

# **Hate speech and political Islam: Root cause of religious extremism, terrorism and jihad**

Distinguished guests my brothers and sisters:

It is my utmost honor to present this lecture at Yale, one of the most prestigious institutions in the world, on my topic titled '**Hate speech and political Islam: Root cause of religious extremism, terrorism and jihad**'.

I once wrote, that when I was in prison, and my family was in danger, and it seemed that my own people had abandoned me; that it was my *Jewish* brothers and sisters<sup>1</sup> who stood by us; who dedicated their time, their resources, their very soul to my freedom. And that is a very important point, because in today's world it seems impossible to most that a Muslim and Jews could be friends, let alone brothers and sisters. But we can be, and in fact so can others.

Fundamentalists are men who emulate the looks and actions of the Prophet Mohammed. Yet, they give the Prophet and Islam a very bad name, as they perpetuate and even add to the western perception that Islam was won by force or the sword. By this I mean by the sword and not by conversion. Yet these self-righteous and arrogant men claim to be speaking in the name of Allah and act like the Prophet. They try to squash any positive action of peace by not only squashing but trying to kill all those who oppose them, making their vision that of a totalitarian theocracy that will allow no free exchange of ideas, the development of thinking such as *ijtihad* or even speech. The golden age of Islam was built on this ebullition of ideas that made it prosper and which gave so much to the world, such as algebra, alchemy; they even kept and preserved philosophy. Under such forces it will lead the Islamic world into the Dark ages which were similar to the European Dark Ages and the Middle Ages instead of the Renaissance and the other periods where discovery, science and even technology was invented.

One of the strengths of the Muslim world has been the shared power between, two types of power one that is secular and was held by the governing Caliph or Sultan and the other was led by the *Ulama* or the religious faction; the two balanced each other out, as one cared for

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Richard L Benkin, an American peace activist started efforts for my release and continued to inquire about my case, till I was released on bail on April 30, 2005.

the body the other for the soul. In a fully secular world, from a socialistic up to and including communism; there is an absence of religious principles or of God, it is believed that man knows best. However, in a theocracy men speak in the name of God. Be it in a fully secular world or in a theocracy, there is imbalance as both have replaced faith with belief. Because, there are no check points; hence the people become ruled over by men who believe they have all the answers or by men who believe they speak for God. In either case a despotic type of governance results and people suffer as it weakens the strength of shared power, body and soul being ruled over by people of faith. Such is the case of the fundamentalists or the secularist who try to impose their ways on the people they claim to want to liberate. They also hinder those who have a balance and who know the difference between personal faith and politics.

One of the Biblical and Qur'anic stories that have influenced my way of thinking<sup>2</sup> is the story of the bad Pharaoh and Moses. This evil man said, there were too many Jews. He first ordered abstinence when that did not work he ordered the killing of every male child. When a radical person comes and gives an order to young men and women to commit suicide in the name of God, I am reminded of that story. The order given by the evil Pharaoh, to kill Jewish male children for the simple reason they are Jewish. In the case of radicals they are not killing Jews they are killing Zionists. Where would we be today if Moses had been killed by Pharaoh? Why then do fundamentalists use the prison and even death to kill all chances of peace? Why do they not see they are the followers of evil Pharaoh and not of the prophets?

Radical movements be it religious or secular also have a trend that is their madness increases as time goes by. We demand equal time, or you cannot say this or that on the air. You are not allowed to speak of us in a bad way. You are a racist. You fear my religion and we are the religion of peace. When that tactic does not work they go after one person and start harassing them, they go over the head of the person and complain, meet with the bosses, demand an apology and then use pressure tactics to get their way. They are after power and control hence medias are not safe, nor journalists because the radicals flood emails, telephone lines and faxes with letters of demand. They order their people to write to call to make them heard. However, the majority of those callers are uninformed; they never heard or read the offensive article. They react blindly to an order that comes from above, the earthly leader who claims to speak in the name of God. Their aim is to get the person fired. If this fails they go for human right commission, law suits and try to get money. The bottom line is they are after power, control and their aim is MONEY, the mighty dollar. All of this is done in the name of God, let me ask you since when does God ask for money? When does God ask to harass, lie, control others into doing His way? God gives us freedom of Choice these radicals take away that freedom in the name of God.

Interfaith dialogues and meetings based on a will to know the other will lead to understanding and respect of each others' faith and beliefs and it is primordial at this time. Because, it prevents generalizations and statements such as "all Jews, Christians, Muslims are like this or

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<sup>2</sup> My father was always suggesting me to never believe what clergies say in Friday prayers. But, he was always insisted us to look into the world realities and read other Holy Books to know the truth.

that". I do caution interfaith dialogue that is solely based on theology, which is what the religion should be and it is not what it is or how the people practice. Theological debates are interesting within a community yet they are restricted for the most part to scholars who use one lineage of thought or ideology. It also gives a moral conduct to people however it often negates who people are. Here is one example from the Christian or Catholic side, women are forbidden to use contraceptives including condoms. Yet, there are women who have pre-marital sex and hence they expose themselves to sexually transmitted diseases. Muslim Theologians or Sheikhs will tell you that a man can have four wives if he can take care of them properly; however most Muslim women prefer having a monogamous relationship with their husbands. Very few will like to share their husband with other woman, except if they cannot bear a child or have a to do great deal of physical labor to do such as farming etc. Jewish theologians will say it is the man that grants a divorce to a woman, however in Canada religious Jewish decided to have a Canadian law to help women get their religious divorce. In talking between ourselves as members of a religion we can add more depth to these statements we can agree or disagree however, the end result will be that we all have pet peeves and we cannot follow all those religious laws as they are at times a burden in our lives. Dialogue breaks down the idea that a group is homogenous and everyone follows the leader blindly. More than likely this is how people make the difference between a person of faith and a person of beliefs. A person of faith will know that God will understand and even forgive them however the believers will rationalize that the law will not forgive the transgressors. Hence those who transgress need to be punished as non-believers even if the people are people of faith.

The question that arises is we people of belief or people of faith? What guides our the lives our faith in God or our belief in the Law? Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis once gave a talk on the idea of faith and trust in God; she said that every one says they have FAITH in God but when asked do you TRUST God there is a hesitation. Dialogue is what will help us learn not only about theology but also how women feel about the laws of theologians.

Faith and trust in God, it seems that as people we do not know or forget that faith MUST include trust. We have faith in God, and often times think that our God is ours and not on else. God is our property as we have all the answer to salvation. In knowing other's faith we soon find out that God created the entire world and every person on earth has his or her own interpretation or divine revelation, be it monotheistic or polytheistic. In the case of monotheism, the common link is Adam the Bible, at first the first covenant found in the Torah, the second in the New Testament and the third revelation in the Koran. Everyone will say we have faith in God, and then proceed to say from their own perspective and interpretation: who is God? The conclusion is that people have faith in God, however how many trust God? How can we trust God and also learn to trust one another? Dialogue is the way the door of can be opened and remain opened. Through interfaith dialogue we get to know not only about the person's religion, but also his or her understanding. We also get to know about culture and most importantly we get to know another person faith, beliefs and hopefully we become friends. It is through faith that our beliefs are often challenged.

There is a difference between faith and belief. I might believe that my religion is the only true path to God. I can believe that I am right. I can believe in the law. I can believe that I have the only way. I can believe that I am right and everyone else is wrong. I can believe the other is evil and bad. Fear is what prevents me from reaching out and challenging my beliefs. Fear is also what motivates me to be very vocal and try to influence others in my beliefs. Fear is what makes me use force to impose my beliefs. Because I have never challenged my beliefs I will remain ignorant to other possibilities. It is through dialogue, honest debate, that I can not only challenge my own beliefs but gain new insight in myself and the other. I might even find out that someone else has the same belief and if the fear is broken, the bridge is built, then a dialogue can take place. My belief is transformed into faith in God and in His/Her diversity. After the internal journey, the challenge of my own core beliefs what remains is faith that is based in God, the Creator of the universe. How could this be? How can I still be true to myself? I have a choice, either I stay and learn or go away and remain close minded. I have been challenged, if I accept the challenge and base my research on fact instead of theory or fiction a new reality takes shape hence a transformation from within. I start growing as a person and hence become better human beings. If I stay as and remain firm in my erroneous beliefs I am deluded then I regress and fall into the abyss of darkness because I have closed myself off from reality "Mine and the Other". This is what the message that prophets and saints have preached for years and no one listened. No one wanted to do the internal journey they only too the external path and not the internal one. Rabbiah of Iraq the Muslim Saint and mystic used the metaphor of setting heaven on fire and extinguishing the fires of hell, so people stopped to pay lip service and being hypocrites because they did good deeds to secure their path to heaven. Christians use to buy indulgences or relics at one time. It is time for each person to take charge of our self and look deep inside and ask, the question: "Do I pay lip service or am I sincere and honest?"

Through dialogue we can learn about one another's beliefs and faith. You and I, yes we can challenge belief and build on faith. By this simple action we deepen what it means to us as individual and as a group the idea of being guided, inspired and even acting according to God's plan. The whole idea of faith, trust, and belief is a philosophical debate between individuals from the central point our self and the peripheral our community. Religions can be based on theology but more importantly it should be based on our perception and understanding of God's words as individuals and not as a mass. This had been the reason as to why I promote interfaith dialogue. Religion does not promote hatred however men have promoted hatred by favoring one religion over the others; usually it is their interpretation of what religion means which is based on theology or the word of God as interpreted by men of small minds. Some monotheists accuse others of worshipping idols and having false gods. Some radicals go as far as destroying historical temples. This can be seen when Christians had statues to represent images of Jesus or the Virgin Mary they were either destroyed or painted over. Romans destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Christians and later Muslims destroyed Hindu temples in India or parts or other parts of the world. The first Christian priests were destroying the spiritual icons of natives, and saying they worshipped idols in nature. Hindus destroyed Muslim and Christian Mosques and Churches. The list goes on an on. However, there is another aspect of religion that is often forgotten those from the tradition who have made a contribution to stopping hatred, which promotes better understanding.

But, while advocating peace and interfaith dialogue, like most Muslims around the world, I have been a victim<sup>3</sup>.

