

The background of the entire page is a complex, repeating geometric pattern in shades of gold, brown, and teal. It features interlocking stars and polygons, with some sections containing stylized Arabic calligraphy in black ink on a gold background. The pattern is dense and intricate, typical of Islamic art.

# Orientation Brief Concerning Violent Extremism for Military Chaplains: The Taliban

Bryce Anthony Wiltermood

©All rights reserved, 2015  
Authored by Bryce Wiltermood  
Religious Education  
Brigham Young University  
Contact at [brycewiltermood@gmail.com](mailto:brycewiltermood@gmail.com)

# Orientation Brief Concerning Violent Extremism for Military Chaplains: The Taliban



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Audience .....	1
Instructions on Use of Brief .....	2
Terms Used Throughout Brief .....	3
Information for Briefing .....	8
<b>Supporting Research and Concepts</b> .....	17
Religious Advisement .....	18
Religious Advisement Framework .....	24
Categories of Advisement/Assessment .....	26
Basic Information about Islam .....	32
The Taliban .....	51
Historical Background .....	51
Wahhabism .....	51
Deobandis .....	53
The Soviet War in Afghanistan .....	54
Madrassas .....	55
Organization .....	57
Leadership .....	57
Operations .....	59
Primary Values .....	62
Holy Sites/Sacred Space .....	63
Ethics .....	65
Relationship to Society .....	65
Summary .....	68
<b>Commander's Orientation: The Taliban</b> .....	69
Commander's Orientation: Further Study .....	107
Islamic Female Revolution .....	107
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	113
<b>Suggestions for Further Reading</b> .....	124

## Introduction

By a review of relevant literature, a brief concerning the Taliban was developed as an example of how a chaplain can brief a commander concerning religion and its impact on military operations. To develop this orientation one group of interest (The Taliban) was selected from the United States Specially Designated Global Terrorist list (SDGT). This list is managed and administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Treasury Department.<sup>1</sup>

The orientation brief was created using categories from the religious assessment guide:<sup>2</sup> historical background, organization, and primary values. These categories were selected from the guide to help structure the brief. Also, specific questions from the religious assessment guide were used to structure the brief. Each question provided information to be used for the commander.

The intent of the orientation is to help prepare the commander with relevant, current, and applicable religious information of a particular group of interest on how it could affect the mission. The goal of the brief is to enhance situational awareness of the tactical environment, help accomplish the commander's mission with fewer casualties or incidents, and facilitate building relationships, improve dialogue and build peace keeping principles, or increase mission analysis. Each part of the brief (historical background, organization, and primary values), when taken as a whole in the orientation, will produce a greater vision of what to expect in a particular area of operation.

## Audience

---

1. George W. Bush, Executive Order 13224, "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism," *U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control*, (September 23, 2001):1-38.

2. Training Circular 1-05, *Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team*, May 2005, D1-D5.

This brief was designed specifically to be used by military chaplains to brief Armed Forces commanders or chaplain supervisors. The audience is commanders, staffs, and others. Chaplains are the primary subject matter experts concerning the religious dimension. How religion impacts on military operations is within their area of concern. How the chaplain briefs the commander or others will depend on researched religious information that is pertinent to the commander and chaplain's area of operation.

### Instructions on Use of Brief

This brief was developed specifically for Armed Forces chaplains to help them advise the commander on how religion affects the tactical environment. Its main focus will center on an extreme religious group identified as a groups of interest, i.e., the Taliban. As previously suggested, it examined one group of interest and provided a framework from which the chaplain can organize an orientation to be given to the commander. This brief can also be presented to chaplains and chaplain supervisors.

The instructional format of the brief is given according to effective Army briefing. The brief should last no longer than 15-30 minutes. However, in the development of the brief, information provided about the Taliban is substantial. Nevertheless, this brief can be shortened according to mission requirements and the commander's intent.

This orientation was developed using the Army's Instructional Model of Briefing. Included in this brief packet/booklet is a section on Information for Briefing concerning relevant literature that supports briefing content. Also provided is a set of power point briefs with notes explaining to the presenter/chaplain how to present each slide. These notes (slides) are sourced and can be referenced in the end notes. Chaplains who are not familiar with the subject matter material can review the section on Information for Briefing and sources provided

by the bibliography and suggested readings included in this briefing packet.

This brief was designed to be given to a commander. However, it can be adapted to be given to military personnel, staff groups, and others.

## Terms Used Throughout Brief

To gain an understanding of terms used through the information provided the orientation, the following relevant words, definitions, and concepts are described.

### **Brief**

A brief or orientation is a tool used in the military to present information to commanders, staffs and others. Information presented and style of brief depends on its purpose.<sup>3</sup> The brief provided for this project offers information on how religion impacts the military area of operation.

### **Chaplain**

The present-day American military chaplain is a trained religious and ethical professional, who is also a commissioned officer in the United States Armed Forces. Chaplains have a long and rich constitutional history of performing or providing Title 10 religious support for service members in peace time and in combat. In recent times, the role of the military chaplain has expanded to include a stronger emphasis on their role of advisor.<sup>4</sup> This is in part due to America's war on terror and the religious aspect of Islam/s that have been represented by the

---

3. "Military Briefings," accessed March 26, 2015, <http://arotc.uncc.edu/sites/arotc.uncc.edu/files/MSL%20401%20Officership%20Section%2005b%20-%20Military%20Briefing.pdf>.

4. U.S. Department of Defense, "Joint Publication 1-05: Religious Affairs in Joint Operations," November 20, 2013, I, accessed April 9, 2015, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp1\\_05.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_05.pdf).



war.

## **Violent Extremism**

Regarding the destructive nature of violent religious extremism, Monica Toft explains, "...that terrorists motivated by religion tend to see the indiscriminate use of violence as acceptable or necessary, if used in the pursuit of a higher cause."<sup>5</sup> Broadly speaking, violent extremism is an act created by an individual or organization who's religious or political views fall far outside mainstream religious or political ideologies and philosophies. In this project, violent extremism denotes ideologies that promote acts of terror committed by the Taliban included in the project, or other groups of interest not otherwise stated who carry out acts of violence in the name of a their ideology.

## **Group of Interest**

Group of interest is defined as an organization that holds violent extremist views that pose a substantial risk of committing acts of terrorism as identified by the United States Specially Designated Global Terrorist list (SDGT).<sup>6</sup> SDGT designations are administered and enforced by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department.

## **Islams**

Islam is often traditionally translated as "submission." This project offers chaplains information and analysis to brief military commanders as a means of managing conflicts in areas where violent extremist

5. Monica Duffy Toft, "Religion, Terrorism, and Civil Wars," in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, eds. Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141.

6. George W. Bush, Executive Order 13224, "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism," *U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control*, (September 23, 2001):1-38.

groups are operating by exploring Said's notion of Islams. According to Said, an Islamic framework involves a complex group of many different races, ethnicities, and languages, encompassing a myriad of interpretations—some of which may come in conflict with one another.<sup>7</sup> The notion of just one view of Islam complicates how the Armed Forces deals with groups of interest in combat situations such as al-Qaeda and ISIS who profess to represent Islam. While they characterize a version of a violent representation of Islam, it is important to note that groups of interest represent a fraction of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims who practice the Islamic faith, most which we are not at war with. The war on terror combats violent extremism, not on Islam itself. The concept of Islams cannot be underestimated. It is not one monolithic religion, that is to say, it is many Islams. In order to accurately study the various forms of Islam, Said suggests utilizing a contextual approach developed by Diane Moore's model:

*Based on the cultural studies model described in Diane Moore's Overcoming Religious Illiteracy, I contend that religion is a phenomenon that is embedded in every dimension of human experience. Its study therefore, 'requires multiple lenses through which to understand its multivalent social/cultural influences.' This approach challenges 'the assumption that human experience can be studied accurately through discrete disciplinary lenses (e.g. political, economic, cultural, social, etc.) and instead posits an approach that recognizes how these lenses are fundamentally entwined.' Furthermore, it views all conceptions of religion as constructed within contexts. It maintains that religions are shaped by a complex web of factors such as political ideologies, socio-economic conditions, and societal attitudes to gender, educational status, literary and artistic traditions, historical and geographical situation—all of which are inextricably linked in influencing*

---

7. Edward Said, "Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot Be Simplified," *Harper's Magazine* 305, no. 1826 (July 2002): 70.

*the frameworks within which sacred texts, rituals and practices are interpreted and understood.*<sup>8</sup>

## Muslim

A Muslim is a follower of Islam. In this project, the term Muslim represents a follower of “an Islam.” The word Islam means a complete surrender to the Divine will; and the one who practices such surrender is a Muslim.<sup>9</sup> The Muslim, who recognizes the one God as Creator and Judge, feels responsible to him: He believes in his books (the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Koran) and in His prophets from Adam through the patriarchs, Moses and Jesus up to Muhammad, the last lawgiving messenger. Further, Muslims believe in God’s angels and in the Last Judgment, and “that good and evil come equally through God.”<sup>10</sup> Muslim doctrine is found and practiced in the six articles of faith, which is: One God (Allah), the angels of God, the Qur’an, Muhammad, judgement, and the supremacy of God’s will.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Muslim’s key tenants of practice are described in the Five Pillars of Islam which support and give structure to Muslim life.<sup>12</sup> The Muslim’s key tenants of faith are described in The Five Pillars of Islam, which support and give structure to Muslim life.<sup>13</sup> The first pillar is the profession of faith, or shahadah (witness or testimony): “There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” The second is prayer (salat). Five times a day, Muslims are called to

8. Ali S. Asani, “Enhancing Religious Literacy in a liberal Arts Education through the Study of Islam and Muslim Societies,” in *The Harvard Sampler: Liberal Education for the Twenty-First*, eds. Jennifer M. Shepard, Stephen M. Kosslyn and Evelyn Maxine Hammonds, accessed April 9, 2015, [books.google.com/books?id=LLcaNBSu2qAC&pg=PA111&lpg=PA111&dq=Based+on+the+cultural+studies+](https://books.google.com/books?id=LLcaNBSu2qAC&pg=PA111&lpg=PA111&dq=Based+on+the+cultural+studies+).

9. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 14.

10. Ibid.

11. ReligionFacts, “Six Articles of Faith,” accessed April 16, 2015, [http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/beliefs/six\\_articles.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/beliefs/six_articles.htm).

12. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained*, (New York,: DK, 2006), 186-187.

13. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained*, (New York,: DK, 2006), 186-187.

worship God while facing Mecca. The third is almsgiving (zakat), or, the payment of tithes and offerings in support of a type of Islamic welfare system. The fourth is fasting each year for a month-long observance called Ramadan from dawn to sunset. The fifth is the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj). While the Five Pillars of Islam generally include all Muslim believers, not all Muslims (violent extremists) faithfully follow the Five Pillars.

## **Religious Advisement**

“The practices of informing the commander on the impact of religions on joint operations to include, but not limited to : worship, rituals, customs, and practices of US military personnel, international forces, and the indigenous population; as well as the impact of military operations on the religious and humanitarian dynamics in the operations area.”<sup>14</sup> Religious advisement is the act of offering expert instruction and information. For the purpose of this project, religious advisement signifies the expert information that an Armed Forces chaplain imparts to the commander on the ground. Eric Patterson states that offering religious advisement is also contingent upon the credibility of a chaplain: “The role and responsibility encompasses a wide range of obligations contingent on the trust between the chaplain and the [commander] receiving the chaplain’s advice.”<sup>15</sup>

## **Religious Advisement Framework**

This is a framework used for assessment and advisement developed from the Army’s Training Circular 1-05: Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team Appendix D: Religious Area/Impact Assessment. This appendix provides Army chaplains an organized

14. U.S. Department of Defense, “Joint Publication 1-05: Religious Affairs in Joint Operations,” November 20, 2013, GL-3.

15. Eric Patterson, “The Modern Military Chaplaincy in the Era of Intervention and Terrorism,” in *Military Chaplains in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Beyond: Advisement and Leader Engagement in Highly Religious Environments*, ed. Eric Patterson (New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2014), 10.

structure that serves as a starting point to evaluate what questions and categories used to brief commanders in areas of conflict.<sup>16</sup>

## **Religious Liaison**

In this role, the chaplain acts as a link between commander and spiritual leaders. As an intermediary, the chaplain can serve as an agent in reconciliation and peace as well as developing dialogue with religious leaders in “the commander’s area of responsibility (AOR).”<sup>17</sup>

## **Sacred Places/Spaces**

Mircea Eliade, in “*Patterns of Comparative Religion*,” describes sacred places as areas where the “place becomes an inexhaustible source of power and sacredness and enables man simply by entering into it, to have a share in the power, to hold communion with sacredness.”<sup>18</sup> He suggests that these places as sacred spaces are defined as: (1) consecrated spaces, (2) constructed sacred places, (3) center of a religious faith, (4) consecrated space not of the world, (5) space with symbolism/mysticism, and (6) nostalgia for a sacred place or space or the idea of paradise.<sup>19</sup> These areas, places, or items can be sacred writings, caves, artifacts, churches, temples, shrines, mosques, religious clothing, personal space or objects, which individuals define as sacred.

## **Information for Briefing**

United States Armed Forces have been involved in the war on terrorism for over 14 years with sustained fighting in Operation Enduring

---

16. U.S. Department of the Army, “Training Circular 1-05: Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team,” 10 May 2005, D-1—D-5.

17. George Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons with Religious Leaders: Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006), 12-13.

18. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religions* Trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: A Meridian Book, 1974), 368.

19. Ibid., 364-365,

Freedom (Afghanistan) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (New Dawn). Over 2.5 million service members have deployed or served in support of these wars.<sup>20</sup> With our involvement in these conflicts and with groups like the Islamic State (IS) and others continuing to surface in the Middle East,<sup>21</sup> combat operations will more likely than not endure in the near future. And with our continual involvement, military chaplains, as staff officers, should be able to present pertinent information to commanders concerning religion and its impact. This is particularly relevant to the Middle East, where an estimated 6,850 Americans have been killed in combat operations since 2001.<sup>22</sup>

Needless to say Western views are stereotypically unfriendly towards the Middle East.<sup>23</sup> Annemarie Schimmel describes the historical context of why the religious West is so threatened by Islam. She said:

*On the political level this threat began with the conquest of Spain by the Arabs at the beginning of the eighth century and it ended with the siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Turks in 1683. But there were not only political reasons for Christian Europe's fear: Islam is the only world religion that came into existence after Christianity, and was hence unacceptable as a true religion.*<sup>24</sup>

In more recent times, Americans are sensitive to Muslim perceptions that are fueled by the media which often report violence and other

---

20. Chris Adams, "Millions Went to War in Iraq, Afghanistan, Leaving Many with Lifelong Scars," *McClatchy Newspapers*, March 14, 2013, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/03/14/185880/millions-went-to-war-in-iraq-afghanistan.html>.

21. Benjamin Isakhan, "The Iraq Legacies and the Roots of the 'Islamic State'," in *The Legacy of Iraq: From the 2003 War to the 'Islamic State'*, ed. Benjamin Isakhan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 223-235.

22. U.S. Casualty Status Data from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND), Operation Inherent Resolve (ORI), Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) as of March 20, 2015, accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>.

23. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 11.

24. *Ibid.*, 1.

newsworthy subjects.<sup>25</sup> Many Muslims believe it is their duty to conduct holy war (*jihad*) and view *jihad* as an essential pillar of their faith.<sup>26</sup> Yahya Armajani and Thomas Ricks explain,

*The meaning of the word [jihad] is 'struggle'—namely, struggle against the forces of ungodliness in one's soul or in the community. Since all wars in early Islam were considered to be struggles against the enemies of God, jihad has been identified with war. There are numerous references in the Koran to war and the Muslim's duty to fight. 'Warfare is ordained for you, though it is hateful to you; but it may happen that ye hate what is good for you' (Koran, Sura 2:216). Indeed, all land not within the domain of Islam was considered the domain of war.*<sup>27</sup>

In the same vein, Douglas Johnston reminds us that jihad, “when retrieved selectively and applied situationally in combination with emotions of hatred and rage, becomes a powerful tool for justifying the unjustifiable.”<sup>28</sup> This has not helped to soften the negative view held by Westerners toward the Islamic faith. It is of no wonder that since 9/11 there has been widespread Islamophobic reactions. To the question, how has the growing Muslim presence been received in the United States? Islam scholar John Renard answered, “Unfortunately, the growing presence of Islam in this country frightens many Americans. They have come to associate the very mention of Islam with strangeness and mystery, and alas, violence. The challenge now facing many American non-Muslims is that of understanding their Muslim neighbors as fellow citizens and brothers and sisters in the human

---

25. “Research Base for the High-level Group Report Analysis on Media,” Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat United Nations, New York, 2.

26. Yahya Armajani and Thomas M. Ricks, *Middle East: Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986), 43.

27. Yahya Armajani and Thomas M. Ricks, *Middle East: Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986), 43-44.

28. Douglas M. Johnston, *Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2011), 1- 38.

race.”<sup>29</sup> Responding to distorted perceptions about Muslims, Islamic scholar and cultural critic, Edward Said, penned:

*The problems facing anyone attempting to say something intelligible, useful, or accurate about Islam are legion. One should therefore begin by speaking about Islams rather than Islam, and then go on to specify which kind, during which particular time, one is speaking about...The point I am trying to make is that on intellectual and historical grounds, Islam is not properly a subject at all but (at best) a series of interpretations which are so divergent in nearly every case so as to make a mockery of the enterprise conceived of by the interpreter as one monolithic whole called “Islam.”... For anyone with clarity of thought and common-sense ideas about the complexity and variety of concrete human experience, it is much more sensible to try to talk about different kinds of Islam, at different moments, for different people, in different fields...Once one gets a tiny step beyond core beliefs (since those are very hard to reduce to a simple set of doctrinal rules) and the centrality of the Koran, one has entered an astoundingly complicated world whose enormous—one might even say unthinkable—collective history alone has yet to be written.*<sup>30</sup>

According to Said, trying to define Muslim identity is extremely problematic. When taking into consideration culture, history, language, and politics, coupled with specific communities and schools of interpretation, in any combination and order, in all the parts of the world, the question of *what is Muslim identity*, is almost impossible to answer.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, to try to answer that question “as one monolithic whole

---

29. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 104.

30. Edward Said, “Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot Be Simplified,” *Harp-er’s Magazine* 305, no. 1826 (July 2002): 70.

31. *Ibid.*, 69-87.



called ‘Islam,’” Edward Said suggests, is to make a mockery out of it.<sup>32</sup> In that light, it is clear that an Islamic framework involves a complex group of many different races, ethnicities, and languages, encompassing a myriad of interpretations—some of which may come in conflict with one another. This understanding of the complexity of Islam can cause others to experience *Islamophobia*.<sup>33</sup>

What are the consequences of this portrayal of Islam within the Armed Forces? This depiction could lead to poor treatment of Muslims, dehumanization (My Lai Massacre),<sup>34</sup> or create an elitist mentality among Americans and non-Muslims. Moreover, this stereotyping could cause categorizing Islam as a monolithic religion with no variation. Lastly, it may “...fuel prejudice and antagonism, thereby hindering efforts aimed at promoting respect for pluralism, peaceful coexistence, and cooperative endeavors in local, national, and global arenas.”<sup>35</sup> This perspective of labeling Islam as a monolithic religion similarly could influence the commander in making bad or impulsive decisions in combat. A misconstrued religious element concerning Islams in the planning process could naturally lead to failures on the battlefield.

Nonetheless, it appears that Islamophobia has increased in American society and culture since the World Trade Center bombings of 9/11.

32. Edward Said, “Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot Be Simplified,” *Harp-er’s Magazine* 305, no. 1826 (July 2002): 74.

33. *Islamophobia* is defined as ““unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims,” as reported by the 1991 Runnymede Trust Report found at University of California, Berkeley Center for Race and Gender, accessed April 16, 2015, <http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/defining-islamophobia>.

34. On March 16, 1968, a platoon of American Soldiers heartlessly murdered between 300 and 500 unarmed civilians in My Lai, a village community surrounded by a cluster of other villages, located near the northern coast of South Vietnam. There was no one cause for the massacre at My Lai, and the events that took place presented numerous ethical dilemmas. In large part, dehumanization of Vietnamese by American Soldiers was accomplished through the glorification of high enemy kills. This “protocol of body count culture” is what led some units to hang up “kill boards” in their common areas. The idea prevailed that a high body count equaled victory, and a low kill ratio equaled defeat. In conjunction with a high body count, the Vietnamese were referred to as “gooks.” This disparaging term for them was used by Soldiers of all ranks and reflected a casual and thoughtless act of racism, making the Vietnamese easier to kill. For a more thorough study of My Lai, see Douglas Linder’s work entitled, “An Introduction to the My Lai Courts-Martial,” and Tony Raimondo’s article, “The My Lai Massacre: A Case Study.”

35. Diane Moore, *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 6.

This tragic event served to emphasize the significance of the topic of religion in international affairs. Furthermore, Islamophobia presents concerns for Armed Forces chaplains as they are the primary advisor to commanders about religion, and its affect within the unit, i.e., that service and family members have the right to exercise their religion.<sup>36</sup> They also have additional responsibilities to advise the commander on how religion influences the environment in which units operate, and when command directed, many times, act as part of a religious support team, also known as religious leader engagement (RLE) in “establishing relationships with appropriate local religious leaders...”<sup>37</sup> Because religious leader engagement (RLE) is beyond the scope of this project, we will not focus on this aspect, but rather the project focuses on providing religious advisement and assessment concerning Islams for the eventual purpose of religious leader engagement.<sup>38</sup>

Religion has been referred to as the “Missing Dimension of Statecraft.”<sup>39</sup> Religion is both a power for good in terms of reconciliation and forgiveness; however, when used to lessen the dignity or humanity of an individual, nation or state, it can be considered a source of conflict. To ignore the power of religion is to deny its influence on beliefs, cultural values, and world perspectives. In addition, religion ignored can be one of many factors that perpetuate war or influence regional conflicts. In response, Johnston suggests, “What is needed are religion experts who have a visceral appreciation for the power

---

36. The various duties and responsibilities of Armed Forces chaplains especially their duty to provide for free exercise is explained in the following publications: Army Regulation 165-1: Army Chaplain Corps Activities, 3-2, b (2), 12; Air Force Instruction 52-104: Chaplain Corp Readiness, 1.2.1, 4; SECNAVINST 1730.7D: Religious Ministry Within the Department of the Navy, e. (2), 5.

37. U.S. Department of Defense, “Joint Publication 1-05, Religious Affairs in Joint Operations,” November 20, 2013, III- 1, accessed April 9, 2015, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp1\\_05.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_05.pdf).

38. For further study of the difference between chaplain religious assessment and advisement, and religious leader engagement (RLE), see Eric Patterson’s *Military Chaplains in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Beyond: Advisement and Leader Engagement in Highly Religious Environments*, 9-10.

39. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

of faith to move people to action.”<sup>40</sup> Armed Forces chaplains can act as religious experts who are trained to understand the dynamics of religion and how to make assessments in order to advise commanders concerning the evolving process of religion and how it affects institutions, individuals, and societies at large. This missing element of statecraft can be an important tool in helping to facilitate effective battlefield planning.

Texts in the field of religion and foreign policy are not new. Nonetheless, few offer foreign policy perspectives that see the value of utilizing military chaplains as third party actors. In *Religion, Terror, and Error*, Douglas Johnston provides his readers a fresh perspective in an intersection of foreign policy and religion. In five succinct sections—Observation, Orientation, Decision, Action, and Moving Beyond—Johnston presents the case that the United States can and should deal more effectively with religious extremism through a revamped paradigm of foreign affairs leadership and policy making initiatives.<sup>41</sup> To illustrate his point, Johnston has devoted a chapter in his book to convince his readers that military chaplains can be a vital asset to employ in this process of bridging church and state in peacemaking initiatives when dealing with religious extremism. He argues that as their role is expanded as religious liaisons between the commander and local religious leaders, conflicts will lessen as the native influential (religious actors) establish trust.<sup>42</sup> In this light, religion continues to affect the war on terrorism. And, as Johnston suggested one resource in understanding “religion” and how it influences the tactical environment is the Armed Forces chaplain. Religion may also shape participant and opponent identity, and in turn how participants talk about or justify conflict. Religion has the ability to shape the causes and duration of a war; the legitimacy of weapons and targets; the timing and locations of confrontations; tactical and strategic calcula-

---

40. Douglas M. Johnston, *Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2011), 106.

41. *Ibid.*, 185.

42. *Ibid.*, 134.

tions; conceptions of victory and defeat; and the materiality and idea scape of soldier life, including how they “dress, eat, fight, and die.”<sup>43</sup> Similarly, religion and how it relates to models of foreign policy can influence what happens on the battlefield. A valid understanding of religion in international relations offers an Armed Forces chaplain a framework for interpretation of the relationships between religion and international relations. It also expands the opportunity for analysis and assessment concerning how religion affects military operations. Analysis and assessment can then be passed on from chaplain to the commander on the ground.

Despite well-documented religiously influenced violence and intolerance committed by devout radicals throughout history, religious organizations and leaders have made successful inroads to establish cross-cultural norms of religious human rights.<sup>44</sup> Chile, South Africa, Guatemala, Nigeria, the Philippines, the Middle East, and other major areas of the world are key examples of how other nations have experienced reduced religious violence when third party religious leaders have become involved.<sup>45</sup> At other times, however, religion serves as a catalyst in regional violence, such as the case of the Kashmiri border of Pakistan and India.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, it is necessary for commanders to know how religion influences the tactical environment. They need to ask themselves how religion shapes their battlefield. International

43. Stacy Gutowski, “Religion and Security in International Relations Theories,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Security*, eds. Chris Seiple, Dennis R. Hoover and Pauletta Otis (New York: Routledge, 2013), 127.

44. Scott Appleby, “Religion and Global Affairs: Militants for Peace,” *The SAIS Review* 18, no. 2 (1998): 38-44.

45. For further study on how religion has been used as a vehicle for reconciliation amidst conflict, see Daniel Philpott’s research on reconciliation commissions in *Just and Unjust Peace* (2012), and Ron Hassner’s work on conflict management in Jerusalem and Mecca in *War on Sacred Grounds* (2009). See also, Johnston and Sampson’s *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (1994).

46. Though the region of Kashmir has been home to Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists for 1,000 years, only in this generation has this area become a source of sectarian violence. In particular, the presence of Indian armed forces in Kashmir drives Muslims to sympathize with extremist groups. Likewise, Islamic militant violence drives Hindus to increase in religious nationalism. For further study on Kashmir, see *Kashmir: Religious Diversity Become Religious Militancy* (Georgetown University: Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, March 2011) accessed March 15, 2015, <http://repository.berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/130801BCKashmir-ReligiousDiversityBecomesReligiousMilitancy.pdf>.

security and religion scholar Ron Hassner argues that religion acts as a force multiplier, both enabling and constraining military operations:

*This is true not only for insurgents and terrorists motivated by radical religious ideas but also for professional soldiers, including contemporary American soldiers, who have to contend with religion as a constant feature of their landscape. Like other exogenous factors, such as topography or climate, religion relentlessly affects the calculus of war. In the last century, religion has influenced the timing of attacks, the selection of targets for assault, the zeal with which units execute their mission, and the ability of individual soldiers to face the challenge of war. Religious ideas have not provided the reasons why conventional militaries fight. But religious practices have influenced their ability to do so effectively. The religion of our soldiers has inhibited or motivated combat whereas the religion of our opponents has created opportunities for exploitation and temptation for over-exploitation, prompting backlash.<sup>47</sup>*

To be sure, many facets of Islamic violence need to be thoughtfully considered when Americans are involved. When being engaged in combat operations with various Islams, military commanders and chaplains would do well to remember the theological, political, and geographical complexities which influence a particular Muslim group. Because it is not always easy to distinguish combatant from civilian, having this information can be instrumental to the commander on the ground. Chaplains can be subject matter experts for the groups of interest in which they will encounter when they deploy. By being able to discern a religion's "language," chaplains are able to discern that religion's potential for peacemaking.<sup>48</sup> Cultures that are poorly

47. Ron Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield*, (New Jersey: Cornell University Press, under contract), 1.

48. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* eds.(New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 307.

informed about their neighbors mischaracterize their beliefs and values, a phenomenon that Dianne Moore, director of Harvard's program in Religion and Secondary Education terms religious illiteracy:

*...our lack of understanding about the ways that religion itself is an integral dimension of social/ political/historical experience coupled with our ignorance about the specific tenets of the world's religious traditions significantly hinder our capacity to function as engaged, informed and responsible citizens of our democracy. In these ways, religious illiteracy has helped foster a climate that is both dangerous and intellectually debilitating.*<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, the starting point for resolving any conflict begins with understanding. Through education in addition to exploring Muslim understandings of Islam, the tactical commander, the chaplain and the unit he leads will be better able to work through religious ignorance regarding Islam. In turn, combat missions will be more effective and fewer lives will ultimately be lost.

The volatile nature of certain extremist groups, coupled with the sensitive manner in which the international community must cooperate with them, demands a more thorough understanding of the question, *what is Muslim identity?*<sup>50</sup>

*These materials were developed by Bryce Wiltermood, a Chaplain Candidate in the United States Army. For any inquiries, please contact [bryce.a.wiltermood.mil@mail.mil](mailto:bryce.a.wiltermood.mil@mail.mil).*

## **Supporting Research and Concepts**

This review offers supporting research and information used to

---

49. Diane Moore, *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3.

50. Edward Said, "Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot Be Simplified," *Harpers Magazine* 305, no. 1826 (July 2002): 69-87.

develop the commander's brief. Information is provided to chaplains who are unfamiliar with how an extremist group of interest like the Taliban can affect a commander's area of operation. This information also examines how a group of interest, under the guise of Islam, can influence the tactical environment.

To do this, the review explores through a religious advisement framework the group's historical background and organization. Finally, it concludes with the group's primary values in their pursuit of a philosophy which impacts the global war on terrorism, as defined by a western perspective, and understood through an Eastern mind set. The justification for choosing the Taliban as a group of interest is that they are current, evolving, and viewed as volatile international threat. Ultimately, this project hopes to assist the commander by the use of a briefing format to develop analysis and make informed decisions concerning the above group of interest. The following provides a brief explanation of how one orientation by a review of the literature will be constructed using a template called the Religious Advisement Framework.<sup>51</sup>

### Religious Advisement

Most major religions have at one time or another been associated, involved with, or caused international conflict. Many believe that instead of bringing peace into the world, religion generates violence. However, working with religious communities and leaders concerning interfaith dialogue and action can defuse tensions. In other words, religion can be a source for international conflict, but it can also be a resource for peacemaking and reconciliation. David Smock, vice president of the Institute's Center for Mediation and Conflict Resolution remarks:

*Given religion's importance as both a source of international*

---

51. U.S. Department of the Army, "Training Circular 1-05: Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team," 10 May 2005, D-1-D-5.

*conflict and a resource for peacemaking, it is regrettable that the U.S. government is so ill equipped to handle religious issues and relate to religious actors. If the U.S. government is to insert itself into international conflicts or build deeper and more productive relationships with countries around the world, it needs to devise a better strategy to effectively and respectfully engage with the religious realm.<sup>52</sup>*

In a world that is globally connected, the US government can ill afford to ignore religion and its impact on military operations. Armed Forces chaplains need to be aware that many who use a secular lens to solve conflict may view religion as one of the primary sources of conflict. Still, religion can also be an important ingredient in resolving conflict through understanding and dialogue.

In terms of religious advisement, military chaplains can give commanders examples of religious misunderstanding in history or from personal experience. Johnston has noted military chaplains are uniquely placed to help deal with the religious dimension of external threats for at least three reasons: (1) chaplains are positioned to bridge the church/state divide (2) chaplains are accustomed to working with those of other faiths, and (3) chaplains typically command strong interpersonal skills.<sup>53</sup> In addition to Johnston, Patterson makes a historical case for chaplains advising commanders:

*At a fundamental level, the presence of clergy on and off the battlefield in times of war is a very natural association: both religion and war are about life and death. Religion provides a reason for life and death....Advice or counsel for commanders from a spiritual person is also known to be a part of the his-*

---

52. David Smock, Religion in World Affairs: Its role in conflict and Peace Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, February 2008, 1, accessed April 8, 2015, <http://www.usip.org/publications/religion-in-world-affairs-its-role-in-conflict-and-peace>.

53. Douglas M. Johnston, *Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2011). 76.



*tory of ancient India, China, Greece, and Rome and the Aztec and Mayan empires.*<sup>54</sup>

Barton et al. describes how the current US government engages with religion in conflicted areas: "...Yet beyond the experts, most government officials and implementing partners still do not have the requisite tools or necessary undertaking of the issues to factor religion into policy and practice in an appropriate manner."<sup>55</sup> We could also conclude that beyond subject matter experts in the military concerning religion in the Armed Forces, very few chaplains have the necessary skills or training to understand religion and how it effects the military/tactical environment in principle and practice. Chaplains who refuse to be educated on the various Islams because they dislike Muslims are unproductive in aiding a commander in the planning process. Many Muslims who are drawn to the Islam faith prefer the religion's traditional form; violent extremism, however, is considered by scholars a deviationist movement and some of its key ideas are unacceptable to truly orthodox believers.<sup>56</sup>

While most Armed Forces chaplains generally display a great deal of sensitivity to many different faiths than their own, some chaplains might not possess the skills, knowledge, ability or confidence to act in a religious advisement role to their commanders. A chaplains' responsibility to advise the command concerning how religion affects the mission is of critical importance. As the Armed Forces continue to deploy to unfamiliar regions throughout the world, it becomes increasingly important that chaplains are able to communicate about

---

54. Pauletta Ottis, "Understanding the Role and Influence of U.S. Military Chaplains," in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 21.

55. Frederick D. Barton, Shannon Hayden, and Karin von Hippel, "Navigating in the Fog: Improving U.S. Government Engagement with Religion," in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, eds. Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 280.

56. Barry Ruben, "Religion and International Affairs," in *Religion The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, eds. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 28.

religious values and understand the sacred places<sup>57</sup> of the population they encounter for their commanders.

Army Regulation 165-1 also defines the role of the Army chaplain as it relates to religion and culture, it states that in addition to the chaplain's role as principle advisor to the commander concerning religious issues in the command, they can also provide advice on: "ethical moral and humanitarian implications of operational decisions," and provide "analysis of the impact of indigenous religions on military operations."<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, FM 1-05 makes a clear division between a chaplain's role in advising the commander about internal (unit religious concerns), and external<sup>59</sup> (religious environments) or indigenous religious issues that affect operations. It states that,

*The chaplain advises the command on the specifics of the religious environment within the area of operations that may impact mission accomplishment. This may include indigenous religions in the area of operation [groups of interest], holy days that may impact military operations, and the significance of local religious leaders and structures. Chaplains and Unit Ministry Teams can work within boards, bureaus, centers, cells, and working groups to integrate their respective expertise and knowledge with the collective expertise of the staff in order to focus on specific problem sets to provide coherent staff recommendations [briefs] to the commander.<sup>60</sup>*

Joint Publication 1-05 also provides specific guidance regarding religious advisement:

---

57. For a more comprehensive study on civil-religious sacred space and how that affects regional conflict, see Ron Hassner's *War on Sacred Grounds*.

58. U.S. Department of the Army, "Army Regulations 165-1: Religious support; Army chaplain Corps Activities," December 3, 2009, (g) (h), 12.

59. U.S. Department of the Army, "Field Manual (FM) 1-05: Religious Support," October, 5, 2012, 1-3.

60. *Ibid.*, 1-3.

*Chaplains may not advise on religious or cultural issues in the operational area where the law of armed conflict specifically prohibits such activities. Chaplains must not function as intelligence collectors or propose combat target selection. However, chaplains can provide input as to what constitutes religious structures or monuments of antiquity in a particular designated area but do not advise on including or excluding specific structures on the no-strike list or target list.<sup>61</sup>*

Though this may sound conflicting, the chaplain's primary purpose is to provide religious support. However, the chaplain can use the military brief as one of many tools to advise the commander on how indigenous religions (groups of interest) can "impact mission accomplishment." An effective Armed Forces chaplain will understand how religiosity transitions from faith to violence, and with proper staff coordination with staff judge advocate, civil affairs and intelligence officers offer religious advisement that is part of good staff work and coordination to assist the commander with mission analysis.

### Advisement/Information Concerning Radical Islam

Though the premise of this project addresses Islams, rather than Islam, scholarly theories in the of field religion and foreign affairs suggest a fundamental and doctrinal basis for extremism targeting the West. Interestingly, violent extremists harbor varying degrees of resentment for America and the West, each for their own distinct and complex reasons. In his book *The Enemy At Home: The Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11*, Dinesh D'Souza writes one of the main reasons for radical Islams targeting the West:

*Muslims realize that it is American culture and values that are penetrating the far corners of the globe, corroding ancient*

---

61. U.S. Department of Defense, "Joint Publication 1-05: Religious Affairs in Joint Operations," November 20, 2013, II-2.

*orthodoxies, and transforming customs and institutions. Many Americans, whatever their politics, generally regard such change as healthy and good. But this attitude is not shared in traditional societies, and it is virtually nonexistent in the Muslim world. America is feared and despised there not in spite of its cultural allure but because of it.*<sup>62</sup>

In this light, the United States is viewed by extremists as attacking the Taliban not only by supporting Israel and with our military presence in the Middle East, but also by exporting our culture through movies, music, the Internet, and other forms of mass communication. Because there is not a significant difference between church and state, the imposition of Western culture in the Muslim world is seen as a dangerous attack on their lives. More importantly, because the American people elect the US government and our taxes support the military, violent extremists argue that American civilians are just as accountable for Western military presence in the Middle East. In the mind of a radical Muslim, acts of terror are not unprovoked attacks on Americans. They are in defense of Islam.

American adversaries evaluate the actions, behaviors, and intentions of America through a religious lens.<sup>63</sup> The following information about a group of interest (the Taliban) is not entirely about religion, but is defined according to characteristics that guide its history, organization, and values. Consequently, the character of the group could be misconstrued when Islam is not accurately taken into account. The following information provided will be the basis for developing the commander's brief (see Appendix A: Orientation Brief Concerning Violent Extremism for Military Chaplains: The Taliban.

---






62. Dinesh D'Souza, *The Enemy at Home: the Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 15.

63. Michael Hoyt, "The Iraqi Inter-religious Congregation and the Baghdad Accords," in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2014), 93.

## Religious Advisement Framework

The template or framework used to develop the commander's orientation about groups of interest is derived from the U.S. Army Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team Training Circular 1-05 (TC 1-05) Appendix D: Religious Area/Impact Assessment.<sup>64</sup> The significant role of chaplains and their assistants in the Army (known as a Unit Ministry Team) in the development and dissemination of a religious assessment is highlighted in TC 1-05: "As the Army deploys U.S. Armed Forces to more unfamiliar areas of the world, it becomes increasingly important for chaplains to explain religious/spiritual beliefs and practices of the people they encounter to commanders and soldiers in their unit."<sup>65</sup> The Religious Assessment Framework as found in TC 1-05 is by no means meant to be a comprehensive matrix; rather, it serves as a guide in the planning process for the development of the a commander's brief.<sup>66</sup>

**TC 1-05** **Religious Area/Impact Assessment**

Table D-1. Religious assessment guide	
Category	Specific questions
Historical background	 Is this group related to a larger group?
	 What makes this group distinctive from the larger group?
	 When did this group come into the area?
Interface with unit	 Based on their religion, are there personnel in the unit who might be inclined to take inappropriate actions for, or against, local religious groups or causes?
	 What command measures might mitigate such a risk?

64. Training Circular 1-05, *Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team*, 10 May 2005. D-1 through D-5.

65. Training Circular 1-05, *Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team*, 10 May 2005. D-1 through D-1.

66. *Ibid.*, D2-D5.

**Table D-1. Religious assessment guide**

Category	Specific questions
Relationship to society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does this society relate to the religious group: (stamp out the group, contain them, assimilate [absorb] them, share power, or promote pluralism)?</li> <li>How is this group viewed: (religious, secret society, protest movement, or a political party)?</li> <li>Does the group have a distinctive subculture or communal life?</li> <li>How does the group influence society?</li> <li>How do they use media resources?</li> </ul>
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What cell-like groups are present?</li> <li>What is the nature of hierarchy within the movement?</li> <li>What are the centers of learning?</li> </ul>
Doctrines and myths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the sources of doctrinal authority?</li> <li>What are the sources of ethics?</li> <li>What are their concepts of justice?</li> <li>What are their concepts of reward?</li> <li>Who are the heroes, villains, or rivalries (past, present, or future)?</li> </ul>

**Table D-1. Religious assessment guide**

Category	Specific questions
Holy day rituals and customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What holy days and/or festivals may impact military operations?</li> <li>What are important religious "do's and don'ts"?</li> <li>What are dietary restrictions?</li> <li>What are the group's distinctive symbols?</li> <li>What are the nature, frequency and traits of worship?</li> <li>What are appropriate protocols for issues related to birth, marriage, and death?</li> </ul>
Sites and shrines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the places of worship, pilgrimage, and memorial sites? Why?</li> <li>Where are the cemeteries and what is the character of their make-up?</li> <li>What are distinctive identifying characteristics (architecture and symbols)?</li> </ul>
Primary values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are they willing to die for?</li> <li>What subjects incite an emotional response?</li> <li>What behaviors does the group reward? What are punishable?</li> <li>What value is placed on women, children, ancestors, certain animals, or objects?</li> </ul>

Table D-1. Religious assessment guide	
Category	Specific questions
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 Who are the religious leaders (official and unofficial)?</li> <li>📖 Do religious leaders of the occupied country's armed forces have an impact on the armed forces of their country?</li> <li>📖 What political influence do religious leaders have?</li> <li>📖 What is the relationship of religious leaders to government officials?</li> <li>📖 What do religious leaders wear to symbolize their position?</li> <li>📖 How many leaders are there and where are they located?</li> <li>📖 What are leader titles?</li> <li>📖 How are leaders selected and trained?</li> </ul>
Tolerance and religious intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 What is the religious commitment in this group: (nominal [in name only], mild, strong, or radical/fanatical)?</li> <li>📖 How tolerant is the group to other parties?</li> <li>📖 How accepting are they with the conversion of their members to other groups?</li> <li>📖 How are members disciplined?</li> <li>📖 Can others join and quit the group easily?</li> <li>📖 How are competing groups viewed and received?</li> </ul>

The above matrix contains elements that can guide the chaplain in briefing the commander in how religion impacts the combat environment. An orientation of a group of interest (the Taliban) will be developed as an example of a briefing format that can be used to aid the commander in mission analysis and with the military decision making process concerning religion.

### Categories of Advisement/Assessment

To understand the Taliban as a group of interest, the orientation or commander's brief will be developed using categories from the Religious Area/Impact Assessment guide.<sup>67</sup> These categories were selected from the guide to help structure the brief. A short explanation of each

67. U.S. Department of the Army, "Training Circular 1-05: Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team," 10 May 2005, D-1-D-5.

category is provided to give the chaplain a reference point.

## Historical Background

Historical background is a critical part of the brief in understanding a group of interest. It explains to the commander the genesis of the conflict through the eyes of the group being examined. It also answers such question like: “Is the group related to a larger group?”; “When did this group come into the area?”; or “What makes this group distinctive?”<sup>68</sup> It not only provides a historical context, but assists in the preparing of military operations and in the ability of the commander to understand aspects of religious historical background, and other elements that define the group of interest. The chaplain as principle advisor (special staff officer) to the commander on religious affairs can help the commander understand how religious factors impact military operations.<sup>69</sup> It also helps in the military decision making process (MDMP), i.e.,<sup>70</sup> the ability of the commander to receive accurate information to understand, visualize, describe, direct and to assess the situation for the accomplishment of the mission.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the chaplain’s role in developing briefs for the commander is important in that they represent or work in the religious dimension and can act as interpreters of religious culture and faith.<sup>72</sup>

## Organization

How each group of interest is organized is critical in understanding

---

68. Ibid., D1.

69. Douglas M. Johnson, Jr., *Religion Terror and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2011), 130.

70. U.S. Department of the Army, “Field Manual 101-5: Staff Organization and Operation,” 5-1—5-31, May 31, 1997, accessed April 15, 2015, [http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/genesis\\_and\\_evolution/source\\_materials/FM-101-5\\_staff\\_organization\\_and\\_operations.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/genesis_and_evolution/source_materials/FM-101-5_staff_organization_and_operations.pdf).

71. U.S. Department of the Army, “Army Doctrine Publication 5-0: The Operations Process,” iv, 26 May 2010, accessed April 8, 2015, [http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/adp5\\_0.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp5_0.pdf).

72. Dayne Nix, “Chaplains Advising Warfighter on Culture and Religion,” in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2014), 47.



not only how religion may shape or impact the military environment, but how groups of interest perceive US involvement i.e., how a group of interest “evaluates the actions behaviors and intentions of America through a religious prism.”<sup>73</sup> They are not just out there fighting for their own personal enjoyment.

Understanding the group’s leadership provides important religious information on how they understand US Armed Forces. The nature of their leadership hierarchy when understood offers the commander insight in not only their religious beliefs (what they teach others) but in how those beliefs can impact operations. In addition, it demonstrates how an organization’s perceptions determine what strategies can be used to combat or to minimize its influence.<sup>74</sup> It also helps to answer questions such as, “What is the nature of hierarchy in the organization?”; “What are the centers of learning?”; “What do religious leaders wear to symbolize their position?” “What are the leaders titles?”; “How does the group influence society?”; and “How do they use media resources?”<sup>75</sup>

Understanding the elements and structure of the groups of interest’s organization will help the commander in making good decisions. It will also provide the chaplain—who develops and gives the briefs, and the commander—who receives the brief, a contextual understanding of the group of interest.

