

**DELIBERATE DEATH: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE OF SUICIDE
ATTACKS**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2010

ABSTRACT

Suicide attacks are a complex and vexing phenomena that are appearing with greater frequency in the international arena. Previous approaches to studying suicide attacks tend to examine them at one-level of analysis. While helpful, the insights produced are isolated from other crucial factors. This dissertation examines suicide attacks at three-levels of analysis as it investigates the organizational incentives, individual motivations and how the attacks achieve societal resonance. As such, the dissertation asks three primary research questions: why do organizations adopt suicide attacks, why are individuals motivated to become suicide attackers and how do the attacks attain resonance?

The research questions are applied to four case studies selected along a conflict continuum where suicide attacks were used. The cases are (a) the Japanese use of Kamikazes during World War II, (b) the LTTE's use of suicide attacks during its irregular war against Sri Lanka, (c) Hamas' use of suicide attacks as domestic terrorism against Israel, and (d) Al Qaeda's use of suicide attacks as transnational terrorism. The dissertation argues that organizations use suicide attacks out of defensive necessity and for strategic purposes, individuals are motivated to become suicide attackers by a religio-nationalist liberation ideology that promises the attacker post-mortem incentives for his or her death, and that societal resonance is achieved when the

organization draws on religious, cultural and nationalistic narratives that enable the population to accept the tactic.

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PREFACE

“On a huge hill,
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will
Reach her, about must and about must go,
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so.
Yet strive so that before age, death's twilight,
Thy soul rest, for none can work in that night.”

-John Donne, *Satire III*

Doing a doctoral degree is not for the faint of heart. It is a rigorous journey that requires intellectual endurance and personal fortitude. At times, it is also a daily struggle against self-doubt and despair. When looking at it as a whole it seems daunting. However, taken incrementally bit-by-bit it becomes manageable and even rewarding. Completing such a degree requires an enormous amount of support.

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the liberal arts. Dr. A.K. Anderson and Dr. Larry McGehee introduced me to the study of religion and theology. They challenged me to ask big questions and to pursue them with zeal and gusto. Dr. Anderson gave me a heads up on the rigors of a doctoral program. I will never forget a conversation I had with him circa 2003 when I was working in Irving, TX. When he heard I wanted to pursue a doctorate he paused during our conversation and in a calm voice asked me, “Are you sure you want to do this?” After I answered in the affirmative, he gave me priceless advice as to how to complete the doctoral degree. Dr. Larry McGehee was one of my biggest supporters. He pushed me to study what I was passionate about and taught me to never waiver from the goal I was seeking. Despite his immense intelligence he was always soft-spoken, good humored and witty, which are three qualities that are often lost in the academy. Dr. Robert Jeffrey taught me political philosophy and was instrumental in shaping my thinking. He introduced me to the enduring wisdom of the ancients who are so often forgotten in today’s colleges and universities. He made me realize that intellectual pursuits are not isolated from the pursuit of excellence and virtue. Dr. Jeffrey also taught me how to read and evaluate primary sources with a careful and critical eye, which has been a valuable skill especially as it pertains to the research done in this dissertation.

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Beverly Brizzi was nothing less than a surrogate mother to me. She unflinchingly looked out for my best interests and was a constant source of support. I would also like to thank Dr. Donald Goldstein who has been another mentor and avid supporter of mine. Dr. Goldstein is a GSPIA institution and I feel fortunate to have worked with him during his final years at GSPIA. His retirement from GSPIA has left a hole that will not easily be replaced. A special thanks is also owed to Chad Serena and Gyldas Ofoulhast who have been my friends at GSPIA from the first day I arrived. My life is indeed richer from having been able to count you as my friends. You are both excellent scholars and I look forward to following your distinguished careers with interest and admiration.

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Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam
Michael Patrick Echemendia
Arlington, VA
June 20, 2010

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“While nothing is easier to denounce the evildoer, nothing is more difficult than to understand him.”

-Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Devils*

“Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made.”

-Immanuel Kant

“Though this be madness, yet there is method in it.”

-Polonius in William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Suicide attacks confound many observers because they defy the fundamental human desire to live.¹ While suicide attacks are not a new phenomenon, the increase in their frequency, lethality and ferocity has caught the attention of many scholars. In the last decade, suicide attacks have occurred in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Britain, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uzbekistan, the West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.² The seeming explosion of suicide attacks has created an urgent need for scholars and policymakers to understand this phenomenon.

The explanations given by scholars to account for suicide attacks tend to fall into three areas. At first, scholars tended to focus on the individual suicide attacker. While political leaders around the world, especially in the aftermath of 9/11, portrayed those engaging in suicide attacks as poor, desperate and mentally unsound individuals that had been duped into carrying out a violent attack in exchange for money, the reality was quite different. As researchers began to probe the background of suicide attackers they found that these generalizations did not hold. Instead, the evidence demonstrated that these assailants were more likely to be educated,

¹ For the purposes of this dissertation, I use Yoram Schweitzer's definition of a suicide attack. He argues that a suicide attack is "a politically motivated violent attack perpetrated by a self-aware individual (or individuals) who actively and purposely causes his own death through blowing himself up along with his chosen target. The perpetrator's ensured death is a precondition for the success of his mission." See Yoram Schweitzer, "Suicide Bombings-The Ultimate Weapon?" (*International Institute for Counter-Terrorism*, July 8, 2001). Article available online at <http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/68/currentpage/25/Default.aspx>. Accessed on 12/5/2008.

² Mohammed Hafez, "Dying to be Martyrs: The Symbolic Dimension of Suicide Terrorism," in Ami Pedhazur ed., *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 165.

especially in the hard sciences, and to have come from middle class backgrounds.³ The suicide attacker was a person who had options in life but decided that death was more important than living.

Other researchers began to shift away from individual motivations for suicide attacks to examine the terrorist organization's role in employing suicide attacks and the justifications for committing the attack. In most cases, the terrorist organization is engaged in an asymmetric struggle with a more powerful enemy, and thus adopts the method that will cause the most damage, generate the greatest amount of publicity for the cause and send a powerful signal to the population as well as to the government. Suicide attacks are best able to accomplish these goals because the perpetrators act as human 'smart bombs;' the attacker controls both the timing and location of the attack to produce the maximum number of casualties and damage.⁴

Finally, researchers became interested in how suicide attacks resonated with their target population. The question of resonance examined how a message gained acceptance with an audience. This led a number of scholars to investigate how an organization presented the tactic to their target populations.

While looking at the organizational incentives, individual motivations and societal resonance independently of one another offer many valuable insights, scholars have failed to

³ Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, "Education, Poverty, and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" (*Journal of Economic Perspective*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2003), 136.

⁴ Ehud Sprinzak, "Rational Fanatics," (*Foreign Policy*, September/October, 2000), 66-74. See also Mohammed Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study," (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 29, 2006), 168

systematically integrate each into a coherent and cogent framework. This dissertation attempts to do just that.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The scholarship on suicide attacks tends to suffer from tunnel vision. Psychologists are interested in the personal traits and characteristics of the individual attacker, political scientists are fixated with the terrorist organization's strategic rationale for adopting the tactic, while sociologists and anthropologists look to religion, nationalism and culture to understand the social environment where suicide attacks occur. Each approach has yielded helpful insights; however, engaging the problem at only one level of analysis belies the complexity of suicide attacks.

This research adheres to a method of study advocated by Martha Crenshaw, which is "based on a model that integrates the individual, the group and society."⁵ A model that fails to integrate all three levels of analysis (the individual, the organization and society) will only provide partial insights into the complex nature of suicide attacks. This is *not* to say that a model that integrates all three levels of analysis will be able to predict the future occurrence of suicide attacks. Indeed, social science, especially political science, has become overly fixated on a model's ability to predict.⁶ The goal of this research is much more humble; it seeks to provide a

⁵ Martha Crenshaw, "The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the 21st Century," (*Political Psychology*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2000), 418.

⁶ For a cogent critique on social science's fixation with prediction see Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

systematic framework by which the researcher will be able to observe the symbiotic relationship between the individual, the organization, and society as it pertains to suicide attacks. In doing so, it will highlight the shortcomings of mono-causal explanations of suicide attacks and reinforce the notion that a more complete understanding of suicide attacks requires an investigation of the occurrence at multiple levels of analysis.

1.2 CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Since the dissertation investigates suicide attacks at three-levels of analysis, it asks three central research questions. First, why do organizations adopt suicide attacks? Second, why are individuals motivated to become a suicide attacker? Third, how does the attack achieve resonance with the target population?

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Traditionally, the literature on suicide attacks is divided into analyses that focus on the strategic logic of suicide attacks, what motivates individuals to become suicide attackers, and how the attacks gain acceptance in the target society. Each of these approaches will now be considered and a new framework will be presented.

Suicide Attacks as Strategic Logic

The strategic logic approach to the study of suicide attacks explains an organization's adoption of suicide attacks as a matter of rational choice.⁷ The core of the argument is simple and persuasive; an organization adopts suicide attacks as a means to an end. Political Scientists Robert Pape and Mia Bloom have provided the two most definitive accounts of the strategic logic approach to suicide attacks.

For Pape, the organizational driving force behind suicide attacks is coercion. The organization adopts the tactic to compel an occupying power to withdraw from territory that the organization rightfully considers to be its own.⁸ As Pape argues, as “the main purpose of suicide terrorism is to use the threat of punishment to compel a target government to change policy, and most especially to cause democratic states to withdraw forces from land the terrorists perceive as their national homeland.”⁹ He goes on to say that “every group mounting a suicide campaign over the past two decades has had as a major objective...[which is] coercing a foreign state that has military forces in what the terrorists see as their homeland to take those forces out.”¹⁰

⁷ The strategic logic approach has a large following within the terrorism studies community. Political Scientist Robert Pape has provided the most definitive account of this approach. See Robert Pape *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, (New York: Random House, 2005).

⁸ Robert Pape *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, (New York: Random House, 2005), 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

Suicide attacks become another tool in the terrorist arsenal by which organizations can achieve their goals.

With the underlying logic established, Pape goes on to describe common features of suicide attacks. Not surprisingly the first point he makes is that suicide attacks are an asymmetric weapon that the weak use against the strong with the target usually being democratic regimes.¹¹ He then enumerates the tactical advantages of suicide attacks, which are twofold. First, suicide attacks are a cost-effective way to achieve a high kill ratio. The tactic is brutally efficient, cheap and easy to organize, and accordingly represents the most ‘value for the money.’¹² Because of their devastating effectiveness, suicide attacks have become the most feared weapon in the arsenal of a terrorist group.¹³

Second, suicide attacks are the ultimate smart bombs. As Pape notes, “modern suicide terrorism is highly lethal because the attackers’ purpose is not only to die, but to use their deaths to kill the maximum number of people from the opposing community.”¹⁴ They can “pinpoint their targets, walk into highly secure areas, make last-minute adjustments in their plans, and

¹¹ Ibid., 38,

¹² Julian Madsen, "Suicide Terrorism: Rationalizing the Irrational," (*Strategic Insights*, Vol. 3, No. 8, August 2004), 6.

¹³ Daniel Tan Kuan Wei, "The Fatal Attraction of Suicide Terrorism," (*Pointer Journals*, Vol. 29, No. 4, 2003. Article available online at <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/publications/pointer/journals/2003/v29n4/features/feature7.html>. Accessed on 12/8/08.

¹⁴ Robert Pape *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, 8-9.

choose the time of detonation to inflict the greatest damages.”¹⁵ The suicide attacker serves as a platform carrying an explosive charge to its target. This platform can think and adapt as it carries its charge to the most optimal location in order to create maximum carnage and destruction.¹⁶ Indeed, there is much tactical flexibility gained by sending an operative who does not require an escape route. In the past, terrorist groups were constrained by the need to create an escape plan in order to prevent the capture of terrorist operatives, who might divulge intricate knowledge about the organization. Suicide attacks effectively have eliminated this liability.

Next, Pape discusses the ideological motivations that drive an organization to employ suicide attacks. He finds that suicide attacks are an outgrowth of nationalism and that they are “an extreme strategy for national liberation.”¹⁷ Since the main goal of the organization is liberation from the occupying power, nationalism fits easily into Pape’s analytic framework. To this extent, Pape believes that all organizations that use suicide attacks have nationalistic and hence secular goals. He quickly moves to discount the role that religion plays in the ideological calculus of an organization. Instead, Pape finds that religion is a tool used by the organization in recruiting and in other efforts in service of the broader strategic-nationalistic objective.¹⁸

While Pape’s explanation of suicide attacks is persuasive, it suffers from three major flaws. First, as Martha Crenshaw notes, Pape’s argument is grounded on “a rather arbitrary

¹⁵ Mohammed Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 9.

¹⁶ Boaz Ganor et al., *Countering Suicide Terrorism*, (Institute for Counter-Terrorism, Herzliya, 2006), 6.

¹⁷ Robert Pape *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, 80.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

determination of what constitutes a [suicide attack] campaign.”¹⁹ Pape’s analysis centers on organizations that use suicide attacks as part of a ‘campaign,’ which is described as an organized and coherent effort but is not further defined. What is problematic here is that this analysis ignores isolated attacks. The limitation of Pape’s approach is especially evident in light of recent failed attempts by Najibullah Zazi and Umar Frouk Abdulmutallab who sought to detonate suicide devices on the New York subway system and an airplane respectively. Indeed, it appears that there is a movement toward suicide attacks as more isolated incidents rather than part of a systematic campaign.

Second, Pape lumps all organizations that use suicide attacks under the nationalism rubric. He goes out of his way to discount the role that religion and religious commitments play in organizations that use suicide attacks. To demonstrate support for his argument, Pape points to “the explicitly antireligious Tamil Tigers” who have committed more suicide attacks than any organization and to Al Qaeda whose goal is to compel the U.S. to leave the Middle East.²⁰ As chapter 3 in this dissertation will demonstrate, the Tamil Tigers convincingly integrate *both* religion and nationalism in order to create an ideology that espouses the creation of an independent Tamil homeland. Similarly, Pape’s discussion of Al Qaeda willfully ignores the religious roots and narrative of the organization. His analysis of Al Qaeda is incomplete at best. Chapter 6 of the dissertation will demonstrate just how much Al Qaeda relies on the religious narrative in order to attract future suicide attackers. Indeed, Pape treats religion and nationalism as mutually exclusive instead of forces that mutually reinforce and complement one another.

¹⁹ Martha Crenshaw, “Explaining Suicide Terrorism,” (*Security Studies*, Issue 16, No. 1, January-March 2007), 142.

²⁰ Robert Pape *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, 16.

Third, the forced separation of religion and nationalism in the creation of an organization's ideology leads Pape to devote little time to investigating how an organization's operational ideology motivates individuals to become suicide attackers. As such, the motivations of the individual suicide attacker receive minimal attention in Pape's analysis. Even the most cursory glance at the final testaments from Al Qaeda or Hamas suicide attackers demonstrate that there is more than just nationalism that motivates individuals to become suicide attackers. Pape does little to address the allure or rewards of martyrdom and the post-mortem benefits they provide the individual. For Pape, these benefits are mere ploys used by the organization in order to entice individuals to become suicide attackers. Indeed, this type of analysis overlooks the bountiful evidence found in the written letters and video testaments of those who make the decision to become suicide attackers.

Mia Bloom, like Pape, focuses on the organizational reasons why groups choose to adopt suicide attacks. The crux of Bloom's argument is that suicide attacks are chosen as a way for terrorist groups to distinguish themselves from their competition. This view, which Bloom calls 'outbidding,' finds that when multiple organizations are in competition with one another for resources and recruits, they turn to dramatic tactics to enhance the organization's prestige.²¹ Suicide attacks, then, are chosen as a way to help terrorist groups survive and prosper by eclipsing potential rivals. Bloom's analysis is most convincing when she discusses the use of suicide attacks in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict especially during the Second Intifada. In her discussion of suicide attacks during the Second Intifada, she notes that "[w]ith the absence of monopoly over [the use of] force, groups compete and outbid each other with more spectacular

²¹ Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Bombing*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 19.

bombing operations and competition over claiming responsibility for them.”²² Groups such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine used suicide attacks to distinguish themselves from each other in order to become the face of the resistance against Israel. However, Bloom’s analysis overlooks two main points. First, there are instances when Palestinian organizations cooperated with one another by sharing materiel and providing operational guidance when conducting suicide attacks. While this does not invalidate Bloom’s outbidding theory, it demonstrates times when Palestinian terror organizations set differences aside in order to focus their energies on fighting Israel. Second, the use of suicide attacks on their own does not automatically give an organization greater appeal with the public. Instead, the appeal of suicide attacks, especially in the case of the Israel-Palestine example, is due to how an organization presents and packages the attacks to the public. In this regard, Hamas emerged as the main resistance organization against Israel by the way it equated suicide attacks with martyrdom. Indeed, Hamas developed a compelling martyrdom narrative that effectively convinced individuals to become suicide attackers, which helped create Palestinian popular support for Hamas over competing organizations. This martyrdom narrative was presented to the Palestinian population and became the ideological driving force behind Hamas’ suicide campaign against Israel.

Bloom’s analysis is less convincing when there is no clear case of organizational competition. Two examples in this regard are Bloom’s discussion of the Tamil Tigers and Al Qaeda. Bloom correctly indicates that the Tamils began using suicide attacks in 1987. As Crenshaw astutely notes, by this time the other Tamil militant groups who should have been competing against the Tamil Tigers had been destroyed systematically either by the Tigers or by

²² Ibid., 27.

the Sri Lankan government.²³ Therefore, the Tamil Tigers really were not competing with rival organizations because they had already been marginalized. Similarly, the outbidding argument is difficult to apply to Al Qaeda. The main question that emerges, which Bloom's analysis fails to answer, is exactly *who* is Al Qaeda competing against? It is not a stretch to say that at present Al Qaeda is less a unitary organization and more of a conglomerate of groups that are inspired by a potent narrative.²⁴ Indeed, Al Qaeda utilizes suicide attacks not because it is competing with other Islamic organizations, but instead as a way to pressure Western countries, especially the U.S., to change its policies vis-à-vis the Muslim world.

Other scholars of the strategic logic approach find that suicide attacks act as an effective form of strategic communication with the targeted country, the international community, and other terrorist organizations operating in the same country.²⁵ Scholars identify three strategic messages that suicide attacks seek to communicate.

First, suicide attacks “send a message to the targeted country that they are so determined to achieve their goals that they are willing to die for the cause.”²⁶ The willingness to sacrifice one's life conveys that the suicide attacker is a fervent individual, committed to a cause and undeterred by the targeted nation-state. Suicide attacks also present an enormous problem to

²³ Martha Crenshaw, “Explaining Suicide Terrorism,” 146.

²⁴ This is an issue found at the heart of the Bruce Hoffman and Marc Sageman debate in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. See Bruce Hoffman and Marc Sageman, “Does Osama Still Call the Shots?” (*Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008). This issue as well as Al Qaeda's narrative is discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

²⁵ Bruce Hoffman and Gordon McCormick, “Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack,” (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 27, 2004), 249.

²⁶ Mohammed, Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, 11.

nation-states, which must determine how to craft a counter-terrorism policy against an enemy who has no regard for his own life.

Second, the suicide attack directly challenges the state's monopoly over the use of force. In fact, the terrorist group wants the state to retaliate harshly thereby creating national and/or international sympathy for the terrorists' cause.²⁷ In this view, the suicide attack is intended to bait a government into adopting a harsh counter-terrorism policy.²⁸

Third, suicide attacks create powerful propaganda that enables the terrorist group to recruit more effectively. Suicide attacks, by their very nature, attract national and international media attention because they are a display of great determination and inclination for self-sacrifice on the part of the terrorist group.²⁹ The sensational nature of the attack guarantees media coverage that helps "terrorists publicize their grievances and solicit support in the form of financing, political support, and volunteers."³⁰ Besides media coverage, the suicide attacker is a 'witness' whose act challenges the larger population to join the struggle that the terrorist group is

²⁷ Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State Response*, (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 174-178.

²⁸ An excellent example of this is Israel's use of targeted assassinations as a response to Palestinian suicide attacks.

²⁹ Daniel Tan Kuan Wei, "The Fatal Attraction of Suicide Terrorism." Article available online at <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/publications/pointer/journals/2003/v29n4/features/feature7.html>. Accessed on 12/05/08.

³⁰ Mohammed Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, 13.

fighting for.³¹ The message sent by the witness is that unless the population joins with the movement the sacrifice of the ‘hero’ or ‘martyr’ will have been in vain.

So far, the main strength of the strategic logic approach to suicide attacks focuses on the benefits provided to the organization. The reasons enumerated above help the scholar to understand the practical considerations behind an organization’s choice of this tactic. Suicide attacks are seen as a rational choice whereby the tactic is chosen because it is the means of achieving a desired outcome, be it obtaining recruits, publicizing the cause, outbidding rivals, or tempting the nation-state to respond in a manner that contradicts its values.

Though this approach promulgated by Pape and Bloom provides many useful observations it suffers from two main weaknesses. The first is the circumstances under which an organization adopts suicide attacks. For Pape the answer lies in coercing the occupier to leave and for Bloom it is a matter of competition with other organizations. However, both analyses ignore the strategic environment that each organization finds itself in. Simply put, the analysis by Pape and Bloom overlooks the fact that organizations use suicide attacks because it is an option of defensive necessity. Coercing another actor or competing against another organization might be the aims of the organization that uses suicide attacks, but the reason why the organization adopts the tactic is due more to its strategic situation. Simply put, the organization adopts suicide attacks because it is in a position of weakness.

The second flaw with the strategic logic approach is that it passes over the question of why an individual would choose to take his life by wearing a bomb-laden explosive vest. The strategic logic approach focuses too intently on the organization’s rationale for adopting suicide

³¹ Michael Roberts, "Suicide Missions as Witnessing: Expansions, Contrasts," (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 30, 2007), 858.

attacks. Little attention is paid to the fact that an organization's goals could be different than an individual's motivation to become a suicide attacker. A suicide attack deprives the suicide attacker of enjoying the benefits the terrorist organization gains from the act. Unless one believes, contrary to social science data, that all suicide attackers are crazy, duped, or desperate, then a powerful incentive must motivate the individual suicide attackers. This incentive must entice the suicide attacker to exchange his life *for* something or else the organization will be without willing participants. Indeed, the strategic logic approach ignores the fact that individual suicide attackers are motivated by a different set of subjective beliefs.

Individual Incentives for the Suicide Attacker

Early attempts at explaining an individual's decision to become a suicide attacker used psychology. Indeed, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, former Senator John Warner (R-VA) argued that "those who would commit suicide in their assaults on the free world *are not rational* and are not deterred by rational concepts."³² Statements like these have contributed to the revitalization of the idea that suicide attackers are psychologically abnormal or suffer from mental illness. It is tempting to label suicide attackers as psychopathic fanatics who are mentally ill. Psychologist John Horgan comments that when dealing with a suicide bombing, most people would assume "that the person responsible is in some way special, different or perhaps even

³² Senator John Warner quoted by Scott Atran in "Who Wants to be a Martyr?" (*AEI Joint Policy Center, The Brookings Institute*, May 2003). Article available at <http://www.aei.brookings.org/policy/page.php?id=137>. Accessed on 1/11/09. Emphasis added.

abnormal.”³³ When confronted with a massive tragedy perpetrated by fellow human beings, it is natural to want to disassociate ourselves in some way from the person, or group, committing the violence. The violent narcissist and the psychoanalytic theories are psychological explanations as to why individuals choose to become suicide attackers. Both theories posit that suicide attackers choose their fate as a result of psychological disorders.³⁴

Psychologist John Crayton argues that terrorism is a result of narcissistic injury sustained by the individual. His theory emerges as the successor to the frustration-aggression hypothesis, which states that the “turn to violence [is] a result of a real or imagined underprivileged, disadvantaged status, and as an aggressive response from a failure to have their grievances resolved.”³⁵ The frustration-aggression theory has been discounted because it fails to account for the lack of terrorism in nation-states with populations largely considered underprivileged and/or disadvantaged. By solely focusing on privilege and advantage Crayton argues that the frustration-aggression theory is a “seriously limited analytical tool in the context of explaining terrorism, both on individual and collective bases.”³⁶ Instead of focusing on privilege or

³³ John Horgan, “The Search for the Terrorist Personality,” in Andrew Silke ed., *Terrorists, Victims and Society*, (West Sussex, John Wiley and Sons, 2003), 5.

³⁴ Reviewing the extensive amount of literature arguing for a connection between terrorism and psychoanalytic disorders is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The author has limited the discussion to the violent narcissist and psychoanalytic theories because, in the realm of terrorism studies, they are the most discussed and disputed theories.

³⁵ John Horgan in Andrew Silke, *Terrorists, Victims and Society*, 10.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

advantage, Crayton argues that the terrorist behavior is best explained by a psychology of narcissism.

Narcissism is defined “as an internal, intra-psychic, regulatory tool that enables the individual to defend the self from damage and harm.”³⁷ Narcissism is meant to protect the individual’s ego from outside harm. To do this, the narcissist creates a grandiose sense of self, which is used as a buffer against the threatening external world. The narcissist is often viewed as anti-social, arrogant and pompous. The narcissist overvalues his life while devaluing the lives of others. According to this theory, the turn to suicide attacks occurs when the narcissistic self is injured. This injury can be the result of a traumatic event, physical abuse, or emotional humiliation. When the narcissistic personality is harmed, a profound sense of fear is created, and an individual’s internal self-image diminishes drastically. The grandiose self no longer provides a buffer between the self and the external outside world. The injured self begins to look for a group or organization to provide comfort and security. The theory posits that narcissistically vulnerable persons are attracted by charismatic leaders and groups that recreate feelings of self-aggrandizement. When the narcissistically-injured self joins a terrorist organization the potential terrorist “feel[s] the need to ‘kill off’ their view of themselves as victims by harming others.”³⁸ Psychologists argue that this creates a malignant narcissism, which “muffles [the] internal voice of reason and morality” and allows such individuals to commit violent acts, such as suicide attacks, against innocents.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., 12.

³⁸ Randy Borum, “The Psychology of Terrorism,” (Tampa, University of South Florida Press, 2004).

Article available at <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/208552.pdf>. Accessed on 1/10/09.

³⁹ Ibid.

The psychoanalytic theory, like the narcissistic theory, finds the suicide attacker as psychologically damaged and that person projects his weakness onto others through violence. The psychoanalytic theory of terrorism has its genesis in the thought of Sigmund Freud. Freud argued that “one has...to reckon with the fact that there are present in all men destructive, and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural, trends and that in a great number of people these are strong enough to determine their behavior in society.”⁴⁰ The destructive tendencies in human beings arise from either the largely unconscious hostility one has toward one’s parents or are a product of early abuse or mistreatment. Based on these internal psychological forces, terrorists form what Jerrold Post calls a ‘psycho-logic.’⁴¹ The psycho-logic is “constructed to rationalize acts [terrorists] are *psychologically compelled to commit*.”⁴² Moreover, it easily constructs an ‘us versus them’ dichotomy, removing prohibitions against violently harming innocents. Though both the narcissistic and psychoanalytic theories may sound compelling, there has not been conclusive empirical support to validate them.

A plethora of studies conducted between 1970 and 2000 concluded that while some terrorists could be characterized as narcissistic or psychotic, the majority of them were psychological normal.⁴³ Comparative studies on the German Baader-Meinhof group, the Italian Red Brigade, the IRA, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, LTTE and Al Qaeda revealed that “[the terrorists]

⁴⁰ Ibid. Sigmund Freud quoted in Randy Borum, “The Psychology of Terrorism.”

⁴¹ Jerrold Post, “Terrorist Psycho-Logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Psychological Forces” in Walter Reich ed., *Origins of Terrorism*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 25.

⁴² Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁴³ Normal in this sense means there were no psychological abnormalities found in the lives of terrorist members.

tended to be normal in intelligence and mental stability, didn't have significant psychiatric problems or mental illness and didn't abuse alcohol."⁴⁴ Moreover, when convicted terrorists were compared with adult prison inmates, the terrorists "were more intelligent, had higher educational attainments, showed less evidence of early developmental problems and had fewer court appearances than 'ordinary' [prison inmates]."⁴⁵

Psychologists who study suicide attacks, such as Ariel Merari, Nasra Hassan and Anthony Silke, do not believe suicide attackers are insane or psychologically perturbed. Indeed, Nasra Hassan when investigating Palestinian suicide attackers found that "[w]hat is frightening is not the abnormality of those who carry out the suicide attacks, *but their sheer normality*."⁴⁶ It is indeed a popular misconception that suicide attackers are madmen. Much to the contrary, the final testaments of suicide attackers demonstrate that "they have considerable insight into their own actions, and often show a striking awareness of how others view them."⁴⁷ Thus, psychologists who study suicide attacks "have gradually been forced to accept that the outstanding characteristic of the terrorist is their normalcy."⁴⁸ If the suicide attacker is normal by psychological standards, then there must be other forces that drive a person to commit such an

⁴⁴ John Horgan in Andrew Silke, *Terrorists, Victims and Society*, 17.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Nasra Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to Human Bombs," (*The New Yorker*, November 19, 2001). Article available online at http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?011119fa_FACT1. Accessed on 1/10/09. Emphasis added.

⁴⁷ Anthony Silke, "Courage in Dark Places: Reflections on Terrorist Psychology," (*Social Research*, Spring, 2004), 181.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 182.

extreme act. Two powerful forces that continue to prompt individuals to act are found in religion and nationalism.

Religion and nationalism provide a set of belief-systems that help the adherent make sense of the world. A belief system refers to "a set of related ideas (learned and shared), which has some permanence, and to which individuals and/or groups exhibit some commitment."⁴⁹ Belief systems direct action toward a certain end. For this reason, religion and nationalism have been powerful forces that have mobilized people for centuries.

For nationalism, the purpose of action is aligned to the maintenance of the nation-state or an 'imagined community.'⁵⁰ Nationalism creates a belief in the value of shared ancestry and kinship in which the individual is part of a sacred communion.⁵¹ The individual is bound to this community by sharing a similar ethnicity, language, and history. The nation or ethnic community is "invested with sacred qualities that it draws from older beliefs, sentiments, and ideals about the nature of community, territory, history and destiny."⁵² For the person motivated by nationalism, the giving of one's self in service of the nation or the imagined community is the highest honor one can achieve.

In much the same vein, religion presents a belief-system that offers a set of transcendent symbols and rules that are intended to orient human action toward a higher deity or supra-

⁴⁹ Robert Benford, *Framing Activity, Meaning, and Social Movement Participation: The Nuclear Disarmament Movement*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1987), 158.

⁵⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1983), 6.

⁵¹ Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 23.

⁵² *Ibid.*

national power.⁵³ Most religions use sacred texts (i.e. Hebrew Scriptures, Bible, Koran, Bhagavad-Gita etc) as examples of how the rightly ordered life should be lived. These texts are intended to form the believer into someone who acts in accordance with a number of rules and precepts. The end for the religious believer is a continual process of self-perfection in order to draw closer to the deity.

This brief discussion of religious and nationalist incentives for death is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to highlight the notion that to perform a suicide attack the individual must harbor subjective beliefs that create an incentive to perform the attack.⁵⁴ The individuals who participate in suicide attacks are inspired by fervent beliefs in their cause that instill determination and absolute commitment.⁵⁵ Accordingly, both the individual and the terrorist organization must operate within this belief system.⁵⁶ The terrorist organization must foster this individual commitment to ensure that it maintains a cadre of individuals who are willing to die for the cause. Since religion and nationalism provide a powerful set of belief-systems to the individual, it should come as little surprise that organizations using suicide attacks have created ideologies combining religion and nationalism that help motivate the individual suicide attacker.

⁵³ Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Religion, Ethnicity and Self Identity: Nations in Turmoil*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997), 2.

⁵⁴ See Michael P. Echemendia, *Dying for Gain: Suicide Terrorism and Incentive Based Beliefs*, (Unpublished MTS Thesis, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, 2006) and Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs*, (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

⁵⁵ Michael Roberts, "Suicide Missions as Witnessing: Expansions, Contrasts," 860.

⁵⁶ It should be noted that the incentives for death are not either/or in that suicide attacks are motivated either by nationalism or religion. Suicide attacks are laden with both nationalist and religious content.

Indeed, the organization must provide mechanisms, which reinforce and intensify those beliefs. The use of rituals, music, and final testaments are techniques in which terrorist groups cultivate and inculcate the individual in order to make him or her a ‘true believer.’ The suicide attacker who becomes a ‘true believer’ is a person of “fanatical faith who is ready to sacrifice his life for a holy cause.”⁵⁷

Scholars such as Mohammed Hafez and Assaf Moghadam have done excellent research into how religious commitments factor into an individual's commitment to become suicide attackers. For Hafez and Moghadam, the critical factor at the individual level of analysis is the allure of martyrdom.⁵⁸ Both Hafez and Moghadam explore how organizations appropriate the language of martyrdom to present a coherent ideology to the individual. Hafez is concerned with how the ideology of martyrdom manifested itself during the Iraq insurgency of 2003-2006 while Moghadam investigates the transnational ideology of Al Qaeda. The major shortcoming with both of these works is that their cases treat only the Islamic variant of suicide attacks. Indeed, as this dissertation will demonstrate, organizations like the Tamil Tigers have constructed their own version of martyrdom that warrants close attention.

While individuals must hold these beliefs and terrorist organizations must promote them, it is crucial to know whether the target audience is amenable to such a drastic tactic. If suicide attacks do not resonate in the society at large then there is a chance that the attacks could be counterproductive to the terrorist organization's cause.

⁵⁷ Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), xii.

⁵⁸ See Mohammed Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, (Washington D.C., United States Institute of Peace, 2007) and Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks*, (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

Societal Resonance

Scholars interested in societal conditions for suicide attacks first looked to find a relationship between poverty and terrorism. Indeed, in former President George W. Bush's 2002 address at the United Nations Conference for Development and Change, he asserted that the fight against poverty is crucial to winning the war against terror because "hope is an answer to terror."⁵⁹ He went on to argue that the United Nations and its member states should "challenge poverty and hopelessness and lack of education...that too often allow conditions that terrorists can seize and try to turn to their advantages."⁶⁰ Former Secretary of State Colin Powell has also said that it should be the earnest work of the U.S. and her allies "to advance reforms that will eliminate the frustration, the injustice, [and] the poverty," which gives rise to terrorism.⁶¹ Implicit in these statements is the assertion that poverty and lack of education leads to terrorism. This belief is entrenched in the rhetoric of political leaders, the media and international organizations.

Economist Alberto Abadie investigated the link between poverty and terrorism. He conducted a study, which analyzed all the instances of domestic and international terrorism in 2003 to determine if there was a linkage between poverty and terrorism. He observes that since September 11, 2001 politicians and the media have focused intensely on the relationship between

⁵⁹ George W. Bush, "President Outlines U.S. Plan to Help World's Poor," (White House Press Release, March 2002). Article available online via LexisNexis. Accessed on 1/5/2009.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Colin Powell, "War on Terrorism only part of U.S. Security Policy," (U.S. Embassy Press Release, 2002). Article available at <http://www.usembassy.org.uk/terror525.html>. Accessed on 1/5/09.

poverty and terrorism. He admits that this theory is widely accepted as a result of the established notion that economic factors widely contribute to and exacerbate internal conflict. Before Abadie conducted his study, he “believed it was a reasonable assumption that terrorism had its roots in poverty.”⁶² However, after analyzing the data collected, he argues that the connection between poverty and terrorism simply does not exist. He claims that this “is true not only for events of international terrorism but...also for the overall levels of terrorism both domestic and foreign.”⁶³ Therefore, the “terrorist risk is not significantly higher for poorer countries” than it is for developed nations.⁶⁴

Abadie’s conclusion is supported by the research of Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, who assert that “any connection between poverty...and terrorism is indirect, complicated, and probably quite weak.”⁶⁵ Krueger and Maleckova argue that terrorism “is more accurately viewed as a response to political conditions...[and] has little to do with economics.”⁶⁶ Economic theories that tout poverty and lack of education as the catalyst for suicide terrorism do not “yield an unambiguous answer to the question of whether higher income and more educated [people]

⁶² Alberto Abadie quoted by Alvin Powell in “Freedom Squelches Terrorist Violence,” (Harvard Gazette, November 4, 2004). Article available online at <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2004/11.04/05-terror.html>. Accessed on 1/09/06.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Alberto Abadie, “Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism,” (*National Bureau of Economic Research*, October 2004). Article available at www.nber.org/papers/w10859. Accessed on 1/08/09.

