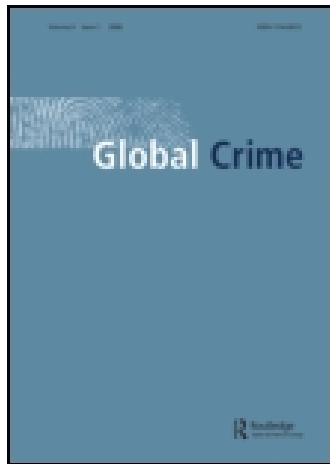


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Perpetual Jihad: Striving for a Caliphate

Hakim Hazim & Robert J. Bunker

Many Sunni and Shiite groups have embraced a more radical version of Islam spawned by Al Qaeda. Those who adhere to this version view the struggle within Islam and against the West as a perpetual jihad ordained by God until a just caliphate emerges. Their jihad must be viewed through the lenses of eschatology. This view focuses on the five prophetic stages of Islam. Four of these stages have come to pass with a future stage to result in the rise of the caliphate and the return of the Mahdi. In order to fulfill this fifth stage, Al Qaeda and other Sunni and Shiite networks are actively promoting jihad activity.

Keywords eschatology; prophetic stages of Islam; caliphate; Mahdi; Al Qaeda

Hakim Hazim is a researcher focusing on Islamic fundamentalism and eschatology, Al Qaeda, and militant cults. He is the owner of Relevant Now, a law enforcement and military consulting company. He is also a member of the management team for Walsh & Associates, Boise, Idaho. Past professional activities include that of a high school educator, correctional work, and restricted living programs for mentally ill and impaired adults with criminal backgrounds. He has a B.A. in Sociology from Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas and a M.A. in National Security Studies, California State University San Bernardino. He has given presentations and training to various military, law enforcement and private sector entities including the MG-5 East and MG-5 West Naval Intelligence Reserve Officer Courses, the Los Angeles, Inland Empire, and Orange County Terrorism Early Warning Groups, and for activities of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center- West (NLECTC-West), a program of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), including the briefing of law enforcement negotiators that took part in the DC sniper investigation for Chief Charles Moose. He has also lectured at California State University Long Beach. He is the author of *American Realism Revisited: Lethal Minds & Latent Threats* (IUniverse, 2005) and the primary researcher of *Foreign OPFOR Reader: Radical Islamic and Al Qaeda Doctrine* (NLECTC-West, 2002). **Robert J. Bunker**, Ph.D., is CEO of the Counter-OPFOR Corporation. He has been a member of the Los Angeles County Terrorism Early Warning Group since 1996 and has counter-terrorism operational planning experience. He is a past Counter-OPFOR consultant, National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center- West (NLECTC-West), a program of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). He is also a former Adjunct Professor, National Security Studies Program, California State University San Bernardino; past Fellow, Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army; and former Professor, Unconventional Warfare, American Military University, Manassas Park, Virginia. Professional LE related training includes Intelligence Support to Force Protection, Anti-Terrorism Course & Force Protection Operations Course, and Mirror Image (Jihadi) Course. Dr. Bunker has provided 150 briefings and presentations on terrorism, future warfare & conflict, suicide bombers, less lethal weapons and directed energy weapons. He has written over 100 essays in publications such as *The Police Chief*, *The Tactical Edge*, *California Journal of Law Enforcement*, *Parameters*, *Military Review*, *Marine Corps Gazette*, *Special Warfare*, *Airpower Journal*, *Naval Institute Proceedings*, and numerous military encyclopedias. He is the editor of a series of law enforcement booklets, *Non-State Threats and Future Wars* (Frank Cass: 2003), and *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency* (Routledge: 2005).

Prophethood (meaning himself) will remain with you for as long as Allah wills it to remain, then Allah will raise it up wherever he wills to raise it up. Afterwards, there will be a Caliphate that follows the guidance of Prophethood remaining with you for as long as Allah wills it to remain. Then, He will raise it up whenever He wills to raise it up. Afterwards, there will be a reign of violently oppressive [The reign of Muslim kings who are partially unjust] rule and it will remain with you for as long as Allah wills it to remain. Then, there will be a reign of tyrannical rule and it will remain for as long as Allah wills it to remain. Then, Allah will raise it up whenever He wills to raise it up. Then, there will be a Caliphate that follows the guidance of Prophethood.¹

On October 17, 2004, Al Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda and quoted from the above Hadiths (sayings of Muhammad), confirming Hazim's previous statements and writings on the role of eschatology and the five stages of Islam in terrorist doctrine.² The use of the above Hadiths by Al Zarqawi also support Bunker's view that a "war over social and political organization" is in effect.³ Al Qaeda, within that context, can be viewed as a criminal-challenger to the nation-state form. The logical, sequential aims of Al Qaeda's jihad, and that of like-minded groups, are threefold:

- Establish a base of operation in a targeted nation.
- Enforce its version of sharia (a body of Islamic law) on the populace.
- Produce a caliphate candidate.⁴

Their version of jihad is perpetual and the continued rhetoric of terrorist leaders, coupled with missteps in American foreign policy, equals gasoline being thrown on burning hearts in the Islamic world. The US has failed to give proper emphasis to the role of eschatological expectation in terrorist doctrine.⁵ Battlefield (tactical and operational) solutions to this struggle are insufficient; even if we wiped out all of the Jihadi fighters and suicide-bombers presently fielded, their ranks would be immediately replenished because there is no shortage of volunteers to take up the cause of jihad. We will attempt to explain this thesis, based on eschatological expectation, throughout this essay.

