

Global Islamism—Understanding and Strategy

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The Sources of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct

In his introduction to *Milestones Along the Way*, or *Milestones*, as it is best known, Egyptian schoolteacher-turned-philosopher Sayyid Qutb described the failure of non-Muslim, modern ideologies, and reminded the Muslim community, or *umma*, of Islam's superiority:

Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head—this being just a symptom and not the real disease—but because humanity is devoid of those vital values which are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress. Even the Western world realizes that Western civilization is unable to present any healthy values for the guidance of mankind. It knows that it does not possess anything which will satisfy its own conscience and justify its existence. ...

It is essential for mankind to have new leadership!

The leadership of mankind by Western man is now on the decline, not because Western culture has become poor materially or because its economic and military power has become weak. The period of the Western system has come to an end primarily because it is deprived of those life-giving values which enabled it to be the leader of mankind. ... Islam is the only System which possesses these values and this way of life.

All nationalistic and chauvinistic ideologies which have appeared in modern times, and all the movements and theories derived from them, have also lost their vitality. In short, all man-made individual or collective theories have proved to be failures.¹

Qutb then called Muslims to revolution to restore Islam as “the leader of mankind”:

At this crucial and bewildering juncture, the turn of Islam and the Muslim community has arrived—the turn of Islam. ... Thus the turn of the Muslim community has come to fulfill the task for mankind which God has enjoined upon it.

“You are the best community raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God.” (3:110) ...

It is the name of a group of people whose manners, ideas and concepts, rules and regulations, values and criteria, are all derived from the Islamic source. The Muslim community with these characteristics vanished at the moment the laws of God be-

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¹ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, Introduction; full electronic text in English available at www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/milestones/hold/index_2.asp.

came suspended on earth. If Islam is again to play the role of the leader of mankind, then it is necessary that the Muslim community be restored to its original form.²

Drawing from the puritanical, traditionalist *Salafiyya* ideology of the Wahhabis, Deobandis, Tablighi, and especially that of Pakistani Mawlana Abul A'la Mawdudi and Egyptian Hassan al-Banna of his own Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb articulated a form of Salafi existentialism that made the case for taking the leap of faith and acting out the most extreme interpretation of the Salafi worldview in the political realm, on the global stage. This *Qutbism*, or “global Islamism,” as we shall also call it, is distinct in many ways from traditional Islam, and yet it is seductively appealing at all levels of the human psyche and to Muslims everywhere. This was Qutb’s “genius.”

The traditionalist, Salafi mind had always honored the sacred text, the Koran, and strictly imitated the life of its Messenger, Muhammad, especially when seeking God’s favor during trying times. “Islam is the solution,” was a common view, but how to implement the Islamic solution and how broadly to cast its revolution is what distinguishes the traditionalist from the extremist. Qutb’s ideology was extremist from the start. It began with this honor-restoring metanarrative:

1. *What went wrong?* Muslims, and especially Arabs, know all too well that something is wrong. Qutb, who traveled to America and lived there for two years in the 1950s, returned to Egypt only to be humiliated, seeing all around him what one American journalist saw: “An apathetic public, economic mismanagement and a wildly out-of-control birthrate have become the cancers of Cairo, sapping its strength and leaving its dazed inhabitants the victims of what is known in Egypt as the IBM syndrome—*inshallah* (if God is willing), *bokra* (tomorrow), and *malesh* (never mind). It doesn’t matter what gets done or how it’s done. If not today, then tomorrow. God decides anyway, so why worry?”³ Qutb’s explanation for this humiliation is seductive:

- The *umma*, or community of Muslims, abandoned its divinely ordained rise and began its great decline when it abandoned its stewardship of Islam as the only true and complete way of life, suspended Islamic law, or *sharia*, and corrupted itself with Western ways.
- The *umma* thus recreated the time of ignorance and barbarism, or *jahiliyya*, that existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. This “new jahiliyya,” as he called it, incurred God’s judgment on the so-called “Muslims,” who are in reality heretics and apostates.

2. *Islam is the solution!* To restore God’s blessing on the *umma* and reestablish Islam in its most honored place as the leader of mankind, Muslims must restore Islam “to its original form;” they must revolt against this “new” *jahiliyya*, following the pattern Muhammad did against the “old” *jahiliyya*:

² Ibid.

³ David Lamb, *The Arabs: Journeys Beyond the Mirage* (New York: Random House, 1987), excerpt published in www.aliciapatterson.org/APF1001/Lamb/Lamb.rtf.

- Unite the *umma* spiritually, ideologically, culturally, socially, and politically through the call to Islam as it was preached in “its original form,” as Muhammad and his companions—the *salaf*, or “good ancestors”—would have known and preached it, without any manmade accretions and subsequent “explanations” and “solutions.” This mandates a revival of the dormant *Salafiyya* reform movements that began earlier in Egypt and Arabia.
- Restore the totalitarian system of Islamic law, or *sharia*, under the leadership of a single divinely guided religious authority, or caliph.
- Through violent struggle, or jihad, destroy the enemies of Islam that created and sustain the “new *jahiliyya*.”⁴ These include both the internal, near enemy (apostate Muslims, apostate regimes, and their new *jahiliyya* systems of thought), and the external, far enemy (infidel, non-Muslim civilizations and the secular system of government they have imposed on Muslims).

Looking through Qutb’s lens, today Islam’s honor has reached its nadir, and its humiliation is at its zenith. Driven by the pressures of relative and absolute deprivation, and a sense of utter cultural humiliation, Muslims today are increasingly prone to see the world through the Salafi-jihad-*sharia*-caliphate revolutionary lens that Qutb so clearly focused on his Islamic utopia. Today’s global civilization—which in many ways was born only in 1989, and is embodied and advanced by radically secular Europe and the radically secular entertainment, media, and materialistic business culture of America—has taken the new *jahiliyya* to even newer lows, further impoverishing Muslims and corrupting Muslim youth, and further advancing the very infidel societies that usurp Islam’s rightful place at the head of the global order.

Global Islamism’s revolutionaries today embrace Qutb’s extreme *Salafiyya-jihadiyya*, meticulously following every word and deed of Muhammad in his successful post-*hijra*, “Medina phase”—the imperialist, offensive jihad phase of Islam. For example, Muhammad, in his farewell address in March 632, declared, “I was ordered to fight all men until they say, ‘There is no God but Allah.’” Shiite revolutionary Ayatollah Khomeini paraphrased these famous words: “We will export our revolution throughout the world ... until the calls ‘there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah’ are echoed all over the world.” And Sunni revolutionary Osama bin Laden mimicked: “I was ordered to fight the people until they say there is no god but Allah and his prophet Muhammad.”⁵

⁴ Chapter 4 of Qutb’s *Milestones*, “Jihad in the Cause of God,” is violent Islamism’s most persuasive “cumulative case” argument that *jihad* in Islam was meant to mean only one thing: offensive violent fighting or combat against non-Muslims to make Islam supreme over all the earth. Qutb makes the case that jihad was never intended to be understood as defensive or as an internal struggle. Those false, “narrow meanings” of *jihad*, he says, are ascribed to the term “by those who are under the pressure of circumstances and are defeated by the wily attacks of the orientalist, who distort the concept of Islamic Jihad.”

⁵ Cited in Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), Introduction.

