Francisco Chronicle, 4 July 2004; and Greg Jaffe, "Trial by Fire: On the Ground in Iraq, Captain Ayers Writes His Own Playbook," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 December 2004.

6. See Barak Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications* (Quantico, Va.: Marine Corps University Press, 2008).

7. The Army has established a Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center, and has begun initiatives through its Combined Arms Center (CAC). Working through its Senior Language Authority, the Navy has also established a nucleus for systematic operational culture and language training, while the Air Force has established a Center for Culture and Language Studies. The JFK Special Warfare School features a robust culture and language training program, and has continued to improve it.

8. For information about the CAP Program in Iraq, see Jason Goodale and Jon Webre, "The Combined Action Platoon in Iraq," *Marine Corps Gazette* 89, 4 (April 2005); Phil Skuta, "Introduction to 2/7 CAP Platoon Actions in Iraq," *Marine Corps Gazette* 89, 4 (April

2005). For information about precursors to the Vietnam CAP, see Al Hemingway, *Our War Was Different: Marine Combined Action Platoons in Vietnam* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994).

9. That is not to say journalists have no role. As guides to and informants about foreign cultures, they can be unrivaled resources. For an example from a region of growing concern to the Marine Corps, see Jeffrey Tayler, Angry Wind: *Through Muslim Black Africa by Truck, Bus, Boat, and Camel* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

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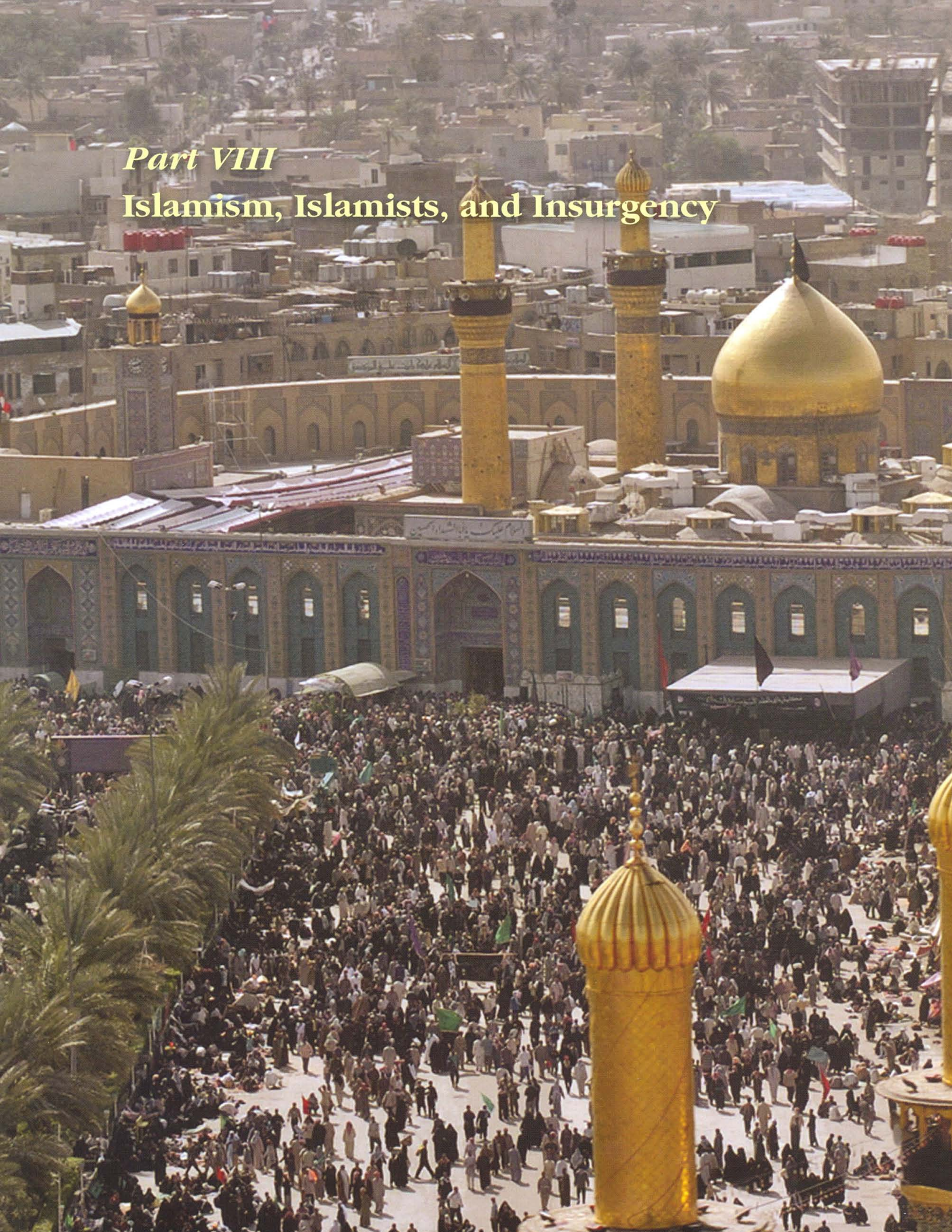
A Clash of Systems: An Analytical Framework to Demystify the Radical Islamist Threat

by Andrew Harvey, Ian Sullivan, and Ralph Groves

In the Winter 2004-05 issue of *Parameters*, Philip Seib makes a laudable effort to establish the imperative for journalists, policymakers, and the American public to "undertake a more sophisticated analysis of how the world works."[1] This is critical because the analytical framework adopted by the media and policymakers has a direct effect on how they approach news coverage and frame discussions regarding the threat posed by radical Islamist extremists. This in turn directly affects public opinion in the United States and the world, which in the context of a war of ideas is directly related to the success or failure of both sides. Professor Seib also pointed out the fact that the "clash of civilizations" theory espoused by Samuel Huntington has been widely criticized, and this article rejects it as an appropriate analytical framework. Our purpose is to provide an alternative framework that portrays the current global conflict as a clash of systems, not civilizations.

The central danger of accepting Huntington's model as a basis for analysis is that it is the chosen model of radical Islamists, who in turn use it to mobilize support. If a clash of civilizations is accepted in the West—or worse, accepted by the populations in Muslim states—then the forces attempting to overturn the global system could eventually succeed. Success, however, is not battalions of extremist Islamists marching down

Pennsylvania Avenue; rather, it is the replacement of "apostate" regimes with an Islamic Caliphate, which can occur only once the current U.S.-led global system is destroyed. Therefore, it is imperative that the wider global war on terror focus on the systemic implications of the struggle, which provides a credible methodology to address and mitigate the root causes that fuel the ideology of extremist Islamism.

Many authors have identified the imminent threat posed to the United States by radical Islamists in the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, and a number of them have described it as a war of ideas. What is lacking in the ongoing discourse, however, is a conceptual framework necessary for an in-depth analysis of the basic conflict. The current threat environment is based on a clash of systems between the U.S.-led global system, in which the phenomenon of globalization has created unprecedented connectivity and prosperity in the developed world, and those who oppose this system and wish to replace it with another paradigm. The ideology seeking to overthrow the global system is extremist Islamism.[2] It is put into action by transnational Islamist terrorists as well as regional and indigenous extremists who wish to replace the secular, U.S.-led global system with an Islamist world order. States along the periphery of the U.S.-led system, where Western liberal democratic ideology and values underlying globalization directly clash with radical Islamism, constitute the main battleground. This is where the primary objective of U.S. national power should be aimed: at convincing the undecided multitudes that becoming part of the global system is a better option than fighting against it. In order to prevent states and populations in this periphery from accepting integration into the global system, radical Islamists attempt to frame the ongoing conflict as a clash of civilizations.

Clash of Systems Framework

The first part of this framework is to establish that there is an international system made up of states and non-state actors. Though there is no world government, rules that guide interactions among these actors on the world stage do exist.[3]

These are formed either by consensus (norms of international law and commerce) or are imposed by a major power such as the United Kingdom in the 19th century and the United States in the 20th.[4] This system includes not only norms of interaction, international law, and treaties, but also institutions. The most important aspects of the post-World War II world system are the West's multinational organizations. They owe their origins to the 1941 Atlantic Charter of liberal principles established to guide the postwar world, and the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference on monetary order (both American initiatives). These gave birth to various organizations, including the United Nations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These organizations and the world order of open economics and dispute management were intended to prevent problems among Western industrial capitalist states—not to fight Soviet Communism, which was a separate system—and they continue to endure despite the end of the Cold War.[5] Therefore, the underlying Western-inspired world order remains intact and is even expanding as China, Russia, and other states of the former Soviet Union join Western organizations. This demonstrates the ongoing vigor of Western values and principles in an international and multinational context. This system is still in place and forms the framework that enables "globalization" to occur, which is in many ways an acceleration of the speed of interactions within the system, and an indicator of their scope. The Islamists understand this relationship, which explains why these institutions are targets for al-Qaeda.

Thomas Friedman has described "globalization" as a system, and as operating within the "liberal rules of economics . . . the software being the rule of law, courts, regulatory institutions, oversight bodies, free press, and democracy."[6] He also observes that globalization is happening in a power structure that isn't driven just by electrons and stock options. It's a power structure maintained and preserved by the U.S. military. The U.S. military is the hidden fist that keeps the hidden hand operating—"Ain't no McDonald's without McDonnell Douglas, and

without America on Duty there's no America Online."[7] This article agrees with Friedman's view of globalization as a system that promotes this increased mobility and the speed of exchange of these elements.

This global system established and maintained by the United States provides the background on which an analytical framework can be built. As the world's sole superpower, the United States will continue to dominate and influence all aspects of the global system for the foreseeable future. Although hegemonies are uncertain, there currently are no powers that accept the global system (this includes most of the world's major states) which are capable of overturning this hegemony without damaging the system itself. In this regard, the greatest threat to U.S. hegemony is not competition within the system, but is instead composed of elements that seek a complete overthrow of the global system. The United States owes this tremendous position of power to its ability to leverage its influence and leadership in the global system, which provides considerable benefit (economically, politically, and militarily) in return. Furthermore, in order to maintain this position as global hegemon, the United States is a status quo power within the global system that must protect and conserve it. In its relations with states that have not accepted the global system, the United States must be an agent for change in order to expand, if possible, the global system from which it derives such benefit.

Thomas Barnett describes the world in terms of a "Functioning Core" of states that have embraced the Western world system of "globalization." These states have stable governments, rising standards of living, liberal media, and are included in one or more systems of collective security. There are also states that have only begun to integrate or have not yet fully integrated into the world system, and are described as "Seam States" on the boundary of the "Functioning Core." Barnett calls other areas (which do not accept "globalization" or the global system) the "Non-Integrating Gap." It is no accident that these areas are trouble spots, and are where the United States is most likely to intervene militarily.[8] This three-level construct of globalization indicates the global Western system has limits

that affect how it functions. These constraints are, interestingly enough, connected to liberal Western concepts such as the rule of law and individual rights, reflecting an important point regarding this global framework. It is built on ideas and values that stand in direct opposition to those of the extremist Islamists.

In return for setting the rules for international interactions (which benefit the rule-maker), the United States provides security to maintain the system. Other actors or powers will support the United States if they receive more benefit from the system's continuation than from its demise. At the same time, they may also jockey for position within the system. On the other hand, if they do not feel that the system provides appropriate benefits, then they will challenge the system and attempt to overthrow or change it through conflict.[9] While many observers of the international system believe that states which clearly are part of the global system may seek to form partnerships and coalitions as a means of mitigating the dominating influence of U.S. power structures, there will be times when members of the system jockey for its leadership. No state is currently seeking to replicate our capabilities across all instruments of power. There is no "near peer competitor" with a desire to replace the current system. In fact, the major world powers—the United States, the European Union, China, Japan, and Russia—are in fact part of the system, or are attempting to integrate further into it (e.g., China and the WTO).

Though no state is attempting to overthrow the Western global system, there are states that are not fully integrated into it, and despite the intactness and growing inclusiveness of the system, there are still outsiders who believe the system is unjust and are unable to share its benefits. It is these latter areas, which are part of the seam, or the non-integrating gap, where the most critical battles in the wider clash of systems will occur.

The Islamist Challenge

Political Islam (Islamism), in various forms, is the most rapidly growing and persuasive ideology among Muslims today. Islamism is a socio-

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political ideology which strives to institute governments under Allah's authority, not man-made constitutions, and administration of society according to *sharia* (Islamic law), not Western law.[10] The ideology of Islamism is the cutting edge of Islamic militants' exertions against the West and its global system. As an ideology, Islamism is distinct from the religion of Islam, although it draws strength from zealous members of the Islamic resurgence. The Islamic resurgence does not protest against Islamic institutions, but rather protests against secular governments and social innovations modeled on the West. Understanding the Islamists' critique of modern life provides some clarity to these distinctions. Most Islamists (except for retrograde Salafists) are not against modern instrumentalities produced by industries (telephones, cars, airplanes, computers, etc.). Rather, Islamists are opposed to *modernism*, a sequel to industrialization and modernization, which is the ideology of social innovation in a secular environment completely unhinged from traditional and religious norms.

Islamism is ideological because it employs Islam for the socio-political goal of establishing governments under Allah's sovereignty with societies based on *sharia*. Islamism "fuses religion and politics, *din wa dawla*, in a way incompatible with Western analytical categories."[11] Establishing such governments and societies are meant to preserve Islamic religion and culture and to reverse Western domination. Culturally, many Islamic traditionalists feel eclipsed by the Western way of life in the globalized economy. Islamism is ascendant in its competition against secular Western political models within large segments of the Muslim world. In predominantly Islamic countries, Islamism has absorbed much of nationalist parties' ideologies, leaving nationalists weak. Generally in such countries, the left is marginal and in disarray and liberal democrats are few. Islamists heed the Koran's specific direction: "Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you."[12]

The Islamists' slogan, "Islam is the solution" (popularized by the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb), will continue to inspire political exertions against Western-type governments in Islamic countries until or unless the West convinces the Islamic world that it can have an equitable stake in globalization. Islamists will resist cultural and political influences of the West's global system, even if they acquiesce to economic interaction and trade. Their resistance to the West is not to imply mainly overt clashes. Most clashes for the proximate future will occur within the Islamic world itself, just as industrial countries of the West's global system will have their own internal (especially social) problems.

There are significant elements of Western culture that make the West less than entirely appealing to many in the Islamic world, both Muslims and Islamists. Though many appreciate the material benefits and technological advances that the West has to offer, Islamists tend to believe the West diluted the basis of its classical Christian civilization due to the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution, followed by the Philosophical Revolution (based on natural law) and its empiricism, rationalism, and positivism. Even though this · enabled technological innovation and industrialization, the removal of religion from its previous position as the basis for all knowledge meant that Christianity lost its centrality over the course of several centuries as the arbiter of how society should function. Today, religion in the West is compartmentalized due to increased secularization since the 1970s. Because of this, the overt manifestation of the West is characterized by its industrial order, which gives it overwhelming material superiority over agricultural or other resource-exporting countries,[13] but not moral superiority because secularization has eroded traditional morality.[14] Social relativism has become the norm, which Muslims and Islamists regard as unacceptable for emulation. In contrast, traditional societies still harboring tenets of their classical civilizations value spirituality (rather than consumerism), a God-centered view of the world (rather than a human-centered one), prescribed patterns of behavior (rather than innovative ones), extended families (rather than individualism and nuclear families), and a belief in absolutes (rather than relativism).

While the industrial West has emphasized secular rationalism, it also has engendered a certain degree of dissatisfaction with materialism as the primary focus of life. Westerners are likely to

seek spirituality in their "flight from the meaning-lessness of the secular world,"[15] reviving various sects of Christianity or importing other religions (such as Baha'ism) or creating new synergetic ones (such as Scientology). The fear of "import-ing" a similar spiritual void is one of the reasons why Islamists reject Western modernism. The West's insistence on democratic government and the rule of law is a function of industrial and commercial efficacy, not high-minded principles from Western classical civilization.[16] In any case, these features are integrated into industrial soci-eties of the global system and may make it awk-ward for countries outside the system to join. For Islamic countries, democracy is more about access than process, and Islamic law is based on *sharia*, which is very different from Western law. Also, the West's secularity presents serious cultur-al problems for Islam, creating tension alongside the potential economic benefits of joining the West's global system.

Despite U.S. or Eurocentric views (such as Francis Fukuyama's *End of History*), the West's industrial order and global system do not have universal appeal. However, the West's industrial order claims a universal applicability of its glob-al system. This puts it in direct conflict with Islamists, who also proclaim the universality of their system. Radical Islamists will accept only *our* unconditional surrender.

Our current conflict of ideologies is centered on the answer to the question of what constitutes "a good life." In the West, the answer is found in the individual rights of life, liberty, and the pur-suit of happiness. For the radical Islamists, the answer is in one's submission to the will of God through the imposition of their interpretation of *sharia* throughout the Muslim world.

