Radosław FIEDLER

Institute of Political Science and Journalism
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Suicide Terrorism in the Strategy of Hamas and al-Qaeda

Introduction: Islam – Fundamentalism – Terrorism:
an Unbreakable Triad?

Hamas and al-Qaeda are bound up with fundamentalism and Islamic terrorism. These organisations are steeped in the religio-political ideology of the Wahhabis movement, and the XXth century thought of: Hasan al. Bana, Sajjid Qutb etc. Islamic fundamentalism is a wider phenomenon in which there are different faces from a totally extremist one involving terrorist activity up to more moderate opposition to the autocratic regimes in the Arab world. Islam is treated as the main weapon and a source of religious symbolism that allows mass support to be activated.[1]

Hava Lazarus-Yafeh Professor of Islamic Civilisation at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem enumerated the most typical features common to the most contemporary fundamentalist groups in all three monotheistic religions:[2]

1) most of these groups constitute a counter-society, which demands intense group loyalty. They are true believers who cling to the authentic tradition, whereas the world outside, especially members of institutionalised religion, are only nominal believers. The term paganism and ignorance (djahiliyya in Arabic) abounds in all fundamentalist writings and the most important aim is to withdraw completely from Westernised society as well as rejection of the national state and the democratic system. Modernity is seen as the great evil, born of the secular tradition;

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[1] Ahamad Kamal Abu al.-Magd a former cabinet member during the Anwar Sadat regime in Egypt, distinguished between five groups Islamic activists. The first call themselves the *Sallafiyyun* and are noted for their inflexible adherence to the classical teachings of Islam, heaving little room for modern reinterpretation. The second are the Sufis, who emphasise the spiritual dimension of Islam and focus their efforts exclusively on seeking a spiritual revival. The third group carries the banner of Islam but is in total rebellion against the prevailing Muslim condition. The fourth group consists of several movements adamant in their demand for the reinstitution of Islamic law (*shari'a*) as a constitution of the state. For them, the control of political power is the most effective way to work for Islam. The fifth group is composed of the moderate majority who believes in the use of reason in applying the teachings of Islam as a guide for life; D. Lesch, *The Middle East and the United States. A Historical and Political Reassessment*, Westview Press 1996, p. 420.

[2] H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Contemporary Fundamentalism*, in: *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective. Religion, Ideology, and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. by J. Silberstein, pp. 45–52; see also: *Islamic Law and Jurisprudence*, ed. by N. Heer, Seattle–London 1990.

2) fundamentalists do not resent modern arms and technology and use them freely, even while denouncing Western science in general;

3) all fundamentalists share a strong, usually literal, belief in the inerrancy of their holy Scriptures. Islamic fundamentalists wanted to make real the concept that sovereignty belongs to God. In Islam there is no clear distinction between what is religious and belongs to God and what is temporal and belongs to man – because both belong to God.[3] Because sovereignty belongs to God, it follows that the divine will is the source of law in the Islamic community. This law was revealed to the Muslims through the Prophet and is embodied in the Qur'an and in the Prophet's Sunna. The Qur'an and the Sunna together constitute the Shari'a, the Islamic law. Added to the Shari'a over the years is the Fiqh, or jurisprudence, based on the interpretation of these primary sources. Shari'a cannot be altered or tampered with by mere mortals, even if they are doctors of law. Therefore the Shari'a is everlasting and not subject to change;

4) the general mood of contemporary fundamentalists whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim is apocalyptic. They all expect radical changes in the near future.

The Islamist view said that the Arabs were behind not because they were insufficiently Arab nationalists – but because they had lost their own roots and identity. Islamic fundamentalists insisted that only Islam could unite the society, mobilise the masses, overturn the present unsatisfactory rulers, destroy Israel and the United States and make the Arabs equal to or even greater than the West.

Barry Rubin director of the Global Research for International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and a professor at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, Israel, in his book *The Tragedy of the Middle East*, described the sources of the Islamic resurgence as a tremendous battle for the soul of Islam. Radicals in this battle raised new interpretations and constituted an attempt to transform Islam. Radicals and the Islamic activism demonstrated by them such as terrorism and militancy are contradictory with how Muslims had practised and thought about their faith for a thousand years.[4]

Bassam Tibi, an expert on Islamic fundamentalism acknowledges in his book *The Challenge of Fundamentalism* that Islamic fundamentalism is an ideology symptomatic of the "clash of civilisations." In his view fundamentalism is much more than extremism or terrorism it is rather a powerful challenge to the existing order of the international system of secular nation-states.[5]

To sum up – the following events have had a significant impact on the development of Islamic fundamentalism:

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[3] Bernard Lewis has argued that the Muslims have not had to choose between God and Caesar because, in Islam, "there was no Caesar, there was only God"; see: B. Lewis, *Politic and War, in the Legacy of Islam*, Oxford 1979, p. 96.

[4] B. Rubin, *The Tragedy of the Middle East*, Cambridge 2002, p. 168.

[5] B. Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism. Political Islam and the New World Disorder*, London 1998, p. 3.