And under this broad *Salafiyya-jihadiyya* rubric, the violent wing of global Islamism has advanced other innovations. This order “to fight all men,” reasoned Egyptian Mohammed Abdussalam Faraj in 1980, is the “neglected obligation,” and neglecting this order is the main reason for Allah’s judgment upon the whole nation of Islam, producing its almost universal decline. In his tract *The Neglected Duty*, Faraj—also a member of the Muslim Brotherhood—restated Qutb’s creed of a world in new *jahiliyya*, where Muslims are forced to submit to earthly idols, such as nationalism. “The idols of this world,” Faraj argues, “can only be made to disappear through the power of the sword.” He declares: “The infidels know that when Muslims realize what is truly expected of them in their religion, about fighting the infidels, it will mean the end of their amoral rule. Consequently they fight against Fundamentalism in every sphere and struggle to dislodge Jihad from its proper role in Islam.”⁶

But in the wake of the persecution in the early 1980s following the Muslim Brotherhood’s role in assassinating Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, the Islamist’s ideal to “fight all men” “through the power of the sword” fell to earth. They realized the utter unfeasibility and incoherence of trying to do so until the *umma* was stronger and more unified. Accordingly, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood moved to an interim “near-violent” strategic posture. The Brotherhood’s symbol is the book over crossed swords, indicating Koran-directed jihad. And today, the movement under Qutb’s inspiration is alive and advancing its interim, near-violent strategy of deception, or *taqiyya*, waiting for a time when Muslims are strong enough to use both near-violent and violent means, along the continuum of *da’wa* (preaching, warning) and jihad (combat). The top-secret version of this far more deceptive near-violent strategy of world conquest, called “The Project,” was drafted in a fourteen-page leaflet dated December 1982.⁷

The Brotherhood’s website today reveals their continued commitment to world conquest:

Soon after the biggest calamity happened in 1924 with the collapse of the “Khilafa,” and the declaration of war against all shapes of Islam in most of the Muslim countries, the Islamic “revival” entered into the movement phase in the middle east by establishing “Al-Ikhwan Al-Moslemoon” (Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt, 1928. Soon after that date, it began to have several branches outside Egypt. Al-Ikhwan, since that date, began to spread the principal Islamic idea: That Islam is “Creed and state, book and sword, and a way of life.” These principles were uncommon at that time even among many Muslim “scholars” who believed that Islam is restricted within the walls of the mosque. The Ikhwan, after a few years, were banned and tor-

⁶ Muhammad ‘Abdus Salam Faraj, *The Neglected Duty* (1980), 44. The first English edition of this book is currently printed and sold commercially by Maktabah al Ansaar in England. It can be ordered at www.maktabah.net/books/default.asp?Subcategory=&Start=10&Offset=10&alpha=all.

⁷ Based on the French text of “The Project” published in Sylvain Besson, *La conquête de l’Occident: Le projet secret des Islamistes* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2005), 193–205, “The Project” was translated into English by Scott Burgess and was first published in serial form by *The Daily Ablution* in December 2005; available at http://dailyablution.blogs.com/the_daily_ablution/2005/11/the_project_par_1.html.

tured in most of the Muslim countries. However, the “mother movement” kept growing and working.

Under this interim, near-violent framework, establishing the Islamic system that Qutb called for entails “preparing (most of) the society for accepting the Islamic laws,” which means plans for “spreading the Islamic culture, the possible media means, mosques, and *da’wa* (missionary) work in public organizations such as syndicates, parliaments, student unions.”⁸

And today the Brotherhood continues “growing and working.” Patiently, ghetto by ghetto, courtroom by courtroom, school by school, youth group by youth group, near-violent Islamists are advancing “the Project.” Well-funded and inspired by European taxes and a *zakat* (alms) coffer swollen by petro-dollars, they are imperceptibly transforming the face of Islam, creating a world of Qutb-reading youth that will not be able to live peaceably with anyone on earth... *especially other Muslims*.

In the late 1980s, in the heady days of impending victory in Afghanistan over the superpower Soviet Union, the global jihadist wing of Islamism was reborn, solidifying the violent wing’s shift in emphasis from the near enemy to the far enemy, and from defensive jihad to offensive jihad. The leading ideologue of this shift was the Palestinian al-Azharite sheikh Abdallah Azzam. Azzam, who taught Osama bin Laden while a professor of Islamic jurisprudence in Saudi Arabia, was also an earlier member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and Egypt. In 1987, Sheikh Azzam wrote *Join the Caravan*, in which he advanced Qutb’s perspective that the *umma* was extinct and that offensive jihad is the lifeblood of Islam. To make his case, Azzam drew upon Islamic jurisprudence and historic analogy dating back 1300 years.⁹ A year later, in 1988, Azzam published in his *al-Jihad* monthly periodical an article entitled “Al-Qa’idah al-Sulbah,” or “The Solid Base,” and established Al Qaeda as the vanguard for this offensive jihad movement.¹⁰

The offensive jihad movement, in which Al Qaeda was to serve as the leading edge, received another boost after the first Gulf War in the early 1990s from the Saudi opposition movement, which sought to further Islamize Saudi society in response to a perceived Western “cultural attack” on the Muslim world.¹¹ After the mysterious death of Azzam, the offensive, global jihad movement kept rising through 1996 and 1998 declarations of war against the far enemy by Al Qaeda’s new leader, a Saudi-born hero of the war in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden.

Qutb’s revolution by offensive jihad against Western civilization again fell to earth as the world responded to Al Qaeda’s plane operation on 11 September 2001, or “9/11,” as it has become known. The U.S. quickly moved and defeated Al Qaeda’s Af-

⁸ Muslim Brotherhood Movement Homepage, at www.ummah.net/ikhwan/ (accessed 19 January 2007).

⁹ Abdallah Azzam, *Join the Caravan* (1987); available in English at www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_caravan_3_part1.htm.

¹⁰ Abdallah Azzam, “Al-Qa’idah al-Sulbah,” *al-Jihad*, No. 41 (April 1988): 46.

¹¹ Uriya Shavit, “Al-Qaeda’s Saudi Origins; Islamist Ideology,” *Middle East Quarterly* 13:4 (Fall 2006); available at www.meforum.org/article/999.

ghani hosts, the Taliban, and then, with unprecedented international cooperation, destroyed Al Qaeda's hierarchichy and its support streams, and killed or captured nearly all of its leadership. Offensive jihad fell further from grace when the reborn Muslim Brotherhood—which up until 9/11 had been silently advancing their deceptive near-violent strategy without opposition—realized that their ignorant and self-serving cousins in Al Qaeda woke the slumbering giant; “the Project,” as they coded it, was only a generation away from lawfully conquering the lands of their former imperial masters, whose citizens were weakened by moral blindness and radical tolerance.¹²

With the old hierarchical, centrally-controlled Al Qaeda destroyed and, Qutb's acolyte Mustafa Setmariam Nasar advanced yet another new mutation. Under the pseudonym Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Nasar's massive 1600-page *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* articulated a bold and innovative strategy of “leaderless jihad,” designed to elude the global reach of the no-longer-sleeping giant's growing “pursue” capabilities.¹³ Nasar and other global Islamist strategists believe that such a dispersed, cell-based, grass roots resistance movement, or *muqawama*, is the only strategy possible under current conditions. This resistance will economically weaken Western civilization to the point where it can no longer threaten the revolution's goals of creating an Islamic sharia state, and then topple other nearby states in the quest for an ideologically, politically, and geographically united *umma* that, unshackled, could then rise to its rightful place.

