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International Terrorism by Non-State Actors

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Question: How are the words of the Quran and the Haddith used to recruit and deploy Muslim “suicide bombers?”

The Prophet [Muhammad] said, "By Him in Whose Hands my life is! Were it not for some men amongst the believers who dislike to be left behind me and whom I cannot provide with means of conveyance, I would certainly never remain behind any Sariya' (army-unit) setting out in Allah's Cause. By Him in Whose Hands my life is! I would love to be martyred in Allah's Cause and then get resurrected and then get martyred, and then get resurrected again and then get martyred and then get resurrected again and then get martyred." (Muhammad, quoted in Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 54)

Introduction: Religious “Human Bombs” Take Center Stage

Allah's Apostle said, "None is wounded in Allah's Cause but will come on the Day of Resurrection with his wound bleeding. The thing that will come out of his wound will be the color of blood, but its smell will be the smell of musk." (Muhammad, Quoted in Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 67, Number 441)

“Suicide bombers” – as they are popularly known – are the single greatest terrorist threat in the world at this time; their advocates admiringly refer to them as “human bombs.” Bruce Hoffman quotes the boast of a Hamas terrorist: “We do not have tanks or rockets, but we have something superior – our exploding Islamic human bombs. In place of a nuclear arsenal, we are proud of our arsenal of believers” (Hoffman, 155).

Since 9/11, statistics show that over 80% of all suicide attacks are religious in nature, Islamic in particular. For example, of the thirty-five terrorist groups employing suicide bombings in 2005, thirty-one of them were Islamic; Hoffman concludes that “In no area of contemporary terrorism has religion had a greater impact in propelling the vast

increase of suicide attacks that have occurred since 9/11” (Hoffman, 131). The Islamic suicide bomber has taken center stage in the theatre of international terrorism.

Middle East Scholar Bernard Lewis notes that the rhetorical and ideological recruitment tools of these terrorist groups are rooted in hallowed Islamic texts: “All these different extremist groups sanctify their action through pious references to Islamic texts, notably the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet...” (Lewis, 138) It is not simply that these terrorists share a common religion; they share a theological starting point for their motivation, and a sacred “other world” justification of their deeds.

Islamic Nations as “State Sponsors” of Terrorism and Suicide Bombings

On the day of the battle of Uhud, a man came to the Prophet and said, "Can you tell me where I will be if I should get martyred?" The Prophet replied, "In Paradise." The man threw away some dates he was carrying in his hand, and fought till he was martyred. (Muhammad, quoted in Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 59, Number 377)

Of the four nations currently on the State Department’s list of “State Sponsors of Terrorism,” one is communist – Cuba – the other three are Islamic; Iran, Sudan, and Syria (U.S. Department of State). Daniel Byman notes that “despite [Cuba] being on the list of state sponsors of terrorism” they are no longer significant (Byman, 34-35).

By contrast, the three Islamic nations yet on the State Department’s list are proven training grounds for and sponsors of Islamic terrorism in general, and suicide bombings in particular. Iran supports Hezbollah and other lesser groups; Iran provided the training and logistical support for the suicide bombing of a U.S. Marine base in Lebanon in 1983 (Byman, 87). Syria provides extensive support to Hezbollah, HAMAS, and others (Byman, 113, 132). Sudan became a host nation for al Qaida training camps (Byman, 49), and had operatives and bases of operation not only for al Qaida, but also for the Abu

Nidal Organization, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Jihad, HAMAS and others (Byman, 42).

Other Islamic nations – though not currently on the State Department list as State Sponsors of Terrorism – have a long connection to suicide bombings; those nations include Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Lybia. Islamic clerics and scholars from these states play a key role in the incitement of suicide bombings.

Non-Islamic Suicide Bombers

We have been cowed. We have been intimidated by suicide terrorism. It is that simple. The fear caused by this tactic has made us cave in to them. (Hoffman, 144, quoting a Sri Lankan official concerning the Tamil Tigers use of suicide bombing.)

While the overwhelming majority of suicide bombers are Islamic, not all are. However, even these groups have been inspired by the imagery and fruit of Islamic suicide bombers: “Even secular, ethno-nationalist movements that later resorted to suicide attacks have...deliberately cultivated religious imagery...” (Hoffman, 132). The most famous of these terrorist groups – and the most successful with that tactic – are the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE); the Tamil Tigers as they are popularly known.

The self-declared reason that the Tamil Tigers embraced this tactic is because it works. “Suicide terrorism, moreover, is guaranteed to provide media coverage, given its eerie sensible combination of savagery and bloodshed. Suicide terrorist attacks are also an especially powerful psychological weapon...The suicide terrorist attack is thus deliberately conceived by its practitioners have far-reaching and profound psychological effects and repercussions well beyond the immediate victims or object of the attack.”