1. The present-day Palestinian-Israeli conflict and especially the Arab defeat in the war with Israel in 1967. The illusion that Arab secular ideologies like: nationalism and socialism would bring development to the Muslim world was shattered.
2. The Islamic revolution in Iran. This event turned Iran into a focus of radical Shiite Islam and serious attempts to export the revolution to the Muslim world, especially during the Khomeini period.
3. The demographic explosion with the simultaneously bad economic, social and political situation in the Muslim world.[6]
4. The victory of the Islamic mujahideen in Afghanistan. The defeat of the Soviet Union in battle was perceived by Islamists not only as a military victory, but also a cultural one.
5. The disintegration of the USRR. The collapse of the Soviet Empire led to the creation of new Muslim states in Central Asia where radical Islam is influential.
6. The war In the Persian Gulf in 1991.
7. The U.S. war against terrorism in which the most important issue is only the military struggle against the Taliban, al-Qaeda and Iraq but lacks any visible program to improve such spheres as: economical development of the Muslim world, education, science, culture etc.[7]

Between the Traditional and Fundamentalist Meaning of Jihad

In Islamic understanding, Muslims by definition do not fight wars. Islamic jihad is never aggression but rather an effort to spread Islam as the true religion. However Muslims are obliged to carry the da'wa call to Islam world-wide. The da'wa is supposed to be peaceful. But if the peoples to whom Muslims bring the message of Islam do not sub-

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[6] Most of the Islamic movements and groups, primarily those that emerged from the 1960s and after, present the Arab and Muslim regimes – and in some cases rightfully – as symbols of arbitrary oppression and the distortion of the social justice that is rooted in Islam. Thus, they instil bring their followers to sympathise with and support those who present themselves as the protectors of the weaker elements of society. Thus, in many cases they manage to recruit to their side elements of social, political, cultural and economic protest against various Arab and Muslim regimes; http://www.e-prism.org/images/Courmayeur-final.pdf.

[7] About condition of the Arab world there is The Arab Human Development Report 2002 which places Arab states in all dimensions: economic, social, civil, political and cultural. In the Report noticed that over past twenty years growth per capita income was the lowest in the world except in sub-Saharan Africa. At an annual growth rate of 0,5% annually, if such trends continue in the future, it will take the average Arab citizen 140 years to double his or her income, while other regions are set to achieve that level in a matter of less then 10 years. Total factor productivity declined an annual average of 0,2% during 1960–1990, while it rapidly accelerated in other parts of the world. Compared to the Asian Tigers, per capita output was higher than the average of this group in 1960. Now it is half than in Korea. The productivity of Arab industrial labour in 1960 was 32% that of the North American level. By 1990, it had fallen to 19%. The Report signalised the Arab Region's 3 deficits in such areas as: freedom, women's empowerment, human capabilities and knowledge relative to income. See: *The Arab Human Development Report 2002*.

mit to it voluntarily, Muslims are entitled to use force in defending the da'wa against the resistance of the unbelievers. This struggle is called qital/defence. Muslim' use of force is not considered to be a harb/war, but rather a righteous reaction to the unbelievers' hindering of the spread of the da'wa as call to Islam. This is the lesser jihad.[8] In Islamic tradition there is the second meaning of the term jihad: Greater Jihad means an inner struggle for purification of the soul. According to Islamists, the military struggle against non-believers is the real Greater Jihad. To support their claims, they invoke only those sections of Quran that equate warfare with the duty of the faithful Muslim.[9] In traditional meaning lesser jihad is considered as a collective obligation (fard kifaya) binding the whole Muslim community.[10] The duty is fulfilled when a part of the community fulfils it. Fundamentalists and terrorists introduced a new meaning: jihad is an individual religious duty (fard'ayn) which even allows wives to fight the enemy without the permission of their husband. Any Muslim who avoids fighting is committing a "major treason" of the Islamic cause.[11] Islamist groups are consistent in using the terms shaheed (martyr) and instishhad (martydom) when referring to suicide attackers and suicide attacks, respectively, since ordinary suicide is manifestly forbidden by the most authoritative sources of Islamic law.[12]

According to Assaf Moghadam a doctoral candidate at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University: "there are two sets of motives that converging at the recruitment stage, when organisations identify and mobilise individuals who have professed a willingness to die. At this stage, the two necessary conditions for suicide bombings merge: on the one hand, a willingness to kill that may stem from individuals or from the organisations; and, on the other hand, a willingness to die among the individual who has been recruited. It is at the recruitment stage when the first phase, what I will term the 'Motivational phase', ends, and where the second phase, the Institutional Phase, sets in. During the 'Institutional Phase', the 'volunteer for martyrdom' comes entirely under the auspices of the organisation. During this phase, the volunteer is indoctrinated and trained by the organisation, which hones the individual who is ready to

