STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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CORE VALUES IN CONFLICT: UNITED STATES SECURITY POLICY AND ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN AFGHANISTAN

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL KEVIN V. WRIGHT
United States Army

SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE FELLOW
AY00

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

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by

Kevin V. Wright
Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army

Professor Michael Crutcher
Project Advisor

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Kevin V. Wright, LTC, USA

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The United States has consistently misjudged the influence of Islamic extremism since the 1979 Iranian revolution. This paper examines the background of contemporary Islamic extremism and American national security responses thereto using Afghanistan as a model. The United States became heavily engaged in Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan War. In the last major surrogate East-West conflict, America supported a variety of opposition groups within Afghanistan, including Islamic extremists who viewed the conflict as a *jihad* against apostates and unbelievers. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the West's "victory" in the Cold War, United States interest in and understanding of Islamic extremism in Afghanistan waned. As a result, America was again unprepared for the neofundamentalist Taliban victories in the mid-1990s and Taliban support for Islamic extremist Usama Bin Ladin, identified by the FBI in 1999 as one of the 10 Most Wanted Persons for terrorist acts against US citizens.

This paper examines the dynamics of US security policy towards Afghanistan, identifying missed opportunities, and the underlying American misunderstanding of the deep motivations among Islamic extremists and their supporters. The paper demonstrates that the United States' approach to Islamic extremism has been consistently shortsighted and reactive, has failed to recognize core value differences, and has ceded the initiative to the extremists. The paper also provides recommendations for short-, mid-, and long-term national security policy measures to regain the strategic initiative against threats posed by Islamic extremists.

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Our policies are guided by our profound respect for Islam. [...] We recognize and honor Islam's role as a source of inspiration, instruction, and moral guidance for hundreds of millions of people around the world.

—President William J. Clinton, December 1999

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it....

—World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders, 23 February 1998

INTRODUCTION

On 20 August 1998, cruise missiles pounded training areas near Khowst, Afghanistan associated with the Islamic extremist *Al-Qa'ida* organization and terrorist Usama Bin Ladin. With that action, the United States government fired its first overt military salvo against what may prove to be the most significant ideology-based threat to the United States in the 21st Century. Unfortunately and despite official United States statements to the contrary, the cruise missile strike, a reaction to Islamic extremist asymmetrical unconventional warfare (terrorism), showed that the United States was not yet willing to take the strategic initiative against this threat.

The United States had been exposed to militant and political Islam prior to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Following the 1979 Iranian revolution and hostage taking, the United States government viewed the Islamic resurgence as a threat.[1] However, United States policy makers viewed the Soviet challenge as a greater threat and focused all effort to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan. In order to keep the fighting from expanding into a larger East-West conflict, the United States and other partners chose to wage proxy war through the Afghan resistance. To the United States, understanding the multiple Afghan factions within the resistance was less important than marshalling a united front on the battlefield. In so doing, United States policy makers failed to comprehend the Islamist and anti-Western motivation of some key resistance groups. More significantly, the United States overlooked the small but increasingly radical assembly of militant Islamic extremists responding to the call for *jihad* against the Soviet Union. Directly or indirectly supported by the United States, these extremists constituted a highly trained, equipped, and motivated corps following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989.

By the Second Gulf War (1990-1991), these extremists targeted the United States. Independently funded and loosely organized around a central support group known as *Al-Qa'ida* (the base), they turned thought into action, attacking United States interests at home and abroad. In 1992, they accepted responsibility for three anti-American bombings in Aden, Yemen. In 1993, they fought alongside Mohammed Aideed against United States troops in Somalia; murdered two CIA employees outside CIA

headquarters in Langley, Virginia; and bombed the World Trade Center in New York City. In 1994, they planned to assassinate the Pope during a visit to Manila and simultaneously bomb the United States and Israeli embassies in several Asian capitols. In 1995, they planned to assassinate President Clinton during a visit to the Philippines and to destroy in mid-air up to twelve commercial airliners. In 1998, they bombed the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 301 and injuring more that 5,000.[2] Although national policy makers began to address this threat by 1998, they were unable to eliminate it. *Al-Qa'ida* almost succeeded in conducting simultaneous attacks against United States citizens and interests in Jordan and elsewhere (including the continental United States) during the Millennium celebrations, and continued to be a viable organization in 2000, operating with near impunity from safe haven in Afghanistan well into 2000. The United States had misread the tea leaves and was paying the price for that error.

ROOTS OF MODERN ISLAMIC EXTREMIST THOUGHT

Al-Qa'ida's violently anti-American public statements and actions were the latest manifestation of Islamic extremist thought. They had their roots in Islamist theoretical discourse reaching back to the 19th Century. To understand today's Islamic extremists, it is important to understand the theoretical tradition from which they gain inspiration and, in their minds, justification.

The first modern proponent of what would become political Islamist thought was Jamal al-Din Afghani.[3] His major influence occurred in the last half of the 19th Century, as the centuries-old Ottoman Turkish empire was at its deepest decline vis-à-vis the West. Al-Afghani, like most Muslim intellectuals of the time, blamed the Ottoman empire's decline on the West's corrupting influence that diverted Muslims from Islam's true path. Al-Afghani was vehemently anti-European and anti-imperialist. He called for Muslim rulers and intellectuals to unite and fight the *kafir* (nonbelieving) European forces while adapting the West's intellectual and scientific advances to Muslim use. To achieve reform, Al-Afghani advanced the concept of *ijtihad*, wherein believers returned to the core articles of faith (Quran and the Sunna) to personally interpret their meaning and apply them to everyday life. This concept reduced the authority of the *ulama* (clerical body) to interpret Islam on the individual's behalf.[4] Al-Afghani's thrust was more political than spiritual, and he was "the first to use the concepts of 'Islam' and 'The West' as correlative and antagonistic historical phenomena."[5]

Muhammad Abdu, an Egyptian, became a disciple of Afghani in the 1870s. Less militantly anti-Western than Al-Afghani, Abdu concentrated on Afghani's *ijtihad* concept applied to religious reform and lawmaking, including *fatwas* (religious decrees). Abdu's principal disciple was Muhammad Rashid Rida, a Lebanese, who further developed *ijtihad* as the basis for reasoning. He published his ideas in the Egyptian journal *Al Manar* (The Lighthouse), later consolidated into <u>The Caliphate or the Supreme Imamate</u>. Like Al-Afghani, Rida blamed the Ottoman Caliphate's political demise on failure to follow the dictates of the Quran and Sunna. He advocated an Islamic state, based on the Quran and Sunna, led by

properly inspired caliphs, with *sharia* as the basic law. If the caliph contravened Islamic principles or public order, the community that appointed and confirmed him would have a right to challenge him.

Al-Afghani, Abdu, and Rida proposed an Islamic political entity based on individual responsibility to follow fundamental Islamic principles (*ijtihad*) as a means to understand the West's encroaching influence. They represented the *salafiyya* (return to the ancestors) theory that would both take on political overtones as Islamism and apolitical aspects as a form of fundamentalism throughout the 20th Century.[6]

Sayid Abdul Ala Maududi grew up in British India in the first half of the 20th Century and was devoutly Muslim. In the 1920s, he wrote *Jihad in Islam*, an influential publication explaining the theoretical justification for violent action to advance Islam. By the 1940s, he established *Jama'at i-islami*, the "Islamic Group Party", which opposed India's Hindu dominance and Western (English) influence. Maududi called for a separate Muslim homeland based on *ijtihad* and *sharia*. He felt that "[t]he objective [of Muslims] must be the setting up, not of a national Muslim state, but an Islamic state."[7] He felt that Islam was self-sufficient, separate from, and opposed to both Western and socialist ways of life. Maududi was the intellectual impetus behind Pakistan's (meaning 'Land of the Pure') 1947 statehood.

