Global Salafi Jihad & Global Islam

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Global Salafi Jihad

- Violent Islamist Revivalist Social Movement
- Modeled on the community of the Prophet & his companions (Salaf)
- Injustice due to crisis of values (Jahiliya) requires overthrow of apostate ‘Muslim’ ruler to establish Salafi state (Qutb)
- Three phases:
  - Against the near enemy (Faraj – “the forgotten duty”)
  - Global expansion of defensive jihad (Azzam)
  - Global offense against the far enemy (Zawahiri & bin Laden)
    - Expel the West from the Middle East
Evidence Based Terrorism Research

• The use of violence against non-Muslim governments or population to establish an Islamist state

• 400 biographies of terrorists
  – Trial transcripts
    • US, France, Germany, Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco, Canada
  – Press accounts
    • English, French, German, Arabic, Spanish (FBIS)
  – Academic publications
  – Internet (corroborated)
Diaspora & Terrorism

• Diasporas are important to terrorism in general:
  – Anarchists, IRA, LTTE, ETA
• Link predated “globalization”
• Link not specific to religion or Islam
• 84% of Global Salafi Mujahedin have joined the jihad, while in a diaspora (87% in Western Europe)
Terrorist “Profile”

• 2/3 from Upper or Middle Class
• Mildly devoted to Islam as youth, but 10% are Christian converts
• Average age at joining the jihad: 26 years
• 87% secular education
• 62% with college education (technical fields)
  – Although well educated, relatively ignorant of traditional Islam
• 2/3 are professional or semi-professional
• ¾ married & majority with children
• Vast majority have no criminal background
• No apparent mental problem or personality pathology
Joining the Jihad

• Friendship (pre-existing): 68%
  – “Bunch of guys” collectively deciding to join
  – Joining childhood friends

• Kinship: 20%
  – Fathers, brothers, first cousins
  – Importance of in-laws & marriage to cement friendship bonds

• Discipleship: 10%
  – Southeast Asia: Jamaah Islamiyah
    • Pondok Ngruki & Pesantren Luqmanul Hakiem
Trajectory of Core Arabs

- Upwardly & geographically mobile (“best & brightest”)
- Mostly from religious, caring & middle class families
- Global citizens, conversant in 3 or 4 languages, skilled in computer technology
- Separated from traditional bonds & culture
- Homesick, lonely, marginalized & excluded from society
- Seek friends
- Drifted to mosques for companionship, not religion
- Moved in together (halal food), formed cliques
Trajectory of Maghreb Arabs

- Two main paths
  - Second generation in the West
  - Young economic immigrants to the West
- Upwardly mobile, & completely secular background
- Excluded from society
- Dropped out of school
  - Petty crime (false documents & drug dealing)
  - Drug addiction
- Groups of friends, who grew up together & collectively drifted to religion to escape their situation
- Radicalized collectively
Joining the Jihad

- Bottom up, self-organizing activity
- No top down recruitment program
  - No campaign, shura or budget dedicated to recruitment
  - Selection: 15-25% of volunteers accepted
- Social bonds came before ideological commitment
- No evidence of “brainwashing”: they simply acquired the beliefs of their friends
- Group processes: no Robinson Crusoe narrative
Motivating Terrorist Operations

- Insidious process
- Low risk participation with increasingly closer set of friends
- Medium risk proselytism for ideal way of life
- Importance of specific script for the global Salafi jihad: 12 Islamist institutions generated 50% of sample
- Salafi ideology: new values (Islam & ummah)
  - Greater jihad: “born again”, imitation of Salaf
  - Faith & commitment grounded in intense small group dynamics
  - Gradual development of collective identity
- Complete transformation of values
In-group love

- Dynamics of dense social networks promotes in-group love
- Self-sacrifice for comrade and the cause
  - Secular $\rightarrow$ religious
  - Material $\rightarrow$ spiritual
  - Short-term opportunity $\rightarrow$ long-term vision
  - Individual concern $\rightarrow$ communitarian sacrifice
  - Apathy $\rightarrow$ active engagement
  - Traditional morality $\rightarrow$ takfir group morality
  - Worldly gains $\rightarrow$ otherworldly rewards
Out-group hate

• Grounded in everyday experience of exclusion from highest levels of society
  – Endemic in Middle East: fight for Justice
  – Western Europe: failure of integration policy
  – Not in U.S., Canada & Australia: American Dream
• Grounded in group dynamics:
  – “Bunch of guys” escalation of mutual complaints about the unfairness & injustice of society
  – Endorse conspiracy theories
• Endorse takfir doctrine \(\rightarrow\) sanctions commission of crime against society
Group Dynamics

• Global Salafi jihad is grounded in group dynamics
  – Once in the movement, difficult to abandon it without betraying close friends & family
  – This natural & intense loyalty to the group, inspired by a violent Salafi script, transforms alienated young Muslims into fanatic terrorists

• High risk terrorist operations
  – In-group love + out-group hate (under specific violent script, often religious) \( \rightarrow \) mass murder + suicide
“Culture shock”

• Global Salafi jihad might be a manifestation of “culture shock”
  – Lack of anchor of traditional social world creates vulnerability to new ideology, especially when shared in groups
  – Not specific to Islam
  – Internet is now creating these opportunities to all “alienated” young men, who no longer need to be geographically dislocated to be attracted to radical ideologies (Jihadi, Neo-Nazi, Cults…)