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[8]   B. Tibi, op. cit., p. 54.
[9]   A. Moghadam, *Suicide Bombings in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Conceptual Framework*, May 2002, http://www/e-prism.org/images/suicide%20Terrorism%20Paper%for%20prism.doc.
[10]   In Islam there are two types of external jihad: offensive and defensive. In Islamic jurisprudence, the offensive jihad functions to promote the spread of Islam to the dar al. - harb (domain of war). The defensive jihad according to Islamic scholars is accepted when an outside force invades Muslim territory, it is incumbent Muslims to wage jihad to protect the faith and faithful; Q. Wiktorowicz, J. Kaltner, *Killing in the Name of Islam; Al. Quaeda's Justification September 11*, "Middle East Policy", Vol. X, Summer 2003, p. 6.
[11]   See more in: G. Kepel, *Jihad. The Trial of Political Islam*, London 2002.
[12]   The Qur'an clearly admonishes: "And do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands". Interpreters explain that "throwing yourself into destruction with your hands" refers to committing suicide. The Islamic tradition states: "Whoever kills himself in the stomach with the knife will be in hell forever, stabbing himself in the stomach: Whoever kills himself by drinking poison will eternally drink poison in the hell; And whoever kills himself by failing off a mountain will forever fall in the fire of hell" see: M. Sheehan, *Fundamentalist Terrorism*; in: *Countering Suicide Terrorism*, An International Conference. February 20–23, 2000, Center Herzliya 2001, pp. 69–70.
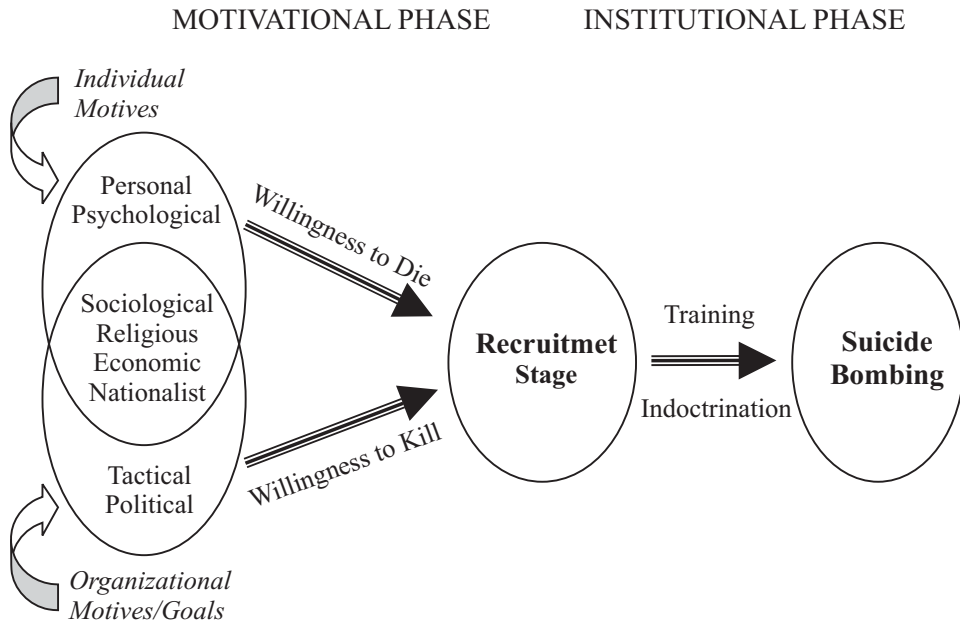
MOTIVATIONAL PHASE   INSTITUTIONAL PHASE

Fig. 1. Two-phase model of suicide bombings

Source: A. Moghadam, *Suicide Bombings in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Conceptual Framework*, May 2002: http://www/e-prism.org/images/suicide%20Terrorism%20Paper%for%20prism.doc.

die into a highly committed 'living martyr'. The goal of the organisation at this phase is to take all measures necessary to assure the individual's commitment to perpetrate the act – in fact, to morally bind the volunteer to his commitment and to make sure that he will not change his mind. To achieve this goal, the organisation, during this phase, will use several techniques that will include peptalks, group pressure, and the extrications of personal and public commitments that the candidate will find difficult, if not impossible, to turn back from. Towards the end of this phase, the 'volunteer for martyrdom' reaches a point of no return, and becomes a 'living martyr'. This Institutional Phase, which usually stretches over a number of days, culminates in the execution of the actual suicide terrorism attack."[13]

Another author Boaz Ganor (Executive Director, International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism) Herzliya, Israel, considers that suicide attacks are attractive to terrorist organisations: they offer them a variety of advantages:[14]

1) suicide attacks result in many victims, causalities and cause deep impact provoking a psychology of fear;

2) suicide attacks attract wide media coverage. A suicide attack is a newsworthy event for the media;

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[13] Quotation: A. Moghadam, op. cit., pp. 8–9.
[14] B. Ganor, *Suicide Attacks in Israel*, in: *Countering Suicide...*, op. cit., p. 137.

3) the use of suicide tactics guarantees that the attack will be carried out at the most appropriate time and place with regard to the circumstances at the target location;

4) it is extremely difficult to counter suicide attacks; even if the security forces do succeed in stopping the suicide attacker before he reaches the intended target, he can still activate the bomb and cause damage;

5) sSuicide attacks require no escape plan;

6) since the perpetrator is killed during the course the suicide attack, there is no fear of his being caught by the security forces and passing on information liable to endanger other activists.

There are also some benefits to the suicide terrorist like: fulfilment of a religious commandment, patriotism, eternal life in paradise and family benefits such as an improvement in social and economic status.[15]

As Scott Atran a director of research at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris noticed: "(...) sponsors of martyrdom are not irrational. Using religious sentiments for political or economic purposes can be eminently rational, as when martyrdom or missionary actions gain recognition, recruits, and power to increase political market share to gain in the competition for political influence in a regional context, within the larger Muslim community, or with the rest of the World."[16]

Hamas and Suicide Bombings in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) was established in December 1987 during first stage of the First Intifada (Palestinian Uprising).[17]

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[15] Ibidem, pp. 138–139. For example Palestinian terrorist groups already receive significant funding from the Saudi government. In April 2002 the Saudi regime hosted an officially sponsored telethon to support the continuation of the Palestinian intifada. Moreover, documents uncovered by Israeli authorities reveal payments totalling more than 5000,000 USD from the government-sponsored Saudi Committee for the Support of the al-Quds Uprising to 102 families of individuals identified by Israel authorities as terrorists; see: P. Hess, *Saudi Arabia Sets Aside $50m. for "Martyrs"*, United Press International, April 9, 2002, http:/www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=09042002-050314-4015.

