Islamofascism

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Abstract

This essay traces the evolution of the "Islamofascist" school, its key adherents, and their institutional support. It evaluates the insights of Bernard Lewis and Paul Berman on Islamist political identities, and compares their contributions with Gilles Kepel and Michael Scheuer. The "Islamofascist" viewpoint is also contrasted with several recent biographies on Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to highlight the very different worldviews at stake in the Bush Administration's Global War on Terror (GWOT). Finally, the implications for Occidentalism, the Islamic Resurgence, and community dialogue are considered.

Overview

In the post-September 11 world several different schools of thought have emerged to explain the deep cultural, religious, and social factors which prompted the terrorist attacks on the United States. The "Islamofascist" school has become the most vocal in the United States about extremist and militant Political Islam (Jihadists) as a neo-realist security threat.[1] Its media narratives influence major opinion journals, whilst its advocates have influenced Bush Administration counterterrorist and foreign policies. The school bridges the liberal hawk and conservative positions in U.S. domestic politics. It is likely to remain influential until the 2008 U.S. election

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The Age of Jihadist Terror?

The GWOT is frequently portrayed by conservative pundits in the U.S. and Australia as an apocalyptic battle between the West and nihilistic Jihadists. This narrative portrays Al Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah and other terrorist networks as inaugurating a new era of transnational conflict by non-state actors. It offers a geostrategic pretext for the Bush Administration's decisions to bomb Afghanistan's Taliban regime (7 October 2001) and invade Saddam Hussein's Iraq (20 March 2003).

Reactions to the Bush Administration's GWOT frame encompass several viewpoints about Political Islam. Daniel Benjamin offers a liberal internationalist view in his

memoir *The Age of Sacred Terror* (2002) which tracks the Clinton Administration's failure to deal effectively with Al Qaeda's attacks on Saudi Arabia's Khobar Towers (25 June 1996), the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (7 August 1998), and the *USS Cole* in Yemen (12 October 2000). Benjamin and co-author Steve Simon are sceptical of Bush's GWOT response, although critics argue this reflects a defence of past National Security Council policies.[2] Daniel Pipes' *Militant Islam Reaches America* (2002) quotes selectively in a wide-ranging attack on Al Qaeda, the Nation of Islam, and Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran.[3] Stephen Schwartz's *Two Faces of Islam* (2003) echoes Pipes' polarised view and strident tone, narrowing the focus to Saudi Arabia's Wahhabist religio-politics and its propagation to the Balkans, Centra Asia and Southeast Asia.[4] These reactions signal a decisive shift from Benjamin's initial uncertainty about the nature of the Jihadist threat, which reflects a broader debate on 'postmodern' or 'new' terrorism, to Pipes and Schwartz's moral clarity and state-centric view.

These initial books mixed self-justification, media hype, and 'litany' sound-bites for the escalating attacks. Pipes and Schwartz provided media-savvy answers for the September 11 atacks that paralleled Robert Kaplan's 'ancient ethnic hatreds' explanation for the Balkans genocide. Pipes contended he had foreseen the September 11 attacks yet was ignored by Clinton, Benjamin, and other liberals. Prior to the attacks he had spoken of "Muslim anomie" to the U.S. State Department and major media outlets.[5] Others such as David Horowitz used the Jihadist threat to attack domestic political opponents.[6] This posited Age of Jihadist Terror gave neoconservatives a renewed sense of political legitimacy which, in turn, has detrimentally influenced how Political Islam is perceived by the public.

The 'Rollback' Network

Two dimensions sustained the neoconservatives: a cohesive geostrategic worldview that linked a genealogy of modern terrorism with Al Qaeda; and an institutional structure that promoted these ideas to academia, the media, and policy analysts. The first provides a perceptual frame that militant Islamists have been waging a 30-year war on Israel and the United States—from the 1968 wave of Palestinian-led hijackings and the 1972 Munich Olympics crisis to September 11—in a myriad of forms.[7] The second is often misdescribed as a conspiracy theory or revolutionary vanguard,[8] rather than as a dynamic school of thought or 'invisible college' with interdependent resources and a variety of stances by proponents. Its primary goal is to 'rollback' militant Jihadists.