Maududi's Egyptian contemporary was Hassan al-Banna, who founded the *Ikhwan al-muslimoon*, or Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. Al-Banna read and was influenced by Rida's *Al Manar*.[8] Al-Banna advocated an Islamic society along the same *ijtihad* and *sharia* lines as earlier described. However, he took a more political and social/populist approach, establishing charitable organizations as a tool of Islamist teaching and doctrine. He condemned Western core values (individualism, gender equality) and contemporary social issues (class conflict, materialism, and atheism), advancing instead the traditional Islamic values of piety, altruism, community fellowship, strong family center, social justice, and a domestic role for women within the existing Egyptian constitutional framework.[9] Al-Banna spoke often in coffee shops and mosques, winning broad popular support. He viewed World War Two as a European civil war and advocated Egyptian nonbelligerency.[10] Although Al-Banna did not advocate violence as the means to achieve the end, many Muslim Brothers were prepared to use this technique, attacking those viewed as collaborators following the war. The Egyptian government saw the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat and increased pressure on it. Following Egyptian Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha's assassination by a Muslim Brotherhood member on 28 December 1948, the movement went underground.[11]

Maududi and Al-Banna turned the concept of Islamic reform and *salafiyya* into broad political movements. As such, they were the true founders of Islamism as a political concept. They and their followers saw political and social activism as the means to achieve the Islamic society – a society Islamic in foundation and structure, not simply composed of Muslims.[12] In 1949, Al-Banna was assassinated by unknown assailants, probably sponsored by the Egyptian government.[13] Al-Banna's murder deeped the split between nonviolent Islamists and the extremists who saw violence as the answer.[14]

Islamic extremist theory developed within the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as a further modification of Islamism. Extremist theoreticians adapted Al-Banna's thoughts to justify violence. The

most influential Islamic extremist thinkers were Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Abd al-Salaam Faraj, both associated with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. Qutb theoretically justified violence to achieve an Islamist society; Faraj turned the theory into practice. Their thoughts and actions influenced Islamist and Islamic extremist activity in the 1970s and 1980s, including the Afghan *mujahidin* resistance and the Islamic extremist groups conducting worldwide terrorist actions in the first year of the 21st Century.

Sayyid Qutb, leading ideologue of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, developed the theological theory of Sunni Islamic extremism which defined the good Muslim and the apostate by political deed, not religious attitude.[15] A university graduate with a degree in English literature, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1953 after spending two years in the United States. He was deeply troubled by the racism, sexual permissiveness, and pro-Zionism he perceived in American society. Returning to Egypt, he became deeply religious and active in the Muslim Brotherhood's attempts to create an Islamic society. Qutb was arrested in the 1950s and spent the rest of his life in prison, where he was tortured before being executed in 1966. While in prison, he developed a theory of violence justified under Islamic precedents. The most significant of his concepts were *jahiliya* (the state of darkness and ignorance which existed before the Prophet's coming), the Apostate Ruler (one who renounces God and Islam, drawing society back into *jahiliya*), and *takfir* (declaring a Muslim ruler apostate) to prevent *jahiliya's* return. Qutb, through selective interpretation of the Quran and Sunna in the spirit of *ijtihad*, developed a theoretical justification for armed insurrection against the government to achieve an Islamic society.

The Muslim Brotherhood remained underground during the pan-Arab socialist Nasser regime. Upon Anwar Sadat's rise to power in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood enjoyed early favor. Sadat initially embraced Islamism, gaining popular support. Egypt's initial tactical victories in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war further increased popularity. However, many Muslim Brothers lost faith in Sadat's governance following the Egyptian battlefield defeat, political moderation, economic troubles, and moral decay.[16] When Sadat signed the Camp David Peace Accord with Israel, radical elements within the Muslim Brotherhood recalled Qutb's theories regarding the apostate ruler and *takfir*. The Muslim Brotherhood attacked Sadat in its periodical, *Al Daawa*, and became increasingly vocal in opposition to the Israeli treaty. When Israel threatened to vacate its treaty commitment unless Egypt stopped openly criticizing it, Sadat began to arrest Muslim Brotherhood radicals. On 6 October 1981, members of a Muslim Brotherhood splinter organization known as *al Gama'a al-islamiya* (Islamic Group) assassinated Sadat.[17]

The *Gama'a* membership had been was inspired by a contemporary, Shaikh Umar Abdul Rahman, blind professor at Asyut University and spiritual leader of *Munazzamat al-jihad* (Al Jihad Organization). Rahman had been an active Islamist at Al-Azhar University in the 1960s and 1970s and had been imprisoned for anti-Nasser Islamist activity. At Asyut University, he studied Maududi and Qutb. In 1980, Rahman issued a *fatwa* essentially declaring Sadat apostate and providing a *sharia*-based justification for lethal action against him.[18] Rahman later fled Egypt for the United States, where he was convicted and sentenced for his involvement in the 1993 New York World Trade Center bombing.

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Muhammad Abd al-Salaam Faraj was chief theoretician for *al-jihad* and one of the members who helped *Gama'at* plan Sadat's assassination. Faraj wrote two booklets prior to Sadat's assassination, <u>Al Jihad: the Forgotten Pillar</u> and <u>The Neglected Duty</u>, both of which form the theoretical justification for Islamic extremist political assassination and represent the further radicalization of Islamist thought beyond Qutb.[19]

According to Faraj, every true Muslim was obliged by his faith to struggle for revival of the Islamic *umma* (community). All Muslim individuals, groups, or leaders who turned away from *sharia* were apostates who brought on *jahiliya* and prevented Islamic *umma* achievement. Therefore, it was sinful for a Muslim to cooperate with an apostate ruler. Muslims were obliged to wage *jihad* against the apostate individual and state. *Jihad* was the "forgotten" but mandatory sixth obligation of a Muslim (in addition to Islam's traditional Five Pillars). The only acceptable form of *jihad* was armed struggle; all else was cowardice or foolishness. True Muslims were to first confront the internal apostate (e.g. Sadat and the Egyptian state), then the external *kafir* (e.g. The West). *Jihad* was a perpetual condition necessary to transform the non-Muslim world into the Islamic *umma*. Therefore, *jihad* was something every Muslim should pursue wherever and whenever possible. Faraj spent the body of <u>The Neglected Duty</u> providing specific instructions on conducting *jihad*, based on selective Islamic scriptural interpretation (*ijtihad*). While <u>The Neglected Duty</u> did not contain tactical doctrine, it addressed concepts that Western military analysts could interpret to be strategic and operational. Whereas Qutb was argumentative, Faraj was prescriptive: Faraj's target audience was already convinced of the basic premise.[20]

The early 1980s were an exciting time for Islamic extremists. Khomeini's Iranian revolution had deposed the secular, Western-oriented Shah and sought to restore an Islamic society (albeit Shi'ite) based on *sharia*. Egypt's *Gama'a* had similarly eliminated a Western-influenced 'apostate ruler'. In Afghanistan, a long-simmering Islamist opposition had finally erupted into armed rebellion, quickly reoriented against the invading Soviet *kafir*. Sunni Islamic extremists were turning thought into action at the local and national levels. However, they lacked the organization, tactical expertise and ordnance to pursue coordinated international *jihad*. They would make up for that deficit in Afghanistan.

ISLAMIC EXTEMIST THOUGHT: THE AFGHAN CONNECTION

The Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989) was the common experience for the Islamic extremists who would threaten United States interests in the 1990s and into the 21st Century. Afghan Islamists were a significant part of the *mujahidin* resistance to the Soviet invasion in 1979. While not decisive on the Afghan political landscape during or following the Afghan-Soviet war, they were the common link to non-Afghan (primarily Arab) Islamic extremist volunteers participating in the *jihad*. Arguably, the non-Afghan volunteers contributed to the *mujahidin* victory. More importantly, they gained combat experience, arms, and confidence in their ability to defeat the *kafir*. The personal connections among Arab Afghans (as the volunteers called

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themselves) and Afghan *mujahidin* leaders facilitated post-war Islamic extremist training, travel, and safe haven in Afghanistan.