Like most Muslims, I've been victimized by a socially supported information flow; one that taught me to look the other way when facts seem to contradict the politically-mandated and politically-correct *weltanschauung* that we are supposed to adopt. I was taught that much of the world is in essence my enemy, and that Israel and the Jewish people are the embodiment of evil. And I was taught to distrust—even though we all admired—Americans.

And that is the case because the enemies of freedom have wormed their way into most social institutions in the Muslim world—the press, the media, governments, and schools. I have seen this in my own nation—a nation of good people, who seek nothing other than the things all of us want in life. These enemies of freedom seek to control my people by controlling our access to information and our contact with those who offer a different point of view.s

And so I am not misconstrued here, I must emphasize that such practices are neither Islamic nor culturally mandated. They are political. And, thankfully, politics change.

In my own case, I was fortunate. My parents raised me to be open and moral, and I had a journalist's natural curiosity and access to information via the Internet. I began to see that there was more information than we were being force-fed; information that quite often contradicted the political orthodoxy. And it opened my eyes. I saw that the United States is *not* the greatest threat to us; neither are the Jews, Zionism, western culture, nor so-called "infidels."

No, the greatest threat to us is the same thing that threatens non-Muslims, that threatens us all. It is a dedicated cadre of individuals who justify killing innocents by falsely—*falsely*—using our faith.

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<sup>3</sup> Continuing to face Sedition, Treason and Blasphemy Case No. 377, trial of which is continuing in the Court of Metropolitan Session Judge in Dhaka, Bangladesh. According to Bangladeshi law, Sedition bears capital punishment.

And so like any good journalist, I began writing about it, warning our people about the rise of terrorism, advocating interfaith dialogue, and urging Muslim Bangladesh to recognize Jewish Israel. Colleagues outside of my country—both Muslim and non-Muslim—joined me in this effort. And as we wrote, people listened. Not all of them agreed with us; in fact, most did not. But our efforts sparked the beginning of public discussion and debate on these issues. And my people began to recall the interfaith respect that is our true heritage.

But all of that changed on November 29, 2003.

Our free exchange of ideas had angered some powerful people who were setting the stage for a “surprise” that would put free debate in Bangladesh on hold.

As I was about to board the aircraft to address a group of Israeli writers<sup>4</sup>, police grabbed me. They ransacked my bags, took my passport and possessions.

At first, they did not charge me with anything but leaked that my alleged crime was espionage “in the interests of Israel against the interests of Bangladesh.” You see, anyone who even suggests that all faiths are equally legitimate must be demonized, and you can do that by preying on people’s vulnerability to wild and untrue conspiracy theories involving the Jews.

Conditions were terrible for me and my family while I was in prison. I was purposely kept in a wing for the mentally insane<sup>5</sup>. The constant screaming, the terrible heat, the filth, and the accusations were intended to break me. My family was threatened and attacked. Police refused to act, blaming it all on my “alliance with the Jews.” My brother, Sohail Choudhury, twice had to flee Dhaka for his safety. They wouldn’t even let me attend my mother’s funeral<sup>6</sup>.

But while my health deteriorated, my spirit did not.

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<sup>4</sup> Hebrew Writer’s Association invited me to attend a conference on December 1, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Cell No. 14 inside Dhaka Central Jail in Dhaka, Bangladesh, is a place for Mentally insane prisoners.

<sup>6</sup> My mother died on August 9, 2005. My family applied for bail on parole for few hours to attend my mother’s funeral. But, the government did not allow me to attend my mother’s funeral.

For I had, first of all, faith: my Muslim faith; and a general faith in G-d and in the justice of our cause. And I had something else. Just before I was taken away, I saw Sohail and asked him to contact my Jewish brother Dr. Richard Benkin, who fought for me without stopping; traveling here and there, writing articles, speaking publicly, and petitioning his government. He even went to the Bangladeshi embassy in Washington, along with honorable Congressman Mark Steven Kirk<sup>7</sup>—who is neither Muslim nor Jewish, demanding my release, and to whom I am also so grateful—joined him in the cause, and this interfaith team eventually secured my freedom.

Today, our efforts to build a Coalition of Understanding continue. For were this persecution just about me, it would be unjust, but little more. However, there are many people of many faiths being persecuted for their stance on behalf of interfaith understanding and for trying to warn their people about the terrorist threat; and many more who are afraid to speak that which are in their hearts. And that is especially true in Muslim nations, where such beliefs are opposed both the by accepted political orthodoxy and by the terrorists in our midst.

Working together, Dr. Benkin and I seek to empower Muslims and others to embrace the religious diversity of our world; to accept that G-d has given us many paths by which we can come to Him; and not seek a return to 7<sup>th</sup> century political and intellectual constructs that deny all but one set of believer's equal legitimacy.

I am a devote Muslim, and I *know* that my faith, my Koran does not award 70 virgins to those who murder children and seek to destroy the faith of our mutual prophet Moses—our Jewish cousins who preceded us in our journey of faith.

We continue to write without ceasing—and now publish unmolested so we can counter the lies that pass as journalism in most of the Muslim world. We seek to provide my people with information—facts, as well as opinion—that most of the media is either too ignorant or too fearful to publish. For it is only through the light of truth, of free access to information, that we can overcome those who seek to overturn centuries of progress. Under extreme adversities, Weekly Blitz<sup>8</sup> and Weekly *Jamjamat* are continuing publication, which are presently known as most vocal

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Steven Kirk is a Republican Congressman from Illinois.

<sup>8</sup> Despite extreme adversity, Weekly Blitz has turned into the most influential newspaper in Bangladesh.

against Islamist fundamentalism and extremism. Each week, number of readers is increasing, although, our advertisers are hesitant to accord support with their advertisements, for reason unknown, despite the fact that, Blitz by now has turned into the leading tabloid weekly in Bangladesh.

Slowly, we are gaining adherents to our cause. Slowly, we are exchanging information and ideas with more and more people who seek the same peace that we do. Being inspired with our mission of peace, Bangladesh Minority Lawyers Association<sup>9</sup> [BMLA], Bangladesh Hindu Mohajote have expressed solidarity to our cause. They are the first organizations in Bangladesh, which issued statements asking the government to immediately withdraw the false sedition charge, that still hangs on me, and end harassment.

We hope to participate in and perhaps empanel seminars and informational events around the world—events that further our goal of true interfaith understanding. Perhaps we will do this in own Bangladesh—a nation that is struggling, valiantly at times, against terrorism and the evil incarnate that is attacking my people.

We do so even though the forces of evil remain arrayed against us. But each one of their lies, each death threat against me and my brother only confirms that they realize our efforts threaten their attempts to drag our world into an abyss. The intensity of their opposition is perhaps the best measure of our success.

In today's Muslim world, political Islam is patronizing hate speech, which I believe is the root cause of religious extremism, terrorism and Jihad. On Friday's during special sermon sessions, you will hear Muslim clergies giving provocative statements, encouraging fellow Muslims in hating Jews and Christians to remain a good Muslim.

When I for the first time forecasted that Madrassa was becoming breeding ground of Jihadists<sup>10</sup>, many of my fellow journalists instantly raised their fingers at me saying, I was serving the purpose of 'foreign interest'. Policymakers in the government were even much aggressive in bringing sedition, treason and blasphemy charges against me. They tried to give justification to such actions saying, by criticizing the Madrassa

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<sup>9</sup> BMLA is the organization, which is formed by lawyers belonging to religious minority groups in Bangladesh.

<sup>10</sup> My article appeared in Middle East Web titled 'Incubating Radical Islam' in 2003, which is available online.



and forecasting the rise of Islamist militancy within such institutions; I was hurting the sentiment of Muslims and was doing harm to Islam!

Ridiculous indeed!

Muslims consider Madrassas as the basic place of generating clergies as well as those who can be the custodians of Islam in the respective countries. But, many are still unaware that in the name of religious education, major segment of such Madrassas are active as breeding ground of Jihadists. Instead of real Islamic education, the students are taught of religious hatred. Their brains are filled with the poison of hate towards everyone who is not a Muslim. Moreover, the very old notion of 'killing Jews and Christians and remaining a good Muslim<sup>11</sup>' is very strongly planted in the minds of thousands of students of such institutions.

For past several years, I have done extensive investigation into the Madrassa education system and the Qaomi [Koranic] Madrassa in Bangladesh as well as studied extensively on such religious schools around the world and each of my inquisitive investigations finally ended in identifying growth of radical and militant Islam right within the 64,000 Qaomi Madrassas in Bangladesh<sup>12</sup>, as well others within the Islamic and non Islamic world.

Although people are always putting focus on Madrassas involvement in breeding Jihadists<sup>13</sup>, they are yet to investigate the inside stories in Madrassas, where male and female students are sexually abused by the clergies on a regular basis. Sodomy is a growing phenomenon in the Madrassas, and according to various reports, silent spread of HIV and AIDS is gradually putting a huge blanket on the large number of students and teachers coming of such institutions.

Terrorism and rise of radical Islam is a global problem. Islamic terrorism [also known as Islamist terrorism or Jihadist terrorism] is religious terrorism by those whose motivations are rooted in their interpretations of Islam. Statistics gathered for 2006 by the National Counterterrorism Center of the United States indicated that "Islamic extremism" was responsible for approximately 25% of all terrorism fatalities worldwide, and a majority of the fatalities for which responsibility could be conclusively determined. Terrorist acts have included airline hijacking, beheading, kidnapping, assassination, roadside bombing, suicide bombing, and occasionally rape.

According to some experts, Perhaps the most resonant incident of Islamic terrorism was the 9/11 attack on the United States. Other prominent attacks have occurred in

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<sup>11</sup> During Friday sermons, the Muslim clergies continue to say, by quoting Koran that those who take Jews and Christians as friends shall no more be a Muslim. Others quoting Hadith or other un-proven religious myths will tell the audience that, Jews and Christians were enemies of Islam. So, killing Jews and Christians through Jihad [Holy War] to establish Islamic Rule in the world is a divine task for every Muslim.

<sup>12</sup> This number of 64,000 madrassas in Bangladesh is based on several reports dated 2007. Now the number has even increased. As madrassa education is not under government control nor there is any registration process of such educational institutions, exact number of madrassas are yet to be identified by anyone.