A Clash of Systems in the Middle East

To Huntington's disciples, al-Qaeda's strike on the economic and military power base of the United States clearly represents an attack by the Islamic civilization against that of the United States and the West. Such an argument is persua-sive, particularly when one looks at the under-

currents of recent events in the Middle East: the ubiquitous Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the vicious campaign being conducted by foreign jihadists against U.S. forces in Iraq, a resurgence of the Islamist ideology across Barnett's non-integrating gap,[17] enhanced violent activity perpetrated by radical Islamist groups across the region, the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the region, and cooperation between regional states and militant groups. Yet Huntington's thesis fails to capture the true nature of the conflict that cur-rently grips the Middle East. It is not simply a result of irreconcilable differences between Western and Islamic civilizations; it is instead a deeper clash of international systems of order—globalization verses Islamism.

Under the current system of U.S.-led global-ization, a given state has two options—beating the system or joining it. In the Middle East, this debate is raging in an emotional and often vio-lent manner, and it is fast becoming a battle for the soul of the Islamic world. This conflict pits two sides against each other: those who embrace the system—i.e., moderates who seek to recon-cile the Islamic culture, religion, and worldview with the benefits of modernization and globaliza-tion—against those who would seek to destroy it, personified by Osama bin Laden and other extremists of his ilk, and who wish to replace it with an alternative system, in this case a world guided by the ideology of Islamism.

For Islamists, there are two main targets in their effort to bring about an Islamist system. The United States and its Western allies constitute one target. The other, perhaps more important, is the governments and elites of the states across the Middle East, who walk a narrow tightrope between accepting the dramatic benefits of the global system and heeding the wishes of the majority of the populace who receive little in the way of benefits from their own governments, let alone from the wider global system.

As a result, Islamists are fighting a two-pronged conflict. On the one hand, they have initiated a wide-reaching war against U.S. inter-ests and allies, which includes not only direct combat against U.S. military forces, but also attacks like those of 9/11 that target Americans and other Western civilians. Second, in the

Middle East the Islamists view the acceptance of a corrupt, godless, immoral system by the civilian populace as being responsible for the Western system's spread. Consequently, Islamists are engaged in a comprehensive battle for hearts and minds.

Their strategic objective to replace the Western system with one inspired by the divine hinges entirely upon successfully converting the populace to Islamist ideology. Islamists point to the hopelessness endemic throughout much of the region, where a handful of leaders and business elites reap economic rewards from collaborating with the U.S.-led system while the vast majority live in a pitiful squalor where daily life is a challenge. Instead of cooperating with a system where a few get rich, Islamists insist upon a strict interpretation of the Koran and look to the glory days of a bygone era when the Muslim world dominated the international system. Instead of buying into a system that is "corrupt" and accepting a culture that is "immoral," Islamists seek to create an alternative system similar to the one that once held a position of dominance. Islamists ask Muslims to accept the concept that "Islam is the solution," popularized by Qutb as early as 1952. Qutb argued that a philosophical break was required with modernism if a Muslim was to be true to his faith. This break is not a starting point for the intellectual study of the impact of modernism on the Islamic world, but instead becomes a manifesto demanding a radical change, inspired by the divine truths espoused in the Koran.[18] In essence, Qutb's philosophy, which has been adopted by a long string of Islamist radicals culminating in bin Laden, espouses a clash of civilizations between the wider Islamic *umma* (community of believers) and the West.

For the West, and particularly the United States, it becomes imperative to prevent the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) from becoming such a clash of civilizations, thereby devolving into exactly the kind of conflict that will be to the Islamists' advantage. Instead, the United States also should follow a two-pronged strategy whereby it selectively confronts Islamists, not simply to crush them, but to demonstrate to the Muslim world the long-term futility of such a

conflict. The current focus of this active conflict is on Iraq and Afghanistan. In the words of Friedman, "America's opponents know just what's at stake in the postwar struggle for Iraq, which is why they flock there: beat America in Iraq and you beat them out of the whole region; lose to America there, lose everywhere."[19] Friedman notes the Islamists understand the fight is not about oil, but is instead about "ideas and values and governance."[20] So for the United States, the active stratagem guiding the Global War on Terrorism is unlike anything it has attempted before; instead of concrete, military success, the GWOT is about reinforcing ideas and values (i.e., those that underpin the U.S.-led system), while at the same time demonstrating the inability of Islamists to advance their ideas and values to the wider Islamic community.

This in part explains the frustrating experience the U.S. military is encountering in its nation-building operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the enemies of the global system, each successful tactical operation against the U.S.-led Coalition becomes a strategic victory. Each successful attack against U.S. military targets, Coalition partners, or international relief workers is a ringing endorsement for those who oppose the system and seek its replacement. Successful attacks offer "proof" to the undecided masses that the United States will not be able to establish the system in the contested areas of Iraq and Afghanistan, and they help to sway opinion toward alternative systemic constructs. From a U.S. perspective, tactical victories are relevant only insofar as they help to buy time for the global system to take root. As a result, there is no classic definition of military "victory." Military operations in these circumstances should be aimed at implementing security and stability in order for the other elements of national power (e.g., economic and social) to bring concrete improvements to the wider society, which in turn will eventually lead the masses to decide that the U.S.-led global system is worth joining. Providing security and stability are the absolutely necessary preconditions that will allow this systemic acceptance to occur, and that should be the primary focus of U.S. military operations in areas of the non-integrating gap where societies are split between joining the

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global system or choosing the Islamist alternative.

According to Daniel Pipes, the central task of the United States is to reinforce moderate Islam as a counterbalance to Islamism. Pipes postulates the central conflict in the GWOT is the one waged between militant and moderate Islam. While Washington can help in this struggle by providing assistance to the moderates and working to establish reforms in areas locked in a self-defeating bargain with the militants (such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan), the actual battle will be won or lost within the Islamic world itself.[21] As a result, the second task implicit in a successful resolution to the GWOT is in supporting those elements in the Middle East that already accept the U.S.-led system, and, most critically, facilitating pro-Western change in those states that straddle the fence.

The issue that makes the Global War on Terrorism so fundamentally different from other ideological conflicts in history is that it pits the U.S.-led global system against non-state actors who transcend political boundaries. These non-state actors are striving to appeal to religion, culture, and even pan-Arab nationalism to forge a decentralized core of ideologically motivated insurgents fighting to overthrow the U.S.-led global system and replace it with one based on their radical interpretations of *sharia*. This conflict is completely asymmetrical, where the enemy realizes it lacks the military capability to directly challenge the U.S.-led system on a global scale. Instead, it relies on the strategy and tactics of the insurgent to selectively engage U.S. and Coalition forces (Khobar Towers, the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the USS *Cole* attack, 9/11) while striking in other venues to make political gains (the Madrid bombing, Bali bombing, kidnappings and murder of foreign nationals in Iraq, the 7/7 bombings in London) to erode Coalition cohesion. Unlike other insurgencies, the GWOT is unique because of its scale. It is, in effect, a pansurgency. [22]

Strategic Conflict of Perceptions

Islamist militants understand their desired strategic objectives. Although they are incapable

of militarily defeating the U.S. and Coalition forces on the battlefield, their success is determined by the achievement of their desired strategic political end state—the withdrawal of U.S. forces and the creation of *sharia*-based governments. This type of conflict is ideally suited to the cultural underpinning of Arab and Islamic concepts of warfare. In virtually every historical example involving Arab or Islamic conflict, tactical and even operational-level military operations are considered ancillary to the final political objective. As a result, even overwhelming defeats have been turned into victories or considered simply part of a longer-term conflict. A couple of historical examples highlight this perspective:

◆ Israel won the most dramatic and complete tactical victories in modern military history during the 1967 Six-Day War. In May 1967, just before launching the devastating air attack which crippled Egypt's air force, Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol commented to his generals, "Nothing will be settled by a military victory. The Arabs will still be here."[23] Thirty-plus years later, Arabs continue to resist the battlefield outcome of that conflict.

◆ In the French/Algerian conflict of the 1950s and early 1960s, conventional French military forces won the tactical fight against the insurgent forces but failed to achieve their strategic objectives due to the collapse of French national will.

The United States currently is facing a tremendous asymmetric challenge. U.S. military operations are focused on winning a tactical fight that does not answer the strategic challenge or target our adversaries' center of gravity, the attraction of their ideology. If U.S. forces fail to orient on the enemy center of gravity, the United States may continue to win the tactical fight while abandoning the strategic advantage to our adversaries, whose tactical operations are designed with a strategic objective in mind. In essence, U.S. forces are playing football while the militants are playing chess.

Meanwhile, the radical Islamists have fixed, and are directly targeting, the United States' center of gravity, its national will to carry on missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan. From the out-

set, anti-Coalition elements in both locations have relied on the media to target this center of gravity. Although part of this effort has been focused on shaping regional opinion (e.g., condemning U.S. foreign policy and military action, calling for armed resistance, etc.) to sustain their operations, the more damaging aspect of this approach is the targeting of public opinion in the West.

The militants are aided in this fight by some parts of the international media that are eager to report on situations unfavorable to U.S. policy. As a result of this coverage, the militants' tactical fight is elevated to the strategic level, whereby each tactical success (a bombing, a mortar attack, a kidnapping, even a single U.S. or Coalition casualty) becomes a strategic success. This is seen in their targeting selection, which aims to cause as much instability as possible, fracture the Coalition, and thereby compel elements of the international community to abandon active participation in these missions. This effort has succeeded in driving out several Coalition partners, NGOs, and regional-based companies participating in the reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The militants intend to take further advantage of a wider information operations campaign as a strategic weapon. Militants can rely on the coverage of Arab-language broadcast and print media, which often has an unmistakable bias against the United States and the West, to bolster their cause.

The growth of satellite broadcast networks such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya is one of the most significant developments in the Middle East in recent years. Although these independent outlets represent a fundamental shift away from state control of the media, they do play upon the emotions of the Arab masses. Suicide bombers in Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan are not referred to as terrorists, but instead as martyrs. During a discussion of the outbreak of violence in Saudi Arabia following the murder of American contractor Paul Johnson, al-Jazeera anchor Abdul Samad Nasser referred to Saudi Arabia as "Jazeerat al-Arab" (or the Arabian Peninsula). This term was used in Arabic to describe the area prior to the formation of the Saudi state, and also has been adopted by Osama bin Laden in his ref-

erences to Saudi Arabia in an attempt to delegitimize the Saudi state in the eyes of his followers. In another case, the former chief editor of the pan-Arab daily *Asharq al-Aswat* noted he once caught one his editors changing the caption of an Associated Press photo from "an American soldier chatting with an Iraqi girl" to "an American soldier asking an Iraqi girl for sex." In effect, Arab-language media sources are tacitly supporting the radical Islamists' agenda of creating a clash of civilizations.[24]

Advocating a New System: The Islamist Agenda

The primary objective of Islamists is to overthrow the West's global system and replace it with a traditional Islamic system. From its political expressions during the early 20th century, Islamism challenged Western modernism as the basis for a just world order. Hasan al-Banna, the Egyptian school-teacher who established the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, railed against the modern world's encroachments on the Islamic world. Banna blamed Mustafa Kemal Attaturk's rise to power in a wave of secular liberalism in Turkey, which spread throughout the Middle East. In 1939, the Muslim Brotherhood transitioned from a social reform movement to a political organization adopting a radical, revolutionary agenda, and in essence became the ideological genesis of today's Islamism. The agenda espoused by the Muslim Brotherhood was threefold:

◆ Islam is a comprehensive, self-evolving system; it is the ultimate path of life in all spheres.
◆ Islam emanates from, and is based on, two fundamental sources, the Koran and the Prophetic Tradition.
◆ Islam is applicable to all times and places.

According to Dilip Hiro, the platform of the Muslim Brotherhood presented an "all-encompassing entity," which offered "an all-powerful system to regulate every detail of the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the believers."[25] Seizing upon Banna's ideas, Qutb argued that true Muslims are in a perpetual state of war

against secular political leaders, in which Jihad becomes a "defensive response" to the "war of annihilation" the "apostates" wage against Islam. "True Muslims" are and must be set apart from the secular incarnation of government in a "counter-society" of the *umma* (community of believers). In this counter-society, true Muslims have no allegiance to state or government, but only to the *umma*, striving to create a system based on the Koran.[26] As early as the mid-1950s, Qutb was arguing for jihad against secular influences in Egypt and the Arab world, and also against Western society. He asked, "What should be done about America and the West given their overwhelming danger to humanity. . . ? Should we not issue a sentence of death? Is it not the verdict most appropriate to the nature of the crime?"[27] During his trial, Qutb made his final statement in support of his concept of Islamism as a system when he argued, "The bonds of ideology and belief are sturdier than those of patriotism based upon region."[28] He was executed by Nasser in 1966.

There is a direct connection between the ideologies of Banna and Qutb and today's radical Islamists. Judith Miller argues that Qutb's primary legacy to radical Islam's ideology is that of "literalism." Qutb was able to use the words of the Koran and turn them against the Western-dominated system that permeated Middle East governments.[29] His calls for jihad against the West as a religious duty for all Muslims would not only permeate the mainstream of Islamic society but would be seized upon by a new generation of radicals, culminating in bin Laden. Like his ideological mentor Qutb, bin Laden considers Arab governments that have bought into the West's system to be "morally depraved" and "hypocrites" worthy not only of enmity, but of overthrow.[30] According to Emmanuel Sivan, Islamist opposition movements concentrate on the "nearest enemy," which in this case means Arab governments that cooperate with the U.S.-led system. In his view, Islamist opposition movements will engage the "further away enemies" (meaning the United States and Israel) at a later time.[31]

Despite bin Laden's ideological diatribes against the United States, and even his direct attacks against U.S. power and influence, the nearest enemy continues to be the dominant battleground in the war between systems. At the end of the day, radical Islam will seize upon challenges in the Middle East: the youth bulge, declining economies where wealth and opportunities are concentrated among small elites, lack of political expression in most states, foreign policy crises (e.g., the *Intifada* and the U.S. occupation of Iraq) where the Islamic world believes it is being challenged by the global system, and a future devoid of optimism. In the words of Moroccan Islamist Abdul Sallam Yassin, both "West and East have failed. The future is Islam."[32] The pervasiveness of Islamism, which even in its moderate form advocates a unity between religious and political life, means that until the global system shows its ability to benefit states of the non-functioning gap, the Arab street will be a willing audience for Islamism. As leading Egyptian journalist Muhammad Hasanein Heikal notes, "Only Islam makes sense, is authentic" to the Arab street.[33]

Bridging the Gap: The Struggle Across the Middle East

From a geostrategic perspective, these areas include a variety of states across the region where Islamists are actively engaged in attempting to instill their vision of a *sharia*-based Islamic *umma*. Currently, radical Islamists do not wield complete control in any state. The only state that comes close is Iran, but even Iran is caught in the struggle between religious fundamentalists and moderates who seek to modernize their country and bring to it some of the benefits of globalization. A second category of states is those in which the leaders have attempted to strike bargains with their nation's indigenous Islamist elements in order to remain in power, such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Finally, there are also states whose governments have chosen to restrict or even eliminate all Islamist elements from gaining enough power, influence, and authority to establish themselves as a true force for change, such as Algeria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

A further complicating factor is the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian and wider Arab-Israeli conflict,

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which is truly about land and not religion or ideology, counter to what the Islamists would have us believe. This aspect represents a true conundrum for U.S. Middle East policy, as it presents an opportunity for Islamists to encroach in an area that allows them to sway the opinion of the Arab street toward their ideology. Bin Laden's attempt to hijack the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for his own purposes, adding the removal of the "Zionists" from Arab territory as one of al-Qaeda's stated goals, illustrates clearly his attempt to develop a clash of civilizations.

If the United States is to be victorious in the Global War on Terrorism, it must not allow the situation to devolve into Huntington's simplistic, apocalyptic vision of a clash of civilizations. Instead, the United States must understand the implications of its leadership in the global system and how to use this position to demonstrate to moderates in the Islamic world why they should join us rather than attempt to beat us.

Notes

1. Philip Seib, "News Media and the Clash of Civilizations," *Parameters* 34 (Winter 2004-05), 71-85.

2. Niall Ferguson makes a key point by suggesting "it is a mistake to characterize Islamists as "Islamo-Fascists," and it is better to think of them as "Islamo-Bolshevists committed to a revolution and reordering of the world along anti-capitalist lines" in "Sinking Globalization," *Foreign Affairs* 84 (March/April 2005), 75.

3. This is a common construct regarding international relations. See: Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia, 1977); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1959); Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992); Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984); and Kenneth A. Oye, ed., *Cooperation under Anarchy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986).

4. This is part of the basis for Hegemonic Stability Theory. See: Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982); and Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization* 39 (Autumn 1985).

5. G. John Ikenberry, "The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (May/June 1996).

6. Thomas Friedman, "National Strategies and Capabilities for a Changing World: Globalization and National Security," luncheon address, 31st Annual IFPA–Fletcher Conference on National Security and Policy, Washington, D.C., 15 November 2000.

