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Encyclopedia of Jihad

Alexei Malashenko

Stephen R. Bowers

Liberty University, srbowers2@liberty.edu

Valeria Ciobanu

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JIHAD: ISLAMIC JIHAD

Alexei Malashenko
Stephen R. Bowers
Valeria Ciobanu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Western powers are the chief targets of a global Islamic jihad.

Once believed to be a relic of history, the notion of Islamic jihad regained a political role in the 1980s.

There are multiple meanings of the term jihad. While “great jihad” implies peaceful activity “small jihad” denotes the use of violence.

There has never been a war in which Christians and Muslims have participated where the latter has not appealed to the slogan of holy war.

The failure of Iran’s “white revolution” in 1979 set the stage for development of violent strategies against the West.

The Chechen conflict is an isolated instance of separatism rather than a part of a “world Jihad”, as the Russian political establishment maintains.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JIHAD: ISLAMIC JIHAD

The Encyclopedia of Jihad: In recent years a great deal of speculation has been focused on the term “encyclopedia of Jihad”. Westerners have often questioned whether or not there was a specific book or set of books that should be referred to as an encyclopedia. In truth, there is no specific book or even collection of books but rather a body of teachings that constitute what we must regard as an encyclopedia of jihad.

In the last two decades of the twentieth century the phenomenon “jihad”, Muslim holy war, became a reality of international political life. The appeal to Jihad has turned out to be an almost inevitable characteristic of conflicts carried out along the Islamic-Christian frontier. Jihad is mentioned in connection with the “clash of civilizations” discussed by Western scholars. It is finally becoming the ideological foundation for international terrorism, which in the 1990s (and even earlier) became a form of radical Islamic activity.

The term “jihad” found a solid place in the political vocabulary of the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century; it received wide spread use in the media. The word “jihad” itself and the words derived from it - “mujahed” and (the incorrect) “jihadist” have entered the mass consciousness of many non-Muslim nations.

In the consciousness of a large part of the world community, including the Muslim world, and according to those precepts that constitute our encyclopedia of jihad, the jihad concept is associated primarily with militant Muslims fighting with the infidels and against all those who represent a threat to Islam. Two polar opposite relations come out of this - an especially negative one, characteristic of those whom the jihad is potentially directed against, and a respectfully enthusiastic one, found in the participants, that is, the mujaheds themselves, and also the Muslims that sympathize with them.

In a situation of constant tension and strained relations between several Muslim countries and Christian European countries, in conditions of internal political conflict, connected with the self determination of the Muslim minority, that has a place in Russia, in the territories of the former Yugoslavia, in the Philippines, in India, etc., beyond the boundaries of the Muslim world jihad has begun to be seen as synonymous with militant Muslim activity.

In connection with this it is always appropriate to talk about the ambivalence of this concept, of which the moderate Muslim politicians and clerics, who all insist on the danger of a one sided interpretation of jihad, are constantly trying to recall.

Origins of the Concept of Jihad: The original word “jihad” is translated from Arabic as effort. In the Islamic context this refers efforts carried out in the name of Islam, focused on the good of the Muslim society or Umma. In Muslim theology there are quite a few interpretations of jihad (including the Vakhabit or wahabite, which is one of the best known and most militant. A few types of jihad appear to be the most widespread and generally accepted. “Great jihad”, the “spiritual jihad” (jihad an-nafsii), signifying the constant self improvement of the Muslim, his adherence to Islamic regulations, and the fulfillment of the Islamic behavioral norms. The great jihad can simultaneously be seen as any constructive activity by a Muslim, bringing benefit to society and to himself. A good illustration of such an approach can be seen in the words of the former Algerian President Huara Bumeden (1965 - 1978) who said that “to build a house, to plant a tree, to give birth to a child - this is jihad”. In 1979 the Ayatollah Khomeini announced a war by means of jihad against illiteracy. In the 1960s the President of Egypt Hamal Abdel Nasser called the construction of the high altitude Aswan Dam a jihad. This list could easily be continued with similar quotes.

