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Our Vision:

In the beginning all people were one nation (Holy Qur'an, 2:213)
Throughout human history, peace has always been the 'primary state' and war the 'accidental state'. Peace is beautiful, compassionate and constructive, while war is fearsome, merciless and destructive. Unfortunately, despite this, war has been one of 20th century's most major problems, and has proved to be the symbol of the beginning of the 21st century. As portrayed by the contemporary history of international relations, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia, war is not the solution, nor is it constructive or helpful in solving problems; rather, it causes problems and is the root of the continuation of violence, instability and insecurity.

War is not the solution to the differences between governments and nations. Only with peace which is based on justice, i.e. '*Just Peace*', can we reach a stable and permanent solution to our differences. Diplomacy and constructive dialogue which take into consideration the rights of both parties, is the only path to establishing '*Just Peace*', stability and world security. Our aim is to change international relations with the active participation of nations on the basis of '*Just Peace*'.

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(Holy Qur'an, 3:104)

We, as part of the international network of intellectuals, are able to play an important and constructive role in the establishment of mutual understanding, of dialogue and in the reduction and amelioration of global problems. Our intention is to provide solutions and means for the positive and just cooperation of nations with each other, and to reach this end independent of governments, through a realistic understanding of nations and governments from each other, and through clear, truthful and constructive dialogue.

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1. Establishing justice between the countries of the South and the North.
2. Mutual respect between different nations and different governments.
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4. Thinking globally and acting against extreme nationalism.
5. Realistic understanding of the realities of the world.
6. Upholding and respecting human rights and the principles of democracy.
7. Accepting and moving towards the destruction of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world/on a global scale

Our priorities in the current situation are to analyse the issues and problems of conflict-zones such as those of the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia.

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1. Inviting and facilitating for intellectuals from different parts of the world to engage in dialogue with each other.
2. Dialogue between intellectuals and international organizations.
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4. Organising international scientific conferences dealing with regional and global issues.
5. Publishing scientific research work on peace studies in the form of books and journals.
6. Providing education internationally on the culture of dialogue, understanding, compromise, justice, freedom and spirituality.

We are a private, non-governmental organisation. Our offices are based in Europe and the Middle East.

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International Peace Studies Centre (IPSC)

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Understanding Radical Islamic Militancy Against the West

Mohammad Sadegh Jokar
International Peace Studies Centre (IPSC), Tehran, Iran

Abstract

This article aims to answer two questions; why is it that radical Islamists, or, as I prefer to call them, neo-fundamentalists,¹ engage in violent actions against the West? And why, contrary to the beliefs of classical Islamists, do they commit indiscriminate terror against civilians in their fight against the West?

In order to answer these questions, we analyzed the letters, statements, and guidelines of top Al-Qaeda leaders, as they are members of one of the most distinct and well-organized radical Islamic groups.

This article is divided into three sections: section one considers the views of these radical groups, as well as their attitudes towards other political groups. Section two examines the ways in which these groups interact with the West. And section three concludes with offering policy implications and possible outcomes.

This study attempts to show how radical Islamist groups perceive the West, and in particular the US, as a “crusader, [the] occupier of Islamic Land, and the supporter of Israel.” This perception has caused a hostile relationship with West. These groups’ employ strict translations of concepts such as *Jihad* and the logic of “an eye for an eye”; as a result, they use military tactics to confront the invaders.

Keywords: Islamists, jihad, terrorism, United States, Zionism

Introduction:

The Western approach to Islam is marked by Orientalist attitudes, and by the West’s own experience of religion. As Edward Said has said, Orientalism is at the root of the West’s misunderstanding of Islamic fundamentalism: the East and the West are viewed as fundamentally opposed to one another, and the East is believed to embody a range of negative characteristics. This arrogant attitude represents the West as developed, democratic and modern, in contrast to the backward, despotic and traditional East. Islamism is further understood to be in opposition to all aspects of modernism.

In this dichotomy of science and religion, which reflects Europe’s own history, any religious perspective is understood to be contrary to modernity, democracy, tolerance, and even spirituality. This view is exemplified in research done by the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Chicago. The “Fundamentalism Project”² classifies fundamentalism as a reaction to modernism, an interpretation common to fundamentalism studies. According to this viewpoint, fundamentalism is seen as a residue of the Dark Ages, at war with enlightenment, development, freedom and modern wisdom. In this context, there is no difference between fundamentalisms of different religions (Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, etc); all of them are perceived in opposition to modernism.³ This viewpoint results in a misunderstanding of Islamic neo-fundamentalist movements, and precludes the opportunity to communicate effectively with these groups.

