

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Department of Defense, Executive Service Directorate (0704-0188). Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ORGANIZATION.

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 02-05-2016	2. REPORT TYPE Master's of Military Studies	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) SEP 2015 - APR 2016
--	---	--

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Wisdom to Self-Correct: Appreciating the Significance of ISIS's Putative Caliphate and Refining America's Strategy to Destroy It	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S) Jeffrey M Brewer - Major, United States Marine Corps	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
--	---

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) Dr Douglas Streusand
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
The Coalition aligned to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) does not appreciate that organization's center of gravity: ISIS possesses and administers significant territory in what used to be Syria and Iraq. Three key organizational strengths spring forth from the possession of administered territory. Western leaders' failure to recognize either the center of gravity or these key strengths has led to development of an ineffectual, air-centric military strategy to address ISIS. However, an appreciation of these key strengths makes possible a more effective strategy to defeat ISIS.

ISIS's possession of a territorial physical state enables three key organizational strengths to persist. First, ISIS is able to sustain an historically powerful and politically relevant narrative about early expansionist Islam's role in shaping the old world while it also bends nations towards the true faith in these latter days and animates foreign fighters to flock to the ISIS cause. Secondly, that ISIS holds significant, albeit scattered and

15. SUBJECT TERMS
ISIS; Caliphate; Strategy; Management of Savagery; Center of Gravity

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 43	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON USMC Command and Staff College
a. REPORT Unclass	b. ABSTRACT Unclass	c. THIS PAGE Unclass			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING SF 298

1. REPORT DATE. Full publication date, including day, month, if available. Must cite at least the year and be Year 2000 compliant, e.g. 30-06-1998; xx-06-1998; xx-xx-1998.

2. REPORT TYPE. State the type of report, such as final, technical, interim, memorandum, master's thesis, progress, quarterly, research, special, group study, etc.

3. DATES COVERED. Indicate the time during which the work was performed and the report was written, e.g., Jun 1997 - Jun 1998; 1-10 Jun 1996; May - Nov 1998; Nov 1998.

4. TITLE. Enter title and subtitle with volume number and part number, if applicable. On classified documents, enter the title classification in parentheses.

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER. Enter all contract numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. F33615-86-C-5169.

5b. GRANT NUMBER. Enter all grant numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. AFOSR-82-1234.

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER. Enter all program element numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 61101A.

5d. PROJECT NUMBER. Enter all project numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 1F665702D1257; ILIR.

5e. TASK NUMBER. Enter all task numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 05; RF0330201; T4112.

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER. Enter all work unit numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 001; AFAPL30480105.

6. AUTHOR(S). Enter name(s) of person(s) responsible for writing the report, performing the research, or credited with the content of the report. The form of entry is the last name, first name, middle initial, and additional qualifiers separated by commas, e.g. Smith, Richard, J, Jr.

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES). Self-explanatory.

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER. Enter all unique alphanumeric report numbers assigned by the performing organization, e.g. BRL-1234; AFWL-TR-85-4017-Vol-21-PT-2.

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES). Enter the name and address of the organization(s) financially responsible for and monitoring the work.

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S). Enter, if available, e.g. BRL, ARDEC, NADC.

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S). Enter report number as assigned by the sponsoring/monitoring agency, if available, e.g. BRL-TR-829; -215.

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT. Use agency-mandated availability statements to indicate the public availability or distribution limitations of the report. If additional limitations/ restrictions or special markings are indicated, follow agency authorization procedures, e.g. RD/FRD, PROPIN, ITAR, etc. Include copyright information.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES. Enter information not included elsewhere such as: prepared in cooperation with; translation of; report supersedes; old edition number, etc.

14. ABSTRACT. A brief (approximately 200 words) factual summary of the most significant information.

15. SUBJECT TERMS. Key words or phrases identifying major concepts in the report.

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION. Enter security classification in accordance with security classification regulations, e.g. U, C, S, etc. If this form contains classified information, stamp classification level on the top and bottom of this page.

17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT. This block must be completed to assign a distribution limitation to the abstract. Enter UU (Unclassified Unlimited) or SAR (Same as Report). An entry in this block is necessary if the abstract is to be limited.

United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES


The Wisdom to Self-Correct: Appreciating the Significance of ISIS's Putative Caliphate and Refining America's Strategy to Destroy It

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

JEFF M. BREWER

AY 15-16

Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Douglas Streusand

Approved: 

Date: 22 April 2016

Oral Defense Committee Member: Francis H. Marlo

Approved: 

Date: 29 April 2016

Executive Summary

Title: The Wisdom to Self-Correct: Appreciating the Significance of ISIS's Putative Caliphate and Refining America's Strategy to Destroy It

Author: Major Jeff M. Brewer, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The Coalition aligned to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) does not appreciate that organization's center of gravity: ISIS possesses and administers significant territory in what used to be Syria and Iraq. Three key organizational strengths spring forth from the possession of administered territory. Western leaders' failure to recognize either the center of gravity or these key strengths has led to development of an ineffectual, air-centric military strategy to address ISIS. However, an appreciation of these key strengths makes possible a more effective strategy to defeat ISIS.

Discussion: ISIS's possession of a territorial physical state enables three key organizational strengths to persist. First, ISIS is able to sustain an historically powerful and politically relevant narrative about early expansionist Islam's role in shaping the old world while it also bends nations towards the true faith in these latter days and animates foreign fighters to flock to the ISIS cause. Secondly, the very fact ISIS holds significant, albeit scattered and non-contiguous, territories allows the organization to use strategic depth to survive the coalition's relentless airstrikes and oftentimes outmaneuver indigenous Syrian and Iraqi ground forces. Thirdly, by some estimates, ISIS governs a population of some 10 million people, which provides a substantial revenue base.

Conclusion: Once one appreciates the ISIS center of gravity and the resultant strengths, one will recognize the need for a refined strategy for achieving President Obama's current ISIS policy of "degrade and ultimately destroy" the organization. Inevitably, this new strategy will accede to the idea that war against ISIS requires substantial ground combat to defeat a capable force entrenched in several cities across the caliphate. Rather than rely on Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and a Syrian ground force to retake territories and key cities, American leaders should assert the right if not an obligation to introduce an adequately-sized American ground force to competently wage battle against and soundly defeat capable ISIS forces in any or all of the caliphate's several strongholds.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

QUOTATION FROM, ABSTRACTION FROM, OR REPRODUCTION OF ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PERMITTED PROVIDED PROPER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS MADE.

Preface

I intend this paper not to condemn decision-makers in the Department of Defense but to present a thoughtful critique of United States (U.S.) strategy for addressing the ISIS threat. To this point, American policy-makers, to include the President of the United States and several other world leaders, have dismissed ISIS as aberrantly unIslamic, as inherently incapable for want of engineers, bureaucrats, and means of finance. This paper lays out the qualities that have permitted ISIS to maintain control over substantial territory, in spite of two years of air attacks and intermittent ground operations against it. Indeed, the current strategy ignores ISIS's institutional competence and the vital importance of its territorial base, which makes credible its claim to constitute a caliphate.

As this paper will demonstrate, these facts of the matter strongly suggest ISIS is a proto-state keen on developing and expanding. To thwart its continuance, we must develop a strategy that responds to ISIS's strategies, strengths, and vulnerabilities. Otherwise, ISIS will use its physical caliphate to export terrorism against American interests and the interests of allies in the region, or else globally, against targets in Europe and the United States.

This paper is intended to influence military and civilian decision-makers in understanding the sources of ISIS's strength and its resiliency. Historical data illuminates readers about early Islamic leaders' inclination to expand and the concomitant requirement to rule in certain ways and sheds light on the convictions and persuasiveness of ISIS's current struggle to emulate its forbearers. References to more contemporary Islamic strategists are purposed to show how ISIS is adept at blending the old and new to militarily and bureaucratically run its current state-building enterprise. Excerpted articles from dozens of journalists and writers covering the ISIS phenomenon demonstrates how ISIS relates to and governs people *today*, perceptibly and in accordance with precedents established long ago in early Islamic history.

I am grateful for all of the dedicated professionals serving this great nation in the fight to defeat ISIS's attempts to further consolidate its seat of power. I want to help. I wish to thank the Marine Corps for furthering my education. Above all I am grateful for the support and encouragement of my amazing wife, who can and does do everything, so that I might be able to pursue my studies. There is none other like her in all the earth.

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	2
Disclaimer	3
Preface	4
Introduction	7
ISIS’s Foundation in Early Islam: How Historical Resonances and Powerful Ideological Appeal Convince Muslims to Join	8
ISIS Recognizes the Requirement to Generate and Sustaining Military Depth.....	18
ISIS’s Real Capacity to Govern and Finance the Caliphate	25
Conclusions.....	33
Bibliography	40

Introduction

Since the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) declared itself “the Caliphate” in June 2014, the 65-nation, international coalition assembled to “degrade and ultimately destroy” the organization has had minimal success.¹ The coalition has neither dislodged ISIS from its major strongholds in Syria and Iraq, nor prevented it from expanding its operational reach to at least a half dozen other countries. Some observers have attributed ISIS’s survival to disjointed, if not dysfunctional, efforts of willing world powers.² Other experts argue regional ground armies, namely the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the various and dysfunctional Syrian rebel groups, possess ineffectual conventional capabilities and insufficient will to defeat ISIS.³ Still, another camp contends ISIS’s staying power owes to regional Sunni states’ general ambivalence to decisively commit to fighting and countering the organization’s ideological narrative.⁴

These explanations have merit, to be sure, but they fail to give ISIS the credit it deserves. Available and mounting evidence indicates ISIS’s successes owe considerable credit to ISIS’s *own program* to establish, maintain, and build upon its modern, physically-realized, putative caliphate. The organization’s efforts reflect the lessons learned from previously failed experiments in totalitarian Islamist rule; indeed, ISIS does seem purposely designed to succeed where forerunners failed. It seized territory and used a coherent theological and historical narrative to attract tens of thousands of followers thereto. The organization recognized the importance of creating physical and ideological strategic depth, even if workable methods towards that end deliberately drew from extra-Islamic sources. And lastly, despite the international coalition’s episodic, incoherent efforts to thwart ISIS’s progress and Russian intervention, ISIS continues to generate capabilities necessary to govern and remain financially viable. Indeed, these three unique organizational strengths make ISIS a resilient actor and, perhaps, even a persistent state. Scholar of strategy Stephen M. Walt

averred the organization could “defy outside efforts” to contest its establishment in the heart of the Middle East.⁵

To date, the prevailing Coalition strategy against ISIS has failed because it has not destroyed the foundation of ISIS’s resilience, its center of gravity: a territorial base in Syria and Iraq, from which the aforementioned key organizational strengths emanate. The combination of a “systematic campaign of airstrikes”⁶ and support for sub-standard indigenous ground forces has not driven ISIS from these lands or eliminated the organization’s ability to resist cumulative pressures brought to bear against its senior leaders and key infrastructure. ISIS remains essentially intact because neither this current approach, nor proposed strategic supplements⁷ and outright strategic alternatives,⁸ address the caliphate’s guiding imperative to take and hold terrain and, when dispossessed of terrain it held, immediately open another front, in another geographic location. The hunger to conquer lands for Islam *underwrites* ISIS’s claim to be emulating the military and political achievements of the early caliphs. Moreover, the indefatigable counteroffensives and resort to asymmetrical operations as needed constantly remake or regain strategic depth and buttress key strongholds. And, finally, sustained control of populous lands provides the organization means to finance governance and operations in and beyond its own territory.

