

in which the group itself plays nothing more than an inspirational role.

Israeli officials express concern over the rise in prominence and operational capability of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its interest in targeting Israeli and Jewish targets in North Africa, Europe and possibly Israel. AQIM today, one official explained, "is al Qaeda's long arm in Europe" and is proactively seeking to carry out attacks, including operations against Jewish targets. Given its access to Muslim-European and Palestinian operatives who could potentially enter Israel, and the plethora of Jewish and Israeli targets in Europe where AQIM maintains an active network, Israeli analysts see AQIM as the al-Qa`ida element most intent and capable of targeting Israeli interests.²⁵

Nevertheless, al-Qa`ida and its global jihad have not yet come to Palestine in any meaningful way. This is in part due to the hostile reception Hamas has provided Palestinian Salafi-jihadi fighters in Gaza. In August 2009, for example, security forces from the Hamas-run government in Gaza—together with militants from the group's Qassam Brigades terrorist wing—raided a mosque affiliated with a Salafi-jihadi preacher and engaged in protracted gun battles with his followers, all members of the group Jund Ansar Allah. The clashes, which left some 24 people dead and 130 wounded, followed a Friday sermon by their cleric, Shaykh `Abd al-Latif Musa, condemning the de facto Hamas government and announcing the establishment of an Islamic emirate in Palestine. Al-Qa`ida in Iraq denounced the Hamas attack on its website, calling on Allah "to avenge the blood of the murdered men and to destroy the Hamas state."²⁶ The episode highlights both the presence in Gaza of Salafi-jihadi groups inspired by but not formally affiliated with al-Qa`ida and the tensions between these groups and Hamas, a violent Islamist but still Palestinian nationalist group in power in Gaza.²⁷

Under stress, however, al-Qa`ida could seek to bolster its image by focusing not only its rhetoric but its operational focus on Israel in an effort to take ownership of the emotive Palestinian issue. Spurred on by al-Qa`ida's continued rhetorical focus on Israel, regional affiliates could ultimately carry out successful attacks on Israeli targets. Local Salafi-jihadi groups in the Gaza Strip could catapult themselves to center stage and demand the attention of al-Qa`ida's core leadership with just one successful attack inflicting significant casualties or targeting a major international figure. In the words of one senior member of the Salafi-jihadi Jaljalat group operating in Gaza, "So far al-Qa`ida has not sponsored our work. We are waiting to carry out a big jihadi operation dedicated to Shaykh Usama bin Ladin. However, our course and doctrine are similar to those of al-Qa`ida. If al-Qa`ida asks us to pledge allegiance to it, we are completely ready for it."²⁸

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activity in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and among Israeli-Arabs, see Yoram Cohen and Matthew Levitt, "Al Qaeda Inspired Groups in Palestine: Determined but In Check," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, forthcoming Winter 2009.

28 Hasan Jabr, "Jaljalat' is Waiting to Carry Out a Big Operation in Order to Dedicate it to Bin-Ladin," *al-Ayyam*, July 11, 2009.

Understanding History's Seven Stages of Jihad

By Sebastian L.v. Gorka

THE POST-9/11 DEBATE on the meaning of "jihad" has often floundered at a superficial understanding of the term. Jihad is often simply referred to as either "striving" or "holy war." Jihad, however, must be understood to consist of four varieties of human activity agreed upon by Islamic theologians and jurists. The first is the jihad of the heart, the so-called "greater jihad" of fighting evil within oneself. The second and third definitions involve the jihads of the mind and tongue, the condoning of "right" behavior in others and counseling those who have gone astray. Finally, there is jihad of the sword. Jihad of the sword is most relevant for the counterterrorism community today because it rests at the foundation of the global jihadist ideology.

The concept of jihad of the sword has been repeatedly reinterpreted and redefined since the days of the Prophet Muhammad. During this extensive time period, jihad by the sword has been used by protagonists to rally co-religionists in the pursuit of a political objective. Al-Qa`ida and the broader Salafi-jihadi movement have also reinterpreted this concept to justify the direct targeting of civilians in terrorist attacks.

To properly understand the historic significance of al-Qa`ida, it is relevant to review the contextual evolution of the concept of jihad and the great success al-Qa`ida has had in redefining it for the current conflict. Since the days of the Prophet Muhammad, jihad by the sword has been shaped by seven, historically-shaped political conceptualizations of jihad, occurring in the following order: empire building; the suppression of apostate subjects; the revolution against "false" Muslim leaders; the anti-colonial struggle and "purification" of the religion; countering Western influence and *jabiliyya*;¹ guerrilla warfare against secular invaders; and finally the direct targeting of civilians in terrorist attacks. This article will identify each contextual interpretation and the significance of jihad as terrorism.

1 *Jabiliyya* refers to the age of polytheism and "unbelief" that existed before the Prophet Muhammad.

25 Personal interviews, Israeli intelligence officials, Tel Aviv, Israel, September 2009.

26 "The Struggle Between Hamas and the Jihadi-Salafist Networks in the Gaza Strip Affiliated with the Global Jihad," Intelligence and Terrorism Center, October 4, 2009.