⁶⁵ Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, “Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?” (*Journal of Economic Perspective*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2003), 119.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

would reduce participation in terrorism.”⁶⁷ Krueger and Maleckova’s data, which compare poverty and the education of Palestinian suicide terrorists with the Palestinian population, is most revealing. According to the data, the poverty rate for suicide bombers is an astonishingly low 13 percent while the population’s poverty level is at 32 percent.⁶⁸ From the data it is evident that “the individuals who carried out suicide bomb attacks for [Palestinian terrorist organizations] are less likely to come from impoverished families.”⁶⁹

The comparison of educational distribution for Palestinian suicide bombers and the Palestinian population depict similar results. The data show that among suicide terrorists “36 percent had finished at least secondary school. Only 2 percent had not gone past primary school,”⁷⁰ compared with the Palestinian population where close to 50 percent had *not* completed primary school. Almost 57 percent of suicide terrorists had a post high-school, college, or post-graduate degree, while only 12 percent of the Palestinian population had a post high-school, college, or post-graduate degree. These results are striking and reveal that very few of the Palestinian suicide terrorists *‘were uneducated, desperately poor, simple minded or depressed. Many were middle class and, unless they were fugitives, held high paying jobs...[and] two were*

⁶⁷ Ibid., 121.

⁶⁸ Claude Berrebi quoted in Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, “Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?” 136.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁷⁰ Claude Berrebi quoted in Mark Clayton, “Probing the Roots of Terror,” (*Christian Science Monitor*, September 02, 2003). Article available online at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0902/p18s01-lehl.html>. Accessed on 1/9/09.

*the sons of millionaires.*⁷¹ These findings cast doubt on the deeply engrained and popular political idea that societal poverty and lack of education breeds terrorism.

Another aspect of the societal dimension of suicide attacks is the reception it receives by the public. The strategic logic approach ignores the interaction between the attack and the society where it takes place. In Pape's logic, the societal frame of reference is important only to the organization because it is the organization that wages the suicide campaign against foreign occupiers. Parting from Pape's analysis, Bloom notes that "suicide terrorism, like terrorism more generally, is a form of political theater in which the audience's reaction is as important as the act itself."⁷² If the audience reacts with revulsion, there will be negative consequences for the group that uses the tactic. Such consequences include a loss of legitimacy by the public, condemnation by the international media, and a reduction in financial backing by local or diaspora communities. Adding to this literature, Assaf Moghadam argues that the analyst should be aware of environmental factors that are meant to give the suicide attacks their context.⁷³ Indeed, suicide attacks must resonate with the target audience, but this ultimately depends on how the tactic is used, against whom, and for what purpose. As Bloom notes, if suicide attacks do not resonate with the larger population, the tactic will fail. However, if the tactic is

⁷¹ Berrebi quoted in Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" 135-136. Emphasis added.

⁷² Mia Bloom, "Dying to Kill: Motivations for Suicide Terrorism," in Ami Pedhazur ed., *Roots Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*, 26.

⁷³ Assaf Moghadam, "The Roots of Suicide Terrorism," in Pedahzur, Ami. *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 86.

applauded, it will flourish.⁷⁴ A critical question that has been overlooked by scholars of suicide attacks is how the organization chooses to present the tactic to its target audience so that it gains resonance.⁷⁵

Integrating the Three-Levels of Analysis

The above discussion outlines three approaches that scholars have taken in studying suicide attacks. The strategic logic approach focused on the organization, psychological theories prompted the researcher to investigate individual commitments, and questions involving poverty and education pushed researchers to investigate the societal environment. The literature review highlighted the flaws in each. The strategic logic approach ignored the circumstances by which organizations choose suicide attacks as well as the forces that prompt individuals to become suicide attacks. Similarly, psychological theories proved unsatisfactory at explaining what motivates individuals to become suicide attacks. Finally, scholars who looked for structural conditions in a society such as poverty or lack of education and its relation to suicide attacks were unable to find a correlation.

The analytic framework posed in this dissertation has two goals. First, it offers an alternative explanation at each level of analysis. At the organizational level, the framework looks to the strategic environment to help explain why a group chooses suicide attacks. At the individual level, the framework looks at the subjective beliefs a person holds, which help that

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30.

⁷⁵ Resonance is defined as the way a message synchs with an audience.

person make the transition from person to suicide attacker. Finally, at the societal level, instead of looking for structural causes, the framework looks at the socio-cultural factors that help the attack attain resonance. The second goal is the movement away from investigating suicide attacks solely at one level of analysis. As the literature review demonstrates, these approaches have not been combined into a coherent framework. Departing from this tendency, this dissertation purposefully investigates suicide attacks along three levels of analysis. As such, it integrates prior approaches to suicide attacks and recognizes the complexity of suicide attacks in that it dispels the notion that suicide attacks are the result of one cause and that they should be investigated solely at one level of analysis. Suicide attacks are organizational, individual and societal phenomena that are mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive. As such, the framework in this dissertation shifts the debate from the single level causes of suicide attacks to an analysis of the nature and characteristics of suicide attacks by recognizing the mutual reinforcement that exists at each level of analysis. What is important is the linkage that exists amongst each level of analysis, which will be explored in depth in each of the case studies the dissertation examines.

It must be mentioned that this researcher's use of multiple levels of analysis is not original. Indeed, it follows an historical precedent set by international relations scholar Kenneth Waltz who made the same argument to understand the causes of war. Perhaps Waltz's most enduring legacy was the three images he used to investigate conflict. The three images provided a systematic framework by which scholars of international relations could examine war. While the images yield certain insights about the causes and nature of war, they are deficient if taken separately. Indeed, Waltz argued that "[s]ome *combination* of our three images, rather than any

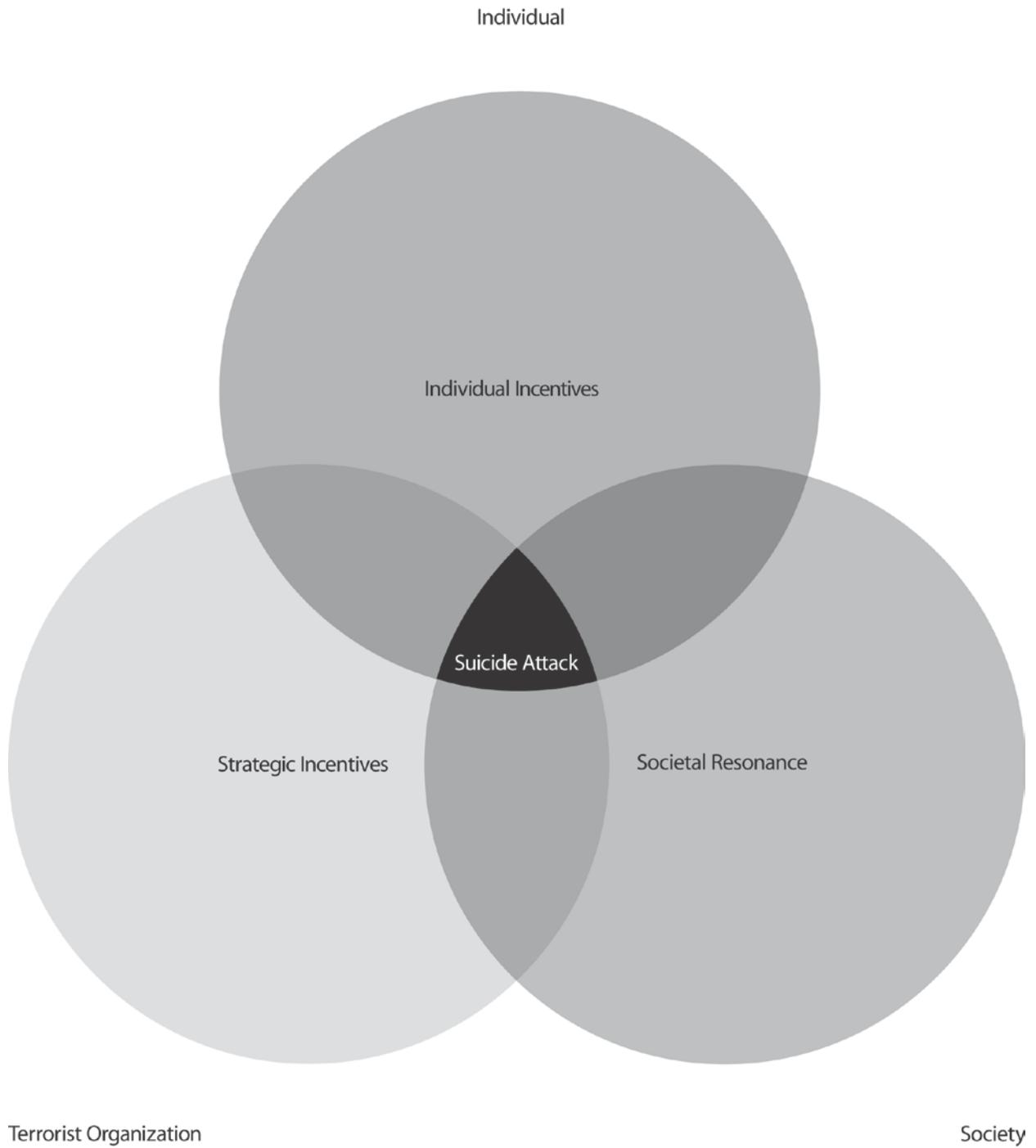
one of them, may be required for an accurate understanding of international relations.”⁷⁶ This researcher believes that Waltz’s statement is not only applicable but also essential to the study of suicide attacks.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

The dissertation argues that organizations use suicide attacks out of defensive necessity and for specific strategic purposes; individuals are motivated to become suicide attackers by a religious-nationalist liberation ideology that promises the attacker post-mortem incentives for his or her death; and that societal resonance is achieved when the organization draws on religious, cultural and nationalistic narratives to make it acceptable to the target population.

⁷⁶ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 14. Emphasis added.

1.5 THE MODEL: SUICIDE ATTACKS AT THREE LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

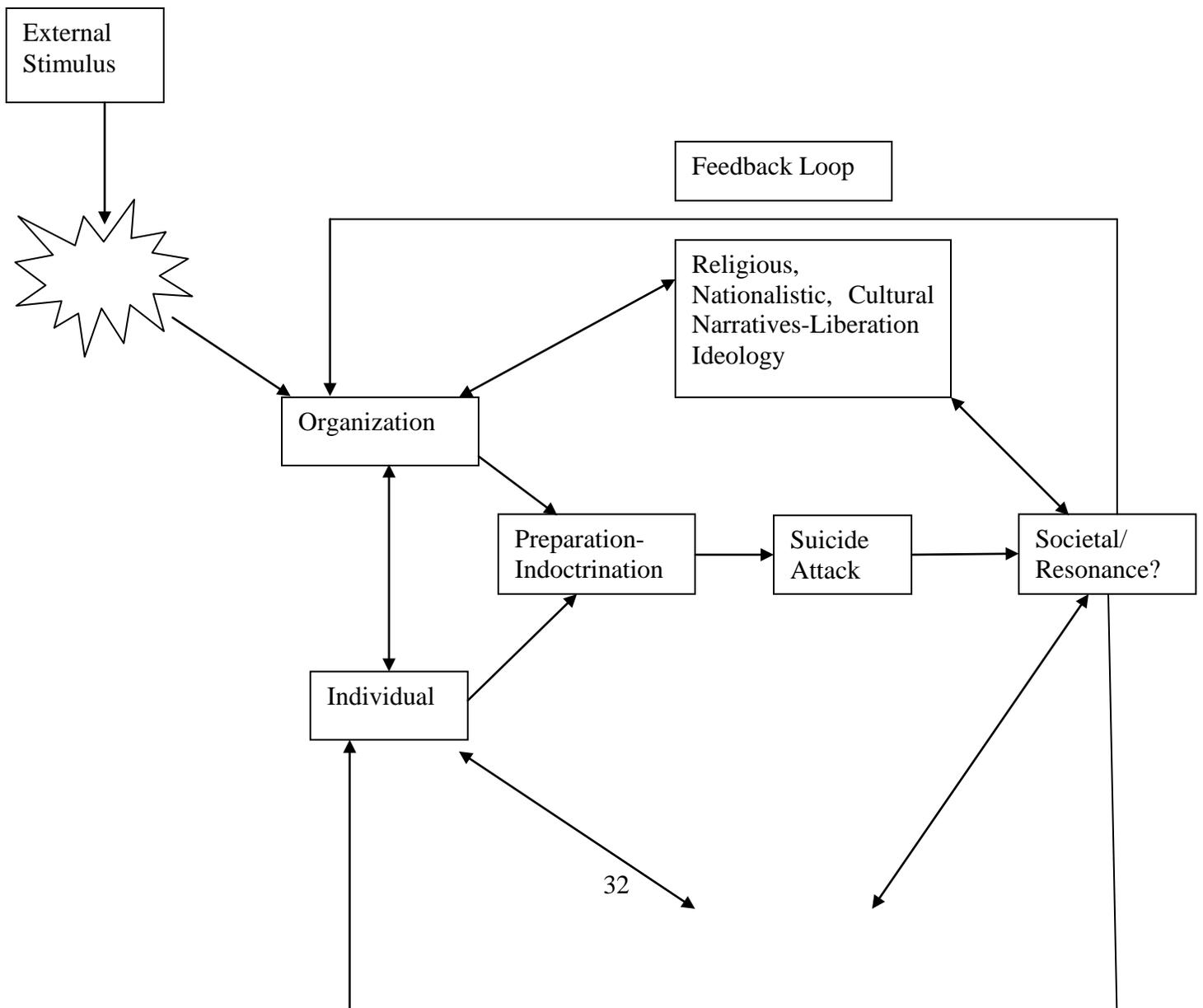


It is useful to think of the model proposed by this dissertation as a Venn diagram involving three circles.⁷⁷ As the literature review reveals, each circle comprises a strand of research where the researcher's primary focus involved one level of analysis. As such, prior approaches looked in isolation at the interaction between each circle and suicide attacks. The model advocated here brings together each level of analysis and demonstrates that each level of analysis interacts with the other as it pertains to the occurrence of suicide attacks. Looking at one level of analysis in isolation from the two others presents only a partial view of the complexity of suicide attacks. The Venn diagram acts as a heuristic tool to help the researcher envision the interaction that takes place among the individual, organizational and societal levels of analysis. It also helps the researcher to explore the linkages that exist amongst each level of analysis.

To better explore the linkages at each level of analysis, a process model is required, which is represented in Figure 1 below.

⁷⁷ A larger scale of the Venn diagram is available in Appendix A.

Figure 1. The Suicide Attack Process Model at Three Levels of Analysis



Post-Mortem
Incentives

Feedback Loop

Figure 1 is a process model showing how the levels interact as a reinforcing system. It is also a useful way to diagram the argument that this dissertation makes. The process begins on the left with an external stimulus of some sort that places the organization in a defensive posture. The organization makes the decision to use suicide attacks based on strategic necessity. This requires that the organization recruit and indoctrinate willing individuals to participate in the attack. In order to do this, the organization draws from religious, cultural, and nationalistic narratives thereby creating a liberation ideology that entices the individual to exchange his or her life to become a suicide attacker. The individual is promised a post-mortem incentive for death drawing more willing recruits to the organization. Once the organization recruits, indoctrinates and carries out a suicide attack, the attack must be packaged and presented to the target audience. Again, the organization draws on religious, nationalistic, and cultural narratives in an attempt to make the attack resonate. At the right of the diagram at societal level, there is a feedback mechanism that goes back both to the organization and individual levels. This feedback loop is critical in that it could have the ability to aid or hinder an organization's ability to use suicide attacks. Additionally, the feedback loop also affects the individual in that it has the potential to encourage or discourage individuals from becoming future suicide attackers.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This dissertation uses the qualitative methodology of structured focused comparison with four case studies.

1.6.1 Structured Focused Comparison With Multiple Case Studies

This research will employ a structured, focused comparison into the phenomenon of suicide attacks by utilizing multiple case studies.⁷⁸ There are six main reasons why the case study methodology is chosen in this context.

First, the case study is the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are posed and when the focus is on a contemporary problem within some real-life context.⁷⁹ The central research questions posed by this dissertation asks *why* organizations choose to adopt suicide attacks, *why* individuals are motivated to become suicide attackers, and *how* the attacks achieve

⁷⁸ According to Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, the structured, focused comparison “method is ‘structured’ in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and accumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is ‘focused’ in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined.” See Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 67.

⁷⁹ Robert Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, (New York: Sage Publications, 1989), 13.

resonance in the target populations. These research questions do not readily lend themselves to quantitative analysis, which usually seeks to determine if a number of independent variables have a causal effect on a chosen dependent variable. Quantitative analysis oftentimes ignores the rich cultural and historical contexts where the dependent variable operates. In this research, the social, historical, cultural, religious, and political contexts are crucial to better understanding suicide attacks.

Second, the case study is intended “to catch the complexity of a real world phenomena.”⁸⁰ Cases are “intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal contexts.”⁸¹ This is undoubtedly so with suicide attacks because it is a phenomenon that draws on the historical and cultural narratives of the societies where they occur.

Third, the case study approach allows the researcher to engage in comparative historical analysis where the researcher asks a structured set of questions about specific sets of cases that exhibit sufficient similarity to be meaningfully compared with one another.⁸²

Fourth, the small-N nature of the case study methodology allows the researcher to know each of the cases with a great amount of depth thereby giving the study a higher level of conceptual and measurement validity than is possible in a large-N study.⁸³ As Sidney Tarrow notes, a small-N study “allows for and indeed demands a degree of intimacy and detail that

⁸⁰ Robert Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), xi.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸² James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, “Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 13.

inspires confidence that the connections drawn between antecedent conditions and outcomes are real.”⁸⁴

Fifth, the case study methodology is concerned more with explanation and the identification of certain features that produce the outcome of interest rather than prediction. As such, it avoids the causality trap in favor of a more modest interpretive approach to research. Indeed, the quest for predictive theory in the social science rests on the mistaken analogy between natural and social phenomena.⁸⁵ Natural phenomena, as philosopher David Hume notes, are part of the mathematical and natural sciences that pertain to ideas that “are always clear and determinate, [where] the smallest distinction between them is immediately perceptible, and the same terms are still expressive of the same ideas, without ambiguity or variation. An oval is never mistaken for a circle, nor an hyperbola for an ellipsis.”⁸⁶ In contrast, the social sciences fail to achieve this measure of accuracy because they deal with “the finer sentiments of the mind, the operations of understanding, the various agitations of the passions...[which] easily escape us, when surveyed by reflection.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Sidney Tarrow, "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice," (*Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2010), 239.

⁸⁵ Steven Bernstein et al, "God Gave Physics the Easy Problems: Adapting Social Science to an Unpredictable World," (*European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 6, No.1, 2000), 43.

⁸⁶ David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. (Cambridge: P.F. Collier and Son, 1910). Available online at <http://18th.eserver.org/hume-enquiry.html#7>. Accessed on 2/25/10.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Finally, the case study methodology permits the researcher to draw on multiple sources of evidence. This serves to triangulate evidence, which ultimately contributes to the overall validity of the study.

1.6.2 Unit(s) of Analysis; Unit(s) of Observation

The unit of analysis or the “phenomenon under study” in this dissertation is the suicide attack.⁸⁸ The units of observation are the organizations that use suicide attacks, the individual suicide attacker, and the society where the suicide attack takes place. This dissertation seeks to investigate the interaction between the unit of analysis and the units of observation. The organizational incentives, individual motivations and methods used to achieve societal resonance are essential components toward a greater understanding of suicide attacks.

1.6.3 Data Collection and Analysis

This dissertation collects data from a variety of primary and secondary open source materials. As often as possible, the author used translated primary sources. Such sources include diaries, articles, tracts, and books written by individual suicide attackers, and the ideologues and organizations justifying the use of suicide attacks. While these sources are hard to come by, the author made extensive use of the translated documents and archives from the Combating

⁸⁸ Thomas Lee, *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999), 59.

Terrorism Center at West Point, the Palestinian Media Watch and the Middle East Media Research Institute [MEMRI]. These websites contain an impressive collection of translated primary source documents and interviews that were invaluable to the author. Additionally, the study accessed MEMRI's extensive collection of videos and written statements left by suicide attackers. The videos, some of which are also available online at other websites like YouTube, were crucial when dealing with the question of individual motivations of suicide attackers pertaining to Hamas and Al Qaeda. The secondary sources used include formal studies of similar cases, newspaper articles, scholarly books and articles, congressional testimony and organizational documentation. The dissertation also used the archival resources donated by Donald M. Goldstein to the University of Pittsburgh library when completing the chapter on the kamikazes.

1.6.4 Selection of Cases and Dissertation Overview

According to Martha Crenshaw, one major deficiency in the literature on suicide attacks is that it suffers from the analytical problem of “over-aggregation.”⁸⁹ Indeed, much of the recent work on suicide attacks by scholars such as Hafez and Moghadam fail to acknowledge that suicide attacks have been used in a variety of conflict contexts. As Crenshaw argues, the majority of the literature on suicide attacks treats the phenomenon *only* as terrorism.⁹⁰ However, she rightly notes that suicide attacks have been utilized not only by terrorist organizations but also by states

⁸⁹ Martha Crenshaw, “Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay,” 162.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

in warfare, by insurgent groups in irregular warfare, and by terrorist organizations with domestic and transnational aims. As such, this dissertation selects the cases for examination along Crenshaw's conflict continuum in the hope of producing new analytical insights on the subject.

The most basic condition for selection is that each case is an instance when an organization used suicide attacks to achieve a strategic end. The other main condition that greatly influenced the selection of cases rested on the availability of open-source information. When dealing with questions of individual motivations and societal resonance, the availability of translated materials was a main requirement in the selection of cases used in this study. The four case studies and the reasoning behind their selection are listed below.

Chapter 2-Suicide Attacks in War: The Japanese Use of the Kamikazes

There are many historical instances of the use of suicide attacks in warfare. One of the first occurs in the 16-18th centuries during the Moro Wars between the Spanish and the Atjenese Muslims living in the Philippines. The Muslim armies, often outnumbered by the Spanish, resorted to suicide attacks in order to damage Spanish morale. A group of Atjenese soldiers the Spaniards called *juramentados* (meaning 'one who took the oath') were a force in whose sole task was to die killing as many of the enemy as possible. These *juramentados* were sent in

waves before the rest of the Atjenese army would engage the Spanish.⁹¹ Their purpose was to sow discord and discourage the Spanish army from fighting.

The most famous modern day example of suicide attacks in warfare, and the first case selected for analysis in this dissertation, is the Japanese use of kamikaze pilots in World War II. This happens to be one of the most understudied cases of suicide attacks by social scientists. In this case, the reasons why the Japanese adopted the suicide attack are examined. Thanks to the diaries left by the kamikaze pilots, the chapter uncovers the individual motivations that made young Japanese men decide to become a suicide attacker. Finally, the availability of government documents demonstrates how the Japanese Imperial government framed the attacks so as to resonate with the Japanese population.

Chapter 3-Suicide Attacks in Irregular War: The Case of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

The decision to use suicide attacks in warfare is one made by a national government. In irregular war, the decision to use suicide attacks is made by an insurgent group(s) or faction(s), which considers the established government illegitimate. Such actors resort to asymmetrical tactics due to the power imbalance that exists between the state and the insurgent group. The first known insurgent groups to use suicide attacks were the Jewish Zealots and the Assassins who operated in modern day Israel and Iran respectively. The Zealots used the tactic against officials of the

⁹¹ Stephen Frederic Dale, "Religious Suicide In Islamic Asia: Anticolonial Terrorism in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines," (*The Journal of Conflict of Resolution*, Vol. 32, No. 1, March 1988), 37.

Roman Empire while the Assassins targeted those they believed were the illegitimate successors of the eighth Caliph.⁹²

The second case selected by this dissertation is the LTTE's use of the 'Black Tiger' suicide squad in its irregular war against Sri Lanka. Until recently, the LTTE has been at war with the Sri Lankan government since the mid 1980s. The LTTE has chosen irregular warfare and suicide attacks as a way to engage the Sri Lankan army in an effort to secure an independent Tamil homeland in northern Sri Lanka. The LTTE's first reported use of a suicide attack was in 1987 against a Sri Lankan army camp. Since then, the LTTE has become a sophisticated proponent of the tactic. The sheer length of the conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government made certain that there would be plenty of available and translated resources. This, coupled with the dissemination of a great deal of important primary source materials by the LTTE's propaganda wing, ensured that enough information was available to answer the case study questions.

Chapter 4-Suicide Attacks as Domestic Terrorism: The Case of Hamas

While this component on the conflict continuum has been the most studied by terrorism researchers, it has yet to be analyzed using a framework that integrates three-levels of analysis. The case selected for this point on the conflict continuum is Hamas. Similar to the irregular warfare point on the continuum, the domestic terrorist organizations use suicide attacks to address a power imbalance. Indeed, Hamas adopted the tactic as a way to strike at Israeli

⁹² For a cogent discussion of the Zealots see Sean Anderson and Stephen Sloan, *Terrorism: Assassins to Zealots*, (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2003).

security forces and Israeli civilians. The large amounts of translated information by individual Hamas suicide attackers, communiqués from Hamas leadership concerning the adoption of the tactic, and the systematic method Hamas used to make the attack resonate with its target population warranted its selection.

Chapter 5-Suicide Attacks as Transnational Terrorism: The Case of Al Qaeda

The final point on the conflict continuum is suicide attacks used in transnational terrorist activity. In the 1980-1990's, suicide attacks were employed largely by irregular forces or terrorist organizations operating within the territorial confines of a nation-state. The LTTE limited its target selection to Sri Lankan government and military officials just as Hamas sent suicide attackers to self-detonate within Israel. The 9/11 attacks by Al Qaeda, however, demonstrated a new globalized phenomenon of suicide attacks that are transnational in nature and goals. Thus the final case study of this dissertation is an examination of Al Qaeda. There was no dearth of information available for this case study. Quite the contrary, there was an overabundance of information requiring the researcher meticulously to sort through it all. This and the proliferation of Al Qaeda inspired suicide attacks across the world warranted this case's selection.

Chapter 6-Conclusion and Discussion of Cases

The dissertation concludes with a review of the findings coming from the case studies, an examination of why organizations abandon suicide attacks, which leads to a discussion of policy implications flowing from the case studies, and finally the dissertation offers suggestions for further research.

2.0 SUICIDE ATTACKS IN WAR: THE KAMIKAZES IN WORLD WAR II

“We believed that our spiritual convictions and moral strength could balance your material and scientific advantages. We did not consider our attacks to be ‘suicide.’ The pilot did not start out on his mission with the intent of committing suicide. He looked upon himself as a human bomb which would destroy a certain part of the fleet...[and] died happy in the conviction that his death was a step towards final victory.”

-Lt. General Torashira Kawabe⁹³

"The Way of the Samurai is, morning after morning, the practice of death, considering whether it will be here or be there, imagining the most slightly way of dying, and putting one's mind firmly in death."

-Yamamoto Tsunetomo⁹⁴

“In blossom today, then scattered;
Life is so like a delicate flower.
How can one expect the fragrance to last forever?”
-Rear Admiral Takijiro Onishi

⁹³ Lt. General Torashira Kawabe quoted in Richard O’Neill, *Suicide Squads*, (London: Salamander Books, 1999), 130-131. The comments were made to U.S. Army interrogators after World War II.

⁹⁴ Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure The Book of the Samurai*, translated by William Scott Wilson. (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1979), 73.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Japanese kamikazes represent the most potent example of suicide attacks used in twentieth century warfare. From October 1944 to August 1945, over 4,000 Japanese army and navy pilots attempted to crash their aircraft into U.S. naval vessels. This tactic was part psychological and part strategic. The psychological reasoning behind the tactic was that it would break the will of American forces by showcasing the indomitable *Yamato Damashi*, the Japanese Fighting Spirit. The strategic rationale was that the kamikaze pilot could cause massive damage to American aircraft carriers, destroyers and other ships. If the Japanese could sink enough American ships, this would force U.S. naval commanders to re-think their naval strategy in the Pacific and could tilt the war in Japan's favor.

While this topic continues to pique the interest of historians, the subject has remained largely unexamined by social scientists. As Andrew Silke astutely notes, "[t]oday, many discussions of suicide terrorism make a passing, throwaway reference to the kamikaze as a precursor, but little real analysis and comparison is made."⁹⁵ A cursory examination of the most prevalent authors on suicide attacks confirms Silke's statement. Indeed, there are only three social scientists, Mia Bloom, Peter Hill and Robert Pape, who mention the kamikazes in their work on suicide attacks. While Bloom and Pape devote a combined total of *seven* pages to the kamikazes, Hill offers a more nuanced treatment in a chapter included in an edited volume

⁹⁵ Andrew Silke, "The Role of Suicide in Politics, Conflict, and Terrorism." (*Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2006), 42.

released in 2005.⁹⁶ The dearth of analysis on the kamikazes by social scientists is a major oversight since a fuller treatment of the kamikazes would be genuinely helpful in understanding modern suicide attacks.⁹⁷ This chapter attempts to fill this gap, as it investigates the kamikazes at the organizational, individual, and societal levels of analysis.

The first section of the chapter investigates the kamikazes at the organizational level and argues that the tactic was chosen out of defensive necessity. The father of the kamikazes, Rear Admiral Takijiro Onishi, believed that Japan was losing the war in the Pacific to the Americans. The Japanese had suffered a humiliating defeat in the Philippines theater, especially the October 1944 Battle for the Leyte Gulf in which the Japanese navy was decimated by Admiral W.F. Halsey's Third Fleet. To recover from such a loss, Onishi needed a weapon that could be manufactured quickly and delivered effectively. Onishi knew that the Japanese had a surplus of planes including the MXY7 Ohka, the A6M Zero and the D4Y4 Bomber. The problem was that Japan lacked skilled pilots to fly these planes; by late 1944, skilled Japanese pilots were a rare commodity. Indeed, the grim reality was that American fighter pilots consistently outclassed the Japanese pilots that managed to enter the aerial theater.⁹⁸ Onishi insisted that instead of wasting precious time training pilots that would lose in one-on-one aerial confrontations against the Americans, Japan should teach pilots to crash their bomb carrying planes into U.S. vessels. He

⁹⁶ See Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Bombing*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 35-37. Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, (New York: Random House, 2005), 13-17. Peter Hill, "Kamikaze, 1943-1945," in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-32.

⁹⁷ Andrew Silke, "The Role of Suicide in Politics, Conflict, and Terrorism," 42.

⁹⁸ Max Gadney, "Kamikazes, Deconstructed," (*World War II*, April/May 2008), 46.

believed that this tactic, if implemented effectively, would turn the tide of the war toward Japan's favor.

The second section of the chapter analyzes the factors motivating the pilots of kamikaze operations. The majority of pilots who manned Onishi's suicide squadron came from Japan's elite universities. These students left an abundance of valuable information through the copious diaries that many kept. While it would be impossible to determine a single motivating factor that drove each pilot to participate in a suicide attack, an investigation of the kamikaze diaries reveals that pilots were motivated by a desire to protect their family and country, and a conviction, stemming from the Bushido warrior tradition, that they would face death without reservation if it could help save Japan. It was also believed that the pilots would achieve a post-mortem god-like status through their selfless sacrifice for Japan and they would meet one another again in the hereafter. Indeed, the pilots who made the decision to die in a suicide attack were heralded as 'warrior gods.'

The third section of the chapter explores the factors that allowed the tactic to resonate with the Japanese population. The most important factors identified are the widely held beliefs in the sacred and inviolable nature of Japan, and the god-like status of the Emperor. These beliefs were integrated into a wartime ideology that was reinforced through state education. The widespread belief in the sacred Japanese homeland and the 'god-man' emperor allowed the Japanese public to embrace and support the suicidal sacrifice made by the kamikaze pilots.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of what social scientists can learn from studying this event.

2.2 FROM VICTORY TO DESPERATION

Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 was meant to deliver a mortal blow to the American Pacific Fleet, which would clear the way for Japanese dominance of the Pacific Ocean. With the American Pacific Fleet out of commission, Japan could procure the wealth that she as an island nation lacked. If the action were successful, Japan would be able to throw a protective cordon stretching from the Kuriles, passing by the Wake and Marshall Islands, including the southern and western extremities of the Malayan barrier, and ending at the frontier separating India and Burma.⁹⁹ With this vast section of space, Japan would have access to oil and other material including bauxite, rubber, and aluminum that were needed to maintain the wartime effectiveness of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy.¹⁰⁰

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a success for the Japanese in that they took the U.S. by surprise. As a consequence, the U.S. lost two carriers (*Arizona* and *Oklahoma*), with six carriers severely damaged (*California*, *West Virginia*, *Maryland*, *Tennessee*, *Pennsylvania*, *Nevada*), two destroyers sunk (*Cassin*, *Downes*), 176 aircraft destroyed, 155 damaged, and 2,345 military and 155 civilians killed.¹⁰¹ While the Pearl Harbor attack had been devastating for the U.S. it could have been far worse. Lieutenant Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, the lead pilot during the Pearl

⁹⁹ Andrieu D'Albas, *Death of a Navy: Japanese Naval Action in World War II*, (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1957), 7.

¹⁰⁰ George Sanson, "Japan's Fatal Blunder." (*Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1948), 548.

¹⁰¹ Andrieu D'Albas, *Death of a Navy: Japanese Naval Action in World War II*, 35-36.

Harbor attack, laments; '[w]hat I most regret is that we did not bring a landing force with us to take Hawaii. [Had Japan done this] [w]e would have been masters of the Pacific.'"¹⁰²

Despite this missed opportunity, Japan scored an early victory with its surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. As Roberta Wohlstetter notes, the U.S. failed to anticipate a Japanese action on Pearl Harbor despite the presence of numerous 'signals' indicating that an attack was likely.¹⁰³ The Japanese also experimented with a new type of attack, which consisted of nine midget submarines manned by a two-person crew that would detonate next to docked ships. According to Donald Goldstein and Katherine Dillon, "it was presumed that the midget submarines penetrated deep into Pearl Harbor and, after sunset, attacked unguarded ships in the harbor. It was believed that they caused a certain amount of damage to the [U.S.] fleet."¹⁰⁴ This was the first instance of a suicide attack used by the Japanese during World War II.¹⁰⁵ These types of attacks would become a hallmark as the war against the Americans progressed and the Japanese military situation grew more desperate.

¹⁰² Mitsuo Fuchida and Masatake Okumiya, *Midway: The Battle that Doomed Japan* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1955), xx.

¹⁰³ Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 382-401. Wohlstetter distinguishes between 'signals' and 'noise' in which the former contains vital intelligence of an enemy action while the latter is meant to obfuscate one's ability to perceive pertinent intelligence. The 'signal' and 'noise' remains a powerful analytic concept especially when dealing with other instances of strategic surprise.

¹⁰⁴ Donald Goldstein and Katherine Dillon, *The Pacific War Papers: Japanese Documents of World War II*, (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2004), 238.

¹⁰⁵ David Earhart. "Kamikazefication and Japan's Wartime Ideology." (*Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 4, 2009), 581. As Earhart notes, it was Takijiro Onishi's idea to experiment with the suicide submarines even though this idea was resisted by the Japanese Imperial Navy.