ISIS’s Foundation in Early Islam: How Historical Resonances and Powerful Ideological Appeal Convince Muslims to Join

ISIS’s imperative to seize territory and then administer their caliphate, in accordance with *Sharia* law,⁹ is rooted in historical pronouncements and relevant experiences of the exemplars of early Islam: The Prophet Mohammad and the *Salaf*, or Mohammad’s “pious Companions.”¹⁰ Indeed, Mohammad’s death in 632 may have been the end of prophecy, but the Prophet’s example in life provided his followers the basis for instituting: 1) the personage of the caliph and 2) the position of caliphate as complimentary means to institutionalize Mohammad’s legacy and regulate

politics on the basis of Allah’s revealed will. The original four Rightly Guided caliphs ruled until 661, and in that time, they oversaw major Muslim conquests and laid down the rules governing relations with the vanquished. Indeed Sunni Muslims—and not only the followers of ISIS—look upon the early period of the four caliphs as the ideal for the whole community (*umma*) of Muslims. Accordingly, in their best estimation, Muslim regimes in every era should strive to emulate the early caliphs’ examples of just governance.

In the course of striving, many Muslims and most jihadists¹¹ have embraced an animating, activist interpretation of Islam that revolves around several core ideas, all of which are anchored to Quranic verses and the hadith corpus. Mary Habeck, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, wrote about these core notions in her book, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*. She lists five “principle dogmas” initially asserted and orally propagated “in discussions about Islamic law and theology that began soon after the death of Mohammad and that are supported by important segments of the clergy (*ulama*) today.”¹² Jihadist groups, in particular, endeavor to realize these doctrines on earth. Additionally, the Quranic verses (*sura*) indicated below are those which best encapsulate the specific dogmas, according to Habeck; some are more specific or unambiguous than others in their addressing the elements of Habeck’s expressed dogmas:

- Islam is the one true faith that will dominate the world (suras 61:9, 48:28)
- Muslim rulers need to govern by the *Sharia* alone (suras 5:45, 5:50, 5:59)
- The Quran and hadith contain the whole truth for determining the righteous life (suras 22:54, 2:186)
- There is no separation between religion and the rest of life (suras 3:110, 51:56)
- Muslims are in a state of conflict with unbelievers¹³ (sura 4:76, 9:29-30)

Starting from these major premises and wielding Islam's core texts—the Quran, hadith, and other authoritative commentaries—ISIS has drawn significant numbers of Muslims (19,000-25,000 in Iraq and Syria as of early February 2016,¹⁴ albeit a small percentage of the worldwide Muslim population) to its caliphate, where residents can live out these principle doctrines in ostensible obedience to Islamic dictates.

Undoubtedly, for some individuals, joining ISIS is more about breaking free from social alienation or economic deprivation or even perceived racism at home, rather than fulfilling religious obligation. For these Muslim searchers, joining the organization is a means to belong to something more significant than their current station in life.¹⁵ However, for Muslims genuinely interested in the historical themes of Islam and in finding fulfillment in the opportunity to make these themes come alive and remain relevant in their personal lives and in the collective *umma*, ISIS's example is more than an exercise in boosting self-esteem. ISIS's historically-rooted program for action is so appealing, eager individuals come from regions around the world to fight for or else live and support development inside the caliphate.¹⁶ Cumulative research into social and psychological factors influencing recruitment shows significant numbers of people persuaded to leave their homes and ways of life and move to the realm appreciate or perceive ISIS as a genuine vanguard of an authentic *umma*. A strategic communications advisory firm based in Lebanon—Quantum Communications—concluded as much in its March 2015 survey of 49 captured or otherwise detained fighters from ISIS and similar jihadist groups. Quantum interviewed three categories of combatants—external Western fighters, Arab fighters from outside Iraq, and fighters from Iraq—and determined a large majority were motivated to join ISIS for typically Islamic reasons: 1) ISIS is actively defending Sunnis against apostate and cruel Shias; 2) ISIS is waging jihad (particularly the defensive form against predatory Shia rulers in Damascus and Baghdad); 3) ISIS has created a

caliphate-environment; and 4) Siding with ISIS provides an opportunity to exist with and among like-minded Muslim community members.¹⁷

Like other observers interested in understanding individuals' motives for joining ISIS, Shiraz Maher, a researcher at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR)—an academic research unit at King's College London—has also investigated what motivates people to join ISIS. Is the draw truly ISIS's appeal as committed co-religionists, willing *to do* something for the cause of Allah? Maher looked specifically at the reasons a group of five British Muslims of Bangladesh descent left the United Kingdom (U.K.) in 2013-14 to join ISIS. His findings indicate these individuals and other U.K. Muslims emigrated to the caliphate precisely because of their perception “the Syrian war [is] a battle over the future of Islam.”¹⁸ In Syria, believers can fight with Islamist groups—ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham—committed to struggle against those who are “not true Muslims,”¹⁹ namely Shia members of Bashar al-Assad's forces. One of Maher's interviewees expressed disdain for moderates who malign the ISIS effort, implying the organization's critics were passively “watching Islam fade away.”²⁰ Another of Maher's subjects affirmed he was fighting precisely because “to fight is to please our creator by making his religion the highest.”²¹ Not insignificantly, Maher also points out these five young men had previously labored for the faith as moderate street preachers in a group calling itself the Portsmouth Dawah Team. Maher indicates the group members' social media accounts “reveal only benign activity: stalls distributing free copies of the Quran, [and] pamphlets explaining the position of Jesus in Islamic scripture.”²² In other words, these men were neither declared radical Islamists, nor were they discernibly driven to join ISIS because they were social outcasts, adrenaline junkies, or victims of racism. Similarly, perceptibly pure motives to aid the ISIS cause inclined nine British-Sudanese doctors to leave the U.K. in March 2015.²³ At least these two groups of sincere Muslims were attracted to ISIS's claim to be the vanguard of Sunni Muslims.

In *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, authors Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan characterize ISIS's effort to appeal to jaded, disheartened, and disaffected Muslims as a deliberate campaign, one with a "carefully elaborated ideological narrative, a potent blend of Islamic hermeneutics, history, and politics."²⁴ The authors base their assessment on testimonies of several jihadists, mostly ISIS fighters, who were captured on the battlefield. These personal accounts support Quantum's and Maher's findings. For instance, ISIS reportedly rejects preferential treatment for certain ethnicities in terms of recruitment, assignment, and command opportunities. The organization eschews al-Qaeda's well-known preference for Arabs as the true lions of Islam. One of Maher's interviewees made this point, as well, stating that he joined ISIS *only after* the al-Qaeda linked group, Jabhat al-Nusra, rejected his bid to join based on the interviewee's lack of *tazkiyah*. This individual had not been vouched for by someone already in the organization. *Tazkiyah* largely excludes European Muslims and other non-Arabs from joining al-Qaeda.²⁵

Beyond ISIS's rejection of ethnic preference in integrating new fighters into its organizational folds, Weiss and Hassan write that recruits to the caliphate are impressed with the organization's spokesmen, or *al-dawah*²⁶ and especially their formidable apologia for ISIS's point of view. These preachers use intense periods of indoctrination to cite Quranic verses, hadith, and ostensibly authoritative scholarship to argue the organization's perspective on a variety of key issues. Benedictine College professor Andrew Salzman, writing at *Small Wars Journal* in August 2014 shortly after ISIS declared the creation of the Islamic State, characterized the organization's use of comparisons between its evolution into a state and the rise of early Islam as a "powerful tactic" which is the foundation of a persuasive, "mythical narrative".²⁷ He credited as particularly effective ISIS's ability to distill these points of favorable comparison to "a few basic resonances". For instance, Salzman offers that ISIS's ability to defeat larger conventional armies in sacking Mosul and other cities in Iraq and Syria squares nicely with Mohammad and his initially small numbers of

followers' ability to defeat large Meccan armies in the early 7th century. Just as the Meccans and other populations initially resisted Mohammad's message and his warriors, ISIS's powerful enemies oppose ISIS's current efforts to create a new state. Salzmann posits ISIS's distinction between *dar al-islam* (House of Islam) and the *dar al-harab* (House of War) is another allusion that reaches back in time; historically, Mohammad viewed the world as these two opposed parts. This well-supported certitude, a liberal use of vivid Islamic imagery and an orderly indoctrination process for new ISIS members is impactful for Muslims freshly exposed to ISIS's muscular and cogent rendering of the Islamic faith, a rendering that bears an uncanny resemblance to at least some of the habits and forms of life cultivated by Mohammad and his Companions.²⁸

Besides establishing a basis for an initial favorable comparison with Mohammad and the Companions, ISIS uses historical precedents to justify specific, controversial actions it takes today. These "proofs" attract, rather than repel, significant numbers of Muslims. In late January 2015, in the aftermath of its decision to burn alive captured Jordanian pilot Muath Safi Yousef al-Kasasbeh, ISIS employed a *fatwa*²⁹ and the seventh edition of its online journal *Dabiq* to justify its decision. The *Dabiq* article reads, in part:

In burning the crusader pilot and burying him under a pile of debris, the Islamic State carried out a just form of retaliation for his involvement in the crusader bombing campaign which continues to result in the killing of countless Muslims who, as a result of these airstrikes, are burned alive under mountains of debris.³⁰

In invoking the law of retaliation or *qisas* in establishing al-Kasasbeh's guilt and punishment, the writer began his justification by first appealing to a passage from the Quran, 16:126:

If you have to retaliate, do so to the extent you have been injured; but if you forbear it is best for those who bear with fortitude.³¹

The author then acknowledged Muhammad's ostensible spoken injunction against immolation, as recorded in a hadith passage al-Bukhari included in his authoritative collection of hadith: "None should punish with fire except Allah."³² Having anticipated ISIS's critics would use al-Bukhari's

narrative to rebut ISIS, the writer then charged “the *hizbiyyīn*, the palace ‘scholars,’ and the ignorant defeatists” with “dishonesty” for not acknowledging a well-established doctrine of equivalence, based on another Quranic verse, 2:194:

[Fighting in] the sacred month is for [aggression committed in] the sacred month, and for [all] violations is legal retribution. So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.³³

After citing Quran and hadith passages, the author further appealed to the example of Mohammad, as recorded in another hadith associated with al-Bukhari: Volume 4, Book 52, Number 261. Therein, Mohammad tortured prisoners by impaling their eyes with heated iron poles.³⁴ After detailing the Prophet’s use of hot irons, the article summarizes five separate examples of the Prophet’s Companions punishing their enemies by burning them. Three of these are attributed, particularly, to the first Rightly Guided Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, as well as famed Muslim warrior, General Khalid Ibn al-Walid; another is credited to Mohammad’s follower Abu Musa al-Ash’ari.³⁵

Author Hassan Hassan, writing at *The Guardian.com* in early February 2015, following al-Kasabeh’s execution, called ISIS’s validation of the burning an example of “kinetic” *Sharia*. In Hassan’s estimation, ISIS’s well-researched recitation of “stories and actions carried out by authoritative Muslim figures in early Islam” trumps the “theoretical fatwas” of Muslim clerics.³⁶

Statements such as ‘this hadith is weak’ or ‘it is not permissible to kill prisoners of war’ can be backed by religious texts, but how early Muslim leaders acted is similarly powerful, if not more persuasive.³⁷

Similar to justifying immolation of Islam’s enemies, then, ISIS employs *Sharia* to justify slavery and sexual bondage of captured females. In the fall of 2014, the organization used the fourth edition of *Dabiq* to argue in detail for its determination to capture idolatrous Yazidi women. In an article entitled “The Revival of Slavery: Before the Hour”, ISIS writers traced the Yazidis’ historic

origins to pre-Islamic times, compared Yazidis' beliefs with Quranic standards of polytheism, and then juxtaposed the findings (lo and behold the Yazidis are polytheistic idolaters or *mushrik*) with Quranic injunction and two schools' of jurisprudence justifications for prisoner enslavement.³⁸ Specifically, the article noted Quranic verse 9:5's directive to "slay the idolaters [or polytheists]" and then appealed to both Ibn Taymiyyah's and the Hanafi school of jurisprudence's justifications for slavery of apostate and polytheistic women, which these two schools base "on the actions of the Companions during the Wars of Apostasy."³⁹ The article also cited Islamic scholar al-Bukhari's commentary on Quranic verse 3:110, which indicates Muslims will enslave non-Muslims at least until non-Muslims accept Islam.⁴⁰ Although that particular iteration of *Dabiq* seemed purposed to justify to a global audience ISIS's careful decision to institute slavery, in December 2014, ISIS released additional, prescriptive guidance to its fighters for treatment of female captives and slaves. The organization's Research and Fatwa Department circulated a document addressing twenty-seven typical questions pertaining to fighter-slave sexual relations, including, for example, two questions about the practice of *'azl*, or refraining from ejaculation when having sex with a female slave.⁴¹ The pamphlet's answer—that a fighter may practice *'azl* with captured female slaves—derives from hadith 33:71,⁴² wherein Mohammad, himself, reportedly justified *'azl* when having sexual intercourse with a female slave.