<sup>13</sup> In Bangladesh, only in 2005, students and teachers of Madrassas were found involved behind series bomb blasts in the country on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005. Later several clergies and Madrassa students were awarded death penalty for their involvement behind such massacre. In the trial courts, these clergies and Madrassa students openly said that they denounce democracy and democratic system as these are 'Laws of Evil'.

Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Israel, Britain, Spain, France, Russia and China. These terrorist groups often describe their actions as Islamic jihad [struggle]. Self-proclaimed sentences of punishment or death, issued publicly as threats, often come in the form of fatwas [Islamic legal judgments]. Both Muslims and non-Muslims have been among the targets and victims, but threats against Muslims are often issued as takfir [a declaration that a person, group or institution that describes itself as Muslim has in fact left Islam and thus is a traitor]. This is an implicit death threat as the punishment for apostasy in Islam is death under Sharia law.

The controversies surrounding the subject include whether the terrorist act is self-defense or aggression, national self-determination or Islamic supremacy; the targeting of noncombatants; whether Islam ever could condone terrorism; whether some attacks described as Islamic terrorism are merely terrorist acts committed by Muslims or nationalists; how much support there is in the Muslim world for Islamic terrorism; whether the Arab-Israeli Conflict is the root of Islamic terrorism, or simply one cause.

Osama bin Laden is the millionaire son of a construction magnate<sup>14</sup>. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Bin Laden's deputy, is a medical doctor. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaida in Iraq was an uneducated street thug who converted to a radical form of Islam in prison. Recently we saw a female Belgian convert to Islam become a suicide bomber in Iraq<sup>15</sup>. It is difficult to identify what such people have in common other than a willingness to kill — and sometimes to die — for a cause they are convinced is right. No study has so far been able to explain why some people become terrorists and others don't. Socio-psychological factors and questions of identity seem to be important and the dynamics of various cults have some striking parallels to terrorist cells. One thing we frequently see in the trajectory of terrorists is a conversion experience that occurs within a small, tight-knit group. The dynamics of such groups tend to reinforce personal conviction, especially among individuals whose other social networks have frayed or can't match the intensity of bonds forged in what is for them an existential struggle.

Often the group is led by a 'charismatic figure' such as a 'jihad veteran', or jihad entrepreneur who raises funds and recruits for jihad. Such groups are found in many contexts, from prisons to social clubs. Often they are associated with a mosque, but generally they do not hold meetings in the mosque itself. Also the internet is playing a role in this conversion by exposing people to extremist views and the possibilities presented by jihad.

Many of the members of such cells have little history of extremism — or of piety. The most pious are not necessarily those most likely to become terrorists. Indeed, one could argue that for some people it is their poor understanding of Islam — and for the young suicide bomber, perhaps even their naivety — that has made them susceptible to extreme views.

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<sup>14</sup> Bin Laden Conglomerate is owned by family of Osama Bin Laden in Saudi Arabia. They are continuing to do business, although Osama Bin Laden has already been identified as a top ranking terrorist in the world.

<sup>15</sup> Brussels based cell helped organize the logistics for Degauque and her husband to travel to Iraq and hook up with jihadists linked to Abu Musab al Zarqawi in the fall of 2005. Time spent amongst the radical circle helped persuade Degauque, angry at U.S. behavior in Iraq, to join the fight there.

Some analysts have argued that the root causes of terrorism lie not with the psychology or life experience of the individual but with deeper underlying political and economic currents. These root causes are variously listed as poverty, underdevelopment, un-employment, the demography of youth bulges, Palestinian dispossession and so forth.

These so-called 'root causes' are relevant but they do not go to the heart of the issue. First, there is the obvious fact that many terrorists are middle class or even from elites. Social studies of terrorists show that they are generally better educated than the broader population.

Secondly, terrorism is not limited to developing countries: look at the history of terrorism in developed democracies such as the United Kingdom. Finally, behind talk of root causes there is an assumption that they are somehow more real than the terrorists' self-proclaimed motivations, that economic factors are more solid than ideology or identity. But as the protests over the Danish cartoons showed: issues of belief, identity and culture are just as real as material ones for many Muslims, and may well drive the emotions of many even more strongly.

That said, dysfunctional economies and authoritarian political systems magnify feelings of frustration and anger which, in turn, provide fertile soil for those who manipulate questions of identity and victim hood in the cause of violent jihad.

Since 9/11 the nature of the terrorist threat has changed. It has become more decentralized and amorphous. Al Qaida is still an active threat even if it has not been directly responsible for any major attack for the past two years. Al Qaida is fighting a war that it believes will last for generations. It has not given up its goal of conducting catastrophic attacks in the United States. We should not forget that eight and a half years passed between the first and second World Trade Centre attacks, and that the relative failure of the first attack seems to have acted more as an incentive than a dampener.

One of Al Qaida's 'achievements' has been to draw many groups and Jihadists out of their local struggles and focus them on the 'far enemy'. Zawahiri, now Al Qaida's chief ideologist, himself moved from a local, Egyptian preoccupation to a global, anti-US ideology. And the story of Jamaah Islamiyah in Indonesia is about the transformation of a group which grew out of a national Islamist movement — Darul Islam — and has gone on to adopt the global Jihadist view of Al Qaida and others.

The terrorist threat today is best understood as a network of networks.

Sometimes the groups and cells that make up this extended network are held together by formal alliances — the best example is the alliance between core Al Qaida and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Al Qaida franchise in Iraq. But most often the links are informal, based on personal contacts. Surprising to some as it may seem, Al Qaida does not exercise command and control over this extensive network.

Consequently terrorists co-operate with each other at a variety of levels. This co-operation may not be 'official', and it is certainly not part of a giant global plot directed from a cave somewhere on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Ad hoc cells are formed for particular operations. A terrorist 'entrepreneur' with good access to financial donors can supply money. Cells or individual facilitators can

provide others with documents or at least with the knowledge of where they can acquire them. A more experienced group can provide a trained bomb-maker to a cell that has a plan but not the technical expertise to carry it out. Veterans can vouch for new recruits to get them into training camps.

This amorphous structure can make it extremely difficult to determine who was responsible for an attack and how it was carried out. After a major attack such as Madrid or London, the automatic question is 'Was Al Qaida responsible?'

It all depends on what you mean by 'Al Qaida' and by 'responsible'. Certainly Al Qaida's ideology and its record of attacks may have provided inspiration, but beyond that, the direct fingerprints are harder to find. Because of the nature of this network of networks, it is always possible to find intriguing personal links back to core Al Qaida — such links do not necessarily mean direct command and control. More importantly no direct Al Qaida involvement — for either planning or finances or other help — is needed to carry out successful attacks. Partly as a result of this network of networks structure, we should be careful not to ascribe to Islamist terrorism a monolithic unity. There are connecting threads: the conviction that the "U.S. and its allies are waging a war against Islam", the contempt for apostate' Muslim regimes, rejection of liberal democracy as atheistic and decadent and particularly the appeal of the single narrative of Muslim victim hood. But it is also the case that the Jihadist movement is diverse with a large degree of internal disagreement over goals and methods. Nor are terrorist groups exempt from the squabbles over money, personalities, and thwarted ambitions that afflict all organizations. One example of disagreement is the current debate between Al Qaida leaders such as Zawahiri on the one hand and Zarqawi's network in Iraq on the other over the legitimacy of killing Shia. Various groups have varying opinions on the legitimacy of killing any civilians. There is also the persistent debate over whether to fight the near 'enemy' — the allegedly corrupt and apostate regimes of the Middle East or Indonesia — or the far 'enemy', the United States which allegedly keeps those regimes in power. We should not however latch onto such disputes as evidence terrorist groups are about to implode. The Jihadist tent is a broad one. Whatever their differences, most Islamist terrorists see themselves as fighting for the same cause: God is one; His cause is one, so His army is one.

My contention that terrorism will be with us for some time yet is not intended to suggest that the fight against terrorism is failing. Rather I would say that while we have had some big wins it is perhaps premature to declare victory. Many terrorist leaders and planners have been killed or captured around the world. Crucial middlemen have been arrested, such as Hambali who was a link between Al Qaida and Jemaah Islamiyah, as have skilled planners such as Khalid Sheykh Muhammad, the so-called mastermind of the 9/11 attack. The invasion of Afghanistan shut down Al Qaida and other groups' training camps there. Al Qaida's core leadership has been driven underground. Multilateral conventions have made the transfer of terrorist funds more difficult. Terrorists have been forced to limit their use of electronic communication and fall back upon couriers. Improved border security and more secure travel documentation have made travel more difficult. We have seen unprecedented co-operation at the bilateral and multilateral level among security forces and intelligence agencies. As a result plots have been disrupted and many terrorists have been captured.

These global efforts underline the global nature of the threat. Those waging the jihad certainly see it as a global struggle as events in Iraq demonstrate. There, Jihadists

see an environment rich in both targets and propaganda opportunities. Iraq is being used as a rhetorical rallying point by Jihadist groups around the world. Jihadists see in Iraq an opportunity to attack the far enemy, the United States. Their target is also what they regard as the near enemy: the democratically elected government of Iraq which they portray as an American puppet. And in Iraq, as elsewhere, Jihadists have also been quite adept at exploiting communal and regional tensions. Videos of attacks on Coalition forces appear within hours on the internet and we know that such material is manipulated in the radicalization and recruitment process. Propagandists use the war to reinforce their narrative of Muslim victim hood, of the clash of civilizations and of cosmic war between Islam and the crusading West.

Also, terrorist networks and cells have formed to supply recruits, funds, and the everyday equipment of the bomber to the Iraq jihad. These facilitation networks extend throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Western Europe. It would however be a mistake to see the insurgency in Iraq as essentially a jihad campaign. Foreign Jihadists are responsible for a disproportionate number of the suicide bombings targeted at the coalition and Iraqi forces. But the foreign Jihadists in fact comprise only a small fraction of the overall insurgency which is more about Iraqi Sunni resentment at the loss of power than jihad against the west. And importantly the global threat from Islamist terrorism would exist irrespective of what has happened in Iraq.

Nor is Iraq in the same league as pre-9/11 Afghanistan as a base for global Islamist terrorism. So far terrorist groups have not been able to establish training camps in Iraq on the scale of Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s.