## Primary Values

---

73. Michael Hoyt, “The Iraqi Inter-religious Congregation and the Baghdad Accords,” in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2014), 93.

74. It is important for the chaplain to realize that orientations have a religious focus. The chaplain is not an intelligence or civil affairs officer. Though, many components are similar, the primary focus of the brief is how religion is perceived and perpetuated by these groups of interest and how it influences or shapes their thinking which can come into conflict with U.S. Strategy and with U.S. Armed Forces.

75. U.S. Department of the Army, “Training Circular 1-05: Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team,” May 2005, D1-D5.

Values are universally accepted as traditions, norms, ethics, or strongly held beliefs that individuals or organizations hold in common or apart. In the context of religious values or ethics, “it is clear that each and every religion embodies and propounds some kind of ethic, fundamental values, frameworks for moral decision making, expectations of and recommendations for appropriate behavior and some notions of sanctions for failing to act morally.”<sup>76</sup> In the context of Islam, values or ethics lie within the Qur’an and in the life and teachings of Mohammad (*Sunnah*). Moral behavior is guided by the divine will of Allah which directs human action and individual decisions. This makes Muslims responsible to God and society.<sup>77</sup> However, John Esposito argues that extremist groups have interpreted the Qur’an according to their own perception of what divine will means, and many times, take the teachings of Allah out of context. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the role values play in the lives of many Muslims:

*The Muslim community is the context through which the Qur’anic ideals and values are translated to the social level. In the Muslim polity, all of life is to be regulated and in conformity with the will of Allah. This requires regular prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and charitable giving. Economic, scientific, marriage and family, legal, social and political relationships and structures are integrated with the ritual practice of Islamic faith. There is not separation of ethics and religion. Interpreting and applying the tradition and scriptures is the role of the Imam (priest), especially among the Shi’a.*<sup>78</sup>

As previously suggested in this project, there are many different Islam; or forms of Islam, nonetheless, there is a framework of reli-

---

76. *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World*, ed. Christopher Partridge (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2002), 77.

77. *Ibid.*, 79.

78. *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World*, ed. Christopher Partridge (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2002), 79.

gious values which is at the center of Muslim faith. These religious values manifest themselves in rituals, religious sites, religious movements, doctrines and myths, and the normal daily activities of life. How this moral framework (religious values) is understood by different groups of interest is where conflict can arise and tensions escalate.

With this in mind, religious values are important elements to understand as part of the commander's brief. In addition the commander should understand that even though a group of interest is identified with Sunni or Shia theology, it does not necessarily represent all Muslims. One aspect of religious values that is critical for a commander to learn about is that of sacred spaces/places.

### **Sacred Spaces/Places**

The chaplain in developing religious briefs for the commanders should be aware of the importance of sacred space and sacred places as critical elements in briefing about religious values. Ron Hassner, in his book "*War on Sacred Ground*," argues that "defining sacred space is difficult given the diversity of such spaces." He goes on to suggest that most of the great religions have sacred sites such as temples, churches, etc.; however, natural sites like caves, and religious objects are made sacred by their meaning and not by construction. Different religious traditions develop sacred places and spaces according to their interpretation.<sup>79</sup>

Sacred space has been defined as a "space distinguished from other spaces. The rituals that a people either practice at a place or direct toward it mark its sacredness and differentiate it from other defined spaces. A sacred space focuses attention on the forms, objects, and actions in it and reveals them as bearers of religious meaning."<sup>80</sup> In addition sacred places are understood by the distinctiveness of the

79. Ron E. Hassner, *War on Sacred Ground* (London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 17-18.

80. *The Encyclopedia of Religions*, s.v. "Sacred Space," ed. Mircea Eliade, V. 12 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 526.

religious culture. They may be sacred according to legend, a grave or a sacred relic. They are seen as fulfilling three primary functions, first “sacred space is a means of communication with the gods. Second, it is a place of divine power. And third, it serves as a visible icon to the world.”<sup>81</sup> They can be places of divine power and also serve as an icon representing religious meaning, significance and veneration. They function as sacred space and are symbolic to religious adherents. They represent ritual activity and express cultural values and religious meaning.<sup>82</sup>

In evaluating what is a sacred space, Hassner believes that the institutionalization of a sacred site exhibits different traits and levels of importance. The access to and behaviors of sacred sites gives the site a level of credibility. For example St. Catherine in Mount Sinai encapsulates within its walls the burning bush. Without the walls of St. Catherine and the care of the monks, this sacred space or bush would not exist or be institutionalized. The same argument can be put forth concerning the Holy Sepulcher (crucifixion and tomb of Jesus) as well as the Dome of the Rock (Muhammad’s accession into heaven). These sacred places and spaces become institutionalized as sites or shrines. Problematic to sacred spaces is the concern that these places can be desecrated or destroyed which could be catastrophic to a community or to a religion [group of interest].<sup>83</sup>

Central to Hassner’s theme concerning institutionalization of sacred places is the concept of centrality or the importance of the sacred site, and vulnerability—sensitivity of a sacred site. He argues that “the more central the site to the identity of the religious community, the more likely the community is to take action in response to challenges to the integrity of the site. The more vulnerable the site, the greater the risk that a foreign presence or conduct will be interpreted as an

---

81. Ibid, 528.

82. *The Encyclopedia of Religions*, s.v. “Sacred Space,” 526-534.

83. Ron E. Hassner, *War on Sacred Ground* (London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 25.

offensive act.”<sup>84</sup>

These concepts are important for chaplains to understand as they advise the commander concerning sacred spaces, and as they determine the importance of institutionalization, centrality and vulnerability of sacred spaces and places for commanders as they conduct military operations. Questions that can help understand primary values are: “What are sources of doctrinal authority?”; “What are their concepts of justice?”; “What are they willing to die for?”; “What value is placed on women, family, etc.?”; “What holy days and/or festivals may have an impact on military operations?”; “What are the group’s distinctive symbols?”; and “What are protocols reference to birth through death?”<sup>85</sup> These and other questions can be used to develop the commander’s brief.

Now that categories were selected from the guide to help structure the brief, we will now review significant terms relevant to the group of interest (The Taliban).

### Basic Information about Islam

As already suggested before the chaplain develops his orientation, research needs to be done in order to more fully develop an understanding of the tenants, beliefs, and practices of a faith-based group of interest and how it influences military operations. One of the purposes of the project is to create an orientation brief on a group of interest that professes to follow the faith of Islam—like the Taliban. The following provides religious information that can aid the chaplain in developing a religious advisement brief. The belief, traditions and customs of Islam are many, and it is not the purpose of this project to examine, explore and understand the theology of Islam, e.g., the five

---

84. Ibid, 31.

85. U.S. Department of the Army, “Training Circular 1-05: Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team,” May 2005, D1-D5.

pillars of faith. However, it is important to have a basic understanding of how an Islam came to be, with which a commander and chaplain should understand.<sup>86</sup>

## Mecca

Before the formal establishment of Islam, Arabia was home to mostly competitive and raiding nomadic tribes. Information regarding the centuries immediately preceding the life of Muhammad is slim. It is known that trade flourished and that tensions were common between the city dwellers and the nomads, who were a nuisance to commerce. On the whole, cities were at the mercy of these nomads, called Bedouins. City dwellers also inhabited Arabia in the major trade and commerce areas.<sup>87</sup>

The city of Mecca lay along a major trade route. Mecca was the most significant city in Arabia due to the fact that it was prosperous for being on the trade route, its water wells, and because of the Ka'ba—an ancient shrine that was the major religious center for most of the inhabitants of the peninsula.<sup>88</sup> Ancient Arabs would perform pilgrimages to the Ka'ba and worship it in a multifaceted manner. The origins of the Ka'ba date back to the days of Abraham, where tradition holds that he and his son, Ishmael built it. It was a house dedicated to the one God (Allah). Over time, worship at the Ka'ba became devoted to multiple gods until the time of Muhammad, when he commanded his followers to face it while they conducted salat to the one true God.<sup>89</sup> Facing Mecca where the Ka'ba stood unified Muhammad's people. Since then, the Ka'ba is revered as the holiest place on earth for a Muslim and thus the only appropriate direction to face when pray-

---

86. For resources, books, websites concerning Islam see Appendix A: Orientation Brief Concerning Violent Extremism for Military Chaplains: The Taliban.

87. Yahya Armajani and Thomas M. Ricks, *Middle East: Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986), 22.

88. *Ibid.*, 25.

89. *Ibid.*, 31.

ing.<sup>90</sup>

Prior to Islam, the Kaaba of Mecca was covered in symbols representing the myriad demons, demigods, or simply tribal gods and other assorted deities which represented the polytheistic culture of pre-Islamic Arabia. Among those key deities were Allah. In pre-Islamic Arabia, Allah was used by Meccans as a reference to a supreme deity.<sup>91</sup> Once a year, tribes from all around the Arabian Peninsula, whether Christian or pagan, would converge on Mecca to perform a pilgrimage (*hajj*), marking the widespread conviction that Allah was the same deity worshiped by monotheists.<sup>92</sup> In contemporary times, wherever they are in the world, Muslims are expected to face the Kaaba – i.e., when outside Mecca, to face toward Mecca – when performing prayer (*salat*). From any point in the world, the direction facing the Kaaba is called the *qibla* (mark or token on the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction to Mecca).

Not only did Mecca hold spiritual and economic significance in pre-Islamic Arabia, Mecca became Arabia's economic and cultural capitol. The political control of the city was in the hands of the Quraysh tribe—the tribe through which the lineage of Muhammad would come in 570 A.D.<sup>93</sup> This was the backdrop of pre-Islamic Arabia from which Muhammad came to be.

## Muhammad

Islam is the religion of allegiance to God that began historically with the prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the 7th century CE. Muhammad was told to warn his people in the town of Mecca, in what is now Saudi Arabia; although he too was rejected by the majority of peo-

90. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 186-187.

91. L. Gardet, *Allah*, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

92. Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*, (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 11.

93. Yahya Armajani and Thomas M. Ricks, *Middle East: Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986), 27.

ple, some saw and heard the truth of God being spoken through him. These people made up the first small community of Muslims, who as a result of persecution moved with Muhammad to Yathrib (from then on called Medina) in 622 CE.

Muslims relate to Muhammad in various personal and worshipful ways. It is respectful and devotional. This devotion through the years has been manifested in poetry, pilgrimage, prayer, calligraphy, literature, and art. Muslims have internalized the notion of Muhammad into their concepts of self. This close relationship to Muhammad has caused many Muslims to take offence in how Muhammad has been portrayed throughout the centuries.

In recent times, the writing of Satanic Verses by Rushdie has brought significant angst and rage to the Muslim community (*ummah*). Likewise, the depiction of Muhammad as a terrorist brought nothing but loathing from Muslims throughout the world. These examples reflect a clash in views of Muhammad between Muslims and Westerners.

## **Sacred Writings**

Virtually all major faith traditions adhere to doctrine, tenants, or key concepts and principles found within a book or books. For Islam, this is the Qur'an. Qur'an means "recitation." It was in a cave on Mount Hira that Muhammad was overwhelmed with a tremendous sense of God (or his messenger Gabriel) pressing upon him and saying, "Irqa," "Recite." The words that followed were later collected into the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book.<sup>94</sup> Divided into 114 surahs (chapters) the Qur'an covers topics ranging from God's role in history, Muhammad's role as his prophet, the Last Judgement, and the need to help other people.<sup>95</sup> To Muslims, the Qur'an is viewed as the final and complete, eternal, uncreated, literal word of God, revealed one final

94. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 183.

95. *Ibid.*, 182.



time to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-two years.<sup>96</sup> However, an English translation of the Qur'an is seen as a shadow of the Arabic Qur'an, that is to say, the Qur'an is only the Qur'an in Arabic.

Because Allah commanded Muhammad to record God's word, Muslims believe that it is problematic to translate the Qur'an into any other language except Arabic. For Muslims, if the original meaning is lost, then it is not truly Allah's word.

*Is not the appearance of such a Book, from the lips of an illiterate man, the greatest miracle and clearest evidence that it is not of human origin?...All this is proof positive that the words of the Qur'an are in no way the sort of thing to originate from man...the matchlessness of the Qur'an is an actuality beyond the powers of humanity...The explicit and implicit testimony of the Qur'an is that the author is God himself. It is never the Prophet who speaks in the Qur'an.*<sup>97</sup>

Early Muslim communities struggled over leadership, authority, and interpretation not only of Muhammad, but of the Qur'an as well.<sup>98</sup> As the revelations of the Prophet stopped after his death, another way to organize life according to divine commands had to be found. Muhammad's companions and the first generations after him looked for a way to fill the gaps while remaining faithful to the spirit of the revelation. They therefore clung to the prophet's own words and actions, or Sunnah (custom). The Prophet's custom, his Sunnah, thus became in itself a kind of interpretation of the Qur'an. His Sunnah, in a way, became the precursor of the Hadith, an additional sacred text of Islam.<sup>99</sup>

96. John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

97. Kenneth Speight and Marston Cragg, *Islam from Within* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1980), 19-20.

98. "Islam and Muslim Americans," Educational Series booklet produced by the Arab American National Museum. 13-14.

99. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 60.

In response to the numerous forgeries during the Abassid dynasty of Islam (between 750 and 950), “hadith gatherers” (Bukari) began a collection of anecdotes, writings, and sayings about Muhammad that attempted to clarify what Muhammad did and said. The writings are known as the Hadith. Bukari established criteria of what to include in the hadith. Hadith are certain allusions, as well as facts that were only vaguely mentioned or indicated in the scripture, had to be understood as Muhammad had shown by his words and actions. His words were collected and his actions told and retold from generation to generation; a single report of what he said or did is called a hadith, “saying tale” called a transmitter (this saying was said by \_\_\_\_ that was said by \_\_\_\_.)<sup>100</sup>

As in every oral tradition, a good number of non-authentic sayings infiltrated the text in the course of the first centuries and a three-part scale was established to identify the strong hadith from a weak one. This scale is *sahih*, or strong hadith; *hasan*, or medium hadith; and, *daif*, or very weak hadith.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the hadith cannot be considered an absolutely infallible source for our understanding of Muhammad’s original teachings and his actual behavior. They also reflect, to a certain extent, the different currents developing inside Islam, for theological and political factions came up with hadith that supported their ideals.<sup>102</sup>

Interestingly, Ali Asani argues in *Pluralism, Intolerance, and the Qur’an* that Islam, as a Qur’anic norm, embraces the concept of heterogeneity.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, in the eighth and ninth centuries, groups began to interpret the Qur’an differently to become more exclusive in order, at the time, to unify Muslims. Asani points out how Muslim

100. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 52.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ali Asani, “Pluralism, Intolerance, and the Qur’an,” *American Scholar* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 52-60.

scholars used verses written in the seventh century after war broke out to undermine more peaceful declarations written before.<sup>104</sup> The end result is suppression within the Qur'an, where later verses calling for violence conflict and (in their view) overpower earlier, peaceful verses. Though the original interpretation of the Qur'an was viewed by scholars as inclusivistic in nature, regimes like Saudi Arabia with its organization of Wahhabism<sup>105</sup> are spreading an exclusivist agenda through their adapted systems of Islamic seminaries (*madrassas*) which are financed by the rich oil industry. This is contrary to the concept of pluralism, and therefore Asani believes is one of Islam's greatest problems.<sup>106</sup> In addition, groups of interest today use the Qur'an to justify violence as a way of legitimizing frustration with failed Arab states based on capitalism, socialism, or communism. Since many states failed due to corrupt governance, some groups of interest (such as Taliban) want to "return" to a theocratic state with a "pure" religion defined by themselves. In other words, this is using religious justification for political domination of others.

### **Imamates and Caliphates, Sunni/Shia Split:**

The first great divergence of Islam can be drawn from the religious and political differences that followed shortly after the death of Muhammad. His death in 632 C.E. led to a dispute over who the next successor should be. The Prophet had united the Bedouin tribes under the banner of Islam, but tribal loyalties cooled quickly when the leader died.<sup>107</sup> The group that they elected from the bloodline became Shia and the ones that wanted to elect Abu Bakr became Sunni. Sunni and Shia communities were divided by disagreements on the succession of leadership after Muhammad, while the rise of the Druze, Sufis, and other Islamic factions reflected specific local customs and cultures.<sup>108</sup>

104. Ali Asani, "Pluralism, Intolerance, and the Qur'an," *American Scholar* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 58.

105. *Ibid.*, 57.

106. *Ibid.*, 58.

107. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 19.

108. *Ibid.*, 60-64.

Today there are differences in religious practice, traditions and customs, often related to Islamic law.

The fundamental difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims is the Shia doctrine of the imamate as distinct from the Sunni caliphate. The caliph was the selected or elected successor of the Prophet. He succeeded to political and military leadership but not to Muhammad's religious authority. By contrast, for the Shia, leadership of the Muslim community is vested in the imam (leader), who, although not a prophet, is the divinely inspired, sinless, infallible, religio-political leader of the community.<sup>109</sup>

The Sunnis wanted the next caliph to be chosen by Muhammad's community of followers, while the Shias wanted the leadership to stay within the prophet's family. The Sunnis were the majority and chose Abu Bakr as their Caliph. Sunnis follow the *Rashidun* "rightly guided Caliphs", who were the first four caliphs who ruled after the death of Muhammad: Abu Bakr (632-634), Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644), Uthman ibn Affan (644-656), and Ali Ibn Abi Talib (656-661).

Shia doctrine does not recognize the validity of the first three caliphs and believes that Ali is the second-most divinely inspired man after Muhammad and that he and his descendants by Fatimah, the Imams, are the sole genuine Islamic leaders.<sup>110</sup> The Imamate of the Shia encompasses far more of a prophetic function than the Caliphate of the Sunnis.<sup>111</sup> Unlike Sunni, Shias believe special spiritual qualities have been granted not only to Muhammad but also to Ali and the other Imams.

The Shias did not recognize the Sunni's new leader and instead,

109. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 48.

110. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 99.

111. Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 38.

they chose Muhammad's son-in-law Ali as their new Imam. Since the time of the division, there have been violent clashes between the two groups. Early on most of the Shia Imams met violent ends at the hands of the stronger Sunni caliphs, including Imam Ali's son Hussein, who's beheading is still considered a major religious observance for Shiite Muslims.<sup>112</sup>

The Shia doctrine of the imamate resulted in fundamental differences in Islamic jurisprudence. In addition to accepting the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the prophets, Shia have maintained their own collection of traditions that include not only the *Sunnah* of the prophet but also of Ali and Imams. They regard their Imam as supreme legal interpreter and authority. In the absence of the Imam, leading *mujtahids* (those publicly acknowledged for their learning, piety, and justice), should serve as a religious guide whose example and teachings believers should follow.<sup>113</sup>

Shias believe that Muhammad divinely ordained his cousin and son-in-law Ali Ibn Abi Talib (the father of his grandsons Hasan ibn Ali and Hussein ibn Ali) in accordance with the command of God to be the next caliph, making Ali and his direct descendants Muhammad's successors.<sup>114</sup> Tradition tells us that at the time, Muhammad was twenty-five years old and Khadija (his wife) was forty. During their fifteen years of marriage, they enjoyed a very close relationship and had three sons (who died in infancy) and four daughters. The most famous of Muhammad's surviving children was Fatima, who would marry Ali, the revered fourth caliph in Sunni Islam and the first legitimate Imam (leader) of Shia Islam.

Currently, there are numerous Sunni and Shiite groups of interest.

112. This event occurred at the Battle of Karbala. See John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book*, 25.

113. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 103.

114. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 14, 33.

Being a Sunni or Shia Muslim does not make a person a member of a group of interest, or even a supporter of those groups, but they are still divided according to historical differences. Every country with Islamic groups of interest has large Sunni-Shia populations on both sides and they both have a history of oppressing one another depending on who is currently in power. Iraq, for example, was run by an oppressive Shia regime before Saddam Hussain, then an oppressive Sunni regime during Saddam's reign, followed by an oppressive Shia regime once again after Saddam left power. Today, most of the Middle East comprises Sunni Muslim, while the Shia sect in Iraq and Iran make up most of the Muslims in that region.<sup>115</sup>

Over the years, Sunni-Shia affairs have been marked by both collaboration and war. Sectarian violence persists to this day and authority and control are major elements of friction throughout the Middle East.<sup>116</sup> In this light, the Sunni-Shia division, in many ways, can be viewed more in terms about power, politics, and retribution than it is about actual religion or theology.

## Mosques

In terms of sacred space, the mosque is a distinct site in Islamic communities. The word "mosque" is a French rendition from the Arabic word masjid, meaning "place of prostration."<sup>117</sup> This has connection to the manner in which Muslims bow deeply as they offer prayer. The concept of having a building to conduct prayer (*salat*) and other worship was first introduced by the prophet Muhammad.<sup>118</sup> Though a mosque is not an essential element in Muslim prayer, they are "houses

---

115. "The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity," August 9, 2012, Pew Research Center, accessed April 8, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-executive-summary/>.

116. Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 105-110.

117. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 194.

118. Ibid., 195.

which God has allowed to be built, that His name may be spoken in them.”<sup>119</sup>

Mosques are important buildings in which significant religious acts takes place to include prayer, worship, community, as well as education, and as a place of rest—an Islamic center meant to unify all Muslims. A mosque is also a place to go for a source of water and to get clean before prayer time, known as *ablution*.<sup>120</sup> Most Mosques have fountains or other sources of water for worshippers to clean their hands and faces before or after prayer.

The Ottoman-style mosques characterized by large domes are probably the most widely known through Western eyes. Armajani and Ricks describe how various regions and eras had their own distinct style of mosque architecture:

*Most of the mosques and palaces built during the Umayyad (661-750) and Abbasid (750- 1258) periods have been destroyed. The best examples of Umayyad architecture that have survived are the Umayyad mosque at Damascus, and the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem. Of the Abbasid buildings, nothing is left...Most authorities agree that, in general, Umayyad architecture shows byzantine influence, while Abbasid architecture shows Iranian influence...Indeed, the art and architecture of the period reflect the close interrelationship between the commercial and the religious realms of the empire.*<sup>121</sup>

In addition, there is significant symbolism represented by the architecture and décor of a mosque. The size and style of the mosque largely

---

119. Surah 24:36.

120. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 43.

121. Yahya Armajani and Thomas M. Ricks, *Middle East: Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986), 96.

depends on the era it was built. The oldest operating mosque, for example, is the Great Mosque in Cordoba, Spain. The Great Mosque was built to represent the hypostyle architecture which was representative of typical Muslim Spain in the eighth century.<sup>122</sup> In terms of decoration, mosques are plain to the eye both on the interior and exterior. Most mosques contain no pictorial representations and are furnished very simply<sup>123</sup> so as to keep surroundings humble and modest and prevent getting distracted from worship. Nevertheless, what a mosque lacks in décor, it makes up for in architectural masterpieces, that can be the best known, and best representative artistic expression of Islamic culture.<sup>124</sup>

## Sharia Law

Muslim life is based on the Qur'an and Hadith which are drawn together into Muslim law in the schools of *Sharia*.<sup>125</sup> Sharia are major traditions that developed into codes for life—Sharia means “the well-worn path that camels take to the watering place.”<sup>126</sup> For Muslims, law is essentially religious—it's God's guidance for humanity, and the basis for both law and ethics (not only what you ought to do, but what you must do).<sup>127</sup> Because Islam describes the whole life experience (not just religion), Sharia should cover both civil and religious conduct. Although there are different names for Sharia applied to civil or religious behavior, there should be no real separation, as all of life should be seen as religious. All acts should be carried out in the name of God and so are governed by his laws.<sup>128</sup>

---

122. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 195.

123. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 43.

124. *Ibid.*, 42.

125. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 184.

126. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 96.  
127. *Ibid.*, 92.

128. Kenneth Speight and Marston Cragg, *Islam from Within* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1980), 99-100.



Muslims look to the Sharia for guidance on morality and faith. However, because the Qur'an does not describe some aspects of modern life, there is some disagreement of how and to what extent Sharia can be interpreted in a modern society.<sup>129</sup> In the time of Muhammad, the people were governed by the Qur'an and by Muhammad. He simply told them what to do and they did it—he created the law by his statements. After his death, the first four Caliphs continued by creating laws as ad hoc decisions for each problem. After the Caliphs, the Umayyad dynasty (661-750) created the first attempt at systemized law.<sup>130</sup> They appointed *qadis*, or judges, who relied on three things: (1) Prevailing law of the area (tribal or communal) (2) Qur'an (where applicable) (3) Qadi's own judgment.<sup>131</sup> This began to build into a system of legal precedent or codified law, but it varied greatly from region to region. The Abbasid dynasty (750-1258) was when Sharia really began to develop. In the two centuries after the Prophet's death, four legal schools, *madhhabs*, “way,” appeared to resolve the conflicts between the Qur'an and cultural traditions in the areas in which Islam was spreading. In each, different methods were developed for the solution of emerging problems in the community. Scholars began to complain about the wide differences in interpretation of law from place to place. Four main schools of thought attempted to create a universal governing system of Sharia law: Hanifa, Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbal.<sup>132</sup> During the time of the creation of these schools of thought (750-900 C.E.) religious scholars (*ulama*), formulated the law, and judges (*qadis*) applied the law. Main problem: the Qur'an is not a law book—only about 10% has to do with law (hence the differences between the schools - not enough source material to answer every question, so the schools fill the gaps differently).<sup>133</sup> How is Sharia

129. Kenneth Speight and Marston Cragg, *Islam from Within* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1980), 100.

130. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 93.

131. *Ibid.*, 93.

132. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 93-94.

133. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 59-63.

law interpreted, framed, and carried out today? Esposito believes it is through several channels, each staking their own claim:

*In the past, the traditional Sunni religious leadership (ulama) claimed the prerogative to interpret Islam, while the caliph was responsible for its implementation. In traditional Shii Islam, the ulama were sources of guidance and emulation in the absence of the imam. In recent decades, the non-ulama, lay intellectuals (men and women) and leaders of Islamic movements, have also asserted their right to interpret or reinterpret Islam...Because Islam lacks a centralized teaching authority or organized hierarchy, there is no easy answer to the question, "Whose Islam?"*

In the broad spectrum of Islamic reformations, revivals, and approaches, the Taliban is just one of those. The Taliban is an Islamic organization whose beliefs and religious philosophies intersect with ancient cultures and tribal codes that hurt the international community. This manipulation of religion can be seen through the Taliban's violent extremism which they resort to in order to reach their goals.

## **Jihad**

Despite the rich diversity in Islamic practice, the Five Pillars of Islam remain the core and common denominator, the five essential and obligatory practices all Muslims accept and follow.<sup>134</sup> Sometimes referred to as the sixth pillar of Islam, jihad signifies a "struggle" in the way of God.<sup>135</sup> The word jihad comes from Arabic *jahada*, "he made an effort." There are many ways to make an effort "in the cause of God": Fighting in defense of Muslims is only one.<sup>136</sup> In the sev-

---

134. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 106.

135. *Ibid.*, 113.

136. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 184.

enth century, during Prophet Mohammad's time, jihad was struggle against enemies for self-defense. However, it had other meanings too. In 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries (C.E.), in Arab world this term was used for imperialism. During colonial times, struggle for freedom was called jihad. But 1980 onwards, a new jihad came up after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. To get rid of communism, US along with Saudi Arabia created, trained and established jihadists from the Afghan/Pakistan border, spending billions of dollars trying to combat the spread of communism into Afghanistan. Thereafter, jihad became a complex issue exploited by violent extremists, and other powers.

There are several prominent voices when it comes to opinions regarding jihad. Perhaps the most conservative is spoken by Sayyid Qutb, a twentieth century Islamic theorist and influential member of the Muslim Brotherhood. For Qutb, all non-Muslims were infidels—even the so-called people of the book, the Christians and Jews.

Qutb believed that peace is the essential character of Islam<sup>137</sup> yet war is the exception and is necessary when there is a deviation from the integration exemplified in the religion of the one God resulting in injustice, oppression, corruption, and discord.<sup>138</sup> Further, he claimed the West has polluted the concept of jihad as savagery and bloodletting while they have fought for centuries trying to fulfill their burning greed and desires, have engaged in unholy war against weaker nations seeking markets for their products and land to colonize.<sup>139</sup> For Qutb, jihad is a practical matter and should not be renounced, be embarrassed about, or written apologetically about.<sup>140</sup> Qutb's views on jihad inspired a whole generation of Islamists. The Muslim world widely accepted his ideology after the Arabs' defeat in the 1967 war. According to Qutb, There are two parties in all the world: the Party of Allah

137. John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 83.

138. Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Salaam Al-Alami Wa-Al-Islam* (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1974), 21.

139. John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 84.

140. Ibid.

and the Party of Satan.<sup>141</sup>

A Western view of jihad is offered by Benjamin Barber. He suggests why democracy has failed in light of a jihadist society:

*Jihad delivers a different set of virtues: a vibrant local identity, a sense of community, and solidarity among kinsmen, neighbors, and countrymen, narrowly conceived. But it also guarantees parochialism and is grounded in exclusivism. Solidarity is secured through war against outsiders. And solidarity often means obedience to a hierarchy in governance, fanaticism in beliefs, and the obliterations of individual selves in the name of the group.*<sup>142</sup>

Such psychological, cultural, and political implication of a group that believes in jihad hardly cultivates the required attitude for people ready to govern themselves in a democratic society. For members involved in groups of interest, jihad is a significant concept and method which targets the destruction of all the existent “unjust” sovereign political systems.

### Jihadist Flags



141. Sayyid Qutb, *al-salaam al-Alami wa-al-Islam* (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1974), 174.

142. Benjamin Barber, “Jihad Vs. McWorld,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 269, no.3 (March 1992): 63.



To make anything more beautiful such as Qur’anic writings, architecture, sculptures and paintings, is viewed as an act of worship and thanksgiving. Banners that represent Islamic groups of interest are no different. Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other groups of interest that practice extreme forms of jihad all seem to have the same variations of the same flag. What do these black flags of jihad mean? Are they as violent as we think, or do they represent something more benign? The flags that are commonly used by groups of interest are called the “Black Standard,” “The Flag of the Eagle” or simply, “The Standard.”

In particular, they are draped in the background and filmed during their operations (including announcements, raids, and beheadings). When uploaded onto a social media platform, they serve as a powerful propaganda and recruitment tool. Though flags of jihad are seen as a rallying cry and symbol of war, the flag's writing, color, and symbols have originally had a history behind it that doesn't include extremist ideologies.<sup>143</sup> The flag's contents have been appropriated by violent extremists and interpreted for their own benefit (much like the Crusaders did with the cross, Nazi's did with the swastika, and the KKK did with Christian symbolism) to falsely identify to others that they were righteous while instilling fear in the hearts of the outsiders. The flags are modeled after the black flag that Muhammad developed for his military banner in the 7th century.<sup>144</sup> The color black is used to represent the time of Muhammad (Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait are other Muslim countries that follow this tradition with black in their flags).<sup>145</sup> Most jihadist flags contain a *shahadah*, (an Islamic testament of their faithfulness to Islam). The full shahadah (on the Taliban flag) translates to "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This is an important testament to Muslims around the world and by no means is restricted to groups of interest, as Peter Sophia explains in his study of the shahadah:

*In Islam, the central truths of the Quranic revelation are Unity and Mercy. These two great themes, which both dominate and permeate the Islamic tradition, are given their most concise expression in the shahadah, the two statements that form the Islamic testification of faith.*<sup>146</sup>

---

143. David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 2002), 197.

144. "The Islamic Imagery Project: Visual Motifs in Jihadi Internet Propaganda," Combating Terrorism Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy. March 2006, accessed 23 February 2015, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-islamic-imagery-project>.

145. Maria Alvanou, "Symbolisms of Basic Islamic Imagery in Jihadi Propaganda," Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues, and Managing Emergencies, accessed 12 December 2014, <http://www.itstime.it/w/symbolisms-of-basic-islamic-imagery-in-jihadi-propaganda>.

146. Peter Sophia, "The Shahadah as Truth and as Way," *The Journal of Traditional Studies* 9, no. 2 (2003), 77.

Various flags flown by groups of interest also contains the “seal of Muhammad.”<sup>147</sup> Inside the seal translates to “Muhammad, messenger of Allah” the seal is a common symbol of Islam. It is the actual seal that Muhammad himself would use on official correspondence.<sup>148</sup> Some flags contain swords, which can denote militancy. However, the swords can also represent historic Islam. The swords were known as “scimitars” and were the principal weapon used by soldiers throughout Arabia during the ninth century.<sup>149</sup> All of these writings and symbols found on jihadist flags when left alone by themselves are used commonly and are harmless. But when a group of interest puts them together on their flag and waves it in the name of war and jihad, the flags take on a twisted, sinister meaning.

The incredible diversity in Muslim identity was the result of fundamental beliefs interacting in complex ways with the many different cultures in which Muslims lived. Factors such as geography, history, cultural traditions, political, social, and economic structures, were all influences that defined Muslim identity. So it continues today. Recognizing this reality, Abdol Karim Soroush, a contemporary Iranian academic, states,

*There is no such thing as a “pure” Islam or an-historical Islam that is outside the process of historical development. The actual lived experience of Islam has always been culturally and historically specific, and bound by the immediate circumstances of its location in time and space. If we were to take a snapshot of Islam as it is lived today, it would reveal a diversity of lived experiences which are all different, yet exist-*

---

147. David Samuel Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1905), 364-365.

148. David Samuel Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1905), 364-365.

149. James E. Lindsay, *Daily Life In The Medieval Islamic World* (Chicago, IL: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 64-65.

ing simultaneously.<sup>150</sup>

Like any major faith tradition, Islam varies in its customs, practices, and explanations of the world. Though virtually all Muslims share the same central beliefs of loyalty and devotion toward the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an as it was revealed to him by Allah, the evolution of Islam as a religion has come to be interpreted in diverse ways as it spread throughout the globe.

### The Taliban



### Historical Background

#### Wahhabism

To better understand the history of the Taliban, it is first necessary to know the history of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia. For more than two hundred years, Wahhabism has been Saudi Arabia's dominant faith. It is a harsh form of Islam that maintains a strictly literal interpretation of the Qur'an. Based on the tenants of its founder, Muhamad Wahhab

150. Abdolkarim Sorouch, as quoted in Farish Noor, *New Voices of Islam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 15-16.



(1703-1792), Wahhabis believe that all those who do not practice their form of Islam are infidels and consequently, enemies to Islam.<sup>151</sup> As an Islamic reformer, Wahhab demanded conformity. He argued that all Muslims must individually pledge their allegiance to a single Muslim leader (caliph). Those who would not conform to this view should be killed, their wives and daughters violated, and their possessions confiscated.<sup>152</sup> The list of apostates meriting death included the Shia Muslims, Sufi Islam, and other Muslim denominations, whom Wahhab did not consider to be Muslim at all.<sup>153</sup> His teachings sent Islam back to the medieval times and anyone who visits Afghanistan today can see it.

Scholars say that Wahhabism's harshness has led it to misinterpret and alter Islam, pointing to violent extremists such as Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.<sup>154</sup> Wahhabism's influence on groups of interest such as the Taliban began in the 1970s when Saudi Arabian contributions from oil started funding Wahhabi madrassas in Pakistan.<sup>155</sup> Armed by Pakistan and the United States, and educated by Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, the mujahedeen became a significant counter-force against the Soviets.

Wahhabism was strongly sustained and maintained by Saudi Arabian religious clergy. It was Saudi Arabia that donated most of the text books and learning materials to the Taliban studying in the Pakistani

---

151. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 144-146.

152. Alastair Croke, "You Can't Understand ISIS If You Don't Know the History of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia," *The World Post*, August 27, 2014, accessed March 3, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-croke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia\\_b\\_5717157.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-croke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia_b_5717157.html).

153. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 222.

154. Ana Serafim, "Terrorism—A Cultural Phenomenon?" *Consortium Quarterly Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 65.

155. Akhilesh Pillalamarri, "The Radicalization of South Asian Islam: Saudi Money and the Spread of Wahhabism," *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, December 20, 2014, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2014/12/20/the-radicalization-of-south-asian-islam-saudi-money-and-the-spread-of-wahhabism>.

madrassas.<sup>156</sup> A holy war fought two centuries ago in Wahhabi's name helped give rise to modern Saudi Arabia, now, a new jihad gives violent rise to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

## Deobandis

Created out of a strong response to Hindu proselytization in India that occurred under British rule in the nineteenth century, Deobandism sought to teach a reformed literal and scriptural interpretation of Islam.<sup>157</sup> Deobandi religious teachings in the Afghan/Pakistan border came directly from the Deoband seminary in northern India, and taught to young males by teachers and scholars in Pakistan and Afghanistan who had been instructed in the same way.<sup>158</sup>

After the creation of the nation of Pakistan in 1947 numerous satellite Deobandi madrassas sprung up throughout Pakistan.<sup>159</sup> These madrassas carried on not only the strict Deobandi theological tradition but also its political activism.<sup>160</sup> The majority of Taliban fighters are Deobandi madrassas-trained, Saudi-funded Sunni Muslims. Many Deobandis believe it is their duty to rid the Muslim world of infidels through jihad.

Deobandi followed the Maturidi school of Islamic theology, which is a modified form of the very conservative Hanafi school of Sharia law. Though both Saudi Arabians and Deobandis are frequently referred to as "Wahhabis," but a key point that divides them is the Sharia law school of thought: Saudis practice the Hanbali legal code, while the Taliban are strict followers of the Hanafi legal code. Deobandi

---

156. Christopher Blanchard, "Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas: Background," CRS Report for Congress Order Code RS21654, February 10, 2005, 2-3.

157. Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: the Myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9.

158. Ibid., 19.

159. Stan C. Weeber, *Private Armies in the Culture of Capitalism* (Lake Charles, LA: Xlibris, 2010), 73.

160. Ibid., 73.

in Afghanistan and Pakistan differs from other forms of the practice because it has been influenced more strongly by the Wahhabi movement, thus, some Deobandis may prefer to use the term Wahhabi to describe themselves or may identify as members of both sects.<sup>161</sup> In short, it is significant that Westerners keep in mind that “Wahhabi” means something very different in the Taliban framework than it does in the Saudi framework. Commanders must not assume that in general, Saudi government shares the same Islamic vision as the Taliban government.

## **The Soviet War in Afghanistan**

The Taliban is a Sunni Islamic extremist group that ruled Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001. With close ties to al Qaeda, the Taliban emerged out of similar circumstances during the war with the Soviets in the mid-1980s, but was not formally recognized until 1994. The Taliban began with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979-1989 which included dozens of different rebel groups called holy fighters (mujahedeen). The Soviet occupation was an attempt to strengthen its control within Soviet Central Asia (including Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan). In addition to being a strategic location for Soviet Russia, the occupation in Afghanistan was also an attempt to curb a rapidly growing Muslim population. A key motive for the war was based on the fear that with the growth of the Muslim population came the development of an Islamic nationalist ideology—one that did not include communism. Concerned that Soviet Central Asia would be affected by this growing ideology, the USSR decided to invade and occupy in order to quell the Afghans’ movement as well as to secure added power in central Asia. In July 1979, President Jimmy Carter secretly authorized the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to spend millions of dollars to support clandestine operations with the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Afghan

---

161. Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld, *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict* (New York, NY: Social Science Press, 2012), 114.

opposition (mujahedeen) against the communists. With covert help and ten years in the making, a ragtag Afghan militia defeated one of the world's superpowers that led to the collapse of the Soviet empire in Afghanistan.

When Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in defeat in 1989, civil war erupted. Numerous mujahedeen warlords and opium dealers carved out their own personal territories to control while the country was on the brink of starvation.<sup>162</sup> In a land without the rule of law, anarchy ensued. In Kandahar, a poor wheat farmer named Muhammad Omar offered a radical solution: Stability in Afghanistan could be found by complying with strict Islamic justice under Sharia law, and zero tolerance for drug trafficking and corruption.<sup>163</sup> Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid suggests that the devastation of the Soviet invasion and the following period influenced Taliban rule of Afghanistan.<sup>164</sup>

Islamic seminary teacher Mullah Omar started the Taliban movement with fewer than 50 of his own madrassa students (*talibs*) in his hometown of Kandahar.<sup>165</sup>

## Madrassas

When the Taliban first started, many primitive/fundamental beliefs were the norm in southern Afghanistan. Similar to today's standards, education was limited for children. When Mullah Omar rose to leadership, he recruited his growing followers from Afghan/Pakistani-trained Islamic seminaries called *madrassas*. The madrassas are where the original members of the Taliban came from—Afghan/Paki-

---

162. Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror* (New York: Picador, 2010), 53. And Vanda Felsbab-Brown, *Shooting Up* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2010), 118.

163. Kevin Tamerler, Position Paper on *Taliban* for Disarmament and International Security Committee, Harvard National Model United Nations, 2011.

164. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 32.

165. Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan, 1994-1997* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25-26.

stani-trained holy fighters (*mujahedeen*) in northern Pakistan, taught to fight the Soviets on the Afghanistan Front.<sup>166</sup> In order to combat the growing influence of communist USSR during the Soviet invasion, money from America and Saudi Arabia was sent to support the *mujahedeen*.<sup>167</sup>

Young men who study at these madrassas (*talibs*) study the teachings of Wahhab. *Talibs* believe that Islam should be purified and practiced like it was practiced by the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century.<sup>168</sup> They are also taught that every enemy of Allah should be converted or destroyed.<sup>169</sup> This severe doctrine stands in stark contrast to many of rich cultural traditions and peaceful tenants of previous and current civilizations of Islam.

In the process of the fighting, many of the Afghan civilians became refugees by the ongoing fighting. To help the refugees, Saudi Arabia set up hundreds of madrassas to offer a free education for the refugee children between the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>170</sup> These madrassa school students are known as *talibs*. Their teachers are local *mullahs* like Muhammad Omar. During the desperate times of the Soviet war, many of these schools were used for a different purpose—to indoctrinate Taliban in jihad. Outraged by the rape of young girls by local warlords, Mullah Omar led his first operation in 1994 and managed to seize Kandahar, the second largest city in Afghanistan.

#### According to Collin Price's "Pakistan: A Plethora of Problems," Paki-

166. Mariam Atifa Raqib, "Resistance By Other Means: The Taliban, Foreign Occupation, and Afghan National Identity" (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2011), 154-155, accessed March 24, 2015, [iris.lib.neu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=law\\_pol\\_soc\\_diss](http://iris.lib.neu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=law_pol_soc_diss).  
167. Michel Chossudovsky, "Al Qaeda and the War on Terrorism," Global Research, January 20, 2008, accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/al-qaeda-and-the-war-on-terrorism/7718>.

168. Cofie D. Malbouisson, *Focus On Islamic Issues* (New York: Nova Science Pub Inc, 2007), 22.

169. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: the Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 75.

170. Peter Singer, "Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education not Jihad," Brookings Institute, November 1, 2001, accessed February 9, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2001/11/pakistan-singer>.

stan believed it could control the Taliban leadership and, in essence, gain control of Afghanistan through a proxy government. Pakistan was the first country to recognize the Taliban government (the only other two being Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), which provided the Taliban with a great deal of military and economic aid.<sup>171</sup> Pakistan was eager to pursue its own interests—its objective in Afghanistan has always been strategic.<sup>172</sup> Pakistan wanted an ally and buffer in its northern regions to strengthen its western flank in case of renewed war against Pakistan's long- time and much larger enemy, India. The Pakistani Intelligence Agency (ISI) also found the zealous Taliban willing to allow Pakistan to train additional violent extremists to fight India in the contested lands of Kashmir.<sup>173</sup>

By 1996 the Taliban had control of Kabul and imposed harsh laws in the newly called Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, where music, and even kites were outlawed. Women were denied education and forced to wear burkas. Backed by the ISI<sup>174</sup>, the Taliban then effectively had control of the government of Afghanistan.<sup>175</sup>

## Organization

### Leadership

The Taliban leadership structure is known as the Quetta Shura and is composed of the leaders of the Afghan Taliban.<sup>176</sup> It has been based in Quetta, Pakistan since the downfall of the Islamic Emirate of Afghan-

---

171. Colin Price, "Pakistan: A Plethora of Problems," *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 53.

172. Larry Hanauer and Peter Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's Strategies in Afghanistan: Implications for the United States and the Region*, (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2012), 25-26.

173. *Ibid.*, 29.

174. *Ibid.*, 28.

175. Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan, 1994-1997* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 26.

176. James Mozul, "The Quetta Shura Taliban: An Overlooked Problem," *International Affairs Review*, XXIII (November 23, 2009), accessed April 8, 2015, <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/106>.

istan in 2001. Quetta Shura Taliban (QST) commanders strategize operations in Afghanistan from their Pakistani headquarters in Quetta, where many leaders, including Mullah Omar, have eluded capture.<sup>177</sup>

According to the Council on Foreign Relations (an organization dedicated to engaging in high-level discussions with world leaders, U.S. government officials, CEOs, policy analysts, and others through select videos, audio recordings, and unedited transcripts), the Taliban controls areas mostly located in southern, eastern, and northern Afghanistan, with major strongholds in the Kandahar region and lands surrounding the capital of Kabul.<sup>178</sup> Some military analysts estimate that there are approximately 25,000 Afghan insurgents with varying degrees of allegiance to the Taliban, but assessments of the group's relative strength vary.<sup>179</sup>

Mullah Omar is the leader of the Afghan Taliban (QST) and “Commander of the Faithful,” a term referring to a leader of an Islamic community ruled by Sharia law.<sup>180</sup> To this day, it is hard to separate Omar, the man, from all the myths and legends that surround him. Ahmed Rashid is a Pakistani journalist who is well-respected by Taliban leaders and who was allowed access into the workings of the Taliban. In addition to describing the Taliban's organization in great detail, Ahmed Rashid gives us some insight on the reason why the Taliban is organized in this manner: “The Sharia does not allow politics or political parties. That is why we give no salaries to officials or soldiers, just food, clothes, shoes, and weapons. We want to live a life like the Prophet lived 1400 years ago, and jihad is our right. We want to recreate the time of the Prophet, and we are only carrying out what

---

177. Ibid.

178. Zachary Laub, “The Taliban in Afghanistan,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, no. 22. (July 2014) accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/taliban-afghanistan/p10551>.