The founder and leader of the Tamil Tigers – Velupillai Prabhakaran – stated that when he saw the U.S. leave Lebanon in defeat after the Hezbollah suicide bombing attack

on Marine barracks in 1983, decided immediately that he would incorporate this tactic in his fight for a Tamil homeland (Hoffman, 132). He said: “With perseverance and sacrifice...Tamil Eelam [a Tamil homeland] can be achieved in 100 years. But if we conduct Black Tiger [suicide] operations, we can shorten the suffering of the people and achieve Tamil Eelam in a shorter period of time” (Hoffman, 141).

The Islamic/religious imprint on the Tiger’s use of suicide bombings is clear: “Prabhakaran’s real genius however it was in creating a historical narrative for the LTTE and the Tamil people that was tailored to support suicide terrorism...The cornerstone of the LTTE’s self identity became the principal of self-sacrifice and ultimately, martyrdom, for the greater good of the Tamil race.” This included words that mean “gift of self,” a “self gift” and an “oath to the nation” offered for a Tamil homeland (Hoffman,141).

The tactic produced a “mythology” that the LTTE possessed an “unstoppable fanaticism,” which drove the Sri Lankan regime to the bargaining table. As quoted above: “It is that simple. The fear caused by this tactic has made us cave into them.”

The LTTE’s successful use of suicide bombings appears to be an exception to the rule. Very few groups outside Islam use the tactic, for the obvious reason what lies – or does not lie – beyond the grave. As we shall see, the Islamic incitement to rewards in the after life is the central – if not the sole – reason to commit a suicide attack. For someone who does not believe in those rewards, the rewards or benefits must be in this world, either for the perpetrator, or for the group or the cause for which he is fighting. Beyond that, a suicide action for political reasons is often seen as an act of desperation and/or despair. It is therefore in my opinion to be expected that the use of suicide bombings will

remain particularly high in Islamic terrorist groups, and low in others.

Let us return to Islamic suicide bombers. All of the earlier mentioned Islamic groups use suicide bombings as weapons. As noted above, the vast majority of groups using suicide bombings are Islamic. A critical role in this upsurge was “the use of religion and theological justification – communicated and encouraged by Muslim clerical authorities – both to sustain support of these tactics among Palestinians and other Muslims and to ensure a continued flow of new recruits for suicide operations into the ranks of terrorist organizations...” (Hoffman, 153) However, Hoffman does little to elaborate on how this theological argument was posed; what texts, reasoning, and logic were used; and he certainly never indicates what role Muhammad’s words and deeds played in inspiring and justifying these crimes?

The Scholar’s and Policy Maker’s “Problem:” The Person of Muhammad

Nobody who dies and finds good from Allah (in the Hereafter) would wish to come back to this world even if he were given the whole world and whatever is in it, except the martyr who, on seeing the superiority of martyrdom, would like to come back to the world and get killed again (in Allah’s Cause). (Muhammad, quoted in Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 53)

The above-cited statistics cited by Hoffman prove conclusively that contemporary suicide bombers are predominantly Islamists. The question for International Relations (IR) experts is “Why?” Why are Islamic terrorists one of the leading sources for death in all types of terrorism (Hoffman, 88), and the overwhelming leader of suicide bombings? How are Islamic clerics able to justify these suicide missions? How are they so successful, that as one HAMAS leader pointed out, “We have to turn applicants away”?

The answer is glaring, simple, and troubling: the perpetrators of Islamic terrorism have self-consciously connected their deeds, and the justification of those deeds, to the

words, deeds, and philosophy of historic Islam. Nevertheless, it appears that this evidence is frequently ignored, glossed over, or not given the treatment it deserves, because it presents a quandary to IR experts, both among policy makers and scholars.

And nowhere is this “quandary” more keenly felt than in the lack of systematic or in depth studies of the life of Muhammad, assessing the role of his words in jihad in general, and “suicide bombings” in particular. Whereas there is a steady – albeit often uncomfortable – admission that the Quran is frequently used to incite violence, there is little at the scholarly or public policy level that delves into the character of Muhammad.

As any devout Muslim knows, Muhammad’s life was meticulously recorded for the faithful to imitate. Yet the role that Muhammad’s words and deeds play in the minds, reasoning, rhetoric, and deeds of terrorists – as the founder and shining example of Islam – is rarely discussed in Western academic literature or public policy writings.

