TRUST IN ALLAH, BUT TIE YOUR CAMEL: THE EFFECTS OF RADICALIZED

SCHOOLING AND STATE SECURITY ON ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN THE MIDDLE

EAST

by

EVAN TIGHE

(Under the Direction of Brock Tessman)

ABSTRACT

Islamic terrorism has become a prevalent problem in the past ten years. Although much research has been done to understand the causes of such terrorism, there remains a lack of analysis on the effects of the schooling of young Muslims in extremist forms of Islam, especially when combined with other factors. This study seeks to understand the effects which such education, along with youth unemployment and the strength of security institutions, can play in the onset and sustainment of domestic Islamic terrorism in Middle Eastern states. As such, the study employs a case study analysis of these factors in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Tajikistan. The study shows that high levels of schooling in conservative Islam and high youth unemployment can lead to larger amounts of youth susceptible to recruitment by Islamic terror groups. Weak security institutions allow these groups to carry out activity within these countries.

INDEX WORDS: Islamic terrorism, Middle East, education, security, youth unemployment

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BS.Ed, University of Georgia, 2008

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2011

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DEDICATION

This work is first and foremost dedicated to my family. To my parents without whose unconditional support my education would never have been possible. To my brother Blair who taught me to follow my heart and to have the courage of my convictions. To my brother Shea and my sister-in-law Minna who taught me perseverance and work ethic. It is also dedicated to my grandfather Dr. Earl Morrogh who devoted his life to the service of others. Finally, it is dedicated to all people around the world who suffer at the hands of religious intolerance and violence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that terrorism has been an area of study amongst researchers for several decades now, the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 and the subsequent fallout in the form of military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq has sparked an increased interest in the topic as it pertains to current events. It seems that this interest has yet to wane, especially when one considers the salience of terrorism around the world today, most importantly the Middle East where historical, revolutionary events are taking place in Egypt, Libya, and Sudan, while at the same time, terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda are securing an ever-growing foothold in Yemen and other parts of the Muslim world. Terrorist activity in the Middle East is considered to be a very serious problem with critical implications for states in the region as well as for countries across the globe. Increases in terrorist activity within the Muslim region and along its periphery have seen a substantial increase as Islamic militants have been responsible for dramatic increases in "high casualty terrorist bombings" and other attacks.[1] This is not to say that Islamic groups are responsible for all terrorist incidents in the Middle East, but they are responsible for a considerable portion.

While most of these attacks have been confined to states such as Iraq and Afghanistan which have been the frontlines in the U.S. and NATO led "War on Terror," recent evidence has shown that the terrorist problem has spread to other countries in the region which are not characterized by significant amounts of foreign military personnel.

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[1] Global Report 2009: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility. Center for Global Policy at the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP)

Figure 1.1

Terrorist Incidents in Middle Eastern States and Surrounding Region by Year: 2000-2008
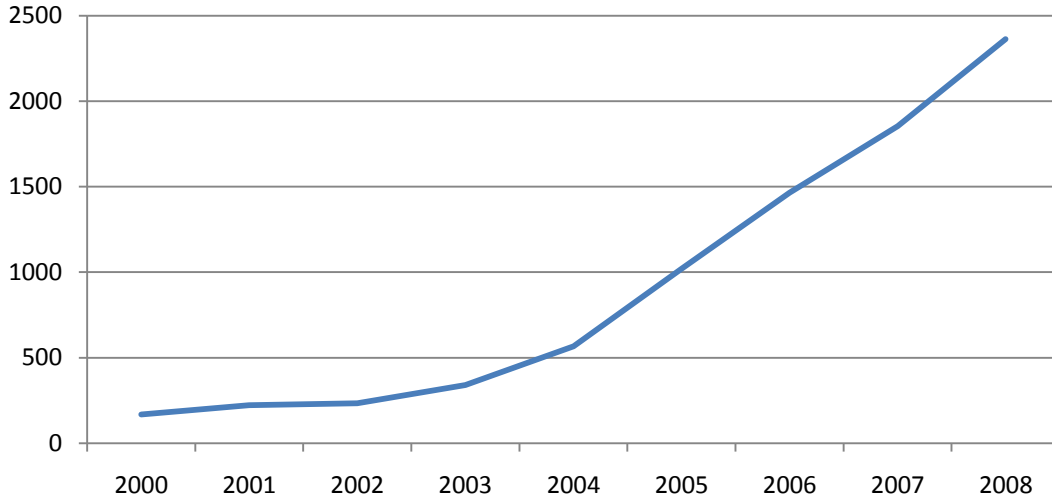
Data from the Global Terrorism Database, START. States included: Afghanistan; Bahrain; Egypt; Iran; Iraq; Israel; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kuwait; Kyrgyzstan; Lebanon; Libya; Oman; Pakistan; West Bank and Gaza Strip; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; Tajikistan; Turkey; United Arab Emirates; Uzbekistan; Yemen.

Figure 1.2

Terrorist Incidents in 2008: Middle East and Surrounding Region vs. World
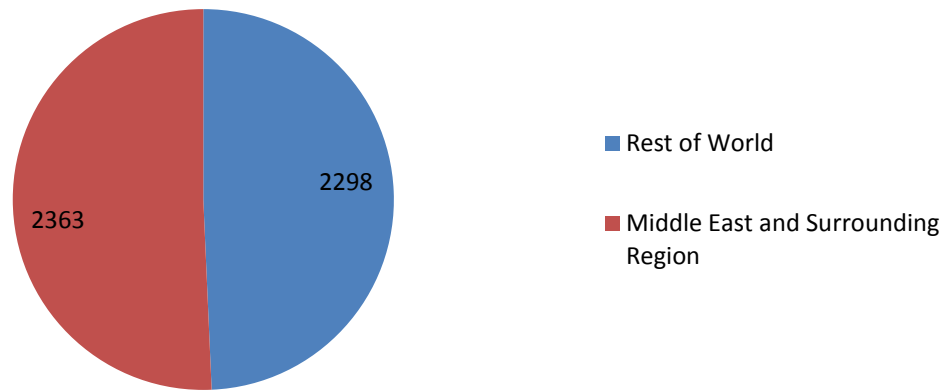
2298

2363

- Rest of World
- Middle East and Surrounding Region

Data from the Global Terrorism Database, START. States included: Afghanistan; Bahrain; Egypt; Iran; Iraq; Israel; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kuwait; Kyrgyzstan; Lebanon; Libya; Oman; Pakistan; West Bank and Gaza Strip; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; Tajikistan; Turkey; United Arab Emirates; Uzbekistan; Yemen.

So what factors do account for the prevalence of terrorism in certain states? Why has a country such as the Sultanate of Oman experienced virtually no instances of Islamic terrorism in recent history while its next-door neighbor, Yemen, has become a new focal point and operational base for Al-Qaeda? Why do predominantly Muslim states in Central Asia such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan suffer very little from terrorism while nearby states such as Afghanistan and Pakistan have chronic and massive problems dealing with militant Islamic organizations such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban? The purpose of this thesis is to provide an answer to these questions.

On the topic of terrorism, several new theories have been put forward by experts and researchers which run the gamut from measurable aspects such as economics to more unquantifiable attributes such as culture and ideology. This thesis will endeavor to put forth a new theory which builds on existing ones and attempts to bridge a gap between these quantifiable and unquantifiable causes of terrorism. The argument put forward is that terrorism attacks occurring on a domestic level are the product of two key variables: education and government effectiveness. More specifically, this thesis will examine the content of education in different Middle Eastern states as well as the level of government in the form of security, its effective reach, and its economic conditions and how these factors interact with each other in accounting for levels of domestic terrorism.

Although it will be outlined in more detail in a later chapter, the argument put forth by this study is as follows: a lack of accessibility to education as well as a religious curriculum grounded in an extremist or anti-western interpretation of Islam produces a young demographic which, unable to secure employment in a viable economy, is easily recruited into Islamic militant organizations. These organizations are then able to operate freely and carry out attacks in countries

which lack effective governmental strength and security institutions to mitigate such a problem.

At this point, it would be prudent to offer a disclaimer to the reader concerning the nature of this study. Religion is a sensitive subject when discussing its possible correlation with violent or otherwise deviant activity. It is important to clarify that this work does not intend at all to "demonize" or condemn the Islamic religion. The author acknowledges the fact that the Muslim faith is one practiced faithfully and peacefully by a virtual universality of its estimated 1.5 billion adherents. Unfortunately, like many other religions over the course of history, it has had its beliefs and tenets hijacked and manipulated by groups and individuals to serve violent purposes. Islam, like many other faiths as well, consists of many different sects and belief structures, much like the many denominations of the Christian Church. Some of these sects have innovated and adapted since the birth of Islam and are fairly liberal in their interpretation of the faith as well as their lifestyles. Other sects have remained rooted in traditionalism and are considered the conservative sects of Islam. Just as the political spectrum ranges from highly liberal to highly conservative, so too do different sects" interpretations of Islam. Even so, this study does not even seek to criticize the very conservative branches of Islam as their inherent nature is one of peace and steadfast devotion to the *Qur'an* and the life of the Prophet Muhammad as described in the *Hadith*. However, some of these conservative sects, such as Salafism and Wahhabism embrace beliefs which fall in line more readily with the mission and goals of Islamic jihadist groups, than more liberal branches of Islam. These beliefs, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters, are reported here as they as are originally written or interpreted from work by Islamic scholars and other researchers.

It is also important to note that this study presents a largely exploratory analysis which focuses on a very specific type of terrorism in a restricted region of the world. As such, the analysis

and findings contained in this work are considerably limited in scope and would most likely fail to predict overall rates of terrorism across the globe in a generalized fashion. Also, as this study is merely exploratory, it fails to include the multitude of variables traditionally included in a theoretical test of the causes of terrorism. As a result, this study should not be considered to be a true "test" of the causes of domestic terrorism.

This study is important for several reasons. First, as an area undergoing major transformations, both politically and ideologically, the Middle East has much to gain from an increased understanding of the causes of terrorism. It is safe to say that no viable and sovereign government, no matter the regime type, wishes to see terrorism occurring within their borders considering the negative effects of such attacks, especially economic consequences.[2] A better understanding of the Islamic terrorism phenomenon could further the possibility of effective policy prescriptions. A second importance of this work is for the U.S. and other states involved in the region, especially those burdened by the "War on Terror." The more information and possible pathways of terrorism are understood, the more able U.S. policy-makers will be in formulating courses of action which are more effective, and most likely less costly than the 1.121 trillion already spent on a protracted war of attrition in the region.[3]

This thesis will attempt to fill several gaps in the terrorism literature. First, while previous studies have examined correlations between levels of education and terrorist activity (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003), none have actually focused on the content of education as well as the lack of accessibility of it in explaining terrorist activity. Second, like education, economic conditions and government effectiveness have been analyzed in terrorism studies (Krueger and Maleckova, 2002;

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[2] A 2002 Economic Outlook Report from the OECD found that the 9/11 attacks had both significant short and long-term effects on the U.S. economy including tightened border controls, greater uncertainty, and a threatening of fiscal consolidation.

[3] Amy Belasco "The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations 9/11." Congressional Research Service. September 2, 2010.

Piazza 2006, 2008) but no studies to date have attempted to draw a causal relationship between these factors in conjunction with education as it is being analyzed here.

As hinted at above, this thesis will focus on domestic terrorism at the state level of analysis. This is necessary for the preservation of integrity of the research. While significant terrorist attacks have spawned investigations and reports dealing with the attackers and their origins[4], most attacks are traced to organizations and groups if possible, and individuals are rarely investigated leaving doubt as to their countries of origin. Although it is widely known that individuals involved in Islamic terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda will oftentimes travel to different countries to take part in Jihadist activities,[5] exact numbers are extremely difficult to pinpoint. Instead, only calculated estimates can be made in attempting to assess the total number of terrorism participants produced by each country. By focusing on domestic levels of terrorism within individual states, this study seeks to minimize the amount of "messy data" which may stem from attempting to quantify the numbers of terrorist participants produced by each state beyond the domestic level, though this aspect is important and will be discussed. Instead, this study will focus on the amount of terrorism experienced within the borders of each state.

This thesis will bypass a large-n analysis in favor of comparative case study analyses of three Middle Eastern states (Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Uzbekistan) which possess varying levels of each explanatory variable while at the same time, exhibiting different amounts of terrorist activity within their borders. A case-study approach is necessary for this study for two reasons. First, the nature of this analysis and the variables chosen do not lend themselves to easy numerical labeling which could be utilized for a quantitative approach especially since an important aspect of

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[4]   For example, the attacks on September 11th, 2001 led to the 9/11 Commission report which traced the attackers to their country of origin.
[5]   Clint Watts "Where They Are Coming From: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan; What Foreign Fighter Data Reveals About the Future of Terrorism." PJ Sage Inc. 2008.

this analysis focuses on a certain ideology or state of mind. Second, the study of the causes of terrorism is a complicated endeavor and requires the detailed analysis of multiple factors. As such, it is not a simple task to generalize and aggregate the roots of terrorism as the interplay and interaction between variables is just as important as the variables themselves. As Louise Richardson succinctly posits, "the search for the cause of terrorism, like the search for a cure for cancer, is not going to yield a single, definitive solution. But as with any disease, an effective cure will be dependent of the accurate diagnosis of the multiplicity of risk factors as well as their interactions with one another" (Richardson, 2006, 1).

The cases of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Uzbekistan, as noted above, were chosen due to their varying levels of the key variables employed in this study, as well as their varying experiences with Islamic terrorism. Yemen, the poorest country in the Arabian Peninsula, possesses inflammatory amounts of both variables, including a low availability of access to education, especially for those in rural and ungoverned areas and a prevalent level of conservative Islamic alternative education. It also has low levels of governmental effectiveness and security as well as a struggling economy. These factors lead some researchers and policy analysts to question whether Yemen will become the "new Afghanistan."[6] Saudi Arabia, like Yemen, exhibits high levels of religious and anti-western rhetoric in its classrooms which have drawn the worry of researchers and experts in the field.[7] However, unlike Yemen, Saudi Arabia possesses a relatively viable economy and a strong government, even to the point of repression, along with an able and capable military and security apparatus which can deter and prevent attacks within the borders of the kingdom. This leads terrorism to be less much less of a problem historically and currently in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, as will be shown, the theory presented will be able to account for the

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[6] Andrew Lee Butters. "Is Yemen the next Afghanistan?" *TIME*. October 5, 2009.
[7] Neil Macfarquhar, "A Nation Challenged: Education; Anti-Western and Extremist Views Pervade Saudi Schools," *New York Times* October 19, 2001

"surge" of terrorist activity that was experienced in Saudi Arabia from 2003-2007, the kingdom‚s only true bout with Islamic militancy. Uzbekistan represents the opposite of Saudi Arabia in that measures have been taken to curb extreme and anti-western religious rhetoric in the nation‛s schools yet also maintains a literacy rate of nearly one hundred percent. However, Uzbekistan lacks a strong economy and accounts for a paltry $3,100 GDP per capita. It also lacks the security and military resources of a stronger state like Saudi Arabia, a country whose GDP is more than seven times larger than Uzbekistan‛s and is able to spend more than twenty times more on military expenditures.[8] Like Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan also has experienced only small amounts of Islamic terrorism within its borders compared to other countries in the region.

Data for the study is derived from primary and secondary sources of terrorist groups, newspaper accounts and state websites. Data is also gathered from governmental reports concerning terrorism, education, and other pertinent areas of concern in the countries of interest.

This thesis will be divided into seven chapters. The following chapter will contain a literature review of the systemic causes of terrorism as well as a focus on the relevant literature as it applies to this study. The next chapter will outline in greater detail the theory and causal framework put forth in the study. Chapter four will discuss the revival of very conservative Islam beginning in the early 1900‛s and describe how it became a formidable Islamic movement in the form of jihadist militancy. Chapters five, six and seven will present the case studies of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Uzbekistan respectively and how the causal framework and theory applies to each country and accounts for their varying levels of domestic Islamic terrorism. The concluding will take the findings of the previous three chapters and apply them to several other countries in the Middle East and surrounding areas as well as present implications of the research, policy prescriptions, and directions for future study.

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[8]   Statistics drawn from the CIA World Factbook.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A large literature has been accumulated over the past few decades concerning the causes of terrorism, especially after the attacks on 9/11 sparked increased interest in the topic. Because of this, many explanations have been offered to explain the causes of terrorism at different levels of analysis including the individual, organization, and environmental (or systemic). Because of the nature of this study, this literature will focus on the causes of terrorism at the environmental level. This literature review first will examine alternative theories and arguments put forth to explain the causes of terrorism. It will then turn to the literature concerning the specific theory put forth in this study. The study of terrorism has produced several bodies of literature concerning its causes: lack of political freedom and civil liberties, occupation, deprivation and state weakness. However, none of these theories are independently capable of explaining terrorism.

Political Freedom and Civil Liberties

The camp of researchers who argue that political repression is a main cause of terrorism suggest that there is a direct correlation between the amount of freedom given to a state's population and their tendency to engage in terrorist activity. This has led many to believe that democracy is the most ideal form of government to deter terrorism due to the fact that it gives organizations and individuals legal and viable political channels to access to voice grievances instead of resorting to terrorism. By allowing greater political access, democracies curb violent activity (Denardo, 1985; Crenshaw, 1990). However, on the other side, other researchers have argued that democracy actually promotes terrorism. Democracies provide "softer targets" due to

the fact that greater civil liberties allow greater freedom of movement   and organization. In addition, the leaders of democratic governments, by their nature, can be voted out of office by a dissatisfied electorate. An electorate who feels as if the government is not providing enough security to the people will be at risk of being voted out of office. Terrorism, therefore, can be a useful tool for organizations at odds with democratic leaders (Eubank and Weinberg, 1994, 1998; Schmid, 1993).

As time progressed, empirical research performed found no significant correlation between political freedom and terrorism (Li, 2005; Abadie 2006) and that there is also a lack of a correlation between authoritarianism and terrorism. Examples of this dynamic at work include the fact that, according to F. Gregory Gause, 75% of terrorist attacks in "free" countries from 2000-2003 occurred in India, while China experienced no instances of terrorism (Gause, 2005). This is what led him to assert that "terrorism appears to stem from much more specific causes than regime type" (2005, 62). However, a variation of the political repression theory may be explain terrorism better. This variation claims that terrorism declines with a rise in repression to a certain point, but rises again as repression grows to a point of discontent in the population (Abadie, 2006).

Occupation

The body of literature concerning occupation is focused on how terrorism is caused by the occupation of a foreign entity in a country. This is a position ardently held by Robert Pape and his colleague James Feldman who claim that suicide terrorism is the result of occupation, whether direct in the form of a physical presence such as military forces, or in an indirect form such as the influence of the policy of a country. This occupation is exacerbated when the occupying country is of a differing religion or a democracy (Pape, 2005; Pape and Feldman, 2010). This is due to the fact that the occupation provides a strong feeling of nationalism amongst the people of a country

who will be willing to go to great lengths, even self-sacrifice, to defend what they perceive to be a threat to their culture. This is especially true when the occupying country is of a different religion which allows organization to appeal to "divine" causes for the defense of their land, and when the occupying country is a democracy, which are claimed to be more susceptible to terrorism since a public who does wish to see a continuation of terrorist activity has the power to vote out elected leaders.

However, the theory of terrorism due to occupation suffers from substantial pitfalls. To begin with, it fails to account for a lack of terrorism in several instances of occupation of a democratic country of a predominantly different religion such as the U.S. occupation of Japan following World War II, a country which exhibited extreme nationalistic tendencies in the defense of their homeland as evidenced by the utilization of "kamikaze" pilots against Allied naval forces. This theory also fails to explain why instances of terrorism actually increased in Saudi Arabia following the reduction of U.S. troops stationed in the country from just over seven thousand in 2000 to less than eight hundred in 2002. In fact, when discussing terrorism in the Middle East, Pape and Feldman's theory seems quite hollow when one considers that in 2001, the year of the 9/11 attacks, only 17,500 U.S. troops were stationed in the entire Middle Eastern region. This may seem like a considerable number until one considers that over forty thousand troops were stationed in Japan alone during the same year.[9] In short, this theory of terrorism driven by occupation fails to account for instances of terrorism in which a foreign presence was absent or a country experienced a significant decrease in foreign presence yet displayed a constant or rising amount of terrorist activity.