Small jihad is distinctly militant, signifying an armed struggle against the enemies of Islam or the spread of Islam in non Islamic territories. In small jihad there is one more designation - gazavat, coming from the concept of "gazva" - raid. In this case the term is about specific actions, the raids (the plural is gazavat) carried out by Mohammed against his adversaries - the heathens in Mecca, from which he was forced to leave in 622. Interestingly, the prophet himself divided jihad into greater and lesser strains, understanding the military activity of the later. Thus, the famous khadis, in which it is said that, having returned from a military campaign, Mohammed said: "We have returned from a small jihad in order to turn to a great jihad."

Subsequent, more detailed interpretations of jihad have come from the Muslim theologians. In a popular detailed interpretation, jihad is divided into four types: "Jihad nafsii" (self improvement), "jihad shaitani" (struggle with the devil), "Jihad al-kufar" (struggle against the infidel), and "jihad al-munafikin" (struggle against hypocrites). Moreover, they differentiate "jihad of tongue", "jihad of hand", having specific, applied content, but making up elements of great jihad. On the whole it is possible to agree with the Islamic scholar from Kazakhstan N. S. Al'niyazova, that the differing interpretations of jihad "are strongly intertwined, and occasionally one concept of jihad can include several others within itself".¹

According to Islamic tradition, the entire world was divided into three parts: Dal al-islam (the territory of Islam), dar al-harb (the territory of war), and dar as-sul'kh (the territory of agreement between Muslims and the local non-Muslim population. The methods of small jihad are employed only to dar al-harb.

The reduction of the entire jihad complex to small jihad undoubtedly contributes to confrontation between the adherents of different religions. This tendency is demonstrated by radical Islamic adherents who argue that the time has come to answer the West's "global challenge", to restore the trampled laws of the Umma in the world. On the other hand, many in the Christian European world of which Russia is a part see Islam as an aggressive, intolerant, and expansionist religion.

Here we should note the reasons according to which the small, military jihad has acquired special topicality. The slogan "jihad" has always revealed itself in times of exacerbated relations between the Islamic and Christian worlds. There has never been a war in which Christians and Muslims have participated where the latter has not appealed to the slogan of holy war. Jihad began to take on special significance in the nineteenth century when the European states were asserting their power in Muslim lands. At this time jihad became an ideological opposition to the Europeans. Among the more famous jihads are imam Shamil's resistance to Russian troops in the Caucasus in the nineteenth century and the struggle of the Algerian sheikh Abd al-Kadir against the French occupation. In the twentieth century the national liberation movement of Muslims was also carried out under the slogan of Jihad. Here we find the struggle of the Turkestan basmachi against the Bolsheviks in the 1920s, the uprising of the Libyan sheikh Omar al-Mukhtar in the 1930's against the Italians, and the Algerian revolution of the 50s and 60s.² We can say that jihad has evolved into one of the typical forms of relations between Europeans and Muslims.

In the 1960s and 1970s the role of jihad in the ideology and practice of the Muslim east was not so significant. This was a time of hope in the relatively quick modernization of the Muslim world by means of reform, the models of which came, on the one hand, from the west and, on the other, from the Soviet Union, which at this time was energetically working up variants of "socialist orientation" the development of third world countries omitting the western models. The question of resistance to the non-Islamic expansion in the commonly accepted sense of that concept had lost its significance. Especially since in the conditions of the bipolar world Muslim states needed the support of one of the poles, western or Soviet.

The formation of national ideologies, something which was a continuous process rather than a single event, began to occur after this. The national idea prevailed over strict Islamic reflections and, as a result, distinctive Arabic nations were created with secular governments.

During this period, the idea began to take root among the European politicians and experts that the concept of a Muslim holy war was finally being relegated to history. However, this by no means meant that the concept of jihad had completely disappeared.