27 For an in-depth analysis of Palestinian Salafi-jihadi

Seven Swords of Jihad

Each of the contextualizations of jihad of the sword has been dictated by the desire to have jihad fill a real, specific and political need for Muslims in a given age and facing a specific threat. When the Prophet Muhammad was building a completely new state, he used the concept of jihad to justify the expansion of Islam. Although the Qur'an does not use the term jihad to refer directly to empire-building in the military sense, sura 25 verse 52 stipulates "obey not the disbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost endeavor." Understood

"The seventh political definition of jihad, therefore, is terrorism."

in the context of Muhammad's return to Mecca from Medina, and the ensuing conflict with the Meccans that is reflected in the latter half of an earlier sura, it is clear that striving is in this instance connected to military combat post *hijra*,² as Muhammad returns to Mecca and enforces his new writ. This constitutes the first offensive use of the concept, referring to the conflict to establish order among the Arab tribes around Mecca, through the use of force if necessary.

When Muhammad's successor, Abu Bakr, faced recalcitrant tribes on the Arabian Peninsula that were threatening the order Muhammad had previously established, the second meaning of jihad was born: *ridda*, or the war against apostasy, against one's own subjects. In the Western world, this would be equivalent to a war against rebels.

The third contextual definition of jihad came centuries later after the eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate's strength, starting in the second half of the 13th century. It is this reworking of the meaning of holy war, most significantly by Ibn Taymiyya, that has the greatest consequence for today's context. The motivation for this redefinition was the need to provide Muslims with the right to revolt against their own leaders, specifically the Mongols. Islam

2 The *hijra* refers to the migration of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina.

had previously prohibited revolution against Muslim rulers. Ibn Taymiyya's answer was to remove the prohibition; he argued that jihad is permissible against one's own leaders if they do not live as true Muslims and if their rule does not conform to the requirements of Shari'a. He said,

And it is known by necessity from the *din* (religion) of the Muslims, and the agreement of all the Muslims, that whoever permits the following of a *din* other than Islam or following a Shari'a other than the Shari'a of Muhammad then he is a *kafir* (unbeliever), and it is like the *kufir* (blasphemy) of one who believes in part of the Book and disbelieves in part of the Book.³

Since the fusion of Mongol, Turkic and Tartar power was occurring at the same time that Ibn Taymiyya was writing, he was specific about the threat to "pure" Islam and how Muslims must respond:

Fighting the Tartars, those who came to the land of Shaam is *wajib* (religious duty) according to the Book and the Sunna, for indeed Allah said in the Qur'an: And fight them until *fitna* (schism/blasphe-mous upheaval) is no more, and the *din* becomes all for Allah.⁴

Therefore, in the Middle Ages jihad became legitimate revolution based upon a new mechanism by which the people could denounce their leaders as un-Islamic.

The fourth political reconceptualization of jihad occurred four centuries later, starting in the early 1700s. As the European powers pushed militarily and politically into North Africa, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, the threat to Islamic societies was twofold. Empires such as the British had to be physically resisted. At the same time, the West's cultural influence upon the purity of the Islamic faith was growing and had to be countered. During this period, jihad was defined as anti-colonial resistance. This new

3 Ibn Taymiyya, "Rulings of Fighting the Mongols," *fatawa*, 28/524.

4 Ibid.; See also Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Shaykh al-Imam: Al-Siyasah al-Shariyah fi Islah al-Raiwa Rajyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Shab, 1976).

interpretation of jihad was typified by the pronouncements of Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabi Islam. Its practical and military consequences were amply demonstrated during the decade-long resistance to the 1830 French invasion of Algeria led by `Abd al-Qadir and also by the Sudanese resistance to the British led by the self-proclaimed mahdi, Muhammad Ahmad. The second, non-military element of this redefinition of jihad—what author Noor Mohammad has described as Islam's internal "housecleaning"—was represented by Shah Waliullah's call to spiritual revival and the purification of India's Muslims under British control.⁵

This definition of jihad would lead directly to the next interpretation, one that relies heavily on the principles laid down hundreds of years prior by Ibn Taymiyya, including the doctrine of *takfir* (excommunication). This fifth version of jihad was fathered and later developed by Abu al-A`la Mawdudi in India (then later Pakistan) and Sayyid Qutb in Egypt. This time the threat was embodied by the post-WWII Arab leaders of the Middle East and the influence of Western "soft power," which together equaled a new *jahiliyya*, or age of polytheism and ignorance. Apostate leaders were to be resisted once more (and removed if possible), Islam purified and Shari'a re-imposed.