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[9]   These figures are drawn from the Global U.S. Troop Deployment dataset published by Tim Kane and available at www.heritage.org/research/nationalsecurity/troopsdb.cfm

This is not to say that foreign occupation has no role to play in the causes of terrorism. The U.S. and NATO occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has undoubtedly drawn fighters from around the region to participate in conflict against them. It is most likely that the Western occupation of these countries has fueled anti-Western sentiment amongst segments of the population of the Middle East which spurs people to terrorist activity (Moghadam, 2006; Mostafa and Al-Hamdi, 2007).

Deprivation

Turning now to theories which are more closely tied in with the proposed argument of this thesis, deprivation theory proposes that terrorism is the result of poverty, low levels of education and other unfortunate social conditions.

This theory builds off the work of researchers who claim that poor economic conditions and lack of material well-being leads to conflict within and between societies (Gurr, 1970, 1985). This is due to the scarcity of resources amongst a population promoting conflict between groups for control of said resources. This theory has been built upon in recent years and some researchers have found significant correlations between economic prosperity and political violence. For instance, one study found that a one percent increase in economic growth led to a five percent decrease in the number of expected Hindu-Muslim ethnic riots in fifteen Indian states between 1982 and 1995 (Bohlken and Sergenti, 2010). In addition, others have found that greater levels of economic prosperity are correlated with a decrease in the likelihood of civil war onset (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Miguel, et al. 2004). Opponents of this school of thought claim that increases in economic prosperity are actually positively correlated with violence as more unfortunate groups rise out of impoverished conditions, they enter into conflict with the members of the next "rung" of the economic ladder (Olzak, 1992).

In regards to terrorism, the proponents of the deprivation theory argue that poverty and low education leads to conditions in which affected populations engage in terrorism as a solution. This is due to the fact that terrorist groups can operate more successfully in states with poor economic conditions because they can offer people ways to alleviate their suffering through social services which are not provided by the government (Grynkewich, 2008) or through ways of making their life more meaningful in the form of sacrifice in a Jihadist struggle (Moghadam, 2006). Claims have even been made that Islamic anger towards the U.S. is due to the inability of Islamic nations to achieve economic success.[10]

Recent work has questioned the validity of poverty and poor social conditions as a cause of terrorism. In one study, Krueger and Maleckova analyzed the backgrounds of members of organizations engaged in terrorism against Israel such as the Shiite militant group Hezbollah and found that just as many members were from economically viable families and had high levels of education as compared to those from impoverished backgrounds and low levels of education (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003). However, as will be mentioned in the next chapter, this study focused on years of education as opposed to access and the content of the education received.

Despite evidence to the contrary, most researchers acknowledge that impoverishment and poor social conditions do have an effect on terrorism, at least indirectly. States with high levels of poverty and economic weakness are usually the result of a state which is weak in more ways than one, which is what this review will examine next.

State Weakness

Related to the previous theory and also to the argument of this thesis, state weakness is maintained as a strong determinant of terrorist activity. Because the term "state weakness" is a

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[10] Thomas Friedman, "The Core of Muslim Rage," New York Times,   6 May 2002. http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/06/opinion/the-core-of-muslim-rage.html?scp=1&sq=the%20core%20of%20muslim%20rage&st=cse

broad one which can incorporate many facets of governmental capability, it has led to the utilization of a large number of various indicators and definitions by researchers. However, most likely the best definition of state strength has been given by Robert Rotberg, one of the foremost experts on the subject, who contends that states exist to provide mechanisms through which public and political goods, such as welfare and defense, are delivered to people living within a designated territory. "It is according to their performance-," he claims, "-according to the levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial political goods -- that strong states may be distinguished from weak ones" (2004, 2).

State weakness can be caused by several factors including economics and geography, but is most typically characterized by unresolved ethnic or religious tensions, high urban crime rates, low and inadequate levels of infrastructure, and high levels of corruption. This weakness leads to greater levels of domestic violence, a decline in GDP, and high amounts of crime (Rotberg, 2003, 2004).

The case for state weakness and its correlation with terrorist activity was created as a response to researchers, policy-makers, and state leaders who contend that terrorism is a product of undemocratic regimes. This was a position espoused by the George W. Bush administration after the attacks on 9/11 and the subsequent events leading to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Empirical studies performed to validate this claim failed to defnitively do so (Piazza, 2007; Wade and Reiter, 2007) and suggested an alternative causal association, namely that regime type is not so much significant as a cause of terrorism as is the strength of the regime. This finding fit in well with earlier work which found that states transitioning to democratic governments were more prone to terrorism than established democracies (Eyerman, 1998) and that unconsolidated democracies were more likely to experience terrorism than stronger, more consolidated ones (Abadie, 2006).

The theory that weak states are correlated with terrorism possesses two mutually reinforcing features. First, weak states and state failure creates the conditions by which terrorist groups can form. Second, that weak states provide opportunities for already existing terrorist groups. By an inability to provide public and political goods and lacking effective institutions, weak states cannot manage conflict or provide security and for other needs which wears away the legitimacy of the government. Weak states are also unable to project power within the borders of the state which creates a power vacuum. This vacuum creates "lawless areas" which are utilized by groups to carry out operations such as recruitment, indoctrination, weapons storage, and communication which necessary for violent activity (Rabasa, et al., 2007). These features allow terrorist organizations to operate freely and to engage in acts with minimal fear of government retaliation. For example, weak states often lack adequate security and law-enforcement capability which allows terrorist organizations to engage in extra-legal fundraising activities such as smuggling and drug trafficking (Piazza, 2007). Now that the relevant literature has been reviewed, this study will now turn to the theory proposed to identify the causes of domestic Islamic terrorism in the Middle East.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY

The theories reviewed in the previous chapter fail to independently account for causes of terrorism, even when applied at the regional level such as the Middle East. However, by building off of already established theoretical frameworks and adding a new factor into the mix, namely that of education, a new theory will be detailed to explain Islamic terrorism in the Middle East. The argument made is that the content of education and in certain states coupled with a high youth unemployment rate produces a youthful demographic more susceptible to recruitment by terrorist organizations operating in states which lack an adequate economy and necessary security and law enforcement measures to deter and prevent terrorist attacks.

The first section of this chapter will explain how the education system of certain states which possess curricula and educational institutions which exhibit pertinent levels of extreme Islamic ideology create youth who are more sympathetic and receptive to the doctrine and mission of jihadist groups. The second section will discuss how high levels of youth unemployment make this demographic of these countries susceptible to recruitment into Islamic terrorist organizations, but will also describe how unemployment in itself is not sufficient for recruitment into Islamic terrorist activity. The third section will describe how low effectiveness of security and law enforcement institutions allow these terrorist organizations to operate freely and carry out attacks. The final section will provide the research design for the study.

Extremist Islamic Education

In speaking about educational reform, Osama bin Laden, the top leader of Al-Qaeda, once remarked that "Crusader interference in changing curriculums is definitely one of the most dangerous interferences in our affairs..."[11] These are particularly revealing words and should tell us about the vital part that education can potentially play in the molding of future generations of Islamic jihadists. As noted in the literature review section of this thesis, education has been examined in relation to terrorist activity, but it has focused on the amount of schooling received rather than the actual content of the education and the accessibility to it. This had led researchers, such as Abdelaziz Testas, to assert in regards to terrorism that "the focus should probably be not only on increasing years of schooling, but also to consider the content of education as well" (Testas, 2004).

It is important to clarify that this thesis does not seek to argue that these schools are recruitment camps for militant Islamic organizations, although there has been evidence that some do serve this purpose. As noted in a report by the International Crisis Group, "Most madrasas [religious schools] do not impart military training or education but they do sow the seeds of extremism in the minds of students."[12] It is the dynamic described in this section which has led Greg Mortenson to establish the NGO, the Central Asia Institute (CAI), aimed at establishing schools throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan with the aim of promoting a moderate Islamic education which dismisses the violent tenets of groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Due to his operations and procedures, Mortenson has since been solicited by the U.S. military to serve as an advisor in the "War on Terror."

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[11] As translated by Dan Darling in "Special Analysis: The 12/04 Bin Laden Tapes," *Winds of Change*.
[12] "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military" 2002 Report by the International Crisis Group (ICG).

For a terrorist group, or any group for that matter, to survive, it must be able to replenish its ranks with like-minded individuals who can carry on the group's activities. This is especially true for violent groups which, by their nature, lose members to risky and dangerous activity. In characterizing terrorist activity as a "high-risk social movement" Richard Shultz of the USAF Institute for National Security Studies finds that appeal to ideology plays a key role in the recruiting process to attract new members, as well as the ability to shape their beliefs to carry out the fight.[13] This is important to keep in mind as this theory does not claim that extremist education consists of the violent tenets which groups such as Al-Qaeda proclaim. Extremist education is rather used in reference to very conservative forms of Islam such as Salafism and Wahhabism which lend themselves more readily to manipulation and shaping by Islamic terror groups for their own purposes.

Students who find themselves without access to a moderate or secular education and find themselves being taught and indoctrinated with extremist ideologies become more sensitized to the jihadist movement. This increases the "mobilization potential" for Jihadist groups in certain states. Mobilization potential refers to the people in society who can be recruited into a social movement, such as a terror organization, and consists of people who take a positive or receptive stance toward these movements. The mobilization potential of a society sets the limits of how successful a mobilization campaign can be for a movement or group and is the reservoir from which the movement can draw from (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987).

For an individual to be motivated or receptive to joining a dangerous social movement such as a violent terrorist organization, it is necessary for individuals to share certain beliefs or goals with that of the movement. Several researchers have asserted that individuals who accept a

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[13]   Richard Shultz. "Global Insurgency Strategy and the Salafi Jihad Movement." INSS Occasional Paper 66. April 2008. USAF Institute for National Security Studies.

movement‟s basic values, believes that valued objects are threatened, and believes that their actions can help restore those values experience a greater obligation to support the movement than individuals who do not share the same values (Dietz, et al., 1999).

By being educated in a school or institution which teaches or promotes extremist versions of Islam, youths are embedded with certain ideological foundations which "fit" better with the ideologies of Islamic terror groups. In many cases, these ideas and beliefs are taught over several years of instruction and rote memorization of specific passages of the *Qur'an*. Although specific beliefs will be examined in the subsequent chapters of this study, it should be noted that they include, but are not limited to, the West waging a physical and ideological war with Islam, disassociation with non-Muslims, and the importance of *jihad* in defending the Islamic lands. By attending institutions which pervade such beliefs, the mobilization potential of these students is much greater than those who have not experienced such an education. As a result, these youths are more likely to be receptive to ideas and propaganda put forth by Islamic terror groups and are more susceptible to joining such an organization. Youths who do not share similar beliefs with the group will lack the necessary motivation or sympathy for recruitment.

Due to this dynamic, states which possess an educational system in which extremist ideas are taught are more at risk for their youth to become members of such organizations which perpetuate their existence, and increase their operational capacity. As the case study portion of this thesis will show, some Middle Eastern states do not necessarily condone these ideas being taught within their borders, yet are unable to moderate certain schools which operate without state approval.

How Youth Unemployment Aids Recruitment

Upon graduation or leaving schools with a more extremist education, these students who find themselves entering an economy in which employment is difficult to obtain become more willing and are even more easily persuaded to join organizations as an alternative to unemployment or an otherwise unpromising future. As this thesis implies, it is the youth of these Islamic countries which are particularly at risk to recruitment. "When was the last time you heard of a 50-year-old suicide bomber?" asks Rafat Al-Akhali, a member of a Yemeni youth group lobbying to have its voice heard in regards to terrorism in the country.[14] Echoing this sentiment is Walter Laqueur who believes that "youth unemployment does create a social and psychological climate in which Islamism and various populist and religious sects flourish" (Laqueur, 2004, 2).

The lack of youth employment in a country may be due to poor economic conditions, an increasingly large youth demographic, or the inability for youth to effectively transition to the work force. Whatever the reason, the inability for youth to gain employment can cause serious repercussions for both the individuals and the society. Employment is generally considered a very important step in the socialization process of adolescents and allows them to take on responsible and productive roles in society as well as provides a sense of fulfillment and identity. Employment also provides a sense of independence and subsequently reduces dependence on others who may no longer be needed to support an individual monetarily or otherwise. When employment is not available or does not present itself as a viable opportunity for young adults, they are denied or marginalized in a way in which they cannot assume active and meaningful roles in society. This leads to general feelings of restricted opportunity, frustration, anger and resignation (Hess, et al., 1994).

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[14]   Alice Hackman, "Yemeni Youth Lobby to be Heard on Terrorism" *Yemen Times,* January 28, 2010

Youths who are unable to secure employment have found to exhibit certain negative tendencies. Psychologically, unemployed youth may be more at risk for serious psychiatric disorders (Finlay-Jones and Eckhardt, 1982).   Researchers also found that youth who were unable to obtain employment seven months after leaving school felt more depressed, lonely, and less satisfied with themselves (Tiggemann and Winefield, 1980). Furthermore, investigators have also concluded that young adults are especially prone to psychosocial stress during unemployment (Kieselbach, 1988; Roberts, 1984). This is primarily due to the feelings of alienation and marginalization which unemployed youth experience.

When youth feel these psychological burdens of unemployment along with the lack of a societal role and identity, they are more prone to finding more deviant outlets for their grievances. This can be explained by the "strain theory" in which deviant behavior, such as crime, committed by unemployed youth is attributed the lack of means to attain personal satisfaction. As a result of restricted opportunities to secure valuable resources such as financial stability, youth may turn to deviant behavior as a solution (Merton, 1967). In other words, lack of employment and stability gives the individual "nothing to lose" in terms of achieving satisfaction which lowers the risks and costs of engaging in deviant behavior.

Islamist terror groups are able to capitalize on the effects of youth unemployment in Middle Eastern countries by offering these individuals a role in which they can achieve fulfillment. Jihadists groups and their supporters claim that the "honor of martyrdom" is the most solemn declaration of faith and the noblest deed a Muslim can perform. Recruits are convinced that it brings victory as well as eternal life (Perry and Negrin, 2008). This promise of fulfillment is exemplified from the following excerpt from material of the Hamas Student Association at al-Najah University:

Allah builds good and pleasant dwellings in heaven. The inhabitants receive rooms, under

which flow rivers. There are also tents in heaven, each one made of pearl sixty miles high and sixty

miles wide. Each mile contains a special corner for family members of the believer, hidden from the

others…In paradise Allah provides the inhabitants with rivers of water, milk, honey, and wine…The

shahid [martyr] for Allah receives immediate atonement of all his sins with the first drop of his

blood being shed…and he weds seventy-two virgins.[15]

Islamic terrorist groups may also be able to capitalize on the situation of unemployed youth

by offering incentives. They may offer financial support such as a stable salary or provide

familial-like bonds to youth who find themselves marginalized due to their predicament. They

might just simply provide something exciting to do. Indeed, an interview of two young women in

Palestine revealed that they decided to join a militant group because "there was nothing to do" and

they felt that they "wanted to do something" (Berko and Erez, 2008).

Unemployment, along with other poor economic conditions, cannot explain recruitment to

terrorist groups by itself. Although unemployment may lead individuals to exhibit the negative

consequences associated with such a dilemma, an individual who lacks an extremist education also

lacks the necessary ideological "glue" to attach themselves to such a movement or organization.

Returning to mobilization potential, those who are not part of this potential will be less likely to

join the movement even if they are reached by attempts at mobilization (Klandermans and

Oegema, 1987). Because of this, youth who may find themselves unemployed, yet were never

educated in extreme Islamic ideologies are less at risk for being recruited into an Islamic terror

organization due to divergent social and religious beliefs which do not coincide with those of the

organization. In addition, those who were educated in moderate or secular environments and

obtained employment do not share the radical beliefs of terror organizations and have also found

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[15] From material obtained by Israel from the Hamas Student Association as al-Najah University in Nablus, quoted in
Samuel Katz, *Jihad in Brooklyn: The NYPD Raid That Stopped America's First Suicide Bomber*. p. 123-124.

their niche in society. In contrast, those who received an education more rooted in ideas and beliefs which coincide more closely with Islamic terror groups as well as fail to secure unemployment create a young individual who is at high risk for recruitment into such groups. Those who have been educated in an extremist curricula and may share similar beliefs as these groups but have secured employment have a role in society which provides stability, both financially and psychologically, which increases the costs and risks of joining such a group (see figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Youth Potential for Islamic Terror Recruitment
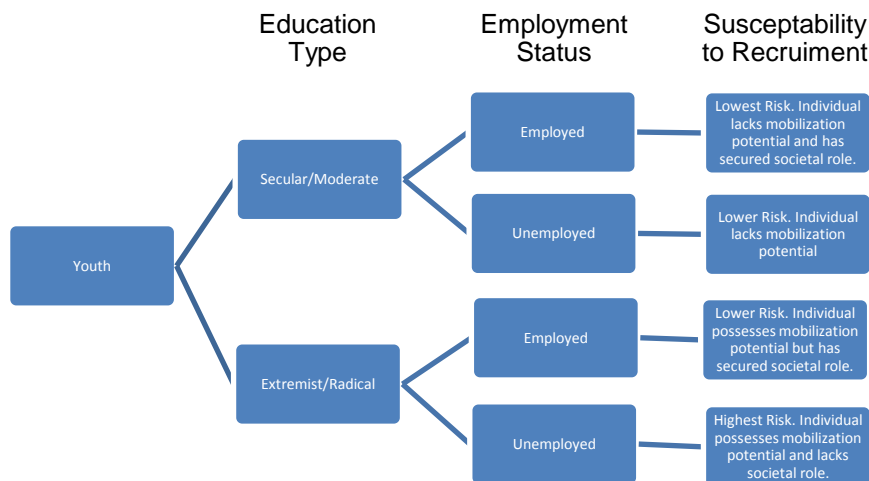
How Inadequate Security and Law Enforcement Lead to Terrorism

If an education rooted in an extremist curriculum provides Islamic terrorist groups potential recruits and fighters, an inadequate security apparatus provides the freedom of movement and organization necessary to carry out operations which culminate in attacks and bombings. Terrorist groups find most success when they can operate in areas which can provide refuge from efforts to combat or counter them. When host countries do not provide the capacity to enforce

security in these areas, it leads to what researchers in the field dub "safe havens" for terrorist groups. This inadequacy can come from two different sources. The host state may inherently lack the resources capable of providing such security and enforcement, or the host state may lack the political will to enforce security. An example of the former can be seen in a state such as Somalia where a bottom of the barrel economy does not provide the state with funding necessary to hire, train, and equip security forces. An example of the latter can be seen in Pakistan, where the state is reticent to enter and enforce law and security in the Waziristan region where Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have created a stronghold of terrorism. These "safe havens" provide terrorist groups the ability to carry out operations such as recruitment, indoctrination, training, weapon storage, intelligence gathering, and eventually, attacks (Rabasa, 2007).

Physical safe havens, which this study is primarily concerned with, may be failed or failing states, poorly controlled borders or maritime areas, or areas within otherwise viable states where the government"s authority cannot reach. Other forms of safe havens also exist including "virtual" safe havens which find their refuge in the electronic infrastructure of the internet and global media.[16] As Islamic militant groups are able to operate freely in the country, they are able to carry out attacks against both Western targets within the state, such as embassies or soldiers, as well as attacks against native government facilities and personnel. As will be described later, the motivation for groups to attack institutions of their own country stem from conservative and traditionalist Islamic beliefs that the only true form of government is one based on Islamic *sharia* law under the rule of an Islamic Caliphate. Middle Eastern states which have adopted Western styles of government and institutions are therefore "apostates," or illegitimate governments, which stand in opposition to "true" Islam as these groups perceive it.

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[16] "Terrorist Safe Havens." Country Reports on Terrorism. 2009. U.S. Department of State.

This factor, combined with the educational factors above, create the necessary environment for domestic terrorist attacks by Islamic militant groups, which is what this thesis is examining. However, this environment can also provide groups with the ability to carry out transnational attacks which makes this study especially salient. To sum up, Islamic terrorism is a vehicle which has two main components: the engine and the chassis. An education rooted in extremist ideology and high youth unemployment rates provide the engine for this phenomenon, powering the movement. Inadequate security and law enforcement provides the chassis. By themselves, each component is incapable of going anywhere. However, when combined, these components create a vehicle capable of moving on its own power.

