8 Toward a strategy

In the fifth century BC the ancient Chinese strategist of war Sun Tsu noted that "What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy." Without a deep knowledge of one's adversary, he argued, one cannot expect to wage an effective campaign. Every decision one makes with regard to that opponent, including their goals, their strengths and their vulnerabilities, would stem from a faulty premise. A war could therefore be lost before a single battle was fought if one failed to attack the enemy's strategy.

In order to defeat al-Qaeda and its associated movements over the long term the world must craft and implement an integrated strategy that is built on a firm understanding of the Jihadist movement's own grand strategy. To date, no such counter-Jihadist strategy has been put in place. This is not to say that national governments have not formulated any counter-terrorism strategies. To the contrary, nearly every country has some sort of stated strategy to counter terrorist threats. These strategies, however, are almost entirely constructed on the basis of what the global Jihadist movement is believed to be, not what it actually is. In many ways, then, existing national strategies are built to fight an illusion of the real enemy.

Some argue that the lack of progress in developing an integrated global strategy that targets the Jihadist movement's strategy is due to the challenges of transforming large bureaucratic organizations. Others point to problems with information sharing within and across governments, stressing the need for further integration and coordination initiatives. But these are merely symptoms of a more serious malady: the Jihadist movement remains poorly understood within the policy community.

Strategies are invaluable for commanders as they provide a series of carefully crafted plans for achieving specific results. The most effective strategies are those that have been carefully calibrated to the context in which one is waging a campaign. This includes a mastery of one's own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of one's adversary. Ideally, strategies utilize all available, relevant and appropriate instruments at an individual's or organization's disposal in order to achieve objectives. There are few tasks that are more important for ensuring long-term global security than formulating a comprehensive strategy for suppressing the further promulgation of the global Jihadist ideology.

George Kennan argued in a landmark 1947 article that the United States should pursue "a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with
that the United States or the United Kingdom can say today that is perceived as anything other than self-interested propaganda by the Islamic world. Not engaging with the Islamic world, however, would be even worse—the foreign policy equivalent of ignoring an elephant in the room. So Western governments must continue to try to communicate their goals, successes, and failures in the likes of Iraq and Afghanistan in every way that they can.

Another conundrum is that Western governments can do nothing right in terms of describing their adversary and their fight against it. The variety of terms used to describe that adversary include “al-Qaida,” “Jihadist,” “militant Islamist,” “radical Muslims,” “Salafi-Jihadists,” “Islamo-fascists,” and more. These terms have been deemed objectionable by at least one major constituency, causing Western policymakers to enter this discussion paralyzed. Because they will be criticized almost irrespective of which term they choose, the policy-makers have tended to avoid using any term that is too specific. So it has become difficult for them to define the adversary, and it is equally difficult to define the nature of the fight. Phrases like “global war on terrorism,” “global struggle against violent extremism,” “the long war” are all disliked by publics and leaders worldwide. No better slogan, however, has emerged to replace these stock phrases, meaning that Western policy-makers charged with communicating the nature of their efforts to their publics lack even the basic language to describe what they are trying to achieve.

Finally, it has proved very difficult to find qualified advisers on this topic. Fluent native Arabic speakers have often been turned away when trying to volunteer because of fears that they might be a security risk. The CIA and the Department of Homeland Security in the USA, according to some reports, have instead hired cadres of Western, school-trained Arabic speakers—people who are significantly less able to handle multiple dialects and idioms. In 2006, for instance, the FBI was criticized by the Washington Post for having only 33 (out of a total of twelve thousand) special agents who were proficient in Arabic five years after 9/11.

Making matters more difficult is that there is no shared lens through which policymakers, military officials and intelligence analysis view Jihad. Understandings of the concept differ not just from agency to agency but from analyst to analyst. Attitudes across the US government, as one might expect, mirror the wide diversity of opinions and attitudes in the broader American public about the Islamic religion, Jihadism and the nature of the security threats posed by terrorist groups like al-Qaida.