1. bin Al-Yaman, H. (nd) 'The Hadiths or Sayings of the Prophet', *As-Silsilah As-Sahihah*, vol. 1, no. 5.

2. Hazim, H. (2005) *American Realism Revisited, Lethal Minds & Latent Threats*, Iuniverse, Lincoln, pp. 73-75.

3. Bunker, R. J. (1997) 'Epochal Change: War Over Social and Political Organization', *Parameters*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 15-25.

4. ZarQawi, A. M. (2004) 'Pledge of Allegiance to Al Qaeda', originally published in Arabic, *Mu'askar al-Battar*, vol. 21, *Terrorism Monitor*, Jeffrey Pool, Trans. vol. 2, iss. 24, The Jamestown Foundation, Washington, DC. Available at: <http://www.jamestown.org>

5. This issue was echoed by Peters, R. (2006) 'Survival strategy: Middle Eastern Islam, Darwin and terrorism', *Armed Forces Journal International*, vol. 143, no. 7, pp. 42-44.

Jihadi Five Stages of Islam According to Several Hadiths

Zarqawi's quotation of the Hadiths is very revealing regarding the groupthink of emerging global criminal-soldiers who are willing to forfeit their lives for their cause. The radical Sunni network obviously believes that violence will begin the process toward a caliphate. In fact, many believe that they were ordained by God to do this. Doves of volunteers are weighing their options in life and signing up for suicide operations, most not acting out of desperation but in accordance with their own beliefs.

Their competitors, the Shiites, are even more ardent in their zeal for a caliphate. This belief is prevalent among radical Shiite sects and Shiite statesmen alike. They anxiously await the return of the Mahdi and a just imamate, the Shiite version of a caliphate. Iran remains a sponsor of terrorism and the leadership clings to a virulent form of eschatology that exalts the status of ayatollahs. Iran's ayatollahs believe they are duty-bound to rule in the Mahdi's place until his return, because their divinely given trust of shepherding the Islamic faithful is ordained by God and his prophet.

With these things in mind, researchers, statesmen, policy makers, and warriors should focus on how the ranks of terrorists ebb and flow along with their cultural and religious perceptions. In order to understand our enemies, and their growing numbers, we must understand their viewpoint and the eschatological aims fueling many of them. Many terrorists hold a deterministic and prophetic view of an inevitable collision between unbelievers and believers as stated in the Hadiths quoted by Zarqawi. Their motivation is based on their belief in a guarantee of eventual victory. Each life sacrificed is an arrow against the oppressor. Prophetically and providentially speaking, each of the five stages is destined to come about until Allah wills to bring about the fifth stage, a caliphate.

The issue before believers is how Allah will bring that about. Terrorists have already decided that violence is the only answer. The worldview and mindset constructed by terrorist leaders is firmly planted in their apocalyptic vision of the world. This view is not rooted in science but their interpretation of revelation. This not only proves formidable to overcome, but also hydradic in nature, meaning the cutting off of one head leads to several springing up in its place. It is absolutely essential to understand the worldview and mindset of terrorists when seeking to establish strategic insight into the Global War on Terror against Al Qaeda and others of a similar worldview. The current and emerging criminal-soldiers who adhere to this mindset have, and will continue to possess, a global, perpetual view of warfare. As a result, the war with Al Qaeda and affiliated groups is still in its opening phases and will be a generational conflict spanning decades.

Whereas the West has advanced based on its progress in science and technology, failure of modernization and political process in the Islamic nations of the Middle East spawned the current embracement of terrorism and its spread to other Islamic nations in Africa and Asia. Additionally, the current war did not spring from the ether. The genesis of American hatred began during the Sahwa (Awakening) period after the Six Day War of 1967. The careful listing of grievances against America, Israel, and the

West in general became normative for radical clerics and terrorist groups after the shame and humiliation Syria, Egypt, and Jordan experienced after that brief conflict.⁶ Nations base their esteem on diverse measurements of power, chief among them military power. This war magnified the military ineptness of this coalition and the bankrupt nature of Nasser's political ideology based on his understanding of Arab unity. The failure of Nasserism, which promised progress for the Middle East through secular Arabism, caused the Sahwa among a demoralized Middle Eastern population.⁷ Many Arabs turned to their religious identity after the crippling of their esteem during the Six Day War and soon being Arab became synonymous with being Islamic. It was argued that the war was Allah's judgment on the Arabs for abandoning Islam. Islam was again viewed in the early traditional way as being the answer for all of mankind's problems.⁸

Statesmen in the Middle East could no longer ignore the usefulness of Islamic thought in politics. The undercurrents of the Middle Eastern populous toward the Sahwa movement began to galvanize a new generation and Middle Eastern dictators used this to their political advantage. Leading people to Quranic truths would prove to be an indispensable part of a cleric's function, the impact of which was clear to statesmen. State appointed clerics were carefully selected to both mitigate the impact of radicalism and to solidify their standing in the eyes of the revived Muslims.⁹ The Sahwa movement continued to build a foundation over the next several years and would soon be given a greater voice in the late seventies.

Two key events in Sunnism and Shiism took place in the same year, 1979, causing a revolutionary change in the Islamic world. Shiite and Sunni faithful interpreted the events of this year as signs of providence, giving rise to ummah (community) consciousness in the minds of believers. The two events were Russia's invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution. Events in Afghanistan signaled to some Sunnis that warfighting was incumbent upon every able bodied believer. They poured into the conflict by the thousands. Just a few miles away, Shiites were beginning to gain significant political power in Iran and, for the first time in its history, a Shiite state emerged with clerics at the helm. Shiite emergence proved to be hostile toward America, manifesting itself in the hostage-taking incident. Sunni and Shiite revivals have proven to be thorns in the side of America, Israel, and in those countries that are witnessing an Islamic revival. The latter include Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and even the European countries of France and the Netherlands.