Research Design

In this study, the terms "terrorism" and "terrorist organizations" are used to describe religious militant groups operating in the Middle East. Although secular militant organizations do exist in the region, it is generally acknowledged that Islamic groups represent the bulk of both terrorist organizations as well as attacks. Examples of these groups include Al-Qaeda and its offshoot organizations such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)[17], Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Taliban.

Although there are several definitions of the Middle East which include differing countries encompassed by it, this study refers to the Middle East in cultural terms. That is, countries in the region which share relatively common religious and historical associations. In this sense, the "Middle East" as it is referred to in this study includes the traditional states associated with the term such as states in the Arabian Peninsula, but also extends eastwards to states in Central and Southwest Asia such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

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[17]   These offshoots, along with the central Al-Qaeda leadership are also referred to as   Al-Qaeda and its Affiliated Movements (AQAM)

This study utilizes a comparative case-study analysis which examines three different Middle Eastern states: Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Tajikistan. As noted in the introduction, these states were chosen based on their variation in each of the key variables used in this model.

Yemen, a country on the Southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula has become a hotbed of Islamic militant activity and the new base of operations for Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Yemen's education system has long been in shambles and state-run and operated schools are rare outside of urban areas. Poor economic conditions and a lack of state schools have given way to alternative schooling in the form of religious schools outside of government influence. Yemen also possesses an extremely high unemployment rate (35%)[18]. Yemen is also exhibits an inability to exert security and law enforcement over large areas of its territory due to domestic conflicts channeling government resources away from such efforts as well as an overall lack of financing, training, personnel, and equipment. In short, Yemen is a prime environment for the growth of Islamic extremism.

Saudi Arabia, unlike Yemen, possesses a much stronger economy and a more stable system of education. However, Saudi Arabia's schools, as a product of state-sponsored Wahhabism, contain a curriculum ingrained with extremist and anti-western ideology. Saudi Arabia's total unemployment rate is lower than Yemen's but the rate for youth unemployment is much higher. This would seem to be prime recruiting ground for terrorist groups. However, Saudi Arabia's current security institutions are much better equipped and capable of enforcement across the country since 2007, leaving terrorist groups little room to breathe and deterring terrorist activity within Saudi borders. Because of this, Saudi Arabia has experienced relatively low levels of terrorism aside from a spate of activity from 2003-2007 which will be explained by the proposed theory in its case study chapter.

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[18]   CIA World Factbook

Tajikistan represents the opposite of Saudi Arabia, as the education system has taken measures to prevent extremist ideologies and curriculums from taking root and maintains a highly secular outlook. Tajikistan also boasts a much better employment rate, but like Saudi Arabia, the youth unemployment rate remains disproportionally higher than the total. Unlike Saudi Arabia, the Tajikistan government lacks the sophistication and resources to provide a consistent security and law enforcement presence in the country such as along the sizable border it shares with Afghanistan and its Rasht Valley. Like Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan has experienced relatively low amounts of terrorist activity to date, but there is concern among state leaders and policy-makers about its future dealings with Islamic terrorism.

Table 3.1: Comparison of Relevant Variables and Domestic Islamic Terrorism in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan				
State	*Education System*	*Youth Unemployment*	*Security Capability*	*Current Level of Islamic Terrorism*
Yemen	Public and religious education.	High	Low	High
Saudi Arabia	State-sponsored religious education incorporated in schools	High	High	Low with high levels from 2003-2007
Tajikistan	Secular. Religious education highly moderated.	High	Low	Low

CHAPTER 4

MODERN ISLAMIC EXTREMISM AND THE ROOTS OF JIHADIST MILITANCY

Before delving into the case study portion of this thesis, it is important to briefly explain the historical roots of modern Islamic extremism as well as its motivations, beliefs, and goals. This is necessary to put into context the factors which may lead youth who are schooled in such an ideology to be susceptible to recruitment by Islamic terror groups.

In studying and understanding Islamic extremism, it is critically important to again realize that the violence and beliefs embodied by extremist organizations are not representative of the Muslim faith as a whole. This is a myth and mischaracterization still propagated in mass quantities today by many people, from ordinary citizens to politicians. Islamic extremism is the result of movements which, although are part of modern Islam, represent only parts of the Islamic community. The preeminent movement which has lent itself to extremism is Salafism which includes movements of its own, such as Wahhabism (which is dominant in Saudi Arabia). Again, like Islam as a whole, Salafism does not imply being prone to terrorism or violent activity, and there are multitudes of adherents to Salafism who live a life of peace. However, aspects of the movement have been taken to an extreme level which has led to violence.

The modern Islamic extremist movement began in the early 20th century when large areas of the Middle Eastern region including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq were under direct occupation or influenced by European powers, most notably France and Britain. Social ills, such as injustice and moral decay, observed in Muslim society during this time were believed to be caused by submission to foreign, alien powers and their influences. This sparked an Islamic movement which

perceived Muslim society as having strayed from the "straight path" of Islam, and that the solution was a renewed adherence to the tenets of the faith. In other words, the *Ummah*, or Muslim society, had fallen into a state of *Jahiliyya*, the term used to describe the ignorance of Arabians before the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad. The belief was that all problems, whether social or political, could be solved by a return to traditional mores of Islam, and that the Muslim community must be re-educated. This would be done by acknowledging only the sovereignty of God and the sacred law, known as *Sharia*, in all aspects of life. A revival of Salafism arose from those Muslims who believed that a strict interpretation of the *Qur'an* and other accounts of the Prophet were necessary to return the *Ummah* to purity.

Followers of the Salafi movement seek to return Islam to its roots by imitating the life of the Prophet and that of the first generations of Muslims. They draw their understanding from a literal interpretation of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna* (the path lived by the Prophet Muhammad when he was alive). Quintan Wiktorowicz summarizes Salafism quite well:

> To protect tawhid (the "oneness" of God), Salafis argue that Muslims must strictly follow the Qur'an and hold fast the purity of the Prophet Muhammad's model. The latter source of religious guidance plays a particularly central role in the Salafi creed. As the Muslim exemplar, he embodied the perfection of tawhid in action and must be emulated in every detail. Salafis also follow the guidance of the Prophet's companions (the salaf), because they learned about Islam directly from the messenger of God and are thus best able to provide an accurate portrayal of the prophetic model (the term "Salafi" signifies followers of the prophetic model as understood by the companions). (Wiktorowicz, 2006, 209).

As such, the Salafi approach rejects all reinterpretations, innovations, and other practices which arose since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Although concepts of Salafism had been in existence for quite some time, it was the occupation and influence of Western powers which spurred its revival.

Out of the revival of Salafism came the Muslim Brotherhood which was created in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, who was distraught over the effects Westernization had had on the Muslim community, and sought to establish an Muslim state in Egypt based on Qur"anic law. The Brotherhood grew in membership and influence until, in 1952, it supported a military coup to overthrow the Egyptian monarchy. The Brotherhood believed that the leader of the military coup, Gamal Abdel Nasser, would be intent on establishing an Islamic government. However, soon afterwards the secular aspirations of Nasser proved incompatible with the Brotherhood"s desires and the Brotherhood attempted to assassinate him in 1954. The Brotherhood was then outlawed and the government began to crack down on its members and operations. It was this repression which sparked Salafi Jihadism.

Sayyid Qutb, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and widely considered to be the father of modern Islamic extremism, was imprisoned in 1954 as part of the effort to dismantle the Brotherhood. During his time in prison, he wrote several works including *In the Shade of the Qur'an* and *Milestones*, both of which have become widely read and doctrine for the Salafi Jihadists. In them, Qutb condemns the Western liberal-democratic tradition of government and the secularist views it espouses and calls for a return to government based on Islamic law and beliefs:

> Any system in which the final decisions are referred to human beings, and in which the sources of authority are human, deifies human beings by designating others than God as lords over men. This declaration means that the usurped authority of God be returned to Him and the usurpers thrown out -- those who by themselves devise laws for others to follow, thus elevating themselves to the status of lords and reducing others to the status of slaves (Qutb, 1964, 58).

Qutb also denounces Western society, which he views as the cause of human degradation and injustice:

Look at this capitalism with its monopolies, its usury, and whatever else is unjust in it; at

this individual freedom, devoid of human sympathy and responsibility for relatives except under

force of law; at this materialistic attitude which deadens the spirit; at this behavior, like animals,

which you call "free mixing of the sexes"; at this vulgarity which you call "emancipation of women"

(139).

According to this ideology, Qutb made the case for denouncing Middle Eastern

governments and labeling them "illegitimate" and thus needing to be overthrown, as Islamic law

and values were being ignored in these apostate regimes. In fact, all societies ruled by such

governments were not Islamic and therefore the Muslims living in them were religiously obligated

by the tenets of *jihad* to oppose and destroy them. This course of action is put forth in another

excerpt from Qutb's work:

Indeed Islam has the right to take the initiative. Islam is not the heritage of any particular

race or country; this is God's religion and it is for the whole world. It has the right to destroy all

obstacles in the form of institutions and traditions…it attacks institutions and traditions to release

human beings from their poisonous influences (75).

In his writings, Qutb provided the basis of an ideology aimed at mobilizing the Muslim

community for *jihad* against near enemies (such as the Egyptian regime) and the far enemy known

as the West. His writings influenced many including several important figures such as Mohammed

Abd al-Salam Faraj, who later became the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) in the 1970's,

and Ayman al-Zawahiri, a top leader of Al-Qaeda. The new Salafi Jihadist movement was initially

contained to the overthrowing of apostate regimes like Egypt, but it would later expand following

the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which provided a unifying cause for the *ummah* to expel the

infidel Soviets.

The Soviet-Afghan War provided a backdrop to which the Salafi jihadist movement was

able to grow, organize, and become a much more formidable ideological and violent force as

Muslims flocked from across the Middle East to join in the battle to defend *dar al-Islam* (the house of Islam). The war created the opportunity for the movement to acquire followers and sources of funding as leaders of the movement traveled to spread their teachings and motivations to gain support for the cause. Organizations gained infrastructure which created networks through which financing, recruiting and training could be performed. "Tens of thousands of militants," writes Olivier Roy, "went to Afghanistan through these Islamic networks for training and Jihad" (2004, 296).

Following the conclusion of the war, the Salafi Jihadists were empowered by the defeat of the powerful Soviet military and quickly began organizing their next move. Some jihadists proposed that the fight be taken to other areas of the Muslim world which were perceived to be under attack by infidel invaders such as Bosnia and the Kashmir. Others sought to return to their home countries to overthrow the "near enemy"; Muslim governments whose regimes did not sit well with the Salafi jihadist vision of a true Islamic community. It is this return, along with a general spread of the Salafi influence, which began to embed Salafi beliefs and anti-western sentiment into schools from Yemen to Pakistan. However, the specifics of this phenomenon will be examined in greater detail in the case study portions of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

In late October of 2010, two explosive devices were intercepted on their way to targets in

the U.S. via airline cargo flights. The devices, one uncovered in the United Kingdom and the other

in a FedEx facility in Dubai, were disguised as printer toner cartridges and described as

sophisticated and unable to be detected by standard x-ray screening. Although it remains unknown

whether the bombs were intended to have detonated en route or at the addressed destinations, the

perpetrator is clear as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which is based in Yemen, has

claimed responsibility.

This plot, along with several other terrorist actions originating from Yemen including an

attempted bombing of a Northwest Airlines flight in late 2009 and the September 2010 crashing of

a cargo flight from Dubai and all claimed by the same group, has caused concern in leaders and

policy-makers about the potential of Islamic terror groups in the country. However, Yemen‟s

struggles with Islamic terrorism are not restricted to the past few years as the country has been

increasingly struggling with the phenomenon locally since 2004.

This case study will trace the dynamics of the theory proposed in the previous chapter and

will show how Yemen‟s education system, along with high levels of youth unemployment and a

weak security apparatus has led to the rise in Islamic terror in the country. The first section of this

case study will present a brief overview of Yemen and its modern history. The second section will

trace Yemen‟s history with Islamic extremism and how the country has historically been

sympathetic to Salafi jihadist ideology and how this sympathy affects the curriculum of some

Yemeni religious schools. The next section will provide an overview of the history of education in Yemen and how it has interacted with extremist Islamic ideologies present in the country to lead to the establishment of religious schools with an extremist curriculum. The fourth section will focus on the current Yemeni education system and its how the lack of accessibility of the public system and curriculums of alternative religious schools plant the seeds of extremism in young Yemenis. The fifth section will analyze Yemen's economy, the dire situation faced by Yemeni youth in seeking employment, and how unemployment makes these radicalized youths susceptible to recruitment by Islamic terror groups. The sixth section will describe how Yemen's inadequate security and law enforcement capabilities lead to operational freedom for these groups and allows them to carry out attacks in the country. The next section will analyze Yemen's growing Islamic terrorist problems since 2004. The final section will present conclusions of the case study.

Brief Overview

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East and located on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the north, Oman to the northeast, and possesses a vast 1,900 kilometer-long coastline which lies on the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea to the south, and continues to the Red Sea to the west. Its borders contain a geography marked by coastal plains along the seas which lead to flat-topped hills and rugged mountains which eventually give way to the desert of the inland Arabian Peninsula. Its area of approximately 528,000 square kilometers makes Yemen roughly twice the size of Wyoming.[19]

Yemen's government is classified as a republic with a presidency elected every seven years and currently held by Ali Abdullah Saleh who has held the post since 1990 when North and South Yemen merged to form a single state. The executive branch also includes a cabinet of ministers appointed by the president with the advice of the prime minister. The legislative branch of the

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[19] CIA World Factbook

government functions on a bicameral system with the upper house representatives being appointed by the president and the lower house representatives elected by popular vote. A judicial branch which operates mostly independent of traditional Islamic Sharia Law completes the structure of the state government.

The economy is focused around its increasingly dwindling oil resources which account for 25% of its GDP and approximately 70% of government revenue. Due to this dependence, Yemen launched an initiative in 2006 aimed at diversifying the economy by bolstering non-oil sectors. This effort has been aided by a $370 million program from the IMF in 2010.[20] However, these efforts so far have yielded little progress as a rising population which has tripled since 1978 continues to burden the state and has led to over 45% of the population living below the poverty line.[21] In terms of religion, Yemen consists of two sects of Islam. Zaidi, a minority sect of Shiite Islam, is prevalent in the northern region of the country while Shaf'i, a Sunni sect, is mainly found in the southern portions.[22]

Turning to Yemen's modern history, the Republic of Yemen as it exists today did not form until May 22, 1990. Before this, the country was split into two separate entities. North Yemen was created when the Ottoman Empire was dissolved in 1918 following World War I, and Imam Yahya, the leader of the Zaidi community, assumed power of the state and sought to maintain the country's religious purity by keeping it isolated from the rest of the world. During this time, North Yemen was characterized by internal opposition and strife through Yahya's rule as well as that of his son, Ahmad, until 1961 when army officers led by Colonel Abdallah al Sallal took control of the country and established the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). Afterwards, civil war broke out between the royalist forces, backed by Saudi Arabia and Jordan in opposition to the newly formed

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[20]   CIA World Factbook
[21]   "No Quick Fixes: Fighting terrorism in Yemen requires and partners." *The Economist.* November 4, 2010.
[22]   "Country Profile: Yemen." Library of Congress- Federal Research Division, August 2008

republic, and republican forces supported by Egypt. Fighting lasted until 1968 when opposing leaders eventually reconciled following a royalist siege of the city of Sanaa.

South Yemen was under British influence and occupation since the capture of the port city of Aden in 1839 and it was ruled as part of British India until 1937 when Aden became a crown colony, and the remaining territory was designated as a protectorate. By 1965, most of the tribal areas within the territory of the protectorate had unified to become the Federation of South Arabia which then gave way to war between the Marxist National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY). By late 1967, the NLF had seized control of most of the country and the Federation had collapsed prompting the removal of British troops. In the Federation''s place, the People''s Republic of Yemen was formed which was later modified to the People''s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) after a radical wing of the NLF gained power.

By 1972, open fighting between the two Yemeni states had broken out and began a period of tension, conflict, and multiple leaders which lasted until 1990 when both sides mutually agreed to a unity constitution which was adopted in May of 1991. However, after unification, fighting between the two states simply transitioned to civil war within the country as poor economic conditions led to domestic unrest. This led to the beginning of the Southern secessionist as leaders of the former South Yemen broke away briefly and established a new Democratic Republic of Yemen based in Aden, but this movement failed to gain any official recognition on the international stage. Following several years of conflict, Aden was captured and the civil war ceased. In 1997, parliamentary elections were held and followed by the election of Saleh (who had presided over the YAR prior to unification in 1990 and remained in power throughout the civil

war) in 1999. After the war, Yemen fell into serious economic problems as the Yemeni riyal became devalued and the price of necessary commodities, such as water and fuel, rose.

Needless to say, Yemen has had a long history of internal problems which continue today. President Saleh‟s government is currently nagged by the continuing efforts of the southern secession movement, as well as a rebellion organized by Houthi‟s, a clan of Zaidi Muslims, in the north. It is necessary to understand the problems surrounding Yemen‟s history as this study now turns to Yemen‚s ties with Islamic extremism.

Yemen and Islamic Extremism

Yemen has had a history of conservative Islam, and has been sympathetic to aspects of Islamic extremism and jihadism for several decades. The Salafi ideology grew in northern Yemen out of its close relationship with Saudi Arabia which embraces Wahhabism, a puritanical form of Salafism which is often labeled as even more conservative than the traditional Salafi style. By the mid-1970‟s, the newly installed President of the YAR, Ibrahim al-Hamdi, began encouraging Wahhabism as a way to combat the Marxism which had taken root in the PDRY. Al-Hamdi was aided in this endeavor by enlisting the help of Sunni ulema who had been trained by the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo. He also appointed „Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, a man of "deeply Wahhabi tendencies" to oversee the establishment of schools and religious institutions to further the effort (Dresch, 2000).

As the Afghan-Soviet War broke out, Yemen was a major source of fighters for the Mujahideen forces in Afghanistan and thousands made the travel to wage *jihad* against the Soviet army, making Yemen the second largest source for fighters only behind Saudi Arabia.[23] General Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, a high-ranking officer of the YAR, actively recruited jihad-minded Yemeni youths to fuel Osama bin Laden‟s battle against the Soviets. "As far as the regime in Sanaa was

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[23] Asaf Maliach "The Global Jihad - The Yemeni Connection." International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2006.

concerned," writes Victoria Clark, "it was only natural, only right and proper, that a portion of its unemployable youth would prefer to take themselves off to Afghanistan to cover themselves with glory doing what they did best" (Clark, 2010, 159).

During the war in Afghanistan, many of the fighters were further infused with the Salafi-jihadist ideology. Although the YAR was responsible for most of the Yemeni fighters in Afghanistan, Tariq al-Fadhli, a friend and compatriot of bin Laden and a native Yemeni, noticed that southern Yemenis were even more intensely committed to the anti-Soviet cause than the northerners. According to al-Fadhli, the Yemenis from the PDRY, where Islamist groups were banned amidst the spread of the Marxist ideology, were eager to return to their homeland and wage jihad against the PDRY government and the "godless Marxists" as soon as they were finished in Afghanistan (Clark, 2010).

Upon their return to a united Yemen and bringing their Salafi-jihadist ideology with them, the jihadist fighters were welcomed back with open arms by the government, and especially the Islamic-oriented Yemeni Islah Party, an opposition group to government and headed by al-Zindani. The outbreak of civil war within the country saw the Afghan "alumni" on the side of the Sanaa government under President Saleh, and it was their contribution which helped eventually bring about the end of the southern "infidel Marxist regime."[24]

After civil war ceased, relative calm ensued until veterans of the Afghan war became upset with the Yemeni government for not allowing certain concessions. These dissatisfied fighters engaged in brief conflict with the government in Aden which led to an eventual crackdown on these Islamic militants. Those who evaded capture or expulsion from the country formed the Islamic Aden-Abyan Army which considered itself to be an heir of the Yemeni Islamic Jihad, a group which had previously existed within the country. The group established training camps in

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[24] Ibid.

the southern province of Abyan and called for the creation of an Islamic Caliphate in Yemen. This group eventually collaborated with Al-Qaeda in the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in the Gulf of Aden.[25]

In more recent years, Yemen has continued to supply fighters to Iraq and Afghanistan in addition to filling the ranks of local jihadist groups. It is estimated that Yemen produces approximately 1 fighter per every 100,000 Muslims in the country.[26] In addressing this concern, Barak Barfi, a fellow at the Brookings Doha Center, provides some insight. "There"s a reason why so many Yemenis have gone to Iraq, and now they go to Lebanon," he explains, "There is a fertile recruiting environment."[27] But why is Yemen such a fertile recruiting environment? As this study turns to education, it will provide an answer to this question.