In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the Americans realized that Japanese expansion to the east and southeast had to be stopped. U.S. submarines began to engage Japanese military and commercial shipping in an effort to stop material from reaching the Japanese mainland. The U.S. also tried to attack the Japanese homeland. Lieutenant Colonel James “Jimmy” Doolittle successfully did this on an April 18, 1942 raid on Honshu by U.S. B-25’s. As Doolittle argued, “[t]he Japanese had been told they were invulnerable. An attack on the Japanese homeland would cause confusion in the minds of the Japanese people and sow doubt about the reliability of their leaders. There was a second, equally important, psychological reason for this attack...Americans badly needed a morale boost.”¹⁰⁶ The Doolittle raid did boost U.S. morale by proving that the Japanese homeland was vulnerable to U.S. air attack. The next decisive turning point for the U.S. in the Pacific War occurred during the Battle of Midway.

The Battle of Midway was, indeed, a decisive victory for the Americans against the Japanese. According to Admiral Ernest King, chief of all U.S. naval operations, the June 4, 1942 Battle of Midway “had been the first decisive defeat of the Japanese navy in 350 years and had restored the balance of naval power in the Pacific.”¹⁰⁷ Prior to the Battle of Midway, Japanese naval operations had gone more or less according to plan, and it seemed that the Japanese Imperial High Command expected the same good fortune in this campaign. The Japanese thoroughly expected the bombing of Midway to bring the American fleet out of Oahu and were confident that Japanese scouting submarines would be able to detect and report movement by the

¹⁰⁶ Doolittle quoted in Carroll Glines, *The Doolittle Raid: America’s Daring First Strike Against Japan*, (New York: Orion Books, 1988), 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Ernest King quoted in Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 341.

American fleet.¹⁰⁸ Unbeknownst to the Japanese was that the U.S. had cracked the Japanese coded radio that sent operational instructions to the Japanese Navy.¹⁰⁹ Admiral Chester Nimitz, thus, was well aware of Japanese intentions, allowing the U.S. Navy to set a trap of its own.

The American attack against the Japanese fleet proved devastating because the latter was unprepared to attack when American carriers were sighted on June 4. At 10:22 A.M. American dive-bombers spotted the Japanese fleet carriers *Akagi*, *Kaga*, and *Soryu*. The carriers could do little to counter the imminent U.S. attack since Admiral Nagumo, earlier that same morning, gave the order to send his airplanes to the hangars for rearming.¹¹⁰ This proved to be a fatal mistake since there were no Japanese aircraft to stop the U.S. attack. What ensued in the next six minutes would radically alter Japan's position in the war. From 10:22 A.M. to 10:26 A.M., Japan lost four of its prized fleet carriers, the *Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Hiryu*, and *Soryu*. Mitsuo Fuchida, onboard the *Akagi*, describes the utter confusion and chaos resulting from the U.S. attack:

“I staggered down a ladder and into the ready room. It was already jammed with badly burned victims from the hangar deck. A new explosion was followed by several more, each causing the bridge structure to tremble. Smoke from the burning hangar gushed through passageways and into the bridge and ready room, forcing us to seek other refuge. Climbing back to the bridge I could see that *Kaga* and *Soryu* had also been hit and were giving off heavy columns of black smoke. The scene was horrible to behold.”¹¹¹

When American dive-bombers attacked, the *Akagi* was in the midst of fueling and arming their planes in order to attack the *USS Yorktown*. Unfortunately for the Japanese this never

¹⁰⁸ Andrieu D'Albas, *Death of a Navy: Japanese Naval Action in World War II*, 151.

¹⁰⁹ On the role of American intelligence in breaking the Japanese codes see David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing*, (New York: MacMillan Press, 1967) and Ronald Lewin, *The American Magic: Codes, Ciphers and the Defeat of Japan*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982).

¹¹⁰ Andrieu D'Albas, *Death of a Navy: Japanese Naval Action in World War II*, 151.

¹¹¹ Mitsuo Fuchida and Masatake Okumiya, *Midway: The Battle that Doomed Japan*, 179.

happened, as American bombs penetrated the wooden deck of the ship and exploded in the hangars where the fully fueled and heavily armed planes resided. This had devastating effects as recorded by Rear Admiral Kusaka:

“...the deck was on fire and anti-aircraft and machine guns were firing automatically, having been set off by the fire aboard the ship. Bodies were all over the place, and it was not possible to tell what would be shot up next...I had my hands and feet burned-a pretty serious burn on one foot. That is eventually the way we abandoned the *Akagi*-helter-skelter, no order of any kind.”¹¹²

The same fate of the *Akagi* befell the *Kaga*, *Soryu*, and *Hiryu*. Again, American dive-bombers penetrated the ships’ wooden decks and caused fires in the hangars below. In a matter of minutes, not only did Japan lose four aircraft carriers, two heavy cruisers and 332 planes, she also lost the best naval pilots and flight crews in the Imperial Japanese Navy.¹¹³ This humiliating defeat prompted Japan to focus its efforts on the Philippines in a last-ditch effort to halt American progress.

By the summer of 1944, the advance of American forces under the leadership of General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz had put Japan in grave danger. Japan’s protective cordon that it had established early in 1942-1943 to ensure that material would reach the Japanese homeland was vanishing. As the Americans moved westward, Japan’s situation worsened because the Americans could interrupt the commercial shipping lanes that the Japanese relied upon. One thought that preoccupied the Japanese Imperial Navy was the dwindling supply of oil. Indeed, “the lack of oil had become [Japan’s] crucial naval problem, so much so that she was no longer able to fuel the whole of her fleet in home waters and had been compelled to base part of it on

¹¹² Kusaka quoted in Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 336.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

the Lingga Islands in the vicinity of Singapore.”¹¹⁴ If the Japanese failed to hold the Philippines then the Japanese Empire would be cut off from its only remaining fuel source, resulting in the Japanese Navy’s inability to defend the Japanese homeland from a U.S. invasion force.¹¹⁵ Rear Admiral Takijiro Onishi realized that Japan’s military situation was deteriorating so he proposed a tactic that, he believed, would be so bold and so deadly as to halt the American advance.¹¹⁶ He would call this tactic by the name ‘Special Attack Force’ or, as it is better known, the kamikaze.

2.3 THE KAMIKAZES: ONISHI’S GAMBLE

In the aftermath of Midway, Rear Admiral Takijiro Onishi took stock of the strategic situation for the Japanese Navy.¹¹⁷ He concluded that Japan had lost its air superiority as veteran pilots

¹¹⁴ J.F.C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World, Volume III*, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1956), 600.

¹¹⁵ Evan Thomas, *Sea of Thunder*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 176.

¹¹⁶ Enriko Tiermey-Ohnuki, "Betrayal by Idealism and Aesthetics: Special Attack Force (Kamikaze) Pilots and their Intellectual Trajectories Part I," (*Anthropology Today*, Vol. 20, No. 2, April 2004), 15. As the author notes, the new tactic was named the “Shimpu,” whose two Chinese characters mean ‘God’ and ‘Wind.’ Together they were pronounced ‘Kamikaze.’ The word ‘kamikaze’ has great historical meaning to the Japanese because it refers to the divine wind typhoon of 1281, which drove the invading Mongol navy from Japan’s shore. Had this not occurred, it is likely that the Mongols would have conquered Japan.

¹¹⁷ Rear Admiral Takijiro Onishi was born on June 2, 1891 in Hyogo Prefecture. He entered Naval Cadet School on Sept 11, 1909. He was made Rear Admiral on Nov 15, 1939, Vice Admiral on May 1, 1943, Commander of First Air Fleet on Oct 20, 1944 and then Vice Chief of General Staff on May 19, 1945. He committed suicide on

killed in battle were being replaced with progressively worse aviators.¹¹⁸ Another troubling occurrence was, by 1944, the Allies were conducting air raids throughout Japan.¹¹⁹ Not only was Japan's homeland exposed to attack, but also there simply were not enough trained pilots to deal with American bombers.¹²⁰ The Japanese Imperial Navy attempted to respond by reducing the number of flight-training hours from 1300 to 500, but this did little except expose novice pilots to better-trained American aviators.¹²¹ Additionally, fuel shortages prompted the Japanese Navy to create a mixture of fuel and alcohol in an attempt to conserve gasoline. This proved disastrous for Japanese aviators whose engines would often stall while airborne. Furthermore, even if Japanese pilots were able to keep their Zero's airborne, they proved largely ineffective against the new U.S. Hellcat fighter, a superior aircraft when compared to the Zero.¹²² Onishi realized that Japan's options were dwindling and that the only hope remaining for Japan was to reclaim Japan's dominance in the air.

August 15, 1945 after Japan surrendered to the United States. Biographical information obtained from the archives of Donald Goldstein, "Takijiro Onishi Interview," (UA90/F-78, Box 33, FF, 24).

¹¹⁸ Peter Hill, "Kamikazes, 1943-1945," in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 3.

¹¹⁹ For a comprehensive discussion of U.S. bombing strategy during WWII see Mark Seldon, "A Forgotten Holocaust: U.S. Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities and the American Way of War from World War II to Iraq," (*The Asian-Pacific Journal*, Summer 2007). The other notes that from February 1945 to August 1945, the U.S. had conducted fourteen bombing raids on Tokyo, thereby destroying a quarter of the city and killing some 100,000 civilians.

¹²⁰ Mako, Sasaki, "Who Became Kamikaze Pilots, and How Did They Feel Towards Their Suicide Mission?" (*The Concord Review*, 1999), 179.

¹²¹ Peter Hill, "Kamikazes, 1943-1945," in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 4.

¹²² Saburo Sakai, "Zero Ace," in Haruko Cook and Theodore Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 138.

Onishi truly believed that if Japan could reclaim air superiority it could then re-take command of the sea. He argued that Japan must accept the grim reality that it was losing the war to the Americans. In a controversial essay penned in November 1943, he argued that Japan “must dispel wishful thinking...[since] too many people have been intoxicated by our early victories and dream only of final victory. [Instead of thinking this way], we must endure every sacrifice and strive with our whole material and spiritual power to achieve eventual victory.”¹²³ In his mind, the key to victory involved the harnessing of Japanese spiritual power and fusing it with the appropriate military tactic.

Onishi’s search for the right tactic took him back to the Pearl Harbor attack. As Mordecai Sheftall notes, it was Onishi who had formulated the ideas for the shallow-run torpedoes and the midget submarines used during Pearl Harbor.¹²⁴ Onishi believed that the midget submarines were employed with great success precisely because the mission was one-way and because it capitalized on the element of surprise. As Onishi ruminated over Japan’s predicament, he came to the conclusion that the only way to stop the American advance, and reassert Japanese air superiority, was to sink U.S. carriers.

While he was well aware of the fuel shortages and the lack of experienced pilots, he thought that if a pilot could be trained to fly his armed Zero into a U.S. carrier this could

¹²³ Onishi quoted in Dennis Warner and Peggy Warner, *The Sacred Warriors: Japan's Suicide Legions*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1982), 60. The essay was controversial in the sense that it called the eventual Japanese victory into question. Such open dissent from a high-ranking military official was extremely rare in war-time Japan considering the restraints on free speech implemented by the Japanese Imperial Government.

¹²⁴ Mordecai Sheftall, *Blossoms in the Wind: Human Legacies of the Kamikaze*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 24.

potentially cripple the U.S. fleet. With the U.S. carrier fleet in disarray this could give Japan the time it needed to reassert itself in the Pacific. At the heart of Onishi's thinking was the firm belief that warfare was more of a spiritual, rather than physical, contest.¹²⁵ According to Gordon Prange, Onishi "was the type who believed that nothing was impossible if one went forward with great spiritual determination. [He believed] one could accomplish anything if he believed in it and worked hard enough at it."¹²⁶ Indeed, Onishi held firmly to the notion that the Japanese soul, which possessed a unique strength to face death without hesitation, was the only means of bringing about a miracle for the Japanese Imperial Navy.¹²⁷ The Japanese fighting spirit would overwhelm the Americans, whom Onishi believed had no spiritual strength due to their fondness for physical pleasure and material possessions.¹²⁸ He concluded that "in America, they can't unite for a common purpose. One blow against them, and they'll fall to pieces."¹²⁹ Having made this realization, he then proceeded to make the case for the establishment of the 'Special Attack Corps.'

The Japanese high command, at this stage in the war, faced a desperate, although not hopeless, situation. It was agreed that if Japan would have any chance of stopping the Americans then they must be defeated decisively in the Philippines. To achieve this end, the

¹²⁵ David Earl, *Emperor and Nation in Japan*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 169.

¹²⁶ Gordon Prange in the archives of Donald Goldstein, "Takijiro Onishi Interview," (*UA90/F-78*, Box 33, FF, 24), 1.

¹²⁷ Emiko Tiermey-Ohnuki, "Betrayal by Idealism and Aesthetics: Special Attack Force (Kamikaze) Pilots and their Intellectual Trajectories Part I," 15.

¹²⁸ The argument that Americans are spiritually bankrupt or that they prefer comfort and material goods is one often made by Al Qaeda. This theme will be explored in chapter five of the dissertation.

¹²⁹ Haruko Cook and Theodore Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 52.

Japanese high command devised a plan called Operation *Sho-Go* ('To Conquer'). Operation *Sho-Go* recognized that Japan's only remaining offensive weapons were her land-based air forces and super battleships.¹³⁰ In order for Japan's battleships to engage successfully the Allied fleet, then at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, it would be necessary to either destroy American carriers or at least put them out of action. The Imperial command was confident that their super battleships could destroy the American carriers, but there was concern that Japan would lack air cover once the attack commenced.¹³¹ Onishi, seeing an opening, presented his idea to create the 'Special Attack Unit' that would be tasked to fly deliberately into U.S. carriers. While Vice-Admiral Takeo Kurita initially opposed the idea, Onishi convinced him that this was the only way to provide cover for Japan's super battleships.¹³² Kurita agreed and gave Onishi permission to begin training his special attack force. The kamikaze's debut would occur on October 25, 1944 during the Battle of the Leyte Gulf as bomb-laden Japanese Zeros attacked with the sole purpose of sinking Allied ships. Japan's fate rested upon Onishi's spiritual tactic.

¹³⁰ The super battleships, or the Yamato class, were the largest and most heavily armed battleships ever constructed during World War II. According to Andrieu D'Albas, "these ships were by far the largest battleships ever built by any naval power. They displaced some 65,000 tons, and their main batteries consisted of nine 18-inch guns. They were high-speed vessels, of great defensive strength due to heavy armor in all vital places and tremendous compartmentation." See Andrieu D'Albas, *Death of a Navy*, 136.

¹³¹ The lack of air support was due to the Japanese defeat during the Battle of Formosa in which the Japanese Imperial Navy lost over 650 aircraft. See J.F.C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World, Volume III*, 601.

¹³² Evan Thomas, *Sea of Thunder*, 184.

2.4 THE BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF AND ITS AFTERMATH: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE KAMIKAZES

The Japanese high command was well aware of the risk it was taking by committing what remained of the Japanese Imperial navy to the Leyte Gulf. The diary of Admiral Teijiro Toyoda succinctly presents the situation:

'If things went well, we might obtain unexpectedly good results. But if the worst should happen, there was a chance that we would lose the entire fleet. I felt that the chance had to be taken...the reason for my determination when sending the order was the fact that should we lose the Philippine operations...the shipping lane to the south would be completely cut off, so that the fleet, if it should come back to Japanese waters, could not obtain its fuel supply. If it should remain in southern waters, it could not received supplies of ammunition and arms. There would be no sense in saving the fleet at the expense of the Philippines.'¹³³

While Admiral Toyoda cautiously observed the situation with a level of strategic detachment, Admiral Matome Ugaki had complete confidence in Onishi's special attack unit. Ugaki, the commander-in-charge at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, believed that the kamikazes would "destroy enemy carriers without fail."¹³⁴ Perhaps what gave Ugaki the most confidence in Operation *Sho* was the kamikaze's spirit of suicidal sacrifice on behalf of Japan. As he notes in his diary, "[o]h what a noble spirit this is! We are not afraid of a million enemies or a thousand carriers because our whole force shares the same spirit."¹³⁵

¹³³ Admiral Teijiro Toyoda's diary quoted in Dennis Warner and Peggy Warner, *The Sacred Warriors: Japan's Suicide Legions*, 99.

¹³⁴ Gordon Prange et al., *Fading Victory: The Diary of Admiral Matome Ugaki*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 485.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

On the morning of October 25, 1944, the Japanese unleashed the special attacks corps against the U.S. Navy as six Japanese kamikaze pilots took off from Cebu and flew eastward with orders to engage and sink U.S. carriers. The first ship they spotted was the USS *St. Lo*, which had left Seeadler Harbor in order to provide air support for the Leyte Battle. Survivors of the engagement recall the kamikaze attacks in this way:

“The Japanese aircraft emerged from the cloud[s] and began to dive...approaching...slowly and deliberately,...maneuvering just enough not to be hit too soon. All those who watched felt their mouths go dry. In less than a minute he [the pilot] would...crash his machine on the deck. All the batteries were firing: the 5-inch guns, the 40 millimeters and 20 millimeters even the rifles. The Japanese aircraft dived through a rain of steel. It had been hit several places and seemed to be trailing a banner of flame and smoke, but it came on, clearly visible, hardly moving, the line of its wings as straight as a sword.”¹³⁶

The lead pilot during the engagement with the *St. Lo* was Lieutenant Yukio Seki, one of Japan’s few remaining ace pilots. According to witness accounts, upon seeing the *St. Lo* he dive-bombed into the ship and “[t]he plane hit the flight deck and exploded in a fireball. The burning fuselage smashed right through the four-inch-thick wooden deck and came to rest amidst a stack of torpedoes and bombs. The ensuing blasts-seven of them-peeled back the flight deck, threw pieces of the carrier as high as a thousand feet into the air, and knocked the *St. Lo* on her beam ends. She was gone in fifteen minutes.”¹³⁷

Despite the initial success of the special attack unit, it proved unable to halt the U.S. advance in the Philippines. Indeed, the U.S. Fleet eventually would overwhelm the Japanese Navy. After four days of fighting, the Americans had lost a light carrier (the *St. Lo*), two escort

¹³⁶ Survivor account quoted by David Sears, *The Last Epic Naval Battle: Voices from Leyte Gulf*, (Westport: Praeger, 2005), 152-153.

¹³⁷ Evan Thomas, *Sea of Thunder*, 303.

carriers, two destroyers, a destroyer escort and a torpedo motor boat.¹³⁸ The Japanese, on the other hand, lost four carriers, three battleships (including the super-battleship *Musashi*), nine cruisers, and ten destroyers, totaling over 300,000 tons of steel that had been sunk by the U.S.¹³⁹ The Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval engagement of the whole war, proved a catastrophic defeat for the Japanese Navy.¹⁴⁰ The Leyte Battle also established the strategic reality that there was no way Japan could win the war in its present state.¹⁴¹ Indeed, the Japanese Navy “was effectively finished as a fighting force.”¹⁴²

Although the Battle of Leyte Gulf was a failure for the Japanese Navy, Admiral Ugaki acknowledged that the special attack units had caused considerable damage to the U.S. fleet. As a result, the Japanese high command decided to utilize the special attack unit during the Battle of Okinawa.¹⁴³ Tables 1 and 2 below show the impact of the kamikazes during the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the Battle of Okinawa.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 322.

¹³⁹ Peter Hill, “Kamikazes, 1943-1945,” in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 5.

¹⁴⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World, Volume III*, 619.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 620. See also Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 147.

¹⁴² Evan Thomas, *Sea of Thunder*, 322.

¹⁴³ Jim Boan, *Rising Sun Sinking: The Battle for Okinawa*, (Austin: Eakin Press, 2000), 48.

**Table 1. The Impact of Kamikaze ‘special attacks’ in the Battle of the Philippines, October 1944-
January 1945.** ¹⁴⁴

Sunk		Damaged			
Ships	Japanese Estimates	U.S. Records	Japanese Estimates	U.S. Records	
Carriers	5	2		13	23
Battleships	1	0		3	5
Cruisers	5	0		8	9
Destroyers	3	3		1	28
Transports	23	5		34	12
Other	0	6		0	10
 TOTAL	 37	 16		 59	 87

¹⁴⁴ Source for the table above comes from Rikihei Inoguchi, Tadashi Nakajima, and Roger Pineau trans., *The Divine Wind: Japan’s Kamikaze Force in World War II*, (London: Hutchinson, 1961), 107.

Table 2. The Impact of Kamikaze ‘special attacks’ in Okinawa Campaign, March August 1945. ¹⁴⁵

Sunk			Damaged		
Ships	Japanese Estimates	U.S. Records	Japanese Estimates	U.S. Records	
Carriers	8	0	11	7	
Battleships	12	0	18	10	
Cruisers	29	0	27	5	
Destroyers	18	11	9	61	
Minesweepers	3	1	2	22	
Other	27	4	22	80	
TOTAL	97	16	89	185	

While the special attack units failed to achieve victory in its final efforts to repulse the U.S. from the Pacific, they caused great concern amongst U.S. Navy admirals. Indeed, it is important to note that more U.S. warships had been sunk or damaged by kamikazes in the Philippines than had been lost or damaged in the previous Pacific naval battles including Pearl Harbor.¹⁴⁶ The

¹⁴⁵ Source for the table above comes from Rikihei Inoguchi, Tadashi Nakajima and Roger Pineau trans., *The Divine Wind: Japan's Kamikaze Force in World War II*, 145-146.

¹⁴⁶ Raymond Lamont-Brown, *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Samurai*, (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1997), 82.

kamikazes proved a far more effective weapon than a conventional air attack, which would have relied on novice pilots.¹⁴⁷ Although Japanese news sources often inflated the number of ships sunk or damaged by the special attack unit (compare the U.S. estimates as opposed to the Japanese estimates in both tables above), the kamikazes succeeded in becoming a potent psychological weapon. As the American war correspondent Hanson Baldwin noted, “the strain of waiting, the anticipated terror, made vivid from past experience, sends some men into hysteria, insanity and breakdown.”¹⁴⁸

In retrospect, the adoption of the kamikaze attacks was a gamble that had little chance of success. It was chosen out of a defensive strategic necessity to stop American progress in the Pacific. The thought was that if the kamikazes could start sinking a number of U.S. warships then they could force a U.S. withdrawal from the Pacific. Part of this calculation came from the belief that the U.S. was a weak-willed and individualistic society that would succumb to an enemy determined to achieve victory at any cost. However, the tactic provided little more than a false hope for a miracle in much the vein as the 1281 typhoon, which saved Japan from the Mongol invasion. The disillusioned Onishi, before committing *seppuku* (ritualistic suicide), confirmed this notion by saying, “[i]f history shows one thing beyond doubt, it is that in the affairs of mankind there is no room for miracles. The fortune of different nations is formed by the amount of honest effort they make.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Richard O’Neill, *Suicide Squads: The Men and Machines of World War II Special Operations*, 143.

¹⁴⁸ Hanson Baldwin quoted in *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁴⁹ Takijiro Onishi interview obtained from archives of Donald Goldstein, (UA90/F-78 Box 22 FF 24, University of Pittsburgh), 1. Upon Japan’s surrender to the Allies, Onishi decided to commit *seppuku* as a way to atone for his failure. While in his study, he cut open his belly and then stabbed himself in the throat. He had to

In analyzing the kamikazes, it becomes clear that Japan's soldiers willingly answered the call to sacrifice their lives for their country. Indeed, the individual sacrifices made by the participants of the special attack units are extraordinary. A total of 4,615 soldiers deliberately set out to their deaths in order to attack the enemy.¹⁵⁰ The question that arises from these figures is what beliefs motivated these soldiers? One Japanese commander interviewed in Kwangtung, China described the special attack participants in this way: '[m]y men were not war machines: they were young, they loved their country, and they took no thought for themselves. The spirit that inspired them stems from the warrior tradition of Japan.'¹⁵¹ This statement provides a clue as to what forces motivated the special attack soldiers.

2.5 THE MOTIVATIONS OF KAMIKAZE PILOTS

Roughly 85% of the pilots who became kamikazes were students from Japan's most prestigious universities.¹⁵² By the fall of 1943, with the military situation becoming increasingly grim, Japan no longer granted student deferments for military service and began drafting university

endure more agony since he did not make it a fatal thrust. Found some hours later, he refused medical attention or honorable decapitation as he conversed with his aids for fifteen hours until he died. See Richard O'Neill, *Suicide Squads: The Men and Machines of World War II Special Operations*, 247.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 251.

¹⁵² Emiko Tierney-Ohnuki, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalism: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 299.

students.¹⁵³ Students majoring in liberal art disciplines like law, political science, and economics left the university and entered the armed services.¹⁵⁴ Many of the students who were drafted volunteered to become pilots. Those who wanted to become pilots were then asked to join the special attack units. Through the diaries left by these university students turned kamikaze pilots, one discovers a group of young men who were intensely committed to the Japanese cause and who were willing to give their lives to ensure Japan's success in the war. This section finds that the readiness with which Japanese kamikaze pilots embraced their mission comes from a potent mix of a willingness to die stemming from the influence of the Bushido warrior code to protect their family and nation, and the belief that their souls would reside at Japan's Yakusuni shrine where they would be honored as warrior-gods.

2.5.1 Pilot Motivations: The Bushido Code and Protecting Kin and Country

Bushido literally translates into 'the way of the warrior.' Founded as an ethical system in feudal Japan, it governed the behavior and etiquette of fighting nobles known as 'samurai.'¹⁵⁵ In contrast with Western ethical systems that have grown out of religious texts or the thought of a principal author, the Bushido code "was founded not on the creation of one brain, however able,

¹⁵³ Ben-Ami Shillony, "Universities and Students in Wartime Japan," (*The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 4, 1986), 779.

¹⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that students majoring in the hard sciences, medicine or engineering were allowed to continue their studies.

¹⁵⁵ Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, (Tokyo: Charles Tuttle Company, 1969), 4.

or on the life of a single personage, however renowned. [Instead] [i]t was an organic growth...[coming from] decades and centuries of military [experience].”¹⁵⁶ The two most important principles extolled by the Bushido code are a fearlessness of death and loyalty to one’s master.

Bushido sought to teach the warrior stoicism especially in the face of danger. In order to face a foe without fear or restraint, it was necessary for the warrior to embrace death. Indeed, the principal lesson of Bushido is found in the *hagakure*, the book of the samurai, which states that the “the Way of the Samurai is, morning after morning, the practice of death, considering whether it will be here or there, imagining the most slightly way of dying, and putting one’s mind firmly in death.”¹⁵⁷ To say that the Bushido code is fixated on death is no exaggeration. By far the most common and oft repeated theme in the *hagakure* is how the warrior should prepare for death. The *hagakure* tells the warrior that the only real choice one has to make is either to die or not to die and that one should always choose death over life.¹⁵⁸ The true samurai had to cultivate a state of mind that impeded self-interested, rational calculation, which Tsunetomo called the *shini gurui* or the ‘death frenzy.’¹⁵⁹ This required the warrior to confront death daily whether it was on the battlefield or in one’s mind. According to the *hagakure*,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵⁷ Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure The Book of the Samurai*, 73. ‘Hagakure’ literally means ‘hidden amongst the leaves.’ The book is a collection of samurai wisdom as recorded through conversations with Yamamoto Tsunetomo who was a retainer to a powerful Japanese lord located in the Saga prefecture.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 17. The *hagakure* notes that “the Way of the Samurai is found in death. When it comes to either/or, there is only the quick choice of death. It is not particularly difficult.”

¹⁵⁹ Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 281.

“Your day must begin with a meditation upon death as the ultimate event. Every morning, with a calm mind, form a picture in your head of the last moment of your life—such as being slain by bow and arrow, gun, sword, or spears; or being carried away by ocean waves; jumping into a big fire; being struck by lightening in a thunderstorm; swallowed up by a great earthquake; falling down hundreds of feet from a high cliff; death by sickness; or unexpected sudden death. Every morning, be sure to take time to think of yourself as dead.”¹⁶⁰

Thus, one of the most important tenets of bushido is that the true samurai was willing to risk his life when called by his lord to do so, and that he actually looked forward to the opportunity to sacrifice himself in the line of duty.¹⁶¹ Arthur Swinson confirms this and notes, “the essence of bushido was that the young warrior *should aim at dying*...[i]n any event, death for the samurai was not something that should be avoided; it was ‘a consummation devoutly to be wished;’ it was the realization of a great and wonderful ideal.”¹⁶² It was believed that the emphasis placed on death not only made one a more formidable warrior, but it also helped the samurai cultivate an unflinching loyalty to his master.

Perhaps just as important as death in the Bushido code is loyalty. Historically, samurai were servants of a powerful lord or *daimyo*, and it was expected that they follow one’s lord to whatever end even if that meant the samurai’s own death.¹⁶³ The loyalty of the samurai to his lord “is said to have been unconditional and utterly selfless.”¹⁶⁴ This intense focus on loyalty is

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Karl Friday, “Bushido or Bull? A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition,” (*The History Teacher*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1994), 341.

¹⁶² Arthur Swinson, *Four Samurai: A Quartet of Japanese Army Commanders in the Second World War*, (London: Hutchinson Press, 1968), 18. Italics from the original text.

¹⁶³ Doris Barga, *Suicidal Honor*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 14.

¹⁶⁴ Karl Friday, “Bushido or Bull? A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition,” 341.

due, in part, to the lack of separation between the individual and the group in the Bushido code. Indeed, Bushido, unlike Western concepts of individualism, does not distinguish the individual person from the group. As Inazo Nitobe notes, Bushido finds that the interest of the individual in relation to the group, usually family and the national polity, are “one and inseparable.”¹⁶⁵ This extreme form of loyalty is best demonstrated through the story of forty-seven ronin.

The tale of the forty-seven *ronin*, which are samurais without masters, describes a true event that occurred in 1702 during the Edo shogunate. A young daimyo lord, Asano Takumi Naganori, was holding an annual reception consisting of imperial messengers at Edo castle. He had been given the task to greet a shogun governor named Kira Kozuke Yoshinaka. Upon arrival, Kira became upset with Asano due to the latter’s refusal to offer the former bribes. Kira, becoming enraged, insulted Asano in front of other shogun officials. Asano believed that Kira had humiliated him publicly so he drew his dagger and attacked the governor. Asano struck Kira in the face with his dagger, but the wound did not kill him. Asano’s actions violated reception protocol and the government wasted little time before coming to a decision to punish Asano. The government condemned Asano to death by disembowelment while praising Kira’s restraint during the heated situation.

The samurai serving Asano believed this to be an unjust punishment, as the government did not address Kira’s unbecoming behavior of demanding a bribe upon being received at Edo castle. The group of forty-seven masterless samurai plotted revenge against Kira. One year later, the ronin enacted their revenge as they broke into Kira’s house and decapitated him. While the ronin avenged their master’s death, they also violated the Shogun’s law, which prohibited revenge killings. The Shogun was aware that their deed was popular amongst the Japanese

¹⁶⁵ Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, 79.

people. With this in mind, the Shogun allowed the ronin to commit ritualistic suicide or seppuku.¹⁶⁶

The importance of this story should not be underestimated. Indeed, as John Allyn notes, this is the national story of Japan, which has seeped into Japan's national consciousness as it continues to be celebrated in song, story, drama and, more recently, motion pictures.¹⁶⁷ Not only does the story powerfully demonstrate the absolute loyalty that warriors have toward their lord, but it also serves as the embodiment of the samurai virtue, which confirms that the way of the warrior is found in death. Both these characteristics are widely found in the kamikaze diaries.

The willingness to embrace death and the premium placed on loyalty allowed the kamikaze pilots to carry out the extreme orders they had been given. Former pilot Yokota Yutaka notes that when "you become a member of an attack force, you become deathly serious. Your eyes become set. Focused. Your life was dedicated to self-sacrifice, committed to smashing into the enemy."¹⁶⁸ He goes on to reflect on the maxim that Bushido is a constant search for a place to die. He notes that this "was our fervent desire, our long-cherished dream. A place to die for my country. I was happy to be born a man. A man of Japan. I don't care if that makes me sound egotistical, but that's how I felt. The country was in my hands."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ For the entire story of the forty-seven ronin, see Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 1995), 304-338. See also John Allyn, *The Forty-Seven Ronin Story*, (Rutland: Charles Tuttle Company, 1970).

¹⁶⁷ John Allyn, *The Forty-Seven Ronin Story*, 8.

¹⁶⁸ Yokota Yutaka quoted in Haruko Cook and Theodore Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 308-309.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 309.

Hachiro Sasaki echoes the ease at which the pilots embraced death. He finds that as “a young man living in Japan at this point in history, the opportunity to participate in the actual making of history is an extraordinary honor.”¹⁷⁰ As a result, he feels an “honorable obligation to dedicate [his] self to the nation” and wishes to “die most beautifully as a person in the midst of a supreme effort.”¹⁷¹ Indeed, for the kamikaze pilots, the good death is one that is freely accepted without hesitation or regret. As Takenori Nako notes, “[d]eath comes to all of us who are given life on this earth and to everything that exists in this real world [so that] to live well is to die well.”¹⁷² Yohei Aboshi reiterates the sentiment of the sublime death. He states that ‘I am confident...that when the time comes for me to die, I can do so composedly and without getting unnecessarily excited.’¹⁷³ He goes on to state that he wants to die “after achieving a victory over the rest of the world” and that Japan must “create [its] own fate” against the enemy she faces.¹⁷⁴ Ryoji Uehara, reflecting on the anniversary of the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905, notices that “[w]hen we compare the situation that prevailed then to that of today, we see that the scale is quite different, but I think of the people’s spiritual condition then and now as pretty much the

¹⁷⁰ Hachiro Sasaki in Midori Yamanouchi, *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*. Translated by Joseph Quinn, (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2000), 121.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁷² Takenori Nakao in Midori Yamanouchi, *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*. Translated by Joseph Quinn, 141.

¹⁷³ Yohei Aboshi in Midori Yamanouchi, *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*. Translated by Joseph Quinn, 245.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

same.”¹⁷⁵ This spiritual condition would ensure victory for Japan and help her “conquer the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union,” which would allow Japan “to spread a cultural life that would even exceed theirs. In time, as it was with the British Empire of the past, wherever one goes he would see the Japanese flag unfurled with dignity and power, and Japanese would be made the language of the world.”¹⁷⁶ The student pilots also mention another prominent theme in their diaries, which is the commitment the pilots had to their family and their country.

There is a belief created through popular fiction and motion pictures that the Emperor figured prominently into the motivations of the kamikaze pilots.¹⁷⁷ The kamikaze diaries dispel this belief and replace it with a deep commitment to kin and country. As Lieutenant Yukio Seki, the man selected to lead the first kamikaze sortie, notes:

“Japan is finished! Killing ace pilots like me, strewth! If it was up to me, I know I could get a direct hit on the flight deck of a carrier with a number 50 [500 lb bomb] without plane ramming. I am not going out for the Emperor...[but I am] going for my beloved wife. If Japan were defeated, I reckon she would be raped by American GIs. I am dying to protect her.”¹⁷⁸

As kamikaze pilot survivor Ryuji Nagatsuka recounts:

“I too would have thought my death worthwhile if it saved my family and friends from being massacred by the Americans. My thoughts never, at any moment, turned to the Emperor, who, in any case, had closed his eyes when this rash and inhuman tactic had been described to him. Did the Emperor have any idea of what went on in the mind and feelings of a suicide pilot?...I would have liked to cry out to him: ‘Look at me, wasting

¹⁷⁵ Ryoji Uehara in Midori Yamanouchi, *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*, translated by Joseph Quinn, 232.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁷⁷ Emiko Tierney-Ohnuki, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalism: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History*, 299.