In order to understand the motivations of terrorists and the moral legitimacy they seek, researchers must take a look at how terrorists view Islamic history. Legitimacy is in the eye of the beholder and history is written by those who conquer others. Al Qaeda and those who share a similar view, ascribe the role of

6. Nasser, G. (1955) *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955, pp. 61-70.

7. Ibid.

8. Menahem, M. (2004) 'Reform vs. Islamism in the Arab World Today', *The Middle East Research Institute*, Special Report no. 34, Available at: <http://www.memri.org>.

9. Ibid.

conquerors to the early caliphs.¹⁰ Therefore, terrorists hold all Western views of history as skewed. The entirety of the five stages of Islam begins with the prophet, is followed by a caliphate, endures a period of unjust rulers, followed by tyrannical rule (present) and culminates with the promised caliphate. Their understanding of legitimate history always includes Muhammad's reign and a caliph, which means "successor to the prophet". The brightest period of Islamic history began with Muhammad and his immediate successors, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Uthman and Ali. All were chosen by other believers largely due to their close association with the prophet, their military and political successes, and their ability to stomp out apostasy. They were collectively called the Rashidun or the Rightly Guided Caliphs. All of the first four caliphs personally knew Muhammad before his death and succeeded him and each other in turn.¹¹

The Caliphs were considered rightly guided because they followed Muhammad's teachings and the community was unified around them. Many terrorists believe the caliph was not just the answer for the Islamic community during that time but for all time. Terrorists seek to establish themselves on a historical basis by aligning themselves with the first caliphate. They seek to implement their own version of a true caliphate.

The expansion of Islam and its use of jihad were very effective after the death of Muhammad but this expansive role would also lead to greater dissension. Two factors contributed to the political and military origins of jihad: the death of Muhammad brought about a vacuum that needed to be filled by a competent leader while the military successes of the caliphs brought about a rapid conversion rate among Arabs. These two factors gave rise to a unity previously unthinkable. The expansive nature of the caliphs' approach was largely unchallenged. In their view, since Muhammad consolidated both spiritual and civil authority into his hands, there was no need to change this model; therefore, the title of Caliph Bakr was first given to Abu Bakr. He lived out the remainder of his life with the title. The last three caliphs, 'Umar, Uthman and Ali, were not so fortunate; they were all assassinated by internal or external enemies of the new empire. Terrorists see violence as a justifiable, even necessary, way of resolving issues that hinder their aims and the early caliphate was plagued by this thinking as well.

During the reign of the first four caliphs, other believers were consulted during conflict and resolution, although the caliph was not *required* to do so because he held the title of imam as well. The first four caliphs were supported because the ummah believed the caliph was the legitimate sole authority over the community and, thus he was revered as the embodiment of spiritual and political authority. One must keep in mind that the caliph was elected by consensus; therefore, consensus has always played a powerful role with Sunni imams.¹² Some Muslims

10. Hazim (2005), pp. 31-34.

11. Ibid.

12. Salmi, R. H., Majul, C. A. & Tanham, G. K. (eds) (1998) *Islam and Conflict Resolution*, University Press of America, Lanham, pp. 54-57.

yearn for the simplicity of that order today and they believe that a jihad against apostate regimes and unbelievers is necessary to return Islam to its former glory.

The Rashidun (Rightly Guided Caliphs) could declare jihad against unbelievers and believers alike for the purposes of self-defense, conquest, or to squash apostasy but, after the death of the last of the initial four, an even greater liberality of definition set in. Infighting among various tribes produced diverse claims upon the ummah and loyalties were deeply divided. The Shia, the party of Ali, split from the Sunnis, and gave birth to deep divisions and different Hadiths. This event furthered the rift between the Shia and Sunni because a Shia version of an Islamic successor, the imam, developed.¹³ On the other hand, the Sunni's continuation of the caliph remained intact.

As the years passed, a pattern of diffusion of titles, Hadiths, and battles cemented the hostilities among Shiites and Sunnis, giving rise to various claimants of true successor to the prophet. Desire for political power gave rise to greater infighting in both Sunni and Shiite camps and the ummah was reeling and in search of leaders. Unity was gone and now any political leader could declare jihad as long as he had the support of an imam and such support was easily gained. This pattern continued throughout the centuries of Islamic dynasties and empires until the last caliphate fell.

The timeline for the caliphate ended on March 3rd 1924 when Turkish president Kemal Ataturk abolished the institution in favor of a new national Turkish identity.¹⁴ Many terrorists point to the end of the Ottoman Empire as one of the most humiliating spectacles in Islamic history. This event was a symbol of Islamic humiliation at the hands of the West. A few spurious military attempts and religious calls to the faithful to reestablish the caliphate did take place but self-declared caliphs and movements towards a unified ummah ruled by a caliph fell on disenchanted and hardened hearts and thus to no avail.¹⁵ Caliphate indicators did not surface again for several decades. This emergence came in the form of sermons and literature after the successes of the mujihadeen against Russia in Afghanistan. Soon, many mujihadeen would be wooed by Al Qaeda and America would become the next target when the soles of US soldier's feet tread upon the holy land.