AFGHAN ISLAMISTS

The Afghan Islamist movement began in 1958 among young urban Afghan intellectuals who had attended Cairo's Al-Azhar University and been exposed to and inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood. Returning to Afghanistan, these intellectuals opposed the Royalist Afghan government and went underground, disseminating translations of Maududi and Qutb. The movement was university-centered and completely Afghan, with no direct linkage to external groups. In 1965 the Islamist students went public in anti-government demonstrations and distributed a tract about *jihad*. By 1970, they had begun a grass-roots campaign to win the hearts and minds of rural villagers, combining preaching and good works.[21]

In 1973, King Zahir Shah was deposed by his cousin and brother-in-law, Sardar Mohammad Daud, a strong nationalist predisposed toward India. Under the Daud regime, the more militant Islamists (who posed a threat to secular, non-Islamic nationalism) were imprisoned. Most of the Islamist leadership went into self-imposed exile in Pakistan, where a rift soon developed between the radicals and the moderates. The radicals, under Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, advocated a general popular uprising, while the moderates, under Borhanuddin Rabbani, favored long-term change through government (Army) infiltration.[22] Supported by Pakistan's President (who saw a threat in Daud's nationalist and pro-Indian politics), the radicals won out and started training for insurgency operations to foment insurrection throughout Afghanistan. Having launched cross-border operations, they were soon defeated. The survivors retreated back to Pakistan to regroup. They received additional support from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (which soon abandoned the movement in favor of the Daud government), but faltered.[23]

In 1976-1977, the Afghan Islamist movement divided again into Hekmatyar's radicals and Rabbani's moderates. The Hekmatyar faction advocated the Qutb notion of *takfir* towards fellow Muslims: "...[T]he good Muslim was no longer defined by his religious attitude, but by his political actions, and it was possible to define someone as a heretic for purely political reasons..."[24] Rabbani, on the other hand, preferred a united front and mass movement along the Muslim Brotherhood model. The Hekmatyar further split in 1979, just before the Soviet invasion, with *Maulani* Yunis Khalis establishing his own group, theoretically aligned with Rabbani. The Islamist parties were weakened by internal dissent, the leadership living in exile.[25]

In 1978, the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew Daud. The Islamists still in Afghanistan went underground. Popular discontent with the communists soon turned into armed insurrection. Although sporadic and unorganized, local and tribal rebellion brought the Islamist students back from Pakistan to fight alongside the local rebels. By late 1979, three-quarters of Afghanistan was in open armed rebellion against the communist government.[26]

Local rebel leaders needed external logistical aid and sent representatives to Pakistan, where they had earlier received governmental support. Among all the rebel factions, the Islamists has the closest governmental ties and competed most successfully for outside aid.[27]

The Soviet invasion and Babrak Karmal's installation as Afghan head of state further inflamed the rebellion and superficially unified the various resistance factions under the traditional and broad Afghan call for *jihad* against the outside invader. For the Islamists, the *jihad* had Islamic and political overtones as developed by Qutb and others. However, the Afghan people traditionally viewed *jihad* more as an act of faith between the Muslim believer and God than as an issue focused on the relationship between the believer and his enemy. The act of *jihad* was more important than the result achieved. Indeed, the fighter could achieve Paradise either because he had killed an enemy (and become a *ghazi*), or because he had been killed in combat and become a *shahid* (martyr).[28]

Jean-Paul Charnay made an important observation regarding the nature of the Afghan *jihad* that has significance to contemporary Islamic extremist rhetoric regarding professional soldiers.

> In the resistance we encounter a regular feature of Islamic wars: the professional soldier (*asker*) is devalued not only with respect to the mujahidin, who is a volunteer and a believer, but also with respect to the warrior and the merchant and artisan. The *asker* is perceived as a simple mercenary, as a victim of forced enrollment, or as too stupid to have plied any other trade. From the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to the Lebanese Hizbullah militiaman, distain for the professional military man goes hand in hand with the spirit of jihad.[29]

The Islamist elements of the resistance did not achieve dominance during the anti-Soviet war, in large part because Islamist politics never took root within the populace, which held more traditional Islamic fundamentalist beliefs. While Rabbani, Hekmatyar, and their followers were able to obtain external support (in large part from the West) via Pakistan, which at least partially endorsed the Islamist agenda, Pakistan tightly controlled support to the Islamists to prevent any one Afghan faction from achieving strategic military dominance.

Nevertheless, the Islamists successfully drew foreign Islamists and Islamic extremists to fight the Soviets. These volunteers, frequently trained under Pakistani and Western supervision, flocked to training camps from 1985 until the early 1990s. The Afghan Islamist connection attracted international support mechanisms, many of which were brokered by the Muslim Brotherhood. The most significant network established during the war was the *Mektab al-khadamat* (Office of Services), which was still influential on the transnational Islamic extremist scene in 2000. The *Mektab al-khadamat* was a non-governmental organization (NGO) headed by Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian member of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. Assisting Azzam in founding the *Mektab al-khadamat* was Usama Bin Ladin, founding member of *Al-Qa'ida*, who also founded the *Bayt al-ansar* (House of Auxiliaries) foundation to recruit and finance non-Afghan *mujahidin* volunteers.[30]

By the 1990s, the anti-Soviet *jihad* had achieved battlefield victory but failed to unite Afghanistan's tribal, ethnic, and political factions. Absent a common enemy, they returned to killing each other.[31] At the

same time, Afghanistan's Islamism was losing its political flavor and becoming more fundamentalist.[32] This form of fundamentalism gave birth to the post-war Taliban movement, which gained de facto control of Afghanistan by the late 1990s and provided sanctuary to *Al-Qa'ida* and other militant non-Afghan Islamic extremist groups.

TALIBAN

In 1986, as the Soviet Union was preparing for its eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan, the communist PDPA replaced Babrak Karmal with Dr. Syed Mohammad Najibullah as President of the Revolutionary Council and PDPA General Secretary. Najibullah became Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev's Afghan counterpart in moving toward a national reconciliation. However, Afghanistan's non-communist political parties, ethnic and tribal factions rejected the Najibullah regime as they had that of Karmal. At the same time, no faction was willing to give up power or territorial control. Despite international attempts to broker a peaceful political settlement, internal fighting continued, forcing Najibullah out of office in 1992.[33] Further attempts by Pakistan and the United Nations to broker a political settlement similarly failed.[34] After a series of failed transitional governments, Afghanistan declined into anarchy and lawlessness. The Taliban movement was a response to these conditions.