Therefore, the neoconservative genealogy embraces a return to the Reagan Administration's Manichean depiction of the global balance-of-terror. Neoconservatives have never recovered from the shock of Khomeini's Iranian revolution and the 444-day American hostage crisis that toppled the Carter Administration.[9] They were also concerned by the FIS' near-win during Algeria's 1992 elections, which were averted by a military coup d'etat.[10] They feared how Hamas and Saudi-affiliated groups were inspired by the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.[11] In his genealogy which connects the above events, Michael Ledeen contends that Bin Laden was inspired by Khomeini, and adapted Hezbollah's paramilitary structure for Al Qaeda's operations.[12] Al Qaeda's 'weak tie' social network enabled neoconservatives to resurrect earlier theories about Great Power clandestine involvement and state-sponsored terrorism.[13]

As an explanatory narrative, this genealogy provides an understandable end-goal for Western analysts about radical Islamists. It side-steps the distinction in counterterrorism discourse between 'old' and 'new' terrorist groups whilst emphasising religious violence as motivation. Yet it has substantial problems. Ledeen's conflation of Khomeini and Bin Laden as interchangeable revolutionary leaders fails to deal with their nationalist undercurrents, nor the separation between Iran's Shi'a and Saudi Arabia's Wahhabist doctrinal communities. The post-September 11 critique of Saudi Arabia's regime by

Craig Unger and others ignores three relevant factors: its strategic imperative to counterbalance Iran's example, the domestic destabilisation that militants create, and the importance of *da'wa* mission of Islam.[14] Ledeen's dismissal of 'blowback' against the US from Afghanistan mujahideen airbrushes the complexities of anti-Soviet covert operations during the 1980-1989 war, or Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence role in assisting the Deobandi students who became the Taliban.[15] Al Qaeda's structure is hotly disputed: models include Rohan Gunaratna's revolutionary cadre; Simon Reeves' entrepreneurial venture capitalists; and Jason Burke's distinction between a hardcore cadre, a 'network of networks', and a Salafist social movement.[16] Finally, the genealogy rearticulates old shibboleths rather than offering a new frame of mind.

Neoconservatives who support this worldview include Norman Podhoretz, William Kristol, Michael Ledeen, Daniel Pipes, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Anthony C. McCarthy and Victor Davis Hanson. Liberal hawks including Paul Berman and Peter Beinart, and conservatices like Niall Ferguson have a similar outlook on Political Islam. Their affiliations include the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the Project for a New American Century. Most write for *The National Review* and *The Weekly Standard*, whilst Beinart and Berman have featured in *The New Republic* and *The Nation* respectively. Jihadists became a priority threat only after September 11: Robert Kagan and William Kristol's 2000 geostrategic review emphasised Middle East nation-states, whilst militant Islam features promintently in David Frum and Richard Perle's *An End To Evil* (2003).[17] Interdependent institutions may become echo chambers to reflect anti-Muslim stereotypes—William Boykin and Ann Coulter's diatribes against Islam are memorable examples.[18]

Jean Bethe Elshtain contends, like many neoconservatives, that the GWOT is comparable to the World War II battles against Germany and Japan. Elshtain believes America's force projection mirrors its moral mission to protect the victims of trans-national conflicts.[19] This enables neoconservatives to promote their worldview as America's moral self-image. Peter Beinart's rallying cry for American liberals to join forces with neoconservatives against the Jihadists also relies on a fusion of World War II historical

analogies and agitprop.[20] Yet both Elshtain and Beinart's conclusions are problematic under closer examination. In his controversial documentary *The Power of Nightmares* (2004), director Adam Curtis suggests that neoconservatives are tapping into grand myths of American geostrategic dominance, and that the GWOT is a self-created conflict between neoconservative and Islamist elites.[21] Although Bin Laden is described as 'Islamofascist', former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer believes that most US citizens "do not have a coherent understanding of what motivates the threat his movement poses." [22] Geostrategic analyst Graham Fuller believes the depiction of political Islamists highlights "confusion about different Islamist models of change, and conflation of the psychology of religion, politics and terrorism."[23] The focus on mirality ignores other more likely pretexts, such as oil geopolitics and resource scarcity.[24] These contradiction also surface in two influential theorists: Bernard Lewis and Paul Berman.