The situation quickly changed in the 1970's and 1980s. Two circumstances served as the critical moment: the revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. With all of the differences in these events, one thing united them: In both cases this is the reaction of the traditional society being forcibly introduced to new (and often foreign) innovations. In Iran the Islamic revolution, with its active use of the jihad slogan, was provoked by the failure of the "white revolution" of Shah Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, who instituted a forced modernization into the country, caused the impoverishment of significant portions of society connected with the traditional sector of the economy. They tried to thrust another model of political organization on Afghanistan and (sic!) to "add" to the mentality of the tribal Muslim society something from Marxism-Leninism. When this was not successful, Moscow began more energetic measures, sending the army into Afghanistan. The natural reaction of the population was holy war. Thus, though little resembling each other externally, the events became the means for the revival of jihad.

In the Muslim world of the 1970s there was a crisis of modernization ideas, of both liberal and socialist orientations. Popular frustration grew and many people began to embrace the "Islamic alternative" which they considered a panacea from their worsening material position. The Islamic oriented sections of society saw the ruling elite's inability to surmount economic and other difficulties and the foreign, non-Muslim models of development thrust on them from without as the main reasons for the crisis. In the Muslim consciousness, all of this was tied in with the departure from pure Islam, forgetting its traditions, the principles of social justice, and the norms of societal and personal behavior.

Organizations Which Embrace the Concept of Jihad: Various radically minded non-governmental organizations began playing an increasingly significant role in the Muslim world, as did local radical Islamic parties and movements, who energetically called for the foundation of a Muslim state on national and regional levels, but also on a planetary scale. Among the more notable international Islamic organizations: The World Wide Islamic Youth League, The World Wide High Council for the Affairs of Mosques, The International Islamic Organization of Salvation ("al-Igasa"). This also includes officially sanctioned activities such as the dissemination of Islamic ideology and religious education which support various radical organizations and movements, including those that operate in Kosovo, the Philippines, the Northern Caucasus, and Central Asia.

The most uncompromising positions are occupied by "Dzhamaat al-Fukra" (founded in 1980, in Brooklyn), "Kharakat al-Ansar" (1993, Pakistan), "Hezbollah" (1979-1980, Lebanon), and finally the "famous" "al-Kaeda" (1989, Afghanistan), the founder and leader of which is "terrorist No.1", Usama ben Laden. The activity of these international groups have spread throughout the globe. They have hundreds of active terrorists in the most different regions.

Concerning these national Islamic organizations, in the Muslim world they are counted in the hundreds and, with very rare exceptions³, they exist in the overwhelming majority of Muslim states. We will enumerate only a few of these, whose activity was especially noticeable in the last decade. These are: The Palestinian "Islamic Jihad", "Hamass" the local division of "Muslim Brothers", the Philippines' "Abu Saiyaf" Group, the Algerian "Armed Islamic Group" and "Front of Islamic Salvation", the Egyptian "al-

Jihad”, “Takfir va al-khigra”, “al-Hamaat al-Islamiia”, and the Indonesian “Commando Jihad”.⁴

Other than those listed above, many other, mainly secular nationalist organizations, appeal to jihad as the cornerstone of their activity. Most of these organizations are in Palestine - The Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, The Peoples Front for the Liberation of Palestine, The Palestinian Liberation Front, etc. Among others, there is the Kosovo Liberation Army, operating in Yugoslavia, whose leadership is prone to defining their struggle as jihad.

All radical Muslim groups necessarily appeal to the slogan of jihad, which includes two directives - the struggle for the foundation of a “true Islamic state” and the struggle against the external enemy. Moreover, the call to jihad would be used to ensure international Islamic solidarity, something that is almost never completely realized.

Often the two directives intertwine, as in the Chechen conflict where, in the middle of the 1990s the local separatists attempted to unite a holy war against Russia with the challenge of establishing an Islamic state.

In a certain sense the position of the Uzbek division of “Hizb at-Tahrir”, operating in Central Asia is paradoxical. They maintain that the chief means of achieving their goal, the foundation of an Islamic state, is great, and not small jihad. That is, peaceful activity, which consists of the gradual integration into the power structures and the Islamic propaganda, which should bring about the relatively painless shift of the current secular government and society to an Islamic direction. From this point of view the position of Hizb at-Tahrir fully reflects the thoughts expressed by the authoritative ideologue of Islamic fundamentalism Abu alya Maududi, a Pakistani (at that time considered a radical, though today he would be considered a moderate).

