

COGNITIVE WARFARE

by

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DEDICATION

To Roopy Roo, Pooky Pants, Edna Mo and most of all, my lovely wife, who—
after two years—may now check her email.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM OF COGNITIVE WARFARE

RESEARCH QUESTION

At the strategic level, how can Arab-Muslim militants achieve victory in their quest to destroy Israel and expel the U.S. from the Middle East in view of the vast, objective military superiority of the two nations they seek to defeat?

HYPOTHESIS

Given their objectively weaker military capabilities, Arab-Muslim militants are seeking strategic victory in their struggle against the U.S. and Israel in the cognitive domain of war.

THE ISSUE

The United States and Israel enjoy unchallenged supremacy on the battlefield, but they are, nonetheless, losing a war. As if to demonstrate the current rules of warfare, elements of the Iraqi Air Force literally buried their aircraft in desert sands before

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The great majority of Iraqi ground forces melted away and, in a decidedly unconventional form, remnants of disparate regime elements set to work on an insurgency that has since grown beyond Coalition control, destroyed thousands of American and Iraqi lives, weakened American citizens' resolve, and endangered prospects for long-term, regional stability.¹ If these American enemies succeed, that is, if jihadists perceive that they forced an American withdrawal as they perceive that they forced a Spanish withdrawal in 2004, their victory will not have been achieved through tactical military means, nor will their prize be territory or materiel. They will have achieved their victory *despite* American military superiority, and their greatest prize will be a moral one: renewed Islamic vigor and militant empowerment on a global scale.

To the west, Israel faces a similarly implacable enemy and essentially the same problem in a different context. After four conventional wars and four humiliating defeats, the Arab nations and Palestinians gave up their dream of crushing Israel with brutal, overwhelming force. Now they leverage proxy forces in guerilla, terrorist, and media campaigns to slowly exhaust the Jewish state and wreck its internal cohesion. In several cases they have succeeded, forcing Israeli concessions or withdrawal, and without offering concessions of their own or—notably—achieving any tactical military victories. Israeli forces withdrew from the Gaza Strip not in exchange for peace or Palestinian

¹ "Iraqi Aircraft 'Buried in Desert,'" *BBC*, 1 August 2003, URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3116259.stm>, accessed 5 July 2005.

concessions, but as part of Ariel Sharon's "disengagement" policy.² Hamas has since taken control of Gaza through violent and democratic means and shows no sign of softening its genocidal ambitions, despite the recent ceasefire.³ Before Sharon, Ehud Barak, having failed to elicit any peace agreements from Lebanon or Syria, unilaterally withdrew the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) from southern Lebanon. Rather than quelling friction with Hezbollah, this action boosted the group's morale and prompted it to continue its militant endeavors. Moreover, many Palestinians took note, inferring that Hezbollah's path was effective and worthy of replication. This positive lesson led directly to the failure of Barak's Herculean effort to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority (PA) at Camp David just weeks later. By most significant, first person accounts of those negotiations, Yasser Arafat deliberately torpedoed the summit, refusing to accept any Israeli proposal or offer one of his own. As discussed in later chapters, the reason would soon become clear: having witnessed Hezbollah's success, elements of the PA would engineer the second intifada (discussed in chapter six).

Surely Israel's and the United States' enemies know that their military endeavors are doomed to failure. Surely they know by now there can be little hope of real, tactical

² Ehud Barak, former Israeli prime minister, is best known for his Herculean effort and monumental failure to make peace with Yasser Arafat in 2000. That failure and the subsequent "al-Aqsa intifada," engineered by the Palestinian Authority, spurred many Israelis to vote for Sharon in 2001. Sharon claimed in the wake of the Camp David failure and the riots that Israel had "no peace partner" in Arafat or the Palestinian Authority, and that Israel must make unilateral decisions about borders dividing Palestinian and Israeli territory.

³ *Dictionary.com*, under "Genocide," URL: <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/genocide>>, accessed 30 April 2008. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary* entry at this site, genocide is the "systematic and planned extermination of an entire national, racial, political, or ethnic group." The Hamas charter unequivocally calls for the political annihilation of Israel and Zionism by way of violent jihad, and internally directed rhetoric, i.e. that which Palestinians—not Westerners—are meant to see, *commonly* calls for and celebrates the indiscriminate killing of Jews. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven. Israel and Hamas agreed on a cease-fire. See "Israel's Barak uncertain about how long cease-fire with Hamas will last," *International Herald Tribune*, online ed., 19 June 2008, URL: <<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/06/19/europe/EU-GEN-France-Mideast.php>>, accessed 20 June 2008.

or operational success against the American and Israeli militaries. Yet, by his own admission, Arafat and the PA closed down schools to send armed children against the IDF during the al Aqsa intifada. In its 2006 bout with the IDF in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah fired a multitude of rockets into civilian Israeli targets knowing that there was no *military* value to the attack. As mentioned above, Hamas continues to do precisely the same thing from Gaza.

Analysts asking why this is so, that is, why these groups are militant when there is so little hope of military success, can find at least a partial answer in yielded results. Just as the United States withdrew from Vietnam and Somalia, so too did Israel twice withdraw from Lebanon, Gaza, and the majority of population centers in the West Bank. But it is obvious that the IDF did not leave these areas in retreat, decimated by jihadist forces or unable to withstand their fiery onslaught. The violent element of the conflict clearly has a role or it would not exist, but what is that role precisely and, more importantly, what *other* tools are the groups employing to effect these withdrawals and concessions?

This thesis therefore attempts to answer the question, “At the strategic level, *how* do Arab-Muslim militants circumvent the military superiority of Israel (and the United States)? Initially, research for this paper was focused solely on the influence of the media to answer those questions, based on the hypothesis that Israel and the U.S. are languishing in the long-term fight for media-based moral supremacy. The Arab and Muslim communities are unquestionably antipathetic towards most things Israeli, but many major western private and government institutions are reluctant to support its security and anti-terrorism initiatives. As discussed at length in chapter seven, Israeli

military operations often precipitate Western headlines characterizing the conflict as one-sided, while stories highlight lopsided casualty numbers and the difficulty of life under occupation. Whatever the empirical truth, headlines and advocacy websites play a powerful role in forming perceptions that can drive third parties to mandate changes, that is, new political and military realities. Arab opposition groups have not failed to understand this. With apparent skill and effectiveness that is generally not seen on the Israeli or U.S. sides, Lebanese, Palestinian, and other militant groups harness the media to manage worldwide perceptions, carefully tailoring their messages to respective audiences. Using these tools to project powerful images and messages that resonate in specific audiences, they may have proven capable of largely negating Israeli and U.S. military advantages. Indeed, the militant groups have forced a situation in which the U.S. and Israel operate under more scrutiny as counterinsurgent entities, both from international *and* local audiences, than do the insurgents and terrorists themselves.

To that end, the research question for this thesis was originally, “To what extent is Israel losing its battle for public perception and why?” The thesis sought to use the Arab-Israeli conflict as a case study to explain a larger phenomenon afflicting the West (in this context Israel will be considered a Western nation). But the course of research led well beyond the realm of the media and psychological operations (PSYOP) as understood in U.S. military doctrine. It became apparent that the problems facing Israel and the West are not limited to particular theaters or confined to specific periods of time. Arab-Muslim militants engage in warfare at the societal level, and the successes they have enjoyed stem from more than strict adherence to Soviet or U.S. Army PSYOP doctrine. There appears to be a societal familiarity with both the intricacies of deception and the

persistence of war—cultural factors that are not so vivid or well defined in the Western mind. Perhaps more importantly, the Arab-Muslim familiarity with these factors is diametrically opposed to—and well suited for exploiting—Western cultural and environmental factors such as the assumption of honesty (deception is a factor that receives extensive treatment throughout the thesis), the internally focused guilt-culture, and a finite perspective on war. The Arab-Israeli conflict remains the demonstrative focus, but I believe my research has provided a framework explaining a much broader conflict and an as yet unrecognized form of warfare, one in which ideology is a central component, and where culture and religion play important roles. Rather than attempting to quantitatively demonstrate that Israel *is* or *is not* losing the battle for public perception, ultimately I thought an examination of Arab Muslim militant methods was more instructive.

BIAS

This thesis is written entirely from the perspective of a U.S. intelligence officer who is attempting to find a better strategy for the Global War on Terrorism, specifically for fighting jihadist groups and jihadist ideologies. Readers will no doubt notice that this thesis is not a balanced treatment of the issues plaguing the Arab-Israeli conflict. United States Policy has been generally supportive of Israel since its inception. Because Palestinian society is unduly influenced by a genocidal discourse and led by individuals who seek to destroy their neighbors, I will agree with this U.S. policy until a two-state solution can be successful. Although Israel deserves its share of criticism, I state up-front that the U.S. and Israel face a similar problem set, a not unreasonable assumption when

they are often considered by their respective enemies to be a semi-unified bloc. It is therefore in both our interests to find a common solution, and as such, I use the Arab-Israeli conflict to demonstrate the mechanics of cognitive warfare. Considering this is written from a defense perspective, that I believe the U.S. and Israel have not been particularly good at this type of warfare, and that they are vulnerable to the effects of cognitive warfare; it stands to reason that the opposing side should be examined more closely. This is not to say that these two countries are not *capable* of cognitive warfare or will never launch an offensive of their own, or that culture and religion have not played important roles in the formation of Western ideologies, rather that Arab-Muslim motivations and means of fighting need to be examined today.

A BRIEF APOLOGIA

The key points of this thesis certainly do not apply to the Israeli case alone—the United States military and senior policymakers are facing many of the same difficulties and appear to be fairing just as badly in the Global War on Terrorism. It is, of course, the Intelligence Community's (IC) role to educate senior policymakers about jihadist methods, enabling the generation and execution of effective counterstrategies. Persistent efforts by the IC will be required to raise awareness in sometimes unreceptive intelligence consumers, particularly with regard to the unorthodox suggestions made in this thesis. These include the notions that the current conflict is one between civilizations, or that cognitive defense and offense must be considered at that level. The IC must conduct extensive worldwide and local level studies on enemy efforts, as well as

close, systematic, qualitative, and *critical* monitoring of open sources such as opinion polling and media themes in order to determine the effects of those efforts. For reasons that will be explained below, I believe the new analysis must be highly critical of previous studies and conventional narratives that facilely draw on “accepted discourses” about various conflicts. Accordingly, the Intelligence Community must shift its thinking about the value of critical, detailed explorations of culture and religion as they are potentially vital driving factors in a conflict.

With few exceptions, analysts use open sources to tip off or warn decision makers about late breaking crises, but only in the absence of reporting with higher classifications. At best, it is used to culturally and religiously introduce analysts or leaders with no background to the problem set. The new paradigm, at least in the context of cognitive warfare—warfare waged primarily in the cognitive domain—must elevate open sources to the primary role in the highest levels of strategic analysis, for it is in the public arena that the enemy conducts its most dangerous activities. Analysts need to use open sources not only to verify other reporting, but also to learn how problems are portrayed and how they are perceived. In these cases, classified reporting will support but not serve as the backbone of analysis. Additionally, U.S. doctrinal understanding of cognitive warfare is severely limited. The best approximation is Information Operations (IO), a woefully neglected enterprise lacking organization and direction, perhaps even acknowledgment at the strategic level, and rarely, if ever, addressing problems beyond the military sphere.

RELATED LITERATURE

The most formative source for this work, ironically, is about biology. Richard Dawkin's *The Selfish Gene* posits that humans and other animals exist to ensure the reproduction of their genes, not the other way around. Tracing biological evolution from its most primitive beginnings to the current complex and diverse world, Dawkins successfully argues that, without being conscious, genes "behave" and evolve in a selfish manner. The notion that humanity exists for genes rather than genes for humans is itself revolutionary, but Dawkins introduces another paradigm-shattering concept. Noting that reproduction or replication is central to any definition of life (as genes reproduce, clearly they may be called a form of life), Dawkins suggests that another, as yet unrecognized form of life exists within humanity: the idea. Like early genetic replicators, repeated ideas evolve and behave selfishly, not necessarily under the control the humans bearing them, or for their benefit. This thesis uses Dawkin's concept of the "meme" as mortar to secure and bind many conceptual blocks together. It is particularly important for understanding the development of ideology.

Concurrent with the discussion on memetics is a brief, but necessary discussion on cognitive dissonance theory. For this, this thesis relies on Joel Cooper's *Cognitive Dissonance: Fifty Years of a Classic Theory*, a descriptive summary of the theory's evolution in the last 50 years. I introduce Cognitive dissonance to demonstrate the importance of psychological factors in cognitive warfare, and to suggest one way in which harmful or counterproductive ideas (memes) might become firmly rooted in individual and societal minds.

J.M. Balkin did a great service for analysts by suggesting that culture is a fundamental factor in the development of ideology, particularly by framing it in memetic terms. In *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology*, he explains that culture may serve as the foundation onto which ideology may be built, or the rock against which it may crash. Describing culture as “the condition of possibility,” Balkin explains that it allows humans to observe and understand the world around them. On the other hand, it can also severely limit or filter what humans perceive. Balkin contributes by establishing culture as one of, if not the most fundamental element in analysis of ideology.

Several MSSSI theses prove useful in exploring the issue. Mark Gray, for instance, authored *Winning the War of Ideas With al-Qaeda*, a piece illustrating the narrative’s importance as a Clausewitzian center of gravity, particularly for terrorist groups. The concept of the narrative, or a unifying story that generates group cohesion, is relevant to Arab groups’ efforts to galvanize their own constituents through the use of repeated themes. Israel’s opponents often invoke the narrative of oppression and suffering through Zionist hegemony in order to swell the opposition’s ranks and maintain their legitimacy. This thesis will discuss more than just the opposition’s constituents, but Gray’s arguments can help us understand the Arab and Muslim communities’ cohesion in the face of the Israeli threat. Gray also provides some useful insight on “counter-narrative” strategies, but this thesis focuses primarily on correctly identifying the broader problem.

Ted Robert Gurr’s “Why Men Rebel,” is an authoritative, modern work on the genesis of revolution. Gurr maintains that conditions for rebellion become especially ripe when a population perceives a “discrepancy between their value expectations and their

value capabilities.” In other words, Gurr believes that the facts of deprivation are secondary to the unsatisfied masses’ *perception* of deprivation. The problem becomes acute when the population’s expectations for success grow increasingly distant from their real capabilities. Gurr’s model lends itself easily to the Arab-Israeli conflict, where so much is determined by perception rather than reality.

Troy Thomas’ and William Casebeer’s “Violent Non-State Actors: Countering Dynamic Systems” enables a broader understanding of the case studies in this thesis. Many elements of their open systems model are applicable to the Arab-Israeli fight for public perception, particularly the concept of an “identity entrepreneur.” These characters are instrumental in manipulating societal identity cleavages and procuring moral and material support for the violent actors. Thomas and Casebeer’s model for group interaction with and eventual transformation of their environment is also relevant to the Arab-Israeli scenarios. Non-state actors such as Hezbollah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization work to expand their operational freedom and eventually achieve victory by transforming the conflict’s cognitive environment.

Stephani Gutmann explores the consequences of selective, simplistic, intended and unintended bias and ratings-driven reporting in *The Other War: Israelis, Palestinians and the Struggle for Media Supremacy*. Deliberate Palestinian falsification and staged events profoundly affected world opinion during the al Aqsa Intifada. Gutmann explores the coverage and possible fabrication of the death of Muhammad al Dura, a twelve year old bystander ostensibly shot by Israelis in September 2000. The image of the boy dying in his father’s arms explosively fueled the *intifada* and proved disastrous for Israeli public relations throughout the fighting. Al Dura’s alleged shooting has become a deeply

entrenched and sacred, i.e. “untouchable,” Arab narrative. It is highly resistant to the preponderance of evidence challenging the story’s veracity. Gutmann also offers several reasons for the Israeli failure to counteract successful Palestinian strategies, but the emphasis of this thesis tends to be what militants are doing, rather than what the West is not doing.

This thesis relies heavily on several Islamic sources, including various translations of the Koran, the Hadith, and the works of various, well-known and respected Muslim jurists. Some of the relevant scholars include ibn Tamiyya, ibn Rushd (Averroes), and al Ghazali. One work used with particular emphasis is Ahmad ibn Naqib al Misri’s *Reliance of the Traveller*, a medieval work of over 1200 pages that details appropriate Muslim behavior in a wide variety of situations. These sources provide religious sanction for deception as fundamental principle in jihad. They explore the nature of jihad itself, as well as Islamic cohesion.

For the tactics employed by Palestinians during the first intifada, Ron Schleifer’s *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada* proved immeasurably helpful. His book serves as a cornerstone of this thesis, as it details the many means used by Palestinians to generate local and international support for their struggle, most falling under the rubric of “propaganda.” In the context of cognitive warfare, Schleifer’s work can be categorized as tactical or operational. That is, most elements of cognitive war can be seen in microcosmic form, but he does not claim to represent the conflict in its broadest terms.

For that, I rely on Stephen Lambert’s *Y: The Sources of Islamic Revolutionary Conflict*. It is not cited extensively in the body of this paper, but Lambert’s work helped the author achieve a contextual, or strategic understanding for Schleifer’s details. In

addition to exploring the Islamic contributing factors, Lambert discusses the other half of cognitive warfare in his chapter on “Our Intellectual Pedigree.” There he criticizes the favored Western paradigm: empirical analysis predicated on the assumption that all humans fundamentally think alike. In fact, this thesis devotes a fair amount of attention to the role that construct has played in hindering good analysis.

Richard Landes, a Boston University professor, produced several movies central to this thesis’ success, including *Pallywood*, *Al Durah—The Birth of an Icon*, and *Icon of Hatred*. These films reveal that the deceptive tactics in the first intifada, described by Schleifer, were pushed to an industrial level during the al Aqsa intifada. Staged battles, faked injuries, faked funerals etc. all have become integral elements of cognitive warfare, designed to shift international perceptions about relative moral legitimacy. Landes re-exposes the alleged al Dura shooting as a powerful fake, an event that had profound effects on the second intifada and the greater Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly as seen through Western eyes.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis delves heavily into the discussion of Arab culture and Islam as they relate to cognitive warfare, particularly in this conflict. The religious and cultural elements of cognitive warfare are by no means the only, or necessarily the dominant, elements in every cognitive war, but they can be vital components. The reader here will undoubtedly notice that the bulk of the thesis appears devoted to the role of religion and culture. There are two reasons for the emphasis. First, they have been untouchable for

decades and therefore merit disproportionate attention now. Second, in this particular conflict, religion and culture do in fact play vital roles in the development of violent ideology and in the cognitive attack.

Because those factors have thus far been ignored, despite their importance, it was necessary to create new models to explain how violent ideologies develop and are then implemented. The models do not *require* culture or religion in order to function, rather they allow those factors to participate. Existing, universalist explanations for various conflicts may be valid, but they are also insufficient by themselves. This paper, for instance, does not intend to debunk poverty as a motivating factor for *every* conflict, but encourages academics to look further. Because of the particularly sensitive nature of culture and religion as academic subjects, the first substantive chapter works exclusively to explain why they must be considered and what Western intelligentsia has been missing thus far. In essence, chapter two is a glorified apologia.

Chapter three discusses the relationship between Dawkins' theory of memetics, cognitive dissonance, and culture in an ideological context. It is necessary preparation for chapter four, which breaks down cognitive warfare into three basic models: the ideological engine, the transformation of the accepted discourse, and the cognitive offensive. The first explains how a wide variety of motivating factors contribute to the development of a violent ideology, how violence transforms the constituent society, and how identity entrepreneurs reinvest the subsequent energy back into the engine. The second model explains how, both with local and enemy populations, identity entrepreneurs and their adherents transform a society's accepted discourse. The last

model, the cognitive offense, explains how the transformed discourse and “moderates” are effectively, if unwittingly, weaponized and used to help a society disarm itself.

In a somewhat transparent fashion, chapter five provides examples of religious and cultural factors that “could” have a role in violent conflict—transparent because all of the named factors do in fact participate in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Chapter five thus sets up chapter six, which delves into the Arab-Israeli conflict as a case study, providing a brief history of the conflict, the relevant motivating factors for Arab-Muslims, and the ideologies of three prominent groups. Chapter seven continues in the same vein, turning more to the operational and tactical manifestations of cognitive warfare, and, where appropriate, reminding readers how culture and religion continue to be factors at that level. Chapter eight explains that jihadist groups in the West have had some success in disarming the intellectual elite by using deceptively moderate language. It also attempts to explain the cognitive paralysis that often results when it becomes apparent they are not moderate, but extreme by Western standards, and that the conscious refusal to close intellectual ranks can be construed as a form of submission to Islam. Chapter nine concludes the thesis, explaining how the management of perception throughout the process should concern intelligence analysts in particular.

CHAPTER 2

FLAWED ASSUMPTIONS AND A POOR UNDERSTANDING OF THE THREAT

JIHADISTS INAPPROPRIATELY DISMISSED

According to the National Security Strategy (2006),

a new totalitarian ideology now threatens, an ideology grounded not in secular philosophy but in the perversion of a proud religion. Its content may be different from the ideologies of the last century, but its means are similar: intolerance, murder, terror, enslavement, and repression... the War on Terror is a battle of ideas, it is not a battle of religions.... These terrorists distort the idea of jihad into a call for murder against those they regard as apostates or unbelievers—including Christians, Jews, Hindus, other religious traditions, and all Muslims who disagree with them.⁴

This statement on the first page of the Strategy acknowledges that the threat has an important ideological component, but the strategy incorrectly diminishes it to a “perversion of a proud religion.” The threat facing the United States today is not one group or a band of pariahs with common interests, but the aggregate whole of militant jihadists who, as this thesis argues, leverage ideologies well rooted in mainstream culture and religion.

The universalist grievances commonly noted by Western intelligentsia, including poverty, military occupation, and political alienation, are real but insufficient to explain

⁴ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, URL: <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/>>, accessed 7 July 2007.

the enduring character of East-West friction by themselves. Cultural and religious factors are also real and, in this conflict, contribute heavily to the genesis of violent ideologies. It is fundamentally incorrect to suggest extremists have distorted the concept of jihad. Quite the contrary, militant jihadists are conducting a war consistent with the precedents set by Muhammad himself—and it should be stressed Muslims consider it an enormity to deny or denounce those precedents. Moreover, there may be far more support for jihadist ideology than Western intelligentsia commonly acknowledges. Although many Muslims do not seek to subordinate other faiths or impose Sharia, sweeping, preemptively apologetic statements such as “the *vast majority* of Muslims do not support terrorism or Osama bin Laden,” are regularly unsupported, misleading, and difficult to reconcile with the oft simultaneously-held belief that Muslims are outraged and feel besieged by the West.

Many polls do indicate a majority of Muslims reject terrorism, but it is an egregious analytical error to assume that because “the vast majority” of Muslims do not support terror or Osama bin Laden’s particular brand of Islam, they do not support *any* violence against Western civilians or *any* of bin Laden’s anti-Western rhetoric. Authors citing positive figures quite often pull them out of the social context and the original report’s context, which would otherwise lead readers to entirely different, sometimes more pessimistic, conclusions. There is substantial qualitative evidence to suggest Muslims do not regard terrorism in the same absolutist light as Westerners, yet many pollsters do not even ask their interviewees if they consider groups like Hamas or al Qaida to be terrorist organizations. The League of Arab States, hardly a pariah organization in the Arab world, rarely fails to distinguish between “legitimate resistance”

and the “brutality” imposed on occupied peoples such as the Palestinians. In a 2004 statement it noted with enthusiasm unchecked by context or facts the “siege imposed on the Palestinian people and their leadership, as well as [the Israeli] aggressions targeting civilians without distinction.”⁵ Otherwise liberally minded authors working for Regional Bureau for Arab States (operating under the auspices of the United Nations) are quick to denounce international terrorism, but equally quick to note a distinction between terrorism and the aforementioned “legitimate resistance.”⁶ Yassine Sahsah Bahida, a Dutch Muslim rapper, refused to perform a song he wrote denouncing terrorism for fear of ostracization by his community. “If you sing that, it's like you choose the Dutch, not Muslims.... People will say 'you are a traitor,’” he said.⁷ Yassine may have feared for his life, but the preponderance of anecdotal indicators like these strongly suggest that moderation is a concept relative to particular cultures, that violent extremists have successfully changed the discourse, or both.

Criticism of terrorism conducted in the name of Islam or Arab causes can be found, but it is relatively rare and often lukewarm. A search on the internet for the phrase “terrorism is unacceptable, but...” turns up a common a construct: terrorism is

⁵ Arab League of States, *The Tunis Declaration*, 23 May 2004, URL: <<http://www.saudiembassy.net/2004News/Statements/StateDetail.asp?cIndex=421>>, accessed 16 April 2007.

⁶ United Nations, *The Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*, 2006, URL: <http://www.mediterraneas.org/article.php3?id_article=590>, accessed 7 July 2007.

⁷ Scheherezade Faramarzi, “Muslims address silence on Europe attacks,” *WorldWide Religious News (WWRN)*, 24 June 2006, URL: <<http://www.wwrn.org/article.php?idd=21946&sec=33&con=45>>, accessed 22 May 2007. It should be noted that this website cites the article as an Associated Press (AP) article. Although Faramarzi does appear to be an AP author, the article could not be found at the AP website, or at other sites using various search engines. It is also worth noting that this article gives several reasons for European Muslim silence in the face of terrorism. Some may fear violent retribution, others may be incensed that non-Muslims “require” them to denounce the actions of individuals not directly connected to them. In the context of other evidence presented in this thesis, however, the following reason cited in article is the most plausible and likely prevalent: “...there is fear of being branded anti-Islam in their communities. Dutch Muslim rapper Yassine S.B. wrote a song about his anger over Van Gogh's murder but scrapped plans to perform it out of fear of being ostracized by the Islamic community. He also turned down requests by a popular Amsterdam radio station to sing a song against terrorism.”

acknowledged as unacceptable in the accepted discourse, while the “but” in the phrase inevitably justifies it. In other words, the definition of terrorism is fluidic and tied to the in/justifiability of particular actions, not the legitimacy of the tactic or strategy itself. As such, analysts must be highly skeptical when examining poll data or analysis that facilely conforms to Western, intuitive expectations.

Opinion polls are regularly cited, but seldom subjected to serious scrutiny. First, it must be understood that not all polls are equally reliable, and the lack of reliability does not necessarily correlate to one political viewpoint, either “pro” or “anti-Muslim” (for lack of better terms). Problematic methodology likely plagues a variety of polls used to support different hypotheses. The practice of “snowballing,” for instance, can easily bias the sample. This is the practice in which a pollster will question a subject and then ask the subject where other willing participants can be found. Because people naturally socialize with like-minded individuals, the pollster unwittingly skews the results by questioning a self-selecting population. Another problem with poll data, particularly when extracted from Muslim samples, is the reliability of the interviewees’ candor. As will be discussed later, many Muslims soften their answers when speaking to non-Muslims about cultural and religious conflict—a form of dissimulation. This goes beyond the polite-minded avoidance of personal friction over tea; among Muslims there is a particularly religious and well-engrained component to the practice. This can compound the inter-societal distrust found in conflicts involving any two religions or cultures. Quintan Wiktorowicz writes, based on his own experience with polling Muslims in Great Britain that:

Muslims are concerned about who is conducting the survey as well as how the data will be used and whether it will adversely impact the community. As a

result, many are hesitant to fill out surveys. In part to address this, I hired a research assistant from the Muslim College of London. As a Muslim from the United Kingdom, she could offer reassurances about the academic nature of the survey that seem more credible than if they came from an American researcher who is not Muslim.⁸

The need for skepticism can be seen quite clearly in the following sets of data supporting alternative hypotheses:

Muslims Reject Terrorism

A 2007 WorldPublicOpinion.org report indicates overwhelming majorities of Muslims in Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia reject violence against civilians. The percentages are 57, 77, 87, and 84 respectively. Majorities in the same countries, save Pakistan, also believe attacks against civilians violate the principles of Islam (In Pakistan only 30 percent agreed).⁹ An organization called Terror Free Tomorrow gathered similar data, claiming “74 percent of respondents in Indonesia agreed that terrorist attacks are ‘never justified;’ in Pakistan, that figure was 86 percent; in Bangladesh, 81 percent.”¹⁰ According to the Pew Global Attitudes Project poll in 2005, support for terrorism has declined in Muslim countries since 2002.¹¹

⁸ Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 32-33.

⁹ WorldPublicOpinion.org, “Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians, and al Qaeda,” 24 April 2007, URL: <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/apr07/START_Apr07_rpt.pdf>, accessed 11 May 2007.

¹⁰ Kenneth Ballen, “The Myth of Muslim Support for Terror,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, online ed., 23 February 2007, URL: <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0223/p09s01-coop.html>>, accessed 14 May 2007.

¹¹ Pew Global Attitudes Project, “Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics,” 14 July 2005, URL: <<http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/248.pdf>>, accessed 7 July 2007.

Muslims Do Not Reject Terrorism

The reliability of the below data has not been established any more than the above data, but it does serve to weaken the strength of the “vast majority” argument. According to a poll taken by al Jazeera three years ago, a majority of Arabs in the Middle East would support Hamas if it acted against Western targets in addition to its targets in Israel. According to another al Jazeera poll, nearly 80 percent supported the kidnapping and killing of civilians, presumably for a similar anti-Western cause.¹² According to a poll conducted in 2005, 37 percent of British Muslims believe British Jews are “legitimate targets as part of the ongoing struggle for justice in the Middle East.”¹³ Fifty-eight percent of Egyptians believe suicide bombings are at least sometimes justified. The Pew Global Attitudes Project data indicating support for terrorism has declined in Muslim countries (mentioned above) also indicates there was no “overwhelming majority” rejecting violence against civilians during that period.¹⁴ In Lebanon, 39 percent believe violence is often or sometimes justified against civilian targets (down from 73 percent in 2002). In Jordan the figure climbed from 43 percent in 2002 to 57 percent in 2005, and then dropped to 29 percent after al Qaida in Iraq attacked a wedding party in Amman.¹⁵ In another poll, nearly one-half of Saudi Arabian citizens approve of the content of bin Laden’s sermons and rhetoric, even if they would not approve of his leadership over the Arabian Peninsula.

¹² Tawfik Hamid, *The Roots of Jihad* (United States: Top Executive Media 2005), 84-85.

¹³ *Populus*, “Muslim Poll: December 2005,” December 2005, URL: <http://www.populuslimited.com/poll_summaries/2006_02_07_times.htm>, accessed 30 January 2007.

¹⁴ *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, “Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics,” 14 July 2005, URL: <<http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/248.pdf>>, accessed 7 July 2007.

¹⁵ *WorldPublicOpinion.org*, “Large and Growing Numbers of Muslims Reject Terrorism, Bin Laden,” 30 June 2006, URL: <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/international_security_bt/221.php?nid=&id=&pnt=221&lb=brme>, accessed 15 May 2008.

Muslims See the GWOT in Islamic Terms

In addition to the above data casting doubt on the “vast majority” belief, there is ample evidence in widely cited polls that should nudge analysts toward sober conclusions about perceptions of an East-West conflict, as well as the role of religion. For instance, a careful reading of the questionnaire for the 2007 WorldPublicOpinion.org poll—a poll cited to support the “vast majority” argument—shows majorities in Egypt and Indonesia do not favorably view the American people. *Vast* majorities do not favorably view the U.S. government or culture. This data appears to dent the popularly held belief that Muslims “like Americans but not American policies.” Majorities in Morocco and Pakistan believe it is probably a goal of the U.S. to expand Israel’s borders while an extreme majority of Egyptians (92 percent) believes this. Importantly, 92 percent of Egyptians also believe it is a U.S. goal to weaken and divide the Islamic world. Seventy-three, 78, and 67 percent in Indonesia, Morocco and Pakistan respectively believe this as well. In an average of the four countries, 38 percent shared al Qaida’s views toward the U.S., 37 percent were unsure, and only 26 percent rejected the views outright. Strong majorities in Morocco and Egypt (roughly 60-70 and 80-90 percent respectively) approved of attacks on US soldiers operating in Afghanistan, Iraq, and those based in the Persian Gulf. Of the four countries, only Indonesia has a majority disapproving of attacks on U.S. troops. Moreover, when asked about the Islamic character al Qaida’s ideology, there appears to be more support than is generally acknowledged in the West (Figure 1).

Thus, poll data do indicate there is a substantial number of Muslims who are moderate according to Western perspectives, and there appears to be wide variance between Muslim countries, but by no means do the data confirm the existence of a “vast majority” which rejects al Qaida and general anti-Western violence. The large fluctuations in Lebanese and Jordanian popular support for terrorism are particularly notable. They indicate the rejection of terrorism as a tactic is not necessarily an enduring value in those two societies and, particularly when the

situation involves intensive conflict with Western entities. The year 2002 witnessed the al Aqsa intifada in Israel and the West Bank, which undoubtedly affected opinion in Israel’s neighboring states, while Jordan felt many repercussions of the U.S. led war in Iraq up to and through 2005. The 58 percent of Egyptians who believe suicide bombings are at least sometimes justified is also notable. This figure comes from the same WorldPublicOpinion.org poll indicating vast majorities of Muslims, including Egyptians,

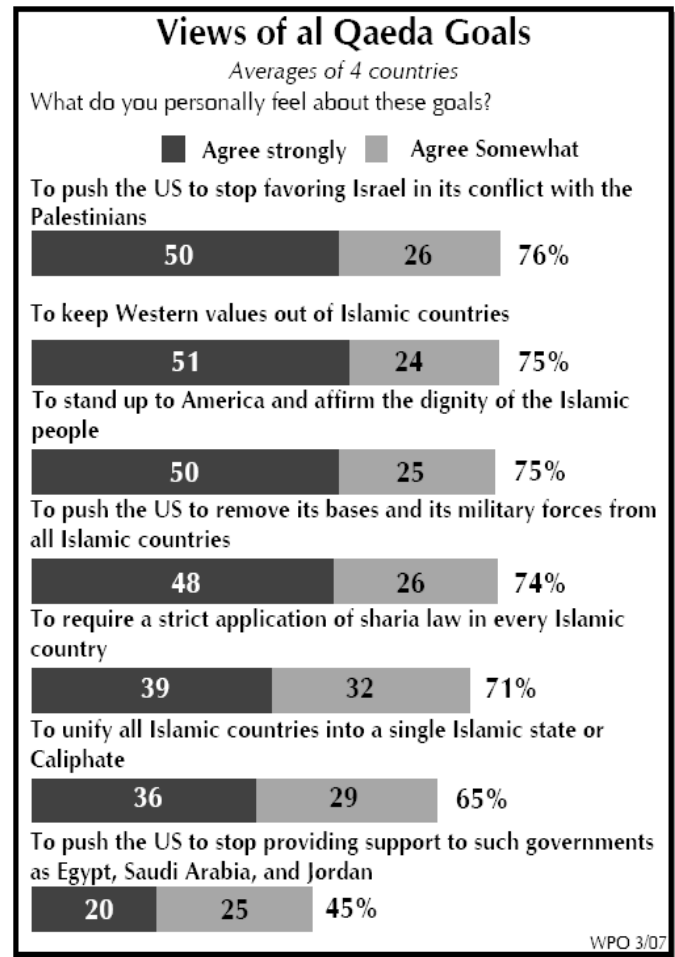


Figure 1. Views of al Qaida Goals in Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, Pakistan

Source: WorldPublicOpinion.org

reject anti-civilian violence—an apparent contradiction revealing a similar poll weakness. Egyptian answers elsewhere in the poll clearly betrayed a close, psychological connection to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the most spectacular anti-Israeli suicide bombings have targeted civilians. The poll did ask what Muslims thought of anti-civilian violence in Europe or the U.S., but the results might have been different if the question had been applied to specific contexts or framed in a different manner (as retaliation for action X or to support the Palestinian cause, for instance).

The point here is not to argue that the “vast majority of Muslims” supports violent anti-Western jihad, but to show that the opposite assumption is dubious at least. Polling data can be pulled to support a variety of theses, but it can also be invoked absent the context of the original report or born of faulty methodology. A good analyst will challenge his intuition, using qualitative sources to put the polling data in context, however it reads. Unfortunately, it is a human tendency to use data that confirm previously-held beliefs. It is, after all, “intuitively correct.”

PROHIBITED ANALYSIS

The national security strategists do not make their assumptions in a vacuum. They do so in the context of an intellectual environment that pre-ordains some conclusions and discourages others. In essence, there are accepted judgments Westerners may levy with or without support, and there are judgments deemed unacceptable despite support. It is the unintended byproduct of a benevolent, intellectual environment designed to correct a human history filled with uninformed, unjustified, and unfortunate bigotry. However, rather than removing moral judgments from intellectual pursuits

altogether—and this would be a prudent philosophy for achieving objectivity—Western intelligentsia, including mainstream media and academia, allows penetrating, sometimes derisive critiques of its own culture while disallowing it of other cultures.

Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind* has to be the most enduring example of a solid, if imperfect, work routinely rejected by modern scholars as “emblematic of a bygone era,” Orientalist à la Edward Said's definition, racist, “lurid,” and, like Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, too general to be accurate or of any use. Critics deride neo-conservatives in the current administration for reading it; some of the more polemic critics claim it “...provided the intellectual backdrop for the torture and sexual abuse that took place at Abu Ghraib.”¹⁶ Rejecting Patai's work as a disfavored “type of thinking,” one anthropologist ironically dismisses it as “culture talk,” while another claims “[Patai] can no longer be taken seriously.” In true, universalist form, critic Emram Qureshi suggests, “Rather than plumbing some mythical ‘Arab mind,’ we should affirm the shared humanity that transcends our differences and binds us all together.” Lee Smith, whom National Public Radio interviewed without contest, eloquently demonstrates the accepted discourse on Patai:

The very title of *The Arab Mind* suggests that it's possible, and desirable, to reduce a set of cultural ideas and circumstances to a single concept. Patai's term is more than the vulgar shorthand of mass politics (e.g., “the black community”). It belongs to an old tradition that classified races according to their ostensibly characteristic traits, a field pioneered by 19th-century European writers and shared by, among others, T.E. Lawrence. “They were a limited, narrow-minded people, whose inert intellects lay fallow in incurious resignation.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Emram Qureshi, “Misreading the Arab Mind: The Dubious Guidebook to Middle East Culture That's on the Pentagon's Reading List,” *The Boston Globe*, online ed., 30 May 2004, URL: <http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2004/05/30/misreading_the_arab_mind?mode=PF>, accessed 15 May 2007.

¹⁷ Lee Smith, “Inside The Arab Mind: What's wrong with the White House's book on Arab nationalism,” *Slate Magazine*, online ed., 27 May 2004, URL: <<http://www.slate.com/id/2101328/>>, accessed 15 May 2007.

Racism-driven inquiry certainly did leave an indelible mark on “the academic mind.” The rejection of obviously flawed and bigoted analysis from the 19th century, however, has produced its own problems. Analysts are now required to assume the universality of human character and prohibited from inquiries like Patai’s, lest they be lumped in with the likes of 19th century bigots. The problem, of course, is that there are differences between cultures and religions that affect behavior and judgments—this cannot be gainsaid. Moreover, it deprives such terms as “Arab” and “Western” of any utility by picking them apart with incessant particularization. It could be inappropriate to use the term American, for instance, because there are fifty diverse states, hundreds of counties in some of them, thousands of towns and cities, as well as a wealth of cultures and subcultures—in the United States alone. Because it would be difficult to find many U.S. citizens who conform to every character trait considered quintessentially American, the term American can have no use, so the argument goes.

Huntington, who posits that the post-Cold War world will be characterized by conflict between different manifestations of the highest social order, the civilization, often endures that particular criticism. Critics maintain that, like Patai, he is too general and does not account for variances within civilizations. Islam is, after all, a “big tent” with many belief systems and over one billion adherents.¹⁸ There must be accounting for the divisions within Islam that appear to be working against each other. Additionally, as mentioned above, the so-called “vast majority” of Muslims do not support terrorism and, by extension, it is believed they do not see themselves necessarily in conflict with the West. The assumed universal human values that drive cultures toward pragmatic

¹⁸ “How Many Muslims Are in the US and the Rest of the World,” *ReligiousTolerance.org*, URL: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/isl_num.htm>, accessed 23 April 2007.

relationships are evidenced by the many examples of peaceful East-West interactions, such as our relations with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or Morocco.

On the first point, that of Huntington and Patai waxing too general, most critics prematurely reject the utility of generalization as an analytical tool and forget both authors understood intra-civilizational divisions. Huntington writes:

The culture of a village in southern Italy may be different from that of a village in northern Italy, but both will share in a common Italian culture that distinguishes them from German villages. European communities, in turn, will share cultural features that distinguish them from Arab or Chinese communities. Arabs, Chinese and Westerners, however, are not part of any broader cultural entity. They constitute civilizations.¹⁹

At no point does Huntington claim the variances within Islam, or the West for that matter, do not exist. Rather, he seeks to back up the analyst's perspective in order to form the broadest possible understanding of trends. Likewise, neither does Patai suggest every Arab psyche conforms to a single concept without deviation; he is trying to give the layperson an abridged familiarization of a broad and proud culture. Patai is deliberately general, writing, "...my portraiture of the Arab mind did not reflect day-to-day events, but was an analysis of overall trends discernible from a long-range perspective..."²⁰ He explicitly states, "...there is a general tendency that can be widely observed, not an iron rule without exceptions."²¹

Yet universalists ironically invoke the exceptions to debunk cultural analysis—ironic because the underlying assumption with universalism is that all peoples are fundamentally the same. As Qureshi said, "We should affirm the shared humanity that transcends our differences and binds us all together." Canada's Secretary of State for

¹⁹ Samuel Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 24.

²⁰ Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (Long Island City: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), xix.

²¹ Patai, xxiii.

Multiculturalism would have agreed, having once stated in a speech at the Atlantic Multicultural Conference, “Through my many experiences I have come to learn that, at heart, most people want the same thing—we are united in the pursuit of a just and compassionate society.”²² It is believed that pointing out the non-conforming example is enough to deconstruct the generalist’s greater observations. Many of Patai’s critics, like those of Huntington, also seem to be reacting to anticipated arguments rather than those actually given. He is believed to paint “...an overwhelmingly negative picture of the Arabs,” though upon a closer examination the book appears uneven but generally sympathetic.²³ Accusing him of a particular type of thinking, the critics’ modus operandi is to pull Patai’s material out of a box and repack it according to the “Orientalist” or “racist” paradigm they are inclined to see.

The late Edward Said played a vital, if unintended, role in the creation of this paradigm. In 1978 he published *Orientalism*, positing that Western understandings of the Middle East, those of Europe in particular, grew out of and were defined by a colonial mindset and relative power. “My contention is that Orientalism [the study of the Middle East, among other things] is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West....” This mindset began in the late 18th century when Europe began its colonial adventures in earnest. It developed substantially in the 19th, when, Said noted, “...every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric.”²⁴ The legacy

²² Jean Augustine, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), “Speaking notes on the occasion of the Atlantic Multicultural Conference,” speech delivered in Halifax, 08 November 2003, URL: <http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/pubs/speeches/2003_11_08_e.cfm>, accessed 08 June 2008.

²³ “The Arab Mind,” *Catholic New Times*, online ed., 4 July 2004, URL: <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0MKY/is_12_28/ai_n6102282>, accessed 15 May 2007.

²⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 204.

of this mindset, Said argues, still runs strong through contemporary academic, media, and government circles. Said explains well the dark lineage of Orientalism, and he adequately demonstrates that negative “Oriental” stereotypes can still be found, but he allows for no possibility that Western analysis of the Middle East can be correct. For him, the Western position of power over the Middle East still leads to portrayals of the Arabs as “greedy, barbarous, and cruel,”²⁵ and few, if any, analysts can shed this perception. According to Said, the work of authoritative Western academics, including Patai and Bernard Lewis, cannot be separated from the greater pejorative Western perspective of the Middle East and therefore cannot be read seriously.

Taking Said’s and others’ criticisms to heart, the Western intelligentsia is now quick to assume the members of every culture are fundamentally moderate, want similar things, and will react in similar ways to given circumstances. Stephen Lambert, author of *Y: Islamic Sources of Revolutionary Conduct*, points out the prohibition against qualitative analysis in Western, particularly U.S., methodological culture. The emphasis today rests largely on quantitative, empirical analysis that does not lend itself well to potentially negative judgments. Potentially unfavorable, qualitative observations or conclusions about other cultures are invariably met with the truism, “Well, we (Westerners) do it too,” an axiom designed to shut down an argument by morally paralyzing the advocate. The axiom also implies that, aside from the cultural differences we are compelled to celebrate, there are no differences that can lead to diversity in action or thinking. It is, as Lambert states, a “myopia that resides not only within the

²⁵ *Lawrence of Arabia*, starring Peter O’Toole and Alec Guinness, directed by David Lean, Columbia Pictures, 1962.

Intelligence Community, but also in the policymaking community as a whole....”²⁶ The natural consequence is a type of logic demonstrated well by Kenneth Ballen, head of Terror Free Tomorrow. He implies terrorism is the result of faulty Western policies and lack of attention to goodwill initiatives:

Our surveys show that not only do Muslims reject terrorism as much if not more than Americans, but even those who are sympathetic to radical ideology can be won over by positive American actions that promote goodwill and offer real hope.²⁷

A personal anecdote further illustrates this point: I recently borrowed a book from the National Defense Intelligence College Library. Inside the book was a warning, neatly hand-written in pencil, admonishing fellow readers to beware of the book’s content. It states, “Note to readers, (1992). This book heavily overgeneralizes about a culture marked by diversity. Contrasting books worth reading include works by [Margaret] Nydell, [possibly Hisham] Sharabi, and E. Said.” Evidently another critic of Huntington, Patai and other “generalists,” this individual felt compelled to notify future students that this work does not conform to the accepted discourse, and therefore they should not take it seriously.

This approach to understanding the genesis and continuance of problems in the Middle East must be discarded. Analytical prohibitions and moral equivalency are overreactions to the darker elements of Orientalism noted by Said, and a universalist form of mirror-imaging. Although over-generalization has its dangers, so too does over-particularization. A Shiite may laud the politics of Lebanese Hezbollah and denounce that of al Qaida, just as a relatively secular Palestinian may be lukewarm toward the

²⁶ Stephen Lambert, *Y: Islamic Sources of Revolutionary Conduct* (Washington, DC: Joint Military Intelligence College, 2005), 8.

²⁷ Kenneth Ballen, “The Myth of Muslim Support for Terror,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, online ed., 23 February 2007, URL: <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0223/p09s01-coop.html>>, accessed 14 May 2007.

Islamification coveted by Hamas, but few of these diverse elements are significantly different when it comes to conflict with the West. Analysts would be mistaken to assume that lack of religious or cultural unity on one issue necessarily means a lack of unity on another.

In 2005, Stephen Coughlin developed an excellent draft model to explain how this environment leads to a reliance on moderates for understanding Islamic cultures—a practice that can distort perception and render policy decisions ineffective.²⁸ The model contrasts Sharia, or Islamic holy law, with the Western democratic, Judeo-Christian value system, but one can apply it to a large number of inter-societal relations. Coughlin’s

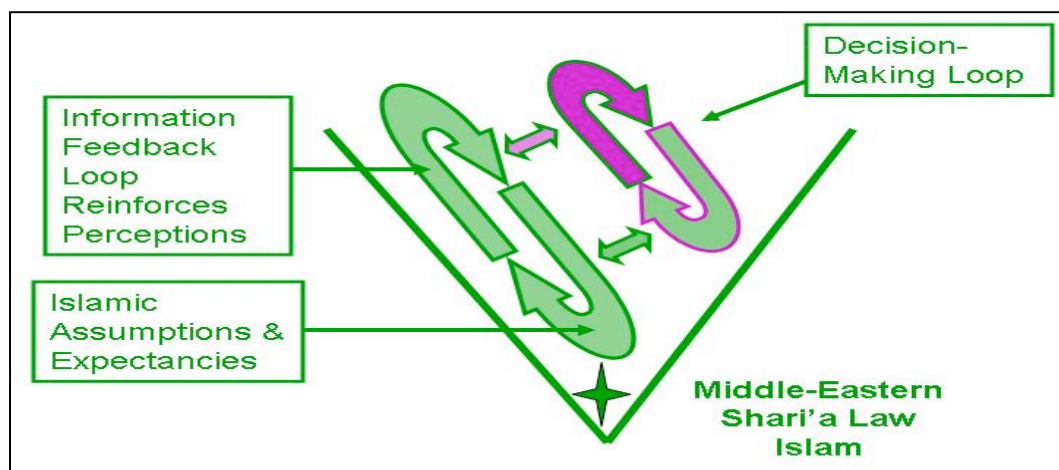


Figure 2. The Essential Mirror Image 1

Source: Stephen Coughlin, “The Essential Mirror Image: Draft,” 9 November 2005.

model suggests that, for Middle Eastern societies, the core elements are the Koran, Hadith, Sunna, etc. In the Western Democratic Judeo-Christian system, the core elements would presumably be the Bible and enlightenment era documents such as the

²⁸ Stephen Coughlin, “The Essential Mirror Image: Draft,” draft briefing, Washington D.C., 9 November 2005.

U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, or the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. The deeper into the “V” one goes, the closer to the core, perhaps “pure,” philosophical elements one gets. Conversely, as one moves closer to V’s opening, the decision and information loops become more nuanced, varied, or moderate, depending on your perspective. Decision-making loops in a given society, presumably those of policymakers, run parallel to that society’s information feedback loops, which are akin to that society’s expectations and assumptions. The decision makers assume that the tenor

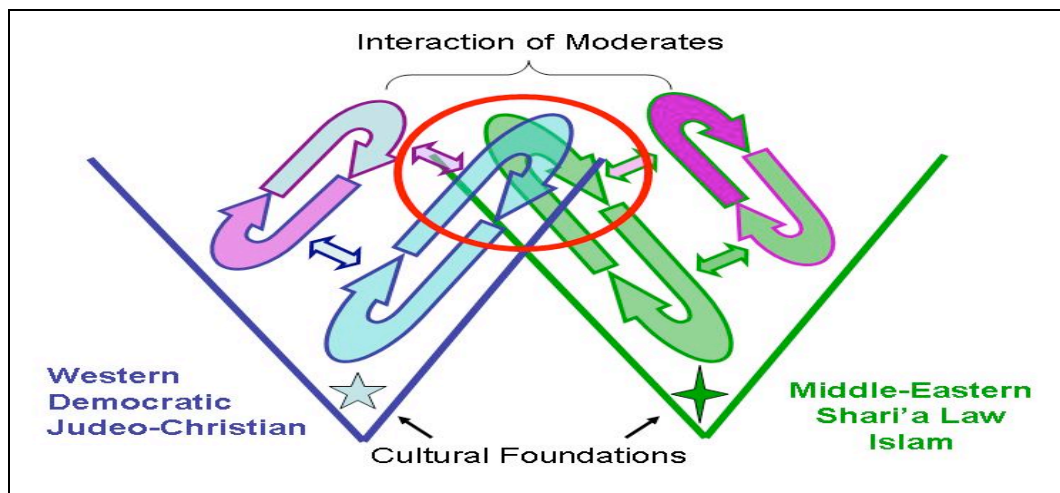


Figure 3. The Essential Mirror Image 2

of their own society’s discourse reflects the tenor of the opposing society’s discourse, and make policy according to that perspective. Where societies and cultures overlap, it tends to be the moderates who determine the meaningful inter-societal discourse. The moderates of one culture form their perspectives from interactions with the moderates of the opposing culture. These moderate perspectives are then fed deeper into their respective societal discourses, where they are digested according to accepted paradigms.

Coughlin writes that, "...our own assessments are made based on our own Western perception of events." He notes some commonly used phrases that illustrate the phenomenon:

- "This is just like when Christians..."
- "It's all a question of interpretation..."
- Or if explanations feed back into the Western paradigm: "It's just like in the West where Christians..." [or] "When Timothy McVeigh..."

Touching on the prohibited analysis discussed above, Coughlin notes phraseology often used to

...divert non-believers from looking to Islam for explanations of events. [The phrases may include:] "There are a thousand different interpretations to Islamic Law..." [or] "Only those who speak classical Arabic can understand the true meaning of the Qur'an."

This model does not account for non-religious factors with roles in the Arab-Muslim perception and decision-making processes, but it is useful in explaining how Western analysis often misses very important factors. As Coughlin states, there is "...no requirement to explain Islamic Assumptions and expectancies beyond the superficial." As discussed above, Westerners are in fact prohibited from delving deeper into the core sources of societal motivations and understanding. Yet, as Coughlin states, "Islamic assumptions and expectancies don't just go away."

Western academics, policymakers, and the general public must be open to the possibility that humans from different cultures will not necessarily react in similar ways. What if Islamic rhetoric, dismissed as extremist "propaganda" by Western standards, lies close to the Muslim mainstream? Will Western intelligentsia be able to respond adequately? Will policymakers futilely target only objectives they can measure empirically, such as economic growth and voter participation rates? As Lambert argues,

“the core ethos of our opponents’ ideology—Islam—is officially shelved and protected from public debate....” This, he states, “...flies in the face of all classical or Socratic approaches to public discourse and debate.”²⁹ Although the answers to such questions are not known, it should at least be permitted to ask them.

Ellen Laipson, a former vice chair for the National Intelligence Council, acknowledged the need to explore these issues in a review of Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon’s *The Sacred Age of Terror*.

Their book's most important and lasting contribution is its exploration of the relationship between al Qaeda's toxic message and the Muslim mainstream.... What the authors find is disturbing. According to them, al Qaeda's belief system cannot be separated neatly from Islamic teachings, because it has—selectively and perniciously—built on fundamental Islamic ideas and principles. This link applies to contemporary issues as well: al Qaeda's views on Islamic law, Israel, or Iraq would not differ significantly from the positions of moderate Islamists, even if they disagree on the use of violence to further their goals.³⁰

Understanding cultures, religions and their adherents means more than knowing and celebrating their diverse virtues—there must be an honest understanding of their effects.

Traditionally Understood Conflict Drivers

The Universalist Approach. Many authors try their hand at modeling rebellion in universal terms. Some theses are quite good, but most assume different revolutionary constituencies will act and react the same way in given circumstances. There is, according to these theories, a universal character to the disgruntled constituency. That is, revolutionaries are driven to action because their circumstances, not their identities, demand it. Universal factors leading to violent rebellion are factors anyone can

²⁹ Lambert, 3.

³⁰ Ellen Laipson, “While America Slept,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2003): 143.

understand, regardless of background, and they may include economic deprivation, military occupation, political alienation, and cultural or religious repression among others. Ted Robert Gurr's theory of relative deprivation still stands out among these theories. In *Why Men Rebel*, Gurr explains men are prone to rebellion when a gap increases between their expectations and capabilities for success. Crucially, he notes it is the feeling or perception of deprivation that matters most; it is not necessarily the fact of it that induces rebellion.³¹ This becomes particularly relevant when propagandists succeed in creating poorly founded beliefs, or when a society is already predisposed to unrealistic expectations about justice and international stature.