The 'Surface Macrohistory' of Bernard Lewis[25]

Bernard Lewis has become the most influential post-September 11 commentators on Muslim culture and history. His bestsellers *What Went Wrong?* (2002) and *The Crisis of Islam* (2003) provide an historical metanarrative of the Ottoman Empire, and explain Jihadists as the outcome of civilisational stasis and religious violence. Bin Laden biographer Youssef Bodansky cites Fereydoun Hoveyda's view, comparable to Lewis, that Islamic civilisation has been in crisis since the 12th century.[26] In their excellent critique of neoconservatives Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke note Lewis "is an influential, tactical and partisan player in the contemporary policy debate" for the Bush Administration about the Middle East.[27]

Lewis articulates a narrow Orientalist worldview which became popular due also to his general insights. For example, Lewis notes the rich historiography within Muslim societies and the multidimensional nature of Islamist movements.[28] He infers likely motivations, notably the attempts by radical Islamists to regain a fundamentalist purity in their religious practices.[29] For critic Mahmood Mamdani, Lewis has promoted a questionable labeling of the modern West versus 'premodern' and 'antimodern' Islamists:

"It is Bernard Lewis who has provided the most durable version of culture talk." [30] Along with Walter Laqueur and other 'new' terrorism proponents, Lewis makes questionable historical comparisons, such as likening Al Qaeda to the Assassins sect.[31]

Halper and Clarke believe Lewis promotes an Orientalist framework that makes the arbitrary "cultural and sociological distinction between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident'."[32] Yahya Sadowski notes that Lewis and other "neo-Orientalists" offer "essentialist" arguments on the *ulama* and future prospects for strong Muslim nation-states.[33] Lewis's *Atlantic Monthly* essay 'The Roots of Muslim Rage' (1990) features this Orientalist *episteme* as the term "clash of civilizations." The term highlighted the conceptual limits of neo-realist theories and put culture back into international relations discussions.[34] Emran Qureshi and Michael Sells note the essay, which inspired Samuel P. Huntington, contends that "Violent intolerance . . . is inscribed within the origins of Islam and is the logical, indeed necessary, result of such inscription."[35] For Mahmood Mamdani, Lewis's depiction of the Crusades, 1492 and European colonisation are treated "as if they were the hallmarks of a single clash of civilizations over fourteen hundred years" rather than as separate events.[36] Edward Said argues that Lewis and Huntington make "sweeping characterizations" about the Muslim *umma*, which although trans-national, often includes pragmatic nationalist identities.[37] Gilles Kepel dismisses Huntington's thesis because "it suggested that the world of Islam is as centralised as the Soviet bloc once was."[38] Joel Beinin and Joe Stork echo Sadowski and Kepel in noting that the theory fails to explain U.S. bilateral alliances with Muslim nation-states.[39] The "clash of civilizations" thesis has become a dangerous self-fulfilling prophecy that does not reflect Islam's cultural diversity. Jihadist groups have accepted Huntington's thesis precisely because it legitimates their polarised worldview. [40]

Lewis gained further notoriety after September 11 because he provided a seemingly plausible rationale for the attacks. Along with Fouad Ajami he had become the Bush Administration's "favorite academic experts on the Middle East."[41] His explanation was a mixture of Middle East history; civilisational stasis which created enmity between Muslims and Christians; and failed modernisation and political reforms which fuelled

anti-American hatreds. This 'surface macrohistory' combined civilisational, Cold War, and globalist agrievements. Lewis believed that German Nazi and Soviet Communist political ideologies had created an authoritarian culture of death: an anti-Americanism which inspired contemporary Jihadists.[42] Elsewhere, Lewis played to contemporary polics: in his essay "We Must Be Clear" he links the September 11 terrorist attacks to Middle East autocratic and despotic states.[43] Conveniently, these allusions and explanations mirror neoconservative presumptions. They have also influenced Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, who argues that "Arab enmity toward Israel is simply a continuation of millenarian political hatreds between Islam and Christendom."[44]

Paul Berman

Paul Berman's *Terror and Liberalism* (2003) popularised Sayyed Qutb as the 'philosopher of terror' who influenced Osama bin Laden. Qutb's influential exegetes *Milestones* (1964) and *In The Shade of the Quran* (1979) became known to a Western general audience. Qutb's innovation was to reinterpret the *Jahiliyya* "cruelty, barbarism, and anarchy" of pre-Islamic Arabia to describe the West's cultural modernity and moral relativism.[45] Berman was also lauded for providing a 20th century history which showed the catalysts and interconnections between the Bolshevik, Fascist and Pan-Arab revolutions.