7. Ibid.

8. Thomas Barnett, "The Pentagon's New Map," *Esquire*, March 2003.

9. This is the main argument of the hegemonic stability theory. Changes to the international system occur when the hegemon is unable or unwilling to provide the public goods necessary to maintain the system. A weak hegemon may be assisted in maintaining the system by other states that derive benefit from that system, or be challenged by others who do not benefit, or who wish to assume the role of the hegemon. See Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, and Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory."

10. *Sharia* (Islamic law) was codified in the eighth and ninth centuries, after the Abbasids seized the Islamic caliphate from the Umayyads. *Sharia* variants exist according to jurists' compilations and interpretations in different geographic areas: the *Hanafi* School (least strict) in Turkey, Central Asia, and India; *Shafi* in Iran and the coastal Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean areas; *Maliki* in North and Sub-Saharan Africa; *Hanbali* (most strict) in Saudi Arabia.

11. Charles Hirschkind, "What is Political Islam?" *Middle East Report*, No. 205 (October-December 1997), 14.

12. Koran, Sura 2: verse 190. Most *sharia* schools of law consider jihad an obligation if unbelievers begin hostilities. See also Desmond Stewart, *Early Islam* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1967): "Christ had taught Christians to forgive their persecutors and turn the other cheek; Muhammad, in contrast, had urged his followers to fight for Islam" (39-40).

13. See Theodore H. von Laue, *The World Revolution of Westernization: The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), for his views of cultures and their abilities to assimilate modern ideas and technology.

14. See Alisdair McIntyre, *After Virtue* (South Bend, Ind.: Notre Dame Univ. Press, 1984), for a comprehensive review of the philosophical path taken by the West, with a critique mirroring many of the Islamists' complaints.

15. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Christianity in a Secularized World* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 57.

16. See Seizaburo Sato, "The Clash of Civilizations: A View from Japan," *The Asteion Magazine* (Okamoto

International Affairs Research Institute, Japan), 1996, for a detailed explanation of the West's transition from its classical roots to an industrial order. Rodney Stark's *For the Glory of God* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003) examines why science progressed further in Christendom rather than in the Islamic world, providing an explanation for the early impetus toward eventual Western industrialization.

17. Barnett.

18. Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (2d ed.; New York: Routledge, 1993), 139-40.

19. Thomas Friedman, "Fighting 'The Big One,'" *The New York Times*, 24 August 2003.

20. Ibid.

21. Daniel Pipes and Graham Fuller, "Combating the Ideology of Radical Islam," Special Policy Forum Report, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 10 April 2003.

22. The concept of pansurgency was conceived by Dr. Ilana Kass of the National Defense University for a briefing to the White House and Congress. Dr. Kass defines pansurgency as the organized movement of transnational actors seeking to overthrow values, cultures, or societies on a global level through subversion and armed conflict with an ultimate goal of establishing a new world order.

23. Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), 152.

24. Mamoun Fandy, "Where's the Arab Media's Sense of Outrage?" *Washington Post*, 4 July 2004, B4.

25. Dilip Hiro, *War Without End: The Rise of Islamist Terrorism and Global Response* (rev., 2d. ed.; London: Routledge, 2002), 59-60.

26. Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1990).

27. Sayyid Qutb, *Islam and the Problems of Civilization*, quoted in Judith Miller, *God Has Ninety-Nine Names: Reporting from a Militant Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 62-63.

28. Hiro, 67.

29. Miller, 63.

30. Ibid., 49.

31. Emmanuel Sivan, "The Holy War Tradition in Islam," *Orbis*, 42 (Spring 1998), 171-94.

32. Mahmud A. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997), 25.

33. Ibid.

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The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam

by Michael G. Knapp

"All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on God, his Messenger, and Muslims. . . . [T]he jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries. . . . As for the fighting to repulse [an enemy], it is aimed at defending sanctity and religion, and it is a duty. . . . On that basis, and in compliance with God's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."

—*Osama bin Laden et al., in "Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders," 23 February 1998*

The word "jihad" means "struggle" or "striving" (in the way of God) or to work for a noble cause with determination; it does not mean "holy war" (war in Arabic is *harb* and holy is *muqadassa*). Unlike its medieval Christian counterpart term, "crusade" ("war for the cross"), however, the term jihad for Muslims has retained its religious and military connotation into modern times. The word jihad has appeared widely in the Western news media following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but the true meaning of this term in the Islamic world (it is sometimes called the "sixth pillar" of the faith) is still not well understood by non-Muslims.

In war, the first essential is to know your adversary—how he thinks and why he thinks that way, and what his strategy and objectives are—so that you can attempt to frustrate his plans and protect the lives of your fellow citizens. Understanding how radical Muslims see jihad and are employing it asymmetrically against us can provide us with that kind of perspective.

This article will trace the development of jihad through early Islamic history into the present day and will focus on how jihad in concept and practice has been appropriated and distorted by Muslim extremists as part of their violent campaign against the West and their own governments. Jihad as a centerpiece of radical thought is illustrated by examining the doctrines of prominent extremist groups such as Hamas and Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Misuse of the term by prominent extremist leaders, such as by Osama bin Laden and others in the quote above, is also addressed.

The Classical Concept of Jihad

Qur'anic and Early Legal Perspectives. Muslims themselves have disagreed throughout their history about the meaning of the term jihad. In the Qur'an (or Koran), it is normally found in the sense of fighting in the path of God; this was used to describe warfare against the enemies of the early Muslim community (*ummah*). In the *hadith,* the second most authoritative source of the *shari'a* (Islamic law), jihad is used to mean armed action, and most Islamic theologians and jurists in the classical period (the first three centuries) of Muslim history understood this obligation to be in a military sense.[1]

Islamic jurists saw jihad in the context of conflict in a world divided between the *Dar al-Islam* (territory under Islamic control) and the *Dar al-harb* (territory of war, which consisted of all lands not under Muslim rule). The inhabitants of the territory of war are divided between "People of the Book" (mainly Jews and Christians) and polytheists. This requirement to continue jihad until all of the world is included in the territory of Islam does not imply that Muslims must wage nonstop warfare, however. Although there was no mechanism for recognizing a non-Muslim government as legitimate, jurists allowed for the negotiation of truces and peace treaties of limited duration. Additionally, extending the territory of Islam does not mean the annihilation of all non-Muslims, nor even their necessary conversion: jihad cannot imply conversion by

force, since the Qur'an (2:256) states that "There is no compulsion in religion." More than a religious aim, jihad really had a political one: the drive to establish a single, unified Muslim realm justified Islam's supercession of other faiths and allowed for the creation of a just political and social order.[2]

Jihad was generally understood not as an obligation of each individual Muslim (known as *fard 'ayn*) but as a general requirement of the Muslim community (*fard kifaya*). Only in emergencies, when the Dar al-Islam comes under unexpected attack, do all Muslims have to participate in jihad. Under normal circumstances, therefore, an individual Muslim need not take part so long as other Muslims carry the burden for all of defending the realm.[3]

Other Philosophical Perspectives. This consensus view of a restricted, defensive version of jihad was contested by Muslim legal philosopher Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). He declared that a ruler who fails to enforce the shari'a rigorously in all aspects, including the conduct of jihad (and is therefore insufficiently Muslim), forfeits his right to rule. Ibn Taymiyya strongly advocated jihad as warfare against both the Crusaders and Mongols who then occupied parts of the Dar al-Islam, and most important, broke with the mainstream of Islam by asserting that a professing Muslim who does not live by the faith is an apostate (unbeliever). By going well beyond most jurists (who tolerated rulers who violated the shari'a for the sake of community stability), Ibn Taymiyya laid much of the groundwork for the intellectual arguments of contemporary radical Islamists.[4]

Islamic law condemns all warfare that does not qualify as jihad, specifically any warfare among Muslims. Thus, military action against Muslims is justified only by denying them the status of Muslims (e.g., classifying them as apostates or rebels).[5] Islamic juristic tradition is also very hostile toward terror as a means of political resistance. Classical Muslim jurists were remarkably tolerant toward political rebels by holding that they may not be executed nor their property confiscated. This tolerance vanished, however, for rebels who conducted attacks against unsuspecting and defenseless victims or who spread terror through

abductions, rapes, the use of poisoned arrows and poisoning of wells (the chemical warfare of this period), arson, attacks against travelers, and night attacks. In these cases, jurists demanded harsh penalties (including death) and ruled that the punishment was the same whether the perpetrator or victim was Muslim or non-Muslim.[6]

Three main views of jihad thus coexisted in pre-modern times. In addition to the classical legal view of jihad as a compulsory, communal effort to defend and expand the Dar al-Islam, and Ibn Taymiyya's notion of active jihad as an indispensable feature of legitimate rule, there was also the *Sufi* movement's doctrine of *greater jihad*. The *Sufis* (a mystical sect of Islam) understood the greater jihad as an inner struggle against the base instincts of the body but also against corruption of the soul, and believed that the greater jihad is a necessary part of the process of gaining spiritual insight. To this day, most Muslims see jihad as a personal rather than a political struggle, while physical actions taken in defense of the realm are considered the *lesser jihad*. It is not surprising, then, that disagreement over the meaning of jihad has continued into the modern era.[7]

Origins of Radical Ideologies

Muslim reform movements in the Middle East first acquired a sense of urgency with the arrival of European imperialism in the latter part of the 19th century. The end of colonialism and acquisition of independence by most Muslim countries after World War II accelerated this drive. However, the massive social changes that accompanied these reforms and the simultaneous introduction of new ideas that were alien to classical Islamic tradition— such as nationalism, popular sovereignty, and women's rights—disrupted traditional ways of life and caused traumatic dislocations in these societies.[8]

Disillusionment with the path Muslim societies have taken in the modern period reached its height in the 1970s. Increasingly widespread rejection of Western civilization as a model for Muslims to emulate has been accompanied by a search for indigenous values that reflect traditional Muslim culture, as well as a drive to restore power and dignity to the community. The last 30 years have seen the rise

of militant, religiously-based political groups whose ideology focuses on demands for jihad (and the willingness to sacrifice one's life) for the forceful creation of a society governed solely by the shari'a and a unified Islamic state, and to eliminate un-Islamic and unjust rulers. These groups are also reemphasizing individual conformity to the requirements of Islam.[9]

Militant Islam (also referred to as political or radical Islam) is rooted in a contemporary religious resurgence in private and public life.[10] The causes of Islamic radicalism have been religio-cultural, political, and socio-economic and have focused on issues of politics and social justice such as authoritarianism, lack of social services, and corruption, which all intertwine as catalysts. Many Islamic reform groups have blamed social ills on outside influences; for example, modernization (e.g., Westernization and secularization) has been perceived as a form of neocolonialism, an evil that replaces Muslim religious and cultural identity and values with alien ideas and models of development.[11]

Islamic militancy is still not well understood by Americans. This is partly due to the secrecy which radical Islamic groups practice to protect themselves from the authorities and from outsiders who do not share their views and aims, but also because Western public communications media frequently tend to marginalize such groups. They are dismissed as religious fanatics, anti-Western hooligans, or mindless terrorists without making an attempt to comprehend the deep discontents that have produced these Islamic groups' violent actions or the logic of their radical cause which compels them to behave as they do.[12]

Differences in Sunni and Shi'a Interpretations of Jihad

Sunni and Shi'a (Shi'ite) Muslims agree, in terms of just cause, that jihad applies to the defense of territory, life, faith, and property; it is justified to repel invasion or its threat; it is necessary to guarantee freedom for the spread of Islam; and that difference in religion alone is not a sufficient cause. Some Islamic scholars have differentiated disbelief from persecution and injustice and claimed that

jihad is justified only to fight those unbelievers who have initiated aggression against the Muslim community. Others, however, have stated more militant views which were inspired by Islamic resistance to the European powers during the colonial period: in this view, jihad as "aggressive war" is authorized against all non-Muslims, whether they are oppressing Muslims or not.

The question of right authority—no jihad can be waged unless it is directed by a legitimate ruler—also has been divisive among Muslims. The Sunnis saw all of the Muslim caliphs (particularly the first four "rightly guided" caliphs to rule after the Prophet Muhammad's death, who possessed combined religious and political authority) as legitimate callers of jihad, as long as they had the support of the realm's *ulama* (Islamic scholars). The Shi'a see this power as having been meant for the Imams, but it was wrongly denied to them by the majority Sunnis. The lack of proper authority after the disappearance of the 12th ("Hidden") Imam in 874 A.D. also posed problems for the Shi'a; this was resolved by the ulama increasingly taking this authority for itself to the point where all legitimate forms of jihad may be considered defensive, and there is no restriction on the kind of war which may be waged in the Hidden Imam's absence so long as it is authorized by a just ruler (this idea reached its zenith under Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini).

Both sects agree on the other prerequisites for jihad. Right intention (*niyyah*) is fundamentally important for engaging in jihad. Fighting for the sake of conquest, booty, or honor in the eyes of one's companions will earn no reward; the only valid purpose for jihad is to draw near to God. In terms of last resort, jihad may be waged only if the enemy has first been offered the triple alternative: accept Islam, pay the *jizyah* (the poll tax required for non-Muslim "People of the Book" living under Muslim control), or fight.[13]

Conditions also are placed on the behavior of combatants in jihad: discrimination of noncombatants from warriors is required, along with the prohibition of harm to noncombatants such as women, children, the disabled, monks and rabbis (unless they are involved in the fighting), and those who have been given the promise of immunity; and proportionality, meaning that the least amount

of force is used to obtain the desired ends in combat.[14]

Ideas on Jihad in the Modern Era

Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) was the first Islamist writer to approach jihad systematically. Warfare, in his view, is conducted not just to expand Islamic political dominance, but also to establish just rule (one that includes freedom of religion). For Mawdudi (an Indo-Pakistani who agitated for Pakistan's independence from India), jihad was akin to war of liberation and is designed to establish politically independent Muslim states. Mawdudi's view significantly changed the concept of jihad in Islam and began its association with anticolonialism and "national liberation movements." His approach paved the way for Arab resistance to Zionism and the existence of the state of Israel to be referred to as jihad.[15]

Radical Egyptian Islamist thinkers (and members of the Muslim Brotherhood) Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) took hold of Mawdudi's activist and nationalist conception of jihad and its role in establishing a truly Islamic government, and incorporated Ibn Taymiyya's earlier conception of jihad that includes the overthrow of governments that fail to enforce the shari'a. This idea of revolution focuses first on dealing with the radicals' own un-Islamic rulers (the "near enemy") before Muslims can direct jihad against external enemies. If leaders such as Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, for example, are not true Muslims, then they cannot lead jihad, not even against a legitimate target such as Israel. Significantly, radical Islamists consider jihad mandatory for all Muslims, making it an individual rather than a communal duty.[16]

The Use of Jihad by Islamic Militants

Regional Islamic Militant Groups' Perceptions.
Classical Islamic criteria for jihad were based on the early unified Muslim empire. The imposition of the modern nation-state on Middle East societies, however, has made such ideas no longer applicable; this can be seen by examining contemporary Muslim militant groups' ideologies.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (commonly known as Hamas) sees its situation as similar to that of the Muslim ruler Saladin in his struggle against the Christian Crusaders, as can be seen by examining portions of its Charter. The goal of Hamas is to establish an Islamic Palestinian state in place of Israel, through both violent means (including terrorism) and peaceful political activity. Hamas argues that the current situation of the Palestinians, living under Israeli control or dispersed from their homeland, is part of an ongoing crusade by Christians to take the Holy Lands out of Palestinian hands. The loss of Palestine and the creation of Israel, the Charter continues, were brought about by the great powers of East and West and taken together constitute a great tragedy not only for the Palestinians but for the entire Islamic community. This, Hamas proclaims, requires jihad not in the sense of expanding the territory of Islam, but of restoring it, and to recover land rather than conquer it. Nor is it a rebellion in the classical sense; rather, this is a struggle to regain a lost portion of the territory of Islam. The Hamas Charter thus provides a uniquely Islamic rationale for al-intifada, the "shaking off" of illegitimate rule.[17] This language thus seems to suggest defensive jihad, rather than an offensive struggle.

