might, the US is the main obstacle in the way of *mankind's conversion to Islam* by persuasion or by force. This bellicose objective or at least the expansion of the lands under Islamic rule is stated in the Holy Book.<sup>29</sup>

In this sense, today's terrorists are wired deep into the origins of Islam and follow a Koranic blueprint to its logical conclusion: the overpowering and humbling of the West. It can always be argued that Salafis use the religious message as an ideological cover, quote the Koranic verses out of context or that the Koran does not really mean what it says. Most Muslims are, nevertheless, fully aware that the bombers are part of a tradition that springs from Islam's warlike origins, when the contemporary world was a theatre of battles to be waged with zeal until the infidels' submission to the will of God, which the word "Islam" means in Arabic.

Bolstering the so-called *moderate* Muslims was the next step in the American campaign of ideas. The Koran itself says: "We have willed you as a community of moderation."<sup>30</sup> Suggesting pluralistic interpretations of the Holy Texts and attempting to adapt religion to modern mores will persuade only a few as long as

the principal Muslim religious authorities stick to their rigid literalism and anti-western worldview. Although the late ideologists of today's Salafism (Mawdudi, Banna, Qutb, Faraj, Azzam) were not Wahhabis, their virulent discourse is not far from that of the main theological academies of Saudi Arabia. No revision of the Koran or revamping of the faith can be expected from these. However, any moderate Muslim deserves support if he or she dares to challenge them.

The idea of democracy promotion, since the Iraqi war, has been a more inspiring and far-reaching strategy. It has apparently sensitized the Arab world and improved America's image among progressive Muslims, who tended to be secular anyway. If, nevertheless, secularism, tolerance, free speech, human rights (of women too) and the primacy of the individual are assumed to be democracy's lifeblood, then its Middle Eastern future is still unclear and depends heavily on the US's success in Iraq. Failure would boost global Jihad.

Eastern Europe's most ethnic Muslims responded favourably to every stage of the evolution of American strategy even if many failed to understand the war on Saddam's Iraq. They expressed compassion and solidarity after 9/11 and condemned the attacks without ifs and buts. (The Bosnian authorities fully cooperated with the CIA investigators and extradited the Algerian suspects.) Most post-socialist "Muslims" do not really care about the interpretation of Islam. They may even be too moderate (inauthentic) by Middle Eastern standards. However, some of their intellectuals and (Hanafi and Sufi) religious leaders can be involved in anti-Salafi campaigns. Strong pro-American feelings can be explained by the Cold War in the cases of Albania, Bulgaria's Turks and the former Soviet peoples of Islamic ancestry, while Bosniaks and Kosovars gratefully remember the courageous interventions of 1995 and 1999.

Since President Clinton, among Balkan Muslims and democrats the American liberals have been popular. Addressing the alleged root causes of Islamist radicalism was, nevertheless, the main solution they proposed for terrorism during the 2004 US presidential campaign. They meant Third World poverty and the Muslim rage provoked by purported US unilateralism and arrogance. This current liberal reasoning is bound to change. It endangers global security, not only that of America which makes the greatest sacrifice in the struggle against mankind's common enemy, just as she did during the Cold War.

The recent Balkan bombing revisionism of certain US analysts is another alarming phenomenon. For Serbian sympathies or irresponsible conclusions from a 1999 domestic debate in Israel,<sup>31</sup> some question America's unselfish Balkan interventions, which she has been so applauded for by the Balkan's Muslims and non-Muslim anti-Milosevic democrats as well. Serbia threatened stability in the whole region at that time. As a controversial Canadian army general put it: "We bombed the wrong side."<sup>32</sup> This misinterpretation of modern history can do much harm, also because it baselessly portrays Bosniaks and Kosovars as Islamist fundamentalists.

## THE AUTHORITIES' INCOMPETENCE

As far as potentially violent Islamism in Eastern Europe is concerned, except for Russia, only the Bosnian Arab camps of the 1990s are documented because well-known Mudjahedin were trained in them. Very few of the holy warriors were of Eastern European origin. Those camps have been closed for years now, but

preparation for urban guerrilla warfare and the concocting of home-made explosives or poison do not require easily noticeable facilities. Simple apartments suffice for this purpose, not necessarily in Bosnia where Arab residents tend to be watched. Preparation includes psychological and ideological training which may, in principle, justify the criminalization of support for schools, courses and holiday camps that indoctrinate youth or even children to grow up into bombers, accomplices and sympathizers.

In the United States similar charges were raised against the Holy Land Foundation for financing Hamas. In many countries in Europe it is, nevertheless, perfectly legal to instigate hate for Jews, Americans, democracy, secularism or praise terror. The main chance to avert the ensuing violence is to keep an eye, usually by agent penetration, on those perfectly legal activities even though any Muslim informant of non-Muslim intelligence agencies is regarded by the Salafis as an apostate worthy of death. In the West vigilance appears to yield results. In the post-socialist East investigation has focused, due to American pressure, on bank transactions and immigration control. This cannot be very effective for the Salafis now transferring money mostly by informal ways and for the region's porous borders and generalized corruption, which affects the police themselves. They would be reluctant to inspect mosques even if they were professionally able to do so, which they are not given their unfamiliarity with Arab language and culture. Moreover, many are Islamophobic, which does not facilitate cooperation with the distrustful and Salafi-intimidated, but usually still pro-western, indigenous Muslim dignitaries. Visas, residence permits, government officials can often be bought at modest prices.

Tracking the money trail can be more effective in developed countries as in the US with rich traditions of financial investigation, fight against money laundering and a relatively transparent banking system. Freezing accounts, stemming the flow of funds, denying potential terrorists the means to travel, communicate and procure equipment may actually constrict the space in which they operate, even in Eastern Europe. The 2001 crackdown on Arab charities in Bosnia was certainly salutary. Fewer similar actions took place in the region's other countries. The smuggling of weapons, people, drugs and counterfeit goods can also contribute to financing terrorism, in principle, but much less than these do in Central Asia or even Western Europe. Albanian Mafiosi are not Islamist at all.

In addition to corruption and widespread organized crime, a number of post-socialist authoritarianism's further features also facilitate the Islamist radicals' task. Trust in law enforcement and government administration is limited for the lack of civic, democratic, human rights traditions and independent judiciary, despite the hypocritical official rhetoric about these for western consumption. The region's other woes such as existential instability, the lack of prospects and security, social and ethnic tensions, the authorities' unaccountability and contempt for civil society may also hamper the investigation of those who hate and snarl in the dark. Misery is not expected to be eradicated soon. Despite the high number of disenchanting Eastern Europeans and the spiritual void following the collapse of socialism, the immigrant Salafi missionaries persuaded only a few. However, the destructive role of these few can be disproportionately significant.

The immigrant Islamists of Eastern Europe are not guest workers or rundown-suburb marginals. Many are students or graduates of low-tuition universities, professionals or, often shady, businessmen. They are ideologically similar to their western counterparts and often connected to organizations as Takfir, the European branches of the Egyptian Gama'a Islamiya, the Muslim Brotherhood or the Algerian

GIA. The flow of cadres, funds and information between East, West and Middle East is obvious.

It is risky to neglect certain countries or parts of the world for their assumed low affectedness by the transnational radical networks. All elements will be needed in piecing together the global mosaic. Terror-related costs in the future will probably be much higher than those of today's preventive measures which should follow, discreetly, the paths of Mideastern-funded religious indoctrination: proselytism, foreign preachers, weekend courses on Islam, charities, humanitarians, immigrant associations, their links to each other and to their counterparts abroad. This kind of attention requires international vision and much more professionalism than the monitoring of bank accounts does. It may shed light on many new Islamists or on old ones who avoided the intelligence services' vigilance, which is not difficult in Eastern Europe. I do not only mean the fewer Afghan, Chechen and Bosnian war veterans, but an increasing number of recently-immigrated Jihadis about whom little is known.

#### POTENTIAL ALLIES

Most Arab and other former Mudjahedin of Bosnia are as bad guys today as they were in 1992-1995. They did not change. The context did. Nonetheless, the United States covering them and allowing them to smuggle their weapons was the right thing to do, while the arming of the Bosnian and other Serbs by Ukraine, Greece and the Mossad was not. The fact that hundreds of Mudjahedin had stayed on after Dayton led Serbian and pro-Serbian analysts to foretell an imminent danger of Islamist radicalization in the Balkans. In 1999 they extended their allegations to Arab and Iranian sympathies toward the Kosovo Liberation Army, although these were limited and un-reciprocated. In order to denigrate their Bosniak and Albanian foes Serbian propagandists have been, for more than a decade, stretching the truth in good English which may be the reason why their exaggerations spread. Unfortunately, some Americans also took part in this campaign of deception.<sup>33</sup>

The deplorable ethnic bias of many Bosniak and Albanian politicians, Balkan kleptocracy or post-socialist authoritarianism should not be mistaken for Islamism. The well-known accusations against the MPRI, Holbrooke, DIA General Hayden, the "Train and Equip" programme, Izetbegovic and the KLA have little significance today.<sup>34</sup> The Serbian patriots had to be stopped, not only for the Bosniaks' and the Albanians' sake. More importantly now, the character of Islamist infiltration into Europe has changed since the 1990s. Although Iranian influence is always worth monitoring, it is certainly much smaller than the Serbs claimed it to be in the early 1990s when Iranian weapons and several hundred Republican Guards were actually sent to Bosnia.<sup>35</sup> Illegal migration through, and radical Arab presence in, the country were and are genuine causes for concern, but similar phenomena have become common in Eastern Europe since then and few seem to care. The Mudjahedin's useless Bosnian passports, 1995 spy stories or even the rise of Islamic awareness among Bosniaks, let alone their nation-building on the basis of cultural memory have little relevance as far as today's terrorists are concerned.

No regional coordinator of Islamist *da'wa* is currently as well known as Dr. Elfatih was in his time. Middle Eastern funding seems to be directly channelled to the various Islamist groups' mostly Arab leaders. These try to recruit native, culturally Muslim or other, Eastern Europeans of inconspicuous appearance. The potential is

vast, despite the cultural gap. Indigenous Muslim dignitaries are often paralyzed by fear and the constant need of Arab money. Otherwise they would probably shed light on these endeavours.