179. Ibid.

180. Jeffery Dressler, “The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan,” Institute for the Study of War: Military Analysis and Education, October 2010, 4, accessed April 9, 2015, [http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf\\_state/haqqani-network-compressed.pdf](http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/haqqani-network-compressed.pdf).

the Afghan people have wanted for the past 14 years.”<sup>181</sup>

As stated by the research of Thomas Johnson and Matthew Dupee, the majority of the funds come to the Taliban by way of opium exports.<sup>182</sup> In 1998, three billion dollars annually was being funneled into the organization, most of it to Mullah Omar and his deputies, who would then disperse it as they saw fit.<sup>183</sup>

## Operations

*Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment.*<sup>184</sup>

Renard suggests the importance of distinguishing between two broad categories of jihadist ideologies: National and Transnational.<sup>185</sup> A nationalist jihad ideology seeks strategies, objectives and tactics that are limited to a geographical or political arena. The Taliban, in addition to groups of interest such as Hamas and Hezbollah would be considered pursuing a nationalist jihad ideology as they are seeking to establish a Muslim state within their own boundaries. On the other hand, groups of interest such as ISIS and al-Qaeda would be considered as holding a transnational jihad ideology. Boundaries and borders are of no concern, calling for war and fatwahs against “Western” enti-

---

181. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 43.

182. Thomas H. Johnson and Matthew C. DuPee, “Analysing the new Taliban Code of Conduct,” *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (March 2012): 79-80.

183. *Ibid.*, 81.

184. Surah 9:111.

185. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 77.



ties and organizations. In the broad spectrum of these two ideologies lie all kinds of Muslims, each with their own reasons for believing jihad the way that they do. For many, anything short of constant warfare against the West is collaboration and cowardice and refusal to engage in the struggle as mandated by Muhammad and the Qur'an.<sup>186</sup>

The Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) defines suicide bombing as an "operational method in which the very act of the attack is dependent upon the death of the perpetrator. The terrorist is fully aware that if she/he does not kill her/himself, the planned attack will not be implemented."<sup>187</sup> Groups of interest recruit and utilize suicide bombers due to their low cost, low technology, and low risk method of promoting violence and fear. Doing it in the name of Islam can be a very powerful tool. By changing the terminology from "suicide" to "martyrdom operations," violent extremists are able to justify the act according to tradition.<sup>188</sup> Author Ehud Sprinzak offers insight regarding the historicity of this practice: "A long view of history reveals that suicide terrorism existed as early as the 11th century. The Assassins (Ismalis-Nizari), Muslim fighters, adopted suicide terrorism as a strategy to advance the cause of Islam. These perpetrators perceived their deaths as acts of martyrdom for the glory of God."<sup>189</sup>

There seems to be theological discord among scholars and leaders as to what the Qur'an and Hadith promises to suicide bombers. It is clear that righteous males are promised seventy-two virgins in the afterlife whether martyred or not.<sup>190</sup> However, some Muslims interpret tradi-

---

186. Ibid., 78.

187. Boaz Ganor, "The First Iraqi Suicide Bombing. A Hint of Things to Come?" International Center for Counter-Terrorism, March 30, 2003, accessed September 25, 2014, <http://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=867>.

188. Surah 4:74, 4:29.

189. Ehud Sprinzak, "Rational Fanatics," *Foreign Policy* 120, no.1 (September-October 2000), 68.

190. Surah 56:36.

tion to also include suicide bombers.<sup>191</sup> Still, other Islam researchers such as Margaret Nydell believe, “It is also time to put the ’72 virgins’ at rest; this is a quaint, lurid, provocative interpretation of an obscure passage in the Qur’an, avidly seized upon by Westerners who find it amusing and use it repeatedly to ridicule Islamic belief.”<sup>192</sup> Nevertheless, the eternal rewards are promised, making suicide attacks a much more powerful incentive.

For the Taliban and other groups of interest, suicide attacks have become an effective means of conducting jihad in the name of Allah. It has long been acknowledged the critical role that religion and spirituality play in propelling combatants toward victory during battles. British historian Bernard Lewis wrote that “The emergence of the now widespread terrorism practice of suicide bombing is a development of the 20th century. It has no antecedents in Islamic history, and no justification in terms of Islamic theology, law, or tradition.”<sup>193</sup>

Social scientists have long suggested many benefits to individuals when they are motivated by a higher cause. They are better able to accept the reality of a situation, develop creative coping strategies, find meaning in trauma, maintain an optimistic view of the future, access their social support network, generate the motivation to persevere, and grow from adversity.<sup>194</sup> Kenneth Pargament and Patrick Sweeney postulate, “The term spirit is also tied intimately to other higher order qualities, including purpose and meaning, enlightenment, authenticity, interconnectedness, and self-actualization. In this

---

191. “In the Muslim world, then, we celebrate what we call the martyr-bombers. To us they are heroes defending the things we hold sacred. Polls in the Middle East show 75% of people in favor of martyr-bombings. They also carry the weight of religious authority. The world’s most quoted independent Islamic jurist, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, calls the bombs ‘commendable’ and ‘among the greatest form of holy struggle against oppression.’” For further study, see the work of notable Muslim journalist, Faisal Bodi. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/aug/28/comment.israelandthepalestinians>.

192. Margaret K. Nydell, *Understanding Arabs: a Contemporary Guide to Arab Society* (Boston, MA: Intercultural Press, 2012), 109.

193. Bernard Lewis and Buntzie Ellis Churchill, *Islam: The Religion and the People*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2009), 153.

194. Kenneth I. Pargament and Patrick J. Sweeney, “Building Spiritual Fitness in the Army: An innovative Approach to a Vital Aspect of Human Development, *American Psychologist* 66, no. 1, (2011): 58-59.

sense, the human spirit organizes people's lives and propels people forward."<sup>195</sup> When spirituality is operationalized in this manner, it is much easier to identify elements of human spirituality associated with the reasons why a suicide attacker would do what they have been told to do, especially when they have the promise of dying as a martyr for the cause of Islam.

Beyond religious and patriotic motivations, suicide bombers may receive large sums of money, improve their family's social status, and enhance their reputation.<sup>196</sup> After their death, their families are showered with honor and receive substantial financial rewards.<sup>197</sup> Additionally, suicide bombers expect to be admired and envied by those left behind. Photographs capture them in heroic positions, and these photos will be used as recruitment posters.<sup>198</sup> With so much incentive, it is clear how one struggling to survive in a third-world country could be committed to a suicide attack. Religion is an especially potent form of violence. Religion can offer moral justification for immoral acts through skewed interpretations as viewed through prophets or sacred writings.

## Primary Values

Former Pakistani militant-turned-journalist, Ahmed Rashid, offers non-Islamic communities' tremendous insight on Taliban thought in his book, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. In it, he cites a declaration made by Mullah Omar in 2001 that highlights the Taliban's ideology, which was relevant then and is relevant now: "I am considering two promises. One is the promise of Allah, the other of Bush. The promise of Allah is that my land is

---

195. Ibid., 58.

196. Debra D. Zedalis, "Female Suicide Bombers," Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, February 2004. Accessed 24 March 2015. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/PUB408.pdf>.

197. Boaz Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview," February 15, 2000; available from <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=128>; accessed September 5, 2014.

198. Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, New York: Harper Collins, 2003, p. xxiii.

vast...the promise of Bush is that there is no place on Earth where I can hide that he won't find me. We shall see which promise is fulfilled."<sup>199</sup> This is a powerful and far-reaching assessment with great implications for America's Armed Forces and citizens. The fact that it was stated by the Taliban's spiritual and political leader gives the mandate even more legitimacy. When religious fanatics are told to follow all-powerful Allah and that President Bush is evil, there is no negotiating with the fanatics. They will always follow Allah.

For young Taliban fighters, war means employment. Peace means unemployment. The Taliban movement has simple aims: To restore peace, disarm the population, and implement strict sharia law.<sup>200</sup> Respected political activist of the late 1800s, Jamal ad-Din Al-Afghani, emphasized that Muslim defeats at the hands of the West are due to the corruption of Islam; pure Islam is the Islam that Muhammad established.<sup>201</sup> Going back much further to the 1300s, Islamic scholar and theologian, Ibn Taymiyya, claimed even apostate Muslims were legitimate targets of jihad.<sup>202</sup> Taken together, coupled with al-Qaeda's mission statement, we can infer that their ideology rests on the concept of maintaining, expanding, and politicizing sharia law, and using the West (the United States in particular) as propaganda to do so.

## Holy Sites/Sacred Space

The Taliban follow the Wahhabi tradition which denounces sites and shrines, believing that they are apostate forms of worship. Anything that is apostate must be destroyed through personal jihad.

---

199. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 247-48.

200. Shabnum Akhtar, "Rise of the Taliban and the US Intervention in Afghanistan," *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science* 19, no. 8 (August 2014): 45.

201. Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 23.

202. John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 283.

A recent example of the Taliban's treatment toward sacred spaces occurred when Mullah Omar declared the ancient Buddhist statues in Afghanistan as heretical and had them destroyed. This caused an international outcry.

In *Sacred Space: Interdisciplinary Perspectives within Contemporary Contexts*, Caroline Bennett sheds light on the ideological conflict between the Taliban and sacred ruins of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan:

*The Taliban government declared that the Buddhas were 'idols', and claimed that since idols are not permitted in Islam, they were destroyed...It seems likely that the Taliban leaders used the destruction of the statues as a stick with which they could beat all opponents, a means of punishing local people who opposed them, and a gesture aimed to outrage the watching world. It was a symbolic destruction of an ancient sacred monument and a brute assertion of power.*<sup>203</sup>

Similar to the symbolic destruction of the Twin Towers, violent extremists destroyed the revered statues in Afghanistan (Buddhas) to shock the world and claimed it was their spiritual duty to do so. Nevertheless, the reason of using religious jihad to do so; however, is problematic, especially since the sacred statues enjoyed a thousand years of survival before their destruction. If the Taliban's destruction of the statues was in line with mainstream Islamic teachings as found in the Qur'an and Hadith, then all statues and monuments found in Egypt would have been destroyed as well. Yet pyramids, like the Great Sphinx, and Abu Simbel still stand. Perhaps their view concerning sacred sites is fueled more by the political situation than by "pure religion."

---

203. Steve Brie, Jenny Daggers, and David Torevell, *Sacred Space: Interdisciplinary Perspectives Within Contemporary Contexts* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 164.

## Ethics

### *Pashtu Tribalism*

The Wahhabi Islamic philosophy (regional or macro) influences religious beliefs while ancient Pashtun tribal codes (local or micro) influences Taliban legislation, ethics, and lifestyle. The Taliban is a Pashtun-ruled government, thus, Pashtun is practiced throughout the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, in conjunction with the Taliban's interpretation of Deobandi Islam.

Pashtuns are the Afghan/Pakistan mountain people of the Pashtun region who have lived outside direct government control in tribal areas since the first millennium BC. Pashtun rules are unwritten agreements that are acknowledged in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Taliban government, it is young males from the Pashtun ethnicity that are given a free education at Deobandi-trained madrassas and who have been heavily recruited into the Taliban since its inception by Mullah Omar in 1996.<sup>204</sup>

## Relationship to Society

Rashid describes the Taliban government as “a secret society run by Kandaharis and as mysterious, secretive, and dictatorial in its ways as the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia or Saddam Hussein's Iraq.”<sup>205</sup> They do not hold elections, as their spokesman explains:

*The Sharia does not allow politics or political parties. That is why we give no salaries to officials or soldiers, just food, clothes, shoes, and weapons. We want to live a life like the*

---

204. Ahmed Rashid, “Afghanistan resistance leader feared dead in blast,” Telegraph, September 11, 2001, accessed March 17, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1340244/Afghanistan-resistance-leader-feared-dead-in-blast.html>.

205. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 98.

*Prophet lived 1400 years ago, and jihad is our right. We want to recreate the time of the Prophet, and we are only carrying out what the Afghan people have wanted for the past 14 years.*<sup>206</sup>

Another Taliban leader put it this way: “We can love our enemies, but only after we have defeated them.”<sup>207</sup>

### *Women*

The Taliban believe their brutal treatment toward women is necessary in order to “secure [an] environment where the chastity and dignity of women may once again be sacrosanct.”<sup>208</sup> John Renard explains, “Taliban social policies are notoriously oppressive toward women especially as manifest in their refusal to allow girls to be formally educated and public corporal punishment for women who violate their antiquated dress code. They seek to impose their own harsh interpretation of Sharia penal sanctions.”<sup>209</sup>

How Islam deals with feminist issues is a controversial problem for scholars and politicians alike who associate with Arab nations. Unfortunately, these issues have become volatile and even hostile ones that are not always placed in their historical or sociological contexts. In his article, *Gender, Islam, and Politics*, Farhad Kazemi emphasizes the following: “From one point of view, Islam is praised for its historically liberating role for women in Arabia and elsewhere. Yet another perspective holds either the religion or some of its practices and practitioners accountable for the lower status and inferior legal rights of

---

206. Ibid, 43.

207. Ibid, 43.

208. Nancy Hatch Dupree, *Afghan Women under the Taliban*, in William Maley, *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*, Hurst and Company 2001, pp. 145-166.

209. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 71.

women in Islamic countries than other parts of the world.”<sup>210</sup>

The life of women in Muslim countries today cannot be understood apart from reflecting on the Qur'an first, and then hadiths (traditions) and laws that have been created due to the influence of the Qur'an. There are many passages dealing with men and women scattered throughout the Qur'an, and also a number declaring that God created man and woman. At first, this implies some equality, but on a closer study, women are not equal in any important sense in many Muslim cultures. Islamic feminist movements argue for a more unrestricted interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith when it comes to roles and responsibilities of Islamic women.

In July 2002, a number of Arab experts commissioned by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development published a report titled “Arab Human Development Report” in which they noted that “the wave of democracy that transformed governance in most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980s and early 1990s has barely reached the Arab states.”<sup>211</sup> The experts also stated that based on international measurements of government accountability, civil liberties, political rights, and media freedom, Arab countries scored lower than any other regional group in the world. Many experts inside and outside Arab countries have expressed the opinion that only democratic reforms, especially the empowerment of women, can defuse the problems of the region as well as diminish the effects of militant Islamic fundamentalism that are at the heart of mounting terrorist activities. Taking this report into consideration, it is not prudent to ignore the role of women or their status in conflict or peace.

---

210. Farhad Kazemi, “Gender, Islam, and Politics,” *Social Research* 67, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 453.

211. The Arab Human Development Report, “Creating Opportunities for the Future,” New York: the United Nations Development Program Publication, 2002, accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf>



## Summary

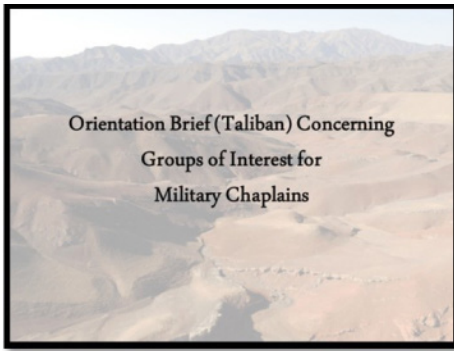
The information provided about religion and the Taliban found that a military force that respects the religious milieu of its affected population significantly increases its perceived legitimacy.<sup>212</sup> This is to say, that a commander will be better able to do mission analysis with pertinent and time sensitive religious information.

Chaplains and commanders cannot by and large change the way various Islam/s live their religion, but they can strive to understand them. This review of the literature provided basic information from which an information brief or orientation can be developed to present to a commander, staff or others about events or issues that are effected by religion.

---

212. Eric Patterson, *Military Chaplains in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Beyond: Advisement and Leader Engagement in Highly Religious Areas*, 92.

## Commander's Orientation: The Taliban



### Slide #1: Introduction

*Notes: It is wise to remember the counsel of President Franklin D. Roosevelt when conducting a brief: "Be sincere; be brief; be seated."*

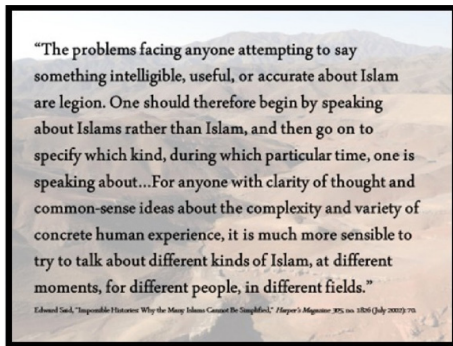
*Because of the evolving nature of the Taliban and similar groups of interest, the following information should not be considered comprehensive and the most up-to-date. Consequently, what follows is not intended to be recited word for word. Begin slide orientation by addressing the audience.*

*Introduce yourself and make any administrative remarks that are appropriate, e.g., "this brief is unclassified," etc.*

Welcome: Address the commander you are briefing. Identify yourself and your unit. Good morning, Sir. My name is Chaplain \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be briefing you today on the religious dimension of the Taliban. This briefing is unclassified.

Explain any special procedures such as what you would like your audience to do if they have questions throughout the brief.

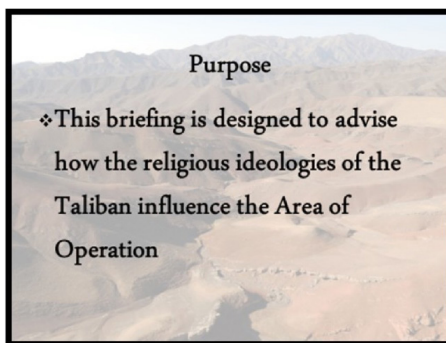
## Slide #2: Quote



Explain quote: According to Said, trying to define Muslim identity is extremely problematic. When taking into consideration culture, history, language, and politics, coupled with specific communities and schools of interpretation, in any combination and order, in all the parts of the world, the question of *what is Muslim identity*, is almost impossible to answer.<sup>213</sup> This understanding of the complexity of Islam can cause others to experience *Islamophobia*.

Ask: What are the consequences of this portrayal of Islam within the Armed Forces?

## Slide #3: Purpose



213. Edward Said, "Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot Be Simplified," *Harper's Magazine* 305, no. 1826 (July 2002): 69-87

The starting point for resolving any conflict is by having a fair understanding of it.

The United States Armed Forces have been involved in the war on terrorism for over 14 years with sustained fighting in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (New Dawn). Over 2.5 million service members have deployed or served in support of these wars.<sup>214</sup> With our involvement in these conflicts and with groups like the Islamic State (IS) and others continuing to surface in the Middle East,<sup>215</sup> combat operations will more likely than not endure in the near future. This is particularly relevant to the Middle East, where an estimated 6,850 Americans have been killed in combat operations since 2001.<sup>216</sup>

*State the purpose of the brief and explain how the Taliban as a group of interest has affected the Global War on Terrorism.*

#### Slide #4: Outline



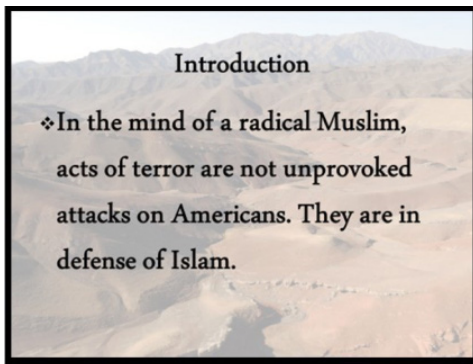
214. Chris Adams, "Millions Went to War in Iraq, Afghanistan, Leaving Many with Lifelong Scars," *McClatchy Newspapers*, March 14, 2013, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/03/14/185880/millions-went-to-war-in-iraq-afghanistan.html>.

215. Benjamin Isakhan, "The Iraq Legacies and the Roots of the 'Islamic State'," in *The Legacy of Iraq: From the 2003 War to the 'Islamic State'*, ed. Benjamin Isakhan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 223-235.

216. U.S. Casualty Status Data from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND), Operation Inherent Resolve (ORI), Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) as of March 20, 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>.

Here's a look at where we're going during this block of instruction. First, we'll be introduced to the Taliban. Next, we'll review some relevant terms and concepts, and then break down their historical background so we can view this group of interest in context. We will then discuss the Taliban's organization, including leadership, religious ideologies, operations, and religious training. Finally, we will look at their primary values, including sites and shrines, ethics, jihad suicidality, their relationship to society, and their treatment of women.

#### Slide #5: Introduction

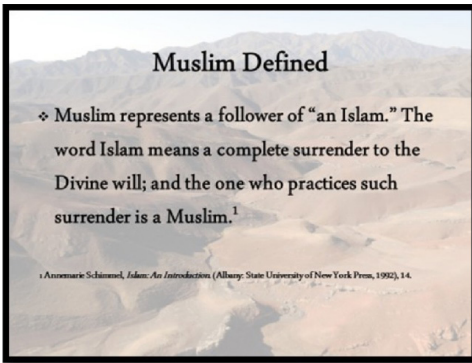


The Taliban evaluate the actions, behaviors, and intentions of America through a religious prism.<sup>217</sup> The following information about the Taliban is not entirely about religion, but is defined according to characteristics that guide its history, organization, and values. Consequently, the character of the group could be misconstrued when Islam/s is not accurately taken into account.

---

217. Michael Hoyt, "The Iraqi Inter-religious Congregation and the Baghdad Accords," in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2014), 93.

## Slide #6 Muslim Defined



The Muslim, who recognizes the one God as Creator and Judge, feels responsible to him: He believes in his books (the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Koran) and in His prophets from Adam through the patriarchs, Moses and Jesus up to Muhammad, the last lawgiving messenger. Further, Muslims believe in God’s angels and in the Last Judgment, and “that good and evil come equally through God.”<sup>218</sup>

In reciting the *shahadah* (testament of faith), the Muslim bears witness that “There is no god but God” and that “Muhammad is the messenger of God”.<sup>219</sup> The Muslim’s key tenants of faith are described in The Five Pillars of Islam, which support and give structure to Muslim life.<sup>220</sup> The first pillar is the profession of faith, or *shahadah* (witness or testimony): “There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” The second is prayer (*salat*). Five times a day, Muslims are called to worship God while facing Mecca. The third is almsgiving (*zakat*), or, the payment of tithes and offerings in support

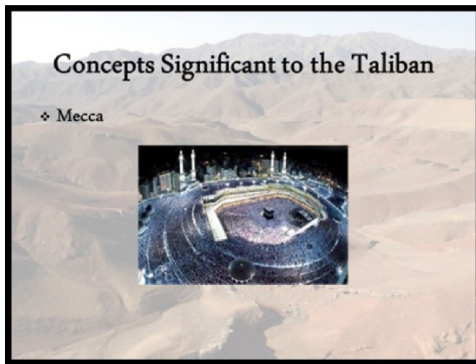
218. Michael Hoyt, “The Iraqi Inter-religious Congregation and the Baghdad Accords,” in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2014), 14.