Since Hamas is not acting on behalf of an established government, it must find authorization elsewhere for its struggle against not only external enemies but also so-called "Muslim" governments that collaborate with the non-Muslim powers (by cooperating with Israel or allowing the basing of Western troops on their soil). The group considers Muslim governments that cooperate with the West as ignorant of the non-Muslim nations' true intentions, or corrupt. Hamas argues that it obtains its authority to declare jihad in another way: the Western powers' invasion of Islamic territory has created an emergency situation where Muslims cannot wait for authorization other than that given directly by God, so jihad is a required duty for all conscientious Muslims.[18] This exceptional situation suspends the usual lines between parties in a relationship so that every Muslim can participate in the struggle. Hamas's Charter thus relates the current situation of Muslims to the classical period, but also marks a break with that classical past. This extraor-

dinary situation also means a change in the nature of Muslim obligation under jihad, from a collective responsibility to extend the Dar al-Islam to a duty for each individual Muslim to restore that territory.[19]

The same pattern of thinking is present in "The Neglected Duty," a pamphlet produced by Egyptian Islamic Jihad (or EIJ, the group that assassinated Anwar Sadat in 1981). This pamphlet, the group's announced "testament," is also a clear expression of the Sunni Islamist perspective on political violence as jihad. It argues that jihad as armed action is the heart of Islam, and that the neglect of this type of action by Muslims has caused the current depressed condition of Islam in the world. EIJ attempts to communicate a sense of urgency to Muslims, who are being victimized and whose territory is being divided and controlled by non-Muslim powers. The document also seeks to justify jihad against other Muslims who, because they are ignorant of this situation, actively cooperate with the unbelievers in the name of "modernization" and are worse than rebels—they are Muslim traitors and apostates. Furthermore, fighting such unbelievers without the limits imposed if they were rebellious Muslims is justified, since they are worse than other unbelievers.[20]

"The Neglected Duty" defines the current rulers of the Muslim world (as Sadat was defined) as the primary enemies of Islam and apostates, despite their profession of Islam and obedience to some of its laws, and advocates their execution. This document is explicitly messianic, asserting that Muslims must "exert every conceivable effort" to bring about the establishment of truly Islamic government, a restoration of the caliphate, and the expansion of the Dar al-Islam, and that the success of these endeavors is inevitable.[21] "The Neglected Duty" cites a different historical analogy for this struggle than does Hamas' Charter, however: more appropriate than the threat posed by the European Crusaders was the struggle of Muslims against the Mongol invaders.

EIJ is raising an important issue connected with irregular war: the group is advocating mass resistance against an established government, and such revolution can be justified in Islam only where the ruler becomes an unbeliever through public displays of unbelief. The most significant of such acts

is introduction of an innovation (bid'ah), which is a policy, teaching, or action that violates precedents in the Qur'an or hadith. The leadership thus loses its divinely given authority when it commits apostasy, and Muslims not only must no longer obey such a ruler, but are required to revolt and depose him.

This reference to the obligation to God for the creation and maintenance of an Islamic state and the responsibilities of Muslims serves to answer the question of authorization for militant Islamic forces.[22] "The Neglected Duty" provides further justification for armed action by arguing that Egypt, like most of its neighbors, is not an Islamic state because its constitution and laws are a mix of traditional Islamic judgments and European law codes. Imposition of such a mixed legal system (non-Islamic laws that are an "innovation") by Egypt's leaders on their subjects thus means that the nation is not part of the territory of Islam, but part of the territory of war or unbelief.[23]

Shi'a radicals have a similar perspective to their Sunni extremist "brothers in arms." Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) contended that Islamic jurists, "by means of jihad and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, must expose and overthrow tyrannical rulers and rouse the people so the universal movement of all alert Muslims can establish Islamic government in the place of tyrannical regimes." The proper teaching of Islam will cause "the entire population to become mujahids [literally "strugglers for God]." Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari (1920-1979), a top ideologue of the Iranian Revolution, considered jihad a necessary consequence of Islam's content: by having political aims, Islam must sanction armed force and provide laws for its use. Mutahhari deemed jihad to be defensive, but his definition includes defense against oppression and may require what international law would consider a war of aggression. For example, he endorses an attack on a country of polytheists (some Muslims see Christians as polytheists due to Christianity's belief in a God who can exist in three manifestations) with the goal simply to eliminate polytheism's evils, not to impose Islam.[24]

Another radical Shi'a perspective on the justification for jihad can be found in the words of Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual leader of

Lebanese Hizballah. In a 1986 interview, he stated that although violence is justified only for defensive purposes and as a last resort, the contemporary situation of the people of the Middle East, in particular of Muslims, creates a scenario that breeds violence. The establishment of Israel, the dislocation of the Palestinians, and the interference of a great oppressive power (in other words, the United States) in Arab-Islamic political, economic, and social affairs leads some Muslims (e.g., militant groups) to consider themselves justified in using force to achieve their goals, and this can even sometimes lead to extreme behavior.[25] Fadlallah does clarify that terrorism (hudna, or violence in Arabic) is not legitimate or justified in Islam, to include the destruction of life, kidnapping, or the hijacking of airliners or ships, and suggests that militants have gone too far in the conduct of their struggle when they employ such means. Nevertheless, he concludes by informing the American people that it is up to them to improve the situation by pressing for reforms in the policies of their government.[26]

How should the West respond to Islamic militant groups? Shaykh Fadlallah suggests that the West should listen to the anger expressed by such groups. While stressing that the way to peace is through dialogue, Fadlallah said that the West must first recognize that Muslims who act in ways that are harmful to Western interests are responding to pain of their own. Islam, he added, should not be thought of as uncompromisingly hostile to the West, since militant groups do not speak for all of the community. Fadlallah adds that if the West does listen to these groups, however, it will understand that the concerns these groups have (for justice, human rights, and self-determination) are legitimate, even if their methods are excessive.[27]

Al-Qaeda and Transnational Jihad: A New Twist on Old Complaints. Before his emergence as the prime suspect in the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden had described his goals and grievances and the tactics of his transnational al-Qaeda network in great detail in a series of statements and interviews. Taken together, these statements provide insight into an ideology that may seem abhorrent or crazy to Americans but has been carefully crafted to appeal to the disgruntled and dispossessed of the

Islamic world.[28] Bin Laden's ideology, however, is really more political than religious.

At the heart of bin Laden's philosophy are two declarations of war—jihad—against the United States. The first, his *Bayan* (statement) issued on 26 August 1996, was directed specifically at "Americans occupying the land of the two holy places," as bin Laden refers to the cities of Mecca and Medina that are located in his native Saudi Arabia. Here he calls upon Muslims all over the world to fight to "expel the infidels . . . from the Arab Peninsula."[29] In his fatwa of 23 February 1998, titled "Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders," which he issued along with the leaders of extremist groups in Egypt, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, bin Laden broadened his earlier edict. In the fatwa, he specifies that the radicals' war is a defensive struggle against Americans and their allies who have declared war "on God, his Messenger, and Muslims." The "crimes and sins" perpetrated by the United States are threefold: first, it "stormed" the Arabian peninsula during the Gulf War and has continued "occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places"; second, it continues a war of annihilation against Iraq; and third, the United States supports the state of Israel and its continued occupation of Jerusalem. The only appropriate Muslim response, according to the fatwa, is a defensive jihad to repulse the aggressor; therefore, borrowing from classical and modern Islamic scholars (because it is defensive), such a war is a moral obligation incumbent upon all true Muslims.[30]

Bin Laden's anger at the "American crusader forces" who are "occupying" his homeland stems from an injunction from the Prophet that there "not be two religions in Arabia"; the presence of foreign forces on holy soil is thus an intolerable affront to 1,400 years of Islamic tradition. In his 1996 statement of jihad, bin Laden blamed the serious economic crisis then gripping Saudi Arabia (due to falling oil prices and widespread corruption) on the presence of these Western "crusader forces." Two years later, in his 1998 fatwa, bin Laden charged that the United States was not only occupying and plundering Arabia, but was "using its bases in the peninsula as a spearhead to fight against the neighboring Islamic peoples." In bin Laden's war, the

goal of expelling the "Judeo-Christian enemy" from Islamic holy lands should occur first on the Arabian peninsula, then in Iraq (which for 500 years was the seat of the Islamic caliphate), and third in Palestine, site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (which is sacred to Muslims as the place from where Muhammad ascended to heaven).[31]

Although the initial attacks associated with bin Laden occurred in Saudi Arabia, Somalia, East Africa, and Yemen, he increasingly made clear that he would bring the war to the American homeland. Al Qaeda is believed to have aided the first attack against the World Trade Center in 1993, and bin Laden told an ABC News reporter in May 1998 that the battle will "inevitably move . . . to American soil."[32] Although he appears to be fired by the religious zeal of Saudi Arabia's puritanical Wahhabi movement, bin Laden's targets have not been offending religious and cultural institutions, but political, military, and economic targets. Additionally, though he quotes selective (but incomplete) passages from the Qur'an to establish the basis for the jihad, bin Laden's motivations are really not that different from the anti-imperialistic doctrines that sustain religious and nonreligious extremist groups all over the world.[33]

In return for joining the jihad against America, bin Laden has promised his followers an honored place in paradise, in accordance with a statement in the Qur'an that "a martyr's privileges are guaranteed by Allah." Bin Laden and many of the other Islamic militant groups in the Middle East are able to draw on large numbers of enthusiastic and waiting recruits for their war against the United States— impoverished youths who are ready to die simply for the idea of jihad.

"Jihad Factories": An Enduring Legacy of Hatred. It is estimated that more than 1 million young men from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Muslim parts of China are attending *madrassas*, or private Islamic religious schools, every year in Pakistan. Madrassa students spend most of their day in rote memorization of the Qur'an in Arabic (this is not their native language, so few understand what they are reading) and interpreting the hadith. Only theology is taught; there is no math, science, computer training, or secular history.[34] The young men at these schools are drawn from the dire poor of the societies they come from, kept in self-contained worlds that are isolated from outside influences, and indoctrinated with a powerful, not-so-academic radical message: their highest honor and duty is to wage jihad to defend Islam from its attackers, and the United States is the chief enemy of Islam.[35]

Madrassas, which have a tradition in Pakistan that dates from colonial days of promoting political independence along with their religious teaching, fill a significant gap in the underfunded public school system by offering free tuition, room, and board. Madrassas received state funding during the Afghan War when they were used to groom the mujahedin who were being sent to fight the Soviet invaders.[36] Many of these schools were emptied in the 1990s when the Taliban needed assistance in military campaigns against its Northern Alliance foes, and many students sent to the front did not return. The graduates of these madrassas have also turned up in places like Bosnia, Chechnya, and the Kashmir, and the survivors of those conflicts have taken their battlefield experience back to their home countries where it is being put to use in jihads against their own not-Islamic enough governments and societies.

The readiness of millions of young men trained in these schools to sacrifice their lives for Islam— and their unquestioning acceptance of anti-American and pro-Islamic extremist propaganda—will continue to be a powerful and enduring weapon against the U.S.-led global war on terrorism, and one that bin Laden and other militants who are bent on attacking the United States and its allies can call on in the years ahead.

Acceptance of Militants' Ideas and Methods Is Limited

The thrust of the entire jihad tradition which Islamic radicals have "hijacked" makes it clear that not everything is permissible. Although the language in the Qur'an and hadith and in other classical Muslim sources is overwhelmingly militant in many places, this is a reflection of the Muslims' world in the seventh century, which consisted initially of resistance to a variety of more powerful non-Islamic tribes and then successful military cam-

paigns to spread the faith.

Besides containing exhortations to fight, however, Islamic sacred texts have also laid out the rules of engagement for war, which (as mentioned earlier) included prohibitions against the killing of non-combatants such as women, children, the aged, and disabled. These texts also require notice to the adversary before an attack, require that a Muslim army must seek peace if its opponent does, and forbid committing aggression against others and suicide.[37] Those who are unfamiliar with the Qur'an and hadith can miss these points when confronted with the propagandistic calls to jihad of militant Islamic groups.

The actions of rebels in the classical period of Islam encountered widespread resentment and condemnation, and this strong sentiment against rebellion remains in modern Islamic thought. Most Muslims agree with the presumption in Islamic teachings on war that individuals are innocent and therefore not subject to harm unless they demonstrate by their actions that they are a threat to the safety or survival of Muslims. On this basis, the overwhelming majority of Islamic scholars have for centuries rejected indiscriminate killing and the terrorizing of civilian populations as a legitimate form of jihad.[38] Also, at no point do Islamic sacred texts even consider the horrific and random slaughter of uninvolved bystanders that is represented by the 9/11 airliner attacks; most Muslims throughout the world were as shocked by those attacks as Americans were.

The radical message in works such as Hamas's Charter, "The Neglected Duty," and the writings of Khomeini and his fellow revolutionary Iranian Shi'a clerics nevertheless finds a lot of acceptance with contemporary Muslims. The reason is simply because of the poor socioeconomic circumstances and lack of human dignity that many Muslim peoples find themselves subject to, brought about by secular failures to attend to their problems.[39] Militant Islamic groups, exemplified by Hamas and the Palestinian branch of Islamic Jihad, have been able to use such poor conditions to their advantage. They provide social services (such as operating free or low-cost schools, medical clinics, sports clubs, and women's support groups), many of which the Palestinian Authority itself often cannot provide, to build public support and attract recruits

in the occupied territories.[40]

Public statements over the last several months by some moderate Muslim religious authorities and commentators that Islamic extremists are corrupting a peaceful religious faith for their own twisted ends are encouraging. Equally positive is the growing recognition in the Muslim world both of bin Laden's lack of proper religious qualifications to issue any religious edicts that promote jihad, and his lack of success, on a strategic level, in forcing the United States to withdraw its military forces completely from Saudi Arabia or to give up its campaign against Islamic terrorism. A few prominent Muslim scholars have not only condemned the terrorist attacks upon the United States, but have declared the perpetrators of these attacks to be "suicides," not martyrs. This is significant, since Islam forbids suicide and teaches that its practitioners are sent not to paradise but to hell, where they are condemned to keep repeating their suicidal act for eternity.[41]

Conclusion

As described herein, jihad in Islamic thought and practice possesses a range of meanings, with Muslim radicals focusing on the physical, violent form of struggle to resist what they see as cultural, economic, military, and political assaults from outside the ummah and oppression and injustice within. So long as societal conditions within many Muslim states remain poor, with unrepresentative governments (which are seen to be propped up by the United States) that are unwilling or unable to undertake meaningful but difficult reforms, then militant Islamic groups will continue to attract recruits and financial support. In spite of logical fallacies and inconsistencies in the doctrine of jihad of radical Islamic groups, and the fact that most of the broad constituency they are attempting to appeal to does not buy into their ideology or methods, such groups nevertheless remain as significant threats to U.S. interests everywhere in the world.

The challenge for the U.S. government over the next several years will be to encourage and support lasting reform by Muslim states who are our allies in the Middle East while maintaining a more balanced and fair-minded foreign policy toward all key regional players. We must also do a better job

of countering the Islamic extremists' widely disseminated version of jihad, while being more persuasive that our own government—and our society—are truly not anti-Islamic. Such actions will do much to deny a supportive environment to our radical Muslim foes. For its part, the U.S. military needs to better understand the religious and cultural aspects of our adversaries' asymmetric mindset—in this case, how Islamic militants conceive of and use jihad—to be successful and survivable in its global campaign against terrorism.

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cfm?docid=14.
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20. Ibid., 100-01.
21. Jansen, p.162, as quoted in Streusand, 5.
22. Kelsay, *Islam and War*, 101-02.
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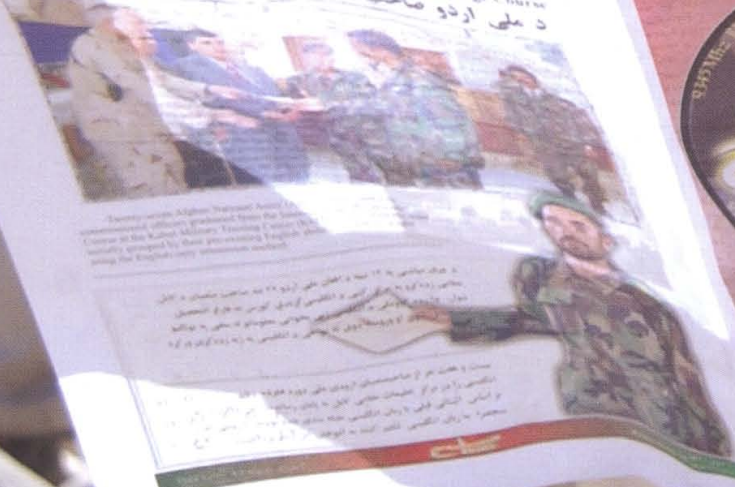
Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan

by Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason

Orbis, Winter 2007

Afghanistan is in danger of capsizing in a perfect storm of insurgency that mimics operations and tactics witnessed in Iraq. This article assesses this insurgency and the re-emergent Taliban. The common view of the Taliban as simply a radical Afghan Islamist movement is overly simple, for that organization has been able to build on tribal kinship networks and a charismatic mullah phenomenon to mobilize a critical and dynamic rural base of support. This support, buttressed by Talib reinforcements from Pakistan's border areas, is enough to frustrate the U.S.-led Coalition's counterinsurgency strategy. At the operational level, the Taliban is fighting a classic "war of the flea," while the Coalition continues to fight the war largely according to the Taliban "game plan." This is resulting in its losing the war in Afghanistan one Pashtun village at a time.