Secular ethnic Muslim opinion leaders such as Albanian, Bosniak, Bulgarian Turkish artists, scholars and other popular figures of public life may be more convincing and effective as far as information, persuasion and the denunciation of Salafism are concerned. The West should not alienate its allies by Balkan bombing revisionism or similar uninspiring provocations which serve, particularly if they come from Jewish authors, the radicals' interests as did the Serbian army's Israeli mortar bombs. The besieged Sarajevans noticed the Hebrew markings on the unexploded ones.<sup>36</sup>

Although Judeophobia is a major theme of the Islamists' discourse, they have not really succeeded in finding common ground with Eastern Europe's many anti-Semites, who tend to dislike Arabs too. There seems to be no comprehensive strategy for the Islamization of post-socialist Europe. The only such Saudi publication, from 1992, reflects a surprising degree of ignorance as to the region's history and cultures.<sup>37</sup> This is probably the Salafis' weakest point. In the beginning they did believe that their mission would entail the Eastern Europeans' mass conversion to Islam, and at least the Bosniaks', the Albanians', the Turks' quick "re-Islamization", their embracing Wahhabi puritanism.

Arab aid blackmail, arrogance, condescension, cemetery vandalism (the demolition of Bosniak and Albanian tomb stones which the Wahhabis regard as idol worship), the construction of bare, stark Wahhabi-style mosques in contrast to ornate Ottoman style, intolerance toward women's liberties and Sufi or inter-confessional traditions revolted most Balkan Muslims. However, the Salafi missionaries did persuade a number of young people. Even a few thousand of these, along with the more convincible Arab immigrants, would be too many since born-again Islamists can most be expected to volunteer for Al-Qaeda-inspired operations, anywhere. They will probably do so without warning. There may not be enough time to disrupt their attack, not necessarily only on American and Jewish targets. Radicals feel secure in Eastern Europe, where they hardly need to keep a low profile. They are difficult to detect for the lack of appropriate forums and committed specialists to assess and discuss the threat they pose. Those who would be able to unmask the radicals do not really come forward. Understandably, few trust the local police services.

Printed sources on radicalism in the region are scarce. Distinction should be made between Islam in Eastern Europe (ethnic and minority studies)<sup>38</sup> and radical Islamist activities in it. Little has been printed on the latter other than the immigrant Arab organizations' newsletters, more or less sensational press articles and the indigenous Muslim institutions' publications. These can certainly be more instructive than Eastern Europe's official intelligence surveys are. However, comprehensive field research should become the primary source of information.

## A PROJECT TO IDENTIFY THE RADICALS

In principle, Eastern Europe's radicals ought to be monitored by the authorities of their countries which may become able to do this efficiently in the future. Until then, the European Union should provide guidance and advice in this respect, also to those post-socialist countries that are not yet members of the Union.

Most western police services already scrutinize Islamic religious institutions, practise profiling and constant observation in certain cases to prevent and deter. Fierce imams have been deported from France, Germany and recently the UK for preaching hatred and intolerance. Anyone should be expected to endure personal inconvenience, even some degree of humiliation, in the name of heightened security. Western specialists of Islam have been involved in these preemptive disruption efforts.

Following the 11 March 2004 Madrid bombing I launched an initiative to identify the radical Islamist networks in post-socialist Eastern Europe. I am not an intelligence specialist, only an Arabist with several years of experience in Arab countries. As a NATO Fellow<sup>39</sup> I have published on Islam in Eastern Europe for the last fifteen years. In the course of this research I encountered many Middle Eastern radical proselytizers, and so did several other native Eastern European scholars of Arabic and Islam. My project consisted of the latter's involvement in observing and documenting, in English, in each of their respective countries, the radical organizations which operate overwhelmingly in Arabic.<sup>40</sup>

The proposal also envisioned engaging dialogue with indigenous Muslims and non-violent Islamists, which my Foundation<sup>41</sup> has been about anyway, as well as the creation of an office of coordination for the envisaged workshops and publications. This enterprise would gradually be expanded to the Russian Federation too, where the Carnegie Endowment has already sponsored similar inspiring research. However, we expect to continue to tackle primarily the Balkans and Central Europe, including Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Baltic States, while proposing cooperation to those outstanding Arabist experts in Russia.

Senior European Union officials rejected my proposal. Its starting budget was obviously modest by western standards so bureaucracy may not be the only reason for this. The EU's position on the anti-terror war was brutally summarized by High Representative Javier Solana: "Europe is not at war." Many Europeans prefer to appease the radicals and tend to dismiss as Islamophobia, paranoia or prejudice, any criticism of the continent's Muslim movements. This attitude may be explained by fear, opportunism, irresponsibility, ignorance or the influential French elite's anti-Americanism. The Council of Europe held a big Islamophobia seminar in this spirit in June 2004 in Budapest.<sup>42</sup> This capitulatory attitude of official, and a considerable part of civil, Europe is disappointing. Islamists will not reward it in the long run. It is unfortunately not far from that of my adopted country, Canada, where radicalism should be further discouraged, also as a security risk. It has gone global. So should be its inspection.

Sooner or later the strategists of terror may seek soft targets, wherever. As Al-Qaeda's Ayman Zawahiri put it: "Inflict the maximum casualties against the opponent, for this is the language understood by the West."<sup>43</sup> Further attacks in Europe may be related to radicals who reside in its Eastern portion. Many ethnic-Muslims there realize that "condemning terror" is not sufficient: active contribution to the identification of its proponents is required. Eastern Europeans of Muslim extraction will not mind the close scrutiny of Islamist radicals. This and the association of Jihad with Islamism will not be viewed here as "culturalism", racism, offences against political correctness or civil liberties. It is often and rightly argued that interacting with Muslims in the West requires cultural sensitivity. Less so in the post-socialist world.

Most official European documents ignore the Muslims of Eastern Europe, which many Westerners still do not consider as part of Europe, without stating this overtly of course. Europe's geographical frontiers are at the Urals, the Caucasus and EU membership candidate Turkey. Westerners should acknowledge the tremendous difference between Eastern Europeans of Muslim descent and the West's radicalizing immigrants: "Homesick young men drift to familiar settings, like mosques, to find companionship and alleviate their loneliness." Sageman also observed<sup>44</sup> the lack of evidence of a comprehensive top-down recruitment programme as far as western terrorism is concerned. He pointed out bottom-up initiatives as the Madrid bombing was. This kind of initiative can also be expected from Eastern Europe's extremists.

A data bank on the region's Islamist organizations should be created. National borders hardly matter since the radicals themselves ignore them. Some infringement on individual rights will be inevitable. The probable cooperation of most indigenous Islamic institutions, or at least their tacit approval, will neutralize any *human-rights* criticism. It remains to be seen who will coordinate this task.

In addition to their above-detailed incompetence, the national authorities of Eastern Europe are often reluctant to cooperate with each other for their anachronistic ethnic bias. If the West tells them what to do, they usually listen. Without western backing not much can be expected from private professional organizations such as ours. They are resourceless and ineffective in an authoritarian environment. I am not aware, in actual fact, of any similar independent civil initiative.

The United Nations and the European Union appear unlikely to contribute to such efforts. Since 9/11 these institutions have debated at length over the definitions of terrorism and the harmonization of legal approaches to it. These are probably not useless, but far from sufficient. In this context the UN and the EU practically did not dare to mention Islamist radicalism, let alone Islam, if not to combat the alleged *Islamophobia* of those who did. It is frustrating to debate with undeservedly influential international bureaucrats, whose knowledge of Islam is rather limited. Seeking allies in this debate raises America's controversial relationship with the Islamic world and the various expressions of anti-Americanism worldwide. Both have far-reaching repercussions on Eastern Europe and Islamism in it.

## "MODERATE" MUSLIMS

If the United States is the world's lone policing force, as it seems to be, the American policy makers' responsibility as to the containment of Islamist radicalism is tremendous. The latter should never be completely separated from the potential of terror. The related terminology should also be adapted.

For instance, if religions are *good* and *peaceful*, and Islam is a religion, then one might assume that Muslims cannot be *bad* or *violent*. If they are, they must not be real Muslims, which is a doubtful syllogism. The Jihadi holy warriors mete out death to innocents for the sake of a presumed divine expectation with utter conviction and purity of heart. Of course, they regard themselves as Muslims. Many other Muslims also view them as such for the fantasy of Islamic supremacy and the infidels' terrorization are Koranic concepts.<sup>45</sup> It is difficult to portray radicalism as a distortion of Islam. However, this should be attempted with



reference to intra-religious pluralism because even partial successes can be meaningful in this probably very long struggle.

Islam can hardly be de-politicized. It is much more than a mere faith or spirituality, which is the solution of the above good-bad paradox. Its authentic religious conceptualizations can, in actual fact, threaten the rest of the world. Publicly acknowledging this may offend sensitivities, which should be avoided if possible. Nonetheless, believing one's own rhetoric, simplifications, generalizations and commonplaces can prove misleading. So can be even correct statements if the arguments behind them are inaccurate. For example, turning moderate Muslims against Salafis is a common and self-evident concept. What degree of anti-Westernism, Judeophobia or other expressions of intolerance can be accepted from those moderates, who are too often assumed to constitute the "overwhelming" or "silent" majority of the world of Islam? What does *moderate* exactly mean, beyond wishful propaganda? According to Bernard Lewis, Muslims "are basically decent, peace-loving, pious people, some of whom have been driven beyond endurance by all the dreadful things we of the West have done to them".<sup>46</sup> The high proportion of the resentful and the hateful justifies this sarcasm.

Professor Lewis's courage set an example for the scholars of Islam and Arabic, who are often reluctant to contribute to anti-terror efforts, not necessarily because earlier they covered up and apologized for the Salafis. (Some did and do just that.) For many, academic ethics require intellectual and even emotional commonality with, or at least openness to, principled Islamic reasoning. The memory of the Orientalists who served colonial endeavours is still powerful, and so is Edward Said's criticism of the western bias misunderstanding and distorting the Eastern Other.<sup>47</sup> However Islamicists and Arabists, rather than intelligence and military specialists, ought to comment on the Muslim and Arab mind.