219. The *Shahadah* as Truth and as Way by Peter Samsel *Sophia: The Journal of Traditional Studies* 9:2 (2003), pp.77 114.

220. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained*, (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 186-187.

of a type of Islamic welfare system. The fourth is fasting each year for a month-long observance called Ramadan from dawn to sunset. The fifth is the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). While the Five Pillars of Islam incorporates all Muslim believers, not all Muslims (violent extremists) faithfully follow the Five Pillars.

#### Slide #7: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-1



The city of Mecca lay along a major trade route. Mecca was the most significant city in Arabia due to the fact that it was prosperous for being on the trade route, its water wells, and because of the Ka'ba—an ancient shrine that was the major religious center for most of the inhabitants of the peninsula.<sup>221</sup> Ancient Arabs would perform pilgrimages to the Ka'ba and worship it in a multifaceted manner.

Prior to Islam, the Kaaba of Mecca was covered in symbols representing the myriad demons, djinn, demigods, or simply tribal gods and other assorted deities which represented the polytheistic culture of pre-Islamic Arabia. Among those key deities were: Allah. In pre-Islamic Arabia, Allah was used by Meccans as a reference to a supreme deity.<sup>222</sup> Once a year, tribes from all around the Arabian Peninsula, whether Christian or pagan, would converge on Mecca to perform

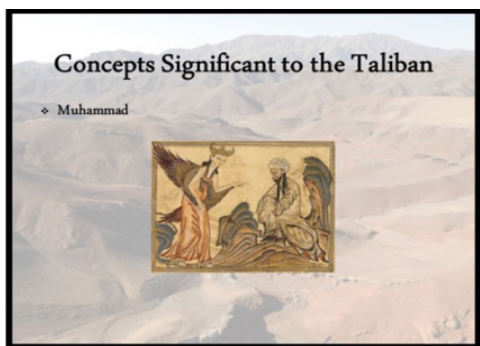
221. Yahya Armajani and Thomas M. Ricks, *Middle East: Past and Present* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986), 25.

222. L. Gardet, *Allah*, Encyclopaedia of Islam.

the Hajj (pilgrimage), marking the widespread conviction that Allah was the same deity worshiped by monotheists.<sup>223</sup> In contemporary times, wherever they are in the world, Muslims are expected to face the Kaaba – i.e. when outside Mecca, to face toward Mecca – when performing salat (prayer). From any point in the world, the direction facing the Kaaba is called the qibla.

Not only did Mecca hold spiritual and economic significance in pre-Islamic Arabia, Mecca became Arabia's economic and cultural capitol.

Slide #8: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-2



Islam is the religion of allegiance to God that began historically with the prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the 7th century CE. Muhammad was told to warn his people in the town of Mecca, in what is now Saudi Arabia; although he too was rejected by the majority of people, some saw and heard the truth of God being spoken through him. These people made up the first small community of Muslims, who as a result of persecution moved with Muhammad to Yathrib (from then on called Medina) in 622 CE.

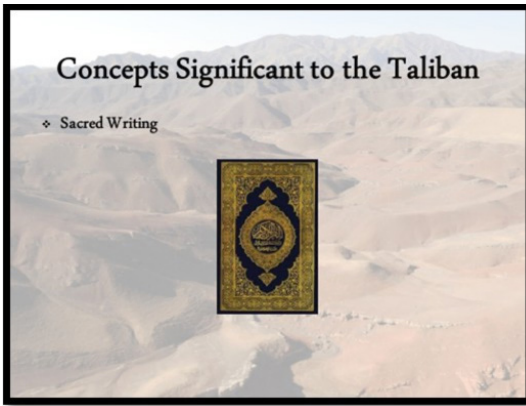
Muslims relate to Muhammad in various personal and worshipful ways. It is respectful and devotional. This devotion through the years

223. Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*, (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 11.



has been manifested in poetry, pilgrimage, prayer, calligraphy, literature, and art. Muslims have internalized the notion of Muhammad into their concepts of self. This close relationship to Muhammad has caused many Muslims to take offence in how Muhammad has been portrayed throughout the centuries.

Slide #9: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-3



Virtually all major faith traditions adhere to doctrine, tenants, or key concepts and principles found within a book or books. For Islam, this is the Qur'an. Qur'an means "recitation." It was in a cave on Mount Hira that Muhammad was overwhelmed with a tremendous sense of God (or his messenger Gabriel) pressing upon him and saying, "Irqa," "Recite." The words that followed were later collected into the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book.<sup>224</sup> Divided into 114 *surahs* (chapters) the Qur'an covers topics ranging from God's role in history, Muhammad's role as his prophet, the Last Judgement, and the need to help other people.<sup>225</sup> To Muslims, the Qur'an is viewed as the final and complete, eternal, uncreated, literal word of God, revealed one final

---

224. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 183.

225. *Ibid.*, 182.

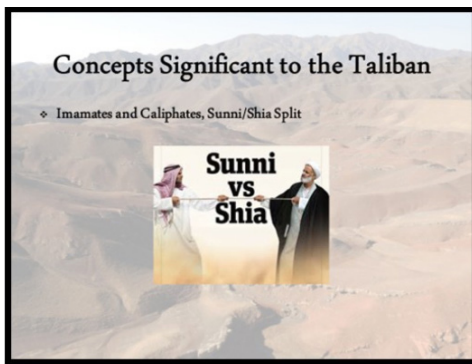
time to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-two years.<sup>226</sup>

Because Allah commanded Muhammad to record God's word, Muslims believe that it is problematic to translate the Qur'an into any other language except Arabic. For Muslims, if the original meaning is lost, then it is not truly Allah's word.

In response to the numerous forgeries during the Abassid dynasty of Islam (between 750 and 950), *Bukari* (hadith gatherers) began a collection of anecdotes, writings, and sayings about Muhammad that attempted to clarify what Muhammad did and said. The writings are known as the Hadith.

The Taliban today use the Qur'an to justify violence as a way of legitimizing frustration with failed Arab states based on Capitalism, Socialism, or Communism. Since many states failed due to a corrupt governance, the Taliban want to "return" to a theocratic state with a "pure" religion which they get to define. In other words, using religious justification for political domination of others.

Slide #10: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-4



226. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

The first great divergence of Islam can be drawn from the religious and political differences that followed shortly after the death of Muhammad. His death in 632 led to a dispute over who the next successor should be. The Prophet had united the Bedouin tribes under the banner of Islam, but tribal loyalties cooled quickly when the leader died.<sup>227</sup> The group that they elected from the bloodline became Shia and the ones that wanted to elect Abu Bakr became Sunni. Sunni and Shi'a communities were divided by disagreements on the succession of leadership after Muhammad, while the rise of the Druze, Sufis, and other Islamic factions reflected to specific local customs and cultures.<sup>228</sup>

Today there are differences in religious practice, traditions and customs, often related to Islamic law. The Sunnis wanted the next caliph to be chosen by Muhammad's community of followers, while the Shiites wanted the leadership to stay within the prophet's family.

The Shiites did not recognize the Sunni's new leader and instead, they chose Muhammad's son-in-law Ali as their new Imam. Since the time of the division, there have been violent clashes between the two groups. Early on most of the Shiite Imams met violent ends at the hands of the stronger Sunni caliphs, including Imam Ali's son Hussein, who's beheading is still considered a major holiday for Shiite Muslims.<sup>229</sup> The fundamental difference between Sunni and Shii Muslims is the Shii doctrine of the imamate as distinct from the Sunni caliphate. Over the years, Sunni-Shia affairs have been marked by both collaboration and war. Sectarian violence persists to this day and authority and control are major elements of friction throughout the Middle East.<sup>230</sup> The Taliban is a radicalized Sunni sect of Islam. In this light, the Sunni-Shiite division, in many ways, can be viewed more

227. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 19.

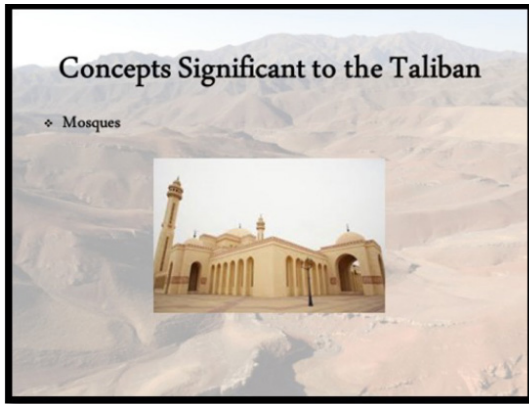
228. *Ibid.*, 60-64.

229. This event occurred at the Battle of Karbala. See John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book*, 25.

230. Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 105-110.

in terms about power, politics, and retribution than it is about actual religion or theology.

#### Slide #11: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-5



In terms of sacred space, the mosque is a distinct site in Islamic communities. The word “mosque” is a French rendition from the Arabic word *masjid*, meaning “place of prostration.”<sup>231</sup> Mosques are important buildings in which significant religious acts takes place to include prayer, worship, community, as well as education, and as a place of rest—an Islamic center meant to unify all Muslims.

Most mosques contain no pictorial representations and are furnished very simply<sup>232</sup> so as to keep surroundings humble and modest and prevent getting distracted from worship. Nevertheless, what a mosque lacks in décor, it makes up for in architectural masterpieces, that can be the best known, and best representative artistic expression of Islamic culture.<sup>233</sup>

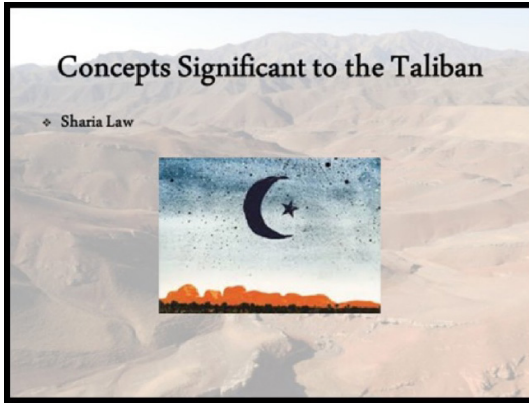
---

231. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 194.

232. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 43.

233. *Ibid.*, 42.

## Slide #12: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-6



Muslim life is based on the Qur'an and Hadith which are drawn together into Muslim law in the schools of sharia.<sup>234</sup> Sharia is major traditions that developed into codes for life—Sharia means “the well-worn path that camels take to the watering place.”<sup>235</sup> For Muslims, law is essentially religious—it's God's guidance for humanity, and the basis for both law and ethics (not only what you ought to do, but what you must do).<sup>236</sup> Because Islam describes the whole life experience (not just religion), sharia should cover both civil and religious conduct.

How is sharia law interpreted, framed, and carried out today?

In the past, the traditional Sunni religious leadership (ulama) claimed the prerogative to interpret Islam, while the caliph was responsible for its implementation. In traditional Shii Islam, the ulama were sources of guidance and emulation in the absence of the imam. In recent

234. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 184.

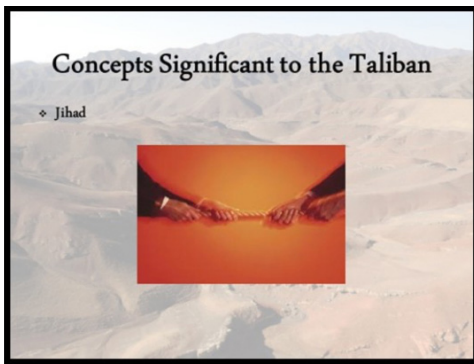
235. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 96.

236. John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 92.

decades, the non-ulama, lay intellectuals (men and women) and leaders of Islamic movements, have also asserted their right to interpret or reinterpret Islam. Because Islam lacks a centralized teaching authority or organized hierarchy, there is no easy answer to the question, “Whose Islam?”

In the broad spectrum of Islamic reformations, revivals, and approaches, the Taliban is just one of those. The Taliban is an Islamic organization whose beliefs and religious philosophies intersect with ancient cultures and tribal codes that hurt the international community. This manipulation of religion can be seen through the Taliban’s violent extremism which they resort to in order to reach their goals.

#### Slide #13: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-7



Despite the rich diversity in Islamic practice, the Five Pillars of Islam remain the core and common denominator, the five essential and obligatory practices all Muslims accept and follow.<sup>237</sup> Sometimes referred to as the sixth pillar of Islam, jihad signifies a “struggle” in the way of God.<sup>238</sup> The word Jihad comes from Arabic jahada, “he made an effort.” There are many ways to make an effort “in the cause

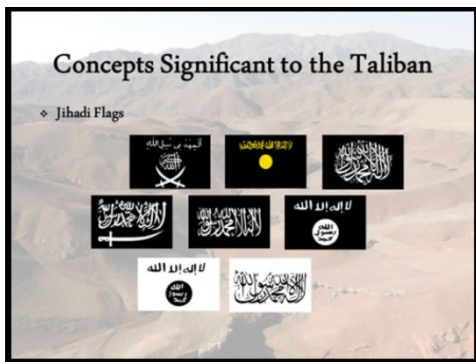
237. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 106.

238. *Ibid.*, 113.

of God”): Fighting in defense of Muslims is only one.<sup>239</sup> In the seventh century, during Prophet Mohammad’s time, jihad was struggle against enemies for self-defense. However, it had other meanings too. In 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries, in Arab world this term was used for imperialism. During colonial times, struggle for freedom was called jihad. But 1980 onwards, a new jihad came up after Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. To get rid of communism, U.S. along with Saudi Arabia created, trained and established jihadist, spending billions of dollars trying to combat the spread of communism into Afghanistan. Thereafter, jihad became a complex issue exploited by fundamentalists.

For members in the Taliban, jihad is a significant concept and method which targets the destruction of all the existent unjust sovereign political systems.

#### Slide #14: Concepts Significant to the Taliban-7



Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other groups of interest that practice extreme forms of jihad all seem to have the same variations of the same flag. The flags that are commonly used by groups of interest are called the “Black Standard,” “The Flag of the Eagle” or simply, “The Standard.”

239. John Bowker, *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York, NY: DK, 2006), 184.

In particular, they are draped in the background and filmed during their operations (including announcements, raids, and beheadings). When uploaded onto a social media platform, they serve as a powerful propaganda and recruitment tool. Though flags of jihad are seen as a rallying cry and symbol of war, the flag's writing, color, and symbols have originally had a history behind it that doesn't include extremist ideologies.<sup>240</sup> The flag's contents have been appropriated by violent extremists and interpreted for their own benefit to falsely identify to others that they were righteous while instilling fear in the hearts of the outsiders.

The flags are modeled after the black flag that Muhammad developed for his military banner in the 7th century.<sup>241</sup> The color black is used to represent the time of Muhammad (Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait are other Muslim countries that follow this tradition with black in their flags).<sup>242</sup> Most jihadist flags contain a shahadah, or, an Islamic testament of their faithfulness to Islam. The full shahadah (on the Taliban flag) translates to "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This is an important testament to Muslims around the world and by no means is restricted to the Taliban. Some flags contain swords, which can denote militancy. However, the swords can also represent historic Islam. The swords were known as "scimitars" and were the principal weapon used by soldiers throughout Arabia during the ninth century.<sup>243</sup> All of these writings and symbols found on jihadist flags when left alone by themselves are used commonly and are harmless.

---

240. David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 2002), 197.

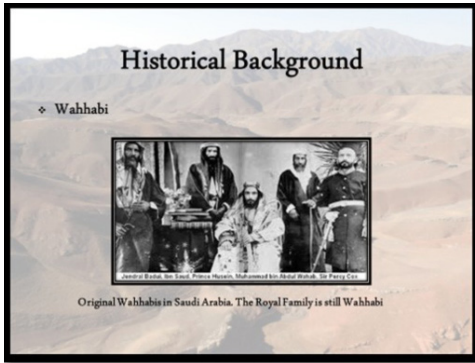
241. The Islamic Imagery Project: Visual Motifs in Jihadi Internet Propaganda. Combating Terrorism Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy. March 2006. Accessed 23 February 2015. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-islamic-imagery-project>.

242. Maria Alvanou, "Symbolisms of Basic Islamic Imagery in Jihadi Propaganda," Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues, and Managing Emergencies. Accessed 12 December 2014. <http://www.itstime.it/w/symbolisms-of-basic-islamic-imagery-in-jihadi-propaganda>.

243. James E. Lindsay, *Daily life in the medieval Islamic world* (Chicago, IL: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 64-65.



## Slide #15: History-1



To better understand the history of the Taliban, it is first necessary to know the history of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia. For more than two hundred years, Wahhabism has been Saudi Arabia's dominant faith. It is a harsh form of Islam that maintains a strictly literal interpretation of the Qur'an. Based on the tenants of its founder, Muhamad Wahhab (1703-1792), Wahhabis believe that all those who do not practice their form of Islam are infidels and consequently, enemies to Islam.<sup>244</sup> As an Islamic reformer, Wahhab demanded conformity. He argued that all Muslims must individually pledge their allegiance to a single Muslim leader (caliph). Those who would not conform to this view should be killed, their wives and daughters violated, and their possessions confiscated.<sup>245</sup> The list of apostates meriting death included the Shia Muslims, Sufi Islam, and other Muslim denominations, whom Wahhab did not consider to be Muslim at all.<sup>246</sup> His teachings sent Islam back to the medieval times and anyone who visits Afghanistan today can see it.

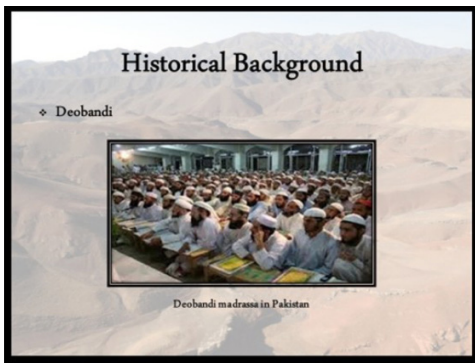
244. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 144-146.

245. Alastair Crooke, "You Can't Understand ISIS If You Don't Know the History of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia," *The World Post*, August 27, 2014, accessed March 3, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia\\_b\\_5717157.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia_b_5717157.html).

246. John L. Esposito, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 222.

Scholars say that Wahhabism's harshness has led it to misinterpret and alter Islam, pointing to violent extremists such as Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.<sup>247</sup> Wahhabism's influence on groups of interest such as the Taliban began in the 1970s when Saudi Arabian contributions from oil started funding Wahhabi madrassas in Pakistan.<sup>248</sup> Wahhabism was strongly sustained and maintained by Saudi Arabian religious clergy. It was Saudi Arabia that donated most of the text books and learning materials to the Taliban studying in the Pakistani madrassas.<sup>249</sup>

## Slide #16: History-2



Created out of a strong response to Hindu proselytization in India that occurred under British rule in the nineteenth century, Deobandiism sought to teach a reformed literal and scriptural interpretation of Islam.<sup>250</sup> Deobandi religious teachings in the Afghan/Pakistan

247. Ana Serafim, "Terrorism—A Cultural Phenomenon?" *Consortium Quarterly Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 65.

248. Akhilesh Pillalamarri, "The Radicalization of South Asian Islam: Saudi Money and the Spread of Wahhabism," *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, December 20, 2014, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2014/12/20/the-radicalization-of-south-asian-islam-saudi-money-and-the-spread-of-wahhabism>.

249. Christopher Blanchard, "Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas: Background," CRS Report for Congress Order Code RS21654, February 10, 2005, 2-3.

250. Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: the Myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9.

border came directly from the Deoband seminary in northern India, and taught to young males by teachers and scholars in Pakistan and Afghanistan who had been instructed in the same way.<sup>251</sup>

After the creation of the nation of Pakistan in 1947 numerous satellite Deobandi madrassas sprung up throughout Pakistan.<sup>252</sup> These madrassas carried on not only the strict Deobandi theological tradition but also its political activism.<sup>253</sup> The majority of Taliban fighters are Deobandi madrassas-trained, Saudi-funded Sunni Muslims. Many Deobandis believe it is their duty to rid the Muslim world of infidels through jihad. Though both Saudi Arabians and Deobandis are frequently referred to as “Wahhabis,” but a key point that divides them is the Sharia law school of thought: Saudis practice the Hanbali legal code, while the Taliban are strict followers of the Hanafi legal code.

Deobandi in Afghanistan and Pakistan differs from other forms of the practice because it has been influenced more strongly by the Wahhabi movement, thus, some Deobandis may prefer to use the term Wahhabi to describe themselves or may identify as members of both sects.<sup>254</sup> In short, it is significant that Westerners keep in mind that “Wahhabi” means something very different in the Taliban framework than it does in the Saudi framework. Commanders must not assume that in general, Saudi government shares the same Islamic vision as the Taliban government.

---

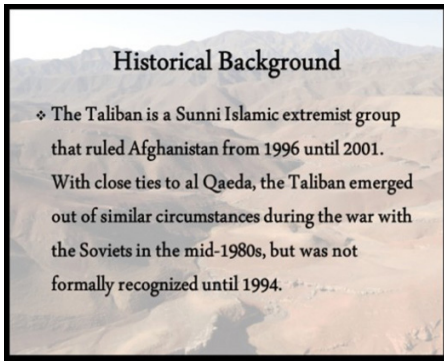
251. Ibid., 19.

252. Stan C. Weeber, *Private Armies in the Culture of Capitalism* (Lake Charles, LA: Xlibris, 2010), 73.

253. Ibid., 73.

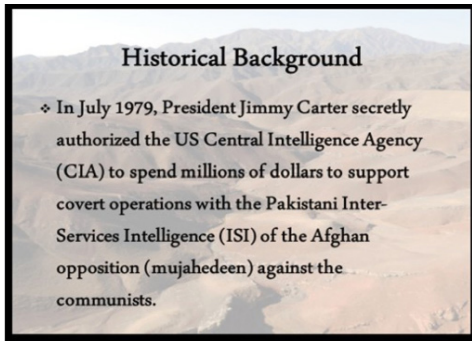
254. Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld, *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict* (New York, NY: Social Science Press, 2012), 114.

## Slide #17: History-3



The Taliban began with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979-1989 which included dozens of different rebel groups called holy fighters (*mujahedeen*). The Soviet occupation was an attempt to strengthen its control within Soviet Central Asia (including Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan). In addition to being a strategic location for Soviet Russia, the occupation in Afghanistan was also an attempt to curb a rapidly growing Muslim population. A key motive for the war was based on the fear that with the growth of the Muslim population came the development of an Islamic nationalist ideology—one that did not include communism. Concerned that Soviet Central Asia would be affected by this growing ideology, the USSR decided to invade and occupy in order to quell the Afghani movement as well as to secure added power in central Asia.

## Slide #18: History-4



With covert help and ten years in the making, a ragtag Afghan militia defeated one of the world's superpowers that led to the collapse of the Soviet empire in Afghanistan.

When Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in defeat in 1989, civil war erupted. Numerous mujahedeen warlords and opium dealers carved out their own personal territories to control while the country was on the brink of starvation.<sup>255</sup> In a land without the rule of law, anarchy ensued.

## Slide #19: History-5



255. Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror* (New York: Picador, 2010), 53. And Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2010), 118.

Islamic seminary teacher Mullah Omar started the Taliban movement with fewer than 50 of his own madrassa students (*talibs*) in his hometown of Kandahar.<sup>256</sup> Outraged by the rape of young girls by local warlords, Mullah Omar led his first operation in 1994 and managed to seize Kandahar, the second largest city in Afghanistan. Muhammad Omar offered a radical solution: Stability in Afghanistan could be found by complying with strict Islamic justice under Sharia law, and zero tolerance for drug trafficking and corruption.<sup>257</sup>

According to Collin Price's "Pakistan: A Plethora of Problems," Pakistan believed it could control the Taliban leadership and, in essence, gain control of Afghanistan through a proxy government. Pakistan was the first country to recognize the Taliban government (the only other two being Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), which provided the Taliban with a great deal of military and economic aid.<sup>258</sup> Pakistan was eager to pursue its own interests—its objective in Afghanistan has always been strategic.<sup>259</sup> Pakistan wanted an ally and buffer in its northern regions to strengthen its western flank in case of renewed war against Pakistan's long-time and much larger enemy, India. The Pakistani Intelligence Agency (ISI) also found the zealous Taliban willing to allow Pakistan to train additional violent extremists to fight India in the contested lands of Kashmir.<sup>260</sup>

By 1996 the Taliban had control of Kabul and imposed harsh laws in the newly called Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, where music, and even kites were outlawed. Women were denied education and forced to wear burkas. Backed by the ISI<sup>261</sup>, the Taliban then effectively had

---

256. Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan, 1994-1997* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25-26.

257. Kevin Tamerler, Position Paper on *Taliban* for Disarmament and International Security Committee, Harvard National Model United Nations, 2011.

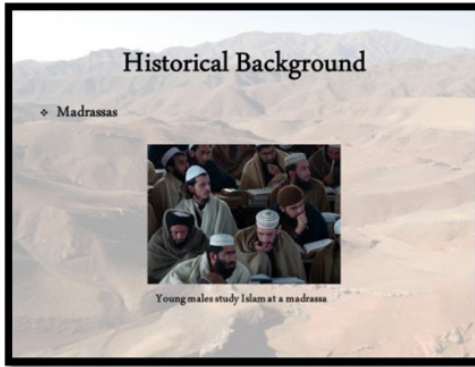
258. Colin Price, "Pakistan: A Plethora of Problems," *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 53.

259. Larry Hanauer and Peter Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's Strategies in Afghanistan: Implications for the United States and the Region*, (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2012), 25-26.

260. *Ibid.*, 29.

261. *Ibid.*, 28.

control of the government of Afghanistan.<sup>262</sup>



When the Taliban first started, many primitive/fundamental beliefs were the norm in southern Afghanistan. Similar to today's standards, education was limited for children. When Mullah Omar rose to leadership, he recruited his growing followers from Afghan/Pakistani-trained Islamic seminaries called *madrassas*. The madrassas are where the original members of the Taliban came from—Afghan/Pakistani-trained holy fighters (*mujahedeen*) in northern Pakistan, taught to fight the Soviets on the Afghanistan Front.<sup>263</sup> In order to combat the growing influence of communist USSR during the Soviet invasion, money from America and Saudi Arabia was sent to support the *mujahedeen*.<sup>264</sup>

Young men who study at these madrassas (*talibs*) study the teachings of Wahhab. *Talibs* believe that Islam should be purified and practiced like it was practiced by the prophet Muhammad in the seventh centu-

---

262. Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan, 1994-1997* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 26.

263. Mariam Atifa Raqib, "Resistance By Other Means: The Taliban, Foreign Occupation, and Afghan National Identity" (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2011), 154-155, accessed March 24, 2015, [iris.lib.neu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=law\\_pol\\_soc\\_diss](http://iris.lib.neu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=law_pol_soc_diss).

264. Michel Chossudovsky, "Al Qaeda and the War on Terrorism," Global Research, January 20, 2008, accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/al-qaeda-and-the-war-on-terrorism/7718>.

ry.<sup>265</sup> They are also taught that every enemy of Allah should be converted or destroyed.<sup>266</sup> This severe doctrine stands in stark contrast to many of rich cultural traditions and peaceful tenants of previous and current civilizations of Islam.

In the process of the fighting, many of the Afghan civilians became refugees by the ongoing fighting. To help the refugees, Saudi Arabia set up hundreds of madrassas to offer a free education for the refugee children between the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>267</sup> These madrassa school students are known as *talibs*. Their teachers are local *mullahs* like Muhammad Omar. During the desperate times of the Soviet war, many of these schools were used for a different purpose—to indoctrinate Taliban in jihad.

Slide #21: Organization-1



265. Cofie D. Malbouisson, *Focus On Islamic Issues* (New York: Nova Science Pub Inc, 2007), 22.

266. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: the Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 75.

267. Peter Singer, "Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education not Jihad," Brookings Institute, November 1, 2001, accessed February 9, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2001/11/pakistan-singer>.



The Taliban leadership structure is known as the Quetta Shura and is composed of the leaders of the Afghan Taliban.<sup>268</sup> It has been based in Quetta, Pakistan since the downfall of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 2001. Quetta Shura Taliban (QST) commanders strategize operations in Afghanistan from their Pakistani headquarters in Quetta, where many leaders, including Mullah Omar, have eluded capture.<sup>269</sup>

According to the Council on Foreign Relations (an organization dedicated to engaging in high-level discussions with world leaders, U.S. government officials, CEOs, policy analysts, and others through select videos, audio recordings, and unedited transcripts), the Taliban controls areas mostly located in southern, eastern, and northern Afghanistan, with major strongholds in the Kandahar region and lands surrounding the capital of Kabul.<sup>270</sup> Some military analysts estimate that there are approximately 25,000 Afghan insurgents with varying degrees of allegiance to the Taliban, but assessments of the group's relative strength vary.<sup>271</sup>

Mullah Omar is the leader of the Afghan Taliban (QST) and “Commander of the Faithful,” a term referring to a leader of an Islamic community ruled by Sharia law.<sup>272</sup>

To this day, it is hard to separate Omar, the man, from all the myths and legends that surround him. Ahmed Rashid is a Pakistani journalist who is well-respected by Taliban leaders and who was allowed access into the workings of the Taliban. In addition to describing the Taliban's organization in great detail, Ahmed Rashid gives us some

268. James Mozul, “The Quetta Shura Taliban: An Overlooked Problem,” *International Affairs Review*, XXIII (November 23, 2009), accessed April 8, 2015, <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/106>.

269. James Mozul. “The Quetta Shura Taliban: An Overlooked Problem,” *International Affairs Review*, November 23, 2009, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/106>.

270. Zachary Laub, “The Taliban in Afghanistan,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, no. 22. (July 2014) accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/taliban-afghanistan/p10551>.

271. Ibid.

272. Jeffery Dressler, “The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan,” Institute for the Study of War: Military Analysis and Education, October 2010, 4, accessed April 9, 2015, [http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf\\_state/haqqani-network-compressed.pdf](http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/haqqani-network-compressed.pdf).

insight on the reason why the Taliban is organized in this manner:

“The Sharia does not allow politics or political parties. That is why we give no salaries to officials or soldiers, just food, clothes, shoes, and weapons. We want to live a life like the Prophet lived 1400 years ago, and jihad is our right. We want to recreate the time of the Prophet, and we are only carrying out what the Afghan people have wanted for the past 14 years.”<sup>273</sup>

As stated by the research of Thomas Johnson and Matthew Dupee, the majority of the funds come to the Taliban by way of opium exports.<sup>274</sup> In 1998, three billion dollars annually was being funneled into the organization, most of it to Mullah Omar and his deputies, who would then disperse it as they saw fit.<sup>275</sup>

## Slide #22: Organization-2



273. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 43.

274. Thomas H. Johnson and Matthew C. DuPee, “Analysing the new Taliban Code of Conduct,” *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (March 2012): 79-80.

275. *Ibid.*, 81.

Renard suggests the importance of distinguishing between two broad categories of jihadist ideologies: National and Transnational.<sup>276</sup> A nationalist jihad ideology seeks strategies, objectives and tactics that are limited to a geographical or political arena. The Taliban, in addition to groups of interest such as Hamas and Hezbollah would be considered pursuing a nationalist jihad ideology as they are seeking to establish a Muslim state within their own boundaries.

On the other hand, groups of interest such as ISIS and al-Qaeda would be considered as holding a transnational jihad ideology. Boundaries and borders are of no concern, calling for war and fatwahs against “Western” entities and organizations. In the broad spectrum of these two ideologies lie all kinds of Muslims, each with their own reasons for believing jihad the way that they do. For many, anything short of constant warfare against the West is collaboration and cowardice and refusal to engage in the struggle as mandated by Muhammad and the Qur’an.<sup>277</sup>

### Slide #23: Organization-3



The Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) defines suicide bombing as  
276. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 77.

277. Ibid., 78.

an “operational method in which the very act of the attack is dependent upon the death of the perpetrator. The terrorist is fully aware that if she/he does not kill her/himself, the planned attack will not be implemented.”<sup>278</sup> Groups of interest recruit and utilize suicide bombers due to their low cost, low technology, and low risk method of promoting violence and fear. Doing it in the name of Islam can be a very powerful tool. By changing the terminology from “suicide” to “martyrdom operations,” violent extremists are able to justify the act according to tradition.<sup>279</sup>

Author Ehud Sprinzak offers insight regarding the historicity of this practice: “A long view of history reveals that suicide terrorism existed as early as the 11th century. The Assassins (Ismalis- Nizari), Muslim fighters, adopted suicide terrorism as a strategy to advance the cause of Islam. These perpetrators perceived their deaths as acts of martyrdom for the glory of God.”<sup>280</sup>

There seems to be theological discord among scholars and leaders as to what the Qur’an and Hadith promises to suicide bombers. It is clear that righteous males are promised seventy-two virgins in the afterlife whether martyred or not.<sup>281</sup> However, some Muslims interpret tradition to also include suicide bombers.<sup>282</sup> Still, other Islam researchers such as Margaret Nydell believe, “It is also time to put the ‘72 virgins’ at rest; this is a quaint, lurid, provocative interpretation of an obscure passage in the Qur’an, avidly seized upon by Westerners who find it

278. Boaz Ganor, “The First Iraqi Suicide Bombing. A Hint of Things to Come?” International Center for Counter-Terrorism, March 30, 2003, accessed September 25, 2014, <http://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=867>.

279. Surah 4:74, 4:29.

280. Ehud Sprinzak, “Rational Fanatics,” *Foreign Policy* 120, no.1 (September-October 2000), 68.

281. Surah 56:36.

282. “In the Muslim world, then, we celebrate what we call the martyr-bombers. To us they are heroes defending the things we hold sacred. Polls in the Middle East show 75% of people in favor of martyr-bombings. They also carry the weight of religious authority. The world’s most quoted independent Islamic jurist, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, calls the bombs ‘commendable’ and ‘among the greatest form of holy struggle against oppression.’” For further study, see the work of notable Muslim journalist, Faisal Bodi. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/aug/28/comment.israelandthepalestinians>.

amusing and use it repeatedly to ridicule Islamic belief.”<sup>283</sup> Nevertheless, the eternal rewards are promised, making suicide attacks a much more powerful incentive.

For the Taliban and other groups of interest, suicide attacks have become an effective means of conducting jihad in the name of Allah. It has long been acknowledged the critical role that religion and spirituality play in propelling combatants toward victory during battles. British historian Bernard Lewis wrote that “The emergence of the now widespread terrorism practice of suicide bombing is a development of the 20th century. It has no antecedents in Islamic history, and no justification in terms of Islamic theology, law, or tradition.”<sup>284</sup>

#### Slide #24: Organization-4



---

283. Margaret K. Nydell, *Understanding Arabs: a Contemporary Guide to Arab Society* (Boston, MA: Intercultural Press, 2012), 109.

284. Bernard Lewis and Buntzie Ellis Churchill, *Islam: The Religion and the People*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2009), 153.

Social scientists have long suggested many benefits to individuals when they are motivated by a higher cause. They are better able to accept the reality of a situation, develop creative coping strategies, find meaning in trauma, maintain an optimistic view of the future, access their social support network, generate the motivation to persevere, and grow from adversity.<sup>285</sup>

Kenneth Pargament and Patrick Sweeny postulate, “The term spirit is also tied intimately to other higher order qualities, including purpose and meaning, enlightenment, authenticity, interconnectedness, and self-actualization. In this sense, the human spirit organizes people’s lives and propels people forward.”<sup>286</sup>

When spirituality is operationalized in this manner, it is much easier to identify elements of human spirituality associated with the reasons why a suicide attacker would do what they have been told to do, especially when they have the promise of dying as a martyr for the cause of Islam.

#### Slide #25: Organization-5



---

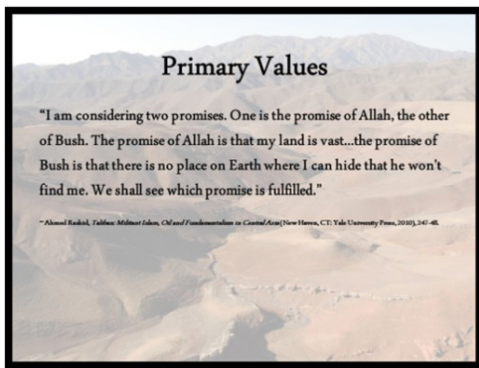
285. Kenneth I. Pargament and Patrick J. Sweeney, “Building Spiritual Fitness in the Army: An innovative Approach to a Vital Aspect of Human Development, *American Psychologist* 66, no. 1, (2011): 58-59.

286. *Ibid.*, 58.

Beyond religious and patriotic motivations, suicide bombers may receive large sums of money, improve their family's social status, and enhance their reputation.<sup>287</sup> After their death, their families are showered with honor and receive substantial financial rewards.<sup>288</sup>

Additionally, suicide bombers expect to be admired and envied by those left behind. Photographs capture them in heroic positions, and these photos will be used as recruitment posters.<sup>289</sup> With so much incentive, it is clear how one struggling to survive in a third-world country could be committed to a suicide attack. Religion is an especially potent form of violence. Religion can offer moral justification for immoral acts through skewed interpretations as viewed through prophets or sacred writings.

#### Slide #26: Primary Values-1



Former Pakistani militant-turned-journalist, Ahmed Rashid, offers

287. Debra D. Zedalis, "Female Suicide Bombers," Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, February 2004. Accessed 24 March 2015. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB408.pdf>.

288. Boaz Ganor, "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview," February 15, 2000; available from <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=128>; accessed September 5, 2014.

289. Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, New York: Harper Collins, 2003, p. xxiii.

non-Islamic communities' tremendous insight on Taliban thought in his book, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. In it, he cites a declaration made by Mullah Omar in 2001 that highlights the Taliban's ideology, which was relevant then and is relevant now: "I am considering two promises. One is the promise of Allah, the other of Bush. The promise of Allah is that my land is vast...the promise of Bush is that there is no place on Earth where I can hide that he won't find me. We shall see which promise is fulfilled."<sup>290</sup> This is a powerful and far-reaching assessment with great implications for America's Armed Forces and citizens. The fact that it was stated by the Taliban's spiritual and political leader gives the mandate even more legitimacy. When religious fanatics are told to follow all-powerful Allah and that President Bush is evil, there is no negotiating with the fanatics. They will always follow Allah.

For young Taliban fighters, war means employment. Peace means unemployment. The Taliban movement has simple aims: To restore peace, disarm the population, and implement strict sharia law.<sup>291</sup> Respected political activist of the late 1800s, Jamal ad-Din Al-Afghani, emphasized that Muslim defeats at the hands of the West are due to the corruption of Islam; pure Islam is the Islam that Muhammad established.<sup>292</sup> Going back much further to the 1300s, Islamic scholar and theologian, Ibn Taymiyya, claimed even apostate Muslims were legitimate targets of jihad.<sup>293</sup> Taken together, coupled with al-Qaeda's mission statement, we can infer that their ideology rests on the concept of maintaining, expanding, and politicizing sharia law, and using the West (the United States in particular) as propaganda to do so.

---

290. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 247-48.

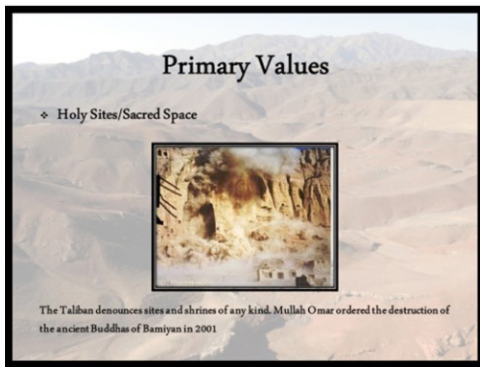
291. Shabnum Akhtar, "Rise of the Taliban and the US Intervention in Afghanistan," *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science* 19, no. 8 (August 2014): 45.

292. Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 23.

293. John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 283.



## Slide #27: Primary Values-2



The Taliban follow the Wahhabi tradition which denounces sites and shrines, believing that they are apostate forms of worship. Anything that is apostate must be destroyed through personal jihad.

A recent example of the Taliban's treatment toward sacred spaces occurred when Mullah Omar declared the ancient Buddhist statues in Afghanistan as heretical and had them destroyed. This caused an international outcry.

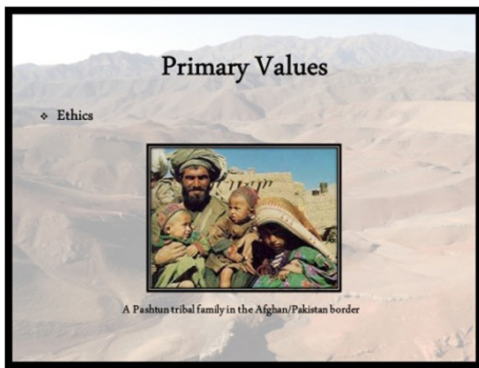
In *Sacred Space: Interdisciplinary Perspectives within Contemporary Contexts*, Caroline Bennett sheds light on the ideological conflict between the Taliban and sacred ruins of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan:

The Taliban government declared that the Buddhas were 'idols', and claimed that since idols are not permitted in Islam, they were destroyed...It seems likely that the Taliban leaders used the destruction of the statues as a stick with which they could beat all opponents, a means of punishing local people who opposed them, and a gesture

aimed to outrage the watching world. It was a symbolic destruction of an ancient sacred monument and a brute assertion of power.<sup>294</sup>

Similar to the symbolic destruction of the Twin Towers, violent extremists destroyed the revered statues in Afghanistan (Buddhas) to shock the world and claimed it was their spiritual duty to do so. Nevertheless, the reason of using religious jihad to do so; however, is problematic, especially since the sacred statues enjoyed a thousand years of survival before their destruction. If the Taliban's destruction of the statues was in line with mainstream Islamic teachings as found in the Qur'an and Hadith, then all statues and monuments found in Egypt would have been destroyed as well. Yet pyramids, like the Great Sphinx, and Abu Simbel still stand. Perhaps their view concerning sacred sites is fueled more by the political situation than by "pure religion."

#### Slide #28: Primary Values-3



---

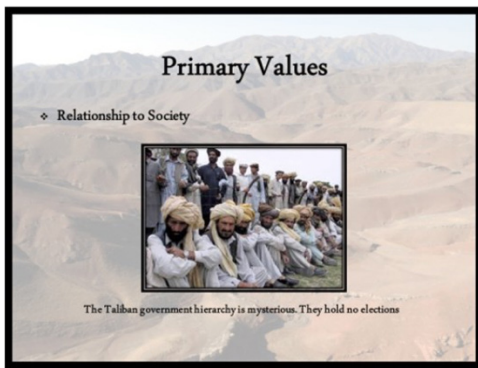
294. Steve Bric, Jenny Daggers, and David Torevell, *Sacred Space: Interdisciplinary Perspectives Within Contemporary Contexts* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 164.

## *Pashtu Tribalism*

The Wahhabi Islamic philosophy (regional or macro) influences religious beliefs while ancient Pashtun tribal codes (local or micro) influences Taliban legislation, ethics, and lifestyle. The Taliban is a Pashtun-ruled government, thus, Pashtun is practiced throughout the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, in conjunction with the Taliban's interpretation of Deobandi Islam.

Pashtuns are the Afghan/Pakistan mountain people of the Pashtun region who have lived outside direct government control in tribal areas since the first millennium BC. Pashtun rules are unwritten agreements that are acknowledged in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Taliban government, it is young males from the Pashtun ethnicity that are given a free education at Deobandi-trained madrassas and who have been heavily recruited into the Taliban since its inception by Mullah Omar in 1996.<sup>295</sup>

### Slide #29: Primary Values-4



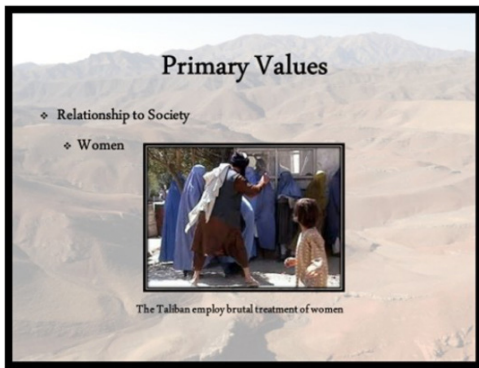
295. Ahmed Rashid, "Afghanistan resistance leader feared dead in blast," Telegraph, September 11, 2001, accessed March 17, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1340244/Afghanistan-resistance-leader-feared-dead-in-blast.html>.

Rashid describes the Taliban government as “a secret society run by Kandaharis and as mysterious, secretive, and dictatorial in its ways as the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia or Saddam Hussein’s Iraq.”<sup>296</sup> They do not hold elections, as their spokesman explains:

The Sharia does not allow politics or political parties. That is why we give no salaries to officials or soldiers, just food, clothes, shoes, and weapons. We want to live a life like the Prophet lived 1400 years ago, and jihad is our right. We want to recreate the time of the Prophet, and we are only carrying out what the Afghan people have wanted for the past 14 years.<sup>297</sup>

Another Taliban leader put it this way: “We can love our enemies, but only after we have defeated them.”<sup>298</sup>

### Slide #30: Primary Values-5



### *Women*

296. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 98.

297. *Ibid.*, 43.

298. *Ibid.*, 43.

