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Fighting Passions: A Developmental Examination of the Salafi Jihadi Movement in Jordan and the Roots of Extremism

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for “Modernization and Social Change” SIT Study Abroad, Fall 2005
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The whole discourse of globalization has been revolutionized by the recent events within and without the Middle East. Within the space of two tragic 9/11’s – the massacre of the World Trade Centre in New York City on the eleventh of September, 2001, and the bombing of three Amman hotels on the ninth of November, 2005 – a reality still in its beginning stages of materialization has, consciously or unconsciously, descended upon the governments and people’s of both East and West. It is a realization that reflects the evolutionary nature of life on the planet as a whole, while also acknowledging the ultimate importance of mankind’s most basic unit: the individual. And it is perhaps the development of the individual that we need to examine in order to understand our collective life. Globalization in its political and economic manifestation has undoubtedly made it easier for us to conceptualize the interrelatedness of not only policy issues and standards throughout the world, but also the values, cultures, interests and beliefs of the billions that constitute our planet. What the injustice, tyranny and oppression that characterizes our world today points to is the understanding that not only are we passing the formative – or nation-building – period of our life, but that we are experiencing the peak of our adolescence, bright with the passions, desires, confusion and chaos that accompany this most essential era of life. While this metaphor itself adds little knowledge to the larger equation, it can prove insightful, and rather hopeful, in that it implies the approach of a stage of maturity or adulthood hardly expected amidst the recurring crises that afflict us day to day.

In this examination of the roots of Islamic fundamentalism, we will trace the development of the Salafi Jihadi movement in Jordan and enquire as to how, through political, economic, cultural, religious, psychological and ideological factors – and almost always a strong mix of all – extremism has come to be an issue influencing and affecting all. Adjusting the rhetoric here is
important. While the current approach to understanding violent Islamist groups provides insight on their structure, strategies and tactics, it does little to address the crucial issue of why and how they exist, nor does it answer the question of who, in fact, “they” are. While the discourse of jihadis is seemingly blunt and alien to us, the “free world” operates on similar, albeit opposing terms. Yes, this is a facing-off of ideologies, a “clash of civilizations”, but it is also a socio-economic crisis answered only by the best listener. The eventual victory of one, or consolidation of both, will ultimately be validated and confirmed by the masses purely because they constitute society itself. In the eyes of jihadis, and many others who sympathize with them, this battle is “fair game” and this is something that needs to be acknowledged by those who believe that liberal democracies are not only a human right but a human necessity. Ultimately, the aim of both sides is the establishment of a certain way of life, the existence of a social condition satisfactory to each respectively. If human lives are truly the concern, the only legitimate approach is one in which the conditions necessary to make such a decision exist in the perception of the beholder. Extremism, in any form, is not a security problem, it is a human one.

It is understandable for people who are not familiar with the Middle East region and Arab culture in general – and this includes many Muslims who have lived all their lives in other countries - to see the development of Salafi Jihadism, and extremist networks in general, as some kind of crazed, sporadic phenomena of bitter, hateful people who have nothing better to do but destroy other people’s lives and countries. Having grown up in the West, I myself have been “normalized” by largely Christian-based Western liberal traditions. This normalization has established, however consciously or unconsciously, the social, political, religious and psychological values, trends and problems that I have
grown up around, as basic to individual and social life. This fact became increasingly apparent during my half-year spent in Jordan. The question to ask here is “why?”. The basic reality surrounding this issue lies on two levels. The first is that the Arab experience in the greater Middle East has been entirely different from the experience of Europe and its subsequent colonial by-products (such as the United States, South Africa and Australia). Parallel to this, the second level represents a truth that we sometimes find hard to recall or acknowledge during times of crisis or affliction: the members of radical groups are also human beings and therefore influenced by religious and political ideologies, social trends and powerful individuals; all of which are strong characteristics of both ancient and contemporary European societies. In this vein, it must be acknowledged that they, like all other people in the world, have feelings of ambition, love (for their families, colleagues and more generally those that share similar beliefs and goals), hate (for those that they feel have intruded or threatened their lives and societies), and suffer from human weaknesses, psychological and social difficulties, as well as issues of individual and group identity, among many others.

All the issues mentioned above have been deeply elaborated on by scholarship throughout the ages and in all regions of the world. That they need to be addressed collectively is a trend that has been compelled precisely by collective human experience and the “shrinking” of the world as a whole, the realization of which was a feature of the turn of the millennium. In our retreat from the “trap” of Orientalism, we from the West have deliberately, albeit benevolently, moved away from the cultural discourse we find so hard to sensitively and wisely address; and in so doing have reallocated it to a more familiar domain of institutional battles, of international political
interests and an even subtler, but perhaps stronger, “Us” vs. “Them” paradigm. As the current conflict is based essentially between [Jihadi] Muslims and Western powers, our failure in this sense has been the negligence of still fundamental cultural gaps that exist between “our” societies and “theirs”. It is my hope that this paper will, at least partly, fill in some of those gaps that hinder us from holistically approaching and talking about the issue of extremism.

The analytical part of this document covers the development of Salafi thought as separate from the Salafi Jihadis themselves, tracing the roots of their thought through major figures influencing their ideological discourse. Following it is a developmental examination of the movement itself, covering their ideology, political thought, recruitment process, and historical roots, touching finally on the influence of major Jordanian figures on the movement in Iraq, the main arena of their current operations.

**ISLAM AND THE MIDDLE EAST UNDER THE OTTOMANS**

In examining any movement which derives its origins from an earlier movement, and especially one with as much history as that of Islam, it is necessary to explore, if briefly, the foundations of related developments that occurred throughout its history. Undoubtedly the most influential political entity following the creation of the early Islamic state undertaken by the Prophet Muhammad Himself was the Ottoman Empire, the authority largely responsible for the establishment and sustenance of the Middle East’s fundamentally Islamic identity. Looking briefly at the ambiguous nature of the founding of the empire and the subsequent upheavals in both social order and identity that marked its final stages of existence, we can thus examine the
evolutionary nature of Islamic political thought through different significant eras occurring throughout history. Conceptualizing Islamic thought both as an ideological and civilizational vein will help those us from the West to acknowledge not only the necessity of recognizing the validity and benevolence of their goals as an independent civilization, but also to appreciate the profound pervasiveness of their history and ideas in the Islamic society of today.

The Early Empire

The spread of the Ottoman Empire, which took its last breath less than a hundred years ago, was originally said to have had more to do with Muslims’ profound religious devotion to the law, or call, of gazwa (or Holy War) than to any geopolitical influences. However, other scholars offered plausible arguments from several different angles, refuting the idea that Ottoman rule spread by Crusade-like conquests of Anatolia. While “extremist” (to use an inept modern term) Muslims who sought to enact the law of Holy War on those who did not want to hop onto the ‘Muhammadan bandwagon’ certainly did exist within the Anatolian region, evidence suggests that this was not the driving force of Ottoman expansion. Of the theories addressing Ottoman establishment throughout the Middle East, possibly the most realistic and pluralistic are those of Cemal Kafadar and Heath Lowry. Kafadar, an American-educated Turk, saw the Ottomans as one of a variety of ethnic groups within the region who assumed a “Romanesque” role in the region by subjugating the other identifiable groups through superior administrative and physical prowess. In their establishment as an empire, he saw the fruit of a Muslim polity which had grown and developed throughout the centuries. Lowry seems to see this polity in a decidedly less religious light. In the Ottoman expansion he saw an organic being,  

1 For more information on this theory, see Paul Wittek’s famous “Gazi Thesis”.  

a society which had as its inspiring force greed and material gain pillared by the columns of reward and punishment. He suggests that the actual expansion of Muslim civilization was due less to religious piety than to an effort to create an environment which made it rewarding to be an Ottoman, and in so doing, to create a “predatory confederacy” which subsumed Muslims and non-believers alike under one Ottoman banner.

The mode of development surrounding the creation of what was in name an Islamic empire proved thus to be inherently diluted and undefined. The repercussions of such establishment were the stirrings of a confused Islamic identity, in belief and in the vision of the practical implementation of the Islamic state. With the exception of several influential scholars who elaborated on original Islamic doctrine through *ijtihad*, this confusion was addressed only centuries later, during the closing stages of the first millennium A.D, through an increasingly defined and far more concentrated movement dedicated to the cause of debating and ultimately clarifying a genuine Islamic worldview.

**Social, Political and Ideological Reform at the End of the Empire**

While a thorough examination of the history and ideological development of Islam itself would certainly provide invaluable insights into the development of the new jihadi current, we shall limit ourselves in this study to understanding the circumstances surrounding what was arguably the most significant transformation in modern Middle Eastern history, a change which was to provide the impetus for the development of two streams of thought: one rationalizing the

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2 Term of *Islamic law* which entails the process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation of the sources of the law— the Qur’an and the Sunna.
rightful separation of the state from religion, and the other looking to reinstate Islam’s legitimate place at the foundation of the state (Hourani, back cover). The former developed in relative proportion to the growing influence of Europe in the region and resulted in the eventual establishment of more “Westernized” societies manifested in the growth of the secular and democratic trends birthed in Europe. The latter, largely a reactionary movement to the former, not only looked to reaffirm the Islamic nature of the 7th century umma created by the Prophet, but prompted the development of a more concrete and articulate corpus of literature addressing the formation and foundations of the future Islamic state (al-Khilafa) and the steps required to reach it. Exploration of the complex assumption of modernizing political trends in the late Ottoman Empire, and the separate political entities which formed out of its millet3 system as a result of its dissolution, is invaluable to understanding developments in modern Islamist ideology.