[16] Qoutation: S. Atran, *Mishandling Suicide Terrorism*, "The Washington Quarterly", Summer 2004, p. 79.

[17] Hamas the Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, represented the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been the first group to preach a return to Islamic piety in the Gaza Strip in the late 1970s. The Muslim Brotherhood, which operated through an organisational framework called al.-Mujamma – the centre, gradually began to impose traditional Islamic perceptions on local population. They tried to deepen the Islamic roots of society through education and community-oriented activity. The Brotherhood opted for the long-range, gradualist Islamic strategy. All of this changed when the Intifada began. The Muslim Brotherhood adopted a violent jihad and direct confrontation; see more in: Z. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza. Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad*, United States 1994.
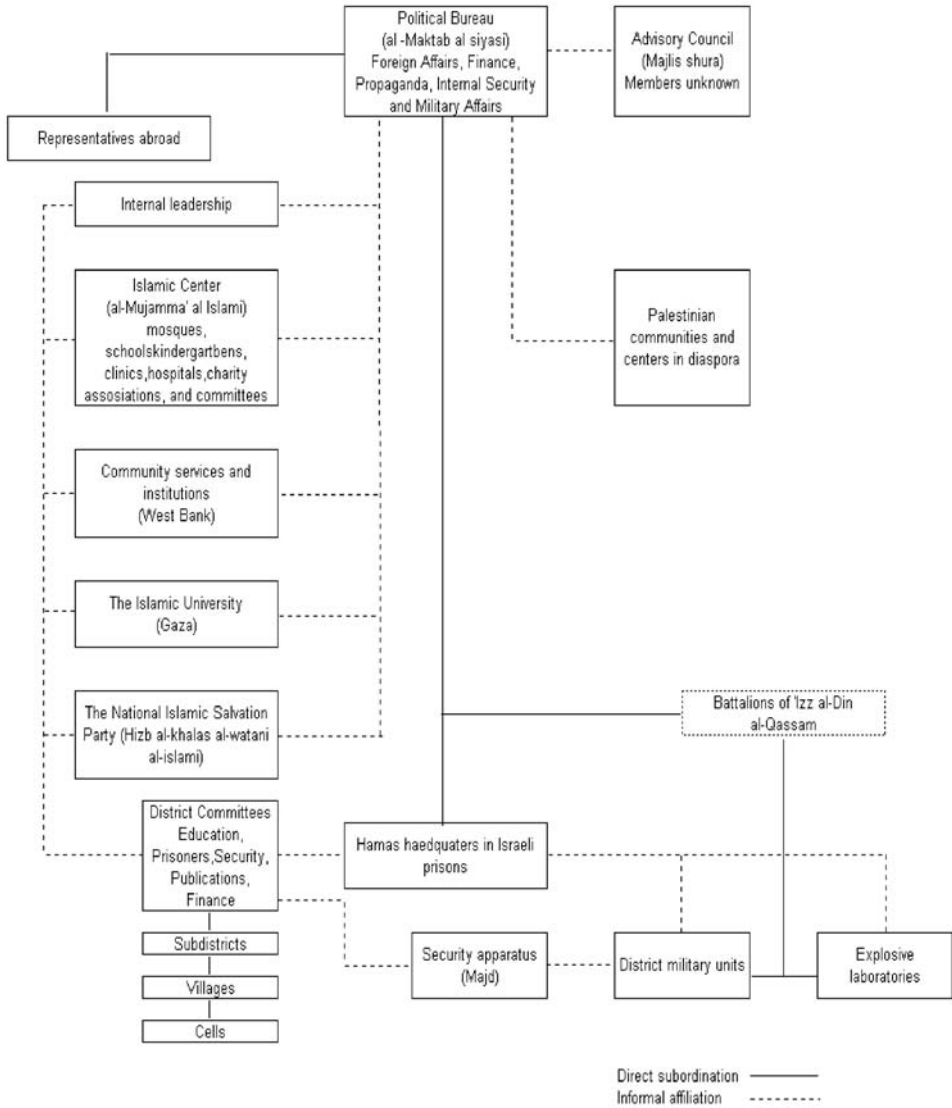
Fig. 2. Hamas's Internal Structure

Source: S. Mishal, A. Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas. Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*, New York 2000.

The I Intifada was presented as a form of Jihad which is considered to be the only means to liberate Palestine and to bring back glory to the Islamic state umma. The jihad for the liberation of Palestine serves for the purification of the umma.