Though Western readers and Muslims understandably find the guidance "sickeningly matter-of-fact,"⁴³ the more important lesson to be learned is that ISIS can and does justify the most obscene activities through simple citation of Islamic sources. To adrenaline-fueled, sexually frustrated, and idealistic young Muslim men who look around and find their secular world bears little resemblance to Islamic civilizations past, ISIS's promise of living out the faith, in every way imaginable, *in the caliphate*, is alluring in the extreme. Worse, many other Muslims, when confronted with ISIS's core assertions, are unable to castigate these viewpoints as *ipso facto*

extreme or beyond the pale, unless these Muslims are prepared to say the same of Mohammad, his Companions, and subsequent early Islamic leaders.

Where, then, ISIS stumbles in convincing the Muslim world, writ large, that it is the religion's standard-bearer, is the position it takes regarding Islam's theology of faith—*what, if anything, should we do about all this?* Indeed, ISIS would ask: *Are there not obligations placed on Muslim believers to promote those truths and the principle dogmas that we duly profess?* Those willing to plumb the depths of Islamic history find ISIS's reported heterodoxy on the subject of the substance of Islamic faith is anything but—their views originate much earlier than the minority views of Sayyid Qutb, or the Wahabbists, or even Ibn Taymiyyah. ISIS's claims were born in Islam's formative period during the time of turmoil surrounding the question of faith or unbelief of 'Uthman (3rd Caliph) and Ali (4th Caliph). Assassins reportedly murdered 'Uthman in 656 over his “centralizing policies and reliance on clan ties... along with accusations of impiety.”⁴⁴ The death of the caliph divided Muslims among those who believed 'Uthman had died—justifiably—as a wrongdoer (*zaliman*) or, whether he was unjustifiably wronged (*mazluman*) on the false assumption he had ruled unjustly or in an unIslamic manner.⁴⁵ In fact, 'Uthman's supporters reckoned 'Ali had ordered or otherwise supported 'Uthman's assassination. This initial internecine conflict split Muslims into three early Islamic camps—the Murji'ites, Kharijites, and the “tendency that would come to be known as Sunni.”⁴⁶

The earliest Murji'ites refused to assess either 'Uthman or Ali to be an “unbeliever”, arguing that since Murji'ites had not witnessed the *fitna* (the conflict ensuing in the wake of 'Uthman's murder and which pitted 'Ali's supporters against those who suspected 'Ali had conspired to kill 'Uthman), they were ignorant of the events and simply unable to pass judgment.⁴⁷ Eventually, this early principle changed into what scholars call the “classical Murji'ite” doctrine:

Everyone who believes in his heart and professes this belief with his tongue should be considered a believer, and no acts alter this status. Statements, however, could: The same credo asserts that whoever professes not to know whether Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus) were prophets, or whether Allah is in Heaven or on earth, is an infidel.⁴⁸

In contrast, the Kharijites believed faith without works was dead and sins could make one an unbeliever. They identified rulers who persisted in unjust, unIslamic rule as *kafir* (unbelievers); they applied this condemnation to ‘Uthman and to ‘Ali thereafter.⁴⁹ Like ISIS today, the Kharijites based their ability to declare Muslims *takfiri* (apostate Muslims/unbelievers) on passages such as Quran verse 5:44: “Those who do not judge by God's revelations are infidels indeed.”⁵⁰ Author Daniel Lav argues the Kharijites merely “applied” a standard first posited or put forward by ‘Awn ibn Abdallah, an early Murji’ite who “broke with the circle” over many Murji’ites’ unwillingness to declare unIslamic rulers—including the wayward Umayyad governor of Iraq, al-Hajjaj, and ‘Uthman—as unbelievers before rising up against them.⁵¹ Lav asserts that “there is much to indicate that ‘Awn’s position was the original in Islam.”⁵²

As for the “tendency that would come to be known as Sunni”, Lav argues convincingly that mainstream Sunnism for the next several hundred years essentially reflected a blending of two distinct but core tenets of this earliest debate on the theology of faith: 1) Faith is a function of belief in the heart, affirmation of the tongue (i.e. the *shahada*), and acts of the limbs, and 2) The genuine article excludes acts from faith.⁵³ Mainstream Sunnism embraced these somewhat competing, earlier orthodoxies, and harmonized them through the idea that faith “dynamically increases and decreases”, so that a verses like 5:44, which states one can act in such a way as to be legitimately judged an unbeliever, actually alludes to grades of unbelief.⁵⁴ Only the most egregious sin would qualify as full unbelief of the sort described in 5:44.

While Sunni Islam settled on a middle-of-the-road position, other writers and scholars coming after the Kharijites, i.e. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyyah, as well as the

Wahabbists, never accepted the established mainstream as anything but a heresy. Like ISIS after and the Kharijites before, these authors argued genuine, original Islamic faith necessarily taxed the individual because it required a Muslim to work towards ensuring principle dogmas become reality, not only in the life of the individual Muslim but also in the collective *umma*. This is not to argue that Ibn Taymiyyah, for one, agreed with all or even most of the Kharijite worldview. In fact he did not. He contended the Kharijites great error was in holding that faith was a single entity and in asserting the consequent view that individuals committing particularly egregious sins have no faith at all.⁵⁵ In other words, Ibn Taymiyya believed the Kharijites went too far in the “belief is faith and acts” position. Unfortunately, for Sunnis and perhaps even Ibn Taymiyyah, the message of an activated faith seeking to exalt Allah just as the earliest of the Faithful did, is winning significant numbers of hearts and minds. And for those so persuaded, the caliphate is both a home for authentic implementation of *Sharia* and a launch pad for global jihadist struggle against unbelievers.

ISIS Recognizes the Requirement to Generate and Sustaining Military Depth

ISIS’s organizational literature and its actions on the ground indicate a recognition and embrace of three complementary politico-military imperatives, which underwrite any state-building initiative worthy of the name: 1) Establishment of operational depth; 2) Dynamic and continual expansion of strategic depth; and 3) Development of a true flexible response military capability. The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (CTC) believes ISIS’s supposed strategic wisdom is overstated, but it credits ISIS with being positioned to take advantage of “opportunities that enabled it to translate some parts of its design into reality.”⁵⁶ Whether one believes ISIS’s leadership is illuminated in some way or not, it is refining these concepts to best serve the needs of the caliphate.

So, for example, ISIS’s seizure of maneuver space forward of its key strongholds, Raqqa and Mosul, exemplifies its conception of operational depth. ISIS recognizes the requirement to

maintain control of these cities to substantiate its claim that the caliphate actually exists. Effecting control forward of these strongholds, in every direction and by securing adjacent key terrain, is a source of constant activity for tactical military commanders. Herein, ISIS moves and deploys forces into operational areas and maneuvers them in such a way as to isolate and achieve limited objectives. In May 2015, ISIS seized Palmyra, Syria by securing limited objectives along approaches to the city and used surrounding desert as maneuver space. Ironically, its failure to hold Palmyra against Russian and Syrian attack in March 2016 is largely due to ISIS's inability to retain the same key terrain along western and northern approaches to the city. In the same vein, ISIS's defense of Mosul in April 2016, in the face of Iraqi Army advances north toward the city, suggest the organization values key terrain much more than retention of all outlying villages. As a sizable Iraqi force of 5,000 troops moved to retake surrounding villages, ISIS did not contest most of the army's operations. However, a mobile ISIS force, consisting of approximately 200 fighters counterattacked said Iraqi force and wrested control of the village of al-Nasr, precisely because this town sits atop key high ground.⁵⁷

In areas it continues to control in Iraq and Syria, ISIS has established what can best be described as a defense-in-depth emanating outward from hubs such as Raqqa and Mosul and the sizeable portion of the Syrian city of Deir Ezzor. Layered mines, trenches, and IEDs are emplaced along avenues of approach linking these hubs and successive smaller cities or strong-points (i.e. Aleppo, Al-Bab, Fallujah). ISIS currently generally enjoys the benefits of interior lines of communication, though in Syria especially, Russian airstrikes and the regime's advances in Deir Ezzor province have lately degraded this advantage. Nevertheless, controlling these lines enables ISIS to responsively redeploy ground forces within a theater and between Syria and Iraq in response to exigencies. By contrast, its enemies are located along the periphery of ISIS's territories in Syria

and Iraq, and have yet to evince an ability to coordinate actions to pressure ISIS simultaneously on multiple fronts.

Mobile forces work to keep these cities and theaters linked with other areas, and as opportunities present, the mobile elements support larger offensives farther forward (In Iraq, tending towards the south towards Baghdad, and in Syria, southwest in the direction of Damascus and Lebanon). Such was the case in May and August of 2015 when ISIS attacked Hadithah and Bayji, southwest and due south of Mosul, respectively. Though these specific attacks failed in linking Mosul with Al Anbar population centers, the efforts attrited ISF and compelled the Iraqi government to detach combat power to defend Hadithah and Bayji.

In terms of creating strategic depth, expansion is an ideological imperative and strategic depth is essentially a bonus. Since the caliphate's inception in the summer of 2014, ISIS has continuously looked to establish surrogates and activate dormant partisans in the greater Middle East, North and West Africa, and east to Afghanistan. In the fifth edition of their online journal, *Dabiq*, published in late November 2014, the organization declared its intent "to remain and expand."⁵⁸ At about that same time, ISIS affiliates in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Libya did indeed pledge loyalty to the caliphate.⁵⁹ Two months later, in late-January 2015, an Afghan franchise planted the ISIS flag in Nangarhar province.⁶⁰ According to Harleen Gambhir, a researcher and counterterrorism analyst at the Institute for the Study of War, ISIS divides the strategic landscape into an:

Interior Ring (Iraq and Syria)... a Near Abroad Ring (the rest of the Middle East and North Africa, extending east to Afghanistan and Pakistan and encompassing historically Islamic lands) and the Far Abroad Ring (Europe, the Americas, and Asia).⁶¹

To be sure, expansion is a means to many ends, which Gambhir's analysis touches on. It certainly reinforces the narrative of an indefatigable, divinely ordained caliphate. Even the dint of a terrorist attack abroad—however unsuccessful—implies ISIS is on the march and is unstoppable.⁶²

Enlargement also practically destabilizes and contests territories in ungoverned spaces outside Iraq and Syria, creating fertile regions of savagery for later development. Additionally, planting ISIS franchises beyond home station enhances the organization's chances for survival in the wake of any sort of global eradication effort. Perhaps of most practical importance, expansion efforts divert the enemy's attention and resources away from the heart of the realm. Besides these, expansion also equates to recruitment, as ISIS frames its operations to appeal to and galvanize its international audience and especially the types mentioned at the outset—those who are inspired “to fight...to please our creator by making his religion the highest.”⁶³

Perhaps the most ominous aspect of ISIS's grasp of key politico-military imperatives is its tactical flexibility, which goes far beyond the standard Islamic insurgent group's ability to conduct complex attacks using a mix of direct and indirect fire weaponry, etc. ISIS flexes between complementary capabilities, or conduct of either: 1) conventional, mobile maneuver and infantry operations; 2) Asymmetrical insurgent guerrilla strikes, and 3) Genuine acts of terrorism...anywhere within the Inner Ring, or in any of the several non-contiguous *wilayats* or governorates the organization has set up beyond Iraq and Syria in the Near Abroad. This tactical flexibility manifests when the organization suffers setbacks in places like Tikrit—lost to ISF in March 2015—and Ramadi—lost to ISF in December 2015. During these times, ISIS sub-commands resort to guerrilla operations and/or in launching other smaller offensives to counter-balance losses incurred. For example, as ISIS's defense of Tikrit withered in late winter/early spring 2015, ISIS leadership initiated a classic siege of Ramadi. When ISF regained Tikrit, ISIS promptly reversed momentum-loss by sacking the Al-Anbar capital and its fatigued defenders only five weeks later. Similarly, having lost Ramadi in late 2015, ISIS transitioned to asymmetrical tactics to target conventional Iraqi forces in order to contest ISF control of Ramadi's outlying areas.⁶⁴