The term Taliban came from the plural of the Arabic *talib* -- one who seeks -- and the Pashtun connotation of one who studies in a *deeni madaris*, the Afghan variant of South Asia's *madrassa* religious educational institution. The *deeni madaris*, roughly similar to primary and secondary school, had an Islamic fundamentalist curriculum and was neither degree granting nor recognized by other educational or governmental institutions. "Graduates" of a *deeni madaris* were awarded the honorific title of *mullah*, permitting them to become *imam*, assume leadership positions within mosques, and act as local judges. Many *mullahs* returned to teach at the *deeni madaris*, along with many *maulawi*, or *taliban* who left the *deeni madaris* before completing their studies and becoming a *mullah*.[35]

Upon the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the dramatic rise in Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the Pakistani government (with funding from other Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia) rapidly expanded the *deeni madaris* system in the refugee enclaves, introducing a significant modification: paramilitary training. *Deeni madaris* were divided into two categories: small schools (up to 15 *taliban*) in mosques primarily involved in religious-only instruction, and larger boarding schools (up to 2,000 *taliban*) intended to produce resistance fighters. The modified curriculum in the resistance-oriented *deeni madaris* included small arms training and paramilitary organization. Originally intended for Afghan refugees, the new *deeni madaris* also accepted Pakistani and Central Asian *taliban*. Pakistan's motivation was three-fold: to create a body of motivated recruits to support the armed resistance in Afghanistan (and hold the Soviets at bay); to placate Pakistani Islamists and religious leaders who formed the major support for the ruling government; and to gainfully occupy the refugee population swelling the Pakistani provinces bordering

Afghanistan. During the school holiday months (approximately 90 days), those *taliban* over 18 years old went to the front to wage *jihad* against the Soviets. Those who survived returned to their studies.[36]

On 20 September 1994, after two years of increasing lawlessness by local armed groups, a particularly repugnant mass rape/murder occurred near Qandahar. *Mullah* Muhammad Omar Akhund, a religious scholar and Islamist veteran of the anti-Soviet *jihad*, was the first to arrive at the scene. He gathered a group of local *taliban* to conduct burial rituals and pledged to restore Islamic order. In time, he gained recruits from other *deeni madaris* as well as arms donations. In the Afghan Islamist tradition, *Mullah* Omar renamed his organization as a political faction, the *Tehreek-i-islami-i-taliban Afghanistan*. Centered on Qandahar and predominantly Sunni Muslim and ethnic Pashtun, the Taliban movement expanded, gaining Islamist and neofundamentalist members from the decaying Afghan Islamist parties. Ranging in age from 15 to 50, Taliban membership included many veterans of the decade-long anti-Soviet *jihad* and subsequent factional infighting.[37] The international community was initially optimistic about the Taliban movement despite concern for its Islamic fundamentalist ideology and strict *sharia* interpretation and at least passively supported it. Other countries anxious for Afghan stability viewed the Taliban as a potential unifying and calming influence on the military and political landscape.[38] By early 2000, the Taliban controlled most of the country (less the Panjshir valley and a portion of north central Afghanistan).

Taliban Islamic thought was focused on establishing *sharia* within all of Afghanistan, interpreted in accordance with the Quran and the Sunni Hanafi *fiqah*, or penal code. The Taliban sought to establish a political Islamic state (the Islamic State of Afghanistan) under Taliban leadership. However, they downplayed politics and ideology. In this sense, they represented a shift from Islamism to a form of fundamentalism.[39] They called their struggle against all Afghan opposition a *jihad*, with the attendant religious and emotional connotations. Significantly, the Taliban had no stated or demonstrated designs on areas outside Afghanistan's existing borders.

Significantly, the Taliban did not reject the non-Afghan Islamists in their midst. As of early 2000, despite United Nations sanctions and United States direct pressure, they steadfastly refused to extradite indicted terrorist Usama Bin Ladin. This may have been at least partially attributable to the Pashtun social ethic *pashtunwalli*: Bin Ladin and the non-Afghan *mujahidin* were the Taliban's guests and comrades in arms to whom allegiance was required in the face of their enemies. However, it probably had more to do with shared anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism and expediency, as *Al-Qa'ida* had significantly bankrolled the Taliban *jihad*, receiving training facilities, housing, and free access within the country.[40]

In summary, the Taliban movement represented an internal response to an Afghanistan that had moved even farther away from personal and political Islam. Initially conceived as an *ad hoc* means to restore order through *sharia*, it soon took on political overtones. However, the Taliban movement exclusively focused on Afghanistan and Afghan problems. It was not searching for a pan-Islamist role. Nevertheless, its origins and neofundamentalist vision were compatible with the non-Afghan Islamic

extremists alongside whom the Taliban had fought during the anti-Soviet *jihad* and to whom the Taliban extended traditional Afghan Pashtun hospitality. This would prove to be a major cause for United States concern in the late 1990s and into the 21st Century.

AFGHAN ARABS

In 2000, the non-Afghan Muslim volunteers who fought in Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet *jihad* represented the greatest Islamic extremist threat to United States interests. Their long-term combat experience molded them into successful irregular warriors. Specialized training developed in Afghanistan's safe haven allowed selected individuals to become sophisticated at that particular type of irregular warfare known as terrorism. With established contacts among like-minded individuals; access to arms, equipment, and a sophisticated infrastructure; and shared fundamentalist anti-Western values; the Afghan Arabs successfully struck at the United States, causing an effect much greater than their investment. They were successful asymmetrical warriors who would ultimately (if almost too late) become the specific object of United States policy and the National Security Strategy.

During the anti-Soviet *jihad* in Afghanistan, Islamist organizations channeled volunteer fighters into Pakistan for training and onward movement to the front. The Muslim Brotherhoods in various countries organized "Islamic" humanitarian aid and volunteer *mujahidin* fighters for the Afghan resistance. Their efforts were funded through Saudi Arabia and coordinated in Pakistan by the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISID).[41] The volunteers had many motivations, but the common vetted theme was the desire to conduct *jihad*. Some were fundamentalists interested in the spiritual aspects of *jihad*. Many, however, were politically motivated extremists of the Muslim Brotherhood and similar splinter organizations who saw in Afghanistan an opportunity to implement Islamic extremist theory and escape local authorities. As the anti-Soviet *jihad* ended and many extremists returned to their home countries or elsewhere to locally implement their objectives, the Second Gulf War (1990-1991) provided renewed motivation for anti-Western action. This action became *jihad* against the United States.

The non-Afghan Muslim volunteers were predominantly Arab. The Egyptians brought with them Faraj's concept of continuous *jihad* and Qutb's political overtone. The Gulf Arabs, especially those from Saudi Arabia (including Usama Bin Ladin), brought their fundamentalist desires for *salafiyya* and scriptural *ijtihad*. All shared a desire to oppose the *kafir* influence wherever it appeared in the Muslim world. In this sense, their motivation exceeded that of the Afghan Islamists, who sought only to drive the Soviets out of the country and establish an Islamist government. The Afghan Arabs were fighting the external *kafir*, not the internal apostate.[42]

Usama Bin Ladin was a prominent coordinator of logistics and infrastructure support for the Afghan Arab volunteers as well as a key component in the Saudi Arabian support mechanism.[43] While in Afghanistan, Bin Ladin encountered *mujahidin* volunteers from Egypt's *Gama'a* and *al-jihad*, including

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Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was to become a key lieutenant in the transnational Islamic extremist *Al-Qa'ida* organization and who was, until early 2000, the head of *al-jihad*. Zawahiri split with the *al-jihad* leadership in 2000 over whether or not the *jihad* should first focus locally (in Egypt against the apostate ruler) before attacking the outside *kafir*. Zawahiri, like Bin Ladin and other *Al-Qa'ida* members, advocated attacking the *kafir* wherever and whenever possible.