According to the Islamic Resistance Movement, nationalism is part and parcel of its religious creed. "Nothing is loftier or deeper in nationalism than waging a holy war

(jihad) against the enemy and confronting him (Israel) when he sets foot on the land of Muslims."[18]

Hamas discarded the old incompatibility between Islam based on ideological grounds and the Western idea of the nation state which is based on territorial claims. As Palestinian nationalism is considered part of the Islamic religious creed, to give any inch of Palestine would mean abandoning a part of creed.[19] Hamas presented itself as an alternative to the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation). Hamas stated that the solution of Palestinian problem would not be achieved by setting up a secular Palestinian state but rather the liberation of Palestine relates to three circles: the Palestinian, the Arab and the Islamic.[20]

The group views the fight for the liberation of Palestine as an "individual religious duty." The goal of the Islamists is to liberate Palestine from occupation by the "Zionist Enemy" and re-established an Islamic state. In this way Palestine becomes an Islamic patrimonium or waqf, which does not belong to any person, party or state. The recognition of the Jewish state in Palestine is considered kufr, meaning infidelity or unbelief. In Hamas's eyes, the Muslims' right to establish an Islamic state in the territory of Palestine leaves no opening for dialogue or a political settlement with Israel. Because Palestine is Islamic, Hamas argued, Jewish control over part of Palestine was a transient phenomenon which must be rejected. It is imperative for the Mujahideen (the warriors of Jihad).

Hamas focused its initial suicide attacks on military targets in the "Territories," but quite rapidly shifted its attacks to civilians in Israel's central cities and densely populated areas. Hamas succeeded in inflicting a high number of casualties among the Israeli civilian population; this had a profound negative impact on the Israeli public's sense of personal security and negatively influenced the peace process.[21]

As G. Luft observed: "Both Islamists and secular Palestinians have come to see suicide bombing as a weapon against which Israel has no comprehensive defence. To counter the Iraqi Scuds, Israel developed and deployed the Arrow, a $2 billion ballistic missile defence system. Against Palestinian H-bombs, Israel can at best build a fence. The suicide bombers are smarter than Scuds, and Palestinians know that even though in Israel today there are more security guards than teachers or doctors, the bomber will always get through. If the Palestinians put their faith in Allah, Israelis put theirs in a tank. Whether consciously or not, their belief in the utility of force – evident in the popular 'Let the IDF Win' campaign, which advocated a freer hand for the army – reflects a strategic choice to militarise the conflict rather than politicise it."[22] Confronted with

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[18] The Islamic Resistance Movement's View of Homeland (watan) and Nationalism (wataniyya) in: S. Mishal, A. Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas. Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, New York 2000, p. 182.

[19] A. Nusse, *Muslim Palestine. The Ideology of Hamas*, Amsterdam 1998, p. 49.

[20] *The Charter of the Hamas. The Charter of Allah: The Platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement article 14*, http://www.palestine-info.com/hamas.

[21] Y. Schweitzer, *Suicide Terrorism: Development and main characteristics*, in: *Countering Suicide Terrorism. An International Conference. February 20–23, 2000*, Herzliya 2001, p. 78.

[22] G. Luft, *The Palestinian H-Bomb. Terrpor's Winning Strategy*, "Foreign Affairs", July/August 2002.

a heavily armed conventional army such as the IDF, some Palestinian groups believe to have found in suicide bombings at least one way of how to circumvent the conventional advantages of a militarily superior force.

For example from 1993 through 2003, 311 Palestinian suicide attackers launched themselves against Israeli targets. In the first seven years of suicide bombing, 70% (43 of 61 attempts) were successful in killing other people. From the start of the second Intifada in September 2000 through 2003, however the success rate declined to 52%, the number of attacks increased from 61 to 250, with 129 of those being successful. Hamas made 51 successful attacks, Palestinian Islamic Jihad 27, al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades 31, other Fatah groups 7, Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine 3, unknown 10.[23]

The suicide bombings in the second Intifada became the most popular weapon in the uneven conflict with Israel. Surprising is the fact that even secular Palestinian organisations adopted suicide bombings as being the most effective and disastrous for Israel.[24] Hamas and other organisations view the campaign's greatest achievement as not just the killing of so many Israelis but the decline of Israel's economy, the destruction of its tourist industry, and the demoralisation of its people.

The second Intifada revealed and deepened the contradictions between the two sides. Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and anarchy from the Palestinian side and the growing violence with military response and security fence from the Israeli side.[25] These factors destroyed the prospects for the normalisation in the near future.

Since 2000 Israel has been unilaterally dealing with the conflict because no moderate Palestinian partnership exists on the other side. Suicide bombings mean that once again the Palestinians fail to build their state. For Israel this suicide strategy also has a negative impact on the psychological condition of society, economy, the political sys-

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[23]   Middle East Resource Database (MERED); http:/www.mered.org/topic.asp; in the first days of the second Intifada the Palestinian Authority leadership released substantial numbers of prisoners known to have planned or have been involved in attacks against Israeli targets in the past, including suicide bombings; A. Cordesman, *The Israeli-Palestinian War: Escalating to Nowhere. Changing Tactics and Methods of Conflict,* October 20, 20003, Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 9.

[24]   As noticed Matthew Levitt a senior fellow at The Washington Institute: "In an indication of the central role they now play in Israeli-Palestinian confrontations, secular Palestinians constituted the majority of wanted militias at the epicentre of the spring 2002 stand-offs at Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity and Arafat's Ramallah compound. These confrontations highlighted the resurgence of secular-nationalist terrorist intent on frustrating efforts to de-escalate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By all accounts, the secular Palestinian groups have abandoned the notion of peaceful reconciliation with Israel in favour of full-fledged alliances with radical Islamic groups and state sponsors of terror"; quotation to: M. Levitt, *Targeting Terror. U.S. Policy toward Middle Eastern Sponsors and Terrorist Organisations, Post-September 11*, Washington 2002, pp. 127–128.