Although liberal Berman articulates many of the neoconservative themes raised above. Berman echoes Lewis in analysing Soviet and Nazi totalitarianism as a forerunner to Jihadists' shared mythos. As with Pipes and Ledeen, Berman contends Al Qaeda's genesis was due to the Iran revolution, the Soviet-Afghanistan war, Sayyed Qutb's martyrdom under Nasser, and Palestine's Sheikh Abdullah Azzam.[46] Berman also believes, alongside Lee Harris, that Al Qaeda's "nebulous constellation" partly "rested on a bedrock of conspiracy theories, organised hatreds, and apocalyptic fantasies: the culture of totalitarianism."[47] In some cases Islamists were able to convert ex-Communists to their cause.[48]

Berman's comparison of Bolshevik, Fascist and Jihadist ideologies offers another case of 'surface macrohistory': he erases the ideological distinctions by focusing on generalisable patterns. This is most problematic when Berman discusses Sayyed Qutb's existentialist crisis during a 1948 trip to the University of Northern Colorado at Greenley, Colorado.[49] Berman alludes to European existentialist philosophers such as Albert Camus, a description that more reflects his audience's mindset rather than Qutb's experience. Although Qutb discussed the tension he perceived between individual agency and collective structures, his Islamist viewpoint on the West's 'decline' lies outside existensialism's moral universe.[50] Lewis suggests Qutb was also reacting to the post-war re-evaluation of the Nazi 'final solution'.[51] However his knowledge of Western colonialism in the Middle East would have been more of a sensitising factor for Qutb.[52] His notable reaction to Greenley's lawns and preachers suggests an internalised rigidity of belief and rejection of modernity that Ian Buruma, Avishai Margalit and Adam Curtis label 'Occidentalism'.[53] Qutb's religious fervour was mobilised by an encounter with how to actualise Islam as collective justice in a tumultuous period of social transition.[54] His subsequent imprisonment and torture in 1954 by Nasser's regime would have rigidified this fervour. [55] Qutb's "annihilation" battle was against infidels/*kufr* for conversion to Islam, and would inspire Egypt's Jihadist groups.[56] Hence the Occidentalist lens provides a more nuanced explanation of Qutb's "pain of living in two worlds at once" than European existentialism.[57]

Terror and Liberalism resonates with audience because, as Firestone notes, such writings "are often based on cultural stereotypes and stereotypical imagery."[58] Berman was self-selective in his chosen historical influences: the Nazi comparison infers that Hitler's 1941 discussions with Jerusalem's Grand Mufti was more significant than contemporary motivators such as the 1967 Six-Day War, the 1979 Camp David accords or the 1991 Gulf War's aftermath.[59] Qutb interrogates modernity's legitimation crisis in *Milestones* and poses questions, albeit from an Islamist framework, that would subsequently be posed by Western technocrats such as Daniel Bell and Herman Kahn in their Mankind 2000 study (1968). Al Qaeda and other Jihadist groups would anchor Qutb's questions into a postcolonial Salafi movement.[60]

Gilles Kepel

Gilles Kepel represents a European tradition with divergent views to Lewis and Berman. A student of Islamic scholar Olivier Roy, Kepel documented in *The Prophet and Pharaoh* (1984) militant Islam's emergence in Egypt, Sadat's assassination, and the political aftermath. *Jihad* (2003) provides a sweeping overview of Political Islam trends, country studies, and influential figures. *The War for Muslim Minds* (2005) documents post-September 11 incidents against the psychological war for Islam's hearts and minds.