However, one must recognize that, for the most part, among the Islamic radicals the appeal to armed jihad is the dominant tendency that actually sanctions their terrorist activity.

Thus, jihad has again become, de facto, a factor in the relations between the Muslim world and the west and within the Muslim world itself. Internally, both jihads are linked as far as the internal Muslim jihad has as its goal the overthrow of those regimes in Muslim countries which, in the opinion of the Islamic radicals, have betrayed from the path of true Islam. This can refer to the majority of governments in Muslim countries.

At different times the high activity of internal small jihad had and has a place in Egypt, Sudan, Tajikistan, in Algeria, in the Fergana Valley region of Central Asia, and to a certain degree in some parts of southern Russia (in the North Caucasus). And up to the present in these countries and regions a significant level of social - political tension has been supported by Islamic radicalism. The peculiarity of the situation is that there is practically nowhere the radicals, including those that use terrorist methods, have been able to achieve a decided success. To put it differently, jihad, both small and great, has not been crowned with the establishment of an Islamic state. The only exception in any sense could be the Afghan Taliban, which, in our opinion, is capable of supporting the Islamic norms of a functional society and an ultra-purist religious morality only in conditions of constant confrontation with their opponents. It can be assumed that the absence of any kind of threat to their quasi Islamic regime could lead to its weakening (If, of course, the regime has not already fallen under the blows of the US - this material was completed in the beginning of October, 2001, when the question of exactly how the US would respond to the terrorist acts in New York and Washington had still not been decided).

The Pragmatic Failure of Radical Islam. The inability of Islamic radicalism to realize its ambitious plans has given many political researchers and religious scholars a

basis for asserting its ultimate failure, as formulated by the French researcher Olivia Rieux as “the end of political Islam”.⁵ We note that this was said back in the 1980s, and the opinion of the majority of specialists has remained the same. However, the failure of “the Islamic project” by no means signifies that the battle for its realization will be cut short, and that long awaited stability will at last come to the Muslim world. The experience of the last decade testifies to the contrary - the jihad against the internal Muslim enemy, the hypocrite-apostate in a number of regions is intensifying.

It is obvious that the stereotype of dealing with the traitor, with the person who has left the path of truth and started on the path of its distortion, is at work here. On this issue the behavior of the Muslim does not differ much from the behavior of adherents of different religions. Internal religious clashes are always distinguished by a certain degree of cruelty and irreconcilability. It is sufficient to call to mind the religious strife of the middle ages between Catholics and Protestants and the inter-Muslim conflict between Sunnis and Shi'ites.

In the modern Islamic world, jihad is used by both opposing sides. As an example, we can bring in the reciprocal jihad of the Taliban and the Islamic Republic of Iran, or the inter-Muslim conflict in Dagestan, where the Vahhabites, local radicals, have declared a jihad against traditional tarikat Islam, whose adherence have in turn declared a jihad against the Vahhabites themselves.

The inter-Muslim jihad is a struggle for power in the government and simultaneously for the right to control societal and individual consciousness of the Muslim. And if, as noted above, the strategic goal of the Islamic radicals, the establishment of an Islamic state, is practically unattainable, then they have to hold on to their tactical successes: First they have to ensure their presence in the political arena as firm and enjoying the relatively wide support of the opposition; second they have to participate in the ruling coalition. The evidence of how helpful this would be can be seen in the creation of the General Accord for the Building of Peace coalition of the government of Tajikistan (signed in Moscow, 1997), in which the Islamists immediately received five posts.

According to the agreement reached with their adversaries the local Islamists renounced their more extreme aims, including jihad, and announced that the establishment of the Islamic state could not be accomplished by force and that the only way was by a national agreement. In this plan the situation in Tajikistan can be considered an opportunity for changing the accent of jihad and its evolution from small into large/great, directed towards constructive activity and a deepening to the religious consciousness of the population.