This misunderstanding of Islamic societies has caused many Western scholars to produce flawed research. Jill Copple, for instance, considers

the Taleban's coming to power in Afghanistan, Khatami's election in Iran, and Erbakan's in Turkey in the 1990's, to be similar signs of Islamic resurgence. This interpretation fails to take into account the important differences between national political contexts.⁴

When this approach influences foreign policy, and US interactions with Islamic movements, the West is presented as innocent of any wrongdoing, unjustly attacked by irrational Islamist groups.⁵ This dominant view has been criticized by some researchers, who argue that Western intervention in Islamic territories has pushed Islamic movements towards militarism and radicalization.⁶

In fact, the terrorist activities of Islamic groups have a "strategic logic"; they are not merely a series of erratic reactions against modernism. This brings us to the key question addressed by this article: why is the neo-fundamentalist approach to the West confrontational? Why do they use terror against civilians as their means of combat?

This article understands the aggressive policy of the US in Middle East as the cause of the militarization of the Islamists' political protests; it argues that the violence of neo-fundamentalists is the result of the US and Israel violence in the region.

This article is divided into three sections. The first section tries to show how Islamist radical groups define themselves and the "other" (the West). The second section explores the rationale behind these groups' interactions with the West, and the third section attempts to articulate some policy implications.

Section One: Neo-Fundamentalists Perceptions of US Activities

Neo-fundamentalist views of US activities are divided into two historical stages. In stage one, during the Soviet attack on Afghanistan, the US was seen as an infidel country, offering aid in the fight against atheist Russians.

From the 1991 Gulf War onwards (in which, according to Bin Laden, King Fahad of Saudi Arabia committed treason by inviting the US forces), neo-fundamentalists formed a new image of US activities. This new picture caused a new reaction in confronting the USA.

1-1 The First Stage: Working with Infidels to Fight Other Infidels.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which happened after the Iranian revolution, threatened key US interests in the Middle East. According to Stephen Zunes, Americans tried to use the Islamists' capabilities to fight the Soviets. They began to give the "freedom fighters Mujahidin"⁷ military, educational and logistic aid. But what was the neo-fundamentalist perception of the US, and how did this shape their relationship with that country?

1-1-1 Theological Justifications for Working with the US

During this period, Islamist groups differed on the subject of whether it was permissible to work with infidels. Some believed that taking help from Western countries in the war in Afghanistan was forbidden. They referred to the words of the Prophet Mohammad; for example, they quoted a paragraph in a book called *Sahih Moslem*, which states that, in the Badr war, the Prophet asked one of the infidels to leave his army, and he further rejected the service of infidels.⁸ But the others argued that in some cases, the service of infidels had been accepted; for example, in the book of *Alnavai* it is said that in the Honain war, the Prophet borrowed a shield from an infidel.⁹ Finally, the views of Abdullah Azzam (1941-1989) ultimately prevailed; he legitimized cooperation with infidels in time of war. However, Azzam outlined a set of conditions:

- 1- Islamic authorities must be the leaders of the war, and the Muslims must be more powerful than their allies.
- 2- The infidels must have a favorable view of the Muslims, and there must be no chance of treason.
- 3- Muslim must be in need of the infidels' assistance.

Azzam strengthened his argument by quoting scholars from the four main sects of Islam on the question of accepting infidels' assistance in a war against other infidels.

For the Hanafi School, he quoted Mohammad bin Hasan, who said that it is acceptable to ask for the help of infidels, if Muslims have the upper hand.

For the Maleki School, he quoted Ibn Ghasem, who said that Muslims can ask for the infidels' help, on the condition that they will serve the Muslims.

For the Shafei School, he quoted Alramli, who cited the view that an Imam or Muslim ruler can enjoy the infidels' assistance as long as the infidels in question have a favorable view of Muslims, or if the Muslims in question are small in numbers.