Kepel, Roy, and John Esposito advance the contra-argument that militant Islamists are in decline and that September 11 was a desparate attempt by Al Qaeda to awaken the *umma*. Kepel believes the Algerian civil war highlighted how Jihadis violence alienated any mainstream support.[61] Basam Tibi counters that September 11 shows Kepel reached the "wrong conclusion" regarding militant Islamists.[62] Yet Kepel has authoritative insights, featured in discussions below, about Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri; Sayyed Qutb's influence on Jihadists; the challenge faced by the *ulema*; and the ideological mutability of Islamism in the post-September 11 geostrategic context. Kepel's research remains vital for offering a dissenting view to most Western counterterrorism discourse.

Michael Scheuer

Michael Scheuer provides a viewpoint outside the neoconservatives: he spearheaded the Central Intelligence Agency's Bin Laden Unit during the Clinton and early Bush Administrations. *Through Our Enemies' Eyes* (2002) provides an intelligence briefing on Bin Laden's goals and mindset. Scheuer made extensive comparisons with the American Founding Fathers to provide a readily understandable metaphor for the interested public. *Imperial Hubris* (2004) critiques the Bush Administration's GWOT frame and neoconservatives. Scheuer's identity was initially concealed due to intelligence legislation, but was revealed by the *Boston Globe* during furore over *Imperial Hubris*.

Scheuer attempts in both books to immerse himself in the Jihadist worldview and to understand its strategic goals. Scheuer's own goal is to understand rather than explain one-dimensionally. He quotes with approval John Esposito's observation that America portrays Islamist groups as terrorists, yet was itself founded by revolutionaries who protested against corrupt rulers and oppression.[63] Although neoconservatives such as Norman Podhoretz have distanced themselves from the realist support of Middle East despots, Scheuer observes they remain dishonest with the public about U.S.-Middle East relations. He attacks Huntington as "delusional" about American force projection,[64] whilst Lewis presents a self-serving history that whitewashes U.S. geostrategy in the Middle East.[65]

In *Imperial Hubris* Scheuer offers U.S.-sponsored corruption and decolonisation as more plausible explanations for Muslim sentiments. This viewpoint acknowledges the U.S. and Middle East have a shared history, beyond the pendulum-like rise-and-fall of Pan Arab ideals. Scheuer's conclusion echoes Mahmood Mamdani's concern that without this postcolonial dimension, the GWOT frame requires that "the West must remain a bystander while Muslims fight their internal war, pitting good against bad Muslims."[66] He critiques the "disease" analogy in Lee Harris's *Policy Review* essay 'Al Qaeda as Fantasy Ideology' as "dehumanising."[67] The same description could apply to much of the analytical scholarship in U.S. counterterrorism discourse.

Scheuer's psychopolitical study of Osama bin Laden notes that Al Qaeda's power lies "in constructing and articulating a consistent, convincing case that an attack on Islam is under way and is being led and directed by America."[68] Bin Laden taps into deep Occidentalist imagery, the *ulema*'s religious traditions, and current issues that resonate with his multiple audiences. For example, Bin Laden's call for jihad against the West anchors the GWOT in four earlier Muslim conflicts. Mahmood Mamdani notes these were Saladin's campaign in the 12th century against the First Crusade; Sufi orders against West African salvery in the 17th century; Wahhab's campaign on the Arabian peninsula in the 19th century; and Mahdi's battle in 19th century Sudan against British, Egyptian and Turkish forces.[69] Bin Laden's rhetoric therefore is grounded in historical trajectories not

understood by neoconservatives. Scheuer believes this results in "a clash between each civilisation's perception of bin Laden, a wide divergence pitting the West's madman against Islam's hero."[70] How do others perceive Bin Laden's mission?

Bin Laden, al-Zawahiri and Zarqawi

Biographies of terrorist leaders have become a lucrative publishing genre after the September 11 attacks. The biographies of Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and now Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, have individual strengths and weaknesses. The Al Qaeda trinity fit 'received' typologies: bin Laden as the Weberian charismatic leader, al-Zawahiri as the vanguard intellectual, and Zarqawi as the ultraviolent thug.