Debates over the meaning of Jihad

The meaning of Jihad is a topic that causes both angst and contention among government officials. There are several reasons why non-Muslim policy-makers have been visibly awkward and vacillating in their discussions of issues relating to this term. First, there has been little incentive within Western bureaucracies for officials to develop a deep cultural and historical knowledge of Islam or to learn the Arabic language. Anecdotal evidence has shown that policy-makers in senior
positions across governments do not understand even the basic concepts and dynamics of the global war on terror, the Middle East, or Islam. Government officials also operate in a highly charged and intensely scrutinized environment. In an era of generally heightened sensitivity to diversity, and an increased awareness that winning the hearts and minds of Muslims is key to defeating the spread of militiam Salafism, government officials, most of whom seek readily understandable answers to their questions, are rewarded (or at least not punished) by taking the most politically neutral and non-offensive approach possible. So, since the attacks of 9/11, non-Muslim policy-makers have taken extraordinary steps to demonstrate that they are both tolerant and progressive in their understanding of Islam. This has led to a number of senior policy officials speaking in overly simplistic terms about the nature of the religion. For example, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, the White House press secretary and the former Deputy Secretary for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes, among others, have publicly and categorically asserted that “Islam is a religion of peace.” Meanwhile, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s Goddard Space Flight Center hosts an Islamic Study Group page on its website which features a presentation by the Council on American–Islamic Relations that clearly explains, “Jihad does not mean Holy War.”

An informed grand strategy

An effective grand strategy for defeating the global Jihadist movement must be multi-pronged in nature, global in scope, and flexible in execution. It must draw on all sources of national power, including diplomatic, intelligence, military, economic, financial, information and law enforcement. And it needs to transcend conventional boundaries because, for the global Jihadist movement itself, such boundaries are increasingly irrelevant: the battlefield is now everywhere. But more than anything else, it must be grounded in a deep understanding of the global Jihadist movement.

In his book *The 33 Strategies of War*, Robert Greene provides an incisive study of the strategies crafted by some of history’s greatest commanders, strategists and leaders. Each of these strategies—including those of Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Bonaparte—relies on a particular combination of strength, seduction and deception. And many of them could be usefully applied by governments to combat and eradicate global Jihadism. The following strategies form a powerful grand strategic approach that could significantly enhance the coherence and effectiveness of global counter-terrorist initiatives.

The polarity strategy: declare war on the enemy

Al-Qaeda and the Jihadist movement have repeatedly and openly declared war on most Western governments, all Islamic regimes not applying Sharia law, and a variety of other entities. They have purposefully sought to polarize the world into two camps: those with the Zionist–Crusader conspiracy and those against it. The movement’s willingness specifically to identify its enemies has been a strategic success. It has established internal guidelines for action; what is referred to among military audiences as the “commander’s intent.” It informs Jihadists about whom they can trust and whom they must hate. The more specific the movement is about whom it stands against, the more protected it is from accusations of hypocrisy or duplicity, so long as its actions are in line with its rhetoric. Providing clear guidelines about whom Jihadists like and dislike is particularly important, given that the movement is physically disconnected and decentralized. Having an established commander’s intent therefore empowers the movement’s regional field commanders to take this general guidance and apply it in the best way for their local situation. This operational flexibility allows groups like al-Qaeda to exist in a state of controlled chaos. It also helps the movement as a whole to inculcate an *esprit de corps* among its members, fostering a belief that they are standing unified against a group of aggressors.

There is no question that most of the world is currently waging war against the Jihadist movement. The enemy, as governments define it, however, might be “terrorists,” “al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations,” “religious extremists,” “deviants,” or any number of other derogatory terms. This continued inability to identify a specific enemy has led many governments open to criticism of inconsistency and hypocrisy from external audiences. Such criticism compounds the challenges facing governments seeking to compete with the Jihadist movement for hearts and minds. In contrast, by clearly identifying its enemy, the Jihadist movement has not only retained focus but has opened the door for collaboration with other enemies of its enemy. Jihadists can now readily tap into the grievances held by other groups or constituencies, even if they differ in methods or objectives. This expands their potential recruitment pool and support base. The United States, on the other hand, has framed its war in terms of “with us or against us,” dividing the world into two camps and prioritizing exclusivity rather than the inclusivity of the Jihadist movement. This has made it more difficult for Western governments to capitalize on the long list of groups and influential individuals who view the Jihadist movement as a threat to them and their interests. Many of these parties are eager to join a fight against al-Qaeda, but they could never countenance joining with the United States or the West in that fight.