The socio-political atmosphere of the 18th and 19th century Ottoman Empire was one decidedly in transition. Simply put, the change was clearly reminiscent of the 18th C. Western European Enlightenment, as many of the same strains of social and political thought emerged within the region, including the presence of a new intelligentsia class which served as a fountain of new and progressive thought. Perhaps because of its location and the Orientalist tropes which have plagued the region, the Middle East during this period has been frustratingly overlooked as a source of novel thinking, both politically and socially. The Tanzimat (reordering) and the First and Second Constitutional periods of the Empire may outwardly suggest a simple reorganization of society but in fact could more accurately be defined as a period of reinvention.

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3 Millets were autonomous religious or ethnic communities under the Ottoman Empire. Each millet was responsible to the central government for obligations such as taxes and internal security and also had responsibility for social and administrative functions not provided by the state. The nation states which today make up the Arab world and the Balkans have stayed largely true to the boundaries formed by each millet during Ottoman times.
As with all types of revolutions - moral, political or industrial - there must needs be a struggle between an old and a new order. The reform struggle in the Empire started with the struggle between Selim III and the Janissaries, the last potent base of conservative authority. Selim recognized that as a reforming sultan, one needs to have a strong supporting army as well as the moral vindication necessary to carrying out the task (McCarthy, p. 291). After a failed attempt at uprooting this institution, Sultan Mahmud II assumed the throne, and while looking to find favor with traditional leaders, slyly posited himself in a position of great power and respect, and very efficiently did away with the Janissary guards, allowing him to enforce the reforms in military power and administrative structure that he had envisioned. This critical break away from conservatism provided the physical shift necessary for a new phase of reform supported by the administration. Let it be said at this point that the Tanzimat reforms, at least from the perspective of the administration, was a clear push towards “Westernization” (McCarthy, p. 297). Though Western models of social and administrative order cannot and should not be applied to other societies “as is”, the basis and ultimate aim of these models can easily be rationalized as essentially the empowerment of the individual.

Acknowledging that the basis of these reforms was a move towards a developing form of democracy (McCarthy, p.297), it does not take any convincing to accept that there needed to have been some kind of ideological drive to this end in the minds of the masses, and in addition, the engendering of the necessary logic within the populace required for such a system to function. One way in which this was accomplished, both by the Ottoman administration and reformers,
was the use of religion as moral justification. Indeed, Kemal Karpat explains that in the latter stages of the Empire’s existence, this was the fundamental problem facing the state:

The problem was aggravated by the fact that any attempt to reconcile society and government functionally and ideologically was bound to undermine the complex socio-ethnic and religious system of balances on which the traditional Ottoman state stood…Unable to grasp the social position into which he was pushed by these circumstances, the Turkish peasant used religion as a basis for group solidarity, and thus identified himself with the Ottoman political elite. The elite eventually used this identification for the nationalist mobilization of the lower strata and for achieving political solidarity in the national state. (Karpat, pp. 246, 250)

Furthermore, the changing economic and political situation, which included a *laissez faire* economic policy, the regulation of economic relations through a European system of codes and courts and the breakdown of the Ottoman feudal system, gave rise to a new middle class based on land-ownership rather than commercial enterprises (ibid, p. 260). Karpat goes on to explain that this middle class provided the basis for new patterns of social stratification among the Muslim communities and “gave birth to a new group of communal leaders formed of *ulema* families, small merchants, landlords, and even settled tribal chieftains in the countryside, and eventually generated an intellectual stratum of its own.” (ibid.) This intellectual stratum, a product of Westernization, turned out to be both the Empire’s greatest gift and the administration’s greatest irritation. In its closing stages, the Ottoman Empire probably reflected best both its most inherent weaknesses and also its most startling potential. Ottoman reforms during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflected to a striking extent the vein of democratic organization which was to take over most of the world in the 20th century. For an Islamic state which had always looked to sustain its identification with the Creator, it looked ominously headed towards what could have been New World glory. More than any other empire,
the Ottomans were willing to include and integrate a plethora of conflicting racial, religious and political identities within its ever-changing boundaries. Ultimately, Ottoman policies such as the Capitulations⁴ established multinational codependence in what was still essentially a very imperious political atmosphere. In the present state of world affairs, the balance of political action is sustained by multinationalism (mostly to economic degrees) and one can live in relative safety as long as there remain reasons to sustain peace. The environment in which the Ottoman Empire lay in grave peril was quite the opposite, it was still a rabidly hungry environment in which other empires were fighting for land and dominance.

THE ROOTS OF SALAFI IDEOLOGY⁵

It was arguably as a result of these conditions of economic depravity, coupled with the threat of the establishment of secular, liberal and democratic social norms within Muslim lands that such currents as we will now examine were allowed to develop, aided by the environment of relative freedom allowing for differences in ideology and political expression. Attempting to understand Salafi ideology, political thinking and ultimate goals provides us not only with insights into the tactics, strategies and targets of the jihadis who have assumed this doctrine, but allows us to acknowledge valid historical, ideological and political claims that simply cannot be ignored. Any efforts to this end could profoundly change the basis of Western governments’— and democratizing Middle Eastern governments – approaches to the issue of “terrorism”.

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⁴ The Capitulations were economic pacts established with foreign, mostly European, powers allowing them free reign to trade within the Empire essentially without regulation, in exchange for political alliance.
⁵ All information on early figures and movements in this section derived from Albert Hourani’s “Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939”, unless otherwise noted.
Acknowledging that the development of radical Islamic ideology was only one of many trends generated by the events of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries (many of which were growing nationalist and pan-Arab ideologies), the scope of this paper will regrettably only allow for the tracing of the roots of modern Salafi thought, leading to its eventual employment by Arab mujahideen after the Soviet-Afghan War.

**Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab**

A product of the above-mentioned era was Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, an 18\textsuperscript{th} century Arabian reformer following the Hanbali school of theology and jurisprudence. In seeking to define what true Islam is, he renounced the validity of all gods but Allah (whether in the form of the “worship” of kings and leaders, and even pious religious figures) as well as the acquisition of customs and practices of any peoples outside Islamic society.

True Islam, stated Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, was that of the first generation, the pious forerunners (al-salaf al-salih), and in their name he protested against all those later innovations which had in fact brought other gods into Islam: against the later development of mystical thought, with its monist doctrines, its ascetic renunciation of the goods of the world, its organization into brotherhoods, its rituals other than those prescribed by the Quran; against the excessive cult of Muhammad as a perfect man and intercessor with God (although great reverence was paid to him as a Prophet); against the worship of saints and reverence for their shrines; and against the return into Islam of the customs and practices of the jahiliyya [those who are ignorant of religious reality]. (p. 37)

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6 A term in Arabic literally meaning “those who carry out jihad”.
7 One of the four main schools of thought (madhhab) in Sunni Islam founded by Ahmad Ibn al-Hanbal. Each maddhab represents a correct way of “walking” in line with the actions of the Prophet (Sunna) and interpreting and applying the Islamic legal code, or Shari’ah (Murata & Chittick, p. 30) The Hanbali maddhab “was strongly opposed to all attempts at reducing the principles of Islam to a construction of the human intelligence, but showed great flexibility in applying them to the problems of social life.” (p. 18)
Here, Albert Hourani confirms the theory that the development of this ideology was not only a call to repent, but that it was a challenge to the dominant social forces in the region, on one hand to the revived strength of the Arab tribes, albeit still living under the shadow of ignorance, and on the other hand to the Ottoman Empire “which stood for Islamic orthodoxy not as the salaf were supposed to have conceived it, but as it had developed over the centuries.” (p. 38) Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, together with the leader of a small dynasty in central Arabia, *Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa’ud*, went on to establish the Muslim state that he had envisioned, one in which the *shari’ah*, and only the *shari’ah*, was to be fully implemented and life could return to the days of old, the way it is supposed to be – the days of the pious forerunners, the first generation of believers in Islam, or *salaf* (included in this group is the Prophet Himself). (ibid)

**Ibn Taymiyya**

Important to the thinking of Wahhab was a thinker who lived almost half a millennium before in the second half of the 13th century: Ibn Taymiyya. Acknowledged by almost all scholarship as the father of Salafi doctrine, this jurist, or *faqih*, dealt with a problem possibly only he, as a faithful student of Islam and an official under Mamluk rule, could have faced: the dilemma of two valid and benevolent codes of law, the first being the Islamic *shari’ah* which left little room for interpretation, and the second being the Mamluk government which functioned by the rules of “political expediency and natural equity” (p. 19) His theory, elucidated in his treatise *al-siyasa al-shar’iyya* (The Politics of Islamic Law), bypassed this dilemma, or rather solved it, by

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8 It must be noted that though the foundation of Salafi thought originated from him (and indirectly from the school of thought founded by Ibn al-Hanbal), his teachings do not necessarily embody the ideology of the current Salafi doctrine which underwent expansion in some aspects, reduction in others, and general refinement throughout time by figures such as Wahhab.
his formulation of a new conception of “the legitimacy of government, the unity of the umma, and the methodology of law.” (ibid)

The essence of government, for Ibn Taymiyya, was the power of coercion, which was necessary if men were to live in society and their solidarity was not to be destroyed by natural human egoism. Since it was a natural necessity of society, it arose by a natural process of seizure, legitimized by contract of association. The ruler, as such, could demand obedience from his subjects, for even an unjust ruler was better than strife and the dissolution of society; ‘give what is due from you and ask God for what is due to you’⁹. (ibid)