Post-socialist Muslims are moderate because their religiosity is weak, in most cases. Fortunately, Islamic law does not sanction, except for rare cases, the excommunication (*takfir*) of any nominally Muslim person. The whole Islamic world considers Balkan and post-Soviet Muslims as brothers, often as straying, misguided or heterodox ones, who should be instructed about the faith they or their fathers abandoned. This was precisely the declared mission of Salafi infiltration into those lands in the form of humanitarian relief or otherwise.

Comparison between religions can be delusive. Practically all, except for certain smaller sects, renounced legally compulsive control over their followers' individual and social lives, but Islam has changed relatively little throughout history. This applies, to some extent, even to secular Turkey where the majority voted for an Islamist party after decades of Kemalist rule.

The post-socialist world's "Muslims" tend to be different. Their religious leaders' prestige is relatively low, similarly to that of their Christian counterparts. The "inter-religious dialogue" between these as promoted by the State Department in the Balkans from the mid-1990s represented only a minority. This very American idea sounded strangely to many in the secular post-socialist context, but it did no harm as a piece initiative. The participation of agnostic Balkan intellectuals would have made it more substantial. Non-Muslim religious officials should normally not be involved in the Islamism dialogue we propose which will not be about religions in general, only about an alarming aspect related to one particular religion. This approach will be more appealing to Eastern Europeans, Muslims and others, even if some still associate Islamism with Bosniak nationalism.

## EUROPEAN ANTI-AMERICANISM AND TRANSATLANTIC SOLIDARITY

It is imperative to discern Bosnian or other post-socialist ethnic bias, nationalists, demagogues, authoritarian politicians, Mafiosi and petty crooks from Islamist radicalism although these occasionally interacted. The distinction's necessity is underlined by the genuine danger Salafi preachers represent, both regionally and as parts of global networks. The systematic study of their religious activities, humanitarian and other local organizations (Active Islamic Youth, shady Albanian groupings), the youngsters they indoctrinate in Eastern Europe or Mideastern schools is long overdue. The surveillance and financial punitive measures that were taken in the United States against a number of its Islamist charities have been, so far, unimaginable in Europe.

Transatlantic disunity is particularly harmful. Jihadis will always strive to drive wedges between democracies. Despite all US public diplomacy and image improvement campaigns the leftist, third-worldist, anti-globalist, secularist, environmentalist, pacifist, French patriotic forms of anti-Americanism have been on the rise. Criticism is everybody's right. It may even be justified. Many in the US may share it. Common interests, priorities and objectives are to be found, not further points of contention. The voices of Eastern European pro-Americanism should also be listened to.

Western Europe's mishandling of its Islamists is highly significant for the rest of the world. Europe's predicted Islamization is probably not imminent, although the anti-immigrant far right is already on the march. The French elite may understand the Arab world better for the colonial past and their similar feelings about the US. Europe's abdication before Islamism in pursuit of short-sighted benefits involves entry into a treacherous terrain. This impacts greatly on its Eastern countries, which are supposed to follow the West's example. They should remember: It was not *détente* that brought down the Soviet Union.

Most Eastern Europeans, including Muslims, were influenced by the anti-clerical French Revolution and secular *république*. It did and does symbolize Europe's progressive heritage. Despite the shock of many over the EU's lack of vision or pusillanimity towards the sworn Islamist enemies of that very heritage, it is still difficult for most Europeans to reach out to the American conservatives as prospective allies. There is no alternative. Europe should not mind any more if these are convinced that non-secular America is the best place on earth with a sacred mission to make it happier, in their own way. They will probably act more responsibly than the EU bureaucracy and particularly the UN personnel did, which had a poor record in the Balkans in the 1990s and no apparent capability of genuine self-criticism.

Huge material resources are at the disposal of these organizations. Some of their officials have become alienated from the real world. They tend to be particularly ignorant of Islamism in Eastern Europe, where Islam is basically not a racial issue as they learned it to be. Ignorant people are not necessarily persuadable. Eastern European officials may be even worse, but cooperation with them cannot be avoided. There is little hope other than that the American ones are much better.

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- <sup>41</sup> The Budapest-based *Alice Lederer Foundation* is committed to democratic and secular principles, despite its particular attention to the world of Islam. The Foundation regards as a civic duty to contribute to the fight against terror and those who recruit supporters for Islamist extremism, in Europe or elsewhere.
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# **Countering Ideological Support to Terrorism in the Circum-Caribbean**

John T. Fishel & Mary Grizzard

## ***The Americas and terrorism: an introduction***

Although it is an obvious cliché to say that on September 11, 2001 the world changed for Americans, it remains, nonetheless, an accurate statement. From the moment of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the aborted third attack aimed at Washington DC, international terrorism became the principal threat to the United States. All other threats came to be viewed in light of their relationship to the war against Al Qaeda and other violent Islamist jihadist extremists.

From a perspective south of the Rio Grande, however, international terrorism did not rise to anything like the level of the premier threat. For the Latin Americans many other problems have significantly higher priorities than international terrorism. Even Colombia, the only nation state in the Western Hemisphere that is directly threatened by a terrorist insurgency, perceives the threat in generally local terms. The *Frente Armada Revolucionaria Colombiana* (FARC) is a home-grown Marxist-Leninist group that is intimately linked with Colombian cocaine trafficking cartels. So, too, are the smaller insurgent groups, the ELN, and the right wing “paramilitaries”. In Peru, the only other Latin American country where insurgent terrorists are active, a somewhat revived *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) Communist movement is following in the mode of the FARC. None of the above cases have any apparent links to the Islamist jihadists.

What we see, therefore, is a sharp discrepancy in threat perception between the United States and the other states of the Americas. This paper will focus on one sub-region of the Western Hemisphere – the Circum-Caribbean. It will address the nature of the sub-region in the next section. This will be followed by an analysis of the threat, primarily as perceived by the states of the sub-region.

In turn, we will explore the general ambiance of anti-Americanism in Latin America and the sub-region. We will argue that it is this anti-American view of the US that complicates our efforts to get the governments and people of the Circum-Caribbean region to raise their perception of the priority of the terrorist threat and therefore limits their cooperation with the United States. At the same time, we will argue that there is a significant potential for the perceived threats to the sub-region to act as international terrorist enablers. It is this coincidence of interest, we suggest, that

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may be used to enhance cooperation between the US and the governments of the region.

We then turn our attention to American strengths and vulnerabilities with regard to our objective of countering ideological support to terrorism in the Circum-Caribbean. Finally, we suggest ways in which the US can exploit its strengths and reduce its vulnerabilities to achieve our long term objectives in this war.

**The Circum-Caribbean Region.** This is defined as the area closest to the US, which is encompassed by Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. In the region as a whole, the threat of terrorism remains low, as documented by a recent State Department report, the 2004 analysis of international terrorism, issued in April 2005 as *Country Reports on Terrorism*. The report outlines US concerns about terrorist threats around the world, including throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. While the report states that the international terrorist threat in the Western Hemisphere remained low in 2004, compared to other regions of the world, it also emphasized that “terrorists may seek safe-haven, financing, recruiting, illegal travel documentation, or access to the United States from the area and pose serious threats”.<sup>1</sup> It is the very closeness of this region to the US, as well as the lack of effective immigration and border control, and particularly the serious nature of criminal gangs that have spread from there into the US that give us concern.

**The nature of the threat: Gangs and what they can do.** The seriousness of the US gang problem and its connections with Latin America were emphasized in remarks given on August 1, 2005, by Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff at a Joint Press Conference on Community Shield (a national law enforcement programme against gangs):

Gang violence and gang criminal behaviour is the kind of threat to our vulnerabilities that all of us -- federal, state and local officials -- are very, very concerned about. Indeed, our threat assessments indicate that many gang members come to this country from overseas, or from other parts of the North and South American continent, which means that they are subject to our immigration laws and that when they violate those laws, we can take action against them. We are deeply committed to enforcing these immigration laws and restoring integrity to our immigration system.<sup>2</sup>

The most well-known and violent gang is the Mara Salvatrucha gang, also referred to as MS-13, which formed when people began fleeing El Salvador because of civil war. They settled primarily in Los Angeles. Since the 1980s, the gang spread across the United States and now has members from many Central American countries and Mexico. The nature of MS-13 violence encompasses robbery, car-jacking, murder, trafficking of people, drugs and arms, migrant smuggling, as well as murder for hire.

As a result of US legislation in 1996, many Central American gang members in the US who were convicted of crimes were deported to their countries of origin, beginning in 1997. Upon returning to El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, the deported criminals re-formed gangs, and recruited locals to expand their numbers. At first, the recipient countries were not notified of the criminal status of these deportees, but US reforms in recent years include notification of criminal records at the time of deportation.<sup>3</sup>

While Central American governments have adopted hard as well as soft measures in an effort to contain these violent gangs, the problem has expanded alarmingly. Estimates of numbers of gang members in Central America vary widely, but the US Southern Command has given the figure of 70,000-100,000. The US Department of Justice estimates there are approximately 30,000 gangs, with 800,000 members, in 2,500 communities in the US MS-13 alone is estimated to have from 8,000 to 10,000 members, in 33 states and the District of Colombia.<sup>4</sup>

In general, Californian gangs, particularly from the Los Angeles area, continue to have a major influence on Mexican American and Central American gangs in the US and in Latin America. The main rival of the MS-13 gang in the US is the M-18 (or Barrio 18), (formed by Mexican immigrants on “18<sup>th</sup> Street”, in the Rampart section of Los Angeles, as early as the 1960s). M-18 was the first gang to accept recruits from all races and states.

While there were concerns that Al Qaeda may have been in Central America in 2004, making contacts with gang members, US officials maintained that there was no evidence for these concerns.<sup>5</sup>

### **Country and Regional Response to Gangs**

Many analysts believe that gang violence in the Circum-Caribbean region threatens social stability, inhibits economic and social development, discourages foreign investment, and may accelerate illegal immigration, as well as drug smuggling and trafficking in arms and persons. Most gangs are in the U.S, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico, with some activity also in Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica and many areas in the Caribbean.