Also, most insurgents in Iraq are locals, and many will not want to extend their jihad outside of Iraq. There is a concern about the potential for a terrorist bleed out from Iraq — the Amman hotel bombings, for example, were planned in Iraq and carried out primarily by Iraqis under the direction of Zarqawi's network. Zarqawi, having been imprisoned in Jordan, has a particular grudge against that country. But a key point here is that the scale and nature of the Jihadists groups in Iraq are quite different to what we faced in Afghanistan.

Let me turn now to the importance of the internet for terrorists. Just like everybody else in our digital age, terrorists use the internet for many purposes<sup>16</sup>. They use it to communicate and transfer funds, although counter-terrorism efforts have had some effect in restricting both. And they use it to raise funds — videotapes of attacks in places like Iraq and elsewhere are used to encourage further donations. But probably the most important use of the internet for Islamist terrorists is the creation of a virtual 'Ummah', or community of believers. Islamists are at the forefront of those recognizing the net's full potential to promote a virtual community. There are literally thousands of websites with chat rooms and bulletin boards where extremists can meet like-minded people. While such people are a small minority of the general population, the internet allows them to form a community of their own, reinforcing and radicalizing their views. It also provides a forum in which the merely curious, or disgruntled, can be exposed to extremist views. And while governments around the world can shut down extremist mosques, or deport radical imams, or even use new technology to increase their control of the internet, it is impossible to shut down the internet or deport firebrands to a place where they cannot access the internet and continue to preach in cyberspace.

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<sup>16</sup> There are several blogs and sites owned or operated by Islamist militancy groups in the world.

But while the internet is important to the tactics of terrorism its role should not be exaggerated. Documents and videos posted on the internet can certainly be used for training. But despite the massive amounts of information on the internet, it augmented, not replaced, real world training in camps. The information on the internet is most useful to someone who has already received terrorist training. For example, the mere fact that there are recipes, of varying degrees of completeness, for chemical and biological weapons on the internet does not mean terrorists are successfully producing them. Nor has Islamist cyber-terrorism been a major problem so far. Whatever their wishes, Islamist terrorists currently have low capability to attack the internet itself or the infrastructure it supports. There are many states and criminal groups that have a greater capacity.

For Australia the trajectory of terrorism in Southeast Asia is of particular concern. And in many ways developments in Southeast Asia mirror those globally. Considerable progress has been made in counter-terrorism efforts. The political will to deal with terrorism is stronger today than in the aftermath of the first Bali bombings in October 2002. Better cooperation is occurring among security forces and intelligence agencies. Capacity building programs by Australia and others are bearing fruit. Key leaders have been arrested or killed. I have mentioned the arrest of Hambali, the main link between Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaida and a key player in the first Bali attack<sup>17</sup>. Last year Azahari — also closely involved in the Bali 1 bombing — was killed. And around 300 Jemaah Islamiyah members have been arrested in Indonesia. Nevertheless, Jemaah Islamiyah remains a capable and resilient terrorist group. It retains links with Al Qaida but it is not dependent on Al Qaida for either funding or operational support. Under pressure it has become more decentralized in its structure and operational planning. But its strategic objectives and its targeting of Australia and the West are unchanged. Jemaah Islamiyah has continued to carry out attacks, most recently the second Bali bombing which targeted Westerners including Australians, but actually killed many more Indonesians. Jemaah Islamiyah can draw on a pool of trained bomb makers and a larger pool of sympathizers who can provide logistical support for a core of operational planners. This situation will not change soon, despite the general abhorrence of the overwhelming majority of Indonesians towards Jemaah Islamiyah's methods and goals. There are several other issues to which we must pay close attention in Southeast Asia. One of the key elements of Al Qaida's method has been to globalize what are essentially local disputes and portray what are nationalist or ethnic conflicts as being part of a more important, and strategic global jihad. So

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<sup>17</sup> The **2002 Bali bombings** occurred on 12 October 2002 in the tourist district of Kuta on the Indonesian island of Bali. The attack was the deadliest act of terrorism in the history of Indonesia, killing 202 people, 152 of whom were foreign nationals, and 38 Indonesian citizens. A further 240 people were injured. The attack involved the detonation of three bombs: a backpack-mounted device carried by a suicide bomber; a large car bomb, both of which were detonated in or near popular nightclubs in Kuta; and a third much smaller device detonated outside the United States consulate in Denpasar, causing only minor damage.

Various members of Jemaah Islamiyah, a violent Islamist group, were convicted in relation to the bombings, including three individuals who were sentenced to death. Abu Bakar Bashir, the alleged spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, was found guilty and sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment. Riduan Isamuddin, generally known as *Hambali* and the suspected former operational leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, is in U.S. custody in an undisclosed location, and has not been charged in relation to the bombing or any other crime. On 9 November 2008, Imam Samudra, Amrozi Nurhasyim and Mukhlas Ghufron were executed by firing squad on the island prison of Nusakambangan at 00:15 Local time (17:15 GMT).

we need to be alert to whether Al Qaida or Jemaah Islamiyah<sup>18</sup> are succeeding in injecting themselves into the separatist conflicts in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand.

In the Philippines this is already the case with Jemaah Islamiyah's links into the southern Philippines giving it a longer strategic reach. In return for safe haven and a certain strategic depth, Jemaah Islamiyah has provided groups in the south with terrorist training. This relationship has extended the capabilities of all participating groups. In contrast we have seen little evidence so far that Jemaah Islamiyah or Al Qaida has managed to inject itself into the separatist conflict in southern Thailand, although the longer the conflict continues, the greater opportunity there will be for outside groups to interfere.

The war against terror is a misleading metaphor because it suggests there will be a decisive moment when we know whether we face victory or defeat. The reality is that this will be a long and incremental struggle waged on many fronts. Part of the struggle will involve finding and eliminating terrorists and constraining their support bases. But at a broader level it will also involve blunting the appeal of violent extremism by giving potential recruits a greater sense of hope than the nihilism which lies at the core of terrorist psychology.

It is in this area that economic and political factors intersect with the drivers of terrorism. Open societies delivering on the economic aspirations of their citizens are not a guarantee against terrorism. But they will go a large way towards blunting the appeal of extremists. Democracies are more likely to be responsive to the grievances

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<sup>18</sup> **Jemaah Islamiyah** (Meaning: "Islamic Congregation"), or **JI**, is a Southeast Asian militant Islamic organization dedicated to the establishment of a Daulah Islamiyah (Islamic State) in Southeast Asia incorporating Indonesia, Malaysia, the southern Philippines, Singapore and Brunei. JI was added to the United Nations 1267 Committee's list of terrorist organizations linked to al-Qaeda or the Taliban on 25 October 2002 under UN Security Council Resolution 1267.

JI has its roots in Darul Islam (DI, meaning "House of Islam"), a radical movement in Indonesia in the 1940s. JI was formally founded on 1 January 1993 by JI leaders, Abu Bakar Bashir and Abdullah Sungkar while hiding in Malaysia from the persecution of the Suharto Government. After the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, both men returned to Indonesia where JI gained a terrorist edge when one of its founders, the late Abdullah Sungkar, established contact with Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

JI's violent operations began during the communal conflicts in Maluku and Poso. It shifted its attention to targeting US and Western interests in Indonesia and the wider Southeast Asian region since the start of the US-led war on terror. JI's terror plans in Southeast Asia were exposed when its plot to set off several bombs in Singapore was foiled by the local authorities.

Recruiting, training, indoctrination, financial and operational links between the JI and other militant groups, such as al-Qaeda, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Misuari Renegade/Breakaway Group (MRG/MBG) and the Philippine Rajah Sulaiman movement (RSM) have existed for many years, and continue to this day.

Jemaah Islamiyah is known to have killed hundreds of civilians in the Bali car bombing on October 12, 2002. In the attack, suicide bombers killed 202 people and wounded many in two blasts. The first, smaller blast by a suicide bomber using a backpack, killed a small number of people in a nightclub and drove the survivors into the street, where the vast majority were killed by a massive fertilizer/fuel oil bomb concealed in a parked van. After this attack, the U.S. State Department designated Jemaah Islamiyah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Jemaah Islamiyah is also strongly suspected of carrying out the 2003 JW Marriott hotel bombing in Kuningan, Jakarta, the 2004 Australian embassy bombing in Jakarta, and the 2005 Bali terrorist bombing. The JI also has been directly and indirectly involved in dozens of bombings in the southern Philippines, usually in league with the ASG.

that can lead people to adopt violence. They are more likely to implement the economic reforms which will not only increase the size of the pie but share it more equitably. In the long run democracy can break the political and economic hold of narrow elites, allow the kind of civil society that permits free expression, and reduce the corruption that plagues authoritarian societies. But democratization cannot be an immediate panacea. Firstly, groups like Al Qaida are not going to lay down their arms and participate in a democratic process. For Zawahiri and Zarqawi, democracy puts human law ahead of 'God's law' and is therefore abhorrent. They hate Islamist groups that participate in the democratic process as much as they hate the Middle East's current regimes. Terrorists would probably still target those governments — even with such Islamist groups in power — just as they target the democratically elected government in Iraq. Since new democracies would probably be supported by the West, then the West too will remain a target.

Secondly, democratization can in the short term increase strategic uncertainty. Due to the lack of secular or liberal political parties in the Middle East, it is probable that Islamist parties of some stripe would win many elections. And we simply don't know what a group like the Muslim Brotherhood would be like in power. The recent success of Hamas in the Palestinian elections illustrates these points. Certainly one can argue that the responsibility of governing should be a moderating influence in the long term. But whether this turns out to be the case in the short to medium term in the Middle East is by no means certain. And thirdly, radicals can exploit political space in democracies, especially newly emerging ones: space which authoritarian regimes would deny them. A militant Islamist fringe is now present in post-Suharto democratic Indonesia; a fringe which seeks to intimidate mainstream Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and parts of which is feeding recruits to Jamaah Islamiyah. Few Indonesians agree with their ideology, and even fewer with their methods. But enough are at least sympathizing with the Islamists' narrative of Muslim victim hood and "Western conspiracy" to make counterterrorism co-operation with Western countries politically sensitive.