We shall note this circumstance, that in separate instances in inter-Muslim jihads, non-Muslim countries have taken part, rendering aid to one of the sides. In particular, this happened after the Iraqi aggression towards Kuwait, when Saudi Arabia came out in an announced holy war against the regime of Saddam Hussein. Having moved closer to the political establishment, the kingdom's scholar Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz called the “Desert Storm” operation carried out in 1991 by the United States and its allies a jihad against Iraq.⁶

The Anti-colonial Jihad. In the 1990s a definite shift occurred in the ideology of jihad. Mujahed-ideologists and practitioners increased their emphasis on the struggle with the external enemy. This is a formal repetition of the anti colonial struggle, where the chief enemy was not their “unstable” Muslim collaborators, but European Christian expansion. The anti colonial jihad of this time ended with the military victory of the Muslims.

Now the threat from the west, from the point of view of radical Islamic ideologists, carries a more large-scale character and puts pressure on Islamic civilization as a whole. This is the U.S.'s struggle for an establishment of a world monopoly and the idea of

globalization, calling for the creation of a Unitarian culture on the western (American) model, eliminating or forcing to the periphery those that do not conform to the western normative valuable orientations.

But since an overwhelming number of regimes in the countries of the Muslim world are political satellites of the west, jihad against them cannot be a basic means for changing the situation and consequently, its main object should become just the west, especially the more expansionist forces - the United States and, its natural ally, Israel. Similar ideas have been ripening among Muslim radicals for quite a long time. The testing ground for them has always been the Near Eastern conflict, in which America has been seen as the exact same kind of enemy as Israel itself. It is enough to remember that the Near Eastern wars of 1967 and 1973 were considered by the Islamists to be jihads against both Israel and the United States. Even the secular politicians of Palestine, including Yasser Arafat, have shared their views.

Approximately two thirds of the terrorist acts carried out by Muslims in the 1970s through the 1990s were prepared by Palestinians, calling themselves “fidais”, sacrificing themselves, willingly going to death in the name of the righteous work.⁷ Supporting the fidais are the religious authorities calling them mujaheds.

Soviet/Russian Relations with Islamic Radicals. The fact that Muslim terrorists never once tried to carry out terrorist attacks against the USSR is interesting. This can be explained by the fact that, first of all, the Soviet Union always took a pro Palestinian position, and maintained friendly relations with many radical Muslim regimes including Libya, Iraq, and Syria, and they carried out diplomacy with Iran, emphasizing their shared position in the struggle against imperialism. Secondly, and this is no longer a secret, Moscow aided in the training, sponsorship, and equipping of terrorist groups, especially Palestinian ones. The USSR also demanded this of her allies in the communist bloc, especially from the special services of the German Democratic Republic, and also from Czechoslovakia Bulgaria, and North Korea. According to specialists, every tenth (at least) Palestinian fighter passed through the appropriate training in the USSR.⁸ We note that during the Cold War the Soviet media was well disposed to the term jihad, often adding to it the epithet “anti imperialist”. Thus, in Moscow they related to the anti western jihad of the Ayatollah Khomeini, who “considered the Soviet - American confrontation to be an extended tendency of world development”⁹ and consciously named the US the “great Satan” but called the USSR only the “lesser Satan”, designing to use the second against the first in his revolutionary jihad.

After the invasion of Afghanistan Soviet politicians changed their attitude to jihad and the opposition to Moscow was began to be called “the so called jihad of the Afghan reaction” and terrorism by Soviet propaganda.

Consequently the anti-Soviet jihad came to be looked on sympathetically in the West, which firmly supported the Afghan mujaheds. Just as the USSR sympathized with the anti imperialist and anti colonial jihad, the anti Soviet jihad found understanding in Europe and the United States. In a word, outside the Muslim world the relationship to jihad has always had a pragmatic character. At this point no one seriously considered the clash of civilizations. The famous article by Samuel Huntington appears only in 1993, the book of the same name provoking heated discussions only three years later.¹⁰ And, following the logic of this scholar, in this clash it follows that jihad should become the chief form of the Muslims’ struggle. But even at this recent time the opposition of the Muslim and Christian world didn’t seem to interest any journalists.