The Taliban believe their brutal treatment toward women is necessary in order to “secure [an] environment where the chastity and dignity of women may once again be sacrosanct.”<sup>299</sup> John Renard explains, “Taliban social policies are notoriously oppressive toward women especially as manifest in their refusal to allow girls to be formally educated and public corporal punishment for women who violate their antiquated dress code. They seek to impose their own harsh interpretation of Sharia penal sanctions.”<sup>300</sup>

How Islam deals with feminist issues is a controversial problem for scholars and politicians alike who associate with Arab nations. Unfortunately, these issues have become volatile and even hostile ones that are not always placed in their historical or sociological contexts. In his article, *Gender, Islam, and Politics*, Farhad Kazemi emphasizes the following: “From one point of view, Islam is praised for its historically liberating role for women in Arabia and elsewhere. Yet another perspective holds either the religion or some of its practices and practitioners accountable for the lower status and inferior legal rights of women in Islamic countries than other parts of the world.”<sup>301</sup>

The life of women in Muslim countries today cannot be understood apart from reflecting on the Qur’an first, and then hadiths (traditions) and laws that have been created due to the influence of the Qur’an. There are many passages dealing with men and women scattered throughout the Qur’an, and also a number declaring that God created man and woman. At first, this implies some equality, but on a closer study, women are not equal in any important sense in many Muslim cultures. Islamic feminist movements argue for a more unrestricted interpretation of the Qur’an and Hadith when it comes to roles and responsibilities of Islamic women.

---

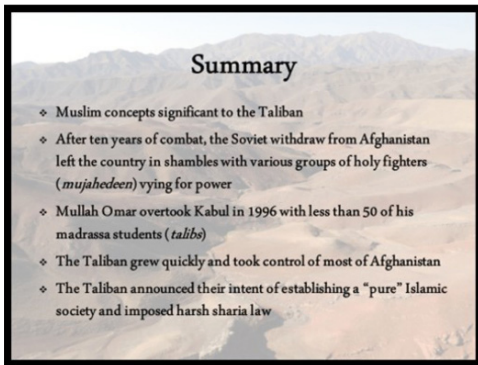
299. Nancy Hatch Dupree, *Afghan Women under the Taliban*, in William Maley, *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*, Hurst and Company 2001, pp. 145-166.

300. John Renard, *The Handy Islam Answer Book* (Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink Press, 2015), 71.

301. Farhad Kazemi, “Gender, Islam, and Politics,” *Social Research* 67, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 453.

In July 2002, a number of Arab experts commissioned by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development published a report titled “Arab Human Development Report” in which they noted that “the wave of democracy that transformed governance in most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980s and early 1990s has barely reached the Arab states.”<sup>302</sup> The experts also stated that based on international measurements of government accountability, civil liberties, political rights, and media freedom, Arab countries scored lower than any other regional group in the world. Many experts inside and outside Arab countries have expressed the opinion that only democratic reforms, especially the empowerment of women, can defuse the problems of the region as well as diminish the effects of militant Islamic fundamentalism that are at the heart of mounting terrorist activities. Taking this report into consideration, it is not prudent to ignore the role of women or their status in conflict or peace.

### Slide #31: Summary



*Note: End your brief with an appropriate summary relevant to the discussion. Allow time for questions.*

302. The Arab Human Development Report, “Creating Opportunities for the Future,” New York: the United Nations Development Program Publication, 2002, accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf>

## Slide #32: Questions



*Note: Briefly restate your main ideas and make a concluding statement. Announce the next briefer, if applicable.*

*Note: This concludes the orientation on the Taliban. You can take questions here from the group, or invite soldiers to approach you individually if you prefer.*

## Commander's Orientation: Further Study

### Islamic Female Revolution

It is significant to understand in the development of chaplain orientation briefs how women are perceived in Islams, and the current Islamic feminism movement.

Islamic feminism are beliefs attempting to provide equality between males and females within a Muslim framework. The movement's website states, "Islamic feminist asserted that Islam itself is a religion of gender-equal and the patriotic society has made the discrimination in order to maintain their domination over women."<sup>303</sup> Taken at face value, this quote may represent one possible reason why Islamic feminism demands the end of patriarchal influences. Islamic feminism tries to make people understand the real meaning of Islam and Qur'an.

Nonetheless, other gender-related views seem to fall in between these two points. Within this spectrum it is easy to see the myriad of concerns and implications associated with this problematic issue. The purpose of this section is to examine several important factors regarding Islam and women, and how those factors affect a changing Muslim world. In order to do this, it is important to understand the influences of veiling, as well as Islamic holy text—the most controversial principles of Islam as seen through Western lenses. I will furthermore explore where the movement is headed and its implications for the future quest of Islamic identity.

---

303. <http://www.feminismeislamic.org/>.



## Islamic feminism and veiling

The hijab is a veil that covers the head and chest, which is particularly worn by Muslim females beyond the age of puberty, in the presence of adult males outside of their immediate family. It can further refer to any head, face, or body covering worn by Muslim women that conforms to a certain standard of modesty. It not only refers to the physical body covering, but also embodies a metaphysical dimension, where al-hijab refers to “the veil which separates man or the world from God.”<sup>304</sup> Hijab can also be used to refer to the seclusion of women from men in the public sphere. Most often, it is worn by Muslim women as a symbol of modesty, privacy and morality.

Broadly speaking, there are two veiling issues at the forefront of Islamic feminism: The traditionalist view of the hijab, and the modernist view of the hijab. Murtaza Mutahhari, a close associate of Ayatollah Khomeini, is the author of *The Problem of Veiling*, the standard Islamist text that was used to enforce Islamic veiling in Iran after the Revolution. He represents those who cling to the traditional view of the hijab, and believes the justification for women wearing the hijab (covering everything, hair included, except for the face and hands) comes from this Qur’anic verse, as well as from many other traditional and “scholarly” commentaries:

Say to the believing women that they cast down their look and guard their private parts and reveal not their adornment [interpreted as jewelry] except such as is outward [interpreted as except for jewelry on hands and face] and let them cast their veils over their bosoms and reveal not their adornment except to their husbands.<sup>305</sup>

From this, the author concludes two things: 1) Wearing the hijab protects the dignity of a woman and her family unit by preventing any-

304. Cyril Glassé, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001), 179-180.

305. Surah 24:31.

thing that could lead to adultery.<sup>306</sup>

2) The hijab prevents the interference of men who lack morality and ethics. Covering everything except her face and hands makes it so that nothing she wears brings stimulation or attraction to her from other men.<sup>307</sup>

The modernist view of the hijab has a different take on the veiling controversy. Leila Ahmed, author of *Veil of Ignorance*, suggests that the world view concerning the hijab would disappear because of a modernist perspective due to development and civilization.<sup>308</sup> Ahmed agrees with other modernist scholars (such as Albert Hourani, an Oxford historian in 1955) that the hijab is a fast, disappearing fad.<sup>309</sup> With greater education and opportunity for women in the Muslim world, the hijab and the oppression that goes with it would become a distant memory. In addition, she views the hijab and the head scarf as signs of women's disempowerment and as items that were dictated to women from a distant patriarchal order.<sup>310</sup>

In 1998 she discovered that in Cambridge, American Muslim women had a different feeling about the hijab. Ahmed interviewed these women and found that they chose to wear the hijab to show their faith and devotion to their religion in light of the growing persecution. In other words, the hijab was a way of rejecting negative stereotypes. Ahmed concludes that Islamic feminism is alive and well in the U.S. Women have had to confront a different Muslim American world after 9-11. Since then, they have had to fight for the right to wear the hijab and fight against its stereotypes.

The issue between Islamic feminism and veiling is an issue at odds with Muslim women, differences between Islamic doctrine and

306. Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talattof, *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 361-362.

307. Ibid., 366-367.

308. Leila Ahmed, "Veil of Ignorance," *Foreign Policy* 186 (May/June 2011): 40-41.

309. Ibid., 40.

310. Ibid., 42.

Islamic tradition, the conflict between minority assimilation, discussions of the “Islamist threat” to society and of Islamophobia, and of strict secularity in state institutions. Only time will tell where the controversy goes from here.

### Islamic feminism and holy text

In *Qur'an and Women*, Amina Wadud-Muhsin calls for a more exegetical approach as a way to better understand the controversies from the Qur'an that face the modern Muslim woman. The exegetical approach, or *hermeneutics*, as defined by Wadud-Muhsin in understanding the Qur'an applies to context, grammatical usage, and world view when reading the text.<sup>311</sup> Using this type of analysis gives readers a more accurate framework in which Islamic holy text regards male-female relationships. The following examples of this are taken from the author's book, *Qur'an and Women*.

*Darajah*: The idea of receiving a higher level of blessings over another person due to doing good deeds. Some Qur'anic examples include giving up wealth for Allah<sup>312</sup> and immigrating for Allah.<sup>313</sup> Wadud-Muhsin claims that this is problematic with regard to the value of women. This leaves each social system to determine the value of different kinds of deeds at will. Every society has distinguished men's work from women's work. The problem is that most men's work is regarded as more valuable than women's. According to the author, the fact is that the Qur'an does not specifically determine the roles and the individual nations have not considered all the possibilities.<sup>314</sup>

*Patriarchy*: The established order in Arabia at the time of the revelation was patriarchal. In patriarchal cultures, women are looked upon in terms of their utility to men, which is primarily reproductive. The

311. Amina Wadud-Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1992), 62-63.

312. Surah 4:95

313. Surah 9:20

314. Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1992), 67.

fact that such a cultural bias was the context of the Qur'anic revelation has serious implications for later communities. Wadud-Muhsin argues that the implication of this patriarchal context must be understood in relation to the greater Qur'anic principles and their ultimate intent of harmonious and equitable relationships in society.<sup>315</sup> It is this ultimate Qur'anic intent which reveals its true spirit. It is clear that through the chronological progression of the text that the Qur'an sets out guidelines that should lead the various communities toward progressive change. She believes that the way to believe in the whole of the book is to recognize the spirit of the book and accept its ultimate intent.<sup>316</sup>

*Polygamy:* For most Muslim nations, polygamy is viewed as an economic perspective of marriage—a type of social welfare system. The verse in the Qur'an which is interpreted to sanction the practice of polygamy is found in Surah 4:3: "If you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two, three, or four. But if you fear that will not be able to justly deal with them, then only one." The author argues that this obscure passage is teaching more about taking care of orphans and less a justification for plural marriage and claims that there is no direct sanction in the Qur'an.<sup>317</sup>

Although Amin Wadud-Muhsin represents only one worldview regarding Islamic feminism and holy text, it is one that reflects a fairly typical opinion among Muslim women trying to break free of rather dogmatic approaches to gender roles.

### Future quest of Islamic identity

This section has sought to explore Islamic feminism through the practice of veiling and through Muslim holy text. Despite the sharp

---

315. Ibid., 80.

316. Ibid., 82.

317. Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1992), 84.

arguments for and against the effort, Islam will not be able to ignore much longer the power and singularity of the feminist movement as women are claiming their places in Islamic discourse and changing their reality through a re-examination of tradition and text. The future of Islamic feminism may see stronger social institutions and resources that support women and end apologetics, as well as see a renaissance of female scholarship in Islam to continually seek justice alongside, not over, Islamic males. If this is the direction the movement is heading, then the future looks bright.

## Bibliography

- Akhtar, Shabnum. "Rise of the Taliban and the US Intervention in Afghanistan." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 19, no. 8 (August 2014): 44-50.
- Ahmad, Imtiaz and Helmut Reifeld, *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict* (New York, NY: Social Science Press, 2012), 114.
- Leila Ahmed. "Veil of Ignorance." *Foreign Policy* 186 (May/June 2011): 40-42.
- Armajani, Yahya, and Thomas M. Ricks. *Middle East: Past and Present*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986.
- Alvanou, Maria. "Symbolisms of Basic Islamic Imagery in Jihadi Propaganda," Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues, and Managing Emergencies. Accessed December 12, 2014. <http://www.itstime.it/w/symbolisms-of-basic-islamic-imagery-in-jihadi-propaganda>.
- Appleby, Scott. "Religion and Global Affairs: Militants for Peace," *The SAIS Review* 18, no. 2 (1998): 38-44.
- Armstrong, Karen *Islam: A Short History*. New York: Modern Library, 2002.
- Asani, Ali S. "Pluralism, Intolerance, and the Qur'an," *American Scholar* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 52-60.
- Barber, Benjamin. "Jihad Vs. McWorld," *The Atlantic Monthly* 269, no.3 (March 1992): 53-65.

Barton, Fredrick B., Shannon Hayden, and Karin von Hippel. "Navigating in the Fog: Improving U.S. Government Engagement with Religion." in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, edited by Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft, 279-290. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Blanchard, Christopher. "Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas: Background." CRS Report for Congress Order Code RS21654, February 10, 2005.

Bowker, John. *World Religions: the Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. New York, NY: DK, 2006.

Brie, Steve, Jenny Daggers, and David Torevell. *Sacred Space: Interdisciplinary Perspectives Within Contemporary Contexts*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

Brown, Vanda Felbab. *Shooting Up*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2010.

Bush, George W. Executive Order 13224. "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism." *U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control* (September 23, 2001):1-38.

Calvert, John. *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Cook, David. *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*. Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 2002.

Chossudovsky, Michel. "Al Qaeda and the War on Terrorism." Global Research, January 20, 2008. Accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/al-qaeda-and-the-war-on-terrorism/7718>.

Coll, Steve. *Ghost Wars: the Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*. New York: Penguin Press. 2004.

Cordesman, Anthony H. "The Lessons and Challenges of September 2011—the New 9/11," Center for Strategic & International Studies. September 9, 2011. Accessed April 8, 2015. <http://csis.org/publication/lessons-and-challenges-september-2011-new-911>.

Dressler, Jefferey. "The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan." Institute for the Study of War: Military Analysis and Education. October 2010, 4. Accessed April 9, 2015, [http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf\\_state/haqqani-network-compressed.pdf](http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/haqqani-network-compressed.pdf).

D'Souza, Dinesh. *The Enemy at Home: the Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.

Eliade, Mircea. *Pattern in Comparative Religions Trans.* Rosemary Sheed. New York: A Meridian Book, 1974.

Esposito, John L. *Islam: the Straight Path*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Voices of Resurgent Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Ganor, Boaz. "Suicide Terrorism: An Overview." February 15, 2000. Accessed April 10, 2015. <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=128>.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The First Iraqi Suicide Bombing. A Hint of Things to Come?" International Center for Counter-Terrorism. March 30, 2003. Accessed September 25, 2014, <http://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=867>.



Glassé, Cyril. *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001.

Gutowski, Stacy. "Religion and Security in International Relations Theories," in *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Security*. edited by Chris Seiple, Dennis R. Hoover and Pauletta Otis, 125-137. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Hassner, Ron E. *Religion on the Battlefield*. New Jersey: Cornell University Press, under contract.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Religion in the Military Worldwide*. Edited by Ron E. Hassner. New York: Cornell University Press, 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. *War on Sacred Grounds*. London: Cornell University Press, 2009.

Hanauer, Larry and Peter Chalk. *India's and Pakistan's Strategies in Afghanistan: Implications for the United States and the Region*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2012.

Hoyt, Michael. "The Iraqi Inter-religious Congregation and the Baghdad Accords," in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson. New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2014

Isakhan, Benjamin. 2015. "The Iraq Legacies and the Roots of the 'Islamic State'." in *The Legacy of Iraq: From the 2003 War to the 'Islamic State'*, edited by Benjamin Isakhan, 223-235. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 223-235.

"Islam and Muslim Americans," Educational Series booklet produced by the Arab American National Museum, 13-14.

Johnston, Douglas. *Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement*. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_. "We Neglect Religion at our own Peril." *Proceedings Magazine* 128, no.1 (January 2002): 50-52.

Johnston, Douglas, and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

"Kashmir: Religious Diversity Become Religious Militancy." Georgetown University: Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs (August 13, 2013) 1-14. Accessed April 9, 2015. <http://repository.berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/130801BCKashmirReligiousDiversityBecomesReligiousMilitancy.pdf>.

Kazemi, Farhad. "Gender, Islam, and Politics." *Social Research* 67, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 453-474.

Laub, Zachary. "The Taliban in Afghanistan," *Council on Foreign Relations*, (July 2014) Accessed April 9, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/taliban-afghanistan/p10551>.

Lewis, Bernard and Buntzie Ellis. Churchill, *Islam: The Religion and the People*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2009.

Lindsay, James E. *Daily Life In The Medieval Islamic World*. Chicago, IL: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005.

Linschoten, Alex Strick van, and Felix Kuehn. *An Enemy We Created: the Myth of the Taliban- Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

- Malbouisson, Cofie D. *Focus On Islamic Issues*. New York: Nova Science Pub Inc, 2007.
- Margoliouth, David Samuel. *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*. New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1905.
- Matinuddin, Kamal. *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan, 1994-1997*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Moaddel, Mansoor, and Kamran Talattof, *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Moore, Diane. *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Mozul, James. "The Quetta Shura Taliban: An Overlooked Problem," *International Affairs Review*." XXIII (November 23, 2009), accessed April 8, 2015, <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/106>.
- Nasr, Vali. *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Nix, Dayne. "Chaplains Advising Warfighters on Culture and Religion." in *Military Chaplains in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Beyond*, ed. Eric Patterson. New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2014.
- Noor, Farish. *New Voices of Islam*. The Netherlands: ISIM, 2002.
- Nydell, Margaret K. *Understanding Arabs: a Contemporary Guide to Arab Society*. Boston, MA: Intercultural Press, 2012.

Pargament, Kenneth I. and Patrick J. Sweeney “Building Spiritual Fitness in the Army: An innovative Approach to a Vital Aspect of Human Development.” *The American Psychologist* 66, no. 1, (2011): 58-64.

Patterson, Eric. “The Modern Military Chaplaincy in the Era of Intervention and Terrorim,” in *Military Chaplains in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Beyond: Advisement and Leader Engagement in Highly Religious Environments*, edited by Eric Patterson, 1-17. New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2014.

Peters, Gretchen. *Seeds of Terror*. New York: Picador, 2010.

Pillalamarri, Akhilesh. “The Radicalization of South Asian Islam: Saudi Money and the Spread of Wahhabism.” *Georgetown Security Studies Review*. December 20, 2014. Accessed March 13, 2015, <http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2014/12/20/the-radicalization-of-south-asian-islam-saudi-money-and-the-spread-of-wahhabism>.

Price, Colin. “Pakistan: A Plethora of Problems.” *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 53-62.

Qutb, Sayyid. *Al-Salaam Al-Alami Wa-Al-Islam*. Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1974.

Raqib, Atifa Mariam. “Resistance By Other Means: The Taliban, Foreign Occupation, and Afghan National Identity.” PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2011. 154-155. Accessed March 24, 2015, [iris.lib.neu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=law\\_pol\\_soc\\_diss](http://iris.lib.neu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=law_pol_soc_diss).

Rashid, Ahmed. *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Reifeld, Imtiaz Ahmad & Helmut. *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict*. New York, NY: Social Science Press, 2012.

Renard, John. *The Handy Islam Answer Book*. Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink Press, 2015.

“Research Base for the High-level Group Report Analysis on Media.” Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat United Nations, New York. Accessed April 9, 2015. [http://www.unaoc.org/repository/thematic\\_media.pdf](http://www.unaoc.org/repository/thematic_media.pdf).

Ruben, Barry. “Religion and International Affairs,” in *Religion The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, 21-34. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Said, Edward. “Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot Be Simplified,” *Harper’s Magazine* 305, no. 1826 (July 2002): 69-87.

Serafim, Ana. “Terrorism—A Cultural Phenomenon?” *Consortium Quarterly Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 61-74.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *Islam: An Introduction*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Singer, Peter. “Pakistan’s Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education not Jihad.” Brookings Institute. November 1, 2001. Accessed February 9, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2001/11/pakistan-singer>.

Smock, David. “Religion in World Affairs: Its Role In Conflict And Peace.” United States Institute of Peace. February 2008. Access April 8, 2015. <http://www.usip.org/publications/religion-in-world-affairs-its-role-in-conflict-and-peace>.

Sophia, Peter. "The Shahadah as Truth and as Way," *The Journal of Traditional Studies* 9, no. 2 (Summer 2003), 77-114.

Speight, Kenneth and Marston Cragg. *Islam from Within*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1980. Sprinzak, Ehud. "Rational Fanatics." *Foreign Policy* 120, no.1 (September-October 2000), 66-74.

Tamerler, Kevin. Position Paper on *Taliban* for Disarmament and International Security Committee, Harvard National Model United Nations, 2011.

The Arab Human Development Report. "Creating Opportunities for the Future." New York: the United Nations Development Program Publication, 2002, Accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf>

The Islamic Imagery Project: Visual Motifs in Jihadi Internet Propaganda. "Combating Terrorism." Center Department of Social Sciences United States Military Academy. March 2006. Accessed February 23, 2015. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-islamic-imagery-project>.

"The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity." August 9, 2012. Pew Research Center. Accessed April 8, 2015. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-executive-summary/>.

Toft, Monica Duffy. "Religion, Terrorism, and Civil Wars." in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, edited by Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft, 127-148. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

U.S. Casualty Status Data from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND), Operation Inherent Resolve (ORI), Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) as of March 20, 2015. Accessed April 9, 2015. <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>.

U.S. Department of the Army. "Army Doctrine Publication 5-0: The Operations Process" 26 May 2010. Accessed April 8, 2015. [http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/adp5\\_0.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp5_0.pdf).

U. S. Department of the Army. "Field Manual 1-05: Religious Support." October 5, 2012. Accessed April 9, 2015. [http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/fm1\\_05.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/fm1_05.pdf).

U. S. Department of the Army. "Field Manual 6-0: Commander and Staff Organization and Operations." May 2014. Accessed April 8, 2015. [http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/fm6\\_0.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/fm6_0.pdf).

U.S. Department of the Army. "Field Manual 101-5: Staff Organization and Operation." May 31, 1997. Accessed April 15, 2015. [http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/genesis\\_and\\_evolution/source\\_materials/FM-101-5\\_staff\\_organization\\_and\\_operations.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/genesis_and_evolution/source_materials/FM-101-5_staff_organization_and_operations.pdf).

U.S. Department of the Army. "TC 1-05: Religious Support Handbook for the Unit Ministry Team." May 2005.

U.S. Department of Defense. "Joint Publication 1-05: Religious Affairs in Joint Operations." November 20, 2009. Accessed April 8, 2015. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp1\\_05.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_05.pdf).

Wadud-Muhsin, Amina. *Qur'an and Woman*. Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1992.

Weeber, Stan C. *Private Armies in the Culture of Capitalism*. Lake Charles, LA: Xlibris, 2010.

Zayd, Abu Nasr. *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Zedalis, Debra D. "Female Suicide Bombers," Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College. February 2004. Accessed 24 March 2015. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB408.pdf>.



## Suggestions for Further Reading

### Websites

Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project: <http://www.al-islam.org/>

Army Chaplain Corps: <http://www.goarmy.com/chaplain.html>

Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs: <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/>

Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs: <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/>

Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.cfr.org/>

Islam and Islamic Studies Resources: <http://islam.uga.edu/>

Religion & Politics: <http://religionandpolitics.org/>

U.S. Army Chaplain Corps: <http://chapnet.chaplaincorps.net/>

### Journals

*Arab & Islamic Studies*

*Armed Forces and Society*

*Chaplain Corps Journal*

*Comparative Islamic Studies*

*Islamic Studies*