After nearly 30 years of continuous war in Afghanistan, the country's American-backed, post-Taliban government is now struggling. President Hamid Karzai's government is encountering extreme difficulty extending control and mandate outside Kabul into the country's hinterland regions. Undermining President Karzai's efforts to build a truly national government with national control is a resurgent Taliban backed by al-Qaeda, which together are mounting an increasingly virulent insurgency, especially in

the east and south, near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. While then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld suggested in May 2003 that the war in Afghanistan was in a "cleanup" phase,[1] now, nearly five years since the conclusion of major Operation Enduring Freedom combat operations, it is clear that Afghanistan is anything but a stable country. The twin insurgencies of the revitalized Taliban and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's faction of Hizb-i-Islami (HiG) are growing steadily in strength and influence, while Kabul's control and influence in a broad swath of the country are rapidly diminishing. As demonstrated by the deadly anti-American riots in the capital in May 2006, political volatility is even starting to reach urban areas.

The chief purpose of the resurged Taliban/al-Qaeda/HiG insurgency appears to be to force the U.S. military to fight the war according to the "Taliban game plan." The priority of U.S. effort seems to be on the "kill/capture mission," just as the Taliban desires, with the U.S. and NATO forces concentrating on battalion-sized sweep operations which are consistently failing, just as they failed in Vietnam. With the U.S. military focused on countering the Taliban game plan, every uphill battle is a losing one and will continue to be until a new strategy is implemented. Currently, the best strategy would be focused coordination of a dramatically increased Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) presence and massive economic development. The Afghan population has to see tangible results from the Karzai government's efforts in order for it to gain legitimacy with them. That is the best way of winning against the Taliban, which for now has good chances of returning.

We attempt here to shed new light on the *idea* of the Taliban. Behind all actions lie ideas, and the current Western perception of the Taliban, both in academia and in policy circles, centers on the belief that the Taliban are primarily an obtuse, radical Islamist organization. The Islamist element of the Taliban may be simply that—an element of the complex historical and tribal phenomenon of the Pashtuns—but this article assesses other aspects of the Taliban, such as its tribal dynamics and charisma. We

then analyze the effects of the current insurgency from the strategic and operational levels and examine its implications for U.S. and Coalition forces' strategy and tactics. We assume that the insurgency stems from three fundamental problems: (1) the lack of state formation and the inability of the national government to establish a significant presence throughout the country, (2) the failure to make the rural areas secure so that development and reconstruction can proceed, and (3) the lack of any meaningful improvement in the lives of the great majority of the people in the southern half of the country.

Making Sense of the Taliban

"A host of wandering Talib-ul-ilums, who correspond with the theological students in Turkey and live free at the expense of the people. . . ." —Winston Churchill, 1898[2]

Popular Western perceptions of the Taliban movement have been driven by images of robed, bearded men toting Qur'ans and guns and instituting draconian social policies while harboring global jihadists. While these images are accurate to a degree, understanding the Taliban requires more subtle analysis of Afghanistan's Soviet occupation and post-occupation experience, its Islamic traditions, Afghan ethno-linguistic and tribal phenomena, interlopers of the frontier border areas with Pakistan, and the context in which the Taliban rose.

Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan deteriorated into a brutal civil war between rival mujahideen groups, many of which had spent much of their energy fighting each other even during the height of the anti-Soviet jihad. This civil war claimed thousands of lives and decimated the country's infrastructure. The civil war intensified after a mujahideen group took Kabul in April 1992. Shortly afterwards, Beirut-style street fighting erupted in the city, especially between the Pashtun HiG and the Tajik Jamaat-i-Islam. This civil war, fought with the vast surplus ordnance of the covert anti-Soviet military aid program and huge stockpiles of abandoned Soviet weapons, eventually wreaked as much if not more damage and

destruction on the country than the Soviet invasion and occupation. Kabul, which was left virtually untouched under Soviet occupation, was savagely bombarded with rockets, mortars, and artillery by Hekmatyar. In Kandahar, fighting between Islamists and traditionalist mujahideen parties resulted in the destruction of much of the traditional power structures. In the rural areas, warlords, drug lords, and bandits ran amok in a state of anarchy created by the unraveling of the traditional tribal leadership system.

As the mujahideen factions and warlords were fighting each other for power, Saudi Arabia invested heavily in the region, most notably funding madrassas (religious boarding schools) in Pakistan that sought to spread the conservative Wahhabi version of Islam practiced in the Saudi kingdom. Pakistan's Jamiat-i-Ulema Islami (JUI) party built a network of its own to extend the influence of the indigenous Deobandi School of Islamic thought. These madrassas would come to serve as an important educational alternative for the numerous displaced refugees from the anti-Soviet jihad and Afghan civil war as well as for poor families along the frontier who could not afford the secular schools. With the oversight of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Direc-torate (ISID), which had grown weary of their favorite Afghan mujahideen leader, Hekmatyar, the Taliban emerged from the madrassas of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the federally administered tribal area (FATA), not to mention kinship networks inside the remaining Afghan refugee camps. In Afghanistan, the Taliban recruited primarily from madrassas near Ghazni and Kandahar. It arrived on the Afghan scene in 1994 with little warning and vowed to install a traditional Islamic government and end the fighting among the mujahideen. With massive covert assistance from Pakistan's ISID, army, and air force, it overthrew the largely Tajik (and northern) mujahideen regime in Kabul, capturing the capital in September 1996. The Taliban considered this regime responsible for a continuing civil war and the deterioration of security in country, as well as discrimination against Pashtuns. Afghanistan soon became a training ground for Islamic activists and other radicals from the Middle East and around Asia.

War-weary Afghans initially welcomed the Taliban, which promoted itself as a new force for honesty and unity and was seen as the desperately needed balm of peace and stability by many Afghans, particularly fellow Pashtuns. The Taliban immediately targeted warlords who were deemed responsible for much of the destruction, instability, and chaos that plagued the country since the outbreak of the civil war. But it also instituted a religious police force, the Amr Bil Marof Wa Nai An Munkir (Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice) to brutally uphold its extreme and often unorthodox interpretations of Islam, which were not previously known in Afghanistan. Taliban philosophy, Ahmed Rashid notes,

. . . fitted nowhere in the Islamic spectrum of ideas and movements that had emerged in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1994. . . . The Taliban represented nobody but themselves and they recognized no Islam except their own. . . . Before the Taliban, Islamic extremism had never flourished in Afghanistan.[3]

The people's optimism soon turned to fear as the Taliban introduced a stringent interpretation of sharia, banned women from work, and introduced punishments such as death by stoning and amputations.

While Tajik resistance to the Taliban in the form of the Northern Alliance held out throughout the Taliban period and retained Afghanistan's seat in the UN, the Taliban eventually conquered 80 percent of the country.[4] By September 2001, it was poised to perhaps wipe out the Northern Alliance. But the 9/11 attacks led to U.S. intervention on October 7, 2001, aimed at destroying al-Qaeda as well as removing the Taliban from Afghanistan.

Characteristics of the Taliban

The Taliban primarily consists of rural Pashtuns from the Ghilzai confederation with some support from the Kakar tribe of the Ghurghusht confederation. Mullah Mohammed

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Omar Akhund and most of the senior members of the Taliban are from the Hotaki tribe of the Ghilzai. Their movement represents an ultraconservative Islamic front with an ideology derived from the Deobandi School (discussed below). The Taliban, however, took Deobandism to extremes the school's founders would not have recognized. The roots of the Taliban are found in the mujahideen effort against the Soviets. From the hundreds of resistance groups that sprang up, the ISID recognized seven and established offices for them through which to channel covert support. Although most had a strong religious ethos, the groups were organized primarily along ethnic and tribal lines. Significantly, three of the seven were led by Ghilzais and none by their rivals, the Durranis, who were deliberately marginalized by the ISID.[5] The importance of these ethnic roots of the Taliban in the mujahideen movement cannot be overstated. Yet its tribal heritage is only a partial explanation of what the Taliban represents.

The Taliban's Islamic Component

The Taliban initially represented a rise to power of the mullahs at the expense of both tribal leaders and mujahideen commanders. Many mujahideen commanders, especially those from Hizb-i-Islami (Maulvi Khalis) and Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami–Islamic Unity Movement (Nabi Muhammadi), were later absorbed by the Taliban.[6] And, as noted, the Taliban was influenced by the teachings of Deobandi Islam in Pakistani seminars and madrassas, especially the Jaamia Haqqania at Akora Khattack.[7] The Pakistani version of the Deobandi schools in Afghan refugee camps were for the most part run by inexperienced, semiliterate mullahs associated with Pakistan's JUI. Saudi funds in combination with a lack of appreciation on the part of the mullahs of the reformist Deobandi agenda brought the schools' curricula closer to ultraconservative Wahhabism.[8]

Deobandi Islam, a conservative Islamic orthodoxy, follows a Salafist egalitarian model that seeks to emulate the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad.[9] The Deobandi philosophy founded at the Dar ul-Ulum (Abode of Islamic Learning) madrassa in Deoband, India, in 1867 eventually became the primary producer of Ulama, or legal scholars, in India. While Deobandi madrassas have flourished across South Asia, they were not officially supported or sanctioned in Pakistan until President Zia ul Haq assumed control of the Pakistani government in 1977. The Deobandi interpretation of Islamic teachings is now widely practiced in Pakistan, with the JUI being its primary political proponent.

The Deobandi interpretation holds that a Muslim's primary obligation and loyalty is to his religion. The Deobandis oppose any kind of social caste system within Islam, to include, naturally, any monarchy. Loyalty to country is always secondary. Deobandis also believe they have a sacred right and obligation to wage jihad to protect the Muslims of any country. This obligation alone may explain some of Mullah Omar's affinity for bin Laden and his global jihadist ambitions. Many analysts believe that had the Taliban remained in power, it was only a matter a time before they moved against "apostate" neighbors such as Uzbekistan. The Taliban had already embraced the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Uzbek regime's primary jihadist opposition.

Deobandi militants share the Taliban's restrictive view of women and regard Shia as non-Muslim. While in power, the Taliban had a deliberate anti-Shia program against Afghanistan's ethnic Hazara, who are predominantly Shia, and led numerous massacres against them, killing tens of thousands.[10]

The Taliban as a Tribal Movement

While the Taliban's rise challenged many traditional tribal institutions, especially those of Afghanistan's eastern mountains, the eventual leadership of the movement consisted almost exclusively of Ghilzai Pashtuns. The Ghilzai have historically been at odds with the smaller Durrani confederation of tribes, which is cur-

Figure 1. Pashtun Tribal Areas and Key Insurgent Strongholds, 2006
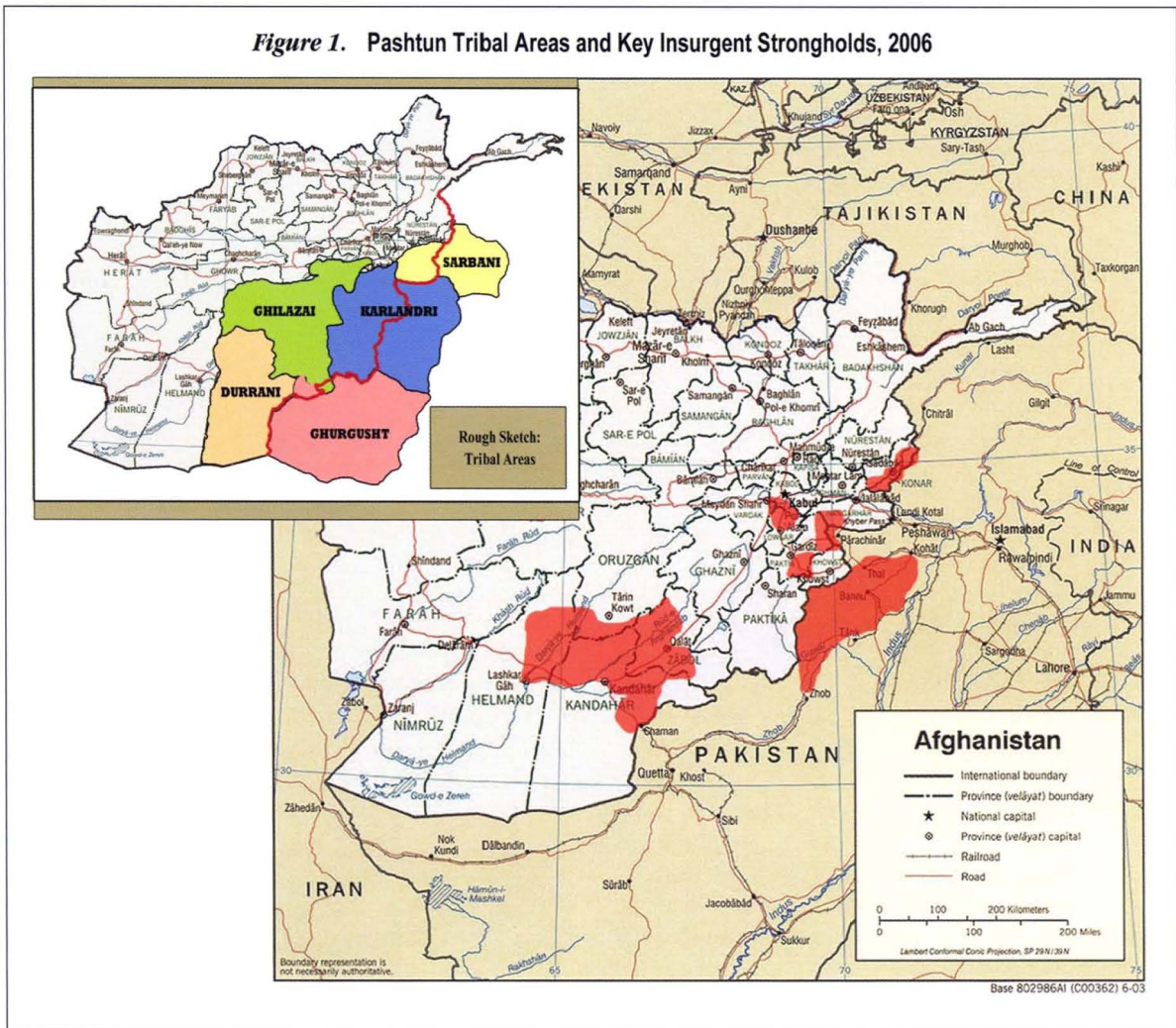
rently represented to some extent in the central Afghan government. Ghilzai Pashtuns are concentrated in the southeast—in Oruzgan, Zabol, Dai Kundi and Gardez provinces, and in the Katawaz region of Paktika province—but they also have communities in the center and north of the country as a result of resettlement, both forcible and encouraged, under Durrani rule in the early twentieth century.

The importance of the Ghilzai to the Taliban and insurgency is illustrated by Figure 1. The shaded section of the map shows those areas where the insurgency is the strongest—primarily areas controlled by the Taliban. These areas include the northern districts of Kandahar Province, the northeastern districts of the Helmand Province, the southern districts of Oruzgan Province, the western districts of Zabol Province, and districts in Paktika, Paktya, Gardez, Wardak, and Logar Provinces. The inset map is a rough sketch of the Pashtun tribal areas of the Durrani, Ghilzai, Ghurghusht, Karlanri, and Sarbani—the five large confederations of Pashtuns, each of which traces its roots to a single ancestor. (Each of these five confederations contains scores of major tribes, or Qawms, which are perhaps analogous to Native American tribes such as the Apache or the Navajo.) Comparing the two maps, it is evident that the most intense area of the insurgency is the area dominated by the various Ghilzai tribes.

Tribalism in Afghanistan can be seen as a sub-

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set of ethno-linguistic groups, giving primacy to ties of kinship and patrilineal descent. The tribe is a kind of union of mutual assistance, with members cooperating on defense and maintaining order.[11] The Pashtun in particular are highly segmentary, with precise patrilineal descents first written down by the Moghuls in the 15th century. To truly understand the Taliban, we must thus go behind the mask of Islamism (the Taliban's opponents in the Northern Alliance were also conservative Muslims) and examine the movement as a tribal phenomenon. On closer inspection, the Taliban is neither simply a Pashtun movement nor even a pan-Ghilzai movement, although its area of influence coincides closely with Ghilzai lands. It is largely led by a single tribe. Most of the senior leadership of the Taliban—with a few exceptions of Kakar tribesmen of the Ghurghusht confederation, who are close to Mullah Omar—was and is drawn specifically from Mullah Omar's own Hotaki tribe (see Table 1).

There is historical precedent for this. The Ghilzai have traditionally been hostile towards the Durrani, who have held power in Kabul for most of the last 300 years and provided all of Afghanistan's kings. Only three times have the Ghilzai seized national power from the Durranis: in 1721, when Mir Wais took power; in 1978, after a coup against Mohammed Daoud by Marxist military officers, who immediately handed over power to the Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan leader Nur Mohammed Taraki;[12] and again in 1996, when Mullah Omar came to power. Both Mir Wais and Mullah Omar are of the Hotaki tribe. Afghans have an immediate and intimate relationship to historical events: the events of 1721 are not forgotten to the Ghilzai, and the anti-monarchist Deobandi Taliban movement was at some level also a re-creation of the triumph of the Hotakis over the hated Durrani monarchs. Significantly, when the Taliban first became powerful, its instinct was not to march immediately on the capital, but to subdue, coopt, and subjugate the Durranis of Kandahar and Helmand Provinces. When the Taliban seized control of Kabul, the exiled King Zahir Shah, a Durrani, was not invited to return from Italy. This dynamic is still at work today: the priority of the resurgent Taliban in 2006 is not driving northeast towards Kabul and bringing down the Karzai government, but rather focusing on first establishing political dominance over Durrani lands in Kandahar and Helmand Provinces. Clearly more is at work here than a simple radical Islamist movement bent on seizing national power.