Operational nimbleness is also discernible in ISIS's conduct of battle against the Kurdish People's Defense Units (PDU) in Syria, in February 2016. Herein, ISIS executed a deliberate tactical retreat, in initially ceding to PDU the town of Ash Shaddadi, before conducting an equally deliberate counterattack.⁶⁵ In the course of battle, 30,000 Sunni Arabs fled south from the town in the face of the PDU advance, and rather than escape "north, east or west into territory currently controlled by the Kurdish-majority Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF),"⁶⁶ these Arabs went towards the city of Deir Ezzor, an area ISIS controls. The series of events, beginning with ISIS's withdrawal from Ash Shaddadi and including the movement of tens of thousands of people deeper into the caliphate, suggests ISIS calculated an accrual of material and strategic benefit if it purposely evacuated the area. Moreover, the counterattack effort inclined the SDF to commit "a huge number" of fighters to buttress PDU forces apparently compelled to dig in and fight off the sustained ISIS counterattack.⁶⁷ Additionally, one media outlet reported that as ISIS lost ground in Ash Shaddadi and withstood relentless Russian air-assault to expel the organization from the city of Palmyra, it managed to launch a series of suicide attacks in Damascus and Homs, which killed 200 people.⁶⁸

The previous point gets at the heart of ISIS's strategic achievement: The organization is executing a purposeful plan of action to design, construct, and sustain a viable state, one that is able to rebound from setbacks and maintain offensive operations. The secret to ISIS's success is undoubtedly due to its endorsement of non-Islamic ideas, concepts, and methods of insurgency and state-building, *rather than or only Islamic sources*. ISIS views differently the roles of power, politics, violence, and terrain from the manner in which their predecessors and most of its contemporaries view these battlefield forces. Kenneth Payne, professor of insurgency theory and psychological war at King's College London, argues that a core group of jihadist theorists, one of whom particularly influences ISIS's behavior and shall be discussed shortly, have lately

“distinguished” themselves from their forbearers “by a deliberate focus on strategy over theology, and by an engagement with secular strategic thought.”⁶⁹

Accordingly, one must reckon with an obscure theoretical influence known as the *Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through which the Umma Will Pass*. Abu Bakr Naji, one of Payne’s distinguished theorists, wrote the treatise circa 2004-2006. Evidence suggests al-Qaeda, and especially ISIS, use the work to guide their respective organizations along path(s) for establishing an Islamic state. ISIS’s first edition of *Dabiq*, published in July 2014, details a 5-step state-building process similar to Naji’s prescriptive plan.⁷⁰

Naji believes his program for action is required “for extricating the Umma from the degradation that afflicts it, so that the Umma may once again steer humanity toward the path of divine guidance and salvation.”⁷¹ To frame the particulars of where humanity currently finds itself, Naji describes a disordered global state of affairs and an Islam defiled and degraded by the excesses and failure of an unjust and tyrannical Sykes-Picot system. Fortunately, Naji has discerned opportunity amongst the debris of failed states and collapsed empires; these have given way to regions of chaos, or “administrations of savagery,” ungoverned by anything other than “the law of the jungle in its primitive form... wherein good people and even the wise among the evildoers yearn for someone to manage the savagery.”⁷² These regions can be villages, cities, or provinces and they likely will be non-contiguous, a feature of Naji’s program. He further posits that committed jihadists, trained and educated in how to competently administer and manage the particulars of these regions of savagery, can simultaneously drive violence and assume control of the resulting chaos. Naji goes on to add substantial detail regarding the military know-how required to secure gains within the regions of chaos, concluding that Muslims who wish to lead and manage this important security effort ought to read, “General books on the art of war, especially guerrilla wars, as long as the student is able to correct the *Sharia* mistakes that are in them.”⁷³

Naji further argued that a well-trained, talented jihadist group could achieve his three-stage plan of action for establishment of the Islamic state. Initially, contested areas will undergo a stage of “vexation and exhaustion” meant to weaken authorities and portray officials as powerless and unable to cope with requirements for security and of generating economic progress.⁷⁴ Naji also believed these vexation operations—which seem to be unsophisticated acts of violence or terrorism committed to simply destabilize prevailing regimes—will attract youth to the movement. Presuming these vexation operations “dislodge” regions from government control, the second developmental stage ensues: A Muslim vanguard assumes responsibility for the “management of savagery” in these detached areas. In this second stage, the vanguard successfully carries out the following basic functions of government: 1) Secures the region from lawlessness and invasion; 2) Provides food and delivers medical services; 3) Establishes *Sharia* justice; 4) Establishes schools for the teaching of worldly and Islamic sciences; and 5) Builds a fighting society of combat proficient warriors.⁷⁵ Competence in governing basics paves way for realization of stage three: Establishing a viable Islamic state, or “uniting the scattered groups and regions under a single banner.”⁷⁶ The final act, as it were, will be to unite its disparate franchises, inclusive of Rome to the west, into a whole state.⁷⁷

Naji fully appreciates this great exertion to seize power and then govern requires the faithful be steadfast and determined in face of equally great resistance to the notion of an Islamic state. In fact, he likens today's circumstances to those the *umma* faced after Mohammad's death, when apostasy abounded and the jihad first began. At one point, he asks his readers to remember and emulate the particular example of the First Caliph, Abu Bakr, who rallied the faithful to model Mohammad's example. Naji records Dirar ibn al-Azwar's recollection of Abu Bakr's faithfulness:

I saw no one other than the Messenger of God who was more filled with the ruthlessness of war than Abu Bakr...His orders for the army dealt only with the matter of severing the neck without clemency or slowness. And he even burned a man named Iyas ibn Abd Allah.⁷⁸

Cue ISIS. These heralded managers of the savagery necessarily “desire and agree with the aims of *Sharia* law”⁷⁹ and are duly committed to the cause of managing a network of savagery.

ISIS has, in fact, competently governed the regions it holds, to the chagrin of the organization’s detractors. The organization’s consolidation of its control over Raqqa City, the capital of the Syrian province of the same name, is instructive. In 2013, in the wake of ISIS’s assumption of control of a large portion of that city, the organization’s administrators arguably averted humanitarian disaster and met the needs of an influx of tens of thousands of refugees into the capital area.⁸⁰ The organization competently transported wheat from areas under its control north of the capital in order to fire bread factories in the city. The organization also surged oil from wells and refineries east of the city to fuel city-dwellers’ automobiles and generators. Ever advertising ISIS’s *raison d’être*, an outfit called the Raqqa Outreach Bureau distributed fliers, videos, and clerical materials heralding the organization’s accomplishments but also tying ISIS’s concern for the people with its intent to govern via *Sharia*.

Rather than enter the capital and immediately enforce harsh Islamic punishments and demand tax payments in exchange for protection and services, ISIS addressed fundamental requirements for inhabitants’ survival. The organization eventually tightened its control, but by accounts, they prudently confronted living conditions first and coupled concern for the fundamentals with an ability to provide security. For many people living in Raqqa City—or for that matter the Syrian region of Deir Ezzor, where ISIS wrestled control in April 2014 and implemented the same sort of governance program⁸¹—ISIS’s sensitivity to basic human needs and its effectiveness in curbing murder, theft, rapes, etc., contrasted sharply with the manner in which regime and rebel groups previously governed the city.

ISIS’s Capacity to Govern and Finance the Caliphate

Indeed, ISIS's ability to deliver government services *throughout its caliphate* is among the organization's more noteworthy accomplishments. The caliphate continues to defy coalition efforts aimed at diminishing ISIS's vitality. Assessments of its core functional capacities will bear out the organization's effectiveness in performing essential state functions.

Consider, first, ISIS's bureaucratic competence. When ISIS first emerged to worldwide infamy in 2013, pundits ridiculed the organization's efforts to build a state and govern large populations. Nate Rosenblatt, writing for Caerus Associates (a research and analysis firm founded by counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen), suggested in an October 2013 article that ISIS's effort to gain control of population centers was predatory and cynical and marked by intimidation of locals (beheadings) and throwing money at civilians to jump-start "a cycle of dependency."⁸² Rosenblatt argued the United States and its allies should adopt "a targeted communications campaign that consistently identifies and leverages Syrian misgivings about ISIS,"⁸³ i.e. hang-ups over ISIS's fighters largely being foreigners. A little later, in December 2014, the *Washington Post* suggested the organization's "exercise in state-building appears to be crumbling as living conditions deteriorate."⁸⁴ The article quoted an unnamed member of the U.S. government dismissing ISIS as unknowledgeable of "how to do this stuff...when stuff breaks down, they get desperate. It doesn't have a whole lot of engineers and staff to run the cities, so things are breaking down."⁸⁵ About the same time, the Atlantic Council ran a two part series on the "crisis" in ISIS's ability to provide social services and economic governance, especially in Raqqa and Mosul; the author of the two articles, French-Lebanese journalist and non-resident fellow at the Council's Rafik Hariri Center, Mona Alami, concluded ISIS was using education and propaganda to offset large segments of the population's "growing resentment"⁸⁶ with ISIS policies. In her estimation, ISIS's efforts in the sectors of justice, education, and healthcare had achieved mixed results at best, and the organization's heavy-handedness in enforcement of separation of sexes in the context of provision

of medical care “had created a backlash” against ISIS’s rule that threatened to expand.⁸⁷ She concluded that ISIS’s draconian methods would not likely work in Mosul, considering the city’s population size and its relative cultural openness.

However, as of early 2016, forecasts of impending failure and predictions of coming collapse have not materialized, and by many accounts, ISIS’s way of governance is even gaining support from the population. It is not difficult to conceive of why this is the case. Practically, ISIS usually leaves existing services intact and professionals in place, contrary to some conventional wisdom. In Mosul, the organization left professors in their place at the local university, though they required curriculum changes to reflect a more Islamic-centric focus.⁸⁸ Everywhere the caliphate reigns, the organization establishes standard government ministries (exemplified by its *Sharia* courts) in each population center it possesses.⁸⁹ These serve as conduits for civilians to remonstrate with ISIS officials about all sorts of legal matters (citizens file grievances at their local complaint department, known as *dawawin al-mazalim*),⁹⁰ including misconduct on the part of members of the state apparatus, i.e. fighters in the security forces organizations. So, not only does ISIS stabilize an area, but it holds its own accountable.⁹¹ Furthermore, unlike the Taliban and other Islamist groups who forbid girls to go to school, ISIS even offers segregated education for females to the age of 15.⁹² This survey by no means covers the gamut of ISIS’s program of governance, but it does somewhat undermine the narrative that ISIS is all primitively brutal and not in any way open to progress and modern life.