For the Hanbali School, he quoted Ibn Ghadim as saying that the founder of that school, Ahmad bin Hanbal, permitted Muslims to take assistance from infidels. For him, the infidels could even benefit financially and materially from the war, as long as they were assisting Muslims in repelling infidel armies from Islamic lands.¹⁰

At this stage, the neo-fundamentalists were inclined to cooperate with the US in their fight against the Russian invaders. The neo-fundamentalists perceived themselves as having the upper hand in that fight. At this stage, the cooperation between the US and the neo-fundamentalists was so intense that, according to Stephen Zunes, many Al-Qaeda terrorists were trained by CIA agents.¹¹

1-2 The Second Stage in Neo-Fundamentalists' Perceptions: the US as an Aggressive Enemy

This stage began when King Fahad of Saudi Arabia invited US troops to that country in August 6, 1990, and in the 1991 Gulf War that followed. During this stage, the neo-fundamentalists considered the US to be the leader of "Global Crusaders" that planned to destroy Islam.

This outlook was confirmed by the attack on Iraq by allied forces led by the US, and by the following sanctions against Iraq, the presence of American troops in the Arabian peninsula (in the land of holy mosques), the military intervention in Sudan, and American support for Israel. This viewpoint has various aspects:

1-2-1 The “Zionist” Conspiracy

Unlike the classical fundamentalist view of Western colonialism as the ultimate enemy, the neo-fundamentalists believe that there is a coalition between “Zionists” and “Crusaders” to destroy the real Islam. They argue that throughout history, Christianity and Judaism have wanted to weaken and destroy Islam, and that this attempt continues today.

Taghiyedin Alnabehani, the founder of the Altahrir Party (a fundamentalist group), believed that the defeat of the Christians in the historical crusades caused a deep hatred of the Islamic world, which led Christians to attempt to occupy Islamic territories after the First World War. He believed that war against Islam is ongoing, and that European countries have poisoned the minds of youth, and have distorted the history and values of Muslims.¹² This is why the Altahrir Party favors *jihad* against “American Crusaders” and their “Zionist” ally: because they are both believed to be at war with Islam. The party issued a statement on June 2001, announcing that “the war against the leader of infidels (US) and its assistants, Britain and etc. has started. This is a state of war, and all Muslims are standing against infidels. Jews and Americans have entered the Central Asian countries to fight terrorism and they must get out of these countries.”¹³

In one of his religious edicts, and calling Muslims to *Jihad*, Bin Laden makes the following statement:

- 1- The US has now occupied most of the holy lands in the Islamic world. It has occupied the land of the two holy mosques (Saudi Arabia), it has plundered its wealth, and, with military presence, has harassed Saudi Arabia’s neighbors. Continuous assaults against the people of Iraq have been staged from Saudi bases.

- 2- In spite of inflicting one million casualties on the people of Iraq, the Zionists still want to expand the war to other Islamic countries.
- 3- Although its main motives for imposing war on the Islamic world are religious and economic, the US also want to divert attention from Israel and the occupation of Jerusalem. This is clear in their attempts to disintegrate Iraq and other Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Egypt.¹⁴ Bin Laden further claims that the Americans want Iraq to be divided into 3 regions: the Kurds in north, the Shiites in South, and the Sunnis in the center. This is in line with the Zionist scheme for “Great Israel.”¹⁵

Further, Bin Laden’s followers have reached the conclusion that the US also wants Saudi Arabia to be divided into a few small regions: the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the oil-rich eastern region, and the northern region, which will be annexed to Israel.¹⁶

To neo-fundamentalists, Australia invaded Indonesia as a result of the alliance between the Crusaders and the Jews. When the Taliban in Afghanistan kidnapped 22 Koreans and killed two of them, they justified it by announcing that the Koreans were Christian missionaries. One of the conditions for setting the hostages free was that Korean forces must leave the crusaders’ alliance, and must stop sending missionaries to Afghanistan.¹⁷

The neo-fundamentalists believe that the invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, the Indonesia incidents, and above all, Israel’s massacre of Palestinians, is a joint Crusader-Jewish conspiracy to destroy Islam.