The Sociological Basis of the Taliban

Tribal politics and Pakistani support do not fully explain how the Taliban was able to seize

Table 1. Senior Taliban Leaders

Name	Position	Tribal Affiliation
Mullah Muhammad Omar	Movement Leader	Hotakia Ghilzai
Mullah Berader	Deputy Movement Leader	Ghilzai
Mullah Dadullah Kakar	Senior Military Commander	Kakar Ghurghusht
Mullah Mohammad Hassen	Foreign Minister after 1997	Hotaki Ghilzai
Nuruddin Turabi	Minister of Justice	Hotaki Ghilzai
Alla Dad Akhund	Minister of Communications	Hotaki Ghilzai
Mohamed Essa	Minister of Water and Power	Hotaki Ghilzai
Wakil Ahmed	Personal Secretary to Mullah Omar	Kakar Ghurghusht
Sadeq Akhond	Minister of Commerce	Hotaki Ghilzai
Mohammed Rabbani	Chairman of Kabul Shura	Kakar Ghurghusht
Mullah Obaidullah	Minister of Defense	Hotaki Ghilzai

control so effectively. To gain power, it drew unconsciously on a universally understood cultural phenomenon among the frontier Pashtun,[13] one that the British and later the Pakistanis encountered over and over again: the charismatic mullah movement. Mullah Omar is the archetype of this phenomenon, a cyclical pattern of insurrection which manifests itself about every 30 years in the Pashtun belt. Indeed, such leaders have often gained powers on the frontier during times of social distress.[14] These charismatic uprisings were so common, in fact, that the British dubbed them "mad mullah movements."

There have been many. A similar figure to Mullah Omar, Mirza Ali Khan—a Tori Khel Waziri who was known to the West as the Fakir of Ipi—led first British and then Pakistani security forces on a frustrating chase around the frontier for 30 years.[15] Protected by his Pashtun tribal supporters in the hills, much as Mullah Omar is today, he was never caught. The Mullah of Hadda, as noted by David Edwards, provoked the Great Pashtun Revolt of 1897 through mysticism, parlor tricks, and promises to turn British bullets to water.[16] Akbar Ahmed has studied the emergence of a charismatic mullah in Waziristan who, like Mullah Omar, challenged state legitimacy.[17] Ahmed argues that the mullah of Waziristan also used mysticism to gain legitimacy, much like Mullah Omar did 30 years later, and challenged Pakistan's attempt to modernize the FATA.

Omar joined this rogues' gallery of politicized insurgent mullahs by means of a politico-religious stunt that is of enormous importance to the Taliban movement. In so doing, he became the epitome of Max Weber's definition of the charismatic leader, who has:

> . . . a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual

concerned is treated as a leader. . . .[18]

The event was Omar's removal in 1994 of a sacred garment believed by many Afghans to be the original cloak worn by the Prophet Muhammad from its sanctuary in Kandahar, and his wearing it while standing atop a mosque in the city. Whereas Omar had been a nonentity before this piece of religious theater, the audacious stunt catapulted him to a level of mystical power (at least among the 90 percent of Pashtuns who are illiterate) and resulted in his being locally proclaimed *Amir-ul Momineen* (the Leader of the Faithful).[19]

What is known of the Taliban subsequent to this event conforms exactly to the "mad mullah" pattern of social mobilization. Furthermore, once in power, Taliban power was (and is) concentrated exclusively in the person of Mullah Omar, another characteristic of the phenomenon—and contrary to traditional Pashtun *shura* (consensus) politics. As Rashid has observed, Omar ultimately made all the decisions within the Taliban, and no one dared act without his orders.[20] Today, Mullah Omar issues statements of encouragement to his field commanders, rather than operational orders, exactly as did the Mullah of Hadda.[21] Thus, unlike most insurgencies, which are not centered in the personality of a single leader, the Taliban's center of gravity, in Clausewitzian terms, is not Taliban foot soldiers or field commanders or even the senior clerics around Omar, but Omar himself. Because it is a charismatic movement socially, if Mullah Omar dies, the Taliban, at least in its current incarnation, will wither and die. The mystical charismatic power that came from wearing the Cloak of the Prophet is not something transferable to a second-in-command. Unfortunately, because this phenomenon is so alien to Western thinking, U.S. analysts instead generally interpret the Taliban in terms more compatible with Western logic.

Labeling the Taliban an Islamist movement, a drug gang, or any of the other revolving-door euphemisms often used, including lately "anti-government militia," is misguided. Understanding the Taliban more precisely could enable better U.S. military Information and Psychological

Operations, for example, or insights into the human terrain by U.S. and NATO forces, and would suggest a realignment of reconstruction priorities to isolate the movement and prevent further mobilization.

A Deteriorating Situation in Afghanistan

More than 340 American soldiers and Marines have been killed in action in Afghanistan.[22] While the overall level of conflict in Afghanistan has not yet approached that experienced in Iraq, the last few years have witnessed an acceleration of increasingly deadly attacks that have begun to graft insurgent tactics in Iraq onto classic mujahideen-style guerrilla warfare.[23] In the first five months of 2006, there was a 200 percent increase in insurgent attacks compared to the first five months of 2005. Indeed, late May 2006 saw the deadliest week in the country in five years. Lutfullah Mashal, the former Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman, observed in May 2006 that "Taliban fighters no longer rely solely on hit-and-run tactics by small groups of guerrillas. Instead, the Taliban have been concentrating into groups of more than 100 fighters to carry out frontal assaults on government security posts."[24] The Taliban is thought to have at least 12,000 fighters controlling areas in the provinces of Oruzgan, Helmand, Zabol and Kandahar.[25]

Troubling indicators such as the relatively free movement of insurgent groups reveal that increasingly large areas of the east and south of the country are falling under the control of the Taliban. Said Jawad, Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States, recently stated, "We have lost a lot of the ground that we may have gained in the country, especially in the south. . . . The fact that U.S. military resources have been 'diverted' to the war in Iraq is of course hurting Afghan-istan."[26]

Taliban insurgents and their al-Qaeda allies are gaining strength. There have been numerous attacks in 2006 in areas other than the south and east, suggesting that the Taliban has expanded the scope of its operations and is taking the war to the north. Cross-border operations from Pakistan are commonplace. NATO, which assumed operational control of the war in 2006, requested more troops to fight the insurgency in September; U.S. troop levels are expected to at least remain at their current level.[27]

Another source of concern is that recent insurgent attacks include the use of suicide bombings, a tactic previously unknown in Afghanistan and rare because of a cultural aversion to suicide,[28] and improvised explosive devises (IEDs), which demonstrate a significant level of coordination with Iraqi insurgents and growing technological sophistication. The great majority of the recent suicide attacks appear to have been "outsourced" to non-Afghans, most often to Punjabis from the south of Pakistan and young foreign Islamists.

The wild and largely unregulated tribal areas on Pakistan's northern border play an extremely important role in the insurgency, as they do in Kashmir and in the rising unrest that challenges Pakistani security forces and governmental authority all along the frontier. They provide a steady source of recruits, a safe haven for senior leadership, and a base of operations and training for the Taliban, Al Qaeda affiliates, and, to a lesser degree, HiG.[29]

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Problem

For decades, Afghanistan's neighboring states have produced disenchanted groups such as Uyghurs, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and other Islamists who have used the country for guerrilla training and an operating base. The most important foreign actors in Afghanistan's affairs have come from Pakistan's western border provinces, especially the NWFP, Baluchistan, and the FATA. Pakistan has long sought to exert influence in Afghanistan in order to achieve "strategic depth" on its northern border in the event of any conflict with India.[30] Successive Pakistani governments have promoted Islamic radicalism to subvert Pashtun and Baluch nationalist movements and further their ambitions in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Also important is the fact that

Afghanistan's Pashtun population spills over into Pakistan's FATA as well as NWFP. Jihad, drugs, and gunrunning have long been the main sources of livelihood for many of the Pashtuns living in the FATA.[31] Afghan refugee camps and thousands of madrassas opened by the JUI provide a steady flow of recruits for the Taliban and other radical groups.

The minimal U.S. troop presence in the south means that the rugged, porous, and often ill-defined 2,450-kilometer border between Pakistan and Afghanistan does not even constitute a speed bump to groups such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda seeking to increase their influence among the Pashtun tribesmen in the region. By mid-2005, in the strategically vital border province of Paktika, for example, which has a population of some 700,000 people and shares a 400 kilometer border with Pakistan, the United States had only two companies of light infantry and no engineers or aviation assets. In the summer of 2005, the fledgling PRT in Paktika was dismembered due to personnel shortages. A vestigial civil affairs remnant, its Civil Military Opera-tions Center (CMOC), was co-located with a maneuver company.

President Karzai and Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta recently blamed the ISID for Taliban attacks in Afghanistan. Kabul claims that Pakistani security forces chase al-Qaeda terrorists within Pakistan but make little effort to arrest Taliban fighters or stop them from crossing the border into Afghanistan.[32] This lack of cooperation has similarly frustrated the United States. As Henry A. Crumpton, the U.S. Department of State coordinator for counterterrorism, asserts:

> The Americans are finding the Pakistanis much more reluctant to face down the Taliban—who are brethren from the Pashtun ethnic group that dominates in Afghanistan—than they have been to confront al-Qaeda, who are largely outsiders. Has Pakistan done enough? I think the answer is no. . . . Not only al-Qaeda, but Taliban leadership are primarily in Pakistan, and the Pakistanis know that.[33]

In 2004, after negotiating with tribal spokes-men, Pakistan responded to rising FATA Islamic militancy with an unprecedented deployment of a reported 70,000 troops to the border area. In Baluchistan, this force is led by the Pakistani paramilitary Frontier Corps and regular army elements from Pakistan's 12th Corps. The Pakistani campaign in the FATA, especially in the North and South Waziristan Agencies, is being conducted by a battalion-plus Special Operations Task Force and elements of the Pakistani Army's 11th Corps, aided by the paramilitary Scouts units of the Frontier Corps indigenous to those agencies. While such troop levels greatly exceed the total number of U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan, the actual relationship between Pakistan's campaign and the U.S. war on terror is controversial and unclear, as suggested by Pakistan's General Tariq Majid, the army's chief of general staff: "We are not fighting America's war in the FATA. It is in our own interest. We're fighting this war because, unfortunately, there have been fallout effects in Pakistan from the instability in Afghanistan."[34] Recently, Islamabad signed the Miranshah "peace agreement" in North Waziristan, seemingly in an attempt to control militants and their "guest fighters," who have been operating against NATO forces in Afghanistan as well as Pakistani forces in the FATA; similar agreements in 2004 and 2005 did virtually nothing to stop cross-border movements of the Taliban and other insurgents. This most recent "peace agreement" basically represents a formal Pakistani surrender to the Waziris and their humiliating retreat from Waziristan, which is now for all intents and purposes an independent country with an independent foreign policy. The *Telegraph* and other sources report that Mullah Omar played a "key" role in brokering this deal. Indeed, Lateef Afridi, a tribal elder and former Pakistan national assembly member, suggests that the Waziri would not have signed the agreement if they had not asked been by Mullah Omar. "This is no peace agreement, it is accepting Taliban rule in Pakistan's territory."[35] This agreement will likely embolden the Taliban to launch even more lethal attacks in Afghanistan.

The border areas are not the only driver of Pakistan's strategic view of Afghanistan. Its per-

ception of an ongoing threat from India has helped shape its Afghanistan policy. Having a friendly and controllable neighbor on Pakistan's western border is critical, allowing Pakistan to focus on its eastern border with India. Afghanistan has also been influenced by Pakistan's strategy towards India-controlled Kashmir. One veteran Pakistani observer suggests that "the Kashmir issue became the prime mover behind Pakistan's Afghan policy and its support to the Taliban."[36] Camps in Afghanistan created during the anti-Soviet jihad have been used to train Kashmiri guerrilla forces. Pakistan has used these jihadist forces as a bargaining chip with India in an attempt to gain more autonomy and even independence from India for Kashmir.

Post Conflict Reconstruction and the Rise of the Taliban Phoenix[37]

Afghanistan today is in danger of capsizing in a perfect storm of insurgency, terrorism, narcotics,[38] and warlords. Benign neglect by the United States since Spring 2003 has brought Afghanistan back to the brink of state failure. Washington has shortchanged Afghanistan in both personnel and resources. The deployment of U.S. troops and NATO International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) dedicated to the stabilization of the countryside represented the lowest per capita commitment of peacekeeping personnel to any post-conflict environment since the end of World War II. The ratios of peacekeepers to citizens in the missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, for example, were 1:48 and 1:58, respectively. For the first three years in Afghanistan, the comparable figure hovered near 1:2,000. Today, with an increase in U.S. force levels and a major reinforcement of the ISAF mission, it is roughly one peacekeeper to every 1,000 Afghans (1:1,000).

The number of ISAF personnel deployed after the December 2001 Bonn Agreement on rebuilding Afghanistan was completely inadequate to fill the security vacuum left by the retreating Taliban, which gap was quickly filled by warlords and drug lords, many of whom have since

donned national police uniforms to facilitate narco-trafficking.[39] As bad as they are, however, the numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Most of the U.S. Special Forces soldiers who best understand counterinsurgency were soon pulled out of Afghanistan to serve in Iraq and elsewhere. Aviation assets have also been drawn down to minimal levels. Because of the lack of helicopter assets, quick reaction forces throughout much of the south are forced to respond to the scene of minor Taliban attacks in Humvees. With an average overland speed of 5–10 miles an hour (over rocky trails that have not improved), Taliban guerrillas are usually long gone from their "roadblock-and-run" attacks before U.S. forces arrive, which emboldens the insurgents, demonstrates to the locals our inability to protect them, and demoralizes the police, few of whom are willing to try to hold off hardened and heavily armed Taliban veterans for several hours with poor-quality weapons and the standard 30 rounds of issued ammunition.

Even more damaging to the effort to stabilize Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban was the shockingly low level of committed funding to rebuild a country laid waste by 25 years of war. The Karzai government was well into its third year in office before cumulative U.S. expenditures on reconstruction and development passed the $1 billion mark. The aid budget for Afghanistan for 2006 was less than $700 million. After subtracting the one major reconstruction project undertaken, the repaving of the Kabul to Kandahar road, annual U.S. aid to Afghanistan over the last five years has averaged just $13 per Afghan. The United States is spending more money every 72 hours on the war in Iraq than it is spending on Afghan reconstruction this year.

Frequent turnovers of personnel, lack of local funds, a cumbersome approval process for projects implemented by U.S. headquarters in Bagram, the absence of construction oversight and quality control, inadequate vetting of contractors, and endemic corruption have combined to waste much of what was spent. The PRT effort has provided a laboratory for U.S. Army Civil Affairs experimentation, but their numbers are absurdly inadequate. With an approximate overall troop-to-task ratio of one PRT in Pashtun

areas for every 1 million Pashtuns, the strategic impact is negligible. In 2005, in the lawless Paktika province, where no international organizations will operate, eight American civil affairs enlisted reservists and two mid-career transfer civil affairs majors were responsible for all rural development and reconstruction in an area the size of Vermont and New Hampshire combined with a population of 700,000 people whose living conditions are largely unchanged since biblical times.

With a miniscule Commander's Emergency Response Program budget, what any 10 soldiers can accomplish amounts at best to a few grains of sand on the beach. In 2005, the entire province of Paktika had only a handful of buildings not made of adobe, fewer than a dozen high school graduates, and no telephones or paved roads. There were two antiquated clinics and two doctors. Officially, the province has 352 elementary schools for boys, but only 40 actual school buildings. The rest of the "schools" were simply patches of open ground in the village where the sixth graders taught what they knew to the first graders. Few if any girls went to school. Ten civil affairs personnel with three Humvees and a few hundred thousand dollars could change little. In fact, in the first four years of the Karzai government, the U.S. government had not built a single school or clinic anywhere in the province. To make matters worse, due to manpower shortages, the PRT in Paktika and seven others have now been effectively disbanded, with their support elements redeployed to other duties, and the handful of civil affairs soldiers of the CMOC rolled together with combat maneuver elements onto shared firebases, where they are generally the lowest priority for missions and assets. In these cases, the PRTs, originally designed as independent, free-standing civil-military affairs institutions, no longer exist. The stated mission of the PRT, to "extend the reach of the Afghan national government to the rural areas," is itself a case of Kafkaesque spin because specific Afghan PRT involvement is extremely rare. Hence, their missions, for the most part, lack any Afghan government component. The inevitable failure of this low level of peacekeeping and reconstruction to effect any meaningful improvement in the lives of the people in the rural south has created an angry environment of unfulfilled expectations. As much or more than the Karzai government's inability to extend its writ beyond Kabul, this gap between expectation and reality is what has opened the door to the resurgence of the Taliban.