Problems With the Universalist Approach. Gurr's theory is brilliant, but analysts should not apply it the same way in every scenario. The societal expectations, that is, the perception of what one's culture, ethnicity, or faith is due may not be the same in different societies. In fact, the perception of economic or social justice can stem from the makeup of the culture or belief systems as much as the given circumstances. For instance, for a culture predisposed to imperialist hegemony, events running counter to that paradigm, such as the failure of an expansionist military campaign, will be painful. Were that society to lose some of its home territory, it would be catastrophic. Similarly, if a society deeply believed in its own luminous example of democracy and the virtues of secular liberalism, witnessing theocracy abroad would be bad. Feeling a hint of it at home could be untenable.

This is not to say, of course, that universal considerations have no merit in discussions about rebellion, or even that cultural and religious factors necessarily

³¹ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 24.

contribute to every violent conflict. Rather, the point is to consider religion and culture as *potential* contributing factors. Economic deprivation as motivation for rebellion has been extensively explored by a wide variety of authors, as have political and military repression, as well as other factors. Gurr's theory, for instance, is largely economic in its focus, although analysts can apply his construct to other problems. Author Mohammed M. Hafez focuses on terrorism perpetrated by Muslims primarily against Muslims, but his theory of political exclusion may have some applicability to the East-West conflict.

Hafez asserts that:

...contrary to academic and journalistic wisdom about why Muslims rebel, violent insurgencies in the Muslim world are not primarily an aggressive response to economic deprivation or psychological alienation produced by severe impoverishment or failed modernizations Muslim rebellions, generally speaking, are a defensive reaction to predatory state repression that threatens the organizational resources and lives of political Islamists.³²

Hafez argues if Islamist organizations are granted some political inclusion in the earliest stages of their development, the groups are less likely to turn violent later on. In other words, "Muslims rebel because they encounter an ill-fated combination of political and institutional exclusion, on the one hand, and reactive and indiscriminate repression on the other."³³ He focuses only on rebellions *within* Muslim states, however, such as in Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and Jordan, and does not consider the cultural or religious factors pushing Muslims to rebel or fight against non-Muslims.

Author Graham Fuller explores the psychological basis for Muslim violence:

Ironically, even as Westerners feel threatened by Islam, most in the Muslim world feel themselves besieged by the West, a reality only dimly grasped in the United States. They see the international order as dramatically skewed against them and their interests, in a world where force and the potential for force dominate the

³² Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2004), xvi.

³³ Hafez, 199.

agenda. They are overwhelmed by feelings of political impotence. ... Under such conditions, it should not be surprising that these frustrated populations perceive the current war against terrorism as functionally a war against Islam.³⁴

Although Hafez rejects psychological explanations, Fuller's and Hafez' theories are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they appear to compliment one another quite well.

Poverty, however, has effectively been discounted as a lone, or even primary, catalyst for violent jihad. Several works of modern scholarship have adequately demonstrated that economics do not play a significant role in generating Islamic terrorism, including those of Robert A. Pape and Hafez. As mentioned, Hafez believes Muslim violence is not a "response to economic deprivation... produced by severe impoverishment or failed modernization." He asserts that Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia showed "no significant differences in the economic-demographic data, or at least they are insufficiently significant to explain variation in patterns of violence."³⁵ Pape concurs, stating, "The countries plagued by suicide terrorism from 1980 to 2001 are by no means the worst off in the world; some would be considered 'middle income' societies, and their people enjoy life expectancies not dramatically lower than those in the United States."³⁶ Author Tawfik Hamid takes the notion quite far, suggesting that the 1970s and 1980s wealth of the oil states precipitated the spread of militant Islam:

The increase of wealth in Saudi Arabia has caused many Muslims from all around the Islamic world [to believe] that Allah had blessed Arabia with oil—and with it, wealth—because they kept the "pure" Islamic culture. Accordingly, many Muslims started to promote the revival of this form of a "pure," intolerant Islamic culture which was practiced in Arabia throughout Islamic history. The promotion of this "pure" and arrogant Islamic culture has sparked much of what we see

³⁴ Graham Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 2 (2002): 54.

³⁵ Hafez, 10.

³⁶ Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2006), 18.

today, with violent and aggressive acts originating from within the Muslim world.³⁷

Author Alan Richards posits that economics does in fact play a role, but hardly by itself. Richards acknowledges the massive Middle Eastern youth bulge and accompanying unemployment rates as exacerbating factors, but he also notes these conditions are not unique to the Arab-Muslim world:

...the “youth bulge” and rampant unemployment are at least as severe in sub-Saharan Africa, but we hear little of Congolese international terrorism.... The Ayatollah Khomeini is reported to have said, “the revolution is about Islam, not the price of melons.” Deeper issues of identity and legitimacy are at stake. For example, it should be remembered that although unemployed, frustrated young men can turn to Islamism, they can also turn to drugs and crime, to apathy, indifference, muddling through, dogged hard work, or any number of other personal “coping” strategies.³⁸

Richards argues that a variety of social factors interact with each other to produce Islamism. Increases in Arab literacy rates, for instance, have ironically compounded the frustration associated with widespread unemployment. Gurr would call this an increasing difference between “value expectations” and “capabilities,” that is, the difference between what newly literate Arabs *think* they should be able to earn or enjoy, and that which they are *capable* of earning or enjoying due to circumstances. Yet the prevailing outlet for Muslim youth rage is not revolutionary communism, an economic concept that has proven attractive in a plethora of different cultures and circumstances, but Islamism, which finds easy purchase in Muslim societies.

Although Pape’s *Dying to Win* acknowledges the fallacy of using economics alone to understand terrorism, he focuses too much on another universalist factor as the genesis of suicide bombings: military occupation. Additionally, Pape bases his thesis

³⁷ Hamid, 60-61.

³⁸ Alan Richards, “Socioeconomic Roots of Middle East Radicalism,” *Naval War College Review* LV, no. 4 (2002), 31-32.

entirely on empirical data that he appears to deliberately misread in order to “prove” Islam cannot be a motivating factor in suicide terrorism. In fact, according to the data Pape collected himself, Muslims belonging to a variety of groups (some incorrectly portrayed as purely secular) are responsible for 239 out of 315 suicide attacks worldwide between 1980 and 2003. Of the remaining attacks, 75 of 76 were conducted by a single, secular group: the Tamil Tigers.³⁹ Few authors seem willing to deeply explore the cultural and religious contributions to violent ideology. When cultural factors are acknowledged by mainstream academia, it is often to demonstrate the futility of meaningful cultural analysis.

The Importance of Muslim Religiosity and Culture

In the mid 20th Century, key Arab leaders such as Gamel Abdel Nasser rejected their nations’ colonial demeanors and replaced them with Arab nationalism, much of whose ideology and methodology ironically drew from Western concepts (military structure, nation-state, “secularism,” etc.). The movement was shepherded by an elite that expected the quiescence and loyalty of the Arab masses, but the relatively secular experiment of Pan-Arabism was a short-lived. It could not help but fall prey to the penetrating, inextricably Islamic character of the Middle East, where even “secular” Muslims appear pious by current Western standards.

Perpetual underestimation of Muslim religiosity leads to much faulty Western analysis. As an extension of the mirror-imaging discussed above, many analysts assume Muslim religiosity is roughly equivalent to that of Westerners. Yet it can be argued that Islam forms the framework around which many of the so-called secular groups are built.

³⁹ Pape, 15.

Yasser Arafat, for instance, was usually called a secular leader by Western authors, although his very name was self-chosen for its religious significance (Arafat is a holy mountain near Mecca), his early organization had links to the Muslim Brotherhood, and virtually all his rhetoric was steeped in religious overtones.⁴⁰ United States Presidents

George W. Bush and Jimmy Carter are both considered pious national leaders, but their outward expressions of piety pale in comparison to those of the secular Arafat.

One could legitimately argue Arafat and other Arab-Muslim leaders manipulated religion and the language of martyrdom to motivate constituents (one attaining the status of a “shaheed” accrues profound respect from Muslim compatriots), but even if it were true, their success in doing so would demonstrate the importance of Islam among Muslims.

Islam forms a critical pillar of Muslim identities (Figure 4), and with few exceptions,

trumps national identity.⁴¹ The data tend to be fairly consistent on this topic, and disputes about the results do not appear prevalent. Western analysts must therefore be careful when dismissing Islam as a motivating factor, or Islamic language as mere rhetoric, even

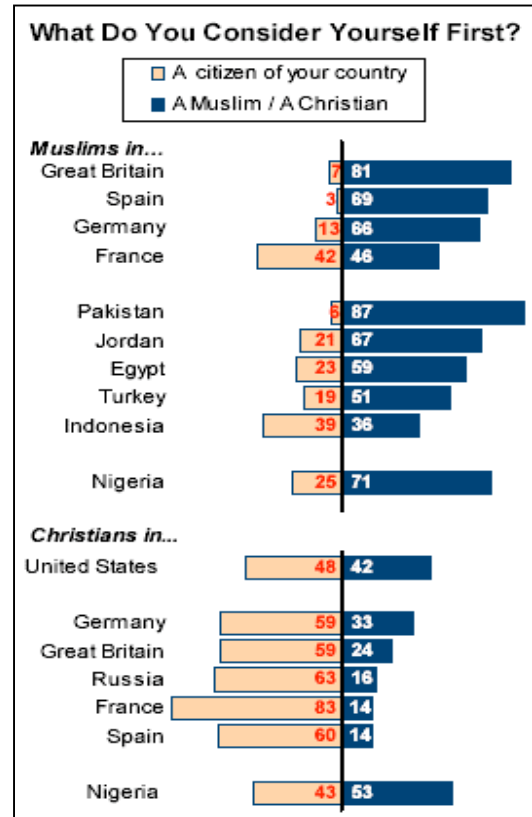


Figure 4. Relative Importance of Religious Identity

Source: Pew Research Center

⁴⁰ Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 6.

⁴¹ *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, “Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns About Religious and Cultural Identity,” 6 July 2006, URL: <<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=254>>, accessed 14 May 2007.

when dealing with apparent secular entities. This does not mean analysts can predict the behavior and reactions of individuals with a Koranic road map or rulebook, but it can be safely said at the Huntingtonian level that religion penetrates and acts on Muslims more than it does Westerners. As will be discussed later, this has profound implications in cognitive war and in the development of ideology.

Culture, which blends with religion, is also important for general analysis, and its utility has been similarly rejected for political correctness. Emphasizing the knowledge of local culture for operational purposes, Montgomery McFate suggests, “Successful counterinsurgency depends on attaining a holistic, total understanding of local culture. This cultural understanding must be thorough and deep if it is to have any practical benefit at all.” Applying it to the operational level, McFate states:

To defeat the insurgency in Iraq, U.S. and coalition forces must recognize and exploit the underlying tribal structure of the country; the power wielded by traditional authority figures; the use of Islam as a political ideology; the competing interests of the Shia, the Sunni, and the Kurds; the psychological effects of totalitarianism; and the divide between urban and rural, among other things.⁴²

Yet, after the Vietnam War, there came a “curious and conspicuous lack of anthropology in the national-security arena.”⁴³ This trend must be reversed if policymakers are to understand the importance of and manner in which culture contributes to the cognitive warfare paradigm. Works like Patai’s should be criticized, to be sure, but they should also be looked at as starting rather than ending points in the discussion.

⁴² Montgomery McFate, “Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of Their Curious Relationship,” *Military Review* (March/April 2005), URL: <<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/download/English/MarApr05/mcfate.pdf>>, accessed 8 July 2007.

⁴³ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the beginning, this chapter serves as a glorified apologia for the kind of analysis proffered below. Because of the subject's incendiary nature, and because of the prohibition against this kind of analysis, there are predictable criticisms that will be preemptively levied, regardless of the evidence I provide. I will likely be labeled a racist, for instance, or Islamophobic. Critics invoking these terms may not notice or care that I am using primary sources, highlighting what Arab-Muslims say about themselves and about us. Nor will my critics necessarily notice what I have *not* said, e.g. that Arab-Muslims are incapable of aspiring to the Western ideals we hold so dear, or that civilizational conflict is inescapably eternal, or that lying as practiced in the Arab-Muslim world deserves the same moral judgment that it does in a Western context (it may and it may not—I do not address that question here). For this reason, chapter two *preemptively* argues against criticisms that categorically reject this work. Moreover, the politically correct intellectual environment is an integral part of the cognitive warfare construct. It needs to be explored as a key weakness that jihadists are exploiting. The evidence in this thesis exposes universalism as a dubious construct and shows that political correctness can be dangerous when its beneficiary seeks to exploit it for pernicious purposes.

In a certain manner, the next chapter continues setting up the reader so that he or she will be able to put the rest of the thesis in its proper context. Chapter three deals almost exclusively with the theory of memetics, which gives analysts and policymakers the tools to coldly dissect and exploit the most important elements of any ideological war: ideas. It attempts to explain what ideas are made of, how they are built upon each other,

how they protect themselves, how they can attack one another, and perhaps most importantly, how it is that humans may be controlled by them rather than the inverse.

CHAPTER 3

MEMETICS

Chapter four proposes a basic construct for cognitive warfare consisting of three models: the ideological engine, changing the accepted discourse, and the cognitive offensive. Each of them attempts to describe a different part of cognitive warfare and all of them deal with mental abstractions. In the ideological engine model, for instance, abstract motivating factors converge to produce violent ideologies. The factors may include, but are not limited to: culture, religion, the political environment, and the given society's accepted discourse. Other motivating factors, such as foreign military occupation and economic deprivation, appear more concrete at first glance, but even these factors spawn violent ideologies only when they are *perceived* to be in a critical state by a population. A military occupation could be perceived as harsh by a particular population, but another population might perceive a similar occupation as entirely tolerable. Likewise, two populations may react differently to similar economic circumstances based solely on their expectations. As Ted Robert Gurr points out, it is more about perception than absolute, empirical truth.⁴⁴ The suggested model for changing the accepted discourse plunges even deeper into the realm of abstraction. This model explains how the temperament of a society's accepted discourse on a particular

⁴⁴ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 24.

subject can be significantly changed—perhaps manipulated—irrespective of the truth. This discourse can be shifted by skillful use of propaganda over the course of decades, or a shift in real-world circumstances that are incongruent with previously-held beliefs. Finally, the cognitive offense model attempts to describe how ideas, paradigms, etc. are typically transmitted across cultures, and how some societal discourses may be vulnerable. Thus, this chapter is a necessary introduction to a science (or philosophy, depending on your perspective) that deals solely with such mental abstractions: memetics.

Invented by biologist Richard Dawkins in the late 1970s, memetics a tool for understanding and harnessing the realm of abstraction. Memetics breaks down ideologies, psychological operations, religions, cultures, discourses, and virtually any other abstractions into their most basic constituent parts, objectively laying them out for examination as entities that exist—some say live—quite apart from the needs of the humans who carry them. Memetics allows analysts to examine with detachment how ideas interact with each other, and how they can thrive or fail irrespective of their basis in fact or benefit to their human hosts.

THE EARLY REPLICATORS

Interestingly, Dawkins' revelation occurred to him in the context of genetics and biology, so it makes some sense to introduce it in the same way here. In fact, the biological thrust of his book is itself revolutionary: the idea that genes are not the animal's or plant's way of reproducing, rather the opposite. The most basic entity

“desiring” to reproduce itself—consciously or unconsciously—is the gene. We are the means by which genes reproduce themselves. We are, along with all other creatures and plants, “survival machines,” or devices built (evolved) around the gene to increase its chances for survival and replication.

The earliest replicators were not so complex, but they had mastered the function of self-copying. The number of copies increased, as did the number of copies made from copies, and thus did the chances for errors showing up in successive generations. “As mis-copyings were made and propagated, the primeval soup became filled by a population not of identical replicas, but of several varieties of replicating molecules, all ‘descended’ from the same ancestor.”⁴⁵ Some of these mutations no doubt hampered the ability of particular genes to reproduce, but some resulted in special qualities enabling survival through environmental change. Dawkins postulates, for instance, that as raw materials for genetic replication were used up and became scarce, there may have been some genes that had mutated into an early carnivorous form.

Some of them may even have ‘discovered’ how to break up molecules of rival varieties chemically, and to use the building blocks so released for making their own copies.... Other replicators perhaps discovered how to protect themselves, either chemically, or by building a physical wall of protein around themselves.⁴⁶

The mechanisms “designed” by genes have, through the process of natural selection, grown increasingly capable, competitive, and complex.

The evolutionary growth of the mind best illustrates this increasing complexity. In *The Meme Machine*, Susan Blackmore suggests that the size of the human brain can be partially explained by the human capacity for imitation—a skill that takes the learning

⁴⁵ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 17.

⁴⁶ Dawkins, 19.

process to unprecedented levels in the animal kingdom.⁴⁷ When the ability first appeared—not necessarily in humans—no longer were creatures programmed solely by their genes and, consequently, no longer were they instinctually driven to oblivion in changing environments. Creatures able to perceive and account for their mistakes enjoyed fantastically greater chances for success than their inflexible counterparts.

Blackmore illustrates with a simple, hungry frog analogy:

...imagine that the flies vary in appearance and goodness to eat. Let us suppose that striped flies are inedible while spotty flies are excellent food. Frogglings that prefer spotty flies will be at an advantage and so the mechanism required for preferring spotty flies, such as sensitive spot detectors in the visual system, will spread. However, it might be the case that the pattern on the flies changes faster than frogling evolution can track. In this case it will pay the little frogglings to be able to *learn* which flies to eat.⁴⁸

It goes without saying that Froggy's trial and error serves him well if he is smart enough to absorb the lessons, but what if he could learn through the experience of *others*? It is here that human ancestors likely began breaking away from the pack. Some lucky and intelligent ancestor no doubt discovered the usefulness of stone tools, for instance, but the discovery would have died with her had onlookers been unable to imitate the action. Better imitation naturally requires a bigger brain, and, according to Blackmore, it stands to reason that better imitators stood a better chance of surviving and attracting mates.

To understand both the power of imitation and the level to which it has evolved, one need only be reminded that nearly every word in every book, every word ever spoken by the individuals reading them, is imitative. The author of this thesis has never invented any words, or those he did—as a toddler—did not prove worthy enough for his society to copy. The most innovative songs, the crudest wheels, the most revolutionary of scientific

⁴⁷ Susan Blackmore, *The Meme Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 77.

⁴⁸ Blackmore, 117.

theories—all of them—would be impossible without preexisting skills and concepts. New ideas and seemingly spontaneous creations can be unprecedented, to be sure, but they are invariably created from mental materials that existed in another form, not from nothing.

Enter the Meme

Careful not to attribute consciousness to gene behavior, Dawkins leaves the door open to the possibility of other, non-genetic replicators in his 1977 book. With the exception replication itself, he suggests it may not be possible to lock in criteria for defining life:

...is there anything that must be true of all life, wherever it is found, and whatever the basis of its chemistry? If forms of life exist whose chemistry is based on silicon rather than carbon, or ammonia rather than water, if creatures are discovered that boil to death at -100 degrees centigrade, if a form of life is found that is not based on chemistry at all but on electronic reverberating circuits, will there still be any general principle that is true of all life? Obviously I do not know but, if I had to bet, I would put my money on one fundamental principle. This is the law that all life evolves by the differential survival of replicating entities.”⁴⁹

Perhaps unintentionally, Dawkins then gives birth to a shattering new worldview—an epiphany no less profound than that produced by the red pill in the Matrix.⁵⁰ Dawkins suggests that ideas, in all their manifestations, are examples of non-genetic replicators. That is, human *thoughts* may be life forms:

⁴⁹ Dawkins, 191-192.

⁵⁰ The Matrix is a science fiction movie based upon the concept that existence as humans know it is a computer-generated illusion. Humans do not know the grim truth about their corporeal existence: their real bodies remain asleep from conception to death, exploited for their electromagnetic energy by a master machine/ computer. In the scene referred to above, the protagonist, Neo, is faced with an uncomfortable choice: take a blue pill and continue life in ignorance but relative psychological safety, or take the red pill and risk the extreme psychological shock of sudden awareness. Dawkins's suggestion that thoughts may be a form of life is no less shattering. It carries with it numerous profound implications, not the least of which is that ideas can be masters of humans as much as the inverse. *The Matrix*, starring Keanu Reeves, directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski, Warner Bros., 1999.

I think that a new kind of replicator has recently emerged on this very planet. It is staring us in the face. It is still in its infancy, still drifting clumsily about in its primeval soup, but already it is achieving evolutionary change at a rate that leaves the old gene panting far behind.⁵¹

The new replicators are called “memes,” a term Dawkins fashioned from a Greek root with an eye towards the French word “meme” (same) and rhyming with the name of the original replicators, gene. He defines a meme as “a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of *imitation*,” and states, “examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches.”

Dawkins and follow-on philosophers who run with his idea do not typically claim memes behave precisely as biological organisms do, but biological analogies are hard to avoid and often provide a succinct way of illustrating what memes are and what they do.

Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.... When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for the meme’s propagation in just the way that a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of a host cell.⁵²

The analogies of virus and parasite are particularly compelling here as the relationship between the meme and the gene, i.e. the relationship between the idea and the human, is not a necessarily positive or symbiotic one. Dawkins is quite careful to point out that the health and virility, or “fitness” of a meme does not depend on its biological benefit, grounding in reason, or its affiliation with any kind of empirical truth.

Although it is literally a parasite and thus may not be considered a meme, *dicrocoelium dendriticum* is a particularly interesting organism that affects ants in much the same way that harmful memes affect humans. The adult version of this parasite finds

⁵¹ Dawkins, 192.

⁵² Dawkins, 192.

its home in the belly of sheep and a few other animals that expel it through feces. Snails then pick up the parasite's eggs and re-release them as tiny slime balls which ants apparently find delicious. When an ant consumes one, the nascent parasite travels to the brain where it lodges itself and compels the insect to climb blades of grass when the air temperature falls below 20 degrees Celsius. Ants normally return to the safety of their colonies at dusk, when the temperature typically falls, but the consequent exposure on the grass during grazing periods increases the likelihood of the parasite being (re)consumed—along with the ant—by sheep. There the cycle begins anew and the parasite's reproduction is ensured.⁵³ The parasite and the behavior it induces is analogous to the way in which memes regularly “infect” the minds of humans, sometimes driving great populations of well-adjusted individuals to detrimental or self-destructive behavior. It is clearly not in the ant's interest to make himself so vulnerable to mowing sheep, but he cannot help it. If he is knocked off the blade, he will climb back up it. Whether or not he “believes” in the parasite's goals, the ant sacrifices himself to perpetuate that which literally resides in his mind.

There is a large supply of human examples at the ideological level. One not raised by Dawkins is that of Marxist communism, an ideology whose implementation ruined and continues to ruin the lives of millions of its own adherents, and which tends to be economically viable only when infused with elements of its rival ideology: capitalism. Pure communism has effectively been demonstrated as untenable at the state level, but the total economic failure or stagnation and retreat of every significant Marxist experiment is apparently insufficient to crush the concept. New, well-meaning students

⁵³ *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador: Newfoundland and Labrador Agriculture, “Animal Diseases Factsheet,”* 14 April 2004, URL: <http://www.nr.gov.nl.ca/agric/animal_diseases/domestic/pdf/dicro.pdf>, accessed 21 January 2008.

and academics continue to interpret history and current events through Marxist lenses, and many old adherents attempt to revive the ideology at the political level in countries previously decimated by its forced practice. Dawkins might say that the communism meme has demonstrated its fitness, that is, the idea has managed to survive and reproduce despite the high price paid by the carriers.

Outside of communism, one can point to numerous border wars, often initiated by a sense of cultural or historical ownership over a territory or people. There is also the perennial problem of “ethnic cleansing,” based on the idea that one’s territory must not be contaminated or threatened by another culture’s ideas (fear of “contamination” through intermarriage and breeding may be better suited for a traditional Darwinian discussion about genetics). The shocking immorality of Nazi Germany’s Holocaust needs little elaboration, but it should be mentioned that, from a cold, memetic point of view, the impetus for this particular genocide was based on many ill-founded ideas and false conspiracy theories, such as belief in the existence of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The “final solution” was also wasteful and counterproductive for a war-strapped nation in an increasingly defensive position. Pure, unabashed, traditional anti-Semitism is unacceptable in (most of) the accepted Western discourse, but it has nonetheless proven an astonishingly persistent meme.⁵⁴ It can be found in virulent form throughout the world, often where there are no Jews present, and in the Middle East anti-Semitism forms an integral part of the accepted discourse and culture. As will be argued later, it is one element among many that together form a lethal narrative, an ideological mandate calling for Israel’s destruction at virtually any cost—and the costs thus far have been high to the Arab world.

Dawkins, however, affords little space to political memes. In addition to his work in biology, Dawkins is also one of the leading writers advocating for atheism. In the *Selfish Gene* and several subsequent books, he presents religion as the most penetrating and most dangerous example of self-destructive memes. While his bias, therefore is evident, his theory remains useful for students of cognitive warfare, and there is no shortage of cults to demonstrate tenacious grip with which some memes control their hosts. Thirty-eight members of the Heaven's Gate cult committed suicide in 1997, believing their souls would be transferred to a space ship hiding behind the Hale-Bopp comet, which was believed to carry Jesus.⁵⁵ The Jonestown incident of 1978 led to the death of over 900 cult members, many of whom willingly drank a cyanide-laced beverage.⁵⁶ Although many of the members were murdered with firearms, the incident is now associated with the idea of handing over control of one's mind and will. Interestingly, it may also have spawned the saying "drinking the Kool-Aid," which indicates blind acceptance of a concept, program, party platform etc.⁵⁷

This thesis seeks primarily to leverage the concept of the meme as a "living" entity capable of manipulating and being manipulated—one that may be considered separate from humans and either beneficial or detrimental to them. There are memes in religions that can be helpful and there are memes in them that may be harmful to humans—I do not seek to make an overall judgment. Some religious concepts will be discussed as memes because they are relevant to the current ideological conflict, but

⁵⁵ *Heaven's Gate*, URL: <<http://www.heavensgate.com/>>, accessed 5 February 2008.

⁵⁶ Don Lattin, "How spiritual journey ended in destruction: Jim Jones led his flock to death in jungle," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, online ed., 18 Nov 2003, URL: <<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2003/11/18/JONESTOWN.TMP>>, accessed 05 February 2008.

⁵⁷ *Word Spy*, under "drink the Kool-Aid," URL: <<http://www.wordspy.com/words/drinktheKool-Aid.asp>>, accessed 5 Feb 2008.

memetics helps us understand more than just theology. The secular-liberal concept itself is a meme, and whether or not they understand it in the context of memetics, advertisers are adept at creating and spreading memes like viruses. The “meme” meme is also a meme, of course, as are historical paradigms, accepted and taboo discourses, rumors both false and true, and national security strategies.

It is with memetics in mind that analysts should objectively dissect paradigms and ideologies. Analysts must be willing to deconstruct both the ideas of their own society and those of the enemy in order to understand the interplay of cognitive warfare. Analysts must understand how some ideas may be strong or “fit” despite being baseless, while others may be weak despite their validity. Analysts must understand how some ideas are vulnerable to others, and once again, the analysis must be absolutely dispassionate.

Memetic Fitness

As with genes, Dawkins notes that memes with high survival values are those with longevity, fecundity, and copying-fidelity.⁵⁸ In other words, Memes can be considered “fit” in the Darwinian sense if they live long, are virulent reproducers, and do not mutate so easily that they become unrecognizable after a few generations. The concept of a meme’s lifespan can be tricky, for there are several mediums in which the meme may be stored. Dawkins notes that songs residing in his head may last only as long as he lives, but if the songs are put to paper or recorded on another medium they may last much longer. Similarly, one could note the Pyramids of Giza, built thousands of years ago, still stand and are replicated by artists and architects who value their aesthetic

⁵⁸ Dawkins, 194.

or structural properties. Such extreme longevity, however, is not necessary for selection if the meme possesses the other two qualities in abundance. For instance, most copies of chain-emails admonishing internet users to “forward” or endure some kind of curse are doomed to immediate deletion, but if even one lands in a naïve user’s box it stands a good chance of being forwarded (reproducing) to many more users. Moreover, because the forwards are digital reproductions of the original, the meme enjoys high copying-fidelity. In some sense, one can liken this to the short, reproductive lives of some insects.

There are, no doubt, plenty of memes which lived long and *would* have copied with high fidelity, but failed to reproduce. Without fecundity, a meme may be relegated to its original storage medium, unnoticed or deemed unworthy of repetition.

Understanding what it is that drives humans to repeat some memes over others is central to mastering cognitive warfare, but it is also one of the most difficult arts. Why, for instance, are there so many over-sized pickup trucks and four-wheel-drive vehicles in urban areas where there are neither horse stalls to muck nor cheap gasoline to be found? The sky-rocketing price of oil—now over \$140 per barrel—appears to be affecting Detroit only today, but gasoline has been costly for years now. Skilful advertisement and the snowballing effect of spreading fads ensured a pool of consumers willing to sacrifice the tangible contents of their wallets for a meme that never had tangible or obvious genetic (survival) benefit.⁵⁹

Dawkins acknowledges that memes must be psychologically appealing in order for them to succeed, but he simultaneously avoids an in-depth discussion of the biological

⁵⁹ A critic might be inclined to point out that those driving apparently impractical vehicles may enjoy the psychological comfort of conformity with one’s community, or that having a particularly “suped up” four wheel drive vehicle can make one more attractive to a particular class of the opposite sex, thus increasing the likelihood of genetic reproduction, but such a discussion belabors the point.

element. “In the last analysis [some of my colleagues] wish always to go back to ‘biological advantage’.... They want to know *why* [the meme] has great psychological appeal.”⁶⁰ But in the end Dawkins dismisses the need for such discussion, stating, “...when we look at the evolution of cultural traits and their survival value, we must be clear *whose* survival we are talking about.... What we have not previously considered is that a cultural trait may have evolved in the way that it has, simply because it is *advantageous to itself*.”⁶¹ I would not deign to dispute Dawkins assertion, but from the perspective of cognitive warfare it is important to consider precisely what in human psychology allows some memes to gain more traction than others. Although the relationship between the mind and the meme is not necessarily symbiotic, and it is probably true that memes have evolved to benefit themselves, it is also fair to say that until recently memes have had to evolve within the collective human mind. In essence, the human mind has been “the environment” and memes have had to evolve in order to survive or be selected within it. It is for this reason that analysts should carefully account for both individual and group psychology as they pertain to cognitive warfare. Good ideas may fail, in part, because they are unable to find purchase in the “soil” of the human mind. To use another biological analogy, if the meme is a seed the mind is a field. A seed with tremendous potential in one climate and soil type may dry or rot in another region.

Unfortunately, an in-depth discussion of individual and group psychology lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but teams of future analysts in pitched cognitive battles will need a commanding grip on the art. The “PSY” in PSYOP did not land there

⁶⁰ Dawkins, 193.

⁶¹ Dawkins, 200.

accidentally, of course. Here, however, one psychological phenomenon—cognitive dissonance—may suffice to demonstrate the potential impact of psychology on the war and the manner in which the most damaging and self-destructive memes might take hold.

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

In the 1950s psychologist Leon Festinger theorized that the human mind is ill suited to tolerate inconsistencies. In his history of cognitive dissonance theory, Joel Cooper summarizes, “It upsets us and drives us to action to reduce our inconsistency. The greater the inconsistency we face, the more agitated we will be and the more motivated we will be to reduce it.”⁶² According to the theory, the human psyche works with cognitions, or mental representations for facts and beliefs. “A cognition is any ‘piece of knowledge’ a person may have. It can be knowledge of a behavior, knowledge of one’s [own] attitude, or knowledge about the state of the world. ...Each of these has a psychological representation—and that is what is meant by cognition.”⁶³ When these cognitions are inconsistent with each other, a state of uncomfortable tension arises until some action or thought process works to alleviate it. It should come as no surprise that the more incongruent the cognitions, the greater the discomfort experienced. The individual can reduce the tension by changing actions, beliefs systems, and attitudes, or reducing the importance of the thorny cognitions and increasing the importance of the welcome cognitions.

⁶² Joel Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance: Fifty Years of a Classic Theory* (Los Angeles, Sage Publications, 2007), 2.

⁶³ Cooper, 6.

Critically, Cooper points out that in most cases, attitudes can change more easily and frequently than behaviors or factual realities. As such, cognitive dissonance theory is “more relevant to attitudes than to any other concept.”⁶⁴ As an example:

If I think contributing to the poor is a good idea, I can resolve to give considerable money the next time I see a beggar or write a larger check to the soup kitchen. However, in my example, I have a dilemma. I have already refused to give any money to a beggar and I gave only a few coins to the soup kitchen.... [Now,] I can reduce the importance I place on my attitudes toward the poor.... I can also work on bolstering the importance of any cognition that supported my behavior toward the poor [such as deciding] that the horror I would experience from writing a bad check was so important that it justified my only reaching into my pocket to see what coins I had.⁶⁵

For another example, Cooper invokes a hypothetical situation relevant to the urban SUV meme mentioned above. In fact, this example sheds a little light on the meeting of the self-destructive—but attractive—meme and the human psyche. Cooper notes that a car buyer who purchases a sexy, good looking, but expensive and impractical car, may experience a twinge of regret, particularly if his funds were limited and he could have chosen the ugly, but cheap and practical alternative. The buyer, having succumbed to his desires rather than his practical needs, will likely inflate the advantages and deflate the disadvantages of the sports car. Cooper suggests the buyer might rationalize

that it is wise to make a major financial investment in something as important as a car. And who needs good fuel economy anyway? ...the thought of how many people will become friendly with you in your shiny new car strikes you as something you had never thought of before. And don't forget that the [cheap car] only comes in colors you do not like and it is probably difficult to add air conditioning to the base car.⁶⁶

This plausible line of reasoning is the buyer's attempt to smooth his psychological tension.

⁶⁴ Cooper, 8.

⁶⁵ Cooper, 7-8.

⁶⁶ Cooper, 11.

Induced Compliance

In the late 1950s, Festinger and others conducted an experiment wherein a proctor pretended to evaluate subjects performing the inane task of turning wooden pegs. After the experiment, the unwitting subjects were tricked into believing they had not in fact been part of the experiment, but had participated only as individuals in a control group. The proctor then looked at his watch and stated one of the psychologists was running late. The proctor pretended to need someone to fill in, and the subjects were asked to tell the “real” subjects in a waiting room how exciting and challenging their task had been. The true subjects were offered a modest monetary sum to compensate them for the trouble of working as an experimenter. The first group of subjects was offered \$1, the second \$20. At the end of the experiment, the subjects were asked what they *really* thought of the peg-turning task. Interestingly, those who had been offered the larger sum indicated they did not enjoy the task at all, while those offered only \$1 indicated they enjoyed it quite a bit. A third group—a control group—appeared to strongly dislike the task. To summarize, those who had been offered more financial compensation believed their own “lies” less than those who had been offered less.

Early cognitive dissonance theorists predicted this outcome: the subjects’ cognitions of not enjoying turning wooden pegs were incongruent with the cognitions of having said the task was exciting or enjoyable. The subjects resolved the psychological discomfort by downplaying and, in some cases, reversing their first cognition. The introduction of financial incentive added a counterintuitive element. The discrepancy in the claimed enjoyment levels between the \$1 group and the \$20 group indicates that the greater the financial incentive, the less psychological discomfort the individuals

experienced. That is, the larger financial incentive allowed the subjects to comfortably endure the incongruent cognitions—it did not encourage them to truly change the manner of their thinking. This point will be raised again later in the context of political-military conflict and the maintenance of violent ideologies.

The experiment, though somewhat controversial in the beginning, became the cornerstone of future dissonance theory and experiments. Since, experiments have been refined and expanded, but the basic premises of the theory stand unassailed. Within the realm of “political attitudes and induced compliance,” Cooper writes that later experiments confirmed the “inverse linear relationship between incentive magnitude and attitude change. Consistent with [earlier] findings, the lower the incentive, the greater the attitude change. The higher the incentive, the smaller the attitude change.”⁶⁷

“Liking what you suffer for”

In the wooden pegs experiment there may have been a bit of mild suffering. At the very least, the task was tedious and therefore unpleasant. Cooper explains in a section aptly named “Liking what you suffer for” that psychological (perhaps even physical) pain can lead to a greater, perhaps inflated, appreciation of the experience. Cognitive dissonance theory predicts this and a separate experiment confirmed it. In 1959 psychologists Elliot Aronson and Jud Mills designed an experiment in which female subjects, thinking they were joining a sexual discussion group, were put through an embarrassing screening process, ostensibly to weed out the squeamish prospectives. As Cooper explains, “They were asked to read aloud some explicit four-letter words and then

⁶⁷ Cooper, 1.

to read an explicit sexual passage drawn from a lurid novel.”⁶⁸ Other students were spared this embarrassment, asked only to read innocuous words like “love” and “petting.” After getting through the staged attrition process, the subjects were told that day’s discussion had already begun, so it would be appropriate only to monitor it through earphones rather than interrupt the meeting. The experimenters, unbeknownst to the subjects, then turned on a taped recording of a decidedly un-lurid discussion.

Rather than a conversation designed to be exciting, this one was staged to be boring and monotonous. It stumbled and bumbled its way through several minutes of dry conversation on the secondary sexual characteristics of lower mammals. As Aronson and Mills described it, the participants ‘contradicted themselves, mumbled several non sequiters, stated sentences that they never finished... and in general conducted one of the worthless and uninteresting discussions imaginable.’⁶⁹

When asked to evaluate the conversation and the conversation’s participants, those subjects who had suffered more embarrassment during the vetting process tended to “enjoy” the conversation more. Those subjects who did not suffer much embarrassment found it boring.

Interestingly, a similar experiment conducted seven years later reproduced these results, but the vetting process used electric shocks rather than lurid passages from smut novels. Those subjects who had endured more shocks during the initiation enjoyed the discussion more.⁷⁰ More recently, the same pattern was borne out in an experiment done by food writer Robin Goldstein, who discovered that when wine labels and prices were covered up, blind testers preferred cheap wines with surprising frequency. Charles Shaw, affectionately known as “Two-Buck Chuck,” beat an upscale \$55 bottle. Another experiment, explained Newsweek, invited volunteers “to try Cabernet Sauvignon priced

⁶⁸ Cooper, 21-22.

⁶⁹ Cooper, 22.

⁷⁰ Cooper, 23.

at \$5, \$10, \$45 and \$90. The twist? There were actually only two kinds of wine offered, marked with different prices.” As dissonance theorists would have predicted, the “price appeared to dictate pleasure.”⁷¹ It stands to reason that a buyer will enjoy her wine more if she knows that she, or her wallet, suffered for it.

Dissonance Theory’s Relevance to Cognitive Warfare

There are two significant ways that cognitive dissonance theory bears on cognitive warfare. The first is that it helps explain that incongruent cognitions lead to psychological discomfort, and those experiencing the discomfort can change either their attitudes or their behavior to alleviate the suffering. Cognitive dissonance theory has tended to center on the individual, but its principles can also be applied to large populations. For instance, Cooper writes, “People who think highly of themselves and expect to succeed would suffer dissonance by failing, but people who think poorly of their ability might experience dissonance from success.”⁷² This statement is eerily similar to the language used by Ted Robert Gurr, who stated that the *masses* may be driven to rebel because of a great “discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities.”⁷³ Later chapters in this thesis argue that like economic and military factors, religion and culture can play important roles in creating well-entrenched cognitions. When they are incongruent with cognitions about geo-political realities, dissonance (frustration) on a massive scale may result in the formation and success of violent ideologies.

⁷¹ Roxana Popescu, “Tastes Great, Less Billing,” *Newsweek*, 7 April 2008, 12.

⁷² Cooper, 25.

⁷³ Gurr, 24.

The second way in which cognitive dissonance theory bears on cognitive warfare lies in its application to memetics. Experimenters involved in the theory's development have consistently demonstrated that the human mind will rectify uncomfortable inconsistencies by increasing or decreasing the importance of related cognitions. The mind's ability, indeed its *tendency* to do this, allows contradicting ideas to exist side by side in perpetuity and, perhaps more importantly, allows ideas without merit to survive and flourish. Because of cognitive dissonance, individuals may believe wholeheartedly in concepts for which there is no significant evidence, experience has proven false, or which appear insane from a balanced or distant perspective.

The theory can go a long way in explaining, for instance, why Thierry Meyssan's 9/11 conspiracy theory is so readily accepted by large parts of French society. His book *L'Effroyable Imposture*, which posited that the events of September 11, 2001 were engineered by the U.S. government, sold several hundred thousand copies within a few weeks of release. If the U.S. government is responsible, so goes the comforting logic, there is no significant Islamist threat. France therefore need not fear the radicalization of its own millions of Muslim citizens. Similarly, Arab-Muslim conspiracy theories about Zionist/CIA responsibility for the 9/11 attacks could conceivably reduce societal guilt felt by some Muslims, but more importantly they reinforce common beliefs about hidden Jewish designs to dominate the world. Thanks in part to cognitive dissonance, this belief is inconsistent with, but can easily exist side by side the belief that Osama bin-Laden, who claimed the attacks, is an anti-Western hero (see the previous chapter for data indicating bin-Laden is not a pariah in his own society as believed by many in the West). Depending on the situation, an individual may unconsciously switch from a genuinely

held belief to one that is incompatible, but also genuine. From an outside view, this behavior will appear logically inconsistent or paradoxical, but from the individual's own point of view, there is constancy of psychological comfort. Thus, cognitive dissonance theory helps explain just one way in memes, despite their detrimental effect on the gene pool, or apparently incompatible nature, can find purchase.

MEMEPLEXES

The above discussion about cognitive dissonance is one about the memetic environment. That is, the discussion briefly entertained what it is about the human mind that might allow otherwise weak or backward ideas to survive. There are, however, other factors that can enable a weak meme's longevity and fecundity. Dawkins hypothesized that in the same way genes have tended to group and thus become associated with one another, particular memes may derive strength from team rather than individual life. At the genetic level, one would be hard-pressed to find the genes for hearts surviving without the associated genes for veins and arteries. Similarly, one would not likely find the human genes for teeth disassociated from the genes for well-suited jaws. These groupings of interdependent, individual genes are called gene-complexes in the same way that groupings of associated memes may be called meme-complexes, or "memeplexes."

In the same way that complex cardio-vascular systems did not mutate themselves into existence overnight, large and intricate memeplexes, such as those for mainstream religions as practiced today, are the product of thousands of mutations and environmental shifts selecting them.

Has the god meme, say become associated with any other particular memes, and does this association assist the survival of each of the participating memes? Perhaps we could regard an organized church, with its architecture, rituals, laws, music, art, and written tradition, as a co-adapted stable set of mutually-assisting memes.⁷⁴

Faith

Dawkins harps on the meme for faith as a particularly powerful assisting meme.

Considered an intrinsic part of many great religions, faith serves to protect those elements of a memplex that could not withstand serious scrutiny.

It means blind trust, in the absence of evidence, even in the teeth of evidence. The story of Doubting Thomas is told, not so that we shall admire Thomas, but so that we can admire the other apostles in comparison.... The meme for blind faith secures its own perpetuation by the simple unconscious expedient of discouraging rational inquiry.⁷⁵

Writing in 1998, author J.M. Balkin elaborated on this point, stating that perhaps the best “strategy for survival is to disable or preempt potential competitors in the environment. Standard examples are memes for faith, which discourage skeptical beliefs and the sort of critical inquiry that would tend to dislodge faith.”⁷⁶

Indeed, in many anecdotal conversations I have had with self-described “born again” Christians about the possibility of knowing the Truth (note the capital “T”) in the absence of evidence. “I know,” is a phrase that invariably enters this conversation. When asked *how* they know that theirs is the one, True faith when so many members of so many different faiths seem equally sure—and with the same amount of evidence—the responses range widely from “I just know,” to “Good point, but I just know.” Though

⁷⁴ Dawkins, 197.

⁷⁵ Dawkins, 198.

⁷⁶ J.M. Balkin, *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 75.

less typically found in the sciences, strong believers like this can and do thrive, perhaps ironically, in a variety of fields requiring disciplined analysis and rational inquiry on a day-to-day basis. Not least among those professions is that of military intelligence. The sections on cognitive dissonance may shed some light on how or why such individuals apply skeptical inquiry in one important area of their life and not the other.

I recently had a conversation with one such individual, who expressed considerable doubt about the fact of evolution. When he claimed fossil records showing gradual change over eons and scientists' current observations are not enough evidence to persuade him, I congratulated him on his skepticism, but suggested that a fraction of that doubt would do far more damage to the God meme and creationism. He laughed in good humor, and briefly acknowledged that it ultimately comes down to the question of one's faith. Interactions like these hint at the immense power of the faith meme and the protection it can afford virtually any idea in any individual. When devising their strategies, Western cognitive warriors would do well to keep in mind the power faith adds to memeplexes, and the different degrees of faith present in various societies.

Balkin notes several other substantive factors worth mentioning that increase the fitness of otherwise false or unsupported memes. Among them is the fact that, "when a belief is obviously true, no one may pay much attention to it or think about it. As a result, it may be much less likely to be communicated to others." Also, "true beliefs are more likely to be communicated in response to false beliefs or only partially true beliefs." This, Balkin correctly notes, can result in evolved memeplexes that contain both true and untrue elements. Perhaps more critically for the cognitive warrior, however, challenging the untrue portions of a memeplex can reinvigorate the faith meme. "Religious faith can


weaken over time if it is not occasionally faced with challenges. Hence heresies and external opposition to faith may sometimes increase religious fervor, proselytization, and the propagation of religious memes.” In fact, those memes whose validity may not easily be proven or disproven often enjoy survival by virtue of the fact that they are continually mulled over in a society, particularly if controversial. Lastly, Balkin astutely observes that, “some memes are more likely to reproduce themselves if they are ambiguous—if they mean different things to different people, or even to the same person.”⁷⁷ It is precisely why treaties and international agreements are often written in frustratingly general terms.

Cultural Memeplexes

Balkin did a great service to analysts by suggesting that culture is a fundamental factor in the development of ideology, particularly by framing it in memetic terms. Culture, in fact, may be considered the largest, the most complex, and the most stable of memeplexes. From a dispassionate perspective, he asserts culture can be restrictive as it predisposes peoples to specific ways of processing and perceiving—or not—information, but it also gives its adherents remarkable capability. Relying heavily on the analogy of software, Balkin posits that the human mind can be likened to an unprogrammed computer, and culture the software giving meaning and capability to it. The products of culture then, including architecture, scientific achievements, art, and ways of war among others, can be likened to the outputs of a computer program. Far exceeding the capability of ordinary software, however, Balkin deems cultural software the ultimate “tool-making

⁷⁷ Balkin, 76-77.

tool.” Culture is a force-multiplier that allows humanity to exceed subsistence living and cognitive nakedness.

There is a double-edged quality to this tool, however. Referencing Hans-Georg Goldamer’s theory of cultural understanding, Balkin begins with the positive by noting prejudice is an intrinsic element to culture, but “these prejudgments, far from being hindrances to our understanding, are in fact the preconditions of our understanding. They enable us to understand not only others within our own culture but people in other cultures as well.”⁷⁸ Then Balkin writes, “To be human is to be constituted by a certain type of cultural software that predisposes and facilitates understanding in certain ways and not in others—a cultural software that is the product of a certain history of conceptual bricolage and cultural evolution.”⁷⁹ Balkin does not say that peoples are shackled to their software, bound to suffer a pre-determined fate, rather that within culture one finds “the very condition of possibility.” Culture may drive adherents to digest information in pre-determined manners, but without it people would not be able to digest or understand their environment. Moreover, all cultures, however awkwardly, are generally capable of designing new tools for understanding new situations or using old tools in innovative ways. 

Suggesting that culture evolves as a memetic phenomenon in much the same way genetic life forms do, Balkin notes that vestigial organs like the appendix or the human little toe were probably once important for survival, but no longer. By way of analogy he states, “Organisms produced by evolution display the remnants of previous development, which may have little relevance to the environmental problems they currently face.”

⁷⁸ Balkin, 7.

⁷⁹ Balkin, 17-18.

Introducing some cultural liabilities, Balkin suggests here that not all prejudices, predispositions and other cultural tools are well suited for new situations. Depending on the circumstances, elements of a culture can become as restrictive or burdensome as they are empowering, “...current utility is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for an organism’s possessing a given feature.”⁸⁰ Like vestigial organs, significant portions of a memplex may be ideological leftovers from a different (cognitive) environment. Consider this in the ideological context of communism’s survival, continuing neo-Nazism, or Biblical creationism’s tenacity in the face of Darwinian observations, fossil records, genetics, and astrophysical evidence.

The power of culture to determine not only how we think, but also what we may notice or even see, should prove daunting to cognitive warriors. It stymies truly objective analysis for several reasons. Among them, one can never truly escape one’s own prejudices or subconscious assumptions, which act like protective filters and distorting lenses. Analysts must continually strive for objectivity, but they may never know what critical information their cultural perspective filters out or adds in.

Many cognitive mechanisms, including prejudices, narrative structures, metaphoric models, and metonymic associations, act like filters. They let in ideas that conform to particular patterns of thought while rejecting those that do not. Psychologists have also discovered a series of heuristic mechanisms that people use to search for information and other mechanisms that people use to assess and discount information contrary to what they already believe. These mechanisms also filter experience. Alternatively, cognitive mechanisms can actively adjust and shape new social experience so that it appears to conform to existing structures of thought and belief. Mechanisms of cognitive-dissonance reduction seem to work in this way.⁸¹

That is, culture plays a key role in sifting for memes compatible with previous manners of thinking.

⁸⁰ Balkin, 39.

⁸¹ Balkin, 58.

Even in military intelligence circles, which outsiders might assume to be politically conservative, there is an accepted discourse—a prevailing analytical culture—that tends to block all but superficial discussion of foreign cultures as potential conflict drivers. Analysis about the Danish cartoon riots of 2006, for instance, would likely conclude that Arab-Muslims perceive themselves to be unfairly targeted and discriminated against by Westerners, that is, they were reacting to perceived injustices. However true that may or may not be, the prevailing analytical culture cannot easily entertain additional, arguably more important factors. Among them is the possibility that Arab-Muslim culture has a relatively heightened sense of honor and shame, or that Islam dictates (and many Arab-Muslims no doubt believe) that non-Muslims occupy lower social strata and *deserve* violent retribution for insulting Islam (see chapter five).

Anecdotally, I once asked a British counterpart whether it was possible that some cultures are driven to violence more quickly than others in particular circumstances. The British analyst responded distastefully, not only saying “no,” but also that he found it “scary anyone would even think something like that in this day and age.” The conversation died, as it had become clear that the notion was to be categorically rejected. Thus, the political culture effectively and preemptively blocked the incongruent memes; there would be no discussion of them.

This last point in particular has important effects in both enemy and friendly camps that cognitive warriors need to be aware of. First, individuals and groups will tend to surround themselves with like-minded people or entities. Although certainly not without exception, it is generally true that “birds of a feather flock together,” and those with similar values stand a higher chance swapping their compatible memes. The greater

the similarity in values, the greater the chance of meaningful exchange and propagation of information. Members of a group enjoy a degree of pre-established credibility amongst themselves that outsiders and divergent thinkers must struggle to achieve, no matter how truthful their memes. Extremists from opposite ends of a political spectrum are less capable of inoculating the other, as their memes are less compatible with each other and therefore more likely to be rejected. In the end, the phenomena of self-selecting populations and memplexes that are “choosy” about new information serve to reinforce and strengthen the survivability of all memplexes, no less the cultural ones. It is for these reasons that “moderates,” who may actually be on the ideological fringes of their *own* culture, play key roles in cross-cultural meme transmission. This aspect of the cognitive offense will be discussed more in chapter four.

Before moving to the next section, it is prudent to raise one last point of caution. For analysts engaged in cognitive warfare, the need to account for culture means that the “rational actor” model grows exponentially more complicated. Based on a universalist approach, the rational actor model assumes individuals will make similar choices given the same circumstances and available information. The addition of culture into the equation means that analysts must compensate for vastly different perceptions of “reasonable” and “rational” before any predictive analysis can begin. Few Westerners, for instance, can instinctively predict or understand why a father would kill his daughter after she had been raped, or how that could be a culturally justified act (see chapter five for a brief discussion of honor killings). Nor would many Westerners understand that traditional Islamic memes for “freedom” and “peace” and “defensive warfare” are different from and pernicious to the Western concepts (see again chapter five).

ENDEMIC V. EPIDEMIC

Having firmly established the influence of cultural memplexes on human thinking, it is easy for Balkin to then make a root connection between culture and the development of ideology. Ideologies may sweep through a society quickly or develop over the course of hundreds of years, but rarely, if ever, do ideologies develop or find purchase in the absence of a cultural context. Those building the frame of a new ideology, or borrowing from an ideology created in another culture, will both rely on and be restricted by their respective backgrounds. The creator cannot easily develop an ideology without instinctively drawing on his cultural narratives and experiences. Of course, the borrower will draw from his own culture to reframe a foreign ideology for local consumption. Communism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and even capitalism, are all memplexes that have been reshaped in a multitude of ways to fit vastly different cultural perspectives.

Digging once again into biological analogies as other authors do, Balkin likens the spread of memes and memplexes to an infection, of which there are two distinct types: the endemic and the epidemic:

Some cultural software is transmitted persistently over generations of individuals and through many different human cultures; it is endemic to a particular culture or to human thought generally. Other forms of cultural software spread rapidly from person to person, like advertising slogans and fashions. These memes are comparable to epidemics.⁸²

Balkin then transitions to his coup de grâce:

⁸² Balkin, 61.

Many of the cognitive *mechanisms that produce ideological effects in human thought are endemic rather than epidemic*. Narratives, networks of association, metaphors, and metonymic models are transmitted widely and persistently. *Moreover, once in place, these endemic forms of cultural software provide the environment in which epidemic cognitive structures and beliefs can thrive.* [emphasis added]⁸³

The reader is led to believe that Balkin is speaking about ideology itself as an epidemic phenomenon, built on the foundation of a greater and more enduring endemic culture. In terms of today's ongoing cognitive war, Islam is the endemic phenomenon passed through many generations of Muslims, while militant jihadism is the epidemic phenomenon that grew easily from it, a product of Islam's and Arab culture's unique combination of filters, lenses and predispositions. Chapter five is devoted to demonstrating in some detail how *jihadism is, contrary to popular belief, an epidemic entirely consistent with and grown from universally accepted Islamic tenets*. For jihadism to achieve the level of purchase we have seen thus far, there must significant compatibility between the endemic culture and epidemic ideology.