After 9/11, the violent wing of global Islamism was also watching its foot soldiers turn the *umma*'s hearts away, pushing them toward the near-violent wing. Even the violent Islamist ideologue Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi warned Iraqi insurgency leader Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi: “Beware of separating jihad from its concept that builds the nation and enhances its power. Do not focus on the means and forget about the end and do not separate from knowledgeable people or proponents of *da'wa*.” Al-Maqdisi repeatedly distinguished between the “mujahideen” and “the proponents of *da'wa*” as two humps on the same camel.¹⁴

Up until Nasar's “call to global Islamic resistance,” there were three active “resistances” in the Arab world: the Palestinian movement, under Hamas; the Lebanese resistance, under Hezbollah; and the Iraqi insurgency, under various Sunnis fighting under the banner of Al Qaeda. Nasar ingeniously created a fourth resistance by taking this concept of *muqawama* global implementing it at the grassroots level around the world. This grassroots concept of global resistance has proved so appealing that near-violent Muslims are joining the caravan. While a quick reading of “resistance” websites reveals that “resistance” and “jihad” are synonyms, a new fifth and global resistance is

¹² See Douglas Farah, “Splits Between Muslim Brotherhood and ‘Offensive Jihadists’ Brewing in Europe,” International Assessment and Strategy Center (16 May 2006); available at www.strategycenter.net/research/pubID.108/pub_detail.asp.

¹³ Abu Mu'sab al-Suri, *Call to a Global Islamic Resistance* (translated by official sources, July 2006).

¹⁴ Abu-Muhammad al-Maqdisi (July 2004), cited by Fu'ad Husayn, “Al-Zarqawi... The Second Generation of Al-Qa'ida,” *Al-Quds al-Arabi* (London) (20 May 2005), 17.

emerging—a global solidarity among the *umma* against everything Western, and especially against the United States.

The greater religious concept of the middle way, or *wasatiyya*—as well as common sense and conscience—have deterred the vast majority of young Muslims from embracing the violent wing of the revolution. But when its murderous means are severed from its utopian ends, the remaining “near-violent,” or “cultural jihad” part of resistance, gives the Qutbian revolution a new respectability—a middle way all its own, with a place for everyone, offering a morally superior means to struggle while retaining the legitimacy of and solidarity with the jihadis.

Thus, the popularity of this new fifth and global *muqawama* in all its forms—non-violent, near-violent, and violent—creates freedom of movement and respectability for the fourth resistance of the violent wing. Until 2006, the violent wing’s leading figurehead and existential actor, Osama bin Laden, enjoyed a higher favorability rating than any other historical figure save Muhammad in the Muslim world. Hezbollah’s Sheikh Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah now holds that position, until the fifth *muqawama* finds yet another great resistor-of-all-things-Western to succeed him.

But where bin Laden and Nasrallah are now Islam’s most noble *doers*, Qutb remains its most lauded *thinker*—few Muslim youth in connected neighborhoods fail to revere him; fewer still do not know of him. Under the advancement of the near-violent wing’s strategy, Qutb’s violent revolutionary works are everywhere, prominently displayed on the pages of average Islamic Websites, and many youth organizations and mosques, from Dallas to Melbourne, systematically introduce him to young, impressionable minds (see the website cited in fn. 1 for a typical example).

These global resistances—both violent and near-violent—and support for Qutb are strongest and most radical where freedom and democracy reign in Europe, proving that the more radical the secularism in a society, the more radical the reaction. Sheikh Musa Admani, an adviser on Muslim affairs to the U.K.’s higher education minister and a chaplain at London Metropolitan University, runs a charity that helps to rehabilitate young Muslims caught in the *muqawama*’s web. “We are dealing with people filled with hatred,” said Admani in November 2006. “It’s hatred for the white man and the West in particular, because they have read the works of Qutb and Maududi who set Muslims apart from everyone else.”¹⁵

If all this philosopher of Islamist terror did was set Muslims apart from other Muslims and non-Muslims, then there would be no ongoing revolution, and its current phase of near-violent and violent global resistance would evaporate like rain in a desert *wadi*. But Qutb and these other Islamist revolutionaries have laid the ideological foundation to advance the darkest possible face of Islam. Explaining the injustice in society, and divining the darkness in our nature, they created the ideological basis for resistance against everything that is not represented in the section of the Koran that deals with the period between Muhammad’s *hijra*, or flight from Mecca to Medina, and his

¹⁵ Abul Taher and Dipesh Gadhre, “Islamists Infiltrate Four Universities,” *The Sunday Times* (London) (12 November 2006); available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-2449930,00.html>.

death eleven years later. Their manifesto, predictably—legalistically, literally, and even ritualistically followed—is everything Muhammad said and did during that period of Arab barbarism in which he struggled to establish Islam.

Thus, global Islamism and its newfound respectability in resistance, or *muqawama*—a significant minority movement within Islam’s broad continuum—is an idea whose time has come. The revolution inspired by Qutb is finally in its first phase of both near-violent and violent resistance, working everywhere at once—by all lawful and all unlawful means—to weaken the West and its perceived quisling “apostate” regimes in the Muslim world, and to unify and incite the *umma* through *Salafiyya* and *sharia*. And Qutb’s followers are hopeful for the first time in decades; they have reached the first of the “milestones along the way” to their utopia.

The Struggle’s Nature

Successful strategy must ultimately address both these aforementioned ideological sources of Islamism’s revolutionary conduct, as well as aspects of the more subtle nature of the revolution and our struggle against it. Here are only three aspects of the struggle’s nature that should inform our strategy.

A Clash of Civilizations, and a Clash between Civilization and Barbarism

The struggle, in Samuel P. Huntington’s terms, is a “clash of civilizations”¹⁶ along the “great historic fault lines” of the more secular and liberal West and the more sacred and traditional Islam. The world order advanced by Western civilization is secular—a culture of freedom and change centered on human reason and scientific materialism. In Islamic civilization, these concepts run a distant second to the more fundamental duty of justice and imitating the Messenger, centered on stewardship of divine revelation. To simplify greatly, where the West creates and changes, Islam preserves and remains the same.

Were the two husband and wife, then they would be complements, each bringing to a more perfect union some strength the other lacked. But Western culture judges the *traditional* Islamic civilization—much of which is in stasis—as unfit for survival in the ever-changing world. Even Muslims view the world through the West’s more pragmatic, materialistic lens and ask, “What went wrong?” And *traditional* Islamic civilization—the civilization known by the vast bulk of the Muslim world—judges the West as ever-changing and adrift in a world that God intended to remain the same. And we in the West often view the world we have created through this more rooted lens and join them in heaping blame upon ourselves, joining with more traditional peoples in longing for the smaller village and a larger connectedness.

To exaggerate somewhat and risk oversimplifying again, where the West has its identity in materialism, rugged individualism, and freedom; the traditional Muslim

¹⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72:3 (Summer 1993), available at www.foreignaffairs.org/19930601faessay51188/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations.html.

world, on the other hand, draws meaning from spiritual traditions, the tribe, or community, and justice, or honor. So, in as many ways as we are perfect complements, we are also polar opposites—the kind of opposites that *do not* attract, but repel, like oil and water. Sadly, Qutb’s judgment of the West—that it does not “possess anything which will satisfy its own conscience and justify its existence”—looks only at the differences and cannot see the more perfect union possible in a global civilization where Islam and the West bring to each other what each one so desperately needs. This is the struggle’s real nature—to at once contain Qutb’s metanarrative, and to create and appreciate this more perfect union in a global civilization.