Holy War as an International Brand

With the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, jihad would no longer be limited to resistance against the cultural and political influence of the secular West or un-Islamic Arab rulers. Although it is true that within Afghanistan, among the Afghans, the motivation to resist Soviet domination did not have to be couched in terms of theology but simply in terms of survival and sovereignty, to the Arab mujahidin recruited by the Palestinian Abdullah Azzam, jihad was a crucial concept, a brand Azzam assiduously built in his travels around the world. Most importantly, Azzam built his jihadist brand in a way that negated earlier requirements for holy war to be declared by a legitimate authority, as he redefined military resistance as an individual duty. In his introduction to

5 Noor Mohammad, "The Doctrine of Jihad: An Introduction," *Journal of Law and Religion* 3:2 (1985): p. 396.

“Defense of Muslim Lands,” he plainly stated that “...if a piece of Muslim land the size of a hand-span is infringed upon, then jihad becomes *fard`ayn* (a personal obligation) on every Muslim male and female, where the child shall march forward without the permission of its parents and the wife without the permission of the husband.” Azzam invoked Ibn Taymiyya by name to justify his version of self-declared jihad and then warned his audiences of the price they would pay if they did not follow the path of military resistance. Quoting from the Qur’an, sura 9 verse 39: “If you march not forth, He will punish you with a painful torment and will replace you with another people, and you cannot harm Him at all, and Allah is able to do all things.”⁶ By the late 1980s, Azzam’s rebranding of Muslim holy war in a new political and geostrategic context was so successful that even in the West jihad would become synonymous with guerrilla resistance to communist invasion and dictatorship.

Only after the eventual defeat of the Soviets, the end of the Cold War and the outbreak of the first Gulf War would the seventh and most important redefining of jihad of the sword be born. With Azzam’s death in 1989, his organization of Arab guerrillas, the Mujahidin Services Bureau (MAK), was taken over by his deputy Usama bin Ladin. Rejected by his own government when he offered to protect Saudi Arabia from Iraq with his Arab fighters, Bin Ladin would change the mission and name of his organization. The “godless” Russians had been defeated, the bipolar world order replaced by the hegemony of a victorious United States, a country that had been invited to bring its troops and influence into the Arabian Peninsula to defend Saudi Arabia from Iraq. Guerrilla warfare within Saudi Arabia against the apostate House of Saud and against U.S. targets was impractical, if not impossible.

Several influential figures who had followed the teachings of the original Muslim Brotherhood and its leader Hassan al-Banna, including Ayman al-Zawahiri, had, after the severe crackdown against the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, joined the MAK. Bin Ladin’s

Wahhabi understanding of jihad would be suffused with the ideology of the Egyptian Qutbists. What resulted was al-Qa`ida and a new indirect approach to violent jihad. Subsequently, the meaning of jihad was expanded for a seventh time since Muhammad built his empire in the seventh century. The fight would be focused less on irregular warfare in countries where Muslims were suffering and more on the “far enemy,” which they identified as supporters of tyrannical regimes in the Muslim world. With the East Africa embassy bombings, the *USS Cole* attack and then finally the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, Bin Ladin successfully defined jihad as willful targeting of civilians by a non-state actor through unconventional means. The seventh political definition of jihad, therefore, is terrorism.

Conclusion

It is crucial for analysts and strategic planners to fully understand this mutation and evolution of the concept of jihad over time. It is incorrect to see jihad solely as a religious concept referring to the striving of the individual to be pure, because jihad of the sword is referenced in the hadith in multiple instances. It is clear that the meaning of violent jihad has been shaped during the centuries to fit the needs of those espousing holy war and calling their co-religionists to the battlefield. Usama bin Ladin’s great historical significance is that he managed to turn jihad from referring to guerrilla resistance against military oppression of the 1980s to mean the killing of mass numbers of civilians on the soil of non-Muslim lands. Understanding this contextual evolution is critical in the effort to find strategies to weaken al-Qa`ida’s ideology.

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Mao Tse-tung and the Search for 21st Century Counterinsurgency

By Thomas A. Marks

IN ANY DISCUSSION of insurgency, the works of Mao Tse-tung are unavoidable. His innovations resulted in “people’s war,” a formulation that lifted the asymmetric challenge from the tactical and military to the strategic and political. Mao was to irregular war what Napoleon and Clausewitz were to regular warfare. Yet today his insights are altogether ignored by Western analysts, who continue to look elsewhere for guidance.

The writings of Mao, however, are essential to achieving and maintaining success in the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. This article explains how Western analysts misinterpret Mao’s writings, the importance of understanding Mao’s approach to irregular challenges, and the implications Mao’s theories have on today’s counterinsurgency campaigns.

Failing to Understand Mao’s Thought

If there is any one error that hobbles the use of Mao, it is to focus strictly on the “military” aspects of his thought to the neglect of his other theories. The only widely read Maoist work, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, was in fact a 1937 training manual that was only a stepping stone to a much larger and more complex body of “people’s war” work. In his larger body of work, he stated the fundamental reality that all insurgency is strategically political and directed operationally through multiple lines of effort (only one of which was violence) toward mobilizing a challenge to the state (i.e., a counter-state) sufficient to dominate the correlation of forces.

Mao’s own framework was driven by the circumstances of China as he found it. The need to transition from guerrilla to regular warfare was because he knew in his circumstances that lesser forms of violence could never be decisive. When weak, insurgents wage the war of the weak, using terror and guerrilla warfare. The primary targets of violence during this strategic defensive stage are local notables and representatives of the state, as well as police and those

⁶ This is otherwise known as part of the Sura at Taubah (Repentance).