Neoconservatives, terrorism experts, and the media have their own viewpoints, often based on outdated models and "invalid lenses."[71] The notion of Jihad as strictly "Holy War" is a Judeo-Christian and European invention.[72] Bernard Lewis presents bin Laden as an "Islamic Robin Hood" whom Islamic states must appease to retain their internal security.[73] The Hamburg cell and Al-Quds mosque that were the hub for the September 11 attacks are generally portrayed as brainwashed fanatics. Michael Scheuer contrasts this with the more likely cultural context of Islamist martyrdom hero-worship.[74]

Assessing the validity of these biographies remains difficult. Authors such as Peter Bergen and Robert Fisk who interviewed Bin Laden may been the unwitting recipients of carefully prepared messages. Roland Jacquard provides translated documents but these are an unrepresentative sample. However, Al Qaeda's statements are rarely referred to in detail, primary sources are used selectively, and there is the danger of creating figureheads that hide the Jihadist movement's realities. Marc Sageman's study of 172 Salafi-Jihad activists is one of the best examples of what can be achieved with 'open source intelligence'.[75]

Several themes emerge from the Bin Laden biograpies. His battles against the Soviets in Jaji (1986) and Shaban (1987) created an aura for Bin Laden that manifested his

leadership potential.[76] The Jaji battle was told to Fisk "as a form of religious baptism" or like a Sufi teaching tale.[77] Bin Laden's entrepreneurial image is intertwined with Saudi Arabia's export of Wahhabism, encompassing rumours about Islamic charities, madrassas, petro-dollars, and global energy markets.[78] His rhetorical skills are also finely honed. Bin Laden's *Declaration of Jihad* on 23 August 1996 outlined his 'Zionist-Crusader' worldview.[79] His description of U.S. forces as 'Crusaders' provides an historical framework that mirrors Lewis and Huntington's "clash of civilisations" thesis.[80] Bin Laden can skillfully appeal to Islam's "Jihad of the Sword"—meant as defence against apostates, criminals, and others—and then turn this into an obligation for his audience.[81] Youssef Bodansky notes some intriguing nation-state manipulation around Al Qaeda, such as a Pakistan-Afghanistan terror network, and a Sudan-Iran grab in the mid-1990s for the Horn of Africa.[82] Bodansky shows his biases when promoting stories such as the World Islamic Front being a cover for Iranian state-sponsored terrorists.[83]

Zayman al-Zawahiri was directly inspired by Qutb's idea of a revolutionary vanguard.[84] At 16 he established an underground cell; and guided its operations until his on 23 October 1981 after Sadat's assassination.[85] After his political amnesty, al-Zawahiri looked to the Soviet-Afghan conflict as a testing ground for Qutb's theory of violent global revolution.[86] He adapted Islamic Jihad's ideology in Sudan to mirror Bin Laden's Al Qaeda.[87] During the 1992-1995 Balkans crisis al-Zawahiri undertook financing, and in 1995 possibly traveled to the U.S. for pre-attack reconaissance.[88] Sageman notes al-Zawahiri criticised Western non-government organisations, multinational corporations, international news agencies, and the United Nations for their role in creating structural violence.[89] Because of others' disagreements with Bin Laden, Zawahri may have resigned from Islamic Jihad in 2000.[90] He is credited with conceiving of September 11 as a psychological strike on the "far enemy" (the U.S.) in order to destabilise the "near enemy" (Israel and *Jahiliyya* Middle East regimes).[91] The Western media usually portrays Bin Laden as al-Zawahiri's pawn, due to the latter's intellectual scope.[92] Al-Zawahiri's enigmatic nature was highlighted when the U.S. Government released a 6,000-word letter claimed to be written by him, on 12 October 2005.[93] The letter's

authenticity was debunked by U.S. critics as likely Shi'a propaganda, and denied by Al Qaeda.

Zarqawi received major attention after videotapes circulated of journalist Nick Berg's muder.[94] Zarqawi's long-term vision includes expelling the Shi'a and Kurds from Iraq and creating a Sunni stronghold to glorify Jihad.[95] He was inspired by Issan Mohammed Taher Al-Barqawi, and constructed a smaller-scale "Afghan mythos" to Bin Laden.[96] After causing havoc in Iraq, Zarqawi's Tawid wal Jihad group made their allegiance to Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden on 17 October 2004.[97] Zarqawi's global network continues to expand, although more research is needed on his capabilities.