And our struggle is also a clash between the spirit of this global civilization and the spirit of barbarism—the “old” *jahiliyya*. Qutb’s brand of global *Islamism* is Islam as the worst of human nature could possibly interpret it. Under the guise of self-righteous religious obedience, it transforms religion into a bullying chauvinism that tolerates no other view of the world. Through this lens, Islam cannot bring its better forms to marriage with the West to create the more perfect global union, for bullies do not join, they resist; they must stand alone in self-righteous resistance to everything other—whether good or evil—until only Self remains. This is pure idolatry—the barbarous essence of the “old” *jahiliyya*.

A Competition with Global Islamism’s Enduring Appeal

A second essential aspect of this struggle is that of competition against the enduring appeal of Qutb’s metanarrative. Part of this enduring appeal is guaranteed by uncontrollable megatrends. The explosive arrival of restive Muslim youth over the next generation will in all likelihood coincide with an implosive departure of wealth and honor from the Muslim world, caused by depletion of oil and gas resources and the worsening education and investment gap resulting from the Salafi and global resistance movements. This conjunction will widen the already broad appeal of parts of Qutb’s metanarrative to this large impoverished youth population, which will find itself without normal political and economic outlets for its aspirations, thus adding fuel to the extremism and fighting spirit already inherent in young demographic groups.

Beyond this conjunction of external megatrends, global *Islamism’s* enduring appeal is felt at every level of human behavior—spiritual, ideological, cultural, psychological, emotional, and even physical.

Spiritual. Jihad (physical struggle in the cause of God), *shahada* (martyrdom), and *sharia* (strict obedience to God’s requirements) are powerful spiritual symbols. In Islam, the existential “leap of faith,” as embodied in jihad and shahada, are the most powerful expressions of worship possible. They add the deepest sense of spirituality that renders the other five more mechanical pillars of the faith pallid in comparison. In Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, they represent the “self-actualization” level within Islam. Most Muslims—obeying their conscience and rational mind—spurn the violent “lesser jihad” and struggle in the non-violent “greater jihad” against the greater enemy within each of us. Yet self-sacrifice is the most powerful religious concept, and

as the last part of the Muslim Brotherhood's creed describes, many Muslims hope to die a martyr, or *shahid*.¹⁷ To many, the prospect of fighting in a legitimate jihad, or dying as a *shahid* in jihad provides their only real assurance of salvation in an increasingly promiscuous new world order where sin is all too near, especially among those recent converts in and immigrants to radically secular Europe.¹⁸

Strict, sacrificial obedience to God's often-difficult commandments is the other major existential leap in Islam. Ironically, the appeal of the fundamentalist view of *sharia* to the religious mind is *not* because it is pleasant—a duty whose burden is easy and yoke is light. Instead, its attractive spiritual power is in the harsh puritanical demands that it makes of us; it draws us because of its sheer *otherness*—its radical counterbalance to the materialistic and often radically secular surrounding culture. And in a culture that places a premium on stewardship of what God gave, *sharia* is a way both to honor God and to regain our honor before him. To the religious mind, the fact that God is obliged to act upon these existential leaps of faith is powerful; it is electrifying to know that the created can, through extreme obedience and self-sacrifice, cause the Creator to create again, and miraculously create new facts on the ground.

Ideological. As global Islamism's trinity of spiritual symbols—jihad, shahada and sharia—provide an intensely personal element of its enduring appeal, the logical system of ideas outlined by Qutb and the other ideologues provide a second, more social aspect. Islamism's ideology appears both *logically* and *legally* unassailable. That Qutb's ideology is legally unassailable is understood when viewing the strong and high walls framed by Islam's most secure pillars of legal reasoning and analysis, such as Malik's *Al-Muwatta*, al-Shafi'i's *Risala*, Ibn Saybani's *Siyar*, Ibn Kathir's *Tafsir*, Ibn-Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, al-Misri's *'Umdat al-Salik*, and Yusuf Ali's *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*. History is replete with peaceful martyrs who attempted bold reform in Islam, only to fail because they ignored Islam's "fixed" doctrines of Islamic law established by these authorities, and disregarded the obstacles to meaningful reform presented by the doctrines on *ijma* (scholarly consensus), *naskh* (the concept of abrogation), and *bid'a* (innovation).¹⁹ From the legal standpoint, the Islamists operating in the post-hijra, Medina mentality stand on firm ground for their revolution and their means to achieve it (except for the mass murder of women and children). The only ideological

¹⁷ Muslim Brotherhood Movement Homepage, at www.ummah.net/ikhwan/ (accessed 19 January 2007).

¹⁸ For example, in his *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, "Abu Mus'ab al Suri" wrote that, "In the Hadith that was told by Ahmed and Al-Turmuzi quoting Al-Miqdam Bin Mu'ad: God promised the martyr seven characteristics, with the first sum of his blood he will be forgiven, he will see his seat in paradise, he will be wearing the suit of faith, he will be wed to seventy two wives ... is saved from suffering in the tomb, he will be secured from the great fear ... and will be able to secure salvation for seventy of his relatives (The Right Collection 5058) (*Call*, 1466).

¹⁹ For example, see George Packer, "The Moderate Martyr: A Radically Peaceful Version of Islam," *The New Yorker* (11 September 2006); available at http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/060911fa_fact1.

strategies against global Islamism left to moderates are the philosophical, logical, and moral arguments—strategies of the *kufir*, or apostates.

That violent Islamism is legally unassailable is one of the reasons for the “silence” among Muslims. Those who in their *greater jihad* are bold enough to risk their lives and rescue their faith are bullied with the Islamist strategy of *takfir*—they are declared to be apostates and, in effect, are excommunicated. To silence Muslims who want to join globalized civilization, live as equals in Western states, embrace the governance principles of political secularism, democracy, and parliamentary law, or even just abide by international law, Islamists simply invoke this *aya* from the Koran: “They who do not rule by that which God has revealed are the unbelievers” (5:44).

Muslims know that Islamism departs from the middle way, or *wasatiyya*, but it is hard to get a mass counter-movement going when the Islamists have so effectively positioned themselves firmly within the legal redoubt as the only ones remaining who are still “judging by that which God has revealed.”

Cultural. Through persistent bullying over the course of decades, global Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood have taken near-complete ownership of most of the key cultural institutions within Islam—schools, seminaries, mosques, youth and political organizations, charities, and the media—and use them to advance beliefs and conspiracy theories that align with Qutb’s metanarrative, and all for the purpose of uniting the *umma* under the narrowest Salafi interpretation of Islam. Today, far too many young Muslims are taught that the West’s presence in their world and the Western-led new global civilization is not for interdependent partnership but rather designed to steal their God-given resources. Young Muslims are taught that the Western-led world order—with its high-tech materialism, integrated supply chains, financial networks and Internet—is designed from the ground up to serve non-Muslim societies that create and change, not Islamic ones that preserve and stay the same. Under this metanarrative, Israel is the West’s tool to further weaken the Muslim world through humiliation and intimidation. Advancing this broad “us vs. them” metanarrative for decades the near-violent Qutbites have created a culture that at the very least passively supports the revolution.

Psychological. Qutb’s metanarrative is a sump for every imaginable psychological weakness within human nature, guaranteeing its appeal to the weak and ignoble. Qutbism has all the psychological allure of delivering to the tribal mentality the elimination of humiliation from relative deprivation, the restoration of their lost territory and honor, and the satisfaction of their need for revenge. It appeals to our darker natural tendencies to stereotype, scapegoat, and dichotomize, projecting its soul onto the “other.” It speaks to former chosen glories and chosen traumas as if unjustly victimized for centuries. And it contains ample conspiracies to explain the parts that might bring dishonor home.