Both practical and realistic, what he was essentially dealing with was not only the legitimate foundations of state rule, but also the practical application of those foundations to a changing, dynamic society. Defining what was legitimate or “just” rule (to use the terminology of the above paragraph) was the first task in this process, and to this end he identified the root as the essential purpose of human life: obedience to the will of God (as articulated, of course, by Islam). The second task, however, proved more difficult. Not only had the original community established by Muhammad and the principal Caliphs been split up into different political entities, but each ruler had imposed different religious rites; essentially, different ways of life. Rationalizing the reality of a single, divinely-ordained code of law (the shari’ah) and a corpus of literature which elaborated on the right way to live (the Sunna) in light of the differences between the different Islamic communities proved here to be the essential challenge. He effectively took a reductionist approach to this issue which is reflected in his set of solutions. Having established that rule was legitimate only if it was in the service of God’s will, any ruler who did so should be followed and obeyed. Since all Muslims share a single doctrine, language, law and purpose, the shari’ah would form the organizational basis of society, both politically and

⁹ The last sentence is a quote from Ibn Taymiyya’s al-Siyasa al-shar’iyya.
socially, and final loyalty belonged to the Islamic community as a whole, rather than the state. Secondly, due to the inherent limitations that any legal code several hundred years old would inevitably have in addressing specific contemporary issues bound to rise under differing social, political and technological conditions, Ibn Taymiyya developed the concept of *maslaha*, or “public interest”. Since the ultimate purpose of God’s laws on earth is the development and welfare of the community, the ruler of a society thus was bound to do everything, within the sphere of human relations (*mu’amalat*), that was conducive to the welfare of his society when interpretation (*ijtihad*) was necessary (he excluded from this issues of worship, or ‘*ibadat*, for which God’s will cannot be known). (p. 20) To ensure both uniformity and conformity, the government would depend on an alliance between the political and military leaders as well as the ‘*ulama*, or religious scholars. (p. 21) This, in its broadest outline, was the basis of the Islamic state from which other scholars were to expand, promoting or adapting it according to both their own interpretations and the exigencies of time.

**Muhammad ‘Abduh, Rashid Rida**

The last two figures to be addressed form the last historical current of the ideological development of Salafism. Due to the close juxtaposition of their lives, these scholars built on each other in quick succession, marking a definite push towards linking the aging movements from which they derived their inspiration with a new generation of eager Muslims existing in the 20th century.
Like Ibn Taymiyya before him, Muhammad Abduh’, an Islamic scholar of the late 19th
century and one of Egypt’s most influential reformers, saw the establishment and
implementation of the Muslim state as a mixture of divinely ordained laws and essential truths,
and the use of reason in the form of ijtihad. ‘Abduh placed great emphasis on the application of
reason not only to basic religious doctrine but also to modern social circumstance; indeed, he
believed that the only real kaffir, or infidel, was the individual who closes his eye to the light of
truth and refuses to examine rational explanations for perfectly reasonable phenomena. (p. 148)
To this end, he justified the utility and assumption of modern sciences by Muslims without the
acceptance or validation of the “religion of materialism” from which they came, nor rejecting
their own. The society he envisioned was one which also formed a part of his memory: he
rejoiced at the remembrance of the golden age of Islamic civilization, a time stretching from the
age of the early followers of the Prophet until the period of the great theologians of the 3rd and 4th
Islamic centuries, whom he also considered part of the salaf (p. 149) More importantly, Abduh’
acknowledged the distinction between matters of worship and matters of human relations
(‘ibadat wa mu’amalat) proffered by his spiritual ancestor, Ibn Taymiyya, but now went on to
expand the principle of maslaha as well as another juristic function: talfiq. With regards to
maslaha, ‘Abduh extended the use of ijtihad to explain the Qur’an and hadeeth by making it a
rule for “deducing specific laws from general principles of social morality.” (p. 152) Through
human reasoning, ‘Abduh taught, divine principles need to be applied to specific problems in
everyday life, as well as be subject to change as conditions change, of course always keeping the
general welfare of the community at the fore. His expansion of the second principle, that of
talfiq, or “piecing together”, added a new dimension to ijtihad itself and attempted to bridge
already existing gaps between different interpretations of Islamic teachings. Before, talfiq was
based on “[the] notion that in any particular case a judge could choose that interpretation of the law, whether it came from his own legal code or not, which best fitted the circumstances” (ibid), but ‘Abduh essentially reinvented it into something far broader,

…not simply the ‘borrowing’ of a specific point from some other code, but a systematic comparison of all four, and even of the doctrines of independent jurists who accepted none of them, with a view to producing a ‘synthesis’ which would combine the good points of all… The logical implication of this method was the creation of a unified and modern system of Islamic law. (ibid)

One of ‘Abduh’s students, a Syrian named Rashid Rida, was the next in the line of prominent scholars basing his thoughts on core Salafi principles. Holding similar ideological views to ‘Abduh, the focus of Rida’s life was also the search for answers to the backwardness of Muslim societies as well as ways to contribute to the development of a concrete Islamic civilization. (p. 228) Like so many before him, Rida watched, with mix of frustration and fascination, the modern developments occurring in Europe, trying to rationalize the rather dilapidated state of the contemporary Muslim world. He saw within Europe a dynamism and drive that pushed them to sacrifice their lives and resources for what they believed was the furthering of their own society; the strengthening of their national identities in addition to striking technological developments. What Rida subsequently strove to instill within his community was that Muslims, too, could find such a principle of unity and loyalty within Islam. In fact, *jihad* in its most general sense implies “positive effort”, an activity essential to Islam and one at which the Europeans appeared to be excelling. (p. 229) It is here where Rida and his teacher differed: while ‘Abduh principally looked to a return to life as the *salaf* lived it, Rida considered the unity of Sunnis and Shi’ites as essential to the development of the community. (p. 230) That said, it is clear from his writings that he largely discredited the Shi’ih establishment
and was always quick to blame them during challenging times. “Shi’ism was full of ‘fairy tales and illegitimate innovations’; its leaders were preventing unity from selfish love of money and glory; it sprang from a doctrinal difference which did not exist in the time of the salaf, and was largely owing to the machinations of the first Jewish converts to Islam.” (p. 231) Finally, Rida further developed the principle of maslaha over the efforts of Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad ‘Abduh. For him, “public interest” became the operative base in the decision-making process, posing that other commands and prohibitions limit the arena in which reason can work.

…what Rashid Rida is saying in fact is that there is and can be no ijma’ [agreement], even that of the first generation, in matters of social morality; or, in other words, that the Muslim community has legislative power. The rulers of the community have not only the executive and judicial powers, they can legislate in the public interest. Thus there can be a body of ‘positive law’ (qanun) subordinate to the Shari’a in the sense that if there is conflict it is the latter which is valid, but otherwise independent and with a binding force which derives ultimately from the general principles of Islam; for it is not only the right but the duty of a Muslim nation to give itself ‘a system of just laws appropriate to the situation in which its past history has placed it’. (p. 234)

The figures discussed above constitute only a few of the more widely recognized scholars contributing to the development of Salafi thought. To claim that their theories, and more especially the limited ones picked out for this study, provide an all-round understanding of the nature of the modern Salafi movement would be both naïve and misleading considering the significance of other modern Salafi scholars such as Ibn Baz, Utheimeen and Ubeikan, among others (Shishani). However, the core issues of the nature of the state, political approaches and goals, and attitudes toward European involvement and influence are amply considered.
THE MODERN SALAFI JIHADI MOVEMENT

Prelude: Islam and the West

Considering that the current efforts of the Salafi Jihadi movement are focused on America and the West, it may be useful here to outline the general framework of Muslims’ differences with the West, culminating in the current political atmosphere of violence. In his paper, The Roots of Muslim Rage\textsuperscript{10} (Lewis), Bernard Lewis, the famous Western scholar of the Middle East, touches on the essential cultural gaps existing between Muslim civilization and those based on the Judeo-Christian tradition.

At the outset, it is insightful to note that the separation of Church and state was only really institutionalized around 300 years ago. The reasons for this being largely as a result of the Christian experience, Muslims have traditionally never seen a need for such a separation, nor tried to rationalize it as the West has\textsuperscript{11}. Secondly, while Islam has itself experienced periods of cruelty and violence, this trend has been mirrored in the development other religious traditions, not the least of which is Christianity. In addition, major religious traditions such as Christianity and Judaism are, like Islam, influenced by the dualist concept of a “cosmic clash” between Good and Evil. Related to this is the assumption of an essential human division, also shared by these three traditions: the religious “us and them” paradigm which separates the Faithful from those

\textsuperscript{10} All facts in this section derived from this short paper by Bernard Lewis. Footnotes by author.
\textsuperscript{11} Except, for example, when European thought provided some answers to Muslim societal discontent, i.e. the era leading up to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.
living in ignorance. This concept helps not only to identify the “enemies of God”, but also to define or develop the perception of self. This perception of self, for Muslims, has been consistently diminishing ever since the power of the Ottoman Empire was substantially challenged in the late 17th century and the rise of the European colonial powers posed a serious threat to societies all over the world.