**US.** As a result of MS-13’s high profile and violence, the FBI is focusing its gang crackdown on the MS-13 in 2005. Also on the FBI’s list of the most dangerous street gangs are Norteños (Northern California Latino gangs allied to the Nuestra Familia prison organization), Sureños (Southern California gangs allied to the Mexican Mafia prison organization), Latin Kings (mostly in Chicago, New York City and other Midwest and East Coast communities), and other street organizations in Texas, Arizona and Puerto Rico. Part of the FBI’s strategy is to create a National Gang Intelligence Center and to establish the MS-13 National Gang Task Force. In an operation that began in February 2005, agents from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), along with local police, have raided gangs throughout the US. To date, they have arrested more than a thousand accused gang members, including many who are thought to be from MS-13.

US elected officials, especially from the area surrounding Washington D.C., are also taking action against MS-13 members, with proposed US legislation as well as communications with Central American leaders.<sup>6</sup>

**Honduras.** The greatest numbers of gang members are in Honduras, where in 2003 legislation was passed to establish a maximum 12-year prison sentence for gang membership, and in 2004, that penalty that was extended to up to 30 years in prison.<sup>7</sup> As a result, there was a significant reduction in crime (60% reduction in young gang violence), but human rights groups complained that civil liberties were affected.



Meanwhile, even at the lowered rate, gang crimes in Honduras continued to be sensational for their brutality. In December 2004, 28 people died and 14 wounded as a result of an assault on a public bus in Honduras. The attackers, who sprayed the bus with automatic weapon fire, were from MS-13, which has earned a reputation for ruthlessness wherever it operates—in the US and in Central America.

In July 2005, Michael Markey, a US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Agent, was murdered while visiting a church just outside the Honduran capital. One of the persons arrested in connection with Markey's death was a young Honduran named Colindres who was a member of M-18. Colindres had already been linked to 17 murders, detained and escaped six times. Such gang members and organized criminals find Central America a convenient transit station for smuggling people and drugs north and arms and cash south. The justice systems in the region cannot keep up with them, and they have become adept at manipulating and corrupting the law enforcement systems.<sup>8</sup> As a result of impatience with corrupt law enforcement, in spring 2005, some vigilante groups began attacking suspected gang members.<sup>9</sup>

**El Salvador.** In 2004, El Salvador passed legislation approving President Tony Saca's anti-gang programme, called *Super Mano Dura* (Super-Firm Hand) with steeper penalties for gang membership, up to five years in jail, and nine years for gang leadership. The government reported that this tough programme reduced the number of murders that year by 14%. In 2005, the legislature tightened gun ownership laws, and also began the complementary programme of prevention and rehabilitation called *Mano Amiga* (Friendly Hand).<sup>10</sup>

**Guatemala.** In Guatemala, President Oscar Berger supports strengthening legislation that would create both punitive jail sentences and rehabilitative programmes for gang members and leaders. Guatemalan prison gangs have recently been found to be communicating via a web page to order and orchestrate riots in seven different prisons at once. Apparently, the M18 gang has found it quite easy to bribe guards to bring in weapons, and according to Interior Minister Carlos Vielmann, "the gangs maintain constant communication, they have a web page and not only synchronize in Guatemala, they synchronize with El Salvador, Honduras, and with the United States". As a result of the discovery of the gangs' wide-spread communications, Vielmann emphasizes that the gangs have organizational power, which allows them to spread terror through much of the region.<sup>11</sup> In 2005, Guatemala and El Salvador organized joint security forces to patrol for gang activity along their borders.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Other countries, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica.**

Throughout Central America, as gang leaders were jailed, new leaders took their place, and new territory was scouted, leading to the spread of gangs into Mexico, the US, and other Central American countries, including to a lesser extent Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica. Nicaragua and Panama have adopted anti-gang strategies, although gangs have not yet threatened national security as much as they have elsewhere in the region.<sup>13</sup> Panamanian President Torrijos launched *Mano Amiga* in September 2004, as a government-sponsored set of alternatives for at risk youth aged 14-17, to provide theatre and sports activities, backed up by volunteers from the family, school and community.

**Mexico.** In Chiapas, just across the border from Guatemala, MS-13 and Barrio 18 began to prey upon poor Central American immigrants crossing illegally into Mexico on their way to the US. Robbing, wounding or killing these undocumented aliens sent a message to other gangs that their own *coyotes* or bribery/protection services ruled in Chiapas. From Chiapas, gangs spread with their objectives of territoriality, crime and dominance over others up to Mexico City through seven Mexican states and along the border with the US. While law enforcement authorities in Mexico have expressed concern that these gangs may be associated with Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, there has been no verifiable evidence to support the association.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, their presence, their sociopathic, carelessly violent nature, as well as their capability of smuggling persons and arms into the US are of great concern.

Whether the people-smugglers are youth gangs or other criminal organizations, it is a very serious problem between the US and Mexico. The F.B.I. has estimated that people smuggling to the US from Mexico earns criminal networks between \$6-9Bn annually, making it second only to drug trafficking in value as an illicit activity. It is estimated that there may be 300 groups that specialize in smuggling people to the US. An example was the so-called Boughader Group, led by a Mexican of Lebanese descent, who was arrested in December 2002 for having conveyed illegal immigrants from the Middle East. However, many analysts agree that any potential terrorists moving through Mexico are more likely to use false passports and have sufficient money to enter through airports and seaports.<sup>15</sup>

Recently, the porous US-Mexican borders are becoming a more prominent political irritant in the US, with a *Foreign Affairs* poll reporting 88 per cent of the American public desiring tougher action against illegal migrants, in the belief that it would aid national security.<sup>16</sup> This negative public perception is in reaction to reports of violence, with the large border town of Nuevo Laredo recently issuing a plea for Mexican troops to be deployed to restore order during the ongoing wars among drug gangs. To the consternation of the Mexican federal government, the US Ambassador temporarily closed the US Consulate in Nuevo Laredo in August 2005 as a protest against the violence. The continued reports of property damage and violence on the US side of the border recently resulted in states of emergency declared by Arizona and New Mexico, to obtain special funds to combat the influx of illegal migrants from the south. Fanning the ongoing perception of crisis, the media also frequently repeats that there are an estimated 10 million illegal migrants in the US, equal to the number who arrive legally, with the numbers of illegals rising by 500,000 a year.<sup>17</sup> In August 2005, Mexican President Vicente Fox pleaded for US –Mexican teamwork and cooperation to resolve the problems of US drug consumption, Mexican violence among drug gangs competing for territory, and the continued flow of illegal aliens into the US.<sup>18</sup>

**Organized Crime** It may be said that the transnational nature of gangs, drugs, arms, and people trafficking certainly overlaps the broader category of transnational organized crime, with its ability to exist in the “ungoverned spaces”, wherever government is weakest, such as in the sparsely guarded border areas between states.<sup>19</sup> In recognition of the security threat to the hemisphere that transnational organized crime represents, the UN and the Organisation of American States (OAS) have addressed this with several measures, including UN Resolution 2116, “Fighting Transnational Organized Crime in the Hemisphere”, adopted at the General Assembly fourth plenary session on June 7, 2005. This Resolution proposes several courses of action, including urging members to adopt or strengthen legislation and cooperation in order to combat the various

manifestations of transnational organized crime in the hemisphere, such as “illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, illicit arms trafficking, trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, cyber crime, criminal youth gangs, kidnapping, and corruption, as well as connections between terrorism and these manifestations”.<sup>20</sup>

**Gangs in the Caribbean.** A number of Caribbean countries are now coming to terms with the reality of gangs that engage in criminal acts, resulting in significantly higher crime levels in the region. One Caribbean Prime Minister has blamed the trend towards gangs on the hundreds of deportees who have been sent back to the Caribbean from the US and Canada.<sup>21</sup> That high numbers of deportees may have had a big impact on crime bears some credibility when one considers that an estimated 13,000 Caribbean criminals have been deported from the United States since 1999. While Jamaica has the highest level of violence, accounting for 60% of the crime in the region and some 85 gangs,<sup>22</sup> violence is also on the rise in other countries across the English-speaking Caribbean. Although the Virgin Islands, St. Kitts, and Trinidad-Tobago have a murder rate only 40% that of Jamaica, they continue to see an increasing presence of drug-dealing gangs.<sup>23</sup>

What is being done? Tough government programmes have begun to see results. In Jamaica, where the gangs are often called “posses”, and are capable of taking over entire neighbourhoods, the National Security Minister launched a major anti-gang initiative, called “Operation Kingfish”, in 2004, which featured the use of intelligence and international support and succeeded in cracking several major drug gangs. The Bahamas has also increased pressure on gangs, which resulted in the capture of five drug gangs since 2001. As a result, the Bahamas is one of the few countries in the region to have managed to lower the murder rate. In recognition of its own growing gang problem, Trinidad-Tobago launched a \$30M Special Anti-Crime Unit in 2004, under the direction of the National Security Ministry, with rules of engagement authorized by the Chief of Defence and the Police Commissioner.<sup>24</sup>

The results of such important government initiatives will be known over time, but the problems are even greater in Haiti, where gangs have become insurgents, and have severely disrupted the country. As an adjoining country, the Dominican Republic suffers from border incursions from Haiti, but also has its own problems with gangs. As in other countries, Dominican gangs continued their battles with rivals even after they were incarcerated. In spring 2005, some 134 prisoners were killed in one of the Dominican Republic’s worst jailhouse fires, when rival drug gangs deliberately set their bedding ablaze. As a consequence, Dominican President Leonel Fernández put forward a plan of zero tolerance. In an effort to find Caribbean solutions to the gang and other security problems, President Fernández presided over a regional seminar on “Security and Cooperation in the Caribbean: Role of Regional Political Leadership” in summer 2005 in Santo Domingo.<sup>25</sup>

### ***The Ambiance of Anti-Americanism***

*With our blood we are blocking the path leading to the annexation of the peoples of our America to that chaotic and brutal north which so despises them. I lived in the monster and I know its entrails...*

*José Martí, April 7, 1895*<sup>26</sup>

Anti-Americanism has a long and respected history in Latin America as seen in this quote from Cuba's poet hero of its war for independence. According to Greg Grandin:

Two broad arcs of antagonism define US – Latin American relations. The first began in the early nineteenth century and paralleled the initial phase of US territorial and economic expansion. Latin American intellectuals, politicians, and nationalists reacted with increasing hostility not only toward the growing influence of US capital ... but also toward the ever more frequent and threatening military interventions.... By the beginning of the twentieth century, such actions inflamed a generation of political and literary critics of US power....<sup>27</sup>

Among these critics were Martí, Rubén Darío of Nicaragua and Isidro Fabela of Mexico, all well known political and literary figures of the time. Their critique drew on specific policy disagreement but also “a more diffuse Spanish antipathy toward Anglo-Protestant ‘individualism’ and ‘materialism’”.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, opposition to the US grew in the Cold War based on policies such as the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954, support for Latin American dictators from the 1950s to the 1970s, and the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua twenty years later.