Example Techniques for Memetic Infection

There is a *multitude of techniques cognitive warriors may use to inject foreign memes into a preexisting memplex*. A comprehensive discussion of them all would overwhelm this thesis and focus too much on the specific art of PSYOP, but it is worth the time and space to provide a couple of demonstrative examples so that analysts have some idea of what to expect or when they are being manipulated. Here we turn briefly to the work of Richard Brodie, author of *Virus of the Mind: The New Science of the Meme*.

⁸³ Balkin, 61.

In particular, Brodie dissects the of various processes memes use to propagate themselves, as viruses do, often without benefit to their hosts.

Conditioning. According to Brodie, there are three basic methods for inoculating hosts, with or without the deliberate assistance of other hosts. The first is conditioning, or repetition. Brodie writes:

If we hear something repeated often enough, it becomes part of our programming. Advertisers and salespeople know this well. Any good book on sales will tell you most customers don't buy until they have been asked five to seven times. It takes that many repetitions to implant the *buy me* meme in the customer.⁸⁴

Whether it is for the commercial or metaphysical sides of life, conditioning works in essentially the same way. Children are conditioned to believe in their deities through repetition of prayers, stories, mantras, etc., not infrequently with the assistance of the faith meme. "If you listen repeatedly to religious speech, after enough repetitions you will actually begin to notice God and his works where there was just chaotic life going on before."⁸⁵ Crucially, Brodie adds, "What was formerly chance becomes a miracle."

Skeptics would argue that rare occurrences appear miraculous by virtue of the fact that they are rare, but they are also predictable or probable given enough chances. The lottery winner, for instance, may ascribe his one-in-a-million win to the will of god, but given the millions of players in many lotteries, at least one winner should quite naturally be expected. Thanks to a lifetime of conditioning, however, the religious winner no-doubt presumes god intervened on his behalf, as did Wiccan high priest Elwood "Bunky" Bartlett, who won approximately \$49 million in late 2007. Bartlett claims he won

⁸⁴ Richard Brodie, *Virus of the Mind: The New Science of the Meme* (Seattle: Integral Press, 1996), 138.

⁸⁵ Brodie, 140.

because he promised “the powers that be” he would quit his job and open a school for witches.⁸⁶

In the Arabic-speaking world, individuals rarely fail to tack “inshallah” (God willing) onto expressions of uncertain hope. So frequently is this phrase uttered, one may begin to believe that every occurrence, positive or negative, reflects the will of Allah, not the result of pro-active human effort. As a frustrated Arab transportation minister once casually explained to me, the belief can cause significant problems when, for instance, military vehicles require basic preventative maintenance. If a truck’s engine seizes in the middle of the desert, it is the will of Allah, not necessarily the lack of coolant at fault.

In fact, as noted in chapter five, repetition, along with exaggeration, is intrinsic to native Arabic speakers. Margarette Nydell, author of the deeply sympathetic *Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Modern Times*, falls squarely into the universalist camp, but as a linguist she correctly observes

Repetition of refrains is common, as is exaggeration... Arabs talk a lot, repeat themselves, shout when excited, and make extensive use of gestures.... If [in turn] you speak softly and make your statements only once, Arabs may wonder if you really mean what you are saying.”⁸⁷

This linguistic tendency greatly assists the process of memetic infection. When Arab-Muslim clerics repeat Koranic exhortations or other key messages, they leverage a culturally accepted practice not dissimilar from Brodie’s concept of conditioning.

⁸⁶ David Edwards and Muriel Kane, “Wiccan lottery winner plans to open witch school,” *The Raw Story*, 30 October 2007, URL: <http://rawstory.com/news/2007/Wiccan_lottery_winner_plans_to_open_1030.html>, accessed 24 April 2008.

⁸⁷ Margaret K. Nydell, *Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Modern Times* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 2006), 98.

Cognitive Dissonance à la Brodie. Brodie's second method for memetic infection is cognitive dissonance, which has already been discussed in this chapter. Adding memetic flair to the concept, he suggests individuals resolve their psychological tension, which arises conflicting memes (cognitive dissonance theorists would call them "cognitions"), by creating new memes and, "by rearranging your memetic programming so that things make sense again. 'Ah, Bill's upset because he paid for lunch the last three times,' you might conclude. Right or wrong, you now have a new meme...."⁸⁸ Brodie also posits that cognitive dissonance can be used to subdue people through a sort of Stockholm syndrome.

Cognitive dissonance can be used to create a meme of submission and loyalty to whatever authority is creating the dissonance. Fraternity hazings, boot camp, and some religious or spiritual disciples put people through difficult tests.... That creates an association-meme between the demonstration of loyalty and the good feeling caused by the release of pressure.⁸⁹

This last thought has particular bearing on the strategy behind terrorism, or even the effect of unorganized mass violence. Victims reaching a specific level of terror may counterintuitively submit to the terrorist's will and feel a degree of affinity for him and his objectives.⁹⁰ This would be a facile, but not necessarily incorrect, reading of the relationship between France's intelligentsia, its anti-Israel disposition, and fear of Arab youth who take violently to the streets over perceived transgressions (see chapters five and seven). In that case, there developed what Brodie calls an "association-meme" between anti-Israel/anti-Americanism and relative calm ensured by pleasing the masses. The creation of 9/11 conspiracy memes may also be the result of cognitive dissonance; as

⁸⁸ Brodie, 138.

⁸⁹ Brodie, 142.

⁹⁰ For elaboration on the different levels of terror and how they are achieved, see Donald Hanle, *Terrorism: The Newest Face of Warfare* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Inc., 1989), 111-113.

suggested earlier, if there is no such thing as militant Islam, then France need not fear its radicalized Muslim citizens.

The Trojan Horse. Brodie calls the last means of memetic infection the “Trojan horse method.” This is the method by which speakers, writers, etc., “sneak in” foreign memes on the backs of more credible or acceptable memes. Members of a political party, for instance, may vote for a candidate espousing a standard platform containing a variety of ideas. Some platform tenets are less popular than others, but because of their association with the greater, more popular tenets, they become successful nonetheless. Many voters may consciously realize that their views do not completely overlap with the candidate’s and begrudgingly vote for the lesser of two evils, but many others will be genuine believers in all the associated concepts. The skilled orator will seek to move as many as possible from the first camp into the second. Richard Brodie notes just one tactic frequently used by campaigners to strengthen the viability of the weaker memes:

The simplest bundling technique, one used frequently by politicians and trial lawyers, is simply saying the memes one after the other, in decreasing order of believability. The credibility of the first statements seem to carry over to the unsupported ones. For example: We all want freedom! We all want democracy to work for everyone! We all want every American to have the opportunity to pursue the American Dream! And we all want a national health-care system that makes that possible.⁹¹

Key memes that politicians, advertisers, lawyers, demagogues etc., might use to grab attention are those involving “danger, food, crisis, or helping children.”

Brodie also notes that questions may also be used to insert the Trojan horse. Asking someone, for instance, “So when did you stop beating your wife and kids?” both plants a powerful image in the minds of onlookers and immediately forces the subject

⁹¹ Brodie, 143-144.

into a defensive posture. Holocaust deniers have successfully planted the “Holocaust hoax” meme in many weak minds by simply raising “questions” about the historical record. As counterinsurgency analyst David Galula remarks, a cognitive warrior (insurgents, in Galula’s context) is not obliged to prove anything.⁹² In the same way, holocaust deniers are not obliged to give a well-founded answer to their own questions; if an obvious answer is implied, it can be enough to ask the question, and thereby poke confidence holes in the accepted (in this case, the correct) narrative. Although even a well-argued deconstruction of one narrative does not necessarily prove the veracity of another (there may be many alternative explanations), unwary individuals may look no further than the question-bearer for the answer.

A hypothetical, but not unrealistic example: a Holocaust denier asks whether the “fact” that German reparations to Israel were based on the number of Holocaust victims could have lead to inflated death-toll figures. In this example, the denier first implants the meme that German reparations were based on the Holocaust death-toll. They were in fact based on the cost of Israel’s absorption of *living* post-war refugees, but by virtue of asking the question, the implied answer is yes, the death-toll was inflated. If this point is conceded, the question-bearer then seems less unreasonable, and by extension, so do the other memes he advertises, including the idea that the Holocaust was at least partially engineered by Jews to justify the theft of Palestinian land. If the Holocaust denier has some success in building consensus or doubt about the historical record, and it becomes more acceptable to “admit” that Jews benefited from the Holocaust, the denier might then try the bundling technique to work in even more damaging memes. For instance, “We all

⁹² David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 14.

know Jews benefited from the Holocaust! We all know they used German money to wage a war against the Palestinians, so why do we fund the ongoing *real* Holocaust with U.S. money?!” Note the introduction of several new memes by implication, including the notion that Palestinians are suffering genocide. This example is crude and does not do justice to the decades of effort or the many slick nuances behind Holocaust denial, but it should show how just two techniques might be (have been) applied operationally to great effect.

With Holocaust denial and Palestinian historical revision (discussed briefly in chapter seven), the memeplexes have developed relatively quickly and often—although not always—with the conscious assistance of groups and people. Memeplexes do not always evolve this quickly or with so much conscious human assistance, however. Memes and memeplexes can evolve slowly into large, stable, complicated entities that form entire cultures or religions. Although Muhammad’s revelations came to him and transformed the Middle East within just a few years, the evolution of the Gilgamesh epic into the Biblical flood story, for instance, probably occurred over the course of many generations. In the same way, evolved architectural and musical characteristics may become associated with great cultures over the course of hundreds years.

CONCLUSION

This chapter should serve as glue binding the many elements of this thesis together. Without at least a basic understanding of memetics, the reader or analyst may not understand what culture, terrorism, ideology, and propaganda—among many other

items—have in common or what they are “made of.” The analyst in particular should walk away with a new understanding of the term “ideology” and the phrase “war of ideas,” and should be open to the possibility that culture forms a vital memetic foundation for both. At the very least, she should now be ready to view competing cultures and their ideological products more objectively, understanding memes and memplexes as phenomena that can exist quite apart from human will. Future cognitive warriors will need to devote significant amounts of time and effort to dissecting culture, ideology, religion and other components into their constituent parts and, if they pose a significant threat, finding a way to exploit or destroy them. Only by breaking down these seemingly intangible elements into their constituent elements—memes—will analysts be able to look for vulnerabilities and strengths—both in enemy and friendly camps.

This chapter has explored the possibility that seemingly contradictory memes are not necessarily incompatible, and may in fact exist side by side with the assistance of cognitive dissonance. By virtue of association with fit memplexes or memetic wildcards such as faith, otherwise weak ideas may thrive in well-adjusted individuals or great populations. This chapter also discussed the human tendency to favor memes that reinforce rather than challenge knowledge normally taken for granted. It has briefly explored the difference between endemic and epidemic memetic infections, but more importantly, it has argued that one grows from the other, and reiterated that serious exploration of culture is—usually—vital to understanding cognitive warfare.

CHAPTER 4

THE ESSENCE OF COGNITIVE WARFARE

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE

The American Approach

Information operations (IO), the closest existing American doctrinal concept for cognitive warfare, consists of five “corps capabilities,” or elements.⁹³ These include electronic warfare, computer network operations, PSYOP, military deception, and operational security. So-called

“supporting capabilities,” or secondary elements, include information assurance, physical security, physical attack,

counterintelligence, and “combat

camera.” There is also a set of

“related capabilities,” or tertiary elements, treated as only tangentially connected to IO.

These are public affairs (PA) and civil military operations. American forces typically subordinate all these elements to support their main effort: conventional warfare. These

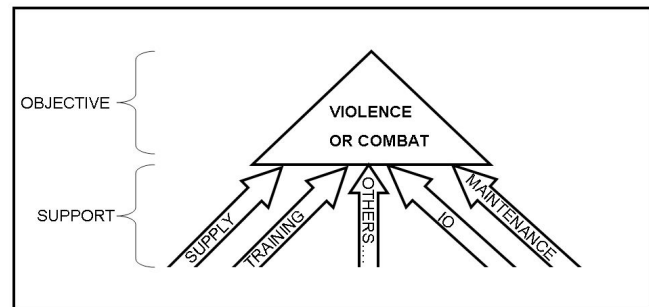


Figure 5.

The Role of Military Violence for the U.S.

⁹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 13 February 2006).

12 elements are disparate, but they are treated as a single, supporting concept serving among others, such as supply, training, maintenance, and medicine, to name a few. All of these, in turn, converge on one focal point: that of making the soldier, sailor, airman or Marine more effective in combat.

The model for conventional warfare (Figure 5) more or less represents the extent and type of warfare the US currently wages, that is, warfare largely restricted to the time and space of the battlefield. The American approach to war is arguably a binary one. Americans historically have perceived themselves to be in a state of either war or peace, but seldom both. Moreover, the state of war does not typically last beyond a few years. As the Global War on Terror (GWOT) endures, this understanding will undoubtedly change, but presently it remains a key element of the American psyche. Despite some admonitions that the GWOT could last decades, the May 2003 “Mission Accomplished” faux pas on the *USS Abraham Lincoln* manifested less realistic expectations, particularly with regard to Iraq. Only in January 2007 did the administration adjust its stance, “Victory will not look like the ones our fathers and grandfathers achieved. There will be no surrender ceremony on the deck of a battleship.”⁹⁴

The confined nature of American thinking on war leaves a similar mark on IO. With some exceptions, American IO is focused on the time and space of the physical battlefield, unduly emphasizing technological means and solutions. Pascale Combelles Siegel observes that the Defense Department

...has committed most of its resources (both financial and human) to improving intelligence, securing networks and digitizing the battlefield. Those dominating ‘IO’ tend to come from technological, intelligence, and communications

⁹⁴ U.S. President, “President’s Address to the Nation,” 10 January 2007, URL: <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-7.html>>, accessed 30 May 2007.

backgrounds. Within this context, a critical arena often ends up as the ugly stepchild in the equation: perception management.⁹⁵

In fact, IO belongs to SPACECOM, the organization charged with maintaining and exploiting space-based assets. Its cadre cannot be expected to handle the psychologically and memetically oriented art of perception management, yet there is no doctrinal concept for greater cognitive warfare (or perception management) beyond IO. Moreover, existing perception management efforts appear thrown together, rudderless, and entirely too vertical. Siegel observes again:

In the US Government, no single body is in charge of this short of the President. Once the President has articulated a vision (which does not always occur), the government must disseminate that vision quickly and accurately to all agencies/command elements involved in perception management. All too often, this process is reduced to mid-level bureaucrats using the President's and Cabinet officials' speeches to sketch out PSYOP leaflets, radio programs, and/or public affairs guidelines.⁹⁶

Compelled to remain “on message,” executors have little freedom to react in fast changing, tactical environments. The message stands a good chance of being late and poorly framed for the intended audience, and because resources have not matched lip service to IO, inadequately distributed. In the best of all possible worlds, cognitive warrior would give as much guidance to their spokespeople and politicians as the inverse.

The Terrorists' Approach

Terrorists and insurgents essentially flip the U.S. paradigm, using violence to underpin many key activities, including IO. A single violent act can introduce a new terrorist organization as a significant player, raise awareness of or create a crisis, begin

⁹⁵ Pascale Combelles Siegel, “Perception Management: IO’s Stepchild?” *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement* 13, no. 2 (2005): 117. Cited hereafter as Siegel.

⁹⁶ Siegel, 130.

polarizing the public into supporting and opposing camps, and accelerate recruitment. In essence, they have turned terrorism and violence into what has often and properly been called “propaganda by deed.” While the U.S. limits itself by employing a single element of cognitive warfare to support an otherwise conventional fight, terrorists and insurgents use violence to support larger, less conventional objectives.⁹⁷ Thomas X. Hammes also noted this in a recent *Military Review* article:

Strategically, insurgent campaigns have shifted from military campaigns supported by information operations to strategic communications campaigns supported by guerilla and terrorist operations.⁹⁸

Most terrorist and insurgent groups are inherently weak and consequently driven to unconventional means. Although many groups, following Mao Tse-Tung’s sequential phases of revolutionary warfare, eventually seek conventional capabilities and the physical destruction of their enemy’s armed forces, the initial, unconventional guerilla and terrorist phases can last decades.

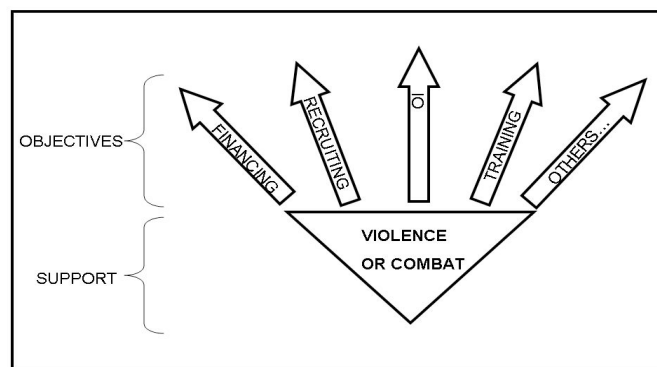


Figure 6. The Role of Violence in Cognitive Warfare

There are numerous examples of this, including Mao’s long communist insurgency in China and Ho Chi Minh’s struggle against French colonialism and later the U.S., which lasted nearly half a century. Some insurgents and terrorists today, however, may recognize the impossibility of ever destroying their enemy’s armed forces. They

⁹⁷ Stuart A. Green, Lieutenant, USN, “Introduction to Israel Research Trip,” unpublished research paper funded by JMIC, 7 February 2007, 3.

⁹⁸ Thomas X. Hammes, Colonel, USMC (Ret.), “Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges,” *Military Review*, May-June 2007, URL: <<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/MayJun07/Hammes.pdf>>, accessed 18 May 2007.

consequently seek to remain in the cognitive arena, with an *apparent* emphasis on terrorism and guerilla warfare. Such is the case with many of the groups currently fighting Israel and the U.S. Their violent operations, however, represent only a fraction of the activities brought to bear in their cognitive wars.

THE ENGINE, THE DISCOURSE, AND THE OFFENSIVE

The terrorist/insurgent treatment of IO clearly differs from the American approach, but Figure 6 does not adequately demonstrate the breadth of the construct. Writing in 1964, counterinsurgency expert David Galula explained it from a Clausewitzian angle:

...we might say that “insurgency is the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by *every* means (emphasis added).” It is not like ordinary war—a “continuation of policy by other means”—because an insurgency can start long before the insurgent resorts to the use of force.⁹⁹

In fact, the cognitive warfare construct encompasses a broad array of cerebral elements that groups and societies may leverage for a common objective. These cerebral elements include, but are not limited to: indoctrination, deceptive military maneuvers, censorship, IO according to the American understanding, ideology, strategic communication, perception management, culture, anthropology, religion, charismatic leadership, cohesion, and specific types of coercive violence, including terrorism. Some of cognitive warfare’s constituent elements, such as PSYOP and anthropology, have been mastered in their own rights, but they do not seem to have been formally grouped and kneaded into a

⁹⁹ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 3-4.

recognizable, strategic doctrine. Nonetheless, the construct exists in practice, if through no other method than collective trial and error.

Cognitive warfare is more than a mere expansion of IO. Despite the breadth of the construct and the diversity of its constituent elements, cognitive warfare must be understood not as a haphazard collection of loosely related disciplines, but **an art that exists on the “moral plane” of war.** It exists there much as maneuver warfare exists on the “physical plane.” That is, cognitive warfare is to the moral plane as maneuver warfare is to the “physical plane”—both are subsets of larger constructs and neither is necessarily alone in its category. Whether employed deliberately or by accident, cognitive warfare can 1) generate support for the conflict in constituent populations and 2) attack the cognitive weaknesses of enemy populations to circumvent superior military strength. **In essence, cognitive warriors seek to shatter their enemies’ wills rather than their abilities to fight.**

It should be noted here that will is an important component of conventional warfare as well, but it plays a different role. Writing specifically about terrorism, Donald Hanle states:

...at the most basic level, both terrorism and the more classical forms of warfare function in the same manner. Both employ lethal force against a victim to affect the morale of the much larger target or targets.... Thus the only significant difference between terrorism and the more classical forms of warfare is the... selection of abnormal means by the terrorists.¹⁰⁰

Ultimately, both terrorism and classical warfare seek to force favorable decisions and change behavior. As Hanle notes, the difference lies in the means selected to do so. In classical warfare, the bulk of the effort rests squarely on the physical plane while the

¹⁰⁰ Donald J. Hanle, *Terrorism: The Newest Face of Warfare* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, Inc., 1989), 115.

objective lies on the moral plane. In cognitive warfare, both the bulk of the effort *and* the objective lie on the moral plane.

To explain how cognitive warriors achieve their two objectives (generating constituent support and attacking enemy weaknesses), this thesis offers three basic models: the ideological engine, the accepted discourse, and the cognitive offensive. Each model explores separate, but interrelated and vital components of the construct. The ideological engine is an attempt to explain the manner in which motivating factors—memes—converge to produce violent ideologies, which may be thought of as memeplexes. In this model, key figures called “identity entrepreneurs” use energy from violence to galvanize and polarize their societies (sometimes outside societies as well), transform identities, and finally reinforce the original motivating factors or founding memes. The next model, the accepted discourse, attempts to explain a few of the ways in which an ideology’s adherents or its tacit supporters can alter the nature of a public debate through the introduction of well-chosen memes, by they true, false, or mixed. Given enough time, skilled effort, or the right historical circumstances, a transformed debate means altered societal perceptions. The cognitive offense model attempts to explain how alterations in the accepted discourse can lead to transformations in the target society’s intellectual environment and, eventually, ideologies (or policies). This model also attempts to explain how individuals perceived as moderate can unwittingly play key roles in the process.

The Ideological Engine

Ideology. As discussed in chapter two, if the National Security Strategy itself fails to identify the depth and resonance of jihadist ideologies, the subordinate National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (September 2006) bases its logic on the dubious concept of an “ideology of terrorism.” On the first page it states “...we will advance effective democracies as the long-term antidote to the ideology of terrorism.”¹⁰¹ There can be no such thing as an ideology of terrorism, of course, because terrorism is a tactic employed by adherents of multiple faiths and political ideologies—advancing democracy can no more eliminate terrorism than advancing theocracy can eliminate maneuver warfare. Terrorism is a key component of cognitive warfare, but as a tool, it cannot be said to define its prosecutors, whether they are prone to its use or not. Cognitive analysts, then, must see beyond the spectacular aspects of terrorism to understand the greater construct at work.

The counterterrorism strategy is correct in one respect, however. It is an ideology that incites and propels jihadist violence and it is against this ideology that Western powers must focus their efforts. In *Winning the War of Ideas With al-Qaeda*, Mark Gray defines ideology as “a system of beliefs that explain the world and attempt to change it.”¹⁰² Gray posits that the al Qaida ideology draws much of its strength from a narrative, or “story,” that recounts the fall of Islam and Arab culture. The revolutionary movement’s vitality, in turn, rests in the desire of al Qaida’s adherents to restore the glory

¹⁰¹ U.S. President, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, September 2006, URL: <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030214-7.html>>, accessed 09 June 2008.

¹⁰² Mark Gray, *Winning the War of Ideas With Al Qaeda*, MSSI Thesis chaired by Donald Hanle J. Hanle (Washington, DC: Joint Military Intelligence College, July 2006), 26.

and dominance of Islam by way of religiosity and violence. Some groups, such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, ostensibly have given up violence as a means, but they retain the essential elements of the narrative. So important is this narrative, Gray argues, it can be treated as a Clausewitzian “center of gravity,” or the source of the jihadists’ war-fighting potential.

The most powerful ideologies will invariably be those that at least “frame” their narratives within social and cultural parameters. As discussed in the previous chapter, J. M. Balkin sees culture as a memetic filter that excludes incompatible memes and accepts the culturally congruent ones. It may be that the most successful ideological memeplexes are in fact drawn from culture, not merely introduced from the outside and made to fit it, although there also is no shortage of “foreign” memes that enjoy global success. In any case, by tapping into previously formed beliefs and values, the identity entrepreneur reduces the amount of effort required to socialize new recruits, that is, divorce them from more moderate quarters and rebuild their identities. An ideology that memetically aligns with societal values will vastly increase the potential for recruitment and mass mobilization, as Quintan Wiktorowicz points out.

...only when there is “frame alignment” between individual and movement interpretive orientations is recruitment and mobilization possible.... This alignment is contingent on fidelity with cultural narratives, symbols, and identities; the reputation of the frame “articulator”; the consistency of the frame; the frame’s empirical credibility; and the personal salience of the frame for potential participants.¹⁰³

Most militant jihadists have properly framed their ideologies; they have increased their recruitment pools and decreased the likelihood of being shunned (their success in doing so varies from group to group, and situation to situation). Militant jihadist ideologies are

¹⁰³ Wiktorowicz, 16.

typically steeped so thoroughly in cultural and religious narratives that, as Ellen Laipson writes, “[they] cannot be separated neatly from Islamic teachings.”¹⁰⁴

Motivating Factors. Cognitive dissonance theorists assign a cognition, or mental representation, for all things tangible or abstract, and properly assume that the psyche directly works with and reacts to those cognitions, not the concrete element. In much the same manner, motivating factors in violent conflict may or may not be tangible, they may or may not be real, but they are perceived and therefore have memetic value. The fact of brutal military occupation, for instance, should not concern analysts engaged in cognitive war nearly as much as the fact of its perception. Crises have been successfully fabricated just as others have been successfully downplayed or covered up. Cognitive warfare analysts should ultimately consider motivating factors not for how they interact in the concrete sense, but for how their memetic counterparts do in the abstract sense.

The factors contributing to a violent ideology do not always appear in the same combinations and do not necessarily appear on the same order of magnitude. There may be an undetermined concentration of factors that will spark a violent ideology or allow one to take hold. Some of these factors are discussed in chapter two. They include, but are not limited to: military occupation; poverty, which contributes less to militant jihadism than it does to other revolutionary ideologies such as communism; a psychological sense of besiegement; political alienation; and the prevailing, accepted discourse in the given society. The accepted discourse will be discussed in more detail later. For now it is sufficient to say rhetoric conforming to accepted language standards will be better received than that which chafes the public ear, and if the accepted discourse

¹⁰⁴ Ellen Laipson, 143.

tends toward bombastic demagoguery, it may contribute to the emergence of a violent ideology.

In the case of militant jihadist movements, culture and faith are two motivating factors that tend to endure through changing circumstances, although they are not immune from memetic transformation. Balkin referred to culture as the endemic memetic phenomenon. Arab-Muslim cultural and religious factors predate the contemporary manifestations of the conflict and, because of their content, can be leveraged easily by skilled identity entrepreneurs. They amount to pre-positioned “fuel” in the “ideological combustion chamber,” pushing Arab-Muslims a little closer to conflict than non-Muslims in comparable circumstances. Because of this, fewer other factors are needed for Arab-Muslims to achieve the required concentration of fuel for a violent ideology. Because of their importance in militant jihadism, as well as the dismissal of their roles by mainstream academia and media, culture and religion will be discussed with disproportionate emphasis in subsequent chapters.

Identity Entrepreneurs. Identity entrepreneurs, a concept found in the work of Thomas and William Casebeer, are among the most important elements of the process.¹⁰⁵ These individuals must be capable of attracting sufficient numbers of recruits to their cause, usually with the promise of reestablished honor and strong identities uncompromised by the perceived source of oppression. As Gurr would say, they must be capable of assigning blame to a tangible source, convincing their constituents there is a

¹⁰⁵ Troy Thomas and William Casebeer, *Violent Systems: Defeating Terrorists, Insurgents, and other Non-State Adversaries*, United States Air Force Institute for National Security Studies, occasional Paper 52, March 2004, URL: <<http://www.usafa.af.mil/df/inss/OCP/OCP52.pdf>>, accessed 31 October 2006.

chance for success in rebellion, and that they can provide a better alternative in the rebellion's wake. In terms of the ideological model, the identity entrepreneur can initially be thought of as a spark plug. He ignites the fuel in the combustion chamber, giving life to the ideology. Generally speaking, the more fuel in the combustion chamber, the easier the identity entrepreneur's job will be. The entrepreneur does not remain tied to that part of the process, however. He moves throughout the ideological engine, ensuring that the opportunities extant in the wake of violence are not wasted.

The Violence-Identity Cycle, or "The Wheel." In the cognitive wars currently being waged, terrorism appears to be the violence of choice, even if other tactics could work in the model. Terrorism serves to propel and augment the conflict in several important ways, but in simple terms, it galvanizes support and polarizes the public into opposing camps, resulting in new or reinforced societal identities ripe for further exploitation by the identity entrepreneurs.

Hanle explores this process in depth. An act of terrorism can be likened to a form of communication with a twofold impact:

First, it emphasizes to the people repressed... that they are not isolated individuals experiencing some form of deprivation due to personal inadequacies, but rather they are part of a larger collectivity of like-minded individuals suffering from, and wishing to be rid of, the same oppression.... Secondly, by choosing the correct symbolic target, the terrorists can also educate [the populace] as to the source of their deprivation.¹⁰⁶

If the targets and intended audiences are properly selected, the act of violence will raise the consciousness of the constituent population and either produce enthusiastic support (galvanize) or force individuals to take sides (polarize). The successful terrorist will

¹⁰⁶ Hanle, 137.

achieve what Hanle calls the “moral isolation” of the regime or the perceived oppressor. When the terrorist’s supporters and opponents have separated out, the terrorist seeks to create moral asymmetry between the poles, that is, bleed righteousness from the regime and flood the movement with it. With the regime’s legitimacy in their sights, terrorists often attack well-chosen, physical targets, hoping “they can induce the government to overreact with indiscriminate terror against the population writ large.”¹⁰⁷ In the 2006 mini-war between Israel and Lebanese Hezbollah, for instance, the latter often fired unguided rockets into Israeli cities from launchers co-located with civilian structures, such as residential buildings and mosques. This tactic allowed Hezbollah to increase the launcher’s probability of survival or, conversely, reap the moral capital of civilian casualties incurred by any subsequent Israeli counterstrikes.¹⁰⁸ The successful portrayal of the counterstrikes as wanton destruction may have helped galvanize Hezbollah’s constituents (more research is needed on this particular example), but it fairly clearly polarized the observing international community (see chapter seven’s section on Qana).

If the terrorists’ constituent population does not rally with enthusiasm in the initial phases, or falters later on, the terrorists may adopt more sinister, fratricidal methods. As an example of forced acquiescence, Hanle cites the ancient Jewish terrorists, the *Sicarii*, who sought to prepare the way for revolt by assassinating Jews opposed to rebellion against Rome. “By targeting these symbolic victims,” writes Hanle,

the *Sicarii* managed to silence most of those who openly sought to avoid war with the Romans. The terrorists assured that only their view took hold among the populace and, equally important, ensured that the Romans perceived all Jews as a

¹⁰⁷ Hanle, 139.

¹⁰⁸ Reuvan Erlich, “Hezbollah’s Use of Lebanese Civilians as Human Shields: the Extensive Military Infrastructure Positioned and Hidden in Populated Areas,” *Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies*, November 2006.

threat since the only voices being heard consistently were those calling for revolt.¹⁰⁹

Today, militant intimidation within Palestinian society effectively prohibits open debate or deviation from the polemic norm—adding to several other factors inhibiting moderation—and stymies outside attempts to discover any “natural” Palestinian mainstream. The phenomenon appears to affect Muslim discourse worldwide, as evidenced by Salman Rushdie’s need to live in hiding, Yassine S.B.’s decision not to perform his anti-terror song, and numerous other anecdotes (see chapter two).

When the terrorists have galvanized their supporters and polarized the population, the increasing intensity and duration of the conflict cannot help but begin reforming the participants’ identities. Time and day-to-day life may become inseparably linked to the fight, new rules of acceptable behavior may develop, and in extreme cases, culture itself may grow out of a sense of opposition, resistance, or hardship. Such is the case with Shiite Muslims, who for centuries have defined themselves as victims of Sunni oppression, and more recently Christian and Jewish oppression. Similarly, the Palestinian national identity gelled through fervent opposition to Zionism and remembrance of “al Nakba” (the “disaster” of 1948), as well as the humiliating reality precipitated by the June 1967 war. Palestinians had little unique identity before Jewish emigration to the British mandate began in earnest; the region had long served as a mixing bowl of diverse elements from Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon and the deserts to the east and south. Identity entrepreneurs such as Mohammad Amin al Husayni during the 1920s and 1930s, and Yasser Arafat in the second half of the 20th century, contributed to an

¹⁰⁹ Hanle, 114.

identity born of opposition to Zionism.¹¹⁰ As time wore on and the challenges did not wane, Palestinian culture could not help but become inextricably tied to the existence of its Jewish enemy (see chapters six and seven).

Not surprisingly, identities like these play into the hands of identity entrepreneurs, who can more easily present the struggle in terms of national, cultural, or even religious duty. The individual's failure to resist oppression would be memetic anathema to both ideology and national identity—a deep betrayal of societal values. In such an environment, the entrepreneur may continue to replenish the combatants' ranks, despite bad or worsening conditions for the population caused by the conflict's continuance. The “violence-identity cycle,” or “the wheel,” is complete. Societies that choose to continue a fight for honor and shame rather than material benefit or general well-being—particularly if that escape is readily available—could arguably be likened to ants seized by *dicrocoelium dendriticum*; they are seized by a powerful memeplex which serves to benefit itself more than its carriers.

Identity Entrepreneurs Reinvest Energy. A skilled entrepreneur maintains momentum by working throughout the process. After giving life to the ideology, the entrepreneur's most important task is to reinvest the energy from the wheel back into the so-called combustion chamber.¹¹¹ The most powerful entrepreneur is one who manages to transform all elements of his society, including the enduring, non-universal motivating

¹¹⁰ Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 6-9.

¹¹¹ Thomas and Casebeer provide an excellent model for explaining how violent, non-state actors create or strengthen their favorable operating environments. See especially pages 11 and 12 for concepts that are similar to “reinvestment,” and 24 for the model itself. The Thomas and Casebeer model incorporates all aspects of the violent group, including tangible processes such as resource acquisition, while this model focuses only on the cognitive aspects and the centrality of ideology.

factors such as culture and religion. The violence-identity cycle may have a particularly profound effect on culture and religion, as discussed above, but identity entrepreneurs can use the energy from that cycle to reinforce the other factors as well.

For instance, when Israeli officials close border crossings to prevent bomber infiltration, the Palestinian economy predictably suffers (it relies in part on day-to-day labor migration). The

identity entrepreneur would likely declare any economic hardship the result of deliberate Israeli oppression, rather than the result of attempted or successful anti-Israeli attacks. The

entrepreneur pushes the exacerbated economic

conditions further into the ideological combustion chamber, declaring it “confirmation” of the need for more attacks. In certain cases, the entrepreneur can be so effective that apparent blows to the cause are converted to ideological/cognitive reinforcement.

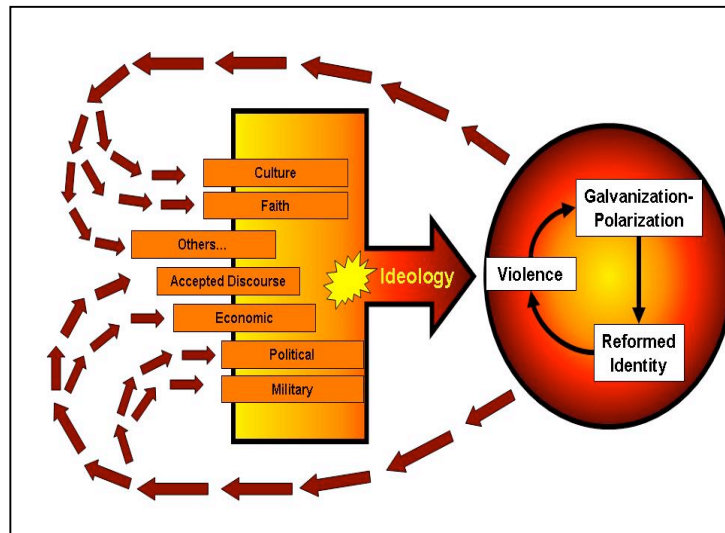


Figure 7. The Ideological Engine: Constituent Support

The Counterintuitive Effect. Ameliorating some factors may have an impact, but it could easily be a limited or counterintuitive one, depending on the parties involved. Withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza might have been beneficial in the earliest stages of the occupation (even this is highly debatable), but now the ideological engine is

working on its own power and such an action would likely reinforce other motivating factors. A withdrawal today, which might be considered a late “preventative” action by Israelis, would most assuredly be perceived by Palestinians as a “victory” and confirmation of righteousness. The identity entrepreneur would take the withdrawal and reinvest the momentum to, once again, “push in” or reinforce other motivating factors.

The precedents for this are clear, particularly with regard to Lebanon. The Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000 had an adverse moral effect on its overall struggle with the Arabs because it reinforced the behavior of militant jihadists everywhere. The danger to Israel’s security lay less in the immediate loss of territory than in the ensuing moral victory for Hezbollah and other regional enemies. Having successfully effected an Israeli withdrawal in May 2000 without a peace treaty or any concessions, it would have been illogical for Hezbollah to simply lift its pressure, satisfied with the fulfillment of a key *raison d’être*. It should have come as no surprise that Lebanese claims on the Shebaa Farms, a 22 square kilometer area in the Golan, appeared in the same month. Author Asher Kaufman comments:

Kofi Annan noted the fact that this was a ‘new position’ of the Lebanese government [pressured and backed by Hezbollah] regarding the definition of its territory, implicitly criticizing Lebanon. Syria was quick to line up with Lebanon’s ‘new position’ and to support the Lebanese claim of sovereignty over the Shebaa farms.¹¹²

Hezbollah, having “proven” that Goliath could be taken down with a persistent guerrilla and terrorist campaign, now had no need to sue for peace when presumably more could be won with the same strategy.

¹¹² Asher Kaufman, “Understanding The Shebaa Farms Dispute: Roots of the Anomaly and Prospects of Resolution,” *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 11, no 1. (2004): 41.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza also took notice of the May 2000 Israeli withdrawal. The belief that Hezbollah militarily “forced” Israel to make major concessions contributed heavily to the al Aqsa intifada just a few months later.¹¹³ Author Ronen Sebag explains that

Palestinians believed that Hizbullah’s violence precipitated Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon and that Palestinian violence might drive Israel out of the West Bank and Gaza.¹¹⁴

Palestinian leaders openly stated on several occasions before the outbreak of the al Aqsa intifada that Hezbollah’s “victory” just a few months prior was a valuable lesson for them. Western analysts should consequently be wary about the assumed moral benefits of conciliation.

It should be noted that this counterintuitive effect can work in the opposite direction as well. In June 2004 a report commissioned by the French Ministry of Education, authored by Jean-Pierre Obin, cited numerous, profound ethnic and religious problems in the French school system, particularly in lower-income areas with significant Muslim populations.¹¹⁵ The 37 page report, eventually leaked to the general public, noted problems such as: the intimidation of and subsequent departure of non-Muslims from communities and schools; the widespread refusal of Muslim students to participate in sports programs; frequent shouting and denial during Holocaust lectures; disruption during lectures on Christianity, biology, or Israel; the refusal of small children to “sing,

¹¹³ Thomas X. Hammes, Colonel, USMC (Ret.), *The Sling and the Stone: on War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul: Zenith Press: 2006), 120.

¹¹⁴ Ronen Sebag, “Lebanon: The *Intifada*’s False Premise,” *Middle East Quarterly*, no. 9-2 (2002): 13.

¹¹⁵ Jean-Pierre Obin, “Les Signes et manifestations d’appartenance religieuse dans les établissements scolaires” (“The Signs and manifestations of religious adherence in scholastic establishments”), *Ministère de l’éducation nationale, de l’enseignement supérieur et de la recherche* (Ministry of national education, higher education and research), June 2004, URL: <<http://www.communautarisme.net/docs/rapport-obin-igen.pdf>>, accessed 10 February 2007. Translation is mine.

dance, or draw a face”; the inability of Muslim students to opt out of religious activities; harassment of students “accused” of being Jewish; the increasing prevalence of anti-Semitic violence and other attacks; the boycotting of classic French authors such as Voltaire and Molière; segregation of bathrooms and lunchrooms; the refusal to use “plus” signs in mathematics because of the resemblance to the Christian cross; and the intense and often violent intimidation of Muslim females who do not act within accepted Islamic parameters.¹¹⁶ In the end, the report indicated success in combating crime, violence, and classroom disruption associated with radicalism tended to come not from the accommodation of religious demands, but the steadfast refusal to accommodate them. The infamous headscarf ban, passed subsequent to the report, deprived Islamic extremists of at least one moral victory and may have discouraged some of the misconduct, but evidence remains to be seen on this point.

The Discourse and the Cognitive Offensive

Any discussion of the cognitive offensive must begin with a discussion of the discourse, for it is the *accepted* discourse cognitive warriors see as the strategic target. Limited to the issue or conflict at hand, the discourse may be considered a relatively small memplex that finds its anchor in larger environmental memplexes such as culture, religion, prevailing academic paradigms, economic traditions etc. It can, however, be manipulated by outside influences through transparent, open debate, or a protracted information campaign that makes skillful use of propaganda, violence, and knowledge of the adversary’s environmental vulnerabilities. The degree to which the

¹¹⁶ Stuart A. Green, Lieutenant, USN, “(Student) National Intelligence Estimate: Europe and Islam,” unpublished research paper funded by JMIC, 4 February 2007.

accepted discourse is vulnerable to destruction from the outside depends on the nature of the contributing environmental factors.

Information and “Information”—The Accepted Discourse. It is important here to discuss the transformation of information into “information.” There must be a careful distinction between information meant to persuade and “information” meant to persuade. That is, there must be a way to differentiate between “information” cynically distributed for effect and information—less the quotation marks—distributed for effect but believed by its propagators to be true and free of exaggeration, regardless of the reality. One could argue, for instance, that the Palestinians’ uttered beliefs are no more propaganda than those of many Jewish settlers who feel a strong emotional and historical connection to the land. Nonetheless, in the context of cognitive warfare and the pressing need for persuasion, there comes a point at which information ceases to be the heartfelt, honest articulation of one’s views. Disconnected from the desire for expression or articulation and no longer parallel to the propagator’s perception of the truth, it emulates propaganda in the traditional, pejorative sense and may be considered an engineered, infectious meme. As time wears on and the conflict’s rhetoric intensifies, propaganda may pull away from empirical and perceived truths. Its propagators, seeking to shift the intellectual locus of legitimacy, attempt to obscure empirical truth by supplanting it with a “new” truth—in other words, manipulation and deception. Brodie offered the Trojan horse and repetition—discussed briefly in chapter three—as just two means by which minds may be deceptively changed. The more successful the campaign, the more

acceptable debate peels off the empirical truth, hopefully, from the propagator's perspective, without the constituents knowing.

The passage of time and the growing intensity of propaganda increase the gap between the acceptable discourse and the empirical truth, which gradually becomes lost or obscured. In the

most extreme scenarios, the gap between the empirical truth and acceptable discourse grows so large that the former is perceived as

extreme or unlikely.

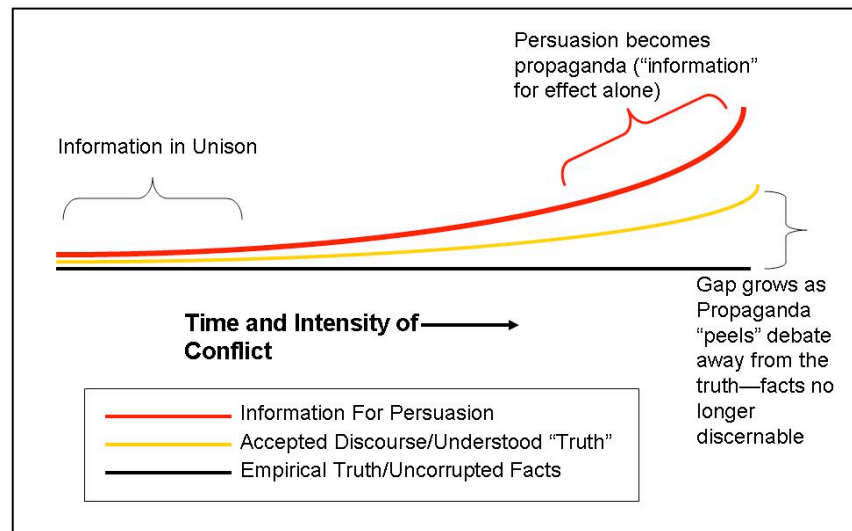


Figure 8. Changing the Accepted Discourse 1

In their campaign to expose “alternative” points of view, for instance, Holocaust deniers have benefited from time's passage and the death of most survivors. As the evidence literally dies off and memories fade, the idea that far fewer Jews died during World War II seems less extreme and therefore more acceptable, particularly when that idea is pitched as a moderate alternative to the notion that the Holocaust never happened. In fact, Holocaust denial is a common theme in the Muslim world (see chapter seven). It presents a major memetic threat to Israel's legitimacy in international eyes, as much support for the state's existence is predicated on the Holocaust and the perceived, tenuous survivability of the Jewish race.

The different types of information do not always begin in unison, however. It may be that “information” exists apart from the empirical truth and accepted discourse in the beginning, but historical events or the independent evolution of the accepted discourse draw the public debate closer to propaganda. Some have argued, for instance, that Israel’s astounding 1967 victory marked the beginning of the end for Israel’s positive press coverage. Stephanie Gutmann describes a *Life* magazine special edition celebrating that victory:

The color photo on the cover was a close-up of a young IDF soldier, still in uniform and holding his rifle, who has just emerged dripping from a dip in the Suez Canal—which is where Israeli troops ended a ninety-hour drive across the Sinai Peninsula. It is an exhilarating picture.... Any photographic close-up is an invitation to identify with the subject of the picture, and this is a picture that invites the viewer to *savor this IDF victory*.

The text of the magazine seemed “to be crowing with aesthetic appreciation for [the Israelis’] great soldiering...” and more significantly, assigned responsibility for the Arabs’ and Palestinians’ plight to the Arabs and Palestinians themselves.

Gutmann argues that such positive coverage is comparatively scarce today. By selectively using passive voice, journalists have eliminated the Arabs as actors and transferred responsibility for the ongoing strife to Israel. Headlines such as, “Car bomb near Israeli bus kills at least 14,” and, “Suicide bombing kills 14 in Jerusalem,” contrast with, “Israeli strike kills at least 12 in Gaza,” and, “Israeli tank fire kills 4 in Jenin.”

Gutmann states:

In one set of headlines, ‘bombs’ seem to explode themselves and kill Israelis, while in the second set, “Israelis” very clearly kill Palestinians.... Throughout the second intifada, Israel just kept *doing things*—firing guns, imposing checkpoints, making laws, adjudicating cases, and so on. But in response to what? ...a map based on news coverage would have shown the state of Israel drawn in speed-addict obsessive detail sitting next to a mostly empty blob titled “Terra Incognita” or maybe “Here Be Palestinians.”

The paradigm assigning moral legitimacy to the weaker power remains relatively unchanged. But in the ensuing decades after 1967, particularly after the 1982 war, Israel's strength and the West Bank and Gaza occupations deprived the fledgling state of its favored underdog status. Pundits hotly debate the consequences of Israeli actions and the state's degree of responsibility for strife, but these questions probably entered the public discourse because

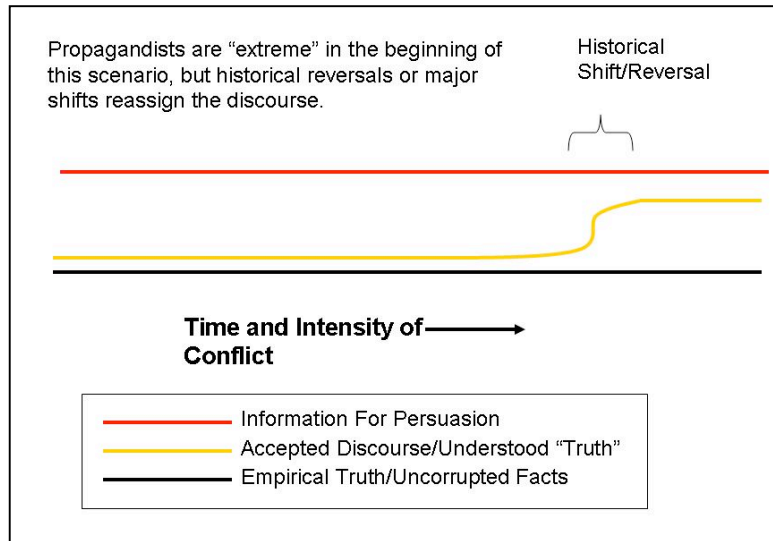


Figure 9. Changing the Accepted Discourse 2

of the change in historical positions, not because of an increase in Israeli transgressions. The cognitive dissonance caused by historical shifts cast doubt onto the acceptance of Israel's favored status. The psychological disorientation ultimately dislodged the discourse and made it more susceptible to the efforts of propagandists, who advertised revolutionary ideals and the valiant, morally righteous struggle of the underdog. That is, they offered cognitions that were psychologically comfortable and did not require the radical deconstruction of an old paradigm, which Israel's newfound strength and continued moral legitimacy might have done.

It should be noted, however, that this process is never clean or simple. The change in Israel's favored status likely stemmed from several factors, not the least of which is the natural, independent evolution of public discourse. The politically correct

intellectual environment, for instance, has played a major role in the Israel's evolving moral stature, but it did not develop because of events specific to Israel. Because political correctness has only gained prominence within the last few decades, its influence on the public discourse is coincidental with post 1967 events. Historical events, therefore, do not occur in a vacuum, but the context of environmental paradigms that are also changing.

In the end, a variety of factors will determine how the entrepreneur attempts to alter the accepted discourse, either his own or the enemy's. The factors include, but are not limited to the target group's literacy rate, proclivity for conspiracy theories, preexisting sympathy for the cause, the level of group fervor, and the effectiveness of enemy counter-propaganda campaigns. The campaign must be properly framed, of course. Arab-Muslims in general, for instance, are not particularly predisposed to believing Israeli sources, thus Arab Muslim identity entrepreneurs have a freer hand in being "creative" with their own material without fear of repercussion or repudiation.

The Accepted Discourse in Greater Context. For the purposes of strategic thinking, it is important to have some sense of how societies may interact with each other during a cognitive war. Stephen Coughlin's "Essential Mirror Image" model proves particularly useful as it does just this (discussed in chapter two), and the model depicted below is influenced by it. It attempts to draw out and explain more clearly the roles of the environment, ideology, discourse, and moderates. The diagram also lays the two societal systems horizontally to better express how these interactions might work in an offensive/defensive context.

The cognitive offensive model (Figure 10), uses many of the same elements of the ideological engine, but reorganizes them into an offensive posture. Ideology retains a central role, but acts in concert with environmental factors, such as culture, religion, and societal paradigms (including victimhood and/or hegemonic aspirations) to drive the

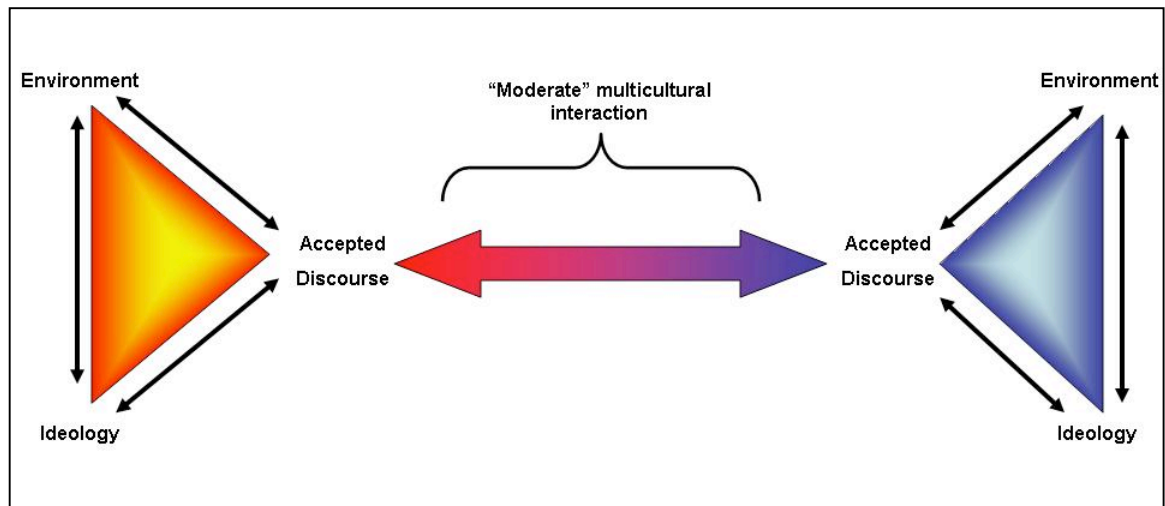


Figure 10. The Cognitive Offensive

accepted discourse. The accepted discourse, in turn, both feeds back into the environment and ideology, and provides the verbal ammunition for the greater offense.

Entrepreneurs may generate and use much of their own propaganda, but they suffer from problems of credibility and meme incompatibility from the perspective of the opposing society. Their best chance for success is to effect a new discourse within their own society and let individuals influenced by, but unassociated with the ideology, participate in the external discourse for them. Unwilling participants may be used for the offensive (see the sections dealing with intimidation), but it is preferable to use true believers. Relatively “moderate” individuals will be more likely to persuade individuals in the opposing society, and therefore effect a new, more favorable discourse in the enemy camp. The most vulnerable discourses are those that do not know they are being

attacked or manipulated. There are, of course, examples in which extremists levy propaganda directly at the enemy, but it tends to be for tactical and operational, military purposes, such as degrading a unit's morale.

The Moderates. As moderates tend to straddle the two cultures, by virtue of a multi-cultural upbringing and/or extensive education and exposure, they are often looked to for expertise and advice by their respective societies. In essence, they become the windows through which respective societies view each other. There are two potential vulnerabilities in this pattern. First, being well-educated and possessing broad perspectives, the learned of the two cultures may be more likely to talk to and be influenced by each other than by the “base” elements of the opposing camps. There are, no doubt, plenty of scholars who have lived among the masses, but it is conceivable that erudites are more influenced by their fellow erudites than by the rank and file. **Any self-selecting, interfacing group is not likely to be truly representative of the cultures’ respective temperaments.** Leaning towards each other from their bases, the moderates may get a softened, perhaps filtered, impression of the opposing culture. They may be inclined to dismiss data that does not conform to their personal experience and intuition, or they may even fail to see it, as one 1940s experiment showed (see chapter nine). The filtered impression is then relayed to the home cultures where the rank-and-file—or even policymakers—have no interaction whatsoever with the opposing culture. Those with no intercultural experience may digest the moderate view as the best approximation of the opposing culture’s temperament. There may be no concept of the vast differences between the respective mainstreams, as demonstrated briefly in chapter two, which

discusses as an example some of the unfounded assumptions made about the “vast majority of Muslims.” The second vulnerability is that the relatively focused and self-selecting nature of this cultural interaction means manipulative propagandists and identity entrepreneurs can economize on their efforts. Rather than blasting an entire culture with the desired message, perhaps for decades, the operators can devote their time and resources to influencing fewer, more influential people. If successful, the duped targets will amplify and lend credibility to the original message, however modified.