Governments around the world must therefore recalibrate their national strategies to identify a specific and common enemy: the global Jihadist movement. They must also ensure that their public rhetoric centers on building a unified front against a shared enemy, concentrating on temporarily setting aside differences on other issues in order to deal with the greater threat.

The perfect economy strategy: choosing battles carefully

Every force has its limitations, be they manpower, ammunition, funding, morale or numerous other variables. No force is therefore able to execute every mission in exactly the way it desires. However, the Jihadist movement has been particularly effective in its allocation of scarce resources. Obviously outgunned and
overpowered militarily, it has made several important decisions. First, it decided to make terrorism a core, although not an all-encompassing, part of its grand strategy. Terrorism allows a small number of people to have a disproportionate impact on a substantially larger enemy by targeting its non-combatants. It is also a relatively inexpensive way to pursue specific strategic objectives. Furthermore, it needs to be perpetrated only periodically in order to inflict long-term psychological trauma on the target population. The global Jihadist movement has therefore been able patiently to conduct reconnaissance, move assets into place, finance, implement training and execute attacks on its own schedule. Trading time—a resource that the Jihadist movement has in abundance—for the ability to calculate actions that will have the greatest effect, the movement has been highly effective in choosing its battles.

Western civilian populations generally do not appreciate that Jihadist terrorism is not focused on them as an end. Jihadists are not seeking to change people’s ways of life or causing fear across populations just for the sake of it. Rather, they intend to use the fear they generate to bait Western military forces into the Middle East, drive Western business and investment out of the Middle East, and therefore bleed Western economies dry by forcing them to defend themselves against the threat of future terrorism.

Global Jihadists have also pursued classic guerrilla and insurgent strategies as a way of conserving energy. They employ these relatively inexpensive and low-tech approaches in order to keep Coalition and local security forces on the defensive with very few fighters. By eliminating static lines, embracing fluidity of operations and prioritizing mobility among their forces, global Jihadists have been able to maximize their limited resources. The Jihadist insurgent strategy fits closely with another important trend in the movement: transforming its single greatest weakness—its geographically dispersed structure—into its greatest strength. Its decentralized network has effectively allowed it to wage an insurgency on a global scale.

In contrast to the global Jihadists who have perfected the strategy of choosing their battles carefully, Western governments, particularly the United States, seem to be doing the opposite. A fortune in American counter-terrorism resources has been allocated to two enormous efforts: protecting the homeland and waging war in Iraq. The underlying assumption of American homeland security programs is that the global Jihadist movement is dedicated to wreaking havoc, mayhem and destruction against civilian targets internationally. By hardening potential targets, securing aviation, maritime and terrestrial transport systems and creating a robust network for monitoring the flows of money, information, goods, people and hazardous material within and across borders, governments worldwide have sought to make the terrorist’s job more difficult.

Another critical aspect of defending against terrorist attack is communicating information across agencies. The need to gather and share terrorism-related intelligence and analysis internally and across national boundaries has not only been acknowledged but prioritized. Indeed, sharing this knowledge is critical if governments are to disrupt and disable would-be terrorist attacks, denying them entry to countries, hindering their movement if they are already inside, and establishing protective measures to reduce collective vulnerability to terrorist attack. Among the most important sectors for defense and first-response preparedness are: critical infrastructure and key resources, including energy, food and agriculture, water, telecommunications, public health, transportation, the defense industrial base, government facilities, postal and shipping, the chemical industry, emergency services, monuments and icons, information technology, dams, commercial facilities, banking and finance, and nuclear reactors, materials and waste.

The constant threat of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction is a matter of chief concern for governments around the world. Therefore, there has been a unified global effort to deny terrorists access to the materials, expertise and other enabling capabilities required to develop such weapons through counter-proliferation and non-proliferation initiatives.

**Divide and conquer: factionalizing the global Jihadist movement**

For decades, Jihadism has exercised great fascination for the students of Egyptian intellectuals and the acolytes of charismatic Saudi shaikhs. Frustrated, discontented, hopeless of overthrowing the political system—or simply too impatient to attempt to do so legally—Jihadists sought instead to change the face of society. Jihadist revolutionaries found in Salafist thought a highly convenient rationalization for their political desires, one that afforded religious justification for their impatience, for their pathetic denial of any value in seeking reform from apostate leaders, for their yearning for political power and personal revenge.