Nevertheless, the attitudes of Latin Americans toward the United States were deeply ambivalent. “A number of post-World War II polls carried out by UNESCO, the USIA, and other groups ... provid[ed] statistical confirmation that US values held great appeal for much of the world's population.”<sup>29</sup> A 1958 National Intelligence Estimate supported this conclusion. Latin American attitudes “expressed ‘envy by disparaging US materialism,’ yet wanted our consumer goods and capital; they espoused pan-Americanism but engaged in petty nationalism; they chafed at our military power but wanted our protection.”<sup>30</sup> Nothing in the ensuing half century would change that conclusion. In short, the ambiance of Latin American attitudes toward the United States prior to 9/11 remained pretty much as it had been. Latin American intellectuals railed against the US; Latin American leaders sought various kinds of accommodation with the US; Latin American people wanted what Americans have.

Survey research data since 9/11, however, has shown a disturbing world-wide trend in attitudes. There has been a significant rise in anti-Americanism – well over what had been seen in the previous eight years of the Clinton Administration. Nevertheless, it is not a new trend but rather an acceleration.

In a survey published in December 2001 by the Pew Trust<sup>31</sup> opinion leaders in many countries stated that US policies were a principal cause of the 9/11 attacks. This was true of 58% of the Latin American respondents. In addition, 71% felt that it was good for the US to feel vulnerable. A mere 37% of the Latin American respondents felt that the US was acting multilaterally at that time. In the same survey 58% of respondents expressed resentment of US power; 51% said that the US causes the gap between rich and poor nations while 44% saw the power of multinational corporations as a reason for disliking the US. Unlike other areas of the world, only 7% of the Latin Americans saw US support of Israel as a major problem (compared with 17% for the next highest area of the world).

As this survey data demonstrates, elite attitudes toward the US are largely negative for, apparently, the same reasons as they have been throughout the history of

inter-American interaction. George Yudice cites evidence from an informal survey of Latin American intellectuals that he took along with public statements by other intellectuals and political activists. He states that “the reactions to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were like a release of pent-up rage at the long history of US interventions in the region’s affairs. Some prominent Latin American intellectuals felt vindicated, as if the attacks were a retaliatory strike on their behalf.”<sup>32</sup>

As the Puerto Rican intellectual and academic, Ramón Grosfoguel put it:

“One can’t expect that the North American state can bomb Iraq for an entire decade, finance the Israeli state’s massacre of Palestinians, invade Panama with a death toll of thousands, train military executioners in the arts of terrorism in the School of the Americas, and subsidize military dictatorships throughout the world for decades on end without someone someday getting it dished back.”<sup>33</sup>

Although these statements are filled with hyperbole and many of the allegations are false, these views are widely accepted in Latin America by both opinion leaders (as shown by the survey data) and by the population at large. Negative views of the US are confirmed by a BBC World Service poll conducted between November 2004 and January 2005 that asked respondents in 21 countries their views regarding President Bush’s reelection.<sup>34</sup> On the average and across all 21 countries 58% said that President Bush’s reelection was negative for global security while only 26% said it was positive. Among the most negative were the Latin Americans. Only 6% of Argentines, 17% of Brazilians, 19% of Chileans and 4% of Mexicans saw the President’s reelection as positive for global security. By contrast, 79% of Argentines, 78% of Brazilians, 62% of Chileans, and 58% of Mexicans saw it as negative. The most disturbing aspect of the data is that these views translate directly into how the respondents see the American people. Only 13% of Argentines, 28% of Brazilians, 16% of Chileans, and 14% of Mexicans feel better about the American people in the wake of Bush’s reelection while 54% of Argentines, 59% of Brazilians, 40% of Chileans, and 49% of Mexicans see Americans in a worse light.

A survey conducted in 23 countries at the same time by Globe Scan for the Programme on International Policy Attitudes of the University of Maryland asked respondents to identify whether Europe becoming more influential in world affairs than the US was positive or negative, as well as whether they saw the US (and other countries) as having a mainly positive or negative influence in the world.<sup>35</sup> Regarding Europe becoming more influential than the US, 57% of Argentines, 53% of Brazilians, 48% of Chileans and 66% of Mexicans saw this trend as mainly positive. Concerning the US: 19% of Argentines viewed its role as mainly positive while 65% saw it as mainly negative; 42% of Brazilians saw the US in mainly positive terms while 51% saw its role as mainly negative; 29% of Chileans viewed the US positively while 50% view it negatively; and 11% of Mexicans have a positive view compared to 57% who see the US in negative terms.

This perception is similar to that of many other countries. According to a report in the *Financial Times* based on the Nation Brands Index (NBI) survey by GMI, “The US is increasingly viewed as a ‘culture free zone’ inhabited by arrogant and unfriendly people...”<sup>36</sup> Yet, the US remains among a select group of nations at the top of the NBI. According to Simon Arnholt, developer of the NBI, “It seems that to be a top nation brand, the country needs to be stable, liberal, democratic and Western, with a tendency toward neutrality”.<sup>37</sup> The US ranks number 11 on the

survey among 13 Western democracies and ahead of all non-Western states in the list of 25. The major problem for the US on the NBI was the perception that the US government could not be trusted to make reasonable decisions on peace and security.

Although there is a clear ambience of anti-Americanism in Latin America it is based more on perceived policy disagreement than on value conflict. Granted that there is an element of the latter, however, there is strong support for the democratic values that are central to what the United States is and does. As Table 1 shows, Latin Americans in general and Central Americans and Mexicans in particular strongly support democracy as the best form of government in spite of its problems and reject authoritarian regimes.

Table 1: Latin American Attitudes Toward Democratic Values

	In spite of problems democracy is the best form of government	In some cases authoritarian government could be preferable	Powerful interests govern in their own interests	Democracy is the only system that can achieve development	Type of government doesn't matter if it solves economic problems	A little government repression is OK	Private enterprise in charge of the country is OK if it solves economic problems
CS	82%	7%	68%	79%	42%	78%	39%
PM	77%	8%	67%	80%	56%	71%	52%
DR	76%	11%	85%	76%	62%	67%	63%
NU	74%	10%	74%	76%	70%	59%	68%
MX	79%	14%	75%	75%	67%	54%	48%
GT	54%	11%	64%	60%	57%	78%	45%
ES	66%	10%	63%	67%	56%	78%	44%
HO	69%	11%	66%	75%	70%	78%	54%
LATAM	71%	15%	71%	72%	55%	64%	47%
SOURCE:	Latinobarometro 2004						

The eight countries specifically identified from our sub-region do not deviate significantly from the Latin American norm.<sup>38</sup> The survey data also clearly indicate that Latin American support for democracy is aspirational. The citizens of these eight countries and of the region as a whole believe that democracy is the system that can achieve the development they hope for. This belief, in turn, makes their support for democracy contingent on its success in attaining economic goals. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that a majority of all Latin Americans, as well as in seven of the eight countries surveyed in the sub-region, agreed with the statement that the type of government does not matter so long as it solves their economic problems. Only in Costa Rica did a majority support democracy in an unqualified manner.

One set of attitudes is particularly disturbing and that is the high level of agreement that powerful economic interests govern the country to their own benefit. This statement is supported by 71% of all Latin Americans and between 63% (El Salvador) and 85% (Dominican Republic) of the eight countries surveyed in the sub-region. In other words, most Latin Americans do not see “democracy” as governing in their interest. Thus, their assessment of democracy in instrumental terms is that it has been less than successful. Moreover, there is a high degree of ambivalence both in Latin America as a whole and in the sub-region toward a free market economy. Concomitantly, the data show significant residual support for statist economic solutions.

The final point to make with regard to this survey is that despite the perception of the researchers that the overwhelming response of significant majorities that “a little government repression is OK” signifies an authoritarian streak in Latin American political culture,<sup>39</sup> it is, rather, a recognition that certain very real threats must be met with a certain amount of repressive force. These are precisely the threats identified in the previous section. Discussion with Latin Americans from all over the region, but especially the sub-region, indicates that they view a degree of repression as necessary but only if carried out under the rule of law.<sup>40</sup>

To complete the picture of Latin American attitudes toward the US comes a picture of Mexican views toward migration to their northern neighbour. According to a poll taken in Mexico by the Pew Hispanic Center, 46% of adult respondents “would come to the United States if they had the means and opportunity. And about half of those people said they’d be willing to move to and work in the United States illegally.”<sup>41</sup> So despite an ambience of anti-Americanism and ambivalence about democratic performance, if not democratic values, a very significant number of Latin Americans would vote with their feet if they could.