Emotional. The revolution’s appeal is greatest at the emotional level, and here the Islamists give the greatest attention. Keeping the *umma* on the brink of rage amplifies everything, and creates the fifth strand in Islamism’s appeal to both hearts and minds.

Islamists incite rage—or, in the words of one influential Saudi preacher, “general and peaceful Islamic anger”²⁰—at every opportunity, amplifying the otherwise innocuous actions of a single person among six billion to make them symbols of one civilization humiliating another. Islamists have always particularly relied upon the Palestinians, finding them perfect sacrificial lambs, keeping them in perpetual shambles as the best inciter of humiliation-based rage.

Physical. Finally, at the most basic level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the global revolutionaries often work to meet the most basic physical and security needs of impoverished and disenfranchised Muslims. By controlling the institutions that hold the purse strings of global *zakat*, they can do what disenfranchised moderates cannot and what corrupt petro-authoritarian governments will not.

A revolution whose nature generates this kind of appeal in a world with convergences of rising youth population and falling standards of living promises to be enduring. And any strategy deployed against it must compete with its appeal on each of these levels.

A Struggle for Islam’s Future and Soul

A third aspect of the struggle’s nature too often overlooked in the West is Islamism’s dual threat to Muslims and Islam. Yet Islamism’s strategy, culture, and ideology have all but eliminated its viability as a threat to the West.

First, Islamism’s strategy fails. Hitler’s utopian dreams failed because, on the balance, he built defense (resistance) and the Allies built offense. Islamism’s revolutionary utopians will likewise fail because their resistance is also merely a defensive strategy. Its lack of an offensive, futuristic, world-changing component leaves it vulnerable to a rescripted Western leadership that resolves to lead—to provide better ideas and new facts on the ground; to create real hope for the swelling ranks of Islam’s youth.

Second, Islamism as a culture also fails. Patterning Qutb’s mind, theirs is a culture of hatred and death, not love and life. Even if they do succeed in creating an *Arab* caliphate—for no others would be allowed—Islamism’s utopian, resistance-minded, dichotomizing culture is fundamentally incapable of creating unity and then materially, technologically, or militarily dominating the West. Thinking they could marry both light and darkness, oil and water, this inconsistent, duplicitous dream palace of the Islamists has shattered the hopes of millions now living in the nightmare slums that even the most casual embrace of Qutb’s metanarrative produces. Like any disease, the symptoms will only get worse.

Third, Qutb’s Islamism fails as a religion; the notion that Islamism could morally topple traditional Islam and the other world’s major religions ignores the essence of truth in religion, which is in love and the middle way, or *wasatiyya*. Stripped of its eloquent literary garb and utopianism, Islamism is entirely about personal honor in a tribal culture, not about God’s truth in the grand universe. Qutb’s angry followers cannot understand a religion where one’s relationship with God is rational and personal and

²⁰ “Salman Al-Awda Calls for Islamic Anger against the Pope of the Vatican,” Tajdeed.org.uk, 16 September 2006, www.tajdeed.org.uk/forums/showthread.php?threadid=45451.

characterized by love of the world's people; the only thing Islamist ideology understands is mechanical obedience through outward structure and totalitarian culture and hatred of everything and everyone other. This concept of religion is intuitively wrong, and antithetical to both human and divine natures.

So, aside from the resistance's disastrous impact on the souls and socio-economic quality of life of the next generation of Muslim youth, the real threat to Muslims is its impact on Islam itself. It will divide the *umma*, creating fitna, like no other force. And it will do this by subtly creating a rigid new orthodoxy for a significant segment of Islam's continuum, forcing the recognition of a new, virulent sect.

This evolution of this new orthodoxy occurs slowly but surely through a series of logical unopposed steps. The revolution's utopian ends, ironically, gravitate toward the barbarous means that existed in seventh-century Arabia, an ethos that Islam claims to have come to eradicate. This *jahiliyya* ethos—the worst part of human nature—forces the worst possible interpretation of the sacred texts. To build toward critical mass, Islamism incites young minds to hatred, which, in turn, becomes a kind of mutation of religious beliefs. Hatred colors its interpretations of sacred texts, changing those interpretations away from the *wasatiyya*, or middle way, and God's logical, loving, and good nature. Incapable of seeing God's true nature, those bent on revolution innovate creative doctrine, interpretations, and connections to make their case that a particular ambiguous text should be seen in its darkest possible light. That culture over time creates an evolution in the faith's belief-sets, as those darkly interpreted passages are popularized by prominent Web ideologues and then enshrined in a body of Internet literature, just as al-Banna, Mawdudi, Qutb, Faraj, Azzam, and other mutation-producing ideologues have done. In the end, a mutant, disfigured, harmful worldview evolves, with an entirely different god, a different view of creation, a different view of man, and of God's will for man. It has become a disease worse than the diseases it was originally designed to cure.

To a certain extent, the West's soul is also at stake. In a changing world, Western culture is far less anchored in rigid legal and sacred texts, and is more threatened by ideological and cultural creep under the pressures of materialism, amassed wealth, self-focus, and entertainment culture, structural philosophical secularism, and reliance on the "black box" of future technology to solve all of our problems. Qutb's indictment of the West as a civilization "unable to present any healthy values for the guidance of mankind" is overdone, but should nonetheless spur us to keep these extremisms at bay.

Strategy

A failure to grasp the struggle's more subtle natures—only three of which were just outlined above—can produce unhelpful "isms" in our strategy. If those three natures of the struggle revealed anything, they revealed a need for a greater measure of realism in our strategic recipe.

Beginning with the end in mind, the first place to inject realism into our strategy is with our concept of "victory." As the struggle's nature reveals, "victory" will not come marching on the world stage like a savior, as it has in the past. It will be more humble

in form. Given the megatrends at work, and the enduring appeal of radical Islamist ideology, our strategy should admit that “victory,” in the manner that it was achieved over fascism in Europe, may never come at all. “Victory” may consist in containing the ideology’s spread by increasing our resistance to it, just as we do when “managing” a stubborn global disease.

This concept of resistance, as if resisting a disease, is logically a strategy tailor-made for a resistance-type revolution, which is now in its first phase. While it may be unwelcome to Western ears, a strategy under the broad overarching rubric of “greater resistance” has merit for the following reasons:

- *Muqawama*, or resistance, as we have seen, is a powerful concept in Islam, and the Islamists have won a victory by taking possession of this rhetorical ground; the appeal of the idea of resistance can and is luring millions to their thinking. Born in 1948 amidst the Palestinian catastrophe, or *nakba*, the concept of resistance was already alive and well in a culture that had endured invaders from the Mongols to Napoleon. Hamas (an acronym for *Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamia*, or Islamic Resistance Movement) harnessed this concept of resistance in their rise to power. Overcoming this powerful cultural symbol of resistance will require the use of an even *greater* symbol, and the only symbols more powerful than resistance are “greater resistance” and love—the latter of which, while the most powerful of all, is understandably too “soft” for the global security community.
- A strategy of greater resistance aligns with time-honored strategic maxims; Sun Tzu taught that “what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy’s strategy.”²¹ Revolution through resistance is the enemy’s strategy; greater revolution through greater resistance is ours. We must capture the frame of “resistance,” and not cede the ideological high ground inherent in the term *resistance* to the Qutbites.
- Whereas the term *war*—as in the “Global War on Terrorism”—dignifies our adversary by creating the notion of a worthy opponent, and folds nicely into the Qutbian metanarrative, the term *resistance* refuses to so dignify Islamism, relegating it as such to a kind of disease that plagues us, and denies its metanarrative the enemy that it needs in order to thrive.