While terrorism - even in the form of suicide attacks — is not an Islamic phenomenon by definition, it cannot be ignored that the lion's share of terrorist acts and the most devastating of them in recent years have been perpetrated in the name of Islam. This fact has sparked a fundamental debate both in the West and within the Muslim world regarding the link between these acts and the teachings of Islam. Most Western analysts are hesitant to identify such acts with the bona fide teachings of one of the world's great religions and prefer to view them as a perversion of a religion that is essentially peace-loving and tolerant. Western leaders have reiterated time and again that the war against terrorism has nothing to do with Islam. It is a war against evil.

Modern international Islamist terrorism is a natural offshoot of twentieth-century Islamic fundamentalism. The "Islamic Movement" emerged in the Arab world and British-ruled India as a response to the dismal state of Muslim society in those countries: social injustice, rejection of traditional mores, acceptance of foreign domination and culture. It perceives the malaise of modern Muslim societies as having strayed from the "straight path" and the solution to all ills in a return to the original mores of Islam. The problems addressed may be social or political: inequality, corruption, and oppression. But in traditional Islam — and certainly in the worldview of the Islamic fundamentalist — there is no separation between the political and the religious. Islam is, in essence, both religion and regime and no area



of human activity is outside its remit. Be the nature of the problem as it may, "Islam is the solution."

The underlying element in the radical Islamist worldview is a historic and dichotomist: Perfection lies in the ways of the Prophet of Islam and the events of his time; therefore, religious innovations, philosophical relativism, and intellectual or political pluralism are anathema. In such a worldview, there can exist only two camps — *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* — which are pitted against each other until the final victory of Islam. These concepts are carried to their extreme conclusion by the radicals; however, they have deep roots in mainstream Islam.

While the trigger for "Islamic awakening" was frequently the meeting with the West, Islamic-motivated rebellions against colonial powers rarely involved individuals from other Muslim countries or broke out of the confines of the territories over which they were fighting. Until the 1980s, most fundamentalist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>19</sup> were inward-looking; Western superiority was viewed as the result of Muslims having forsaken the teachings of the Prophet. Therefore, the remedy was, first, "re-Islamization" of Muslim society and restoration of an Islamic government, based on Islamic law [Shariah]. In this context, jihad was aimed mainly against "apostate" Muslim governments and societies, while the historic offensive jihad of

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<sup>19</sup> **The Muslim Brothers** (Full title **The Society of the Muslim Brothers**, often simply **the Brotherhood** or **MB**) is a transnational Sunni movement and the largest political opposition organization in many Arab states, particularly Egypt. The world's oldest and largest Islamic political group was founded by the Egyptian schoolteacher Hassan al-Banna in 1928. The Brotherhood's stated goal is to instill the Qur'an and Sunnah as the "sole reference point for ... ordering the life of the Muslim family, individual, community ... and state". Since its inception in 1928 the movement has officially opposed violent means to achieve its goals, with some exceptions such as in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or to overthrow secular Ba'athist rule in Syria. This position has been questioned, particularly by the Egyptian government, which accused the group of a campaign of killings in Egypt after World War II. The Brotherhood has been described as both unjustly oppressed and dangerously violent. Members have been arbitrarily arrested; in Egypt the government has obstructed the party's attempts to field candidates in elections, with arrests or harassment of activists and obstruction of voting in Muslim Brotherhood strongholds. However, supporters of the Brotherhood have demonstrated violence on their part in many occasions and have often clashed with supporters of other parties, specifically the National Democratic Party (NDP) in Egypt. Outside of Egypt, the group's political activity has been described as evolving away from modernism and reformism towards a more traditional, "rightist conservative" stance. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood party in Kuwait opposes suffrage for women. The Brotherhood's official opposition to terror against civilians and condemnation the 9/11 attacks is a matter of international controversy. Its position on violence has also caused disputes within the movement, with advocates of violence at times breaking away to form groups such as the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Group) and Al Takfir Wal Hijra (Excommunication and Migration). Among the Brotherhood's more influential members was Sayyid Qutb. Qutb was the author of one of Islamism's most important books, *Milestones*, which called for the restoration of Islam by re-establishing the Sharia and by using "physical power and Jihad for abolishing the organizations and authorities of the Jahili system," which he believed to include the entire Muslim world. While studying at university, Osama bin Laden claimed to have been influenced by the religious and political ideas of several professors with strong ties to the Muslim Brotherhood including both Sayyid Qutb and his brother Muhammad Qutb. While some have claimed that the Brotherhood's theology and methods are opposed to those of bin Laden, and that they are "reformist," "democratic," "non-violent" and "chiefly political", some journalists have reported the opposite. The Brotherhood is financed by contributions from its members who are required to allocate portion of their income to the movement. Most of these contributions come from members living in oil-rich countries, such as Saudi Arabia.

the Muslim world against the infidels was put in abeyance [at least until the restoration of the caliphate<sup>20</sup>].

Until the 1980s, attempts to mobilize Muslims all over the world for a jihad in one area of the world [Palestine, Kashmir] were unsuccessful. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a watershed event, as it revived the concept of participation in jihad to evict an "infidel" occupier from a Muslim country as a "personal duty" for every capable Muslim. The basis of this duty derives from the "irreversibility" of Islamic identity both for individual Muslims [thus, capital punishment for "apostates" — e.g., Salman Rushdie] and for Muslim territories. Therefore, any land [Afghanistan, Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Spain] that had once been under the sway of Islamic law may not revert to control by any other law. In such a case, it becomes the "personal duty" of all Muslims in the land to fight a jihad to liberate it. If they do not succeed, it becomes incumbent on any Muslim in a certain perimeter from that land to join the jihad and so forth. Accordingly, given the number of Muslim lands under "infidel occupation" and the length of time of those occupations, it is argued that it has become a personal duty for all Muslims to join the jihad. This duty — if taken seriously — is no less a religious imperative than the other five pillars of Islam. It becomes a de facto sixth pillar; a Muslim who does not perform it 'will inherit hell'.

Such a philosophy attributing centrality to the duty of jihad is not an innovation of modern radical Islam. The seventh-century Kharijite sect, infamous in Islamic history as a cause of Muslim civil war, took this position and implemented it. But the Kharijite doctrine was rejected as a heresy by medieval Islam. The novelty is the tacit acceptance by mainstream Islam of the basic building blocks of this "neo-Kharijite" school.

The Soviet defeat in Afghanistan and the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union were perceived as an eschatological sign, adumbrating the renewal of the jihad against the infidel world at large and the apocalyptic war between Islam and heresy which will result in the rule of Islam in the world. Along with the renewal of the jihad, the Islamist Weltanschauung, which emerged from the Afghani crucible, developed a Thanatophile ideology in which death is idealized as a desired goal and not a necessary evil in war.

An offshoot of this philosophy poses a dilemma for theories of deterrence. The Islamic traditions of war allow the Muslim forces to retreat if their numerical strength

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<sup>20</sup> The term **caliphate** (Arabic: khilāfa) refers to a form of government inspired by interpretations of the religion of Islam. The term is also used to refer to a state which implements such a government. Historically there have been many states claiming to be led by caliphates, some existing simultaneously. Sunni Islam dictates that the caliph should be selected by Shura, elected by Muslims or their representatives. Followers of Shia Islam believe the caliph was an imam descended in a line from the Ahl al-Bayt. From the time of Muhammad until 1924, caliphates, often several at a single time and both real and illusory, were claimed by various dynasties, including the Umayyads of Mecca (who were driven from Damascus to Córdoba), the Abbasids of Mecca (who ruled from Baghdad and drove away the Umayyads from Damascus), the Fatimids (who ruled from Cairo), and finally the Ottomans. Some Muslim countries, like Indonesia and Malaysia were never subject, in any way, to the authority of a Caliphate with the exception of Aceh, which acknowledged Ottoman suzerainty. Rather some countries had their own, local, sultans or rulers who did not fully accept the authority of the Caliph. The caliphate was "the core political concept of Sunni Islam, by the consensus of the Muslim majority in the early centuries." but its importance rapidly dwindled as the lands of Islam grew and the practicalities of governance in vast regions turned the Caliphate into little more than an ideal concept acknowledged by some scholars but with little connection to the reality of most Muslims' lives.

is less than half that of the enemy. Other traditions go further and allow retreat only in the face of a tenfold superiority of the enemy. The reasoning is that the act of jihad is, by definition, an act of faith in Allah. By fighting a weaker or equal enemy, the Muslim is relying on his own strength and not on Allah; by entering the fray against all odds, the 'Mujahid' [Jihadist] is proving his utter faith in Allah and will be rewarded accordingly. The politics of Islamist radicalism has also bred a mentality of *bello ergo sum* [I fight, therefore I exist] — Islamic leaders are in constant need of popular jihads to boost their leadership status. Nothing succeeds like success: The attacks in the United States gave birth to a second wave of 'Mujahidin' who want to emulate their 'heroes'.

### **Kindergarten Madrassa:**

Since 1999, there is a growing phenomenon of mushroom growth of kindergarten Madrassas [Islamic religious kindergartens] in almost all the Muslim nations, preaching Wahhabism, which greatly encourages people towards jihad and killing of Jews and Christians. In present days, only in Bangladesh there are 64,000 *Qaomi* [Koranic] Madrassas, while the number of kindergarten Madrassas, mostly financed by dubious Afro-Arab sources has already crossed a few thousand throughout the country. And, of course, most interestingly, Madrassas and kindergarten Madrassas are the most notorious places to breed religious extremists and terrorists. Children are given orientations to accept Ossama Bin Laden as a hero, while endorsing the notoriety of Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah or Hamas as 'holy task'.

Bangladesh is known as a 'moderate Muslim country' and its people have the reputation of 'moderate Muslims,' free of rancor against other faiths. However, Bangladesh society, like many others, is being subverted by the efforts of Muslim extremists.

It is a fact that most people of Bangladesh still lack the opportunity for modern, scientific education and are therefore open to persuasion by religious extremists. In recent years there has been a strong upsurge in activities of religious extremist groups in a number of countries, including Bangladesh. In recent years, law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh have captured members of quite a number of such groups in various parts of the country. These were operating under the umbrella of "Islamic Kindergarten Madrassas" or Madrassas financed by Afro-Arab organizations. Islamic Kindergarten Madrassas are supposed to be innocent institutions where young boys learn the elements of Islamic faith, but these Madrassas have a different agenda.