In *Deadly Connections* – the often brilliant and in depth study of state sponsored terrorism, including suicide bombings – author Dr. Daniel Byman shows that various Islamic groups use theology to spread violence and terror (Byman, 179, 182, 201, 225). Yet he does not *mention Muhammad’s name in the index, nor quote him* one time in his work. Likewise Dr. Bruce Hoffman, in *Inside Terrorism* – a bedrock resource for the study of terrorism – spends page after page on Islamic terrorism, Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, et. al (Hoffman, 81-130), yet like Dr. Byman, does not mention Muhammad’s name in the index, does not quote him in the entire book, and only prints Muhammad’s name when he is named in the quote of another, such as Osama bin Laden (see Hoffman, 81, 82). When explaining the “dramatic upsurge of suicide attacks,” Hoffman refers to

“the use of religion and theological justification – communicated and encouraged by Muslim clerical authorities...” (Hoffman, 153) but does little to elaborate on this, and certainly never indicates that the words of Muhammad – the founder, central figure, and exalted hero of Islam – have a direct role in inspiring and justifying these crimes.

Why does this gap exist? I offer these possible explanations. Most IR policy makers were trained in – and accept the premise of – a “Westphalian system” in which the religion(s) practiced in a nation are of little or no concern to another state; vis-à-vis, the religious affairs and beliefs (including practices or persecutions) inside of a sovereign state is that state’s business. Recent UN treatise and documents – such as the U.N. Charter, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – have slowly begun to breach this Westphalian wall. These conventions declare fundamental human rights include the right to practice ones religion privately and publically in all nations – including the right to proselytize – and that the domestic laws of every nation must reflect and protect those human rights. That shift notwithstanding (tempered by the fact that many nations who practice sharia law repress and sometimes brutally deny freedom of religion), to thoroughly investigate *any* religion for terrorist predilections is disconcerting for some, anathema for others. The west construes that religion is by definition a *personal, peaceful matter*. It is easier to state – as President Bush did to Congress – “The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism...The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself...” (Bush, Sept. 20, 2001) than to ask and search out whether or not Islam had dogmas and articles of faith that made it an inherent threat to freedom and human rights.

In scholastic circles the difficulty of plumbing the depth and strength of the connection between the Quran, the Haddith, and suicide bombings is compounded by the tendency of scholars to not venture far beyond the borders of their own graduate studies. Scholars who do choose to write on possible *root causes* of terrorism and suicide bombings (as the adage says; “Publish, or die!”) have often produced work that is a deconstructionist effort to fit a set of data, or a general overview of terrorism, into the parameters and strictures of a scholar’s field of expertise, whether or not it actually has much to do with terrorism and its causes. Let me prove my assertion.

Dr. Susan Strange, in *The Retreat of the State*, wrote of her “final parting of the ways from the discipline of international relations” (most notably, from her colleagues - Strange, xv) in part because of the lack of cross discipline analysis among her associates in various issues touching on international relations. She stated that her motivation for writing the above title was the “failure of inter-connection between bodies of theory” in politics, economics, social sciences, and non-state authority and activity (Strange, 12). I believe the principle of “inter-connection” she discusses in her book is critical to a deeper understanding of Islamic terrorism in general, and suicide bombers in particular.

To be more on point with terrorism and suicide bombing, I argue that one cannot have studied Marxist political or economic theory and expect to accurately explain the root causes of Islamic suicide bombings through a Marxist or otherwise economic grid. However, some have tried. In *Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?* researchers Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova go through a painstaking, detailed analysis of this question, as well as giving a significant review of certain authors

who claim a link between poverty and terrorism. In the final analysis, according to the empirical evidence they had, such a connection not exist (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003).

Islam Speaks on Islam's Terms With Islam's Goals

I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped, Allah who put my livelihood under the shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey my orders (Muhammad, quoted by Osama bin Laden, Fatwa of 1998).

A recitation (with citations) of the plethora of articles, books, theories, etc. that seek to explain terrorism and suicide bombings through various grids – including the theory that Americans should stop driving SUVs and use more birth control to slow down terrorism (*Some Roots of Terrorism*; Ehrlich and Liu, 2002) – would be cumbersome to the extreme, and beyond the scope of this paper. Do we lack the ability of the will to let Islamic terrorists speak for themselves, in their own narrative, with their own vocabulary, through a theo-centric, Muhammadan lens of the world? Bin Laden and other terrorists regularly refer to the “golden age” of the Prophet, his companions, and the early caliphate; they allude to heroes and battles long forgotten or never known by westerners; and most importantly, they pour out or echo an abundance of quotes from the Quran and the Haddith – often without citation – to explain what they do, and why. Lewis notes:

Historical allusions such as bin Laden's, which may seem abstruse to many Americans, are common among Muslims, and can be properly understood only within the context of Middle Eastern perceptions of identity and against the background of Middle Eastern history... The Muslim peoples, like everyone else in the world, are shaped by their history, but unlike some others, they are keenly aware of it... Islamic history, for Muslims, has an important religious and also legal significance, since it reflects the working out of God's purpose for this community—those who accept the teachings of Islam and obey his law (Lewis, vxiii, xix).