The Strategic Framework of Greater Resistance

The concept of greater resistance is *not* the strategy; it is only the strategy’s *character*; it is the *strategic culture* that guides the various elements of the strategy to keep them working together, and to prevent any one from becoming counterproductive. And in view of the sources of Islamism’s revolutionary conduct and the nature of our struggle

²¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 77.

against it, the rubric “greater resistance” should encompass two broad and simultaneously applied counterstrategies: *firm containment* and *moral competition*.

Firm containment is “defense.” It firmly contains the myriad causal factors, their movement, their strategy, their strengths, and our vulnerabilities. *Moral competition*, on the other hand, is “offense.” It works to lessen the opponent’s appeal, and increases our own. Because the struggle is ultimately a *new* “great game” between competing systems—between which the exploding population of young Muslims will ultimately decide—moral competition is what will cause young Muslims to see us and not the Islamists as the one (to use Qutb’s words) whose “life-giving values” enable it “to be the leader of mankind.”

What It Is Not

Before any more detailed discussion of what greater resistance is, we need to outline what it is not. First, and perhaps most important, it is not pacifism. Pacifism is an “ism” that fails when it is pitted against barbarism. Gandhi and King prevailed in strict pacifism because they struggled against their own kind—civilized people whose moral judgment was clouded. Greater resistance will mean greater violence against those taking up the sword, greater near-violence against those who condone such violence and incite others to it, and greater non-violence against those global Islamists who struggle morally as we do, but whose moral judgment is clouded by Qutb’s appealing metanarrative.

Second, greater resistance is not appeasement or compromise. Greater resistance should harbor no “Munich analogy”; it is firm, demanding that Muslim leaders unequivocally renounce the global revolution in all of its forms, or be treated like the enemies of global civilization that they are.

Third, it is not greater deception. Greater resistance is unapologetic and open about our resolve to wipe the spirit of Qutb’s revolution from the face of the earth. Their ideology-driven strategy of *taqiyya*, or deception, is no match for our openly communicated strategy of firm containment and moral competition. The strategy of greater resistance can be published in the clear, transmitting our resolve to, first, “heal the wrong divide” between Islam and the West, and second, “create the right divide” between Islamism’s barbarism and the burgeoning population of young Muslims in our global civilization. Communicating such a two-part strategy openly and honestly puts us under its obligation, thus holding ourselves accountable to execute it.

A Catalyst for Moral Clarity and Resolve

The framework of “greater resistance” helps create the resolve necessary to undermine Islamism’s enduring appeal, and to address the non-violent and near-violent strategic elements of a religious revolution. Greater resistance helps create necessary confidence in the moral superiority of our cause—the certitude in knowing that all ideologies and the cultures they create are not equally worthy, and that non-violent and near-violent global Islamism—by creating and advancing a culture of hatred and death—is just as destructive as the violent wing of Islamism, since it works to destroy hope, and lengthens and deepens the struggle and its effects.

Pacifism that has lost its will to exert greater resistance—through lack of moral clarity, misplaced cultural relativism, hedonism, or post-colonialist guilt syndrome—will destroy both Islam and our nascent global civilization. This global civilization was born in 1989 with the fall the Berlin Wall, and the tearing of what Churchill called the “Iron Curtain.” But pacifism fails to see that another wall is rising as Islamism’s curtain descends, dividing Muslim and non-Muslim, thus preventing the “more perfect union” described earlier that our global civilization needs. If we allow these misguided utopians to erect this wall, then we have set the young Muslim’s world perpetually at war. In their elementary, irrationally legalistic literalism, they exchange the truth about God for an extremism that puts all *ayas* in the Koran like the order “to fight all men until they say there is no God but Allah” on par with those more mundane that dictate rules for diet. When such a curtain falls over the rising population of young Muslim minds, then *peace* will become a relative term; besides brief interludes of *fitna*, or extreme disunity, there will be only war and rumor of war... as usual, mostly between Muslims. Such misguided pacifism creates greater evil.

Sadly, this resolve does not yet exist at “9/11 + 5”—or, five years after the Qutbites’ fatal mistake. Instead, our intellectual left makes excuses for this culture of hatred and death, joins with Islamism’s carefully scripted strategy in heaping all blame on the West, and especially the U.S., for causing “Muslim anger.” And in their political correctness they categorically refuse to talk about the “elephant in the living room”; they refuse to acknowledge that Salafi Islam’s orthodoxy and Muslim actions (or inactions) and culture are the second and third pillars that support and fuel all such Muslim anger and violence. What’s more, in the United States, where most of the revolution’s hatemongering websites exist under U.S. Internet Service Providers (ISPs), radicalized freedom prevents us from taking them down. This is moral cloudiness, not clarity.

Finally, such a strategy of a greater resistance is the middle way between the extremes of the approach of mere “law enforcement,” as practiced in Europe, and the United States’ approach of fighting a “global war on terrorism.” It acknowledges the struggle’s enduring, non-violent, near-violent, and violent nature, and gives us the resolve and confidence that we can both contain and compete successfully with those who wish to dominate us and change us. Such a *wasatiyya* strategy of firm, patient containment and moral competition is a kind of ethos in itself. A middle-way ethos of civilization’s greater resistance is inherently superior to the extremist ethos of barbarism’s resistance, thus reducing its relative appeal, and defusing the Islamists’ metanarrative of a Western “war on Islam.”

Firm Containment

Firm containment entails dozens of complex strategic elements, of which only three can be mentioned here. First, firm containment means containing the causal factors that make “Qutbism” appealing, as well as containing the strategies that advance it. A state-by-state world tour of revolutionary activity reveals how global Islamists steadily advance their goals to simultaneously weaken existing regimes; to unify the *umma* under the most puritanical, irrational, legalistic interpretation of Islam; and to incrementally

implement extreme *sharia*, which, in turn, creates more support for the extremist worldview, and changes the traditional, familiar face of peaceful Islam everywhere it goes. The non-violent and near-violent wings of Islamism operate where democracy reigns, and the violent wing operates where autocracy reigns.

Attacking the enemy's strategy means firm containment of the more virulent forms of the *Salafiyya* movement that Qutb built his ideas upon, and its extreme forms of *sharia*, morally confident in the knowledge that, wherever they go, structural violence and every manner of oppression also go. In every state and locale and neighborhood, the global networks of networks—of public and private, bureaucratic and grassroots, Muslim and non-Muslim—must create political, economic, and social bulwarks that impede the spread of Salafist ideology and extremist *sharia*. In the first time in our young history, global civilization must deliberately advance a peaceful counter-strategy to contain the strategy of the puritanical Wahhabis to replace traditional views of Islam around the globe. No amount of wishful thinking will change this unpleasant reality; courageous leadership, deliberate strategy, and firm resolve must face the facts, and act. If such a firm containment “counterstrategy” is not executed, then the Islamic culture that has enriched the world will gradually fade from existence, deliberately replaced by the puritanical “us vs. them” Wahhabi-like worldview that allows Qutbism to flourish. In another generation of uninterrupted, unchallenged, petro-dollar driven spread into impoverished areas that cannot resist it, or into Western civil liberties sanctuaries, the movement will gain the critical mass needed to advance to the second of Qutb's “milestones along the way.”