A Brief History of Modern Education

Yemen"s education system is best characterized as "weak" and has consistently struggled with corruption and other problems. In addition to the public education system, an alternative form of religious education has existed alongside the public system and, in fact, predates the modern public system which was established in the 1960"s. These forms of education have existed and developed alongside each other since the 1970"s with religious schools being especially prominent in the rural areas of the country.

Traditionally, education in North Yemen was limited to religious schools associated with mosques and established on local initiative. By the 1940"s and 50"s, despite rugged terrain and a lack of roads due to weak infrastructure, a surprisingly large number of schools which offered a religious education existed (Zabarah, 1982). Then, upon the 1961 military takeover of the government in North Yemen, efforts to establish a more secular ideology which included a less

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Watts. "Where Are They Coming From?"
[27] Julie Cohn "Islamist Radicalism in Yemen." Council on Foreign Relations. June 29, 2010.

religious-based school system were put forth. This change was preceded by a shift of the economy from mostly sustenance-based agriculture to an economy focused on commerce. These economic reforms brought about relative prosperity which was accompanied by the rapid growth of urban areas, the institution of heath care and the ability to provide relatively greater financing for a secular school system. However, this effort at secularization failed to change the strong role of religion in the country or alter conservative attitudes of Islam (Dorsky and Stevenson, 1995).

Efforts to modernize and expand the education system in North Yemen brought about notable success in increasing enrollment. From 1965 to 1985, the number of pupils enrolled in primary schools increased over tenfold. In addition, the percentage of school age children attending school increased greatly from 12% in 1971/72 to 48.7% in 81/82 (Clark, 1985). However, the system was also plagued by high dropout rates, overcrowding, and unqualified teachers (al-Iriyani, 1985).   Throughout this period, religious schools continued to expand and operate vigorously alongside the public education system (Clark, 1985).

It was during the 1970"s when President al-Hamdi appointed Abd al-Majid al-Zindani. As described above, Zindani"s purpose was to help in the ideological struggle against the Marxist South by overseeing the establishment of religious schools to counteract socialist ideas. During this time, Al-Zindani constantly traveled back and forth between Yemen and Saudi Arabia and infused the Yemeni education system with a much more extreme and conservative form of Islam than had been traditionally present in Yemen.[28] It was also during this time that Saudi-funded religious institutes began being established in North Yemen as an alternative to the government schools which struggled to receive adequate funding. These institutes, known as "scientific institutes" (or "*al-ma'ahid al-'ilmiyyah*") were known for spreading intolerance of other Muslim ideologies and were accused of attempting to wipe out Zaidi Shi"a thought (Vom Bruck, 2005).

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[28]   Gregory D. Johnsen, "Profile of Sheikh Abd al-Majid al-Zindani," *Terrorism Monitor* 4 (7) April 6, 2006.

Al-Zindani was eventually appointed as Minister of Education in 1983. During his brief time in office before he left to fight in Afghanistan, his schools continued to grow in number with funding from the education budget as well as Saudi financing. By 1988, there were estimated to be over 1,100 religious schools in North Yemen with an enrollment of almost 120,000 students, 4,600 of which were being trained as teachers to continue the rise of religious education (Dresch, 2000).

In South Yemen, British occupation from 1839 to 1967 saw formal education limited to Aden. When British troops withdrew, the South Yemen government expanded its education system as its counterpart in the North did. However, Islamic groups were banned during this time and the spread of schools was primarily to spread socialist ideology (Dresch, 2000).

When the two Yemens unified in 1990, the education systems were integrated into a single system. However, standardization of texts proved difficult and the poor economy caused by the costs of unification made textbooks and school supplies, which were required for public schools, a costly luxury for most families. Meanwhile, the return of Afghan jihadists facilitated the growth of Salafi schools until 1996 when 400 such schools existed at the secondary level alone. These schools claimed to have as many as 330,000 pupils, with 12,600 being trained as teachers to instruct future generations (Dresch, 2000). At this time, government teacher training institutes instructed only a quarter of the number of teacher that the Salafi schools did, and Islamists made strong efforts to establish schools in rural and impoverished areas of the country (Dresch, 2000).

The Current System of Education

The public education system in Yemen today suffers from serious problems which have led to a vast discrepancy between the number of urban and rural school-age Yemenis who are able to receive an adequate state-sponsored education. Yemeni law provides for universal, free and compulsory education for children from age 6 to 15. However, the government does not enforce

the enrollment policy which has led to only 75% of school age children enrolled in primary school and only 37% enrolled in secondary institutions.[29] Out of every 100 children in the system, 48 will drop out prior to reaching the sixth grade due to poor literacy, lack of access to schools, and the fact that employment in not a guarantee upon graduation.[30]

Rural Yemenis are at much higher risk for this problem than their urban counterparts. Access to basic education in urban areas is significantly higher in urban areas than rural ones, where the rates of access are 91% and 78% respectively. Furthermore, as the level of schooling increases, school availability decreases in rural areas as only 36 % of secondary aged youth in rural areas have access to such schools.[31] This is especially noteworthy considering the fact that almost 74% of the country"s population lives in rural areas.[32]

Even students who are able to attend public schools are not guaranteed a viable education. Weak infrastructure, poor conditions, inadequate materials, and unqualified teaching staff are chronic problems in the system. Cheating, favoritism and bribery also nag the system and hinder its legitimacy.[33] Almost half of Yemeni teachers have not completed secondary school and only 60% had completed even a basic education.[34] The effects of Yemen"s poor education system can be seen in the miserable literacy rates which are estimated to be around 54% for ages 15 and older, 73% for all males, and 35% for all females.[35]

However, as an alternative to the weak public education system, a religious-based system which has been operating alongside the public system is an option for Yemeni youths. These

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[29] "Country Profile: Yemen."
[30] "Yemen: Concern over Increasing Number of School Dropouts." IRIN, November 27, 2007.
[31] L. Guarcello and F. C. Rosati, "Does School Quality Matter for Working Children?" Working Paper   Series, Understanding Children's Work Project. UNICEF, April 2007.
[32] Country Profile: Yemen
[33] Huda al-Kibsi, "Education in Yemen Needs to be Reformed, Says Study," Yemen Observer, August 11, 2007.
[34] "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper," Republic of Yemen Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. 2003
[35] "Country Profile: Yemen"

schools had been operating outside of government control until 2000, and Yemen has had difficulty in monitoring and managing them, even currently. These schools are primarily located in rural areas where the public system, as well as the government in general, has a weak reach. They also operate at all levels of education including primary, secondary, and the university level and have expanded following the effort by Salafi Islamists to propagate their ideology.

As mentioned earlier, al-Zindani was an important figurehead in the effort to create schools modeled on his extremist thought. Al-Zindani is a confidant of Osama bin Laden, and has been designated by the U.S. and the UN as a "specially designated global terrorist."[36] He can be heard on cassette tapes available throughout Yemen blaming Jews for the September 11th attacks and condemning anyone who supports the American presence in Afghanistan.[37] In 2002, he was aired on Egyptian television brandishing an AK-47 assault rifle while claiming that "the Muslim lands are under the control of the infidel Christians," and that "Islam will achieve victory and overwhelm the world."[38] He has also been one of the single largest forces in the establishment of religious schools throughout the country. In addition to the schools he established in the 1970"s and 80"s in Yemen, upon his return to the country following the Afghan-Soviet War where he served as a respected mujahideen commander, he established the conservative Islamic political party Islah in 1990. During the 90"s the Islah party began creating its own religious schools and, over time, came to establish thousands of these institutes which reflected al-Zindani"s salafi-jihadist ideology and taught that those who follow such an ideology are "real" Muslims.[39] Abdul Karim Iryani, a former Yemeni prime minister, advises that these schools "create a culture of hatred of others."[40]

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[36]   Gregory D. Johnsen, "Yemen's Al-Iman University: A Pipeline for Fundamentalists?," *Terrorism Monitor* 4 (22) November 12, 2006.
[37]   Susan Sachs "A Nation Challenged: Militants; Yemen Fears Being Singed By a Home-Grown Firebrand." *New York Times.* February 15, 2002.
[38]   Evan F. Kohlmann, "In Too Deep: Terrorism in Yemen," The National Review, January 17, 2003.
[39]   Sachs "A Nation Challenged"
[40]   Ibid.

Al-Zindani also heads Sanaa‛s Al-Iman University which itself has ties to extremism and has been found to have produced Islamic militants.

In addition to the schools established by the Islah party, another network of schools known as the Dar al-Haddeth network originating in the Sa‛ada governorate is also a recognized extremist group of schools. The network was founded by Sheikh Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi‛I, a cleric who studied religion in Saudi Arabia for over 20 years. This network of schools is reported to have institutions in seven areas of Yemen as well as abroad in several countries.[41] The schools are primarily funded by Salafi donors in Saudi Arabia and were accused by the Yemeni government in 2002 of promoting terrorism. Subsequently, 70 of the school‛s foreign students were deported based on illegal residency papers.[42] It has been reported by both local and U.S. sources that these schools are linked with Al-Qaeda militants[43] and in 2004, one of the schools in Dammaj was designated as a "known terrorist training center."[44] Despite the presence of established networks such as the Islah schools and the Dar al-Haddeth network, many more religious schools operate illegally within the country.

In 2004, the Yemeni government passed a law ordering the closure of all unlicensed religious schools operating in the country "Due to the connection between extremism, militancy, and certain curricula that promote deviant and alien ideologies."[45] The law also called for the overhaul of the religious education system in order to promote a more moderate interpretation of Islam and to insure national security and stability.[46] In writing about these unlicensed religious institutions, Dr. Mohammed Al-Qadhi, a Yemeni journalist, asserted that they "teach curricula that

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[41] "Information about Daar Hadeeth Yemen," translated by Aboo Imraan al-Mekseekee, Salafi Web, May 25, 2006.
[42] "Salafia Schism," Yemen Times, May 26, 2002.
[43] Ibid
[44] Summary of Evidence for Combatant Status Review Tribunal - Al Yafi, Al Khadr Abdallah Muhammed, Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants. United States Department of Defense, October 14, 2004.

legalize the killing of non-Muslims and consider them infidels…" and that "the Western people and their civilization [are] immoral."[47] A 2005 report by the Ministry of Education found that the unregistered religious schools served over 320,000 students across the country.[48]

Despite government efforts to shut them down, a report in 2009 found that of the more than 4,000 religious schools operating in Yemen, 20% are still operating illegally and outside of Yemeni law. The Yemeni government itself has further acknowledged the danger of these schools and government officials have described them as "incubators for terrorists and fanatics."[49] As a response, the government has undertaken further reforms and passed laws aimed at standardizing and moderating the curriculum of these schools. However, for the near future, the damage caused by these schools in terms of indoctrinating Yemeni youth and making them susceptible to recruitment by terrorist groups may be irreversible.

Youth Unemployment

In addition to schools which reflect an extremist curriculum, a contributing factor to the susceptibility of Yemenis to recruitment by terrorist organizations is a high youth unemployment rate in the country. Although Yemen"s total official unemployment rate is dismal by any measure (35%)[50], estimates as high as 50% have been claimed for young Yemenis.[51] There are several reasons for this high unemployment rate. Yemen already is one of the poorest countries in the world with an economy which has struggled mightily for the past few decades, and there are an

[45] Mohammed Al-Asadi "Religious Schools Shut Down: Cabinet Eyeing Connection Between Education, Extremism; Sa"ada ,,Believing Youth" Trigger Moves Against Militancy" *Yemen Observer.* July 3, 2004.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Mohammed Al-Qadhi "Silver Lining: Addressing Momentum of Terrorism." *Yemen Times.*
[48] Abdurrahman Al-Salimi "A Comparison of Modern Religious Education in Arabia: Oman and Yemen." *IjtihadReason.* The Center for Global Engagement at the Institute for American Values. 2005.
[49] Zaid al-Alaya'a"GovernmentSeeks toEnd Control ofMosques byExtremists,"*Yemen Observer*, January 31 2009

[50] CIA World Factbook
[51] "Analysis: Yemen"s "Youth Bulge" and Unemployment - An Explosive Mix." IRIN, September 26, 2010.

estimated 42% of people living on less than two dollars a day.[52] Furthermore, Yemen is currently experiencing a phenomenon known as a "youth bulge" which occurs when countries move from high rates of fertility and low rates of infant mortality. Yemen's fertility rate is among the highest in the world (approximately 3%) as women have an average of 5.4 children each, and 46% of the country's population is below the age of 16.[53] This population growth is coupled with slow economic growth which is unable to keep pace with the high number of youth attempting to enter the workforce. Another important factor is linked to Yemen's education system. Relatively few young Yemenis, even university graduates, have an adequate enough education to succeed in the modern workplace and lack necessary skills such as proficiency in English and computer skills.[54] Most high school graduates are only able to find jobs in low-wage work, if they can find a job at all.[55]

The social effects of Yemen's high youth unemployment rate have been duly noted by officials and observers. Reports have identified unemployment as leading to depression and deprivation as well as a contributing factor to terrorism and youth extremism.[56] Students themselves who are unable to find work describe their situation as bleak and that they are "pessimistic", "disappointed", and even "destroyed."[57] The effects of this unemployment on terrorist recruitment are summed up succinctly in the words of Abdullah al-Faqih. "Thousands of jobless and hopeless Yemeni youths," he says, "are an easy target for transnational and domestic extremist groups."[58]

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[52] Moneer Al-Omari "Youth Unemployment in Yemen: More Graduates…Less Jobs." *Yemen Post.* November 19, 2007.
[53] "Analysis: Yemen's "Youth Bulge" and Unemployment."
[54] Ibid.
[55] Zarha Sethna "Helping Young People Help Themselves Through Peer Education in Yemen." UNICEF, March 18, 2010
[56] Al-Omari "Youth Unemployment in Yemen."
[57] "Analysis: Yemen's "Youth Bulge" and Unemployment."
[58] Nicholas Blanford, "Are Iran and Al Qaeda Vying for Influence in Yemen?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, July

As dangerous as high levels of youth unemployment can be for making young Yemenis targets for recruitment, it is the unemployed youth who have attended schools embedded with extremist ideology that are the most likely targets for militant groups. Left with no ability to earn a livelihood, these youths seek a chance to fulfill a role in their life and turn to groups which promote ideologies in line with those they received in their schooling. In other words, it seems to be more than coincidence that the Yemeni governorates in which Al-Qaeda and other militant groups are known to operate are also the same governorates which include schools and institutes known or suspected to preach radical ideology.[59]

These factors have combined to make Yemen a "fertile recruiting ground" for Islamic terrorist groups in Yemen as well as groups from other states in the Middle East. This is evident in the high involvement rate of Yemenis in conflicts in both Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the supplying of fighters is only half of the equation of this study as it seeks to explain the causes of domestic Islamic terrorism within a country and not simply the production of militants. To complete the puzzle, the case study will now turn to Yemen˚s security and law enforcement institutions and their ability (or lack thereof) to deter terrorist groups from operating and carrying out attacks within Yemen˚s borders.

Security and Law Enforcement

It has been shown how Islamic terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda find an ample crop of recruits within the borders of Yemen. This provides these groups with a vital lifeline to keep themselves operating and successful as ranks are required to be replenished to carry out further attacks and to perpetuate the existence of the group. However, the fact that Yemen is a productive area for recruiting fails to answer the question of why Yemen itself is increasingly becoming the

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13, 2004.

[59] Al-Qaeda and other groups in Yemen are known to operate primarily in Hadramut, Ma˚rib, Dhamar, and Sa˚ada, which are the locations of schools which have been targeted by efforts to curb extremist curricula.

stage for terrorist attacks. To answer this question, we now analyze Yemen‟s security situation and its ability to effectively control terrorism within its borders.

In terms of manpower, Yemen has one of the largest military forces in the Arabia peninsula and consists of an army, navy, air force, and reserves. Yemen currently has an active fighting force approximately 67,000 and its defense spending stood at forty percent of the government‟s total budget in 2006 and is likely to remain high as internal threats put the stability of the country at stake. Yemen also possesses an internal police and intelligence gathering service known as the Political Security Organization (PSO) which is led by military officers and is constituted of about 150,000 personnel. However, despite its budget and manpower, the equipment of the Yemeni armed forces are described as "light, outdated, and poorly maintained" when compared to other militaries in neighboring states.[60] This is due to the fact that Yemen‟s poor finances skew the amount of defense spending which, in absolute terms, stands at approximately $1.1 billion, or 6.6% of its total GDP which is low compared to other countries such as the $17 billion spent by Egypt, $10 billion by Iraq, and $13.5 billion by Pakistan.[61] Foreign funding to Yemen‟s defense has been spearheaded by the U.S. which gave $8.4 million in Foreign Military Financing in 2006 and an additional $1.4 million in Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs financing.[62] U.S. defense aid has concurrently risen with the increased prevalence of Islamic terrorism within the country. It is also important to note that no U.S. military forces are permanently stationed in Yemen.

Yemen‟s security situation is defined mostly by internal strife and conflict. Currently, Yemen‟s only real external source of concern is an ongoing border dispute with Saudi Arabia which Saudi Arabia has responded to by increasing security along its side of the border to stem

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[60] "Country Profile: Yemen"
[61] CIA World Factbook
[62] "Country Profile: Yemen"

illegal crossing activity. Internally, the Yemeni government is plagued by two separate issues in addition to its problems with Islamic terrorist groups: a secessionist movement in the South and a rebellion in the North. These issues have diverted attention and resources away from anti-terrorism efforts and have given rise to "safe haven" areas in which Islamic terror groups have the freedom to operate.

Following the events of 9/11, Yemen became a helpful ally in cooperating with U.S. efforts to halt terrorist activity. For instance, collaborated efforts between Yemen and the CIA in 2002 led to the killing of Al-Qaeda leader Abu Ali al-Harithi. Continued efforts between the U.S. and Yemen seemed to quell the terrorism problem within the country over the next year. However, Yemen"s counter-terrorism efforts began to wane by the end of 2003 as the problem was perceived to be solved.[63]

In June of 2004, the Houthi Rebellion was initiated originating from the northern Sa"dah governorate and led by Shiite cleric Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi. The Yemeni government claims that the rebellion, which is comprised of Zaidi Muslim Yemenis, aims to overthrow the government and establish Shi"a religious law in the country. Furthermore, Yemen has accused the Shiite government of Iran of helping to finance the rebellion.[64] In response to the insurgency, the Yemeni government initiated armed conflict with the group which led to an quick escalation of fighting and the mobilization of tanks and artillery to the areas surrounding the city of Sa"ada.[65] This led to the killing of al-Houthi in a firefight in September of 2004. This was a brief victory for the government until Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the brother of Hussein, filled the leadership void and conflict continued with even greater intensity.[66]

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[63] Gregory Johnsen "Waning Vigilance: Al-Qaeda"s Resurgence in Yemen," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. July 14, 2009.
[64] Shaun Overton "Understanding the Second Houthi Rebellion in Yemen," *Terrorism Monitor* 3 (12). June 2005
[65] Ibid.
[66] "Medical Report Confirms Houthi Leader"s Death," *Yemen Post,* October 21, 2009.

Fighting has continued to the present day with ever-growing amount of resources and attention from the Yemeni government, which views the rebellion as the largest threat to the country‟s stability.[67] The current operation against the rebellion, "Operation Scorched Earth," is the sixth such campaign since hostilities began in 2004.[68] Periods between heavy violence have been marked by sporadic attacks by rebels in northern Yemen. Efforts to end the conflict have met with failure as a Qatari-negotiated agreement in 2008 as well as an attempt by President Saleh to open dialogue have not provided any substantial evidence of success or reduced violence, and by August of 2009, rebels had taken control of large portions of the Sa‟ada province, blockaded military installations, arrested Yemeni soldiers, taken control of 63 schools and attacked numerous government buildings.[69]

In addition to the Houthi Rebellion, another less pressing concern for the Yemeni government has been a secessionist movement in the southern portion of the country. The movement is primarily led by Tariq-al Fadhli, a former ally of President Saleh, and demands the re-establishment of South Yemen as an independent state as it had been before unification in 1990.[70] This is due to the perceived economic marginalization of the country‟s oil profits which are thought to be spread throughout the country despite its heavy production in south Yemen, forced early retirement for military officers from the south, and restrictions on press freedoms in the south for newspapers advocating secessionist agendas.[71] Although the movement is not wholly violent in nature, attempts to assassinate Yemeni officials and ambushes of security checkpoints and military convoys have occurred along with anti-unity protests turning violent.[72]

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[67] Chris Harnisch, Chris "Denying Al-Qaeda a Safe Haven in Yemen," American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research: Critical Threats. October 20, 2009.
[68] "Saboteurs Surrendered on Way to Haraf Sufian," Saba Net. August 21, 2009.
[69] Harnisch "Denying Al-Qaeda a Safe Haven in Yemen"
[70] "Civil War Fears as Yemen Celebrates Unity," BBC News, May 21, 2009.
[71] Harnisch, Chris "Denying Al-Qaeda a Safe Haven in Yemen"
[72] "General Killed, Nineteen Hurt as Yemen Police Clash with Violent Protesters," *Yemen Post,* September 30, 2009.