Central to the history, teachings and laws of Islam are the Quran and the Haddith.

To have an intelligent grasp of the message and motives of terrorists, we must hear and

see them from this theological and historical foundation, not ours.

This has proved difficult and illusive. For example, when *The 9/11 Commission Report* – written by western scholars – introduced “Bin Laden’s Appeal In The Islamic World” they stated that bin Laden “...saw himself as called ‘to follow in the footsteps of the Messenger and to communicate his message to all nations...’” (9/11 Report, 48). The authors acknowledged that bin Laden’s messages used “cultural and religious allusions to the Holy Quran,” but in so doing downplayed the number of times he quoted the Quran to support his actions, and worse yet, they never showed the direct connection between “The Messenger’s [Muhammad’s]” words and deeds with the words and deeds of Osama bin Laden and his fellow terrorists. This cannot be mere oversight – quotes from the Quran and Muhammad given by bin Laden are too extensive to be missed – it therefore reflects some debilitating mix scholasticism, politics, and/or policy.

Thankfully, Bernard Lewis declares that some western policy makers – who are charged vocationally with the day to day security of their respective peoples – are probing the problem: “The key question that occupies Western policymakers at the present time may be stated simply: is Islam, whether fundamentalist or other, a threat to the West?” (Lewis, 27) The level to which the answer is in the affirmative or negative will be dealt with in part as I probe the connection between the Quran and the Haddith on one hand, and suicide bombers and recruiters on the other. But I would argue we must see it as “of a piece.” I.e, beyond the study of suicide bombers, the broader question begged by Lewis (that deserves a level of scholastic probing equal to the stakes) is this: is orthodox, historic Islam an inherent threat to, or incompatible with, the fundamental

liberties delineated in the Bill of Rights, and to basic Human Rights defined in various international treatise to which America is a signatory and at times guarantor?

Answering Questions with an Islamic Vocabulary

The person who participates in (Holy battles) in Allah's cause and nothing compels him to do so except belief in Allah and His Apostles, will be recompensed by Allah either with a reward, or booty (if he survives) or will be admitted to Paradise (if he is killed in the battle as a martyr). Had I not found it difficult for my followers, then I would not remain behind any sariya [battle] going for Jihad and I would have loved to be martyred in Allah's cause and then made alive, and then martyred and then made alive, and then again martyred in His cause. (Muhammad, quoted in Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 36)

When Osama bin Laden was interviewed by ABC News John Miller, Miller said:

[Miller:] Mr. bin Laden, to Americans you are an interesting figure: A man who comes from a background of wealth and comforts who ended up fighting on the front lines. Many Americans would think that's unusual.

[Bin Laden:] Thanks be to Allah. It is hard for one to understand if the person does not understand Islam. In our religion we believe that Allah created us to worship him. Allah is the one who created us and blessed us with this religion, and orders us to carry out the holy struggle jihad to raise the word of Allah above the words of the unbelievers. (ABC)

The main challenge to scholars and policy makers is quite simple, though clearly not easy; namely, to study and learn historic Islam, and then to prove or disprove - using sacred Islamic texts, history, and reason – whether or not suicide bombers are obeying the dictates of God in the Quran and following the guidance of Muhammad. It is critical to note that a fierce debate exists within Islamic clerical and scholarly circles; and that the debate is by no means settled. Having said that, it is clear that the “pro-suicide bomber” argument has many adherents, great traction and appeal, and as we shall see in some circumstances, a majority support.

Two critical issues must be addressed; namely, 1) the divergence of meanings with certain words between Islamic Culture and Western Culture; and 2) the definition of words unique to Islam. The words “freedom,” “justice,” “martyr,” “community,”

“faithful,” and “Word of God” – to name a few – have very different meanings between the Islamic and Western Worlds. The words “Haddith,” Sunna” the “traditions of the Prophet” and a host of other critical Islamic words and phrases transliterated into English have virtually no recognition in our mother tongue. Accurate meanings are critical.