### **Radical Islamists May Be Recruiting Prison Inmates in the US**

Although the US has been focusing on foreign terrorists entering the US, a new research project based at the University of Maryland contains data that support the observation that the odds favour domestic rather than international terrorists. Gary Lafree, who heads the project funded by the Department of Homeland Security (HLS), has collected data covering some 70,000 terrorist attacks since 1970, and of these, domestic terrorist events outnumber international events by 7 to one.<sup>42</sup> There have been recent reports that a militant Islamist group, thought to be operating in California prisons, was suspected of planning to attack targets in Los Angeles. The suspects in this California Folsom Prison case include US citizens and a Pakistani illegal immigrant. The Islamist militant group in this prison case is the *Jamiyyat Ul Islam Is Saheeh*, or JIS, which has had a presence at Folsom for about five years, with followers including both inmates and former inmates. The group's name translates from Arabic into the Assembly of Authentic Islam. The FBI is investigating possible Islamist groups in other US prisons.<sup>43</sup>

The Folsom case recalls that of José Padilla, a US citizen from Puerto Rico, who had been in and out of prisons several times for crimes connected with gang activities in Chicago. Padilla had converted to a radical form of Islam, possibly as a result of prison contacts, and was arrested at Chicago airport under suspicion of plotting a terrorist attack with a dirty bomb. However, there are other Islamist converts among US citizens with no prison association, such as the Ohio-born Mahmud Faruq Brent, who was secretly recorded bragging about attending a terrorist training camp in Pakistan in 2002. He had been living in Baltimore the

past five years, while working in nearby Washington D.C. as a cab and ambulance driver. Brent was arrested in August 2005, accused of association with *Lakshar-e-Taiba*, a militant Islamist group active in the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir.<sup>44</sup>

It is, therefore, necessary to consider the probability that radical Islamist groups will recruit Latin gang members as well as members of Jamaican posses and other gangs in the English speaking Caribbean. Such successful recruitment of people with strategic criminal capabilities and a predisposition toward anti-Americanism would signify a major increase in the nature of the terrorist threat.

### ***Tying the Problem Together***

The problem in Latin America, and especially in the Circum-Caribbean sub-region, is twofold. First, it is a problem of capabilities; second, it is a problem of attitudes. Compounding its complexity is the fact that the capabilities and the attitudes may be linked only very loosely, if at all. Indeed, there is no hard evidence that the terrorism enabling capabilities identified and discussed here are in any way linked to the anti-American attitudes found throughout the region. To address the problem we will consider it in both worst and best case terms. The question inherent in this approach is whether the actions we recommend to address the problem will be different in either case.

**Worst Case Scenario:** In the worst case, we imagine that the capabilities of the gangs – Mara Salvatrucha, M-18, Jamaican posses, Dominican gangs – organized criminals, narcotraffickers, and home grown insurgents, are profoundly and deeply influenced by a wide variety of anti-American attitudes. The gangs and the other groups view the US as the source of all their problems. Gang members reject American democratic values. So, of course, do the insurgents as well as many, if not most, of the criminals. Gang members, both those who have been deported from their US homes and those who have joined the gangs in their home countries, blame the US and its policies for that. Insurgents usually draw their ideological inspiration from Marxism-Leninism in either its Maoist or Castroite *foco*<sup>45</sup> form. Their resentment of the US is such that they are willing to make common cause with any radicals who would do harm to America.

**Best Case Scenario:** In the best case, we imagine that the gangs and other criminal or insurgent groups are largely indifferent to anti-American attitudes. Rather than being influenced by anti-Americanism, the gangs and criminal organizations are in the business of simply making money and protecting their interests. Thus, for a price, they are willing to undertake any action that would advance their interests.

The outcome is the same in either scenario. The gangs, organized criminals, and insurgents have the capability to enable terrorists to inflict harm on the US. For either ideological or mundane reasons they have an incentive to undertake such enabling activities. Therefore, the first order of business in dealing with the threat must be to reduce and, if possible, neutralize the threat capabilities. But herein lies the rub: without a reduction of anti-Americanism there can be no long term assurance that terrorists<sup>46</sup> will not be enabled by kindred ideological spirits in this hemisphere. So, the second order of business must be to wage the “information war” with the goal of turning many or most of the adherents of anti-Americanism into, if not supporters of US policy, at least friends of the US who fully share its values. As is suggested by the survey data, this is not “mission impossible”; how to



achieve it will be addressed below. First, however, we will consider American strengths and vulnerabilities.

### **American Strengths and Vulnerabilities**

Since 9/11 and the continuing terrorist attacks around the world against Western targets (such as 7/7 in Britain), Americans have been convulsed by a debate about who we are, and why some people in the world would want to kill us? Is our “Americanness” compatible with values shared by reasonable people around the world? Is there something “off” in the perception of the United States today? What are our strengths, which would be viewed as positive and attractive to the rest of the world?

Surely among our greatest strengths is our democratic system of government. That very democracy carries with it a great responsibility for its citizens, who have that precious freedom, to endeavour to be well-educated, capable of critical thinking, in order to make well-informed choices. Since the US is also the single superpower in the world today, those well-informed choices become all the more significant to the rest of the world. And as a country that grew by adding to its citizenry immigrants and their descendants from lands around the world it has an eclectic heritage. Hence, among the American greatest virtues is tolerance, towards itself and others. The flip side may be a lack of introspection and not caring too much about defining yourself, except that you have to now, because you are under threat.

Despite American “diversity” there is very much a narrative of American history, a set of American traditions, and especially an American “identity” or “brand” that the world has admired and even envied. Some American brands of merchandise, in fact, become closely connected to their country of origin and are quintessentially American. They represent the American innovation, lifestyle, image and even its foreign policy. That the foreign perception of the latter may begin to erode acceptance of American ideas and merchandise is predicted by Simon Anholt, author of *Brand America*, and is supported by a poll reported in the British *Financial Times* on August 1 2005, in the article “World turning its back on Brand America”, by Kevin Allison. The erosion of America’s corporate image abroad was also recently documented by a global survey company, GFKNOP, which interviewed consumers in 30 countries and concluded that it was due to two factors: competition, and a negative perception of American values and policies, especially the prestige lost since the US began the war with Iraq.<sup>47</sup> Another publication, *Working with Americans*, a business bestseller published by Prentice Hall in 2002, contains observations by one of the co-authors, Allyson Stewart-Allen, that US companies abroad need to align with their customers, and not present themselves as aggressively and arrogantly American, insisting on imposing their way of doing things in international markets. Publications on this subject generally concur that US companies, as well as the government, need to focus on an awareness of the client-base and its sensitivities.

**Exemplary measures to date** Much the same may be said of the style of presenting and explaining a well-reasoned US foreign policy to the US public and to our neighbours. What is the interest of the consumer—or the neighbouring country? How may the ideas be presented in such a way that demonstrates understanding of the neighbouring countries’ needs? One way would be to work cooperatively on the mutual security threat represented by transnational organized crime and gangs, which we have characterized as significant potential terrorist enablers.

An example of efforts that deserve US support are the fast-response special forces units to confront gangs, as proposed by Central American and Mexican leaders at a summit in Chiapas in June 2005. Officials in the region made it clear at that meeting that they expect Washington to help finance the unit, because both US drug consumption and increased US deportation of gang members have aggravated the security problem. Parenthetically, there is more reason to pay attention to fluid gang movements because of another new feature which will complicate the regional security problem -- CAFTA, the recent regional trade agreement with the region. CAFTA will likely help alleviate poverty in the long term, but in the short term it will not remove gang warfare or crime, but will actually provide more open borders, which would facilitate transnational criminal activities.

Other security measures also deserve US support, for they are agreements and organizations that already exist to mutually benefit the US and the region. The OAS – sponsored Inter-American Committee on Terrorism (CICTE) was revitalized after 9/11, as it endeavoured to identify actions that would strengthen cooperation in order to eliminate terrorism in the hemisphere. In June 2002, OAS members signed a new agreement, the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism.<sup>48</sup> In January 2003, CICTE met in El Salvador, and issued the Declaration of San Salvador, which condemned terrorism and pledged to strengthen cooperation through customs and financial security measures.

Another organization that receives key US support under the US State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and deals with gang violence, as well as drug use, is CICAD, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission. Since 2000, CICAD has held regional seminars to raise awareness about drug use and gang violence in the Western Hemisphere, especially in Central America and the Caribbean Basin. For instance, in 2003-4, CICAD cooperated with El Salvador on several projects to counter gang activity, including an innovative programme to help ex-gang members stay clear of gangs and engage in rehabilitative, environmental cleanup work.

Based on the same principle of understanding the needs of the targeted population, community-based programmes are likely to be the most successful in treating the cause of alienation and gang formation both in the US and in the region. In the US there have been such programmes in Los Angeles, Boston, and San José that include church-based programmes with after-school activities, counselling and protection for those leaving gangs. Recently, in the Maryland suburbs of Washington DC, new community programmes have emerged, such as *Sacando a Chicos de Problemas* (Removing Kids from Problems), targeted to Hispanic youth, offering counselling and sports activities.

Among the programmes created by the US Justice Department is the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Programme (ICITAP) initiative to train community policing in hundreds of Salvadoran towns. In addition, the FBI has its special task force focusing on MS-13, and has also created a liaison office in San Salvador which will share information with Central American authorities.

Other US government agencies are making new, substantial contributions to solving the international gang problem, in a manner that seeks to collaborate with foreign governments. In the Department of Homeland Security, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) created the new national anti-gang initiative called “Operation Community Shield”, which not only arrests suspected gang members,

but also coordinates with governments in the region. USAID has worked with ICITAP on the preventive side, and also has proposed a crime prevention programme in Guatemala, to create a “model youth home” for at-risk youth and former gang members, while providing education and vocational training to secure their futures.

Indeed, the seriousness of the situation was emphasized in the March 15, 2005 testimony by General Bantz Craddock, Commander of the US Southern Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, when he stated that “the level of sophistication and brutality of these gangs is without precedent,” so that regional solutions to the gang problem are absolutely essential.<sup>49</sup>

### ***What is to be done?***

**Addressing terrorism’s enabling capabilities** It is clear that, although the people and governments of the Circum-Caribbean sub-region and Latin America as a whole recognize it, they do not place nearly so high a priority on international terrorism as does the United States. Rather, in their priority lists it is well below (in approximate order) criminal gangs, narcotrafficking, organized crime and insurgency. There is, of course, some variation in these priorities from sub-region to sub-region as well as from country to country. However, it is interesting to note that narcotrafficking has moved higher on the regional priority lists over the last decade whether in response to solid US arguments or as a result of its becoming a significant crime, health, and security problem in its own right. Be that as it may, the US also sees criminal gangs, narcotrafficking, organized crime, and insurgencies as threats. More important, the US perceives these threats as capabilities that can be used to enable international terrorists in their efforts to target the American homeland and/or its interests. The result is a coincidence of interest among the US and its regional and sub-regional partners in addressing the highest priority threats as perceived by those partners.