¹⁷⁸ Lt. Yukio Seki quoted in Peter Hill, “Kamikazes, 1943-1945,” in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 24.

copying out these hollow phrases! To hell with it! Give me some fuel and good weather, not your words!. I would set out this minute on a suicide-mission to defend my family and my country, but I do not want to die for a man who calls himself Emperor!”¹⁷⁹

The two pilots mention a recurring theme, believing that the Americans were barbarians and if allowed to invade Japan would rape and pillage at will. A female survivor of the Battle of Okinawa confirms this and says that “from the time we’d been children, we’d only been educated to hate them [Americans]. They would strip the girls naked and do with them whatever they wanted, then run over them with tanks. We really believed that. Not only us girls. Mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, [and husbands] all were cowering.”¹⁸⁰ The pilots also believed that participating in a special attack was a great honor, one that carried some otherworldly benefits.

2.5.2 Post-Mortem Incentives: Familial Honor and a Place at the Yakusuni Shrine

The students explicitly state in their diaries that being selected to participate in a kamikaze mission was an honor. One student, Yokota Yutaka, describes the intense competition that existed amongst the pilots to be chosen for a special attack mission. When one of Yutaka’s friends was not selected to take part in the mission, “he dashed up to our squad commander, a desperate look in his eyes. ‘How could you leave me? Why won’t you take me?’ He was in tears. ‘Please make me the one hundred and first.’ [That day] [t]hey chose one hundred out of

¹⁷⁹ Ryuji Nagatsuka, *I Was Kamikaze*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1972), 197-198.

¹⁸⁰ Miyadi Kukuko in Haruko Cook and Theodore Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 360-361.

two thousand.”¹⁸¹ When pilot Ichizo Hayashi was selected he wrote, “I am pleased to have the honor of having been chosen as a member of a Special Attack Force that is on its way into battle, but I cannot help crying when I think of you, Mom. Please be happy, however, that I have been chosen for my job because I so far exceeded the other competitors in our flying exercises.”¹⁸² Similarly, Ryoji Uehara notes, “I am keenly aware of the tremendous personal honor involved in my having been chosen to be a member of the Army Special Attack Corps, which is considered to be the most elite attack force in the service of our glorious fatherland.”¹⁸³

When a pilot was selected to join a special attack unit, he was given a distinctive uniform with cherry-blossom buttons, a water chrysanthemum badge on his sleeves, and a white silk scarf.¹⁸⁴ The cherry-blossom became the symbol *par excellence* of the kamikaze pilot as it represented the soldier’s sacrifice for Japan. As Emiko Tierney-Ohnuki notes, the cherry blossom stands for “the most pressing concerns of an individual life, while offering a means to identify oneself as a member of a social group and ultimately as a Japanese.”¹⁸⁵ As such, the cherry blossom was a symbol of group cohesion in that it bound the fate of the individual pilots to that of the nation. The cherry blossom as an aesthetic symbol beautifully represented the individual sacrifices of kamikazes on the battlefield. Kamikaze pilots euphemistically noted upon being selected for a special operation that they were “happy to fall like a cherry blossom

¹⁸¹ Yokota Yutaka quoted in Haruko Cook and Theodore Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 307.

¹⁸² Ichizo Hayashi in Midori Yamanouchi, *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*, 217.

¹⁸³ Ryoji Uehara in Midori Yamanouchi, *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*, 1.

¹⁸⁴ Peter Hill, “Kamikazes, 1943-1945,” in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 24.

¹⁸⁵ Emiko Tierney-Ohnuki, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalism: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History*, 282.

petal.”¹⁸⁶ Ohnuki goes on to note that at the level of the individual pilot, the cherry blossom “represents [the] processes of life, death and rebirth.”¹⁸⁷ While the individual soldiers fell as cherry blossoms, it was believed that they would posthumously reside at the Yakusuni shrine, Japan’s religious site for the heroic war dead.

The Yakusuni shrine, founded in 1889 in a Tokyo suburb by the Meiji government, is considered to be the most sacred place in Japan. According to Japanese legend, it is said that Yasukuni houses the spirit of Amaterasu-Omikami, the Sun Goddess and founder of Japan.¹⁸⁸ The shrine was also built in order to ‘venerate the state’s martyrs, those devoted warriors who sacrificed their lives for their country’ and to provide a place for the spirits of fallen Japanese soldiers.¹⁸⁹ The Meiji government believed that the Japanese state needed to construct a shrine in order to appease the souls of the fallen warriors. This concern reflects the Shinto belief that the souls of the dead must be properly cared for lest they inflict misfortune on Japan’s national and international ambitions.¹⁹⁰ The souls of the dead soldiers housed in Yasukuni shrine are

¹⁸⁶ Tohimasa Hayashi in Midori Yamanouchi, *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*, 249.

¹⁸⁷ Emiko Tierney-Ohnuki, "Betrayal by Idealism and Aesthetics: Special Attack Force (Kamikaze) Pilots and their Intellectual Trajectories Part I," 18.

¹⁸⁸ Dennis Warner and Peggy Warner, *The Sacred Warriors: Japan's Suicide Legions*, 39. A detailed account of the sacred origins of the Japanese state will be conducted in the next section.

¹⁸⁹ Wang Zhixin, “China, Japan and the Spell of Yasukuni,” in John Breen ed., *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan’s Past*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 82-83. It is important to note that Yasukuni does not enshrine the spirits of all Japanese soldiers killed in action. Instead, it houses only those ‘glorious spirits’ of fallen war heroes who exhibited courage, bravery and self-sacrifice.

¹⁹⁰ Emiko Tierney-Ohnuki, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalism: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History*, 83. For a pertinent discussion on the relationship between the *kamis* and Japanese nationalism

considered *kamis* or spirits. These *kamis* have the ability to bring good or bad fortune for the nation, depending on if the nation remembers them during yearly Shinto rituals.¹⁹¹ The soldiers who died in special attack units were considered the epitome of national self-sacrifice and therefore would be enshrined as ‘national protecting *kamis*’ at Yasukuni shrine, where they were revered and honored by Prime Ministers, the Imperial High Command, and even the emperor himself.¹⁹² As the war with the U.S. intensified, Yasukuni became a symbol that figured prominently in the government’s propaganda effort.¹⁹³ As Rear Admiral Kurihara Etsuzo commented, the intense focus on Yasukuni during Japan’s Pacific campaign against the Americans was an attempt to inject “the special attack spirit into the hearts of the entire [Japanese] nation. The world will be shaken when the time comes for the Japanese people...to bring this spirit into play.”¹⁹⁴ As the war drew on, Yakusuni became the location where the Japanese government remembered and valorized the souls of the dead.¹⁹⁵

see C. Burnell Olds, “Japan Harnesses Religion in the National Service,” (*Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1943), 535-547.

¹⁹¹ Wang Zhixin, “China, Japan and the Spell of Yasukuni,” in John Breen ed., *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan’s Past*, 82.

¹⁹² Takahashi Tetsuya, “Legacies of Empire: The Yasukuni Shrine Controversy,” in John Breen ed., *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan’s Past*, 109-110.

¹⁹³ David Earhart, "Kamikazefication and Japan's Wartime Ideology," 571.

¹⁹⁴ Rear Admiral Kurihara Etsuzo quoted in David Earhart, "Kamikazefication and Japan's Wartime Ideology," 569-570.

¹⁹⁵ John Nelson, "Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrine," (*The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 2003), 446.

Another reason why the Yasukuni shrine became important to the pilots was because they believed that they would meet their fallen comrades at Yasukuni after they died. This is exemplified in the special attack pilot pledge, which states, "I'll go first. I'll meet you at Yasukuni."¹⁹⁶ As Araki Shigeko notes, the pilots were desperate to cling to the idea of meeting again as it helped them mentally prepare for the sacrifice they were about to make.¹⁹⁷ Those at Yasukuni were dead in the physical sense, but their enshrined spirits still lingered to fight alongside the living to further Japan's imperial ambitions. Indeed, the emperor himself would preside over an elaborate enshrinement ritual at Yasukuni, ensuring that the dead man's spirit joined the ranks of the imperial ancestors.¹⁹⁸ After the ritual was over, the soldier would be pronounced of one Japan's 'warrior gods' by virtue of his transformational sacrifice.¹⁹⁹

Outside of the spiritual benefits enumerated above, the kamikaze pilots also garnered some material rewards.²⁰⁰ Upon completing their missions, the kamikaze pilots were posthumously given a two-rank promotion, entitling their families to increased pension benefits. Moreover, the families of dead kamikazes were called *homare no ie*, 'a household of honor,'

¹⁹⁶ Araki Shigeko in Haruko Cook and Theodore Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 324.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ The notion that the fallen warrior is not dead is a recurring theme in history. The poet Simonides when speaking about the death of the Spartan warriors at the Battle of Thermopylae echoes this sentiment when he said, "having died, they are not dead; for their valor, by the glory which it brings, raises them from above out of the house of Hades." Simonides quoted in Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 217.

¹⁹⁹ David Earhart, "Kamikazefication and Japan's Wartime Ideology," 576.

²⁰⁰ It is interesting to note that there is no mention in the diaries of the pilots being motivated by these material rewards. At best, the pilots were aware of them and of the benefits their families would receive but there is no evidence that it actively influenced their decision to become a special attack pilot.

they received better rations, and were given places of honor at official state ceremonies.²⁰¹ If a family lost a son in a kamikaze mission, it was common for the government to release the name of the pilot so that the family would be congratulated by the townspeople.²⁰² The government counted on the unwavering support of the Japanese public for the special attack. How and why the Japanese public came to embrace the special attack tactic is the subject of the next section.

2.6 SOCIETAL RESONANCE AND JAPAN'S WAR-TIME IDEOLOGY

When the Japanese High Command adopted Onishi's recommendation to create the special attack units, little thought was given to the question of how the Japanese public would view these attacks. The reason being is that since the Meiji era, the Japanese public had been heavily indoctrinated with an ideology that viewed Japan as a sacred nation. At the head of Japan's sacred founding was the emperor, who was considered a direct descendent of the gods. In order to demonstrate absolute fealty to the emperor, the individual was required to align his will with the state. This absolutist political ideology was propagated through Japan's public education for nearly two generations so when the war began with the U.S. the Japanese public was willing to

²⁰¹ Jean Larteguy, *The Sun Goes Down: Last Letters from Japanese-Suicide Pilots and Soldier*, translated by Nora Wydenbruck, (London: W. Kimber, 1956), 128.

²⁰² Araki Shigeko lost her husband in a kamikaze attack. She notes that "if a family lost someone in action in those days, we would congratulate them. We'd say, 'That's wonderful!' We really meant it!" Araki Shigeko quoted in Haruko Cook and Theodore Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 325.

do their 'divine duty' to help the emperor and Japan succeed. As a result of this indoctrination, the public heralded and lauded the sacrifice made by the kamikaze pilots.

2.6.1 The Divine Origins of the Japanese Nation

Scholars of nationalism have long recognized the importance of the founding myths of nations. As Anthony Smith notes, many nations conceive themselves to be a 'sacred communities' since the nation is "invested with sacred qualities that it draws from older beliefs, sentiments, and ideals about the nature of community, territory, history and destiny."²⁰³ That Japan possesses stories detailing the sacred origins of the country is not unique. What is unique, however, is how the post-Meiji Japanese government actively integrated these beliefs into the Japanese consciousness. The most powerful belief that the government cultivated was that there was a national Japanese essence separating Japan from the other nations on the earth. Known as the *Kokutai No Hongi* (translated as 'The Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan'), this mindset helped to foster feelings of Japanese exceptionalism and later militarism.

The *Kokutai No Hongi* (KNH) became an official statement of national policy in the Meiji government. The bedrock of the KNH is the belief in the divine origin of Japan, its people and its ruling family. The KNH explains the unbroken line of the emperors who have reigned eternally over the Japanese empire. The line of unbroken and divine rule "is our eternal and immutable national entity. Thus, founded on this great principle, all the people, united as one

²⁰³ Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 23.

great family nation in heart and obeying the Imperial Will.”²⁰⁴ The KNH describes how Japan was the first nation created on the earth and as such it was home to the gods. The greatest of the gods was Amaterasu Ohmikami (the ‘Heavenly Shining Great August Deity’ or also simply known as the ‘Sun Goddess’) who sent down heavenly legions to pacify the native inhabitants of Japan. Once order was brought to the land, she sent the fledgling nation her ‘Heavenly Grandchild’ to begin the dynasty of emperors. The royal line of Japan is considered to be “coeval with heaven and earth,” meaning that the emperor is part man and part god.²⁰⁵ Indeed, the KNH calls the emperor the *hitogami* (translated as ‘god-man’ or ‘deity-incarnate’) who is both human and divine.

The emperor’s main duty is to protect the lineage of the gods.²⁰⁶ This notion gained such importance that Article I of the Meiji Constitution explicitly states, “the empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal.”²⁰⁷ The preamble of the Meiji constitution reinforces Japan’s sacred nature:

“Japan is the Land of the Gods. Our Imperial Ancestor for the first time set the foundation of the nation, and the Sun Deity forever handeth the Imperial Throne. This is a thing existing only in our country and without parallel in foreign lands. This is why we call it a Land of the Gods... We the Emperor with discretion and awe to the divine spirits of the Imperial Ancestors do declare and say: We the Emperor, in keeping with the tremendous tasks coeval with Heaven and Earth, do

²⁰⁴ John Owen Gauntlett trans., *Kokutai No Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 59.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. The first ‘god-man’ Emperor was Jimmu who ruled in 600 BC.

²⁰⁶ John Brownlee, “Four Stages of the Japanese Kokutai,” (JSAC Conference, University of British Columbia, October 2000), 1.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 71.

succeed to the Imperial Throne and, holding firm unto the projects laid down of old, shall never fail.”²⁰⁸

It is obvious from the KNH and the Meiji Constitution that the Japanese Emperor is different from those rulers of other countries; he is not a ruler chosen by his subjects on the grounds of his virtue, reason, or intelligence. Instead, the Emperor’s primary duty is to act as a steward of the country’s divine lineage. To complete this awesome task requires the absolute loyalty and devotion of Japanese inhabitants.

The KNH describes ‘The Way of the Subjects,’ which is a set of recommendations about how the individual can best serve the emperor. The two most important virtues described are loyalty and filial piety. Loyalty entails more than a mere reverence for the emperor. Instead it requires the “offering [of] our lives for the sake of the Emperor.”²⁰⁹ The KNH is explicit in not calling this ‘self-sacrifice,’ but rather the “the casting aside of our little selves to live under his august grace and the enhancing of the genuine life of the people [in the] State.”²¹⁰ What is perhaps most shocking for a modern audience is the way in which loyal Japanese subjects are portrayed. The individual is “an existence belonging to [the] State and her history, which form the basis of his origin, and is fundamentally one body with it.”²¹¹ Since there is no separation between individual and the state, the subject has little choice but to follow the dictates of the emperor and concomitantly the state. While this raises the philosophical question of whether one

²⁰⁸ Meiji Constitution quoted in John Owen Gauntlett trans., *Kokutai No Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, 122.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 80.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

can exhibit loyalty if the individual has no choice in the matter, the practical reality is that the Japanese subject is required to submit his will and desires to that of the state at all times.

The second virtue, filial piety, is also connected with the state. The KNH speaks of the ‘national family’ and contrasts this with Western notions of ‘individual family.’ In the latter, the main relationship is between the parent and child, which becomes the primary building block in the Western social order. By contrast, the KNH notes that the ‘national family’ entails more than the Western notion of the parent-child relationship. Instead, “the life of the family in our country is not confined to the present life of a household of parents and children, but beginning with the distant ancestors, is carried on eternally by the descendants.”²¹² Linking the national family to the ‘distant ancestors’ establishes the state as the primary unit in the Japanese social order. Indeed, the KNH describes the individual as “an existence belonging to a State and her history which form the basis of his origin, and is fundamentally one body with it.”²¹³ There are two main points to note here.

First, the individual owes its existence and identity to the state. This is in stark contrast with Western ideas of how the state is created. In Western political philosophy, the individual enters into the social contract in order to preserve one’s life from the perils of the state of nature, which, in Thomas Hobbes’ famous description, is “poor, nasty, brutish and short.”²¹⁴ The individual acts to preserve life and limb, which is the necessary condition for the formation of the state. In contrast, the divine creation of Japan finds that the state *precedes* the individual. The individual never enters into a social contract, but rather finds the state as a pre-established

²¹² Ibid., 90.

²¹³ Ibid., 81.

²¹⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), 100.

social order imposed by the gods. The divine social order places a premium on subordinating one's individual will to that of the state.

Second, the individual is subservient to the state. As such, the truest form of filial piety is when the individual conforms to the divine national entity. Individuals are essentially “not beings isolated from the State, but each has his allotted share as forming part of the State.”²¹⁵ This requires that the Japanese people exude a spirit of self-effacement, which means living for the great self (the state) by dying to the small self (individual ego).²¹⁶ With the emperor as the divine head of the national entity, the greatest act an individual can do is to make the will of the state his or her own. The divination of the emperor created a unique Japanese political philosophy formed around the notion that obedience to the emperor had a quasi-religious character and that obedience to the emperor was the same as obedience to the national-family.²¹⁷

Investigating the KNH reveals the core beliefs that the Japanese public would come to hold before World War II began. The emperor became known as the ‘unmoved mover’ or “the incarnation of the absolute unity of the state and the nation.”²¹⁸ Every decree from the emperor carried the authority of the gods and thus became a sacred duty for individual Japanese citizens. Additionally important was the mythology that Japan was an ancient and divine dynasty, which had remained unbroken since the birth of the sun. How these beliefs were converted successfully into a compelling ideology requires an examination of Japan's education system.

²¹⁵ Meiji Constitution quoted in John Owen Gauntlett trans., *Kokutai No Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, 134.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

²¹⁷ William Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), 80.

²¹⁸ Maurice Pinguet, *Voluntary Death In Japan*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 190.

2.6.2 Japan's Public Education: Promoting the State's Ideology

The principles of the KNH were propagated to the public by Japan's Ministry of Education, which was created in 1872. From the beginning of the Meiji era, Japanese education was controlled by the state, and, except for a few private institutions, the government, through the Ministry of Education, operated all schools and universities.²¹⁹ Beginning in 1903, teachers in Japan were expected to "expound a state-prescribed orthodoxy in their courses, comprising an 'absolutist' interpretation of the emperor's position in the state" and upholding the sacred founding of Japan.²²⁰ Another feature was the pronounced anti-Western sentiments that appeared in Japanese history textbooks. Any admiration of the West was removed and replaced with open hostility. Westerners were portrayed as a self-serving and weak-willed race that thought only of comfort and riches. One archetypal example of the West's weakness is found in a 1903 history textbook that re-tells the story of U.S. Commodore James Biddle.

Biddle, after anchoring two American warships in Tokyo Bay in 1846, was brought to Tokyo by a group of Japanese sailors. As Biddle was walking, one Japanese sailor deliberately broke ranks, pushed Biddle and verbally insulted him. This violation of decorum was punishable by death and the Japanese expected Biddle to kill the sailor on the spot. Instead, Biddle smiled

²¹⁹ Charles Nelson Spinks, "Indoctrination and Re-Education of Japan's Youth," (*Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 17, No.1, 1944), 57.

²²⁰ William Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 82.

and ignored the incident. The textbook notes that the “word spread that the Americans were weak and need not be taken seriously.”²²¹

Additionally, the Ministry of Education actively promoted the notion that Western ideas were harmful to Japan. Ideas such as limited government, liberty, and individual freedom were considered anathema to the Japanese state. As a result, the Ministry of Education passed the “Imperial Rescript on Education” [IRE] on October 30, 1890. As Charles Spinks notes, the IRE was

“[o]ne of the most significant documents of modern Japan, fully equal in importance to the Imperial Constitution which had been promulgated the year before. The evil genius who drafted this Rescript, Akimasa Yoshikawa (then Minister of Education), frankly admitted that its primary purpose was to halt the westernization of Japan. [T]he Rescript on Education is the intellectual Magna Carta of their country, which emancipated Japan from the malignant bondage of Western thought and culture. Still more important, this document became the cornerstone of modern Japanese nationalism.”²²²

At the heart of the IRE is the idea of ‘spiritual training.’ Spiritual training begins when a student is in primary school and continues throughout the student’s education, even at the university level. Part of a student’s curriculum involves taking courses that promote the national virtues of Japan. In these classes, a student reads from a carefully selected text, which is intended to demonstrate a national virtue. For example, when the curriculum called for a lesson on loyalty, the teacher was instructed to present the story of the forty-seven *ronin*. It should be the teacher’s goal to make it the ambition of all of his pupils to want “to burn an incense stick before the

²²¹ Edwin Hoyt, *Japan's War*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 5-6.

²²² Charles Nelson Spinks, “Indoctrination and Re-Education of Japan’s Youth,” 58.

tombs of these warriors who avenged an injustice to their lord and paid with their lives for their loyalty.”²²³

The IRE also unabashedly promotes Japanese exceptionalism. Indeed, it instructs teachers to present the idea of *hakko ichiu*, which translates as ‘over all directions of the earth, one sky,’ to their students. Reminiscent of the American notion of manifest destiny, although much greater in purpose and scope, *hakko ichiu* is the idea that it is Japan’s divine destiny to extend its borders to all corners of the earth. Japan’s culture and way of life were such that the rest of the world would benefit from it. The IRE quotes the Japanese philosopher Yoshida Shoin who proclaims that “it goes without saying for the Imperial Land to reign in all directions as unending as the Heavenly Sun, [and] as boundlessly eternal as heaven and earth.”²²⁴

It should be unsurprising to note that the IRE promoted the virtues found in the KNH. The IRE reinforced the idea that the emperor was identical with the nation and deserved absolute loyalty. Moreover, the IRE reminded Japanese citizens that Japan was founded by the gods and has an unbroken ancestral line “as unchanging as heaven and earth, [that] is to be passed on to ten thousand times ten thousand generations.”²²⁵ The IRE made clear to all Japanese students that the Emperor and the state were divine entities that demanded absolute loyalty and self-

²²³ Ibid., 59.

²²⁴ David Earl, *Emperor and Nation in Japan*, 170-171. Yoshida Shoin was born in 1830 in Matsumoto and was a political thinker and nationalist. He advocated expansionism in Japan’s sphere of influence and believed that confrontation between Japan and the West was inevitable in order for Japan to spread its culture to the rest of the world.

²²⁵ Ibid., 183.

sacrifice. Consider the lessons of a fourth-grade and ninth-grade text designed to inculcate spiritual readiness into Japanese students:

- “The Imperial Scion [the Emperor] is holy, by virtue of the Imperial Progenitor [Amaterasu Omikami]. By virtue of the august spirit of the Imperial Progenitor, the authority of the extant Emperor is inviolate.”²²⁶
- “The state protects the subjects. But if the subjects do not completely obey the state, the state cannot completely protect the subjects. It is the first duty of subjects to obey and protect the state.”²²⁷
- “Subjects are particles which together comprise the whole nation. The prosperity of the subjects is tied to the prosperity of the state. Subjects and state are one body.”²²⁸
- “The state exists independently forever, but the individual for only a time, and compared with the state his life is very brief. It is only natural that the people must conform to the purposes of the eternal state, and give no heed to personal interests.”²²⁹
- “Remembering our deep obligation to the Emperor for his favors, we should strive to become good Japanese by devoting ourselves to ruler-

²²⁶ Kosaka Masaaki ed., *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era*, Volume II, (Tokyo: Pan-Pacific Press, 1958), 384.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 494.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

loyalty and patriotism, revering the Imperial family, respecting the law, honoring the flag, and bearing in mind the origin of festival days.”²³⁰

From 1904 until 1945, the Ministry of Education controlled the distribution of all elementary school texts and oversaw the textbooks that went to public universities. This ensured that nearly two generations of Japanese had been indoctrinated by the state’s absolutist ideology. Students were taught to venerate the emperor through in-class rituals, such as praying in front of the imperial photograph, which were used to instill awe and obedience to the emperor and state. State education was not meant to promote critical thinking and independent reasoning. Instead, the education promulgated during this period produced citizens who became zealous supporters of Japan’s Imperial policies. Consider the composition of one *third-grade* student during the Russo-Japanese War, “I will become a soldier and kill Russians and take them prisoner. I will kill more Russians, cut off their heads and bring them back to the Emperor. I will charge into battle again, cut off more Russian heads, kill[ing] them all. I will be a great man.”²³¹

This exemplifies the Japanese zeitgeist in the years preceding World War II. With an education system focusing on the sacredness of the emperor and country, coupled with the idolization of the Bushido virtues of loyalty and the willingness to die for one’s country, the militarization of Japanese education was complete. This state-produced, militaristic ideology was injected into the Japanese populace first through the education system and later through the

²³⁰ Ibid., 240.

²³¹ Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 24

active control over the press and media.²³² These elements combined to create a population that was willing to accept the special attacks as part of the ‘national will’ and would celebrate and revere the sacrifice of the kamikaze pilots.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The Japanese use of suicide attacks during World War II is the first modern use of such a tactic. Because of this, it should no longer be confined to the dustbin of history and ignored by social scientists who study terrorism and political violence. Indeed, the Japanese case study presents a fascinating account of how and why an organization pursues this extreme tactic.

As this chapter demonstrates, the Japanese military adopted the special attack because they found themselves in a position of increasing weakness and desperation. The Americans, having soundly defeated the Japanese Imperial Forces at Midway, continued to press on toward the Philippines. This action threatened Japan’s access to the precious war-related material resources that the surrounding islands provided. If Japan failed to defeat the U.S. in the Philippines theater, the war effort would suffer a critical blow. Thus, at the organizational level of analysis, the Japanese High Command sought a new tactic that would turn-the-tide of the war in Japan’s favor. Takijiro Onishi’s idea of a special attack unit devised for the sole purpose of

²³² Gregory Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 202

ramming Japanese planes into U.S. ships became the tactic that the Japanese High Command believed would halt the American advance.

At the individual level, the diaries left by kamikaze pilots reveal that they were motivated by nationalistic and familial sentiments. They did not want their country nor their loved ones to be conquered by the ‘barbaric’ American GIs. In order to protect their kin and country, the pilots embraced Bushido, the ancient warrior ethic of medieval Japan, allowing them to face death with courage and bravery. Additionally, the belief the pilots had that they would see each other again at Yasukuni shrine helped them cope with the gravity of the sacrifice their country required them to make. Indeed, the Japanese High Command exploited the pilot’s noble spirit of self-sacrifice and used that to create a squadron of flying, human bombs.

Finally, the kamikaze attacks gained acceptance by the Japanese population largely through the indoctrinating efforts of the Ministry of Education. Since the Meiji restoration, the Japanese populace had been fed a healthy dose of a state-created ideology containing a powerful mixture of militarism and exceptionalism. The Japanese people, believing in the sacred qualities of their country and their emperor, thought that loyalty to the state was the highest virtue one could display. As a result, the individual was urged to align his individual will with that of the state. When the public learned of the kamikaze attacks, they were hailed as ‘warrior gods’ and celebrated as the supreme example of Japan’s fighting spirit.

This case study is an example of a hierarchical linkage structure amongst the three levels of analysis. As the case study identifies, the main catalyst for the Japanese leadership to adopt the special attack squad was the position of weakness that the Japanese armed forces was in. Once the decision was made to use the special attacks, the Japanese High Command found itself atop of a hierarchical structure that sought to align the will of the individual pilot as well as the

Japanese public to supporting the tactic. In this hierarchical system, there is a fluid compatibility amongst each level of analysis. The Japanese High Command presented those individuals chosen for a special attack as an elite group who were dying nobly for their country. The noble sacrifices of the pilots fit nicely into a societal narrative, which subjugated the individual will to that of the state's collective will. What is interesting is that the individual pilots and the Japanese public needed little coaxing to accept the special attack tactic as a result of the state fashioned ideology that had been administered by the Ministry of Education. Thus, before the decision was made to use suicide attacks both the individual and societal levels had been primed by the state's ideology.

What makes the kamikazes a unique historical event is that the tactic was used by one nation against another in warfare. What is of lasting value for social scientists is found in the circumstances through which the Japanese High Command adopted the tactic. Indeed, the kamikaze example is a prelude to future instances where a power imbalance exists and an organization adopts an extreme method to alter that power imbalance.

The next chapter of the dissertation investigates the use of suicide attacks when the power imbalance is indeed more pronounced. The case study of the Tamil Tigers and the irregular war effort against the Sri Lankan state contains many of the same factors at each level of analysis that this chapter on the kamikazes revealed.

3.0 SUICIDE ATTACKS IN IRREGULAR WAR: THE CASE OF THE TAMIL TIGERS

“We will reach the path of the leader
Who sacrificed himself totally
We will, as the tigers are known
For self-sacrifice.
We will rise as wave after wave
Looking for a day-break for us.
To teach that goal, we will
Sacrifice our lives.
And become exploding bombs.
We will tread as Black Tigers
And attack the enemies.
We will climb the battlefield and
Live to see the flowering Eelam.”
-Vellupillai Pirabakaran, Founder of the LTTE

“The Century started by Black Tigers
Began today.
On the earth and Sea,
Mingling with air as air
And with waves as waves,
Filling our hearts
Are the Black Tigers.”
-Poem read aloud on Black Tiger Commemoration Day, July 5, 2004

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka is a small island about 270 miles long and 150 miles wide located to the east of the Indian subcontinent. It is situated 1500 miles west of the Straits of Malacca and the Sunda Strait, the two major gateways to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, making the island accessible to European travelers and explorers. When Portuguese explorers arrived in the sixteenth century, they called it the ‘jewel of the Indian Ocean.’ Later in the nineteenth century, the British began to cultivate high quality tea and cinnamon, exporting the goods around the world. At the end of World War II, it seemed as though Sri Lanka would emerge as a pillar of democracy in South Asia; Sri Lanka adopted the British Parliamentary system, had a large and educated middle class, and had a thriving tea and spice trade with Europe and North America.²³³ All signs indicated that the country was on the right path toward establishing a vibrant democracy. This proved to be a mistaken assumption.

Since 1973, the Sri Lankan Government [SLG] has been engaged in a violent and protracted conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE]. The LTTE has emerged as one of the deadliest, most proficient and durable terrorist organizations in the world.²³⁴ The LTTE’s sophistication is such that it became the only terrorist organization in the world with its own army, navy and air force. Additionally, it is the only terrorist organization to boast the

²³³ Chandra de Silva, *Sri Lanka: A History*, (Janpura: Vikas Publishing House, 1987), 2.

²³⁴ Peter Chalk, “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Insurgency and Sri Lanka,” in Rajat Ganguly and Ian MacDuff, Ian eds., *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South And Southeast Asia*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), 146.

assassination of two heads of state.²³⁵ Through a violent guerrilla war, the LTTE has successfully engaged SLG army forces and repelled an Indian Peacekeeping Force. The LTTE has made suicide attacks a permanent feature of its insurgency strategy. This chapter seeks to answer the following questions: What is the historical context of the conflict between the SLG and the LTTE? Why did the LTTE choose to adopt suicide attacks? What motivates LTTE suicide attackers, also known as ‘Black Tigers,’ to participate in such an act? Finally, how is the LTTE able to make the attack resonate with the Tamil population?

The first section of the chapter explores the historical roots of the conflict between the LTTE and the SLG. While it is tempting to look to the early years after Sri Lankan independence for the antecedents of the conflict, this tells only part of the story. Instead, one must begin by looking at the resurgence of Buddhism in Sri Lanka during the nineteenth century. An anti-Western Buddhist monk named Ankarika Dharmapala [1864-1933] led this resurgence. He believed that Western culture and Christianity were corrupting Sri Lanka. In order to recover from this state of weakness, he advocated that the country embrace its Buddhist heritage. This created a strain of Buddhist infused nationalism that would eventually pit the Sinhalese Buddhist majority against the Tamil Hindu and Christian minority. Once Sri Lanka attained independence, supporters of this virulent strain of nationalism convinced the nascent Sri Lankan government to first marginalize, and later actively discriminate against, the Tamil minority.

The second section of the chapter chronicles the rise of the Tamil Tigers. As the SLG became more oppressive against the Tamil population, the Tigers emerged as the group best able

²³⁵ The LTTE assassinated former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 1991 and former President of Sri Lanka Ranasinghe Premadasa on May 1, 1993. They have also killed many academics, military and police officers, and local politicians.

to engage the SLG militarily. In this context, the LTTE began to experiment with suicide attacks. This section argues that suicide attacks at first were utilized out of a defensive necessity and then later were integrated into the LTTE's arsenal for offensive use. The LTTE's leader, Vellupillai Pirabakaran, recognized early on that suicide attacks could be used to offset the Sri Lankan Army's disproportionate possession of heavy weaponry. As a result, he formed the 'Black Tiger Squad,' which would become the most feared cadre of suicide attackers in the world. The Black Tigers would be used to assassinate heads of state and traitors to the Tamil cause as well as to attack fortified Sri Lankan Army [SLA] posts.

The third section of the chapter investigates the motivations for why one chooses to become a Black Tiger. Unlike Middle Eastern terrorist groups like Hamas, Hizbollah, and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade that produce and publish videotapes and writings of their martyrs, the LTTE is much more guarded in its release of such information. Despite the dearth of primary source information by Black Tigers themselves, this section finds that Pirabakaran has shrewdly created an ideology of martyrdom within the LTTE at large and the Black Tiger units in particular. This ideology of martyrdom is a potent mixture of nationalism and religious symbolism, which extols the abandonment of one's life for the cause of Tamil Eelam [Tamil Homeland].

The fourth section looks into the factors that have allowed LTTE suicide attacks to resonate with the Tamil population in Sri Lanka and in the diaspora. The section argues that the main contributor has been the LTTE's development of a cult of martyrdom, which exists locally in the northern part of Sri Lanka and internationally over the Internet. Like Pirabakaran's martyrdom ideology, this too draws on nationalistic and religious elements. To garner support for the martyrs, the LTTE sponsors year-round events honoring the memories of the Black

Tigers and others who have been martyred fighting for a free Tamil homeland. These events are available to those living in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, at the heart of the LTTE insurgency and to those Tamils living in diaspora via the Internet. As a result, the LTTE Black Tigers are the first cadre of suicide attackers that have both a local and global support base.

3.2 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS: A RESURGENT BUDDHISM

When speaking of the historical roots of the Sri Lankan conflict, David Little notes, “it is frequently asserted...that the Sri Lankan civil war between the Sinhala majority, which is mostly Buddhist, and the Tamil minority, which is overwhelmingly Hindu, has nothing to do with religion. That is supposed to be true...because the conflict can be shown not to be about disputes over religion.”²³⁶ The scholarly champion of this viewpoint is Robert Pape, who argues that the struggle between the Sri Lankan state and the LTTE is mainly one between competing nationalisms.²³⁷ On the surface, this is true. Tamil nationalism fuels the LTTE’s desire to create an independent and autonomous Tamil state in the northern part of Sri Lanka. Similarly, Sinhala nationalism prompts the SLG to deny the LTTE’s claim since it wants to keep the entire state intact. The problem with this explanation is that it forcibly separates ethnicity and religion, which, as David Little notes, produces a view that ignores and distorts crucial historical

²³⁶ David Little, “Religion and Ethnicity in the Sri Lankan Civil War,” in Robert Rotberg ed., *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 41.

²³⁷ See Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, (New York: Random House, 2005), 139-154.

realities.²³⁸ Specifically, it ignores the crucial fact that Buddhism became the source for Sinhalese nationalism.²³⁹ Indeed, a resurgent, racist and xenophobic Buddhist nationalism laid the groundwork for the terrible confrontation between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. How this virulent nationalism evolved will now be explored.

3.2.1 Buddhism and Sri Lanka

Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka over 2,200 years ago and remains the religion professed by 70% of the island's population.²⁴⁰ A sacred Buddhist text called the Mahavamsa depicts how Buddhism came to Sri Lanka. According to it, the Buddha foresaw the demise of Buddhism in India, the religion's birthplace. He wanted to establish a stronghold for the nascent faith, and thus created the Sinhalese race, sending it to inhabit Sri Lanka. A great Sinhalese prince name Duttugemunu went to Sri Lanka to conquer the island and prepare it for Buddhism's arrival. When he arrived, he found a flourishing Tamil kingdom to the north under the rule of a king named Elaru. Duttugemunu, armed with a spear containing a relic of the Buddha embedded in its tip, traveled north to crush the Tamil kingdom.²⁴¹ The battle between the two yielded a

²³⁸ David Little, "Religion and Ethnicity in the Sri Lankan Civil War," 42.