The leading policy makers of the US and the USSR tried according to their strengths and opportunities to Muslim countries and communities to further their interests, being active in their political movements and ideological currents. In this source they

attempted to turn one against another and the slogan of Islamic jihad. Moreover, the plans of American foreign policy tried to use radical Islamic currents against each other. Such as supporting the Taliban in the hopes of using it against Iran, thus using an Afghan Sunni jihad against an Iranian Shiite jihad, which turned against the US. This political course turned out to be successful in a certain sense, since it maintained tense relations between two neighboring states and created an uncomfortable situation for the Iranian Ayatollahs. Inside the Afghan jihad itself the Taliban was opposed by the jihad of the Northern Alliance, lead by the most famous of the mujahed of the time Ahmed Shah Massoud.

US policy maker assumed that they would be able to reach an agreement with the different radical Islamic groups and use them to further the interests of their own policies. In any case, the first years of Taliban rule in Kabul made it possible to hope for this, weakening Iranian influence in Central Asia, making Russia uneasy, and creating a threat to the former Soviet republics that bordered Afghanistan, which caused them to seek closer relations with the United States. There is a widespread belief that in the 1990s the Americans established contact with bin Laden.

Obviously, aspiring to the status of the single world superpower, the US has considered it possible and promising to control any group or movement, including those whose ideologies and strategic missions clash with or are even hostile to them. On the one hand, the US was able to show interest in ben Laden and his comrades “just in case”, on the other, we cannot rule out that they considered using them in the game against Moscow in the Caspian region.¹¹ Be that as it may, the foreign aid of the Islamic radicals that were supporting the Chechen jihad against Russia, played a significant, if not decisive role in the destabilization of the situation in the northern Caucasus. In the Russian media information has been spread about a visit to Chechnya by ben Laden himself. This, however, did not receive reliable corroboration from the separatists themselves or independent sources.

Since the beginning of the 1990s bin Laden has become a significant political and, especially important, religious authority for Islamic radicals. In 1990 he offered aid to the Saudi regime in repelling a possible attack from Iraq. Er-Riyad, however, preferred to depend on a more reliable partner, the US, which irritated ben Laden, who soon left Saudi Arabia. At the end of 1990, relying on Afghan veterans of the war against the Soviets, bin Laden created the “World Wide Front of Jihad”, of which the leading role was played by the military organization “al-Qaeda” (the base), whose members immediately entered into a holy war. Today al-Qaeda, according to the majority of experts is the most organized and active organization of Islamic radicals.

In August 1996 ben Laden issued a fatwah, in which he announced a jihad against the United States and appealed to his confederates to pursue and kill Americans. The enemy was specified but the symbol of the entire successful western world became an object of jihad. In the same month bin Laden’s people bombed the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, this was also interpreted by them as an act of jihad.

The activity of bin Laden, other lesser groups working with him, and the policies of the Taliban, which to a certain extent can be interpreted as “the Islamic challenge” (ad-da’ba al-islyamiya), shows that the ability of the West to manipulate radical Islam is always limited and in the final analysis that radicals will always serve their inner logic. From this point of view, jihad can turn against the parties that today support mujaheds.

In the 1990s the small jihad more and more became synonymous with military activity (Muslims’ terrorist acts) any where in the world, not only against the military forces of their enemies but also against the world population.

At the same time it is instilling itself as an ideology and practice of ethnic separatists. In the second half of the 1990s no one suffered more from this than the Russian Federation, coming up against a holy war in Chechnya. The Chechens’ religious opposition

to a large extent predetermined the brutality of the conflict, which in the Russian media is often portrayed as a clash of civilizations. It is not only the Chechen separatists that are fighting in the jihad against Russia, there are several representatives of peoples from the northern Caucasus, who believe in the idea of setting up an Islamic state in this region.

At the same time, although the slogan of jihad furthers the consolidation of Chechen society, the idea of creating an Islamic state in this region is opposed by the majority of Chechens. Moreover, the question of the place of Islam in the structure of the government has become a cause of contention among them.