1-2-2- The Shiite Conspiracy, and the Expansion of Secularism in Muslim Countries

Neo-fundamentalists have a hostile attitude toward Shiites. To them, Shiites are worse than Jews and Crusaders. The Al-Qaeda view of Shiites is as follows: “we consider Shiites as idolaters and worst creatures of God.”¹⁸ This is also a common view among the official

Saudi clergy. Abdulrahman Albarak, lecturer at Mohammad bin Saud University, believes that the Shiites are not even Muslims, and that those Shiites who live under Sunni rule, and who try rule to practice their fate freely, should be met with *jihad*.¹⁹

When the Shiites in Saudi Arabia complained to King Abdullah of the harsh repression they faced, the Sunni clergy reacted fervently. Al Ahvaih, a top Saudi clergy and a member of the Internal League of Saudi Clergies, warned that there would be two consequences to any move to give the Shiites more freedom: 1- Shiite sovereignty or 2- the establishment of a secular state in Saudi Arabia. According to Al Ahvaih, all through Islamic history, Shiites have allied themselves with the enemies of the Sunnis. In the thirteenth century, Shiites united with Mongols and killed the Abbasid caliph; today it is said that they are busy conspiring with Americans against Islam.²⁰ Yousof Al Aviri (the Al-Qaeda provocateur in Saudi Arabia who was killed in 2004 in a clash with Saudi forces) believed that Shiites had a long term plan to control strategic locations in the region, and would declare themselves to be the fifth Islamic faith in Sunni countries. To Al Aviri, the threat of Shiites is no less than that posed by Jews and Christians.²¹

Neo-fundamentalists believe that Shiites and Sunni reformists have united to bring change to the political structure of Saudi Arabia, and to establish a secular state there. According to Abdul Rahman Al Najdi, the Taliban spokesperson in 2002, Iraqi Shiites and Americans have united to force Saudis to implement reforms, and to allow Shiites to infiltrate the Saudi political structure. Neo-fundamentalists believe that at present there are two hostile alliances; Zionist-Crusaders and Shiite-Crusaders, and that the latter alliance has grown stronger since the US invasion of Iraq. The sign of this alliance is the negotiations between the US and Iran for authority over the Iraq Sunni population, and over other Sunni countries in the region. Therefore, contrary to Iran and US who wish to see a stable Shiite government in Iraq, neo-fundamentalists want to overthrow the Shiite government of Iraq.

1-2-2 US Support For Corrupt Regimes

Al-Qaeda believes that the US assists corrupt Middle Eastern regimes in their efforts to destroy Islam. In a cassette tape published on January 30, 2005, Ayman Al Zawahiri spoke of the three pillars of Al-Qaeda ideology:

- 1- Liberating Islamic lands
- 2- Supporting political governance based on Quranic teachings
- 3- Liberating the Islamic lands from all monarchies.²²

They believe that any government is corrupt that is founded on human law rather than on the law of Allah. Such governments, Al Qaida believes, are used as tools by the US in their efforts to control Islamic territories. Such corrupt regimes must be replaced by an Islamic caliphate. In the 2005 tape, the list of these regimes included the Saudi monarchy, Mosharaf's military government in Pakistan, the puppet regime headed by Karzai in Afghanistan, Mobarak's government in Egypt, and Libya's Ghaddafi: all these are illegitimate and must be overthrown. These governments permitted Americans to enter Islamic lands, and jailed devoted Muslim clergies. These pro-US governments are thus composed of infidels, and it is just to kill these rulers. According to Zunes, the real problem of the US policy in the Middle East is the support given to autocratic governments which, in turn, has caused the expansion of neo-fundamentalist Islam.²³

Section 2: The Combat Tactics of Radical Islamists

2-1 Defensive Jihad

Although the neo-fundamentalists have revived many Salafi concepts, they have modified these ideas as well. Their emphasis on defensive *jihad* (in contrast to aggressive *jihad*) is one example of this. Neo-fundamentalists' conception of *Jihad* is a reaction to what they call the infidels' invasion of Islamic Lands.

From the sixth Al-Qaeda official statement:

“All the incidents that happened after the New York and Washington attacks: killing Germans in Tunisia, French men in Karachi, bombing a super tanker in Yemen, killing marines in Filka Kuwait, British and Australian citizens killed in Bali blast, Moscow blasts, and all other periodic operations around the world were in response to Crusaders’ war against Islam.”²⁴

In his January 9, 2006 statement, Bin Laden announced:

“Let me tell you that we do not have anything to lose and we are not scared of you. You have occupied our land, betrayed our dignity, insulted our honor, and spilled the blood of our loved ones. You have plundered our riches, destroyed our homes and made us refugees with no security. We want to inflict the same on you.”²⁵

Stressing the defensive *jihad* approach in his October 30, 2005 statement:

“Swear to God, we did not plan to attack the Twin Towers. But after what the American-Israeli coalition did to Lebanon and Palestine, we took it into consideration.”²⁶

It is clear that in spite of the dualistic worldview of good and evil, and contrary to Salafi views, this is a strategy of defensive *Jihad*.