Assessing the Afghan Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

The Taliban, unlike Kabul, intuitively understood that the center of gravity was satisfying the rural Pashtun. They knew there was a window of opportunity for Karzai to gain rural Pashtun support, and they were quick to capitalize on the U.S. Department of Defense's failure to understand this. Indeed, the DoD saw the aftermath of the Taliban's withdrawal south of the border as a simple matter of subtractive math: "Kill the existing insurgents and terrorists until the number reaches zero and the war is over." But an attempted war of attrition in this context is a nonstarter. For its part, the Taliban today is conducting a brilliant defensive insurgency. They have deployed enough low-level fighters to intimidate the NGOs and international organizations into withdrawing their personnel from the south. By night, Taliban mullahs travel in the rural areas, speaking to village elders. They are fond of saying, "The Americans have the wristwatches, but we have the time." The simple message they deliver in person or by "night letter" is one of intimidation: "The Americans may stay for five years, they may stay for 10, but eventually they will leave, and when they do, we will come back to this village and kill every family that has collaborated with the Americans or the Karzai government." Such a message is devastatingly effective in these areas, where transgenerational feuds and revenge are a fabric of the society. The insurgency has recently regained major footholds across the southern region of the country in areas ranging from Helmand to Ghazni.

Combined with the lack of any tangible reason to support either the Americans or Karzai,

the villagers either remain neutral or provide assistance to the guerrillas. U.S. forces have often accelerated this process through culturally obtuse behavior, unnecessarily invasive and violent tactics, and a series of tragic incidents of "collateral damage" which are inevitable in wartime. U.S. forces deploying to Afghanistan still receive only minimal cultural awareness briefings, if any, and this training is usually the lowest priority on the checklist of requirements to be crossed off before deployment. Few if any can speak a word of the Pashto language. They primarily rely on trilingual young Tajik interpreters to communicate with Pashtun elders, a major source of miscommunication.

At the strategic level, the Taliban is fighting a classic "war of the flea,"[40] largely along the same lines used by the mujahideen 20 years ago against the Soviets, including fighting in villages to deliberately provoke air strikes and collateral damage. They gladly trade the lives of a few dozen guerrilla fighters in order to cost the American forces the permanent loyalty of that village, under the code of Pashtun social behavior called *Pashtunwali* and its obligation for revenge (*Badal*), which the U.S. Army does not even begin to understand. The advent of suicide attacks is particularly alarming. The Taliban is getting American forces to do exactly what they want them to do: chase illiterate teenage boys with guns around the countryside like the dog chasing its tail and gnawing at each flea bite until it drops from exhaustion. The Taliban, however, has a virtually infinite number of guerrilla recruits pouring out of the Deobandi madrassas and growing up in the Pashtun Afghan refugee camps in northern Pakistan. It could sustain casualties of 10,000 or more guerrillas a year for 20 years without any operational impact. Indeed, the Pashtun, who make up 100 percent of the Taliban, have a saying: "Kill one enemy, make 10." Thus, the death in battle of a Pashtun guerrilla invokes an obligation of revenge among all his male relatives, making the killing of a Taliban guerrilla an act of insurgent multiplication, not subtraction. The Soviets learned this lesson as they killed nearly a million Pashtuns but only increased the number of Pashtun guerrillas by the end of the war. The

Taliban center of gravity is Mullah Omar, the charismatic cult leader, not teenage boys or mid-level commanders, and no amount of killing them will shut the insurgency down.

The priority of U.S. effort is still what the Taliban desires, on the so-called "kill/capture mission," and the U.S. Army spends much of its time on battalion-sized sweep operations (e.g., Operations Mountain Thrust, Medusa, Red Wings, and Pil). Although few if any insurgencies have ever been won by killing insurgents, this remains the primary strategy. Indeed, media reporting of the conflict in 2006 indicates an increasing U.S. return to the success metric of body counts, a haunting and disturbing echo of the same failure in Vietnam. In short, the United States is losing the war in Afghanistan one Pashtun village at a time, bursting into school-yards full of children with guns bristling, kicking in village doors, searching women, speeding down city streets, and putting out cross-cultural gibberish in totally ineffectual InfoOps and Psy-Ops campaigns—all of which are anathema to the Afghans.

Conclusion

Without a major change in counterinsurgency strategy and a major increase in manpower, equipment (particularly aviation assets), and especially reconstruction funding, the United States may lose this war. Today, the momentum—particularly in the counterinsurgency and the counternarcotics efforts—is running the wrong way. It is still possible to win—to create a slowly developing yet stable, conservative Islamic democracy in Afghanistan, one generally free of terrorism—but not with the current resources and tactics. The Taliban has numerous advantages, including comprehensive knowledge of the local culture, language, and tribal hierarchies of which U.S. forces are ignorant; a virtually inexhaustible supply of recruits and money; mountainous terrain that favors the insurgent; centuries of successful experience in guerrilla warfare against Western powers; patience; domination to the point of supremacy in Information Warfare, and perhaps most importantly, ready sanctuary in

much of northern Pakistan.

Major changes in the way the United States is doing business are needed immediately, but even with them, the United States cannot do it alone. It needs not just the energetic support of NATO, but a sustained commitment from NATO to the hard business of counterinsurgency, a type of warfare in which NATO has had little training and almost no experience. The UN, NGOs, and the donor nations must do more as well. And Afghanistan's northern and western neighbors must continue to avoid the urge to excessively meddle in Afghan affairs or risk a future of Islamist terrorism exported from Afghanistan.

But the key to success or failure in Afghanistan lies below its southern border, in northern Pakistan. As long as insurgents are virtually free to cross the border at will and Pakistani Frontier Corps elements aid and abet their movements, the insurgency cannot be shut down in Afghanistan. As the Soviets learned, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be easily closed. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf must stop trying to appear to be the ally of the United States in the war on terror while seeking to curry political favor with its worst proponents in the NWFP, Baluchistan, and the FATA. Thanks to ill-conceived Pakistani policies of encouragement and appeasement, fundamentalist Islam in the border region may now be too powerful to stop, but it's not too late to try. President Musharraf must assert national control there and act boldly to shut down the major insurgent movements across the border before the situation spirals completely out of control.

For its part, the United States must begin to fight smarter and stop following the Taliban playbook. A complete change in counterinsurgency strategy is required, and all U.S. soldiers must become cultural and language warriors with months, not minutes, of training in both language and culture before deployment. Quantum improvement is required in this area; already in 2004, Human Rights Watch had released a scathing report on the conduct of American military personnel and the Afghan National Police,[41] which are an almost unmitigated disaster of corruption, warlord cronyism, and incompetence.

Despite extreme poverty, a landmine-littered landscape, massive corruption, a fledgling government whose authority outside of Kabul is very limited, an ongoing insurgency, a shattered economy, booming opium production, and a host of other daunting problems, Afghanistan remains geostrategically vital. The United States cannot repeat its post-Soviet withdrawal abandonment of the country or fob the mission off on NATO, or the results will be disastrous once again. By abandoning Afghanistan once, the United States allowed the country to become a refuge for terrorist groups to recruit, train, and wage war against the West. The effect on Afghanistan, the region, and the rest of the world was dramatic and terrifying. This time, if we leave—or lose—the results will be even worse.

Notes

1. Rowan Scarborough, "War on Terrorism in 'Cleanup' Phase," *Washington Times*, May 2, 2003.
2. Winston S. Churchill, *The Story of the Malakand Field Force: An Episode of Frontier War* (London: Green and Longmans, 1898).
3. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 85, 93.
4. Only three countries provided diplomatic recognition to the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan: Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the UAE.
5. Rashid, *Taliban*, 18–19; Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 70.
6. International Crisis Group, "Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation," *ICG Asia Report*, No. 62, Kabul/Brussels, Aug. 5, 2003, 17.
7. Other seminaries outside the border areas that were important foundations for the Taliban included ones in Karachi (Binori Town and Jamia Farooqia) and in Lahore (Jamia Ashrafia). Similarly, there were important seminaries in Peshawar, Akora Khattack, and Quetta, which all played a pivotal role in building up the Taliban movement. See Syed Saleem Shahzad, "How the Taliban Builds its Army," *Asia Times*, Aug. 27, 2003.
8. Ahmed Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1999.

9. See Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002); Barbara Metcalf, "The Madrassa at Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in Modern India," *Modern Asian Studies*, February 1978; and Usha Sanyal, "Generational Changes in the Leadership of the Ahl-e Sunnat Movement in North India during the Twentieth Century," *Modern Asian Studies*, July 1998.

10. Rashid, *Taliban*, 77, 83, 139.

11. See Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 1980, 2nd ed).

12. The competition and distrust between the Ghilzai and the Durranis played a major role in the split of the PDPA between the *Khalq* (People) faction, led by Taraki and representing Ghilzai Pashtuns and the *Parcham* (Banner) faction, led by Babrak Karmal and representing the Durrani Pashtun. See Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985, 2nd ed.).

13. See Vanni Cappelli, "The Alienated Frontier: Why the United States Can't Get Osama bin Laden," *Orbis*, Fall 2005.

14. For a seminal treatment of the subject of charismatic leadership and political organizations, see Alfred de Grazia, *Political Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1965), also published at www.grazian-archive.com.

15. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 480, 487, 491–2.

16. David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

17. Akbar S. Ahmed, *Resistance and Control in Pakistan* (London: Routledge, 1991). Also see Akbar S. Ahmed, *Religion and Politics in Muslim Society: Order and Conflict in Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

18. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, translated by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 358–59, 362.

19. The cloak of the Prophet Muhammad was folded and padlocked in a series of chests in a crypt in the royal mausoleum at Kandahar; "myth had it that the padlocks to the crypt could be opened only when touched by a true *Amir-ul Momineen*." Joseph A. Raelin, "The Myth of Charismatic Leaders," *T&D*, March 2003.

20. Rashid, *Taliban*.

21. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age*.

22. For current figures, see www.icasualties.org.

23. Griff Witte, "Afghans Confront Surge In Violence: Foreign Support Seen Behind Attacks That Mimic Those in Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 28, 2005.

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25. Center for International Issues Research, *Daily Arabic Media Report*, May 25, 2006.

26. "Taliban, Al-Qaeda regroup in Afghanistan, defying U.S. strategy," Onlinenews.com, May 19, 2006.

27. Anne Gearan, "NATO adding troops in Afghanistan," AP, Sept. 21, 2006.

28. Griff Witte, "Suicide Bombers Kill Dozens in Afghanistan, Violence in South Is Seen as Message to NATO," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, Jan. 17, 2006. For a chronology of suicide bombings in Afghanistan, see www.rferl.org.

29. On Feb. 19, 2003, the U.S. government formally designated Hekmatyar as a "specially designated global terrorist," under which designation terrorists and terrorist-related institutions are subject to financial and other sanctions. See Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," CRS Report for Congress, Dec. 28, 2004.

30. See Vanni Cappelli, "Containing Pakistan: Engaging the *Raja-Mandala* in South-Central Asia," *Orbis*, Winer 2007.

31. See James D. Medler, "Afghan Heroin: Terrain, Tradition, and Turmoil," *Orbis*, Spring 2005.

32. Synovitz, "Afghanistan: Upsurge of Violence."

33. Eric Schmitt, "Springtime for Killing in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, May 28, 2006.

34. Rober Karniol, "Plugging the Gaps," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, Mar. 22, 2006.

35. Massoud Ansari and Colin Freeman, "Omar role in truce reinforces fears that Pakistan 'caved in' to Taliban," *Telegraph*, Sept. 9, 2006. Also see Tarique Niazi, "Pakistan's Peace Deal with Taliban Militants," *Terrorism Monitor*, Oct. 5, 2006.

36. Rashid, *Taliban*, 186.

37. Much of the analysis presented here is based on the authors' observations while in Afghanistan periodically over the years 2002–05. During 2005, Chris Mason served as the political officer for the PRT in Paktika.

38. The UN estimates the annual income of Afghanistan's opium industry at $2.5 billion. The opium industry represents the largest source of income in Afghanistan. And the country produces 85 to 90 percent of the world's heroin. Quite simply, Afghanistan is a narco-state. See UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Afghanistan's Counter Narcotics Directorate, "Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2005," November 2005.

39. In November 2005, CBS News quoted a "senior U.S. drug enforcement official" at the U.S. Embassy in

Kabul as saying that he believed "90 percent of the district police chiefs in Afghanistan are either involved in the production of opium or protecting the trade in some way."

40. See Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac, 2002).

41. See HRW, "Enduring Freedom Abuses by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, March 2004.

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Afghanistan Four Years On: An Assessment

by Sean M. Maloney

> The transformation of a traditional society could only be achieved extremely slowly, and certainly not by wrecking its existing structure and relationships. Even in the Soviet Union there had been the "great mistakes" of the 1920s and 1930s. As a Soviet official in Moscow was also reported as saying [in 1981], "If there is one country in the world where we would not like to try scientific socialism at this point in time, it is Afghanistan."
>
> —Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan* (2001)

In Spring 2004, *Parameters* published "Afghanistan: From Here to Eternity?" which explored the situation in Afghanistan in early 2003, or a little over one year after the Taliban regime was removed from power. The tone of the piece was guardedly pessimistic and in effect reminded readers that though there had been progress, the possibility remained that overenthusiastic and emotional responses by the international community in the follow-on phase of the campaign could scuttle that success. That article also laid out a number of challenges that would have to be addressed to avoid what the critics increasingly referred to as "another Vietnam."

In 2005, the situation in Afghanistan has progressed to the point where guarded optimism is justified. Unfortunately, the perception of the situation on the ground has become distorted through the prism of American partisan politics, particularly during the run-up to the 2004 election. The focus of this rhetoric was and remains issues related to narcotics production and a number of spin-off arguments related to it. Afghanistan is apparently no longer looked at as

"another Vietnam"; now it is perhaps "another Colombia."[1] Though the narcotics issue is critical to the future of Afghanistan, public discussion of it in American fora has overridden acknowledgment of other areas of success, areas which are in fact more important than any single issue and which will, in the long run, have a positive effect on counternarcotics operations in the region anyway. This article examines how the situation in Afghanistan has dramatically changed since 2003, and why. It will also suggest that there are new areas for concern which policymakers may wish to focus on beyond the currently salient narcotics problem.

Where Did We Stand in 2003?

Combined Forces Command Afghanistan or "CFC Alpha" (CFC-A) is the American-led Coalition headquarters for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Established in late 2003 to rationalize a convoluted command structure, CFC-A is now the focal point of the Coalition military effort. The situation in-country in July 2003, according to CFC-A, was characterized by these elements: a Coalition force with a counterterrorist focus; an enemy which had sanctuary in Afghanistan conducting operations against Coalition forces; a neutral population; an Afghan National Army that was in training; only four Provincial Reconstruction Teams; and minimal support from Pakistan. There was no constitution, no political process, and minimal sovereignty was exercised by Afghanistan.[2]

With the exception of the overly simplified portrayal of the enemy forces, these points were generally accurate,[3] but they require some elaboration. In 2003, the primary problem was the embryonic nature of the interim and transitional Afghan governments and the possibility that fragile structure could be destabilized and toppled before it could get to work. Connected to this was the questionable legitimacy of the government's leader, President Hamid Karzai. On the ground, Karzai was variously portrayed as a pawn of the United States or in the pocket of southern anti-Taliban fighters of Pashtun ethnicity, or implicitly controlled by the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance exerted explicit control over Kabul and the associated political processes by dint of its 27,000-man military contingent based in the city and its environs. There was no countervailing federal governmental coercive power in Kabul, let alone throughout the rest of the country. This power was in the hands of local leaders, anti-Taliban chieftains which the media pejoratively labeled "warlords." Remnants of the Taliban, supported by the remnants of al-Qaeda's military forces, were by this time in the process of transitioning from a conventional guerrilla war to a low-level terrorist campaign, and the possibility of a return to the destructive post-Soviet era infighting between the chieftains existed in numerous locations, including Kabul. The Afghan population outside of the Pashtun areas was, in the main, not openly hostile toward the international forces, but it generally was not overtly supportive either except in certain cases.[4]

International forces in Afghanistan at that time included the 18,000 members of the American-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the 4,500-strong European-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). OEF was evolving into a mature counterinsurgency force, operating mostly in the southeast and eastern parts of Afghanistan, while ISAF was confined to Kabul. ISAF had a muddled mandate and, without the resources to carry it out, functioned as a nearly symbolic European presence in Kabul, a green-uniformed island in a tan-uniformed sea. A pilot program intended to coordinate OEF efforts with those of the provincial chieftains and the embryonic Afghan National Army, called the Joint Regional Teams, was established in Gardez by mid-2003 (in time, the Joint Regional Teams were renamed Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or PRTs).