“Imperialism”, in much of Islamic literature in fact connotes “missionary”. For a religion which believes in the rightful authority of the Faithful over the Unbelievers, colonialism was more than a hard pill to swallow, it was a deep-seated challenge to the principles and way of life promised them by God. That such a challenge came from “infidels” was wholly blasphemous. However, fundamental Islamists could not have been wrong in thinking that Western civilization constituted the biggest threat to their way of life, a threat still very much alive today. That said, events within the Western world, particularly the two World Wars (in which, ironically, the warring countries undermined each other and spread propaganda within the Islamic world) and the development of new commercial, financial and industrials methods (though this process brought a lot of wealth, it ultimately ended up in the hands of Westerners or Westernized minorities) created a vein of rejection and hostility, devaluing Westerners in the eyes of millions of Arabs.

Islamic fundamentalism has given an aim and form to the otherwise aimless and formless resentment and anger of the Muslim masses at the forces that have devalued their traditional values and loyalties and, in the final analysis, robbed them of their beliefs, their aspirations, their dignity, and to an increasing extent even their livelihood...It should by now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. (Lewis)

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12 This is very much the concept of *jahilliya* mentioned in the section on Salafi Jihadi political thought. In their view of the world, they are the only true Faithfuls and the rest of the world are *kauffar*, or infidels.
Definitions

Before probing into the development of the modern Salafi Jihadi movement, some definitional issues need to be addressed. Acknowledging that scholarship – both Arab and Western – on Salafi Jihadism is wholly underdeveloped, it should be noted that some of the scholarship that does exist is somewhat misleading, or at least ambiguous, about the definition of who, in fact, they are and where they come from. One theory is that Salafism is split into three groups, of which the jihadi vein is only the most radical. More accurately, though, Salafi Jihadis were first “jihadi”, and then only “Salafi”, rather than the other way around.

Salafi ideology, rather, is split between two groups of scholars who acknowledge the same ideological ancestors and share the same core beliefs and principles but are divided by their approaches to change: traditionalists and reformists, or taqlidi and islahi. Taqlidi, or traditional Salafis are against involvement in politics, even in current, albeit “corrupted” (in their eyes) Muslim regimes. The vein is strictly religious and therefore looks to create societal change through non-violent, non-political means such as culture and education. In Jordan, they have their own activities which they carry out freely due to their tangibly non-threatening nature (Shehadeh). The islahi, or reformist trend of Salafism appeared during the 80’s and builds somewhat on the traditional vein. Islahi Salafism sees its vision being met through both educational means and political maneuvering, but also rejects the use of violence in this process (Shishani). In the modern age, traditional Salafis look for direction to scholars such as Nasser al-Din al-Albani (see below, History) and ‘Abd al-Aziz Ibn Baz, who have all built on the
essential principles laid down by Taymiyya and Wahhab (Shishani), while the reformists look to figures such as Abduh and Rida who were influenced largely by European intellectual trends and place a large emphasis on rational thought that adopts Islamic life to contemporary social circumstance. That said, Salafism, even in the modern era, should be looked at both as the basis and culmination of a collective “bouncing around” of ideas between scholars from various trends of thought. Strict separation of thought has never been a feature of a developing ideological discourse.

The Salafi Jihadi movement is, at its core, a synthesis of two experiences. On the one hand is the largely peaceful Salafi ideology as outlined above, and on the other is the jihadi experience in Afghanistan. Essentially, the Arab war against the Soviets, begun in 1979, introduced both Arabs from all over the Middle East to each other, as well as the Islamist ideologies that they brought with them from their home countries, thus producing a synthesis of successful Islamic jihad with growing ideological cohesion. It was during this war that these fighters realized the similarities of their goals, and eventually adopted the doctrine that not only best fit their needs but met with their vision of the future Islamic state, the creation of which is their ultimate goal (Shishani). Despite their shared ideological background, Salafi Jihadis made a very clear break from Salafis themselves, especially rejecting reformists such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida\(^\text{13}\) (most probably because of their consideration of and openness to Western rites and thought trends), dismissing them for not assuming a strict reading of the Qur’an. The feeling, though, was and still is mutual. Most Salafis, traditional or reformist, shun the jihadis, not

\(^{13}\) Here is an example of where different group stances and ideology cannot be separated from ideological development. Even though they reject Rida, Salafi Jihadis today have a markedly anti-Shi’ih stance which can be seen in the thought of Rashid Rida. They also reject Ibn Taymiyya’s tolerance of other cultural rites through their strict application of the Qur’anic tradition, while at the same time accepting ‘Abduh’s concept of the salaf as representing the first few generations of Muhammad’s followers.
associating their own groups with a group that they largely disagree with on account of their use of violence to overthrow regimes (Shishani).

Salafi Jihadis do share something in common, though, with reformist Salafism: they both appeared as conscious movements after 1979, following the Iranian Revolution. The significance of the Revolution in this respect was that it brought about the realization that regime change was possible through revolution\textsuperscript{14} (Shehadeh). Adnan Abu Odeh shares that, apart from the recognition by Arab Islamists that regime change could come about through revolt, the Iranian Revolution showcased a new model of leadership; it showed them that, Shi’ite or not, religionists themselves could also be politicians. This development gave Islamists a definite boost towards the political aspect of societal change (Abu Odeh).

Salafi Jihadi groups today constitute almost all Islamic jihadi groups in the world, with the exclusion of a stubborn few who have either 1) not realized that without joining the others they cannot possibly achieve their goals, or 2) pursue fundamentally different aims to those of other groups. Its two largest and most influential networks are those of Bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda (The Base) and Zarqawi’s *Al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad fii Bilaad al-Rafidain* (Monotheism and Jihad in the Land between the Two Rivers, i.e. Mesopotomia or today’s Iraq), which itself was subsumed under the al-Qaeda umbrella in 2005. The official amalgamation of these networks represents a level of unity, cooperation, capability, influence and infamy never before seen in political Islam and which is founded upon a network of like-minded people stretching from London and Madrid in Europe, through the entire Middle East, to south-east Asia.

\textsuperscript{14} The Iranian Revolution was admittedly administered by Shi’ite Muslims who hold largely different views of Islam from the Sunni sect. This difference, however, at least within the terms of political Islam, was still largely unqualified at the time.
A network of such vast proportions must needs have a simple, accessible and familiar set of core beliefs. For all intents and purposes, this is exactly what defines the Salafi Jihadis, though they have their own ideologists to cater for those who desire deeper and more detailed explanations and justifications (in the form of “decrees”, or *fataawa*) as to what they *are* and *will be* doing. As you will probably be able to tell, the essentials of their beliefs are embedded in the ideologies circulated by their spiritual forefathers.

At the core of their doctrine is their “call”, or *daw’a*. Since, as Muslims, they are required to submit their wills to the Will of God as exampled perfectly by the Prophet, their call is also the Prophet’s call: *tawheed* or monotheism (Shehadeh). This emphasis on monotheism reflects the Salafi dimension of the movement. Monotheism in Islam implies three levels of oneness: the oneness of the lordship of God (there is only one lord of the universe, and that is God Himself), the oneness of the worship of God (none has the right to be worshipped but God), and the oneness of the names and qualities of God (it is not accessible to name or qualify God except with what the Prophet named or qualified Him; none deserve to be named or qualified with the definitive names or attributes of God). (Al-Shomar, p. 11)

From *tawheed*, Salafi Jihadis derive three main concepts (Shehadeh):
1) *Al-Hakimeeya* (governorate): The only valid state is the one based on a strict application of *shari‘ah*, or Islamic law (which has its own structure of authority). All other constitutions, governments or armies are considered as infidels, including those of “corrupted” Muslim countries. (Abu Rumman, b)

2) *Wallaa’ wa Barraa’* (loyalty and denial): This implies loyalty only to the faithful (for Salafi Jihadis, they themselves constitute the only true body of faithful Muslims) and rejection, or denial, of infidels. (Abu Rumman, b) Infidels represent those who are not Muslims, including Shi’ites, as well as those Muslims who support infidels, i.e. in Iraq, they kill only Muslims who perform a duty in support of the occupiers, i.e. drivers, Iraqi police forces. According to the *shari‘ah*, if someone is considered an infidel “warrior” they should be dealt with as warriors, and can be killed. The rationalization of this can be seen in the attack on the World Trade Centres: since Israel occupies and is essentially “attacking” an Islamic land, and America is a strong supporter of them, the U.S. government, too, is considered an attacking force. The fact that Americans themselves not only voted in, but pay taxes to the government thus makes all Americans warriors. (Shehadeh)

3) *Al-Jihad*: There are many types of jihad in Islam, three of which are *defensive* jihad (fighting when attacked), *offensive* jihad (attacking infidel regimes), and the jihad of the *individual soul* (the individual’s struggle against the self in his attempt to submit his will to God’s Will). (Shehadeh)

While these thoughts are a more general interpretation of Islam, they have beliefs, or more accurately, a number of claims, which are specific to them as a movement existing within the
current political milieu of the world. These thoughts were enumerated in an interview with Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, the principal Salafi Jihadi ideologue in Jordan and one of the central theorists of the movement as a whole¹⁵.

Firstly, they never dwell on their plight in this world, they look purely toward the afterlife, seeing the path of jihad as the road to heaven. They see the dangers of their efforts to this end – such as arrest, disasters and martyrdom – as the way of the prophets and saints and welcome confrontation as an inevitability between God’s faithful servants and the “followers of Satan” and the “soldiers of idolatry”. The faithful man is not responsible for securing his own fate as his fate is determined only by God – triumph will be awarded by patience. A common expression used by Salafi Jihadi teachers in introducing this concept to their members is a quote from the writings of Sayyid Qutub (see History for more on his life and writings): “On this road there is neither position, importance nor money. On this road are blood, tears and skeletons”¹⁶, yet it is the only road which leads to heaven.