1-2- The Strategy of “Balance of Terror” and Operations inside US and its allies

In an interview with Tayseer Allouni, Bin Laden named his strategy “Balanced Terror,” and stated:

“They kill us and we are forced to kill them in order to have a balance of terror. This is the only time in recent history that a balance has been reached between Muslims and Americans.”²⁷

Then he continued to say that the war will be extended to the US mainland, and will be continued until victory is achieved. This shift, from attacking US interests (as in the 1990s) to attacking the US directly is a sign of Bin Laden's intentions to use US democratic values against itself.

In an interview with John Miller, Bin Laden announced:

“Instead of attacking the US interests abroad, Muslims have decided to fight the US in its own territories. This will continue until Americans choose a government that is more responsible to them and protects their interests.”²⁸

In the same interview Bin Laden also said:

“I tell the American people to get rid of their treacherous government. Your government is an agent of Israel and this is clear with the Clinton government.”²⁹

1-3- Suicide Attacks Against Civilians

In a call to the Iraqi people, Bin Laden states that the use of suicide attacks is key in thwarting the actions of the US and its allies.³⁰ Bin Laden considered attacking civilians to be both logical and religiously justifiable. He gave two reasons for his belief: a) The principal of retaliation b) Governments represent people, and a cruel state is the agent of a cruel people.

a) The principle of retaliation: Bin Laden listed the activities of the US and Israeli governments: “are our civilians and children not innocent and is their blood worthless? Whenever we kill a civilian all the world cries out, but who is saying our blood is not sacred and theirs is? Who will talk in praise of the people killed in our land? More than a million children are killed in Iraq, and continue to be killed; but why we cannot hear the sound of anyone protesting.”³¹

b) To Bin Laden, the US government is the representative of the American people. Therefore, the American people are directly responsible for everything their government does. In a letter to the people of Palestine, Al Qaida announced, “the people of American must make no mistake: we are watching them, and the American political system is a part of them and belongs to them, as Jewish people in Palestine are part of America. I, sheikh Osama, swear to God that the people of America will not enjoy a happy moment until we feel security in Palestine.”³²

In this statement, Bin Laden explains his efforts to influence public opinion in the US, in order to bring an end to its aggressive policy towards the Islamic World.

Bin Laden also develops religious justifications for his attacks on civilians. Although he mentions the Prophet’s words which forbid the massacre of women and children, he insists that these words are not absolute. He quotes the sayings of earlier Islamic scholars (Ibn Ghayem, Shokani, and Qartobi) to the effect that, if infidels have killed your women and children, you should not fail to do the same to them, especially if it might prevent them from doing it again. To Bin Laden this is religious law, and those who say otherwise have no knowledge of Islam.³³

However, Bin Laden’s teacher, Abdullah Azam, offered a more comprehensive analysis of the question of whether it is permissible to kill women and civilians in times of war; he stated that Islamic scholars have responded to this question in two ways.

The Maleki School holds that the killing of women and children is never permitted.

The Shafei and Hanafi schools maintain that the killing of women and children is not allowed, unless they either engage in combat, or are indistinguishable from those who are engaged in combat.

In *Hokkam Soltanieh*, Mavardi says: “Killing women and children, as long as they do not fight, is not allowed, because this has been banned by the Prophet.”

In *Almabsoot*, Alsorkhi says, “Attacking the infidel’s castles will not be stopped due to the presence of women and children or even Muslim slaves dwelling in them.”

Ibn Taymiyeh also believes that the presence of human shields (for instance, captured Muslims) should not keep Muslims from attacking the infidels, especially if not attacking might lead to the defeat of Muslims. Some scholars believe that even a ceasefire agreement should not keep Muslims from mounting an attack.³⁴

In view of Bin Laden’s and Ayman Al Zawahiri’s speech and actions, it seems that the neo-fundamentalists hold the second position on the question of whether it is permissible to kill civilians.