For the manipulative identity entrepreneur, success may mean changing the enemy discourse or simply fracturing it to degrade societal cohesion and unity of purpose. Either way, the effects may eventually be felt in the environmental or ideological factors that supported the original discourse. The accepted discourse, environmental, and ideological factors interact with and affect each other within both societies. For instance, Western guilt culture, an environmental factor, opens the Western discourse to accusations of Western culpability by both Westerners and Easterners. Political correctness, another environmental factor, however, tends to close the Western discourse to accusations of Middle-Eastern culpability, particularly with regard to cultural and religious factors. If an accepted discourse endures long enough, it can reinforce or change the contributing environmental factors—the discourse bleeds into the way a society recounts its history. The resulting harmony between the accepted discourse and environmental factors may produce intelligentsia, including academics, government members, and media, favoring appropriately “corrective” policies (ideology) designed to redress Western wrongdoings.

Western discourses are particularly vulnerable to fracture because of the premium placed on democratic pluralism, political correctness, as well as the prevailing guilt-culture. In fact, those environmental factors define the accepted discourse, such that all but the pariah points of view must be at least considered and most must be deemed “legitimate,” if different. Consequently, ideas of unequal merit are given equal treatment. Not infrequently, this concept is taken to the extreme, as Deborah Lipstadt makes clear in *Denying the Holocaust*. Holocaust deniers play deftly on the free speech and alternative view imperatives:

...the deniers want to be thought of as the “other side.” Simply appearing with them [on national television] accords that status.... The deniers have painted my refusal to debate them and my resistance to the publication of Holocaust denial ads in campus newspapers as a reflection of my lack of tolerance for the First Amendment and my opposition to intellectual free inquiry.¹¹⁷

Lest one think the denier tactics laughable, in a multitude of instances, student newspapers editors at respected and well-known universities felt compelled to publish denier advertisements, ostensibly for fear of infringing on the deniers’ First Amendment rights. It is reasonable to assume the editors either felt the “point of view” was legitimate, or were so fearful of accusations of free speech violations that they lost site of their editorial duties. The deniers’ tactics proved effective. Given the extreme and baseless character of Holocaust denier claims, it would be a worthwhile study to determine which points of view do not meet the threshold of legitimacy and why. I would suggest an argument’s legitimacy is determined as much or more by their acceptability than their supportability, that is, points of view are “in” or “out” rather than “supportable” or “unsupportable.”

¹¹⁷ Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Plume, 1994), xiii.

It is for these reasons that militant jihadists tend to target the Western discourse, rather than the ideology or environment directly. The accepted discourse in the West tends to favor the underdog and grant it access. However abhorrent those pluralistic values are to the jihadists in the end, they facilitate memetic infection today. Moreover, to target the secular liberal value system, the closest thing to a Western ideological center of gravity, is obvious and risks exposing the jihadist movement as incompatible with Western values. The soft-hand approach is more efficient and likely to succeed, even if it takes longer. Propaganda that directly targets the secular-liberal construct as anathema to God's will, or otherwise something to be destroyed, is more than likely intended for the Muslim in-group rather than the Western society.

CONCLUSION

Cognitive warfare may not yet have achieved the status of other warfares, such as maneuver or trench warfare, but it exists in practice. Skilled ideologists, terrorists, guerrilla warriors, and identity entrepreneurs understand what they are doing on an instinctual level at the very least. They have understood for decades that they can circumvent vastly superior military forces without forfeiting victory, that the right ideology can present a memetic “cure” for the disaffected masses, and that symbolic violence has powerful, regenerative characteristics. Analysts have long assumed that ameliorating factors motivating groups and individuals toward violence—the factors that contributed to the development of their ideology—will deprive conflicts of momentum. In some cases this may be true, but this chapter has also tried to show how doing so can

have counterintuitive, detrimental effects. The skill of the identity entrepreneur is a vital factor in this process, and strategists would do well to find ways of discrediting or isolating them from their constituents. The ideologies entrepreneurs wield, however, often last beyond the mouthpieces or spread beyond their singular control. Al Qaida by no means exists as a monolithic threat to the West, but as a loose, sometimes unlikely association of groups adhering to similar ideals. The ideology is, in most cases, the source of warfighting potential—the center of gravity—and Western strategists and analysts should be searching for memes that are pernicious to them.

The strategic, cognitive offense can last decades and involves entire societies. It is predicated on most of the same elements found in the ideological engine, but they are reorganized to direct the effects outward. In the cognitive offense, identity entrepreneurs tend to take a secondary role, for it is the moderates who stand the best chance of being accepted by the opposing society and whose memes are most compatible. Successful transformation of the enemy discourse can lead to the transformation of their environment and ideology as well. For the entrepreneur, the ideological transformations would ideally result in favorable political and military policy changes.

CHAPTER 5

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN COGNITIVE WARFARE

This section begins with a discussion of jihad, for it is the most important and among the least understood memes in this cognitive war. Jihad, or Islamic holy war, is treated extensively in the Koran and Hadith, which urge Muslims to battle in a variety of circumstances. There are essentially two forms of Islamic warfare: “the lesser jihad,” that is the violent jihad, and the “greater jihad,” or the inner struggle for self-improvement. Political correctness favors the latter as a moderate, more legitimate “version” in the Western discourse, but the Western discourse rides uneasily with the contemporary and ancient Muslim discourse. More palatable to multiculturalists, the greater jihad aligns with the peaceful memes found in many cultures promoting self-improvement, and it is akin to the observant Christian’s struggle against temptation in both thought and deed. As will be explained here, however, *both* the greater and lesser jihads are legitimate and consistent with one another. Theoretically, the respective jihads are not versions to be chosen. Muslims do not choose which jihad best suits them as much as the circumstances determine which type of jihad must be waged and when. The greater jihad may be so named because it is often the longer of the two struggles and arguably more difficult. However, the need for a lesser jihad may be more pressing, depending on the circumstances.

The greater jihad undoubtedly deserves extensive exploration in the study of cognitive warfare. It likely serves as a factor in the long-term evolution and radicalization of increasingly religious Muslim societies, but such a study lies beyond the scope of this thesis. The purpose here is to illuminate a few of the Islamic exhortations that may or may not act on individual Muslims in a day-to-day sense, but almost certainly make it easier for identity entrepreneurs to develop violent ideologies for their greater societies.

WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND

Before proceeding, however, it is important to note some vital points. First, the concept of *nasikh*, or abrogation, is a mainstream doctrine in which a more recent Koranic verse takes precedence over an older verse when the two are in conflict.¹¹⁸ Koranic verse 2:106 states, “Any revelation we cause to be superseded or forgotten, we replace with something better or similar. Do you not know that God has power over everything?”¹¹⁹ This is significant because the more violent and intolerant Koranic verses occurred later in the Prophet Muhammad’s life. Accordingly, more violent ones have abrogated many of the verses urging tolerance. Second, the Koran and Hadith are immutable and no Muslim may deny them—it is considered an enormity to do so. More so than Western faiths, Islam requires a greater literal adherence to the Holy texts. With the exception of a few verses relayed through Muhammad, it is considered God’s perfect,

¹¹⁸ Anwarul Haqq, *Abrogation in the Koran* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1926). Available online at URL: <http://muhammadanism.org/Quran/abrogation_koran.pdf>, accessed 24 April 2007. See also Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, under “Naskh.”

¹¹⁹ *The Qur'an*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13.

direct statement. According to Oxford Islamic Studies Online, “Muslims believe that the Qur’an is the eternal, literal word of God. The original version of the book is described as preserved in heaven or in the mind of God.”¹²⁰ Rejecting any portion of it, or the Hadith, is considered apostasy, a crime punishable by death according—to orthodoxy. From a memetic standpoint, this tenet affords essentially the same protection of the faith meme, but adds the element of violent consequence for deviation. Even Muslims who are participating in the greater jihad are less likely to blaspheme by rejecting the more violent verses.

It may also be worthwhile to preempt the oft-invoked moral equivalency argument. As discussed in chapter two, unfavorable observations or conclusions about other cultures are invariably met with the truism, “Well, we (Westerners) do it too.” Such is the case when it comes to the exploration of lying, deceit, violence and killing in the Arab-Muslim world. It is, of course, true that Westerners lie, deceive, and kill. The West may even be responsible for more death than any other civilization. But do Arab-Muslims lie on the same order of magnitude and for the same purposes? Are they prohibited by tradition from lying in all the same circumstances as Westerners? Do Westerners kill for the same reasons? Would Arab-Muslims have killed as many, more, or less people given the same power and technology as Western militaries? Although there is overlap in the two cultures’ approaches to these issues, there is also great divergence.

I recognize the existence of Biblical passages sanctioning practices that are unacceptable by today’s Western standards—the Exodus passages dealing with the

¹²⁰ *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, 9 June 2008, under “Qur’an,” Ed. John L. Esposito, URL: <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t243/e275>, accessed 9 June 2008.

treatment of slaves immediately after the Ten Commandments, for instance. Yet, these passages and those dealing with slavery in the Hadith—along with all other passages—are understood in vastly different contexts by their respective cultures. The Bible is still considered holy by its adherents, but the Judeo-Christian equivalent of Koranic literalism and the prohibition against rejecting *any* part of the text is relatively subdued in Western culture. Muslim sensitivity over the Koran is so pronounced that even perceived assaults on the book can spark widespread outrage and mainstream condemnation. On two separate occasions, for example, Nigerian schoolteachers unintentionally ignited lethal riots by confiscating Korans from students who were reading them in class.¹²¹

Muhammad enjoys veneration similar to that of the Koran, a fact demonstrated by worldwide riots over Danish cartoons poking fun at him. Neal Robinson explains that he is thought to belong “to the category of “the perfect man” (*al insan al kamil*). [He, and other prophets] assume the character traits of God, which are latent in all human beings, and manifest them in perfect equilibrium.”¹²² Many Christians view Jesus in a similar light, perhaps even more so, but they are generally less inclined to react with the same ferocity to perceived assaults on his character. The “Piss-Christ” art scandal in 1989 (an artist submerged a crucifix in his own urine) was not marked by violence similar to that witnessed after the Danish cartoon incident. With the holy texts’ and Muhammad’s unimpeachable characters in mind, analysts should be less inclined to “contextualize” in history events that they might otherwise consider confined to the medieval period.

¹²¹ “Nigeria Teacher Dies ‘Over Koran,” *BBC News*, 21 March 2007, URL: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6477177.stm>>, accessed 2 May 2007.

¹²² Neal Robinson, “Ibn al-'Arabi, Muhyi al-Din (1164-1240),” 1998, URL: <<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H022.htm#H022SECT4>>, accessed 2 May 2007.

Although it continues to exist on a practical level, theologians attempted to end exegesis when they “closed the gates of *ijtihad*” in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It was determined that the philosophers had exhausted the process of legal interpretation. This may have been a partly political decision, but it was also consistent with the original concept of Islam as a corrective blueprint, a cure for the wayward practices of the existing monotheistic faiths. Muhammad was to be the “seal of the prophets” and Islam the final chance for humanity to redeem itself—concepts that endure today and inhibit much needed reinterpretation or reevaluation. It is true that Muslim theologians are frequently forced to interpret Islam according to changing circumstances. As Quintan Wiktorowics explains, however, “...many of the shifts and changes are the result of new understandings about context rather than new readings of the religious texts and concomitant principles.”¹²³

Particularly in Sunni Islam, the legitimacy of interpretation is tightly bound to historical traceability, i.e. precedent and strict adherence to the holy texts. Most jihadists trace their ideology to respected Islamic thinkers such as Taqi al Din Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792), Mawlana Abul A’la Mawdudi (1903-1979), and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), some of whom were quite innovative for their time.¹²⁴ Muslim thinkers opposed to jihadist ideologies are similarly inclined to employ historical precedent rather than innovation to ensure their own credibility. Consider the fatwa, for instance, which is a traditional clerical response to a layman’s question. When issuing fatwas, Muslim scholars theoretically leverage the Koran, the Hadith, and consensus among the learned to produce the best possible

¹²³ Quintan Wiktorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2005): 876-77.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

response. Perhaps because of the Muslim world's size and breadth, fatwas today supplant the use of precedents for the use of consensus.¹²⁵ Thus, even the oldest Islamic sources remain relevant, even timeless, in contemporary Muslim society.

When reading the below, analysts may ask themselves what differentiates Islamic medieval doctrine and practice from its Christian counterparts. The Crusades, the Inquisition, and pogroms, after all, are universally understood as blights on Western history and are often invoked as part of the “we do it too” construct. Indeed there can be little doubt that Christians have conducted their share of religiously motivated war and violence; even in secular wars, combatants often believe they fight with God's backing. Yet the misbehavior of medieval and other Christians cannot be easily justified by the New Testament or Jesus' personal example—stable memes which persistently act on Western societies, even if their importance fluctuates. As such, hawkish interpretations which stem from other, transient motivating factors feeding into the ideological engine (see the previous chapter), may come and go with changing circumstances. By contrast, in Islam the hawkish memes are the enduring, codified ones. As with Christianity, interpretations may come and go, but the original texts will likely endure and continue to act on Muslim societies, even if their importance fluctuates in changing circumstances. When considering when and how Muslims may take up arms, therefore, analysts should not dismiss the memes discussed below as analogous to the Western experience, even if Westerners are also driven to ideological violence.

¹²⁵ Shmuel Bar, “Jihad Ideology in Light of Contemporary Fatwas,” *Hudson Institute: Center on Islam, Democracy, and the Future of the Muslim World*, August 2006, URL: <<http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/Jihad.pdf>>, accessed 11 June 2007, 3. Cited hereafter as “Bar.”

TYPES OF JIHAD

Defensive Jihad

The lesser jihad can be divided between the offensive and defensive.

Wiktorowicz explains that “the offensive jihad functions to promote the spread of Islam, enlightenment, and civility to the *dar al harb* (domain of war).”¹²⁶ Most Muslims, according to Wiktorowicz, do not believe such a war can be waged without the authority of a caliph (the caliphate no longer exists, however, bringing into question this prohibition, according to at least one contemporary scholar).¹²⁷ According to Wiktorowicz, defensive jihad “is a widely accepted concept that is analogous to international norms of self-defense and Judeo-Christian just war theory.” It may be described as the most urgent form of jihad, and as such, it is incumbent on every Muslim, not only those whom the caliph selects to carry out the duty for the community.¹²⁸ In a 1998 interview, Osama bin Laden stated that

The mission is to spread the word of God, not to indulge in massacring people. We ourselves are the target of killings, destruction, and atrocities. We are only defending ourselves. This is a defensive jihad. We want to defend our people and our land. That is why we say, if we don’t get security, the Americans, too, would not get security. This is the simple formula that even an American child can understand. Live and let live.¹²⁹

A sense of common besiegement or an invasion of one Muslim country by non-believers invariably revives the notion of common defense. It is a defensive meme that can be “turned on” when the larger ideological memplex is threatened in any location.

¹²⁶ Quintan Wiktorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2005): 83.

¹²⁷ Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, *The Reliance of the Traveller*, trans. Nuh Ha Mim Keller (Beltsville: Amana Publications, 1994), 602. Cited hereafter as *The Reliance of the Traveller*.

¹²⁸ Bar, 8.

¹²⁹ Quintan Wiktorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2005): 86.

The common defense concept exists in Western societies as well—article five of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s charter states that an attack on one of the members is tantamount to an attack on them all—but without the same religious, emotional, or cohesive character.¹³⁰ According to one Muslim scholar, “...non-Muslim forces entering Muslim lands is a weighty matter that cannot be ignored, but must be met with effort and struggle to repel them by every possible means.”¹³¹ It is not uncommon for intra-Muslim rivalries to temporarily subside in the face of an outside threat, or an otherwise “just” operation in the Muslim world to be denounced solely because the executors are non-Muslim. Wiktorowicz writes:

According to most Islamic scholars, when an outside force invades Muslim territory it is incumbent on all Muslims to wage jihad to protect the faith and the faithful. Mutual protection is seen as a religious obligation intended to ensure the survival of the global Muslim community.¹³²

The tendency for unity in the face of an outside threat exists in most societies, but in the Muslim world it has been reinforced through religious codification.

Koran 3:28 The believers should not make the disbelievers their allies rather than other believers—anyone who does such a thing will isolate himself completely from God—except when you need to protect yourselves from them.¹³³

Koran 49:12 Do not spy and do not slander one another.¹³⁴

[Muhammad stated:] “The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim. He does not oppress him, hang back from coming to his aid, or belittle him. It is sufficiently wicked for someone to demean his fellow Muslim.”¹³⁵

¹³⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *The North Atlantic Treaty*, 4 April 1949, URL: <<http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm>>, accessed 8 June 2008.

¹³¹ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 601.

¹³² Quintan Wiktorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2005): 83.

¹³³ *The Qur’an*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 36.

¹³⁴ *The Reliance of the Traveller*, 686.

¹³⁵ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 687.

Offensive Jihad

The rhetoric of the war may bear little resemblance to the true nature of the war, as entrepreneurs and ideologues are likely to couch even an offensive jihad in defensive terms. From a broad enough perspective, any war can be deemed ultimately defensive. Americans and Israelis should understand this philosophical quandary, as both have conducted a multitude of offensive operations under the auspices of their respective defense department or ministry. Defensive terminology tends to increase the palatability of violent, jihadist ideologies, whatever their ultimate objectives, thus Wiktorowicz' assertion that few Islamists focus on offensive jihad may be technically correct. Western analysts, however, must understand some critical factors Wiktorowicz does not point out.

A Western analyst might interpret the following Koranic verse as defensive, for instance, basing his reading on his own cultural and intellectual constructs: Koran 8:39 “And fight them on until there is no more persecution, and religion becomes Allah’s in its entirety, but if they cease, verily Allah doth see all that they do.”¹³⁶ The commentary, or side notes in this particular Koran makes it clear, however, that the persecution is not of Muslims per se, but of the “Truth.” That is, so long as unbelievers practice their beliefs, God’s Truth, the only truth, is persecuted and must be defended—violently if necessary. Interestingly, this insight is not provided in many English Korans, although it is quite different from the contemporary, Western understanding of just war.

Writing for contemporary Muslims, Sayyid Qutb drew on the medieval Muslim concepts of “freedom” and “persecution,” unequivocally deriding the concept of a defensive war. In “Jihad in the Cause of God” he states:

¹³⁶ *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 480.

No political system or material power should put hindrances in the way of preaching Islam. It should leave every individual free to accept or reject it... it should not prevent him or fight against him. If someone [of the political system] does this, then it is the duty of Islam to fight him until either he is killed or until he declares his submission.¹³⁷

Because Islam is a comprehensive political system—not a religion for personal use—a practicing Muslim can only be free if the non-Islamic system is overthrown, so goes the logic. Qutb explains further that “defeatist-type people” mistakenly

...want to confine Jihaad to what today is called “defensive war.” The Islamic Jihaad has no relationship to modern warfare, either in its causes or in the way in which it is conducted.... It means a challenge to all kinds and forms of systems which are based on the concept of the sovereignty of man; in other words, where man has usurped the Divine attribute.¹³⁸

The well-known Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) also drew this distinction between the Western and Eastern concepts of just war. He writes:

In the Muslim community, the holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of the [Muslim] mission and [the obligation to] convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or force.... The other religious groups did not have a universal mission, and the holy war was not a religious duty to them, save only for purposes of defense.¹³⁹

In another study, it would be worthwhile to determine how many jihadists (and Muslims) favor the expansion of Islamic rule as a defensive antidote to the perceived persecution of Muslims (and the “Truth”) around the world. The results could further illustrate the lack of symmetry between Middle Eastern and Western discourses.

If there is a preference for defensive jihad, it may be a contemporary phenomenon linked more to modern circumstances than foundational Islamic sources. Ahmad ibn Naqib al Misri, a medieval Muslim scholar and the author of an astonishingly

¹³⁷ Sayyid Qutb, “Jihad in the Cause of God,” in *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, ed. Andrew Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005), 233.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibn Khaldun, “The Muqaddimah,” in *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, ed. Andrew Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005), 161.

comprehensive guide for day-to-day Islam, stated unequivocally, “The caliph makes war upon Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians until they become Muslim or else pay the non-Muslim poll tax.... The caliph fights all other peoples until they become Muslim.”¹⁴⁰

Ibn Rushd, another medieval Muslim scholar, known as Averroes in Europe, did not even entertain the possibility of a defensive jihad. In his *Distinguished Jurist's Primer*, Ibn Rushd rhetorically asked, “Why wage war?” which he answered, “The Muslim jurists agreed that the purpose of fighting the People of the Book... is one of two things: it is either for their conversion to Islam or the payment of *jizya*.”¹⁴¹ This interpretation—a universal one for the time—finds its basis in a number of Koranic verses, most notably these:

Koran 9:29 Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the *Jizya* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.¹⁴²

Koran 9:5 ...wherever you encounter the idolaters, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post; but if they turn [to God], maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way....¹⁴³

In fact, much of the medieval discussion about just war centered on the prerequisites of *initiating* violence, not the various reasons Muslims might be compelled to defense as the West understands it. It is possible this stems from the fact that Islam's greatest philosophical and legal era rode on the heels of unfettered conquest—the discussion of defense was confined to remembering Muhammad's Meccan period, fighting the persecution of God's “truth” or the corruption of the caliph.

¹⁴⁰ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 603.

¹⁴¹ Ibn Rushd, *The Distinguished Jurist's Primer*, trans. Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee (Reading: The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1994), 464.

¹⁴² *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 507.

¹⁴³ *The Qur'an*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 117.

Some might interpret even the above verses as defensive, correctly pointing out that they were historically revealed in the wake of alleged infidel treachery.¹⁴⁴

Interestingly, there is a marked tone of resignation in this section of the Koran. That is, it seemed Muhammad (or God) had effectively given up on dealing with infidels as trustworthy equals:

Koran 9:8 How (can there be such a covenant) seeing that if they get an advantage over you, they respect not in you the ties either of kinship or of covenant? With (fair words from) their mouths they please you, but their hearts are averse from you; and most of them are rebellious and wicked.¹⁴⁵

Whatever the motive—defensive or offensive—Muslims purged Arabia of all pagans, Jews and Christians in the end. Moreover, the verses’ aggressive character is consistent with the forward-leaning, military example that Muhammad and his “rightly guided” successors, or *rashidoun*, set for their believers. As Muhammad’s position strengthened and Islam’s future no longer seemed threatened, he increased rather than decreased the scope of military operations, infusing his armies with a drive that would carry successive generations to present-day France and Indonesia. According to al Misri, Muhammad himself attended at least twenty-seven expeditions, fought in eight, and dispatched others to fight in forty-seven.¹⁴⁶ According to a Hadith related by Bukhari, Muhammad once stated, “I have been commanded to fight mankind until they say, ‘There is no God but Allah,’” and according to another scholar he stated, “War is permanently established until the Day of Judgment.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 494-495.

¹⁴⁵ *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 499.

¹⁴⁶ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 600.

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Rushd, *The Distinguished Jurist’s Primer*, trans. Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee (Reading: The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1994), 465. See also *Islam: What the West Needs to Know*, produced and directed by Gregory M. Davis and Bryan Daly, distributed by Quixotic Media, LLC, 2006,

THE LEGITIMACY OF JIHADISTS

One often hears the refrain that bin Laden, among others, does not have the requisite authority to call for jihad. Of the Muslim reluctance to support bin Laden's campaign, some may stem from the caliph's absence, but most of it likely stems from the fact that jihadists target Muslims at least as much as non-Muslims. Humans are naturally repulsed by fratricidal violence, and the cohesive aspects of Islam—mentioned above—appear to contradict such behavior. There are strict Islamic prohibitions against killing or hurting fellow Muslims. Koran 4:98 clearly states, "If a man kills a Believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell...."¹⁴⁸ Thus, criticism from Muslim quarters often gravitates towards this aspect of the jihad, rather than the legitimacy of external, or "defensive" wars waged against non-Muslims.

Nonetheless, jihadists target Muslim national leaders and their supporters, and in many cases, they may claim legitimacy in this action as well. According to the Associated Press,

Mr. bin Laden said Muslims should ignore the Islamic prohibition against raising arms against fellow Muslims, asserting it was legitimate to rise up against leaders who are not governing according to Islamic law. Those leaders, he said, came to power "either by a military coup or with backing from foreign forces."¹⁴⁹

The authoritative, medieval scholars are quite clear on this point. Because it is considered anathema to act against fellow Muslims, jihadists typically declare their

DVD. Cited hereafter as *Islam: What the West Needs to Know*. See also Sheikh Burhanuddin Ali of Marghinan, "The Hidayah," in *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, ed. Andrew Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005), 184.

¹⁴⁸ *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 243.

¹⁴⁹ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Bush's Speech Prods Middle East Leaders," *The New York Times Online*, 19 May 2008, URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/19/world/middleeast/9prexy.html?em&ex=1211342400&en=df5ad47339cb4ef8&ei=5087%0A>, accessed 19 May 2008.

Muslim targets apostates first. Apostasy is the worst of enormities and one of the few that deprives Muslims of protected status. Apostates are, in fact, placed in the same category as adulterers, pigs, and biting dogs.¹⁵⁰ It is said, “When a person who has reached puberty and is sane voluntarily apostatizes from Islam, he deserves to be killed.”¹⁵¹ According to one school of jurisprudence, it is preferable that the caliph or his representative perform the execution, but “There is no indemnity for killing an apostate...since it is killing someone who deserves to die.”¹⁵² According to several bloody Hadith related by Bukhari, individual Muslims are encouraged to kill apostates. In one Muhammad stated, “Wherever you find such people, kill them. Whoever kills them will be rewarded on Judgment day.” In another, Muhammad ordered a group of thieving apostates’ hands be cut off, their eyes be gouged out with hot pokers, and then thrown on jagged rocks until they perished, parched for water.¹⁵³

When it comes to the caliph himself—one can assume this applies to any Muslim leader in the caliph’s absence—apostasy, or any acts that contravene Islamic holy law, negate his legitimacy of rule and he *must* be overthrown:

If the caliph becomes a non-Muslim, alters the Sacred Law... or imposes reprehensible innovations while in office, then he loses his authority and need no longer be obeyed, and it is obligatory for Muslims to rise against him if possible, remove him from office, and install an upright leader in his place.¹⁵⁴

There is a litany of violations for which one might be declared an apostate or illegitimate ruler. Among them: denying the existence of Allah; denying any verse in the Koran, and

¹⁵⁰ Reliance of the Traveller, 87.

¹⁵¹ Reliance of the Traveller, 595.

¹⁵² Reliance of the Traveller, 596.

¹⁵³ Center for the Study of Political Islam, *The Political Traditions of Mohammed* (United States: Center for the Study of Political Islam, 2006), 102.

¹⁵⁴ Reliance of the Traveller, 640.

denying that Allah intended Islam to be the world's religion.¹⁵⁵ The number of enormities constituting apostasy makes it easy for jihadists to declare their national leaders illegitimate, but in the end, it can all be boiled down to Ibn Taymiyya's explanation:

Since lawful warfare is essentially jihad and since its aim is that the religion is God's entirely and God's word is uppermost, therefore, according to all Muslims, those who stand in the way of this aim must be fought.¹⁵⁶

That is, Muslim rulers can no longer be considered truly Muslim if they do not support an expansionist jihad, and revolutionaries are well within their rights to kill them.

WHO MUST PARTICIPATE IN JIHAD

All jihad, of course, is a religious obligation, but the requirements for personal and group participation may shift according to the type of jihad being waged. In general, an offensive jihad is a communal obligation which may be executed by a few members representing the greater umma, or Muslim community. Ibn Rushd called it a "collective and not a universal obligation."¹⁵⁷ It can be said, then, a jihad that is defensive according to Western standards is a universal obligation as well as a collective one, and every Muslim must participate because of the situation's gravity. This meme acts concurrently with those binding the Muslim community together, serving to swell the defensive ranks progressively as the memplex comes under more of a perceived threat, or its expansion meets resistance.

¹⁵⁵ Reliance of the Traveller, 596.

¹⁵⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, "Al-Siyasa al-Shariyya," in *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, ed. Andrew Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005), 168.

¹⁵⁷ Ibn Rushd, *The Distinguished Jurist's Primer*, trans. Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee (Reading: The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1994), 454.

There are a number of ways the individual can participate in jihad and they are not equally ranked. The verse used to establish the fact of difference between contributions is Koran 4:95, which states, "...Unto all (in Faith) Hath Allah promised good: but those who strive and fight hath he distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a great reward."¹⁵⁸ Able-bodied men of sound mind are encouraged to physically volunteer for the offensive jihad; for the defensive jihad—if there are not enough men—it is an obligation. In most cases, however, one can participate in jihad by giving financial, material, or moral support as well as physical. "He who provides the equipment for a soldier in jihad has himself performed jihad," Muhammad reportedly said.¹⁵⁹ In a manner of speaking, the entire umma is obliged to participate in jihad by contributing one eighth of its taxes to jihadists—a share equal to those received by the poor, travelers needing money, individuals buying their freedom, and other predetermined recipients (one school of jurisprudence maintains that more or less may be given to any of the recipient categories, including jihadists).¹⁶⁰

THE BENEFITS OF MARTYRDOM

In Western belief systems, the soldier seeks to avoid death but understands it as a potential consequence of battle. Medal of Honor victims often die in the course of their heroic feats, but they are not required or encouraged to do so for the recognition.

¹⁵⁸ *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 244-245.

¹⁵⁹ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 600.

¹⁶⁰ Ibn Rushd, *The Distinguished Jurist's Primer*, trans. Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee (Reading: The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1994), 319-320. See also *Reliance of the Traveller*, 267 and 272.

Moreover, it tends to be the accomplishment of the mission, committed without regard to personal safety and despite great odds, that American society venerates; not the attainment of a new metaphysical status. Western society writ large understands death as a potential consequence, and honors those who have made the sacrifice, but there is no codified reward system or comparable encouragement in their holy texts. Indeed, in the traditional Christian concept, a martyr is one who maintains their faith despite great suffering inflicted *on* them, and to my knowledge, no foundational Christian texts allow for the possibility of martyrdom during offensive endeavors.

In Arab-Muslim cultures, jihad—both offensive and defensive—is considered a supreme, societal good, and there is a strong allure to martyrdom. If Muslims perceive the situation to be sufficiently desperate, martyrdom’s specter may even begin to override the importance of pragmatic military objectives, particularly on the individual level. Muslims consider death for Allah’s cause the ultimate expression faith and consequently set apart martyrs from other jihadists and the masses seeking entry into heaven. Those martyred receive enormous accolades, and a life of religious infractions may be forgiven instantly—a powerful attractant in an orthopraxy with severe punishments. In a Hadith related by Sahih Muslim, Mohammad stated, “Except debt, all sins of a martyr are forgiven.”¹⁶¹ It is well-known that Islam promises its prospective martyrs a high place in heaven—the highest, in fact—with a bevy of doting virgins:

Koran 56:10-24 And those Foremost (In Faith) will be Foremost (in the Hereafter)... (They will be) on couches encrusted (with gold and precious stones)... and (there will be) Companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes like unto pearls well-guarded. A reward for the Deeds of their past (Life).¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Center for the Study of Political Islam, *The Political Traditions of Mohammed* (United States: Center for the Study of Political Islam, 2006), 21.

¹⁶² *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 1674-1675.

Prospective martyrs are also promised immediate entry into heaven, unlike others who must wait for Judgment.

When Muhammad established unequivocally that Allah smiles on death for his cause, some of his earliest followers jumped at the chance. In a Hadith related by Muslim, Mohammed said:

“Certainly, the gates of Paradise lie in the shade of swords.” A shabby man rose and asked Abu Musa if he had heard Mohammed say this. “Yes,” he replied. The shabby man then rejoined his friends and said his good-byes. He then unsheathed his sword, broke and discarded its scabbard, advanced upon the enemy, and fought until he was killed.¹⁶³

In another MSSSI thesis, Naphtali Benyamin recounted a similar story:

...during the critical battle of Bedr between the followers of Muhammad and the tribes from Mecca in January 624, Muhammad called out, “All who die today will go to paradise.” A young man standing beside Muhammad, eating a handful of dates, replied, “What? Is it only necessary to be killed by those people in order to enter paradise?” He drew his sword, dashed into the crowd of his enemies killing several before he fell covered with wounds.¹⁶⁴

There can be no clearer demonstration of a meme that is disadvantageous to the bearer.

Yet, Dawkins and other memetic philosophers would no doubt classify martyrdom as a fit meme that has withstood time and helped ensure the larger memplex’s survival.

DHIMMITUDE—A RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL IMPERATIVE

This section explores the orthodox Islamic view of non-Muslim monotheists; particularly those living under an Islamic government. The intent here is not to prove

¹⁶³ Center for the Study of Political Islam, *The Political Traditions of Mohammed* (United States: Center for the Study of Political Islam, 2006), 22.

¹⁶⁴ Naphtali Benyamin, *The Arab Way of War: Culture, Militant Warfare, and the Raiding Strategy*, MSSSI Thesis chaired by Donald J. Hanle, PhD., (Washington, DC: Joint Military Intelligence College, August 2005), 139.

that Jews and Christians were treated any better or worse than minorities living in Western lands, rather to show that 1) the prevailing apologist discourse about this history may be prejudicially accepted, but it may not be correct and 2) there is a religious, doctrinal component to the mistreatment of minorities living under Islam. If it is true that authors like John Esposito are incorrect, they are unwitting victims of politically correct memplexes which filter out information unfavorable to non-Western cultures. It is a memetic vulnerability that cognitive warriors can easily manipulate, as will be demonstrated more in later chapters. Jihadists or orthodox Muslims can easily leverage Esposito's tendency to see only the positive in order to disguise their real dispositions toward minorities, and subsequently make their ideology appear more palatable to the Western mind. When raw and unfavorable evidence turns up, jihadists can dismissively wave their hands in a manner reminiscent of Obi-Wan Kanobe in *Star Wars*, suggest that "these aren't the droids you're looking for," and furthermore that their brand of Islam is fundamentally compatible with Western ideals.¹⁶⁵

Author Bat Ye'or coined the term "dhimmitude" in 1983,¹⁶⁶ although she gives credit to Lebanese Christian Basher Gamayel, who used it in a 1982 speech.¹⁶⁷ Dhimmitude, "describes the legal and social conditions of Jews and Christians subjected to Islamic rule." Most Western studies of the medieval Islamic era emphasize the rights and protected status afforded Jews and Christians (dhimmi) under ancient Muslim rule,

¹⁶⁵ *Star Wars*, starring Mark Hamill, Alec Guinness, and others, directed by George Lucas, 20th Century Fox, 1977. In the referenced scene, Obi-Wan Kanobe influences two guards with his psychic powers, making them believe the machines they are staring at are not the items they have been searching for, although they plainly are. Obi-Wan Kanobe says calmly, "These aren't the droids you're looking for," to which the guard responds, "These aren't the droids we're looking for... move along."

¹⁶⁶ "The Status of Non-Muslim Minorities Under Islamic Rule," *dhimmitude.org*, URL: <<http://www.dhimmitude.org/index.php>>, accessed 13 February 2007.

¹⁶⁷ Lebanese Forces Official Website, "extract from the speech of Bashir Gemayel," URL: <<http://www.lebanese-forces.org/vbullet/archive/index.php/t-14656.html>>, accessed 13 February 2007.

but users of the term “dhimmitude” tend to pull the submissive-dominant dynamics of that relationship and apply them to contemporary developments. Examples of modern dhimmitude will be discussed below and in chapter seven. Here it will be discussed in historical terms.

By casting doubt on the belief that Islamic empires exhibited only enlightened tolerance for Jews and Christians, the reader will understand that in the Arab-Muslim narrative, domination *of* Muslims *by* dhimmi is particularly distasteful. Many well-known Western scholars on Islam carefully frame their theses to project the Islamic empires as highly tolerant and enlightened with regard to minority populations, particularly in relation to their European counterparts. Ye’or and others emphasize that ancient dhimmi were at times severely oppressed and suffered the life of second-class citizens under Islamic law. In particular, any rights afforded Jews and Christians were derived from Islam, “*not* from any recognized rights of their own,” as one author noted.¹⁶⁸

John Esposito refers only lightly to the massacre of approximately 800 bound Jews in a formative Islamic event, stating that it “was common in Arab (and, indeed, Semitic) practice.... However, it is important to note that the motivation for such actions was political rather than racial or theological.”¹⁶⁹ When discussing the Crusades, Esposito writes, “The chivalrous Saladin was faithful to his word and compassionate toward noncombatants. Richard [the Lion-Hearted] accepted the surrender of Acre and then proceeded to massacre all its inhabitants, including women and children, despite

¹⁶⁸ Andrew Bostom, “Jihad Conquests and the Imposition of *Dhimmitude*—A Survey,” in *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, ed. Andrew G. Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005), 25.

¹⁶⁹ John Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 15.

promises to the contrary.”¹⁷⁰ Westerners often take it at face value when historians such as Esposito claim Islamic empires worked to end persecution and promote religious freedom.¹⁷¹ To be sure, there were minorities that benefited from Muslim rule, but in general, the proposed freedom was not one of choice. As explained above, it was the freedom to live under Muslim, rather than misguided infidel rule. Ye’or’s describes this tendency of Western scholarship:

The thematic structure of this type of Western apologetic literature—certainly not exhaustive—is [comprised by] historical negationism consisting of suppressing or sketching, in a page or a paragraph, one thousand years of jihad which is presented as a peaceful conquest, generally welcomed by the vanquished populations; the omission of Christian and, in particular, Muslim sources describing the methods of conquests: pillage, enslavement, deportation, massacres, and so on; the mythical historical version of “centuries” of “peaceful coexistence,” masking the processes which transformed majorities into minorities, constantly at risk of extinction; an obligatory self-incrimination for the Crusades, the Inquisition, imperialism, colonialism, Israel, and other intrusions into the Dar al-Islam....¹⁷²

The facts, of course, do not absolve Western empires of their own participation in minority oppression, nor do they minimize such atrocities as the Holocaust or the Spanish Inquisition. The facts do, however, suggest a less dhimmi-friendly version of Islamic history than that cherished in the accepted, Western discourse. An uncolored exploration of Islamic history vis-à-vis non-believers may illuminate some current motivating factors in jihadist ideology. It may also be worthwhile to reiterate that the Western discourse on Islamic history does not match the Eastern discourse. Walid Shoebat, a former PLO operative, describes the schooling he received as a child, referring specifically to the celebrated slaughter of the Jews mentioned above.

¹⁷⁰ John Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 59.

¹⁷¹ John Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 34.

¹⁷² Bat Ye’or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2002), 315-316.

Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, wiped out all the Jews of Saudi Arabia. There were three tribes... we were proudly studying this in school as Muhammad, the prophet of Islam ordered the beheading of the Jews of Beni Quraiza, and the taking of the women as concubines. As soon as the child had pubic hair, he was beheaded. So the Jewish population was either extradited or beheaded. *The story of Rabat Qanina is a well-known story in the history of Islam.* Rabbat Kanina was ordered tortured by the prophet of Islam himself. His eyes were put out, he was burned in order to confess where the Jewish tribes were hiding their goods—their gold and their silver and all those kinds of things. And this is right from the *Hadith*. *This inspired us as Palestinians, inspired us on fighting jihad against the Jews in Palestine.* (Italic emphasis added)¹⁷³

Author Benny Morris does justice to a nuanced interpretation of Islam's history.

With the caveat that pogroms of the European and Russian variety were relatively uncommon in the Muslim world, Morris explains such violence was by no means nonexistent and sometimes quite horrific.

In 1066 nearly three thousand Jews were massacred in Granada, Spain. In Fez, Morocco, some six thousand Jews were murdered in 1033, and massacres took place again in 1276 and 1465. There were massacres in Tetuán in Morocco in 1790; in Mashhad and Barfurush in Persia in 1839 and 1867, respectively; and in Baghdad in 1828. The Jewish quarter of Fez was almost destroyed in 1912 by a Muslim mob; and pro-Nazi mobs slaughtered dozens of Jews in Baghdad in 1941. Repeatedly, in various parts of the Islamic world, Jewish communities—contrary to the provisions of the *dhimma*—were given the choice of conversion or death [normally there is a third option of paying a poll tax].¹⁷⁴

Morris also explains that, with few exceptions, the perception of Jews as inferior and base permeated Muslim attitudes.

One measure and symbol of Jewish degradation was the common phenomenon—amounting in certain places, such as Yemen and Morocco, to a local custom—of stone-throwing at Jews by Muslim children. A nineteenth-century Western traveler wrote: I have seen a little fellow of six years old, with a troop of fat toddlers of only three and four, teaching [them] to throw stones at a Jew, and one little urchin would, with the greatest coolness, waddle up to the man and literally

¹⁷³ Walid Shoebat, in *Islam: What the West Needs to Know*, produced and directed by Gregory M. Davis and Bryan Daly, distributed by Quixotic Media, LLC, 2006, DVD.

¹⁷⁴ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 11-12.

spit upon his Jewish gabardine. To all this the Jew is obliged to submit; it would be more than his life was worth to offer to strike a Mahommedan.”¹⁷⁵

Much of the Islamic tenor regarding dhimmi comes from the provisions for jihad. Of particular significance are the repeated Koranic exhortations to conquer, kill if necessary, and subdue non-Islamic populations. Koran 9:29 clearly calls for the submission and taxation of the dhimmi, who enjoyed relatively robust minority rights, “Fight... until they pay the *Jizya* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.” Most, if not all, medieval Islamic scholars were unified on the low position of unbelievers. The well-known and respected al Ghazali writes:

[When] offering up the *jizya*, the *dhimmi* [subjected by jihad] must hang his head while the official takes hold of his beard and hits on the protuberant bone beneath his ear.... They are not permitted to ostentatiously display their wine or church bells... their houses may not be higher than the Muslim’s, no matter how low that is. The *dhimmi* may not ride an elegant horse or mule; he may ride a donkey only if the saddle is of wood. He may not walk on the good part of the road. They have to wear [an identifying] patch, even women, and even in the [public] baths... [*dhimmi*] must hold their tongue....¹⁷⁶

At least some relatively recent Islamic scholars outlined similar positions. A 17th century revivalist, Sirhindi, writes:

The real purpose in levying the *jizya* on them (the non-Muslims) is to humiliate them to such an extent that, on account of fear of *jizya*, they may not be able to dress well and to live in grandeur. They should constantly remain terrified and trembling. It in [sic] intended to hold them under contempt and to uphold the honour and might of Islam.¹⁷⁷

This prevailing attitude reaches back to the period of the “rightly guided” caliphs in Islam’s early history. According to Hadith related by Bukhari:

¹⁷⁵ Morris, 11.

¹⁷⁶ Al-Ghazali, “Kitab al-Wagiz fi Fiqh Madhab al-Imam al-Safi’i,” in *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, ed. Andrew Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005), 199.

¹⁷⁷ Sirhindi, untitled, in *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, ed. Andrew Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005), 200.

Umar drove all the non-Muslims from Arabia. After Mohammed conquered Khaybar [where Jews had taken refuge from a previous attack], he considered expelling the Jews from the land of Allah, Mohammed and the Muslims. However, the Jews asked Mohammed if they could stay in exchange for their servitude and half of each harvest. Mohammed said, “You may stay on those terms as long as it pleases us.” The Jews remained until Caliph Umar drove them from Arabia.¹⁷⁸

TAQIYYA

Do Arab Muslims lie on the same order of magnitude and for the same purposes? Are they prohibited by tradition from lying in all the same circumstances as Westerners? Although there is overlap in the two cultures’ approaches to lying, there is also great divergence. During brief service in Iraq in 2004, for instance, I noticed most of the translators working for a particular unit were not Muslim, as one would expect, but Assyrian Christian—an Iraqi minority whose dwindling percentage is in the single digits. When the author asked why this was so, a unit interrogator explained that, based on experience, they had determined the Christian translators were more reliable and less prone to deceit.¹⁷⁹ Why did the Muslim translators lie? Moreover, why did they lie to protect individuals associated a regime despised as much locally as internationally?

In this case, as in many others, the answers at least partially rest in the religious duties of all Muslims. According to the faith, it is anathema for Muslims to be ruled by or even allied with non-Muslims. Koran 3:28 clearly states, “The believers should not

¹⁷⁸ Center for the Study of Political Islam, *The Political Traditions of Mohammed: The Hadith for the Unbelievers* (United States: Center for the Study of Political Islam, 2006), 50.

¹⁷⁹ When recounting this anecdote, I have been reminded that Tariq Aziz, infamous for outrageous lies on behalf of Saddam Hussein’s regime, is in fact Christian as well. He was operating in an overwhelmingly Muslim construct, however, and under an oppressive regime.

make disbelievers their allies rather than other believers....”¹⁸⁰ As discussed in a previous section, it is doctrinally vital to protect a fellow Muslim before aiding non-believers, no matter how hateful the Muslim’s character or reputation. Although it may seem counter-productive to the Western mind, it has also been traditionally accepted that Muslim tyranny is better than anarchy or disorder. Thus, in the Iraqi context as in many others, the honorable end of community defense legitimizes and necessitates deceiving non-Muslim employers.

The practice is effectively codified in the Shiite doctrine of *taqiyya*, or dissimulation. Most Islamic doctrine that allows for dissimulation finds its roots in Koran 16:106, “Any one who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters Unbelief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith... theirs will be a dreadful chastisement.”¹⁸¹ The Shiites developed this historically defensive (though that aspect clearly varies) practice over the course of many persecuted generations, and their Sunni brethren often deride them for it. The Sunni, however, are by no means purists when it comes to truth-telling. One classical Sunni jurist stated, “If anyone is compelled and professes unbelief with his tongue while his heart contradicts him, in order to escape his enemies, no blame falls on him....”¹⁸² In at least the Shafi’i school of Islamic jurisprudence, it is considered prudent to lie for an honorable objective when telling the truth would be detrimental to the cause.

... Scholars say that there is no harm in giving a misleading impression if required by an interest countenanced by Sacred Law that is more important than not

¹⁸⁰ *The Qur’an*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 36.

¹⁸¹ *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (al-Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1989/1990), 764-765.

¹⁸² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, under “*Taqiyya*.”

misleading the person being addressed, or if there is a pressing need which could not otherwise be fulfilled except through lying.¹⁸³

According to the same school, one is not encouraged, but *required* to lie if the honorable objective cannot be achieved by telling the truth. Honorable objectives can include smoothing over relations with one's wife, settling disagreements, or most honorably, defending Muslims against unjust (infidel) authorities. Interestingly, one may also lie if the particular sin, such as fornication or drinking, affects only the individual and is known only to him and Allah.

...if a ruler asks one about a wicked act one has committed that is solely between oneself and Allah Most High ([if] it does not concern the rights of another), in which case one is entitled to disclaim it, such as by saying, 'I did not commit fornication,' or 'I did not drink.'¹⁸⁴

There is a seemingly inexhaustible supply of anecdotal evidence demonstrating the prevalence of Muslim lying, particularly in the midst of war, some of which will be explored in chapter seven. The analytical quandary, of course, is that one can easily say the same about Western lying. Those feeling uncomfortable with a comparison between the two cultures will again assert that, "we do it too," and again, this is at least partially true. Sissela Bok explores the Western aspects of the practice in great depth. She recounts the absolute philosophical positions of Immanuel Kant and St. Augustine, both of whom believed all lies are abhorrent but differed in their practical approaches, and she contrasts them with the ethics of Machiavelli and Nietzsche, where "violence and deceit are portrayed with bravado and exultation."¹⁸⁵ She notes a well-known Catholic textbook that advises doctors to deceive seriously ill patients, and she describes numerous other

¹⁸³ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 748.

¹⁸⁴ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 746.

¹⁸⁵ Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 29. Cited hereafter as Bok.

pragmatic examples paralleling the Islamic positions outlined above. Even Martin Luther rhetorically asked,

What harm would it do, if a man told a good strong lie for the sake of the good and for the Christian church[...] a lie out of necessity, a useful lie, a helpful lie, such lies would not be against God, he would accept them.¹⁸⁶

I believe there is a difference in the volume of lies between the two cultures, but it is impossible to systematically exhaust the supply of anecdotes on either side. Additionally, any quantitative studies of deception—if there are indeed any—run the risk of being corrupted by the very phenomenon they seek to explore.

An honest intellectual must therefore consider two qualitative points. Is there a difference in societal approval for the lies? Is there a difference in the philosophical or religious sanction for the lies? Societal derision for Yasser Arafat's frequent and profound lies about peace with Israel was virtually non-existent in the Muslim world, while a U.S. president was impeached for lying about a personal affair (examples of Arafat's tactics in the context of cognitive warfare will be given in the following chapters). In contrast, even Bok noted in an updated preface to her book, that a raging debate about the ethics of lying and dishonesty had erupted in the U.S. during the 1980s.

I can no longer subscribe, therefore, to the claim I made in the Introduction, that [the issue of lying has] received extraordinarily little contemporary analysis. Questions of truthfulness and deception are now taken up in classrooms as in the media and in scholarly literature. Codes of ethics, such as the 1980 "Principles of Medical Ethics" of the American Medical Association, have incorporated clauses stressing honesty.¹⁸⁷

The simple fact that these issues figure so prominently in the public, accepted, Western discourse should be some indicator of the difference in volume, even if there are gaps between philosophy and practice. It is conceivable that the cultural upsets

¹⁸⁶ Bok, 47.

¹⁸⁷ Bok, xiii.

associated with scandals such as Watergate and Iran-Contra stemmed from ignorance or wishful thinking about the true nature of day-to-day political life. It was a shocking realization, delayed by cultural naiveté, that trusted agents of all stripes had been ritually dishonest despite staunch moral prohibitions against lying. Such shock may have even helped drive Bok to publish her book as a corrective measure; other thinkers may have followed suit in spirit. It is clear there are differences in the respective society's reactions to lying. As for cultural or religious sanction, one can find some Western, philosophical approval for lying when there is a hard moral dilemma. In a classic scenario—hiding Jews from the Nazis—several Western philosophers, St. Augustine included, might be inclined to lie for their protection. Yet, figures such as Machiavelli and Nietzsche hardly enjoy universal celebration as paragons of moral virtue. They are often taken as examples of cold, perhaps even amoral, philosophers.

The Islamic sanction for lying seems more explicit and closer to the core of unimpeachable sources: the Koran and Hadith. It also appears in a greater variety of situations, and, perhaps more realistically, with lower thresholds for acceptance in Muslim society. Depending on one's perspective, this could be chalked up to advanced, pragmatic thinking in the medieval, Muslim philosophical tradition. More relevant to intelligence analysts, however, is the sharp in-group out-group distinction that only one of the two cultures draws when it comes to warfare and lying. First, it must be recounted that this chapter has established Islam as essentially hard-wired to view outside cultures and faiths as enemies needing subjugation, whether or not individual Muslims act on those precepts. Second, it has established that, in relation to those outside cultures, Islam emphasizes intense societal cohesion. Third, it has established that there is religious

sanction for lying if the cause is sufficiently just. Deception in war and intelligence are tentatively accepted in the West as necessary practices, but they are conducted with the fear of losing long-term credibility in mind—whiffs of government deception tend to discomfort Western publics.¹⁸⁸ It was discussed in chapter four that Westerners do not typically see themselves in a state of perpetual conflict. It would follow, then, that the need for lying in inter-societal relations depends on the state of conflict. If Islam, however, is in a state of perpetual jihad, and jihad is clearly just, then perpetual lying to non-Muslims may also be just so long as it advances the cause.

Western analysts might be inclined to highlight the similarities they see between Western and Eastern moral systems, but they may miss the fact that some of the highlighted values apply to intra-Muslim relations and not necessarily to Muslim-non-Muslim relations. There are several Hadith vividly demonstrating the permissibility of lying to non-Muslims. In at least three separate Hadith, Mohammad explicitly stated, “war is deceit.”¹⁸⁹ Given the widely acknowledged, pervasive sense of a siege on the Muslim world, the accepted importance of jihad, and the sanction for lying in honorable struggles, it is reasonable to conclude that deceiving Westerners is commonplace. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, the skill a society develops in lying can essentially weaponize a cultural trait and have a profound effect on the course of its cognitive war.

¹⁸⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 13 February 2006), under “MILDEC as an IO Core Capability.”

¹⁸⁹ Sahih Bukhari, “Vol. 4, Book 52, Number 268,” in *USC-MSA Compendium of Muslim Texts*, trans. M. Muhsin Khan, URL: <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/052.sbt.html#004.052.267>>, accessed 13 June 2007.

CUTTING OFF THE NOSE TO SAVE THE FACE

Thus far, this chapter has focused mostly on the relevant elements of Islam, but now the discussion shifts to a few cultural factors. There will be, of course, some crossover between religion and culture, as one seldom exists without affecting or being affected by the other. By virtue of memetic association, in fact, some cultural traits may be indistinguishable from religion and vice versa. Islam has so pervaded the day-to-day lives of Muslims that it would be difficult to cleanly extricate it from Middle Eastern culture. Taqiyya, for instance, could be considered as much of a cultural phenomenon as a religious one. This section will nonetheless point out a few relevant cultural attributes that have an impact on the current cognitive war, particularly the honor-shamed-based construct.

Honor, Shame, and Guilt

In the West, individuals and groups *theoretically* make decisions by determining which course of action will result in tangible improvements. Arabs in the same circumstances may, and often do, arrive at entirely different decisions in order to save face. The choices are puzzling from the Western perspective because, rather than resulting in material or political improvements, they often lead directly to predictable material loss or continued privation. Nonetheless, the Arab decision-maker will stand firm in his resolve, satisfied with the seemingly disproportionate material price.

Arab societies are deeply rooted in the notions of shame and honor, unlike most Western societies, which have been based on guilt for at least the past several decades. The primary difference between shame and guilt lies in the involvement—or non-involvement—of societal elements

GUILT CULTURE	OTHER PEOPLE BELIEVE	
	I BELIEVE	
I did not do it	I did not do it	I did do it
I did do it	No problem	I protest my innocence and fight the accusation
I did do it	I am expected to feel guilty regardless	I am guilty and am punished

Figure 11. Guilt Culture

Source: www.doceo.co.uk

beyond the individual. That is, guilt is primarily an internal phenomenon for individuals; it is a burden the individual carries, whether or not others know about the alleged “crime.” Shame, however, requires participation by society, and is not contingent on the individual having truly committed the crime. Shame is about the *appearance* of dishonor, brought either upon oneself or one’s in-group, for all the world to see. J. S. Atherton provides two models that aptly explain the difference (Figures 11 and 12).¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ James Atherton, “Shame-Culture and Guilt-Culture,” *Doceo*, URL: <http://www.doceo.co.uk/background/shame_guilt.htm>, accessed 25 January 2007.