The Soviet withdrawal essentially ended the *jihad* for which the Afghan Arabs volunteered. By the early 1990s, they started to return home, leaving behind an intact and functional training infrastructure. Once home, these Arab Afghan Islamic extremists frequently found that the radicalism of the early 1980s had turned more moderate. Out of despair, many Arab Afghans abandoned their parent organizational ties to remain together. Sudan's radical Islamist Sheikh Hassan al-Turabi offered domicile to Afghan Arabs, including Usama Bin Ladin. Bin Ladin provided jobs and housing to fellow Afghan Arabs, who returned the favor with strong personal loyalty. Additionally, Bin Ladin used his personal wealth to support the Sudanese regime, to fund "good works" within the worldwide Islamic community, and to fund Islamic extremist organizations throughout the Muslim world. His activities were so pronounced that Egyptian President Mubarak in 1994 formally complained about Bin Ladin's support of Egyptian extremists to Saudi Arabia, which later revoked Bin Ladin's Saudi citizenship.[44] Comfortable with violent confrontation, flushed with Muslim victory over the Soviet *kafir*, these extremist Afghan veterans formed numerous splinter groups, both permanent and transitory, to keep the *jihad* active.[45]

The single-most important event to Islamic extremism's continued existence was the Second Gulf War. The extremists viewed the coalition military presence in Saudi Arabia as a thinly concealed occupation to keep Gulf oil within Western reach. More importantly, the *kafir* was occupying the land of the two holy sites. Extremists viewed Saudi Arabia's invitation to the United States and coalition partners as a sellout by an apostate ruler. In their view, the Kuwaiti government had similarly rejected Islam for the West's corrupting influences. Out of solidarity with Islamic brothers under attack by the *kafir*, the Afghan Arabs overwhelmingly supported Iraq. Islamist extremism adopted a vehemently anti-United States and anti-Saudi tone after 1991. A consequence of the Second Gulf War was increased Islamic extremist autonomy. State sponsorship waned after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the Second Gulf War changed political allegiance within the Muslim world. Saudi Arabia, which had bankrolled the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups, cut funding in response to strong anti-Saudi rhetoric, while the Gulf Muslim Brotherhoods quit the greater organization *en masse*.[46] However, the robust financial donation network initially established by the Muslim Brotherhood and run in part by Usama Bin Ladin remained intact and under Bin Ladin control. His personal wealth, connections, and financial acumen allowed *Al-Qa'ida* and other groups to achieve a measure of financial independence. Given the Afghan Arab activist fervor for continuous *jihad* absent a significant political ideology,[47] fiscal autonomy provided significant strategic agility. Widespread and near-simultaneous Islamic extremist combat actions in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, the Balkans, Chechnya, and the United States were the consequence of such flexibility.

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Partly in response to Egyptian President Mubarak's complaints and partly because of increasingly anti-Saudi activity by Bin Ladin after Saudi Arabia permitted Western military forces to remain on Saudi territory following the Second Gulf War, Saudi Arabia formally revoked his Saudi citizenship.[48] In 1996, bowing to Saudi Arabian and United States pressure, Sudan forced Bin Ladin and his Afghan Arabs to leave. The various factions in Afghanistan immediately granted them shelter. Bin Ladin enjoyed personal relationships with the major Islamist faction leaders[49] and solidified his ties to the Taliban by marrying one of *Mullah* Muhammad Omar Akhund's daughters. Having found effective safe haven in Afghanistan, Bin Ladin and the leadership of *Al-Qa'ida* proceeded to meet with other like-minded fundamentalist Islamic extremists to "advocate reestablishment of the Muslim state throughout the world." [50] ·

AL-QA'IDA

Al-Qa'ida clearly articulated a form of fundamentalist dogma calling for *jihad* against the West (which it called Crusaders and Zionists, in the Islamist tradition) without regard for resolving apostate local ruler issues. In three public statements by Usama Bin Ladin from 1996-1998, the Qutb/Faraj discourse was evident but reversed regarding *takfir* against the internal apostate and the external *kafir*. For Usama Bin Ladin, the external *kafir* was the more important target. Significantly, Bin Ladin's writing omitted the Qutb/Faraj political overtone. In a sense, Bin Ladin represented the synthesis of political Islamism, fundamental Islam, and Islamic extremism.

On 23 August 1996, Bin Ladin issued a "Declaration of War against the Americans occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places." [51] This polemic tract, in style similar to Faraj's Neglected Duty and selectively quoting from the Quran and Sunna, called for the greater Muslim community to rise up and drive out of country the "American-Israeli alliance" (which he termed the "greatest *Kafir*.")[52] The significance of the 1996 "Declaration of War" was that it advocated attacking the external *kafir* before the internal apostate, reversing Qutb and Faraj while continuing Faraj's constant *jihad*. Bin Ladin selectively quoted from the Quran and Sunna, saying, "[P]eople of Islam should join forces and support each other to get rid of the main 'Kufr' [sic] who is controlling the countries of the Islamic world, even to bear the lesser damage to get rid of the major one, that is the great 'Kufr' [sic]".[53] While he attacked the Saudi government for tolerating the United States' presence following the Second Gulf War, his main thrust was clearly against the United States. He referred to the United States defeat in Somalia, the Russian defeat in Chechnya, and the limited Serbian defeat in Bosnia-Herzegovina as evidence of a worldwide *jihad*.

In late Fall of 1996, Bin Ladin followed up his declaration of war with a press interview published in the London-based Al-Quds al-'Arabi newspaper on 27 November 1996. In that interview, Bin Ladin reiterated his call for *jihad* against the United States to force withdrawal from the entire Islamic world. When specifically asked whether he would admit the failure of Islamic extremism in the face of more moderate elements in Algeria, Egypt, and elsewhere, Bin Ladin replied that "[J]ihad is part of our shari'ah [sic] and the nation cannot dispense with it (in its fight) against its enemies. Since it abandoned the *jihad*

the nation has been suffering calamities of murder, dispossession, and plunder at the hands of the Crusaders and their allies, led by the United States and Israel."[54]

On 23 February 1998, a group known as the World Islamic Front issued a *fatwa* "Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders." This *fatwa* was signed by Usama Bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri (of Egypt's *al-jihad*), Abu-Yasir Rifa'l Ahmad Taha (of Egypt's *Gama'a*), and representatives of other South Asian Islamic extremist organizations. The issuers of this *fatwa* specifically called on all Muslims to drive the United States from the Arabian Peninsula. Citing the United States' presence on the Arabian Peninsula and continued attacks against Iraq as crimes and sins against God, the Prophet, and all Muslims, the writers declared *jihad* to be an individual duty if an enemy destroys Muslim countries. The most important part of the *fatwa* ruled that it was an individual Muslim duty to kill Americans and their allies, civilian and military, wherever possible, in order to drive their armies from the lands of Islam.[55] Like Rahman's *fatwa* supporting Sadat's assassination, this *fatwa* provided the 'legitimacy' for subsequent violence against the fatwa's target.

Within 6 months of this latest *fatwa*, *Al-Qa'ida* operatives attacked the United States embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In December 1999, Jordanian security forces disrupted an *Al-Qa'ida* cell in Amman planning Millennium attacks against Americans and other tourists. At the United States border with Canada, alert United States customs agents disrupted a possible Islamic extremist attack. Clearly, the call to arms had been heard.

US POLICY AND ISLAMIC EXTREMISM: THE AFGHAN CONNECTION

In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the United States encouraged Islamists in the Middle East in order to confront communism.[56] United States policymakers were largely ignorant of Islamism's cultural, religious, and sociological contexts. The 1979 Iranian revolution refocused US policymakers on the subject of Islamic extremism. However, the Carter administration was caught off-guard by the Khomeini revolution's popular appeal and treated the Iranian revolution as a secular political event, misinterpreting the Islamic/theocratic context.[57] In general, the American discussion of Khomeini's Islamism focused on the Shi'ite branch of Islam. Iran backed Shi'ite militias in Lebanon which also held United States citizens hostage. In an effort to understand the "Islamic movement", Westerners loosely ascribed values to the Muslim community along Shi'a and Sunni lines: Shi'ites were "bad" (anti-American) Muslims, while Sunnis were "good" Muslims. This value judgement had more to do with revenge than with any in-depth understanding of Islam and Islamist thought. In essence, the United States adopted the view that "the enemy of my enemy was my friend."

The communist coup in Afghanistan, subsequent Soviet invasion, and Iranian revolution occurred almost simultaneously. For many reasons, the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were concerned with the possible spread of the Iranian revolution into Afghanistan and

South Asia and sought to contain it through a strategic partnership. The United States assumed an aggressive anti-Iranian stance, while Saudi Arabia and Pakistan sought to keep the Khomeini-inspired brand of Islamism isolated from the Sunni communities. Coupled with this interest in containing Shi'ite Islamism was the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, largely played out through proxies. For the United States, a communist government in Afghanistan could clear the way for Soviet southward expansion toward Pakistan and the Indian Ocean.