The first step is to address the threat posed by criminal gangs. This requires agreement between the US and its partners as to exactly what the threat is as well as the causes of the threat. Many, but not all, of the criminal gangs in the region originated in the US. Both MS-13 and M-18 began as Los Angeles street gangs. Dominican and Jamaican gangs were either born on the streets of New York City or invigorated there. In all cases, US immigration law changes in 1996 and the processes of its enforcement resulted in the transfer of these and other gangs and their cultures to the home countries of their members as those members were deported. Often the deportations took place without the US informing the recipient country of the criminal background of the deportees. By the time this communication failure was rectified the gangs were well established on Central American, Caribbean, and Mexican turf.

Max Manwaring argues that:

Central American gangs’ seeming immunity from effective law enforcement efforts and the resultant lack of personal and collective security in that region have created a dangerous synergy between organized criminality and terror that is blurring the traditional line between criminal and political violence. In that context, the greatest fear haunting many Central American officials and citizens is that criminal violence is about to spiral out of control and acquire a political agenda. This fear is exacerbated because second and third generation gangs and their mercenary allies are controlling larger and larger portions of cities, the interior, and the traditionally inviolate national

frontiers – and have achieved complete freedom of movement and action within and between national territories. As a consequence, the effective sovereignty of all Central American countries is being impinged every day and the gangs' commercial motives are, in fact, becoming a political agenda for control of state governing and security institutions and for control of people and territory.<sup>50</sup>

To deal with the threat posed by criminal gangs requires a holistic approach that leverages the capabilities of the US, host governments and the private sector (writ large) to achieve effective unity of effort in neutralizing the threat. Neutralizing the threat, in turn, means attaining and maintaining the perceived legitimacy of the host government on the part of the nation's citizens. This means that the government must be able to provide security everywhere on its territory. To do this, it must govern that territory – areas of the country without effective state presence are no longer acceptable.

The principal actions that have shown promise are those like El Salvador's *super mano dura* policy coupled with its recently announced *mano amiga*. The former establishes long prison terms for gang members and longer ones for gang leaders. The latter combines actions targeted on prevention with rehabilitation, particularly of younger gang members. Preventive actions are those that seek to raise the standard of living in the sectors of the country most prone to gang activity and include education and job training. Both of these form major parts of the rehabilitative effort.

In a similar fashion the Jamaica Defence Force, in coordination with the Jamaica Constabulary, has developed a programme of actions targeted on prevention based on the development and rehabilitation of areas of the island that are heavily gang infected and influenced. Initial indications were that this approach was having some success, however, the proof would be in the ability of the Jamaican government to sustain the effort.<sup>51</sup>

The second capability that must be addressed is that of organized crime, in all its aspects, but especially with respect to narcotrafficking. Throughout the region there is clear evidence that the profits from narcotrafficking fund all sorts of criminal as well as legitimate economic activities. Not remarkably, this includes gang activity. Equally unremarkable is the role that narco-dollars play in corruption of government officials. All of this results in the delegitimization of the government along with a decrease in its capacity to govern effectively. The result is space created for other players to exercise authority in the absence of an effective legitimate state presence. With the exception of Mexico in our sub-region (where the Zapatista insurgents exist but are contained in a single area of the country) there is no active insurgency to make common cause with the organized criminals.<sup>52</sup>

In no case have the governments of the region nor of the US raised the level of the threat from organized crime per se to that of a threat to national security. The partial exceptions to this are narcotrafficking and gangs but the larger linkage has not been made. Therefore, organized crime is viewed simply as a problem for law enforcement and the judicial system. To a lesser extent this is also the prevailing perception of both gangs and narcotrafficking. But like terrorism, these are all threats to the security of the state and require a more holistic approach to deal with them.

At the national level, each of these threats requires the integration of the activities of multiple agencies at all levels of government. In many cases, the best approach is the creation of an integrated task force under a single director with the authority to direct the member agencies as well as to hire and fire his subordinates. The director may be a civilian, a police officer, or a military officer – there are numerous examples of this kind of unity of command.<sup>53</sup> Failing to attain unity of command is, unfortunately, the norm rather than the exception. Hence, other solutions to the problem need to be considered.

The necessary but insufficient condition for unity of effort is agreement among all participants on the objective. Without such agreement success will be unachievable; the gangs will not be neutralized; organized crime will continue to operate with impunity; narcotrafficking will continue to fund all sorts of criminal activities and corrupt government; and insurgents will be tempted to resource their operations from the profits of the drug trade. In addition to agreed objectives, there is a requirement for common procedures to coordinate the activities of the various entities engaged in the fight. Thus, it is critical for there to be common communications among the agencies involved, planning, and rehearsal of operations, etc.

Where one could hope for a fully integrated operation under a single director with command authority within a single state, such an operation involving two or more states becomes “a bridge too far”. Even the world’s most successful military alliance – NATO – does not cede full command to SACEUR. Rather, each national contingent retains the right to appeal a SACEUR decision to the North Atlantic Council (as the British did in Kosovo where their appeal was upheld). Thus, the best that can be achieved in the multinational arena is unity of effort. In turn, that requires effective politics in the most diplomatic sense of the word.

**Dealing with anti-Americanism.** If the potential for long term danger to American interests and the US homeland of Latin American anti-Americanism were not so great, addressing that anti-Americanism would not be particularly urgent. After all, not much has changed in the last half century. Latin American intellectuals still rail against the US as crass, crude and imperialistic. Latin American governments have significant policy disagreements but also share common interests. Latin American publics tend to blame the US for the impact of their own governments’ bad policy but would gladly emigrate to the US if they had the opportunity. However, the environment has changed significantly and the terrorism enabling capabilities of gangs, organized criminals, narcotraffickers, and insurgents, if they were fed by and linked with anti-Americanism, would boil up a veritable witches’ brew threatening the US homeland.

Because of this potential, there is an urgency in addressing the problem of Latin American anti-Americanism that did not exist even a decade ago. Anti-Americanism is, however, a subtle problem that calls for subtle and necessarily partial solutions. These include:

- Seeking true collaboration with Latin American governments on issues of common concern (such as gangs).
- Listening to our partners and seeking their advice in addition to giving our advice.
- Recognizing that there will be areas of disagreement but that other nations will act in their own interests. Some disagreements can be resolved by

persuasion and mutual respect; others simply require an agreement to disagree without being disagreeable.

- Recognizing that the countries of the region share with the US a common heritage of Western democratic values and building on that common ground.
- Recognizing, at the same time, that there is more than one Western tradition and that these different democratic traditions – particularly in law – make for basically different and, at times, irreconcilable assumptions.

In summary, based on an assessment of what has proved to be effective already, the recommendations are for community-based programmes, as well as for innovative regional cooperation, given the fluid, international nature of gangs and organized crime. Regional cooperation should offer shared databases and intelligence, and experience-based police training and preventive programmes, all of which need to be supported by pooled financial resources and expertise. Some other examples of good regional programmes are those supported by the US Justice Department, USAID, and others supported by the Inter-American Development Bank.<sup>54</sup>

### ***Recommendations for US policy***

The United States should:

- Identify those terrorism enabling capabilities that the states of the region identify as threats and commit resources to assist those states in dealing with those threats.
  - Regarding gangs, the US should build interagency task forces that include police, military, intelligence, finance, development specialists, etc., under a director with the required authority to work for the American ambassador to coordinate US actions with the host country. The host country should be encouraged to build a similar task force to address the problem. Regional and sub-regional multinational task forces should also be encouraged and assisted.
  - With regard to narcotrafficking the US should provide all necessary assistance to the countries of the Circum-Caribbean and Latin America. The interagency task force concept is appropriate and, for the US builds on the success of Joint Interagency Task Force-South.
  - For both gangs and narcotrafficking, combined interagency exercises can be used to train the forces in working together and in the kinds of skills needed. In addition, such exercises should have a developmental component to them similar to US Southern Command's *New Horizons (Nuevos Horizontes)* series which involves building roads, schools, medical posts, etc. in rural areas of Central America. If these exercises were conducted in conjunction with programmes like El Salvador's *Mano Amiga* they would have the primary effect of reducing the internal breeding grounds for gang activity. A secondary but equally important effect would be the impact on the perception of ordinary citizens of the US role in the region.
  - To deal with organized crime the US should expand its cooperative interagency efforts among the Department of Justice (ICITAP, LEGATT), USAID (Administration of Justice Programme), Department of Homeland Security (ICE), among others. To the extent necessary and possible the integrated interagency task force concept under a director with full authority should be adopted.

- All of these programmes must take account of the host country's needs and interests and not seek to impose US solutions on them. Rather, they need to be truly collaborative and responsive to the input and interests of regional and sub-regional partners.
- One additional area of essential collaboration is that of intelligence and intelligence sharing. Much of the intelligence required here is traditionally police intelligence but some falls within the purview of traditional intelligence agencies. The US must have the will to develop mechanisms for effective intelligence sharing with its partners in the police, military and national intelligence agencies.
- With respect to all of these areas of collaboration, workshops and conferences that include both academics and practitioners would be a useful means of developing new and improved approaches as well as to project an attitude of a government willing to listen to its partners and respond to their concerns.
- Addressing anti-Americanism is more subtle than dealing with terrorism-enabling capabilities but very closely related. Central to any effort to counter this ideological current is the need to keep clearly in mind the message the US is communicating. The essential message must be that we want to help you address the problems and threats you have identified; it is in our interest as much as it is in yours. Other components of the effort to counter anti-Americanism are addressed below but it must be recognized that they are designed specifically to support attitudinal change based on the perception that US behaviour supports Latin American and Caribbean values and interests.
  - The first step in directly countering anti-Americanism would be to invest again in a strong programme of bi-national cultural centres in the region. This would make US culture and its values more accessible to the people as they were in the not so distant past.
  - A second step would be to expand US scholarship and fellowship programmes to American universities along with shorter programmes for local leaders to study in the US. The flip side would be an expansion of the Fulbright lectureship programme.
  - To address Latin American intellectuals, US government leaders should engage in international conferences (such as the Latin American Studies Association), regional fora and other academic conferences. The Department of Defense should make every effort to be well represented at these conferences.
  - Programmes such as those of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (HDS) and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation clearly provide venues in which issues can be frankly addressed under conditions of academic freedom and non-attribution. Greater resources need to be devoted to them. In addition to these DoD programmes there is a need to create similar US institutions in other departments and/or on an interagency basis. These institutions need to be fully accredited academically as is the National Defense University and other war and staff colleges.
  - Not only should there be venues for publication by regional scholars such as CHDS' *Security and Defense Studies Review*, the Air University's *Airpower Journal*, and the Army Command & General Staff College's *Military Review* – all of which publish in English, Spanish and Portuguese – but there is a need for a multilingual non-

defense venue supported by the US government where views critical of US policy can be heard.