“Word of God” or “Scriptures:” For Islam the only word of God is the Quran. The Old and New Testaments included true messages from God sent through His prophets but the texts were corrupted and perverted by rabbis, priests, and monks. Therefore, they are not the word of God. Muhammad is the last prophet, the “seal of the prophets,” who came to “correct the errors of time” (i.e., the supposed corruptions of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures), and was given the Quran, the flawless Word of Allah, which will guide men to God until the end of time. No more prophets or scriptures will come.

The “Sunnah” and the “Hadith,” known also as “The Traditions of the Prophet.” There is significant overlap between these words, but the most simple reduction is this: The Haddith are the recorded words of Muhammad that are *not* in the Quran; the Sunnah is the record of his deeds; “The Traditions” are his words and deeds combined, that serve as the highest and best example of how a Muslim might obey the Quran, please the Almighty, and earn eternal life. Sometimes, the words *Sunna*, *Hadith*, and *Traditions* are used interchangeably. Islamic scholar S.A. Nigosian explains their role:

From the very beginning up to the present day, the words and actions (sunnah, trodden path) of the prophet Muhammad have served as the ideal model for all Muslim believers to emulate... Thus, the sunnah of Muhammad as recorded in the Hadith is the vital integrating force directing the daily lives of millions of Muslims the world over. For more than thirteen hundred years Muslims have modeled their lives after their prophet Muhammad (Nigosian, 80- 81).

Muhammad embodied the Quranic ideal:

The Islamic devotion to the Sunnah or the Hadith – or the Traditions of the Prophet as they are also called – is universal, from small and great, rich and poor, layman and cleric, subjects and ruler; “...the Hadith has been to Muslims as vital a source of spiritual guidance as the Quran. For Muslims, to reject the Hadith is to reject the Quran. Hadith, the Quran, and the prophet Muhammad are inseparable...” (Nigosian, 84).

Osama bin Laden echoes this with the brevity, clarity, and passion of a true believer: “What goes for us is whatever is found in the Book of God and the *hadith* of the Prophet” (bin Laden, Messages to the World, 124–125).

The Islamic sources of history and the Sunnah I am using are revered among Islamic scholars. Most of the Hadith quotes thus far are from Sahih al-Bukhari, who is considered nearly canonical; “...al-Bukhari’s collection acquired, and still maintains, a significance in Muslim literature second only to the Quran” (Nigosian, 83).

Martyr: In the Christian schema, it means one who suffers death for the Faith (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 866); Bernard Lewis adds, “...in Judeo-Christian usage designates one who is prepared to suffer torture and death rather than renounce his faith. And his martyrdom is also testimony or witness to that faith and his readiness to suffer and die for it” (Lewis, 38).

The Islamic meaning is startlingly different: “The Islamic usage the term martyrdom is normally interpreted to mean death in the jihad [battle] and it’s reward is eternal bliss, described in some detail in early rigid religious texts” (Lewis, 38).

The Call to be, and the Reward of being a Martyr: A Study of Hadiths

Allah's Apostle said, "Five are regarded as martyrs: They are those who die because of plague, abdominal disease, drowning or a falling building etc., and the martyrs in Allah's Cause. (Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 82)

In an effort to bring clarity to terms, and to peer inside the mind and reasoning of terrorists who recruit martyrs and suicide bombers, I have examined every hadith in al-

Bukhari's collection that uses the word "martyr" or "martyred." (I did not use the plural "martyrs," or "martyrdom.") What follows are my findings.

The words were used 73 times in al-Buhari's collection. On 3 of those occasions, a caliph, not Muhammad, uttered the words, so they were not counted.

Of the remaining 70 usages, 8 of them were in connection to death by disease or accident, as mentioned in the above hadith.

3 passages spoke of a group of 70 soldiers whom Muhammad sent to teach the Quran to a pagan tribe. They were ambushed, and slaughtered; these could reasonably be considered martyrs in the sense of those who are killed for proclaiming their beliefs, however, the texts are unclear. They were soldiers, and may have been defeated in battle.

In the remaining 59 passages – or roughly 84% of the passages – the hadiths dealt clearly and solely with Muslims dying in battle for the cause of Islam and Muhammad prophetic office. A "martyr" is someone who is killed in battle, who is "facing the enemy," "slaying and being slain" (Quran, 9: 111) in order to establish Islam. Roughly 11% are labeled "martyr" for dying of disease or certain accidents; under 5% - given a kind reading of the texts – are considered to have been "martyred" for their words.