The Chechen jihad has not become a cause for the entire Caucasus and has not received massive support among the nearly 20 million Russian Muslims. A bipartite relation to it is preserved even in the rest of the Muslim world: All Muslim countries, with the exception of Afghanistan recognize the territorial integrity of Russia, although they express dissatisfaction with the way that Russia is trying to preserve its integrity.

However, the Chechens have received support from radical Islamic organizations, including those under bin Laden. Chechen fighters underwent training in Afghan camps, were instructed in the use of weapons, demolitions by Arab instructors, who at the same time imparted their religious knowledge.

“Islamic Pragmatism” as a Policy Option. How great a role does this foreign factor play in the Chechen opposition? It is impossible to ignore it, but it is also dangerous to exaggerate it. At the base of the Chechen conflict is the complex relations between Moscow and Grozny (and by no means the intrigues of Islamic fundamentalism and American Imperialism, as many Russian politicians have maintained). From the beginning the Chechen separatists have planned to establish an independent secular republic, of which their leader Dzhokhar Dudayev often spoke. The Islamic component, including the foreign aid, appeared later.

Here the question arises of how far is the holy war of Chechnya against Russia is a part of a world jihad. It is thought that in spite of the fact that there is collaboration with Islamic radical organizations and that the Chechens have contacts with the Taliban, “ Hamas”, “ Jihad”, “ The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and others, the Chechen conflict is an isolated instance of separatism, following this religious slogan. The Chechen opposition is not so much enrolled in this “ world jihad” as the Russian political establishment, especially the special services, would like to portray them. This is reinforced by the fact that in the Muslim world the relations to the Chechens as Muslims is rather negative. Even the Chechens themselves frequently try to present themselves as the “ bearers of the traditional features of the yafet tribes of khurrit*” which “ threaten the danger of conversion into the structural part of certain faceless Islamic umma with the character and outer appearance of a Semitic tribe”.⁴² It is worth adding that the majority of the Chechen population in general does not feel reverence for the Muslims of the Near East and are trying to distance themselves from them. We know that the most influential Arab in Chechnya - the field commander Khattab - is not popular among the local fighters who are irritated by the excessive advertisement of his devotion to Islam, his haughty attitude to the local inhabitants, and even his external appearance (long hair, clothes, etc.). It is unlikely that this will do anything to please the Arab supporters of the Chechens.

The Chechen jihad against the Russians is to a large extent an autonomous, perhaps even insignificant, phenomenon of the radical Islamist activity.

The West, as before, remains the chief target of world jihad. In the Muslim world Russia is seen as, if not an ally, then at least as having suffered from American expansionism. Remember Khomeini’s pronouncement that Russia is only the “ lesser Satan”. This idea is especially current against with background of Russia and Iran’s steady cooperation in the military sphere and in the sphere of nuclear energy.

So, Islamic jihad, in spite of the widespread claims that it is aimed at all non Muslims (in accordance with the idea of the clash of civilizations), is still directed primarily against the West. The events of September 2001 taken with the bombings in 1996 of the American base in Dahran and the 1998 embassy bombings underline the anti American tendencies. However, Islamic radical organizations are active in Europe - In France, Great Britain, Germany, their presence is being noticed more and more often in the Balkans. Islamic jihad is becoming a part of world terrorism.

In the Muslim world of today no single coordinated jihad has developed into an organization on a trans national scale. Nevertheless, separate local and regional groups of mujaheds are capable of effective actions, destabilizing situations on a national, regional, and, as the terrorist attacks in the US have shown, global level. Between them there is more or less steady contact, making them even more dangerous. Moreover, not having a common structure, the current mujaheds have a single ideological cover, that is also a prerequisite for their cooperation.

The specific character of jihad, its, so to speak, religious vivid aspect is the fact that the mujahed-extremists work not only professionally, but selflessly on a higher level. Their sincere religious fanaticism sets them apart and makes them ready for self sacrifice. The moral and psychological temper of the mujaheds hinders their forming a feeling of compassion for their victims. They act according to a Higher will in the name of the faith and from this point of view any of their actions can be justified as if they are the highest judge. Moreover, the fighters receive their fatwah from their religious instructors, which is somewhat analogous to Catholic indulgences. Here we should remember that the religious authorities in Chechnya have delivered a fatwah for the taking of hostages for the sake of the ransom. By this they refer to the experience of the Prophet Mohammed who, battling the pagans, also demanded a ransom for prisoners.