The Gulf War brought further agitation into the region when American troops, rather than Bin Laden's mujihadeen/Al Qaeda network, were chosen by the Royal House of Saud to defend Saudi Arabia. The royal family infuriated many Muslims

13. Shiites believe that God gave them Twelve perfect imams and that the Twelfth will soon return. Al Mahdi is the Twelfth Imam. He was born in 868, is in a state of occultation (hidden), and will reveal himself on the Day of Resurrection.

14. Furnish, T. (2002) 'Bin Laden: The Man Who Would be Mahdi', *The Middle East Quarterly*, Spring. Available at: <http://www.meforum.org>. See also Robbins, J. (2001) National Defense University, 'Bin Laden's Vision Thing', *National Review Online*, October 8. Available at: <http://www.nationalreview.com>.

15. Ibid.

further by allowing the US to stay after hostilities ceased; this was viewed as an even greater sin by Bin Laden and others.¹⁶ These actions were interpreted as provocations that fueled a smoldering rage in jihadists against the US and apostate regimes like the House of Saud. This rage was vented in several terrorism attacks by Al Qaeda over the next few years with some of the major events being those against embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and the US Cole in Yemen. These attacks signaled to the world that Al Qaeda was no longer an infant but rather growing swiftly and at an alarming rate. Al Qaeda reached full maturity on September 11, 2001. After this successful launch, Al Qaeda became more than a group; it became an idea with a voice, best expressed in violence.

Al Qaeda's doctrine departs from previous doctrines of jihad and borrows heavily from the ideological foundation of Abdullah Azzam's *Join the Caravan*. This work was central in formulating the ideology behind robust jihads that favored a supranational ummah that could lay claim to all believers, regardless of ethnicity. Azzam listed the following reasons for joining jihad:

- In order that the disbelievers do not dominate.
- Due to the scarcity of men.
- Fear of hellfire.
- Fulfilling the duty of jihad.
- Following the footsteps of the Pious Predecessors (Salafi: First three generations after the prophet).
- Establishing a solid foundation for the base of Islam.
- Protecting those who are oppressed in the land.
- Hoping for Martyrdom.¹⁷

Al Qaeda has used these tenets and added the classic terrorist's mantra that they can *legitimately target civilians* because enemy nations' civilians pay taxes to oppressive governments that seek to dominate the populations they are seeking to deliver.

Terrorists are fighting this type of jihad and drawing consistent motivation from militant religiosity, the oppression of tyrannical governments, and misguided American foreign policy. Recruits are taught about the currency of heaven and they are willing to pay the price. A suicide soldier's blood is hallowed in the minds of future recruits. Al Qaeda and other networks have learned how to replenish their ranks through the use of media campaigns, elaborate funerals, and vast community support. Devout jihadist leaders, in the mold of the now-deceased Al Zarqawi, view the world through the lens of the five stages of Islam listed in Table 1.

16. bin Laden, U. (1998) 'Jihad against Jews and Crusaders', World Islamic Front Statement, February 23; and 'The New Powder Keg in the Middle East', *Nida'ul Islam*, iss. 15, October-November. UBL repeatedly refers to the occupation of the Saudi peninsula in all of his released statements as a grievance against the US and proof of the House of Saud's unfitness to lead the ummah against infidels.
 17. Azzam, A. (1987) *Join the Caravan*, available at <http://www.al-haqq.org> in December 2001.

The table deals with the progressive movements of the five prophetic stages of Islam as interpreted by many Sunnis and most Shiites. We will now give a brief description of how Al Qaeda and similar groups view history and the future:

1. The first stage is the represented by Muhammad's prophethood. He set up the foundation of Islam through receiving the revelations of the Quran and instructing the first believers around him on how they should live through the hadiths.
2. The second stage sees the expansion of Islam as a political dynasty in the Middle East and beyond. It was here that the rise of Islam was seen as unstoppable and in keeping with the prophet's instructions.
3. The third stage of Islam begins after the death of the Ali, the last rightly guided caliph according to the Sunnis. The Shiites differ, because they regard him and his progeny as the only legitimate heirs to Muhammad. This has created a schism in Islam that has continued to this day. Still, both parties agree that the ummah during this historical era is disjointed and in need of a shepherd. The pattern of oppression continues until the last caliphate falls in 1924.
4. At this point, the fourth stage of Islam commences and continues to the present. This stage is progressively worse than the previous. It is characterized by tyrannical oppression in which Islamic populations are held captive by infidels and their apostate, puppet leaders. They view this current time in history as a stage that was predicted by Muhammad, but also a stage that sets the tone for a new caliphate emerging.
5. The fifth stage, yet to come, is a period when a righteous caliphate emerges and brings about justice on the earth.

Caliphate Indicators and Concerns

We only have ideas in so far as we are able to take the attitude of the community and then respond to it.

George Herbert Meade

Ideas are powerful and conveyed through symbols. These symbols are in fact the anchors of ideas, languages, hopes, passions and human activity. Symbolic interactionism is a school of thought within sociology that seeks to explain behavior and social interaction through the study of symbols. In this context, every thought, word or action has some symbolic value that assigns meaning to self, community and outsiders. Once this pattern is established, the minds of the members are solidified and outsiders are usually shunned.¹⁸ Al Qaeda has responded to the attitude of some within the Islamic community and created a

18. Mead, G. H. (1934) *Mind, Self, and Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Table 1 Jihadi Stages of Islam^a