Yemen‟s concern with the secessionist movement primarily lies with the aforementioned oil production of the country. Already facing a scarcity of resources and dwindling oil reserves, Yemen can hardly afford, quite literally, to allow the south, where the bulk of the country‟s oil is produced, to break away from the country. Saleh‟s government has responded to the movement through both peaceful and more extreme measures. Saleh has offered dialogue with the separatists to hear their grievances and solutions, but at the same time the government has used deadly force to disperse separation rallies and has arrested hundreds of separatist supporters which have only incited stronger feelings of secession.[73]

These two problems have put Yemen‟s government in a difficult position as its attention and an already tight security budget is stretched to deal with the rebellion and secessionist movement. This has caused Yemen to be unable to exert its authority and security across the entire country which has given way to the creation of "safe haven" areas for terrorist cells to operate. Richard Haass, the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, describes Yemen as "the wild west" due to the government‟s inability to control portions of its own territory and asserted that the best way to curb terrorism in the country is to strengthen the capacity of Yemen‟s government.[74] Diplomatic cables attained by Wikileaks portray the lack of effective counter-terrorism operations by the Yemeni government due to poor financing and other resources. These cables included descriptions of Yemen‟s main terrorism control center which reportedly possessed only three computers, field operatives who are forced to rely on mobile phones which frequently fail, and mapping operations which are limited to paper charts. The cables also report Yemen‟s counter-terrorism unit commander Kamal al-Sayani admitting that "almost 80% of relevant information never makes it to the tactical counter-terrorism unit leaders in the field" due to

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[73] "Yemen: Secession Drive Becomes Violent," United Press International. April 28, 2010.
[74] "U.S. Boosts Anti-Terror Funding: Al-Qaeda Quick to Move into Poor Arab Nation With Weak Government, But Can We Fix it?" CBS News. January 4, 2010.

inadequate communications abilities.[75] Poor funding efforts have led the U.S. to drastically increase Yemeni aid for counter-terrorism which recently doubled its $67 million aid for such purposes.[76]

In contrast to the inadequately funded effort to secure areas of the country, the Houthi Rebellion and the separatist movement in the south have drawn the bulk of Yemen"s security resources. This diversion of resources has created a noticeable impact on the state government"s ability to project its influence and enforce security. General David Petraeus of the U.S. Army has remarked that "with tribal rebel movements on the rise in Yemen, the central government cannot fully control the country and Al-Qaeda has found a safe haven."[77] This sentiment is echoed by John Alterman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "There is a very real sense that the central government is losing control over most of the country," he claims, "and that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is setting up bases…"[78] The inability of Yemen"s government to control these "safe haven" areas has led policy-makers to compare its situation to that of Afghanistan.[79]

Since the Yemeni government has become preoccupied with the rebellion in the north and the separatist movement in the south, which it considers to be more of an existential threat than Islamic terrorism, groups have taken advantage of the state government"s loosened grip and attacks have risen accordingly. Prior to 2004, the only notable Islamic terrorist attack within Yemen"s borders was the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in the Gulf of Aden which was attributed to Al-Qaeda. Islamic groups were responsible for a handful of sporadic incidents in

[75] "Wikileaks Cables: Yemen Offered US ‚Open Door" to Attack Al-Qaeda on its Soil," *The Guardian.* December 3, 2010.

[76] "U.S. Boosts Anti-Terror Funding," CBS News.
[77] "U.S. Fears Yemen as Safe Haven for Al-Qaeda," CNN. December 28, 2009.
[78] Ibid.
[79] "Al-Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb," Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations. United States Senate. January 21, 2010.

Yemen since the late 1990's including a 1998 kidnapping of foreign tourists in Sana'a and a 2002 bombing near the home of Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Qader Bajammal in which he was not harmed. However, incidents such as these were isolated in nature and failed to result in large numbers of casualties.[80] It wasn't until after the Houthi Rebellion began in 2004 when Islamic terrorist groups, most notably Al-Qaeda (More specifically, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula or AQAP), began to mobilize a much more organized campaign including frequent attacks in Yemen as well as transnational attacks.

Recent Islamic Terrorism

Since 2007, Islamic terrorist organizations, especially Al-Qaeda, in Yemen have been increasingly active. In July of 2007, eight tourists and two Yemeni drivers were killed by a car bomb in Maarib. In January of 2008, two Belgian tourists, as well as their guide and driver were shot dead in Hadramout. This was followed by an attempted bombing of the U.S. embassy in March in which two people were killed as well as a double car bombing in September which killed sixteen. In March of 2009, four were killed in a suicide bombing in Shibam. In April and June of 2010, a suicide attack was attempted on a British envoy and an attack on an Aden security complex killed ten. In July of the same year, eleven security forces were killed in two separate incidents in the Shabwa province.[81] It is important to note that these are attacks in which involvement of Islamic terror groups were confirmed. Many other attacks in which Islamic groups are suspected have occurred since 2005 including 23 such attacks in 2008.[82] Overall, as many observers, policy makers, and state leaders agree, Islamic terrorist groups in

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[80]   Information on attack obtained from the Global Terrorism Database organized by Study of Terrorism And Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/
[81]   "Yemen-Timeline: A Chronology of Key Events," BBC News. February 2, 2011.
[82]   Global Terrorism Database

Yemen are engaging in a much more frequent and organized wave of attacks unlike the country has ever seen.

Conclusion

As this case study has shown, Yemen has historically been proven to be a fertile area for recruitment into Jihadist terror groups as evidenced by the heavy involvement of Yemenis during the Soviet-Afghan War as well as the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan due to a number of schools in the country teaching extremist curricula. A high youth unemployment rate only exacerbated this problem. However it wasn"t until 2004 that both necessary conditions for significant amounts of domestic Islamic terrorism had been met in Yemen as the central government was forced to divert critical security resources to the Houthi Rebellion in the north and therefore give Islamic groups freedom to operate within the borders of the country. This study will now turn to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where, unlike Yemen, domestic Islamic terrorism has not occurred on a frequent basis since 2007.

CHAPTER 6

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia presents an interesting case for researchers interested in the causes and consequences of Islamic terrorism. Historically, it has extremely close ties to the Islamic religion and is often called "The Land of the Two Holy Mosques" in reference to the cities of Mecca and Medina, the birthplaces of Islam and the destinations for Muslims making the obligatory pilgrimage, the *Hajj*. However, despite these ties, Saudi Arabia has found itself as a target of modern Islamic terrorism just as Yemen and other states in the region have. Saudi Arabia's most recent experience with this problem was a violent spate of terrorist activity occurring between the years of 2003 and 2007 along with isolated incidents in the 1990's.

However, the past few years have seen a markedly different output of domestic terrorism in the country as successful attacks have ground to a halt. The lack of domestic terrorism in Saudi Arabia is not the result of a lack of effort or desire on the part of Islamic terror groups as demonstrated by a failed attempt by a suicide bomber in 2009 to assassinate the head of Saudi Arabia's security services, Prince Muhammed bin Nayef. This case study will show how the absence of domestic Islamic terrorism in the country since 2007 has been the removal of one of the necessary conditions for such a phenomenon, that of inadequate security and law enforcement.

Much like Yemen, Saudi Arabia's education system contains elements of radical Islamic teaching which plants the seeds of extremism in Saudi youth. This radicalization has led Saudi Arabia to be the primary exporter of Jihadist fighters in Afghanistan and Iraq as Islamic terror groups realize that Saudi Arabia offers the same type of fertile recruiting ground that Yemen

does.[83] This dynamic is described explicitly by a professor at King Saud University: "It looks innocent, they [Saudis] are just trying to teach religion, but in a subtle way it is a recruiting mechanism…if a pupil shows enthusiasm, he is recruited into their circles and then suddenly, bang! -- he takes a gun and goes to Afghanistan to fight for Islam."[84]

However, unlike Yemen, Saudi Arabia possesses the resources, courtesy of vast supplies of oil, to fund effective security and law enforcement measures to keep a strangle hold on Islamic terror groups in the country and have forced them to relocate to other countries which provide a higher chance of operational freedom and success. When Saudi Arabia"s bout with domestic terrorism began in 2003, it had been preceded by the withdrawal of a large number of U.S. troops from the country, shedding doubt that the U.S. presence was the instigator of such attacks. Since that time, Saudi Arabia has nearly doubled its security expenditures[85] and undertaken various measures to deter and clamp down on Islamic terrorist activity within its borders.

This cases study will proceed by first providing a brief overview of Saudi Arabia. It will then describe the origins of Saudi Wahhabism (a puritanical from of Salafism) and how it has played a major role in the history and politics of the country. The third section will provide of brief history of the Saudi education system and the embedment of more extreme Islamic ideologies. The next section will analyze Saudi Arabia"s current education system and how it leads to the production of young Saudis who are potential recruits for Islamic terror groups. The fifth section will describe how Saudi Arabia"s youth unemployment further increases the problem of this recruitment. This section will be followed by a discussion of Saudi Arabia"s security and law

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[83] Watts "Where are they coming from?"
[84] Macfarquhar, "A Nation Challenged"

[85] National Materials Capabilities Dataset (Version 4.0). Correlates of War.

enforcement measures and how they are adequately able to prevent the operation of Islamic terror groups in the country. The final section will present conclusions.

Brief Overview

Saudi Arabia is a country of approximately 2,150,000 square kilometers lying in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula. It shares borders with Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait to the north, and Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar to the south and southeast. Its western border lies on the Red Sea while its eastern border is comprised of the beaches of the Persian Gulf. Its terrain is characterized mostly by harsh, uninhabitable desert.[86]

Saudi Arabia"s government is a monarchy, currently led by King and Prime Minister Abdallah bin Abn al-Aziz Al Saud, with a legal system defined by Sharia law. Due to the nature of its government, no elections are held, but a legislative branch does exist comprised of 150 members who are appointed by the king and serve four-year terms. Its judicial branch consists of the Supreme Council of Justice.[87]

The economy is primarily oil-based and the government has strong control over economic activities. Oil production provides roughly 80% of budget revenues and approximately 45% of the kingdom"s $622.5 billion GDP. In terms of demographics, Saudi Arabia has a population of almost 26,000,000 by most recent estimates, 82% of which live in urban areas.[88] Islam is the state religion and virtually the entire population is comprised of Muslims due to restrictions of freedom of religion.[89]

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[86]   CIA World Factbook
[87]   Ibid.
[88]   Ibid.

[89]   "Saudi Arabia: International Religious Freedom Report 2004," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Saudi Wahhabism

Wahhabism considers itself to be a true salafist movement and started with the goal of theological reform in the 18th century. As such, it stressed the deconstruction of traditions and practices which had evolved over the course of Islam"s history such as visiting tombs and shrines of venerated individuals, which Wahhabism labels as polytheism and goes against the central monotheistic tenet of *tawhid* or the "oneness of God." The Wahhabi movement was started by Muhammad Bin Abd al-Wahhab who believed that the recognition of *tawhid* was insufficient for correct belief and must be coupled with "pure" Islamic behavior. As such, Wahhabism prohibits many practices in which other Muslims engage such as listening to certain types of music, drawings of human beings or any other being which contains a soul, or praying while visiting tombs.[90] Other conservative beliefs and tendencies differentiate Wahhabis from other Muslims, even other salafists.[91]

Shortly after Abd al-Wahhab began laying out his teachings and vision of Islam, he drew opposition from other sheikhs who declared him and his followers as illegitimate. Even Abd al-Wahhab"s brother, Sulaiman, objected to the intolerance of his teachings and led opposition against him and his followers. Eventually, Abd al-Wahhab settled in Diriya in 1744 in secrecy out of concern for his safety. While there, he forged an alliance with the local emir, Muhammad ibn Saud, in which Abd al-Wahhab lended ibn Saud religious support for his system of taxation which ran counter to Sharia law. In return, ibn Saud would lend military support to Abd al-Wahhab"s vision to expand his own brand of Islam. However, Abd al-Wahhab was able to convince ibn Saud that the spoils of war would bring far more prosperity to him than the system of taxation and

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[90] Ahmad Moussalli (2009) "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism: Who is The Enemy." Conflicts Forum: Beirut - London - Washington.
[91] Ibid.

withdrew his support for it. Ibn Saud conceded and the abolishment of the tax won popular support

for Abd al-Wahhab and his teachings. This partnership gave rise to the first Saudi state as the

combination of Abd al-Wahhab"s Islam and Ibn Saud"s military might conquered Arabia and

forged a politically united realm for a short while until the Wahhabis were defeated by the efforts

of the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha in 1818 (Wynbrandt, 2004).

Though the Wahhabi movement appeared to have been defeated, the effects of its military

campaign were dramatic. Wahhabism had united Arabia and mostly brought an end to the tribal

warfare which had long been the source of instability in the region. Its defeat in 1818 became a

mark of the resilience of the movement and its adherents, and by 1824 the Wahhabis and the Saud

family had retreated to Riyadh and established roots there and in the surrounding territory which

led to the second Saudi state. This rule was plagued by interfamily rivalry and frequent civil wars

which weakened it to the point of being defeated by Muhammad ibn Rashid in 1890, and the Saud

family retreated to the area of Kuwait (Wynbradt, 2004).

In 1902, the Wahhabi movement resurfaced when Abd al-Aziz Bin Abd al-Rahman,

otherwise known in the West simply as Ibn Saud, returned from Kuwait and initiated a series of

incursions to spread Wahhabism and establish the third Saudi Wahhabi state. During this time, he

sought to establish his rule as well as good international and regional relations using Wahhabism

as a vehicle for legitimizing his political objectives. However, this effort to establish a stable ruling

regime put him at odds with other Wahhabis who wished to continue *jihad* against non-Muslims as

well as non-Wahhabi Muslims. By 1929, Ibn Saud had defeated the confrontational Wahhabi

factions and transformed Wahhabism into a state institution (Wynbrandt, 2004). Thus,

Wahhabism was changed from a revolutionary *jihad* into a movement of conservative social,

political, and religious ideology which was used to justify the institution that upholds loyalty to the royal Saudi family and the King"s absolute power.[92]

Since the establishment of the modern Saudi state in 1932, Wahhabism has had a close, virtually intertwined, association with the ruling family. Wahhabi clerics were integrated into the religious and political establishment and were highly regarded in society while Wahhabism ideas formed the basis of the rules and laws used to govern social affairs in the kingdom.[93] Wahhabi ideas also shaped the kingdom"s judicial and educational institutions which are currently a concern for outside observers due to the content which reflects strong Wahhabi beliefs and provides an unflattering portrayal of other religions and cultures (Prokop, 2003).

This heavy Wahhabi culture in Saudi Arabian institutions is primarily due to the high level of status and influence held by the Saudi religious leaders, or *ulema,* who share power in the kingdom. While the king controls the state, the Saudi *ulema*, which are descendants of Sheikh Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab and see themselves as guardians of the Wahhabi legacy, control the religious institutions. This cooperative and consensual relationship has provided a level of stability unlike that of the kingdom"s neighbors.[94] However, this relationship has also led to a heavy amount of influence in Saudi actions and decision-making. Examples of such influence include the implementation of an oil embargo against the U.S. in 1973 due to the *ulema's* desire to punish the U.S. for its support of Israel against the Palestinians, and the high levels of support from Saudi Arabia to the efforts of the mujahideen against the Soviets in Afghanistan as well as the Taliban.[95] The tenets of the Wahhabi faith are also strictly enforced by the government"s religious police,

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[92] Moussalli "Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism"
[93] Christopher Blanchard "The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya," CRS Report for Congress. January 24, 2008.
[94] Nawaf Obaid"The Power of Saudi Arabia"s Religious Leaders,"*Middle EastQuarterly,*September1999, 51-58
[95] Ibid.

known as the *Mutawwa'in,* which oversees activity such as prayer. As this study turns to Saudi Arabia''s educational system, it will shed light on how this Wahhabi influence reflects in the school curricula leading to a more radicalized youth susceptible to recruitment by Islamic terrorist organizations.

A Brief History of the Education System

Since the establishment of the modern Saudi Arabian Kingdom and its education system, the curriculum and teachings of schools have become gradually more conservative and radical in nature over time. The incorporation of Wahhabi ideals into the schools, as referenced to above, was due to the influence of the *ulema* and the desire of the Saudi lineage of kings to shore up the kingdom''s Islamic credentials.

The first Saudi school system was established upon the creation of the Directorate of Education in 1925. Before this time, that only a handful of private schools existed in the kingdom. However, this education system was limited solely to the study of Islam and the memorization of the *Qur'an*. In 1952, the Ministry of Education was established along with the present day system of education which featured Western-style schools separated by sex. Secular subjects were added to the curriculum along with a continued emphasis on the interpretation of the *Qur'an* and the application of Islamic tradition in daily life. The boy''s schools are supervised by the Ministry of Education while the girl''s schools falls under the direction of the General Presidency for Girls'' Education. However, both sexes follow the same curriculum and take the same annual examinations (Thomas, 2006).

By the late 1950''s Saudi''s who had studied abroad began to return to the kingdom to teach and the curriculum reflected as such with topics such as Roman history and the Protestant Reformation.[96] However, this exposure to Western topics would come to an end beginning in the

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[96]   Macfarquhar "A Nation Challenged."

1960‟s when members of the Muslim Brotherhood, seeking refuge from crackdown of Gamel Abdel Nasser‟s regime in Egypt, found political asylum granted by King Faisal in Saudi Arabia. Many of these members of the Brotherhood became teachers and quickly made their ideology a part of the curriculum. "They said „This is infidel knowledge,‟" describes a former Saudi government official, "and gradually their teaching crowded out all useful information."[97]

In 1979, multiple incidents caused the Saudi government to give more sway to the religious institution in the realm of education. The Mecca uprising and the Islamic Revolution in Iran prompted the government to reemphasize its Islamic heritage and it subsequently created several policies, including educational ones, to meet this goal. Religious classes were now run during the summer in order to increase the amount of religious education and greater financing was given to religious institutions, which led to the creation of the Islamic University of al-Qura (Prokop, 2006). In this regard, Michaela Prokop notes that "in order to get the acquiescence and approval of the *ulema* for state policies, the government has made concessions to the religious authorities in the fields of culture, curriculum development and control over the educational apparatus" (Prokop, 2003, 78).

The Current System of Education and its Curriculum

Saudi Arabia‟s education system consists of several tiers of schooling: a six-year elementary cycle, a three-year intermediate cycle, and a three-year secondary cycle. The system also has a separate higher education program. Children enter the elementary cycle at the age of six in which attendance is compulsory. Upon finishing the elementary level, children move on to the intermediate level in which, unlike the elementary cycle, attendance is not required but students are highly encouraged to attend. This cycle is roughly the equivalent of grades 7-9 in the U.S. and

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[97] Ibid.

passing a completion exam is required to advance to the secondary cycle of education.[98] All

students share a common curriculum during the first year of secondary education, in which their

performance is a key determinant for the rest of their education. At this point, the education system

branches into two separate paths for students: literary and scientific. Students who score 60 percent

or higher in all of their first year subjects may choose to take either of the two paths while those

scoring below must opt for the literary path which is largely focused on religious studies. The

scientific path is comprised of vocational studies in commercial, industrial and agricultural fields.[99]

Although other subjects are studied, Islamic studies are core to the educational system's

curricula. In his study of the kingdom's schools, William Rugh noted that "Islam is not only

integral to Saudi education but also serves as the very essence of its curriculum" (Rugh, 2002, 41).