It must be acknowledged that after the United States announced that countries supporting the terrorists who carried out the attacks on New York and Washington will share the responsibility for them, anti Americanism grew among Muslims. Judging by the numerous anti American demonstrations occurring in Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, Arab countries Muslim did not experience a feeling of guilt for the crimes of their fellow believers. A film of Palestinians celebrating the fall of the World Trade Center made its way around the world. In the Brooklyn quarter of New York itself a few local Muslims treated passers by to sweets at specially placed tables in the street and the news of the events in the US was received with joy in Chechnya. In Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan a twenty year old local inhabitant admitted that "as a Muslim woman, this made her happy".¹³ Such a reaction indirectly testifies to the fact that some Muslims recognize that the attack was carried out by their fellow believers (something many Muslim politicians, demanding concrete proof, have disagreed with). The general growth of the potential for conflict has stimulated the rise of Islamic radicalism, which itself is a prerequisite for maintaining the mood of jihad.

All of this taken together makes the struggle against the extremist-mujaheds extremely difficult. A situation is developing where the governments of Europe and America must fight an adversary who does not "play by the rules" and justifies his actions by appealing to a higher power. The jihad factor places the traditional security criteria in doubt, forcing them to seek other qualitative approaches to dealing with terrorists.

A more carefully considered approach to the role of jihad is necessary, which is used as a tool during different conflicts, including those whose solutions do not seem to be in the foreseeable future. The conflict in the Near East belongs to this category, possibly Nagorny Karabakh, and certainly the seemingly endless Chechen conflict.

It is obvious that the world community, including a large number of Muslim states, has not yet developed a reasonable and effective answer to military jihad, which includes terrorist acts. It is possible that the answer is not exclusively found in military action with the participation of large numbers of land, sea, and air forces. The chief method of fighting them will instead become specific counter terrorist operations, possible only under large scale international cooperation.

A special place in the opposition to extremism should be occupied by Muslims themselves, the Muslim cultural, political, and especially the spiritual elite, the theologians, the majority of whom do advocate smaller, military jihad, considering it as a last, worst, forced measure, applicable only in the most extreme situations. In connection with this the extremely timely “Muslim Clergy and Terrorism” conference was held in Moscow in October 2001. The participants all emphasized the danger of identifying extreme forms of Islamic ideology and practices and Islam itself.

The support of those tendencies in Islamic ideology which are more open to dialogue has an important significance. It does not absolutize the past and looks on Islam as a part of something valuable to all mankind. In their interpretation the concept of jihad is not an obstacle to a dialogue between civilizations. Without such a positive concept of jihad success will be unlikely.

Finally, it is necessary to consider the fact that the economic and social difficulties in many regions of the Muslim world serve as the soil for jihad.

In the foreseeable future it may not be possible to fully escape the outbreaks of religious fanaticism and the accompanying aggression under the banner of holy war. The world community should think about a mechanism for their prevention and limiting their negative consequences.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alexei Malashenko holds a doctoral degree in history from Moscow State University and is a Professor and scholar in residence at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow.

Stephen R. Bowers is a Professor of Government at Liberty University and is the Director of the Center for Security and Science. Dr. Bowers is the author of *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe*, a monograph published by the Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism in London as well as numerous papers dealing with Eastern Europe and the former USSR.

Valeria Ciobanu is a lawyer who has worked with the Moldovan President's Documentation Service. In 1997 and 1998 she worked with the Moldovan Helsinki Committee for Human Rights as a lawyer, programs coordinator and program assistant. In this capacity she organized workshops on Human Rights in the Penitentiary System of the Republic of Moldova and on the Rights of the Refugees and of the Internal Displaced Persons in Republic of Moldova.. She participated in several international seminars on human rights in Poland, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Northern Ireland, and Canada. Valeria is fluent in English, Russian and Romanian.