The Afghan National Army program was, at the time, convoluted, and little progress had been made because of the inability of ISAF to support the task effectively and the reticence of OEF to take it over completely pending clarification of the responsibilities of both forces vis-à-vis the emerging transitional government. Infrastructure damage after 25 years of war was another impediment to extending federal government control over the provinces. Nongovern-

mental organizations (NGOs) were intimidated in insurgency areas, which had a spill-over effect in secured areas: the insurgents targeted NGOs in the southeast knowing that the organizations would pull out of the whole country if enough casualties were taken by aid workers. OEF operations against the insurgents were complicated by the sensitive matter of Pakistani territorial sovereignty and the volatile political scene in that country.[5]

In sum, the Afghan transitional government had questionable legitimacy among the people (though not necessarily on the international scene), it was subject to coercion by better-armed entities, and it was dependent on international forces in every way. Without security, there can be no reconstruction, and with no reconstruction, there would be no nation-building, thus leaving Afghanistan susceptible to continued instability and penetration by international terrorism. On the plus side, the insurgency was forced by OEF operations to alter its methodology, which in turn made insurgent operations less effective. There were clear indicators that the Afghan population did not and would not support the continuation of Taliban influence (and consequently al-Qaeda) in the country.

The Situation in 2004–05

There are, essentially, three enemy forces operating against the Afghan government and its Coalition partners. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) organization, still seeking to influence the brokerage of power in Kabul, operates from areas east of the city and still mounts usually ineffective attacks on ISAF, OEF, and Afghan National Army forces in the capital. Taliban military formations have been completely reduced by OEF operating methods and appear to have shifted from guerrilla warfare to pinprick terrorist attacks, usually in ethnically Pashtun areas in the southeast. Al-Qaeda provides training and equipment to both HIG and the Taliban. Additionally, al-Qaeda mounts its own limited raids on Coalition forces located on the border with Pakistan. These raids appear to employ the well-equipped remnants of al-Qaeda's "conventional" formations which

worked with the Taliban prior to 2001. Unlike HIG and al-Qaeda, the Taliban are still trying to create a parallel government to garner popular support in Pashtun areas with the aim of retaking the country. At this point, the synergy of HIG, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda has been unable to significantly influence the direction that the Afghan people are taking under the Karzai government.[6]

The importance of Karzai's election in this milieu cannot be underestimated. It is a truism that government legitimacy and the support of the population are absolutely critical in the fight against guerrilla and terrorist organizations. By most indications, this has been achieved for the time being in Afghanistan. The elections were fair and carefully monitored: the voter turnout, more than 80 percent, should put the citizens of the United States and Canada to shame with regard to their respective voter turnouts during elections in 2004. Attempts by enemy forces to use terrorism to interfere with the Afghan election process were crushed before they could bear fruit, particularly in Kabul, where ISAF and OEF forces operated together with Afghan police and military forces in a coordinated fashion.[7]

The success in containing the insurgency and suppressing other elements posing challenges to the Afghan reconstruction effort is attributable to several "moving parts," all of which are interdependent. First, the American-led Coalition, OEF, is the repository of mobile striking power in Afghanistan. In the past, OEF special operations forces used direct action against high-value targets and worked closely with various chieftains' militia forces while airmobile light infantry was brought in to hit concentrations of enemy fighters and sweep support areas. Most OEF operations were conducted in the eastern part of the country. This approach has, in some ways, changed. A prototype regional team concept, established in 2003, deployed a small coordination cell to Gardez to assist with information collection, limited civic action, and NGO coordination in conjunction with the local militia force commanders. These regional teams were originally in support of the sweep and raid operations conducted by the airmobile and special operations forces, and were renamed Joint Regional

Teams. Each was expanded in numbers and capability to encompass broader reconstruction coordination and security tasks, and they were then again renamed as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). By late 2004, the emphasis on mobile sweep and raid operations in the east shifted to supporting the 18 PRTs, which were located in every significant populated area in the country. In addition, each concentration of PRTs required a Forward Support Base with helicopters, medical resources, and reaction forces. The effects of establishing a PRT and Forward Support Base network throughout Afghanistan, however rudimentary in the early days, provided a firm basis to extend Afghan government influence once the nature of that influence could be determined.[8]

The main cog here was the development and expansion of the Afghan National Army (ANA), the second "moving part." By late 2003, the ANA support process from the international community had become much more rational. ISAF (pre-2003) had dropped the ball in the training scheme and it was picked up by OEF, but the direction taken in the design of the Afghan National Army was initially haphazard and impeded by the chieftains in Kabul and their militia forces. In time, high-quality instruction provided by American, Canadian, and British Embedded Training Teams established a significant confidence level in the fledgling Afghan Ministry of Defence and, most important, in its fighting units. The Afghan National Army expanded from three experimental "kandaks" (battalion-equivalents) toward a goal of 26. With an expanded ANA, the Afghan government has forged a power-projection tool to take advantage of the expanded Coalition presence throughout the country. ANA garrisons now exist in most urban areas. The development of the ANA, however, is still very much a work in progress.[9]

The third "moving part" was the ISAF in Kabul. ISAF in its pre-NATO configuration had a vague but potentially competing mandate with OEF and possessed virtually no resources or firepower to provide significant influence in the city of Kabul, its designated area of operations.[10] The NATO summit in Istanbul in 2003 and the acceptance by NATO of ISAF command dramatically altered this state of affairs.[11] Under Canadian influence, the vague ISAF mandate evolved to a statement specifically supporting the interim government and establishing security in Kabul. This depended on an improved ANA capability to offset the military capabilities of at least two heavily armed chieftains who controlled the city and its security forces, which in turn had a countervailing influence on the Afghan political process. ISAF's area of operations was expanded to encompass the entire province of Kabul, not just the city, and coordination between ISAF and OEF was improved, particularly in the special operations realm. ISAF was able to keep an eye on potential problem factions, assist in the hunt for HIG and al-Qaeda-trained infiltrations, and facilitate a wide variety of local projects which synergistically assisted the security efforts by building trust with the population.[12]

Yet another "moving part" is the institution-building and coordination efforts between OEF, ISAF, the Afghan Ministry of Defence, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), and police forces in Kabul. Proceeding simultaneously with the OEF effort in the field, ISAF in Kabul, and the ANA training activities, experienced Afghan military and security leaders were asked to provide their leadership to the central government. This was no easy task, as some had fought each other in previous years. Consensus-building, however, has had some success, and the mentoring programs provided by private military corporations like MPRI have professionalized in some respects the bureaucratic mechanisms needed to handle national army and security forces and have assisted in their coordination with OEF and ISAF. All of this had to be done without generating the perception that the result was being imposed from the outside by foreign entities.

OEF takes on the organized insurgents, while ISAF assists with security of the capital. PRT expansion provides bases for the extension of central government power into the outlying areas. These ambitious programs did not proceed without challenges. Clearly, the primary antagonists, all supported by al-Qaeda, continued in their efforts to disrupt and derail in a broad sense the direction being taken by the

Karzai government. The real nub, however, are the chieftains and their militia forces. How, exactly, can a central government be established and its power expanded without a return to the bad old days of 1993-1996? Can a civil war be prevented?

A simplistic analysis would have us believe that the main encumbrances to stability and peace in Afghanistan are "the drug-fueled warlords" and that there aren't enough American troops on the ground in Afghanistan to confront them because of operations in Iraq.[13] Such politically motivated critiques ignore the historical realities of Afghanistan, however, specifically that a large infusion of outside forces would place us in the same position that the Soviets found themselves in during the 1980s. They also are a slap in the face to those Afghan commanders and soldiers loyal to the Afghan government who have engaged in combat against those seeking to topple it. A large infusion of Western soldiery is not necessary; indeed, less is more, when handled adeptly. Having limited resources demands that subtlety and thought be employed rather than brute force. Brute-force solutions will not work in Afghanistan.[14]

The necessary subtlety is currently employed through the "chess game," a coordinated effort using a variety of tools to incrementally lessen the power that regional chieftains have and supplant it with central government influence while at the same time avoiding fighting.[15] Essentially, these are influence tools of differing coerciveness. The "chess game" would be impossible without the high-end coercive resources that OEF and ISAF bring to bear, but that factor is in the background and builds on the psychology of OEF's four-year firepower demonstration against the Taliban, plus the overall goodwill engendered by the special operations forces, civil affairs teams in the provinces, and ISAF operations in Kabul. Other mechanisms wielded in the "chess game" include the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program; the Heavy Weapons Cantonment (HWC) program; "soft entry" deployments of the Afghan National Army; the proliferation of a variety of police forces to a region; and the "lateral promotion" of recalcitrant militia leaders.

Broadly speaking, the DDR program is used to demobilize personnel, while HWC cantons heavy weapons from machine guns to tanks and artillery. They are separately funded programs with different lines of control.[16] DDR is now used as a verb: to "DDR" a militia formation is to incrementally demobilize it and canton the weapons. DDR may be employed bluntly as a threat, while at the same time DDR is an ongoing process throughout the country.

On the police front, militia forces under chieftain command previously provided security of all types in an unsystematic fashion. Now, border police, highway patrol police, and municipal police, all trained in Kabul, are incrementally introduced to professionalize and systematize the application of law at the local level. To a certain extent, law and order remains relative, but the concept behind an incremental transfer of power applies. The method of establishing a small Afghan National Army garrison, building it up slowly, and having its personnel develop relationships with militia forces provides yet another mechanism for progress.[17]

Militia forces are leadership-dependent. The main issue in this regard is one of "face." The outright removal of an uncooperative chieftain is too abrupt and, in any event, if he no longer has a stake in the reconstruction process because he is out of power, then why should he and his remaining followers not take to the hills? Instead, chieftains have been brought into the central government in all manner of portfolios and assigned staffs to mentor them in governance. Second-tier militia leaders are promoted to become police commanders—but in another province, with other forces funded by Kabul. Rather than taking a moralistic Western stance and labeling them all drug dealers and war criminals and then demanding Nuremberg-like trials, it has proven to be far better to assume everybody is "dirty" after 25 years of war and to start anew. Yes, some militia leaders will remain dirty, and mechanisms will have to be found to deal with that. However, the avoidance of civil war and a resurgence of Taliban influence is the objective, not show trials using Western laws or our version of international law.

It is critical to emphasize that this "chess

game" is not something imposed from the outside: it is a coordinated effort between the Karzai government and the international entities operating in Afghanistan. Indeed, the United Nations, NATO, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the prolific number of American agencies working there are cooperating in various degrees in this direction and with varying levels of effectiveness. It would be easy to label this a "CIA plot" if it were not so transparent and multifaceted. It is clear to objective observers that President Karzai is not a pawn in the game.[18]

It would be foolish to argue that this "chess game" works perfectly. Indeed, the modeling of third- and fourth-order effects is not up to speed, and there can be unintended consequences when the relationships between certain key personalities are not taken into account.

The situation in Herat in the summer and fall of 2004 was a test case for the "chess game." Ismail Kahn was a popular but recalcitrant chieftain who had in fact employed substantial revenues generated by cross-border trade with Iran to beautify Herat and its environs, but his militia commanders were not really interested in going along with the central government's plans for power-sharing. Over time, the militia forces were incrementally "DDR'd" to the point that they were unable to offer serious resistance when Kabul ordered two Afghan National Army battalions into the area. Despite a small firefight, the national army forces were able to convince local militia forces to back off. Factions in Ismail Khan's forces then attacked each other. Khan was "laterally promoted" to a post in Kabul. The confidence level built up after the Herat affair permitted the Karzai government to conduct a similar action with Fahim Khan's militia forces in Kabul, which in turn neutralized a significant coercive force in the capital. As a consequence of such effective actions, the fall elections of 2004 were conducted in an atmosphere nearly devoid of Taliban, HIG, or militia coercion.[19]

New Challenges

The main supporting effort of the "chess game" mechanism will be police and judicial reform. In time, the incremental deployments of central government people to the outer reaches of Afghanistan will have to be backed up with a functioning legal system. Italy is in charge of assisting the Afghan government in this area. Though Italy brings to bear substantial experience in combating organized crime, the reform process has been slow and cultural differences are significant. The same can be said of police training. Germany is the lead nation in this regard, and for reasons most likely related to the Afghan budget, progress is slower than anticipated. At some point, it will no longer be desirable for the Afghan government and Coalition entities to continue to use military force to police the country.

This takes us to the narcotics problem. The assumption among some international entities operating in support of the Afghan government in 2004 suggests that the removal of chieftains engaged in narcotics cultivation and trafficking via the "chess game" may have two effects. It may result, in the worst case, in better networking under the guise of legitimate government activity. Second, the removal of the prominent leadership will devolve power to second-, third-, and even fourth-tier local personnel engaged in narcotics production, trafficking, and protection. By no means are all of these personnel former militia force personnel, which complicates attempts to identify and deal with them. Though this works to the advantage of the Afghan government in that the traffickers' ability to organize a "narco-insurgency" is severely reduced, the lack of police and judicial capacity means that Kabul cannot yet target these dispersed, low-level groups. Similarly, an anti-corruption force will have to be formed to police the chieftains and others in the government to ensure that they remain uninvolved in narcotics production and distribution. In effect, Afghanistan will become like every other nation trying to take on organized crime (and not a Colombia-like narco-insurgency), but only if the right tools are forged and brought to bear.

Two other extremely important aspects of extending government influence to the provinces are sometimes overlooked in military assessments. These are the lack of roads and other infrastructure, coupled with the extremely high

illiteracy rate. How does one provide anti-narcotics information to a nearly illiterate population? How does one deploy police and a legal system when the roads do not facilitate vehicular traffic? The deployment of PRTs, be they NATO or OEF, will assist in collecting information as much as they will assist in the local and provincial coordination effort, but how will Afghanistan "balance its books" in the reconstruction effort? And what priorities will be assigned? Politically motivated criticism in the Western media can interfere with the assessment and establishment of priorities. Demands by Western politicians and their mouthpieces for a huge and expensive counternarcotics force could divert the Afghan leadership's attention from what they rightly view as their own established reconstruction priorities.

The seemingly constant demand by critics that more and more international troops need to be deployed to Afghanistan was addressed earlier. However, the PRT expansion program, whereby NATO members have in principle agreed to accept lead-nation status for several former American OEF-run PRTs, has stalled out because of a lack of contributors.[20] The PRTs and their associated Forward Support Bases are supposed to be manned by approximately 5,000 personnel (100 per PRT, and 400 to 500 per FSB), yet NATO member nations can't seem to come up with the additional personnel to meet this requirement. The reason is principally attributable to the stultifying eurobureaucracy, but there also are serious problems in how ISAF is commanded as it expands to the provinces.

In 2004, the Eurocorps took command of ISAF, while the Franco-German Brigade was placed in command of ISAF's Kabul Multinational Brigade. The relationship between the two French-led or dominated NATO headquarters with Combined Forces Command Afghanistan and certain American, British, and Canadian nations contributing forces to ISAF can be described in polite terms only as dysfunctional. The infighting, kept to a minimum under Canadian command last year but now detrimental to ISAF's effectiveness, has reached the point where a new command concept should be considered. Steps were taken to conceptualize a

NATO "Afghanistan Force" that would command both CFC-A and ISAF, but the lasting problem over the international command of American forces will prevent significant and effective movement in this direction for the time being.[21] As usual, the demand by the French to command the planned NATO force grates on the sensitivities of other NATO members. The only entities to benefit from these fractures are France and al-Qaeda.

An Afghanistan Force option was rejected by NATO in spring 2005. As it stands, the phased replacement of OEF PRTs with NATO PRTs will result in the transfer of some American-led PRTs to NATO command. Special operations forces engaged in the hunt for high-value targets will continue to operate in the region. The command relationship between those forces and the new, expanded ISAF is currently under discussion. In effect, ISAF will absorb elements of OEF, not replace them. SHAPE planners are, as of summer 2005, developing a campaign plan for the entire country. The problem of who will conduct the "robust" portions of that plan and what national restrictions will be placed on those forces will remain the main issues.

Another emerging challenge is the demands by international legal personalities for Balkans-style war crimes trials in Afghanistan.[22] These demands appear to be rooted in simplistic notions that one size fits all when it comes to international law (other motives, like personal ambition and job security, cannot be ruled out). Afghanistan is not Bosnia, nor is it Kosovo. The Balkan wars were comparatively short in duration and had identifiable protagonists who could be singled out as instigators of mass crimes against humanity. Afghanistan, on the other hand, has had 25 years of war. The existing polity includes people who fought on both sides during the Soviet era but against the Taliban in more recent years. Milosevic-style indictments will not work in Afghanistan, where almost everybody may be guilty of violating some Western-based law. Indeed, if we are to have war crimes trials for Afghanistan, one should first call to the dock Soviet military and political leaders for acts of genocide, followed by every Soviet soldier who fought there, before moving on to