To be sure, ISIS would retort to critics that its methods of governing are far from capricious or unjust. Rather, the organization’s blueprint for governance is *very much* fashioned from Islamic tradition and history. In fact, ISIS managers draw up a social contract, called a *wathiqat al-madinah* (literally, “documents of the city”) in faithful emulation of Mohammad’s so named contract with the people of Medina, who were conquered in 622. This contract is intended to

“enumerate the obligations of the caliphate to its ‘citizens’ ...called *ri’aya*—and vice versa,” according to Mara Revkin, writing for *Foreign Affairs* in January 2016.⁹³

At least some public opinion polls indicate the ruled *endorse* this method of governing; they see it as an effective and therefore an acceptable alternative to the scheme foisted by previous Syrian or Iraqi regimes. People may not agree with the ideology buttressing the method, but they like the security and the normalcy that go along with the brutal, even-handed meting out of justice. In late 2015, Munqith Dagher, a renowned Middle East pollster and CEO of the Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society Studies (IIACSS), published findings on caliphate residents’ view of ISIS’s governance in Mosul. Most significant, Dagher’s data indicated ISIS is gaining steady support from local nationals. For example, a June 2015 survey asked individuals the following question: “Thinking about life in general, is it better or worse than 18 months ago?” 77% of respondents said it was worse, while 21% said it was better. In December 2015, however, 55% answered it was better, and 42% indicated it was worse. Interestingly, while just 39% of those polled considered ISIS to be representative of their views and interests, only 37.5% viewed ISIS security forces as the greatest threat to their family’s survival. A plurality of respondents—45.8%-- answered U.S. airstrikes posed the gravest peril.⁹⁴

To say ISIS has mastered governance would be an exceeding stretch and something the data, of which the IIACSS poll is only one example, does not support. However, the caliphate’s residents have not risen up *en masse* to overthrow its rulers based on poor performance. Why? ISIS’s detractors might argue civilians would flee or otherwise revolt if there were a better alternative, and some would assert ISIS’s coercive methods are too much for a shell-shocked community to resist. Undoubtedly, in the context of a brutal civil war, these explanations are plausible, but perhaps the answer is more complex than ascribing lack of means as dooming resistance to ISIS. Perhaps the answer is that ISIS appreciates and ably manipulates the interplay of coercion, provision of services,

and ideology in obtaining compliance of the ruled *far better* than naysayers care to admit. In the process, it provides a level of service better than many in the West care to imagine.

Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, a researcher at the Middle East Forum, argued precisely this point as early as April 2015. Like others, al-Tamimi recognizes ISIS's rise in Syria in 2013 as evidence the organization will readily compromise in the short term in order to realize long-term benefits, as was the case in Raqqa City. But al-Tamimi goes further than applauding ISIS for wisely offering concessions, adding that ISIS's consistent and rational appeals to the Quran as basis for governance and its sustained willingness to hold its own to the same exacting standards of conduct endear begrudging respect even from its ideological skeptics. Abu Ibrahim Raqqawi, a Raqqa resident and anti-ISIS activists with the non-governmental organization "Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently" further elucidated the reasons for ISIS's appeal: Its willingness and ability to sanction non-compliers is balanced by an equally significant corollary—if you comply you will be left alone to live your life.⁹⁵

Obviously, the same could not be said for Iraqi and Syrian regimes known for their capricious and often cruel governing tact.⁹⁶ Nor can the same be said for Kurdish or Shia-militia forces who might partner with Iraqi or Syrian forces to push ISIS from one of its populated strongholds. Munqith Dagher and Karl Kaltenthaler, writing in the *Washington Post* in mid-April 2016, highlighted problems facing any force that endeavors to liberate those in ISIS-held cities, such as Mosul. Sunnis in Mosul do not want to be liberated by just anyone. Dagher and Kaltenthaler cite the latest IIACSS poll, from February 2016, which claims "74 percent of Sunni survey respondents [in Mosul] say they do not want to be liberated by the Iraqi army on its own."⁹⁷ They further reveal that of "the 120 Sunni respondents in Mosul, 100 percent do not want to be liberated by Shiite militias or the Kurds" either.⁹⁸ Dagher, writing a short-time later in another *Washington Post* article, implicated the large and predominantly Shia-militia known as *Hashd al-*

Shaabi, or Popular Mobilization Units, for reprisals it reportedly exacted on Sunni residents and infrastructure during and after the liberation of Tikrit, from ISIS, in March-April 2015.⁹⁹ Dagher's research, then, suggests Mosul residents—estimated at 1.5 million¹⁰⁰--fear the cure to their predicament is likely worse than the scourge of ISIS.

So how does ISIS finance its alternately cruel and relatively gentle leviathan, in terms of both encouraging internal economic activity and providing and paying for governance? Hint: The organization does not depend on state donors, like a Saudi Arabia or Oman, to float the caliphate. Nor is the organization as dependent on oil revenues as one might imagine.¹⁰¹ Actually, ISIS has built an economic system with three relatively unique features, which combine to harden and inure said system. First, the caliphate economy is integrated with the economies of Iraq and Turkey. According to a recent *Financial Times* report on the health of the caliphate's economy, millions of caliphate residents live on consumables manufactured in those countries. Likewise, Iraqi and Turkish businesses depend for their livelihoods on buyers living in ISIS territory.¹⁰² Rather than thwart this natural supply-and-demand nexus, as conventional wisdom might suggest an irrational jihadist group would do, ISIS authorities encourage businesses to trade with the caliphate. So long as traders pay the required yearly custom duties and business tax or *zakat*—neither of which fit the definition of onerous—they can freely and physically access the caliphate's several markets.¹⁰³ Consequently, according to an interviewee in the *Financial Times* piece, traders now sell “90%” of their goods (consumables) in the caliphate.¹⁰⁴ Not insignificantly, according to the *Times* article, ISIS realizes \$140 million in revenue, annually, just from collection of customs duties.¹⁰⁵ Truly, ISIS has harnessed to adjacent economies the collective buying power of millions of residents, and formed an economic system underwritten by common interests.

As the coalition and Russia continue to attack ISIS's infrastructure and interfere in this system's functioning, evidence suggests the effort is causing cause unintended, negative

consequences for honest businessmen outside the caliphate just trying to make a living. Worse, of course, are the deteriorating conditions in many of ISIS's populated strongholds.

Having detailed the caliphate economy's purposeful and profitable integration with adjacent countries' economies, another of the caliphate's unique structural features speaks directly to the organization's ability to finance governance: ISIS uses several revenue sources to fund operations and its administrative requirements. Reports suggest the organization depends on five major funding sources:

- Confiscations (Seizure of property deemed unIslamic)
- Ransoms (Extortion of kidnapping victims)
- Oil revenues (From seized refineries)
- Taxation of caliphate inhabitants (Assessed on businesses, farmland, and individuals)
- Agricultural (Lands seized among most fertile in the region)

In October 2015, Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi obtained leaked ISIS financial documents from the region of Deir Ezzor, an oil-rich province in eastern Syria, which ISIS has controlled since early 2014. The region is significant because ISIS's rule therein exemplifies the ideal situation for revenue generation. The region is very diverse with an agricultural sector, historic oil and gas industrial base, and a large population (1.24 million inhabitants according to United Nation estimate from 2014).¹⁰⁶ Setting aside the well-worn topic of oil revenues, which are on the decline due to a number of factors,¹⁰⁷ al-Tamimi's most insightful document analysis indicated that from December 2014 to January 2015, the organization in Deir Ezzor made \$3.6 million USD—or 45% of total revenues¹⁰⁸—from “confiscations”, which are seizure of unauthorized, unIslamic contraband such as cigarettes, alcohol, secular music or even business properties. Moreover, al-Tamimi's report showed ISIS collected 25% of its yearly revenues, or \$1.9 million USD, from obligatory *zakat* levied specifically on Muslims' wealth, barley, wheat, camels, and fruits.¹⁰⁹ Regimes gather the tax

and fund the machinery of governance, and especially armed jihad.

On paper and in the short run, the Deir Ezzor region is positioned to sustain and withstand threats to one or more revenue streams. However, ISIS's administrators in Deir Ezzor and elsewhere will have to inevitably seek new ways of generating revenues and thus create additional revenue streams. Conventionally, this might be done in one of two ways. Either, ISIS literally develops a new, more efficient approach to agricultural development, or it repairs and expands on existing oil refinement infrastructure. Without the capacity to improve oil infrastructure or the inclination to commit to farming cash crops of some kind, (after all, agricultural toil "distracts from jihad"¹¹⁰), it is a safe assumption ISIS will rely on the tried and true methods of squeezing the caliphate's population for more confiscations, additional taxation, and ransoms or to simply expand and seize revenue streams abroad. Naji would advise enlargement through establishment of newer affiliates in other ungoverned spaces or regions of savagery as a means grow the tax base.

The third unique feature of ISIS's financial system is the fact revenue collection responsibilities—chiefly confiscations and *zakat* collections—are pushed down to the *wilayat* level. This sensible determination recognizes a decentralized financial model makes it more likely the organization can survive periods of tumult and shortages, such as the period of "exceptional circumstances"¹¹¹ the caliphate encountered in late 2015/early 2016. Even when ISIS's oil revenues suffer loss, a wily *wilayat* governor, equipped with a disciplined apparatchik force and especially an effective cadre of *al-Hisbah* morality police,¹¹² can use coercive methods to ensure compliance with Islamic standards of behavior and keep the organization solvent.

As one might imagine, aspiring *wilayat* managers must convince senior leadership the respective franchisee has a thoughtful, realistic plan to govern and finance operations before *wilayat* establishment takes place. ISIS's literature suggests provincial management is a competitive endeavor for those who would step out and manage lands; to fail in financial management and

security enforcement is to weaken the entire enterprise. Consequently, before ISIS accepts a pledge of allegiance and formation of a new governorate, applicants submit a proposal detailing their military and governance strategy and identify a collectively chosen *wilayat* leader. The seventh issue of *Dabiq* magazine describes this careful process:

This [approval] process includes documenting their bay'āt [pledge of allegiance], unifying the jamā'āt [assembly] who have given bay'ah, holding consultations to nominate a wālī [governor] and members for the regional shūrā assembly, planning a strategy to achieve consolidation in their region for the Khilāfah [caliphate] so as to implement the Sharī'ah [Islamic law], and presenting all this to the Islamic State leadership for approval.¹¹³

For a caliphate divinely sanctioned, incompetence in governance undermines the entire notion the organization resides under God's favor. Therefore, ISIS's senior leadership and *wilayat* governors have every incentive to collude in development of good governance, i.e. rule that exploits all revenue streams and does so by employing means that are beyond reproach.

Conclusion – Use American Ground Forces to Rollback ISIS

After ~600 days of operations and 11,539 airstrikes, costing \$6.2 billion dollars and resulting in 22,779+ targets damaged or destroyed,¹¹⁴ the caliphate remains a functioning state and a menace to international security. The organization is decidedly not “a vicious/sick/narcissistic death cult”¹¹⁵ or “a junior varsity”¹¹⁶ team of misfit terrorists. That it abides still, defiantly in control of Mosul and Raqqa, established in Libya, and able to kill scores of people in Baghdad, Damascus, Turkey, or a major European city whenever it so chooses only reinforces the need for a refined strategy for achieving the current ISIS policy of “degrade and ultimately destroy” the organization. Inevitably, this new strategy will recognize the war against ISIS requires substantial ground combat to defeat a capable and entrenched asymmetric force. Rather than rely on Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and a Russian-backed Syrian force to execute the new way—ground combat—American leaders should prevail on the coalition to support introduction of an adequately-

sized American force to competently wage battle against and soundly defeat capable ISIS forces in any or all of the caliphate's several strongholds. Using the American military to accelerate ISIS's demise will also ensure Iraq and Syria's *post bellum* is determined with American interests in mind, rather than with Russia controlling agendas and assuming the region's *de facto* pole position.

Assuming American leaders embrace the call for a new way forward and do employ American means, the enthusiastic should be reminded ISIS is an organization that thrives on the current conflict and expects and welcomes violent opposition. The organization will use various means to survive in the face of credible opposition. To wit, as its enemies began to attempt to surround ISIS strongholds in Iraq and Syria in early 2016, the organization surged fighters, leadership, and funding to seize towns and oil sectors in Libya.¹¹⁷ Evidence suggests ISIS is now directing would-be recruits to move to its franchises abroad, rather than trek to the caliphate in Syria and Iraq. This directive is in line with the organization's intention to revert to disparate, elusive surrogate operations whenever conditions warrant. Furthermore, as the West and Russia have honed in on caliphate oil infrastructure to degrade a valuable revenue source, ISIS flexed and inexplicably spared 230 Christians to reap a ransom payment of \$25-30 million dollars.¹¹⁸ Indeed, ISIS will continue to evolve unless the Coalition aligned against it recognizes the organization for what it is: An adaptive, resilient proto-state designed to endure inchoate air campaigns and “ideological offensives.”