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Attributes</i>
Stage 1	Prophethood	570 to 632: The birth and rise of Muhammad in Arabia and the new religion of Islam.
Stage 2	Caliphate according to Sunnis and the beginning of the Imamate through Ali according to Shiites	632 to 661: The four successors of Muhammad or the Rightly Guided Caliphs ruled during this time period, and the Sunni's hold that this period was known as a righteous period that guided all of the believers appropriately. Shiites hold that Ali alone was rightly guided and the other caliphs were usurpers.
Stage 3a	Lesser Apostasy Commences Islamic Empires Begin	661 to mid-1800s: This period was characterized by apostasy and a general turning away of the faith. There were still periods of growth, revival, and stunning military accomplishments but Islamic piety did not approach the previous periods of Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The last caliphate fell in 1924 and this was merely symbolic; Jihadist refer to this frequently in their writing.
Stage 3b	Complete subjugation of Muslim Lands and ensuing rebellions from time to time. The most significant was led by a self appointed Mahdi in Sudan. Resistance begins with a Mahdi figure.	1880-1899: A member of the Sufi sect, the Mahdi, Muhammad Ahmad Abdallah and his followers waged successful military campaigns against the Turks and British, effectively uniting Sudan under his leadership until defeated by the British in 1899 at the Battle of Omdurman.
Stage 4a	The birth of Israel, Pan Arabism & Islamism and jihads in Afghanistan, Lebanon, the Iranian Revolution and Khomeinism, Palestine and unrest in Chechnya and Bosnia as well	1979: Russia invades Afghanistan Abdullah Azzam and others called for supranational campaigns against apostates, oppressors and foreign military bases in Islamic lands. 1967: Six Day War Israel defeats the Arab Alliance of Egypt, Syria and Jordan and the Sahwa, Islamic Awakening begins. The intellectual underpinnings were started by Sayyid Qutb. 1948: Israel became a nation as well. 1932: The unification of Saudi Arabia. 1924: Fall of the Ottoman Empire and last recognizable caliphate.
Stage 4b	Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups become active on a global level	1988 to 2006 (the present): The beginning of global upsurge in supranational propaganda and campaigns designed to bring about emirates. Provinces and territories such as Afghanistan have shariah as the foundation of law.

(continued)

Stage 5a (Future projec- tions)	New Caliphate	Yet to be fulfilled: The caliphate is the womb from which the Mahdi will emerge. It is also the only true foundation of a just Islamic nation other than Muhammad's prophetic ministry.
Stage 5b (Future projec- tions)	Mahdi	Yet to be fulfilled: The end of the world draws near with his emergence.

^aChart compiled from the following sources: Hijazi, (1995) 'Al-Mahdi, Muhammad ibn Abdullah and A Caliphate That Follows the Guidance of the Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa sallam', available at: http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/articles/aeedah/al_mahdi.htm; Muslimheritage.com; Chronology of Major Events in Muslim Heritage; Salmi, R. H., et al. (1998). Ahmed, R. (2002) *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 223-224.

terrorist network shortly after the end of the Afghanistan jihad. There, the idea of global jihad gained traction and the symbol of a global caliphate emerged. The idea of targeting particular nations grew from this.

Al Qaeda has been very successful in terms of creating the symbols necessary to sustain its evolution and success within the global ummah and selected nations. Al Qaeda is an idea and a violent reform movement within Islam seeking volunteers that will take the lead role in reshaping the ummah. Other cult-like networks have embraced this ideology in terms of individual duties, collective duties, and fighting outsiders who are attempting to oppress the ummah. Individual members of these groups view themselves and their community as deliverers and America, its allies, Israel and anyone else against their cause as an outsider and deserving of death.

The idea of a ruling class of clerics was appealing to Ruhmallah Khomeini and he successfully applied it in Iran. His brand of Islam was deridingly called Khomeinism by his detractors but it ushered in a revolution.

If you were to act correctly and fulfill your duties you would see that the conduct of affairs would be bound over to you. If the form of government willed by Islam were to come into being none of the governments now existing in the world would be able to resist it: they would all capitulate. But unfortunately we have failed to establish such a government.¹⁹

The Ayatollahs bolstered by Khomeinism and the Iranian Revolution rose to a level of political prominence previously unknown in the Middle East to Shiite clerics and they, like all statesmen, will not surrender their new-found influence

19. Khomeini, R. (1970) *Velayate Faqeeh* (Governance of the Jurist) Islamic Government, Iran. Originally taken from lectures between January 21 and February 8, 1970. His lectures on Velayat-e faqeeh, the theory of governance and Islamic leadership were published and smuggled into Iran shortly afterward. Hamid Algar, trans., Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works. International Affairs Division, 2001.

without a fight. They view themselves as an imamate leadership ruling in the absence of Mahdi and hope that a significant number of their citizens will continue to view them this way as well. So far, the results have been mixed but the ayatollahs are not against fusing nationalism and Shiism to their political advantage.

Nations that have more than three or more of the criteria listed below have caliphate potential insofar as Islamism has been acted upon in the past and can gain traction:

- A significant number of devout Muslims who demand an Islamic government.
- A significant number of clerics who espouse and justify violent theology.
- Political leadership that is anti-Western and is based on sharia law.
- Failing or disjointed state status.
- Significant numbers of terrorist operatives or sympathizers that have infiltrated or remain in the government and security forces.

Attempting to address the concerns of caliphate indicators is no small matter. Indicators of caliphate consciousness simply defined means this: a greater number of people are looking for a caliphate type leader who is able to galvanize the majority of zealots toward the common goal of Islamic dominance, not only as a religion, but as a political force. The Ayatollah Khomeini read the sentiment of his times and seized the moment among Persian Shiites, exhorting his fellow Shiites to form an Islamic government.