It is not surprising that a small group of men came to believe and promote the undeniable truth of Salafist teaching in schools, universities, mosques, and now online. Edward Gibbon’s words, used by Kennan to illustrate the process of self-delusion he saw among those in the Soviet Union, are equally apt in today’s conflict:

> From enthusiasm to imposture the step is perilous and slippery; the demon of Socrates affords a memorable instance of how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others, how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self-delusion and voluntary fraud.

The global Jihadist movement would not exist today without its scholars, shaikhs and intellectuals. The power of these individuals to steer and guide the movement cannot be overstated. What is poorly understood today, however, is that massive fractures exist among these thinkers and their followers that could be widened in such a way to catalyze the self-destruction of the Salafist ideology.

Some of these fractures are visible in the debates over strategy and the future direction of the Jihadist movement. Consider, for instance, the debate that occurred between the emir of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and the organization’s High Command in 2005. Zarqawi, the thug leader of al-Qaeda’s brutal operations in Iraq at the time, had been pursuing a strategy of turning everyone against everyone else. The logic was simple: by focusing effort on driving the American forces from Iraq, a virtually impossible task, Zarqawi would provide the Shia
majority with the opportunity they needed to consolidate power, establish a functioning government, set up social infrastructure and build an effective national guard and police force. So by the time he was able to turn his focus on the Shia authorities, they would have entrenched themselves across the country and ingratiated themselves with the local population.

However, al-Qaida’s senior leadership was highly displeased with Zarqawi for what they considered to be his overly violent methodology. Rather than conducting savage beheadings and massive explosions against other Muslims, Zarqawi should be concentrating on opening up security vacuums and establishing territorial footholds across Iraq. A stern letter-writing campaign was inaugurated by Ayman al-Zawahiri and his top deputies, including Atiyah abd al-Rahman and Abu Yahya Libi, all of whom scolded Zarqawi for his actions. The latter resisted their demands and the continuing dispute ripped apart the broader Jihadist community. The competition between supporters of Zarqawi and supporters of the High Command was played out in a very public way. If one media outlet released a propaganda video prominently featuring Zarqawi, it would be followed almost immediately by one from another media group highlighting Bin Laden and Zawahiri. The two sides were reconciled only with Zarqawi’s death in June 2006.

Other splits have been more personal. Take the rift between the two founders of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Zawahiri and Abd al-Qadir ibn Abd al-Aziz, that occurred in the early 1990s. The latter lost faith in his erstwhile friend and colleague because of Zawahiri’s poor strategic judgement in waging war against the Egyptian government, his stubbornness and his decision to take sole credit for a book that they had co-authored. Or consider the feud between Abu Qatada and Abu Musab al-Suri over the former’s continued support for Algerian terrorism in the mid-1990s, when the GIA’s activities crossed the point of acceptability for most Muslims and even most Jihadists.

Jihadist thinkers often express sadness for and disappointment in any colleagues who recant, even when they know it may have been coerced. They commonly refer to these people as “turncoats” or “backbiters.” Consider the fall from Jihadist grace of two Saudi shaikhs, Safar al-Hawai and Salman al-Awdah, who not only recanted but actively joined the Saudi government in fighting against the global Jihadist movement. The British-based thinker Abu Basir al-Tartusi similarly created a firestorm among some Jihadists when he spoke out against the use of suicide bombings in the United Kingdom. And the Kuwaiti Jihadist Shaikh Hamad al-Ali irritated a number of Jihadist scholars when he argued against the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq. Even the legendary scholar Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi created rifts within the community when he castigated his former student and partner Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The center of gravity strategy: hit them where it hurts

The Jihadist movement’s most important resources are its new recruits. If the amount of new blood entering the movement could be reduced, organizations like al-Qaida would inevitably become stale, out of touch and less active globally in the long term. By focusing on this “center of gravity,” the point at which the entire movement draws its power and endurance, Western governments would be able to hinder the movement significantly.