Second is a dichotomy essential to their purely political thought, a conceptualization of their enemies into two “manageable” groups: “the close enemy” and “the far enemy”, both of which must be conquered. The Close Enemy implies all “corrupted” Arab governments (of which they currently all are, according to their definition), and the Far Enemy constitutes the rest of the world’s governments, but more especially the United States and Israel, since they are seen as current “occupiers” of Muslim lands, i.e. Palestine and Iraq. Through such conceptualizations, they expanded the Islamic concept of jahiliyya, which originally referred to the age of ignorance,

¹⁵ The following three paragraphs are taken form the interview between Maqdisi and Muhammad Abu Rumman (Abu Rumman, c).
¹⁶ Informal translation by the author, though this text is also published in English.
idolatry and paganism that the world was living in before the advent of Islam, to include peoples and governments still existing who are apparently still cast under this shadow of ignorance. The original idea behind this theory was that, because attacking the Far Enemy would incite the Close Enemy to crack down on their movement, they should first make a concerted effort to eliminate the Close Enemy. However, though this conceptualization is still valid and used, different Salafi Jihadi movements focus on one or the other pretty much as they please.

Third is an in depth refusal of a number of things not necessary to enumerate. What needs to be known is that all refusals, such as of political parties, leaders, democracy, pluralism, validity of Shi’ism, etc. are refuted simply on the basis that 1) they were not instituted by shari’ah, and/or 2) they are connected, and directly or indirectly support, those who are still living in jahiliyya.

**Recruitment**

One of the most important parts of the establishment of Salafi Jihadi groups is their actual makeup. In Marwan Shehadeh and Urs Gehriger’s “Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi: In the Network of the Phantom”, the process and methods of recruitment are delineated:

The recruiting procedure consists of several phases: after establishing contact through acquaintances or at the mosque, a would-be member is assigned to a study group where he is informed about the group’s ideological, social and political position. He is then accepted into the organization on a provisional basis. The real test is considered to be a spell in prison. The Zarqawi network in Jordan is under constant surveillance, and its members are frequently arrested. There is usually no concrete charge, and the members are usually set free again after several weeks or months. Anyone capable of remaining true to the group’s principles through interrogations, often accompanied by torture, has provided an important proof of loyalty.
Next, the new member is entrusted with his first tasks in a terrorist cell, in accordance with his particular physical and mental skills. This often involves work that strengthens the network or provides logistical support for the fighters on the front line in Iraq. Only those who prove their worth during this phase qualify for higher duties or become an emir, the head of a terrorist cell.

Those wishing to go to the front themselves require a reference from at least two long-standing members of the Zarqawi group vouching for the candidate’s seriousness, competence and reliability. It is not unheard of for young men to set off for Iraq without such letters of recommendation, a venture that often ends in tragedy for the battle-hungry volunteers. Either they are arrested on their journey, or the terrorist group in Iraq considers them untrustworthy and immediately sends them, without their knowledge, on a suicide mission. (Gehriger & Shehadeh, 3)

This process is largely in line with Quintan Wiktorowicz’s analysis of the psychology of recruitment, though it does little to explain initial interest in the group itself. In his study of a British jihadi group called *Al-Muhajiroun*[^17], Wiktorowicz explains that at the heart of any decision to join such a group is a multi-leveled process of persuasion (p. 1). He identifies four key processes that enhance the likelihood of a potential joiner. The first of them he terms “cognitive opening”, the point at which an individual becomes receptive to the possibility of new ideas and worldviews. The next process, “religious seeking” is simply the individual’s search for meaning through religious idiom, and is followed by his actual contact with the group. “Frame alignment” defines this stage, where the public representation adopted by the radical group is agreeable with the individual and attracts his initial interest. The culmination of his introduction to the group itself is “socialization”, where the individual experiences religious lessons and activities offered by the group, facilitating their “indoctrination, identity construction and value changes.” (p. 1) While there is general agreement among past scholars that individuals join groups and movements in response to crisis, it must be made clear that “grievances may provide impetus for joining, but other factors such as the level of repression or resource availability

[^17]: All information in this paragraph from this study (Wiktorowicz).
influence about participation.” (p. 1) The actual decision to join supplements the socialization process. It is at this point that exogenous conditions can “suddenly inject a degree of uncertainty into the process, producing a halting or uneven trajectory.” (p. 3) When the individual actually chooses to be a member, the group will then instruct him to become a leader, organizer or participant in the movement activities directed toward replicating the movement message. This process itself then solidifies the member’s identity with the movement. (p. 3)

**History**

The beginning of the modern Salafi movement dates back to less than forty years ago in 1969 (Shehadeh), the timing of which one would struggle to separate from the monumental regional reverses that happened two years before when the Israeli Air Force single-handedly demolished the Arab armies in a matter of six days.

The Salafi current as a whole was popularized by Nasser al-Din al-Albani, a Damascene scholar specializing in the *hadeeth*, or the speech of the Prophet Muhammad. Having developed strong relations with the *Ikhwan Muslimeen*, or Muslim Brotherhood 18, in Jordan, al-Albani began frequenting Jordanian cities during the 1970’s, giving lectures and disseminating his ideology, especially in the Brotherhood stronghold of Zarqa. Despite the Brotherhood’s assistance in this process, it had clear ideological differences with that of the Salafi Albani, and ultimately the new doctrine started gaining popularity galvanized by the addition of new adherents. (Shehadeh)

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18 Also known simply as the Brotherhood. Though different political entities, their existence in Jordan is a continuation of the original Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.
As Jordan was being introduced to the Salafi doctrine, Egypt was experiencing the practical effects and growth of jihadis. Not even a decade before Albani’s “missionary trips” to Jordan, a man known to the world only as Sayyid Qutub published a work that was to change the nature of Islamic political thought and radicalize fundamentalist Islamic groups the world over. A former member of the Egyptian Education Ministry, Qutub in fact received his Masters degree in 1950 from the Colorado State College of Education. Already a scholar of Islamic political thought, but influenced slightly by the socialist movement, he is said to have been radicalized partly due to his experience in the United States, where he was disgusted with the ingrained racism and sexual openness of the society (Wikipedia, a). However, his imprisonment under the reign of Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser of Egypt essentially fed, matured and completed his radical political thought, resulting in the publishing of his seminal work, “ma’alim fee al-tareeq” (lit. “Signs on the Road”), published in English as “Milestones”. According to Ibrahim Gharaibeh, Director of Research at al-Ghad, a prominent daily in Jordan, this book was probably the most important book in the last 500 years of Islamic political thinking (Gharaibeh, a), thoroughly rationalizing and laying down justification for the right, and duty, of Muslims to “step forward and take control of the political authority so that it may establish the Divine system on earth…” (Qutub)

The reasons for Jihaad…are these: to establish God’s authority in the earth; to arrange human affairs according to the true guidance provided by God; to abolish all the Satanic forces and Satanic systems of life; to end the lordship of one man over others since all men are creatures of God and no one has the authority to make them his servants or to make arbitrary laws for them. These reasons are sufficient for proclaiming Jihaad. However, one should always keep in mind that there is no compulsion in religion; that is, once the people are free from the lordship of men, the law governing civil affairs will be purely that of God, while no one will be forced to change his beliefs and accept Islam. (Qutub)
Acknowledging the main emphasis of political Islam as being, by definition, the establishment of an Islamic polity, and despite Qutub’s strong conjectures about the validity of the use of jihad to “end the lordship of one man over others”, it is important to note here the emphasis on freedom of religion. That this point is stressed repeatedly throughout Qutub’s writings, and this is a common feature of most Islamic political writing, highlights the genuine desire of Islamists, even the radical ones, to establish Islam as the basis of society rather than force their religion onto the masses, a common misconception in the West.

Turning away from theology, we return to the establishment and growth of jihadism. The effect of Qutub was obvious. It wasn’t long before the “dynamic duo” of Islamiya Jihadiya (Islamic Jihad) and Jama’at al-Islamiya appeared in Egypt, the first two jihadi groups in modern political Islam\(^\text{19}\) (Gharaibeh). A student of Sayyed Qutub and one of their main ideologists, Abd al-Salaam Faraj expanded the jihadi ideology through his book entitled al-fareeda al-gha’iba, or “The Absent Duty”. The “duty” it is referring to is of course jihad, and “absent” suggests the lack of action Muslims have taken thus far towards fulfilling this duty. However, this document is more well-known, and infinitely critical, for its conceptualization of the enemy in two distinct categories: the “close enemy” and the “far enemy”, as discussed in the section “Political Thought Articulated”.