- ¹ Barack Obama, "We Will Degrade and Ultimately Destroy ISIL" (speech, The White House, Washington, D.C., September 10 2014). transcript, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/09/10/president-obama-we-will-\(Communications-2015\)-degrade-and-ultimately-destroy-isil](https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/09/10/president-obama-we-will-(Communications-2015)-degrade-and-ultimately-destroy-isil).
- ² Anthony N. Celso, "How to Defeat the Islamic State: Crafting a Rational War Strategy," *Small Wars Journal*, September 24, 2015, 1, http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rc=t&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&ved=0ahUKewjb1M_9hv_KAhVlqR4KHXMADqUQFghFMAY&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsmallwarsjournal.com%2Fprintpdf%2F30763&usq=AFQjCNGc77bb9IE9VrF4JqSqzUIDxJLi2Q&sig2=oFMqJYAJFai0OyCHHY0n_pQ.
- ³ Matt Schiavenza, "Why Iraq's Military Has No Will to Fight: The country's political dysfunction has undermined all efforts to build an effective fighting force," *The Atlantic*, May 25, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/why-iraqs-military-has-no-will-to-fight/394067/>.
- ⁴ Rob Page, *ISIS and the Sectarian Conflict in the Middle East*, Research Report for the British House of Commons. London, UK: International Law, International Affairs and Defence Section, House of Commons Library March 19, 2015), 29-31, <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP15-16/RP15-16.pdf>.
- ⁵ Stephen Walt, "What Should We Do if the Islamic State Wins," *Foreign Policy*, June 10, 2015, www.foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/10/what-should-we-do-if-ISIS-Islamic-state-wins-containment/.
- ⁶ Barack Obama, "Letter from the President-Authorization for the Use of United States Armed Forces in Connection with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (letter to Congress, The White House, Washington, D.C., February 11, 2015). statement and release, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/11/letter-president-authorization-use-united-states-armed-forces-connection>.
- ⁷ Arthur Herman. "How America's Drones Can Defeat ISIS." *Defense One*, March 15, 2015, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2015/03/how-americas-drones-can-defeat-isis/107565/>. Note: American authors, Arthur Herman and William Luti of the Hudson Institute, argue that armed, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are fully capable of executing a "sustained drone mission" which could "secure U.S. gains against ISIS." Herman and Luti promise UAVs could deliver "a series of mortal blows against ISIS without putting a single American soldier on the ground."
- ⁸ Andrew J. Bowen. "Time Bomb: The Islamic State Implodes." *National Interest*, March 11, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/time-bomb-the-islamic-state-implodes-12397>. Note: Andrew J. Bowen, a Senior Fellow and the Director of Middle East Studies at the Center for the National Interest, proposes the West resort to "waiting ISIS out as the organization cracks from within."
- ⁹ Note: When Sharia(h) is mentioned hereafter, it is understood to mean, "The Islamic Law – the disciplines and principles that govern the behavior of a Muslim individual towards his or herself, family, neighbors, community, city, nation and the Muslim polity as a whole, the Ummah. Similarly Shariah governs the interactions between communities, groups and social and economic organizations. Shariah establishes the criteria by which all social actions are classified, categorized and administered within the overall governance of the state." This quote comes from The Islamic Supreme Council of America website, at <http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/understanding-islam/legal-rulings/52-understanding-islamic-law.html>.
- ¹⁰ Shiv Malik. "The Isis Papers: Leaked documents show how ISIS is building its state." *The Guardian*, December 7, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/07/leaked-isis-document-reveals-plan-building-state-syria>. Note: See also The Guardian's translation of the 24-page document in another article, entitled, "The ISIS Papers: A master plan for consolidating power," 7 December 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/07/islamic-state-document-masterplan-for-power>. In this desire to govern via *sharia* law, ISIS is subtly different from other jihadist groups, most notably al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate Al-Nusra Front, in that ISIS wants to aggressively seize and possess lands, while others prefer less-aggressive methods. In contrast, according to the Institute for the Study of War's December 2014 publication, "Jabhat Al-Nusra (JN) in Syria", JN is embarking on "a more gradualist approach to state-building than that of ISIS. JN adheres to AQ leader Ayman al-Zawahiri's methodology, which prioritizes social outreach and proselytization over direct conquest of terrain and the immediate declaration of a state." Along those same lines, the publication cites a passage from the book, *The Al-Qaeda Franchise: The Expansion of Al-Qaeda and Its Consequences*, written by Barak Mendelsohn. In that book, Mendelsohn quotes the leader of JN, Abu Muhammad al-Joulani, from al-Joulani's December 2013 interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). In that interview, he asserted the following regarding JN's aspirations to seize and govern: "The al-Nusra Front will not unilaterally lead the society... We do not seek to rule the country, but to have the Shari'a applied in the country. Whether we are rulers or not, we do not care about that. What we care about is that the Shari'a rules, justice prevails, injustice is removed, and a judicious Islamic government is established following the course of the Prophet." To cite but one example of JN actually carving out its own emirate in Syria, to rule in accordance with *sharia*, see John Rossomando's article, "Jabhat al-Nusra Squeezes Out U.S.-Backed Syrian Rebels" from November 13, 2014, accessed at: <http://www.investigativeproject.org/4653/jabhat-al-nusra-squeezes-out-us-backed-syrian#>.
- ¹¹ Note: Writing in the Middle Eastern Quarterly in 1997, Dr. Douglas Streusand noted the lingering disagreement over what exactly the terms jihad and jihadist mean and/or represent. In this paper, jihad or jihadist refers exclusively to mean those who "wish to propagate Islam through warfare in the path of God against the enemies of the Muslim community" i.e. "*jihad fi sabil Allah*." Dr. Streusand argues that the term as used in the Quran "is commonly followed by the expression *fi sabil Allah*, 'in the path of God'". He then cites authors Bernard Lewis and Muhammad ibn Isma'il Bukhari in allowing that the hadith corpus narrated by Sahih al-Bukhari overwhelmingly supports this understanding of the term jihad, as well. See Dr. Streusand's article at <http://www.meforum.org/357/what-does-jihad-mean>.
- ¹² Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 17.
- ¹³ Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 17.
- ¹⁴ Andrew Tilghman. "Size of ISIS force declining in Iraq and Syria, according to new intel." *Military Times*, February 4, 2016, <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/02/04/new-intel-shows-isis-force-declining-iraq-syria/79819744/>.
- ¹⁵ Kenan Malik. "A Search for Identity draws jihadis to the horrors of ISIS." *The Guardian.com*. February 28, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/01/what-draws-jihadis-to-isis-identity-alienation>.
- ¹⁶ Simon Cottee. "Pilgrims to the Islamic State: What Westerners migrating to ISIS have in common with Westerners who sympathized with communism." *The Atlantic*, July 24, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/07/isis-foreign-fighters-political-pilgrims/399209/>. Note: See also Mark Townsend. "What happened to the British medics who went to work for ISIS?" from July 11, 2015 and accessible at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/12/british-medics-isis-turkey-islamic-state>. See also Erin Marie Saltman's article "Till Martyrdom Do Us Part: Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon" from February 2015 at Institute for Strategic Dialogue. http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf.
- ¹⁷ "Understanding Jihadists: In their Own Words," Quantum Communications, The White Papers Issue 2 (March 2015), 9, <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/specialreports/565067-understanding-jihadists-in-their-own-words>. Note: PDF Report is accessible by clicking link in article cited.
- ¹⁸ Shiraz Maher. "From Portsmouth to Kobane - The British jihadis fighting for ISIS: What motivates the young men who leave Britain to join the murderous fanatics of ISIS in the Middle East?" *NewStatesman*, November 6, 2014, <http://www.newstatesman.com/2014/10/portsmouth-kobane>.
- ¹⁹ Shiraz Maher.

- ²⁰ Shiraz Maher.
- ²¹ Shiraz Maher.
- ²² Shiraz Maher
- ²³ Mark Townsend. "What happened to the British medics who went to work for Isis?" *The Guardian*, July 11, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/12/british-medics-isis-turkey-islamic-state>.
- ²⁴ Michael Weiss. *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York, NY: Regan Arts, 2015), 155.
- ²⁵ Shiraz Maher.
- ²⁶ Note: ISIS's Al-Dawah members are a disputed cast of supposed experts and clerics. The list found at the following URL website is one individual's attempt to discredit ISIS's claims to holding legitimate views on several of the most controversial topics in Islam today. http://justpaste.it/IS_Scholars <https://pjmedia.com/blog/watch-leading-islamic-scholars-justify-executing-stoning-and-shooting-gays/>.
- ²⁷ Andrew Salzmann, "ISIS: Public Legitimacy Through the Reenactment of Islam's Early History," *Small Wars Journal*, August 14, 2014, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jml/art/isis-public-legitimacy-through-the-reenactment-of-islam%E2%80%99s-early-history>.
- ²⁸ Andrew Salzmann, "ISIS: Public Legitimacy Through the Reenactment of Islam's Early History," *Small Wars Journal*, August 14, 2014, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jml/art/isis-public-legitimacy-through-the-reenactment-of-islam%E2%80%99s-early-history>.
- ²⁹ ISIS's Fatwa explaining decision to burn Jordanian pilot. February 3, 2015. <http://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/654891>.
- ³⁰ Al-Hayat - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "The Burning of the Murtado Pilot," *Dabiq* 7 (February-March 2015): 6, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-Dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf>.
- ³¹ Al-Qur'an. Translation by Ahmed Ali The Honey Bees (An-Nahl) Verse. http://www.studyquran.org/Ahmed_Ali_Al_Quran.pdf. Note: ISIS translation in Issue 7 of *Dabiq* is as follows: "AND IF YOU PUNISH [AN ENEMY], PUNISH WITH AN EQUIVALENT OF THAT WITH WHICH YOU WERE HARMED."
- ³² Al-Hayat - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "The Burning of the Murtado Pilot," *Dabiq* 7 (February-March 2015): 7, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-Dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf>. Note: *Sunnah.com* translates the verse slightly different than that which appeared in *Dabiq*: "Do not punish anybody with Allah's punishment (fire)." This verse can be found at <http://sunnah.com/bukhari/88>.
- ³³ The Cow (Al-Baqarah) Verse. <http://quran.com/2/194>. *Sunnah.com*.
- ³⁴ Fighting for the Cause of Allah (Jihad). *Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Book 52: Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement*, University of Southern California. <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/052-sbt.php>.
- ³⁵ Al-Hayat - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "The Burning of the Murtado Pilot," *Dabiq* 7 (February-March 2015): 7-8, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-Dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf>. Note: ISIS includes the following additional "evidence" from antiquity via a footnote in the article above. The text in the footnote reads: "Al-Mundhirī (rahimahullāh) mentions that there were four khulafā' who burned sodomites with fire: Abū Bakr as-Siddīq, 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib, 'Abdullāh Ibn az-Zubayr, and Hishām Ibn 'Abdil-Malik [At-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb]."
- ³⁶ Hassan Hassan. "ISIS has reached new depths of depravity. But there is a brutal logic behind it." *The Guardian*, February 7, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/08/isis-islamic-state-ideology-sharia-syria-iraq-jordan-pilot>.
- ³⁷ Hassan.
- ³⁸ Al-Hayat - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "The Revival of Slavery Before the Hour," *Dabiq* 4 (October 2014): 14-15, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-isis-magazine-Issue-4-the-failed-crusade.pdf>.
- ³⁹ Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "The Revival of Slavery Before the Hour," *Dabiq* 4 (October 2014): 14-15, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-isis-magazine-Issue-4-the-failed-crusade.pdf>.
- ⁴⁰ Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin al-Mughira al-Ja'fai. Volume 6, Book 60, hadith 80. The verse: "You true Muslims are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind" means the best of peoples for the people, as you bring them with chains on their necks till they embrace Islam". http://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_6_60.php.
- ⁴¹ The Middle East Media Research Institute. "Islamic State (ISIS) Releases Pamphlet On Female Slaves." *Jihad and Terrorism Threat Monitor*, December 4, 2014, <http://www.memrijtm.org/islamic-state-isis-releases-pamphlet-on-female-slaves.html>.
- ⁴² Sahih Muslim 33:71. "Book of Marriage: The ruling on coitus interrupts ('Azl)," *Sunnah.com*, <http://sunnah.com/muslim/16/147>.
- ⁴³ Adam Withnall. "ISIS releases 'abhorrent' sex slaves pamphlet with 27 tips for militants on taking, punishing and raping female captives," *The Independent*, December 4, 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-releases-abhorrent-sex-slaves-pamphlet-with-27-tips-for-militants-on-taking-punishing-and-9915913.html>.
- ⁴⁴ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 14.
- ⁴⁵ Patricia Cone. *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004), 20.
- ⁴⁶ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4.
- ⁴⁷ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 15.
- ⁴⁸ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 26.
- ⁴⁹ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21.
- ⁵⁰ Al-Qur'an 5:44. Translation by Ahmed. Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread). http://www.studyquran.org/Ahmed_Ali_Al_Quran.pdf.
- ⁵¹ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 20-21.
- ⁵² Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21.
- ⁵³ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 24.
- ⁵⁴ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 27.
- ⁵⁵ Daniel Lav. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 34.
- ⁵⁶ Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "The Group That Calls Itself a State: Understanding the Evolution and Challenges of the Islamic State," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, December 2014, 8, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/CTC-The-Group-That-Calls-Itself-A-State-December20141.pdf>.
- ⁵⁷ Munqith al-Dagher. "The Last Battle: The long fight to re-take Iraq's second-biggest city, Mosul, has begun." *Researchgate.net*, April 16, 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301214172_httpswww.washingtonpostcomnewsmonkey-cagewp20160411why-iraqis-living-under-the-islamic-state-fear-their-liberators. Note: A complementary article at *CNN.com*, titled "Is the U.S. doing enough to help Iraq fight ISIS?" indicates ISIS retains control of the village but asserts the Iraqi Army's 15th Division will inevitably push the organization out of the village. See <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/10/middleeast/u-s-in-iraq-isis-fight/>.