The Carter administration viewed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a greater security threat than the Iranian revolution and sought to galvanize the already militant regional Islamists to counter the Soviet threat. The main objective of United States foreign policy seemed to be containment of the Soviet Union.[58] In courting Sunni Islamists to fight the Soviets, the United States appeared to tacitly support radical Islamism as the lesser evil, thereby sending mixed signals to the international community regarding United States policy toward Islamism.

Six months prior to the actual Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States initiated covert action to provide non-lethal support to the anticommunist factions in Afghanistan.[59] Once the Soviet military actually invaded Afghanistan, the United States dramatically increased aid to the anticommunist factions, including lethal aid in the form of weapons, munitions, and equipment. In order to conceal United States involvement in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States agreed that all United States aid would be funneled through Pakistan. Pakistan then distributed that aid to the various Afghan resistance parties, emphasizing the Islamists.

As the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan continued and the United States government changed from the Carter to the Reagan administrations, the United States more aggressively supported the Afghan resistance. It shifted its goal from Soviet troop harassment to actual battlefield defeat.[60] Despite President Reagan's strong anti-Islamist rhetoric, the Reagan administration continued the Carter administration's policy of addressing Soviet expansion before dealing with Islamism.[61] The United States remained a 'one-ball juggler' on this issue, not perceiving the long-term implications of short-term Islamist support or accommodation.

Within the United States government, various branches of government pursued different objectives. The State Department advocated support to the Geneva peace talks and an ultimate long-term diplomatic settlement. Others, notably members of Congress, sought a more aggressive position – full military victory.[62] The comments of Representative Charles Wilson (Democrat, Texas), who sat on the House Appropriations Committee's Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, best illustrated this position. In an interview with the Washington Post in 1985 regarding his initiative to increase lethal aid to the Afghan resistance, Wilson stated, "There were 58,000 dead in Vietnam and we owe the Russians one, and you can quote me on that... I have had a slight obsession with it, because of Vietnam. I thought the Soviets ought to get a dose of it."[63]

The United States executive branch agreed with Wilson's sentiment. Together with an increase in funds, arms, and training provided to the resistance at large (brokered through Pakistan without US discrimination regarding resistance group motivations and dynamics), the administration decided to break the mid-1980s battlefield stalemate by providing a weapon capable of defeating the increasingly effective Soviet airmobile threat.[64] After some debate, the weapon selected was the Stinger shoulder-fired antiaircraft guided missile, heretofore excluded because of its direct attribution to the United States. Prophetically, the United States Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Central Intelligence Agency all voiced objections to providing Stinger missiles to the Afghan resistance. Fears included technology transfer through capture by the Soviets, lack of plausible deniability, and the possibility that the missiles could be turned against the United States by Afghan resistance elements.[65] Eventually, the DOD, JCS, and CIA bowed to political pressure and agreed to Stinger shipments.

The resistance achieved a tactical advantage with the Stinger missile at the same time that the Soviets (under Mikhail Gorbachev) decided to cut their losses and seek a non-military solution in Afghanistan, withdrawing the last Soviet troops in 1989. With the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States declared victory in the Cold War without having already formulating a policy toward the Islamist elements it had supported over the previous decade.

With the end of East-West conflict, the United States government was able to address the lesser geopolitical regional issues. The Bush administration had to quickly address Islamism due to radical Islamist political successes in Algeria and Sudan, sectarian fighting in Afghanistan, and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.[66] In 1992, the Bush administration made the first public policy statement by any United States administration regarding Islamism.[67] Edward Djerejian, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, delivered a public address entitled, "The U.S., Islam and the Middle East in a Changing World" at Meridien House International, Washington, DC in June 1992. This address clearly identified fundamental United States values: pluralism, human rights support, participatory government, women's and minority rights, and rejection of terrorism, extremism, and oppression. It named support of fundamental U.S. values, Arab-Israeli peace, and unrestricted access to Persian Gulf oil as strategic U.S. foreign policy objectives in the Middle East. Lastly, it distinguished between Islamism as a political force and Islamic extremism.[68]

The Meridien address clearly identified Islamic extremism as a threat to the United States. However, the address failed to identify specific Islamic extremist groups or individuals who posed that threat.[69] It identified American core values and regional interests; however, it did not address the fact that many Islamists, both moderate and extremist, rejected those values as anti-Islamic (e.g. women's rights) or imperialistic (e.g. unrestricted access to Gulf oil resources).[70]

Through 2000, the Clinton administration had essentially pursued a similar position on Islamism and Islamist extremism to that first identified at Meridien House. His administration continued to differentiate among Islam as a faith, Islamism as a political movement, and violent Islamic extremism or terrorism. The President, Vice President, Secretary of State, and other foreign policy officials made numerous public statements regarding Islam, the Middle East, and Islamism, making a conscious effort to distinguish between the majority of the Muslim community, whose values were more or less in concert with those of the United States, and the Islamic extremist element bent on violence and destabilization.[71] Unfortunately, that fine distinction was irrelevant to the extremists and their supporters. In attempting to reassure the Muslim community that the United States was not anti-Islamic, it may have provoked the extremists and their supporters even more to attack the United States and the more moderate Muslim governments.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The Clinton administration's national security policy statements from the late 1990s inadequately addressed Islamic extremism as a threat. It was not until 1998, following *Al-Qa'ida* attacks against the United States, that the administration faced the issue head-on. Unfortunately, the policy statements and their execution did not deter *Al-Qa'ida* from further aggression.

In the February 1996 National Security Strategy (NSS), President Clinton identified the United States' central security goals as being to enhance security with prepared military forces effectively represented abroad; to bolster American economic revitalization; and to promote democracy abroad.[72] Nowhere in the document was there any discussion of Islamic extremism. Regionally, the 1996 NSS addressed as important regional goals the dual containment of Iran and Iraq as regional threats, support for lasting Arab-Israeli peace, and the free flow of oil at reasonable prices.[73] There was no regional discussion of extremist groups or their objectives. The overall reference to terrorism stated,

> Our policy in countering international terrorists is to make no concessions to terrorists, continue to pressure state sponsors of terrorism, fully exploit all available legal mechanisms to punish international terrorists and help other governments improve their capabilities to combat terrorism.[74]

The 1996 NSS further tied counterterrorism to diplomacy and law enforcement. Thus, the 1996 NSS identified as critical to the national strategy several issues that were red flags to Islamic extremists: forward military presence in the Gulf to contain Iran and Iraq and to ensure United States access to oil; United States cooperation with friendly (therefore, apostate) Muslim governments; and the spread of free market democracy to other (Muslim) countries. The terrorist threat was addressed in terms of generic bilateral partnership with an emphasis on state sponsorship. However, as should have been evident as early as the 1993 World Trade Center attack and CIA killings, the Islamic extremist threat to the United States was not state-sponsored.

The National Security Strategy had failed to address the transnational Islamic extremist threat posed by the Afghan Arabs.