Most discussions about public diplomacy and strategic communication efforts mention the audiences who should be targeted. Some argue that the target audience should be the Jihadists themselves, and there is indeed some evidence to show that committed participants in the movement can be swayed. A number of countries, most notably Saudi Arabia, have implemented re-education and de-radicalization programs to control the spread of Jihadist thought among the movement’s foot soldiers. Others argue that, rather than focusing on the few who are already committed, resources might be better spent on the broader constituencies whom the Jihadists are trying to suck into their vortex. Thinking in terms of concentric circles, with al-Qaida in the center, the next ring out would include the uncommitted, albeit ultra-conservative and irate, Salafist youth. These people are fluent in the ideological doctrine and share the socio-economic and political grievances of the movement, but they have yet to cross the mental threshold of identifying themselves as “Jihadist.” Nevertheless, they probably already possess several of the behavioral characteristics that are familiar among ardline Jihadists.

- Social disillusionment: Followers of Jihadism tend to emerge from populations who see themselves as disenchanted by their own government and see no legitimate way to promote change in their country. Without a stake in the existing order, they are vulnerable to manipulation by those who advocate a perverse political vision based on violence and destruction. If they live in the West, they might also be angry with their immediate family for leaving what they tend to glorize as a more religiously pure country.

- Belief in conspiracies: The global Jihadist message seems particularly resonant with people whose knowledge about the world is conditioned by conspiracy theorizing. Such theories keep grievances alive by filtering out or altering facts that would otherwise challenge prejudices and propaganda. Paranoia, obsession and mistrust of outsiders tend to be pervasive among Jihadist followers.

- Need for simplification: Those individuals who fall under the spell of the Jihadist ideology often share a need for black-and-white answers to problems. They need to know who they can trust and against whom they must defend themselves. Above all else, they look for guarantees that certain actions will guarantee them a place in Heaven.

- Deference to leadership: Although most discussions about the attraction of Jihadism for individuals center on peer networks, the role of charismatic leadership seems to be far more persuasive for Jihadist recruits. They desperately seek counsel from senior figures (both dead and alive) about all aspects of life, particularly in regard to their ideology.

If young Muslims exhibiting these characteristics can be identified before moving to violence, governments may succeed in weakening the global Jihadist movement.
Give Jihadists enough rope to hang themselves

Ultimately, the Jihadist movement’s self-destructive tendencies will be its downfall. The only reason why the most recent manifestation of global Jihadism has not yet collapsed on itself is because it has consistently succeeded in redirecting criticism away from itself. This redirection campaign has been remarkably sophisticated and yet cunningly simple. In some cases, the global Jihadist leadership does little more than argue that it is the lesser of two evils. Usually in the aftermath of an unpopular attack, the leaders may deny their involvement or claim that an attack did not go as planned. Either way, they argue, the mistake can still be justified in the eyes of God because the enemy is so bad that Muslims must be willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good. In other cases, the leadership might dismiss allegations made against it by its critics as nothing more than fabrication and falsities. Playing on popular conspiracy theories that pervade the Islamic world, the leaders are able to mitigate the damage of unfavorable characterizations by attacking the source’s credibility, rather than responding to the substance of the charge.

One of the reasons why the Jihadist movement has become so good at conducting public relations damage-control operations is because it has had so much practice: most of its actions are unpopular among the broader Islamic world. Jihadism’s fundamental weakness is that it offers no attractive end result to most people. This is why the movement has been so vocal about its motivations for fighting and its short-term objectives: its leaders are well aware that their terrorist methodology and their long-term strategic objectives are widely unpopular.

Those policy-makers around the world charged with defeating the Jihadist movement ought to pause momentarily and consider that sometimes less action can yield more fruit. As the great strategist Napoleon Bonaparte once said: “If your enemy is busy shooting himself in the foot, don’t get in his way.” Or, to put it another way, today’s global fight against al-Qaeda and its associated movements might be characterized as a failure by governments and societies around the world to let the enemy have enough rope to hang itself. Governments around the world should make a concerted effort to stop interrupting the Jihadist movement as it damages its own credibility within its core constituency and shores the religious legitimacy in which it cloaks itself.