As in discussing religious education in Yemen, it must be noted that religious teaching is not

inherently a bad thing, and that the centrality of Islam in the education system is not a problem in

itself. However, the influence of the Wahhabi ideology has ingrained the curriculum with a large

amount of material and text which can easily be argued to "radical."

As mentioned, the religion curriculum is extensive. It is comprised of four courses

designed to occupy more than a third of the student's time at the primary and intermediate levels.

At least four hours a week are also dedicated to religious teaching at the secondary level

(Doumato, 2003). Eleanor Doumato, in her extensive study on Saudi religious texts, reveals some

disturbing facets of this religious education and concludes that the curriculum is driven towards a

very narrow interpretation of the *Qur'an* that gives little insight or credence to other Islamic sects

outside of Wahhabism.

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[98]   "Educational System in Saudi Arabia: 2006," Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Higher Education. Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission.

[99]   Robert Sedgwick, "Education in Saudi Arabia" World Education News and Reviews. 2001.

In her research Doumato reports that the content of textbooks revealed lessons which teach that the West has, and still is, waging a cultural, ideological and military war against Islam and that the Crusades, Christian missionaries, the Zionist state of Israel and cultural globalization are all examples of West"s assault on Muslims. In one eleventh-grade textbook, a lesson described how Christians are not only attacking Islam through education, but also through the control of weak Muslim governments. Furthermore, texts described a Jewish war being waged against Islam and warned that the Zionist attempt at global domination threatens to reach Saudi Arabia.[100] Another study finds that texts blame Jews for negative events in Muslim history such as the split between Sunnis and Shi"as.[101]

In addition to the Western assault on Islam, texts also teach the need of *jihad* to defend against Western influences in Muslim lands. On this topic, Doumato"s research found that there was an overall message to students that they must wage *jihad* in the defense of the faith. One eleventh-grade text reads "When the enemy has seized a place and country in which Muslims dwell, such as Israel, which has been set up by force in the heart of the Islamic world, then jihad becomes an obligation upon all Muslims who are capable of bearing arms" (Doumato, 2003).

Texts also stress the importance of disassociation with non-Wahhabis and other non-Muslims. Lessons which define proper activity and dress often do so by alluding to other cultures. For example, a ninth-grade text makes it clear that imitating the *fasaq,* unrighteous or godless person, or *kuffar,* Jews and Christians, in their clothes or outward appearance is not permissible because "whoever imitates a people becomes one of them" (Doumato, 2003, 236). This sentiment is reinforced in a tenth-grade text which states that "imitating the unbelievers in what is particular to them and their customs is forbidden," and "upon him will be severe

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Prokop "Saudi Arabia: The Politics of Education"

punishment" (Doumato, 239). First-grade students are taught that "every religion other than Islam is false," and teachers are instructed to give examples of give examples of false religions such as Christianity. Likewise, fifth grade texts teach that "It is forbidden for a Muslim to be a loyal friend to someone who does not believe in God, and his prophet, or someone who fights the religion of Islam."[102] Practices of Shi'a and Sufi Islam, such as visiting cemeteries and chants aimed at union with God, are condemned. This is due to the fact that these sects are labeled as non-believers and, therefore, "enemies."[103] In addition, Muslims who work or live with non-believers are considered to be apostates.

In addition to religious classes, history classes are also deeply ingrained with Wahhabi ideology and anti-Western sentiment. History textbooks teach that Westernization has caused a loss of Islamic ideals and leads to instability and conflict. One text reads that "Westernization promotes misery and suffering among Muslims" (al-Rasheed, 2001). Textbooks also express the idea that government leaders who do not uphold Islamic law should be met with opposition (Prokop, 2003). This type of education is prevalent as one study found that in 4th through 12th grade history texts, 68.5% covered Islamic themes, 30% covered Saudi history, and only 1.5% covered global development (Prokop, 2006).

This content and curriculum is best summed up by Nina Shea, director of the Freedom House Center for Religious Freedom, in her testimony to the U.S. Senate on a study of Saudi school texts:

> The various Saudi publications gathered for this study state that it is a religious obligation
> for Muslims to hate Christians and Jews and warn against imitating, befriending, or helping
> such "infidels" in any way, or taking part in their festivities and celebrations. They instill

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[102] Hasan Fattah "Don't be Friends With Christians or Jews,Saudi Texts Say,"*New York Times,*May 24, 2006
[103] Ibid.

contempt for America because the United States is ruled by legislated civil law rather than by totalitarian Wahhabi-style Islamic law. Some of the publications collected for this study direct Muslims not to take American citizenship as long as the country is ruled by infidels and tell them, while abroad, above all, to work for the creation of an Islamic state. The Saudi textbooks and documents our researchers collected preach a Nazi-like hatred for Jews, treat the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion as historical fact, and avow that the Muslim's duty is to eliminate the state of Israel.[104]

Even private schools are subject to these teachings as they are obligated to use the same textbooks and curricula as the public schools, with the government providing the texts free of charge. Non-Muslim students in private schools are not required to study Islam. However, no private religious schools are offered for non-Muslims of for Muslims who adhere to non-Wahhabi Islam. In addition, adherents of Shi'a Islam are not permitted to teach religion in Saudi schools (Thomas, 2006).

In the face of scrutiny, especially after the events of 9/11 in which 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals, the Saudi Arabian government began to address the content of its textbooks. Some efforts to revise the curriculum have taken place, such as the removal of certain passages. However, continuing efforts face opposition. "It is an uphill battle to revise the curriculum," states Muhammad al-Zulfa, a member of the consultative Shura council, "because the resistance by well-established conservative pockets is so fierce."[105] As of 2010, reform efforts remained stymied and failed to result in significant alterations to the Saudi school curriculum.[106]

The findings from Saudi Arabia's school curriculum are linked with evidence that they plant the seeds of extremism in Saudi youth, making them more susceptible to recruitment by

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[104] Nina Shea "Saudi Arabia: Friend or Foe in the War on Terror?" Testimony before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate. November 8, 2005.

[105] Fattah "Don't be Friends"
[106] Nina Shea & Bonnie Alldredge, "Saudi Textbooks: Still Teaching Hatred," *National Review*. June 29, 2010.

Islamic terror groups. This dynamic is evident in Saudi Arabia"s efforts to monitor the curriculum, despite difficulty in doing so. Along with measures aimed at eliminating radical passages from texts, authorities have also advised school principals to report signs of extremism in staff or students. In addition, it has also been found that recruits from Saudi Arabia into Islamic terrorist groups had an education primarily focused on religion at the secondary level as opposed to the natural sciences (Hegghammer, 2006). Recruiting activity was also prevalent in schools around the country (Hegghammer, 2006).

The curriculum of Saudi schools is a major factor in the ability for Islamic terrorist groups to recruit members into their fold. As journalist Adel al-Toraifi of the newspaper *Al-Watan* notes in discussing the current Saudi anti-terror efforts, "The problem is that we"re not dealing with the extremist thought that makes these men fertile ground for the call to violence."[107] However, though the educational curriculum is the root of extremist thought and action, the problem is exacerbated by a high youth unemployment rate.

Youth Unemployment

In addition to Saudi Arabia"s school system, the youth unemployment rate of the country adds to the problem of the country"s "fertile" ground for recruiting. It should be noted that youth unemployment was not a problem in the 1980"s, while the Soviet-Afghan was in full swing, shedding doubt that unemployment itself is the main contributor to the recruitment of Saudis in jihadist activity. The early and mid-80"s saw Saudi Arabia prospering from an oil boom which fueled a large expansion infrastructure and business in the kingdom. New jobs outpaced young Saudi graduates and allowed for a high level of youth unemployment.[108] However, as the boom began to die down in the late 80"s, the ability of the Saudi government to employ new graduates

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[107]   Faiza Ambah "In Saudi Arabia, Fresh Recruits for Al-Qaeda," *Christian Science Monitor,* April 16, 2004.
[108]   Warren Richey, Warren "For Each Saudi Arab There Are Two Jobs," The Christian Science Monitor, July 17,1981.

lessened. This is especially important considering that the Saudi government is the primary

employer of graduates (Prokop, 2003). By 2001, an estimated 50,000 Saudi graduates were unable

to find jobs[109] and currently, estimates of youth unemployment are as high as 42%.[110]

This factor, along with Saudi Arabia''s school curriculum, has led the kingdom to be the

largest source of foreign *jihadist* fighters around the Middle East. As mentioned above, Saudi

Arabia contributed the largest number of foreign fighters during the Soviet-Afghan War. Some

estimates place the number of Saudis involved in the war as high as 15,000.[111] In addition to the

Soviet-Afghan War, Saudi participation was also high in conflicts in Chechnya, Bosnia, and

Kosovo, and it is estimated that at least 25,000 Saudis have received training in these areas

between 1979 and 2001. These Saudis would later become involved in terrorist incidents in

Yemen, Tanzania, Kenya, and Saudi Arabia itself.[112] Also, as mentioned above, Saudis primarily

comprised the contingent of 9/11 hijackers. Saudi Arabia currently continues to be one of the top

producers of fighters in Afghanistan and Iraq.[113]

It has been presented above that one of the primary factors leading to domestic Islamic

terrorism has existed for quite some time in Saudi Arabia and that the kingdom has produced a

large number of extremist fighters. This case study will now turn to the second factor, that of

security and law enforcement and how the lack of effective measures in Saudi Arabia led to a wave

of domestic terrorism from 2003-2007 following the establishment of an Al-Qaeda front in the

country. It will also explain how the subsequent strengthening of the Saudi security apparatus

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[109] Macfarquhar, "A Nation Challenged.
[110] Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, Ambrose "Mid-East Contagion Fears for Saudi Oil Fields," *The Telegraph,* January 31, 2011.
[111] Douglas Jehl, Douglas "A Nation Challenged: Saudi Arabia; Holy War Lured Saudis as Rulers Looked Away," *New York Times,* December 27, 2001.

[112] Ibid.
[113] Watts "Where are they Coming From?"

since 2007 has since removed this necessary factor for terrorism within Saudi borders despite the continued ability for Islamic groups to recruit Saudi nationals.

Security and Law Enforcement

It has been shown that one of the necessary factors for domestic terrorism has been present in Saudi Arabia for quite some time. However, before delving into the factor of security, it is important to describe briefly the course of events which led Saudi Arabia to become a target of Islamic terrorist groups. This is necessary to describe why Saudi Arabia did not experience broad waves of domestic terrorism until 2003 despite the kingdom possessing both factors necessary for domestic terrorism.

Islamic terrorism began to become a problem for Saudi Arabia in the mid-90's with isolated bombings in both 1995 and 1996. The targeting of Saudi Arabia by militant groups stems from a disagreement between Osama bin Laden and King Fahd in 1990 over the refused offer of 100,000 of Bin Laden's *mujahideen* to repel the Iraqi army from the "holy land" if it were to invade. King Fahd, in an attempt to distance himself from the militant movement and a possible duplication of the extended fighting in Afghanistan, turned down the offer and instead opted to allow U.S. and allied forces to deploy in Saudi Arabia and use the kingdom as a staging ground to drive the Iraqi army from Kuwait.[114] This rejection earned King Fahd the resentment of Bin Laden who would publicly decry the Saudi government and be forced into exile from the kingdom. Bin Laden would travel to Sudan and subsequently establish links with various Islamic groups around the region and create a formidable Al-Qaeda presence in the country.[115]

In 1996, Bin Laden would issue his "Declaration of War" against America and Saudi Arabia in which he stated that Saudi Arabia "through its course of actions…has torn off its

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[114] Shultz "Global Insurgency Strategy"
[115] Ibid.

legitimacy."[116] However, internal disagreements amongst Al-Qaeda and other affiliated groups as well as attention focused on other *jihad* efforts elsewhere led to a postponement of activity in Saudi Arabia until 2002, when Bin Laden formally ordered Saudi fighters elsewhere in the Middle East to return to Saudi Arabia and prepare for a campaign. This order led an estimate of as many as 1,000 Saudi Al-Qaeda recruits to return the kingdom, and the organization began collecting weapons and establishing safe houses and training camps (Hegghammer, 2006).

During this time, Saudi Arabia possessed what has been described as a security apparatus with "systemic weakness." This is for two reasons. First, Saudi Arabia had little experience in antiterrorism operations or in advanced intelligence analysis. Secondly, Saudi Arabia"s security organizations lacked a confrontational culture of policing. This is due to a long history of civilian government which has prevented militarization of the regime and a strict social conservatism which has reduced the need for criminal policing. As a result, Saudi Arabia"s oil wealth along with traditional social structures had created a security apparatus which dealt with dissent through cooptation rather than coercion (Hegghammer, 2006).

Coordination between the different branches of Saudi Arabia"s national defense, such as the National Guard, the Ministry of Interior, security forces and police, also proved ineffective during this time. The kingdom had sought to develop a more integrated approach to civil defense during the First Gulf War, but Iraq never provided any meaningful test of the system. The scattered acts of terrorism between 1995 and 2001 likewise did little to test to the coordination of security forces. As a result, these branches operated virtually independent of each other with little communication or intelligence sharing (Cordesman, 2009).

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[116] Osama Bin Laden "Declaration of Jihad," August 23, 1996.

After the events of 9/11, the Saudi government directed attention to accusations from the Western media and politicians about the social and religious dynamics of the country and what led fifteen Saudis to be involved in the hijackings. However, despite the focus on political and diplomatic ties, little was done to improve internal security. This may be due to the fact that Saudi Arabia failed to recognize the threat which it was faced with by Islamic terror groups because of the perceived lack of militant cells operating in the country. The kingdom did, however, focus on security issues with other countries, especially the U.S.. Regardless, the Saudi internal security apparatus failed to be strengthened in any significant way until 2003 (Cordesman and Obaid, 2005).

This weakness allowed Al-Qaeda to take root in the country and establish their own version of a "safe haven." Unlike Yemen which offers remote areas in the mountainous portions of the country, Saudi Arabia is primarily uninhabitable desert which forced terrorist cells to operate in urban areas. However, the Saudi intelligence community relied too much on human contacts and signals intelligence rather than active efforts in the field (Cordesman and Obaid, 2005). This, in turn, allowed groups such as Al-Qaeda the ability to operate relatively unimpeded. Because of this "The Kingdom"s relative value as a theatre of operations had increased, because in 2002 jihadists were pursued less vigorously in Saudi Arabia than in most other countries in the region" (Hegghammer, 2008, 709).

The weakness of the Saudi apparatus became apparent on May 12, 2003 when Al-Qaeda launched multiple suicide car bombings in Riyadh which killed 34 and wounded more than 200. This bombing was followed by another in November targeting a residential compound in which 17 were killed and 122 injured. In April of 2004, two suicide car bombs were detonated outside the Saudi Arabian security headquarters in Riyadh which killed five and wounded over 150. In

December of the same year, the U.S. consulate in Jeddah is attacked in which five were killed. Later in December, coordinated car bombings in Riyadh injured multiple people including Saudi security officers. These attacks and bombings were also interspersed with shootings and kidnappings as well as skirmishes between militants and Saudi police and security forces. However, since 2007 no significant terrorist attacks have taken place within the borders of the kingdom. This is due to the enhanced security measures and reforms by the Saudi government which have eliminated the operational freedom of terrorist groups.

Since the first wave of Islamic terrorist attacks began in 2003, the Saudi government has greatly increased the funding and capability of its internal security forces. In 2003, the Saudi government appropriated approximately $7 billion for its internal security budget. By 2005, that figure had risen to approximately $10 billion, and by 2006, an estimated $12 billion was spent (Cordesman, 2009). Concurrently, Saudi Arabia''s total defense expenditures rose dramatically, almost doubling from $22 billion in 2002 to just under $40 billion in 2009.[117] The kingdom is now currently one of the top spenders in the world in terms of defense expenditures as a percentage of GDP.

This increase in spending allowed Saudi Arabia to undertake more intensive efforts to deter and combat terrorist activity in the state. Immediately, the Saudi government began to address the weaknesses in the defense apparatus discussed above. Coordination, or lack thereof, between different branches of defense forces was solved through the creation of several organizations designed to promote more fluidity and communication across the defense spectrum. A Joint Counterterrorism Center was established in the Ministry of the Interior as well as a separate Counterterrorism Operations Center in the Ministry of Defense and Aviation to better equip, train,

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[117] Information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditures Database. http://www.sipri.org/databases/milex

and strengthen the different services of the armed forces. In addition, a National Joint Counterterrorism Command (NJCC) was established to enhance the cooperation and command and control capabilities amongst the separate branches (Cordesman, 2009).

These measures also included improving intelligence and information gathering, and in May of 2003, a Saudi-U.S. task force was organized across law and intelligence agencies to work side-by-side in order to share "real-time" intelligence and conduct operations (Cordesman and Obaid, 2005). Since that time, both U.S. and Saudi officials have noted strong collaboration between the two counterparts.[118] Enhanced intelligence capabilities allowed Saudi defense forces to conduct dozens of sweeps across the country which succeeded in rooting out and dismantling terrorist cells. Saudi authorities have also gained tight control of the roads, mobile network, and the internet which made organized militancy extremely difficult (Hegghammer, 2008). Saudi Arabia also began to publish "most wanted" lists of suspected terrorists beginning in 2003 in order to accurately target the most influential and active Islamic terror operatives (Cordesman, 2009).
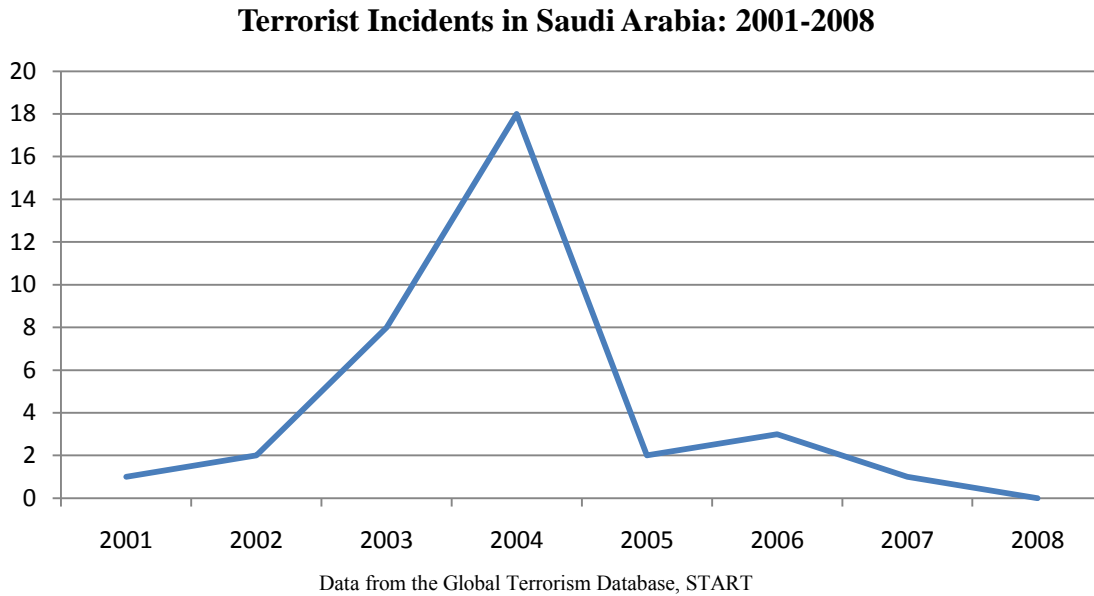
As a result of increased defense spending and improved security in the kingdom, Saudi Arabia has been able to prevent Islamic terror groups from establishing operational centers in order to conduct violent attacks (see figures 6.1 and 6.2). In 2006, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal, claimed that security forces had prevented 52 terrorist attacks in the kingdom since the May 2003 attacks. Additionally, counterterrorism forces had killed 120 terrorists and arrested more than 800 between May 2003 and January of 2006. By 2008, Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, the Saudi Minister of the Interior, reiterated the success of the newly enhanced Saudi security apparatus, claiming that 160 terrorist operations had been prevented and 991 extremists detained. In addition, by 2006, Saudi forces had killed or captured 18 of the 36
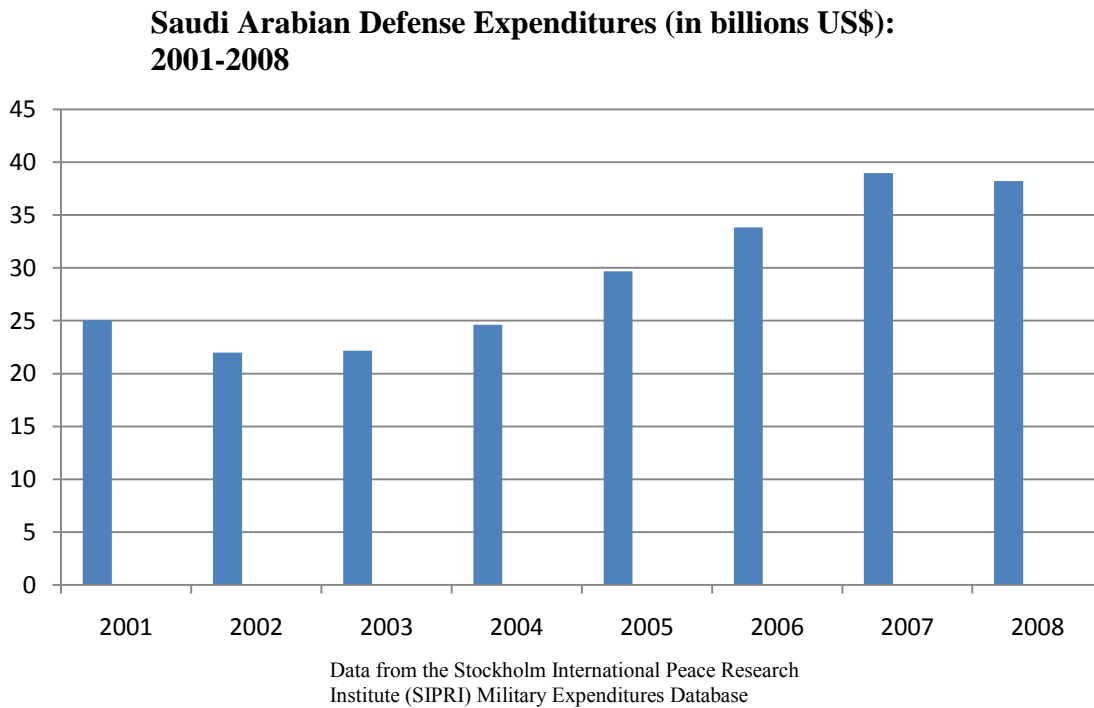
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[118] "Combating Terrorism," United States Government Accountability Office Report. September 2009.

operatives on the most-wanted list issued in July of 2005. 24 of 26 of the December 2003 list had

been killed or captured as well (Cordesman, 2009).