In the 1997 <u>National Security Strategy for a New Century</u>, President Clinton went a bit farther than before in addressing the impact of anti-United States Islamic extremism.[75] The 1997 NSS included specific references to transnational threats to United States interests. It recognized the threat of transnational terrorism and declared that the United States would impose sanctions on states that sponsor terrorism. It also conveyed that the United States had placed terrorism "at the top of the diplomatic agenda" and declared that the United States would

> further seek to uncover, reduce or eliminate foreign terrorist capabilities in our country; eliminate terrorist sanctuaries; counter state-supported terrorism and subversion of moderate regimes through a comprehensive program of diplomatic, economic and intelligence activities; ...and improve protection for our personnel assigned overseas.[76]

Regarding core values and strategic interests in the Muslim world, the 1997 NSS continued to emphasize the Middle East Peace Process and made an even stronger statement regarding Gulf oil: "...[O]ver the long term, U.S. dependence on access to these and other foreign oil sources will remain important as our resources are depleted. The United States must remain ever vigilant to ensure unrestricted access to this critical resource."[77] Finally, the 1997 NSS encouraged the spread of "democratic values" (not democracy) throughout the Middle East, South and Southwest Asia, encouraging increasing political participation, quality of governance, and human rights improvements.[78]

The 1997 NSS softened the core value rhetoric regarding the Muslim world, but still contained items sure to fire the emotions of neofundamentalist Islamic extremists. Above all, the even stronger tie to Gulf oil seem to support Usama Bin Ladin's fears, as stated in his 1996 "Declaration of War". The 1997 NSS still failed to specifically highlight the Islamic extremist threat to the United States, although one could interpret the terrorism policy section to imply *Al-Qa'ida* in Afghanistan's safe haven. Significantly, this NSS was issued nine months after Bin Ladin's "Declaration of War" on the United States.

The 1998 <u>National Security Strategy for a New Century</u> differed from previous NSS documents by containing a clear enumeration of United States national interests.[79] This enumeration followed a 1996 study published by the Commission on America's National Interests, entitled <u>America's National Interests</u>.[80] The Commission on America's National Interests sought to codify a concise statement of core concepts that form the de facto cornerstone of United States domestic and foreign policy. The Commission found that there had been little consensus among legislators, policy makers, and the public regarding what mattered most to the United States. The Commission identified four categories of United States national interests: those which were "vital" (necessary to safeguard and enhance American well-being in a free and secure nation); "extremely important" (would severely prejudice but not imperil the ability of the

United States to safeguard and enhance American well-being); "just important" (would have major negative consequences for the ability of the U.S. government to safeguard and enhance American well-being); and "less important or secondary" (intrinsically desirable but have no major effect on the ability of the U.S. government to safeguard and enhance American well-being). Of significance to the Islamic extremist issue, the Commission identified suppression, containment, and combating terrorism as being "extremely important". Regarding sociological and political values, the Commission identified as "extremely important" the promotion of international rules of law and mechanisms to peacefully resolve disputes. The "just important" category included human rights promotion as a component official foreign policy and democracy promotion without destabilization in strategically important states. Enlarging democracy elsewhere or for its own sake was categorized as being "less important". [81] The Commission report did not specifically address Islamic extremism as an issue of national relevance outside the broader terrorism scope, consistent with previous National Security Strategies.

The 1998 NSS used a three tiered approach to naming national interests: vital, important, and humanitarian/other, very loosely associated with the earlier Commission study. However, the 1998 NSS did not link national interests and national values using the same hierarchy. The 1998 NSS continued the same themes as that of 1997, further delineating the intent to retain a robust and continual military presence in the Gulf to contain Iraq and Iran and ensure continued access to oil. The 1998 NSS again emphasized continued dependence on Gulf oil as a national vulnerability.[82] Most significantly, the 1998 NSS took a much more aggressive stance against Islamic extremism as terrorism. In the terrorism section, it specifically singled out "the network of radical groups affiliated with Osama bin Laden [sic]" [83] as an example of a direct transnational terrorist threat to the United States. Identifying Afghanistan as the nation-state in which this network was located, the 1998 NSS discussed the retaliatory military strike launched in August 1998 against terrorist-associated sites in Afghanistan and Sudan "as a necessary and proportionate response to the imminent threat of further terrorist attacks against U.S. personnel and facilities" following attacks on United States embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.[84] In the regional section, it reminded nations to reject terrorism and refuse "refuge to those who commit such acts."[85] Immediately following this admonition, the NSS included a direct policy statement regarding Islam and the Muslim community:

> U.S. policies in the Middle East and Southwest Asia are not anti-Islamic – an allegation made by some opponents of our efforts to help bring lasting peace and stability to the region. Islam is the fastest-growing faith in the United States. We recognize deeply its moral teachings and its role as a source of instruction and instruction for hundreds of millions of people around the world. U.S. policy in the region is directed at the actions of governments and terrorist groups, not peoples or faiths. The standards we would like all the nations in the region to observe are not merely Western, but universal.[86]

The 1999 National Security Strategy for a New Century left the text of the 1998 NSS largely unchanged. It repeated the same themes regarding terrorism, Bin Ladin, and regional issues (including the need for Gulf oil), but it toned down the rhetoric regarding Islam and eliminated the statement regarding the United States desire for nations in the region to observe a Western (albeit universal) standard.[87]

CONCLUSION

From 1979 to 1989, several United States administrations provided support to Islamists and Islamic extremists as a component of the national Cold War strategy without understanding their underlying motivations. These administrations did not formulate a security strategy to address Islamic extremism in the event of Cold War victory and were unprepared for increasingly anti-American Islamic extremist activity. Although the first United States policy statements responding to this new threat were made in 1992, it was not until 1998 that the United States directly addressed the very real threat of transnational Islamic extremist violence in a NSS. The 1998 and 1999 NSS took into account the nature of the threat; named specific organizations, individuals, and nations harboring them; and highlighted at least one direct military response to the threat (presented as a preemptive strike, not a punitive reprisal). They even attempted to distinguish among Islam, nonviolent Muslims, and Islamic extremists/terrorists. However, certain components of the strategy were sure to be inflammatory among the very Islamist populations the United States government sought to placate. Continued references to the spread of Western democracy (albeit toned down from previous official pronouncements) and an increased identification of United States willingness to use military force to ensure access to Gulf (read: Muslim) oil could aggravate the Islamist and Islamic fundamentalists' anti-imperialist fears. The United States' stated reliance on a trained and ready professional military as policy guarantor was anathema to the Islamic extremists, for whom the professional soldier is an object of scorn. As the United States entered the 21st Century, it had only just begun to seriously address the Islamic extremist threat. Much remained to be done.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States government should continue to closely monitor the transnational Islamic extremist threat. Although rooted in the Middle East, it is a major contributor to instability throughout the world and poses a serious threat to United States security and the well-being of its citizens. The future National Security Strategy should expand coverage of Islamic extremism to address this phenomenon as a permutation of Islamist politics and fundamentalist ideology (albeit on the subnational, national, and international levels) instead of simply terrorism. Finally, policy makers should remove as many "red flags" as possible regarding Islamist fears of United States hegemony. The United States' deeds and words should match the high ideals expressed by

senior national leaders. As it now stands, the United States sends a mixed signal that will only further inflame those who would support the extremists.

In terms of policy implementation, the United States must increase the pressure on Islamic extremists hostile to the United States, United States interests, and friendly governments. This means taking the strategic initiative away from the extremists by reversing the heretofore-reactive approach to terrorist activity. The United States government has multiple agencies involved in various aspects of the Islamic extremist issue. Now is the time to consolidate these efforts within a standing interagency task force to ensure unity of effort. Subordinated to one Executive Branch "czar" responsible to the Chief Executive and with full Congressional oversight, such an interagency task force could fully integrate the diplomatic, law enforcement, intelligence, covert action, military (from information operations through direct action), and humanitarian initiatives of the United States government.

In 1996, a non-governmental entity declared war on the United States carried out lethal asymmetrical warfare for more that four years. If the United States government is serious about protecting the country and its citizens from the Islamic extremist threat, then it must seize the strategic initiative and take the fight to the enemy with every diplomatic and military weapon in the national arsenal, from public statements and foreign aid through covert action, information operations, and military raids. The Islamic extremist enemy will not take this action lightly and will certainly fight back. Americans and their elected officials must be significantly more vigilant than they are at present and must be prepared for increased military and civilian casualties. This will require a fundamental shift in American behavior, for which the American public is not yet prepared. Americans can learn a lesson from the Israelis regarding sustained diplomatic, military, and civil asymmetrical warfare preparedness in their decades-long counterterrorist war.