Forcing strategies: control the dynamic

Global Jihadists have spent decades learning how to dominate public discourse. As members of a generally unpopular and peripheral movement, Jihadist scholars have historically needed to defend themselves against vigorous smear campaigns waged by government-sponsored religious scholars. Jihadist scholars have also had to master the art of rhetorical manipulation in order to recruit new members into their movement. Governments across the Middle East have sought to make the movement as unattractive as possible. They have funded large-scale propaganda campaigns in the hope of ideologically immunizing their youth populations from being tempted by the movement. They have also engaged in highly public arrest and interrogation campaigns of Jihadists in order to intimidate those who might be ideologically committed to the movement from acting on their desires. Over time, though, Jihadists have learned how to navigate around these hurdles by seizing the offensive in the public debate. They realized that they could put governments and their religious advisers back on their heels by challenging their overall religiosity. Governments looking to reclaim dominance in the court of public opinion ought to take the following steps:

- Aggressively assault the reputation of the global Jihadist movement by presenting the latter’s most reprehensible words and actions. Prove that the movement has historically offered and continues to offer nothing but violence and bloodshed.
- Force mainstream Salafists to define their positions on specific issues as often and as publicly as possible. This will then be forced to discuss not only what they are for but what they are against, which will allow Muslims to see just how conservative much of their ideology is across multiple fronts.
- Steer conversations about terrorism away from religious issues and more toward common denominators (family, social justice, accountable leadership). Help people to find a theme on which they can unite, not an enemy against which they can unite. If Middle East audiences are told they must unite against an enemy, they will tend to pick the West, not Jihadism.
- Continue to promote the ideals of the Western liberal value system. There is no doubt that much of the world still looks to the West for hope. The values of respect for human dignity and protection of the minority voice are transcendental and hold sway over many of the audiences whom some have been eager to write off as lost causes.
- Move away from the inflexible “talking-points” that define (particularly American) public diplomacy initiatives and implement more process-driven campaigns through the realm of human-to-human exchanges and micro-level communication efforts. The goal must not be to communicate a specific point to an audience. Rather, it should be to catalyze discussion and inform that debate. Governments must empower a new cadre of young, smart professionals across the private, public and academic spheres, with the flexibility and resources to discuss hard issues candidly in a variety of public fora.

These initiatives ought to be paired with the hard-nosed counter-terrorism policies already in effect. The global Jihadist movement will not die easily, so stopping those operatives whose job it is to conduct attacks and the commanders who order them remains a critical piece of the overall counter-Jihadist strategy. Although the best methodology for stopping these individuals is open to debate, there is no doubt that success in this sphere requires an enormous amount of global cooperation on intelligence, military and law enforcement fronts.

Know your enemy: the intelligence strategy

Many followers of the global Jihadist movement have made studying the works of their adversary a chief priority. They read military strategy books, contemporary
periodicals, and popular political commentary in order to target weaknesses and
degrade strengths. In contrast, to date, the rest of the world has dedicated only a
cursory amount of time toward really understanding the global Jihadist movement
from the inside. One of the most effective ways to learn about the priorities,
sensitivities and goals of Jihadist thinkers is simply to read their works. But as
there are thousands of books, articles and blog postings in cyberspace, studying
the enemy from their own side is a daunting task for anyone. However, thanks to
Issa al-Awshan, the now dead Saudi Jihadist involved with al-Qaida’s propaganda
machine on the peninsula, there is a short cut. In 39 Ways to Serve and Participate
in Jihad (which has been translated into multiple languages and is one of the
most widely read Jihadist books of the decade), Awshan provides readers with
a road-map for learning about the movement. There is no reason why those
outside of the Jihadist Movement should not use his work in order to understand
the enemy better.

Awshan explains that one of the best ways for Muslims not on the front line
to support the movement is for them to learn the jurisprudence of Jihad and related
legal issues. Doing this allows anyone to become a potential teacher, recruiter
and religious adviser, he contends. Generally, Jihadists or those interested
in the topic of Jihad should read works by Abdallah Azzam, Yousef al-Ayirii,
Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Qatada, and Abd al-Qadir ibn Abd al-Aziz.
Awshan then references a multi-part Jihadist reading list compiled by an unnamed
“virtuous scholar”:

Beginner readings on Jihad
1 Guidance of the Gentle Man in the Most Important Tasks of Ibrahim’s
Community by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi.
3 Jihad and the Interpretation of Religious Texts by Abu Qatada al-Filistini.
4 The Basic Issue of Preparation by Abd al-Qadir Abd al-Aziz.
5 A Guide to Explain the Fine Points of Islam by Sulaiman al-Ulwan.
6 Defending Muslim Lands is the Most Important Individual Obligation by
Abdallah Azzam.