Both Islam and traditional Arab tribal culture reflect and reinforce honor-shame values. It has already been mentioned that for at least Sunni Muslims, so long as a crime does not affect others, an individual is free to keep it between himself and God, and lie about it. In fact, because of the emphasis placed on the in-group's honor, the individual may suffer from a guilty conscience, but feel compelled to quietly shoulder that burden for the sake of the group. In addition to the

SHAME CULTURE	OTHER PEOPLE BELIEVE	
I BELIEVE	I did not do it	I did do it
I did not do it	No problem	I am shamed and dishonored by their belief
I did do it	No-one knows, so I am not shamed	I am guilty and am punished

Figure 12. Shame Culture

Source: www.doceo.co.uk

exhortations to protect fellow Muslims as a part of the greater Islamic community, tradition prohibits the faithful from unnecessarily exposing the faults of others. Such actions include, but are not limited to revealing someone else's sins (so long as they do not hurt others), "rejecting a brother's [fellow Muslim's] excuse," and "asking about another's mistakes."¹⁹¹ In a story recounted by Sania Hamady,

An Arab Husband caught his wife in bed with another man; he drew his gun and aimed it at the couple while addressing the man: "You are in my power and I can kill you with one shot, but I will set you free if you swear to keep secret the relationship you have had with my wife."¹⁹²

According to al Misri, Muhammad stated that "All of my community shall be pardoned save those who commit sins openly."¹⁹³ Interestingly, nighttime, according to this parable, constitutes a "cover" with which Allah conceals sin. These religious tenets may

¹⁹¹ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 759-770.

¹⁹² Sania Hamady, *Temperament and Character of the Arabs* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960), 37.

¹⁹³ *Reliance of the Traveller*, 770.

have resulted in part from a cultural reticence to bring shame into the group, or risk feuding by unnecessarily slinging it onto other groups from the same culture.

The question then becomes, “What if the ‘others’ are non-Muslims?” Is it assumed that they enjoy the same protection from slander and dishonor? For the answer to this, the analyst may synthesize a few of the Islamic tenets explored thus far. It has been established that dhimmi are not equal to Muslims and therefore are not entitled to the same rights and privileges. Indeed, they occupy a lower social stratum, are compelled to tread lightly when interacting with Muslims, and may easily incur Muslim wrath, particularly for perceived insults to the faith. Non-Muslims living in Muslim lands, according to tradition, lived by an entirely different set of rules; among them the non-Muslim poll tax (*jizya*), the restrictions on building, the requirements for dress etc. Moreover, non-Muslims living *outside* Islamic lands were necessarily characterized as living in “Dar al Harb” (the House of War), where it is permitted to do otherwise impermissible things for the good of “Dar al Islam” (the House of Islam). It is reasonable to conclude, then, that if a crime, or a lie, hurts only non-Muslims, it need not be confessed, for no dishonor has been done to Muslims, and the rights of the concerned “other” are comparatively insignificant.

This emphasis on shame and appearance can be seen most clearly in the many restrictions behind male-female interactions in Arab tribal culture. In the most conservative Arab societies, women are prohibited from leaving the house unescorted, lest it appear she slipped under the watchful eyes of her husband or brother in order to fornicate. According to Hamady,

The woman’s sexual behavior is equated with her total honor, and the man’s honor is primarily defined by the sexual conduct of his womenfolk. Therefore,

the woman's honor becomes the business of the man, who sees to it that it is not violated. He has to guard it, for if it is besmirched the stigma of immoral behavior falls on him. If the woman is suspected or accused of any sexual contact with a man outside the marriage bond, her reputation is spoiled for good. Her men kin usually kill her, and if not, they discard or ostracize her.¹⁹⁴

It is impossible to vouch for the frequency of such honor killings, but Hamady's statement alludes to a serious problem that continues today. In Iraq, for instance, where kidnappings for ransom are now prevalent, untold numbers of female kidnapping victims are being murdered, not by the kidnappers, but by their own families.¹⁹⁵ A woman who is suspected of cheating on her husband, having pre-marital sex, or generally living in a manner that brings disrepute to the group can be slaughtered, according to the custom. The mere *possibility* that a woman, and by extension her entire family, had been dishonored through extramarital sex, even if it is rape, demands the family cleanse its image. The death sentence has little to do with the actual guilt or innocence of the individual in question, it is meant to restore the group's reputation in the eyes of others from the same culture by wiping out the most obvious manifestation of shame.¹⁹⁶

This need to save face, be it for the tribe or the individual, manifests itself on the political level as well. Citing an interview with an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman about negotiations with Palestinians, Benyamin writes:

The purpose of negotiations is to create an environment of win-win for both sides; otherwise, there is little incentive to negotiate. But since Arab cultural norms dictated an agenda overly preoccupied by issues of honor and saving face, the environment quickly turned into a lose-lose situation.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Hamady, 50.

¹⁹⁵ Anne Garrels, "Concern Grows Over Iraqi 'Honor Killings,'" *All Things Considered*, NPR, airdate 7 December 2005, audio file, URL: <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5043032>>, accessed 25 January 2007.

¹⁹⁶ Peter Schneider, "In Germany, Muslims Grow Apart," *The New York Times*, 4 December 2004.

¹⁹⁷ Naphtali Benyamin, *The Arab Way of War: Culture, Militant Warfare, and the Raiding Strategy*, 19-20.

On more than one occasion Arab negotiators have refused concessions from Israelis for fear of the appearance it would create among Muslims—that they had surrendered some point to the hated-Israelis—instead choosing the face saving alternative of letting no one win. It would seem that such behavior would have an overall detrimental effect on the society, or that the identity entrepreneurs would suffer a loss of credibility, having failed to ameliorate their constituents' conditions. If the conflict is fundamentally about material or territorial issues, it is true that the entrepreneur may suffer credibility problems. As mentioned in the previous chapter, however, a skilled identity entrepreneur may use the persistence of poor conditions, or the worsening conditions, to reinforce the ideology's original motivating factors. In essence, it amounts to deflecting and reinvesting blame. If the conflict is also fueled by particularly strong non-material or non-territorial motivating factors, the population may be willing to sacrifice material gain for a perceived superior spiritual or political order. In that case, saving face at the cost of material benefit would not necessarily reduce the entrepreneur's credibility.

It should come as no surprise to the reader that honor-shame societies tend to have difficulty looking inward for the source of problems. In general, they are inclined to blame the outsider rather than lose face by taking responsibility. Western guilt-based societies, in contrast, tend to look inward for the solution before they look outward. Their constant self-questioning allows for self-improvement, but it can weaken societal cohesion as well in pluralistic environments. Benyamin, notes the different approaches reach even into the classroom. Arab and Western students are taught mathematics in entirely different manners. Western students tend learn how formulas work; their instructors walk them through the process, teaching them the fundamental concepts

behind the equation and how those concepts come together. Arab students, however, enjoy little reinforcement for this inquisitive process; they tend to learn through rote memorization, “absorbing rather than discovering.”¹⁹⁸ The inability to look critically inward, or critically examine accepted truths, allows identity entrepreneurs to perpetuate the conflict paradigm with relatively little resistance. It also works to block external criticism, thereby keeping the accepted discourse safe from external persuasion campaigns.

The examples provided here and in the next chapter—the honor-killings, the inability to accept peace with a dhimmi state, the preference for struggle at the cost of opportunity, and the reluctance to look inward for improvement—demonstrate the extreme emphasis Arab-Muslims place on questions of honor, shame, and appearance.

Thomas Friedman adds:

The most underestimated emotion in Arab politics is humiliation. The Israeli-Arab conflict, for instance, is not just about borders. Israel’s mere existence is a daily humiliation to Muslims, who can’t understand how, if they have the superior religion, Israel can be so powerful. Al Jazeera’s editor, Ahmed Sheikh, said it best when he recently told the Swiss weekly *Die Weltwoche*: “It gnaws at the people in the Middle East that such a small country as Israel, with only about seven million inhabitants, can defeat the Arab nation with its 350 million. That hurts our collective ego. The Palestinian problem is in the genes of every Arab. The West’s problem is that it does not understand this.”¹⁹⁹

Honor-shame culture and the Islamic tenets demanding religious hegemony provide ample fuel for the ideological combustion chamber. When these motivating factors are combined with the embarrassing political and military realities, the appearance of a violent ideology becomes that much more likely.

¹⁹⁸ Naphtali Benyamin, *The Arab Way of War: Culture, Militant Warfare, and the Raiding Strategy*, 133-134.

¹⁹⁹ Thomas Friedman, “Mideast Rules to Live By,” *The New York Times*, 20 December 2006.

Passion and Incitement

Sania Hamady explains in somewhat blunt 1960s prose that, “The Arab’s temperament is nervous, and the least provocation antagonizes him. He flares up easily and does not restrain from outbursts; and once arisen, his wrath has no limits. The Arab’s control over his fury is weak and precarious.”²⁰⁰ Flare-ups between individuals may lead to lethal violence, but states of relative calm generally bracket those instances and death is by no means a guaranteed element. “The outbursts of anger of most people do not last long; soon they apologize and try to make up with those they have antagonized.”²⁰¹ In some respect, the violence-tranquility cycle can be likened to boiling milk. When the heat is applied, it tends to flare up quickly, but the froth disappears almost immediately when the heat is reduced. In fact, I have observed several instances in which small groups of self-described Bedouins fall into a minor fracas, pushing, shoving, and yelling, but without suffering serious consequences. The phenomenon was once explained to me by a Bedouin officer in the Jordanian Army, who stated that the Bedouin personality remains deeply rooted in the “desert culture,” no matter how many generations have lived in the city (in fact, the officer considered the trait an asset, particularly when coupled with fierce loyalty to the Hashemite king).

²⁰⁰ Hamady, 48.

²⁰¹ Hamady, 49. If it seems improbable that members of a culture so driven by honor would apologize, see Lazar Berman’s “Understanding Arab Culture,” written from the perspective of an Israeli platoon leader who commanded an all-Arab unit in the IDF. He states that despite his Jewish heritage, the influential members of an Arab soldier’s family would call and profusely apologize for any of that soldier’s alleged misconduct. Berman suggests that these families wished to remain “close to the plate,” that is, they recognized his power and wanted to avoid antagonizing it. It is possible that after a fight or strong verbal confrontation, one of the two Arab parties would rethink his relative position of power and prevent any further “damage” by conceding. See Lazar Berman, “Understanding Arab Culture,” *Small Wars Journal*, 13 April 2008, URL: <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/2008/04/understanding-arab-culture.php>>, accessed 08 June 2008.

It should be noted here that Hamady's work lacks some needed qualifications for rather unequivocal statements, but the reader must also keep in mind that, despite being an Arab herself, Hamady did not write her book in an era in which every potentially negative observation had to be balanced with a positive observations of equal or greater weight. Moreover, Hamady did not write in an era observable truths could not be uttered because of unfortunate parallels to reviled stereotypes. The image of the Arabs as a people easily angered is quite old and, although undoubtedly exaggerated at times, it may be based in at least some general fact. When discussing prospective Western policies (such as the 2003 Iraq war), considerations of consequences on the so-called "Arab Street" may be fearful, particularly among the culturally-sensitive. According to the stereotype, said street is prone to violent demonstrations, burnings in effigy, rock throwing and similar such behavior. The region-wide reaction to the Danish cartoon riots again comes to mind, as do the two Palestinian intifadas, the French "youth" riots in 2005, the anti-Jewish Arab riots of the 1920s and 1930s, in addition to numerous others. Depending on the criteria used, many of these instances can be characterized as flare-ups rather than sustained, uninterrupted resistance campaigns (excepting, perhaps the second intifada). The difficulty, of course, lies in determining which flare-ups result from this cultural trait, and which stem from environmental circumstances that would drive non-Arabs to action as well. As with violent ideologies, there are probably motivators universal to mankind, but they are likely exacerbated by or even founded on particular cultural or religious factors.

Conspiracy Theories. Several authors have observed that there is a linguistic tendency toward exaggeration and overemphasis, at least partly anchored in the flowery and repetitious patterns of Arabic itself. It often reflects what the Arab speaker wishes to happen rather than what has actually happened. At first glance, this appears to overlap with *taqiyya*, but, depending on the context, it can also grow from personal desire or a sense of otherwise inescapable shame. Margaret Nydell writes in *Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Modern Times* that

If Arabs feel that something threatens their personal dignity, they may be obliged to deny it, even in the face of facts to the contrary.... If they do not want to accept the facts, they will reject them and proceed according to their own view of the situation. Arabs will rarely admit to errors openly if doing so will cause them to lose face. *To Arabs, honor is more important than facts.* Any Arab would understand what is happening, and would never suggest that the other person is lying. Nor would he insist on proving the facts and thus humiliate the other person (“lying” is a common Western accusation).²⁰²

Wishful thinking in verbal, Arabic form can take on titanic, sometimes comical proportions. In this example from the eve of the 1948 war, the Syrian president said to a Palestinian leader,

I am happy to tell you that our army and its equipment are of the highest order and well able to deal with a few Jews; and I can tell you in confidence that we even have an atomic bomb.... Yes, it was made locally; we fortunately found a very clever fellow, a tinsmith....²⁰³

Yet, the 1948 war clearly did not turn out well for the Arabs, fact that generated shame and gave birth to a new series of “lies,” not the least of which is the conspicuous absence of Israel on many Middle Eastern maps. Such exaggeration—or lying—can alleviate the pain of failure, deflect blame and create new, more favorable realities. The political, economic, and military facts for Arabs today reach so far in one direction, while Islamic

²⁰² Margaret K. Nydell, *Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Modern Times* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 2006), 29. Emphasis and parenthetical remark in the original.

²⁰³ Patai, 53-54.

and honor-shame expectations reach so far in the other direction, that there is a massive gap and subsequent cognitive dissonance. Simple lies are not sufficient to cover that gap.

The conspiracy theory has developed as a more creative, and expansive means of compensation. One Arab author writes, "If it were not for the existence of other races and nations with their own conspiracy theories, I would have thought that the concept was a patented Arab invention."²⁰⁴ Of course, it is not an Arab invention, but there are numerous observations from Arabs and non-Arabs which highlight the problem as an astonishingly pervasive and dangerous one in Arab society. Moreover, contrary to what one might expect, the theories are pervasive in all social strata, not only the uneducated. It was widely believed in Iraq, for instance, that U.S. soldiers' sunglasses were capable of capturing x-ray images, and that soldiers used them to peer through women's dresses. In an interview for the New York Times, an Iraqi engineering student echoed the belief, "With those glasses, [they] can definitely see through women's clothes. It makes me angry. We are afraid to take our families out on the street." One sergeant tried to dissuade Iraqis by showing them his glasses, but most remained unconvinced, believing he had not turned them on. A retired accountant dismissed the stories about x-ray sunglasses, as he did the rumor about Saddam Hussein having been taken to a CIA safehouse. Instead, he believed that the former Iraqi president had gone to Tel Aviv.²⁰⁵ The spokesman for the Muslim Canadian Congress, a relatively moderate Canadian advocacy group, stated last year, "It is ironic that Muslim extremists are portraying

²⁰⁴ Mishari al-Thaidi, "More on conspiracy theories," *Arab News*, 18 September 2004, URL: <<http://www.arabnews.com>>, accessed 15 June 2007.

²⁰⁵ John Tierney, "G.I.'s Have X-Ray Vision. Of Course.," *New York Times*, online ed., 7 August 2003. URL: <<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/08/07/nyt.tierney/>>, accessed 15 June 2007.

themselves as anti-imperialist, when in fact Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are nothing more but [sic] a creation of the CIA.”²⁰⁶

There is a multitude of such conspiracy theories, and many of them are highly creative and original, but more simply appear to be scions, offshoots of old, persistent anti-Semitic themes. A select few include:

- U.S. soldiers cannibalize Iraqi civilians.
- Jews caused the space shuttle *Columbia* to explode.
- Jews have conspired to perpetrate every terrorist attack in the world to make the Arabs and Muslims look bad.
- The CIA controls Osama bin Laden.
- “Zionism is behind terrorist actions in the kingdom. I can say that I am 95 percent sure of that.” (Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia)
- Jews perpetrated the 11 September 2001 attacks.
- Jews perpetrated the 2004 Madrid bombings.
- Jews perpetrated the 2003 Istanbul bombings during Ramadan.
- Jews use Christian and Muslim blood to make Hamantashen (pastries).²⁰⁷

These and many similar theories are well known in the Arab world, and most of those listed above were printed or aired without qualification in Arab mainstream media, even the last one. Like Prince Abdullah, many senior, well-respected Arab-Muslim leaders hold such beliefs.

CONCLUSION

This chapter does not prove or otherwise suggest the tactic of terrorism can be linked to Islam and Arab culture, but it does make the case that the current *conflict* with the West almost certainly can. There is a strong connection between Islam and the

²⁰⁶ “MCC expresses relief at arrest of alleged terror cell: Urges community to confront extremism and radical ideas,” *Muslim Canadian Congress* website, 3 June 2006, URL: <<http://www.muslimcanadiancongress.org/20060603.html>>, accessed 15 June 2007.

²⁰⁷ Steven Stalinsky, “A Vast Conspiracy: Nothing funny about this top-ten list,” *National Review Online*, 6 May 2004, URL: <<http://www.nationalreview.com>>, accessed 15 June 2007.

current struggle against the West. Whatever the locus of the Muslim mainstream, Islam grants clear authority to jihadists, including those using violence against non-believers. Whatever the roles of poverty, political conditions, or psychological conditions, Islam tends to endure as a motivating factor—sometimes latent, sometimes active—edging its believers toward conflict. Many argue that, when looking at the violent Koranic verses and Hadith, it is important to understand the historical context. I would argue that analysts should, after considering the relative importance of faith to Muslims, put history in the context of Islam. The sense of besiegement and the current sting of Arab and Muslim humiliation for being “powerless” has been augmented by deeply engrained, nearly archetypal, religious and cultural constructs that demand dhimmi be subdued and dominated. The notion of domination is unacceptable to any dominated culture, but domination by Jews, Christians, or any other infidel population is doubly intolerable to Arab-Muslims.

Clearly, the world has not yet declared there is no God but Allah. A religious exhortation to conquer the world may seem firmly rooted in ancient times to Westerners, yet Muhammad’s example and his urgings are well-known and admired by the highly religious, contemporary Muslim societies. He bequeathed a command of constant conquest to his successors—a jihad that ultimately cannot end until the world is subdued and its inhabitants are “free” to follow the true faith. With the exception of a few setbacks, such as those in Spain and the Mongol invasion, Islamic hegemony endured for well over a millennium. This historical fact, in combination with the early, unimpeachable holy “Truths” encouraging that historical pattern, must have an effect on the collective Muslim psyche. In other words, as Ted Robert Gurr would state, it is the

gap between value expectations and capabilities that cause the dissatisfaction. I concur, but suggest additional factors. The face-saving elements of honor-shame culture augment the perceived gap, produce ideologies designed to “wipe out” the manifestation of shame—Israel’s existence—and reduce the likelihood of constructive self criticism.

Additionally, there are several cultural attributes, such as the proclivities for incitement and conspiracy theories, and the Muslim duty to protect the Umma, which dramatically reduce the effort required of identity entrepreneurs. This chapter also briefly explored the differences in lying as practiced by Muslims and Westerners. Skilled deception is more an offensive asset than a motivating factor, (the following chapters will demonstrate how it has been employed in the Arab-Israeli conflict), but the proclivity for conspiracy theories both serves to illustrate the difficulty this honor-shame culture has in absorbing criticism, and reduce the credibility identity entrepreneurs require for successful propaganda efforts. For Muslims, the normal prohibitions against lying do not exist in inter-faith relations, which are necessarily characterized by jihad.

CHAPTER 6

THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT: BACKGROUND

“I think that this is the first war in history that on the morrow the victors sued for peace and the vanquished called for unconditional surrender.”—Abba Eban

Chapters six and seven do not provide a complete example of a cognitive war in action. Indeed, there may be no conflict in which *all* the elements of cognitive warfare—all the possible memes, motivating factors, ideology, identity entrepreneurs, violence, identity formation, reinvestment of energy, environment, moderates, and accepted discourse—come into play, working in perfect synchronization. There are, however, numerous conflicts in which various parts of the process have been manifest and have worked together as described in chapter four. As stated earlier, cognitive warfare is an art that has not been mastered like trench or maneuver warfare, yet there are warriors who have sufficiently practiced it to do great damage. Using the Arab-Israeli conflict as a case study, this and the following chapter seek to demonstrate some of the more important elements from the ideological engine, the accepted discourse, and the cognitive offense in operation. Chapter six provides a brief history of the Arab-Israeli conflict so that readers may understand the underlying motivations of the conflict and the violent ideologies that developed from them.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND--PALESTINIANS

Before Jewish immigration began to significantly impact Palestine in the 20th century the area had been relatively sparsely populated and—despite its religious significance to several faiths—thought of in administrative rather than national terms. The inhabitants descended from Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, and the deserts to the east and the south, and there was a small but enduring Jewish presence. Prior to 1948, the “quantity of Arab land offered for sale was far in excess of the Jewish ability to purchase,” as Historian Kenneth Stein writes.²⁰⁸ Although Palestine was far from “a land without people” made for a “people without land” as extreme Zionists portrayed it, the region was vastly underpopulated. Mark Twain wrote in 1867, “Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren.... The valleys are unsightly deserts.... Palestine is desolate and unlovely.”²⁰⁹ Joan Peters’ controversial, but obsessively documented *From Time Immemorial* argues Arab immigration to the region increased alongside that of the Jews, largely because of the positive economic effect of the Jewish resurgence.²¹⁰ The 1937 report by the British Peel Commission corroborates this,

The Arab population shows a remarkable increase since 1920, and it has had some share in the increased prosperity of Palestine. Many Arab landowners have benefited from the sale of land and the profitable investment of the purchase money. The *fellaheen* are better off on the whole than they were in 1920. This Arab progress has been partly due to the import of Jewish capital into Palestine and other factors associated with the growth of the National Home. In particular,

²⁰⁸ Cited in Morris, 111.

²⁰⁹ Morris, 3.

²¹⁰ Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine* (Chicago: JKAP Publications, 1984). Cited hereafter as Peters.

the Arabs have benefited from social services which could not have been provided on the existing scale without the revenue obtained from the Jews.²¹¹

The ideology of Zionism and the resultant surge of Jewish immigration began forging a Palestinian-Arab identity, however, and many inhabitants did not take kindly to the demographic shifts.

The region has been termed “the twice-promised land,” owing to the delicate balancing act performed by British politicians attempting to secure both Jewish and Arab support against the Ottoman Empire in World War I. Out of fear, frustration and cultural reasons that will be discussed below, Arab Palestinians rioted several times in the 1920s and 1930s against the flow of Jewish immigrants. As the conflict’s intensity increased, the British restricted Jewish immigration in order to cap the violence, but after World War II, the pressures of the recent Holocaust, massive numbers of now homeless Jews in Europe, Britain’s war exhaustion, and its inability to block the surge in illegal Jewish immigration precipitated the United Nation’s (UN) involvement.

The UN voted to partition the land between majority Arab and majority Jewish areas. Jewish representatives accepted the deal and the Arabs rejected it, choosing instead to take everything with the combined armed forces of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Arab fighters from Palestine itself. In an upset, the Jews consolidated and expanded their territories to form what is now known as Israel. This 1948 birth has been termed *al Nakba*, or “the catastrophe,” by Palestinians, and it has taken on mythic status throughout the Arab-Islamic world as one of, if not the most humiliating Arab-Muslim historical experience.

²¹¹ Palestine Royal Commission, *Report of the Palestine Royal Commission*, July 1937, URL: <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/peel1.html>>, accessed 30 May 2008.

During this war between 430,000 and 650,000 Arabs left their homes for a variety of reasons, including stoked fears of massacre—a fear precipitated in part by a disputed incident at Deir Yassin—and encouragement by the Arab nations, which promised quick destruction of the nascent Israeli state.²¹² Anti-Israeli resistance launched from the surrounding Arab states continued after the 1948 war, but displaced Palestinians would form the core of uncompromising, violent opposition.

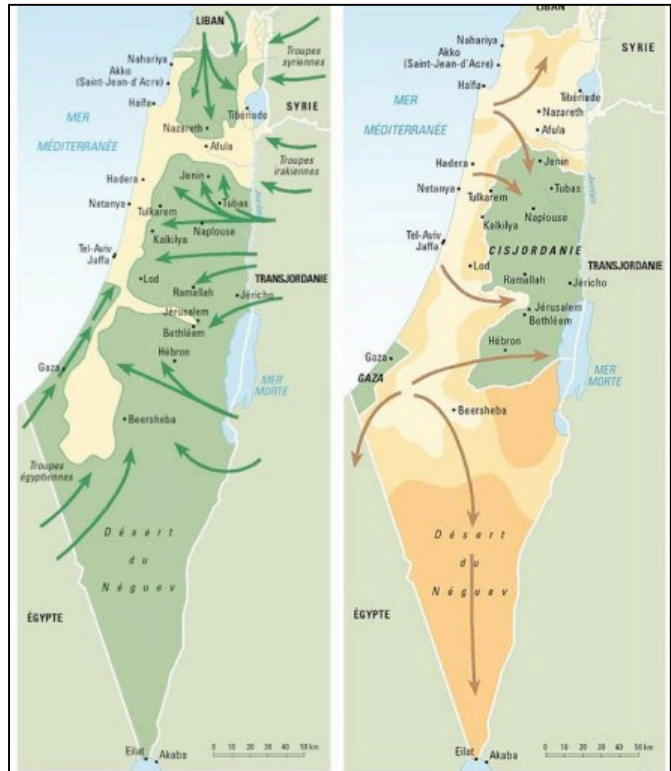


Figure 13. The First Arab-Israeli War 1948-1949

Source: Philippe Rekacewicz, *Le Monde Diplomatique*

The Arab states, for their part, appeared content to use the Palestinian issue for its symbolic capital. The difference in motivation between Palestinians and the Arab

²¹² Peters, 16. Regarding Deir Yassin, see Dan Kurzman, *Genesis 1948* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 138-149. Deir Yassin, a small town near Jerusalem in the British Mandate of Palestine, was attacked by extremist Jewish forces in April 1947 in the course of a larger civil war. Although the Jewish forces planned for the inhabitants to vacate the town before taking it, the armored car bearing the loudspeaker crashed into an anti-tank trap before entering the area. The inhabitants of the town, who were well-armed but thus far uninvolved in the war, were surprised by the Jewish advance and reacted ferociously to defend their homes and families. The Jewish forces, apparently surprised to find the town well-defended and unsettled by their own, unexpected casualties, fought with dwindling restraint as the battle wore on. The Jewish forces eventually resorted to destroying entire, occupied houses to eliminate Arab snipers and in several cases made no distinction between combatants and obvious civilians. Casualties totaled around 110 dead, including old men, women, and children. The name of the town has since become synonymous with massacre, and although testimony about the incident differs, the Deir Yassin meme continues fueling anti-Zionist hatred in Arab minds and blackens the international view of Israel's legitimacy.

national leaders manifests itself even today. While the Arab nations lost face and botched their chances for territorial acquisition in 1948, the refugees had also lost their homes, land and livelihoods. Indeed, when Gamel Abdel Nasser first created the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat did not embrace it particularly warmly.

Barry Rubin, author of *Revolution Until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO*, characterized Nasser's initial efforts as little more than "manipulation" of the Palestinian cause for his own interests. "The PLO created in 1964 was incapable of either disputing the policies of Arab states or fulfilling the Palestinians' desire to destroy Israel and throw out its Jewish population."²¹³ Arafat, meanwhile, had already created his own organization while working in Kuwait. He called it Fatah, a reverse Arabic acronym for the "Palestinian National Liberation Movement." Not insignificantly, the acronym also means "conquest," alluding to the early medieval Muslim subjugation of numerous peoples.²¹⁴ This and many other organizations eventually joined the umbrella group, but distrust of and friction with the Arab state sponsors remained significant throughout the PLO's history.

The states had not completely lost their will to destroy Israel, however. From May-June 1967 Egypt closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping by shelling boats, forced out the United Nations peacekeeping forces emplaced after the 1956 war, and began mobilizing for a decisive campaign in league with Syria. Arab fervor for Israel's

²¹³ Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 2. Cited hereafter as Rubin.

²¹⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Concise, online edition, under "Fatah," URL: <<http://concise.britannica.com/ebc/article-9033809/Fatah->>, accessed 29 April 2007.

destruction reached a crescendo among both leaders and civilians.²¹⁵ Morale sank in Israel, where citizens began digging graves in anticipation of a second holocaust, and Yitzak Rabin, then chief of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) General Staff, suffered a nervous breakdown.²¹⁶ The IDF nonetheless pulled off a spectacular victory. In a preemptive attack, it surprised and destroyed the combined armies of Egypt, Syria and later Jordan. It took Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights as its prize, vastly increasing Israel's territorial defensibility.²¹⁷

Now further shamed and seemingly impotent, the Arab states lost influence in the PLO to Arafat and his like-minded associates, who reshaped the organization as the only entity still working for Israel's righteous destruction. Other groups collected under the aegis of the PLO, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the splinter group Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP-GC), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). With a persistent Islamic flavor, these groups pursued a variety of ideologies, including, but are not limited to, pan-Arab nationalism, Communism, as well as Arafat's intentional lack of any articulated or structured dogma.

These groups operated not in the occupied territories, but out of the refugee camps in the nations surrounding Israel. They were, in essence, an exiled resistance, particularly after Israel's 1982 invasion of southern Lebanon, which forced the PLO out of its last

²¹⁵ Gamal Abdel Nasser, "Statement by President Nasser to Arab Trade Unionists: 26 May 1967," *Jewish Virtual Library*, URL: <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/nasser1.html>>, accessed 21 June 2007. See also "The Mideast: A Century of Conflict Part 4: The 1967 Six Day War," *National Public Radio*, 3 October 2002, URL: <<http://www.npr.org/news/specials/mideast/history/history4.html>>, accessed 21 June 2007.

²¹⁶ Morris, 307-308.

²¹⁷ In an interesting interview before his death, King Hussein of Jordan states that Nasser coerced him into participating in the war with a personal threat. See *The 50 Years War: Israel and the Arabs*, produced by Brian Lapping, PBS, 1999.

regional stronghold and relegated its leadership to Tunis. When the intifada erupted in 1987, the PLO suffered for its lack of presence, forced to ride on the heels of a grass-roots resistance movement and struggling to maintain the appearance of control.²¹⁸ It was under these circumstances that a new Palestinian resistance organization, Hamas, emerged as an on-scene, “pure” Islamic rival to the PLO’s influence.

The 1987 intifada eventually died down, but tension between Israel and the Palestinians by no means abated. The 1993 Oslo accords filled many with hope for a lasting peace, but Arafat’s subsequent statements indicated the PLO did not intend to make a lasting peace with Israel, but execute a phased plan to incrementally eliminate the state of Israel from the map once and for all.²¹⁹ Revelations about Arafat’s statements helped bolster those in Israel who felt Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had already conceded too much. A Jewish extremist assassinated him in late 1995 for precisely that reason. Meanwhile, Hamas’s leadership, diametrically opposed to even the appearance of peace with Israel, and worried that the PLO would gain influence through the peace process, sought to derail Oslo with a series of suicide bombings in 1996.²²⁰ When Rabin’s successor appeared inept and the process futile, a critical mass of Israelis elected the hard-line Benjamin Netanyahu. The new prime minister reversed or stalled many actions called for in the Oslo accords, but Arafat and the PLO had already taken over the newly established Palestinian Authority, created well-armed security forces, and begun autonomous rule in a few of the occupied areas.

²¹⁸ Thomas X. Hammes, Colonel, USMC (Ret.), *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2006), 98.

²¹⁹ Efraim Karsh, *Arafat’s War: the Man and His Battle for Israeli Conquest* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 59-60. Cited hereafter as Karsh.

²²⁰ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 72 and 77.

Ehud Barak won the 1999 elections and radically changed Netanyahu's policies. Under domestic pressure, and in what appeared to be a rushed fashion, Barak attempted and failed to elicit a peace agreement with Syria and Lebanon in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from the southern security belt. He thus withdrew Israeli forces from the Lebanese security belt unilaterally, a move heralded by militant groups as a victory for Islam, and one that affected the outcome subsequent Camp David 2000 Summit. Barak pushed hard for the summit as an all out, last-ditch effort to establish a comprehensive peace with Palestinians, and he offered radically more than any of his predecessors in order to achieve it. Arafat attended the summit, but turned down every Israeli offer and walked out without submitting a single counterproposal. Widespread violence in the territories erupted just a few weeks thereafter, highlighting the summit as a landmark, demonstrative, catastrophic failure.

At this point I will dwell a bit on the Camp David failure. There may be no better demonstration of the memetic obstacles Arab-Muslim leaders face when it comes to dealing with Israel. There are some interpretations of this event that blame the Clinton administration and/or Barak's handling of the event for its eventual failure, but most reliable sources, including key Palestinians present at the event, acknowledge Arafat utterly refused to compromise and may never have intended to conclude a peace regardless of Israel's offers. According to Efraim Karsh, Arafat agreed to attend the summit only reluctantly and on the condition that President Clinton not blame "anyone" in the event of a summit failure.²²¹ Other sources corroborate his intransigence throughout the process. "We gained some concessions from the Israelis yet indicated no readiness to concede anything in return," said a member of the Palestinian negotiating

²²¹ Karsh, 159-165.

team. “We have no intention of compromising on any of our basic demands, particularly on the issues of Jerusalem and the refugees,” stated another member. Mahmoud Abbas, the current PA president, made it clear that by “refugees” and the right of return, the Palestinian negotiators meant a return to Israel proper—not merely the occupied territories.²²² Palestinian negotiators have indefatigably pushed for this right of return because, among other reasons, it would mean a demographic end to Jewish dominance in Israel (Israeli negotiators have resisted it for the same reason). After rejecting numerous Israeli proposals, Arafat withdrew from the summit and received numerous Arab accolades for his stance.²²³ Even his Islamist rival and spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmad Yassin, commended Arafat’s uncompromising approach. “I welcome his steadfastness. There is no choice but the choice of resistance. What was taken by force must be returned by force.”²²⁴

Regardless of whether Clinton truly promised to not lay blame at Arafat’s feet for a summit failure as Karsh suggests, he eventually expressed great frustration, corroborating the other accounts:

Don't simply say to the Israelis that their map is no good. Give me something better! ...This a fraud. It is not a summit. I won't have the United States covering for negotiations in bad faith. Let's quit! ...If the Israelis can make compromises and you can't, I should go home. You have been here fourteen days and said no to everything. These things have consequences; failure will mean the end of the peace process.... Let's let hell break loose and live with the consequences.²²⁵

If it had not been abundantly clear, Arafat made his obstinacy ever more apparent when Israeli negotiators offered to share sovereignty over the Temple Mount—the most sacred

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ari Shavit, “End of a Journey,” *Haaretz*, online ed., 16 September 2001, URL: <<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=74353>>, accessed 25 January 2007.

²²⁴ Karsh, 165.

²²⁵ Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *The New York Review of Books* 48, no. 13, (2001), URL: <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14380>>, accessed 19 April 2007.

site in Judaism and heretofore a nonnegotiable item—and he claimed that there was, in fact, no such thing as a Temple Mount. Dennis Ross, Middle East Envoy for President Clinton stated,

The problem I have with Arafat at Camp David—whatever criticisms I have of Barak—Barak in the end was prepared to confront history and mythology, and you can't ask more of a leader than that. Arafat was prepared to confront neither the history nor the mythology *and* he created a new mythology by saying the Temple doesn't exist there. It was the only new idea he raised in fifteen days at Camp David.²²⁶

According to the official Palestinian Authority daily, Arafat would not submit to a peace “imposed” by the Israelis.²²⁷ Indeed, Arafat's withdrawal from the negotiations stemmed from a deep-seeded, cultural inability to finalize peace with the “Zionist entity” and the loss of face it would inevitably cost him.

There is an abundance of evidence indicating the Palestinian Authority, with the willing assistance of newspapers and imams, planned to instigate violence even as the negotiations continued.²²⁸ As the PA played old footage of IDF soldiers clubbing rioters in the first intifada, one author wrote just after the Camp David collapse, “It is necessary that millions of Palestinians, wherever they are, go into the streets at the same time. This is the preferred way to counter... Barak's ‘no's’ and the American bias.”²²⁹ Another columnist wrote, cognizant of the moral success achieved in the first intifada,

Every Palestinian home is able to stockpile a few months of supplies for his basic needs. Every home has enough space for a few bags of flour, rice, sugar, candles,

²²⁶ “Shattered Dreams of Peace: The Road From Oslo,” produced by Dan Setton and Tor Ben Mayor, narrated by Will Lyman, on *Frontline*, PBS, airdate 27 June 2002, videocassette.

²²⁷ Akram Haniyah, “Camp David Diary – 4th Installment,” *Al-Ayyam*, 3 August 2000, *Open Source Center*, accessed 18 April 2007.

²²⁸ Joshua Muravchik, *Covering the Intifada: How the Media Reported the Palestinian Uprising* (Washington D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003), 9-10. Cited hereafter as Muravchik.

²²⁹ Gutmann, 32. See also Talal 'Okal, quoted in “Special Dispatch,” *Middle East Media Research Institute*, 6 October 2000, URL: <<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP13200>>, accessed 29 June 2007.

and salt. [The preparations should not be for a military confrontation, rather for a popular Intifada.] It would be a mistake and a sin to prepare for confrontation as an organized establishment with specified camps, locations, and stores. This is exactly what the Israeli army wants, counting on its superiority in weaponry and in the air. The solution guaranteeing our superiority is to go back to our quality as a fighting people that [fights through] the Intifada.²³⁰

Abu Ali Mustafa, a PA member, stated just days before the negotiations collapsed and weeks before the riots:

The issues of Jerusalem, the refugees, and sovereignty will be decided on the ground and not in negotiations. At this point it is important to prepare Palestinian society for the next step because we will undoubtedly find ourselves in confrontation with Israel in order to create new facts on the ground. ...I believe that the situation in the future will be more violent than the Intifada.²³¹

The PA justice minister stated in the same period, "...violence is near and the Palestinian people are willing to sacrifice even 5000 casualties."²³² Another key leader, Marwan Barghouti, openly stated in an interview with al Hayat that he and others worked hard to incite the Palestinian masses.²³³ On the first day of lethal rioting, roughly 22,000 Muslims had filled the al Aqsa mosque, where "Shaykh Hayan al Idrisi, known for his outspoken anti-Semitism and opposition to the Camp David negotiations... warned that the 'the Jews' were intending to replace the mosque with a synagogue or temple [and that] 'the Muslims are ready to sacrifice their lives and blood to protect the Islamic nature

²³⁰ Hassan Al-Kashef, quoted in "Special Dispatch," *Middle East Media Research Institute*, 6 October 2000, URL: <<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP13200>>, accessed 29 June 2007.

²³¹ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee - First Statement of the Government of Israel- Opening Statement*, 28 December 2000, URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2000/12/Sharm%20el-Sheikh%20Fact-Finding%20Committee%20-%20First%20Sta>, accessed 10 June 2008.

²³² Freih Abu Middein, quoted in "Special Dispatch," *Middle East Media Research Institute*, 6 October 2000, URL: <<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP13200>>, accessed 29 June 2007.

²³³ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Interview by Marwan Barghouti to 'al-Hayat,'" 29 September 2001. URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2001/9/Interview%20by%20Marwan%20Barghouti%20to%20Al%20Hayat%20-%2029-Sep>, accessed 25 January 2007.

of Jerusalem and El Aksa!’’²³⁴ During the first days of rioting, the PA closed schools in order to encourage children to take to the streets.²³⁵ If the appearance of succumbing to an Israeli peace seemed untenable, extracting concessions through violence would help save face. Moreover, Hezbollah had reinforced the relevance of violence just a few months before.

According to the accepted discourse, however, the al Aqsa intifada began when Ariel Sharon, then a prominent Israeli politician, former defense minister, and hard-line icon hated by Palestinians, provocatively visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This piece of territory is hotly contested; both Jews and Muslims have alternately accused one another of desecrating their respective holy sites, either through allegedly intrusive excavations or construction.²³⁶ Two of Islam’s holiest sites, the Dome of the Rock and the adjacent al Aqsa Mosque, sit atop Judaism’s revered Temple Mount, while the Wailing Wall forms one segment of the Mount and is literally within stone-throwing distance of the mosque above it. Muslims at the mosque have taken advantage of this fact after Friday prayers several times, prompting strong responses from Israeli police forces. When Sharon visited the Mount, Palestinian Muslims reacted violently, initiating a response-revenge cycle that would last for several years. This narrative is more consistent with the “righteous underdog v. wicked hegemon” paradigm, so facts and statements indicating otherwise—such as those cited above—rarely get noticed or incorporated into popular analysis. That is, contradicting memes are incongruent with the favored narrative memeplex and therefore go unabsorbed. It is probable, however, that

²³⁴ Muravchik, 11.

²³⁵ Muravchik, 12.

²³⁶ Greg Myre and Jon Elsen, “Clashes at disputed Jerusalem holy site,” *International Herald Tribune*, online ed., 9 February 2007, URL: <<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/02/09/news/web.0209mideastC.php>>, accessed 19 June 2007.

the riots would have dissipated without intense incitement by the Palestinian Authority, the fabrication of Muhammad al Dura's death, and the (un)witting assistance of Western journalists. This topic is discussed further in the next chapter.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND—LEBANON/LEBANESE HEZBOLLAH

Lebanon gained its independence from France in 1943. At the time of the French withdrawal, the Maronite Christians had the ear of the French authorities and used their influence to ensure the creation of a constitution favorable to Christian interests. The Maronites represented approximately 30 percent of the Lebanese population, the Sunni Muslims 20 percent. Together these two sects effectively controlled Lebanese politics for decades, perpetually occupying the posts of president and prime minister respectively. Additionally, the parliament's seats were doled out according to the Lebanese sects' relative proportions detailed in a 1932 census. The Maronites and Sunnis retained their executive offices and increasingly disproportionate power in the parliament as the country's demographics shifted. Lebanon's minorities, in turn, most notably the Druze and the Shiite Muslims, remained unable to address their concerns through representation. The inflexible power-sharing arrangement between the dominant sects led to a minority sense of disenfranchisement and set the fundamental conditions for civil war decades later.²³⁷

The inflexible power-sharing arrangement, however, did not drive the country to war by itself. A number of factors exacerbated the situation, the most prominent being

²³⁷ Michael Mullany, "Stability Without Peace: Lebanon's Violent Compromises," *Harvard International Review* 13, no. 3 (1991).

the introduction of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and the activities of their patron organization, the PLO, in the 1970s. The original refugees found their way into southern Lebanon in 1948 during the Israeli War of Independence. Like the Palestinians refugees in other countries, many left their homes for short-term safety, believing the war would be quick and that the combined Arab armies would soon defeat the Israelis.

As in Syria and Jordan, the masses of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon reluctantly put down roots. These settlements, administered by the United Nations Works and Relief Agency, more closely resemble permanent, albeit relatively poor cities that nonetheless have functioning electric power grids, as well as markets, concrete structures, and swelling populations now in their third generation since 1948. The refugees, by virtue of their numbers and presence, put immense demographic and political stress on their respective host nations, particularly so in Lebanon, where sectarian strife was already tense. After a failed PLO coup attempt against King Hussein of Jordan and the group's subsequent exile, the organization began moving all its anti-Israeli operations to Lebanon in the early 1970s. Michael Mullany explains that most Maronites opposed the PLO presence in part because the local Sunnis intended to use it for more political leverage. Although the Maronites and Sunnis once agreed to ignore the PLO presence, Israel began forcefully reacting to the Lebanon-based operations, driving indigenous inhabitants from the South. The migrants provided new recruits for Druze, Shiite, and leftist anti-government organizations, further complicating the situation.²³⁸ Mullany notes that

continuing attacks led to a growing polarization between the main Maronite groups which still wanted to use the Lebanese army to crush the PLO and the Sunnis who wanted the army to support it. A third party, a leftist alliance of Maronites, Druze and Shi'ites, wanted the government to support the PLO, but it also wanted to abolish the sectarian principles on which the state was based. This

²³⁸ Mullany, 4

threatened to undermine the bases of power of both the Sunni and Maronite elites. This clash of positions eventually precipitated the first round of the civil war, in which the PLO joined the leftist alliance.²³⁹

Fearing Israeli involvement, Syria intervened in 1976 to aid the Maronites and succeeded in temporarily quelling the violence, but it did not disarm the involved militias and did not crush the PLO as the Christians desired. Syria remained as Lebanon's patron state for nearly thirty years.²⁴⁰

The PLO started attacking Israel from southern Lebanon as early as 1968. Israel had already conducted several counter-raids when it launched the first invasion of Lebanon in 1978. The UN passed Resolution 425, which both demanded an Israeli withdrawal and created the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

UNIFIL was created by the Security Council in 1978 to confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist the Lebanese Government in restoring its effective authority in the area.²⁴¹

Although UNIFIL is still present, the original endeavor largely failed—UNIFIL was neither able to confirm a complete Israeli withdrawal nor establish enough order in the south to preclude militant PLO activities. Israel, in fact, continued to exert influence along the southern border through the newly created South Lebanese Army, a militia comprised of approximately equal numbers of Lebanese Shiites and Christians.²⁴²

Continued PLO attacks against northern Israel and the confluence of hawkish minds in the Israeli cabinet led to the massive 1982 invasion. This large-scale operation created a new Arab-Israeli order and generated an array of unforeseen long-term security

²³⁹ Mullany, 5

²⁴⁰ Hala Jabar, *Hezbollah: Born With a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 11.

²⁴¹ United Nations, *United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon*, URL: <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unifil/>>, accessed 24 September 2006.

²⁴² Jabar, 13. See also "South Lebanese Army (SLA)," *GlobalSecurity.org*, URL: <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/sla.htm>>, accessed 30 June 2007.

problems. Committing approximately 80,000 troops, Israel poured across the border to achieve several objectives. Then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon intended to destroy the PLO and, by extension, choke off any nascent resistance in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. He additionally sought to remove Syrian military influence in Lebanon and install a friendly Christian government with which Israel could sign a comprehensive peace treaty.²⁴³ This became known as “the Big Plan.”²⁴⁴ Although Israel failed to achieve most objectives and did not destroy the PLO, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) did temporarily drive the organization’s leadership out of Lebanon to Tunisia. The PLO managed to conduct some limited activities from Lebanon after the invasion, but never at the intensity of pre-war levels.

During the initial phases of that invasion, Israel enjoyed tentative support from the Shiite majority in the south, which had begun to resent the longstanding, disruptive Palestinian presence.

The PLO had become a state-within-a-state in South Lebanon and its officials were accused of rape, robbery and extortion.... The weariness of the southerners from the years of suffering under their Palestinian masters was reflected in their show of welcome and gratitude to those who had freed them of their tormentors.²⁴⁵

The euphoria of liberation waned quickly, however. As Lieutenant General David Petraeus once observed, “...every Army of liberation has a half-life beyond which it turns into an Army of occupation.”²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 157-158.

²⁴⁴ Shai Feldman and Heda Rechnitz-Kijner, *Deception, Consensus and War: Israel in Lebanon*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 21.

²⁴⁵ Jabar, 14.

²⁴⁶ David H. Petraeus, Lieutenant General, USA, “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq,” *U.S. Army Military Review* (January-February 2006), URL:

Shiite anti-Israeli violence began small and did not appear to fall under the direction of one particular organization. Hala Jabar states

Initially it was a limited number of people engaging in small-scale protests, from boycotting the Israeli products which had poured into the Lebanese markets to attacking the homes of Lebanese collaborators and planting home-made roadside bombs against the Israeli patrols.... It was a spontaneous movement which had been started by a minority of civilians, motivated by a sense of nationalism....²⁴⁷

As the IDF “tightened the noose” to choke out resistance, the Israelis made several key and unrecoverable errors that motivated Shiite militancy (pushed more fuel into the combustion chamber), not the least of which was allowing an allied Lebanese militia to kill 800-1000 Palestinians, as well as some Lebanese Shiites, in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.²⁴⁸ In another incident widely regarded as the turning point for the occupation in 1983, an Israeli convoy foolishly attempted to drive through thousands of worshipers during an Ashura festival in Nabatiyeh. Angered Shiites reacted violently, barricaded the convoy, overturned a vehicle and lit it on fire. Feeling threatened, the trapped soldiers called for reinforcements, killed two Shiites and injured fifteen.²⁴⁹

Thus, resistance to the occupation had already begun when Hezbollah, or “Party of God” officially announced its existence in 1985.²⁵⁰ In fact, Hezbollah’s own roots reach back to the turbulence of the mid 1970s when it existed as part of an organization called Amal. Founded by Musa Sadr, Amal was the first significant Shiite militia and

<http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume4/april_2006/4_06_2_pf.html>, accessed 23 September 2006.

²⁴⁷ Jabar, 17-18.

²⁴⁸ The Christian Phalangist militia was an Israeli ally during the invasion. The Phalangists, enemies of the PLO, entered the two refugee camps ostensibly to root out remaining PLO fighters. According to Friedman, the IDF provided cover for the operation, but did not intervene when it became clear it had degenerated into a bloodbath. The massacres badly stained the reputation of Ariel Sharon, who was Minister of Defense at the time. He has since become known among Arabs as “the Butcher.” See Thomas Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 157-163.

²⁴⁹ Jabar, 18. See also Carl Anthony Wege, “Hizbollah Organization,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 17, no. 2, (Apr-Jun 1994): 154. Cited hereafter as Wege.

²⁵⁰ Jabar, 19

was involved in the initial round of fighting during the civil war. Carl Anthony Wege writes,

Musa Sadr's Amal was the seedbed for the Party of God. Although Amal's political program was reformist and secular rather than Islamic, its members would constitute many initial Hizbollah cadres.²⁵¹

The Islamic flavor in the organization intensified, a natural consequence of its many connections to exiled Iranian clerics. After the 1979 Iranian revolution, thousands of Iranian "Pasdaran" resided in the Bekaa Valley where, having trained with the PLO, they stood ready to assist with the Shiite struggle against Israel. The Syrians permitted and assisted this activity in part because it ensured freedom of movement for their own conventional forces in Lebanon. It was in this context that "Islamic Amal," or Hezbollah, was born.²⁵²

MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR ARAB-MUSLIM ANTI-ZIONISTS

It goes without question that Zionism, Jewish immigration to Palestine, and the wars of 1948 and 1967 are the most visible motivating factors in the conflict. It is equally clear that with each successive event the Jews increased their power, and the Arab world writ large felt the increasing sting of humiliation. All things being equal, this would chafe individuals from most cultures and perhaps even drive them toward violent resistance. Not all things are equal, however. The Palestinian and larger Arab refusal to recognize Israel's existence, or accept the early Jewish settlers for that matter, stemmed as much from deep-seeded cultural and religious factors as it did from more universal

²⁵¹ Wege, 154.

²⁵² Wege, 154.

motivations. In essence, the Arab-Israeli conflict is deeper than a secular, political or military conflict, which is how it has been traditionally framed. It is true that the Arab resistance stemmed in part from a fear of economic and political domination, but this fails to capture the true essence and genesis of this intractable struggle.

Indeed, for most Arabs, the principal cause of this conflict is cultural rather than political and economic, and the most cogent arguments point to a deep and abiding fear of domination by Jews. Large increases in immigrant populations often, if not always, increase tension with indigenous populations—whatever the material benefits—but deeply engrained, nearly archetypal, religious, cultural, and historical constructs augment this dynamic in the Arab-Israeli case. The combination of natural antipathy towards newcomers and the hostile, religious imperative rendered Palestinian Arabs unwilling to accept any material benefits to the Jewish presence. The 1937 Palestine Royal Commission Report noted some of those benefits (see above). Yet the memes and memplexes discussed in chapter five demand Jews and other dhimmi be subdued and dominated by Islam, particularly in lands viewed as Islamic. By example of the prophet, the Koran, and the Hadith, Jews are necessarily inferior and can only exist in Islamic holy lands at the pleasure of the Muslims. For Muslims, it must have been a jarring, humiliating experience to have this construct, which endured for well over a millennium, reversed within the space of a few decades. Demographic changes and Jewish military victories upset the sensibilities of Arab-Muslim historical propriety. Their honor-shame culture exacerbated the subsequent sense of having been wronged, and the combination of it all led to the formation of a Palestinian identity based almost entirely on opposition to Zionism—not Egyptian or Jordanian occupation. The combination of honor-shame

culture and the proclivity for incitement to violence in particular continues to assist identity entrepreneurs in the maintenance of their violent ideologies.

Even the so-called “secular” groups were born in a decidedly Muslim framework. It pervades Arab-Muslim thought and feeling in a way many Western analysts fail to grasp. Quick to focus on the legitimately secular aspects of groups like Fatah and the PLO, as well as the universal motivating factors of demography and military occupation, Western analysts are often too quick in dismissing the effect of piety in a highly religious, historically conscious society. As mentioned in chapter two, for instance, Arafat has often been called a secular leader, yet he employed religious ideological tools.²⁵³ If the relatively secular nationalist and communist trends of the 1950s and 60s diluted the Islamic character of resistance, those competing memplexes could not last long in light of the remarkable, self-protective strength of Islam. During the late 1970s, for reasons that may be debated, Islamism resurged and now poses the primary memetic threat to both secular Arab regimes and Western entities. Many historians point to the repeated failures of pan-Arab nationalists to deliver on their promises as the driving factor. None of them were able to cow Israel into submission, those lacking oil wealth struggled to increase their citizens’ living standards, and prospects for Arab unity—to say nothing of a return to glory—appeared more distant with each successive generation. Historians consequently mark 1979 and the Iranian revolution as the turning point.