[25]   Israel intend to build 640 km of the security fence. Construction started in 2002. Now the length of the fence is estimated on 200 km. The construction is supposed to be finished in 2005. In July, 2004 the International Court of Justice in Hague gave the verdict that the security fence is illegal; "Gazeta Wyborcza", 10–11 July, 2004.

tem and creates a rise in Jewish religious fundamentalism which is becoming the main threat to Israeli democracy.[26]

Al-Qaeda's Strategy of Suicide Terrorism

The September 11, 2001, suicide attack on the United States prepared by Osama bin Laden and his al-Qeada group reminded about the threats of terrorism on a global scale, islamic fundamentalism and questions about religious sources of violence and re-opened the problem of the probable clash between Islamic and Western civilisation.

The 9/11 attack decidedly changed the international policy of the U.S. and its main priorities. The war against terrorism was declared by the G. W. Bush administration and resulted in the wars In Afghanistan and Iraq. The first campaign had a wide interna-tional support. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan was treated as the main menace: in the form of terrorism, totalitarianism and huge drug selling. The second campaign against Iraq in 2003 had no legal basis and was started on false, unconfirmed accusa-tions of the possession of weapons of mass destruction. The war caused tensions be-tween the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations and undoubtedly undermined the counter-terrorism coalition.[27]

Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda, is a product of traditional Saudi Wahhabism,[28] enjoying riches and a privileged position until his radicalisation in the Afghan war. For Osama bin Laden, the war in Afghanistan and the triumph over a su-perpower was a watershed moment in Islamic solidarity. The mujahideen were intoxi-cated by the Muslim victory in Afghanistan. They believed that it could be replicated elsewhere – that the whole world was ripe for jihad."[29] Bin Laden does not mention the concepts of jahiliyya and individual jihad. He focused on jihad – as understood by the more traditionalist ulama – a defensive struggle against enemies who attack and occupy Muslim lands. It was not fundamentalist theories and reinterpretations that mobilised him, but the Soviet invasion of Muslim Afghanistan and the stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden's strategy is to open up a new front against the Ameri-cans and to give it a justification. The United States is accused of being the source of all the ills affecting the Muslim world, especially the U.S. support of Israel and of the cor-rupt dictatorships of the Middle East. Osama bin Laden initially focused on the Saudi regime and its subservience to American forces. Since then, his belligerence towards

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[26]   See more in: I. Shahak, N. Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, London 1999.

[27]   See more in: W. Shawcross, *Allies. The U.S., Britain, Europe and the War in Iraq*, London 2003.

[28]   The founder of the wahhabism Abd Al. Wahhab (1703–1792). The movement became the offi-cial ideology of Saudi Arabia. The movement is concentrating on Islamic fundamentals of faith and the necessity of establishing a strong state to propagate and defend the faith and Sharia J. S. Idris, *The Islamic Fundamentalism of the Wahhabi Movement*, 1995, http://www.jaafaridris.com/English/Bo-oks/Wahabism.htm.

[29]   B. Orbach, *Usama bin Ladin and Al.-Qa'ida: Origins and Doctrines*, "Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal", Vol. 5, No. 4, December 2001.

the United States has grown and his advocacy against the U.S. has become more promi-
nent. In his 1996 Declaration of War bin Laden showed a global list of wrongs committed
by the "Zionist-Crusaders alliance" against the Muslim people from Iraq to Palestine to
Chechnya to Bosnia.[30] The 1996 document clearly asserted the guilt of the United States
in regard to creating problems in the Arab world, but was more critical of the Saudi re-
gime for allowing such American influence. In contrast to previous declarations, the Feb-
ruary 23, 1998 fatwa and his ABC interview were more global in its meaning. Bin Laden
stated that any Muslim wishing the rewards of God must adhere to the order to "kill the
Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it."

   "To kill the Americans as Osama bin Laden wrote in his fatwa – and their allies, both
civil and military, is an individual duty for every Muslim who is able, in any country
where this is possible, until the al Aqsa Mosque and the Haram Mosque are freed from
their grip and until their armies, shattered and broken winged, depart from all the lands
of Islam."[31]

   The idea behind al-Qaeda was the establishment of a "base" which would bring to-
gether the different Islamist groups and co-ordinate their activities. However on the
begining al-Qaeda failed to attract the mainstream of the radical Islamist movement in
Arab countries. In contrary to al-Qaeda most Islamist groups took the view that revolu-
tionary Islamist action should be confined within each group's nation-state and that
they should not interfere in one another's territory beyond providing moral support.[32]
However al-Qaeda is an umbrella organisation with an estimated approximately 3000
to 5000 followers prior September 11 and is related with Islamic Jihad and Gamaa
Islamiya in Egypt, Harak ul.-Ansar in Pakistan and has contacs with the National Is-
lamic Front in the Sudan. Since the September 11 attacks, al-Qaeda's strength shrank
from 5000 members to a few hundred.