Marwan Shehadeh, an early member of Islamic Jihad in Jordan, and currently a journalist and researcher, relates that four events in the Middle East during this period brought jihadi Islam to the fore, two of which happened in 1979. The first of these was also the first ever violent

\(^{19}\) There did exist a few informal groups centered on figures like Abu al-Ala al-Mawdoodi and Sayyid Qutub, however Islamic Jihad and Jama’at al-Islamiya were the only two with established networks of adherents who followed a definite ideology and recognized leaders.
operation carried out against a regime. It happened in 1973/4 when a military uprising broke out with the goal of killing Anwar Sadat, then Egyptian president. The perpetrators, the Military Brigade Organization under the leadership of Dr Saleh Suriyeh, failed miserably and six of the group were hung, including Suriyeh. 1979 witnessed the Iranian Revolution as well as Juhaiman al-Utaybi’s armed uprising operated from the Ka’aba in Mecca in which he planned to kill the royal family. He, too, was caught and subsequently executed. Finally, however, one plan worked: the second attempt to assassinate Sadat. The Egyptian president had recently secured peace with Israel through the Camp David agreements and this was unacceptable to a group such as Islamic Jihad, a sworn enemy of the current occupiers of the Palestinian Land- the Israelis. During this period, Sadat was attempting to shift support from Russia to the West and in so doing made one vital mistake which led to his own downfall: he had tried using Islamic groups to help him shift to a capitalist system, and thus gave them freedom to move around without keeping tabs on them. This freedom coupled with Egyptian-Israeli peace and development towards the West invoked a harsh rebuke. Anwar Sadat’s assassination in 1981 was only one step of Islamic Jihad’s plan to overthrow the regime in Egypt. (Shehadeh)

The Establishment of Salafi Jihadism in Jordan

Following the events of 1981, one of the founders of Islamic Jihad in Egypt, a Palestinian named Muhammad Salem Rehal, escaped from Egypt to Jordan because of his involvement in the assassination. Continuing his mission from Egypt, Rehal decided to establish Islamic Jihad in Jordan20, into what was assuredly a far more dangerous environment for the revolutionary21.

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20 Its creation is estimated at the beginning of 1982, which would account for the time necessary for Rehal to leave Egypt and establish himself in Jordan.
Indeed, after two or three years of existence, despite having garnered a sizeable amount of recruits, he was caught and put in custody for two years. A year following the arrest of numerous other members, Islamic Jihad in Jordan ceased to exist. (Shehadeh)

By 1982 in Jordan, however, al-Albani had established himself as the leader of the traditional Salafi movement, and was surrounded by a group of elite recruits\(^\text{22}\) who expanded upon, and helped solidify, their ideology. One of these, and perhaps the most important, was *Omar Mahmud Uthman Abu Omar*, widely known simply as *Abu Qatada*\(^\text{23}\). Born in 1961, the Palestinian thinker grew up in the *Ras al-‘Ayn* area of Amman. Having completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Jordan, Abu Qatada attempted to complete his graduate studies but ended up joining the Jordanian Army, working for four years as a lieutenant in the information department. His work in this field is significant because it gave him insight into the different wings of Islamic thinking, one of which was the Salafi current just materializing at the end of the eighties. Diversifying his reading and expanding his ideological resources, Abu Qatada, along with some of his like-minded colleagues, started working on creating a Salafi movement in Jordan. This project, however, failed because of its rejection by Sheikh Albani and his other students, so instead they formed the *Ahl al-Sunna* (People of the Sunna) movement which represented the left wing of the Jordanian Salafi movement. Failing again to create a successful movement, Abu Qatada left Jordan in 1991, after which he started to develop and strengthen his own political and religious thinking. Settling in Britain in 1994, he

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\(^{21}\) The Jordanian *mukhabarat*, or General Intelligence Department (GID) is renowned for its abilities to eliminate potential threats before they manifest themselves, largely due to their pervasive penetration into radical Islamist circles.

\(^{22}\) Among his most famous disciples are Ali Halabi, Mashhoor Hassan, Muhammad Shakra, Muhammad Nasib al-Rifai and Abu Qatada.

\(^{23}\) All background to the life of Abu Qatada provided by Muhammad Abu Rumman, unless otherwise noted. For more information on his life and influence, see Abu Rumman’s “*Abu Qatada al-Filsteenee, filusoof tandheemaat al-‘anf*”.
established himself as a central Salafi theorist, supervising many magazines such as *Al-Fajr* and *Al-Manhaj* and acting as an informant and thinker for Salafi groups in North Africa. Most importantly, he issued a powerful book, *al-jihad wa al-ijtihad* (Jihad and the Process of Interpretation), in which he elaborated the theories and foundation of the Salafi Jihadi movement. This book is considered the strongest piece of literature addressing the Salafi Jihadis, convincingly interpreting and justifying their ideas and vision. Between 1985 and 1987, another disciple of Albani, *Muhammad al-Rifai*, created another Salafi Jihadi group in an attempt to make up for the failure of Rehal just a few years before. This time, the impetus was the Israeli occupation of Palestine, but this time, too, Rifai was captured and imprisoned (Shehadeh).

**Social Transformation in Jordan and the Middle East**

Given the failures of Salafi Jihadi operations during the eighties, one might conclude that the movement as a whole would have been dampened and perhaps even collapse, but the *mukhabarat*’s intervention in their operations only served to push the movement underground. Instead, two critical forces brought the Salafis back to the forefront, and this time they arrived stronger, more cohesive and more united than they had ever been.

The first of these was the internal dynamic developing in Jordan starting from the late 1980’s. 1989 brought what was to be a landmark in the social and economic life of the country: the debt crisis. Already weak structurally, the Jordanian economy collapsed in the wake of “inappropriate government policy responses to three events: the revenue slump of the 1980’s, the

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24 Abu Qatada was known for his sharp tongue and bitter criticism of other Islamic movements, as well, of course, as his enemies. He was recently released from prison and is currently under house arrest in England. It is still unknown whether he will be tried in Britain, handed to the Jordanian authorities, or released.
Iran-Iraq War and the Jordanian renewal to the claim of sovereignty over the West Bank earlier in the year.” (Knowles, p. 95) Riots broke out in Ma’an soon after, and these were followed later by similar riots in the southern and central parts of the country. Mustafah Hamarneh of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan offers that these popular riots “paved the way for the momentous changes that began to occur in the country” for several reasons:

First, this was a Trans-Jordanian political act; the Palestinian segment of the population remained conspicuously indifferent. Second, the price increase followed Jordan’s most severe economic crisis – the [Jordanian D]inar was significantly devalued and foreign debt reached the $10 billion mark. Third, the riots were spontaneous, i.e. political parties, at the initial stages of the riots, were notoriously absent…This was an anti-government, anti-corruption and mismanagement, pro-reform and pro-public participation political act… (Hamarneh, p. 60)

The International Crisis Group adds that the privatization drive which followed the 1992 agreement with the International Monetary Fund also resulted in cuts in public sector jobs (of which Trans-Jordanians make up a majority), which not only aggravated the problem but further “eroded the power of tribal leaders who used to dispense patronage in the form of public sector employment.” (ICG, p. 5) While it is generally acknowledged by current scholarship that the disenchantment of the public in Jordan as a result of governmental political and economic failures served as a significant impetus for the turn to radical Islam, the non-participation of Palestinians mentioned in the above paragraph does little to explain the high level of subsequent jihadi activity in largely Palestinian neighborhoods. There were, however, several other reasons affecting the social transformation occurring in the nineties, and it is to these that we will now turn.

25 Ma’an is a city in the south of Jordan. The riots were motivated by increases in the prices mainly of bread and fuel as part of an economic emergency package recommended by the IMF.
The 1989 parliamentary elections, which followed the King’s dissolution of the parliament as a result of the debt crisis, revealed that public mood was shifting towards Islamism. The government having provided no immediate answers to the plight of the Jordanian people, the masses now turned to their only other option: the semi-moderate Muslim Brotherhood (or rather its political arm, the Islamic Action Front). In addition, the Gulf War, initiated and eventually won by the West, did nothing to galvanize a new sense of national pride. The war, in fact, further angered a public not only socially and economically in tatters, but largely sympathetic with Saddam Hussein and now humiliated as a race at the hands of the Americans. These massive upheavals within Jordan and the Middle East coincided with the end, in 1988, of the first stage of the second critical process influencing the rise and maturity of jihadi Islam: the Soviet Afghan War. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the victory of the Arab mujahideen in Afghanistan led to the return of a large number of fighters to their respective countries. Empowered, triumphant and eager, these soldiers brought with them a new vision of enforcing change in their own countries by the raising of arms, imagining the establishment of the Islamic governments they had always sought to restore (Abu Rumman, b). This war, as well as the period of the reign of the Taliban in Afghanistan is seen by some as one of the most important influences on the development of the Salafi Jihadi movement, purely because the environment of violence surrounding them, as well as their inevitable mixing and sharing of ideas, laid the foundation for their cohesion and synthesis as a violent network²⁶ (Gharaibeh). One of those to return was the modern Salafi Jihadi ideologue Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (see below) who, from his arrival in 1992 onward, was relentless in lecturing against the regime as well as

²⁶ It should also be noted that before these fighters reached Afghanistan, they were largely peaceful, practicing Muslims. (Gharaibeh)
democracy and elections, and further disseminating the Salafi jihadi creed through copies of his *Millat Ibrahim* (Ibrahim’s Creed) (ICG, p. 6). The second stage of the critical “Afghan” process was to come slightly later, but there was no doubt that since the end of the Gulf War in 1991, armed Islamic groups, Salafi and otherwise, had been on the rise, whether at the local level or on the level of supporting the Palestinian *intifada* against the Israeli regime. (Abu Rumman, b) Because many of the country’s youth were dissatisfied at this time with their government’s attempts to normalize with Israel, this led to the fostering of a number of small jihadi groups around the country throughout the 90’s. These groups fought for various causes, some even in other jihadi arenas like Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (Abu Rumman, a). With a sense of dignity creeping back in after the loss of the Gulf War, the youth in Jordan started shaking off their feelings of weakness. Dissemination of Salafi ideology was a key characteristic of this time, especially aided by many university professors emigrating from Saudi Arabia at the time. The Saudi immigrations were part of a larger process of immigration from the Gulf as a result of the mass deflation that the country was experiencing, and nowhere was Salafism stronger than in Saudi Arabia. (Abu Rumman, b) The first result of the approaching peace with Israel, the youth sentiment in the country at the time, and the spread of Salafism was in the form of a group called *Jaysh Muhammad* (Army of Muhammad). (Shehadeh) Though it was not a hugely significant movement, Jaysh Muhammad was a sign of bigger things to come.