²³⁹ Robert Pape, *Dying to Win*, 146-147.

²⁴⁰ Chandra de Silva, *Sri Lanka: A History*, 5.

²⁴¹ The relic is said to have contained the tooth of the Buddha, which is believed to be housed at the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Also, the Mahavamsa portrays the Tamils as the historical enemies of the Sinhalese. This feature will be picked up by the Buddhist monk Ankarika Dharmapala.

stalemate and had to be decided in a one-on-one battle between the two rulers. Duttugemunu and Elaru, each mounted on a great elephant, attacked one another. Duttugemunu and his magical spear defeated Elaru and the island was claimed as the newfound home for Buddhism. After the battle, the Mahavamsa has Duttugemunu declaring that it was “not for glory but for religion [that I] wage[d] this battle.”²⁴² After the fall of the Tamil kingdom, a sapling of the Bodhi Tree, the tree under which Buddha attained Enlightenment, was sent to Sri Lanka.

The Sinhalese, which means ‘people of the lion,’ believe themselves to be the defenders of Buddhism, which they have done since the 2nd century BC. Despite flaws in the historical accuracy of the Mahavamsa, historian K.M. de Silva notes, “Buddhism became the bedrock of the culture and civilization of the island...[and was] the main influence shaping the outlook of the masses of the people.”²⁴³ After the religion’s arrival in Sri Lanka, it enjoyed a type of ‘Golden Age’ as it spread over the country.²⁴⁴ Buddhist monasteries were established in the southern part of the island, making it an important center for Buddhist learning. During this time, the Mahavamsa inspired the belief that Sri Lanka was a nation brought into being for the sole purpose of propagating Buddhism became ingrained in the Sinhalese mindset.²⁴⁵ The link between Buddhism and the Sinhalese race had been forged during the almost two centuries when Buddhism had little external competition from other religions. This changed upon the arrival of European explorers who brought Christianity with them.

²⁴² William McGowan, *Only Man is Vile*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992), 143.

²⁴³ K.M. de Silva, “Historical Survey,” in K.M. de Silva ed. *Sri Lanka: A Survey*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977), 34

²⁴⁴ S.A. Pakeman, *Ceylon*. (New York: Praeger, 1964), 21.

²⁴⁵ D.C. Vijayavardhana, *The Revolt in the Temple*. (Colombo: Sinha Publications, 1953), 3.

3.2.2 The Christian Challenge and Buddhist Revivalism

The disestablishment of Buddhism began with the arrival of the Europeans and their variants of the Christian faith. The Portuguese brought Roman Catholicism to Sri Lanka in 1587, followed by the Dutch with their Reformed Protestantism in 1638 and the British with their Anglicanism in 1796.²⁴⁶ When the British secured the island from the Dutch, they opened it to Anglican missionaries. The Anglican missionaries created many schools and taught English along with their version of Christianity. Many Tamils attended the missionary schools and learned English giving them a distinct advantage over their Sinhalese counterparts whose Buddhist run schools did not teach English. Their English-language abilities made employment with the British civil service more likely because entry to the civil service was based on examinations administered in English.

The Buddhist monks [bhikkhus] became worried when the British began to help Christian missionaries establish a new system of church-run schools in Sri Lanka while withdrawing all government support to Buddhist schools.²⁴⁷ Christian evangelism and the establishment of Christian schools prompted many Buddhist monks to believe that the British wanted to sever the connection between Sri Lankan and Buddhism. The Buddhist monks were offended by what they believed to be Christian denigration of their culture and their religion. The Christian missionaries conducted an aggressive proselytization campaign by releasing public documents

²⁴⁶ Chandra de Silva, *Sri Lanka: A History*, 12.

²⁴⁷ David Little "Religion and Ethnicity in the Sri Lankan Civil War," 45.

seeking to disprove and denigrate Buddhism. The bhikkhus were alarmed at the proliferation of pamphlets distributed by Christian missionaries exhorting the people to discard and abandon their Buddhist superstitions and to embrace Christianity.²⁴⁸ The bhikkhus began to see Christianity as a threat because they believed that the British wanted to replace Buddhism with Christianity as the foundation for Sri Lanka. This prompted a Buddhist convert named Don David Hewaviratne to argue that Sri Lanka needed to return its Buddhist roots before their religion disappeared.

Don David Hewaviratne was not born a Buddhist. He had attended an Anglican school sponsored by the British government and learned English. He became convinced of the need to revive Buddhism in Sri Lanka after a visit to a sacred Buddhist shrine. He saw the shrine close to ruin and under the control of the British government. As Robert Bond notes, he then “vowed beneath the Bodhi Tree to rescue Buddhism from neglect.”²⁴⁹ Converting to Buddhism and changing his name to Anagarika Dharmapala, which means ‘protector of the Dharma,’ he argued that the people of Sri Lanka needed to reclaim their Sinhalese Buddhist roots and traditions. Dharmapala linked Buddhism with nationalism as he sought to revive the great tradition espoused by the Mahavamsa. He called on the Sinhalese people to become patriots “for the preservation of our nation, our literature, our land, and our most glorious religion at whose

²⁴⁸ K.N.O. Dharmadasa, *Language, Religion, and Ethnic Assertiveness: The Growth of Sinhalese Nationalism in Sri Lanka*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 96.

²⁴⁹ George Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 54.

source our forefathers drank deep for nearly seventy generations.”²⁵⁰ He believed that reestablishing Buddhism and Buddhist values would enable the Sinhalese to reestablish the glorious civilization that had existed in antiquity that was “free from foreign influences...with the word of Buddha as their guiding light.”²⁵¹

To achieve his goal of recapturing Buddhism for Sri Lanka, Dharmapala obtained the help of Col. Henry Olcott. Olcott, the founder of the Theosophical Movement, came to know Dharmapala during the former’s trip to Sri Lanka to mount a public campaign against Christianity.²⁵² Dharmapala discussed with Olcott how Western culture and Christianity had tainted Sinhalese culture and society. Dharmapala told Olcott “he saw how the influence of [the] missionaries had eaten into the vitals of the [Sinhalese] people and was corroding all that was noblest in their national character.”²⁵³ He went on to say that ‘the sweet, tender, gentle Aryan children of an ancient historical race are sacrificed at the altar of the whiskey-drinking, beef-eating, belly-god of [Christian] heathenism.’²⁵⁴ In order to combat Christianity, Dharmapala and Olcott devised a number of public debates between Christian missionaries and Buddhist monks.

²⁵⁰ Angarika Dharmapala quoted in George Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response*, 55.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 56.

²⁵² The Theosophical Movement held that there was no one single religion that could convey the divine. The Theosophical Movement held that all religions were part of a great mystical union and that one religion should not be promoted over another. The movement, which means “godly wisdom,” is based primarily on the thought of Helena Blavatsky,

²⁵³ Dharmapala quoted in William McGowan *Only Man is Vile*, 141.

²⁵⁴ Dharmapala quoted in Ibid., 141. It should be noted that in this quote that Dharmapala revived the claim that the Sinhalese were of Aryan stock, which maintained racial purity for centuries.

The Buddhist monks who debated the Christians had a nuanced understanding of Buddhism and were well versed in Christian theology.²⁵⁵ In front of large audiences, the monks called into question such theological concepts as the Trinity, theodicy, transubstantiation, consubstantiation and original sin. The Christian missionaries chosen to debate the Buddhist monks did not have sufficient theological training about Christian doctrine and little to none about Buddhism. The debates were a major success for Dharmapala, which, in turn, helped cultivate a nationalism grounded in religion and race. This religio-racial nationalism would become a powerful force after Sri Lanka obtained its independence from the British.

3.2.3 Language: Another Element of Buddhist Nationalism

After Sri Lankan independence in 1948, a group of influential Buddhist monks under the name of the 'Buddhist Committee of Inquiry' published a report entitled 'The Betrayal of Buddhism.' The report's purpose was to "inquire into the present state of Buddhism in Ceylon and to report on the conditions necessary to improve and strengthen the position of Buddhism, and the means whereby those conditions may be fulfilled."²⁵⁶ Not surprisingly, the report argued that Sri Lanka was losing its Buddhist heritage and advocated that 'education in Ceylon today should be

²⁵⁵ K.N.O. Dharmadasa, *Language, Religion, and Ethnic Assertiveness: The Growth of Sinhalese Nationalism in Sri Lanka*, 101.

²⁵⁶ Report quoted in Stanley Tambiah, "Buddhism, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka," in Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 593.

oriented towards the bringing forth of a generation with an intimate awareness of its national language [Sinhala], history and culture and capable of enriching that national heritage.’²⁵⁷ In order to accomplish this goal, the report advocated that Buddhism should be the country’s national religion and that Sinhala should replace English as the national language so that Buddhist values could be easily transmitted. The report added yet another dimension to the growing nationalism, language.

As aforementioned, the British left a government and civil service that operated in English. Official government documents were printed in English and the key to obtaining employment with the government was a strong command of the English language. The Buddhist monks wanted to shift from English as the medium of governmental administration to Sinhala, which was the native language of the Sinhalese population. The monks argued that since approximately 74% of the population was Sinhalese and spoke Sinhala, it was only logical that an independent Sri Lanka utilize the language of the majority population.²⁵⁸ The Tamils were worried about this proposal since they did not speak Sinhalese. They also saw this as a threat to the positions they had been able to obtain as a result of their ability to learn English. This created much concern amongst the Tamil population and Tamil leaders like G.G. Pannambalam tried to persuade the new Sri Lankan government not to institute the change recommended by the monks.²⁵⁹ The Tamils were able to delay the statewide implementation of Sinhala for a few

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 594.

²⁵⁸ Stephen Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002,” in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 46. Of 19 million people, 74% are Sinhalese, 18% Tamil and 7% Muslim.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 47.

years, but the 1956 candidacy of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike for Prime Minister of Sri Lanka threatened to change this.

1956 was a watershed year for the newly independent country. Indeed, it was a year of great expectations because it marked the 2500th year since the death of Buddha and the concomitant arrival of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. Taking advantage of this, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike ran a campaign seeking to restore Buddhism to its rightful place in Sri Lanka. Central to his platform was that, if elected, he would pass a bill making Sinhala the official and sole language of Sri Lanka. This made his candidacy extremely attractive to the nationalistic Buddhist clergy, which in turn helped him get elected. The victory of Bandaranaike in 1956 saw the introduction of a new fundamentalist and militant Buddhism advocating the takeover of denominational schools to reduce the power of the Christian missionaries, the compulsory teaching of Buddhism in state schools, and establishing Sinhala as the official language of Sri Lanka.²⁶⁰ Bandaranaike adeptly understood the power of language as an aspect of group identity and capitalized on it to get elected. He won the support of the Buddhist monks who warned the Sinhala population of the “danger that would befall the Buddhist religion and the Sinhalese tradition if Sinhala were allowed to fall into decay under the powerful influences of English and Tamil.”²⁶¹ The Tamils saw the election of Bandaranaike and his United National Party [UNP] as a threat. They questioned whether the Tamil language and culture would be preserved under the

²⁶⁰ Ganath Obeyesekere, “The Origins and Institutionalization of Political Violence,” in James Manor, ed. *Sri Lanka In Change and Crisis*, (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 157.

²⁶¹ Chelvadurai Manogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 43

leadership of someone who was an advocate for the primacy of Sinhala. Their worst fears were realized in the days after Bandaranaike's election.

3.2.4 Tamil Discrimination: Language, Education and a New Constitution

Keeping his campaign promise, Bandaranaike enacted into law the 'Official Language Act No. 33 of 1956.' This act made Sinhala the official language of Sri Lanka. All government business and affairs would be recorded in Sinhala, courts would only use Sinhala, and government officials faced the choice of either having to learn Sinhala or losing their position. Additionally, the act "marked the end of the political control exercised by the westernized, English-speaking elite, including Tamils, in all spheres of life in Sri Lanka and symbolized the end of foreign domination of Sri Lanka."²⁶² Tamil leaders believed that the Sinhala-Only language policy would lead to forced assimilation and the loss of the Tamil language and culture. They responded by lobbying the Bandaranaike government to include a provision recognizing Tamil, at the very least, in the northern areas of the island where the majority of the Tamil population lived. Bandaranaike rejected these overtures.

The Sinhala Only act also functioned as a way to help Sinhalese gain employment in the government, which had been monopolized by the Tamils due to their mastery of English. Indeed, "although the Sinhalese were about six times more numerous than the Ceylon Tamils, the selective Ceylon Service employed nearly half as many Tamils as Sinhalese, and the Judicial

²⁶² Ibid.

Service had two-thirds as many Tamils as Sinhalese.”²⁶³ The establishment of Sinhalese was an effort to make the Sinhalese people more competitive against their Tamil counterparts. With the passage of the act, the Tamils in the government saw the future prospects for their advancement quickly disappearing.

For the Tamils, the Sinhala Only act presented a threat to the very existence of the Tamil minority. The ruling party and the nationalistic Buddhist clergy who advised Prime Minister Bandaranaike were attacking their language, culture and heritage. Tamil politicians decided to use satyagraha [peaceful protest] in the Gandhian tradition to protest the Sinhalese Only Act. On June 5, 1956, peaceful protestors congregated outside of the Parliament complex located in Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka. The Tamils intended to raise awareness about their plight by meditating and fasting from morning until sundown. After a few hours, a crowd of Sinhalese people led by Buddhist monks staged a counter protest. Only a few minutes passed before the counter protestors attacked the non-violent protestors. As Neil DeVotta notes, “the satyagrahis were beaten and pelted with stones; at least one Tamil was thrown into the nearby Beira lake, and another had an ear bitten and torn off. The police...stood by as passive observers, having been given explicit orders not to intervene unless they themselves were attacked.”²⁶⁴ Upon learning of the violence, Bandaranaike appeared and addressed the stunned Tamil crowd

²⁶³ Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity and Political Economy*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 43.

²⁶⁴ Neil DeVotta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 83.

telling them to disperse and go home. When the protestors refused, the police then used fire hoses to drive them from the area.²⁶⁵

After the riot, it is fair to say that Bandaranaike realized he had unleashed a potent and violent nationalism driven by religion, ethnicity, and language. To his credit, he attempted to reign in the very nationalism he released. Going to the Sri Maha Bodhia shrine, the most holy shrine in Sri Lanka,²⁶⁶ he made this appeal: ‘Let it not be said, to the eternal disgrace of Buddhism as well as Ceylon, that the Sinhalese, the chosen people of the Buddha, have done harm and injury to our Tamil brothers. To the non-Sinhalese and non-Buddhists I say, ‘Bear with us, have faith in us, and join hands with us, so that we united can lead our land to peace, prosperity and success.’²⁶⁷ Bandaranaike went on to argue that Tamil grievances should be accommodated. To this end, he made the following four exceptions to the Sinhala-Only Act. First, the Tamils had the right to be educated in their common tongue. Second, civil service examinations would be given in Tamil. Third, Tamil correspondence with state and local government institutions would be returned in Tamil. Finally, local authorities could use Tamil to conduct business with the Colombo government.²⁶⁸ While the Tamils were relieved by these overtures, the Buddhist factions that helped elect Bandaranaike believed them to be a betrayal tantamount to treason.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 83.

²⁶⁶ The Sri Maha Bodhia shrine is located in Anuradhapura and is said to house a sapling from the same Bodhi tree under which the Buddha obtained enlightenment.

²⁶⁷ Bandaranaike quoted in Neil DeVotta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*, 94.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 98

Bandaranaike attempted to pass these accommodations in legislation entitled ‘The Tamil Language Special Provision Act.’ Immediately, his Buddhist support base verbally denounced him. Bandaranaike noted, “every kind of opprobrious epithet has been flung at me. Sinhalese anonymous letters have come to me [saying] that I have been a traitor to the Sinhalese people...All types of things have been said. They are all wanting to bump me off.”²⁶⁹ The prime minister’s prediction proved correct. In September 1959, a Buddhist monk named Talduwe Somarama came to Bandaranaike’s home dressed in the official saffron robes under the guise to discuss alternatives to the new course of action the prime minister had chosen to take. As the monk approached, the prime minister made the customary bow that is done when greeting a Buddhist monk.²⁷⁰ As he prostrated himself, the monk shot the prime minister at point-blank range with a revolver. The wave of Buddhist nationalism that swept Bandaranaike to power ultimately cost him his life. The assassination reveals just how much political power the Buddhist monks had acquired and the extent to which they would go to ensure that their vision of a Sinhalese-Buddhist Sri Lanka remained intact.

With the death of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, his widow, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, assumed the helm as prime minister.²⁷¹ To assuage her Buddhist support base, she vowed to take an even tougher stance on the Tamils than did her husband. She wasted little time as she began to overhaul the education system in Sri Lanka. In 1973, her government introduced an affirmative action policy to “adjust the ethnic balance in university admissions as a measure for correcting

²⁶⁹ Bandaranaike quoted in *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁷⁰ K.M. de Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi-Ethnic Societies*, (New York: University Press of America, 1986), 199.

²⁷¹ As an historical aside, she was the first elected female prime minister in the world.

disparities in marking standards between different subjects and different media and as a way to compensate for the unequal provision of facilities to different groups.”²⁷² Essentially, she introduced a discriminatory policy against Tamil students, which gave Sinhalese applicants a weighted score when applying for university admissions. For example, the qualifying mark for admission to the medical faculty was 250 out of 400 for Tamil students. For Sinhalese students, however, the mark was reduced to 229.²⁷³ As K.M. de Silva notes, “students sitting for the examinations in the same language, but belonging to two ethnic groups, had different qualifying marks.”²⁷⁴ The university quotas were distributed in the following manner: 72% of university spots were held for Sinhalese students, 11% for Jaffna Tamils, 9% for Indian born Tamils and 2% for other minorities.²⁷⁵ The implementation of a strict quota system not only made it harder for Tamil students to gain admission to university, but it also negatively impacted their prospects for obtaining employment. Indeed, in 1949, Tamils made up 41% of the government workforce. By the mid-1980’s, the Sinhalese held 85% of all public sector jobs, 82% of technical and

²⁷² A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, *S. J.V. Chelvanayakam and the Crisis of Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 122.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁷⁴ C.R. de Silva, “The Politics of University Admissions: A Review of Some Aspects of the Admission Policy in Sri Lanka 1971-1973,” (*Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol 1, No. 2, 1978), 85-123. Silva goes on to chronicle the effects that the discrimination policy had from 1969 to 1977. For admission into the university science faculties in 1969, 57.7% admitted were Sinhala and 39.8% were Tamil. By 1977, Sinhalese students accounted for 73.3% while their Tamil counterparts made up only 23.6%.

²⁷⁵ William McGowan, *Only Man is Vile*, 166.

professional positions, and 83% managerial and administrative positions.²⁷⁶ Simply put, Tamil youth were being squeezed out of the university and the workforce.

Immediately following the university quotas, Ms. Bandaranaike submitted a new constitution for consideration in 1972. The new constitution enshrined the Sinhala-Only Act making Sinhala the official language of the island. In addition, the assumption that the state was secular had vanished as the constitution conferred a special status to Buddhism. In one telling clause, the constitution states, “it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster Buddhism.”²⁷⁷ Buddhism thus became the official state religion of Sri Lanka and it would receive the financial and political support of the state. Moreover, Ms. Bandaranaike’s constitution eliminated protection for minority groups. Gone was the clause in the previous constitution stating that ‘Parliament has no right to enact legislation which would confer an undue advantage to a race, religion or community.’²⁷⁸ Finally, the new constitution declared that the country would no longer be called Sri Lanka but would go by ‘Ceylon,’ which was the ancient Sinhalese name for the country used in the Mahavamsa. Reacting to the active and blatant discrimination of Ms. Bandaranaike’s government, the Tamil opposition party, called the Tamil United Front [TUF], decided to hold a protest on March 22, 1973.

The protest began in Jaffna and was led by S.J. V. Chelvanayakam the leader of the TUF who was committed to the Gandhian method of ahimsa [non-violence]. He believed that the Tamils could compel the Colombo government through satyagraha to grant them equal rights the

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ 1972 Sri Lanka constitution quoted in Chelvadurai Manogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka*, 56.

²⁷⁸ 1972 Sri Lanka constitution quoted in Ibid.

same way that the Indians used this tactic against the British. Thousands of Tamils marched to Jaffna on the day that a number of Ms. Bandaranaike's cabinet ministers were scheduled to arrive. The group of Tamils sat in the streets, preventing the ministers from going into the city. Ms. Bandaranaike, claiming emergency powers, sent in police to round up and arrest the protestors. The police violently confronted the protestors, beating hundreds and killing five Tamil students.²⁷⁹

The violent government response made many Tamils, especially the younger student population, disillusioned with Gandhian methods of non-violent civil disobedience. In the mind of one Tamil student, Vellupillai Pirabakaran, the Sinhalese government could only be persuaded with force. While Chelvanayakam tried to convince the Tamil youth to be patient with the non-violent struggle, Pirabakaran quickly realized that their Sinhala Buddhist adversaries were not like Britain's government in India. To that end, Pirabakaran and many in the Tamil community abandoned the Gandhian non-violent struggle and were ready to try the Churchillian path of 'blood, toil, tears, and sweat.'²⁸⁰ This event marked the birth of the Tamil militant movement, which would later erupt into a violent insurgency against the SLG.

3.3 SUICIDE ATTACKS AND THE LTTE

Pirabakaran was convinced that non-violent resistance was failing. He believed the Tamils should assert their fundamental right of self-determination, the right of one nation to secede and

²⁷⁹ A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, *S. J.V. Chelvanayakam and the Crisis of Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*, 82.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

form a state of its own, in order to prevent the ‘Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinists’ from crushing the Tamil freedom movement.²⁸¹ He and a small band of Tamil students came together to form the Tamil Student Federation [TSF], which was renamed the Tamil New Tigers [TNT] in 1972 and later the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] in 1976.²⁸² This section investigates the rise of the LTTE and why the organization decided to use suicide attacks. Simply put, the LTTE adopted suicide attacks out of a defensive necessity. Pirabakaran believed that the tactic would offset the military imbalances that existed between the LTTE and the SLA. What Pirabakaran discovered was a powerful offensive weapon that could be used to achieve a variety of strategic aims. He then decided to create the Black Tiger cadre, the mysterious and much feared suicide squad of the LTTE. During the years 1987-2004, the LTTE became the world’s most prolific user of suicide attacks. Additionally, the LTTE became an innovating force behind the tactic as Pirabakaran sought out new ways to conduct suicide attacks. Ultimately, this would lead to the most drastic innovation yet, the inclusion of women in suicide attacks.

3.3.1 Beginnings of an Insurgency

On July 27, 1975, the LTTE committed its first act of violence by assassinating the Jaffna Mayor, Alfred Duriappah, who Pirabakaran considered to be sympathetic with Ms.

²⁸¹ A.S. Galasingham, *Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle*, (Jaffna: Political Committee of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, 1983), 3.

²⁸² Nira Wickramasinghe, *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 282.

Bandaranaike's government. According to a government report, four young men, including Pirabakaran, ambushed the mayor as he was leaving his car to enter a Hindu temple. Supposedly, it was Pirabakaran himself who shot the mayor.²⁸³ Anti-Tamil violence flared up after the assassination, which was one of many such acts perpetrated by the LTTE. The LTTE then participated in a number of bank robberies in order to secure funds to finance the burgeoning movement. After the bank robberies, Sri Lankan President Jayewardene declared a state of emergency and sent the SLA to occupy Jaffna. Additionally, Jayewardene passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which gave the government and internal security forces special privileges when dealing with Tamil separatists. According to William McGowan, it allowed government forces

“...to deny trial by jury, to make confessions under torture admissible evidence, and to detain suspects without trial or access to counsel for up to eighteen months on suspicion alone. It also banned the expression of sentiments and opinions that could cause religious, racial, or communal disharmony, authorized stop and seizure at will, authorized arrest without a warrant, and banned support, espousal, or financial backing for separatists causes. In addition, its powers were retroactive. Basically, the PTA suspended civil government and fundamental rights and substituted police and military rule.”²⁸⁴

Also hidden in the PTA was an old provision resurrected from colonial times dealing with the prevention of disease. This provision, dubbed ‘Emergency Regulation 15A,’ allowed the security forces to dispose of corpses without a postmortem inquest, thus allowing them to kill civilians or guerrilla suspects and burn their bodies on the spot without reporting the deaths to government officials.²⁸⁵ The effects of the PTA did little to curb Tamil militancy. As Mia

²⁸³ See the “Jain Commission Report.” Available online at www.tamilnation.org. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

²⁸⁴ McGowan, William. *Only Man is Vile*, 178.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

Bloom notes, “rather than mitigate the occurrences of violence, the PTA escalated Tamil violence in the 1980’s, and additional repressive counter measures of the government led to a spiral of increasing brutality and tit for tat violence.”²⁸⁶ The PTA prompted the LTTE to adopt higher profile targets. One attack that would cause outrage occurred in 1983 when the LTTE attacked a group of Sinhalese soldiers.

On July 23, 1983, an army jeep carrying SLA army soldiers was ambushed by the LTTE outside of Jaffna. When the thirteen dead soldiers were brought back to Colombo for a collective funeral the next day, a large crowd gathered to pay their respects. After the funeral the crowd left the cemetery and began to attack Tamil shops and properties in the surrounding neighborhood. As Jonathan Spencer notes, “much of it [the violence] was the work of relatively, small, well-organized groups of men, methodically identifying Tamil properties from electoral lists and systematically setting fire to them. But this routinized destruction was punctuated by moments of panic and frenzy in which innocent Tamils were set upon, beaten, killed, [and] in some cases burnt alive.”²⁸⁷ As the *Times of London* reported, unlike earlier riots “the Government detected plain signs of deliberate organization. The rioters, seeking out Tamil homes and burning them, had a particularly detailed knowledge of who lived where and who owned what.”²⁸⁸ Indeed, the violence produced three days of chaos as Sri Lanka was reduced to the Hobbesian state of ‘a war of all against all.’ As the chaos continued, a group of fifty-three

²⁸⁶ Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 52.

²⁸⁷ Jonathan Spencer, *A Sinhala Village in a Time of Trouble: Politics and Change in Rural Sri Lanka*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 232.

²⁸⁸ *Times of London* quoted in S.J. Tambiah, *Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 21.

Tamils, who were incarcerated in a Colombo jail under the PTA for ‘terrorist activities,’ were summarily executed in retaliation. The SLG told the public that a group of outraged Sinhalese prisoners killed the Tamil prisoners. While this is plausible, suspicions arose suggesting that the prison guards murdered the Tamil inmates.²⁸⁹

The riots marked a major breakdown in law and order. Also disturbing were stories that police and SLA soldiers were involved in the violence against innocent Tamil civilians. The *Times of London* stated that SLA “personnel actively encouraged arson and looting of [Tamil] business establishments and homes in Colombo and absolutely no action was taken to apprehend or prevent the crucial elements involved in these activities.”²⁹⁰ Other stories suggesting that SLA soldiers had raped Tamil women began to proliferate. In the end, the SLG claimed that some 350 Tamils were killed, but other estimates place the number dead over 1,000.²⁹¹ The official response by the SLG did little to alleviate Tamil concerns. Prime Minister Jayewardene released a statement stating, “Sri Lanka is inherently and rightfully a Sinhalese state...and it must be accepted as such, not a matter of opinion to be debated. For attempting to challenge this premise, Tamils have brought the wrath of [the] Sinhalese on their own heads; *they have themselves to blame.*”²⁹² The violence and the prime minister’s statement faulting the Tamil

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 16.

²⁹⁰ *Times of London* quoted in Ibid., 25.

²⁹¹ Dagmar Rajanayagam-Hellmann, *The Tamil Tigers: Armed Struggle for Identity*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994), 12.

²⁹² Prime Minister Jayewardene quoted in Elizabeth Nissan, “Some Thoughts on Sinhalese Justifications for the Violence,” in James Manor ed., *Sri Lanka: In Change and in Crisis*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 176-177. Emphasis added.

community with the violence prompted many Tamils to leave Colombo and travel north to Jaffna. Indeed, after the riots the Tamil population had lost faith in the SLG and did not believe it would protect them. The influx of Tamils into Jaffna saw the LTTE's ranks swell and also marked the beginning of a violent insurgency campaign against the SLG.²⁹³

After the 1983 riots, the LTTE received an outpouring of support from the Tamil population living in India.²⁹⁴ Pirabakaran capitalized on the sympathy from his Indian brethren and established training camps in Tamil Nadu.²⁹⁵ More importantly, Pirabakaran and the LTTE received guerrilla and military training from India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).²⁹⁶ Indira Gandhi turned a blind-eye to the LTTE training camp in Tamil Nadu largely for political reasons as she was relying on the Tamil vote for her election campaign. As a result, from 1983-1987, the LTTE were trained, armed, financed and directed by the RAW.²⁹⁷

The RAW helped the LTTE become a formidable fighting force. The RAW instructed the Tigers in the use of weapons for low intensity warfare. They became proficient with large caliber machine guns, AK-47 assault rifles, mortars, grenades, and large caliber mortar shells.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ Edgar O'Balance, *The Cyanide War: Tamil Insurrection in Sri Lanka 1973-1988*, (London: Brassey's, 1989), 21.

²⁹⁴ The southern most province in India is called "Tamil Nadu" and is home to a large number of Indian Tamils.

²⁹⁵ Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, (Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1998), 113.

²⁹⁶ William McGowan, *Only Man is Vile*, 183.

²⁹⁷ Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, 115.

²⁹⁸ William McGowan, *Only Man is Vile*, 184.

The RAW also helped the LTTE gain an important capability, the ability to produce explosives. The LTTE capitalized on this ability as they began to use landmines with a ferocious intensity. The most powerful mines they developed were 55 gallon barrels filled with 50-150 kilograms of explosives. These were placed in culverts under roads and ignited by wires from a nearby house when SLA soldiers would drive by.²⁹⁹

As the LTTE became a more formidable insurgent force, the SLG stepped up its efforts to eliminate it. In 1983, the SLG established an economic blockade that made food and raw materials, used primarily for weaponry, harder to obtain.³⁰⁰ In 1987, the SLG launched an offensive entitled Operation Liberation, which was designed to take back the now LTTE-controlled Jaffna Peninsula. Despite protests by India, the SLG launched the offensive on May 26, 1987. Due to superior firepower and sheer numbers, the SLA was able to capture Vadamarachchi, which was known as “the cradle of the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle.”³⁰¹ The capture of Vadamarachchi was a strategic victory for the SLG as it cut off the LTTE from India’s Tamil Nadu. According to Asoka Bandarage, “at this point, only Jaffna...and the nearby area remained, and they appeared about to fall. It looked like the LTTE would be defeated and the armed conflict would end. Operation Liberation is said to have come within a hair’s breadth

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Stephen Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002,” in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 51.

³⁰¹ Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity and Political Economy*, 130.

of capturing Pirabakaran who was in Vadamarachchi.”³⁰² With the situation turning desperate, Pirabakaran turned to suicide attacks as a way to halt the SLA advance on Jaffna.

3.3.2 The First Suicide Attack and the India-LTTE Skirmish

According to legend, Pirabakaran “was supposedly influenced into using suicide bombers by watching a Hollywood movie that depicted a woman blowing herself up and assassinating a world leader.”³⁰³ Anecdotal evidence aside, the most probable influence on Pirabakaran was the devastating use of suicide attackers by Hizbollah against American and French forces in 1983. As Shanaka Jayasekara notes, LTTE operatives had received training from Middle Eastern terrorist organizations like Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and it is likely that LTTE operatives were in Palestine when the Hizbollah attack occurred.³⁰⁴ Indeed, the first suicide attack by the LTTE is almost a carbon copy of the Hizbollah attack.

On July 5, 1987 an LTTE member known as Captain Millar drove a truck filled with explosives into an SLA camp stationed at a former college in Nelliady, located in the north of the Jaffna peninsula. Like Hizbollah’s simultaneous attacks against U.S. and French forces, the explosive laden truck was a ‘land torpedo’ that was driven into the barracks. After the truck

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Neil DeVotta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*, 174.

³⁰⁴ Shanaka Jayasekara, "Tamil Tiger Links with Islamist Groups," (*International Counter Terrorism Institute*, Commentary). Available online at www.ict.org. Accessed on 5/26/2009.

exploded, the LTTE emerged from the jungle catching SLA soldiers unaware and quickly took the camp. This was a major victory for the Tigers as they destroyed the main SLA telecommunications center, which had been relaying critical military intelligence to the SLG.³⁰⁵

According to one former Tamil Tiger, the attack was driven out of desperation. Up until that point, the “Tamils had no power with regards to the SLA. No power with regards to the military. The members [of the LTTE] were ready to sacrifice their lives in any way needed.”³⁰⁶ As Stephen Hopgood notes, “this single attack was hugely effective, shocking the Sri Lankan government and stopping a major army offensive, Operation Liberation, in its tracks.”³⁰⁷ The attack also prompted the Indian government to send a peacekeeping force to Sri Lanka with the purpose of brokering a peace deal between the LTTE and the SLG.

On July 29, 1987, some three weeks after Captain Millar’s suicide attack, the Sri Lankan Tamils and the LTTE welcomed the arrival of the India Peacekeeping Force (IPKF). At Indian’s behest, the LTTE and the SLG met and signed the ‘Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka.’ Indian troops were brought to Sri Lanka in order to enforce a cease-fire so that the SLG and LTTE could participate in negotiations. The terms of the accord were as follows: the LTTE and SLA were to immediately cease hostilities; there would be a

³⁰⁵ Thomas Marks, “Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam,” in Louise Richardson et al., *Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past*, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 504-505.

³⁰⁶ Interview quoted in Simanti Lahiri, *Consumed By Commitment: Suicide Protest in the Contentious Politics of South Asia*, (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008), 170.

³⁰⁷ Stephen Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002,” in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 50.

temporary merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces thereby creating one 'Tamil province'; the SLG would allow the Tamils to introduce a system of provincial councils for the devolution of power to the new Tamil province; finally India would provide military assistance to Sri Lanka for the implementation of the accord.³⁰⁸ On paper, the agreement appeared promising, but that would change in due course.

Three months after the IPKF's arrival, the LTTE believed that the SLG was not holding to its end of the bargain. At issue was the establishment of the autonomous provincial councils, which should have given the Tamils a measure of self-government. However, in practice the SLG still had wide ranging power to nullify what the provincial councils had established. On October 1, 1987, thirteen LTTE members staged a demonstration against the IPKF and were arrested and brought to Colombo for questioning. Rather than be questioned, the captured Tigers committed suicide by swallowing the cyanide capsules that every LTTE member wears around his or her neck.³⁰⁹ The LTTE believed that the IPKF was reneging on its agreement to be impartial brokers. As a result, the LTTE declared the ceasefire null-and-void. On October 2, one day after the incident, the LTTE captured nine Sinhalese soldiers, executed them and hung their bodies near the Jaffna university campus.³¹⁰ A few days later on October 8, the LTTE targeted and killed five Indian commandos. This began a violent campaign between the LTTE and the IPKF.

³⁰⁸ Nira Wickramasinghe, *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age*, 290.

³⁰⁹ All LTTE members wear a cyanide capsule around their neck. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter.

³¹⁰ Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity and Political Economy*, 149.