   For global Islamic terrorists defeating the U.S. means the defeat of the West, which
would lead to a shift in the international centre of gravity back to the Islamic World.[33]
They are deeply convinced that there is no chance of changing the situation of the Is-
lamic world unless the role of United States is singled out. The United States could

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[30] *Interview with Osama bin Ladin*, "Frontline", May 1998, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pa-
ges/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html; *Interview with Mujahid Usmah bin Ladin*, "Nida'ul
Islam", Oct./Nov. 1996, www.islam.org.au/articles/15.
   [31] Osama bin Laden stated: "We do not differentiate between those dressed in miliatary uniforms
and civilians. They are all targets. Any American who pays taxes to his government is our target be-
cause he is helping the American war machine against the Muslim nation;" quotation see in: J. Miller,
Interview with Osama bin Ladin, "Frontline", May 1998, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontli-
ne/shows/binladen/who/miller.html; *Interview with Osama bin Ladin*, "Frontline", May 1998,
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html.
   [32] M. Azzam, *Al-Qaeda: the misunderstood Wahhabi connection and the ideology of violence*,
February 2003, http://www.riia.org/pdf/research/mep/Azzaml.pdf.
   [33] R. Paz, *Global Jihad and the United States: interpretation of the new World order of Osama bin
Ladin*, "The Project for the Research of Islamist Movements" (PRISM), Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2003,
p. 6.

not be defeated by an army or by any traditional military confrontation, except the global jihad terrorism and suicide bombings.[34]

The group's aim is to take Islamists from around the world involved in local revolts and to direct them into an international battle seeking to create a single Islamist state.

Al-Qaeda's status as a non-state-sponsored terrorist organisation (with so called no return address) creates both operational difficulties in the areas of financial and tactical operations and advantages in their choice of targets and missions. Without direct state aid, the group raises money through two main sources: (1) Osama bin Laden's own money (he has access to roughly $300 million); (2) donations from mosques, schools and charities.[35]

The group's lack of a return address causes a lot of problems for the anti-terrosist campaign. Despite all the efforts and resources applied to the U.S.-led war on terrorism, the terrorist threat has escalated several-fold since September 11, 2001. Although the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was destroyed and Saddam Hussein overthrown in Iraq, the war on terrorism seems to be the wrong way of dimishing the terrorist threat. Al-Qaeda has demonstrated in Saudi Arabia, Spain, Bali, Iraq and Turkey its ability to co-ordinate operations despite the loss of its traditional sanctuary, the death or capture of leaders and members, the seizure of resources and the disruption to the network.[36] **This drastic increase in the terrorist threat has been a result of al-Qaeda's transformation from a group into movement.**

Al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups found in Iraq a new base. Despite the counterterrorism strategies and the war on terrorism adopted by U.S., 2003 witnessed more suicide attacks (98) than any year in contemporary history. For example in Iraq from February 1 to March 2, 10 suicide bombers killed more than 400 people – a greater number than in any single country for any 31-day period since the September 11 attacks.[37] The combination of anti-Americanism, and the internal struggle between Islamic and secular groups took its toll. Iraq since March 2003 has experienced an alarming rise in terrorist activity, including suicide bombings. The U.S. invasion of Iraq increased the world-wide threat of terrorism. Muslims are angry about the invasion and post-invasion developments. This animosity towards the U.S. and Europe makes it easier for terrorist and extremist groups to continue to generate recruits and support for their ideology and the al-Qaeda movement.[38]

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[34] R. Paz, *Global Jihad and the United States; Interpretation of the New World order of Usama bin Ladin*, (PRISM Series of Global Jihad, No. 1, March 2003).

[35] See more in: B. Orbach, *Usama bin Ladin*..., op. cit., p. 14.

[36] During the past two-and-a-half years, law enforcement authorities world-wide have detected, disrupted, or deterred more then 100 terrorist attacks in the planning, preparation, and execution phases. In the United States alone, the government has disrupted more than 40 attacks; R. Guna-ratna, *The Post-Madrid Face of Al-Qaeda*, "The Washington Quarterly", Summer 2004; http://www.twq.com/onsummer/docs/04summer_gunarantana.pdf.

[37] S. Atran, *Mishandling*..., op. cit., p. 72.

[38] Al-Qaeda's just before he was killed by Saudi security forces stated that the establishment of democracy in Iraq would be death knell for Islam. According to him and other Islamic fundamenta-

The most serious terrorist attacks in Iraq in 2003:[39]
– **August 7:** A car bomb explodes outside the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad, killing atleast 14 people and wounding dozens; all the dead were Iraqis;
– **August 19:** A truck bomb explodes outside U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, killing 24 people, including the head of the U.N. mission, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Over 100 were injured. The dead also include the Iraq co-ordinator for the U.N. children's fund, UNICEF, and several World Bank staff members;
– **September 10:** A suicide car bomb explodes outside coalition intelligence offices in Irbil. Three die; 41 are injured;
– **October 9:** A suicide bomber rams his car into a police station in Baghdad, killing nine. Two U.S. soldiers die and four are injured in an ambush in Baghdad;
– **October 12:** A suicide car bombing near the Baghdad Hotel kills eight and wounds 32;
– **October 14:** A suicide car bomb explodes outside the Turkish embassy in Baghdad, killing one Iraqi and wounding at least 13. In an apparent change of strategy, insurgents are targeting supporters of the Coalition rather than U.S. troops;
– **October 27:** Four co-ordinated suicide attacks in Baghdad kill 43 and wound more than 200. The targets are the headquarters of the Red Crescent (Islamic Red Cross) and three police stations. It's the bloodiest day since the fall of Hussein's regime;
– **November 12:** A car bomb outside an Italian military police station in Nassiriya kills 18 Italian officers and at least eight Iraqis;
– **November 21:** A suicide bombing outside the PUK office in Kirkuk kills four;
– **December 27:** Guerrillas attack government buildings and foreign military bases in Karbala with suicide car bombs, mortars and guns. 19 Iraqis die.