To cap it all off, the Muslim Brotherhood, the group to whom the masses had so eagerly turned to revolutionize their lives, adopted a policy of non-confrontation with the Hashemite regime. The Brotherhood, deciding that their best method of influencing society was through political participation rather than open clashing, thus closed the door of political alternatives to a much
undecided and visionless society, leading to the final event that “crowned the series of Jordanian and Palestinian frustrations” (ICG, 6): the normalization of Jordanian relations with Israel resulting in the 1994 peace treaty. These momentous events coupled with fundamental social transformation within Jordanian society paved the way for the newly envisioned Salafis, who not only offered the public a general alternative to their unresponsive government but also provided answers to their specific physical and mental needs. Recognized by most scholarship as one of the most critical causes of radicalism, Alan Richards offers a concrete analysis of the role of Middle Eastern socio-economic conditions in the rise of political Islam.

This is the era of social transition in the region, from conservatism to liberalism. It is an era that witnesses poverty and unemployment. And it’s an era that is witnessing mass education, where more girls are coming out as educated girls, from high schools, colleges and universities. You have two contradictory youth cultures in the country, diametrically opposed to each other. One is pro-Western culture in every sense of the word…and opposite to it is very conservative Islamic culture. Instead of going to the café, [some] go to the mosque, where there is separation between men and women. These two cultures are coexisting together in this transitional era of our lives. (Abu Odeh)

In this interview, Adnan Abu Odeh, former advisor to their Majesties Kings Hussein and Abdullah II of Jordan, captured one of Richards’ central arguments— that “radical movements have their greatest appeal when the dislocations of the transitions to modernity are most acute.” (p. 6) When this process of transition fails, especially with regards to the economic dimension, the legitimacy of regimes are eroded and the vision of young populations are turned elsewhere, toward a viable alternative (p. 6), which in this case are the outreaching jihadi groups, who not only offer concrete goals but tangible methods of attaining them. In general, though, Richards explains that the transition of societies consisting largely of “illiterate farmers” – in this case the Jordanian Bedouins –
who are ruled by a literate, urban elite, to an urban, mass educated society with a modern economy has “always and everywhere been deeply traumatic” (p. 5)

**The Sword and the Pen: The Rise of Zarqawi and Maqdisi**

Born and raised within this exact milieu, and rearing to fill the void in his country, was a troubled boy from a small neighborhood of a little known town. The man known infamously only as “Zarqawi” was born in the late 60’s in a small satellite city of Amman called Zarqa. The name “Zarqawi” connotes a person whose roots are derived from the city itself, but he was identified at birth as *Ahmad Fadheel al-Nazal al-Khalayleh*\(^{27}\), a member of the native Bani Hassan tribe. His full appellation as a grown man and leader of a vast network of jihadi Islamists stretching from Tehran to London is *Abu Mus’ab Az-Zarqawi*. The name “Mus’ab” was adapted from one of the Prophet Muhammad’s warriors, *Mus’ab bin Umayer*, who lost both of his hands in the Battle of Medina and is the patron-saint of suicide bombers\(^{28}\) (Gehriger, p. 1). Leading a troubled childhood probably similar to that of many discontent juveniles around the world, Ahmad wandered the streets of his neighborhood, playing soccer, drinking alcohol excessively, starting fights, eventually joining a gang and finally dropping out of school at age seventeen (Shehadeh).

\(^{27}\) It is interesting to note that following the “Black Wednesday” (Nov. 9) bombings, all male members of the Khalayleh family signed a public statement addressed to King Abdullah II denouncing his actions and casting him out from the family.

\(^{28}\) While this may reflect on his affinity for using suicide bombs for his operations, this information may be questionable as suicide bombers did not exist during the time of Muhammad the way they exist today, if at all, and in addition, suicide bombs are seen in Islam only as an exceptional tactic.
A rebel and bully, Ahmad grew up in the “al-Ma’assoum Quarter” of a city with both a disturbed past and present. Zarqa, an industrial, working-class city consisting of over 450,000 Palestinians, Trans-Jordanians, Circassians and Jordanians lies about half an hour from Amman, the capital city of Jordan. Marred by a high crime rate, Zarqa suffered a huge socio-economic blow in the early 90’s when, from around 250,000 Palestinians who were forced from Kuwait in the wake of the first Gulf War, over 160,000 of them settled in the city. Lacking a strong tribal structure due to the mixed population and its urban setting and suffering economically, Zarqa became the ideal recruiting ground for jihadi groups. (ICG, p. 4)

The turning point in Ahmad’s life is supposed to be the day he walked into the al-Falah Mosque situated in a Palestinian refugee camp near to his neighborhood where he found friends who introduced him to a radical form of Islam. After becoming energized and familiarized with the movement, he departed during the spring of 1989 for Afghanistan to join the fight against the occupying Soviets alongside his mujahideen brothers. He arrived in Afghanistan only to find out that the war was basically over. Disappointed but not without vigor, he received a job with the Al-Qaeda propaganda publication Al-Bunyan al-Marsus for which he traveled around Afghanistan, gathering the experiences and testimonies of the mujahideen who had come from various parts of the Middle East to join the cause. During his travels, he came upon the writings of Abdullah Azzam, one of the leading proponents of the war and of pan-Islamic Jihad, and

29 Tribes have not only been the dominant form of social organization in Jordan, but have also played a huge role in the stability of the country since its inception. The Bedouin tribes have a history of loyalty to the King in addition to forming a key contingent of the Jordan Arab Army (Jureidini and McLaurein, p. 37).
30 Alan Richards supports this argument, stating that “arrest records from Egypt suggest that many of those arrested for violent opposition to regimes were from shanty towns surrounding large cities.” (Richards)
31 The Solid Edifice.
32 Abdullah Azzam had established a bureau which supported fighters going to Afghanistan. Ironically, it was funded by the U.S., the U.K., Saudi Arabia and China, among others. (CGI Report, 5) The only reasonable
adopted his Salafi creed, gathering and internalizing his writings (Gehriger, p. 2). When Zarqawi returned to Jordan, he reconnected with the Salafi ideologist Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, whom he had met years before in Peshawar, Pakistan, and had also turned to violence as a result of his experiences in Afghanistan. Together with some other Jordanian veterans from the Afghan war, they formed Bayyat al-Imam\textsuperscript{33}, a group formed to attack the sovereignty of the Hashemite regime in Jordan. Their plan, however, was foiled by the Jordanian mukhabarat, who arrested and imprisoned them in 1994 for life under charges of weapons possession. (Abu Rumman)

Swaq\textsuperscript{a} prison is situated around 70 km south of Amman, right on the edge of the desert. It was in this prison that Zarqawi trained himself mentally and physically for his future goals. He started memorizing the Qur’an, lifting makeshift weights, and learning the doctrine of the Salafi Jihadis from his colleague Maqdisi. Commanding the respect and obedience of his fellow prisoners, Zarqawi turned that prison cell into a little camp where he coordinated the everyday lives of the prisoners, as well as (together with Maqdisi) training them and indoctrinating them in the Salafi creed (Gettleman, p. 3). During their imprisonment, the movement around the country was also progressing, largely due to the repression many youth felt from the government’s move to take away their role models. As Zarqawi and Maqdisi fought the justice system to secure their release, their supporters increased, spreading to cities such as Ma’an, Mafraq, Karak, Salt and Irbid (Abu Rumman, c). Essentially, Maqdisi’s role in promoting the movement outside of prison was to spread his ideas and concentrate on getting more youth to join the ranks, which he did even from prison. While a loose amalgamation of supporters existed outside the prison, coordination and maturation of the movement was taken care of in prison, and it was only a

\textsuperscript{33} Fealty to the Imam.
matter of time before the prisoners, anxious to take their movement to the next level, would be released. Some of the fellow inmates recall Maqdisi’s poems written on the prison walls, invoking their patience and reminding them of the roads which lead to heaven (Abu Rumman, c). These prayers were finally answered when, in 1999, long-time king of Jordan, King Hussein, died and was replaced by his son, Abdullah II. The prisoners were released through a royal decree issued by the new King, presumably to try and garner good relations with the established Islamists. However, by the time of their release, they had already established a core group trained in violent operations, were far more focused on a doctrine that united all the small cells with jihadi views, and recognized a true leadership. They wanted Abu Mus’ab az-Zarqawi to be their leader, and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi was content to forge ahead with the activity he had always been best at: providing the ideological dynamic for pushing ahead with a growing and maturing jihadi movement. (Abu Rumman)

Despite their new-found focus, Zarqawi and Maqdisi had slight differences with each other, and this resulted in a parting of ways, if only physically. Maqdisi’s release constituted a qualitative transformation to the jihadi movement in Jordan, which was reflected in the public celebration of his release by his supporters. Seeing a new openness in the group, this husband and father of two, decided to remain in Jordan, thinking it better to build on the work they had started in the country, (Abu Rumman, c) while Zarqawi once again left Jordan to Afghanistan. A Spanish UCIE anti-terror unit report found that within a few months of his arrival in Afghanistan, Zarqawi had already climbed to the upper echelons of the Al-Qaeda leadership. Apparently, Saif