Firm containment also means creating legal bulwarks to impede the spread of Islamism in all of its non-violent, near-violent, and violent forms. The importance of this “zero-tolerance” culture is understood by those who know the Islamists best. Al Qaeda's prolific Web impresario Nasar, in his *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, laments that “The president of Syria, Hafez Assad, himself an agnostic, has reached such levels of conceit to where he has declared the death penalty a punishment for whoever is proven to be belonging to the Islamic Brotherhood!!!”²² De-Nazification and de-Shinto-fication after World War II was a form of firm containment then; lawful de-*Ikhwan*-fication is firm containment now, even if it does follow the example of Assad and all other Muslim regimes. A trip to the Muslim Brotherhood's website and a stroll down its memory lane helps spur the timid to introduce legislation to better control its schemes, just as we closed “charities” linked to other violent groups after 9/11.

A third element of containment, and the last that can be mentioned here, is our containment of our own vulnerabilities that global Islamists exploit to advance their revolution across the globe, for example:

- Our tendency to either overreact or not act at all produces a mentality of complete victory (the “war on terrorism” approach) on one end of the spectrum and pacifism (the “law enforcement” approach) on the other, with no middle ground. Our Islamophobia and our willful ignorance has helped create the perception of a

²² Al-Suri, *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, 1495.

Western war on Islam. Such a perception hinders our two-part strategy to: 1) “heal the wrong divide” (between Muslims and the rest of civilization); and 2) to “create the right divide” (between us all and the global Islamists).

- Our ignorance of the ideological sources of Islamism’s revolutionary conduct and the struggle’s nature have prevented much-needed conceptual unity and resolve. Such willful ignorance of Islamism creates a reliance on moderate Muslims to explain the struggle’s causes and nature, when they themselves do not fully understand it. And our ignorance has disheartened those true moderates who watch as our political leaders cozy up to wolves in sheep’s clothing. Our willful ignorance also forces us to remain inside our comfort zone, to continue to view this struggle through the lens of the Cold War. Such myopia forces us to make up for our gaps in knowledge by projecting our culture onto the enemy, or extrapolating from past experiences, projecting them onto present phenomena.²³ And our ignorance creates the problem of “one step forward, two steps back,” as our flawed and incomplete knowledge of the enemy causes such rhetorical blunders as “Islamofascism,” and our current tendency to vastly overestimate the present unity, scope, and strength of global Islamism.
- Our reliance on elegantly simple panacea strategies like democratization, economic assistance, globalization, and multiculturalism produces despair and further overreaction and harmful agitation when they predictably fail.
- Our lack of political, theological, and moral clarity that gives Israel a “blank check” and fails to hold it accountable for its own extremism creates the obvious conclusion that we are identical with Israel, and that we share in their extremism. It also hinders Israel’s ability to take the appropriate steps in pursuing its own self-interest, because the Israeli leadership believes they are doing what we want them to. Our lack of concern for Israeli peace and complacency creates despair for Muslims, who see the issue as playing an increasing role in radicalizing young Muslims around the world.
- At the heart of this clash is our lack of motivation to engage in real dialogue—dialogue that goes beyond the intellectual suicide of merely looking for common ground; dialogue that goes directly to the hardest things that each side says in private among friends. Presently, we have two monologues, but no dialogue, and no hard work committed to produce the synthesis of the “more perfect union” of the West and Islam that we all know is possible. Our politically correct and postmodern ideology assumes that all religious ideas and cultures are the same, creating an unwillingness to confront a group that claims to be speaking on behalf of religion and engage it in a dialectical type dialogue aimed at producing real synthesis.
- Our materialism produces a mentality that holds that “the military is defense, and technology is security,” preventing us from embarking upon meaningful long-

²³ Jeff Stein, “Can You Tell a Sunni from a Shiite?” *New York Times* (17 October 2006).

term strategies. Our blindness to the weaknesses of the free press has created an unwillingness to balance those weaknesses with a deliberate strategic communications or information strategy; we allow the “press at war” syndrome and sensationalist journalism to heighten tensions and obscure truth. Our dependency on the welfare state’s bureaucracies to solve the world’s problems prevents us from looking to the grass-roots, for solutions that are inspired by individual people and businesses rather than the bureaucratic state.

Dozens of other elements of firm containment exist that cannot be mentioned here. Firm containment entails all of our *pursue* and *protect* strategies, which as of this writing—five years after 9/11, and seventeen years after the fall of the Iron Curtain—has represented global civilization’s entire strategy. Firm containment entails only a small part of the *prevent* strategy that must be our center of gravity over this long, enduring struggle. As mentioned earlier, firm containment—for all of its necessity—is only the “defense” element of the new great game. And the defense in any game can never win; it can only hold the opponent while the offense plays to its strengths and attacks the other defense’s vulnerabilities. It is offense, then, that ultimately wins the game. And our offense in the “new great game” is moral competition.

Moral Competition

Our wisest thinkers have understood that moral culture and moral action is the greatest power a nation can wield. To the ancient Chinese sage Sun Tzu, moral and mental strength were the greatest arsenal in war.²⁴ To Israel’s ancient wise King Solomon, “righteousness exalts a nation.”²⁵ And America’s own wise man, the late George Kennan, believed that his generation’s “great game” “is in essence a test of the overall worth of the United States as a nation among nations,” and that to win “the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions....”²⁶ The power and necessity of moral competition are so fundamental that even the Islamist ideologue Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, from his prison cell in Jordan, conveyed his understanding of the point to al-Zarqawi in 2004: “I advise my fraternal mujahideen to protect their efforts and keep jihad in its brightest image. This is the best victory for them—better than sacrificing their lives.”²⁷ Similarly, at the dawn of this generation’s great struggle with its own “ism,” global Islamism—Qutbism—the success or failure of humanity rests in large measure on the nature of Islamic and Western civilizations themselves. To deny the Islamists the hearts and minds of the next generation of young Muslims, we need only measure up to our “own best traditions.”

The first phase in such a moral struggle is creating a break with the Cold War mentality that failed to provide just leadership in the Muslim world, and the new global

²⁴ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 39.

²⁵ Proverbs 14:34.

²⁶ George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947).

²⁷ Abu-Muhammad al-Maqdisi, July 2004, cited by Fu’ad Husayn, “Al-Zarqawi... The Second Generation of Al-Qa’ida,” *London Al-Quds al-Arabi* (20 May 2005), 17.

civilization that resolves to justly lead. Think of it as a new era's resolution—a re-scripting with honor, allowing a new, just champion of the young Muslim's cause to emerge.

The first goal of this re-scripting is *credibility*. The United States' Cold War-informed satisfaction with the status quo took our credibility to zero and then beyond, creating conspiracies galore. The main conspiracy describes how the U.S. is really Islam's eternal enemy, strategizing to keep the Muslim world down, everyone else out, and ourselves in position to steal both the Muslim world's resources through economic imperialism and the Muslim youth's faith through cultural imperialism. As incredible as this seems, it is the only explanation that is credible to hundreds of millions.

On the other hand, the Islamists enjoy immense credibility in the Muslim world; they are the ones living in squalor and spending their own wealth to provide the social services that give Muslim youths a glimmer of hope. To narrow this credibility gap, the rescripted and emergent new global civilization's leadership must leave behind the silence in our rhetoric that failed to acknowledge their grievances and our failures. Our new emergence must bring articulations of deep respect and understanding and deep commitment to just action. And we must communicate this in ways that hold out more hope than Qutb's seductively utopian but vacuous metanarrative offers.

The second phase of moral leadership is one of demonstrated respect, of intense listening and dialogue to create real *empathy*—not as an end in itself, for that creates few facts on the ground, but as means to the greater end of jointly creating and communicating three things: 1) a new metanarrative for Islam; 2) a new multifaceted strategy; and 3) a determined resolve to execute this strategy and create the new facts on the ground. From this point forward, we must hold these three pillars continually before both ourselves and the young Muslims in our global civilization; they form the essence of our competition with the Qutbites to earn the title of champion for the Muslim youth; they are the essence of our offense.