In Europe the day of grimness was the March 11, 2004 in Spain; the attacks show that not only Iraq, Turkey or the U.S. are the targets of terrorism.

Rohan Gunaratna, a head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies in Singapore demonstrated the differences between the U.S. and Europe in counter-terrorist strategies: "Prior to September 11, 2001, the Federal Bureau of Investigation waited for a lead to start investigation. Highly trained terrorist operatives left no leads or traces. After September 11 it became a matter of survival to target cells at home proactively and strike them overseas pre-emptively. One way of understanding this shift is to think of it as a shift from fishing to hunting. When fishing, a fisherman waits until a fish attacks the bait, a hunter, conversely, requires initiative and creativity to target its prey proactively. Even after the September 11 attacks, however, European countries continued to behave like fishermen."[40]

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lists, democracy is man-made law, and Muslims should only respects Islamic law, or God's law; J. Pollack, *Anti-Americanism in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*, "MERIA Journal", Vol. 7, No. 4, December 2003, http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue4/jv7n4a3.html.
[39] S. Lanier, *Low Intesity Conflict and Nation Building in Iraq*, http://www.csis.org/features/iraq_lowintesity.pdf.
[40] R. Gunaratna, *The Post-Madrid...*, op. cit., pp. 94–95.

Al-Qaeda is taking advantage of freedoms enshrined in the liberal democracies in the Europe, such as the freedom of movement, association, and dissent. Al-Qaeda and its associated groups have slowly and steadily built a robust network of members, collaborators, supporters, and sympathisers in Europe.

The countries of Europe as the example of Spain shows, have a fragile public opinion: after the attack the society refused to support the government instead of consolidating round the leader as in the U.S. The terror and frustration which appeared after the March 11 attacks was evidence that al-Qaeda can seriously change the political situation and weaken the counter-terrorism coalition.

Another success of the group is the decrease in the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia. This country is on the edge of an Islamic revolution. Nearly all American troops were removed to Qatar.

Al-Qaeda's transformation into a movement and the dispersal of the central base in Afghanistan into smaller organisations and individuals across the world is the new tendency in the development of this organisation. Osama bin Laden and others treat jihad as an endless struggle as the primary and even only goal.

The terrorism and suicide bombings have meant that al-Qaeda has become very well-known in the world. This pattern of activity leads to a gloomy world of violence. In spite of some tacticals victories in the war against the West, the results are devastating not for the U.S. or Europe but for the Muslim World. As Barry Rubin observed: "Terrorism is not the weapon of the poor or oppressed, but a carefully thought out revolutionary tactic. The radical Islamists like al-Qaeda and others believed that terrorists bombings and assassinations would delegitimize and demoralise their enemies. Islamists cannot solve the problems of the Arab world but they can make the problems of the Arab world unsolvable. They cannot bring victory to the Arab world over the West or Israel, but they can block good relations and peace. They cannot replace the Western model of development, but they can discredit it."[41]

Conclusions

The past three years contained more suicide attacks than the last quarter century. Most of them were religiously motivated. For Hamas and al-Qaeda, Islam was an inexhaustible source for their explanation of suicide bombings. Their religious interpretation created the foundations not only for terrorism but also totalitarianism.

"Even with many – as Scott Atran pointed out – top al-Qaeda leaders now dead or in custody, the transitional jihadist fraternity is transforming into a hydra-headed network more difficult to fight than before."[42]

Al-Qaeda and Hamas are symbols of the strategy of annihilation with utopian aims. Both groups have no alternative program beyond endless jihad. The transformation of

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[41] Quotation: B. Rubin, *The Tragedy*..., op. cit.
[42] Quotation: S. Atran, *Mishandling*..., op. cit., p. 67.

Hamas into a moderate organisation would change the long-term conflict with Israel. Negotiation instead of suicide bombings would positively influence the prospects for a Palestinian state. Hamas is not a ready to take such decisions yet.

Hamas on the contrary to al-Qaeda is more local in its scope and enjoys popularity in the West Bank and Gaza particularly through its social and charitable activities and this is the main strength of the organisation. The global scope of bin Laden's organisation is both its strength and weakness. Its strength because it can attract tens of millions of Muslims, and its weakness because apart from the global jihad it has no concrete programme for the solution of the poor situation of the Arab world.

The U.S. led global war needs new dimensions and activity. The events which have occurred since September 11 have demonstrated that not only superior military capabilities can stop terrorism and suicide bombings but equally the so-called "soft power" alternatives. such as: an elected government, freedom of expression, educational opportunity, and economic choice can.[43]

The worst scenario, albeit somewhat unlikely, is that the terrorism of these groups might lead to a global confrontation between Muslims and the West.

The Muslim world today is torn by a deep internal conflict over the essence and purpose of Islamic society. The outcome of this internal conflict has dictated, and continues to dictate, the nature of the ties between Muslim civilisation and Western and other civilisations.

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[43] About "soft power" see more in the newest book of J. S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York 2004.