At the same time, the United States must aggressively act to remove, inasmuch as possible, the motivations behind Islamic extremism. Working with international organizations, other counties, and nongovernmental agencies, the United States should seek to improve the political and socioeconomic conditions that encourage Islamic extremism as the only alternative to poverty and social neglect. Americans must broaden their cultural understanding of the Islamic world, engaging Muslims and non-extremist Islamists to understand differences and find common ground. The diplomatic, military, and intelligence communities should increase the breadth and depth of Islamic expertise among their members, while universities and secondary schools expand language and cultural studies curricula to prepare tomorrow's leaders. Such an effort will yield an increased understanding that should reduce the sources of terrorism.

WORD COUNT = 9567

ENDNOTES

[1] Fawaz A. Gerges, <u>America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999), 1-72. Gerges divides United States policy makers into two camps regarding Islam: the confrontationalists, who view Islam as a monolithic anti-Western and anti-democratic threat; and the accommodationists, who differentiate among Islamic factions and believe that Western and Islamic systems can peacefully coexist. Gerges places the Reagan administration within the confrontationalist camp, citing a 1980 <u>Time</u> interview in which President Reagan "claimed that Muslims were reverting to their belief that unless they killed a Christian or a Jew they would not go to heaven." Attributed to Ronald Reagan in "An Interview With Ronald Reagan," <u>Time</u>, 17 November 1980, n.p., quoted in Gerges, 69-70.

[2] Department of State, <u>Patterns in Global Terrorism: 1998</u> (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State, April 1999), 57-90.

[3] Dilip Hiro, <u>Holy Wars: The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism</u> (New York: Routledge, 1989), 44-59.

[4] Olivier Roy, <u>The Failure of Political Islam</u>, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1994), 35-36.

[5] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, <u>Islam in Modern History</u> (Princeton: Princeton University, 1957), 49, quoted in Hiro, 52.

[6] For a good discussion of the Al-Afghani/Abdu/Rida connection, see Hiro, 59 and Roy, <u>Failure of Political Islam</u>, 37-39.

[7] Attributed to Maududi by Kalim Bahadur, <u>The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan</u> (Lahore: Progressive Books, 1978), 45; quoted in Olivier Roy, <u>Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan</u>, trans. First Edition, Gwydir St, Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986), 80.

[8] Hiro, 60.

[9] Ibid., 60-64.

[10] Near East Division Islamic and Regional Issues Staff, "The Inner World of the Islamist," [working draft ca. October 1999], Near East Division, Operations Directorate, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., 7.

[11] Richard P. Mitchell, <u>The Society of the Muslim Brothers</u> (Oxford: Oxford University, 1993), 67.

[12] Roy, <u>Failure of Political Islam</u>, 37-39.

[13] Mitchell, 71.

[14] Near East Division Islamic and Regional Issues Staff, 6-7.

[15] Roy, <u>Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan</u>, trans. First Edition, Gwydir St, Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986), 69-74.

[16] Hiro, 75.

[17] John K. Cooley, Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism (London: Pluto, 1999), 39.

[18] Hiro, 77-80.

[19] Muhammad Abd-al Salaam Faraj, "Al-Faridah al-Ghaa'ibah", trans. Johannes J.G. Jansen, quoted in its entirety in Johannes J.G. Jansen, The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East (New York: MacMillan, 1986), 160-234. Jansen presents an excellent contextual summary of the original Faraj treatise and a description of events surrounding its discovery. For a good summary of the text's salient points, see Hiro, 80.

[20] Near East Division Islamic and Regional Issues Staff, 16-17.

[21] Roy, Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan, 69-74

[22] Ibid., 75.

[23] Ibid., 75-76.

[24] Ibid., 78.

[25] Ibid., 78.

[26] Ibid., 98-102.

[27] Ibid., 121.

[28] Ibid., 110, 158 and Roy, Failure of Political Islam, 157.

[29] Jean-Paul Charnay, L'Islam et la guerre (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 252, quoted in Roy, Failure of Political Islam, 158-159.

[30] Olivier Roy, "Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?," in Fundamentalism Reborn: Afghanistan and the Taliban, ed. William Maley (New York: New York University, 1998), 201-202.

[31] Kamal Matinuddin, The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997 (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 5.

[32] Roy, Failure of Political Islam, 150.

[33] Barnett R. Rubin, The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System (New Haven: Yale University, 1995), 265-269.

[34] Matinuddin, 8.

[35] Ibid., 12-15.

[36] Ibid., 12-24.

[37] Ibid., 11-42.

[38] Peter Marsden, <u>The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan</u>, Politics in Contemporary Asia (Karachi: Oxford University, 1998), 43-56.

[39] Roy, "Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?," 199-211.

[40] Cooley, 119-120.

[41] Roy, <u>Failure of Political Islam</u>, 117-118.

[42] Roy, "Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?," 201-202.

[43] Cooley, 118-119.

[44] Ibid., 121.

[45] Roy, <u>Failure of Political Islam</u>, 113-115.

[46] Ibid., 121-123.

[47] Roy, "Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?," 203.

[48] Cooley, 123.

[49] Ibid., 224.

[50] Department of State, <u>Patterns in Global Terrorism</u>, 82.

[51] Usama Bin Ladin, "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," trans. Unknown, [unpublished and unpaginated text in English provided to the author], 23 August 1996.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Foreign Broadcast Information Service, "MM271114429627 London <u>Al-Quds al-'Arabi</u> in Arabic 27 November 1996 p. 5", trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 27 November 1996.

[55] Foreign Broadcast Information Service, "MM2302163198 London <u>Al-Quds al-'Arabi</u> in Arabic 23 February 1998 p. 3", trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 23 February 1998.

[56] Gerges, 68.

[57] Ibid., 63.

[58] Ibid., 68.

[59] Kirsten Lundberg, "Politics of a Covert Action: The US, the Mujahideen, and the Stinger Missile," [Draft paper dated 31 August, 1999], Kennedy School of Government Case Study Program, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1.

[60] Ibid., 1-15.

[61] Gerges, 69-73.

[62] Lundberg, 18-19.

[63] The Honorable Charles Wilson, quoted in Bob Woodward and Charles Babcock, "US Covert Aid to Afghans on the Rise; Rep. Wilson Spurs Drive for New Funds, Antiaircraft Cannon for the Insurgents." Washington Post, 13 January 1985, sec. A, p. 1, quoted in Lundberg, 20.

[64] Cooley, 80-105.

[65] Lundberg, 71-75.

[66] Gerges, 73-78.

[67] Ibid., 78.

[68] Edward Djerejian, "The U.S., Islam and the Middle East in a Changing World," United States Department of State Bulletin, 2 June 1992, 3-4.

[69] Gerges, 80-81.

[70] Ibid., 83-85.

[71] Ibid., 86-115.

[72] William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Washington, D.C.: The White House, Febrauary 1996).

[73] Ibid., 42.

[74] Ibid., 15.

[75] Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington, D.C.: The White House, May 1997).

[76] Ibid., 10.

[77] Ibid., 27.

[78] Ibid., 27.

[79] Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October 1998).

[80] The Commission on America's National Interests, America's National Interests (Cambridge, MA: Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, July 1996).

[81] Ibid., 9-25.

[82] Clinton, <u>National Security Strategy</u>, 1998, 51.

[83] Ibid., 16.

[84] Ibid., 16.

[85] Ibid., 54.

[86] Ibid., 54.

[87] Clinton, <u>A National Security Strategy for a New Century</u> (Washington, D.C.: The White House, December 1999).

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