Though it originated in a non-Arab environment—Persian and Shiite no less—the Iranian revolution appears to have influenced and fostered the growth of other Islamist movements, including Lebanese Hezbollah. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, successfully repelled by celebrated Sunni-Arab jihadists, gave new life to Sunni Islamism

²⁵³ Rubin, 6.

when those fighters returned to their respective homes, intoxicated by success. Rather than relieving the stress of a perceived siege on Islam, identity entrepreneurs like bin Laden successfully reinvested the energy obtained from that victory into other struggles. In the Palestinian territories during the 1980s, the PLO existed but its leadership lived in exile. Hamas, born of the 1987 intifada, took advantage of the PLO's absence, providing a relatively "pure" Islamic alternative to the failed secular organizations. Hamas' rise to power is but one manifestation of a region-wide phenomenon—the entire discourse of resistance once again lies with Islam. Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela concur:

The revival of Islam as a collective cultural and political force and its return to the center of the public stage were relatively rapid, *not least because the secular political discourse itself had drawn heavily on Islamic symbols and terminology*, reflecting Islam's primacy in the social and cultural life of the Arab Muslim peoples.²⁵⁴ [italic emphasis added]

IDEOLOGIES

PLO

Because the Arab-Muslim resistance to Zionism was born of a cultural and religious framework, the PLO's relatively secular ideology betrays this (if indeed there is an articulated ideology). Using the 1964 and 1968 Palestine National Covenants (it was revised in 1968 with Arafat's ascension) as starting points, one can easily find references to the glory of martyrs and the quest of jihad, in addition to the pan-Arabist values favored by Nasserites. For instance, the preamble states, "We, the Palestinian Arab people, who waged fierce and continuous battles to safeguard its homeland, to defend its

²⁵⁴ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 28.

dignity and honor, and who offered all through the years *continuous caravans of immortal martyrs*, and who wrote the noblest pages of sacrifice, offering and giving [italic emphasis added].”²⁵⁵ It goes on, “We, the Palestinian Arab people, who believe in its Arabism and in its right to regain its homeland... move forward on the path of holy war (al jihad) until complete and final victory has been attained.”²⁵⁶

The charter appears well-enough designed, however, to attract several types of adherents, including those professing pan-Arabist and communist ideologies. Several articles are sufficiently vague to be interpreted as jihadist, communist, Arabist, or all three. Article nine of the 1964 charter, for instance, states, “Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. Thus it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase.” Indeed, Arafat himself once stated, “It is the commandos who will decide the future.”²⁵⁷ This concept parallels both Karl Marx’s notion that class revolution is both inevitable and violent, while numerous Hadith and Koranic verses exhort Muslims to wage jihad, particularly against unjust oppression suffered by other Muslims. According to the faith, jihad is a duty incumbent on every Muslim. Article 15 of the same charter reflects this, adding nationalist and communist elements:

The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national (qawmi) duty and it attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine. Absolute responsibility for this falls upon the Arab nation—peoples and governments—with the Arab people of Palestine in the vanguard.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Palestinian Liberation Organization, *Palestinian National Covenant*, 1968, URL: <<http://www.un.int/palestine/PLO/PNA2.html>>, accessed 30 April 2007.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Rubin, 19.

²⁵⁸ The Palestinian Liberation Organization, *Palestine National Covenant: June 1964*, in *Arab-Israeli Conflict and Conciliation: A Documentary History*. ed. Bernard Reich (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 95.

The charter is not entirely clear about the equality or inequality of religions, however. The exhortations to jihad allude to the historical primacy of Islam, but pan-Arabism was a nationalistic movement meant to appeal to Christian Arabs as well.

Article 16 states that:

...from a spiritual point of view, [the liberation] will provide the Holy Land with an atmosphere of safety and tranquility, which in turn will safeguard the country's religious sanctuaries and guarantee freedom of worship and visit to all, without discrimination of race, color, language, or religion....²⁵⁹

In several places in the charter, the PLO calls for the assistance of outside “peace loving” parties to combat the “racist, fanatic, aggressive, expansionist, colonialist, illegitimate, and threatening” ideology of Zionism. The charter’s crafters were quite careful to avoid verbally targeting Jews writ large. Presumably in order to evade appearing racist itself and therefore alienating potential international supporters, the PLO attempted to force a wedge between Zionism as a movement and Jews as individuals. It should be noted, however, there is a wealth of material meant only for Arab audiences that is unequivocally indiscriminant, anti-Semitic, vitriolic, and frankly, bloodthirsty. Although it is not part of the official PLO charter or doctrine, this is material commonly propagated by Palestinian authorities and appears to be used for ensuring continuing support in the conflict with Israel. This is discussed more in the following chapter under the section of “For Arab-Muslim Eyes Only.”

Going back to Article 15, note the term “imperialist.” It reflects the view of both pan-Arabists and communists that Zionism amounts to more than a new Crusade. For the communists, Zionism is a manifestation of capitalistic imperialism, while the pan-Arabists were offended by both this and the violation of conceived Arab sovereignty over

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

Palestine. Nasser stated in 1967 that the Arab world faced three interlinked enemies: U.S. imperialism, Zionism, and conservative Arab regimes.²⁶⁰ He described them as “the advocates of counter-revolution against all aspirations to liberty, progress and welfare... in the whole of the Third World.”

Although Arafat claimed to heed no ideology and once stated, “We do not have any ideology,” he did believe in the concept of Israel as an imperialist satellite state. Focusing on action and the model of Algeria, Arafat and others concluded Israel could be cut off from its patron state (believed to be the U.S.) and subsequently choked to death. Succinctly describing the confused nature of Arafat, and by extension, the PLO, Rubin described the revolutionary as a “centrist nationalist in his relative indifference to class struggle or Marxism-Leninism but was otherwise quite radical.” It is interesting to note that, despite the lack of a well-articulated ideology, the PLO achieved at least some of its success by pulling on the more successful, pre-established communist and Islamic memes in other ideologies.

Hamas

Hamas is an Islamist, terrorist, guerilla, and humanitarian resistance organization deriving substantial popular support from its public works. Matthew Levitt, a U.S. Treasury Department analyst, stresses that Hamas is a single entity with a military *raison d'être*, but it gains influence and recruits through well-developed welfare and political elements. Hamas traces its own lineage back to that of the well-respected Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. It seeks Israel's destruction and the establishment of an Islamic government in its place. Notably, it does not appear to align particularly well with al

²⁶⁰ Rubin, 12.

Qaida's chosen path. The latter seeks a global Islamic transformation, while the former confines its efforts, for the time being, to Palestine. Hamas' current "participation" in an otherwise non-Islamic government has compounded ideological differences, but al Qaida has expressed its solidarity with Hamas nonetheless.²⁶¹

Regardless of the extent of the PLO's Islamic roots, Hamas' religious character cannot be disputed. The first article of the Hamas charter, under "Ideological Origins," unequivocally states, "The basis of the Islamic Resistance Movement is Islam. From Islam it derives its ideas and its fundamental precepts and view of life, the universe, and humanity; and it judges all its actions according to Islam and is inspired by Islam to correct its errors."²⁶² The entire document is filled with exhortations to the faith: "Allah is [the Hamas] target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes."²⁶³ The charter calls on the individual Muslim's sense of communal obligation, stating several times in different ways, "the liberation [of Palestine] is an individual duty, binding on every Muslim wherever he may be.... Once the enemies usurp some of the Muslim lands, Jihad becomes an individual obligation for every Muslim." The charter's crafters interspersed numerous Koranic verses and Hadith throughout the document to drive home the legitimacy of their objectives and methodology.

There is, of course, the requisite refrain calling for Israel's destruction, in this case as a quote from the Muslim Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al Banna, "Israel will be

²⁶¹ Karen DeYoung, "Al-Qaeda, Seeking New Sway, Urges Muslims to Aid Hamas," *The Washington Post*, 26 June 2006, A15.

²⁶² Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 177.

²⁶³ Matthew Levitt, *HAMAS: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 8.

established and will stay established until Islam nullifies it as it nullified what was before it [alternate translations supplant ‘destroy’ and ‘obliterate’ for ‘nullify’].” The charter also makes use of a particularly popular Hadith related by Bukhari:

The Day of Judgment will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only the Gharkad tree, would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews."²⁶⁴

In a manner reminiscent of Arafat’s views, the Hamas charter requires force to implement its Islamic objectives. Rejecting peaceful initiatives, it states:

...giving up any part of Palestine is tantamount to giving up part of its religion,” thus, the “[Peace] initiatives, the so-called peaceful solutions, and international conferences to resolve the Palestinian problem all contradict the beliefs of the Islamic Resistance Movement.... There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad.

The charter also makes use of standard Nazi-Zionist parallels, and frames the conflict in deeply historical terms, not failing to invoke the collective memory of the Crusades.

Hezbollah

Like Hamas, the organization is a guerilla, terrorist, Islamist, and humanitarian entity. It was originally dedicated to Israel’s expulsion from southern Lebanon, in addition to the eventual destruction it emphasizes today. Hezbollah also seeks to found an Islamic state in Lebanon, presumably through democratic means, but its ideology rests firmly on the principles of Islam and jihad.

As for our culture, it is based on the Holy Koran, the Sunna and the legal rulings of the *faqih* who is our source of imitation (*marja’ al-taqlid*). Our culture is crystal clear. It is not complicated and is accessible to all. No one can imagine the importance of *our military potential as our military apparatus is not separate*

²⁶⁴ Hamas, *Hamas Covenant 1988*, at *The Avalon Project at Yale Law School*, URL: <<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm>>, accessed 20 June 2007.

from our overall social fabric. Each of us is a fighting soldier. And when it becomes necessary to carry out the Holy War, each of us takes up his assignment in the fight in accordance with the injunctions of the Law.²⁶⁵ [*italic emphasis added*]

Like other Islamist organizations, Hezbollah draws attention to the Islamic memes invoking the collective defense, and it forcefully acknowledges the vital military contribution of all Muslim society. Exhortations to war contribution can also be found in Western societies, of course, but such exhortations tend to be geared for specific and finite conflicts. Although Western identity entrepreneurs have used religion to leverage their constituents in violent times, they do not enjoy the benefit of a permanent, codified, universal, religious call to war that Muslim entrepreneurs do.

One notable dissimilarity between Shiite and Sunni resistance groups echoes a larger difference between the two Islamic sects. Shiite groups like Hezbollah follow the dictates of living jurists, who may continue to interpret Islamic legal tradition and, according to some, may institute clerical rule. Shiites typically choose one cleric's interpretations and stick with that individual for life. Sunnis rely more on chains of authenticity and precedent, as the "gates of *ijtihad*" were closed hundreds of years ago when philosophers and jurists determined Koranic exegesis had been exhausted (see chapter five under "What to Keep in Mind"). Sunnis also tend to distinguish clerical rulings from administrative (government) rulers, even if the latter must adhere to Islamic principles and defend the faith.

Although Israel withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000, the organization continues its military campaign, as the "struggle will end only when [the Zionist] entity is

²⁶⁵ Hezbollah, *An Open Letter, the Hizballah Program*, at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya: Institute for Counter-Terrorism, URL: <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/Hiz_letter.htm>, accessed 30 October 2006.

obliterated.”²⁶⁶ It has increased emphasis on solidarity with the Palestinians, and claims Israel has yet to completely withdraw from Lebanese territory (see the previous reference to this new Lebanese claim on the Shebaa Farms). In any conflict where there is a perceived downtrodden mass of Muslims, particularly Shiite Muslims, Hezbollah will offer at least its moral support. Much of the organization’s rhetoric rests on the identity it has skillfully created as champion of oppressed.

CONCLUSION

The Arab-Israeli conflict typically has been pitched as one stemming from military, political, and demographic factors. It is my contention that while those factors do play a part in the genesis of violence, in this case, the conflict stems primarily from religious and cultural factors that are incongruent with contemporary political and military realities facing Palestinians. The long-term deprivation experienced by Palestinian society and the continued success of violent ideologies are at least partially explainable by cognitive dissonance, which serves to devalue the fact of suffering and call on those memes emphasizing honor, shame and jihad. Moreover, those memes were not introduced recently; they are deep-seeded and firmly embedded the memeplexes of Arab culture and Islam. Their existence and depth help explain Arafat’s refusal to accept any Israeli proposal or even submit one of his own at the 2000 Camp David summit, Hezbollah’s insistence on continuing its struggle after the Israeli withdrawal, and the resurgence of Islamism and Hamas in the wake of “secular” ideological failures. Indeed, the Jordanian and Egyptian occupations of the West Bank and Gaza before 1967 did

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

little, if anything, to spur Palestinian nationalism. Palestinian national identity was born of the humiliating fact of occupation and domination by Jews.

CHAPTER 7

THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT: DECEPTION, ADVOCACY, AND VIOLENT IDENTITY FORMATION

The asymmetrical situation has important effects on propaganda. The insurgent, having no responsibility, is free to use every trick; if necessary, he can lie, cheat, exaggerate. He is not obliged to prove; he is judged by what he promises, not by what he does. –David Galula²⁶⁷

The previous chapter provided a brief history of the Arab-Israeli conflict relevant to Lebanese and Palestinian militants. It then suggested some operative cultural and religious memes for Arab-Muslims in this conflict, demonstrating that they can and have contributed to the genesis of violent ideology. This chapter examines cognitive warfare from an operational and tactical perspective, demonstrating through key examples how identity entrepreneurs maintain their ideological momentum to ensure local and moral support, and nullify their enemies' military superiority through the cognitive offensive.

Both the ideological engine and the cognitive offensive require deft perception management, that is, the creation or reinforcement of favorable memes and memplexes that represent “reality” to the meme-bearer. Cognitive warfare is, in fact, predicated on the warrior's ability to transform realities as reflected in discourses, social environments, and ultimately, political and military policies. This chapter attempts to illustrate that

²⁶⁷ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 14.

jihadists have done this to some extent by skillfully employing the powerful cultural asset of *taqiyya* against the western assumption of honesty, and, with messages carefully crafted to align with Western memplexes, penetrated and transformed the accepted Western discourse (see chapter four, “The Accepted Discourse in Greater Context”). There are several media in which cognitive warriors achieve this, but the most prominent and perhaps powerful is “*the media*,” traditionally understood as radio, television, and newspapers owned by commercial entities and staffed by professional journalists. While also relevant, this chapter does not explore in greater detail the growing influence and balancing role of the internet and the “blogosphere,” nor does it consider means of information dispersal such as leaflets, loudspeakers, or other methods often associated with PSYOP. Suffice it to say these all constitute powerful tools if used properly by cognitive warriors, but in the longest view, *the media* defines the discourse.

Readers familiar with psychological operations may determine that the operational elements of cognitive warfare demonstrated here differ little from doctrinal PSYOP. In fact, PSYOP is the most operational and tactical manifestation of cognitive warfare. This thesis, however, attempts to demonstrate that cognitive warfare reaches far beyond the science of psychological operations. Good PSYOP will incorporate culture and religion, to be sure, but like information operations in general, PSYOP has traditionally been confined to the time and space of the battlefield, certainly it has not been waged at a civilizational level. Cognitive war, as waged by jihadists, may not have a definite end or beginning—there may be no distinction between war and peace as the West understands them. This chapter, read in the context of the models described in chapter three, and the social imperatives described in chapter four, should demonstrate

that jihadists have used “PSYOP” to cultivate much greater phenomena embedded deep within each society’s fabric.

PALLYWOOD-HEZBOLLYWOOD

It was apparent to Raanan Gissin, former Primer Minister Ariel Sharon’s strategic advisor, that the Palestinians recognized the power of media control at least as early as 1982. Before being expelled from Lebanon, the PLO requested the return of two media vans the Israelis captured during the invasion.²⁶⁸ The IDF kept the vans, but Palestinian militants continued developing their media capability, particularly under the PA’s auspices during the last ten years. Today, PA TV provides a powerful tool for whipping constituents into a fervor when identity entrepreneurs require violence or increased ideological momentum. Indeed, any terrorist worth his salt will recognize the central role of publicity and the media. As Brigitte Nacos notes, “...publicity—far more than financial resources—is as essential for terrorists as the air they breathe.”²⁶⁹ Hezbollah’s al Manar television station represents a sophisticated and evolved form of perception management directed to both local and international audiences.²⁷⁰ Avi Jorisch maintains that Hezbollah uses it to incite hatred and conflict with Israel, thereby ensuring the group’s continued relevance and funding streams. At the local level, this activity maintains the requisite amount of “fuel” in the combustion chamber for ideological

²⁶⁸ Raanan Gissin, Strategic Advisor to Ariel Sharon, interviewed by the author, December 2006. Cited hereafter as Gissin.

²⁶⁹ Brigitte L. Nacos, *Mass Mediated Terrorism: The Central Role of the Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 193.

²⁷⁰ Avi Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizballah’s al-Manar Television* (Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004).

continuance; it is essentially the ideological memeplexe's most useful organ for survival and replication. Gabriel Weimann's *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges* highlights the immense and increasing power of the internet, now used by virtually all jihadist organizations to incite, recruit, and disseminate ideology.²⁷¹ The new technology allows terrorists for the first time to control the content of messages and their means of dissemination.

Message control, however, is neither limited to webpages nor confined to hardware owned by the propagator. Professor Richard Landes of Boston University has devoted the past several years to exploring the extent of a phenomenon known as "Pallywood." The term "Pallywood" plays on the term "Bollywood," the thriving Indian film industry rivaling Hollywood. Rather than producing romance, dance and drama films, however, Pallywood creates fictional incidents passed off to local and international news networks as real—invariably having "exposed" the IDF's excesses, abuses, and suppression of a righteous Palestinian minority. The Palestinians themselves usually set up and film the incidents, while mainstream news outlets such as France 2, the BBC, CNN, CBS, and al Jazeera contribute by neglecting to verify the material's credibility. Instead they proliferate the images, usually without criticism and often without the necessary context.

Landes' exposé on Pallywood demonstrates that many of the most ubiquitous clips broadcast during the al Aqsa intifada were partially staged or entirely faked, not the least of which was Muhammad al Dura's death, discussed below. In other instances, he uncovered extensive, unedited footage showing on-site directors controlling the "set,"

²⁷¹ Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2006).

individuals faking gunshot wounds, carefully staged “battles” in which the Palestinians fought non-existent IDF elements, and ambulances arriving in suspiciously short response times.²⁷² On several occasions, when the IDF had employed tear gas against rioters, the PLO accused it of waging chemical warfare against Palestinian civilians. The organization pulled on the world’s memory of Nazi gas chambers and manipulated or fabricated images of “victims” on stretchers, waving towels etc. Similarly, Western media were quick to pick up and disseminate false stories of Israeli soldiers massacring Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp during the April 2002 battle, when Palestinians had excavated cemeteries and lined up bodies for photographs.²⁷³ In footage acquired by an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle, Palestinian pallbearers drop a “corpse” several times which dutifully climbs back in for more dramatic attempts.²⁷⁴

These particular bits of staging, combined with many Palestinian “eye witness” accounts of horrific, IDF-perpetrated mass murder, succeeding in bringing enormous anti-Israel derision to bear in the world press. The UK Guardian equated Israel’s offensive in Jenin to the 9/11 attacks on New York, while the London’s Evening Standard stated, “We are talking here of massacre, and a cover-up, of genocide.” Janine di Giovanni of the London Times claimed, “Rarely in more than a decade of war reporting from Bosnia, Chechnya, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, have I seen such deliberate destruction, such disrespect for human life.”²⁷⁵ Philip Reeves of *The Independent* echoed these journalists’ conclusions, writing that “a monstrous war crime that Israel has tried to

²⁷² *Pallywood*, directed and narrated by Richard Landes, The Second Draft, 2006, viewed online, URL: <<http://www.seconddraft.org/movies.php>>, accessed 25 June 2007.

²⁷³ Roni Kitri, Brigadier General (Ret.), former IDF Spokesman, former Head of Central Intelligence School, interview by the author, 14 December 2006.

²⁷⁴ “IDF: Tape shows Palestinians faked funeral,” *CNN.com*, 3 May 2002, URL: <<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/05/03/jenin.tape/index.html>>, accessed 21 June 2007.

²⁷⁵ “U.N. Reporting on Jenin,” *Honestreporting.com*, 2002, URL: <http://www.aish.com/jewishissues/mediaobjectivity/UN_Report_on_Jenin.asp>, accessed 30 May 2008.

cover up for a fortnight has finally been exposed.” Although that article indicates Reeves himself saw only two bodies in the midst of acres of rubble, he relies heavily on the word of Palestinians who showed him where hundreds of bodies were allegedly hidden.

The sweet and ghastly reek of rotting human bodies is everywhere, evidence that it is a human tomb. The people, who spent days hiding in basements crowded into single rooms as the rockets pounded in, say there are hundreds of corpses, entombed beneath the dust, under a field of debris, criss-crossed with tank and bulldozer treadmarks.²⁷⁶

In the end, it was discovered that the Jenin Massacre was fiction. According to the U.N. the number of Palestinian dead totaled 54, although Human Rights Watch, a group whose anti-Israel disposition will be discussed later, confirmed only 22 dead.²⁷⁷ The memetic damage to Israel’s reputation had been done, however. As the sacred status of the Muhammad al Dura narrative continues to demonstrate, some accusations are much easier to levy than recover from.

Muhammad al Dura

On 30 September 2000, just three days after the beginning of the al Aqsa riots, most elements of the mainstream media (MSM) treated their audiences to a powerful image: that of a 12 year old Palestinian boy, held in his father’s arms as they both hunkered for cover behind a barrel, apparently shot and killed. The 10-20 second video,

²⁷⁶ Phil Reeves, “Amid the ruins of Jenin, the grisly evidence of a war crime,” *The Independent*, 16 April 2002, URL: <<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/51a/038.html>>, accessed 30 May 2008.

²⁷⁷ Matt Rees, “The Battle of Jenin,” *Time*, undated, URL: <<http://www.time.com/time/2002/jenin/story.html>>, accessed 30 May 2008. According to Rees, “Charles Kapes, the deputy chief of the U.N. office in the camp, says 54 dead have been pulled from the wreckage and 49 Palestinians are missing, of whom 18 are residents of the camp. Human Rights Watch says 52 were killed, of whom only 27 were thought to be armed Palestinians. The Israelis say they found 46 dead in the rubble, including a pile of five bodies that had been booby-trapped. Of these 46, say the Israelis, all but three were ‘fighters,’ men ages 18 to 40. The Jenin Hospital, meanwhile, says 52 camp residents died, including five women and four children under the age of 15. Of the 43 dead men, eight were 55 or older and therefore probably not involved in the fighting. No matter whose figures one accepts, ‘there was no massacre,’ concludes Amnesty’s Holley. That said, Jenin was awful; all wars are. The Israelis themselves lost 23 men, and an additional 75 were wounded.

as the world saw it, framed only the boy and his father. There were no background or contextual images, but this mattered little given the emotional force of the image. As Stephanie Gutmann explains,

...almost immediately the international media reported the story as if were clear that the Israeli Defense Force troops had shot the two, either deliberately or accidentally as a result of what a consortium of aid groups that called for an investigation termed ‘the widespread use of weapons by the security forces in Israel and the territories.’²⁷⁸

Palestinian media spliced into the al Dura footage an otherwise unrelated image of an IDF soldier firing his weapon, and continuously aired it as the riots spread (several other Pallywood productions have used this technique of splicing stock footage into current footage—an effective way to implicate IDF guilt whether it is deserved or not). The Western media aired the original footage, or described the footage, without questioning the content or the Palestinian cameraman’s account, indeed, repeating it verbatim or adding layers of anti-IDF scorn.²⁷⁹



Figure 14. The al Dura Meme

Source: International Action Center.org

Several investigators have since provided substantial evidence showing that the

²⁷⁸ Gutmann, 40.

²⁷⁹ France 2 correspondent Charles Enderlin narrated the original video based on his Palestinian cameraman’s account, stating, “...Jamal and his son Mohammed are the target of fire coming from the Israeli position. Mohammed is twelve years old. His father tries to protect him. He signals. But there is a new burst of fire. Mohammed is dead and his father is badly wounded.” See John Rosenthal, “The Al-Dura Defamation Case and the End of Free Speech,” *World Politics Review*, 3 November 2006, URL: <<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=312>>, accessed 26 June 2008. Enderlin’s account was disproven, his reputation tarnished, and the existence of Pallywood more widely exposed when Enderlin himself attempted (and failed) to sue a blogger for defamation. For highly demonstrative examples of added layers of anti-IDF scorn Gutmann, 50-56. See also Susan Goldenberg, “Israel washes its hands of boy’s death,” *The Guardian*, online ed., 28 November 2000, URL: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2000/nov/28/israel?commentpage=1>>, accessed 26 June 2008.

Palestinian cameraman, who has since received several awards, staged or faked the shooting, but the revelations were not timely enough for fast-paced Western media outlets, memetically congruent with the accepted discourse, or credible from the Arab perspective.²⁸⁰ Israel's image deteriorated overnight from that of a decidedly unrighteous aggressor to an even worse visage of a murderous, Nazi-like superpower.

The effect within the territories was profound. Landes calls it “the media equivalent of a nuclear bomb.”²⁸¹ As he explains in *Icon of Hatred*, the image helped turn the limited, ostensibly spontaneous riots into a violent struggle that lasted for years. If the ideological combustion chamber had enough fuel to sustain the engine's momentum, the iconic vision of al Dura's death injected the memetic equivalent of nitrous oxide. One man explained:

When we saw these pictures of Muhammad al Dura, we said that there was a radical change in the way the Jews considered us. We had never seen or imagined Israelis soldiers shooting at a child to kill him, and for forty minutes we thought that if you have no pity for Arab children, you are going to massacre us all.²⁸²

Twelve days after the al Dura incident, two IDF reservists driving through Ramallah accidentally encountered a funeral procession. Palestinian police forced them out of their car and took them to a station where an angry mob arrived shortly afterward. Reportedly overpowering the police, the crowd beat the reservists to death, badly mutilating the bodies while shouting al Dura's name, eventually dropping one out the second-story window. One member of the crowd waved his blood-covered hands proudly. Either as a consequence of, or simply in concert with al Dura's shooting, PA television perfected

²⁸⁰ *Icon of Hatred*, directed and narrated by Richard Landes, The Second Draft, 2007. Cited hereafter as *Icon of Hatred*. See also *Al Dura: What Happened?*, directed and narrated by Richard Landes, The Second Draft, 2006. See also *Pallywood*, directed and narrated by Richard Landes, The Second Draft, 2006. All available at URL: <<http://www.seconddraft.org/movies.php>>, accessed 25 June 2007.

²⁸¹ Richard Landes, Boston University Professor, interviewed by author, December 2006.

²⁸² *Icon of Hatred*.

programs designed to incite the Palestinian masses. Imams on television once again preached the well-known Hadith:

The resurrection will not take place until the Muslims fight the Jews and the Muslims kill them. The Muslims will kill the Jews, rejoice [in it], rejoice in Allah's victory. The Muslims will kill the Jews, and he will hide. The Prophet said, 'The Jews will hide behind the rock and tree, and the rock and tree will say, "Oh servant of Allah, of Muslim, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him!"'

Al Dura had become the cause célèbre, and in short order, would also become the center of what Landes calls an iconic industry. Paintings, busts, stamps, songs, music videos, posters, murals, and numerous other items have been produced in his honor, all perfect examples of virulent memetic reproduction and an ideological engine gaining speed. "He became the icon of the intifada for Palestinian TV and Arab TV," Landes states. "He became the subject of English lessons, of school rallies and songs. The results on children were rapid and terrifying." Suicide bombers often said their murderous acts were revenge for al Dura's death, and imams who had previously denounced the attacks began promoting them. Even children graduating from kindergarten painted their hands red, mimicking the Ramallah lynchings with admiration.

The effects were hardly limited to Israel, however. Protests erupted within the week in South Africa, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Brussels, Indonesia, London, France, Italy, the Netherlands, New York, Madrid, and Miami. There were processions of people dressed as suicide bombers and an immense amount of material equating Israel with Nazi Germany. "In Europe," Landes explains, "Western revolutionaries joined with immigrant Muslim populations to protest violently against the 'Zionist criminals,' shouting together, 'Death to the Jews! Kill the Jews! Sharon is a killer.' It was the beginning of a fateful marriage between revolution and jihad that resonated to the same

global cry of outrage.” A massive spike in global anti-Semitic attacks erupted in 2001 (discussed later in this chapter), and bin Laden released a recruiting video dwelling extensively on al Dura, using Pallywood footage. In the Durbin 2001 conference against racism, crowds carried al Dura’s effigy and posters with statements declaring Zionism “ethnic cleansing and racism.” Just four days after the Durbin conference, al Qaida conducted its attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. “Surely Durbin did not inspire [bin Laden] to this long planned and atrocious deed,” Landes states,

The ideology of death, incarnated in his attempt to kill thousands of Americans regardless of race or religion, as a blow for Muslim honor and vengeance, had grown at the margins of Islam and world opinion for over a generation, but it may well have given him the impression that, at the site of such devastation, the world would jump for joy at his mighty blow. And many did.”

Although there is no shortage of successful Pallywood material, the al Dura video pops out as a particularly influential piece. A large part of its success derived from the prevalence of the righteous underdog construct. Who, after all, could be more righteous than an unarmed child and what could be less moral than the powerful military that kills him? This image, as Landes effectively argues, resonated powerfully around the world. It likely confirmed and deepened the suspicions of those inclined to distrust Israel as it aligned perfectly with their previously-held world views, but given its brutal emotional impact, the video also may have pushed waffling individuals off the fence. With a nose or a toe in anti-Israel camp, the exhortations of organizations like Hamas, Fatah, and Hezbollah slowly begin to appear understandable, and the mission of propagandists becomes progressively easier. As Richard Brodie might say, such individuals become susceptible to other memes riding in on the al Dura Trojan horse. The mechanics of this effect are discussed in chapter three.

Qana

Hezbollah has developed its own industry, sometimes called “Hezbollywood” by Western web loggers (bloggers). The industry existed previously but gained significant momentum during the summer of 2006 when IDF-Hezbollah fighting peaked. There is one disputed incident in which the New York Times posted a series of images showing a man in multiple roles, both as rescuer and rescued. It should be noted that, in this case, the photographer gave a plausible explanation concerning an error in the photographs’ captions.²⁸³ However, there are many other now infamous examples of less defensible “errors,” including that of the ambulances the IDF allegedly destroyed which turned out to be pre-war junk. According to a vignette recounted by CNN reporter Anderson Cooper, Hezbollah grouped empty ambulances together, ostensibly awaiting civilian casualties. When the press arrived, the ambulances started their engines, drove off, and maneuvered back and forth with sirens blaring.²⁸⁴ There is also Adnan Hajj, a Reuters photographer exposed by independent bloggers for having manipulated several images that were prominently featured in the mainstream media (MSM). In one image he added the illusion of smoke to Beirut’s skyline for dramatic effect. In other instances, photographers set up clean teddy bears, Mickey Mouse dolls, and pacifiers in otherwise filthy rubble zones for dramatic effect; they also reused previously destroyed buildings multiple times as evidence of continuing, uninterrupted bombing campaigns; reused the same grieving woman multiple times in different settings, always wailing with pleading hands extended; and used photographs of a burning garbage dump, claiming an Israeli jet

²⁸³ Tyler Hicks, “Tyler Hicks: Lebanon Caption Controversy Wasn’t My Fault,” *Photo District News Online*, 4 October 2006, URL: <http://www.pdnonline.com/pdn/newswire/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003220382>, accessed 21 June 2007.

²⁸⁴ Anderson Cooper, *CNN*, untitled, undated, URL: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT5gDjg1coc>>, accessed 21 June 2007.

had been downed. One can also find common reference to a man bloggers endearingly call “Mr. Green Helmet.”²⁸⁵ This Lebanese man was caught staging and reusing child corpses for photographic opportunities in a number of different scenes, most notably at the alleged Qana massacre.

If Muhammad al Dura’s staged death did not drive the point hard enough, the internationally infamous incident at Qana, in Lebanon, surely demonstrated the very real power of fake images. On 30 July 2006, an Israeli airstrike targeting Katyusha rocket batteries collapsed a building and allegedly killed 28-54 civilians. Whereas international opinion initially appeared to favor Israel’s offensive against the organization, even if only tentatively, after Qana it overwhelmingly rejected the operation as “unjust” and “disproportionate.” French President Jacques Chirac denounced the alleged strike, stating, “France condemns this unjustifiable action, which shows more than ever the need to reach an immediate cease-fire.” The European Union declared that “Nothing can justify that,” and the “attack on the city of Qana means an escalation of violence that is unjustifiable at a time when the international community is jointly working to find a solution.” The Council on American-Islamic relations denounced Israel’s actions as “state terror,” and Spain issued its “deepest consternation and condemnation” of the

²⁸⁵ Richard North and Helen Szamuely, “Qana-the director’s cut,” *EU Referendum*, 5 August 2006, URL: <<http://eureferendum.blogspot.com/2006/08/qana-directors-cut.html>>, accessed 21 June 2007. See also Zombietime.com’s “A Taxonomy of Fraud: A comprehensive overview of the four types of photo fraud committed by Reuters,” *Zombietime.com*, August 2006, URL: <http://www.zombietime.com/reuters_photo_fraud/>, accessed 21 June 2007. It should be noted that most investigative bloggers and web-oriented watchdog organizations do not enjoy the credibility of mainstream outlets, such as Reuters, CNN, or AFP. Although there is an ongoing debate about blog bias and reliability, it can safely be said that blog quality varies wildly, and also that the industry is chipping away at the MSM’s relative influence in the public discourse. Some watchdog blogs have played important roles in exposing MSM misrepresentations, fabrications etc. Adnan Hajj, for instance, was fired from Reuters for discoveries made by bloggers, and several bloggers played key roles in the French court case that exposed Charles Enderlin’s unethical journalistic practices.

bombing.²⁸⁶ In fact, Israel suspended its aerial operations for 48 hours after the incident, and, as international criticism of Israel continued to gain momentum, it eventually withdrew from Lebanon under UN guidelines without having achieved its military objectives (what precisely those objectives were remains disputed). Mark Regev, lead spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalled,

When the Qana story broke, it was not just a military problem, not just a media problem, but a very real problem. Additionally, it wasn't just how to keep the pictures off TV, but how to not let the pictures dictate what was happening in the UN—they changed the entire dynamic, putting Israel on the immediate political defensive.²⁸⁷

Were it not for the powerful images of mangled, dust-covered, lifeless children being dragged out of the rubble, Israel might have remained in Lebanon long enough to deal Hezbollah a less recoverable blow.

Qana, which proved so devastating to the IDF's offensive momentum, has since become a disputed event. If nothing else, the staged Qana photographs demonstrate well-played, theatrical opportunism, but there are indications the very incident itself was set up—whatever the real number of civilian casualties. Although it has failed to make its evidence as memetically successful (ubiquitous) as the images of the wailing woman or child's corpse, the IDF has shown with video from unmanned aerial vehicles that Hezbollah deliberately collocated rocket batteries with civilian structures. As discussed in chapter four, this tactic is designed to draw Israeli counter-fire that causes collateral damage, which subsequently reorders the relative, moral positions of the two belligerents. Perhaps not surprisingly, when the structure at Qana collapsed—by some accounts seven

²⁸⁶ "Qana Attack Stirs Worldwide Outcry," *CNN.com International*, 30 July 2006, URL: <<http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/07/30/qana.reaction/>>, accessed 22 June 2007.

²⁸⁷ Mark Regev, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman, untitled briefing presented at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Herzliya, Israel, 18 December 2006.

hours after the midnight bombing—Hezbollah had a professionally produced, building-sized poster unfurled within a few hours, decrying both the massacre as well as U.S.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.²⁸⁸

OTHER DECEPTION

Despite its prevalence, Western analysts and policymakers appear fairly inept at compensating for lying as practiced in the Middle East. It can be argued, for instance, that U.S. policymakers knew well the pre-war Iraqi regime was lying about “something” and naturally it was assumed to be the existence of a robust weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program. But because they came from Western backgrounds, U.S. policymakers were not well-equipped to understand the true depth and complexity of the lies surrounding Iraq’s WMD program. First, they failed to understand that key Iraqi figures were lying as much to themselves as they were to the outside, non-Muslim world.

According to the Iraq Survey Group’s final report,

The growth of a culture of lying to superiors hurt [Iraqi] policymaking more than did the attendant gossip. Lying to superiors was driven by fear of the Regime and the inability to achieve results as resources deteriorated under sanctions in the first half of the 1990s. Lack of structural checks and balances allowed false information to affect Iraqi decision making with disastrous effects. Saddam knew his subordinates had a tendency to lie, but his earlier efforts to check their claims by “ground-truthing” them through personal tours of inspection decreased by 1998 as he became more reclusive.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Gissin. See also “Just Wondering,” *Powerline*, 30 July 2006, URL: <<http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/014843.php>>, accessed 22 June 2006. See also “Kana collapse was hours after attack,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 31 July 2006, URL: <<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1153292042767&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>>, accessed 22 June 2007.

²⁸⁹ Iraq Survey Group, *Iraq Survey Group Final Report*, 30 September 2004, URL: <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/report/2004/isg-final-report/>>, accessed online 25 January 2007.

Second, U.S. Policymakers failed to understand that, lacking perfect information about his own programs but at least suspecting they were not robust, Saddam's message to the outside world may have been deliberately ambiguous in order to convince his neighbors that he still posed a menacing threat. Indeed, in the minds of many Iraqi Sunni leaders, Iran posed at least as much of a threat as the U.S. or Israel.

Westerners often take Arab-Muslim statements, particularly private statements, at face value. If there is skepticism, it tends to be misdirected, treating Arab-Muslim rhetoric as simple hyperbole used to mobilize public support. In private conversations, it is assumed, there is no need to manipulate or align oneself with the public. The whispered word is therefore considered more truthful. Thomas Friedman noted as a rule, however, that Middle Easterners tend to tell the truth more in public—in Arabic—to their own audiences, while they tend to lie more in private—in English—to Western listeners (he also acknowledged that Westerners lie, but reverse this pattern when they do it).²⁹⁰ Friedman, in fact, claimed he would not listen to Arafat's English speeches, only those translated from Arabic. As argued in chapter five, Arafat's practices can be traced to religious and cultural origins.

In fact, Palestinian leadership and activists have long tempered their statements for Western audiences. Unlike the common diplomatic practice of softening one's statements in mixed company, however, this is calculated deception meant to hide antithetical values. Walid Shoebat, a former Fatah member, explains how his organization played on the sensibilities of American college students:

²⁹⁰ Thomas Friedman, "Mideast Rules to Live By," *The International Herald Tribune*, online ed., 20 December 2006, URL: <<http://iht.nytimes.com/protected/articles/2006/12/20/opinion/edfried.php>>, accessed 10 June 2008.

[I worked] as a translator in Chicago fundraising for jihad movements, the PA, the PLO at that time. I remember the Arabic [flyers] would basically be the facts: “Bring your friends, we intend to raise funds to support our Jihad brothers in Lebanon against Israel,” or whatever, and then comes the English part. The English part would be pretty much the standard, “We will be conducting a Middle Eastern cultural party, [and] you are welcome. We will be serving lamb and baklava.” So the West doesn’t understand that when we get together as a group our conversations are different—as soon as a westerner would come into the scene, the whole conversation changes, it becomes palatable to the Western mind.²⁹¹

Arafat provided a number of other, more internationally known examples. He was caught several times stating that the Palestinian Liberation Organization had no intention of achieving a lasting peace with Israel. Just months after the 1993 Oslo agreements, Arafat stated in an informal briefing to an Arab audience in that, “We plan to eliminate the State of Israel and establish a purely Palestinian state.”²⁹² In another meeting in South Africa he likened the Oslo agreement to the historical Treaty of Hudaibiya, implying that the agreement was temporary or not binding in the long term.²⁹³

Ron Schleifer writes in *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies*, “It does not matter if an allegation is wholly true as long as it keeps the enemy on the defense.”²⁹⁴ A half-truth is particularly useful because it is not, “...an outright lie, which might be exposed and thus harm the overall effort to achieve credibility.” Moreover, if it is suggested that an individual or organization has lied, advocates can dilute the accusation by focusing on the true half, attempting to obscure the other half. This section provides a few well-known examples

²⁹¹ *Islam: What the West Needs to Know*

²⁹² Karsh, 57.

²⁹³ The treaty of Hudaibiya, a pact between Muhammad’s followers and the then non-Muslim Meccans, was nullified after a short period. Although it is traditionally understood in Muslim circles that the Meccans gave Muhammad just cause to nullify the treaty, the historical precedent established the potential impermanence of all treaties with non-Muslims later on.

²⁹⁴ Ron Schleifer, *Psychological Warfare in the Intifada: Israeli and Palestinian Media Politics and Military Strategies* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2006), 152. Cited hereafter as Schleifer.

in which Palestinian or Hezbollah agents were caught lying, but there likely are a far greater number of unexposed instances, especially of half-truths, which Westerners more easily swallowed because of their memetic compatibility with preexisting paradigms.

Schleifer writes:

The most common example was the number of deaths. Those who died of natural causes or in accidents were added to the list of Intifada casualties. It was very difficult to check up on, as such an investigation would require an exhumation of the bodies and could stir up an undesirable response, so in balance it was likely to be left alone.²⁹⁵

Schleifer writes only within the context of the first intifada, but the tactic was used and reinforced by the media in the second intifada and the recent Israel-Hezbollah war as well. In the latter, for instance, Hezbollah controlled the casualty figures—according to a large number of Western sources—leading to the frequent inflation the civilian and deflation of militant casualty numbers.

MEDIA CONTROL

Faceless though it may be at times, the media exists as far more than a dispassionate conduit, an omnipresent, unbiased machine for the collection and dissemination of information. Media agents are affected by the memes in their working environments even as they disseminate or generate them. Journalists, photographers, editors, bloggers etc. can be unethical advocates, victims of manipulation, or stalwart investigators, tirelessly looking for cracks in accepted wisdom. The media is, of course, an indispensable element of cognitive warfare. Without means of dissemination, there

²⁹⁵ Schleifer, 151.

can be no manipulation of the masses, and no influencing of the public in long or short order.

Recognizing the importance of the media, Palestinian militants and Lebanese Hezbollah have sought to manage the projected images by several means. The first, deception, has already been discussed at length, but intimidation, threatened loss of access, and shepherding have also enabled militants to control the way in which they are portrayed to different audiences. These practices limit both the information MSM can collect, and control the manner in which it is conveyed (reported) to Western audiences—including the Israeli public. The objectives, in most cases, are to ensure that the Arab-Israeli struggle is cast in terms palatable for Western moderates, gain the sympathy of those moderates, affect a favorable Western discourse and, as with Qana, achieve Western policies that help deprive the IDF of its relevance.

The crudest method is, of course, intimidation and violence directed against journalists. One would think this tactic counterproductive in the long run, but it has proven surprisingly effective in cowing otherwise ethical members of the media. There are several cases in which Western journalists recanted their stories for fear of being beaten, or turned their cameras off at the behest of militants who did not want particular activities made known to the Western publics. A photographer for London's *Daily Telegraph* stumbled on the aftermath of the Ramallah lynching described above.

...I saw that it was a body, a man they were dragging by the feet. The lower part of his body was on fire and the upper part had been shot at, and the head beaten so badly that it was a pulp, like red jelly.... My God, I thought, they've killed this guy. He was dead, he must have been dead, but they were still beating him, madly, kicking his head. They were like animals.... I was composing the picture when I was punched in the face by a Palestinian. Another Palestinian pointed

right at me shouting “no picture, no picture!” while another guy hit me in the face and said “give me your film!”²⁹⁶

Clearly, the mob in this case was not implementing a deliberate and well-planned strategy to influence worldwide perceptions, but the angry mob’s instinct brought it to the right place: appear moderate for the moderates; allow no witnesses to reviled behavior.

The Ramallah lynching produced a more revealing example. Although other television crews were not allowed to leave the territory with their film of the incident intact, one Italian company managed to slip through, eventually giving it to the Israeli embassy in Rome. When the footage aired, a producer at a competing Italian company in Jerusalem feared being confused with the offending company (he had been beaten recently himself). He thus published a letter on the first page of the leading PA daily, stating in markedly obsequious terms, “My dear friends in Palestine,

We congratulate you and think it is our duty to explain to you what happened on October 12 in Ramallah. One of the private Italian television stations which competes with us ...filmed the events... the public impression was created as if we took these pictures. We emphasize to all of you that the events did not happen this way, because we always respect the journalistic rules of the Palestinian Authority for work in Palestine... this is not our way of acting, and we would never do such a thing....

The producer of the competing station began receiving death threats and had to return to Italy. In addition to the humble tone of the letter, it is important to note the reference to “journalistic rules of the Palestinian Authority,” an unwritten agreement between journalists and Palestinian elements about the permitted types of coverage. The public acknowledgement of this agreement apparently angered the producer’s colleagues, who subsequently made a pariah out of him. An editor from the rival company stated, “As of today, our correspondents can no longer work [in the territories]. We know whom to

²⁹⁶ Gutmann, 91.

thank.”²⁹⁷ According to the Associated Press, dozens of foreigners have been kidnapped by Palestinian militants (the exact number of Journalists is unknown).²⁹⁸

The victims, however, are not limited to foreign journalists, nor has the problem been chronologically confined to the al Aqsa period.²⁹⁹ According to a 1999 State Department report, “PA harassment led many Palestinian commentators, reporters, and critics to practice self-censorship.”³⁰⁰ This corroborates several other reports from the same period, including one from Amnesty International stating the Palestinian Authority has frequently closed newspapers and radio stations for extended periods.³⁰¹ In many cases, reporters, academics, lawyers and others have been jailed or beaten for apparent dissention. There is no shortage of reports suggesting that Palestinian journalists exercise self-censorship, and there is no reason to expect a significantly different reaction from Western journalists who need access to the territories for their best stories.

This type of intimidation ensures more than an acquiescent Palestinian media; average citizens must also tow the party line. During the first intifada, there was an untold number of summary executions for suspected “Israeli spies” or “Israeli collaborators,” terms liberally applied to non-compliant individuals among others. Militants enforced compliance through draconian measures,

²⁹⁷ Gutmann, 92-93

²⁹⁸ “Journalist’s Kidnapping Protested in Gaza City,” *Washington Post*, 20 August 2006, URL: <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/19/AR2006081900588.html>>, accessed 26 June 2006. See also Scott Wilson, “Hope Dims For Imminent Release of BBC Reporter,” *The Washington Post*, 26 June 2007, A14.

²⁹⁹ Khaled Abu Toameh, “Gunmen kidnap Palestinian Journalist,” *Jerusalem Post Online*, 25 September 2006, URL: <<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull&cid=1159193315038>>, accessed 26 June 2006.

³⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, *1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 25 February 2000, URL: <http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/occterr.html>, accessed 26 June 2007.

³⁰¹ Amnesty International, “Palestinian Authority: Silencing Dissent,” September 2000, URL: <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE210162000?open&of=ENG-PSE>>, accessed 26 June 2007.

carried out through an informal organization of strike forces set up by Arafat.... Members of these groups wore ninja outfits, communicated by means of toy walkie-talkies, and brandished swords and axes.... [“Shock Committees”] confronted Israeli soldiers, executed collaborators, and enforced boycotts and strikes.³⁰²

These activities both maintain the appearance of a unified front for outsiders, whether or not one truly exists, and guarantees at least material support for militant campaigns.

From the ideological perspective, physically killing off those who would dare verbalize their competing memes has an uncanny way of squashing the transmission of other pernicious memes. Even if individuals allow themselves to think dangerous thoughts in private, the lack of safe communication means disallows their virile reproduction, mutation, and evolution into more threatening forms.

One critical manifestation of media control lies in the use of “stringers,” also called “handlers” or “fixers.” In the territories, stringers are typically Palestinians who speak English and Arabic and use their militant connections to enable media access. They are particularly valuable to the many journalists who “parachute” into Israel when a crises erupts, knowing little of the conflict’s background, how to get around the territories, or where to find the most newsworthy items. Gutmann explains in vivid detail that excessive reliance on stringers, in combination with other factors such as intimidation and bias, has led to carefully crafted media portrayals of the conflict that are harmful to Israel. The practice has developed into something of a science in the territories. “Many fixers,” she notes, “hone their skills at the Media Institute of Bir Zeit University in Ramallah—where the Hamas chapter recently won a majority of student council seats on a platform of having killed more Jews than the other groups running.”³⁰³

³⁰² Schleifer, 47.

³⁰³ Gutmann, 209.

Stringers take photographers and journalists precisely where the militants want them be, and nowhere that they do not want them to be.

CNN's Nic Robertson admitted during the recent Israel-Hezbollah war that journalists could not attain access to the relevant regions without using Hezbollah guides:

There's no doubt about it. They had control of the situation. They designated the places that we went to, and we certainly didn't have time to go into the houses or lift up the rubble to see what was underneath.... Hezbollah is now running a number of these [excursions] every day, taking journalists into this area. They realize that this is a good way for them to get their message out....³⁰⁴

It is rare for journalists to admit that the content of their reports is effectively controlled, and it is entirely possible that many of those who do justify the practice through the mechanisms of cognitive dissonance. They may think, "Yes, they control what we see, but that doesn't mean they're wrong," or, "this is the only way they have to fight the IDF—it's just evening things out." In fact, Landes alludes to that mindset in a demonstrative anecdote described below. Whether it is due to willing or begrudged compliance, this marked level of Hezbollah and Palestinian control over media activities should force analysts into a highly skeptical posture when it comes to the accuracy of the prevailing media discourse, even if information is said to be "first hand" or "ground truth." Hezbollywood productions are made that much easier when journalists rely primarily on one source for information about the progress of the war, casualty numbers, the level of destruction etc. It is another very effective method for preventing the spread of pernicious memes.

³⁰⁴ "Coverage of Mideast Conflict," *CNN.com*, 23 July 2006, URL: <<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0607/23/rs.01.html>>, accessed 26 June 2007.

MEDIA AND NGO ADVOCACY—WRITING THE WRONG

It would be a worthwhile study, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis, to quantitatively determine whether the Western media is biased in one direction or another. Of course, neither side in the Arab-Israeli conflict has a complete monopoly on every journalist's heart, but because it is a jihadist cognitive effort that should most concern the West, this section will mention a few examples of pro-Palestinian bias that assist jihadist objectives. The right kind of bias can be a powerful force multiplier for cognitive warriors. This goes beyond the type of reporting that results from mistakes, intimidation, or direct manipulation by militants. The witting and unwitting activism of journalists with strong and predetermined senses of right or wrong can assist propagandists in effecting new realities and blocking or omitting pernicious memes, particularly if they are inconveniently true.

This photograph, run in the New York Times early in the al Aqsa intifada provides us with one such example. The caption labels the beating victim as a Palestinian and implies the Israeli police officer is the offending perpetrator because, at first glance, the picture appears to conform neatly to the accepted discourse. The photograph depicts an unarmed, bludgeoned civilian at the feet of an apparently menacing, club-

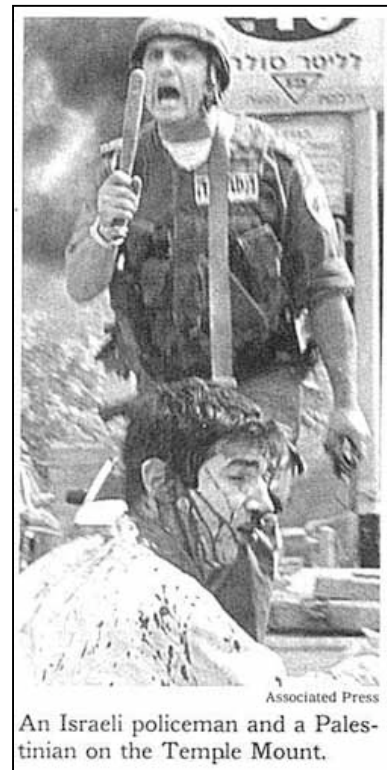


Figure 15. The Mis-captioned Beating of Tuvia Grossman

Source: aish.com

wielding man in uniform. In fact, the victim is Tuvia Grossman, a Jewish seminary student who had just been severely beaten by a mob of Palestinians and the police officer is chasing them away. Additionally, this incident did not occur on the Temple Mount, as the New York Times' caption indicates, but near a gas station in an Arab neighborhood of Jerusalem. The Times eventually posted a correction, but it took several, insistent calls from Grossman himself.³⁰⁵ On one level, those responsible for the caption error are guilty of a mere failure to fact check, but as Grossman states, the Associated Press and Times both assume that "if it's a victim, it must be a Palestinian." It is likely that the reporter/ photographer/ editor could not *see* the contrary facts because the dominant memplexes filtered them out. But more than that, those responsible filled in the gap with pre-determined ideas about the way the conflict *should* look.

Landes suggests that rather than filtering out dubious material, mainstream editors often amplify questionable Palestinian narratives to create an artificial, moral equilibrium between the sides, usually to the detriment of Israel. In what is probably the most stunning example, Landes confronted France 2 anchorman Charles Enderlin, who was responsible for the dissemination and narration of the al Dura footage, with evidence for the existence of Pallywood, including the unedited footage of individuals faking injuries or conducting attacks against non-existence police forces. Enderlin responded, "Oh yeah, but they do that all the time." Although this response struck Landes as a shocking admission of unethical practice—particularly coming from a renowned journalist—he

³⁰⁵ Tuvia Grossman, "Victim of the Media War," *aish.com*, 5 November 2000, URL: <http://www.aish.com/jewishissues/israeldiary/Victim_of_the_Media_War.asp>, accessed 10 June 2008. See also Gutmann, 17-19. The New York Times did eventually print a longer and more substantial explanation of the facts behind the photograph, but only at the insistence of Grossman and his supporters. For its part, the Associated Press sent out notice that, "captions on two photos sent Sept. 29 from Jerusalem misidentified a young man injured during street battles between Israeli forces and Palestinians," a correction that is only slightly more accurate as it does not address the fact that Grossman is not a Palestinian victim.

encountered it at other major news networks as well. After showing the same footage to ABC the network's representative stated, "You've convinced me, but I don't know how much of an appetite there is for this kind of thing," implying that viewers would not be interested in material contradicting their accepted discourse. Another stated, "Even if we were to expose this, we'd have to do something against the Israelis to be balanced."³⁰⁶ Despite the massive impact of the al Dura footage on the Middle East and perceptions of Israel, revelations about the fabrication achieved virtually no play in the Western MSM, aside from one German public television documentary by Esther Schapira, *Three Bullets and a Dead Child: Who Shot Mohammed al Dura?* Commercial and non-German outlets refused to air the program.³⁰⁷

Daniel Seaman, head of Israel's Government Press Office, recounts an incident in which he realized many reporters working in Israel were there not for objective reasons, but to right a perceived wrong. During a party after Netanyahu's election he encountered a group of forlorn individuals:

They were just sitting there, all the journalists invited to this party, and there were quite a lot of them and everybody was all depressed. So I started asking people, "Why are you so depressed?" The answer was "Netanyahu" and the "the world is over" and so on. I looked at this group and suddenly I saw the Abraham Lincoln Brigades from the Spanish Civil War, the people who came to Spain to fight in the name of Socialism.... They didn't come to report objectively. They came with their pens to fight.³⁰⁸

Seaman has waged a particularly bitter fight against what he regards as lop-sided journalism.³⁰⁹ He laments rampant breaches of journalistic ethics such as those noted by

³⁰⁶ Richard Landes, Boston University Professor, interview by author, December 2006.

³⁰⁷ Stephanie Gutmann, 73.

³⁰⁸ Gutmann, 97.

³⁰⁹ Daniel Seaman, Director, Government Press Office, untitled briefing presented at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Herzliya, Israel, 18 December 2006. Citing deep differences with Enderlin over the al Dura and other incidents, he calls the anchorman a "coward" and notes that Enderlin has threatened to sue him.