In the capital city of Dhaka in Bangladesh, even now such organizations are quite in evidence and have large memberships. Promoters of these organizations hire huge buildings in posh areas and target boys from the semi-affluent middle class. Previously, Madrassa education was mostly confined to lower income and less affluent groups. However, following the emergence of these so-called Islamic Kindergarten Madrassas in Bangladesh, the students are drawn from richer segments, and even include boys and girls of the richest class.

One of the accused arrested from one such institution confessed to Bangladesh police that they were planning to have an Islamic revolution in the country, and that they were anxiously looking for boys and girls from the affluent class since politics is mostly controlled by them. The accused admitted that they were heavily funded by a number of African and Arab countries.

The arrest and statement of the accused have been widely carried by local press. According to these reports, these belligerent people under the covering of various 'Deen' [true path] training organizations intend to coach a section of ill-educated and prejudiced people to be their followers. Through their clandestine campaigns they are plotting to wage a 'Holy War'. As instruments to induce rage and delude people, they are using different recorded tapes with extremist provocative speeches and songs. They also include messages from Osama Bin Laden.

In 2003, a Syrian teacher with an Islamic Education School was arrested in Bangladesh. He had belonged to an organization named the 'Al-Haramine Institution'. According to records of police intelligence in Bangladesh, members of this organization use the kindergarten Madrassa as camouflage. They regularly communicate with various underground armed groups in Bangladesh and even recruit locals and send them to Palestine as guerilla fighters. Each recruit gets US\$ 1500-2000 as an up front payment for their 'new job'. Later family members or legal representatives or spouses of these guerilla fighters will receive US\$ 150-200 per month as salary. If any of them are killed during the war, their family would get US\$ 5,000 as compensation.

According to the police report, Al-Haramine Institution maintained secret training camp inside the compound of its kindergarten Madrassa. The recruits are given theoretical and practical training for seven weeks before they proceed to their destination. During training, they are given an elementary idea of their responsibilities and a practical knowledge about some of the weapons used by Palestinian fighters and other extremist groups.

Al-Haramine Institute was gradually spreading its wings in other parts of Bangladesh too, before it was identified and banned by Bangladesh authorities. Although Al Haramine's mission could not continue as its agendas were exposed, it is learnt that patrons and investors of such activities are continuing to breed Jihadists through other under cover institutions as well as Madrassas and Kindergarten Madaraasas.

### **Saudi Arabia funds terrorism?**

Few years back, on September 11, 2001, most well-informed observers of the Middle East were shocked to hear that 15 out of the 19 hijackers who carried out the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were Saudi citizens. It was equally surprising that the mastermind of the worst terrorist attack on the United States in its history, Osama bin Laden, was born and raised in Saudi Arabia. This curiosity and wonder about the Saudi role in the attack came up once more with the release of the September 11 Joint Intelligence Report by the U.S. Congress and its disclosure of what the U.S. press called "incontrovertible evidence" linking Saudis to the financing of al-Qaeda operatives in the United States.

For decades, terrorism had been associated with states like Libya, Syria, Lebanon or Iran. Saudi Arabia had been a pro-Western force during the Cold War and had hosted large coalition armies during the 1991 Gulf War. Saudi Arabia had not been colonized during its history, like other Middle Eastern states that had endured a legacy of European imperialism. This background only sharpened the questions of many after the attacks: What was the precise source of the hatred that drove these men to take their own lives in an act of mass murder? The Saudis were initially in a state of denial about their connection to September 11; Interior Minister Prince Naif

even tried to pin the blame for the attacks on Israel, saying it was impossible that Saudi youth could have been involved.

Yet over time it became clearer how Saudi Arabia could have provided the ideological backdrop that spawned al-Qaeda's attack on the United States. In a series of articles appearing in the Egyptian weekly, *Ruz al-Yousef* [the Newsweek of Egypt], this past May, Wael al-Abrashi, the magazine's deputy editor, attempted to grapple with this issue. He drew a direct link between the rise of much of contemporary terrorism and Saudi Arabia's main Islamic creed, Wahhabism, and the financial involvement of Saudi Arabia's large charitable organizations:

Wahhabism<sup>21</sup> leads, as we have seen, to the birth of extremist, closed, and fanatical streams, that accuse others of heresy, abolish them, and destroy them. The extremist religious groups have moved from the stage of Takfir [condemning other Muslims as unbelievers] to the stage of "annihilation and destruction," in accordance with the strategy of Al-Qa'ida – which Saudi authorities must admit is a local Saudi organization that drew other organizations into it, and not the other way around. All the organizations emerged from under the robe of Wahhabism.

I can state with certainty that after a very careful reading of all the documents and texts of the official investigations linked to all acts of terror that have taken place in Egypt, from the assassination of the late president Anwar Al Sadat in October 1981, up to the Luxor massacre in 1997, Saudi Arabia was the main station through which most of the Egyptian extremists passed, and emerged bearing with them terrorist thought regarding Takfir – thought that they drew from the sheikhs of Wahhabism. They also bore with them funds they received from the Saudi charities.

Thus, while some Western commentators have sought to explain the roots of al-Qaeda's fury at the U.S. by focusing on the history of American policy in the Middle

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<sup>21</sup> **Wahhabi** (Arabic: Al-Wahhābīyya) or **Wahhabism** is a sect attributed to Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab, an 18th century scholar from what is today known as Saudi Arabia, who advocated to purge Islam of what he considered innovations in Islam. It is often referred to as a sect within Sunni Islam, although this designation is disputed.

Wahhabism predominantly influenced the central Arabian peninsula, known as Najd, originally advocating the Hanbali school of jurisprudence. It has developed considerable influence in the Muslim world through the funding of mosques, schools and other means from Persian Gulf oil wealth. It is interesting to note that nobody calls themselves Wahhabi; but they are called by others as Wahhabi. The name is a myth as the title comes from the Sheikh, whose name is Muahmmmed, not Wahhab.

The primary doctrine of Wahhabi is Tawhid, or the uniqueness and unity of God as pronounced by Ibn Abdul Wahhab and influenced by the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, a Hanbali jurist who in some of his writings considered calling on pious figures as intermediaries for one's prayers to be an innovation. Ibn Abdul Wahhab went further in considering it an act of idolatry, and despite being accepted by centuries of Muslim scholarship, his sect considered its practitioners and advocates to be outside of Islam and permissible to kill, raid, and enslave. He preached against a "perceived moral decline and political weakness" in the Arabian Peninsula and condemned what he saw as idolatry in the form of shrine and tomb visitation.

The term "Wahhabi" (*Wahhābīya*) was first used by opponents of ibn Abdul Wahhab. It is considered derogatory by the people it is used to describe, who prefer to be called "unitarians" (*Muwahiddun*). The terms "Wahhabi" and "Salafi" are often used interchangeably, but Wahhabi has also been called "a particular orientation within Salafism", an orientation some consider ultra-conservative. Wahhabism is specifically a theological sect, while the focus of Salafism was historically confined to reinterpreting Islamic jurisprudence, or fiqh. That many modern Wahhabis are also Salafis, and now refer to themselves nearly exclusively as such, has led to confusion.

East or other external factors, a growing number of Middle Eastern analysts have concentrated instead on internal Saudi factors, including recent militant trends among Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi clerics and the role of large Saudi global charities in terrorist financing. This requires a careful look at how Saudi Arabia contributed to the ideological roots of some of the new wave of international terrorism as well as how the kingdom emerged as a critical factor in providing the resources needed by many terrorist groups.

The particular creed of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia, which is known in the West as Wahhabism, emerged in the mid-eighteenth century in Central Arabia from the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab. This Arabian religious reformer sought to rid Islam of foreign innovations that compromised its monotheistic foundations, and to restore what he believed were the religious practices of the seventh century at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his immediate successors. He established a political covenant in 1744 with Muhammad bin Saud, the ruler of Diriyah near modern-day Riyadh, according to which he received bin Saud's protection and in exchange legitimized the spread of Saudi rule over a widening circle of Arabian tribes. This covenant between the Saudi royal family and Wahhabism is at the root of modern Saudi Arabia.

In retrospect, Wahhabism was significant for two reasons. First, it rejuvenated the idea of the militant jihad, or holy war, which had declined as a central Islamic value to be applied universally. Under the influence of Sufism, for example, jihad had also evolved into a more spiritual concept. Second, Wahhabism became associated with a brutal history of political expansion that led to the massacre of Muslims who did not adhere to its tenets, the most famous of which occurred against the Shi'ite Muslims of Kerbala in the early nineteenth century and against Sunni Muslims in Arabian cities, like Taif, during the early twentieth century. These Muslims were labeled as polytheists and thus did not deserve any protection. The highest spiritual authority of Islam during this period, the Sultan-Caliph of the Ottoman Empire, regarded the Wahhabis as heretics and waged wars against them in defense of Islam.

Yet it would be a mistake to focus on Wahhabism alone as the ideological fountainhead of the new global terrorism. Modern Saudi Arabia in the 1950s and 1960s hosted other militant movements that had an important impact, as well. For reasons of regional geopolitics, King Saud, King Faisal, and their successors provided sanctuary to elements of the radical Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, and Syria. Some were provided Saudi stipends. Others were given positions in the Saudi educational system, including the universities, or in the large Saudi charities, like the Muslim World League that was created in 1962. For example, while Egyptian President Abdul Nasser had the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue, Sayyed Qutb, executed in 1966, his brother, Muhammad Qutb, fled to Saudi Arabia and taught at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. He was joined in the 1970s by one of the heads of the Muslim Brotherhood from Jordan, Abdullah Azzam. In 1979, both taught Osama bin Laden, a student at the university.

Saudi Arabia's global charities, like the Muslim World League, permitted the spread of the new militancy that was forged from the cooperation between the Wahhabi clerics and the Muslim Brotherhood refugees. After 1973, these charities benefited from the huge petrodollar resources dispensed by the Saudi government, which undoubtedly helped them achieve a global reach. Abdullah Azzam headed the offices of the Muslim World League in Peshawar, Pakistan, when it served as the rear base for the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. He was joined by his

student, bin Laden, who with Saudi funding also set up the Mujahidin Services Center [Maktab Khadmat al-Mujahidin] for Muslim volunteers who came to fight the Red Army. After Moscow's defeat in Afghanistan, this office became al-Qaeda.