When a devout Muslim reads the hadith regarding being a "martyr" he is immediately and overwhelmingly faced with the fact that according to Muhammad – the founder and "best of men" as bin Laden said – the overwhelming meaning of being a martyr, and the call to be martyred, means fighting and dying for the Muslim faith.

Osama bin Laden: A Voice for Muhammad?

The martyr has a guarantee from God: He forgives him at the first drop of his blood and shows him his seat in heaven. He decorates him with the jewels of faith, protects him

from the torment of the grave, keeps them safe on the day of judgment, places a crown of dignity on his head with the finest rubies in the world, Mary's hymn to 72 of the pure virgins of paradise and intercedes on behalf of 70 of his relatives (Muhammad, quoted in Hadith of al-Tirmidhi, vol. 4, book 23, ch1, no. 1,620; cited in Messages to the World)

Osama bin Laden – the most famous terrorist in the world at this time – quotes the above words of Muhammad in his infamous 1996 “Declaration of Jihad” against “Zionist-Crusader alliance.” This declaration by Osama – and many others like it authored by him – is filled with scores of Quranic verses, hadiths of Muhammad, and uncited allusions to both Quranic and hadith texts that are frequently missed or ignored by western scholars and annalists. Dr. Rosalind Gwynne, of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, bemoans this atmosphere:

Specialists have analyzed the actions of Usamah bin Laden on the basis of everything from National Security to Freud. Some have even attempted to judge in what way his conduct may be called “Islamic,” an approach that is at least a step up from the usual formula that bin Laden is “using Islam” to cover “real motives” originating in anything but religion. Yet I have found no one who has paid close attention to the “Islamic” contents of his declarations, epistles, and interviews. These are studded with significant quotations from and allusions to the Qur'an and Hadith (Gwynne, 2001).

An example of what Dr. Gwynne describes, is that Dr. Hoffman quotes variations of the above hadith (recited by al-Tirmidhi) three times (pgs 159, 162, and 163) from news sources quoting clerics who are recruiting suicide bombers; yet in none of those sources do they acknowledge that the *original* quote and *promises of paradise* – and the ability to bring seventy family members to heaven as well – originated with Muhammad.

Dr. Gwynne notes that “To dismiss the man [bin Laden] as a ‘devil quoting scripture’ is to remain ignorant of both the attraction he holds for supporters and the factor that may in the long run deprive him and his movement of that support: effective, credible opposition from Muslims themselves” (Gwynne, 2001).

Herein lies the conundrum; bin Laden and other terrorist recruiters are reciting the

most sacred texts, recounting the glorious past, and describing the current abuses and defeats of the *umma* at the hands of infidels - often with the collaboration of “apostate” Muslim governments. Muslims who seek to dismiss bin Laden from within the ranks of Islam find themselves in the precarious position of (seemingly) disagreeing with sacred Scripture and hadiths, and thereby possibly painting themselves as those who aid the Zionist-Crusader attack on Islam, and are therefore apostates, worthy of death.

When interviewed by *al Jazeera* reporter Taysir Alluni on October 21, 2001, bin Laden quoted the Quranic command to Muslims (found in Sura 5:51): “O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as allies, they are but allies to one another. And if any among you takes them as allies, then surely he is one of them” (Lawrence, 122). Bin Laden went on to say:

So I tell the Muslims to be very wary and careful about befriending Jews and Christians. Whoever helps them do so with one word, let him be devout to God, and to renew his face so he can repent about what he did...

TA: *even one word?*

OBL: even one word, whoever helps them with one word...

TA: falls into apostasy?

OBL: falls into apostasy, a terrible apostasy, and there is no mite nor power except with God...(Lawrence, 123)

Bin Laden’s reasoning, theology, and historical narrative are far more appealing to someone who wants to “end the occupation of the Holy Lands of Muhammad” from the infidel armies that have desecrated that sacred soil than are the words of Islamic governments that side with America and Britain.

The critical nature of this discussion induces me to print what might normally be considered too long a quote from bin Laden’s “Declaration of War” from 1996. Yet the

need to see and hear Islamic terrorism and suicide bombings on Islam's terms, and given the fact that this Declaration resulted in terrorist attacks throughout the world including 9/11, and the fact that thousands have perished at the hands of those inspired by these words, I am compelled to quote this lengthy passage from bin Laden's 1996 Declaration.