Tracking caliphate movements is not as difficult as some say. The primary thing to look for is the self-reported statements of those who are actively seeking to implement their version of sharia law upon every individual who claims to be Muslim. Every group that has this vision is taking steps toward implementing a caliphate. Al Qaeda's self-reported political objective of implementing an emirate in Iraq is only an intermediary step designed to bring about a caliphate.²⁰

The caliphate and what it symbolizes is more than noteworthy; it is in fact the impetus behind the majority of militant cults and their rhetoric.²¹ Militant cults and the new strain of Islam that endorses violence against civilians are not about self defense alone, it is angry and violent. Expressions of this extreme form of violence can be witnessed in the on-going suicide bombings and beheadings perpetrated by Islamic radicals. It is this way because of the following factors: oppression of the populace by the hands of Middle Eastern dictators, unwanted intervention by foreign governments, and the fact that there is often no other competing ideology. It is human nature for people, and ultimately the nations

20. ZarQawi, A. M. (2004) 'Pledge of Allegiance to Al Qaeda', *Mu'asker al-Battar*, iss. 21, October 17. Statement released on jihadi websites.

21. For more on Jihadi symbolism see Kennedy-Boudali, L. et al. (2006) *The Islamic Imagery Project: Visual Motifs in Jihadi Internet Propaganda*, West Point, Combating Terrorism Center, United States Military Academy.

they encompass, to actively seek to expand their role in the world. Jihadists do the same and, to date, militant Islam has become a legitimate political voice for many.²² Al Qaeda and others desire a caliphate, not just a state. They define it as a nation led by a caliph who best upholds the traditions of Muhammad and actively adheres to the Quran. A true caliphate would be binding upon all Muslims. Jihadi acts of terrorism are the most palpable signs of activity toward a global caliphate.

The study of jihad was hotly debated by many in the field of security studies before September 11 but discussions concerning a global caliphate rarely came into consideration. Security experts were dismissive, opting instead to focus on regional jihads. The panorama of current events and historical data led agencies such as the CIA and FBI to one conclusion: regional jihads were the only legitimate concern for the international community. Jihadists were viewed as being bound only by regional concerns and the spillover from such conflicts would be limited to this realm. This proved false after 9/11 and the nightmare of terrorism within US borders became a reality. With these things in mind, the symbolism and function of a caliphate, both historically and currently, should now be weighed in terms of US security interests. The states and non-state movements listed in Table 2 could possibly seek to emulate caliphate status among Muslims.

Iran

The Iranian revolution that was launched by the Ayatollah Khomeini and his brand of Shia Islam became the dominant theology in Iran and has spread beyond. What was troubling about his systematic theology is the role it ascribed to clerics and that it advocated the violent overthrow of perceived apostates. Iraq's Shiites have been unleashed by the US and this will empower Shiites in many nations but primarily Iran. Sunni nations actively oppressing Shiite communities will be impacted as well. The revival of Shiites is both political and religious and is currently underway throughout the Middle East.²³ Khomeini's successors, the ayatollahs, have continued their rule in the ayatollahs' Regime of Iran. Khomeini's theology is captured best in *Valeyat Faqeeh* (Governance of the Jurist), and thereby, even in death, he speaks from this document.²⁴ To date, Iran is the best example of what a threatening Islamic government looks like. Although there is a strong reform movement within the country, it remains a stable state with considerable economic and military power firmly under the control of the ayatollahs.

Iran is currently the best possible candidate for an imamate (Shia version of caliphate). They are obviously concerned with some domestic issues, and Al Sistani's emerging quietist view of a cleric's role in politics, but US pressure for

22. Hazim (2005), p. 6.

23. Nasr, V. (2006) 'When the Shiites Rise', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 5 pp. Available at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.org>.

24. Khomeini, R. (1970).

Table 2 State and non-state caliphate candidates

<i>Nations with Caliphate Potential</i>	<i>Information and Details</i>
Iran (Shiite)	Iran continues with an Ayatollah led government that is striving to rule in the absence of the 12 th Imam.
Iraq (Shiite)	Iraq has seen a revival in Shiism. Shiite militias are essentially running the prison system in Iraq.
Pakistan (Sunni)	Pakistan remains a target for extremists due to the fact it is the only Islamic country with nuclear weapons. There is also strong support for Al Qaeda and Taliban members among clerics, populace, military, and the ISI.
Afghanistan (Sunni)	Afghanistan instituted in 1996 - Ousted in late 2001. Karzai is facing more opposition from Afghans and has become more critical of US policy.
Somalia (Sunni)	Somalia, although small and torn by civil war, has proven to be a hot bed for extremists.
Less likely candidates: Nigeria (Sunni)	Nigeria has a large Islamic population but does not appear to be threatened by takeover by militants at this point.
Indonesia (Sunni)	Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, but is primarily moderate.
Palestine (Sunni)	Palestine is in need of a political unification before any consideration can be given to it but the rise of Hamas, at the expense of Fatah, suggests that more extreme forms of radicalism are winning out. These forms of radicalism appear to be caliphate-seeking rather than state-seeking.
<i>Non-State Movements</i>	<i>Information and Details</i>
Virtual Ummah	Strong consensus among many internet savvy Muslims who have no strong ties to traditional leaders. This should be a concern because more are expressing the need for a caliphate.
Global Ummah	This will pose problems for states seeking to mitigate prophetic expectation confirmed through current events. Look for leaders to interpret the signs of the times for their followers.
Eschatological movements	This is simply a matter of interpretation that causes the masses of Islamic populations to look for acts of providence pointing to the Last Days. The interpretation of such events will cause some to act as harbingers of a new caliphate through acts of violence. They believe the more they act on God's behalf the more He will act on theirs.