Thus, the Saudi charities became the chosen instrument for Riyadh's support of the continuing global jihad. Bin Laden's brother-in-law, Muhammad Jamal Khalifa, ran the offices of the International Islamic Relief Organization [IIRO], a Muslim World League offshoot, in the Philippines. Local intelligence agencies suspected that it served as a financial conduit to the Abu Sayyaf organization. Muhammad al-Zawahiri, brother of bin Laden's Egyptian partner, Ayman al-Zawahiri, would eventually work for IIRO in Albania. An IIRO employee from Bangladesh, Sayed Abu Nasir, led a cell broken up by Indian police that intended to strike at the U.S. consulates in Madras and Kolkata; Abu Nasir explained that his superiors told him of 40 to 50 percent of IIRO charitable funds being diverted to finance terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Summarizing this history, former CIA operative Robert Baer wrote: "When Saudi Arabia decided to fund the Afghan *mujahidin* in the early 1980s, the IIRO proved a perfect fit, a money conduit and plausible denial rolled into one."

While these developments may seem far beyond the horizon of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a careful examination of some of the worst suicide bombings by the Hamas organization against the State of Israel also leads to Saudi Arabia. As of September 2003, Saudi clerics were featured prominently on Hamas websites as providing the religious justification for suicide bombings. Of 16 religious leaders cited by Hamas, Saudis are the largest national group backing these attacks. The formal Saudi position on suicide bombings, in fact, has been mixed. To his credit, Saudi Grand Mufti, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah Al al-Sheikh, has condemned these acts. Yet at the same time, Saudi Arabia's Minister for Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Saleh Al al-Sheikh, has condoned them: "The suicide bombings are permitted...the victims are considered to have died a martyr's death."

The Hamas-Saudi connection should not come as a surprise. Hamas emerged in 1987 from the Gaza branch of Muslim Brotherhood which, as noted earlier, had become a key Saudi ally in previous decades. When Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yasin was let out of an Israeli prison in 1998, he went to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment and Crown Prince Abdullah made a high-profile visit to his hospital bedside. As late as early 2002, Abdullah was hosting Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. Bin Laden had made the fate of Sheikh Yasin an issue for his al-Qaeda followers as well. In his 1996 "Declaration of War," he listed Sheikh Yasin's release from prison as one of his demands or grievances.

Saudi support for suicide bombings has wider repercussions. Other militant Islamic movements cite Saudi Wahhabi clerics to justify their activities – from the Chechen groups battling the Russians to Iraqi mujahidin fighting the U.S. in western Iraq. Coincidentally; the ubiquitous IIRO was lauded by the Saudi press for its support activities in the Sunni districts of post-Saddam Iraq, as well. Its presence was usually indicative in other regions of Saudi identification with local militant causes. In order to evaluate the significance of these religious rulings, it is necessary to focus on the stature of these various Saudi clerical figures that Jihadist movements worldwide were citing.

For example, just after the September 11 attacks, it is true that many Saudi government officials condemned them. But there were other voices as well. Shortly

thereafter a Saudi book appeared on the Internet justifying the murder of thousands of Americans, entitled *The Foundations of the Legality of the Destruction That Befell America*. The Introduction to the book was written by a prominent Saudi religious leader, Sheikh Hamud bin Uqla al-Shuaibi. He wrote on November 16, 2001, that he hoped Allah [God] would bring further destruction upon the United States. Al-Shuaibi's name appears in a book entitled *The Great Book of Fatwas*, found in a Taliban office in Kabul. Sheikh al-Shuaibi appears on the Hamas website, noted earlier, as a religious source for suicide attacks. Attacks on U.S. soldiers in western Iraq by a Wahhabi group called al-Jama'a al-Salafiya were dedicated to his name and to the names of other Saudi clerics. Al-Shuaibi's ideas, in short, had global reach.

The question that must be asked is whether a religious leader of this sort is a peripheral figure on the fringes of society or whether he reflects more mainstream thinking. In fact, al-Shuaibi had very strong credentials. Born in 1925 in the Wahhabi stronghold of Buraida, he was a student of King Faisal's Grand Mufti, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Al al-Sheikh. Al-Shuaibi's roster of students read like a "Who's Who" of Saudi Arabia, including the Grand Mufti and the former Minister of Islamic Affairs and Muslim World League secretary-general, Abdullah al-Turki. When al-Shuaibi died in 2002, many central Saudi figures attended his funeral. In short, he was in mainstream. His militant ideas about justifying the September 11 attacks were echoed by Sheikh Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman Jibrin, who actually was a member of the Directorate of Religious Research, Islamic Legal Rulings, and Islamic Propagation and Guidance – an official branch of the Saudi government.

In 2003, the religious opinions of Saudi militant clerics were turning up in Hamas educational institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For example, the Hamas-oriented "Koran and Sunna Society–Palestine," that had been established in 1996 in Kalkilya, had branches in Bethlehem, Salfit, Abu Dis, Jenin, and the Tulkarm area. It distributed Saudi texts praising suicide attacks against "the infidels" and condemning those who dodge their obligations to join "the jihad." The pro-Hamas "Dar al-Arqam Model School" in Gaza, that was established with Saudi aid, used texts that cited Sheikh Sulaiman bin Nasser al-Ulwan, a pro-al-Qaeda Saudi cleric, whose name is mentioned in a bin Laden video clip from December 2001. Both the "Koran and Sunna Society–Palestine" and the "Dar al-Arqam Model School" were supported by the Saudi-based World Assembly of Muslim Youth [WAMY], and were part of the "civilian" infrastructure of Hamas. Militant Saudi texts extolling martyrdom were infiltrated into schools throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, creating a whole generation of students that absorbed their extremist messages. The export of this Jihadist ideology to the Palestinians was reminiscent of the Saudi support for Madrassas in western Pakistan during the 1980s, that gave birth to the Taliban and other pro-bin Laden groups.

As already demonstrated, Saudi Arabia erected a number of large global charities in the 1960s and 1970s whose original purpose may have been to spread Wahhabi Islam, but which became penetrated by prominent individuals from al-Qaeda's global Jihadist network. The three most prominent of these charities were the International Islamic Relief Organization [IIRO; an offshoot of the Muslim World League], the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, and the Charitable Foundations of al-Haramain. All three are suspected by various global intelligence organizations of terrorist funding. From the CIA's interrogation of an al-Qaeda operative, it was learned that al-Haramain, for example, was used as a conduit for funding al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, Russia's Federal Security Service charged that al-Haramain was wiring funds to Chechen militants in 1999.



It would be incorrect to view these charities as purely non-governmental organizations [NGOs] or private charities, as they are mistakenly called. At the apex of each organization's board is a top Saudi official. The Saudi Grand Mufti, who was also a Saudi cabinet member, chaired the Constituent Council of the Muslim World League. The Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs chaired the secretariat of WAMY and the administrative council of al-Haramain. All three organizations have received large charitable contributions from the Saudi royal family that have been detailed in Saudi periodicals. Indeed, according to legal documents submitted on behalf of the Saudis by their legal team in the firm Baker Botts, in the 9/11 lawsuit, Prince Sultan provided \$266,000 a year to the IIRO for sixteen years. He also provided a much smaller sum to WAMY. In short, these Saudi charities were full-fledged GOs – governmental organizations.

The earliest documented links between one of these charities and terrorists was found in Bosnia. It is a handwritten account on IIRO stationery from the late 1980s of a meeting attended by the secretary-general of the Muslim World League and bin Laden representatives, indicating the IIRO's readiness to have its offices used in support of militant actions. As already noted, IIRO has been suspected of terrorist funding in the Philippines, Russia, East Africa, Bosnia, and India. Al-Qaeda operatives became accustomed to Saudi Arabia being their source of support, in general. In an intercepted telephone conversation, a senior al-Qaeda operative told a subordinate: "Don't ever worry about money, because Saudi Arabia's money is your money." As in mid-August 2003, the former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage admitted in Australia that "some money from Saudi private charities had gone toward funding militants in Iraq."

But the strongest documented cases that demonstrate the ties between Saudi Arabia's global charities and international terrorism are related to Hamas. These ties were allegedly already in place in the mid-1990s when a Hamas funding group received instructions to write letters of thanks to executives of IIRO and WAMY for funds it had received. In 1994, former US President Clinton made a brief stop-over in Saudi Arabia during which he complained about Saudi funding of Hamas. These charges about Saudi Arabia bankrolling Hamas have become even more vociferous in recent years.

### **Teaching the children to kill non-Muslims:**

In the Palestine's public schools, whose textbooks were financed by the European Union, incitement against Israel and the glorification of martyrdom are prominent themes, embedded in nationalistic aspirations. Needless to say, interest in reconciliation with Israel is notably absent. Elementary school teachers and principals commend their young students for wanting to "tear their [Zionists'] bodies into little pieces and cause them more pain than they will ever know." Posters in university classrooms proudly remind the world that the Palestinian cause is armed with 'human bombs'. Sheik Hassan Yosef, a leading Hamas member, summarized this process of incitement in his own words: "We like to grow them from kindergarten through college." Palestinian Brigadier General, Mahmoud Abu Marzoug, reminded a group of tenth grade girls in Gaza City, "as a Shahid [martyr], you will be alive in

Heaven." After the address, a group of these girls lined up to assure a Washington Post reporter that they would be happy to carry out suicide bombings or other actions ending in their deaths.

When the PA assumed responsibility for education in the West Bank and Gaza in 1994, it adopted textbooks from Jordan and Egypt. These schoolbooks contained egregious anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric, including overt calls for Israel's destruction. After much international criticism, a curriculum review project was initiated by the PA, which resulted in the publishing of new textbooks for grades one and six, for the school year 2000–2001. While much of the explicit incitement against Israel and Jews that existed in the old schoolbooks is gone, there is still considerable de-legitimization of Israel and denial of any Jewish historical connection to the land. Israel is omitted on all maps of the area, and all cities and natural and historic landmarks in Israel are taught as being 'Palestinian.'