Intermediate readings on Jihad
1 Unbelief and Tyranny by Abu Basir al-Tartusi.
2 Millat Ibrahim by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi.
3 Which of the Two Groups is More Deserving of Slaughter? by Ahmad al-
Dakhil.
4 The New Crusader War by Yousef al-Ayiri.
5 A Warning against Excess in Accusations of Apostasy by Abu Muhammad al-
Maqdisi.
6 Tendencies of the Savior by Sulaiman al-Ulwan.

Advanced readings on Jihad
2 Hypocrisy by Ali al-Khudayr.
3 God’s Triumph is Near by Sulaiman al-Ulwan.
4 Democracy is a Religion by Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi.
5 Al-Wala wal-Bara: Inherited Ideology and Lost Reality by Ayman al-
Zawahiri.
6 Garden of the Favored by Abu Qatada al-Filistini.
7 Beneficial Materials on the Apostasy of Those who Abandon Monotheism by
Muhammad Bin Abd-al-Wahab.

Calamity
1 A Guide to the Apostasy of Those who Help the Americans by Nasir al-Fahd.
2 Articles on the Need for Jihad against the Crusaders and Jews by Nasir al-
Fahd.
3 The Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction by Nasir al-Fahd.
4 Martyrdom Operations: Suicide or Martyrdom? by Yosef al-Ayiri.
5 Spies by Abu Basir al-Tartusi.
6 Ruling on the Obligation of Jihad against the Crusaders by Sulaiman al-
Ulwan.
7 Selected Passages on Asking Infidels for Help by Hamoud Bin Uqla as-
Shuaybi.
8 A Guide to the Tradition on Joining the Military by Ahmad al-Khalidi.
10 The Need to Rescue the Oppressed from the Prisons of the Tyrants and
Apostates by Abu Jandal al-Azdi.

Awshan continues to list a variety of other biographies, books and articles related
to Jihad. The authors in this bibliography are among the most prominent and
revered within the global Jihadist movement; and, importantly, their works are
increasingly being translated into and read in English.

The writings that Awshan highlights could be compared in their tone and scope
to the works of other revolutionary zealots throughout history. Consider Adolf
Hitler’s Mein Kampf; for instance, a book that freely offered the world an advance
outline of his hopes, dreams and fears. It was not read widely in the West; nor was
it viewed as being serious by those who did read it. In exactly the same way, the
Jihadist books that Awshan identifies are currently largely ignored by most
governments. But thanks to his work, governments have a precious opportunity to
read today’s equivalents of Mein Kampf. If they seize that opportunity—and they
must—they will be able to follow Sun Tzu’s counsel about knowing one’s enemy.
Although the aforementioned writings are only a small fraction of the core readings
for those Muslims who are considering waging violent Jihad, if the West continues to disregard them history will almost certainly repeat itself.

**Hope for tomorrow**

This book has sought to demonstrate that big ideas can have very big consequences. There can be little doubt that those individuals who are willing to engage in acts of Jihadist terrorism must be identified and neutralized before they can unleash their wrath upon the world. But an even greater issue is that no matter how many foot soldiers are killed or captured in the course of this fight against the global Jihadist movement, new generations of Jihadists will emerge. More young, angry men will offer themselves to God in exchange for an empty promise.

This reality will persist for as long as the Jihadist movement has a cadre of smart and motivated leaders and thinkers who are actively recruiting, training, educating and deploying their operatives globally. These leaders provide the vision that their followers strive to realize and emulate. They offer direction, discipline and inspiration for their subordinates to accomplish a given task. They take the reality of the world and simplify it in such a way that only two sides emerge: those who are willing to fight for *Sharia, Tawhid, Jihad* and their *Aqidah*; and those who are in the way.

If there is a bright side to this global war, it is that the Jihadist movement offers nothing more than empty rhetoric and wanton bloodshed. It is a bankrupt ideology that, like numerous historical precedents, will eventually collapse under its own internal contradictions. The world cannot simply wait for that to happen, however: it must, and it can, accelerate the process and triumph over the global Jihadist movement.
8 Toward a strategy

6 European policy officials are currently facing pressures of political correctness regarding the nature of Islam. See Cal Thomas, "Charting Disloyal Tides," Washington Times, December 12, 2006.