ridding themselves of nuclear capability is their primary concern. The clerics are in the process of whipping up nationalism and religious solidarity in order to consolidate their hold on Iran's populace. The ayatollahs are using a front man like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to advance their agenda. Iran's clerics have not taken a back seat to Ahmadinejad; they are pulling the strings, recently issuing a fatwa justifying the use of nuclear weapons against their enemies.²⁵ They are actively attempting to stave off US military force against them through various means of diplomacy and bellicose speech toward the US and Israel. One should view the nuclear issue in terms of realism. The unelected clergy truly fear US intentions and with good reason. They are doing what they think is necessary to ensure their survival and they are unwilling to forfeit their clandestine nuclear activity. The clergy view this as a legitimate deterrent and they view themselves as legitimate successors to the prophet and the ruling class in the absence of the Twelfth Imam. The Iranian president recently voiced such a prayer in public.²⁶

Iran is doing what it views as consistent with sharia law in order to gain some parity with the West, in terms of WMDs. Although democratic movements are present in Iran, a renewed sense of national sovereignty is derailing the democratic movement the US is playing up. Currently, Iran is diametrically opposed to any US initiatives and has Russia supporting its position on nuclear technology. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has secured an offer from the US to come to the table and have face to face meetings with his government, if he decides to follow through. This is truly a diplomatic victory for Iran, and the Shiite clergy in general, because it signals to many that a hawkish administration is willing to be dovish when facing an ascendant Iran. This reinforces the need for economic and military to be controlled by Iran's clergy when dealing with the West.

Iraq

Iraq is a laboratory in which several forces are vying to be the primary catalyst for change. If Iraq is the laboratory for democracy in the Middle East, it is also the laboratory for what happens when jihad ideology of resistance by any means necessary takes hold of a small percentage of the populace. The war in Iraq has produced a magnet for jihadists who are seeking to implement jihad toward a caliphate; they view themselves as deliverers, a term the US has reserved for itself.²⁷ Although Zarqawi was recently killed, his death will be useful to jihadists as well as to the US and Iraqi forces. One must remember how symbolic interactionism works, particularly in religious terms. The most important thing perverse religious movements and cults produce in people's minds is the sense that they are truly special and others are not. Zarqawi convinced himself and his

25. Freeman, C. (2006) 'Iran Clerics Back Nuclear Weapons', *The London Sunday Telegraph*, February 19, 2 pp. Available at: <http://www.washtimes.com>.

26. Daniszewski, J. (2006) 'Iran President's Call on Mahdi is Polarizing', *Los Angeles Times Sunday*, April 23, 2006.

27. Hazim (2005), pp. 139-140.

followers of this. This belief is a common thread that runs through all militant cults. The motivational psychology behind Al Zarqawi and those eagerly following his ideology is not that they live a significant life by worldly standards but that they die a significant death. He achieved this and now others of a similar mindset will follow this course in Iraq and beyond.

Here are five things to watch for in jihadist circles following Zarqawi's death in Iraq:

- He will now live beyond the grave and many idealistic jihadists will seek to emulate him.
- Unfortunately for Al Qaeda, their zeal will not be matched by his knowledge or charisma, and many will lack the discipline necessary to be effective jihadists.
- Unfortunately for the US, the movements will become more and more fragmented and disorganized, producing more violence on low level targets.
- The fragmentation will produce rivalries between jihadists who consider themselves purists versus those who are part timers and are using violence as a way of seeking attention from the media and potential recruits.
- A conglomeration of a new generation of terrorists in Iraq and elsewhere that include pragmatic jihadists, idealist jihadists, gangster jihadists and the like will emerge and begin to clash with one another and Iraqi/US forces more frequently.

Shiism in Iraq and a particular form of Shiism, quietism, is likely to rule the day in Iraq as long as Al Sistani remains healthy, significant, and active, but afterwards it's anyone's bet. Even if Al Sistani's approach remains after he is gone, it does not mean that the clerics will not have a role; it simply means that they will guide the political process and intervene when they deem it necessary. This does not bode well for US interests due to the fact that Al Sistani has emerged as the most powerful political figure in the post-Saddam era.²⁸ Iraq's likely course is to use US military involvement in hopes of becoming a stable, prosperous nation. Its hopes rest on the possibility of striving to use both Arab identity and Shia identity as a means to claiming greater legitimacy in the Islamic world. Iraq must become a stable state before it can claim any ascendancy to an imamate status and the Sunnis are unlikely to allow this to happen. Still, Iraq remains a candidate for such a status due to the nature of the current struggle within it and the fact that Shiites will not surrender their newly found political power, even if it means civil war.

Pakistan

Pakistan remains an enigma to most. Pakistan is responsible for training many of the jihadist elements in Kashmir and Afghanistan as well. The overwhelming pressure placed on Pervez Musharraf after September 11th caused him to make a

28. Cole, J. (2004) 'It Takes a Following to make an Ayatollah', *Washington Post*, August 15. Available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.

decision, one that he had to make in order to avoid dire consequences. His immediate decision to join with the US should be viewed in terms of political realism but his choice has not eradicated the very real danger of a takeover by extremist elements within the country. He has been the target of many assassination attempts but remains in control.²⁹ The worse case scenario is a takeover by militants who will come into possession of nuclear weapons. This country is truly the envy of all serious jihadists and there is no doubt that many have infiltrated the military and intelligence ranks.³⁰

Afghanistan

Afghanistan has experienced an increase of Taliban resurgence and an increase in US deaths. One aspect of this resurgence is the rise of 'Night Postings'—messages secretly placed on buildings that threaten those who cooperate with the government and stabilization forces with eventual death. The resurgence of the Taliban is a blight on the current path the US is treading. The US has not finished its work there, and what stands is a form of government that is weak, still largely controlled by warlords, and one that the masses of people do not buy into. Recently, Hamid Karzai was critical of the current approach of American policy and he even went so far as to call the Taliban "sons of this land."³¹ Afghanistan is still open territory for a caliphate type government to emerge once again if the US chooses to leave the country and deploy its military sources elsewhere. The jihad is perpetual and the Taliban, still lead by their shadowy leader Mullah Muhammad Omar, are not leaving any time soon. The staying power of the Taliban is without question and a new generation will certainly emerge with its own view of history and their quest for a caliphate.