Rajiv Gandhi launched ‘Operation Pawan [Wind],’ in order to recapture Jaffna and subdue the LTTE. The counter-insurgency methods practiced by the IPKF mimicked those done by the SLG, which included harsh interrogations, torture, and executions. All this had the effect of completely alienating the Tamil population and increasing the LTTE’s popularity in Jaffna. The IPKF’s attempt to disarm the LTTE by force proved futile. Both the IPKF and LTTE suffered heavy casualties, but Rajiv Gandhi never anticipated the ferocity of the fighting that ensued. At its height, the IPKF had between 75,000-100,000 troops in Sri Lanka and yet they could not pacify the LTTE. The LTTE was much more adept at fighting a guerrilla war than the IPKF was at conducting a counterinsurgency.

With casualties mounting, the IPKF “soon found that popularity and gratitude are the most ephemeral of political commodities; and that intruding foreign armies are hailed as liberators, only to be denounced, within a very short time, as arrogant and bumbling invaders.”³¹¹ In 1989, Gandhi announced that IPKF forces would withdraw from Sri Lanka. As Asoka Bandarage notes, “the Indian Army, the fourth largest in the world, departed in humiliation, leaving behind a trail of death and destruction.”³¹² On March 24, 1990, the last of the forces left Sri Lanka. The peacekeeping force cost US\$1.25 billion and 1,555 Indian lives and failed to eliminate the Tamil Tigers.³¹³

³¹¹ K.M. de Silva, “Indo-Sri Lankan Relations, 1975-1989,” in K.M. de Silva, and R.J. Ray, eds., *Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict*, (London: Pinter Publications, 1991), 100.

³¹² Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity and Political Economy*, 153.

³¹³ Ibid.

It is intriguing to note that during this time period, the LTTE used no suicide attacks against the IPKF. There are three potential explanations for why this is so. First, it is possible that Pirabakaran had not developed a comprehensive motivating rationale that could inspire recruits to become suicide attackers. While all LTTE members carried the cyanide capsule, this was largely a defensive measure used by the LTTE to prevent captured operatives from revealing critical information to the SLG. In this view, Pirabakaran had yet to create a potent ideology that would foster a willingness to die that was offensive not merely defensive in nature.³¹⁴ Second, the LTTE was no longer in the precarious situation as it had been when the SLA was close to taking Jaffna. In this view, the LTTE probably believed that it could engage the IPKF militarily in a guerrilla war, which would slowly wear the IPKF down to the point where they would be forced to withdraw. Finally, it is plausible that the IPKF camps were simply better fortified and protected thereby preventing a Captain Millar type of suicide attack from occurring.³¹⁵

Each explanation is plausible and the reality is that the decision of the LTTE to not use suicide attacks during this time is probably a combination of all three. The LTTE would return to the tactic in 1990 as a way to target SLA bases and assassinate leaders who were either threats to an independent Tamil Eelam or traitors to the cause. It is during this period of time that the LTTE developed the Black Tiger cadre and experimented with different ways to deliver the suicide attacker.

³¹⁴ This point will be discussed at length in the section dealing with the individual motivations for those who would become a Black Tiger.

³¹⁵ Stephen Hopgood, "Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002," in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 52.

3.3.3 The Black Tigers and the Innovation of Suicide Attacks

There is some discrepancy as to when the LTTE actually established the Black Tiger squad. While official LTTE documents claim that it was created in 1983, other scholars like Mia Bloom put its creation at 1987.³¹⁶ Regardless of when it was created, from 1983-2004 the LTTE Black Tigers perpetrated the most suicide attacks of any single terrorist organization in the world. Unlike Islamist terrorist organizations that keep their suicide attackers separate from the organization and in isolation, the Black Tigers are drawn from the ranks of LTTE. Every LTTE fighter undergoes a three month type of ‘basic training’ in which he or she is instructed in guerrilla warfare tactics, which include, but are not limited to: intelligence and counterintelligence, weapons handling, ambush, camouflage, escape and evasion tactics.³¹⁷ During this time, candidates have to prove their dedication to the cause of Tamil Eelam and demonstrate a strong spirit of self-sacrifice.³¹⁸ After the recruit completes this process and becomes an LTTE member, he or she must make an individual choice to become a Black Tiger.

According to Karikalan, an LTTE commander in Jaffna, the process to become a Black Tiger is as follows: “To become Black Tigers, our cadre must apply in writing to our leader, Mr. Vellupillai Pirabakaran. [Pirabakaran] then goes through the applications, looking at the

³¹⁶ LTTE documents available in English are available through EelamWeb.com and Tamilnation.org, which are two internet sites that have a variety of the LTTE’s published material. See also Mia Bloom *Dying to Kill*, 60.

³¹⁷ Peter Chalk, “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Insurgency in Sri Lanka,” in Rajat Ganguly and Ian MacDuff eds., *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South And Southeast Asia*, 141.

³¹⁸ Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers Armed Struggle for Identity*, 66.

applicant's particular skills, the kinds of missions he or she has been involved in, their motivations and their family situations. Are they an only son or daughter? Do they have dependents? All these things are considered, after which the applicant is told whether he [or she] can become a Black Tiger."³¹⁹

After Pirabakaran reviews the letters, he sends responses back to the applicants. As Amy Waldman notes, more often than not the applicant is rejected with a letter saying, "[t]here are many applicants. Do what duties are sent to you. If the necessity arises we'll call you."³²⁰ Those who are selected to become Black Tigers undergo more physical and psychological training. Another LTTE commander named Thamilini notes that the Black Tigers are "strong in spirit and firm in purpose."³²¹ She goes on to say that "people dejected in life won't be able to go as Black Tigers. There must be a clear conception of why and for what we are fighting. A deep humanitarianism is very necessary—a love of others, for the people."³²²

Due to the elaborate process by which one becomes a Black Tiger, speculation that the Black Tigers are forced into becoming suicide attackers is implausible. Forcing someone to be a Black Tiger, according to Dagmar Hellman-Rajanayagam, "would run counter to [the] LTTE's

³¹⁹ Karikalan quoted in Tim Elliot, "Sri Lanka—a Land in Ruin," (*New Zealand Herald*, 3/15/2003). Article available online at <http://www.lankalibrary.com/pol/land%20in%20ruin.htm>. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

³²⁰ Amy Waldman, "Masters of Suicide Bombing: Tamil Guerrillas of Sri Lanka," (*New York Times*, 1/14/2003). Article available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/14/world/masters-of-suicide-bombing-tamil-guerrillas-of-sri-lanka.html>. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Thamilini quoted in Ibid.

philosophy and probably in its eyes weaken its fighting strength.”³²³ He argues that “[i]ts soldiers have to be committed, and they do not trust in the run-of-the-mill Jaffna man to be that. It is actually an honour to be a member of the LTTE [Black Tigers], and this membership is not open to everybody.”³²⁴ To this end, there is a mystique surrounding the Black Tiger squad. Even after the Black Tiger successfully completes his or her training, no LTTE member, outside of Pirabakaran and his closest advisors, knows that the person is a Black Tiger. The Black Tiger returns to his or her unit and waits until given a suicide mission. The rest of the LTTE discover the identity of a Black Tiger only after that mission has been completed.³²⁵

The Black Tigers are used by the LTTE for three major purposes. First, Black Tigers are used in order to achieve conventional warfare goals, which include the taking of territory and strategic assets, destroying enemy resources, and targeting Sri Lankan armed forces. The first suicide attack by Captain Millar was an example of human being used as a guided artillery round in order to halt the advance of the SLA. As aforementioned, Millar’s van was filled with explosives and his mission was to drive and detonate it in the SLA camp. The surprise and shock of having a van explode in the middle of the SLA barracks stunned the army and allowed LTTE fighters to over-run the base.

In order to capitalize on this ability, the LTTE developed what they call the ‘Sea and Air Tigers.’ The Sea Tigers are used to control LTTE access to Palk Bay, the body of water separating India from Sri Lanka. This waterway is crucial for the LTTE as it is where arms and

³²³ Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers Armed Struggle for Identity*, 66.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Peter Chalk, “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Insurgency in Sri Lanka,” in Rajat Ganguly and Ian MacDuff eds., *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South And Southeast Asia*, 141.

materiel are shipped from Tamil Nadu to help the LTTE fight against the SLG. The Black Sea Tigers are placed in high-powered speedboats that are filled with explosives and their purpose is to ensure that the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) does not intercept goods arriving to Jaffna. Tactically, the Black Sea Tigers “rely on wolf pack-style attacks, carried out by fast attack crafts-some of them featuring crude, self-made stealth design-aiming at overwhelming the defenses of their prey.”³²⁶ According to maritime security expert Tony Britley,

“...the Sea Tigers’ suicide craft are almost impossible to detect. They are dark, sit low in the water and cannot be detected by radar. The only way for the Sri Lankan navy to find them is through heat-detecting systems, but even then they travel at such speed that they are very difficult to shoot at. The boats, packed with explosives, are modeled on an American stealth bomber, but a more recent development is a human torpedo craft designed especially for suicide attacks.”³²⁷

This has allowed the Sea Tigers to engage the SLN with relative success.

The Air Tigers, which R. S. Vasan argues was inspired by the kamikazes and Al Qaeda’s 9/11 attacks, represent the LTTE’s recent experimentation with air power.³²⁸ To this end, the LTTE purchased an unknown number of Czechoslovakian made Zlin 143 aircraft. These are single engine planes that are powered by a six-cylinder engine.³²⁹ Its light frame makes the aircraft agile, which could allow a pilot to drop a bomb or to fly it into a SLA base. The LTTE attempted the latter on February 20, 2009 when it launched two Zlin 143 aircraft in an effort to hit a Sri Lankan Air Force hanger in Katunayake and the Bandaranaike International Airport.

³²⁶ Peter Lehr, “Maritime Terrorism: Locations, Actors, and Capabilities,” in Rupert Herbert-Burns, Sam Bateman, and Peter Lehr eds., (Boca Raton, Auerbach Publications, 2009), 61.

³²⁷ Tony Britley quoted in Ibid.

³²⁸ R.S. Vasan, "Kamikaze Attacks by Black Tigers and After," (*South Asian Analysis Group*, Paper No. 3084, March 2009), 1.

³²⁹ David Donald ed., *The Encyclopedia of World Aircraft*, (Leicester: Blitz Publishing, 1997), 32.

The mission failed as the planes were intercepted by radar and brought down with anti-aircraft gunfire.³³⁰

The second way the Black Tigers are utilized is to assassinate threats or traitors to the Tamil cause. The two most high profile assassinations are the deaths of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa.³³¹ To eliminate these targets, the LTTE integrated women into their suicide attack arsenal. Before female suicide attacks became a morally and religiously sanctioned strategy in Palestine, Israel, Iraq and Chechnya it had become a routine tool in the LTTE's arsenal.³³² Up until this point, a woman had not been used as suicide attackers in any terrorist organization other than the LTTE.³³³

There are two main reasons why the incorporation of women into the Black Tigers is strategic. They were recruited to replenish the LTTE ranks. As the SLG began targeting Tamil men aged between 14-40, many were lost in combat, which diminished the ranks of the Black Tigers and subsequently the fighting capacity of the LTTE. As a result, the LTTE created units known as the "Freedom Birds" and "Black Tigresses," which are suicide units exclusively made

³³⁰ "Tiger Air Force Destroyed Says Military," (*The Sunday Leader*, February 22, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/20090222/NEWS.HTM>. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

³³¹ The LTTE also attempted to assassinate Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, who survived but lost one eye in the attack.

³³² William Harman, "The Martyr Bomber Becomes a Goddess: Women, Theosis, and Sacrificial Violence in Sri Lanka," (Address given at the International Center for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka. September 23, 2008). Available online at www.transcurrents.com. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

³³³ Jimmie Briggs, *Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War*, (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 84.

up of women.³³⁴ Also, women suicide attackers have tactical advantages over men. Because of their sex, women are assumed to be non-threatening due to “their inherent nature [weak and soft] and social roles [subservient to males].”³³⁵ Women are also more likely to get through a security checkpoint because of cultural sensitivities about men touching women. As a result, this allows a woman wearing a suicide belt to slip through security and approach her target with relative ease.³³⁶ Indeed, this is what happened when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. A Black Tigress named Tenmoli Rajaratnam passed through a security checkpoint when Gandhi was campaigning in Chennai, India. She positioned herself by Gandhi and began to bow in mock reverence to the prime minister. She then rose and approached him to garland his neck with flowers. As she reached out to put the flowers over Gandhi’s neck, she detonated the suicide vest killing Gandhi and fourteen others.³³⁷ As such, the Black Tigresses ability to evade security checkpoints and get close to key targets became an invaluable asset to the LTTE. Table 3 below demonstrates that the Black Tigress’ comprise 32% of all Black Tiger attacks.

³³⁴ Alisa O’Conner-Stack, “Lions, Tigers, and Freedom Birds: How and Why the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Employs Women,” (*Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2007), 50.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

³³⁶ As Peter Schalk notes, the idea for the belt bomb came from the Indian National Army [INA]. While the INA was the first to use it, the LTTE became the most prolific user of the device. It is likely that Palestinian terrorist groups were inspired by the LTTE to use suicide belt bombs for their own use. See Peter Schalk, “Women Fighters of the Liberation Tigers in Tamil Ilam. The Martial Feminism of Atel Palacinkam,” (*South Asia Research*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Autumn 1994), 174.

³³⁷ “The Untold Story of Rajiv Gandhi’s Assassination,” (*Sri Lanka Ministry of Defense, Public Security, Law and Order*, 11/7/06). Article available online at http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20060521_02. Accessed on 7/15/09.

Table 3. Black Tiger Participants in the LTTE: 1983-2009. ³³⁸

	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
Black Sea Tigers	63	133	196
Black Land Tigers	29	61	90
Total Black Tigers	92	194	286

The third and final way Black Tigers are used is more akin to traditional goals of terrorism by attacking targets to sow fear or prompt a backlash by the SLG. While *Eelamweb*, the official online mouthpiece of the LTTE, insists that the LTTE does not target civilians, the facts indicate otherwise. The LTTE has been known to choose targets with high symbolic value. One of the most notorious attacks occurred when a pair of suicide attackers detonated their suicide vests in the Temple of the Tooth, one of Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrines, on January

³³⁸ Sources: Official LTTE website statistics of LTTE Black Tigers from 1983-2004. Available online at <http://www.eelamweb.com/maveerar/statistics/>, accessed on 6/26/2009. Statistics from 2004-2009 taken from *The National Counterterrorism Center*, World Incidents Tracking System. Available online at <http://wits.nctc.gov/>. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

25, 1998 killing 14 people and wounding 50.³³⁹ Other incidents of the LTTE attacking public targets include:

- January 31, 1996-A suicide truck bomb driven into and detonated in the Central Bank building in Colombo killing 81 people and wounding 1,400.
- Jul 26, 1996-Two bombs were exploded by suicide attackers on a public commuter train near Colombo, killing 78 people.
- October 15, 1997-LTTE suicide bomber drove a truck filled with 400 kg of explosives and detonated it by the World Trade Centre in Colombo killing 18 and wounding 100.
- February 7, 2000-Suicide attackers engaged in simultaneous attacks on trains and buses in Colombo.³⁴⁰

Table 4 below demonstrates the breakdown of how suicide attacks are used by the LTTE.

³³⁹ Joe Turlej, "Turning a Blind Eye to Terrorism," (*The MacKenzie Institute*, April 2000). Article available online at http://www.mackenzieinstitute.com/2000/2000_04_Tigers_Terrorism.html. Accessed on July 16, 2009.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

Table 4. Targets of LTTE Black Tigers: 1983-2009.³⁴¹

	<i>Military</i>	<i>Assassination</i>	<i>Civilian</i>
Male	178	6	10
Female	71	16	5
Total	249	22	15

According to the table, the bulk of all Black Tiger attacks are directed against the SLA, which account for 87% of all the LTTE's suicide attacks. Next are assassinations, which comprise 8%

³⁴¹ Sources: Official LTTE website statistics of LTTE Black Tigers from 1983-2004. Available online at <http://www.eelamweb.com/maveerar/statistics/>, accessed on 6/26/2009. Statistics from 2004-2009 taken from *The National Counterterrorism Center*, World Incidents Tracking System. Available online at <http://wits.nctc.gov/>. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

of the suicide attacks. What is most interesting here is female Black Tigers make up 72% of all Black Tiger assassinations. Finally, civilian targets comprise 5% of Black Tiger attacks.

It is useful to summarize what this section has argued. The LTTE adopted suicide attacks out of a defensive necessity since the SLA's Operation Liberation had the LTTE close to defeat. The Captain Millar attack bought the LTTE some time and prompted India to intervene. The LTTE then began to use the Black Tigers as a way to attack the SLA, assassinating threats or traitors to the Tamil cause, and sowing fear in the population. The following section addresses the question of why one becomes a Black Tiger.

3.4 WHY BECOME A BLACK TIGER?

In order for the LTTE to have become the world's most prolific user of suicide attacks, there must be a powerful individual incentive motivating the suicide attackers. The precise manner by which the LTTE uses suicide attacks makes it unlikely that their suicide attackers are coerced. As the last section demonstrated, the Black Tigers are a highly trained and motivated group designed to achieve specific goals. Black Tigers, like all LTTE members, are motivated by an elaborate ideology of martyrdom designed by LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirabakaran. This ideology combines elements of nationalism and religion that sees the attainment of Tamil Eelam as a 'holy aim,' which requires a sacrificial commitment. As a result, the LTTE martyr is one who 'abandons' his or her life for the Tamil cause. The ideology of martyrdom is inculcated through the use of elaborate rituals that instill this incentive for death in every LTTE member.

3.4.1 The LTTE Martyr: One Who Abandons

The LTTE developed an ideology of martyrdom to suit its own military purposes. This potent ideology is one major factor that accounts for the LTTE's success because it motivates the entire organization. For those in the LTTE, one can achieve martyrdom in two ways. First, there is offensive martyrdom, which entails becoming a martyr by fighting the SLA on the battlefield or by participating in a suicide attack. Second, there is defensive martyrdom, which happens when a captured or wounded LTTE member bites the cyanide capsule and commits suicide. Regardless of the manner by which the LTTE operative becomes a martyr, the member is hailed as abandoning his or her life for the greater cause of Tamil Eelam.

In Tamil, there are several words for 'martyr' and 'martyrdom' but the most common words are *tiyaki* (one who abandons) and *tiyakam* (abandonment). As Peter Schalk notes, "these concepts have been developed mainly in the 1980s and were officially promoted by the LTTE from 1989 onwards to rationalize armed and unarmed struggle, and personal and collective suffering in a specific historical situation of war in the process of state formation."³⁴² While the LTTE appeals to the Western notion of the martyr, there is a dramatic difference between the LTTE's understanding of martyrdom and the Western, Judeo-Christian notion of the martyr. The word *martyr* is derived from Greek and means 'to bear witness to.' The Judeo-Christian martyr is one who endures unjust suffering and death yet remains faithful to his or her religion. In this sense, the Judeo-Christian martyr is a passive actor. He or she is the recipient of death as a result of the religious beliefs he or she holds. Contrast this with the LTTE martyr who is an

³⁴² Peter Schalk, "Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamililam," in Joyce Pettigrew ed., *Martyrdom and Political Resistance*. (Amsterdam: VU Press, 1997), 67.

active actor. The LTTE martyr has “not chosen like the Christian martyr to suffer in the mind the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. [Rather,] [h]e has taken up arms against a sea of troubles trying to end them by opposing them.”³⁴³ The *tiyaki* then “combines what is unthinkable for a martyr in the original Judeo-Christian tradition, [which is] *to get killed in the very act of killing*.”³⁴⁴ The concept of the *tiyakam* is rooted in the last section of the Bhagavada Gita and came into modern day usage during the Indian struggle against the British.³⁴⁵ It is useful to quote the final section of the *Bhagavada Gita* at length in order to identify the elements Pirabakaran borrows to create his ideology.

At the end of the *Bhadavada Gita*, Arjuna asks to be told “of the essence of renunciation, and the essence of surrender.”³⁴⁶ Krishna replies as follows:

“The renunciation of selfish works is called renunciation; but the surrender of the reward of all work is called surrender. *Works of sacrifice, gift, and self-harmony should not be abandoned, but should indeed be performed for these are works of purification.* But even these works, Arjuna, should be done in the freedom of a pure offering, and without expectation of a [personal] reward...*[i]t is not right to leave undone the holy work which ought to be done.* Such surrender of action would be a delusion of darkness. And he who abandons his duty because he has fear of pain, his surrender...is impure, and in truth he has no reward. *But he who does the holy work, Arjuna, because it ought to be done, and surrenders selfishness and thought of reward, his work is pure and is peace. This man sees and has no doubts: he surrenders, he is pure and has peace.*”³⁴⁷

³⁴³ Ibid., 67.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 68. Emphasis added.

³⁴⁵ Peter Schalk, "On the Sacrificial Ideology of the Liberation Tigers," Article available online at www.tamilnation.org. Accessed on 6/26/2009. Article published November 24, 1993.

³⁴⁶ *The Bhagavada Gita*, translated by Juan Mascaro, (London: Penguin Books, 1962), 79.

³⁴⁷ Ibid. Emphasis added.

Pirabakaran draws two important themes from the text. First, *tiyakam* signifies abandonment, not inaction. In fact, Krishna tells Arjuna that works of sacrifice should be performed because they result in one's spiritual purification. Similarly, the Tiger fighter must abandon the pleasures associated with civilian life and his individuality by embracing the Spartan and austere lifestyle of the LTTE and its quest for an independent Tamil Eelam. The Tiger existence, much like the *bhakti* tradition, is one of unyielding dedication and asceticism.³⁴⁸

Second, abandonment enables the Tiger to complete 'the holy work which ought to be done.' This sentence should be investigated with care. For Pirabakaran, the 'work' corresponds to the Tamil word *cutantiram*, which translates as 'holy aim.' This holy aim is at the very center of the LTTE's movement and has strong religious undertones. The Tamil politician and leader Celvanayakam, drawing broadly from the Judeo-Christian tradition, introduced the term and linked it with the Tamil struggle.³⁴⁹ Celvanayakam saw how the term was associated with the Indian struggle for independence as it established a homology "between English colonization and the Indian freedom struggle."³⁵⁰ In the same manner, *cutantiram* creates a homology between the oppressive Sinhala government and the Tamil struggle for an independent homeland. Not only is this 'work,' but also it is qualified as 'holy.' Therefore, the quest for a separate Tamil Eelam acquires religious importance and urgency.

³⁴⁸ Peter Schalk, "Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamililam," in Joyce Pettigrew ed., 66.

³⁴⁹ Peter Schalk, "Sacrillisation of Politics the by LTTE," (*Tenemos*, Vol. 33, 1997). Available online at www.tamilcanadian.com. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

³⁵⁰ Peter Schalk, "Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamililam," in Joyce Pettigrew ed., 63.

Giving the goal of Tamil Eelam a religious significance makes it a transcendental ideal and it is the ultimate incentive that compels Tiger men and women to sacrifice their lives. Indeed, the holy aim is what every individual Tamil Tiger must strive for. According to the Bhagavada Gita, forsaking the holy aim is described as a ‘delusion of darkness,’ and an ‘impurity.’ The person who is not willing to make the required sacrifices is rebuked and called impure. As such, Pirabakaran views the *tiyaki* as “an outstanding living man [or woman] who has extraordinary mental and moral qualities that all amount to self-restraint.”³⁵¹ The ideology of martyrdom is focused on achieving the holy aim through the *tiyaki*’s immeasurable abandonment of life, or martyrdom, which is *the* force that will liberate Tamil Eelam.

The above discussion raises serious flaws with the argument, primarily espoused by political scientist Robert Pape, that the LTTE is a secular and areligious organization. Pape is quick to identify nationalism as the sole motive for an individual’s participation in a suicide attack. The problem with this is that he ignores the religious elements and symbols that are infused within the LTTE’s brand of nationalism. The concepts of *tiyakam* and *cutantiram* are integral features comprising Pirabakaran’s ideology of martyrdom. Simply put, Pape’s analysis suffers from an inability to enumerate and give adequate weight to the cultural, historical and religious factors found in Pirabakaran’s ideology of martyrdom. This leads anthropologist Michael Roberts to note “the facile manner in which Robert Pape and so many other scholars present the LTTE as ‘secular’ seems quite erroneous.”³⁵² Instead, the scholar and analyst should be aware that religion plays a significant influence in the creation of the LTTE’s ideology of

³⁵¹ Pirabakaran quoted in *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁵² Michael Roberts, "Blunders in Tigerland: Pape’s Muddles on 'Suicide Bombers' in Sri Lanka," (*South Asia Institute*, University of Heidelberg, Working Paper No. 32, November 2007), 38.

martyrdom. The significance of Pape's error is that he ignores a wellspring of symbols, culture and history that have motivated the Black Tigers. This type of analytical myopia can lead to a misdiagnosis of proper counterterrorism measures that must be taken to reduce and ultimately eliminate the motivating ideology of the insurgency. With this in mind, the next section addresses the manner in which the ideology is inculcated into its members.

3.4.2 The Cyanide Capsule

In a statement about the Black Tigers, LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirabakaran said, "I have groomed my weak brethren into a strong weapon called Black Tigers...the Black Tigers have cast aside fear from its very roots. Death has surrendered to them. They keep eagerly waiting for the day they would die. They just don't bother about death."³⁵³ LTTE members and Black Tigers 'don't bother about death' because from the moment they join the LTTE ranks they are desensitized to death through an elaborate ritual in which all LTTE members participate. This ritual is called the '*kupi* ceremony.'

The *kupi* is the small vial of cyanide that each Tiger wears around his or her neck. After the Tiger completes basic training and proves worthy of becoming a Tamil Tiger, the member participates in the *kupi* ceremony. Before the ceremony begins, the new Tiger makes the 'Tiger pledge' stating, "I pledge my life, my body and my mind to our esteemed leader Vellupillai Pirabakaran in self-sacrificial service to the achievement of our organization's aim of a separate

³⁵³ Pirabakaran quoted in M.R.N. Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind: Pirabakaran*, (Fremont: Literate, World, 2003), 243-244.

Tamil Eelam. The Tiger's thirst is the Tamil Eelam motherland."³⁵⁴ After swearing loyalty to Pirabakaran and Tamil liberation, the recruit receives a vial containing a lethal mixture of potassium cyanide that is to be worn at all times.

During military training, "misplacement or even forgetting to wear the cyanide capsule by a 'cadet' result[s] in a severe punishment...which entail[s] carrying about the "*Paska*," a heavy two foot length of coconut tree, and a large bottle of flour...hung on a string round the miscreant's neck...[which is] intended to ridicule and bring dishonor to the 'cadet.'"³⁵⁵ According to Peter Schalk, the cyanide "vial is fully and consciously exposed hanging on a cord around the neck [of LTTE members during] processions and in the daily encounters of the LTTE cadres and civilians."³⁵⁶ The glass vials are manufactured in Germany and the cyanide is bought from India.³⁵⁷ If a Tiger is captured or cornered on a mission, he is trained and expected to bite down on the vial immediately. The "taking of cyanide may lead to mental confusion and painful convulsions during the death struggle. Having passed into the bloodstream, death is present within two minutes, but if the amount taken is too small, death does not occur and the person may become an idiot, [or] be crippled for life."³⁵⁸ Pirabakaran claims that "[c]arrying cyanide on

³⁵⁴ Tiger pledge quoted in A. Gunawardena, "Suicide Terrorism: Is there a counter?" (MSc., Unpublished Dissertation, University of Leicester, 2003), 11. Available online at www.nijpcs.org/terror/gunawardena%20paper.pdf. Accessed on 3/3/09.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Peter Schalk, "Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamil Eelam," in Joyce Pettigrew ed., *Martyrdom and Political Resistance*, 74.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. Analysts believe that the LTTE has a special unit that is solely in charge of mixing and sealing the poison in the *kupi*.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 74-75.

one's person is a symbolic expression of our commitment, our determination, our courage."³⁵⁹ A Jaffna regional commander, Kittu, reiterates the point: "[a]s long as we have this cyanide around our neck, we have no need to fear any force on earth! While attacking, our fighters don't count their lives."³⁶⁰ The cyanide capsule becomes a crucial ally to the LTTE fighter; "[t]he whole meaning of life: freedom alone, indeed, is greatness [won] by the cyanide vials, holding them with assurance."³⁶¹ Indeed, the cyanide capsule is what sets the Tiger fighter apart from his enemies. According to Sri Lankan journalist D.B.S. Jeyaraj, "[f]rom the Tiger perspective it is this readiness to die for the cause that elevates the LTTE member from his surroundings. It is the cyanide capsule that symbolizes the Tiger's superiority to others and signifies the dedicated mission in life...[resulting in] a curious blend of rational obscurantism, absolute nihilism and revolutionary commitment [that] has succeeded in making a fetish of the cyanide capsule."³⁶² LTTE leader Pirabakaran confirms this view when he was interviewed by *The Hindu* newspaper on September 5, 1986. The reporter asked Pirabakaran about the cyanide capsule. Here is his response:

"Yes, we have adopted this measure [wearing the cyanide capsule] from the start. As a consequence, many comrades have sacrificed themselves. You won't find people from our movement in jail, at least, not many more than you can count on your fingers, perhaps to or three, and even those are people not involved in the inner circle of activity. Our fighters, through laying down their lives, protect our sympathizers and contacts, the people who give us support and assistance. Otherwise, the great mass of people who support us, and their families, would be herded into jail. But that is not the only reason for this practice. It is this cyanide that has helped us develop our movement very rapidly.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 76

³⁶⁰ Ibid. Emphasis added.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² D.B.S. Jeyaraj quoted in Sumantra Bose, *States, Nations, Sovereignty: Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil*

Eelam Movement, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994), 118.

*Carrying cyanide on our person is a symbolic expression of our determination, our commitment, our courage. It gives our fighters an extra measure of belief in our cause, a special edge; the cyanide has instilled in us a determination to sacrifice our lives and our everything for our cause.”*³⁶³

The main purpose of the cyanide ceremony is to instill a fearlessness of death into all LTTE members. Wearing the cyanide capsule is a physical representation of the fact that death is always close. Pirabakaran’s use of this ritual not only demystifies death, but also it inculcates the notion into each person that death for a free Tamil Eelam is a noble and virtuous act. Indeed, it is estimated that roughly 15% of Tiger deaths are the result of taking the cyanide capsule, which means that out of the 22,000 Tigers killed in the insurgency against the SLA some 3,300 have died by biting into the *kupi*.³⁶⁴ This number demonstrates the potency of Pirabakaran’s ideology of martyrdom and it is no exaggeration to say that this ideology permeates the entire organization. Thus, the ‘holy aim’ of an independent Tamil Eelam is *the* factor that motivates both LTTE members and Black Tigers to willingly embrace death. Those who bite the *kupi* or embark on a suicide attack are revered as martyrs who have abandoned their lives for the Tamil cause. Having established this ideology, Pirabakaran introduced it to the Tamil population living in Jaffna and in the diaspora.

³⁶³ Pirabakaran quoted in D.B.S. Jeyaraj quoted in Sumantra Bose, *States, Nations, Sovereignty: Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement*. 117. Emphasis added.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

3.5 SOCIETAL RESONANCE AND THE CULT OF THE MARTYR

As Pirabakaran fashioned his ideology of martyrdom, a crucial component involved convincing the Tamil people that this form of sacrifice was necessary to the Tamil Eelam struggle. Pirabakaran created a propaganda wing in the LTTE whose sole purpose is to curry public support for the martyrs who died fighting for the Tamil cause. To this end, Pirabakaran and the propaganda wing began to foster what the LTTE calls the ‘cult of the martyr.’ This was cultivated in three ways: through a yearly celebration known as ‘Great Heroes Day’ in which all the martyrs and Black Tigers are remembered collectively for their self-sacrifice; the creation of burial grounds called ‘Martyr shrines’ where the LTTE martyrs are venerated by the population; and the ‘cult of the martyr,’ available to those Tamils living in diaspora via the World Wide Web. Tamils residing in Western Europe and North America are able to watch videos of Pirabakaran’s speeches and obtain press releases by the LTTE on their personal computers.

3.5.1 Great Heroes Day

The LTTE created the ‘Office of Great Heroes’ (OGH) in 1991 in order to foster public support for LTTE martyrs. The office is part of the LTTE’s propaganda wing, which operates in Jaffna as well as in various European and North American countries.³⁶⁵ With Pirabakaran’s guidance,

³⁶⁵ The LTTE’s propaganda wing has offices in 54 countries from Burma, Botswana, to the UK, Canada, Australia, France, and Switzerland. The LTTE has a publishing office in London that is used to disseminate LTTE

one of the first actions instituted by the OGH was the establishment of the ‘Great Heroes Day’ (GHD). GHD occurs every year on November 27, the day in which the first Black Tiger, Captain Millar, participated in a suicide attack against the SLA. It marks the end of what the LTTE calls ‘Heroes Week.’ The purpose of GHD is twofold. First, it introduces the martyrs to the Tamil population. The LTTE keep the identities of their martyrs in strict secrecy until a few months after an attack has occurred. Details are then slowly released to the public by the OGH. This is in stark contrast with a Islamist groups, like Hamas, that actively broadcast the identity of a suicide attacker almost immediately after the suicide attack has occurred.

Second, the GHD is a way to inculcate a societal veneration of all LTTE martyrs. In Tamil, GHD is called *eluccinal* or ‘the day of rising.’ Poems and stories are read about the lives and heroism of the LTTE martyrs. Also shared for the first time are the poems written by Black Tigers or others who have become martyrs fighting for Tamil Eelam. An example of one such poem is given below written by an LTTE member named Tirunamam.

“They go, the great heroes, they go-
Having won the war with the enemy they go to their death.
The big army of the ruler arranged to march in rows
In the sounds of music they dissolve-
In a vehicle decorated with flowers, wrapped in the red flag
Go the ones who command respect.
Having paid the great debt to the soil of the good Tamil Mother
Crowned with the golden band they go-
Their Mothers to wail and our country’s people in sobbing rows they go.
Consciously having given their own body for the land
The life for Tamil, they go-
Courageous with the pride of youth in their body
Flower bedecked they go-
In the house’s doorway a lamp, the filled jar of perfection, the black flag
A string of coconut leaves to hang over the threshold, so they go
Having created an epic like to the deep sea

materials to the diaspora community. See Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 44.

Go the heroic guardians.
Before the heroic war tigers sink into the ground
A thousand tigers sprout
Having beaten their chest, having lived in honor, these
Unbowed they go-Great Heroes
Unsullied, having given their lives for the life of our village
To seek the final resting place they go-
Their names mentioned they go on to live as history
In the hearts of the Tamils tomorrow.”³⁶⁶

The event is emotionally charged and inundates residents with Black Tiger propaganda. Posters of the dead martyrs line the streets, pro-LTTE music is broadcast constantly, and Black Tiger videos are played throughout the day. A popular movie that attracts Tamil youth is called *Tayakkanavu*, a movie produced by Nitarcanam, the official television station of the LTTE. According to Peter Schalk,

“[the movie begins] by showing a happy family...[who are] sitting in the garden celebrating a birthday. They have good relations with their neighbors. The son takes the neighbor’s young daughter to school on his motor-bike. One day the Lankan Air Force drops bombs on the school, and the boy can only take the dead body of his young friend to her parents. In his inner vision, he anticipates that this could have happened to his own younger sister. He decides that he will enter the squad of the Black Tigers.”³⁶⁷

The film depicts the rigorous training given to a Black Tiger and emphasizes the Tiger’s joy when he is chosen to participate in a Black Tiger operation.

Another prominent event of Heroes Day is the annual speech given by Pirabakaran. Pirabakaran’s speech is considered as “a sort of throne speech in which he usually elaborates on

³⁶⁶ See Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “And Heroes Die: Poetry of the Tamil Liberation Movement in Northern Sri Lanka,” (*Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2005), 129.

³⁶⁷ Peter Schalk, “Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamil Eelam,” in *Martyrdom and Political Resistance*, 77.

the victories, ground situation, future plans and an analysis of the current political situation.”³⁶⁸

The speech is given at sunset next to the ever-burning ‘flame of sacrifice,’ which commemorates the eternal memory of all LTTE martyrs.