- ⁵⁸ Al-Hayat - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "Remaining and Expanding," *Dabiq* 5, (November 2014): 22, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/isis-isis-islamic-state-magazine-issue-5-remaining-and-expanding.pdf>.
- ⁵⁹ Bardia Rahmani, "ISIS's Growing Caliphate: Profiles of Affiliates," *The Wilson Center*, February 19, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/isis-growing-caliphate-profiles-affiliates>.
- ⁶⁰ Bardia Rahmani, "ISIS's Growing Caliphate: Profiles of Affiliates," *The Wilson Center*, February 19, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/isis-growing-caliphate-profiles-affiliates>.
- ⁶¹ Harleen Gambhir, "ISIS Global Strategy: A Wargame," Institute for the Study of War - Middle East Security Report, No 28 (July 2015), 9-12, <http://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS%20Global%20Strategy%20--%20A%20Wargame%20FINAL.pdf>.
- ⁶² Joe Cochran. "Jakarta Attack Raises Fears of ISIS' Spread in Southeast Asia." *New York Times*, January 13, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/15/world/asia/jakarta-explosion.html?_r=0. Note: The January 2016 strike in Jakarta, Indonesia where damage and casualties were minimal—5 of 7 killed were the ISIS attackers—made headlines and suggested ISIS had made some inroad into Southeast Asia.
- ⁶³ Shiraz Maher. "From Portsmouth to Kobane: The British jihadis fighting for ISIS: What motivates the young men who leave Britain to join the murderous fanatics of ISIS in the Middle East?" *NewStatesman*, November 6, 2014, <http://www.newstatesman.com/2014/10/portsmouth-kobane>.
- ⁶⁴ Al Jazeera Staff. "ISIL suicide car bombers hit Iraqi forces near Ramadi." *Al Jazeera*, February 10, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/02/isis-hits-iraqi-forces-ramadi-bomb-160210134923515.html>.
- ⁶⁵ Michael Weiss. "Does Obama Want to Carve Up Syria?" *The Daily Beast*, February 25, 2016, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/02/25/does-obama-want-to-carve-up-syria.html>.
- ⁶⁶ Noura Hourani. "In battle for one corner of Al-Hasakah, 30,000 displaced move south toward Islamic State territory amidst fears of SDF." *Syria Direct*, February 23, 2016, <http://syriadirect.org/news/in-battle-for-one-corner-of-al-hasakah-30000-displaced-move-south-toward-islamic-state-territory-amidst-fears-of-sdf/>.
- ⁶⁷ Noura Hourani.
- ⁶⁸ Nancy Yousseff. "ISIS Is Losing Its Capital." *The Daily Beast*, February 25, 2016, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/02/25/isis-is-losing-its-capital.html>.
- ⁶⁹ Kenneth Payne. "Building the Base: Al-Qaeda's Focoist Strategy." *Defence Studies Department, Kings College London - Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 34, no: 2 (January 2011): 129, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2011.538832>.
- ⁷⁰ Al-Hayat - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "From Hijrah to Khilafah," *Dabiq* 1, (July 27, 2014): 34-41, <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/islamic-state-22dc481biq-magazine-122.pdf>. Note: This particular article claims ISIS followed a plan towards achieving a state. Here follows the organization's summary of that effort: "In short, these phases consist of immigrating to a land with a weak central authority to use as a base where a jama'ah can form, recruit members, and train them. (If such a land does not exist or hijrah is not possible, the place can be formed through long campaigns of nikayah attacks carried out by underground mujahid cells. These attacks will compel apostate forces to partially withdraw from rural territory and regroup in major urban regions.) The jama'ah would then take advantage of the situation by increasing the chaos to a point leading to the complete collapse of the taghut regime in entire areas, a situation some refer to as "tawahhush" ("mayhem"). The next step would be to fill the vacuum by managing the state of affairs to the point of developing into a full-fledged state, and continuing expansion into territory still under control of the taghut. This has always been the roadmap towards Khilafah for the mujahidin.
- ⁷¹ Abu Bakr Naji. *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass*, trans. William McCants. May 2006. PDF e-book. https://www.physics.wisc.edu/undergrads/courses/206-07/files/reference_chapter07/Management_of_Savagery.pdf. 6.
- ⁷² Abu Bakr Naji. 27.
- ⁷³ Abu Bakr Naji. 71.
- ⁷⁴ Abu Bakr Naji. 33.
- ⁷⁵ Abu Bakr Naji. 42-43. Note: One would expect the caliphate to deliver security, basic medical services, establish sharia, and educate young and old alike. It endeavors to do all of these. However, interestingly, ISIS is intent on building a fighting society. The organization takes young children, whom it affectionately calls "cubs" and trains them in how to use small arms and instills in them a combative philosophy and ethos of loyalty to the caliphate and a willingness to kill or be killed to further the caliphate. See Katarina Montgomery's article "ISIS Sets a 'New Paradigm' for Child Soldiers: Ideology, Combat and Forced Marriage" from November 27, 2014. <http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2014/11/6433/isis-sets-new-paradigm-child-soldiers-ideology-combat-forced-marriage/>. See also Feras Hanoush's article, "The Islamic State's Molding of Syrian Children" from November 17, 2015. <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/the-islamic-state-s-molding-of-syrian-children>.
- ⁷⁶ Abu Bakr Naji 117.
- ⁷⁷ Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, *Black Flags From Rome: The Coming Insurgency*, January 17, 2015. <https://archive.org/details/EbookBlackFlagsFromRome>. 1.
- ⁷⁸ Abu Bakr Naji. 75. Note: A complete account of the incident Naji records can be found on page 132 in the book written by Mohammad Redha, *Abu Bakr Al-Seddeq: The First Caliph*, Interpreted by Mohammad Agha. This book was published in Beirut, Lebanon in 1999. I accessed it online at http://www.islamicbulletin.org/free_downloads/companions/the_first_caliph.pdf.
- ⁷⁹ Abu Bakr Naji. 27.
- ⁸⁰ Barak Barfi and Aaron Y. Zelin. "Al Qaeda's Syrian Strategy." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, October 10, 2013, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/al-qaedas-syrian-strategy>.
- ⁸¹ Mara Revkin. "ISIS' Social Contract: What the Islamic State Offers Civilians." *Foreign Affairs*, January 20, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-01-10/isis-social-contract>.
- ⁸² Nate Rosenblatt. "ISIS' Plan to Govern Syria—and What the U.S. Should Do About It." *War on the Rocks*, October 31, 2013, <http://warontherocks.com/2013/10/isis-plan-to-govern-syria-and-what-the-us-should-do-about-it/>.
- ⁸³ Nate Rosenblatt.
- ⁸⁴ Liz Sly. "The Islamic State is Failing at Being a State." *Washington Post*, December 25, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-islamic-state-is-failing-at-being-a-state/2014/12/24/bfbf8962-8092-11e4-b936-f3afab0155a7_story.html.
- ⁸⁵ Liz Sly.
- ⁸⁶ Mona Alami. "ISIS's Governance Crisis (Part II): Social Services." *Atlantic Council*, December 14, 2014, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/isis-s-governance-crisis-part-ii-social-services>.
- ⁸⁷ Mona Alami.
- ⁸⁸ Attika Shubert. "How ISIS controls life, from birth to foosball." *CNN.com*, April 21, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/21/middleeast/isis-documents/>. Note: See also an article written in June 2015 by Ali A. Nabhan and Ghassan Adnan, entitled "Iraqi City of Mosul Transformed a Year

After Islamic State Capture". The article appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* online at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/iraqi-city-of-mosul-transformed-a-year-after-islamic-state-capture-143388626>.

⁸⁹ Aymenn al-Tamimi. "The Evolution in Islamic State Administration: The Documentary Evidence." *Terrorism Research Initiative* 9, no. 4 (2015), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/447/html>.

⁹⁰ Mara Revkin. "ISIS' Social Contract: What the Islamic State Offers Civilians." *Foreign Affairs*, January 20, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-01-10/isis-social-contract>.

⁹¹ Hozan Mamo. "Islamic State executes four of its own jihadis on charges of corruption." *Ajansa Rojnamevaniya Azad*, January 18, 2016, <http://aranews.net/2016/01/17721/>.

⁹² Al-Khansaa Brigade. *Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khansaa Brigade*. trans. Charlie Winter, The Quilliam Foundation, PDF e-book, <https://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/women-of-the-islamic-state3.pdf>. 24.

⁹³ Mara Revkin. "ISIS' Social Contract: What the Islamic State Offers Civilians." *Foreign Affairs*, January 20, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-01-10/isis-social-contract>.

⁹⁴ Munqith Dagher. "The Islamic State: New Inside Views." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, December 14, 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-islamic-state-new-inside-views>.

⁹⁵ French Press Agency. "Syria's Raqqa: For ISIS a 'model city,' for others, a living hell." *Daily Sabah*, June 19, 2015, <http://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2015/06/19/syrias-raqqa-for-isis-a-model-city-for-others-a-living-hell>.

⁹⁶ Mara Revkin and William McCants. "Experts weigh in: Is ISIS good at governing?" *Brookings.edu*, November 20, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/11/20-experts-weigh-in-isis-governance-revkin-mccants>.

⁹⁷ Munqith al-Dagher and Karl Kaltenthaler. "Why Iraqis living under the Islamic State fear their liberators." *WashingtonPost.com*, April, 11, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/04/11/why-iraqis-living-under-the-islamic-state-fear-their-liberators/>.

⁹⁸ Munqith al-Dagher and Karl Kaltenthaler.

⁹⁹ Munqith al-Dagher. "The Last Battle: The long fight to re-take Iraq's second-biggest city, Mosul, has begun." *Researchgate.net*, April 16, 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301214172_httpswwwwashingtonpostcomnewsmonkey-cagewp20160411why-iraqis-living-under-the-islamic-state-fear-their-liberators. Note: In the aftermath of the liberation of Tikrit, several news agencies carried stories pertaining to alleged reprisals in the city, taken by its liberators. For the most complete account, see the Humans Rights Watch report, "Ruinous Aftermath", from September 2015: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/iraq0915_4up_0.pdf. Additionally, see also <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32181503>.

¹⁰⁰ Naomi Conrad. "UN braced for more 'Islamic State' advances in Iraq." *Deutsche Welle (DW.com)*, June 11, 2015, <http://www.dw.com/en/un-braced-for-more-islamic-state-advances-in-iraq/a-18511821>.