Please note when reading: 1) The plethora of Quranic verses, marked by chapter name and verse, i.e., *Muhammad 47:46*; 2) The call for violence in these verses; 3) The frequent quotes of Muhammad from the hadith (begun with the words, "His Messenger... said", followed by the name of the source, i.e., *Saheeh AlJame' AsSagheer*; 4) The calls to jihad from Muhammad, and the promise of paradise; 5) The inspirational, victorious tone; and 6) The cohesion of bin Laden's argument. If the Holy Places of Islam are overrun by infidels; and perhaps most importantly, if these sacred passages are *true*, if Islam is the *true religion*, given to mankind by God himself in time and space through the Muhammad, then bin Laden's reasoning is sound, and his conclusions nearly irresistible:

...I say: Since the sons of the land of the two Holy Places feel and strongly believe that fighting (Jihad) against the Kuffar [infidels] in every part of the world, is absolutely essential; then they would be even more enthusiastic, more powerful and larger in number upon fighting on their own land - the place of their births - defending the greatest of their sanctities, the noble Ka'ba (the Qiblah of all Muslims). They know that the Muslims of the world will assist and help them to victory. To liberate their sanctities is the greatest of issues concerning all Muslims; It is the duty of every Muslims in this world...

These youths believe in what has been told by Allah and His messenger (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) about the greatness of the reward for the Mujahideen and Martyrs. Allah, the most exalted said: "And so far those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will by no means allow their deeds to perish. He will guide them and improve their condition. And cause them to enter the garden paradise which He has made known to them." (Muhammad 47:46). Allah the Exalted also said: "And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead nay they are alive, but you do not perceive" (Bagarah 2:154). His messenger (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) said: "For those who strive in His cause Allah prepared hundred degrees (levels) in paradise in-between two degrees as the in-between heaven and earth" Saheeh AlJame' AsSagheer. He (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) also said: "The best of the martyrs are those who do NOT turn their faces away from the battle till they are killed. They are in the high level of Jannah (paradise). Their Lord laughs to them (in pleasure) and when your Lord laughs to a slave of His, He will not hold him to an account." narrated by Ahmad with correct and trustworthy reference. And: "A martyr will

not feel the pain of death except like how you feel when you are pinched.” Saheeh AlJame’ AsSagheer.

...Those youths know that their rewards in fighting you, the USA, is double than their rewards in fighting some one else not from the people of the book. They have no intention except to enter paradise by killing you. An infidel, and enemy of God like you, cannot be in the same hell with his righteous executioner. Our youths chanting and reciting the word of Allah, the most exalted: “Fight them Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and heal the heart of a believing people” (AtTaubah 9:14) and the words of the prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM): “I swear by Him, who has my soul in His hand, that no man get killed fighting them today, patiently attacking and not retreating ,surely Allah will let him into paradise.” And his (Allah"s Blessings and Salutations may be on him) saying to them: “Get up to a paradise as wide as heaven and earth.”

The youths also reciting the All Mighty words of: “So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite the necks.....” (Muhammad 47:19). Those youths will not ask you (William Perry) for explanations, they will tell you singing there is nothing between us that needs to be explained, there is only killing and neck smiting. (bin Laden, 1996)

Let us fast forward to October 2001, after 9/11. When asked about his connection is to the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington on 9/11, bin Laden referred to the inspirational role of the above document and others:

We’ve been inciting for years, and we have released decrees and documents concerning this issue, and other incitements which were published and broadcast in the media. So if they mean, or if you mean, that there is a connection as a result of our incitement, and that is true. So we incite, and incitement is a duty—and God has asked it from the best of humans, the Prophet.

God said: “Then fight [O Mohammed] in the cause of God, you are not held responsible except for yourself, and incite the believers [to fight along with you]—it may be that God will restrain the evil might of the disbelievers. And God is stronger in might and stronger in punishing.” [quoting Quran 4:84]

And what he meant is fighting in combat against the disbelievers. So this connection is indeed right. We have incited and urged the killing of Americans and Jews. That is true. (Lawrence, 108)

The simple fact is that there are an extensive number of texts in the Quran, and an overwhelming – seemingly endless supply – of sayings from Muhammad (hadiths) that related to killing and dying in the way of jihad as a martyr for Allah.

Killing “Non-combatants” and “Innocents”

Much has been made of the fact that in the vast majority of suicide attacks, civilians (variously referred to as “non-combatants,” “innocents,” “women and children”

etc.) At many points – such as in the World Trade Center – they are the prime targets.

This has caused a somewhat aggressive effort on behalf of some to denounce these attacks as being inherently unjust, even in the Islamic schema. For example, Bernard Lewis states: “At no point did the basic texts of Islam enjoin terrorism and murder. At no point—as far as I am aware—do they even consider the random slaughter of uninvolved bystanders (Lewis, 39). Regarding the 9/11 attacks, he asks rhetorically, “Can these in any sense be justified in terms of Islam? The answer must be a clear no” (Lewis, 154). Unfortunately, he appears to be incorrect on both assertions.