Based on the image the neo-fundamentalists have of America and its actions, they have announced *Jihad* against that country. This struggle has two dimensions: 1- The destruction of the “Zionist-Crusader” alliance by attacking its allies and interests around the world; and 2- Attacking America inside its own frontiers.³⁵ This is what we have seen in the expansion of the attacks on the US and its allies, which have become increasingly common, and increasingly complex.

The number of terrorist attacks against the US and Europe has increased dramatically since the end of the 1990s. These attacks, which used to target US and European interests internationally, have become direct hits inside the borders of these countries. The main goal of these attacks, as Bin Laden put it, was a “Balance in Terror” in order to force the US out of Islamic countries.³⁶ The table below shows the terrorist attacks of the 1980s, the 1990s, and the early 2000s; it shows a

dramatic increase in numbers. In the 1980s there were only six major attacks, while during and after the 1990s, this number increased to 31.

Terrorist Attacks in the 1980s³⁷

Casualties	Place of Attack	Date
63 deaths	US embassy in Beirut	April 1983
241 deaths	Marine Camp	October 1983
5 deaths	US embassy in Kuwait	December 1983
Dean of Beirut University	Beirut	January 1983
18 deaths	Air base in Spain	April 1983
16 deaths	US embassy in Beirut	September 1984

Terrorist Attacks in the 1990s and 2000s³⁸

Description and casualties	Place of attack	Date
World Trade Centre, 6 deaths and 1000 injured	New York, US	February 26, 1993
Small bomb in Philippine airline, killing one Japanese merchant and wounding 10	The Philippines	December 11, 1994
Paris metro and a Jewish school in Lyon	Paris and Lyon, France	July 29, 1994
Military Base bombing	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	November 13, 1995
A tourist site, 9 Germans Killed	Cairo, Egypt	September 18, 1997
A tourist site, 70 killed	Luxor, Egypt	December 17, 1997
US embassies, 200 deaths and thousands injured	Nairobi, Kenya; Darussalam, Tanzania	December 7, 1997
US ship Cole, 17 killed and 39 injured	Yemen	October 12, 2000

World Trade Centre, more than 3000 killed	Washington, New York, US	September 11, 2001
Car bomb, 21 deaths	Tunisia	April 11, 2002
French engineers bus attacked	Karachi, Pakistan	May 8, 2002
US consulate, 12 killed and 51 injured	Karachi, Pakistan	July 14, 2002
French oil tanker, 1 killed	Yemen	October 10, 2002
A club in Bali, 202 killed including 26 British	Bali, Indonesia	October 12, 2002
Israel hotel, 12 killed	Mombasa, Kenya	November 28, 2001
Residential building, 30 killed	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	May 12, 2003
Spanish club, 45 killed and 100 injured	Casablanca, Morocco	May 16, 2003
Marriot hotel, 12 killed and 100 injured	Indonesia	August, 5, 2003
Residential bldg, 17 killed and 80 injured	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	November 8, 2003
Car bomb	Islam Abad, Turkey	November 15, 2003
Car bomb, British consulate and bank, 60 killed	Islamabad, Turkey	November 20, 2003
199 killed	Madrid, Spain	March 11, 2004
6 foreign workers and 1 Saudi killed	Yenbo, Saudi Arabia	May 1, 2004
4 oil rig platform	Alkhobar, Saudi Arabia	May 30, 2004
Car bomb, Australian Embassy, 9 killed and 100 injured	Jakarta, Indonesia	September 8, 2004
Hilton hotel in Taba, bombing in Sinai, 30 killed	Egypt	September 8, 2004
Marriot hotel, 7 injured	Islamabad, Pakistan	October 28, 2004
A theater, 1 killed and 12 injured	Doha, Qatar	March 19, 2005
Cairo market, 2 French	Cairo, Egypt	April 7, 2005

and 1 US killed, and 17 injured		
Tourist bus burned, 8 injured	Cairo, Egypt	April 30, 2005
Metro and bus blast, 52 killed and 700 injured	London, Britain	July 7, 2005
46 cases of terrorist activity by radical jihadist groups ³⁹	United States	Between 2001 and 2009

Conclusion:

In this article we have tried to demonstrate that: 1- terrorism is not an intrinsic part of Islam; and 2- Western and especially US actions in Islamic territories, and support for Israel, has contributed to a hostile attitude on the part of Muslim fundamentalists. This has caused a reaction against the US and its allies (who are believed to have formed a “Zionist-Crusader Alliance”). This reaction has been justified as a religious act of *jihad*. Fundamentalists justify their violence and military activities with reference to the military violence of the US and Israel, and in particular the deaths of civilians caused by these armies. Thus the neo-fundamentalists describe their actions as “balanced terror.” Until the US and its allies end their violent military presence in Islamic territories, the violent reaction of the Islamist neo-fundamentalists will continue.