In the new sixth grade textbook entitled "Reading the Koran", Palestinian children read about Allah's warning to the Jews that Allah will kill them because of their evil. Elsewhere, they are taught that Jews are like donkeys and that they will be expelled from their homes by Allah. In the assessment of the Palestinian Media Watch, this religion-based anti-Semitism is the most dangerous, as children are taught that hating Jews is God's choice and command. Moreover, although Islam also has positive traditions regarding Jews, the PA educators chose to incorporate only hateful religious traditions. Israel is portrayed as foreign to the Middle East and is described as a colonialist conqueror. There is a strongly implied message that all such conquered Arab land must be "liberated." This message is pervasive in all subjects, sometimes subtly, almost subliminally, as in the first grade science book in a chapter on 'sight'. The young student is instructed to look at little things using a magnifying glass. An illustration demonstrates what would be seen when looking through a magnifying glass at a piece of paper with writing that is barely visible without the magnifier. The part under the magnifying glass can be read clearly: "Palestine is Arab." In all contexts of the education system, "Palestine" includes all of Israel.

Other grades are still using the Jordanian and Egyptian imports, which glorify hatred of Israel and Jews, and glorify death in jihad. For example, in an eighth grade book for "Islamic Education" we find, "The Muslim sacrifices himself for his belief, and wages jihad for Allah. He is not swayed, for he knows that the date of his death as a Shahid on the field of battle is preferable to death in his bed." A tenth grade reading text claims, "Martyred jihad fighters are the most honored people, after the Prophet."

Violent death is sanctified throughout the Palestinian areas. The streets are plastered with posters glorifying the exploits of individual suicide bombers. Children trade 'martyr cards', purchased at their local shops, instead of cricket cards. Necklaces with pictures of martyrs are also very popular. One favorite wall slogan reads: "beware of death by natural causes." Suicide bombing is considered a source of neighborhood pride, as streets are named after the perpetrators of these atrocities. There is even a musical group named 'The Martyrs', whose lyrics espouse the virtues of "sacrificing yourself for Allah." Under these cultural influences, many children readily admit that they want to become suicide bombers. Some draw pictures and fantasize about the day when they will achieve their goal. Boys are taught that, as suicide bombers, they will ascend to a paradise of luxury staffed by 72 virgins waiting to gratify the martyrs as they arrive. An American psychiatrist with 22 years of experience studying and treating suicidal patients stresses that suicide bombers –

both children and adults – are "tools used by terrorist leaders" with "a whole culture encouraging [them] to die."

Pakistani Government-controlled schools and private schools teaching the Government-prescribed curriculum may teach conventional disciplines, but hardly provide a more rational education than provided at Madrassas and training camps. The educational agenda of these schools is to instill the "ideology of Pakistan" into the minds of students, and/or the belief that Islam is superior to all other religions and that Pakistan is the Muslim homeland. Dr. Yvette Clair Rosser's study for the Observer Research Foundation revealed the prejudices found in Pakistani textbooks. In one seventh grades textbook, the section explaining different political systems on democracy, theocracy, and military rule was replaced with chapters titled "What it means to be a Good Pakistani" and "Standing in Queue." As stated by one student: "we have covered the same material year after year... we don't have to study for the tests, because the ideology of Pakistan has been instilled into us."

On an ethnic level, textbooks embody supremacist phrases condemning outside religions. In Pakistani textbooks, Hindus are referred to as "diabolical and conspiring against Pakistan." Further, Hindus are described as "backward, superstitious, wife burners, and that they are inherently cruel and if given the chance would assert their power over the weak, especially Muslims, by depriving them of education and pouring molten lead into their ears." This supremacist rhetoric continues on a global level and other countries are vilified in a similarly negative light. Textbooks portray Pakistan's existence as being threatened by a "Machiavellian conspiracy." As stated in Mohammed Sarwers' Pakistan Studies book, "at present particular segments in the guise of modernization and progressive activities have taken the unholy task of damaging our cultures heritage and thereby damaging our nation's integration."

Pakistani state-run education is not substantially different from what is preached by Islamist fundamentalists at Madrassas. The latter proclaim the need to perform jihad against India and on the West, which they believe is run by Jews. They also proclaim the goal of "planting Islamic flags in Delhi, Tel Aviv and Washington." One of the Lashkar-e-Toiba's Websites had a list of Jews that it claimed were working for the 'Clinton Administration'. Included in this list were presidential officials Robert Nash [an African American from the United States] and CIA director George Tenet [a Greek American].

For many Palestinian children, incitement begins at home. The parents' role in encouraging their own offspring to become martyrs is difficult to understand. They believe that the death of their child for the sake of holy jihad and Islam will guarantee him or her everlasting life and bliss in the hereafter. This type of sacrifice is held in such high esteem in certain segments of Palestinian society that it has become a badge of pride. Parents of toddlers proudly recount their little children saying they want to become martyrs. The father of a 13 year-old says, "I pray that God will choose him" to become a Shahid [Martyr]. One mother of a 13 year-old who perished as a result of his participation in the Intifada, told a journalist from the Times [London]: "I am happy that he has been martyred. I will sacrifice all my sons and daughters [12 in all] to Al-Aqsa and Jerusalem." Another mother boasted that she bore her son precisely for the purpose of participating in such a Jihad, while the child's father proudly claimed to have provided his son with the training. After 15 year-old Ahmat Omar Abu Selmia was killed on his way to attack the Israeli community of Dugit, his father celebrated his 'martyrdom' at a street festival attended by about 200 men.

A photograph in the Jerusalem Post on February 26, 2002, showed Palestinian fathers teaching a group of toddlers and young children to properly hold assault rifles while trampling on American and Israeli flags. The most shocking evidence of the extent of such brainwashing was found in the family photo album of a wanted Hamas militant. This album contained a photograph of a baby dressed as a suicide bomber, complete with a harness of mock explosives and the traditional Shahid's red headband.

Another reason that Palestinian parents allow and even encourage their children to get involved is the financial incentive offered to families of 'martyrs'. Thus, the PA furnishes cash payment of \$2,000 [USD] per child killed and \$300 per child wounded. Saudi Arabia announced that it had pledged \$250 million as its first contribution to a billion-dollar fund aimed at supporting the families of Palestinian martyrs. In addition, from the beginning to the current Intifada until the capture of Baghdad by allied forces in April 2003, the Arab Liberation Front, a Palestinian group loyal to former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, paid generous bounties to the injured, and the families of the Palestinian dead, according to the following sliding scale: \$500 for a wound; \$1,000 for disability; \$10,000 to the family of each martyr; and \$25,000 to the family of every suicide bomber. These are lavish sums, particularly given the chronic unemployment and poverty of the Palestinians who reside in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

It is important to note, however, that many Palestinian parents have attempted to restrain their children, and have resisted those who would place them in harm's way.

One public opinion poll of Palestinians living in the West Bank revealed that 74.1 per cent oppose the participation of children under the age of eighteen in the Intifada. Unfortunately this still leaves a substantial percentage that supports the participation of children, corresponding to hundreds of thousands of parents. Could their reluctance to exercise routine parental authority, by discouraging their children from participating in the violence, be attributable to the threats by armed PA officials?

Some in the PA leadership are apparently uncomfortable with the international and local criticism their use of children has engendered and are beginning to acknowledge the inherent risks of mixing child protesters with Palestinian gunmen. However, their reactions to the use of children in the Intifada are far from uniform or consistent. Mixed signals still emanate from various factions of the PA leadership.

For example, in January, 2003, marches and rallies were being planned by Fatah, the largest faction of the PLO, to celebrate the 38th anniversary of the founding of the movement. The then PA Minister of Interior, Hani al-Hassan, warned the Fatah activists against any display of weapons or the wearing of masks [to hide their faces] during the demonstrations. Hassan's directive was completely ignored, however, and witnesses said that the marchers "carried almost every kind of weapon, turning the celebration into a military parade." Shots were fired into the air from rifles and pistols. "The shooting continued all day," said one Palestinian. "It was like being in a battlefield. People were terrified, and it's only a miracle that no one was killed or injured." Many Palestinian bystanders were especially disturbed by the participation of several hundred children brandishing Kalashnikov rifles during the demonstrations. Some of the children were dressed in white uniforms, and wrapped in explosive belts to emulate Palestinian suicide bombers. Pictures of the children appeared in both local and foreign newspapers, much to the annoyance of the

Palestinian Journalists' Association. The Association has banned journalists from taking pictures of armed children and threatened sanctions against any journalist, local or foreign, who disregards the ban. Association members are concerned that such pictures will further damage the image of the Palestinians in the eyes of the world.

The same ideology of martyrdom of their children is shared by many Pakistani parents. Stern found that "mothers claimed that they would donate sons, because it will help them in the next life – the real life." One father stated "whoever gives his life to Allah lives forever and earns a spot in heaven for 70 members of the family chosen by him." Whenever there is a martyr in the village it encourages more children to join Jihad.

As there is allegation of Palestinian jihad, organizations been set up in Pakistan to help the families of martyrs. These organizations help to pay debts, improve the families' living conditions and help start businesses. One such organization, the Shuhda-e-Islam Foundation, founded in 1995 by the Jamaat-e-Islami [JeI], claims to provide financial support to over 364 families and to have paid out over three million Pakistani rupees. When interviewed, one mother whose son lost his life to jihad claimed, "God is helping us a lot," pointing to the new additions to her house. She stated that she wanted to martyr her youngest son, who was ten years of age. When questioned what he wanted after he grew up, he claimed "respect and jihad."

Friend, we all have heard about Bali bombing or bombing in Spain or even the latest massacre in Mumbai in India at Nariman House. Be rest assured, each of such notorious actions are result of hate speech, patronized by political Islam. Repeatedly I told people, Islam is not the problem, but the problem is political Islam. We surely need to assess the entire situation, with utmost urgency. We have to check the rise of madrassas, which are breeding ground of Jihadists. We also need to keep eyes on the activities of Tablighi Jamaat, which is another front for provoking Jihad.

For the sake of global peace and inter-faith harmony, we need to act NOW, before it is too late. We only have one world, and we cannot afford to let it go inside the tight grips of Jihadists and fanatics.