¹⁰¹ Sarah Almkhtar. "ISIS Finances Are Strong." *New York Times*, May 19, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/19/world/middleeast/isis-finances.html?_r=1.

¹⁰² Erika Solomon. "Isis Inc: Loot and taxes keep jihadi economy churning." *Financial Times*, December 14, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/ae689a00-9ff1-11e5-beba-5e33e2b79e46.html#axzz41VgmC1fh>.

¹⁰³ Erika Solomon.

¹⁰⁴ Erika Solomon.

¹⁰⁵ Erika Solomon.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Syrian Arab Republic Governs Profile* (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, August 6, 2014), 28, <http://syria.unocha.org/sites/default/files/Syria%20governorate%20profiles%206%20August%202014.pdf>. Note: The UN bases the population numbers on 2011 estimates.

¹⁰⁷ Keith Crane. "The Role of Oil in ISIL Finances," Before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources United States Senate. January 6, 2016. 1. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT488z1/RAND_CT448z1.pdf.

¹⁰⁸ Aymenn Al-Tamimi. "Unseen Islamic State Financial Accounts for Deir az-Zor Province." *Jihadology*, October 5, 2015, <http://jihadology.net/2015/10/05/the-archivist-unseen-islamic-state-financial-accounts-for-deir-az-zor-province/>.

¹⁰⁹ Aymenn Al-Tamimi. Note: Though the Quran does not anywhere fix a particular rate of levy, the Hadiths contain numerous references to an amount of 2.5%. And in fact, according to a January 2016 article in *Foreign Affairs*, ISIS's zakat collectors in Deir Ezzor assess residents that exact amount.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī. "My Provision was Placed for Me in the Shade of My Spear," *Dabiq* 4 (October 2014): 12, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-isis-magazine-Issue-4-the-failed-crusade.pdf>.

¹¹¹ Aymenn Al-Tamimi. "Wilayat al-Raqqa - November-December 2015," *Aymenn Jawad*, January 11, 2016, <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2016/01/archive-of-islamic-state-administrative-documents-1>.

¹¹² Michael Weiss. "Inside ISIS's Torture Brigades," *Daily Beast*, November 17, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/11/17/inside-isis-torture-brigades.html>.

¹¹³ Al Hayat - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone," *Dabiq* 7 (February 2015): 35, <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ United States Department of Defense. *Operation Inherent Resolve*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, April 17, 2016), http://www.defense.gov/news/special-reports/0814_Inherent-Resolve.

¹¹⁵ The use of "death cult" to describe ISIS's actions is a pejorative often employed by leaders in the West. Several Western leaders have dismissively referred to the organization using this phrase. Boris Johnson, mayor of London and political figure in Great Britain, wrote as much in November 2015 following the Paris attacks. See "ISIS is a sick, narcissistic death cult but we will defeat them," November 23, 2015. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3318892/ISIS-sick-narcissistic-death-cult-defect-writes-Boris-Johnson.html#ixzz42BhoBak6>. Then-Prime Minister of Australia Tony Abbott said the same in June 2015. See "Tony Abbott says Islamic State is an 'apocalyptic death cult,'" June 11, 2015. <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-death-cult-australian-prime-minister-tony-abbott-blasts-islamic-state-group-1962661>.

President Barack Obama has labeled ISIS as such, including during the National Prayer Breakfast in early 2015. See Barack Obama - Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast," February 5, 2015. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/05/remarks-president-national-prayer-breakfast>. See also Byron Tau's article, "Obama Calls ISIS a 'Vicious Death Cult' at National Prayer Breakfast," February 5, 2015. <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2015/02/05/obama-call-isis-a-vicious-death-cult-at-national-prayer-breakfast/>.

British Prime Minister Cameron and French President Hollande reportedly referred to ISIS in the same manner in the aftermath of the Paris attacks. See Lizzie Dearden's "Paris attacks: Five more terror suspects arrested as Brussels remains on lockdown," November 23, 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/paris->

[attacks-live-david-cameron-and-francois-hollande-discuss-strategy-against-isis-as-brussels-a6744636.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/27/us/politics/attacks-live-david-cameron-and-francois-hollande-discuss-strategy-against-isis-as-brussels-a6744636.html).

¹¹⁶ David Remnick. "Going the Distance: On and off the road with Barack Obama." *New Yorker*, January 27, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/27/going-the-distance-david-remnick>.

¹¹⁷ Jakkie Cilliers. "Isis stronghold in Libya spells dire consequences," *Mail and Guardian - Africa's Best Read*, March 11, 2016, <http://mg.co.za/article/2016-03-10-isis-stronghold-in-libya-spells-dire-consequences/>.

¹¹⁸ Associated Press. "ISIS collects millions in ransom for abducted Christians," CBS News, February 22, 2016, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-collects-millions-in-ransom-for-abducted-christians/>.

Bibliography

- Al-Hayat. "The Return of Khilafah." *Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham - Dabiq* 1 (July 2014): <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/09-2014/isis-isil-islamic-state-magazine-Issue-1-the-return-of-khilafah.pdf>.
- Al-Hayat. "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone." *Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham – Dabiq* 7 (February 2015): <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf>.
- Al-Hayat. "My Provision was Placed for Me in the Shade of My Spear." *Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham - Dabiq* 4 (October 2014): <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-isis-magazine-Issue-4-the-failed-crusade.pdf>.
- Al-Hayat. "Remaining and Expanding." *Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham - Dabiq* 5 (November 2014): <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/isis-isil-islamic-state-magazine-issue-5-remaining-and-expanding.pdf>.
- Al-Khanssaa Brigade. "Women of the Islamic State: A Manifesto on Women." Edited by Quilliam Foundation. Translated by Charlie Winter. February 2015.
- Barfi, Barak, and Aaron Zelin. "Al Qaeda's Syrian Strategy." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* (October 2013): <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/al-qaedas-syrian-strategy>.
- Bowen, Andrew. "Time Bomb: The Islamic State Implodes." *National Interest* (March 2015): <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/time-bomb-the-islamic-state-implodes-12397>.
- Bukhari, Sahih. *Volume 6, Book 60, hadith 80*. Translated by Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin al-Mughira Al-Ja'fai. http://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_6_60.php. (accessed January 23, 2016).
- Celso, Anthony. "How to Defeat the Islamic State: Crafting a Rational War Strategy." *Small Wars Journal* (September 2015): http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&ved=0ahUKEwjb1M_9hv_KAhVIqR4KHXMADqUQFghFMAY&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsmallwarsjournal.com%2Fprintpdf%2F30763&usg=AFQjCNGc77bb9IE9VrF4JqSqzUIDxJLi2Q&sig2=oFMqJYAJFai0OyCHHY0npQ.
- Communications, Quantum. "Understanding Jihadis in Their Own Words." *NOW - Lebanese News Service- The White Papers* 2 (April 2015): <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/specialreports/565067-understanding-jihadists-in-their-own-words>.
- Cone, Patricia. *God's Rule: Government and Islam*. New York, NY: Columbia University

Press, 2004.

Cottee, Simon. "Pilgrims to the Islamic State: What Westerners migrating to ISIS have in common with Westerners who sympathized with communism." *The Atlantic* (July 2015): <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/07/isis-foreign-fighters-political-pilgrims/399209/>.

Dagher, Munqith, Aaron Y. Zelin, and David Pollock. "The Islamic State: New Inside Views." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* (December 2015): <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-islamic-state-new-inside-views>.

Dizboni, Ali G. *Islam and War: The Disparity Between the Technological-normative Evolution of Modern War and the Doctrine of Jihad*. New York, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2011.

Gambhir, Harleen. "ISIS's Global Strategy: A Wargame." *Institute for the Study of War - Middle East Security Report* 28 (July 2015): <http://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS%20Global%20Strategy%20--%20A%20Wargame%20FINAL.pdf>.

Habeck, Mary. *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.

Hourani, Noura. "In battle for one corner of Al-Hasakah, 30,000 displaced move south toward Islamic State territory amidst fears of SDF Syria Direct." *Syria Direct* (February 2016): <http://syriadirect.org/news/in-battle-for-one-corner-of-al-hasakah-30000-displaced-move-south-toward-islamic-state-territory-amidst-fears-of-sdf/>.

Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham. *Black Flags from Rome*. January 2015. PDF e-book.

Lav, Daniel. *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Madelung, Wilfred. *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*. Albany, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988. PDF e-book.

Naji, Abu Bakr. *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass*. Translated by William McCants. 2006. PDF e-book.

Obama, Barack. "Letter from the President -- Authorization for the Use of United States Armed Forces in connection with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant." The White House, Washington, DC, February 11, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/11/letter-president-authorization-use-united-states-armed-forces-connection>.

Obama, Barack. "Address to the Nation - We Will Degrade and Ultimately Destroy ISIL."

-
- Speech. The White House, Washington, DC, September 10, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1>.
- Page, Rob. "ISIS and the sectarian conflict in the Middle East." *International Affairs and Defence Section, House of Commons* (March 2015): <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP15-16/RP15-16.pdf>.
- Payne, Kenneth. "Building the Base: Al Qaeda's Focoist Strategy." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism - Defence Studies Department, Kings College London* 34 (2011): <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1057610X.2011.538832>.
- Price, Bryan, Dan Milton, Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, and Nelly Lahoud. "The Group that Calls Itself a State: Understanding the Evolution and Challenges of the Islamic State." *Counter Terrorism Center at West Point* (December 2014): <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-group-that-calls-itself-a-state-understanding-the-evolution-and-challenges-of-the-islamic-state>.
- Rahmani, Bardia. "ISIS's Growing Caliphate: Profiles of Affiliates." *The Wilson Center* (February 2016): <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/isiss-growing-caliphate-profiles-affiliates>.
- Remnick, David. "Going the Distance: On and off the road with Barack Obama." *New Yorker*, January 2014. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/27/going-the-distance-david-remnick>.
- Revkin, Mara. "ISIS' Social Contract: What the Islamic State Offers Civilians." *Foreign Affairs* (January 2016): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-01-10/isis-social-contract>.
- Salmi, Ralph H. *Islam and Conflict Resolution: Theories and Practice*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998.
- Salzmann, Andrew. "ISIS: Public Legitimacy Through the Reenactment of Islam's Early History." *Small Wars Journal* (August 2014): <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/isis-public-legitimacy-through-the-reenactment-of-islam%E2%80%99s-early-history>.
- Schiavenza, Matt. "Why Iraq's Military Has No Will to Fight: The country's political dysfunction has undermined all efforts to build an effective fighting force." *The Atlantic* (May 2015): <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/why-iraqs-military-has-no-will-to-fight/394067/>.
- Erika Solomon. "Isis Inc: Loot and taxes keep jihadi economy churning." *Financial Times* (December 2015): <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/aee89a00-9ff1-11e5-beba-5e33e2b79e46.html#axzz41VgmC1fh>.
- The Middle East Media Research Institute. "Islamic State (ISIS) Releases Pamphlet On Female

-
- Slaves." *Jihad and Threat Terrorism Model* (December 2014):
<http://www.memrijttm.org/islamic-state-isis-releases-pamphlet-on-female-slaves.html>.
- United Nations. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Syrian Arab Republic Governorates Profile*. Geneva, Switzerland, June 2014.
<http://syria.unocha.org/sites/default/files/Syria%20governorate%20profiles%206%20August%202014.pdf>.
- U.S. Congress, Senate. *The Role of Oil in ISIL Finances.*: Hearing before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, 114th Cong., 2016.
- US Department of Defense. *Operation Inherent Resolve: Targeted Operations Against ISIL Terrorists*. Tampa, FL: Central Command, April, 2016.
http://www.defense.gov/news/special-reports/0814_Inherent-Resolve.
- Walt, Steven. "What Should We Do if the Islamic State Wins? Live with it." *Foreign Policy* (June 2015): www.foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/10/what-should-we-do-if-ISIS-Islamic-state-wins-containment/.
- Weiss, Michael. *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*. New York, NY: Regan Arts, 2015.