Concerning murder, there were times when Muhammad incited murder; i.e., the deliberate killing of a non-combatant. Two short examples must suffice. For example, Muhammad said: “The apostle said, 'Kill any Jew that falls into your power.' Thereupon Muhayyisa son of Mas'ud leapt upon Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant with whom he had social and business relations, and killed him" (Ishaq, 369). The murderer’s older brother rebuked him: "When Muhayyisa killed him Huwayyisa began to beat him, saying, 'You enemy of God, did you kill him when much of the fat on your belly comes from his wealth?'" His brother answered, ‘Had the one who ordered me to kill him ordered me to kill you I would have cut your head off...’” (Ishaq, 369).

Umayya, daughter of Marwan, wrote verses of poetry against Muhammad. She was murdered in her bed at Muhammad’s behest:

When the apostle heard what she had said he said, “Who will rid me of Marwan’s daughter?” Umayr who was with him heard him, and that very night he went to her house and killed her. In the morning he came to the apostle and told him what he had done and he said, “You have helped God and his apostle, o Umayr!” (Ishaq, 676)

Concerning killing non-combatants, the most famous – proudly referred to by bin

Laden in one of his statements – is the slaughter of the tribe of Banu Qurayza.

A handful Jews of Qurayza breached a peace treaty that Muhammad had with them. Most Jews knew absolutely nothing of what happened. Muhammad learned of the failed confederacy, and said Gabriel told him to prepare for war; Gabriel “has been sent to B. Qurayza to shake their castles and strike terror to their hearts.” (Ishaq, 461).

After a siege of 25 days, the Jews surrendered, and agreed to submit to Muhammad’s judgment. They knew that other Jews had been expelled in peace with the chattel property they could carry (Ishaq, 437). Perhaps they would receive the same. Muhammad agreed to abide by the referees ruling, who said: "Then I give judgment that the men should be killed, the property divided, and the women and children taken as captives" (Ishaq, 464). Muhammad responded: “You have passed judgment on them with the judgment of God and the judgment of His Messenger” (al-Tabari, Volume VIII, 34).

The following narrative recounts the slaughter:

Then the apostle went out to the market of Medina (which is still its market today) and dug trenches in it. Then he sent for them and struck off their heads in those trenches as they were brought up to him in batches. Among them was the enemy of Allah Huyayy son of Akhtab and Ka'b son of Asad their chief. There were 600 or 700 in all, though some put the figure as high as 800 or 900...the apostle made an end of them (Ishaq, 464).

The Quran heralds this massacre as a glorious sign of God’s blessing:

And he [God] caused those people of the book (the Jews), who aided the Confederates, to come down out of their fortresses, and cast dismay into their hearts: some ye slew, others ye took prisoners. And he gave you their land, and their dwellings, and their wealth, for an heritage--even a land on which ye had never set foot: for the might of God is equal to all things (Sura 33: 26,27).

Muhammad is the *central actor* in this massacre: “*The apostle...dug trenches; ... he sent for them and struck off their heads...as they were brought up to him in batches;*” and “*the apostle made an end of them...*” According to the definition of “non-combatant”

(Byman, 8, 9) most of these males would be defined as non-combatants, or innocent civilians. They were not warriors, and most had no roll in what had fueled Muhammad's ire. This event was a precursor to modern terrorism. Rodinson notes:

From a purely political point of view, moreover, the massacre was an extremely wise move...the killing would help to frighten and discourage the enemy" and wipe out a hot bed of "anti-Muslim intrigue" (Rodinson, 214).

Rodinson's words echo what some call "the strategy of terrorism;" it "achieves its goals not through its acts but through the response to its acts" (Fromkin, 692).

Finally, regarding non-combatants, bin Laden gives this Muslim perspective:

...forbidding of killing children and innocents is not set in stone, and there are other writings that uphold [killing them]. God's saying: "And if you punish (your enemy, O you believers in the oneness of God), then punish them with the like of that which you were afflicted" [Quran, 16:126] [Scholars] say that if the disbelievers were to kill our children and women, then we should not feel ashamed to do the same to them, mainly to deter them from trying to kill our children and then again (Lawrence, 118-119).

Conclusion

This study shows that the words of the Quran and the words of Muhammad – recorded in the Hadith - are the central source of justification for suicide bombers, and those who recruit them, such as Osama bin Laden.

Moreover, these sources provide the religious motivation to those in Islam who desire to wage jihad, and become "martyrs."

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