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34 Maqdisi, himself, states that imprisonment was a period of excellent growth for the Jordanian Salafi Jihad establishment, and that its framework was established there. (Abu Rumman, c)
35 He was rearrested later, during the last months of 2002, and imprisoned at Qaf-Qaf Prison on charges of involvement in the “Mafraq” case and is wanted in other Arab countries for inciting violence in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Abu Rumman, a). Maqdisi is still in prison in Jordan after only a brief, four day release in 2005.
al-Adel, Osama bin Laden’s former military commander\textsuperscript{36}, had heard about Zarqawi’s “historic pleas”, where he publicly insulted the King of Jordan during a court trial\textsuperscript{37} (Gehriger, p. 3). Al-Adel visited Zarqawi close to the end of 1999 and, though he found him rather unimpressive as a person and still rather impious (see below), he knew he had met a very ambitious man with clear goals in his sights. The fundamental problem met by Al-Qaeda’s top brass (Bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman Zawahiri), though, was that while their own focus was to fight against “crusaders and Jews”\textsuperscript{38}, Zarqawi concentrated on Jews and “corrupt” Arab regimes. To resolve this, Bin Laden and Zawahiri gave him command of a military training camp in Herat and recommended him to start his own group. Very contentedly, Zarqawi made his way to Herat from Kandahar (the Al-Qaeda hub in Afghanistan) and, along with his colleagues from the Sham\textsuperscript{39}, established an iron rule in his camp, enforcing strict discipline and firm loyalty (ibid). This new group called themselves Jund ash-Sham, or the Sham Soldiers. While this core group was to become an important part of Zarqawi’s later operations, they had to abandon their camp in Herat due to the U.S.-Afghan War following the events of September 11\textsuperscript{th} 2001. In 2002, Zarqawi got injured and so escaped to northern Iraq, where some Jordanian Salafi leaders had already connected with a Kurdish Salafi group, Ansar al-Islam\textsuperscript{40}. Ansar welcomed Zarqawi, but he was somewhat discontented with their mode of operation due to their secretive nature, and so started carrying out operations against American, Israeli and Jordanian targets back at home (ibid). In 2003, at the onset of the U.S. war on Iraq, Zarqawi moved from northern Iraq to Baghdad in order to fight the incoming U.S. army. According to Urs Gehriger, Zarqawi’s own analysis of the tension

\begin{itemize}
\item He also used to be a colonel in the Egyptian Special Forces. Al-Adel is currently imprisoned in Iran.
\item Maqdisi is also credited with similar actions.
\item U.S.A and Israel, for the immediate future.
\item The Sham is an Arabic term denoting the Greater Syria area. The Bilad ash-Sham (Countries of the Sham) form a unit in Islamic terminology and is composed of Jordan, Syria, (occupied) Palestine and Lebanon (Shehadeh)
\item Ansar al-Islam is a Kurdish jihadi group aimed at fighting Kurdish nationalist forces (Wikipedia).
\end{itemize}
between the Ba’athist Regime in Iraq and the White House led him to conclude that the Americans were inevitably bound to invade Iraq, and that this was the factor that originally led him to enter Iraq and set up and strengthen his network. (Gehriger, p. 4)

It may be insightful at this point to make a break from the historical background of Zarqawi’s life and look more at his personal side. There is little argument from most who have examined or spoken about his life that during his childhood, Ahmad Khalayleh was a rough, rebellious child. Called the “green man” by his friends on account of the tattoos on his shoulders and arms (Gehriger, p. 1), Zarqawi was both bossy and serious, as well as largely uneducated. Despite his rough side, though, Abu Mus’ab also had a very intimate, tender side. He was close to his mother and took care of her during her struggle with leukemia. According to his fellow inmates at Swaqa, Zarqawi would sometimes “retreat to his bed, which he had turned into a tent by draping it with blankets. Sometimes crying was heard, other times he spent hours bent over a sheet of paper, drawing patterns, roses and hearts with childlike diligence.” (Gehriger, p. 2) Most of them were supposedly sent to his mother, Umm Sayel. His letters were signed al-Gharib, which means “the stranger” and his personality is said to have completely changed during this spell in prison. Umm Sayel died from the leukemia in February of 2000 at the age of 62, and according to another associate, her last wish was for Ahmad to be killed in battle rather than dying under captivity (Gettleman, p. 4). Saif al-Adel, during his visit to Zarqawi (see above), commented that in his first meeting with him, he was immediately struck by Zarqawi’s weaknesses. He noted a man with “poor rhetorical skills, who expressed what was on his mind bluntly.” He also found him to have few practical experiences with jihad. (Gehriger, p. 3) However, following the success of his camp in Herat, Zarqawi seems to have learned hard and fast the tricks of the jihadi
trade. Quoted in Urs Gehriger’s in-depth report on Zarqawi’s life, Saif al-Adel explained his delight at the new Zarqawi:

Saif al-Adel rejoiced over the “great progress”. And noted a remarkable transformation in Zarqawi himself: “By the start of 2001, Abu Musab had become a different person.” Talkative, interested in high-level politics, he had even developed an understanding for public relations. He now made a “much more convincing” overall impression. He had begun to think about the future and to plan it strategically “all of which are indicators for the emergence of an outstanding leadership figure”. At this point, only a small circle knew about the skills of the emerging Prince of Terror. (Gehriger, ibid)

Al-Tawhid wa Al-Jihad fee Bilaad al-Rafidain and Jund ash-Sham

Abu Mus’ab Az-Zarqawi’s move to Iraq represents the next level of Salafi Jihadi operation within the region, a subject far too complex to discuss meaningfully within the space of a few pages. That said, any discussion of the Salafi Jihadi movement in Jordan would be incomplete without at least touching on the effect of Jordan’s legacy on Salafi Jihadism’s new stage: Iraq. Firstly, it needs to be said that since his books and messages appeared in the nineties, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi’s scholarship is considered the most important body of literature for the jihadi movement. His writings are still studied and disseminated throughout the membership, and he operates a website visited by thousands of sympathizers. Secondly, Zarqawi, upon arriving in Baghdad, established a new group built to fight alongside the Iraqi national resistance against the Americans. Though the resistance as a whole is now a complex fusion of the socialist B’aathi’s and the Salafi Jihadis (Gharaibeh, a), Zarqawi’s network of fighters, Al-Tawhid wa Al-Jihad
fee Bilaad al-Rafidain\textsuperscript{41} has still overshadowed the national resistance movement as a whole, and presents the biggest threat to American troops within the area. In addition, he still operates Jund al-Sham, the group he started in Herat, which has a separate mission of defeating “the close enemy” in the Sham countries. Though Zarqawi is obviously primarily focused on defeating the American occupation of Iraq, he is still said to be setting up and developing cells in places such as the West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

This substantial new phase of expansion was amply displayed in his success in organizing both the rocket attacks on an American naval ship off the coast of Jordan in August of 2005 as well as the infinitely more significant November 2005 bombings of three Western hotels in Amman, the largest jihadi operation in the modern history of Jordan. These events signify not only his growing power and coordination, but also the expansion of Iraqi membership within the ranks of his network through his participation in the U.S.-Iraq War. In the words of Marwan Shehadeh, “the Americans succeeded in their globalization of the war on terror, but on the other hand, the Salafi Jihadis succeeded in globalizing the terms of Jihad.” (Shehadeh) In the current political atmosphere, it is hard to realistically see it any other way.

\textsuperscript{41} This group was first heard of in March of 2003 and now represents the Al-Qaeda Organization in Iraq (\textit{Qaedat al-Jihad fee Bilaad al-Rafidain}) (Abu Rumman)
THE MYTH OF SECURITY

The purpose of this paper was not to offer any new and inventive ways of combating “terrorists”. It does, though, offer the background, however inadequately, of how we can approach “extremists”. Essentially, the argument I make can be summarized as the difference between these two. While the dominant rhetoric in media, Western scholarship and commonspeak is one that assumes that members of jihadi groups are something other than humans with radical answers to important questions, it is my argument that such approaches to this problem can, and have, only spawned further radicalism in society. Extremism in any form is usually harmful to anyone or anything surrounding it, and this is not limited to Salafi Jihadis, who make up only one of many extremist groups and networks in the world. Therefore, yes, prevention and security from it should be a top priority, as it already is. Security and intelligence services the world over are at the forefront of local and international governmental work, oftentimes demanding massive budgets and increased efforts to carry out their duties. That this trend exists in almost every country of the globe is a sure reflection of humanity’s need to feel secure, and it is most definitely not this that is the problem. The work of governments to eliminate extremism, however, lacks the mindfulness of the nature of the problem. The nature of security in the modern age is one of “seek and destroy”, most of the time through military means. And again, sometimes this is necessary. The argument here is not against any of the methods mankind has so devised to meet this problem, rather it is one which develops the “intelligence” dimension of security. The reality is that we are fighting passions, passions to live, passions to be recognized, passions to
fulfill ourselves as humans, passions to create the world as we see best can surmise it.

When policymakers and the masses create an atmosphere of legitimate consideration for the totality of the earth’s needs and problems, and thus considering, contemplate their own specific problems, then will we have gotten to a point where we, as humans, can make informed and appropriate decisions about the lives of other humans. Such veins of thought have, in the past, largely been considered “soft” or “abstract”, but humans themselves have proven otherwise. Salafi Jihadis represent the pinnacle of this plight, manifested in their discontent with an unjust society, the total dismissal of the identity of their forefathers, and the discarding of values and norms wholly normal and practiced within their communities. The mere act of recognizing what separates us as humans allows us to see our common humanity, if only because we acknowledge each other. In the words of a famous 19th century Iranian philosopher,

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.
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