The public speech enables Pirabakaran to present his ideology of martyrdom to the Tamil people. From his first speech delivered in 1992, to the one given before his death in 2009, he has used this chance to inject his ideology into the Tamil population. During his first GHD speech delivered in 1992, he told his Tamil audience that GHD “is the *sacred day* when we cherish in our memory those exceptional beings who, by their sacrifice, have made our freedom struggle a heroic epic in the annals of world history.”³⁶⁹ This mirrors the language that he uses with the Black Tigers, who believe that achieving a liberated Tamil homeland is a sacred aim. This theme is of central importance to Pirabakaran’s ideology of martyrdom, which is evidenced by the fact that the theme appears in every GHD speech given by Pirabakaran from 1992-2008.³⁷⁰ Pirabakaran uses this to emphasize to the Tamil people the importance of the struggle against the Sinhalese state. It is a struggle that takes on a religious importance and as such requires the sacrifice not only of the LTTE members but also the Tamil people.

³⁶⁸ Natali Cristiana, *Building Cemeteries, Constructing Identities: Funerary Practices and Nationalist Discourse Among the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka*, (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Bologna, 2007), 6.

³⁶⁹ Vellupillai Pirabakaran, "Heroes Day Speech-1992." Available online at www.eelamweb.com. Accessed on 6/29/09. English translations of the Martyr's Day Speeches done by LTTE International Secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E61BU, UK. Every Heroes Day speech given by Pirabakaran from 1992-2008 has been translated by the LTTE's International Secretariat and is available online at eelamweb. Some of the speeches, from 2002-2008, have been videotaped so that one can watch them online. Many of Pirabakaran's speeches are also available via YouTube.

³⁷⁰ In each speech he uses the term ‘sacred struggle.’

After laying the groundwork for the holy aim, Pirabakaran goes on to describe the characteristics of LTTE martyrs. He calls the LTTE heroes “supreme idealists” who “loved their goal more than their lives.”³⁷¹ He goes on to say that “none can equal our martyrs in their dedication, deep commitment to the goal and tremendous courage that transcends the fear of death.”³⁷² Again, this mirrors the concept he developed for the Black Tigers. As aforementioned, the martyr is the *tiyaki* or ‘one who abandons’ his or her life for the Tamil cause. This is why Pirabakaran calls the martyrs ‘supreme idealists’ because the martyr believes that abandoning his or her life will make an independent Tamil country a reality. Additionally, Pirabakaran roots the Tamil Eelam struggle in the sacrifice of the martyrs. As he says, “our martyrs are the pillars of our freedom movement, whose blood enriches the history of our freedom struggle, whose ideal makes our struggle supreme, whose sacrifices shape the formation of our nation, [and] whose memories make our determination stronger.”³⁷³ An image Pirabakaran often uses is that the idea for Tamil Eelam is but a seed that must be watered by the blood of the martyrs.³⁷⁴

Also, the speech serves to remind the Tamil people that the SLG is the cause of the conflict and concomitantly of their suffering. Pirabakaran reiterates to the population that the injustice and intolerance of the SLG has prompted the LTTE to fight a ‘war of liberation.’ Indeed, he claims that the “anti-Tamil attitude of *Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism*...has turned Sri

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. An interesting parallel is that Hamas uses almost the exact same line when describing their martyrs.

Lanka into a blazing cauldron of violence.”³⁷⁵ In every GHD speech he has given, Pirabakaran uses the term ‘Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism.’ He goes on to say that this chauvinism has “its roots buried in Sri Lankan Buddhism, [which] has perversely spread throughout the Sinhala social formation and penetrated into the Sinhala political system.”³⁷⁶ The main message he is conveying is that the roots of the Tamil conflict stem from a politicized Buddhism that the first section of this chapter addressed. Indeed, he mentions that “the Sinhala nation continues to be entrapped in the Mahavamsa mindset, in that mythical ideology. The Sinhalese people are still caught up in the legendary fiction that the island of Sri Lanka is a divine gift to Buddhism, a holy land entitled to the Sinhala race.”³⁷⁷

After identifying the main cause of the Tamil conflict, he is quick to remind the Tamils that “Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism [is] not prepared to resolve the ethnic conflict through peaceful means.”³⁷⁸ If the SLG refuses to address Tamil grievances, then the only option is to obtain independence through the use of violence. As Pirabakaran tells his audience, “we cannot gain our rights by pleading with the Sinhala rulers. We must fight and win our rights. History has not recorded any liberation struggle that has won without fighting, without bloodshed, without death and destruction, without sacrifice.”³⁷⁹ He states that the fight they are engaged in is just because it is rooted in the right of self-determination.³⁸⁰ Since the struggle is based on

³⁷⁵ Ibid., Heroes Speech 1998.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., Heroes Speech 2000.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., Heroes Speech 2005.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., Heroes Speech 1999.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., Heroes Speech 1996.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., Heroes Speech 2004.

self-determination, he tells the Tamil people that the LTTE is not a terrorist organization. As he says, “we are not terrorists. We are not mentally demented as to commit blind acts of violence impelled by racist and religious fanaticism. We are fighting and sacrificing our lives for the love of a noble cause, human freedom.”³⁸¹

The creation of GHD and the speeches given by Pirabakaran has helped the LTTE to create and foster grassroots support and loyalty among the population for Pirabakaran’s ideology of martyrdom. This has caused the LTTE to be “the only group that is accepted by the [Tamil] population as ‘on of our own.’”³⁸² The Tigers are lovingly referred to as ‘our boys’ and ‘our sons and daughters’ in popular discourse.³⁸³ Additionally, the Tamil population venerates the Black Tigers as examples *par excellence* of the sacrifice required to achieve Tamil Eelam. Another way the LTTE fosters popular support for its martyrs is through the building of ‘martyr cemeteries’ that the Tamil population visits to revere and remember the martyrs’ sacrifices.

3.5.2 Martyr Cemeteries

To help foster the cult of martyrdom, the LTTE intentionally utilizes visible mediums, such as being buried in a *tuyilum illam*, a ‘sleeping house,’ to honor their martyrs. The sleeping house is a simple mound of earth that commemorates the life and death of the Black Tiger. In front of the mound is a sign, which has the operative’s name, his Black Tiger *nom de guerre*, town of birth,

³⁸¹ Ibid., Heroes Speech 2001.

³⁸² Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers: Armed Struggle for Identity*, 136.

³⁸³ Ibid.

date of birth and death, and how the Black Tiger became a *tiyaki*.³⁸⁴ The LTTE remembers its first martyr, Captain Millar, in this way on his headstone:

Black Tiger Captain Millar

Vallipuram Vacantan

Tunalai

01.06.66-05.07.87

When in Nellyati the Black Tiger had diffused a bomb on the Sri Lankan army, having been driven by a car, whilst striking there occurred his heroic death.³⁸⁵

The sleeping houses are a permanent construction in the Jaffna region and function as a burial ground for LTTE martyrs only. According to Michael Roberts, this tradition came from the eulogy of a Catholic priest who was also a Tiger.³⁸⁶ Roberts claims that at the burial of Marcelin Fuselus, a Catholic Tiger who led a raid which killed 146 people in Anuradhapura, the “priest who delivered the funeral oration...deployed a metaphor from St. John’s Gospel, the motif of the seed that shall not bring forth life unless it fall on the ground and die.”³⁸⁷ Pirabakaran uses the

³⁸⁴ Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “And Heroes Die: Poetry of the Tamil Liberation Movement in Northern Sri Lanka,” 119.

³⁸⁵ Peter Schalk, “Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamil Eelam,” in *Martyrdom and Political Resistance*, 77.

³⁸⁶ Michael Roberts, “Tamil Tigers ‘Martyrs’: Regenerating Divine Potency?” (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 28, No. 6, 2005), 500.

³⁸⁷ Michael Roberts, “Tamil Tigers ‘Martyrs’: Regenerating Divine Potency?” 494-495. The Gospel reference is John 12: 24 (King James Version) where Jesus says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

St. John motif to view the martyr's death as the planting of a seed, which will bring forth the fruit of a free and independent Tamil Eelam. Moreover, Pirabakaran utilizes the metaphor to grant the Black Tiger immortality in the minds of the Tamil people. He claims that the "LTTE martyr never dies. His body is planted as a seed to be reborn."³⁸⁸

The decision to bury its martyrs was an important decision and can only be fully understood if one has some knowledge of Hinduism. Michael Roberts estimates that over 50% of Sri Lankan Tamils are Hindus of the Vellalar caste.³⁸⁹ The Hindus do not bury their dead because the body acts as a trap for the soul. In order for the soul to be released, the body must be burned on a funeral pyre. Indeed, for centuries Hindus have engaged in cremation rituals to ensure that the soul's release from the body. It is crucial to note that in northern Sri Lanka, the only group that buried their dead was low caste [dalit-also known as the untouchables] Christian converts. Roberts captures the significance of this when he notes, "for the Tiger hierarchy to order the burial of their dead and impose it on the peoples under their thumb was a radical measure."³⁹⁰ Indeed, the Tigers went against a religiously established practice that was centuries old for the sole purpose of allowing the cult of the martyr to proliferate.

One of the biggest martyr cemeteries is the Viscamadu cemetery located in the Killinocchi district in Jaffna. Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam describes it in this way:

"Visually the headstones resemble a lotus...the walls around the graveyard are plastered with the photos of the dead heroes and their date of death. [Visitors] File past the photos

³⁸⁸ Peter Schalk, "The Revival of Marty Cults am Ilavar," article available online at www.tamilnation.org.

Accessed on 3/3/08.

³⁸⁹ Michael Roberts, "Tamil Tigers 'Martyrs': Regenerating Divine Potency?" 499.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

and offer flower buds. In the sand the map of Tamil Eelam is picked out with donated tomb lamps. In the middle the *kuttu vilakku* or 'eternal light' burns steadily."³⁹¹

These cemeteries have become the focal point for parents, relatives, friends, colleagues and all the Tamil people congregate.³⁹² They congregate at the cemeteries because the Tamil population believes the graves have spiritual properties since those buried there are considered local deities. These "defied humans inspire hope. They help one surmount fear and to derive magical power. They protect, and thereby renew, one's being."³⁹³ The Tamil population can directly appeal to the martyrs to help bring about the liberation of Tamil Eelam. This practice helps to foster the cult of the martyr amongst the Tamil population because it provides a physical location in which the sacrifice of the martyr is made manifest. Indeed, the martyr and his or her sacrifice survive in the memory of the group. As a result, this has created a sacred topography centered on the sacrifice of the martyr, which is available to the entire Tamil population living in northern Sri Lanka.³⁹⁴ The cult of the martyr is not geographically limited in scope. The LTTE shrewdly disseminates information pertaining to the cult of the martyr via various websites on the World Wide Web.

³⁹¹ Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, "And Heroes Die: Poetry of the Tamil Liberation Movement in Northern Sri Lanka," 119.

³⁹² "Veneration of Martyrs Permeates Nooks and Corners of Tamil Eelam," article dated 9/25/2004. Available online at www.tamilcanadian.com. Accessed on 6/26/2009.

³⁹³ Michael Roberts, "Tamil Tigers 'Martyrs': Regenerating Divine Potency?" 500.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 493.

3.5.3 The Tamil Community and the Internet

The LTTE is perhaps the first insurgent organization to capitalize on the internet's ability to broadcast propaganda material all over the world. With a diaspora of roughly 700,000 living abroad in Western Europe and North America, a way had to be found to keep these émigrés informed about how the freedom struggle was faring against the SLG. Today, there are four main websites dedicated to the distribution of information relating to the Tamil struggle. These websites are *tamilnet.com*, *eelamweb.com*, *tamilcanadian.com*, *tamilnation.org*.

The main purpose of the websites is to highlight abuses by the Sri Lankan government. If one visits *tamilnet.com* the main page of the website is devoted entirely to linking stories that call into question the Sri Lankan government's handling of the Tamils. Here one can find a mix of international news stories coming from the BBC, Reuters, the Associated Press, the Hindu, the New York Times and other outlets as well as stories written by *tamilnet*'s own reporters. It is interesting to note that *tamilnet.com* has become a source of information used by the international news media as the latter usually cite or quote *tamilnet.com*'s reports almost verbatim.³⁹⁵ This happens because *tamilnet*'s reporting mimics Western journalism as their articles are authoritative in tone, contain facts and figures that are double-sourced and carefully checked and because *tamilnet* articles may be reproduced without charge as long as there is attribution.³⁹⁶ Despite these characteristics, *tamilnet* slants their coverage so that the SLG looks like the aggressor and the Tamils look like the victims. Similarly, *eelamweb* says on its webpage

³⁹⁵ Mark Whitaker, "Tamilnet.com: Some Reflections on Popular Anthropology, Nationalism, and the Internet," (*Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 3, 2004), 478.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 478.

that “the mass human rights abuses committed by the Sri Lankan government and its forces are done so in the cover of a complete censorship of all information concerning Tamils in Tamil Eelam. Due to the sufferings that Tamil people are facing in their own home land, we, at EelamWeb have found this page a necessity to expose the terror of the Sri Lankan government and its forces.”³⁹⁷ Going further, eelamweb claims that the reports released by the SLG cannot be trusted and that the website has attempted to compile information relating to the Tamil struggle, tradition and culture.³⁹⁸

In addition, the Tamil websites are integral for the spreading of LTTE ideology and propaganda. The two websites dedicated to doing this are *tamilnation.org* and *eelamweb.com*. Eelamweb has a section of the website that is devoted exclusively to the speeches of LTTE leader Velpullai Pirabakaran. Here one can find every Heroes Day Speech Pirabakaran has given, and which have been translated.³⁹⁹ In addition to the text of the speeches, if one understands Tamil one can listen to the actual audio file of the speech. This gives Tamils living outside of Sri Lanka unprecedented access to the LTTE. Also there is a webpage on eelamweb devoted exclusively to the memory of LTTE martyrs. The visitor can browse statistics of those LTTE martyrs killed in the fight against the SLG. Additionally, the website features what it calls “Heroes Week Feature,” which has a link introducing an LTTE martyr to the web surfer. Currently on the site is Lieutenant Shankar, the first LTTE member to commit suicide biting on the *kupi*. As would be expected, the website extols Shankar as a martyr: “Shankar firmly

³⁹⁷ See “About Us,” Available online at <http://www.eelamweb.com/aboutus/>, accessed on 7/20/2009.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ The Heroes Day Speeches are available online at <http://www.eelamweb.com/leader/messages/herosday/>. Accessed on 7/20/2009.

believed that we can achieve the liberation of Tamil Eelam if and only if the political and military leadership of the LTTE is unwavering. He lived and breathed the liberation struggle, and took up arms for it.”⁴⁰⁰ The website goes on to say that those who died a martyr’s death are remembered every year at the Heroes Day celebration. The website contains links to photo gallery of various Heroes Day events through the years as well as ‘martyr songs’ that one can download and listen to.⁴⁰¹

The other website dedicated to spreading LTTE ideology and propaganda, tamilnation, is perhaps the most sophisticated, pro-Tamil website on the internet. Tamilnation contains academic articles and books pertaining to Tamil history, culture, and the current struggle. These resources have been downloaded as PDF files or scanned into a computer and posted on the website for visitors. It also serves as a forum where articles and books critical of the Tamil liberation struggle are debated.⁴⁰² The most interesting feature on the website is the extensive posting of videos. These videos run the gamut. From low-quality, homemade productions depicting LTTE training to sophisticated music videos utilizing pop music and rap extolling the LTTE martyrs. The LTTE’s London propaganda office also produces short films on Black Tiger

⁴⁰⁰ “The Death of Lt. Shankar,” article available online at <http://www.eelamweb.com/maveerar/shankar/>. Accessed on 7/20/2009.

⁴⁰¹ “Warrior Songs,” article available online at <http://www.eelamweb.com/audio/ws.html>, accessed on 7/20/2009.

⁴⁰² One such debate occurred when Sachi Sri Kantha, a US trained biochemist, challenged Robert Pape’s assertion that the LTTE was a secular and Marxist group. The email exchange is available online at <http://www.tamilnation.org/forum/sachisrikantha/060630pape.htm>, accessed on 7/20/2009.

martyrs that demonstrate how the martyrs are venerated and remembered by their families.⁴⁰³ Also of importance are the many videos of the Great Heroes Day celebration. This gives the Tamil living in diaspora a chance to participate virtually in the most important event in the LTTE's ritual calendar. Here the visitor can watch Pirabakaran light the great heroes torch and then listen to his speech commending the LTTE martyr's for their sacrifice.⁴⁰⁴

The website also serves a social networking purpose as Tamils living abroad can go to the site to find Tamils that will come together to celebrate Great Heroes Day. In 2008, Tamils in diaspora celebrated Great Heroes Day in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and the USA.⁴⁰⁵

Pirabakaran created an ideology of martyrdom that has permeated Sri Lankan society and has been disseminated to a worldwide audience via the internet. The celebration of Great Heroes Day and veneration of martyr cemeteries have become fixtures in the northern areas of Sri

⁴⁰³ In the video "Maveerar Kanam," a mother and father approach the grave of their martyr son. In front of the grave is a slender lamp that is raised a few feet off the ground. The mother approaches the lamp and lights it. After a few moments of silence, the mother kneels over the grave and begins to wail. She then throws herself on the tombstone and weeps. When she is finished, the couple light incense and place it on the tombstone. They then garland the tombstone with the Karthikai Poo, which is the Tamil Eelam National Flower. See "Maveerar Kanam," Video available online at <http://www.tamilnation.org/tamileelam/maveerar/index.htm>. Accessed on 7/20/2009.

⁴⁰⁴ "Martyrs of Tamil Eelam," article available online at <http://www.tamilnation.org/tamileelam/maveerar/index.htm>. Accessed on 7/20/2009.

⁴⁰⁵ "Tamils: A Transstate Nation," article available online at www.tamilnation.org/tamileelam/maveerar/2007.htm. Accessed on 7/20/2009. In the USA, the Great Heroes Day celebration occurred in Edison, New Jersey.

Lanka. This helped to inculcate a cult of the martyr in the Tamil population. Those living abroad also experience the cult of the martyr as the videos and speeches are widely available for the Tamil diaspora to view on their personal computers. As a result, Pirabakaran has succeeded in an ideology that is rooted locally but transnational in scope.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The case study in this chapter investigated the LTTE as an instance where suicide attacks were used to wage an asymmetric war. The chapter probed the historical antecedents of the conflict, the organizational reason why the LTTE adopted suicide attacks, the motivations of the suicide attackers, and how the attacks were made to resonate with the Tamil population. The first section of the chapter argued that the conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhalese has roots in a xenophobic and militaristic Buddhism that began in the late nineteenth century and became a powerful political force in Sri Lankan politics in the twentieth century. Upon the election of S.W.R.D Bandaranaike, the SLG began to actively discriminate against the Tamils. While the Tamil independence movement at first advocated non-violent resistance to the SLG, they changed tactics when the SLG began to react violently against Tamil calls for an autonomous state. The LTTE chose armed resistance against the SLG as the only way to achieve Tamil Eelam.

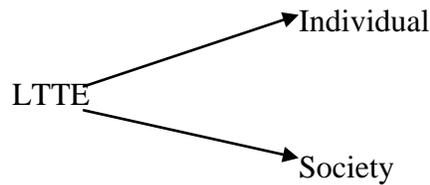
At the organizational level, the LTTE adopted suicide attacks out of a defensive necessity. As the irregular war between the LTTE and SLG escalated, the LTTE needed a weapon that could stop the advance of the SLA into Jaffna. Captain Millars's suicide attack halted the SLA advance into Jaffna. Suicide attacks were later turned into an offensive weapon

that were used as a conventional tactic against the SLA, to assassinate Sri Lankan and Tamil leaders, and to sow terror by targeting civilians.

At the individual level, Pirabakaran fashioned an elaborate ideology of martyrdom that combined religious and nationalistic language and symbols to create a powerful incentive for death. By equating martyrdom with the Hindu concept of abandonment, *tiyakam*, the quest for an independent Tamil homeland acquires a quasi-religious significance. Indeed, the struggle for Tamil Eelam is holy, and the ideal *tiyaki* is one who abandons his or her life in pursuit of Tamil Eelam. He used rituals such as the cyanide ceremony to instill in both the Black Tigers and LTTE members that death for the Tamil nation exceeds the importance of an individual's life. The ideology of martyrdom's potency is further evident when one considers that the LTTE perpetrated more suicide attacks than the combined total of all other terrorist organizations that have adopted this tactic. Most astonishingly, the Black Tigers have killed roughly 1,000 people and assassinated two heads of state, including India's former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 and Sri Lanka's President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993.

Finally, at the societal level, resonance for the attack is achieved by fostering a cult of the martyr that exists domestically and internationally. To this end, the LTTE created the Great Heroes Day celebration where the Tamil community gathers every year to pay tribute to the martyrs as well as the martyr cemeteries. Both the celebration and the cemeteries act as visible symbols reinforcing Pirabakaran's cult of the martyr. The cult of the martyr is also broadcast to the Tamil diaspora via the World Wide Web. Undoubtedly, the LTTE's use of the internet to disseminate propaganda has inspired Islamist terrorist groups to do the same.

The interaction amongst each level of analysis in this case study is lateral and can be represented by a less-than symbol [$<$].



The point at which the two lines intersect is the organization with one line representing the individual and the other society. In this case, the organizational ideology of the LTTE is the most important feature because it not only attracts individuals from within the ranks of the LTTE but it is also presented to the Tamil society through Pirabakaran's cult of the martyr. Indeed, the LTTE's organizational ideology is a necessary condition for suicide attacks in the Sri Lankan case. This point has been reaffirmed since Pirabakaran's death, as there have been no Black Tiger attacks since that event.

The figure also demonstrates that there is no interaction between the individual and societal levels. Unlike Hamas, the LTTE draws Black Tigers from its own ranks and does not have a need to recruit from the population. Instead, those individuals who become Black Tigers are already full-fledged combatants in the LTTE organization that have given themselves to Pirabakaran's ideology of martyrdom. In this respect, societal resonance while important was not a critical issue for the Tamil Tigers since all the volunteers for Black Tiger attacks came from within their ranks.

The next chapter of the dissertation investigates suicide attacks that are used primarily by an organization engaged in domestic terrorism.

4.0 SUICIDE ATTACKS AS DOMESTIC TERRORISM: THE CASE OF HAMAS IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

“This is a war which has not been extinguished...for close to fourteen centuries, and which continues until this moment, its blaze raging in all corners of the earth.”

-Sayyid Qutb, *Our Struggle With the Jews*

“O Mother, my religion has called me to jihad and self-sacrifice. O Mother, I am marching toward immortality, I will never retreat. O Mother, don't cry for me if I am shot down, laid out on the ground. For death is my path; martyrdom my desire!”

-Hamas, “Martyrdom Song”

"These operations are the supreme form of Jihad for the sake of Allah, and a type of [warfare] that is allowed by the Sharia...He who commits suicide kills himself for his own benefit, while he who commits martyrdom sacrifices himself for the sake of his religion and his nation. While someone who commits suicide has lost hope with himself and with the spirit of Allah, the Mujahid is full of hope with regard to Allah's spirit and mercy. He fights his enemy and the enemy of Allah with this new weapon, which destiny has put in the hands of the weak, so that they would fight against the evil of the strong and arrogant. The Mujahid becomes a 'human bomb' that blows up at a specific place and time, in the midst of the enemies of Allah and the homeland, leaving them helpless in the face of the Shahid who...sold his soul to Allah, and sought the Shahada for the sake of Allah."

-Sheik Yussuf al Qaradhawi

4.1 INTRODUCTION

On August 9, 2001 a group of people gathered at a Sbarro pizzeria at the corner of King George Street and Jaffa Road in downtown Jerusalem. At 2:00 PM, the restaurant was filled with lunchtime guests. Mothers were with their children, husbands with their wives, and friends were enjoying one another's company. At 2:05 PM, a younger gentleman entered the restaurant. He wore sunglasses, carried a guitar case and appeared to be a tourist stopping for lunch. Unbeknownst to the restaurant patrons, the young man was wearing a suicide vest containing a 5-10 kg bomb, which "was packed with nails, screws, and bolts to ensure maximum damage."⁴⁰⁶ The attacker calmly proceeded to the middle of the restaurant, set down his guitar case and detonated the suicide vest. The results were devastating.

According to one eyewitness, "[a]s soon as I cut into the pizza I heard a huge boom, and orange flames shot through the air."⁴⁰⁷ Another survivor recalled, "there were people-babies-thrown through the window and covered with blood. The whole street was covered with blood and bodies: the dead and the dying."⁴⁰⁸ Fifteen people were killed, including seven children, and over 130 people were injured in the attack. Later that evening, the Islamic Resistance

⁴⁰⁶ "Suicide bombing at the Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem," (*Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, August 9, 2001). Article available online at http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFArchive/2000_2009/2000/10/Suicide%20bombing%20at%20the%20Sbarro%20pizzeria%20in%20Jerusalem. Accessed on 10/12/09.

⁴⁰⁷ Suzanne Goldenberg, "The Street was covered with blood and bodies: the dead and the dying," (*The Guardian*, August 10, 2001). Available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/aug/10/israel1>. Accessed on 10/12/09.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

Movement (also known as Hamas) claimed responsibility for the attack. Hamas proudly announced that the suicide attacker, a 23-year-old male named Izekine al-Masri, became a noble *shahid* (martyr) and that he would spend an eternity in Paradise by virtue of his terrible action. This suicide attack would be one of many perpetrated by Hamas targeting Israeli civilians during the Al Aqsa Uprising (also known as the second intifada).

Since 1993, Israel has been engaged in a protracted conflict with Hamas and other terrorist organizations seeking to use violence in order to achieve an independent Palestinian state. This chapter focuses on Hamas exclusively because that group became the most prolific user of suicide attacks during the first and second Palestinian uprisings. As such, the chapter seeks to answer the following questions: What is the historical context of the conflict between Israel and Hamas? Why did Hamas choose to adopt suicide attacks in the first and second intifadas? What are the individual motivations prompting Hamas attackers to detonate a suicide vest?⁴⁰⁹ Finally, how is Hamas able to make the attack resonate with the Palestinian population?

The first section investigates the historical roots of the conflict between Hamas and the state of Israel. This requires an exploration into the profound ideological influence that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had on Hamas. Hamas, being the self-described military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, inherited a powerful narrative from the Muslim Brotherhood, which combined history, grievance and theology. This narrative was fashioned by Muslim Brotherhood founder Hasan al-Banna and then perfected by its most famous ideologue, Sayyid Qutb.⁴¹⁰ It is a virulent mix of anti-Semitic and orthodox theological arguments that seek to dehumanize the

⁴⁰⁹ This question is particularly pertinent since suicide is strictly forbidden in Islam.

⁴¹⁰ The impact of Sayyid Qutb's thought on Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda will be examined in the next chapter.

inhabitants of Israel while justifying *jihad* (struggle) to liberate the Palestinian state. This narrative gained traction with successive failures by Arab and Palestinian nationalism to resist the state of Israel. Indeed, Hamas presented a cogent Islamic ideology of liberation to a Palestinian population disillusioned with the promises of Arab nationalism. Following the Muslim Brotherhood's lead, Hamas then proliferated this ideology by way of *dawa* (charity) activities in mosques, and schools.⁴¹¹

The second section investigates why Hamas used suicide attacks during the first and second intifadas. The section argues that in each instance the tactic was adopted out of a defensive necessity as a means to engage Israel militarily in order to achieve a specific strategic goal. The first intifada of 1993-1996 saw an increasing commitment to a peaceful solution to the Palestinian conflict led by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin, PLO leader Yasser Arafat and U.S. President Bill Clinton. In September 1993, Israel and the PLO entered into the Oslo Accords in Washington DC, which called for a withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and affirmed the Palestinian right to self-government within those areas through the creation of the Palestinian Authority. Hamas decried the peace process and instituted its first campaign of suicide attacks to disrupt and dismantle the peace process. The second intifada of 2000-2006 saw a dramatic increase in suicide attacks by Hamas as its ideology of martyrdom grew more potent. Hamas' main strategic goal was an attempt to make Israel engage in a unilateral withdrawal of Palestinian land. Hamas achieved this goal as it prompted Israel to withdraw from Judea, Samaria and Gaza at the end of the second intifada. This

⁴¹¹ *Dawa* literally translates as 'preaching' or 'a call to god' but it was used by the Muslim Brotherhood as social service network.

dramatically increased Hamas' popularity and, as a result, the group won the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2006.

The third section delves into the motivation of Hamas suicide attackers. The motivation must have a powerful allure since the suicide attacker is convinced that his or her act is not suicide. Hamas tells the potential attacker that the goal of the act is to become a martyr, which thereby nullifies the Islamic injunction against suicide. Martyrs do not commit suicide but rather die in the path of god. A deadly mixture of martyrdom, and the post-mortem incentives this act provides, and hatred against the Israeli enemy emerges as the primary motivator for the Hamas suicide attacker. This is confirmed by the great deal of personal information Hamas martyrs leave behind as to why they participate in an attack. This information comes in the forms of martyrdom videos and the final written testaments released by Hamas after the attack takes place. The videos and final testaments are critically important because they serve as a way to cement the suicide attacker's commitment, acting as a 'martyrdom contract' between the attacker and the organization. What emerges is a picture of an individual who is simultaneously motivated by the post-mortem incentives of martyrdom as well as an intense hatred for the Israeli occupier.

The fourth section investigates how Hamas is able to make the attack resonate with the Palestinian population. This is of particular importance in light of a worrying 2008 poll conducted by the Palestinian Survey Research Unit, which found that 91% of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and 74% in the West Bank support suicide attacks against Israel.⁴¹² The section argues that Hamas successfully has created a culture of martyrdom, which is pervasive in the

⁴¹² "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 27," (*Palestinian Survey Research Unit*, No. 27, March 24, 2008).

Available online at www.pcpsr.org. Accessed on 10/6/2009.

West Bank and Gaza. It has achieved this by engaging in an impressive campaign that markets martyrdom via videos, television, graffiti, and the internet. Moreover, Hamas sponsors schools and school-related curriculum that teach Palestinian children from a young age to aspire to be martyrs and hate their Jewish neighbors. Collectively, these efforts have created a society inculcated with the belief that the martyr's death is the greatest act one can aspire to with his or her life.

4.2 THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN HAMAS AND ISRAEL

The Muslim Brotherhood, in a sense, gave birth to Hamas. This is evident in chapter I, article 2 of Hamas' founding charter, which states that Hamas "is one of the wings of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine."⁴¹³ The main difference between the two organizations is that Hamas wanted to adopt military means to confront Israel. The Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine believed that confrontation with Israel should exist primarily on the social and theological fronts with armed struggle to occur at a later date. Though the two differed on the means, they both agreed that the establishment of a Palestinian state was of paramount importance. By virtue of being the offspring of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas inherited the Brotherhood's ideology of liberation fashioned by Hasan al-Banna and later Sayyid Qutb. This ideology is a potent mix of anti-Semitism and Islamic fundamentalism, which blames the travails of the Palestinian

⁴¹³ See Hamas Charter.

population on “the Jews” and advocates armed resistance as the only way to achieve a Palestinian state. The history of the Muslim Brotherhood and the ideology it bequeathed to Hamas will now be explored.

4.2.1 Precursor to Hamas: The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood was established in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna. The Egyptian based Islamist group was conceived to be a mass opposition movement and under Banna’s leadership it grew to become a powerful non-governmental force with enormous influence.⁴¹⁴ Banna’s movement was rooted in Islam and offered a clear alternative to the secular and materialist trends that he perceived to be gripping Egypt.⁴¹⁵ Banna’s hope was to institute an Islamic revival through the establishment of an Islamic society in Egypt governed by shariah (Islamic) law, which would then spread throughout the Middle East. He firmly believed that “[t]he Ikhwan [the Brotherhood] is not a regional movement, but it is indeed an international Islamic one, because Islam is an international religion.”⁴¹⁶

From the Brotherhood’s founding, it was interested in what it called ‘the Palestinian problem.’ For Banna and his Brotherhood, the Palestinian problem was many centuries old. He

⁴¹⁴ Barbara Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan al-Hudaybi and Ideology*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 11.

⁴¹⁵ Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), xv.

⁴¹⁶ Hasan al-Banna quoted in Abd El-Awaisi, *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question 1928-1947*, (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), 137.

saw Palestine as the scene of ancient clashes between decaying and emerging empires from the Egyptian, Hebrew, Babylonian, and Hittite to the Greek and Roman. By 640 AD, Palestine had come under Islamic rule as the Ummahyad, Abbasid and Fatimid dynasties only to fall in 1099 AD to the Christian Crusaders from Western Europe.⁴¹⁷ Jerusalem would then return to Islamic control after the famed warrior Salah al-Din routed the Crusaders in 1187. The last invasion came from the Ottomans in 1250, which maintained control over Palestine until the breakup of the Ottoman Empire during World War I.⁴¹⁸ After World War II, European powers took control of the Levant with France controlling Syria and Lebanon and the British controlling Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine.⁴¹⁹

In 1935, Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam left Egypt to establish the Brotherhood's first branch in British Occupied Palestine marking the beginning of the Brotherhood's involvement in Palestine. This is also of consequence because Qassam instituted guerrilla warfare against the British in what is called the 'Great Arab Revolt.' He achieved great notoriety during the guerrilla war against the British, as he became the first Muslim Brother to be martyred in Palestine.⁴²⁰ In 1945, Banna sent his own brother, Abd al-Rahman al-Banna, to found the

⁴¹⁷ Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2001), 181.

⁴¹⁸ Bard O'Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 2.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Hamas would later name its military wing and its suicide squad after Izz al-Din al-Qassam.

Brotherhood's branch in Jerusalem.⁴²¹ The Brotherhood then moved into the West Bank and Gaza Strip where it established religious centers that ran a number of charitable organizations such as hospitals, neighborhood clinics, schools and universities.⁴²²

1948 was a watershed year for the Brotherhood as it witnessed the creation of the state of Israel. Banna denounced this as 'a great mistake' and blamed it on a "global Jewish conspiracy."⁴²³ His language is similar to that of an anti-Semitic Russian document entitled *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁴²⁴ Following the Russian piece, Banna claimed that the Jews had cut a deal with the British government as a way to marginalize the Palestinians. Like the Protocols, this claim is based on the argument that the Jews held power because they controlled many of the banks that operated in Great Britain. Banna essentially reinterpreted the Protocols through an Islamic lens. Banna also believed that the only way for the Arab world to counter the Jewish threat and regain its preeminence involved a return to faith. In particular, he argued for a balance between the internal and external jihad. The internal jihad made use of preaching and education (*da'wa*) in order to purify one's soul. Banna thought that the internal jihad would lead to an extensive Islamic revolution and the subsequent creation of an Islamic state. The external

⁴²¹ Ziad Abu-Amr, " Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," (*Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1993), 6.

⁴²² Stephen Pelletiere, " Hamas and Hizbollah: The Radical Challenge to Israel in the Occupied Territories," (Carlisle: US Army War College, 1994), 17.

⁴²³ David Meir-Levi, "The Nazi Roots of Palestinian Nationalism and Islamic Jihad," (*David Horowitz Freedom Center*, 2007), 12

⁴²⁴ Full text and commentary of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is available online at www.ddickerson.igc.org/the_protocols_of_the_learned_elders_of_zion.pdf.

jihad, or the struggle against Israel, should be postponed until the advent of the Islamic state. According to this logic, “since Israel’s very existence was the result of the abandonment of Islamic norms, only when the Islamization of society was completed and the *sharia* (Islamic law) fully implemented would the Muslims be capable of defeating Israel.”⁴²⁵ Banna’s assassination in 1949 left one important question unanswered: when was the appropriate time to begin the external jihad against Israel? Sayyid Qutb emerged as the new ideologue for the Muslim Brotherhood and provided an answer to this question. Qutb, following Banna, fashioned a potent Islamic ideology of liberation that would have a profound influence on Hamas.