After analyzing Al Qaida suicide actors from 1995 to 2004, political scientist Robert Pape concludes that two thirds of them come from countries in which the US has a military presence. In another article, he draws the conclusion that these terrorist activities are not religious, but in fact pursue a unique strategic goal: forcing modern democracies to change their policies and end their military presence in Islamic territories. “The goal of more than 95 per cent of terrorist activities is the expulsion of invaders.”⁴⁰

In criticizing the view that Islam is the root cause of terrorist activities, Pape states, “the argument that Islam is the reason behind terror attacks is incorrect. If this was true, then we should have had the majority of these attacks committed by Iran which has a Muslim population three times bigger than Iraq and Saudi Arabia. But in fact we do not see any Iranian Muslim among the terrorists.”⁴¹

Pape concluded that, as the presence of the US in the Middle East increases, terrorist activities likewise increase. In his view, there was no terrorist activity in Iraq, prior to the US invasion. However, there were 20 attacks in 2003, 40 in 2004, 50 in 2005, and 65 in 2006. Since 2002, Al Qaida has executed attacks that are fewer in number but more significant in impact, all over the world. These 15 major operations are the equivalent of all their operations pre- 2001. The reason for this is the US military presence in Islamic territories. These territories are holy to the neo-fundamentalists, and must be defended. According to Pape, in 1996 Bin Laden predicted that Iraq would be invaded by the US. George W. Bush made this a reality, and consequently, Bin Laden become more certain of the eventual disintegration of Saudi Arabia at the hands of the US.⁴² From this point of view, Bush strengthened the neo-fundamentalists’ view that they are engaged in a war against Crusaders.

Pape sees the presence of the US in the Middle East as the root cause of anti-Americanism. Similarly, in a Carnegie Foundation seminar on anti-Americanism, Alexander Randos pointed out that “the main reason for anti-Americanism is the cultural differences between the US, with its capitalist-Christian identity, and Islamic groups. According to Randos, US is the cultural “other” of terrorist groups. With the aggressive acts of the US in Islamic territories, its military presence in the Middle East, its support of Israel, and its fight against Islamists, this alien is considered to be an enemy by fundamentalists.”⁴³

Ivan Crustof also believes that anti-Americanism is a conceptual and cognitive problem that has been embedded in the minds of terrorist groups over a long period of time. It takes different forms in different societies, and reflects the ideological framework of each context in

which it is found.⁴⁴ The US is caught between the need to reduce anti-Americanism, and the need to secure its interests. It is believed that America's interests require a US military presence in the Middle East, and the provision of support to the region's authoritarian regimes, as well as to Israel. This in return strengthens the notion of "America as enemy" in the minds of neo-fundamentalists, and thus contributes to the growth of anti-Americanism.

As Pape suggests, the US military presence in the region is seen by neo-fundamentalists as the actions of an enemy; this leads to terrorism. US actions in response to the Arab-Israel conflict, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Somalia, in Sudan, in Saudi Arabia and in Indonesia have all contributed to this situation. Maybe Bin Laden's words should be heard once again:

“Swear to God, we did not plan to attack the Twin Towers. But after what the American-Israeli coalition did to Lebanon and Palestine, we took it into consideration.”⁴⁵

Endnotes

¹ Islamic neo-fundamentalism refers to new social movements that reject the culture of modernity but combine modern technological achievements with traditional tendencies in order to differentiate themselves from traditional Islamists, and to combat modern Western culture and globalization. These movements are jihadist, exclusivist (belief in excommunicating non-believers, *Takfir*), trans-national, anti-Semitic, and literal-minded who believe in literal reading of sacred texts. For more information, see *Globalized Islam* by Oliver Rove.

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¹⁶ - Ibid.

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¹⁹ Ibid, p.27

²⁰ Ibid, p.29

²¹ Ibid, p.33

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²³ Zunes, U.S. Policy toward political islam,**op.cit**,p.18

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