Somalia

Somalia has resurfaced once again as a legitimate threat to become a base for terrorism. The logic in the beginning is for The Supreme Islamic Courts Council (ICSC) to bring about an Islamic country. Its primary leader Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, whom US officials have branded a terrorist, claims that Somalia is Islamic, and therefore, sharia law is the natural course of action. The Islamic Courts Supreme Council is attempting to disassociate itself from terrorism and reach out to the international community; however, they cannot continue to hold onto an extreme form of Islam and not attract extremist elements. It is a well known fact that the new leadership frowns upon television, and in order to enforce this approach, two of their more zealous members killed a teen aged girl for ignoring their orders and continuing to watch a soccer game. To their credit, the ICSC

29. Benjamin, D. (2006) 'Why Pakistan's May be the West Best Bet for Peace', *Time Magazine*, April 30.

30. Risen, J & Judith, M. (2001) 'Pakistan's Intelligence had Links to Al Qaeda, U.S. says', *The New York Times*, October 29.

31. Tran, T. (2006) 'Karzai Criticizes US Led Coalition', Associated Press, June 23.

considered this too severe and arrested the men.³² The ICSC will continue to draw this type of element into their militia as long as they attempt to establish an austere version of sharia governance in Somalia.

Other Countries

Al Qaeda has repeatedly made statements to the ummah to overthrow the leaders of several countries. Current caliphate concerns and indicators take on a new degree of needed vigilance since the historical data has proven that an increase in caliphate indicators correlates with an increase of terrorist events. The outcomes of caliphate strivings in the form of jihadist activity will result in several unpleasant manifestations for the US. Countries such as Indonesia and Nigeria do not have enough indicators to be considered caliphate candidates at this point and to make such statements one would have to lean toward alarmism. Palestine is an interesting case because the success of Hamas over Fatah has further radicalized the Arab dominated territories. These lands are poverty stricken and a new generation of terrorists, more agreeable to caliphate ideas, now control the government. However, given the fact the Fatah is still very much a political force, the likely outcome is ongoing civil strife between the competing factions.

Non-state Movements

In addition, to those state movements listed above, we have added non-state and transnational ones due to the fact that control of physical territory is not needed to build a significant movement. Terrorists are increasingly using media outlets and the internet (5th dimensional space) to wage havoc. Virtual jihadi training websites have replaced lost training camps in Afghanistan.³³ This has served to further fragment the global Islamic insurgency into smaller cells that are more difficult to identify. Three types of non-state movements may exist. The first is the virtual ummah. This is derived from a "leaderless resistance" model in which lone wolves (jihadi individuals and small cells) reach consensus on the internet. The second is the global ummah. Rather than being sub-national this movement is supra-national in scope. Non-contiguous enclaves of believers, the vast majority slum dwellers, become globally bound together via a charismatic figure. The basis of this movement would be the have-nots rising up against the haves. The final non-state movement is eschatological. This movement is derived from a Mahdi-

32. Hassan, M. O. (2006) 'Somalia Militants Arrest 2 in TV Killings', Associated Press, July 6, 2:43 pm. Available at: <http://www.wtop.com>.

33. For more on the network advantages of Al Qaeda see Bunker, R. J. & Begert, M. (2005) 'Operational Combat Analysis of the Al Qaeda Network', in *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, ed. R. J. Bunker, Routledge, London, pp. 146-169.

like figure that effectively communicates an end of days message to his followers. More information and details on these movements can be found in Table 2.

Conclusion

There are four particular events that can be expected to take place in the next decade that will warrant great vigilance by any state seeking to reduce terrorism and insurgency within its borders, particularly those with a large Sunni population:

- There will be an increase in nations that are hostile toward the US, and they will use political Islam as a foundation for their citizens and a counterweight to democracy.
- There will be an increasingly strained relationship between the US and its Sunni and Shia allies. This has already taken place in some regions of Iraq where the liberators are now viewed as occupiers.
- Al Qaeda theology and ideas will become an even greater religious force that converts members of the ummah and turns them against the host nation to their cause, fueling more home grown terrorists.
- A latent function of the increase of terrorism will be the shock value of such tactics. These tactics will be copied by numerous secular and radical groups that have nothing to do with Al Qaeda. The recent beheadings in Colombia by the FARC and those in Mexico by the cartels represent a case in point.

The US is unprepared to deal with the threat of caliphate yearnings and the eschatology that spawns it. These yearnings will take on nationalist, religious, and sectarian clothing. The symbolism contained in these movements is powerful for both Sunnis and Shiites. Since there is no recognized figure for Sunnis, Al Qaeda's logical approach is to tap into the expectation of the Sunni masses. What the masses are looking for is representation from a leader who convinces them of his sincere concern for them. The oppression of political leaders and the random violence of terrorist organizers have disqualified both groups from being a legitimate voice for the masses, but the question remains as to what other voices will emerge in their place.