Figure 6.1

Terrorist Incidents in Saudi Arabia: 2001-2008

Data from the Global Terrorism Database, START

Figure 6.2

Saudi Arabian Defense Expenditures (in billions US$): 2001-2008

Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research
Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditures Database

Conclusion

This case study has analyzed Saudi Arabia and its history of Islamic terrorism, including a brief bout with the violent phenomenon from 2003-2007. Since that time, no significant attacks have been successfully carried out in the kingdom, although a failed attempt was made on the life of Saudi Prince Muhammad bin Nayef, the head of Saudi Arabia's anti-terror campaign, in August of 2009. However, the fact that this assassination attempt occurred only works to underscore the Saudi success of strengthening the internal security apparatus as Islamic organizations are still intent on carrying out attacks in the kingdom.

This case study has shown how the prevalence of anti-western curricula in the Saudi Arabian education system works to produce a relatively large number of Islamic militants. This claim is supported by the large number of fighters that Saudi Arabia has exported to various jihad efforts across the Middle East such as Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the high level of involvement of Saudi nationals in transnational Islamic terror operations such as 9/11. This educational curricula combined with a weak internal security apparatus led Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda to find operational freedom and recruits within the kingdom prior to the sporadic attacks of the 1990's and the major Al-Qaeda campaign from 2003-2007. However, as Saudi Arabia drastically improved its internal security it removed one of the necessary factors for Islamic domestic terrorism. Even though Saudi Arabia may continue to prove to be a strong provider of militant recruits, operations within the kingdom have proved difficult as security forces have cracked down.

This thesis will now proceed to the final case study, that of Tajikistan. A country which, in the context of this thesis, represents the inverse of Saudi Arabia, in that it lacks the resources and capability of adequately securing its land, but it possesses an educational curriculum which

promotes a more moderate brand of Islam and does not contain rhetoric or texts which may plant the seeds of extremism in students.

CHAPTER 7

THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan, like Yemen and Saudi Arabia, presents an interesting case study due to the proximity of the state to hotbeds of Islamic extremism and violence such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Unlike these countries, Tajikistan has yet to experience a wave of coordinated Islamic terrorism within its borders. Between 2002 and 2008, Tajikistan suffered from only seven such attacks, mostly attributed to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which injured only twelve and claimed only a single fatality.[119] While there have been several terrorist incidents in the country over the past few years, they have been isolated in nature and do not resemble the campaign of terrorism currently taking place in Yemen or during the 2003-2007 span in Saudi Arabia.

This lack of violence cannot be attributed to the absence of the Islamic faith, which solidifies the fact that Islam is not an inherently violent religion. Approximate 90% of the country adheres to Islam with approximately 85% belonging to the Sunni sect and about 5% to the Shi"a sect.[120] Nor can this lack of violence be attributed to a high level of youth employment or a strong economy. Like Yemen, Tajikistan possesses a fragile economy which garners only a $14.61 billion GDP and more than half of its population lives below the poverty line.[121] Moreover, Tajikistan possesses a high youth unemployment rate which rivals that of Yemen or Saudi Arabia. Lastly, this lack of Islamic extremist violence cannot be traced to a lack of effort or desire as

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[119]   Global Terrorism Database
[120]   CIA Factbook

[121]   Ibid.

groups such as the IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir, which goals include the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate, have made known their presence in the country.

This case study will analyze the aspects of Tajikistan‟s education system and its lack of prevalent extreme Islamic ideology embedded in the curriculum. It will also describe the current state of Tajikistan‟s internal security capabilities and the presence of undergoverned or ungoverned areas in which Islamic terror groups can find safe haven. What will be shown is that Tajikistan possesses only one of the necessary conditions for large amounts of coordinated Islamic terrorist action in the country. In short, this case study will show how Tajikistan presents Islamic militants areas capable of organizing cells, but are prevented from carrying out operations due to a lack of young Tajik recruits, who have been educated in a secular or moderate Islamic system, to sustain any prolonged campaign of activity.

This case study will proceed by first providing a brief overview of Tajikistan and its modern history, beginning with its assimilation into the Soviet Union. The study will then examine the history of Islam within Tajikistan and the relatively diminished role it plays in social and political life. The next section will focus on the system of education including both the secular state schools as well as religious schools and how the curriculums of each, moderated by the Tajik government, curbs the dissemination of radical Islamic tenets to the country‟s youth. The fourth section will briefly touch on Tajikistan youth unemployment which mirrors that of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, yet has failed to produce significant numbers of militant recruits. This section will be followed by an analysis of Tajikistan‟s internal security apparatus and how its lack of effective resources and capabilities allows for ungoverned and undergoverned areas, especially in the southern regions of the country along the Afghan border. The last section will present conclusions.

Brief Overview

Tajikistan is located in Central Asia and nestled in between Afghanistan to the south, China to the East, Uzbekistan to the west and northwest, and Kyrgyzstan to the northeast. The country is a smaller country comprised of approximately 143,000 sq km which makes it roughly the size of the state of Wisconsin. The geography is characterized by mountainous terrain with the Fergana Valley located in the northern part of the country and the Kofarnihon and Vakhsh valleys in the southwest.[122]

Following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Tajikistan established a republic system of government headed by President Emomali Rahmon who has maintained the position of head of state for virtually the entire length of time. The government also consists of a bicameral legislature comprised of the Supreme Assembly, whose members are appointed by the president or selected by local deputies, and the Assembly of Representatives whose members are elected by popular vote. The Judicial branch is comprised of a Supreme Court whose members are appointed by the president. Tajikistan"s legal system is based on civil law with no significant influence of Islamic Shari"a law.[123]

Tajikistan"s economy is weak and its GDP per capita ($2,000) is among the lowest of the 15 former Soviet republics. Only 7% of the land is arable with cotton being the most important crop. However, since the end of civil war in 1997, Tajikistan has experienced relatively stable economic growth which reached 10.6% in 2004, but dropped below 8% from 2005-2008.[124]

Before assimilation into the Soviet Union, Tajikistan was part of the region known as Western Turkestan which had become a Russian protectorate in 1868 during the Russian advance

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[122]   CIA factbook
[123]   Ibid.
[124]   Ibid.

into Central Asia. By this time, the people of the region had become devout Muslims who lived by Sharia law as a result of the spread of the religion in the centuries prior to Russian influence. Following the Russian Revolution in which the Tsar was deposed and the Bolshevik Party assumed power, Tajikistan, as well as large areas of Central Asia, found itself under direct Soviet rule.

The events immediately following the establishment of Soviet control was marked by hunger and rebellion. The Soviet government induced local farmers to focus on the production of cotton rather than grain, which they asserted could be easily imported from other areas. However, transportation problems halted the import of grain into the region and a famine took root in which an estimated one million people perished (Harris, 2006). The religious people of Central Asia were also skeptical and wary of the Soviet regime which preached atheism. A resistance group known as the Basmachis mounted an unsuccessful military campaign against the Red Army, but were promptly defeated, forcing the people to accept the inevitability of Soviet rule (Bergne, 2007). In 1924, the Soviet government divided the Central Asian region into multiple republics based on ethnicity, and it was this division which created the modern boundaries of Tajikistan as well as the establishment of Dushanbe as its capital.

The following years saw the concerted efforts by the Soviet regime to drastically alter cultural, social and religious ideologies as well as establish a viable infrastructure in the country. By 1927, the Communist Party began closing mosques, eliminating religious leaders from their positions, and initiated sweeping changes to the traditional family structure and lifestyle. Islam became severely repressed during the 1930‟s and 40‟s as religious literature was suppressed and the closing of mosques and Islamic schools continued (Jonson, 2006). The Soviet regime also built roads, established electrical services and telephone systems, created railways and organized bus

services. It also constructed factories, hospitals, radio and television stations and theatres (Harris, 2006).

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the Soviet states formerly under its control, Tajikistan included, began to declare independence. After its declaration on September 9, 1991, it was no longer able to lean on Soviet economic support and its situation worsened, and by 1992 the country was embroiled in turmoil and civil war had begun over access to the political leadership of the country. The two opposing sides consisted of the former Communist party and a coalition of democratic and Islamist parties known as the Islamic Democratic Opposition (later as the United Tajik Opposition) (Bergne, 2007).

Fighting ceased in 1997 with the singing of a peace agreement between the government of Emomali Rahmon of the former Communist Party and the United Tajik Opposition in which Rahmon"s party retained the position it had seized in 1992. Unfortunately, the war left Tajikistan with a multitude of problems, especially economic woes which led to widespread poverty. Since this time, Tajikistan had focused on stabilizing itself both economically and politically.

Islam in Tajikistan

The Islamic faith was brought to the area which would become Tajikistan during the expansion of the Islamic Empire in the 8th and 9th centuries. By the time of Russian occupation, the religion had taken firm root in the area and the vast majority of its inhabitants were Muslims. While early Russian officials and Tsarists were hesitant to interfere with the religion, the Bolsheviks made their best attempt to control it. As discussed above, Islam in Tajikistan was severely repressed during the first half of the 20th century as mosques were closed and religious literature was purged. However, beginning in the late 1940"s, Soviet officials, now under Khrushchev, sought to improve relations with the states under their control and used Central Asia

as a "showcase" to Muslim inhabitants. Religious schools were once again allowed to be established and by the 1970"s an Islamic revival took root in the country which accelerated following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Jonson, 2006). .

Out of this revival came a split between Islam in Tajikistan between groups which advocated different perspectives of how Islam should be incorporated in Tajik life and politics. More radical voices wished to reform Islam in the sense of cleansing it from the popular traditions which has arisen locally and return it to its pure roots including the establishment of an Islamic government. Those people who espoused this view were not Wahhabi in a strict sense of the term, they were labeled as such by opponents of the movement who formed a fierce resistance as the majority of the Tajik population defended the popular institutions and traditions as well as the separation of religion and government (Jonson, 2006).

As Tajikistan declared its independence, it maintained the secular government that had been established during the Soviet occupation. The Tajik constitution defines the nation as secular and state religions are specifically banned, although freedom of religion remains a cornerstone of Tajik government. This form of governance presents virtually an antithesis of the Saudi Arabian state in the fact that while Saudi Wahhabism plays a direct role in the affairs of the kingdom, religious institutions are ordered to stay out of state affairs in Tajikistan (Merriman, 2009). Although religious freedom is granted, the Tajik government has made strong efforts to control religious institutions for fear of radical Islamic sects. In 1994, the Law on Religion and Religious Organizations was enacted and defines the rights of religious groups as well as the form and content of their activities. All religious organizations must be registered with the state and receive authorization of from the State Department on Religious Affairs (DRA) (Jonson, 2006). Based on this law, the DRA has the power to reject the establishment of religious buildings if they fail to

meet sanitation or building codes, located on public land, or are adjacent to government buildings or schools.[125] Tajik authorities have also initiated several campaigns to pressure unregistered mosques and other religious establishments to do so, as well as check religious leaders knowledge on religious issues (Olimova, 2005).

Today, religious freedom remains an important aspect of Tajik life. However, it is argued that restrictions of this freedom disproportionately affect certain sects of Islam which the state perceives as "radical" or "extremist." The government treats mainstream Muslim groups with more leniency than those viewed as radical and has increased barriers for religious registration accordingly (Merriman, 2009). In addition, the Tajik government has banned several of these types of organizations and movements, deeming them a threat to society and the state. In 2000, the government banned the group Hizb ut-Tahrir, which advocates the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate across Central Asia, and subsequently has detained members for carrying and distributing leaflets as well as other related activities. Tajik authorities reported that 299 such members had been sentenced between 2000-2005.[126] More recently, the Tajik government has taken measures to curb the spread of Salafi ideology and enacted a ban on the movement in February of 2009. However, the fact that Salafism is not an organization or group, but rather a movement, has caused problems for the government in enforcing such a ban.[127] Salafism is a relatively new movement in Tajikistan having emerged several years ago and it is estimated that only several thousand adherents of Salafism are currently present in the country, mostly comprised of young adults who attended Islamic schools in Pakistan or other Arab countries.[128]

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[125] International Freedom Religious Report: Tajikistan. U.S. Department of State. 2008
[126] "Tajikistan Sentences 299 Hizbut-Tahrir Members in2000-2005"CentralAsia-CaucasusInstitute.July20, 2005.
[127] Parshin, Konstantin, "Tajikistan: Salafis Latest Casualty in War on Religion." EurasiaNet. February 9, 2009.
[128] "Leader of Salafiya Movement Gets Jail Term of Seven Years," Asia-Plus. January 23, 2010.

Overall, in recent years the Tajik government has intensified its monitoring of the activities of religious groups and institutions to prevent them from becoming overtly political or extremist.[129] However, these efforts to monitor and restrict the ability of certain groups to carry out activity have caused concern that such efforts will backfire in the form of violence against repression.[130]

Education System

Before the Russian conquest, educational establishments in Tajikistan consisted primarily of religious schools which largely taught rote memorization of the Qur"an (Harris, 2006). Once Soviet control was established, a secular educational system began to be implemented including primary, secondary, and university levels. Attendance became compulsory initially for the primary level, but came to incorporate the secondary level as well (Harris, 2006). In addition to the state schools, dozens of private religious institutions were established throughout Tajikistan during the Islamic revival in the 1970"s (Jonson, 2006). State education in Tajikistan has kept in line with its secular roots and has only recently implanted courses in Islam into the curriculum. Religious education exists in addition to public education but is monitored closely by the Tajik government.

State Education

After independence, state education followed the same secular model which was established during Soviet control. The system consists of four levels of education: pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary. School attendance is compulsory from ages 7-17 with attendance rates having fluctuated over the past twenty years. Currently, attendance for each level of schooling is relatively high with 99% of males and 95% of females enrolled at the primary level. At the secondary level, the attendance numbers for males and females stand at 88% and 77%

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[129] International Freedom Religious Report: Tajikistan. U.S. Department of State. 2008
[130] Parshin "Tajikistan"

respectively. 98% of Tajik youth complete at least a primary education and the national literacy rate stands at a virtually universal 99.7%.[131]

However, despite these numbers, the educational system in Tajikistan is currently suffering from several problems. After the end of Soviet occupation, the stability and financing which it provided became absent and a five-year civil war following independence only exacerbated the problem. Education in Tajikistan is poorly funded although government expenditures in the area have recently risen. In 2000, only 2.3% of GDP was spent on education[132] but that figure has since risen to around 3.5% as of 2008, or 18.7% of total government spending.[133] In absolute terms, this spending amounts to approximately $120 million.[134]

These financing issues have led to multiple issues including a weak educational infrastructure, a shortage of updated materials and textbooks, and a lack of qualified teachers. Also, poverty affects the ability for many children, especially those in rural areas to attend school due to the lack of money needed to purchase clothes, shoes, and books even though attendance for basic education is free.[135] Finally, Tajikistan is currently experiencing a rapid population growth which is beginning to overburden the school system, which has led the government to take drastic measures such as drafting high school students to teach younger ones in remote areas of the country.[136] The Tajik government and the Ministry of Education have launched several campaigns in recent years to update the course curriculum and textbooks, raise teacher salary, and improve the

[131] "Education in Tajikistan," UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2008
[132] Marina Baskakova "Some Aspects of Youth Education, Gender Equality, and Unemployment In the Caucasus and Central Asia." International Labour Organization. 2007.
[133] CIA World Factbook

[134] "Country Profile: Tajikistan"
[135] "National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan (2006-2015)," Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan. August 2005.
[136] David Trilling "Tajikistan: Dushanbe Confronts Dysfunction in Education Sector," EurasiaNet. May 12, 2009.

educational infrastructure with the help of international aid, and although progress so far has been slow, there have been signs of success.

However, despite the problems with Tajikistan‟s educational system, it is clearly characterized by the lack of conservative or radical Islamic curricula which are present in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Throughout Soviet occupation and into its current period of independence, the government has gone to great lengths to keep state education secularized and absent of Islamic teaching which primarily include legislative provisions to keep religion out of state schooling. This separation of education and religion has even prohibited female students from wearing the *hijab*, a head covering traditionally worn by Muslim women, in state schools.[137]

This exclusion of Islam in state schools is not surprising given the overall attitude of Tajik citizens regarding the state and religion. In an August 2003 survey of Tajik citizens, 61% support the government‟s current policies toward religion while only 1.3% completely rejected the state‟s stance on religion. Furthermore, a 2001 survey found that a majority of citizens believed that Islam should play a less important role in society; despite the drastically diminished role it plays compared to other predominantly Islamic countries (Olimova, 2005).

In 2009, in a proactive attempt to prevent the spread of radical ideas being imported from countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, the government began prescribing mandatory courses on Islam to be taught in government schools. However, Islamic scholars were left out of the process of creating texts or curricula for the courses as well as teaching them. Instead, the Ministry of Education created its own text and trained 400 literature and history teachers to teach the courses. The courses focus on the history of the *Qur'an* and Islam, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and teachings which fall in line with the liberal Hanafi sect practiced by the majority

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[137] "Country Profile: Tajikistan"

of Tajiks and only comprise about one hour per week of classes.[138] Even taking into account the measures the government has taken to deny or moderate religion in schools, it has taken even further measures to monitor and control Islam in religious schools in an attempt to prevent dissemination of radical teachings.

Religious Education

Religious education in Tajikistan is essentially separated into two separate categories: informal and formal. The informal category pertains primarily to younger Tajiks who wish to pursue a religious education in addition to basic education at the primary and secondary levels. The formal category includes institutions and schools, which operate with the consent of the state, for students who wish to receive a more specialized religious education.

As noted above, basic state education is compulsory for Tajik youths aged 7-17 and, as a result, the vast majority of students are educated in state schools with only a small fraction of youths in this age bracket attending private religious schools.[139] If students wish to seek a religious education they may do so. However, the parents of a child under the age of 16 must consent to their doing so and the student must attend an institution which is registered with the state. In addition, the student must pursue religious studies in their own time (Olimova, 2005).