The biographies also inadvertently reveal strategies used in Al Qaeda recruitment. Atrocity footage from "Chechnya, Bosnia and Kosovo" was exploited to build the Hamburg cell's commitment for the September 11 attacks.[98] Jemaah Islamiyah's Mohamed Iqbal and Abu Bakar Bashir mentioned ethnonationalist and regional conflicts in their sermons.[99] Bin Laden's rhetoric has delegitimated the U.S. by creating an historical narrative from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the Iraq sanctions.[100] Al-Zawahiri is regarded as a more effective recruiter than Bin Laden, due to his ability to lucidly explain the Jihadist worldview.[101] Sageman's study found Al Qaeda affiliation was primarily a "group phenomenon", via networks of "strong bonds", self-selected by "friendship, kinship, discipleship, and religious devotion."[102] There are different levels of trust: Zarqawi joined the inner cadre in 1999 after proving his capabilites.[103] Since September 11, Al Qaeda has been concentrating its recruitment efforts in Europe, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.[104]

The Occidentalist Dimension

The Occidentalist lens provides a hermeneutic third way beyond neoconservatives and terrorist biographers to understand the Jihadist lifeworld. It embodies a collective 'social image' that shapes individual values and collective worldviews. As outlined by Buruma and Margalit the Occidentalist lens portrays the West as a "'machine civilisation': the

soulless whore as a greedy automaton."[105] Sociologist Ibn Khaldun and philosopher Owald Spengler also shared this transhistorical view, although in different historical contexts. Europe's rapid urbanisation, the Romantics, and modernity all created a cultural niche for Occidentalist proponents. Sayyed Qutb's description of Western societies as *Jahiliyya* remains the most influential Occidentalist worldview in Islamist politics.[106] The transhistorical nature of the Occidentalist lens meant Qutb could adapt his critique as Egypt morphed into the United Arab Republic.[107]

The failure of Qutb and other Islamist activists to transform Egypt, Algeria, the Balkans and other conflict zones means Occidentalist rhetoric remains viable for contemporary Jihadists.[108] The September 11 terrorist attacks can be understood as a dramaturgical and symbolic attack on the West's "idolatory".[109] Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri uses Occidentalist rhetoric to reshape Muslim identity by historiographical interpretation and an anti-Western stance which offers distinctiveness.[110] Michael Scheuer believes that Bin Laden uses specific issues—Palestine, Chechnya, Indonesia—that resonate with Sunni and Salafi audiences, rather than broad anti-American hatred.[111] Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri hope, by tapping into the *umma*'s feelings of injustice and traumata, to mobilise collective action.

Bin Laden has also tapped into the leadership crisis facing the *ulema* in Muslim societies after Khomeini's Iranian revolution.[112] Global interconnectedness and technological acceleration now empowers radical Islamist preachers to reach a more diverse audience.[113] Following Khomeini's prevolutionary broadcasts via cassette tapes, Jihadist preachers use video, audio and Internet distribution for their sermons.[114] Al-Zawahiri crafted an international media strategy which used war footage to increase Al Qaeda's community of support.[115] The Islamist reaction to the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan's Taliban highlights how polarising events lead to critiquing the "enemies of Islam" than independent intellectual debate.[116] Michael Scheur believes Al Qaeda has funded many Islamist insurgencies, notably the Philippines' Abu Sayyaf; Kashmir separatists; Algeria's Salafist Group for Call and Combat; and Indonesia's Free Aceh Movement.[117] The conflicts and violence means that "The *ulema* have lost control over the declaration

of jihad", a tension that enhances Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's religious legitimacy.[118] This violence may be harnessed by Jihadists to create an 'all-channel' Caliphate network.

The alternative of a Caliphate trans-national community remains a long-term goal for Al Qaeda and other Jihadist groups. The Caliphate is comparable as a political Islamist ideal to Augustine's 'city of god' for Christians, although often treated as a sound-bite by Western media. Buruma and Margalit note the Caliphate embodies "going back to the purity of an imaginary past."[119] Yet this depth and timeframe are misunderstood by many Western scholars, and depicted by neoconservatives as a cyclical return to 'pre-modern' society. Due to the Ottoman Empire's collapse, the *umma* remains alienated from realistically achieving the Caliphate in the near-term. [120] The post-Soviet transitions of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and other Central Asian nation-states in the 1990s suggests a similar societal-wide pattern.