In short, every effort must be made to fight effectively and win what is properly called the information war. Otherwise, the potential linkage between terrorism-enabling capabilities in the region and anti-American ideology will become real, with a significant multiplier effect on the threat.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism*. 2004, April, 2005, p. 76 Western Hemisphere Overview.

<sup>2</sup> [www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/). See the 1 August speech by Secretary Chertoff. Also see the US Department of Justice definition of a gang, which is not simply a “street family”: “a group must be involved in a pattern of criminal acts to be considered a youth gang” in “Youth Gangs: An Overview” in *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, published by the US Dept. of Justice, August, 1998, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ana Arana, “How the Street Gangs Took Central America”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2005.

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programmes, National Institute of Justice. See [www.securitymanagement.com/library](http://www.securitymanagement.com/library).

<sup>5</sup> Mark P. Sullivan, “Latin America: Terrorism Issues”, *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RS21049, July 19, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Representative Randy J. Forbes of Virginia, author of the so-called “gang-busters bill” spoke in a PBS interview about gang brutality: “They’re cutting off people’s heads, they’re cutting off their fingers, they’re cutting off their arms”. (From PBS.Org. News hour, “Gang Violence”, August 2, 2005. ) Residents of suburban Maryland were shocked in August 2005 with the arrest of several Salvadoran immigrants accused of gang-related, brutal knife attacks. Maryland’s Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan traveled to El Salvador in August and spoke about gang problems related to Salvadoran immigrants, as well as about the Central American Free Trade Treaty (CAFTA )with Salvadoran President Saca (Nancy Trejo, “In El Salvador, Duncan Seeks Ally in Gang War”. *Washington Post*, Metro Section, August 9, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Estimates of the numbers of gang members in Honduras are usually in the range of some 40,000 individuals. Ana Arana, “How the Street Gangs Took Central America”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2005, VOL 84, issue 3, p. 3. For an estimate of 100,000 gang members in Honduras—see Hector Duarte Jr., “DEA Agent Shot and Killed during Robbery in Honduras”, August 1, 2005, *All Headline News*.

<sup>8</sup> Marcela Sanchez, “From Freedom to Stability, More than a Leap of Faith for Central America”, *Washington Post*, August 12, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> As indicated in the State Department’s February 2005 Human Rights Report. See also “Death of Son Persuades Honduran President to Take Political Stage”, *Financial Times*, August 11, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Chris Kraul, “El Salvador Comes to Grips with Gangs,” *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RS22141, May 10, 2005. Human rights groups have expressed concern about the tough government programmes, with the observation that the poorest sectors may choose to join gangs in search of support, and carry weapons in order to defend neighborhoods against rivals. That many engage in criminal activities is acknowledged, while concern persists for the human rights of the accused. See Joint Press Release, No 26/04, “Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and UNICEF Express Concern over Situation of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents Involved with Gangs in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras”, December 4, 2004, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, OAS.

<sup>11</sup> Will Wiessert, “Guatemala Gangs Blame Guards for Weapons”, *Guardian Unlimited*, August 16, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Clare Ribando, Gangs in Central America”, *CRS Report for Congress* , May 10, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> See Ribando, who estimated the level of menace to be lower in these countries, but also a contrasting account in an online bulletin from Panama, that gives a view of an encounter with a 9-year old gang member, in “Time to leave protesters alone and attack the criminal gangs.” July 12, 2005. <http://www.bulletinpa.com/index.php>

<sup>14</sup> Secretaría de Seguridad Pública de Chiapas, Escenarios de la Mara Salvatrucha y Barrio Dieciocho en México, May 2005. Also, Athanasios Hristoulas, a researcher in security issues at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo in Mexico City was quoted as saying: “There have already been some cases of people suspected of having links to Al Qaeda caught in Mexico.” In Oscar Becerra, “Mexico People-Smuggling Trade Worth Billions”, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, December 1, 2004, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Becerra.



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<sup>16</sup> The poll was funded by the Ford Foundation, and was reported as “Public Agenda Confidence in US Foreign Policy”, in *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005.

<sup>17</sup> “Francis Harris, “Bush under Pressure on Influx from Mexico”, *The Telegraph.Co.UK.*, August 17, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> President Fox’s comment, urging US-Mexican cooperation on border violence was widely reported. For one example where this comment is mentioned, see [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin\\_america/july-dec05/borders](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin_america/july-dec05/borders), in the PBS Newshour online programme, “US-Mexico Border Disputes”, August 18, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> See the link between street gangs and insurgency in Max G. Manwaring, “Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency”, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Series, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, March 2005.

<sup>20</sup> See UN Resolution 2116, on the UN Website.

<sup>21</sup> The Prime Minister is not named, but he is quoted as saying “Most of these rogues left the region at a very early age. Many of them have no families in the region and when they run afoul of the law...they are thrown back to the Caribbean.” From Norman ‘Gus’ Thomas, “Regional Crime Wave Fueled by Gangs and Deportees”, Caribbean Net News, August 15, 2005. [www.caribbeannetnews.com](http://www.caribbeannetnews.com)

<sup>22</sup> According to personal interviews with a Caribbean military officer, 2005. and corroborated by an on-line article summarized from the Economist, print edition, “Bubba, Bobo, Zambo and Zeeks—Domestic and International Issues Fuel Gang Violence in the Caribbean”, 4 Nov. 2004. [www.unesco.org/csi/smis/siv/inter-reg/art-crimeviolence.htm](http://www.unesco.org/csi/smis/siv/inter-reg/art-crimeviolence.htm)

<sup>23</sup> According to personal interviews with Caribbean security officials, 2005.

<sup>24</sup> According to personal interviews with Caribbean security officials, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> 1-2 August 2005, Santo Domingo, “Seguridad y Cooperación en el Caribe: Rol del Liderazgo Político Regional”, supported by the “Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (Funglode), as well as the Programa Latinoamericano of the Woodrow Wilson International Center (WWIC), and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO).

<sup>26</sup> Quoted by Ana Maria Dopico, “The 3:10 to Yuma,” in Andrew Ross and Kristin Ross (editors), *Anti-Americanism*, (New York: 2004), New York University Press, p. 47.

<sup>27</sup> Greg Grandin, “The Narcissism of Violent Differences,” in Ross & Ross, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 25

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Data from this survey are presented below with the reference: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/print.php>. Pew Global Attitudes Project.

<sup>32</sup> George Yudice, “US Prepotencia,” in Ross & Ross, p. 75.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/BBCworldpoll>. The margin of error in the poll ranged from 2.5% to 4%.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.pipa.org>.

<sup>36</sup> Kevin Allison, “World Turning its Back on Brand America,” FT.Com, August 1, 2005.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.gmi-mr.com/gmipoll/press\\_room\\_wppk\\_pr.phtml](http://www.gmi-mr.com/gmipoll/press_room_wppk_pr.phtml). August 16, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> One such exception is Guatemala’s meager 54% support of democracy which is significantly lower than both the Latin American average and that of its peers. It is still a clear majority, however.

<sup>39</sup> [www.latinobarometro.org](http://www.latinobarometro.org), *Informe – Resumen*, Agosto 13, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> These observations come from discussions with numerous Latin American civilian and military officials, police officers, journalists, and academics held in Washington D.C. and in the region over the past eight years. All of these discussions were held under non-attribution rules.

<sup>41</sup> <http://npr.org/templated/story/story.php>, June 9, 2005

<sup>42</sup> NPR report by Pam Fessler, “Crafting a Mental Profile of a Terrorist”, All Things Considered, August 17, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Greg Krikorian and Jennifer Warren, “Terror Probe Targets Prison in Folsom”, California Section, *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Eric Rich, “Suspected Jihadi Didn’t Stand Out in Neighborhood”, *Washington Post*, Metro, August 6, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> The term *foco*, Spanish for light or torch, is the theoretical insurgency strategy associated with the ideas of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro which used a small armed insurrectionist group as the focal point for the “revolution” to rally around.

<sup>46</sup> It is critical to point out here that we are not just talking about any terrorist – or any user of the terrorist tactic – but that the enemy is made up of types of the radical Islamist jihadist groups, especially those associated with Al Qaeda. These groups share only one ideological component with radicals in Latin America and that is a deep and profound anti-Americanism. That negative shared element is enough to form tactical alliances.

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<sup>47</sup> Carey Silvers, Vice President of the global survey company GFKNOP, in the consumer survey released this month, as reported by NPR, by Susan Stamberg, "Survey: American Brands Losing Prestige", in Morning Edition, August 17, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> While the US is a signatory to the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism, two years later the treaty was in the Senate for advice and consent, and was sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Among other things, the treaty would seek to improve regional cooperation against terrorism by committing parties to support U.N. anti-terrorism instruments, and deny safe haven to terrorists.

<sup>49</sup> Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army Commander, United States Southern Command before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 March 2005.  
[senate.gov/armed\\_services/statement/2005/March/Craddock](http://senate.gov/armed_services/statement/2005/March/Craddock)

<sup>50</sup> Max G. Manwaring, *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency*, Carlisle, PA: March 2005, Strategic Studies Institute, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with a Caribbean military officer who wishes to remain anonymous – 2005.

<sup>52</sup> By contrast, see the case of the Andean Ridge.

<sup>53</sup> See for example John T. Fishel and Max G. Manwaring, *Uncomfortable Wars Revisited*, Norman OK: 2006 (forthcoming), University of Oklahoma Press, especially Chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>54</sup> In June 2005, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) held in Panama City a regional seminar on strategies to prevent youth violence and crime, with delegates from governments and police forces from Central America, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. The IDB supports efforts by national and local authorities, civil society groups and the private sector to reduce violence in the region, through programmes to design youth policies, strengthening human development agencies, NGOs, communities, and modernizing police forces.