The first pillar is a metanarrative superior to Qutb's Islamism, one that is thoroughly Islamic, yet is new and promising because it is a more faithful a steward of the changeless truth of Islam, and is more focused on promoting the good and preventing vice—the very things that the constantly increasing population of young Muslims will undoubtedly see as their mission. Such a superior metanarrative must convincingly advance a model of Islam that offers better “life giving values” that enable it “to be the leader of mankind”—a faith to be emulated, not a faith to be feared and despised—something that, in spite of its lofty words, Qutb's dark model could never do. Such a new metanarrative must entail:

- The resolve that “solution” is Islam, but not the “Islam” of extreme Salafist-*sharia* totalitarianism and *al-walaa wal-baraa*²⁸ exclusionism. Instead, the solution is an Islam that fully engages the struggling global civilization and leads by love and by example—something that Muslim “leaders,” hampered by their personal dreams of a pan-Arabian nation under their rule, never would do.
- A rejection of Qutb’s and the Brotherhood’s metanarrative as the wolf in sheep’s clothing; the Muslim world’s problem is not that it never fully embraced the elements for success against the barbarism of seventh-century Arabia, but that it never fully embraced the elements for success in a free-market economy in the twenty-first-century’s global civilization. These elements for success are neither inherently Western nor Islamic, but are simply laws that were set in motion at the same time as the physical laws were set in motion.
- A rejection of the “us versus them” thinking at home among the Salafi community, which forever enshrines structural violence, prevents the rule of law from taking root in the traditional Muslim world, and scares away economic investment and cultural exchange.

The second pillar of competition is a jointly created strategy—a “Muslim Youth Security Strategy,” if you will—on a level of complexity and resourcing equivalent to the U.S. Trident submarine-missile program. The real “war of ideas” begins and ends here, not so much in finding the correct panaceas, but in pursuing the correct down-to-earth actions—actions that will incrementally bring about the “solution” long sought. The hard-fought plan created in this phase of moral competition will entail many, complex, multifaceted, long-term, incremental-minded strategies that address the many and complex causes that set Qutb’s and other Islamist pens in motion.

The third pillar of moral competition goes beyond listening, dialogue, new metanarratives and strategies: it is *world-changing action*, the real center of gravity of the strategy. Visionary leadership for a world “teetering on the brink of chaos” does not come with elegantly simple panaceas wearing custom-tailored suits of pure virgin wool;²⁹ it comes in more down-to-earth overalls, and work shirts with the sleeves rolled up. Instead of silencing the dialogue between civilizations by imposing creative, untested, panacea-like “hopeful monsters,” credible leadership creates a culture and or-

²⁸ *Al-Walaa wal-baraa* is an Islamic doctrine which decrees that there must be absolute allegiance to the community of Muslims, and total rejection of non-Muslims and Muslims who have strayed from the path of Islam. This concept of *al-walaa wal-baraa* is sacrosanct, yet it fuels every kind of extremist thought. Saudi Arabia reform movement researcher Stéphane Lacroix describes how Saudi sheikhs from the growing Salafi-Jihadi trend, who act as guardians of Wahhabi orthodoxy, consider *al-walaa wal-baraa* unquestionable as part of Islam; the concept is so strong among prominent Saudi sheikhs that none dare question it. See Stéphane Lacroix, “Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia’s New ‘Islam Liberal’ Reformists,” *Middle East Journal* 58:3 (Summer 2004): 346.

²⁹ Bashar Assad, “America Must Listen,” interview with *Spiegel* (24 September 2006); available at www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,438804,00.html.

ganization geared for constant activity in implementing a sound plan full of not-so-exciting miniscule steps. It advances the principle of *continuous improvement*, or cycle of permanent incremental change that W. Edward Deming taught to Japanese manufacturers in the 1950s, sparking the post-war Japanese economic “miracle.” That is how the Japanese transformed their civilization, and it is how our global civilization—working together—will transform the young Muslim’s threatened world. The “genius” in such a strategy, as the inventor Thomas Edison said, is “two percent inspiration and ninety-eight percent perspiration.”

Part of this third pillar of moral competition is healing the catastrophe, or *nakba*, one heart, one neighborhood at a time, beginning in the heart of Palestine. Moral leadership means moving the rhetoric and activity of the peace process—bit by bit, nothing too small—into high gear, with conferences and town-hall meetings throughout the region to create dialogue between Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians, Egyptians, Jordanians, and Lebanese. It means exposing and minimizing the self-serving designs of all groups outside of this conflict that benefit from keeping the conflict brewing, and it means elevating and keeping at center stage the views of the Palestinians and the Israeli people themselves, who have both long been held hostage by outside forces with agendas other than peace. Credibility in leadership means keeping this level of rhetoric and activity at the same fever pitch as is maintained in an election campaign in the U.S. Daily press releases, weekly conferences, and continual “good news” stories from our modest but diligent efforts will—over the next decade—create a cumulative case for a sea change in how the two civilizations view each other. The Islamist resistance will find itself resisting the solution.

Such a marriage of a better metanarrative, better strategic vision, and realistic old-fashioned hard work—void of grand elegant schemes that are attractive for their political capital and simplistic nature—will, over time, create new facts on the ground that history books will describe as a world-changing revolution. And new facts on the ground will, in turn, provide the new metanarrative with the greater credibility it needs to compete ideologically.

Capping all three pillars is a strategic communications plan that saturates the ideological battlespace with the message of how we are working to create the solution that the Islamists claim to be pursuing, and of our efforts to earn the title of “champion of Muslim youth.” That we have not adequately championed the causes of Muslim youth is *our* neglected obligation. Make no mistake—only one leader will emerge in the minds of young Muslims. It will be the stasis of the discredited Cold Warrior, or the false but seductive panacea of the Islamist metanarrative... or it will be global civilization’s leader rescripted and aware of its true calling as “world changer for the world’s youth.”

Conclusion

In his farewell address on 17 January 1961, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower articulated the basis for our present-day international security strategy with this prayer: “We pray that peoples of all faiths, all races, all nations ... will come to live together in a

peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love.”³⁰ This “binding force” of mutual respect and love is a *strategic culture*; it is the “right spirit” that amplifies a good strategy, whereas the lack of such a right spirit will nullify even the best strategy.

Such a strategic culture of mutual respect and love infusing our strategy of greater resistance—with its centers of gravity in firm containment and moral competition—will give us a new lens through which to accurately view the ideological struggle in which we are engaged. Through this lens we can see that a battle of ideas is at heart really a competition of resolve and behavior. When this moral competition is bundled with firm containment, then our greater resistance becomes a kind of “tough love”—a contract with Self to create the revolution in the young Muslim’s world. Such tough love is the most noble and hardest of paths, and those who embark upon and consistently walk such a path have already won the struggle for their own soul.

Finally, this new great game—Islamism’s resistance versus our greater resistance—will be the drama of the new century, playing out in the global arena, where the burgeoning population of Muslim youth are watching to see who will work the hardest to bring much-needed change to their world. The game strategy for the war makers is set; the game strategy for the peacemakers is not yet in place. Our mission as peacemakers demands that we resist their game strategy with all we *have*, and advance ours with all we *are*. This will be *our* struggle; it is *our* jihad—*our* neglected obligation.

³⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower, Farewell Address, 17 January 1961; available at www.eisenhower.archives.gov/farewell.htm.

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