The Caliphate was renewed during the 1992-95 Bosnian conflict that energised Salafi Jihadists.[121] The religio-political ideal was part of Al Qaeda's recruitment strategies for its Afghan-Bosnian network.[122] This suggests that Bin Laden is tapping into the regional hotspots and "irregular wars"[123] of global disorder, then using the *umma*'s concern for recruiting and mobilising potential Jihadists.[124] There are also internal disagreements on the circumstances necessary to found the Caliphate, as when Tal'at Fu'ad Qasim dismissed Ayman al-Zawahiri's arguments.[125] Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's ability to shift operations from different state sponsors and 'failed' governments—the Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan—into an amorphous structure in Chechnya, Central Asia and the Indonesian archipelago challenges the state-centric model of U.S. counterterrorism discourse.[126]

Neoconservatives fear the Caliphate for many reasons. They view an Islamic Resurgence as a geopolitical competitor akin to China and India's Great Power politics. The Caliphate ideal and the local mosque, which may offer the *umma* more security in a hyperglobal world, challenges in its purist form the constitutive and normative basis for the Westphalian nation-state.[127] It contradicts the neoconservative mission to export

American liberal democracy, whilst the Muslim world is still adapting these institutions and norms. The ambiguities and varieties of Islamic nation-states means that neoconservatives engage remain suspicious about *shari'a* law.[128] Finally, the possibility for sociopolitical change in Muslim societies is frequently depicted as an Islamic Reformation: a reliance on European lineage and metaphors rather than Muslim or trans-civilisational.

Consequently, neoconservatives are also closed to Muslim worldviews that have evolved independently of the West.[129] Bernard Lewis and Paul Berman's success was partly due to their use of historical and philosophical undercurrents that readers grasped. Yet their macrohistorical grand narratives have both failed to create intersubjective and culturally-aware policymaking, which is desperately required to inform GWOT grand strategy. For example, the U.S. could have avoided inciting Bin Laden in the early 1990s if Pentagon officials had factored into the decision to deploy troops in Saudi Arabia, the region's colonialist history and negative perception of military bases.[130] Instead the neoconservative view reflects an elite view of national interests and the pragmatics of social diffusion. Neoconservative policymakers do not yet understand an Islamic civilisational perspective.[131]

Conclusion

How can these issues be publicly addressed in an effective manner?[132] The Lackawanna Six case offers one valuable case study of GWOT complexities about Political Islam. Six Yemeni-American friends were suspected of being a 'sleeper' terrorist cell in the U.S. Several had traveled to Afghanistan training camps, met Osama bin Laden, and were monitored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation on their return, after a tipoff from the Muslim community.[133] Camp trips were considered a 'rite of passage' for devout Arab men.[134] There were hints the Lackawanna Six may have been recruited to conduct Jihadist operations in Chechnya against Russian military forces.[135] The FBI spent several months investigating the group whilst the White House was briefed. Once the Lackawanna Six were arrested U.S. Attorney-General John Ashcroft used the case to

promote the Patriot Act and domestic surveillance capabilities.[136] Yet the case was based on intelligence conclusions that remain debated. The Lackawanna Six members were each sentenced to 7-10 years jail.[137]

The hysteria generated by the Lackawanna Six case obscures several GWOT realities. Al-Zawahiri miscalculated the U.S. response to September 11, and the scale of their bombing campaigns and counterinsurgency operations.[138] Bin Laden lost the support of Sudan's Hassan al-Turabi and Afghanistan's Taliban regime.[139] After the Iraq intervention Bin Laden's mission morphed into an insurgency.[140] Yet because Al Qaeda has a "metaphysical" dimension to its goals, rather than negotiable political demands, the GWOT must be augmented in the long term by a refocus on actionable solutions and effective institutions.[141] The current debate has not engaged with the Muslim *umma* on any real terms: the bid to shift responsibility to moderate Muslims highlights the ignorance of many Western analysts about Political Islam and the terrorist threat being faced. Bernard Lewis, Paul Berman, and others have used an "Islamo-fascist" frame to explain the problems. Iman Feisal Abdul Rauf offers an alternative frame, one that transcends yet includes the positive insights of Lewis and Berman. Rauf's alternative vision is based on interfaith dialogue, a renewed understanding of civilisational history, and a global ethic based on positive peace.[142]

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