In addition to obtaining religious education in schools outside of the state system, youth also have the option of receiving this type of education inside their own homes. Indeed, a 2003 survey showed that the home is the primary place where most Tajiks receive their basic religious education (Olimova, 2005). However, even home schooling is moderated by the state as parents and relatives are only permitted to teach their kin and are prohibited from including children from

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[138]   Alexander Sodiqov "Mandatory Course on Islam Introduced in Tajik Schools," Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. September 1, 2009.
[139]   Tajikistan Development Gateway, Dushanbe. http://www.tajik-gateway.org/index.phtml?lang=ru&id=3651

other families in their instruction as this is perceived as a potential opportunity for unwanted religious proselytizing.[140]

The formal category of religious education includes official institutes approved by the state. Currently, this official religious education system includes 20 Islamic *madrassas*, the Islamic University in Dushanbe, one school for readers of the Qur'an, and two preparatory departments.[141] The *madrassas* in Tajikistan are theological schools which typically operate at a high school level. They are currently the most popular form of religious institutions and employ teachers who have graduated from Islamic universities in other countries such as Egypt, Libya and Syria as well as Dushanbe's Islamic University and have passed a required background check.[142] These *madrassas* generally have a four-year curriculum approved by the regional Council of Ulama and which include Islamic studies as well as instruction in humanities courses such as English, geography, philosophy, and history (Olimova, 2005).

The Islamic Institute in Dushanbe enrolls approximately 1,300 in its courses. The university is also dependent on tuition, charitable donations, and sponsored assistance from abroad to finance its programs as the state prohibits subsidization of religious institutions and organizations. As the only official Islamic institute of higher learning in the country, it has been subjected to several instances of intense monitoring by state officials. At one point, the Ministry of Education required that male teachers wear suits and ties as well as shave their beards. As was mentioned earlier, women attending the university were forbidden to wear the *hijab*.[143] The curriculum of the University is also strictly monitored through direct input and participation by the Committee for Religious Affairs (Olimova, 2005).

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[140]   International Religious Freedom Report: Tajikistan.
[141]   Ibid.
[142]   Maks Maksudov "North Tajikistan Concerned About Tajiks in Foreign Madrassas," Central Asia Online. October 10, 2010.
[143]   International Religious Freedom Report: Tajikistan. 2008.

Despite efforts to monitor religious institutes, authorities in recent years have been alarmed by the presence of unlicensed "illegal" *madrassas* which have been established throughout the country, and have taken efforts to shut them down. In July of 2010, authorities raided seven unregistered schools in the Isfara, Istaravshan, Panjakent, and Ghafurov districts.[144] The following month, Tajik police raided another unregistered *madrassa* in the Rudaki district south of Dushanbe and detained its founder and students.[145] In October, twenty more illegal schools with an enrollment of 189 students were discovered and subsequently shut down.[146] However, it is still believed that there are dozens of illegal schools still operating in the country, primarily in remote areas.

In addition to shutting down illegal religious schools within the country, Tajikistan has also called for the return of thousands of students enrolled in religious schools in other countries believing that the curricula of these schools is "questionable."[147] This campaign was initiated by President Rahmon who, in August 2010, announced that foreign Islamic schools were turning young students into terrorists and extremists. Over 1,500 students have already returned to Tajikistan with slightly over 2,000 continuing to study abroad.[148]

Although numerous unlicensed and unapproved religious schools are becoming more prevalent in Tajikistan, the lack of access to type of these schools, along with the government"s strong secular policy and moderation of registered religious schools, has largely prevented the prevalence of the spread of extremist or radical ideas and beliefs among the Muslim youth of

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[144] Farangis Najibullah "Tajik Officials Keep Sharp Eye On Islamic Teaching" Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. August 7, 2010.
[145] Alexander Sodiqov "Tajik Police Detain Islamic School Leader and Students," Jamestown Foundation *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 7, issue 154, August 10, 2010.
[146] Stan Rogers "Tajikistan Finds 20 Illegal Religious Schools," Central Asia Online. October 27, 2010.
[147] Maksudov "North Tajikistan Concerned About Tajiks in Foreign Madrassas"
[148] Alexander Sodiqov "Mosques and Islamic Education Under Increasing Scrutiny in Tajikistan," Jamestown Foundation *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 8, issue 41, March 1, 2011.

Tajikistan. This has prevented the sustaining of a large pool of Tajik youths from which to potentially recruit for Islamic terrorism.

Youth Unemployment

Like Yemen and Saudi Arabia, youth unemployment is a problem in Tajikistan. The Tajik economy, though it has currently been growing at a steady rate since 2000, was left in shambles following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent civil war. The civil war disrupted both agricultural and industrial production and the output of aluminum, the country"s most important industrial product, has yet to reach pre-independence levels.[149] In addition, as one of its main sources of income, Tajikistan has had to rely on money remittances from an estimated 1.5 million migrants working abroad in neighboring countries such as Russia.[150]

Because of its low-performing economy, unemployment in the country is high and is not reflective of the rate of 2-3% reported by several measures according to state officials.[151] Youth unemployment is particularly troubling as in 2002, the Tajik population under the age of 30 accounted for 62.6% of registered unemployed in the country.[152] However, high levels of youth unemployment have failed to produce the same type of Islamic militant participation seen in Yemen or Saudi Arabia, casting doubt that this factor is the sole cause of such participation. Historically, Tajiks have participated very little in *jihad* efforts and many actually fought alongside Soviet troops during the war in Afghanistan. Tajikistan"s material support of Soviet efforts also marked it as a target for the Afghan mujahideen, which initiated attacks within the

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[149] "Country Profile: Tajikistan"
[150] Sayrahmon Nazriev and Aslibegim Manzarshoeva "Poverty Tajikistan"s Only Growth Area," Asia Times Online. August 6, 2009.
[151] "Tajikistan: Unemployment High and Rising, Say Labour Minister," IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
[152] Baskakova "Some Aspects of Youth Education, Gender Equality, and Employment In the Caucasus and Central Asia"

country in 1987. Tajikistan also supported efforts of the Afghan Northern Alliance against the Taliban during the late 90''s.[153]

Currently, Tajiks play a very limited role in militant activity in nearby countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. In his profile of nearly 900 Islamic terrorists involved in conflicts around the Middle East, Clint Watts found that none were Tajik nationals despite the fact that 20 countries were represented. In contrast, Yemen and Saudi Arabia accounted for 144 and 359 fighters, respectively.[154] Although Tajiks have been found to be involved in jihadist activity, participation is limited. In Tajikistan, the number of active militant cells are, likewise small, and receive little popular support outside of certain regions. Because of this, the influence of certain groups such as the IMU is limited to undergoverned areas such as the Rasht Valley.[155] This dynamic will be analyzed below.

Security and Law Enforcement

Tajikistan''s security potential pales in comparison to Saudi Arabia''s as its lack of resources and viable economy makes it more comparable to Yemen. In 2010, Tajikistan''s defense spending amounted to only 1.5% of its GDP which is a slight increase from its 2009 share of 1.46%.[156] In absolute terms, this spending amounts to approximately $83.7 million in 2010 which, suffice it to say, is much less than many countries spend on national defense. U.S. officials have noted the effect of this poor amount of funding and have described Tajik security forces as "lack[ing] appropriate equipment, transportation, personnel, and training."[157] Tajik officials have

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[153] "Themes: Tajikistan and Afghanistan," Institute for the Study of War (ISW).

[154] Watts "Where Are They coming From?"
[155] Andrew McGregor "Jihad in the Rasht Valley: Tajikistan''s Security Dilemma," Jamestown Foundation. *Terrorism Monitor* 8, issue 37. October 4, 2010.
[156] CIA Factbook
[157] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009" U.S. Department of State.

also acknowledged the poor amount of funding as having caused a lack of qualified personnel and have stressed the need to strengthen the country''s border security and improve training for security officers.[158] It is for reasons such as these that the U.S. and other countries have recently provided Tajikistan with considerable amounts of defense financing. These problems, along with the geography of Tajikistan, provide ungoverned and lawless areas which can be described as safe haven areas for militant groups. However, because these groups do not have a large pool of Tajik recruits to draw from they are limited in capability and effectiveness beyond these areas.

Tajikistan''s substantial borders with several countries have provided the bulk of the trouble for the country. The country has emerged as one of the primary transit points for illegal drug trade in Central Asia as the mountainous terrain and inadequate border security allow ease of access for smugglers into the country. This is especially true for Tajikistan''s 1,300 kilometer long border with Afghanistan and has given rise to the Afghan opium trade. This drug trade has become one of the primary sources of financing for militant groups in the region (Engvall, 2006). It has been estimated that 15% of opiates and 20% of heroin produced in Afghanistan is smuggled through Tajikistan en route to Russia, Europe and China.[159] The porous border also provides freedom of movement for civil war-era militants who found refuge in Afghanistan as well as terrorist and extremist groups. Uzbekistan officials claim that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) has been utilizing the Tajik-Afghan border in recent years in order to establish headquarters in Tajik areas.[160] Despite recent efforts to improve border security, the capacity of security forces remains very limited.

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[158]   Dialfruz Nabiyeva "Tajik Legislation Fights Extremism," Central Asia Online. March 3, 2011.
[159]   Alexander Sodiqov "Porous Tajik-Afghan Border Remains a Major Security Challenge," Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. July 15, 2009.
[160]   Ibid.

These border problems have given rise to two areas which have provided safe haven areas for Islamic extremist groups, primarily the IMU. The first is the Ferghana Valley located in the northern region of the country which is divided between Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The Valley is the birthplace of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan which formed shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union as an opposition to secular governments. During the Tajik civil war, the IMU utilized this area of Tajikistan as a way to conduct operations in Uzbekistan, but was subsequently forced to flee to Afghanistan following a crackdown by Central Asian governments with U.S. assistance following 9/11. The Valley is characterized by high levels of poverty and social instability and is considered one of the most unstable regions in Central Asia.[161] The majority of the population in the valley lives in rural areas and is generally more religious than other citizens of the country. The IMU has recently made a return to the Valley due to the socio-economic and cultural factors which allow it to find haven, as well as geographic complications which make law enforcement difficult. "The mountainous terrain is not conducive to complete monitoring," explains one Tajik official, "and is convenient not only for underground terrorist activities but also for supporting ties to radical extremist groups."[162]

The second potential safe haven area is the Rasht Valley which lies in central Tajikistan approximately 100 kilometers west of Dushanbe. The Valley is located near the Afghan border and, like the Ferghana Valley, the mountainous terrain surrounding the valley has provided smugglers and militants ease of access and is rarely patrolled by security forces. The Rasht Valley provided the base of operations for the United Tajik Opposition during the civil war which fought against President Rahmon's government. After the war ended, rather than make peace with the

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[161] Igor Rotar "Resurgence of Islamic Radicalism in Tajikistan's Ferghana Valley," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Focus,* vol. 3, issue 15. April 20, 2006.
[162] Negmatullo Mirsaidov "Tajikistan's Isfara Becomes Terrorist Hub," Central Asia Online. November 8, 2010.

government, a contingent of Islamist fighters retreated into northern Afghanistan. The lack of security measures in the valley has currently caused concern after the recent escape of Islamic militants from a Tajik jail in August of 2010. Several weeks later, a Tajik military convoy was ambushed, killing 25. The government has taken measures to increase security in the region including the establishment of security installations in the mountainous terrain in the region as well as coordinated efforts between Tajik and Russian forces to sweep the region searching for suspected militants.[163]

Despite these safe haven areas, Islamic groups have had difficulty in organizing a campaign of violence which extends outside of these isolated areas. This has been attributed to the fact that the majority of Tajikistan's liberal Islamic population is not supportive of the extremist ideology and espousal of violence which characterizes these groups. The IMU is thought to have less than 200 members although its exact strength is uncertain due to its decentralized structure similar to that of Al-Qaeda's.[164] Although there have been several attacks in these areas, officials and observers have stressed that they are not indicative of a wider campaign of Islamic terror. As one analyst observes "There is a big difference between militants taking an opportunistic potshot at a military convoy…and coordinating a more ambitious attack."[165]

Conclusion

This case study has analyzed Tajikistan's situation in regards to Islamic terrorism and has found that, outside of isolated incidents in two different areas of the country, Tajikistan is not currently at any immediate risk of a prolonged campaign of violence. This is due to the fact that although the country possesses inherent problems with its border and internal security apparatus

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[163] McGregor "Jihad in the Rasht Valley"
[164] Eugene Chausovsky "Tajikistan Security Sweeps and the Possible Return of the IMU," STRATFOR Global Intelligence. November 11, 2010.
[165] Ibid.

which has created safe haven areas, the secular education espoused by the Tajik government as well as the strict monitoring of religious schools have prevented the rise and dissemination of radical Islamic ideas in the country's youth. This has prevented militant organizations from obtaining necessary support and recruits from which to stage a widespread campaign of violence.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

What factors can explain domestic Islamic terrorism it Middle Eastern states? This thesis

attempted to answer this question by examining two primary variables. The first is the prevalence

of an education system, whether legitimate or underground which is based on religious principles

or ideas which may plant the seeds of extremism in Muslim youth. This factor coupled with a high

youth unemployment rate may lead young Muslim adults to be more susceptible to recruitment by

Islamic terror organizations. The second is the lack of security and law enforcement capability

which may lead to the creation of "safe haven" areas from which terrorist organizations and cells

may operate freely with little state interference or reprisal.

These factors were analyzed in three different Middle Eastern countries which currently

exhibit different levels of terrorist activity. In Yemen, it was shown that Islamic schools, both legal

and illegal, are operating which have been found to disseminate very conservative Islamic tenets.

Coupled with a high youth unemployment rate and a security force which is inherently weak, but

also distracted by two domestic conflicts, Yemen currently has a serious problem with Islamic

terrorism which has led analysts to question whether it will become the "next Afghanistan."

Saudi Arabia, due to its state-sponsored Wahhabi ideology, has an education system which

has prompted outside observers, as well as state leaders, to call for a reform of its education

system. An examination of Saudi school texts provides a glimpse as to why this would be the case.

Saudi Arabia likewise has a high youth unemployment rate, and until the targeting of the kingdom

by Islamic groups, a weak and untested security apparatus. However, since 2007, terrorist attacks

have been virtually eliminated due to the large amount of resources the kingdom was capable of infusing its security forces with, and Saudi Arabia now possesses an adequate enough system of security to prevent the establishment and operational freedom of terror cells.

Tajikistan, unlike Yemen and Saudi Arabia, exhibit"s a secular education system which has kept a firm grip on religious education within its borders. Tajikistan has made strong efforts to keep religious curricula under surveillance and, in accordance with this policy, has raided and closed down many religious schools operating illegally within the country. Like Yemen and Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan also possesses a large problem with youth unemployment, yet groups such as the IMU have had difficulty in finding support and recruits within the country. This is despite the fact that Tajikistan has much room for improvement in the realm of security which has led to several areas within the country which are liable to be taken advantage of by such groups due to the mountainous geography of the area and the inability of Tajik security forces to maintain a persistent presence.

Applying this theory to other states in the Middle East strengthens its validity. Pakistan and Afghanistan, two states which have exhibited the highest levels of domestic Islamic violence over the past ten years, are notorious among policy makers, both foreign and domestic, for madrassas which have been established by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban for the purpose of indoctrinating young Muslims, and subsequently training them for militant activity. Both countries also contain large swaths of area which, due to the inability of security forces or political unwillingness, are strongholds for terror cells. Pakistan"s Waziristan region has long been the headquarters for the Taliban since their removal from Afghanistan by U.S. Special Forces and the Afghan Northern Alliance in 2001. Afghanistan, by virtue of being a virtually failed state and its mountainous and remote regions, has kept NATO and Afghan troops from securing the country despite nearly ten

years of constant operations within the country. Most troublesome for these operations have been the Helmand and Kandahar provinces on the Afghan-Pakistan border.

These countries are in complete contrast with a state such as Oman, bordering Yemen, which has been pursuing a modernized and non-fundamentalist education system and infrastructure since the deposing of Sultan Said bin Taimur by his son Qaboos bin Said in 1970. Before this time, Oman‟s education system was comprised of three schools with a total enrollment of about 900 students. Since then, Oman‟s education system has expanded and both boys and girls are expected to finish high school and the curriculum has largely been purged of extremist factors.[166] Oman, like other countries, also possesses a problem with youth unemployment, yet the country has also placed a strong emphasis on security, appropriating enough funding to its forces to equal 11.4% of its GDP.[167] Oman has yet to experience any instances of Islamic terrorism within its borders.

The implications of this study are twofold. First, although Islam is not an inherently violent religion, some tenets of the faith have been hijacked by extremists who wish to propagate this ideology into the youth of several states to perpetuate its existence. This dynamic must be acknowledged if there is to be any meaningful action taken to curb the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism. Second, although it seems self-explanatory that inadequate security measures lead to campaigns of terrorism, there are Middle Eastern states which remain at risk to the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism if preventive action is not taken to strengthen security measures and capabilities. This may prove even more urgent due to the current political upheaval in many states in the region, including Egypt, Bahrain, Tunisia, and Libya.

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[166] Nicholas Kristof, Nicholas "What Oman Can Teach Us," *New York Times,* October 13, 2010.
[167] CIA World Factbook

In terms of possible policy prescriptions, it should be noted that some areas are much more likely to be effective and well-received than others. Two such areas, education and religion, are more closely guarded by states as staples of their culture and society and most nations would understandably be opposed to outside intervention in their educational and religious affairs. Therefore, it would not be prudent for international actors to attempt to persuade Middle Eastern states to alter or reform religious aspects of the educational curriculum. However, these same states may welcome a helping hand in modernizing and upgrading school systems to accommodate larger numbers of students who otherwise would not receive any formal education as well as improve teacher training and classroom supplies. This can be beneficial in two ways. First, expanded and more viable school systems may help accommodate students from rural or remote areas who otherwise receive an education provided by religious schools operating without government consent. Second, a stronger and modernized education system may provide the necessary training to make young adult graduates more employable in their nations" economies, thereby lowering dangerous unemployment rates.

Based on the findings of this study, three main policy prescriptions for international leaders and decision-makers are suggested. The first is the continued engagement and dialogue between Western nations and those of Muslim states to find a suitable solution to the problem of Islamic extremism. It is no secret that the leaders of most Muslim states deplore terroristic action as much as any other. However, cooperation between Islamic leaders in these states is needed to put an end to extremist violence through the widespread and total condemnation of these acts. The second policy prescription is increased aid from Western nations to Middle Eastern and Central Asian states which inherently lack the resources to adequately fund security and counter-terror measures. Increased amounts of foreign military aid may be able to prevent another state, not yet plagued by

the problem of Islamic extremism, from becoming the next victim. The third policy prescription is the increased attention towards areas of the Middle East whose remote and isolated nature preclude youths from obtaining a moderate Islamic education. The work done by Greg Mortenson and his NGO, the Central Asia Institute, should provide the blueprints for efforts in this area.

Applying the analysis of this study to religions other than Islam would be an assuredly interesting endeavor. There is no doubt that extremists from Christianity, Judaism, and other major religions have attempted or carried out brutal acts of violence in modern history. Without further research, one can only speculate on whether the dynamics of this study would remain the same for other religions, but there is reason to believe it would. The theory proposed is not based on any sort of exclusion for religion which leads the author to believe that any individual indoctrinated with religious (or any ideological system) tenets based upon hatred of or violence upon others could become an instrument of terrorism. However, to create a campaign of terrorist attacks, it would be necessary for self-perpetuating, like-minded groups to exist in order to plan, organize, and carry out activity. In the absence of such a group, attacks would be isolated in nature. Although a modern history of radical religious organizations falls outside of the knowledge base of the author, it would seem that, at this point in time, radical and violent sects of other religions, though they undeniably exists, do not carry the same level of support and acceptance as their Islamic counterparts currently do. Whether this is the result of Western occupation of Middle Eastern states sparking an in-group/out-group conflict or some other cause requires further study.

Suggestions for further study include the expanding of this theory to include other factors which may play a role in the causes of Islamic terrorism, such as international events of political or religious nature which may spark an increased number of incidents. In addition, efforts should be made to account for transnational terrorist incidents to greater grasp the problem areas of this type

of terrorism and which countries are most at risk. Lastly, although it is an inherently difficult factor to grasp and quantify due to its nature, efforts should be made at tracing the movement of Islamic militants and groups across national borders to provide a sharper focus on which areas are in most need of attention.

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