Landes and claims that, until recently, journalists had become unquestioningly reliant on their Palestinian stringers. “It was so bad that in 1999 the Palestinians had become de facto editors, producers, and had complete control over who was allowed in the PA territories.”³¹⁰ This level of control can easily lead to the unintentional skewing of news, but as mentioned above in the context of Hezbollah’s media control, there must be at least some willing consent from the reporters themselves, or the lack of uninhibited access would become the “story” itself. In some sense, it can be said that advocate journalists carry out their work for more than the emotional satisfaction of righting a perceived wrong; they are on a quest to reinforce their guiding memes.

Joshua Muravchik observes several studies “have shown that journalists, especially in the elite media, are disproportionately Democratic in their personal party allegiance.”³¹¹ It is conceivable that memes sometimes associated with the democratic party, such as distrust for strong military institutions or sensitivity to perceived instances of oppression, act on the tenor of news coming out of Israel and the territories. As discussed in the previous chapter, many in the MSM pinned the blame for the al Aqsa intifada entirely on Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount, omitting the deliberate Palestinian contributions, including fiery sermons and exhortations to another intifada by Palestinian media and PA officials before Sharon’s visit and the Camp David summit

³¹⁰ Seaman has consequently waged a campaign to restrict the activities of journalists whom he views as unethical. He emphasizes that his approach is to be tough, but within the confines of the law and existing regulations, which had not been strictly enforced until recently. In a controversial move, Seaman withdrew press cards for the Palestinian “fixers.” The Israeli Supreme Court overturned that decision, but granted that journalists must demonstrate no Israelis can do the same job before hiring a Palestinian fixer. Seaman’s relatively “tough” approach is hotly debated within the government and has drawn criticism from other offices favoring conciliatory policies—in essence, wooing otherwise hostile reporters. “[Journalists] can be critical of Israel,” Seaman states, “but if they respect the state and uphold professional standards I don’t have a problem with that. We can have leverage over them by simply not cooperating, not making it excessively easy, but often they succeed [with skewed anti-Israel reporting] anyway.” Seaman, Director, Government Press Office, interview by author, 19 December 2006.

³¹¹ Muravchik, 59.

collapse. A critical mass of journalists in the MSM appeared to agree that his visit must have been the primary motivator behind the riots. As Muravchik tells it, “the culprits were 1) Sharon and 2) the impersonal force of momentum.”³¹² This echoes Gutmann’s claim that many in the MSM do not view Palestinians as actors in the conflict. The guiding memeplex maintains that they are, at most, reactors with understandable motives. For Muravchik, ABC’s Gillian Findlay neatly captured this discourse when she reported, “Sharon... whose visit to the site of their sacred mosque sparked these riots... refused to accept responsibility,” adding, “The men [of the Barak Government] who could have stopped Sharon’s visit didn’t and today blamed Palestinian leaders.”³¹³ Betraying the same bias over al Dura, Findlay lamented, “the video of twelve-year-old Mohammed plays on Palestinian television non-stop. It has appeared on Israel’s most popular TV station exactly twice.”³¹⁴

Raising the specter of Richard Brodie’s Trojan horse, journalists with conscious or unconscious agendas may switch to a more offensive approach in reinforcing—and spreading—their memeplexes. One such forward-leaning technique is to ask “loaded” questions, which are not meant to elicit the subject’s answer for informational purposes, but to trip the subject or implant a more “correct” and damaging meme in third party minds. To an uncritical audience, defensive or slow-witted responses to loaded questions appear to be proof of guilt. Dani Seaman experienced a bit of this himself during an interview with Patricia Naylor about an alleged epidemic of anti-Press violence by the IDF. Seaman agreed to be recorded on camera while watching a video of one of the shootings. It is clearly an uncomfortable moment for Seaman who, as he watches the

³¹² Muravchik, 11.

³¹³ Muravchik, 12-13.

³¹⁴ Muravchik, 15.

segment, begins stating that it is hard to know where the shots came from and asks whether they were live or rubber bullets. At one point he winces. He later says he is sorry that anyone has to endure that and admits there is probably nothing he can say that will make Nael Shyouki, the alleged victim, feel better. When Naylor claims Shyouki stated even an apology would be acceptable, Seaman's discomfort becomes more palpable. There are dramatic pauses in which Seaman is thinking of the best response, punctuated at the end by what appears to be a refusal to apologize. Significantly, the interview closes with Seaman stating, "I don't think he means my apology, I think I know what he means." He pauses, rubbing his face, then states, "Maybe that will happen." At this point, Naylor's set up is likely working well. By virtue of the fact that Seaman is watching the video, onlookers are infected with memes suggesting Seaman accepts some responsibility for the shootings. Because he then appears to "refuse" to apologize, onlookers are infected with memes establishing Seaman's "guilt."

The video Seaman viewed, like many others in the special, is presented without context or amplifying information; Naylor likely relies on the guiding memplex to provide that. IDF guilt is presumed rather than proven or even argued, thus the video's presentation to Seaman works essentially the same way as the Trojan horse meme implantation method, "So when did you stop beating your wife?" Seaman is immediately placed in a defensive position, and his questions about the direction and type of bullets involved, although potentially relevant, only appear to strengthen the "defensive=guilty" construct. Capitalizing on this, Naylor hinges almost the entire weight of the Israeli perspective on Seaman. Later she narrates,

During all the time I reported this story, I made numerous attempts to interview the Israeli Army. They refused to discuss the shootings. So I went back to talk to Dani Seaman... I found his attitude had hardened.

She immediately cuts to an image of a visibly upset Seaman, who is holding up his hands with palms outward as if to “stop” the onslaught of investigative reporting. This image works powerfully to reinforce the onlookers’ guilt memes. Naylor hammers the message home by adding one of Seaman’s statements, taken out of context, “I’m not worried about the freedom of the press. If there are any limitations to it, it can be restored. The lives of Israeli citizens cannot be restored.”³¹⁵

In fact, journalists often use the freedom (and relative lack of intimidation) afforded them by the IDF and government to more easily criticize Israeli policies. There is, for instance, a plethora of images portraying Israel as a strong, hegemonic state, but a relative dearth of photographs



Figure 16. Example of a Favored Image

**Source: Lake Merritt Neighbors
Organized for Peace**

or videos portraying their Palestinian or Lebanese counterparts in a negative light.

Palestinian militants, particularly those carrying weapons, are often reluctant to have their pictures taken for fear of bad press (many also fear they are wanted by Israeli authorities).

Photographers are thus more reticent about taking pictures of armed Palestinians without

³¹⁵ Seaman here was not talking about the right of reporters to work without being shot, rather the right of Palestinian stringers to maintain their press cards, which the Government Press Office revoked for undue manipulation of foreign media. See the previous section.

first asking permission. In contrast, the IDF generally allows the media freedom of content and action.³¹⁶ When Gutmann asked one photographer if the Israelis restrict photographers much he replied, “Are you kidding? Basically you can take whatever you want.” When she asked if photographers can take photographs during combat he responded similarly, “Oh yeah, you can pretty much get up in their face as long as you don’t interfere with what they’re doing. I got one with his rifle pointed straight at my lens. I just ran out in front of this Israeli [soldier] and took a quick snap.”³¹⁷ Images such as these, powerful and damaging to the IDF, are particular favorites of editors and producers because they conform neatly to the accepted discourse. Images contrasting the might of the IDF with the “weakness” of the Palestinians also arouse strong emotions within readers and viewers, ensuring an avid following. When contrasted with the dearth of images showing “weaponized” Palestinians, the impact deepens, the complexity of the situation recedes, and ambivalence about the conflict disappears. These and similar types of media bias greatly assist the efforts of propagandists, even if they are less extreme. As witting or unwitting agents, advocate journalists help cognitive warriors frame the conflict narrative in palatable terms for the target audience. In essence, they show the warriors what the correct and most effective narrative is, and so long as they continue reporting in that fashion, they multiply the propagandists’ efforts.

One problem that compounds the tendencies of advocate journalists is an over reliance on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for objective statistics. Gerald

³¹⁶ Naylor relied quite heavily on fixers. It is possible her reporting was duly influenced, and her disposition affected by the effect Seaman’s actions had on her work. See Patricia Naylor, in “In the Line of Fire,” produced by Patricia Naylor and Rodney Palmer, narrated by Patricia Naylor, on *Frontline World*, PBS, March 2003, viewed online, URL: <<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/israel.palestine/index.html>>, accessed 30 November 2006. See also “Interview With Patricia Naylor: When Journalists Become Targets,” *Frontline World*, URL: <<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/israel.palestine/naylor.html>>, accessed 28 June 2007.

³¹⁷ Gutmann, 111.

Steinburg is editor of NGO Monitor, a group which describes its mission as “promoting critical debate and accountability of human rights NGOs in the Arab-Israeli conflict.” He notes that in general, NGOs tend to disproportionately focus on Israel’s activities and exhibit clear signs of anti-Israel agendas.³¹⁸ During the July-August 2006 war, for instance, Human Rights Watch (HRW) devoted 70 percent of its reports to Israel and only 30 percent to the activities of Hezbollah.³¹⁹

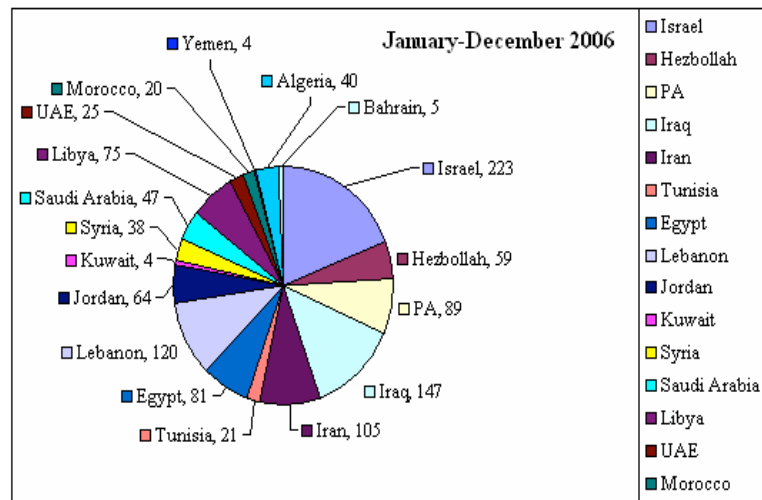


Figure 17. Weighted Point Totals for HRW Coverage of the Middle East

Source: NGO Monitor

Israel, in fact, receives vastly more attention than any other Middle Eastern country, including Iraq, where human rights abuses between religious sects and the ferocity of conflict are arguably more pervasive. The organization’s agenda can also be seen in the statements of its leadership:

Peter Bouckaert, HRW’s “emergencies director,” played a major role in HRW reporting on the war, and its institutional biases. On July 31, in *The Guardian (UK)*, Bouckaert called Israel’s claim that Hezbollah used human shields a “convenient excuse.” Similarly, Ken Roth, HRW’s Executive Director, wrote in the *New York Sun* on July 31, 2006 that Israel’s actions in Lebanon during 2006 were “the morality of some more primitive moment.”³²⁰

³¹⁸ Gerald Steinburg, editor, Non-Governmental Organization Monitor, “Dealing with the Politicized NGO Network and the Media,” briefing presented at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel, 17 December 2006. Cited hereafter as Steinburg.

³¹⁹ “Report on HRW’s Activities in 2006: Political Bias Undermines Human Rights,” *NGO Monitor*, 26 June 2007, URL: <<http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article.php?id=1478>>, accessed 29 June 2007.

³²⁰ Ibid.

Amnesty International (AI), which has similarly weighted its material against Israel, acknowledges the practice is a deliberate one. Responding to the accusation that Israel received more negative reports in 2006 than Sudan, where there are widespread allegations of genocide, Director General Amnon Vidan stated, “There is an expectation of Israel and other democratic states to abide by a higher standard than Sudan.”³²¹

Many NGOs (HRW is one among many according to NGO Monitor), commonly invoke the theme of “disproportionate force” without defining what is meant by the term; often make judgments about the nature of military targets despite the fact that few—if any—of their members have military expertise; condemn the targeting of bridges, roads, and airports as “collective punishment;” rarely mention the use of human shields by Arab Muslims; and rarely call for the release of IDF prisoners. One HRW document was titled “Fatal Strikes: Israel’s Indiscriminate Attacks Against Civilians in Lebanon.” Amnesty International issued one titled, “48 Hours as war crimes continue,” referencing the 48 hour, unilateral suspension of aerial bombardment after Qana. Allowing for no possibility that the target(s) had military value, another report led with the title “Deliberate destruction or ‘collateral damage’?” Reports of this nature play a critical role in the formation of world perception, as their contents are often repeated by such outlets as BBC, CNN.com, and Boston.com (the Boston Globe website).

Steinburg notes journalists covering the Arab-Israeli conflict are often “lazy,” reprinting the releases of NGOs without qualification or suspicion of agenda. The NGO casualty figures may themselves be based on press reports, eyewitness accounts and

³²¹ “FOCUS: NGO Monitor’s Analysis of Amnesty International’s 2006 Reporting on the Middle East Receives Extensive Media Coverage,” *NGO Monitor*, 21 May 2007, URL: <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/digest_info.php?id=1434#1>, accessed 29 June 2007.

rumors rather than bodies or photographs. This practice can be particularly problematic in cultures prone to exaggeration or known to employ taqiyya, as witnessed in the Jenin “massacres” in 2002, or when militant groups control the content of media reports. Rather than dying or becoming discredited, dubious information finds its way back into the media, where it is picked up by the UN and academia, achieving more credibility as it goes up the chain.³²² This is, in essence, a form of circular reporting, and it may not end there. It is conceivable that figures pulled from “reliable” sources such as the UN and academia are then fed back into the system, where the process begins again. These activities—witting or unwitting advocacy by journalists and NGOs—all demonstrate that the Western discourse has been penetrated by militants at least to some extent.

RECASTING HISTORY

One such effort at affecting the discourse can be found in the interpretation of history. It is commonly believed that the primary justification for Israel’s existence lies in the Holocaust, that the Western nations, indeed the world, would not have supported the Jewish homeland’s creation had it not been for the 6 million murdered Jews, to say nothing of the Allied powers’ acquiescence to it. The displacement of Palestinians, it is believed, is an evil justified primarily by a much larger evil, the murder of millions and the attempt to wipe out a race. If the Palestinian cognitive warriors can lessen the Holocaust’s severity, or even establish Zionist complicity in it, the justification for Israel’s existence is thereby also lessened. Success along these lines has benefits in both

³²² Steinburg

international and local arenas, as it woos support for Palestinian causes in the former, and casts righteous victim identities in the latter.

Indeed, Holocaust denial, mentioned in chapter four, plays a vital role in the creation and maintenance of the memeplex forming Palestinian identity. It is an important element of jihadist ideologies—if it is not reflected in all the founding documents—and an apt demonstration of the perceptive nature of cognitive warfare. The notion that the Holocaust never happened, was far less severe, or that it was a Zionist scheme to generate international support for the “theft” of Palestine are all mainstream beliefs in Palestinian and Arab society, and they are reflected in a plethora of political cartoons, editorials, speeches, grade school textbooks, and even doctoral-level theses. Mahmoud Abbas, the current PA President and head of Fatah, now commonly referred to as a moderate by Westerners, wrote his own dissertation about a bloody conspiracy that led to Israel’s birth, a collusion between the Zionists and the Nazis in the murder of European Jewry. He later wrote another book, more or less in the same vein.³²³

Palestinian schoolbooks, including those for high school published within the last three years, omit any mention of the Holocaust in their sections on World War II.³²⁴ Al Hayat al Jadida, the leading Palestinian daily, has regularly featured Holocaust denial articles, which have claimed that Jews fabricated “the shocking story about gas ovens... to arouse admiration,” and “...the Jewish explanation exaggerating the Holocaust has

³²³ Yael Yehoshua, “Abu Mazen: A Political Profile,” *Middle East Media Research Institute*, 29 April 2003, URL: <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sr&ID=SR01503#_ednref69>, accessed 23 June 2007.

³²⁴ Noa Meridor, “Israel still does not appear on maps in Palestinian textbooks,” *Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, 16 April 2006, URL: <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/as_nm_e.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2007. See also Itimar Marcus and Barbara Crook, “PA Holocaust denial in new PA schoolbooks: WWII without a Holocaust,” *Palestinian Media Watch*, 18 April 2007, URL: <http://pmw.org.il/Bulletins_apr2007.htm#b180407>, accessed 23 June 2007.

exceeded all limits and reached a level of imagination of things that could never happen.”³²⁵

There are two striking ironies in this construct. The first is that the most influential Palestinian leader at the time sided with the Nazi regime and participated in the Holocaust. In the 1920s and 1930s, Hajj Amin al Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, played an important role in instigating anti-Jewish riots that lead to the deaths of hundreds. When World War II began he dealt heavily with the Nazis, and as the Nazis attempted to destroy the Allied Powers in North Africa, they planned to bring the Holocaust to the Middle East with his assistance.³²⁶ According to Benyamin Korn, al Husseini organized sabotage squads to parachute behind allied lines in Europe and one such unit deployed to Tel Aviv. British police caught them attempting to poison the area’s water system with enough toxin to kill hundreds of thousands.³²⁷ Al Husseini’s and Hitler’s meeting is perhaps better known, however. There is photographic evidence of it, and it is now recognized that al Husseini recruited thousands of Bosnian Muslims for a Waffen SS unit. Dieter Wisliceny, a deputy to Adolf Eichmann, declared at Nuremburg that

The Mufti was one of the initiators of the systematic extermination of European Jewry and had been a collaborator and adviser of Eichmann and Himmler in the execution of this plan.... He was one of Eichmann’s best friends and had constantly incited him to accelerate the extermination measures. I heard him say, accompanied by Eichmann, he had visited incognito the gas chambers of Auschwitz.³²⁸

³²⁵ Itamar Marcus, “PA Holocaust Denial,” *Palestinian Media Watch*, undated, URL: <<http://www.pmw.org.il/holocaust.htm#10>>, accessed 22 June 2007.

³²⁶ “Nazis planned Holocaust in Palestine: Nazis,” *Expatica*, 12 April 2006, URL: <http://www.expatica.com/actual/article.asp?subchannel_id=26&story_id=29259>, accessed 25 June 2007.

³²⁷ Benyamin Korn, “Arab Chemical Warfare Against Jews—in 1944,” *David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies*, March 2003, URL: <<http://www.wymaninstitute.org/articles/2003-03-chemical.php>>, accessed 25 June 2007.

³²⁸ David G. Dalin, *The Myth of Hitler’s Pope: How Pope Pious XII Rescued Jews From the Nazis* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2005), 136.

Al Hussein holds a revered place in contemporary Palestinian discourse. Arafat, among others eulogized him, but discussion of the Palestinian-Nazi alliance appears to be incongruent with the objectives of Holocaust denial. Korn noted that in 1995 Arab journalists visiting Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum, objected to the exhibit on this subject, while others have downplayed the "so-called Palestinian contacts with Germany during World War II."

The second irony is that Palestinians, with the willing help of "moderates" in the West (those who attempt to bridge the two societies' discourses), have equated Zionism and Israel with Nazism. The prevalence of the righteous underdog construct reduces the effort required to make this association. On some level, the construct's adherents, eager

to jab Israel in a sensitive spot, may see the comparison between Israel and Nazi Germany as a painful and destructive meme, perhaps the surest way to drag down the David-turned-Goliath. Landes suggests that Europeans are anxious to be rid of the guilt associated with the Holocaust, a sentiment

betrayed clearly by a Europe 1



Figure 18. The al Dura Meme Cancels Holocaust Memes

Source: International Action

Anchorwoman. Referencing the well-known image of a little Jewish boy in the Warsaw Ghetto, Catherine Nay stated, "The death of Muhammad [al Dura] annuls, erases that of the Jewish child, hands raised in the air before the SS..."³²⁹ From the ideologist's

³²⁹ Ivan Rioufol, "Bloc-notes: les medias, pouvoir intouchable" ("Boc-notes: the media, untouchable power") *Le Figaro*, online ed., 13 June 2008, URL: <<http://blog.lefigaro.fr/rioufol/2008/06/blocnotes-les-medias-pouvoir-i.html>>, accessed 27 June 2008. Translation is mine. For the poll data, see

perspective, how better to destroy Israel's moral legitimacy than by demonstrating the victim has become the worst of perpetrators? From a memetic perspective, what better example is there of a pernicious and nullifying meme? At worldwide rallies lamenting the alleged IDF killing of Muhammad al Dura, IDF incursions into Palestinian towns, the newly-created separation wall, or other Israeli policies, protesters invariably carry large banners with blue swastikas and stars of David juxtaposed. Many such rallies occur in Europe. Arab political cartoons, for their part, are particularly graphic and remarkably consistent with Nazism-cum-Zionism themes.

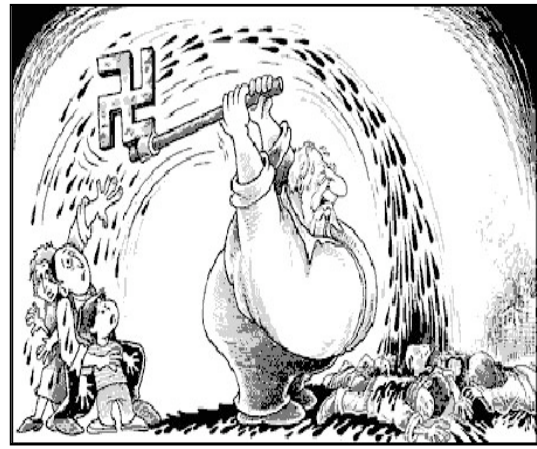


Figure 19. Arab Cartoons Portraying Israel as Nazi-Like

Source: www.tromgrossmedia.com

Palestinian historical revision is not limited to WWII, however. Just as there has been an effort to deny the Holocaust, so too has there been an effort to debase Jewish claims to an ancient regional presence. Shahid Alam, an economics professor at Northeastern University, echoes the

“Germans ‘guilty’ over Holocaust,” *News24.com*, 26 January 2005, URL: <http://www.news24.com/News24/World/News/0,,2-10-1462_1652599,00.html>, accessed 27 June 2008. See also Etgar Leftkovits, “Poll: Over 50% of Germans equate IDF with Nazy army,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 7 December 2004, archived at URL: <<http://www.tomgrossmedia.com/mideastdispatches/archives/000044.html>>, accessed 27 June 2008. Please note that the poll is widely cited, but I could not find the original document. The polls indicate a sense of societal guilt for and an eagerness to be done with the history of the Holocaust. A 2005 poll found that 47 percent of Germans felt “special responsibility” for the Jewish people, and another reportedly found 62 percent of Germans were tired of Jewish “harping” about Germany’s war crimes.

common sentiment that Zionists “have persisted in their plans to dispossess the Palestinians of the last fragments of their rights and legacy whose Canaanite roots were more ancient than Isaiah, Ezekiel, David and Moses.”³³⁰ Haider Abdel Shafi, a former Palestinian negotiator and current activist, stated in 1992, “...the Palestinians are the indigenous people of Palestine. They are descendants of the Semitic tribes that came and inhabited Palestinian territory since thousands and thousands of years, certainly long before Abraham set foot on the Palestinian territory.”³³¹ According to a demonstrative anecdote given by Stephanie Gutmann, some Palestinians may be slow to acknowledge or unaware of *any* ancient Jewish presence. Recounting a conversation she had with a Palestinian colleague and friend:

“...the Jews have only been here since ...oh, in the thirties,” he said. [I responded] “Nonsense, they’ve been around since biblical times, since as long as you, at least.” Faraj kept shaking his head, no, not true. His small smile indicated that he seemed to think he had me on this one. “Two words,” I said. “Jesus Christ ...you know, *King of the Jews*? Jesus of *Nazareth*, born in *Bethlehem*, took his last walk with the cross through the *Old City*.” “That is *very* interesting,” Faraj said. Color rushed to his face and he was quiet for a few minutes, nodding his head as he drove.³³²

Accordingly, it is commonly believed that Jewish immigrants during the late 19th and early 20th centuries stole Palestinian land and drove out the inhabitants—a practice that allegedly culminated in the “aggressive” and “expansionist” 1948 war.

Whether by the simple passing of decades or these attempts to recast history, the obscuration of the empirical truth has benefitted Israel’s enemies. Even outside the bounds of Arab society, I have had numerous conversations with educated Westerners during which it became progressively clearer that, despite potent beliefs, the individual

³³⁰ Shahid Alam, “A Colonizing Project Built on Lies,” *Counterpunch*, 18 April 2002, URL: <<http://www.counterpunch.org/alam0418.html>>, accessed 25 June 2007.

³³¹ Alan Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), 23.

³³² Gutmann, 228.

did not know the basic, historical facts. These facts have included: the Jewish acceptance and Arab rejection of a two-state solution in 1948 (and 2000); the subsequent, repeated attempts to wipe out the nascent Jewish state by conventional means (1948, 1967, and arguably 1973); that U.N. administered refugee camps are not “concentration camps run by Israel” (this one was related to me by a fellow-intelligence professional); the pervasiveness of genocidal rhetoric in the Palestinian discourse; that Israel’s alleged “mistreatment/oppression” of Palestinians in the occupied territories is not the original cause of Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism.

If this type of ignorance has been increasing over the past few decades—and I suggest that it has—it tracks neatly with the changing discourse model described in chapter four. Gutmann’s argument that press coverage became more critical after 1967 implies that the righteous underdog paradigm either shifted or—more likely—that the new facts did not align with it. Rather than search for a new paradigm in which a newly risen power could maintain its righteous character, those driving the discourse simply transferred moral legitimacy to the other party, which now played the role of the underdog. The historical memes which favor Israel initially aligned with the underdog memplex, but now that Israel occupies a new and necessarily sinister position in that paradigm, the historical memes which favor the Jewish state are memetically filtered out. That is, the righteous underdog memplex “works” to ensure its own survival by culling the memes which are antithetical to it, whether or not they were previously acknowledged and regarded as “true.” It is likely in this manner that those basic facts about Israel’s history die or become buried, and it is a phenomenon that propagandists can easily accelerate.

Some of the attempts to recast Palestinian history are no-doubt part of a cottage industry pursued from genuinely-held beliefs, but there was and perhaps still is a concerted PLO effort to speed the process. Schleifer notes that the PLO

...invested much effort in its cultural department. Academics were used not only in an international relations capacity such as media interviews and public debates, but also to promote arguments of historical perspective.... Much effort was invested in creating a Palestinian identity. This is a complex issue which does not have fixed rules.... The PLO's large cultural department had the task of recreating a past for the Palestinians.... On numerous occasions political propaganda was combined with cultural and folklore activity, such as Palestinian embroidery, folk dancing or cooking, etc.³³³

Note the use of academics on the international scene. This flows directly from the cognitive offense model in which “moderates” are used as civilizational interlocutors. The extent to which the first Palestinian identity entrepreneurs and their academic missionaries believed their own propaganda cannot be known, but it can be safely said that the beliefs are pervasive today—at all levels—and statements do not significantly deviate from this accepted, effected discourse. Arafat's claim during the 2000 Camp David summit that there was no Jewish Temple Mount—not even any archeological evidence or ruins—stands as a helpful reminder of this.

³³³ Schleifer, 136.

FOR ARAB-MUSLIM EYES ONLY

Interviewer: Mr. President, what message would you like to send to the Palestinian people in general, and, particularly, to the Palestinian children?

Arafat: The child who is grasping the stone facing the tank - is it not the greatest message to the world when the hero becomes a *shahid*?—PA TV, 15 January 2002³³⁴

Itimar Marcus is the director of the Palestinian Media Watch, an organization devoted to monitoring the messages and images broadcast within Palestinian society. Marcus noted that, as a rule, the character of the discourse circulating within Palestinian media about the Arab-Israeli circles is far bloodier and more violent than the messages selected for dissemination to the outside world. While Western audiences receive a message of injustice and oppression at the hands of a powerful entity (Israel), a message carefully fashioned as a Western narrative, local audiences are alternatively inculcated with messages that emphasize the weakness of the Jewish state and the potential for uncompromising victory. Moreover, through a wide variety of media, the PA and other Palestinian groups consistently urge their constituents to both sacrifice themselves for the cause and kill as many Jews as possible.³³⁵

This last message is of particular interest because it commonly appears in Palestinian circles, but for reasons discussed in the media control section, Western editors and reporters have deleted the most inflammatory elements or failed to report them at all.

³³⁴ “PA Indoctrination of Children to Seek Heroic Death for Allah – *Shahada*,” *Palestinian Media Watch*, undated, URL: <<http://www.pmw.org.il/tv%20part1.html>>, accessed 22 June 2007.

³³⁵ Itimar Marcus, Director, Palestinian Media Watch, untitled briefing presented at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Herzliya, Israel, 18 December 2006.

There is one case in which a Palestinian imam, Dr. Ahmad Abu Halabaya, incited his masses by preaching that Jews

...are the terrorists. They are the ones who must be butchered and killed, as Allah the almighty said: 'Fight them; Allah will torture them at your hands, and will humiliate them....' Have no mercy on the Jews no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Wherever you meet them, kill them. Wherever you are, kill those Jews and those Americans who are like them—and those who stand by them....

In an article about incitement in the intifada, however, New York Times reporter William Orme neglects to include this passage. Instead he downplays Israeli concerns by quoting a Palestinian who states, "Every word the Israelis hear on the Voice of Palestine they think is incitement." Orme then chooses a comparatively innocuous statement by the same preacher above from the same day and, by use of the word "egregious," implies Israeli concerns about incitement are somewhat hysterical:

Israelis cite as one egregious example a televised sermon that defended the killing of the two soldiers. "Whether Likud or Labor, Jews are Jews," proclaimed Sheik Ahmad Abu Halabaya in a live broadcast from a Gaza City mosque the day after the killings.³³⁶

This is a potent demonstration of the difficulty non-aligned memes encounter when thrown against a well-established discourse. In this case, Orme writes his article under the powerful persuasion of political correctness, which can scarcely allow for the existence of non-Western mainstreams infused with genocidal rhetoric, or that there might not be some balancing rhetoric on the Israeli side. Orme's omissions are therefore the likely product of cognitive dissonance, as he lowered the significance of Halabaya's

³³⁶ William Orme, "A Parallel Mideast Battle: Is It News or Incitement?" *The New York Times Online*, 24 October 2008, URL: <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B01E5D61731F937A15753C1A9669C8B63&scp=1&sq=%22Israelis+cite+as+one+egregious%22&st=nyt>>, accessed 1 June 2008. For the article which first noted this particular problem, see Alex Safian's "New York Times Covers up Call to 'Kill the Jews,'" *CAMERA.org*, 25 October 2008, URL: <http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=35&x_article=118>, accessed 1 June 2008.

inflammatory rhetoric and raised the significance of his more palatable statements in order to make the facts more congruent—and therefore more comfortable—with his worldview. This practice must be pronounced in MSM circles, as there is a wealth of evidence that *would* expose the existence of a shocking Palestinian discourse, were it given more MSM play.

For example, PA television aired a program, clearly meant for children under ten, in which a host asks a talking chick puppet what he would do if someone were to chop down his tree, a direct allusion to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The chick responds, “I’ll fight him and make a big riot, I’ll call the whole world and make a riot. I’ll bring AK-47

[assault rifles] and the whole world; I’ll commit a massacre in front of the house.” On another show, a host asks two pre-teen Palestinian girls, “What is better, peace and full rights for the Palestinian people, or Shahada (martyrdom)?”



Figure 20. Farfur Gets the Stuffing Beaten Out of Him

Source: Chas’ Compilation blog

Both indicate the latter and express a strong desire to become martyrs themselves. In yet another, more recent example, a Hamas-sponsored program employs a character clearly modeled after Mickey Mouse in order to incite children to violent acts and martyrdom. The mouse is eventually martyred by an Israeli interrogator, who beats him to death while demanding that he turn

over his family's property deeds. Other Palestinian programs geared for children have followed suit.

A poem glorifying death appeared in language textbooks for grades five, six, seven and twelve, stating, "I see my death, But I hasten my steps towards it.... By your life! This is the death of men, And who asks for a noble death—here it is...."³³⁷

Palestinian as well as other Arab media are filled with rhetoric about the glory of martyrdom and militant leaders urging their constituents to this desired end. Billboards, murals, iconographic sculptures,

T-shirts, music videos, even postal stamps and elementary school textbooks enshrine the memories of recent martyrs and beckon more to follow. At the university level, a graphic



Figure 21. Sbarro Bombing Reenactment

Source: BBC Online

"museum" exhibit celebrated one

of the more infamous suicide bombings by recreating the destroyed pizzeria, complete with dismembered corpses, blood-spattered walls, and pizza remnants strewn everywhere. The exhibit, displayed in al Najah University's cafeteria for nearly a week, included a statue of the bomber reciting from the Koran and a plaque at his feet which stated, "[Hamas'] pizza is more delicious."³³⁸ Another part of the exhibit displayed a

³³⁷ "Children as Combatants in PA Ideology," *Palestinian Media Watch*, clip from Palestinian Authority Television, 22 October 2004, URL: <<http://www.pmw.org.il/>>, accessed 25 January 2007.

³³⁸ "Arafat closes 'suicide bombing' art show," *BBC Online*, 26 September 2001, URL: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/1564188.stm>>, accessed 1 June 2008.

statue of an orthodox Jew standing near a rock, which recites via tape-recording, “O believer, there is a Jewish man behind me. Come and kill him.”³³⁹

This is a facet of cognitive warfare used not to influence Western audiences, but to create generations unquestioningly devoted to the anti-Israeli struggle, and it succeeds partly because of its alignment with the deeply held religious beliefs discussed in chapter five. Although this plainly leaves the population ill-equipped to deal with peace, from the cognitive warrior’s perspective, a population raised on conflict can be tremendously cohesive, even in the face of long-term adversity caused by perpetual war. In the Palestinian case there are obviously divisive issues, as witnessed in the recent fighting between Fatah and Hamas. These differences tend to be focused on intra-Palestinian issues and questions of methodology rather than the righteousness or direction of the cause writ large, however. Hamas has roundly criticized Fatah and the PLO for its apparent willingness to make concessions to Israel, even as an interim, deceptive step toward Israel’s eventual destruction. Similarly, al Qaida has questioned Hamas’ decision to participate in the PA government, yet all three parties do not significantly diverge in their ultimate, anti-Israeli objectives. Arafat had to deal with a divided house even during his tenure as the PLO’s chairman, but he kept the diverse elements together by continually focusing on long-term, extreme [by Western standards] objectives. He maintained the relative harmony not by softening those objectives—as it appeared in the English discourse—but by keeping them immutable in the Arabic discourse. Campaigns designed to incite anti-Israeli violence thus do more than simply reinforce accepted Islamic values. They can ensure the ultimate unity of a population for generations, which

³³⁹ “Gruesome exhibit marks anniversary of uprising,” *Associated Press* via *LJWorld.com*, 24 September 2001, URL: <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2001/sep/24/gruesome_exhibit_marks/>, accessed 1 June 2008.

indirectly ensures the survival of the over-arching memeplexes, whatever methodological disagreements may arise in the short run. It is this local campaign to shape the population that demonstrates true intent, and it is for this reason that cognitive warriors significantly change the tenor of their rhetoric when addressing Westerners.

THE MILITARY EFFECT OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES—REAL OR FAKED

If the stronger of the two belligerents is a pluralistic, democratic society concerned about its own moral conduct, inflated civilian casualty numbers and staged incidents like the al Dura shooting or the Qana strike can have effects in the military sphere. Afraid of causing further innocent death, or even the perception of it, military commanders may become hesitant to undertake tactically beneficial operations. In August 2006, the *Washington Post* explored the depth to which this kind of angst penetrates the IDF's decision-making processes. Reporter Laura Blumenfeld depicts "a divisive struggle" over the collateral damage that can be caused by "targeted killings," surgical strikes against terrorist leadership designed to stop ongoing operations and deter future ones.³⁴⁰ In one camp, Lieutenant General Moshe Yaalon, the IDF's former chief of staff, asks rhetorically, "How can we look in the eyes of our pilots if they kill innocent people?" Yaalon said his decisions about these strikes must pass "the mirror test," that is, he must be able look at himself in the mirror the following day. Conversely, on the other end of the Israeli perspective is Avid Dichter, former head of the Shin Bet security

³⁴⁰ Laura Blumenfeld, "In Israel, a Divisive Struggle Over Targeted Killing," *The Washington Post*, 27 August 2006, A1 and A12-A13.

service (similar to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation), who asks, “If the terrorists walk out alive, and... another bus explodes, how do we explain it to our people?”

In 2003, multiple key leaders, bomb-makers and strategists from Hamas met in a known, but fairly populated location. Meetings such as this are rare and to have good, time-sensitive intelligence on them is even rarer. Yaalon’s deputy called it a “Who’s Who of Hamas... [full of] people we’d be hunting for years.” Dichter and Yaalon debated for hours over the respective consequences of proceeding or aborting the attack. According to one of Blumenfeld’s sources, the majority of such operations have been called off, either for fear of killing innocents, the subsequent political repercussions, or both. Because the IDF would not likely get another opportunity like this, Dichter favored going forth with attack, stating, “There is no fair fight against terrorists. Never has been. Never will be.” Yaalon was less certain, however. Blumenfeld describes an ambivalence in him that can be found in greater Israeli society as easily as Dichter’s unwavering conviction.

Yaalon said the army had to consider the support of the Israeli public—unlikely to favor civilian deaths—and international legitimacy.... [Collateral] deaths, he said, shaped his thinking on Sept. 6, 2003. But his mother’s life played a more important role. Yaalon’s mother, a Holocaust survivor, was the only member of her family who was not killed by Nazis. She never talked about it, yet Yaalon absorbed a lesson from her. “I learned, ‘Remember and don’t forget.’ I drank it like mother’s milk. It meant that Jews shouldn’t be killed, but it also means that we don’t kill others. You need strength to defend Israel, and on the other hand, to be a human,” Yaalon said. “This is the tension, the heaviness of the decision.”

In this particular case, the decision-makers gambled that the Hamas leaders would meet on the top floor, which could be attacked with a small bomb to reduce collateral damage. The attack launched and there were no collateral deaths, but the meeting took place on the first floor and its members escaped with only light injuries.

Blumenfeld writes that as Hamas' spiritual leader claimed Sharon would "pay a price for this crime,"

Protesters waved giant green Hamas flags. They fired assault rifles into the air. They marveled at the miracle that their leaders had survived an Israeli airstrike. Up and down the Gaza Strip, people repeated the phrase: "Allah saved them."

Indeed, this example demonstrates several key elements of cognitive warfare. Over the course of years, Palestinian propagandists offensively used *taqiyya* to exacerbate intra-Israeli and Western tension about the number and nature of Palestinian civilian casualties. They achieved at least some success because the memplexes forming the latest Western moral constructs are 1) vulnerable to *taqiyya* and 2) highly sensitive when it comes to issues around collateral damage. Operating within those memetic constructs, Israeli decision-makers deliberately scaled back a military operation for lack of will, not capability.³⁴¹ In this case, the self-imposed restraint allowed the weaker military party to literally walk away from the fight. Decrying the IDF's "crime," the identity entrepreneur then reinvested energy from the attack by iterating the need for revenge (continued resistance) and he basked in an elevated righteousness confirmed by his "miraculous" salvation. Without suggesting that the IDF *should* have risked the collateral damage, analysts should note that Israel's self-restraint is at least a partial product of a Palestinian memetic offensive. Moreover, it might be said that the IDF and Israeli government spend more energy unconsciously complying with these moral directives—previously extant but manipulated by propagandists—than they do in combating the offending "fake" memes. Such an expenditure of moral energy clearly works to the benefit of the

³⁴¹ Note that the same memetic, moral constraints were entirely absent or somehow nullified in the mind of Hafez Assad, late President of Syria, who once ordered an attack on the Syrian town of Hama to root out the Muslim Brotherhood and set an example for other potentially sympathetic areas. Estimates on civilian casualties range from 10,000 to 20,000. See Friedman's *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, 76-79.

cognitive warriors, who, as David Galula noted, ironically do not have to hold themselves to the same standard.

CONCLUSION

Continuing with the Arab-Israeli conflict as a case study, this chapter was designed to show cognitive warriors working within their own societies to maintain their ideological engine's momentum, show some cultural memes that have been “weaponized” to attack and transform the opponent's discourse, and finally, suggest some ways in which the targets have enabled the transformation of that discourse.

Palestinian identity entrepreneurs have maintained ideological momentum by creating a national history framed in eternal resistance to the “Zionist entity.” It is, in essence, an identity born of opposition. As explained in previous chapters, the most critical elements in this opposition are derived from memes demanding Arab-Muslim dominance over Jews, the redress of dishonor precipitated by the inverse reality, and the re-invigoration of a perpetual, religious war against non-believers. Many of the particulars of Palestinian national identity are polemic fabrication, notably the memes for Holocaust denial and the ephemeral nature of the Jewish regional presence. The first meme is “designed” to sap moral legitimacy from Jewish postwar immigration and infuse the ensuing Palestinian resistance with its own legitimacy, while the second meme is “designed” to destroy any semblance of Jewish heritage—and therefore legitimacy—in the land.

The sheer volume of anti-Semitic, pro-conflict Arab-Muslim material, as well as the rarity of alternative, less “radical” Palestinian viewpoints suggests three possibilities. First, the militants have been at least partially successful in creating or transforming the Palestinian identity. The propaganda of Holocaust denial, Nazi-Zionist conspiracy theories, and Palestinian claims of Canaanite ancestry, grow out of and reinforce the natural tendency of the violence-identity cycle to form new societal identities (see chapter four). Deliberate attempts to incur civilian casualties, such as Hezbollah collocating rocket batteries with civilian structures during Israeli air strikes, and Arafat encouraging children with stones to “face the tank,” were transparent attempts to trade fraternal blood for increased cohesion, in addition to worldwide condemnation of Israel. Muhammad al Dura and Qana both demonstrated a large degree of success. Second, vitriolic material meets little resistance because militant ideology is closer to the Palestinian mainstream thought than commonly recognized by Western observers. This is because the memes promoted by militant ideologists are congruent with their constituents’ previously held paradigms. Third, militant organizations have squashed the growth of more moderate memes by way of intimidation, internal terror, and media control.

Deception has been indispensable in reframing Palestinian motives and long-term objectives so the West does not categorically reject them as incongruent with secular-liberal ideals. Palestinian resistant organizations have enjoyed at least some success, evidenced by the willingness of advocate journalists and NGOs to complement their efforts in shaping the Western discourse. Whether these particular advocates are unaware of the deep cultural and religious Palestinian motives, or whether they ignore them as a function of cognitive dissonance, well-meaning Western advocates have played a vital

role in augmenting propagandists' efforts. This will be explored more in the following chapter, with emphasis on the attempts of some jihadist organizations in the U.S. and Europe to appear moderate, and the cognitive paralysis that occurs when it becomes clear they are not. This chapter focused more on the direct, in-theater application of taqiyya to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Lastly, it should be noted that there is a difference between the type of deception illustrated in this chapter and that of the more classic battlefield approach, such as Operation Fortitude in World War II. The operation, which preceded the landing at Normandy, aimed to fool the Germans into thinking the invasion would be launched at Calais, the closest French geographical point to England. It entailed the construction of masses of fake tanks, army camps, and coded—but easily broken—radio signals.³⁴² In this kind of an operation, the intended audience is solely military and its effect can be classified as operational-to-tactical. In the end, it had strategic effects, but the operation's designers intended to bait and switch, not manipulate the collective German psyche or sway international opinion about the morality of the war. Moreover, it was still designed to enable one conventional force to overwhelm and destroy another. Hezbollywood and Pallywood, however, do not solely assist military operations. They effect victory by generating moral and psychological pressure in the military *and* the civilian enemy camps, as well as by moving international audiences to a favorable political disposition. In the case of Qana, Hezbollah successfully sidestepped significant mention of its own terrorist operations and focused international condemnation on the IDF.

³⁴² Robert Leckie, *Delivered From Evil: The Saga of World War II* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987), 672-673.

CHAPTER 8

THE MODERATE MEME OFFENSIVE, COGNITIVE PARALYSIS, AND DHIMMITUDE

The last chapter focused a great deal on deception in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but with particular emphasis on its operational applications. Delving a little more into deception, the first half of this chapter moves away from the blunt operational manifestations and toward some of the slight-of-hand, soft rhetoric used by related jihadist groups in other parts of the West, namely the U.S. and Europe. It seeks to demonstrate that jihadists have successfully targeted American and European politicians, academics, and journalists with deceptively moderate memes designed to infiltrate and disarm the Western discourse. They have managed to hide agendas that are not only pernicious to Israel, but to secular Western society as a whole. The second half of this chapter addresses the Western intelligentsia's reaction to evidence of the uncomfortable truth: cognitive dissonance and paralysis. In the end, it argues that the failure to confront these realities as they become progressively clearer constitutes a form of modern dhimmitude. That is, the failure to confront violence, violent rhetoric, and violent ideology represents unwitting submission to an Arab-Muslim agenda.

USE OF MODERATE MEMES

In times of particularly intense conflict the accepted discourses have naturally shifted toward the extreme. During the World Wars entire enemy populations became associated with rapacious destruction and evil, as were “the Hun” during WWI and the Japanese during WWII for Americans. In the current context, however, only the Arab-Muslim society maintains that it is now (and always has been) at war with Western society. Western society, for its part, continues to think of war in confined, sporadic terms—certainly, war is not perceived as a millennial imperative. Today the accepted Western discourse, with some exceptions, does not allow for the suggestion that it is in a civilizational war—such talk is generally denounced as racist or Islamophobic. Thenceforth, “extreme” rhetoric is permitted within the mainstream, Arab-Muslim discourse, while the Western discourse remains relatively unradicalized.

Professor Anna Geifman of Boston University observes the frequent appearance of a particular question after terrorist attacks: “What did we do to make them hate us?”³⁴³ The emergence of this question demonstrates not only that the Western discourse remains comparatively unmoved by even the violent manifestation of the war—there is little “mobilization” in the Western discourse when compared to WWI, WWII, or the current Arab-Muslim discourse—but also that it is decidedly vulnerable to hostile ideologists and their “moderate” supporters who indulge in answering the question. Few ask the more relevant question Landes suggests, which holds particular value for our own cognitive warriors: “What are they telling *themselves* that makes them hate us?” The accepted

³⁴³ Anna Geifman, “Stockholm Syndrome in the Media,” briefing presented through the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Herzliya, Israel, 17 December 2006.

pattern is to point out a variety of Western policies as the genesis of Arab-Muslim anger and conflict. This kind of thinking—not completely without value—stems from guilt-culture and maintains that we can find out “why they hate us” by opening a “dialogue,” and possibly even improve relations by admitting culpability. For this to be theoretically possible, the Western elite must find a moderate Arab-Muslim cadre to sit across the table, and because universalist memplexes insist that there is such a cadre, cognitive warriors happily provide them.

Stephen Coughlin suggests that the moderates of respective societies interact with each other to feed temperate, sometimes “soft,” impressions of the other culture back into their own society’s discourse (see chapter 2). There are also influential individuals and groups wholly aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas who use *taqiyya* to make themselves *appear* moderate by Western standards, that is, they pass themselves off as the best chance for “mutual understanding” and inter-societal progress. By appropriately aligning their memes for infiltration and infection, these groups and individuals soften Western policy-makers, academics, and journalists, most of whom are neither familiar with *taqiyya* nor the depth and extremity of the opposing ideology. These deceptively moderate elements are on the front lines of the cognitive war and arguably present the most dangerous, most capable threat to the West.

The Campus

Schleifer demonstrates that their activities represent one of the more “mastered” elements of cognitive warfare. During the first intifada, Palestinian leaders broke down their PSYOP target audiences into several subcategories. Western democratic audiences,

for instance, were divided between Arab-American/Europeans, opinion makers, Muslim groups, Jewish liberals, and the general public.³⁴⁴ Walid Shoebat's anecdote above gives some clue as to the extent of Fatah's message tailoring in the U.S., but Schleifer notes that Palestinians also study in Israeli universities. "One notable example is Ibrahim Karaeen, a leading Fatah member who in 1978 opened the Palestinian Press Service in East Jerusalem," to translate publications and give foreign correspondents a new, Palestinian perspective.³⁴⁵ Steven Emerson highlights some of the activities of the more infamous jihadists in the U.S., including Sami al Arian, a University of South Florida professor with strong ties to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and who has been taped shouting "death to Israel" in Arabic. Arian established two organizations dedicated "exclusively for educational and academic research and analysis, and promotion of international peace and understanding," which could easily have attracted the interest of unsuspecting students and academics.³⁴⁶

There is a multitude of organizations on Western campuses dedicated to boycotting Israeli products and Israeli academics. Their prevalence and several recent events have demonstrated the extent to which the Palestinian narrative has penetrated some campuses.³⁴⁷ Palestinian "trade unionists," representing a wide variety of professional, often leftist, associations in the territories, agitate internationally for Palestinian causes (they may do so on behalf of the PA, although this requires additional investigation), most commonly calling for intellectual and commercial boycotts of Israel

³⁴⁴ Schleifer, 130.

³⁴⁵ Schleifer, 68.

³⁴⁶ Steven Emerson, *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 111.

³⁴⁷ *Boycott Israel*, URL: <<http://www.mylinkspace.com/israel.html#ACA>>, accessed 28 June 2007. See also, "Palestinian Academics Call for the International Academic Boycott of Israel," *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*, 7 July 2004, URL: <<http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/news/article178>>, accessed 28 June 2007.

on humanitarian civil rights grounds. Recently, they received a significant moral boost when at least two British unions—the British University and College Union (UCU), claiming to speak for 120,000 British educators, and “UNISON,” a union claiming to represent 1.3 million public sector workers—passed similar resolutions calling for anti-Israel intellectual and military boycotts. They pledged support for the Palestinian “people’s right to self-determination and to establish a state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with its capital in Jerusalem.”³⁴⁸ Unions and activists such as these do not generally intend to support the *violent* activities of Palestinian ideologists, but from the ideologist’s perspective, that type of support is a tertiary concern. By way of international pressure, cognitive warriors seek only to trigger Israel’s self-imposed military restraint, which subsequently allows jihadists more freedom for their own military operations.

Lest the substantive connection between militants and apparently moderate organs like the trade unions mentioned above be doubted, it is important to remember the previous sections of this thesis which established the level of militant control over the Palestinian discourse. Even for genuinely independent groups with specialized causes, only memes that are in line with or beneficial to “radical” ideology may be permitted. Moreover, many jihadist groups have used deception to establish new groups that *appear* independent and moderate, but remain connected to and work for the benefit of their parent organization.

³⁴⁸ “Slamming Israel, Giving Palestinians a Free Pass,” *The Economist.com*, 14 June 2007, URL: <http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9340508>, accessed 28 June 2007. See also, “UNISON Pledges Support for Palestine,” *UNISON*, 20 June 2007, URL: <http://www.unison.org.uk/news/news_view.asp?did=3414>, accessed 2 July 2007. See also Barry Grey, “British university teachers’ union votes for boycott of Israeli academics,” *World Socialist Website*, 21 June 2007, URL: <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2007/jun2007/boyc-j21.shtml>>, accessed 2 July 2007.

The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood?

The Muslim American Society (MAS) is one such example. Formed in 1993, its “leadership was instructed to deny their affiliation with the [Muslim] Brotherhood, their strategy was to operate under a different name but promote the same ideological goals: the reformation of society through the spread of Islam, with the ultimate goal of establishing Islamic rule in America.”³⁴⁹ Like several other organizations claiming to serve as conduits for dialogue with American Muslims, the MAS was in fact established by the global Muslim Brotherhood movement, which, according to an *internal* memorandum made public at the Holy Land Foundation trial in Texas, wages

a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and “sabotaging” its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.”³⁵⁰

Perhaps the best known Brotherhood scion and arguably the most influential American Muslim organization is the Council for American Islamic Relations (CAIR). Established in 1994, this organization descended from yet another influential offshoot, the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP). According to another internal memorandum, the IAP “absorbed most of the [Muslim Brotherhood’s] Palestinian energy at the leadership and grassroots levels in addition to some of the brothers from other countries,” and it developed the Palestine Committee and Hamas, often described as a sister organization by the IAP’s leaders.³⁵¹ Given CAIR’s family history, it comes as no

³⁴⁹ “Muslim American Society: Dossier,” *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*, URL: <<http://www.investigativeproject.org/>>, accessed 4 June 2008.

³⁵⁰ *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation*, “An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America,” 22 May 1991, Government Exhibit 003-0003 3:04-CR-240-G.

³⁵¹ Transcript of FBI wire tap recording, presented at *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation*, Government Exhibit 016-0069 3:04-CR-240-G. See also *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation*, “Shura Council Report on the future of the Group: Work paper #1: A historical outline and the main issues,” 9 November 1991, Government Exhibit 003-0003 3:04-CR-240-G.

surprise that the Council is also active in Palestinian causes in its mission as interlocutor, but unlike other jihadist groups based in the U.S., its influence dramatically expanded after 9/11. A quick perusal of CAIR Pennsylvania’s website indicates that the organization has successfully bent the ear of over 50 senators, representatives, state governors, and city council members, all of whom “applaud CAIR’s mission to enhance understanding and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.” Even President Bush stated that it was his “honor to be meeting with leaders who feel just the same way I do... They love America just as much as I do.”³⁵²

This kind of adulation is common and poignantly shows the group’s success in penetrating the American discourse. Even the Muslim Brotherhood itself, the progenitor of virtually every significant, modern, violent, Sunni jihadist group, is frequently portrayed as a moderate organization



Figure 22. CAIR Meets With Local Law Enforcement in Tampa

Source: Saint Petersburg Times

committed to democratic ideals and peaceful transformation of society. One *Foreign Affairs* article written in this vein presents it as a viable alternative in “the anxious and often fruitless search for Muslim moderates,” and suggests that “policymakers should

³⁵² “What they say about CAIR,” *CAIR Pennsylvania*, undated, URL: <<http://pa.cair.com/index.php?Page=whattheysay&Side=about>>, accessed 4 June 2004.

recognize that the Muslim Brotherhood presents a notable opportunity.”³⁵³ This article, in fact, warrants a slightly closer look as it demonstrates that even those who have carefully studied a jihadist organization can fall prey to its claims of moderation.

An honest academic attempt to dissect the ideological war, Robert Leiken’s and Steven Brooke’s “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood” is not a purely apologetic look at the group. The fourteen page article suggests some interesting divides that might be exploited under the massive umbrella organization, traces an interesting history that presumably led the Brotherhood to reject violent jihad and embrace democratic means for acquiring power, and points to some of its leaders who refrained from inciting their constituents and even (outwardly) worked to control them in times of heightened tension. The authors even acknowledge that “many analysts... sensibly question whether the Brotherhood’s adherence to democracy is merely tactical and transitory—an opportunistic commitment to, in the historian Bernard Lewis’ words, ‘one man, one vote, one time.’”³⁵⁴ Like so many others who make similar attempts, however, Leiken and Brooke’s work suffers from at least two key flaws.

First, they make only passing and indirect reference to the phenomenon described at length in this thesis, *taqiyya*. They write, “A recent article in the journal *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* found worrying discrepancies between the English and Arabic versions of certain articles on the official Muslim Brotherhood Web site,” making it apparent that they, like other Westerners, began their analysis with little suspicion of systematic deception and merely stumbled across some apparently minor problems. Although the authors at least acknowledge that “Islamists have been accused” of a double

³⁵³ Robert Leiken and Steven Brooke, “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2007, Vol. 86 No. 2, 108.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 111.

discourse, the manner in which they diminish the claim shows they do not understand that taqiyya necessarily brings into question *all* the Brotherhood's externally targeted statements. Had Leiken and Brooke read the transcript for this meeting of the IAP's senior leaders, they might have given more credence to the claim.

I swear by your God that war is deception. War is deception. We are fighting our enemy with a kind heart and we never thought of deceiving it. War is deception. Deceive, camouflage, pretend that you're leaving while you're walking that way.... Deceive your enemy. [Another states:] This is like one who plays basketball; he makes a player believe that he is doing this while he does something else.... I agree with you. Like they say, politics is a completion of war.³⁵⁵

Second, they are either unaware of or conspicuously fail to address several key documents and key leader quotes which—despite their best and arguably successful efforts at deception—should destroy any semblance of the Brotherhood's moderation. The finest example, mentioned above, describes the group's pernicious effort to “destroy Western civilization,” a goal that remains in place despite the outward rejection of violence. But there are numerous quotes from the Brotherhood's and CAIR's key leaders which less-than-subtly suggest their underlying discourse is vitriolic and destructive. In a “Meeting Agenda for the Palestine Committee” in 1994, for instance, the Brotherhood flatly rejects the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993, equates normalization of Arab-Israeli relations with “surrender,” ironically suggests that Jewish attempts to establish dialogue are meant to break the Muslim psychological barrier, and proposes a plan to obstruct the peace process.

The Islamic and Arabic World is being overrun by a vigorous campaign to normalize the relations between the Muslims and the Arabs from one side, and the Zionist entity from another side.... Dr. Edward Sa'id, one of the participants in these dialogues, says that the Zionist organizations were planning this type of

³⁵⁵ Transcript of FBI wire tap recording, presented at *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation*, Government Exhibit 016-0069 3:04-CR-240-G.

dialogues in order to break the psychological barrier that the Arabs and Palestinians have so that they accept the Jews and their country.... [The counter-strategy is thus:] The activation of the role of (MAS) to educate the brothers in all work centers, mosques and organizations on the necessity of stopping any contacts with the Zionist organizations and the rejection of any future contacts.... An internal Brotherhood committee to fight the normalization of relations and monitor the brotherhood organizations and others, and giving advice to them in the best ways.... [The] attempt to stop the normalization that is happening under any umbrella. Activating the role of the Association [IAP] and its publications to take up its media role in this area.³⁵⁶

In 2004 Mohammed Mahdi Akef, the international Brotherhood's leader, made repeated statements calling for Israel's destruction, lauded Iraqi and Palestinian suicide bombers, and claimed that there is no evidence pointing to al Qaida's responsibility for 9/11.³⁵⁷

Between statements assuring the American public of their peaceful intentions and desire for dialogue, CAIR's own top leaders have betrayed an underlying perspective that defies moderation. According to a well-sourced article by Emerson, CAIR's chairmen, directors, and other key leaders have:

- Supported Saudi financial assistance to families of "martyrs."
- Used the term "zionazi" to describe Jews.
- Defended Holocaust denial and asserted that Jews control the media
- Invited neo-Nazis to speak at several conferences
- Repeatedly defended Yusuf al Qaradawi, who believes that "there should be no dialogue with [Israelis] except through swords," and has said, "these are not suicide operations... these are heroic martyrdom operations."
- Supports the concept of "blasphemy laws" which would "broaden the scope of anti-hate laws" to prohibit blasphemy directed at religious symbols, including cartoons depicting Mohammad.
- Claimed that violent resistance to Israel is necessary. In October 2000, Nihad Awad, a CAIR co-founder, attended a rally during which protesters shouted "Khaibar, Khaibar, Ya Yahud, Jaysh Muhammad Safayood" (Khaibar, Khaibar, O Jews, Muhammad's Army is coming for you).³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation*, "Meeting Agenda for the Palestine Committee," 30 July 1994, Government Exhibit 003-0078 3:04-CR-240-G.

³⁵⁷ Noreen Ahmed-Ullah, Same Roe and Lauri Cohen, "A rare look at secretive Brotherhood in America," *Chicagotribune.com*, 19 September 2004, URL: <<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/specials/chi-0409190261sep19,1,3910166.story?coll=chi-news-hed>>, accessed 4 June 2008.

³⁵⁸ Steve Emerson, "Leaders Illustrate CAIR's Extremism, Anti-Semitism," *IPT News*, 3 April 2008, URL: <<http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/120.pdf>>, accessed 5 June 2008.

Leiken and Brooke are by no means the only authors to miss these statements or fail to dig into jihadist's underlying motives, but I have used it as an example of jihadist success in penetrating, indeed, helping to form the Western discourse.³⁵⁹ One may conclude that these authors are victims of taqiyya and their willingness to unquestionably embrace the organization's potential for engagement is the intended product of their deceptive practices. It essentially demonstrates that these individuals' willingness, indeed their *need* to believe in the moderation of the Brotherhood for memetic salvation—dovetailed with the group's efforts to appear moderate.

Dissection of a Hamas Editorial

A recent editorial in the Washington Post by Mahmoud al Zahar, one of Hamas' co-founders, demonstrated the remarkable skill with which even genocidal Palestinians may frame their objectives in Western narratives. When Western icons like former President Carter subscribe wholeheartedly to the Palestinian narrative, and then pile on with words like “apartheid,” much of Hamas' work is done, or at least done for it. As words like this become part of the Western narrative and are reinforced by unwitting agents like Carter, Hamas appears less extreme when its members use similar or even more extreme terminology. In short order, Hamas' true objectives—none of which have softened—are quickly forgotten as al Zahar's plea to sit at the “peace” table is contrasted with Israel's seemingly unreasonable refusal to have them.

In the editorial al Zahar states negotiations cannot succeed if there are preconditions to sitting at the table—a reasonable statement on the face of it. But Hamas

³⁵⁹ For another example, albeit a less academic one, see Susan Taylor Martin, “With CAIR, compromise complicated,” *tampabay.com*, 23 September 2007, URL: <http://www.sptimes.com/2007/09/23/Worldandnation/With_CAIR__compromise.shtml>, accessed 5 June 2008.

has its own preconditions that would effectively eliminate the Jewish state legally and demographically before negotiations begin in earnest.

A “peace process” with Palestinians cannot take even its first tiny step until Israel first withdraws to the borders of 1967; dismantles all settlements; removes all soldiers from Gaza and the West Bank; repudiates its illegal annexation of Jerusalem; releases all prisoners; and ends its blockade of our international borders, our coastline and our airspace permanently. This would provide the *starting point* for just negotiations and would lay the groundwork for the return of millions of refugees.³⁶⁰ [emphasis added]

These demands, lest they appear extreme to western eyes, are placed much deeper in the letter and sandwiched between two softer, more palatable statements. The opening bracket is designed to demonstrate that Hamas is not in fact an anti-Semitic organization: “Judaism—which gave so much to human culture in the contributions of its ancient lawgivers and modern proponents of tikkun olam...” while the closing bracket appeals to our humanity: “I am eternally proud of my sons and miss them every day. I think of them as fathers everywhere, even in Israel, think of their sons—as innocent boys, as curious students, as young men with limitless potential—not as “gunmen” or “militants.”

It is difficult to know how the editorial was received by Western eyes, but one may reasonably count this salvo as a well-aimed one. Al Zahar managed to couch extreme objectives in a memetic configuration that the West is predisposed to accept. An observant reader will notice that nowhere in the letter is there any suggestion of Palestinian responsibility for the Palestinian plight, nowhere in the letter is there any indication that Hamas intends to compromise on any issue. In fact, if one is familiar with the long term, uncompromising quality of Palestinian strategies, the last line waxes particularly ominous, “As for the Israeli state and its Spartan culture of permanent war, it

³⁶⁰ Mahmoud al-Zahar, “No Peace Without Hamas,” *The Washington Post*, online ed., 17 April 2008, URL: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/16/AR2008041602899_pf.html>, accessed 20 June 2008.

is all too vulnerable to time, fatigue and demographics: In the end, it is always a question of our children and those who come after us.” To Westerners, this statement may seem innocuous. By design the inferred meaning is, “Israel cannot maintain its intransigence forever. We may fail, but our children will successfully reach a settlement.” For the Palestinian audience, the meaning is entirely different. It is that “Israel cannot hold out forever. We will outbreed them if we cannot first pick them apart with negotiation.”

COGNITIVE PARALYSIS: MEMETIC REACTION TO UNFORESEEN DHIMMITUDE

Litmus Tests for Western Minds

The surest sign of a cognitive campaign’s success is the enemy’s willing assistance. Geifman suggests the pliant behavior of Western journalists, among other members of the intelligentsia, constitutes a type of Stockholm Syndrome. She notes that questions such as the one noted above (“What did we do to make them hate us?”) bring home the responsibility for terrorism and avoid the uncomfortable exploration of the true underlying causes for jihadist ideologies. Her thinking parallels that of Bat Ye’or, who claims the political left, although meaning well, has essentially subjugated Western culture to the status of historical dhimmi by taking redress of Western colonial practices to an extreme. This is in excess of the tendency to *assume* that groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and CAIR are moderate. This is, in fact, a kind of suicidal, intellectual paralysis that occurs when incontrovertible evidence of pernicious motives surfaces. As an extreme form of cognitive dissonance, it is the stubborn tenacity of old, discredited memplexes to charge on in a self-destructive direction. It is the hope that those using

the West's own "miserable hands" to destroy it will become enlightened before the destruction is completed. It is, in essence, a strange, semi-conscious submission to *dicrocoelium dendriticum*, the parasite that drives ants to suicidal behavior. In a critical time, the discourse has excused practices and behavior that would not be tolerated from non-Muslim American/European or Israeli quarters (Amnesty International has effectively acknowledged this). As in the historical context of dhimmitude, the "subjects" dare not speak ill of Islam lest there be violent consequences—or accusations of racism or Islamophobia—and they make political and economic concessions without reciprocation.

The row over publication of the Danish cartoons depicting Mohammad and the subsequent apologies is probably the best-known illustration of this. In another example, then French interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy appeared reluctant to acknowledge the ethnic identity of many anti-Semitic attackers in 2003, stating, "Anyone who explains the resurgence of anti-Semitism by the Middle East conflict is saying something wrong. Anti-Semitism existed before the existence of Israel."³⁶¹ It is important to note that, at the time, the al Aqsa intifada raged and many of the anti-Semitic attacks in France were perpetrated with specific reference to it. Moreover, it was clear French Muslims constituted a disproportionate share of the attackers (see below). Sarkozy, known as a hard line conservative on immigration issues, shied away from acknowledging this and instead chose to refocus attention on Europe's pre-Muslim tradition of anti-Semitism. Whether for fear of treading on Muslim sensitivities, fear of being labeled Islamophobic,

³⁶¹ James Graff, "What's Causing the Anti-Semitic Attacks?" *Time in Partnership with CNN*, 24 November 2003, URL: <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,901031201-549088,00.html>>, accessed 13 February 2007.

or fear of sparking wider violence, Sarkozy's comments can be construed as a form of dhimmitude.

Other examples of contemporary dhimmitude include: the France 2 evening news program's failure to report the Muslim identity of most attackers in the 2005 riots, instead calling them "les jeunes" (the youths); the dietary provisions for Muslim students in a secular school system; non-Muslims fearfully moving out of neighborhoods due to intimidation; non-Muslims abstaining from wearing Christian or Jewish paraphernalia for fear of being attacked; Jews switching to friendlier schools with fewer radical students; and non-Muslims feeling compelled to use "non-Muslim bathrooms" to avoid retribution. Although it eventually happened, there was initially a lack of French institutional will to completely shut down al Manar, Lebanese Hezbollah's television station dedicated to disseminating anti-Semitic vitriol, propaganda about the eventual destruction of Israel, and videos glorifying gore and martyrdom.³⁶²

Some argue that the general coolness of the European discourse and policies toward Israel and US initiatives constitute a form of dhimmitude as well. The Madrid bombings of 2004 led to Prime Minister José María Aznar's electoral defeat and the subsequent Spanish withdrawal from Iraq. Although it is popularly maintained that the election upset and withdrawal were indirect consequences of the Spaniards' distrust for their government, jihadists quickly picked up on the violence=results equation, a lesson that falls squarely in the dhimmitude construct.³⁶³ French policies in the Middle East today trace their roots to decisions made by Charles de Gaulle after World War II, who

³⁶² Department of State, *Report on Global Anti-Semitism*, 5 January 2006, URL: <<http://www.state.gov/drl/rls/40258.htm>>, accessed 20 June 2008.

³⁶³ Paul Mitchell, "The Madrid bomb inquiry: Aznar continues his lies," *World Socialist Website*, 4 December 2004, URL: <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2004/dec2004/span-d04.shtml>>, accessed 13 February 2007.

desired that France remain an influential nation beholden to no superpower.³⁶⁴ In *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* Bat Ye'or argues that Europe, led by France, willfully and deliberately conceded the political and academic discourse about Israel to Arabs. The concession was demanded as part of the price for increased economic and political ties that the French desired to counterweigh U.S. global influence and re-secure their prominence. The Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD), a concept floated by the French shortly before the 1973 war in Israel, gained true significance when Europe sought to escape—through dialogue and concession—the oil embargo resulting from that War. Arab partners in the EAD and other dialogue bodies made no secret of the fact that cooperation was contingent chiefly on European anti-Israel rhetoric and policies, but there were other important concessions as well.³⁶⁵

European intellectuals, who may not have fully understood the hegemonic nature of jihad, supported not only the establishment of large Muslim-Arab communities on European soil, but the development of education centers espousing jihad. Ye'or writes:

The educational and cultural programs of the European Islamic Centers, which were introduced by the EAD into European schools, seem to reflect the concept of the Jihad (Holy War) Fund [envisioned by Mohammed Hasan Mohammed al Tohami, who sought to help Muslims resist “alien thought and foreign ideology”]. These programs were wholeheartedly embraced, applied and monitored by European leaders, intellectuals, and activists.³⁶⁶

With the Arab-Muslim presence in Europe now firmly established and the accepted discourse arguably anti-Israel, at least half of the joint vision may have been achieved. Ye'or would probably argue that Europe failed to use the Arab world to counter U.S.

³⁶⁴ Bat Ye'or, “Symposium: The Death of Multiculturalism?” *FrontPageMagazine.com*, 8 September 2006, URL: <<http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles>>, accessed 11 February 2007.

³⁶⁵ Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, (Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 73-74.

³⁶⁶ Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, (Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 76-77.

influence, but the Arab world nonetheless achieved disproportionate influence in European circles. There often appears to be a level of respect for Arab-Muslim sensitivities that would not be afforded to Jews or other non-Muslims. It is not uncommon to hear suggestions that fears of a violent Arab “street” at least in part drive European, particularly French, political decisions. Even if Europeans do not see it as such, the subordination of Europe’s political and cultural discourses to Arab-Muslim demands—sometimes for fear of violent retribution—constitutes a form of dhimmitude from the classical Arab-Muslim perspective.

But it does not stand alone as a meme. As explained in chapter three, otherwise independent ideas can increase their fitness by becoming associated with other strong concepts, thus forming memplexes that are less easily broken apart. In this case, the meme for dhimmitude often goes hand in hand with memes for anti-Semitism, even from the unlikely quarters of other potential dhimmi: Christians. There are numerous authors who effectively argue that the old form of anti-Semitism has not disappeared, rather it has evolved. Particularly in Europe, anti-Semitism of the “traditional” Nazi variety, which is not part of the accepted discourse, has given way to a “new” anti-Semitism. It is no less virulent or dangerous, but because it is led by the Arab-Muslim world (including the world of Muslim immigrants), it is tacitly approved of or excused by Western intellectual elites who are intellectually paralyzed by memes prohibiting criticism of minorities. Rather than discussing the cultural and religious roots of Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism and how it blends with the traditional home-grown variety, the accepted discourse now downplays the seriousness of Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism by characterizing it as a natural consequence of Israeli injustices. When vitriolic statements or actions,

considered unacceptable within Western circles come from Arab-Muslim sources, they are often permitted or dismissed as insignificant. This is classic cognitive dissonance, and it appears to have immobilized the Western intelligentsia.

This phenomenon appears at first glance to be more pro-Arab apologia than anti-Semitic prejudice, but the attitude typically extends toward a categorical condemnation of Israel and often circles back to burden European Jews, who are assumed responsible for perceived Israeli transgressions. Anecdotally, when Israeli security forces allegedly shot Muhammad al Dura, French Jews were commonly asked, “Why did *you* kill that boy?” Apparently, the epithet “*sale Juif*” (dirty Jew) is still lobbed with ease, and discussants defending Israel in public risk being “accused” of being Jewish or a Mossad agent.³⁶⁷ Incidents like these stem from a permissive environment, one that reportedly led my NATO colleague, a French lieutenant colonel, to publicly let loose a string of toxic accusations about the “satanic” character of Israel, which “deserved everything it got.” It is apparent that the meme for anti-Semitism did not die at the end of World War II, and it can be considered a virile one that augments and thrives among dhimmi. From an ideological perspective, Christian anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist discourse may be an indicator of dhimmi-like submission—as would be mainstream silence over Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism—and some success.

³⁶⁷ Richard Landes, Boston University Professor, interview by the author, December 2006. Anecdotally, a French air force captain—who ironically believed in Meyssan’s 9/11 conspiracy—confirmed for me that one does not typically side with Israel in public without derision. See also, Richard Landes, “Falling Asleep in the Skid: Reflections on France Part VI,” *The Augean Stables*, 29 March 2006, URL: <<http://www.theaugeanstables.com/2006/03/29/falling-asleep-in-the-skid-reflections-on-france-part-v/>>, accessed 20 June 2008.

Litmus Test for Arab-Muslim Minds

Within the memplexes forming the Western discourse, it is assumed that all victims of inequality wish ultimately to achieve equality. This is not necessarily the case, however. The presence of anti-Semitism in minority communities illustrates that equality is a normative ideal not necessarily shared by all. In this case, anti-Semitism in Europe can serve as a Litmus test for global Muslim attitudes towards other minority groups, demonstrating either concurrence with or the success of Jihadists' efforts. Traditionally carried out by right-wing, white groups such as the neo-Nazis, skinheads, or particularly fervent followers of France's late Jean-Marie le Pen, anti-Semitism has been common in Europe since World War II, even if openly shunned by the mainstream culture. The recent advent of increased Muslim immigration in Europe, however, has ushered in a new wave of attacks and a different group of anti-Semitic perpetrators.

A State Department describes the changing nature and increasing prevalence of anti-Semitic attacks:

The increasing frequency and severity of anti-Semitic incidents since the start of the 21st century, particularly in Europe, has compelled the international community to focus on anti-Semitism with renewed vigor. Attacks on individual Jews and on Jewish properties occurred in the immediate post World War II period, but decreased over time and were primarily linked to vandalism and criminal activity. In recent years, incidents have been more targeted in nature with perpetrators appearing to have the specific intent to attack Jews and Judaism. These attacks have disrupted the sense of safety and well being of Jewish communities.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Department of State, *Report on Global Anti-Semitism*, 5 January 2006, URL: <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/40258.htm>>, accessed 20 June 2008. The current French Jewish population rests just below 500,000, but it has been dropping by thousands each year because of the rise in discrimination. According to the Jewish Agency, roughly 2,500 Jews opted to depart France both in 2005 and 2006. As a point of comparison, approximately 2,300 Jews left the United States for Israel during each year of the same period, but the U.S. Jewish population totals nearly 5.6 million. The current trends in French Jewish emigration are nearly double those of the 1990s, and according to one poll, approximately one quarter of remaining French Jews were considering leaving the country as of 2003. Stuart A. Green, Lieutenant, USN, "(Student) National Intelligence Estimate," unpublished research paper funded by JMIC, 30 January 2007.

Mentioned briefly above, the French *Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme* (National Consultative Commission for the Rights of Man, or CNCDH), states anti-Semitic attacks remain continually elevated near record levels and, despite Jews representing less than 1 percent of the French population, constitute 62 percent of all racist attacks in the country.³⁶⁹ There are clear indications that European Muslims are conducting disproportionately large numbers of anti-Semitic attacks. According to the same organization, French police estimate Muslims conduct 26.8 percent of the attacks, although Muslims only constitute about 8 percent of the population. These figures are somewhat unreliable due to prohibitions on the collection of ethnic or religious data, however.³⁷⁰ It was mentioned in chapter two that one poll, whose reliability has not been determined, indicates 37 percent of British Muslims believe British Jews are “legitimate targets as part of the ongoing struggle for justice in the Middle East.”³⁷¹ Additionally, 2006 turned out to be a record year for anti-Semitic attacks in the UK, linked partially to the August Israeli-Hezbollah war.³⁷² According to one report, 76 out of 205 victims claimed they were attacked by individuals of ethnicities commonly associated with Muslims.³⁷³

³⁶⁹ Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme (National Advisory Commission for the Rights of Man), *La Lutte Contre le Racisme et la Xénophobie*, (The Fight Against Racism and Xenophobia), 2004, 9-10. Translation is mine.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Populus, “Muslim Poll: December 2005,” December 2005, URL: <http://www.populuslimited.com/poll_summaries/2006_02_07_times.htm>, accessed 30 January 2007.

³⁷² Jeevan Vasagar, “Anti-Semitic Attacks Hit Record High Following Lebanon War,” *Guardian Unlimited*, 2 February 2007, URL: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,2004144,00.html>>, accessed 11 February 2007.

³⁷³ Jonny Paul, “UK: Anti-Semitic Attacks Up 31%,” *Jerusalem Post*, online ed., 1 February 2007, URL: <<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull&cid=1167467868048>>, accessed 11 February 2007.

Anti-Semitic thought and practice appears to be far more prevalent in Muslim communities than among native Europeans. The carelessness with which young and older Muslim students sling Judeophobic epithets appeared to shock Education Minister Jean-Pierre Obin (see chapter four), and it indicates the hatred stems from far more than political disagreements over situations in the Middle East. Owing at least in part to the growing influence of radical imams, or “big brothers,” young Muslims increasingly believe that Jews deserve the lowest of positions in society, and they can clearly draw on well-established sources to legitimize that position. It is important to note that Christians and Jews effectively occupied the same social stratum beneath Muslims in classic times. There is a possibility that, in the long view, anti-Semitic attackers are also latent anti-Christian attackers, but the current dominance of Christian/secular culture in Europe prevents overt manifestations beyond riots and protests. European Jews, however, are an extreme minority and ill equipped to stop anti-Semitism. The prevalence of Arab-on-Jew attacks, therefore, may be another indicator of ideologists’ success in radicalizing their constituents.

CONCLUSION

Jihadist efforts to transform the accepted Western discourse have achieved at least some success by attracting and enlisting the support of moderates, and expertly employing taqiyya against unsuspecting targets. In the previous chapter we saw that cognitive warriors have created new realities with propaganda channeled through individuals bridging the cultural gap. That included, among others, advocate journalists

and NGO members. In this chapter we see that organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood and CAIR take the memetic offensive to the confines of Western society by advertising themselves as moderate interlocutors, ostensibly representing reasonable Islamists who seek “dialogue and understanding.” Many of these movements appear credible because they seem to originate within Western society and are believed to be distinct from “extreme” points of view. Others, like the Palestinian trade unions, at least present a front that is memetically acceptable to Western intellectuals.

The cognitive dissonance arises when evidence comes to light that is not consistent with the prevailing memetic paradigms, i.e. that jihadists are waging more than a defensive war and that seemingly moderate groups and the masses following them are not behaving in moderate ways. The western mind is paralyzed because the inconsistencies cannot be accounted for and, more importantly, they are incompatible with the prevailing universalist paradigm. It would be a shocking and perhaps painful experience for universalists to admit that not all humans are driven by the same motivations, or that humans do not all fundamentally think alike. Rather than memetically adapting, however, advocates of the accepted discourse retrench themselves and ignore the contravening evidence presented to them or diminish its significance.

Because that mentality leads to Western apology for behavior and thought considered unacceptable by Western standards, it can easily be considered an unwitting, though a willing, form of submission to jihadist goals. Bat Ye’or, therefore, is correct to call it a form of Dhimmitude. In one sense, this is the endstate militant ideologists seek to achieve, although it is nothing close to the desired magnitude. In another sense, this is the precise point at which identity entrepreneurs begin reinvesting their energy, starting

the cycle anew. Success, so goes the saying, breeds more success. If European and American elites bend to the will jihadists, those jihadists will be able to advertise their successes to their own populations, thus feeding the ideological engine. Perhaps this is why the Obin report remarked that the French school system saw positive results when it refused to make concessions to the Islamists.

CHAPTER 9

CALLING A RED SPADE A RED SPADE: THE RELEVANCE TO INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS AND POLICY

As stated in the first chapter, the original research question asked, “To what extent is Israel losing its battle for public perception and why?” I changed that when it became apparent that perception was important, but only a piece of a much larger phenomenon needing exploration. Questions lingered, such as why some media stories appear to take root and proliferate while others fail to become known, despite their apparent significance; what calculus Arab-Muslim identity entrepreneurs use when they made decisions that do not conform to the Western “rational actor” model; and why do Western intelligentsia ascribe Western values and motivations to Arab-Muslims in cases where there is little commonality. Recognizing the relevance of these questions, but wanting to keep the thesis anchored in the realm of defense, I asked a different research question: “At the strategic level, how can Arab-Muslim militants achieve victory in their quest to destroy Israel and expel the U.S. from the Middle East in view of the vast, objective military superiority of the two nations they seek to defeat?” There is, of course, an implied answer to this question and it is quite broad: Arab-Muslim militants are using more than their militaries to defeat us and they are only symbolically attacking ours.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ This is not meant to diminish the intensity of combat, weariness, frustration, and pain experienced by U.S. service members fighting our GWOT, rather to point out that the enemy has a long way to go before it can hope for a U.S. *military* surrender, and that their violence must therefore be for another—more symbolic—purpose.

The hypothesis submitted in chapter one is therefore: “Given their objectively weaker military capabilities, Arab-Muslim militants are seeking strategic victory in their struggle against the U.S. and Israel in the cognitive domain of war.”

To explain how they do this I offer three basic models, all of which are cemented together with Richard Dawkin’s concept of the meme. The first model suggests that violent ideology can be borne of a wide variety of motivating factors, each of which contribute in varying degrees to a mixture that key personalities ignite. Although this may provoke a “no kidding” response in my critics, it should be kept in mind that to date historians have tended to focus on just a handful of motivating factors, even when arguing for a universal construct. These factors may be accurate when applied to one or a few conflicts, but rarely can they be applied at universal levels. The ideological engine model offered here truly is universal in that it can accept many different combinations and degrees of motivating “fuel” and it does not have to include all the factors in every conflict. The traditionally understood factors such as poverty and military occupation still have a place, and I take it one step further by giving previously taboo elements due consideration. In fact, because the other motivating factors are generally part of the accepted discourse, this thesis argues only for the accession of culture and religion to co-equal status (chapter five).

Whatever the combination, these factors blend into an explosive mixture which is ignited by persuasive individuals—identity entrepreneurs—who promise restored honor, a new identity, improved economic conditions, etc. The violence that unsurprisingly flows from this violent ideology then polarizes society into opposing camps and galvanizes respective constituents into supportive action. As the conflict wears on and, in

all likelihood, conditions deteriorate for the rebellious population, identity entrepreneurs harness the increased discontent and reinforce the original motivating factors. If conditions improve for their constituents, the entrepreneurs are just as likely to harness that as a form of validation. Perceived success in battle and concessions from the enemy can be tremendously empowering for violent ideologists. For that reason policymakers and analysts must beware that not all peace offers will be received with gratitude, and some may be cynically taken as a green light to intensify the violent struggle. The longer the struggle endures, the more the resistance-based identity entrenches and easier it is for violent memes to root—for any culture.

As explained in the second and third models, the violent ideologist's primary cognitive target is their enemy's accepted discourse, but maintaining control over their own people's discourse is also vital for ensuring their ideology's memetic survival. In the Palestinian territories, militants have effectively eliminated competing memes, e.g. those questioning the worth of the violent struggle against Israel, through fratricidal violence and the invocation of powerful religious and honor-based cultural tenets demanding war in their current predicament. The effect has been to ensure that the accepted Palestinian discourse is far more closely aligned with propaganda than any empirical truth. This thesis discussed in some detail, for instance, the prevalence of Holocaust denial and other historical fabrications in Palestinian mainstream discourse. As for the ideologist's primary target—their enemy's accepted discourse—I have attempted to show how witting and unwitting Westerners alike have been used to achieve jihadist objectives. Through direct media manipulation, deception, the use of advocate

journalists and NGOs, as well as academics, jihadists have had at least some success in infiltrating and transforming the Western discourse.

Palestinian organizations, as well as others spawned by the Muslim Brotherhood, have pushed their success even further with cynical, deliberately deceptive attempts to appear moderate and aligned with Western value systems. The last model explains how such efforts, that is, efforts designed to woo well-meaning “moderates,” represent the pointiest part of the cognitive spear. If cultural interlocutors such as former President Carter or noted Islamic scholar John Esposito can be memetically infected to any significant degree they will carry those memes back to their general population and, eventually, to the policymakers as well. The more established those memes, the more it becomes part of the intellectual environment, the accepted discourse, and eventually the prevailing political ideology as well. The previous chapter discussed briefly some manifestations of their success, including an apologetic Western discourse, and how it reflects a form of dhimmitude—the endstate jihadists seek.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In the end, the most important work to be done is finding a solution: a good memetic defense and a devastating memetic offense. My identification of the problem is only the beginning of an understanding, but there should be a sense of urgency in analysts and policymakers that drives them to snatch the strategic initiative from jihadists, even as they work to understand the intricacies of what I have described. Serious thinkers will need to consider the kind of national-level organizations necessary for such an endeavor,

as well as the strategic, operational, and tactical means they will use to win this war. Thinkers will have to determine what disciplines to bring to the effort, what caliber of analyst and decision-maker should be involved, how to navigate existing laws on this type of activity, what new kinds of laws and funding will be necessary, how to weave the effort into the activities of preexisting departments and agencies, etc. Success in this new arena will require nothing short of a monumental effort.

My suggestions for future research would include an examination Palestinian public opinion. Specifically, how Palestinian public opinion evolves, under what circumstances, how fast or slow it is to do so, whether it is fickle or enduring, and whether shifts in public opinion can be linked to types of events. I would do the same for the Israeli public, and then for both I would make sure to discriminate between the opinions of various strata and interest groups in those societies. For other analysts picking up where this thesis leaves off, some work has been done to this end.³⁷⁵ From the defense perspective, however, any work done on public opinion in the future should probably be done in the context of memetics, and with an eye towards defensive/offensive memes and their effectiveness.

This thesis discussed the importance of bias in the media and it mentioned that there have been jihadist efforts to leverage university systems, but there is more work to be done here as well. Our own cognitive warriors may want to monitor the progression of jihadist memes as they move through mainstream academic literature, as the presence of jihadist apology in the Western academic discourse may be considered an ancillary indicator of jihadist success. Professors are excellent tools for memetic reproduction as

³⁷⁵ See, for instance, David A. Jaeger and others, *The Struggle for Palestinian Hearts and Minds: Violence and Public Opinion in the Second Intifada*, Study, IZA DP No. 3439, April 2008.

their audiences are somewhat controlled and available for more than televised soundbites; if successful, their progeny go forth and augment their efforts. Like journalists, professors are expected to remain unbiased in their research and analysis, but like all humans, they are susceptible to the effects of memetic filtration and self-protective paradigms. Just the use of the term jihadist, for example (used throughout this thesis, no less), can be considered a small jihadist victory. P. W. Singer and Elina Noor note the honor it confers upon the radical militants and ask us to “Imagine if Franklin D. Roosevelt had taken to calling Adolf Hitler the ‘leader of the National Socialist Aryan patriots’ or dubbed Japanese soldiers fighting in World War II as the ‘defenders of Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.’”³⁷⁶

Lest this observation seem hyperbolic, readers may recall the many examples provided in this thesis of authors and journalists deliberately highlighting the best and avoiding the worst facets of their jihadist subjects. Not infrequently, reporters refrain from using the term “terrorist” for even the most extreme militant organizations—such as Hamas—noting instead that “some governments consider” them terrorist organizations.³⁷⁷ This kernel of doubt about the veracity of the terrorist label—even for an organization that seeks to instill *terror* by claiming and glorifying their deliberate targeting of civilians—is a testament to the successes of the Palestinian cognitive effort. Works succeeding this one might consider a quantitative method for tracking such memetic infiltration.

³⁷⁶ P. W. Singer and Elina Noor, “What Do You Call a Terror (Jihad)ist?,” *The New York Times*, online ed., 2 June 2008, URL: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/02/opinion/02singer.html>>, accessed 17 June 2008.

³⁷⁷ To see the prevalence of this meme, type “consider Hamas a terrorist organization,” with the quotation marks, into an internet search engine and scan the results.

I will also admit that for a thesis which claims violent ideology is the enemy's center of gravity in cognitive warfare, it did little justice to the important, cascading, psychological effects of the violence itself. Hanle's *Terrorism: The Newest Face of Warfare* thoroughly examines those effects, and other works have made vital contributions, but a treatment here would significantly shore up my discussion of the violence-identity cycle. Future analysts will need to examine literature that explores the manner in which violence galvanizes and polarizes societies, as well as the manner in which *individuals* are drawn to violent ideology. For this last aspect in particular, analysts may want to consider starting with Quintan Wiktorowicz' *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*, an excellent work that explains the socialization process attracting Muslims to radical movements in the West. We should not limit our exploration to the effects of violent acts perpetrated by non-state actors, however. Western powers might consider more carefully how to conduct their own acts of violence and for what memetic purpose. Incidentally, it is not safe to assume that reducing the number and intensity of Western military operations will have a positive memetic effect.

MEMETIC MANIPULATION

One other critical area not covered in this thesis is that of an Islamic reformation. Chapter five belabors the fact that jihadists have orthodox Islam and several key elements of Arab culture on their side, but the intent is not to imply that all Arab-Muslims march in lock step or that their minds cannot be changed. Quite the contrary, this thesis attempts to demonstrate how thoroughly a society's mind *can* be changed. It may be difficult to

change Arab-Muslim minds given the strength of their self-protective memes and remarkable societal cohesion, but if analysts and policymakers take the concept of cognitive warfare seriously and persistently, weaknesses can be found. Some of those weaknesses likely exist along the faultlines of major philosophical movements, and students of Islam can no doubt identify them. The most obvious is the Sunni-Shiite rift, but there are cleavages within each of those camps as well. There are even differences within extremist camps that may be exploited with the proper knowledge and right approach.

For reasons that are mentioned in the cautionary section below, however, these efforts will yield only limited fruit. Ultimately, the West needs an empowered Islamic memeplex that does not doctrinally call for its subjugation, however much it calls for the destruction of rival Islamist ideologies. Policymakers would do well, therefore, to not get sucked into ideological squabbles between Islamists that essentially leave us in the same place. If there are no viable, useful ideologies available, we must be willing to begin a memetic campaign that creates one, or several. This may entail manipulating the constituent parts of culture and religion—memes—in order to prepare the way for ideologies more in our favor. For instance, the Arab sense of shame and the Islamic prohibitions against slandering or killing fellow Muslims could make it easier to introduce memes castigating Palestinian leaders doing precisely this. Some of this has probably been tried at the PSYOP level, but not at the strategic-societal level to my knowledge. Certainly it has not been done as part of a plan that spans several generations. Of course, some of this will need to be executed with a degree of cynicism and secrecy. Advocates of the transparent, secular-liberal ideal may not sleep well

knowing this, but it is necessary if infectious memes are to enjoy credibility in their target populations. Memes even perceived to be part of a “Zionist conspiracy” will be flatly rejected, taking any associated memes with them and destroying the larger effort.

Difficulties will arise when dealing with the fact that radical Islamists have orthodox Islam on their side. The number of Koranic verses calling for tolerance and peace outnumbers those calling for intolerance and jihad, but as long as the doctrinal concept of abrogation nullifies them, it will be difficult for those memes to compete on even ground. Cognitive warriors, working with scholars, will have to devise ways negate the effect of the abrogation meme. The same applies to the protective memes prohibiting selective interpretation of the Koran and Hadith. That is, cognitive warriors must find a way to unequivocally nullify the violent and pernicious precedents set by Muhammad. Perhaps scholars could study the mechanisms that moved the West away from Biblical literalism (at least for a time) and see if they can be applied to Islam. Given Muhammad’s, the Koran’s and the Hadith’s untouchable status, as well as Muslim sensitivity around these issues, cognitive warriors will have to search hard and carefully. Such an effort would be the pointy end of the West’s memetic offensive.

A WORD OF CAUTION

A word of caution may be prudent here for the policymaker in particular: it should never be assumed that empowering an opposition party, group, or element will lead to gratitude and a long-term alliance. Arab-Muslims opposed to al Qaida today, for instance, are no more our friends by default than the Arab fighters who once engaged the

Soviets with our assistance and returned to wage a holy war against the West. As cliché as it may be, it is still worth reiterating that policymakers and analysts must consider the long view, that is, determine whether the exploiter is not in fact the exploited. Western history is replete with examples of short-lived treaties, overturned alliances, and broken agreements, so it should come as no surprise when this is inflicted *on* Westerners by pious adherents of a faith that codifies and legitimizes the practice (see the brief chapter seven reference to the treaty of Hudaibiya, the discussions of taqiyya and deception throughout the thesis, and chapter five's exploration of jihad's righteous and enduring character). Perhaps even more importantly, memetic manipulators seeking to pit Islamist reformers against orthodox militants *must* consider whether the stated intent to reform or introduce a kinder, more moderate, or West-friendly version of Islamism is not, in fact, another able demonstration of taqiyya. Chapter eight exposes some of the more pressing examples of this tactic, as practiced by the Muslim Brotherhood and CAIR, and it highlights how members of the intelligentsia are susceptible to it.

Additionally, from the defense perspective, it may be prudent to separate the desire to morally, spiritually, or materially uplift the global human condition from the need to ideologically incapacitate those who would obstruct our vision of that endstate. Many call for a U.S. foreign policy based on human rights, for instance. The universal enjoyment of human rights is indeed a worthy goal for cognitive warriors to work toward, but the unqualified, immediate implementation of every freedom articulated in the U.S. Bill of Rights in every situation around the globe can be disastrous. Democracy imposed prematurely, that is, democracy imposed before the successful rooting of its accompanying memes (respect for and the dominance of secular law, protection of

minority rights, an independent judiciary with sufficient power, a free press, etc.), can lead to the empowerment of *even* more oppressive tyrants with more destructive ideologies.

This nearly came to pass in Algeria during the 1990s, where Islamists won an election that was subsequently canceled by the ruling power, precipitating a brutal civil war and a sustained campaign of deliberate massacres. Elections in Gaza have validated Hamas' ideology, which shows no signs of the moderation onlookers hoped would follow from democratic participation, and in several major Muslim countries there are large majorities which appear to favor the *strict* imposition of Sharia. Notably, this is the case in Egypt and Pakistan, where 74 and 79 percent respectively support Sharia's application.³⁷⁸ Aside from the provisions for dhimmi and taqiyya, Sharia (Islamic holy law) has not been extensively explored in this thesis. What has been covered is sufficient to show that in its orthodox form, Sharia is incongruent with Western democracy insofar as it categorically rejects minorities as equal and limits their freedom of worship. Moreover, Islamists favoring short-term democratic participation (in order to achieve power) tend to avoid the question of democracy's fate after Islamist dominance is achieved. With this in mind policymakers must understand the difference between the desired, democratic endstate and the need to introduce democratic memes slowly and judiciously. Democracy may be one bridge too far for today in some places, that is, we must first work on negating its destructive ideological obstacles.

³⁷⁸ World Public Opinion.org, *Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and al Qaeda*, 24 April 2007, URL: <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/apr07/START_Apr07_rpt.pdf>, accessed 16 June 2008.

FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ANALYST AND THE ACADEMIC: SEE THE RED SPADE

In 1949, Jerome S. Bruner and Leo Postman of Harvard University conducted a simple, but brilliant experiment that has yet to receive the attention it deserves. The experimenters exposed their subjects to brief images of playing cards, interspersing anomalous variations, such as red spades or black hearts, with the standard versions. The subjects were to identify

everything they saw, but incorrect identifications would result in the same image being flashed for a slightly longer duration. The image would keep repeating for progressively longer durations until the subject at last identified it correctly, anomalous

characteristics and all. The results of the experiment were stunning, and to this day have enormous implications

for the understanding of human perception and knowledge of environment. Subjects noticed and correctly identified the anomalous cards at the shortest exposures only about 20 percent of the time. Otherwise, the subjects supplanted what they expected to see for the images actually shown to them. A red spade would be reported as a black spade, or if something seemed awry, reported as a compromise—anything from “black with red

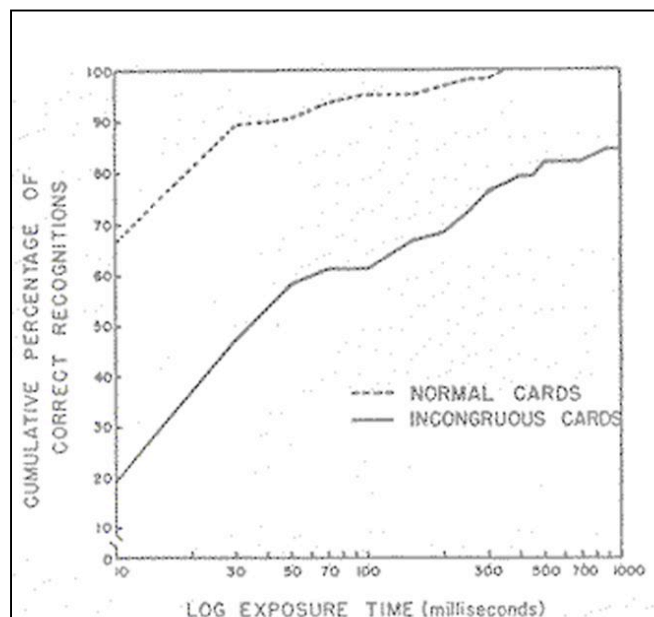


Figure 23. Recognition Thresholds

Source: *Classics in the History of Psychology*

edges” to “brown.” At the longest exposure all the subjects identified the legitimate cards, but failed to recognize the anomalous cards approximately 20 percent of the time. Bruner and Postman observed that their subjects knew *something* was anomalous but could not figure out precisely what it was. Several experienced frustration, one even going so far as to say, “I can’t make the suit out, whatever it is. It didn’t even look like a card that time. I don’t know what color it is now or whether it’s a spade or heart. I’m not even sure now what a spade looks like! My God!” Bruner and Postman concluded what may now seem obvious, if unacknowledged:

...perceptual organization is powerfully determined by expectations built upon past commerce with the environment. When such expectations are violated by the environment, the perceiver’s behavior can be described as resistance to the recognition of the unexpected or incongruous.³⁷⁹

In other words humans tend to see what they expect to see, and when that does not exist, they still tend to see it. Only the most extreme anomalies, presented in relatively forceful ways, may catch our attention, and even then, they may not register correctly. As J. M. Balkin might argue, individuals may change their expectations, but they may never be entirely free of them. Expectations—some would call them “common sense”—are the product of lifetimes built on repeated teachings or experiences. In a word: culture.

In 1962, Thomas Kuhn incorporated this notion into a new construct for explaining the transformation of scientific knowledge not as a cumulative process, but a revolutionary one.³⁸⁰ Kuhn felt the Bruner and Postman experiment ably demonstrated

³⁷⁹ Jerome S. Bruner and Leo Postman (1949), “On the Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm,” *Classics in the History of Psychology*, ed. Christopher D. Green, URL: <<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Bruner/Cards/>>, accessed 3 July 2007.

³⁸⁰ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

that “paradigms” (in this context Kuhn meant theoretical frameworks with rules and expectations that guide research and explain discoveries) may prevail long after counter-intuitive discoveries begin to chip away at their validity. Prominent scientists who have invested their entire lives in, indeed established their reputations on, a particular way of thinking will resist acknowledging that which disproves or requires modification of their favored paradigm. There comes a point, however, when the amount of incongruent information reaches a critical mass, demanding a new interpretive construct: a new paradigm.

In their nascent stages, most paradigms attempt to incorporate the discoveries considered incongruent with the previous manner of thought. As Kuhn states, “Paradigms gain their status because they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute.”³⁸¹ The new way of thinking may not be reconciled with the previous paradigm, and although it appears to be an improvement, neither is it complete. Scientists make their careers out of “mopping up” the details with subsequent discoveries, effectively establishing the new paradigm as the dominant one in the process. Inevitably, however, the cycle begins again as the number of incongruent discoveries grows and forces some level of recognition or cognitive paralysis (“I can’t make the suit out, whatever it is... My God!”).

Such is the quandary of analysts and academics. As discussed extensively in chapter two, students are effectively prohibited from arriving at uncomfortable conclusions about the genesis of a threat, compelled to either consciously or subconsciously ignore otherwise obvious factors. Restricted to universalist explanations

³⁸¹ Kuhn, 23.

that draw no distinctions between cultures or religions, analysts force their discoveries through the existing, politically correct paradigm. The anomalous factors, such as the fact that violent jihad is a moral imperative, or that lying is a cultural, religiously codified practice, go unnoticed, are discarded, or are scornfully dismissed as analogous to Western practices. A colleague of mine once said to me that it is “dangerous” to even suggest Arab-Muslims might be more inclined toward violence in some situations. In another conversation, an individual with decades of Middle Eastern diplomatic experience privately admitted, “I know in my heart that Arabs lie more, but I don’t see how you can prove it.” Indeed, in a subsequent conversation, the same individual echoed the first analyst, effectively concluding that such inquiries are dangerous and necessarily lead to negative stereotypes. These are classic demonstrations of the self-protective power of memplexes, which “desire” to stand strong, whatever the contravening evidence.

Edward Said, who took to sneering critiques of so many anthropologists and historians before him, rarely demonstrated how writers like Raphael Patai, Sania Hamady and Bernard Lewis were wrong. Rather, it seemed that their identities as Westerners, or culturally assimilated Westerners, comprised the core problem. Without a touch of irony, and after stating that Western analysts are too infected by a particular, perhaps even cultural, mindset resulting from centuries of power, Said implied that all intellectuals should strive for an environment in which “...racial, ethnic, and national distinctions [are] less important than the common enterprise of promoting human community.”³⁸² As Richard Landes asks in a critique of Said, “These are noble sentiments, the very drivers of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. But is ‘promoting this enterprise’ the scholar’s

³⁸² Said, 328.

task?”³⁸³ Regardless of the answer, innumerable historians and anthropologists have taken up the mission in Said’s wake.

This new intellectual environment has affected the accepted discourses in several arenas, including intelligence. There is no directive explicitly preventing intelligence analysts from voicing their opinions, in fact, most analysts and managers in the business outwardly agree it is vitally important for analysts to provide policymakers with frank, unfettered opinions. There may be, however, a substantial mass of progressive thinkers at the national level (those inside or around the “beltway” of Washington, D.C.), human agents of enduring memplexes—Kuhn’s vision of the paradigm—that form the politically correct discourses and intellectual environments stressing universal over cultural and religious considerations. Because most intelligence papers must be run through a number of agencies or offices before landing on policymakers’ desks, the original authors tend to make the products as palatable and inoffensive as possible to reduce the likelihood of dissent. Incongruous observations—those that chafe the politically correct paradigm—may not be included in analysis, even if the analyst thinks to put them in. Of course, systemic failures in the bureaucracy of the Intelligence Community exceeds the scope of this work.

Has this accepted, albeit relatively young, paradigm already reached the revolutionary point Kuhn references? Are there enough anomalies (which demonstrate the criticality of religion and culture to human thinking) to land a fatal blow to today’s accepted discourse? This thesis argues yes. It does not attempt to diminish the importance of traditionally understood conflict drivers, but it does perhaps unduly

³⁸³ Richard Landes, “Edward Said and the Culture of Honor and Shame,” *The Augean Stables*, 28 October 2007, URL: <<http://www.theaugeanstables.com/2007/10/28/edward-said-and-the-culture-of-honor-and-shame/>>, accessed 11 June 2008.

emphasize culture and religion in order to demonstrate their importance and get them back on the table for discussion.

The consequences of failing to do so should be obvious: the omission of vital, if taboo, factors drives the analysis off the logical course, inevitably leading to incorrect conclusions. Policymakers, basing their decisions on those conclusions, may be doomed to failure as a result. Thus far, intelligence analysts have been operating under dangerously shallow presuppositions—producing bad analysis based on “intuitive” knowledge and the commonly accepted axioms (we can build or employ our way out of the Iraqi insurgency and there is no military solution, to name two), even while being fresh to the problem set and not particularly well-versed in Arab or Islamic perspectives.

FOR THE POLICYMAKER AND OPERATOR: RETOOL

But political correctness is not the only paradigm this thesis seeks to shatter. I have repeated frequently that Western militaries are traditionally geared to fight physical problems with “kinetic,” or physical means. Intelligence and law enforcement services have thus focused on taking down networks at the cellular level or decapitating an organization by killing and capturing its leadership. The main thrust of the effort, in any case, lies on the physical plane with just a few supporting elements from the moral plane. As it stands, information operations, the *only* means actively used to manage perception and the best existing approximation to cognitive warfare, is disorganized, underused, poorly conceptualized, and it is largely useless as a result. Operators regard it as little more than a secondary or tertiary duty—an annoyance at best—imposed on service

members embroiled in more immediate problems. When employed, IO is often leveraged insufficiently or in a manner ill suited for the circumstances. It may be uncoordinated, or so thoroughly coordinated that it is slow and unresponsive to fast changing tactical or operational situations. Moreover, there appears to be little appreciation for its strategic importance, that is, the precedence it should take over “kinetic” solutions, both during armed conflict and periods of relative peace. As Siegel writes:

Perhaps the most compelling argument for paying attention to perception management is that America’s adversaries, which do not really have the means to defeat the United States conventionally, have used and will continue to use perception management to weaken American resolve and commitment.³⁸⁴

To some extent, U.S. policymakers also seem to have lost sight of another important target in cognitive warfare: the will. The advent of Effects Based Operations (EBO) theoretically represents a U.S. move away from the traditional use of overwhelming force in battle. This revolutionary approach is characterized by pinpoint strikes in carefully coordinated campaigns. The executors do not necessarily desire the destruction of the enemy’s armed forces, rather their immobilization. The *International Herald Tribune* describes the art in language clear to all:

the new approach, based on U.S. ability to fuse precision-guided weapons and complete electronic mastery of a battlefield the size of Iraq, is designed to paralyze resistance and compel capitulation with Iraq's civilian population largely unharmed and its infrastructure intact.³⁸⁵

In the case of Iraq, the Defense Department hoped the paralysis of Saddam’s Hussein’s regime would lead to its quick collapse.

³⁸⁴ Siegel, 122.

³⁸⁵ Joseph Fitchett, “Effects-Based Warfare Values Precision Over Massive Force: Frontlines Give Way to Beelines,” *International Herald Tribune*, online ed., 25 March 2003, URL: <<http://www.iht.com/articles/2003/03/25/T-combat.php>>, accessed 21 May 2007.

The problem with this approach is that it still equates capability with will. U.S. decision makers failed to prepare for Iraqi resistance that retained, or even developed, a substantial will. Yet the Baathist leadership U.S. forces sought to paralyze through EBO coordinated the beginnings of the insurgency, that is, they retained their will regardless of any sense of *conventional* defeat.³⁸⁶ The civilian population, which had been left “unharmd” by the EBO, developed into a pool of recruits and new resistance organizations leveraging primitive, but effective, tactics.

IN SUM

In sum, U.S. strategic thinkers tend to put too much emphasis on the immediate vicinity of the battlefield, be it the physical confines and contents of the land, sea, air and space, or the specified and typically short time period in which the physical fight occurs. I have attempted to show how this strategy, a holdover from eras wherein force was the decisive element, hardly addresses the cognitive problem of today and is unlikely to work in the long term. There is a new kind of war being waged against us, and while the enemy makes deep inroads, we have yet to realize what they are doing, much less consider mobilizing in a new fashion. We absolutely cannot afford to sleepwalk or, in some hypnotized daze, unilaterally disarm ourselves, as we seem to be doing in some quarters. We must close ranks.

I would not be so arrogant as to suggest that this thesis is revolutionary in the Kuhnian sense; indeed, it may be significantly flawed. I would suggest, however, that a

³⁸⁶ Joe Klein, “Saddam’s Revenge,” *Time*, online ed., 18 September 2005, URL: <<http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1106307,00.html>>, accessed 22 May 2007.

revolutionary approach is required if we are to defend against, let alone defeat our cognitive enemies. The models offered here differ from the prevailing war paradigm in several vital ways. First, the entire war is waged with memes, and battles are won or lost not on the empirical accuracy of those memes, or even their respective benefit to humanity, but on the relative strength, survivability, and destructive power of those memes. Second, far from being limited in a temporal sense, cognitive warfare can be and has been waged over the course of several generations. The cultural foundations for ideological constructs can be thousands of years old, and ideologies themselves can be hundreds of years in the making, even if they only blossomed within the past few decades. Third, cognitive warfare can and has involved many players outside the battlefield. It can involve home constituencies and global audiences such as governments, academics, and media, it can involve NGOs, charities, bloggers, lawyers, and protestors—to name a few. Fourth, the best cognitive warriors use their enemy’s own culture, accepted discourses, intellectual environment, etc., against them, much as the Muslim Brotherhood seeks to use “our miserable hands” against ourselves.

Intelligence analysts, policymakers and operators should meditate on that point in particular, for their perceptions are no more immune from manipulation than the general public’s. Indeed members of that public must allow themselves to see the hitherto unnoticed or unacknowledged “red spades,” that is, realize that everything they think they know about a conflict may be accepted, but also wrong.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁷ Richard Landes, “Black Hearts and Red Spades: the Media Gets the ‘Intifada’ Wrong,” *The Augean Stables*, 10 April 2006, URL: <<http://www.theaugenstables.com/2006/04/10/black-hearts-and-red-spades-the-media-gets-the-intifada-wrong/>>, accessed 2 July 2007.

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