4.2.2 Sayyid Qutb and the Islamic Ideology of Liberation

Sayyid Qutb was born in 1906 and educated at the University of Cairo. He began his career as a literary critic and then obtained employment working for the Egyptian Ministry of Education. During his professional work at the Ministry of Education he was exposed to the American education system. The Egyptian Ministry decided to send Qutb to the United States so that he could learn more about the American school curricula. In 1948, he spent nearly a year studying at the Teacher’s College of Colorado State College (now University of Northern Colorado). His time in the United States was enough to galvanize a deep hatred of the United States and Western culture. This hatred was due to the fact that he saw the United States as a degenerate and corrupt culture where lust and greed were pursued over virtue. In a letter to a friend he

⁴²⁵ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 33.

opined, “[h]ow I hate and despise this European civilization and eulogize humanity which is being tricked by its luster, noise and sexual enjoyment in which the soul suffocates and the conscience dies down, while instincts and senses become intoxicated, quarrelsome and excited by the red lights.”⁴²⁶

Qutb’s humble sensibilities were affronted by the great intermingling between men and women as they attended class together, ate in the cafeteria together and often accompanied one another on social outings. In a seminar on American Social Life, he wanted to know what role personal ethics and morality played in the interaction between the sexes. An American woman at the Teacher’s College responded to Qutb in this manner: “[t]he issue of sexual relations is a purely biological issue. You-the Orientals-complicate this simple issue by introducing the ethical elements in it. The horse and the mare, the bull and the cow, the ram and the goat and the rooster and the hen do not think of this story of ethics while they are mating. So their life is easy, simple and comfortable!”⁴²⁷ The woman’s statement merely confirmed Qutb’s view that Americans were a licentious lot focused on satisfying “a body that lusts after another body...[like] an animal that craves another animal, with no time for spiritual longings, [or] high aspirations.”⁴²⁸

Another aspect of American life in particular and Western civilization in general that disturbed Qutb was the value placed on material goods and money. In a letter, he noted that America and all Western nations “take their bearings from one source, and that is the

⁴²⁶ Qutb quoted in John Zimmerman, “Sayyid Qutb’s Influence on the 11 September Attacks,” (*Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2004), 225.

⁴²⁷ Adnan Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism*, (Westport: Praeger, 2005), 114-115.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

materialistic civilization which has no heart and nor moral conscience. It is a civilization, which does not speak of anything but commerce. How I hate and disdain those Westerners! All of them, without exception.”⁴²⁹

Needless to say, Qutb returned to Egypt disgusted with what he had seen in America. As Ronald Nettler notes, his experience in Colorado prompted Qutb to return to Islam and “he began to see in America and the West intrinsic features of moral corruption and decadence which, in his view, totally contradicted Islamic morality and endangered Islamic values.”⁴³⁰ Qutb also believed that both Judaism and Christianity had sacrificed their ethical systems on the altar of economic materialism. He came to see both Jews and Christians as opponents of Islam and felt that the best course of action was a healthy distance between the Abrahamic religions.

The creation of the state of Israel threatened this separation and inspired Qutb to write polemical tracts against what he perceived as Western and Jewish imperialism in the traditional land of Islam. Like Banna, Qutb viewed Israel as the most important problem facing contemporary Muslims. In an essay Qutb published in 1950 entitled ‘Our Struggle with the Jews’ he lays out the dire situation for the Islamic community. According to Qutb, the creation of the Israeli state marks the beginning of a major crisis for the Islamic faith. He notes that the Jews’ total emancipation from Muslim rule and their establishment of a Jewish state on Muslim lands is a signal of Islam’s total collapse.⁴³¹ The problem as identified by Qutb is not only a political problem but also a theological one. Qutb believed that the Jewish state was a danger to

⁴²⁹ Qutb quoted in John Zimmerman, “Sayyid Qutb’s Influence on the 11 September Attacks,” 225.

⁴³⁰ Ronald Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), 27.

⁴³¹ Qutb quoted in *Ibid.*, 19.

the social and political strength of Islam. Indeed, he goes on to say that the loss of ancient Palestine to the Jews is a *direct result* of Muslims having abandoned their faith and then, in this weakness, succumbing to Jewish deception.

Qutb identifies the Jews as the ancient enemy of Islam. He states that, “the Jews have confronted Islam with enmity from the moment that the Islamic state was established in Medina.”⁴³² This ancient confrontation has persisted until the twentieth century where, according to Qutb, the Jews “have instilled men and regimes [in the Islamic World and the West], in order to conspire against this [Muslim] community. Hundreds, then, even thousands were plotting within the Islamic world” to wrest Palestine from Muslim control.⁴³³ The Jews were able to do this subversive work through a proliferation of false ideologies like secularization and materialism emanating from the West that were undermining Islam. He notes that “behind the doctrine of atheistic materialism was a Jew; behind the doctrine of animalistic sexuality was a Jew; and behind the destruction of the family and the shattering of sacred relationships in society...was a Jew.”⁴³⁴ Here Qutb identifies the socialist economics of Karl Marx, the psychosexual theories of Sigmund Freud and the atheistic sociology of Emile Durkheim. These anti-Islamic ideologies continue to lead the Muslim community “away from its religion and to alienate it from the Koran.”⁴³⁵ This prompts Qutb to conclude that the “struggle between Islam and the Jews continues in force and will continue, because the Jews will

⁴³² Ibid., 34.

⁴³³ Ibid., 47.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 72.

be satisfied only with the destruction of this religion [Islam].”⁴³⁶ So far, Qutb has equated the establishment of Israel with a loss of faith, and identified the Jews as the ancient enemies of Islam who are responsible for this current predicament. Simply put, he has revealed the problem, assigned blame and now must put forth a plan of action for Palestine’s liberation. For Qutb, the liberation of Palestine can only occur if the Muslim community returns to their faith and then wages a jihad against Israel.

Qutb expounds on the role of jihad in a book he wrote while in prison called *Milestones*. According to R. Scott Appleby, *Milestones* was a major contribution to Sunni fundamentalism. He notes that the book is shaped by “a tortured vision of the past—a construction of history that casts the long and otherwise dispiriting record of humiliation, persecution, and exile of the true believers as a necessary prelude to the decisive intervention of God and the vanquishing of the apostates.”⁴³⁷ Probably the most radical idea in the book is the abrogation of jihad as a defensive war to an offensive war. Islam, like Christianity, has a rich tradition of ‘Just War theory.’⁴³⁸ Before Qutb, the theological consensus was that violent jihad should only be engaged in a defensive effort to repel the enemies of Islam.⁴³⁹ Qutb rejects this because he believes that a defensive jihad is too restrictive and puts the Islamic community at risk. Such a jihad “confined

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁴³⁷ R. Scott Appleby, "History in the Fundamentalist Imagination," (*The Journal of American History*, Vol. 89, No. 2, 2002), 498.

⁴³⁸ For a cogent discussion of the roots of just war theory see Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

⁴³⁹ Shaul Shay, *The Shahids: Islam and Suicide Attacks*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004),

to geographical...limits [that] does not take any action except out of fear of aggression...[has lost] all its inherent dynamism.”⁴⁴⁰

For Qutb, jihad is not restricted to the defense of the Islamic homeland, but rather should extend to the end of the earth. He couches this goal in egalitarian language. He claims that Islam brings peace and equality into societies gripped by inequality and materialism. Since Islam is a divinely ordained “perfect system” aimed at the liberation of humankind, extending Islam’s influence should be in humanity’s interest because it brings human beings a “taste of true freedom.”⁴⁴¹ The major goal of jihad, then, is the “establishing of the dominion of God on earth, the abolishing of the dominion of man, the taking away of sovereignty from the usurper to revert it to God, and the bringing about of the enforcement of Divine Law (Sharia).”⁴⁴² This requires offensive action “to replace this jahiliyya (state of ignorance) with Islamic ideas and traditions.”⁴⁴³

Qutb’s exposition on jihad presents a solution for how to deal with the creation of Israel. The first move requires a return to orthodox Islam. He claims that “we must begin where the Prophet began, with a small group of people [vanguard] who have committed themselves to serve God and God alone in all aspects of life.”⁴⁴⁴ Once the idolatrous ideologies propagated by the Jews are tossed in the “rubbish heap of the West” then the group can begin to implement

⁴⁴⁰ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (Cedar Rapids: The Mother Mosque Foundation, 1981), 74.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴⁴⁴ William Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of 'Jahiliyya,'" (*International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 2003), 530.

jihad.⁴⁴⁵ By the time of Qutb's death, he had succeeded in fashioning a revolutionary Islamic ideology of liberation, which vilified the Jews and espoused an offensive jihad in order to Islamize and thus free those societies gripped by unbelief. This Islamic ideology of liberation had a profound influence on the Muslim Brotherhood and was easily transferred to Hamas after it declared itself to be the military arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. The ideology would become even more potent when its chief competitors, Arab and Palestinian nationalism, failed to liberate Palestine.

4.2.3 The Failure of Nationalism

In the twentieth century, nationalism took two forms when dealing with Israel.⁴⁴⁶ First, there was Pan-Arab nationalism exemplified by the Egyptian President Gamal' Abd al-Nasser. Next there was Yasser Arafat's Palestinian nationalism of Fatah and the PLO. Despite the claims by both pan-Arab and Palestinian nationalism to rid the Middle East of Israel, both failed to achieve their goals.

The failure of pan-Arabism lies in the disastrous outcome of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. While there is a large literature on this conflict, most scholars point to three actions undertaken by President Nasser, which prompted an Israeli preemptive strike against the airfields of Egypt

⁴⁴⁵ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, 139.

⁴⁴⁶ Youssef Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 111-112.

and Syria.⁴⁴⁷ On May 14, 1967, Nasser sent two Egyptian infantry divisions accompanied by some 200 tanks to the Sinai Peninsula. Two days later on May 16, he demanded that the United Nations Emergency Force withdraw from Egyptian soil. Finally, on May 22, he declared the Straits of Tiran closed to Israeli shipping.⁴⁴⁸ He then increased his belligerent rhetoric claiming that if a battle was begun between Israel and Egypt that Egypt's "basic objective will be to destroy Israel."⁴⁴⁹ Reacting to these actions, Israeli leaders "repeatedly emphasized that Israel would regard any interference with the principle of free passage as an act of aggression. They warned that Israel would take action to defend its right to sail through the Straits even at the cost of war. Closing the Straits, the Israeli government concluded, amounted to a *casus belli*."⁴⁵⁰ When faced with amassing Egyptian troops on its border and the closing of the Straits of Tiran, which would cripple the Israeli economy, the Israeli leadership decided that a preemptive war was a necessary option.

Israel launched its preemptive war against Egypt and Syria on June 5, 1967. The Israeli Air Force dubbed its mission *Operation Moked* (Focus) as it aimed "to launch a surprise attack

⁴⁴⁷ For various discussions of the 1967 war see Shlomo Aloni, *Arab-Israeli Air Wars 1947-1982*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2001). Moshe Gat, *Britain and the Conflict in the Middle East, 1964-1967*, (Westport: Praeger, 2003). Jeremy Bowen, *Six Days: How the 1967 War Shaped the Middle East*, (London: Simon and Schuster, 2003). Eric Hammel, *Six Days in June: How Israel Won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War*, (London: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

⁴⁴⁸ Moshe Gat, "Nasser and the Six Day War, 5 June 1967: A Premeditated Strategy or an Inexorable Drift to War," (*Israel Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2004), 608.

⁴⁴⁹ "Statement by President Nasser to Arab Trade Unionists," (*Jewish Virtual Library*, May 26, 1967). Article available online at www.jewishvirtuallibrary.com. Accessed on 10/15/2009.

⁴⁵⁰ Moshe Gat, "Nasser and the Six Day War, 5 June 1967: A Premeditated Strategy or an Inexorable Drift to War," 611.

on the enemy air bases by small formations that would bomb the runways and then return to destroy the enemy aircraft on the ground by strafing.”⁴⁵¹ The attack achieved complete surprise; losses on the Israeli side were lighter than anticipated whereas the Egyptian Air Force was crippled.⁴⁵² During the next five days, Israel would further humiliate the Arab armies as it obtained control over the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai and the Golan Heights. The 1967 defeat was a stunning blow to Pan-Arab nationalism and raised questions amongst Palestinians as to the feasibility of fighting Israel in a conventional war.⁴⁵³ Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip found themselves separated from their Arab neighbors and living under direct Israeli control.⁴⁵⁴ Yasser Arafat and his Fatah organization turned to Palestinian nationalism and concomitantly terrorism as a way to wrest control of Palestine from Israel.

Established in 1958, Fatah had anticipated a war with Israel before 1967. However, Yasser Arafat and other leaders did not believe it would happen so soon. They wanted to gradually build up the Arab forces of Egypt and Syria and then launch an invasion into Israel in order to reclaim the territory they believed had been confiscated from the Palestinians. On August 20, 1967, Fatah’s leadership convened in the Old Quarter of Nablus, “a West Bank town

⁴⁵¹ Shlomo Aloni, *Arab-Israeli Wars 1947-82*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2001), 31.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁵³ Bard O’Neill, *Armed Struggle in Palestine: A Political-Military Analysis*, 6.

⁴⁵⁴ Amal Jamal, *The Palestinian National Movement and the Politics of Contention, 1967-2005*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 19.

with a long history of Arab nationalist fervor.”⁴⁵⁵ The main issue on the agenda was how they were going to resist the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Arafat believed that the only option left was to engage in guerrilla activities, which should begin as soon as possible.⁴⁵⁶

Arafat wanted Fatah to engage Israel on two fronts. The first involved guerrilla warfare and terrorism. Fatah’s main modus operandi was to attack Israel’s checkpoints and to lure the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers into a gunfight. Fatah also sought to inspire the local Palestinian population to engage in active resistance against the Israeli occupier. It was Arafat’s hope that “the two courses of action-Fatah’s terrorism and local rebellion-would finally merge into one movement-a popular armed revolution, led by Arafat and his colleagues.”⁴⁵⁷

Arafat’s dream of one united movement against Israel was not to be realized. While he had substantial control over the main governing body in Palestine, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), of which Fatah was a main member, many different guerrilla groups appeared to challenge Arafat. Others include the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PLFP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF), Palestinian People’s Party (PPP) and the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF). The challenging groups agreed on the end they wanted to achieve; the restoration of a Palestinian state. However, some groups did not agree on the means. Fatah, the PFLP and the DFLP believed that armed struggle was the only way to obtain a Palestinian state. Others, like the PPP,

⁴⁵⁵ Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power, and Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 37.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 38.

believed that Israel would be defeated through a Marxist class revolution, which would sweep Israel out of power and usher in the Palestinian state.

Fatah's lack of tangible results raised concerns from one Muslim Brother living in Gaza named Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. Yassin had been sent to Gaza to head the *Mujamma*, a welfare charity organization that provided social services to the Palestinian population. One event in particular caught the Sheikh's attention. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon revealed just how impotent the PLO and Fatah were to what Yassin believed to be blatant acts of Israeli aggression.⁴⁵⁸ For Yassin, this latest defeat was not just a military matter. He believed that the reason why the Palestinians had not achieved their goal was due to a lack of religious faith.

4.2.4 The Emergence of Hamas

Sheikh Yassin became the force behind a devastating critique of Palestinian nationalism. He argued that Arab and Palestinian nationalism had done little to improve the situation of everyday Palestinians. Worse yet, it had not come close to liberating Palestine. The Sheikh, turning to the writings of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, believed this failure to be a direct result of the secular orientation of Fatah and the PLO. Rather than putting one's faith in Islam, these organizations had adopted Western ideologies. Yassin offered a simple solution to the problem at hand. If the Palestinian community would turn to Islam, then they would be better able to

⁴⁵⁸ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 33.

engage Israel. As such, Yassin declared that “the Islamization of society was a precondition for the establishment of an Islamic state in a liberated Palestine.”⁴⁵⁹

The Sheikh supported his argument for a return to Islam by drawing from the Iranian Revolution and Hizbollah as evidence. The Iranian revolution had a major impact on Yassin and the Muslim Brothers working in Palestine. Even though the Iranian Islamists emerged from a different religious tradition (Shia instead of Sunni), their seizure of power supported the idea that Islam could usher in profound change if the faithful believed in it.⁴⁶⁰ Yassin admired how Ayatollah Khomeini galvanized the population as Islamic fervor swept the Shah out of power.⁴⁶¹ Similarly in Lebanon, Yassin marveled at the way Hizbollah militarized their faith. The April 23, 1983 suicide attacks against American marine and French army barracks led both countries to withdraw their forces. The United States Marine barracks bombing was, at that time, the largest terrorist act in United States history with 220 Marines dead.⁴⁶² Yassin listened carefully to Hizbollah cleric Hassan Trad when he said that “Lebanon was only liberated thanks to the ishtihad [martyrdom] actions.”⁴⁶³ Yassin observed how Hizbollah turned to jihad and succeeded in expelling the Western multinational forces in Lebanon.

⁴⁵⁹ Dilip Hiro, *Sharing the Promised Land: A Tale of Israelis and Palestinians*, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), 258.

⁴⁶⁰ "Islamic Social Welfare Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legitimate Target?" (*International Crisis Group*, No. 13, April 2003), 5.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Shaul Shay, *The Shahids: Islam and Suicide Attacks*, 41

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 38.

These experiences confirmed for Yassin the primacy of faith and how it could be mobilized as a weapon to fight Israel. Yassin, like Banna, saw the Palestinians as locked in an ancient conflict between Muslims and Jews in which the latter had used deception against the former in order to obtain the state of Israel. Since the Jewish state was militarily superior to the Palestinians, the only way to bridge the gap was a strict reliance on faith. As such, Yassin agreed with Qutb's proscription of jihad as the method by which the Palestinians would defeat Israel.

Yassin and other members of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood began to consider providing an Islamic alternative to the PLO's secular leadership.⁴⁶⁴ The failure of the 1967 war and continuing Israeli aggression against Palestinians were signs that the PLO had placed its trust in a false ideology. Their deliberations acquired a sense of urgency when in December 1987, an Israeli truck crashed into a vehicle transporting Palestinian workers. The crash, dubbed an accident, triggered violent riots that grew into a social uprising. This marked the beginning of the first intifada where the Palestinian society engaged in open demonstrations and violence against their Israeli occupiers.⁴⁶⁵ In February 1988, two months after the beginning of the intifada, Yassin's Gaza based Muslim Brotherhood created a splinter group called Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawamat al-Islamiyya, meaning 'zeal' in Arabic). Hamas presented a new, Islamic based formula for victory and became the chief competitor against the secular PLO and Fatah organizations. Unbeknownst to Israel, Hamas would later emerge as the most prolific user of suicide attacks during the first and second Palestinian intifadas.

⁴⁶⁴ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 33.

⁴⁶⁵ Are Knudsen, "Crescent and Sword: The Hamas Enigma," (*Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 8, 2005), 1377.

4.3 HAMAS AND SUICIDE ATTACKS IN THE FIRST AND SECOND INTIFADAS

Hamas classified itself as the militant wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. Through the creation of Hamas, “the founding fathers of the Muslim Brotherhood had effectively adopted jihad as a means for achieving *national and religious redemption*, recognizing the primacy of armed struggle to mobilize the masses, and taking the initiative in guiding the popular uprising.”⁴⁶⁶

Hamas inherited the Islamic ideology of liberation created by Banna and Qutb, which sanctioned the doctrine of external jihad against Israel with the goals of liberating Palestine and creating an Islamic state. According to Hamas’ charter, jihad “becomes an individual duty binding on every Muslim man and woman...[and] [t]here is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by jihad.”⁴⁶⁷

Despite this language, Hamas did not emerge during the first intifada as a group that engaged in wanton violence. An examination of the first intifada reveals that Hamas adopted a pragmatic strategy of controlled violence against Israel out of a defensive necessity since the organization could not engage Israel in an open confrontation, which aimed at disrupting peace talks between the PLO and Israel. During the second intifada, Hamas increased the frequency of suicide attacks to terrify the Israel public so that it would pressure the Israeli government to engage in territorial concessions. Hamas’ successful ability to use suicide attacks is attributed

⁴⁶⁶ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, 36. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶⁷ Hamas Charter quoted in Yonah Alexander, *Palestinian Religious Terrorism*, (Ardsey: Transnational Publishers, 2002), 54.

largely to the martyrdom ideology that it developed. This potent ideology ensured that Hamas' suicide cadres were filled with willing volunteers ready to attack Israel.

4.3.1 Suicide Attacks and the First Intifada

Hamas' first act of terrorism against Israel was not a suicide attack. Instead, in 1989, Hamas instituted what amounted to be a sicari-like campaign of stabbings and kidnappings.⁴⁶⁸ Like the sicari, Hamas members openly attacked Israeli citizens in the West Bank and Gaza cities with easily hidden daggers.⁴⁶⁹ This caught the attention of Israeli counter-terrorism officials and Israel responded by conducting a wave of arrests in the West Bank and Gaza. With over 415 Hamas members arrested, Israel decided to deport these individuals to southern Lebanon.⁴⁷⁰ This proved to be a disastrous decision that Israel would later regret. When the Hamas members arrived in Lebanon, they were approached by members of Hizbollah. It is believed that the

⁴⁶⁸ Jonathan Schanzer, "The Challenge of Hamas to Fatah," (*The Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Spring 2003). Article available online at <http://www.meforum.org/516/the-challenge-of-hamas-to-fatah>. Accessed on 10/12/09. The sicari was an extreme Jewish faction operating in Roman controlled Palestine. Using short daggers (sica) they attacked their enemies in public during the daylight. For a discussion of the Sicarri see Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10-11.

⁴⁶⁹ Shaul Shay, *Islamic Terror Abductions in the Middle East*, (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2007), 25.

⁴⁷⁰ Adam Dolnik and Anjali Bhattacharjee, "Hamas: Suicide Bombings, Rockets, or WMD?" (*Terror and Political Violence*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2002), 109. See also Luca Ricolfi, "Palestinians, 1981-2003" in Diego Gambetta ed., *Understanding Suicide Missions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 91.

Hamas members received weapons training from Hizbollah and witnessed Hizbollah's use of suicide attacks. As Shaul Shay argues, Hamas operatives "underwent terrorist training under the tutelage of the Hizbollah and implemented everything they had learned in their struggle with Israel."⁴⁷¹ When the exiled members returned to Palestine, they came back with sophisticated military training and an idea of a new tactic that could be used against Israel.

Hizbollah's influence on Hamas was apparent in 1993, when Hamas launched its first suicide attack on April 16, 1993, almost four years after the group's creation.⁴⁷² A car filled with explosives driven by Sahar Tama Nabulsi was detonated next to a group of buses in a parking lot where a restaurant, frequented by members of the Mechola settlement in the Jordan valley, was located. The number of casualties "was relatively reduced owing to the fact that most of the soldiers destined to travel on these buses were in the restaurant at the time."⁴⁷³ According to security officials and policymakers in Israel, "the first Palestinian incident was received with a great astonishment because until that day, the phenomenon of suicide terrorism was mostly limited to the Lebanon region."⁴⁷⁴ This marked the beginning of a Hamas suicide campaign that lasted from 1993 until 1996. During that three year time, Hamas engaged in 16 suicide attacks in which 119 people were killed and 467 people were injured.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷¹ Shaul Shay, *The Shahids: Islam and Suicide Attacks*, 52.

⁴⁷² Adam Dolnik and Anjali Bhattacharjee, "Hamas: Suicide Bombings, Rockets, or WMD?" 110.

⁴⁷³ Ami Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 55.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ These statistics were compiled using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), and the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

What shocked many in Israel about Hamas' campaign of suicide attacks was that it targeted Israeli civilians. Public statements from Hamas claim that the group began to target Israeli civilians in response to Baruch Goldstein's Temple Mount massacre.⁴⁷⁶ In a sense, Hamas sought to capitalize on the rage many Palestinians felt in the aftermath of the Temple Mount carnage so it used the Goldstein atrocity to test whether the Palestinian public would accept their newfound tactic.⁴⁷⁷ When the retaliatory suicide attack against Israeli civilians was greeted with jubilation on the Palestinian side, Hamas must have realized that targeting civilians with suicide attacks could be integrated into a viable resistance strategy. Hamas made the necessary internal adjustments as it formed the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigade, which would dedicate itself to perpetrating suicide attacks against Israel.

Apart from revenge for the rampage of Baruch Goldstein, Hamas' first wave of suicide attacks was intended to spoil the forthcoming Oslo Accords. Indeed, the April 4, 1996 suicide attack that killed 8 and wounded 50 was an attempt to sabotage the Declaration of Principles and to undermine the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority. Hamas believed that the Oslo Accords were fundamentally flawed because they "would bring an end to [Hamas'] lofty vision of an establishment of an Islamic state on all Palestinian-Israeli territory."⁴⁷⁸ A two-state solution was irreconcilable to Hamas' goal of an Islamic Palestine, which included the occupied territories and

⁴⁷⁶ Dr. Baruch Goldstein was a Jewish settler from Hebron who had worked as a physician with Israel's Special Forces Unit. He was also a follower of radical Jewish Rabbi Kane. He entered into the Machpela Cave mosque and killed 30 worshippers with an automatic weapon.

⁴⁷⁷ Khaled Hroub, "Hamas after Shaykh Yasin and Rantisi." (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4, Summer 2004), 23.

⁴⁷⁸ Ami Pedhazur, *Suicide Terrorism*, 58.

Israel. Hamas argued that historic Palestine, which included the state of Israel, comprised a holy land (*waqf*), which had been endowed to all Muslim generations ‘until the day of resurrection.’⁴⁷⁹ As a result, a solution that did not involve the return of the entire *waqf* should be rejected. Moreover, the accords granted Fatah a dominant status in the Palestinian Authority in terms of creating and implementing policy. As such, it became evident that Islamic organizations like Hamas would have no voice in the political process.

Toward the end of its first campaign of suicide attacks, Hamas succeeded in its role as saboteur. At the end of 1996, the peace process was in disarray and Hamas had created a climate of fear within Israel. Additionally, Hamas conducted two devastating suicide attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv before the Israeli general election. The attacks killed 33 and wounded 110 and, according to Mia Bloom, prompted the Israeli public to elect the conservative Likud party candidate Benjamin Netanyahu who declared his firm opposition to the peace process.⁴⁸⁰

The limited nature with which Hamas used suicide attacks during this period suggests an organization that was carefully implementing a new strategy. As aforementioned, there were only 16 attacks in a three year period. The primary reasons why Hamas did not utilize suicide attacks more during this period are a combination of organizational and ideological restraints. Ideologically, Hamas was in the process of developing a sophisticated martyrdom ideology that would be presented to the potential suicide attacker. As Mohammed Hafez observes, the incentive for martyrdom during the first intifada was presented by Hamas to the attacker in a

⁴⁷⁹ See Hamas Charter chapter III, article 11.

⁴⁸⁰ Mia Bloom, “Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding,” (*Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 1, 2004), 63.

largely ‘top-down approach.’⁴⁸¹ Hamas recruiters utilized the *dawa* social network system it inherited from the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, recruiters would often visit mosques and religious schools in search of martyrs. Most of the martyrs-to-be were recruited and then immediately “kept in isolation for several weeks [to months for] mental, technical and [religious] preparation.”⁴⁸² Additionally, as Quintan Wiktorowicz notes, during the first intifada support for suicide bombings in Palestine “never exceeded a third of the population and generally hovered around 25%.”⁴⁸³ This translated into organizational restraints as Hamas had to choose its targets selectively, only attacking when it believed there was a promising opportunity to marginalize the PLO or disrupt the peace process. During the second intifada, these organizational restraints began to disappear. As Hamas developed a more robust martyrdom ideology, more members of the Palestinian population sought to become suicide attackers. This gave Hamas’ Izz al-Din al-Qassam the strategic flexibility to unleash their newfound ‘arsenal of believers’ to pressure Israel into making unilateral concessions.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸¹ Mohammed Hafez, “Manufacturing Human bombs,” (Paper given at the University of Texas-Austin, 2006), 6. Available online at www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/government/content/workshop_papers/hafez.pdf. Accessed on 9/7/2009.

⁴⁸² Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, “Suicide Bombers Change Mideast’s Military Balance,” (*The Washington Post*, 8/18/2002). Available online at www.washingtonpost.com. Accessed on 10/11/09.

⁴⁸³ Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Suicide Bombings: Do Beliefs Matter?” (Memphis: Rhodes College Working Paper, 2004), 3.

⁴⁸⁴ The term ‘arsenal of believers’ is taken from Nasra Hassan, “An Arsenal of Believers,” (*The New Yorker*, November 19, 2001). Available online at www.newyorker.com. Accessed on 10/6/2009.

4.3.2 Suicide Attacks and the Second Intifada

During the months preceding the second intifada, the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians was stalling. In July 2000, the peace summit at Camp David between U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barack and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat failed to produce a comprehensive peace agreement. According to Charles Enderlin, the four issues preventing an agreement involved questions over what constituted a sovereign Palestinian territory, who would have control over Jerusalem, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and what unilateral security measures Israel could take if Palestinian violence erupted.⁴⁸⁵ The failure of the peace process also hardened Israeli and Palestinian attitudes against one another. On the Palestinian side, a poll conducted by the *Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research* found that 60% of Palestinians believed that peace between Israel and Palestine was ‘impossible or definitely impossible’ and that 66% believed that ‘violent confrontation’ was the only way to secure an independent Palestinian state.⁴⁸⁶ This general feeling of pessimism and anger created a Palestinian populace who was willing to re-engage in violent conflict with Israel. Once the second intifada erupted, Hamas and its potent martyrdom ideology would take full advantage of this atmosphere.

⁴⁸⁵ Charles Enderlin, *Shattered Dreams: The Failure of the Peace Process in the Middle East, 1995-2002*, (New York: Other Press, 2003), 177-187.

⁴⁸⁶ “Public Opinion Poll #1, Camp David Summit, Chances for Reconciliation and Lasting Peace, Violence and Confrontations, Hierarchies of Priorities and Domestic Politics,” (*Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research*, July 27-29, 2000). Available online at <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2000/p1a.html>. Accessed on 10/19/2009.

The second intifada started on September 28, 2000 and would prove to be much more violent than the first. It is commonly asserted that the trigger for the second collective uprising was a visit to the Temple Mount by future Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.⁴⁸⁷ Captured by Israel in the 1967 war, the Temple Mount (known to Muslims as the Haram al Sharif) is sacred to all three Abrahamic faiths because it is the location where it is believed Abraham bound his son Isaac to offer him as a burnt offering to God.⁴⁸⁸ Additionally, for Jews, the Temple Mount is the site where King Solomon built the first Jewish temple almost 3,000 years ago. For Muslims, the Haram al Sharif is where the Prophet Mohammad, accompanied by the Angel Gabriel, made the night journey to Allah's heavenly throne where the Prophet saw all the wonders of the afterlife.⁴⁸⁹ According to Sharon, he visited the Temple Mount "in order to see what happens here and really to help the feeling that we are now ready to move forward."⁴⁹⁰ Despite Sharon's peaceful intentions, his visit was decried as another example of Israel's occupying presence.

⁴⁸⁷ An alternative view by Jonathan Schanzer claims that Sharon's visit was not the cause of the second intifada. Instead, he quotes Imad Faluji, a communications director of the PA, as saying that the violence was 'planned since Arafat's return from Camp David.' In this view, the visit of Sharon to the Temple Mount presented a convenient opportunity to instigate the uprising. See Jonathan Schanzer, *Hamas vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 58.

⁴⁸⁸ In Judaism this is known as the akedah or the 'binding.' See Genesis 22: 1-18 and Koran Al-Saffat 37: 102-110.

⁴⁸⁹ Koran, Sura Al-Isra: 17:1.

⁴⁹⁰ "2000: Provocative Mosque Visit Sparks Riots," (*BBC*). Article available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/28/newsid_3687000/3687762.stm. Accessed on 10/19/2009.

Soon after Sharon left the Temple Mount, angry demonstrators clashed with the Israeli police forces.⁴⁹¹

From the outset of the second intifada, Israel noticed something different. While Hamas perpetrated the first suicide attack in the second intifada targeting Israeli citizens on January 8, 2001, secular organizations like the PFLP and Fatah's newly created Al Aqsa Martyr Brigade (AMB) also began to engage in suicide attacks.⁴⁹² According to Mia Bloom, the secular organizations adopted suicide attacks as a way to outbid and marginalize their Islamic competitors.⁴⁹³ As Bloom notes, the secular PFLP and AMB organizations were engaged in a battle of legitimacy against the Islamic organizations like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). When looking at inter-group dynamics, this explanation is certainly plausible. Not wanting to be marginalized, the PFLP and AMB adopted a tactic that would raise their visibility. Indeed, the PFLP and AMB must have seen how much attention was devoted to Hamas' suicide attacks, especially those targeting Israeli civilians. While Bloom's explanation is useful in seeing how different groups vie for perceived legitimacy in a population, there are three shortcomings with her argument.

First, there is evidence that Hamas collaborated with PIJ and AMB. Michele Esposito finds that Hamas worked together with PIJ and AMB on as many as 10 suicide attacks.⁴⁹⁴ With 142 total suicide attacks during the second intifada, this means that roughly 7% of the attacks

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² See Global Terrorism Database.

⁴⁹³ Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 29-31.

⁴⁹⁴ Michele Esposito, "The Al-Aqsa Intifada: Military Operations, Suicide Attacks, Assassinations, and Losses in the First Four Years," (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Winter 2005), 108.

involved collaboration between Hamas and another group. It is hard to imagine groups engaged in such an intense competitive struggle would collaborate at all. Also, looking at the aggregate number of suicide attacks performed from 2001-2006 during the second intifada reveals that 66% of them were perpetrated by Hamas.⁴⁹⁵ Rather than competition, this suggests that PIJ, PFLP and AMB adopted the strategy as a way to stay relevant in the struggle for Palestine.

Second, focusing on inter-group competition ignores external factors that prompted other organizations to adopt suicide attacks, the most critical being Israel's policy of targeted killing. Instead of competing with one another, the PFLP, PIJ, and AMB could have adopted the tactic out of a defensive need to retaliate against Israel's targeted assassination policy.

Finally, the inter-group competition all but ignores how the PFLP and AMB copied Hamas' martyrdom ideology. Although avowedly nationalist in their goals, both the PFLP and the AMB began to entice potential attackers with talk of martyrdom. The PFLP and AMB were attempting to inject an Islamic concept that was, until that point, strictly used by Hamas in the hope of tapping into a population increasingly drawn by the promises of martyrdom. The sheer power of this ideology is best demonstrated by the speed and frequency with which Hamas sent suicide attackers to target Israel.

During the first intifada, Hamas averaged around five suicide attacks per year. These attacks were usually spread out, as they had to be timed carefully to disrupt the peace process. During the second intifada, Hamas' use of suicide attacks soared to 18.8 per year. What is most striking in this period is the increase in the frequency of the attacks. The lag time between attacks that existed in the first intifada was gone in the second intifada. As was noted earlier, the first intifada saw Hamas marketing martyrdom mainly through a top-down approach. This

⁴⁹⁵ See Global Terrorism Database.

required Hamas to actively identify recruits that would participate in suicide attacks. As such, Hamas had to scout out potential suicide attackers then sequester them to instill in them the desire for martyrdom.

This dynamic changed completely in the second intifada. Hamas did not have to invest nearly as much time identifying, recruiting and ideologically preparing young martyrs-to-be because the allure of martyrdom had set in for those Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁴⁹⁶ Instead, as former Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin noted, “our biggest problem is the hordes of young men who beat on our doors, clamoring to be sent [on a suicide attack]. It is difficult to only select a few. Those whom we turn away return again and again, pestering us and pleading to be accepted.”⁴⁹⁷ During the second intifada, Hamas had too many willing recruits, which allowed the group to expand the manner in which it used suicide attacks. For instance, Hamas was able to participate in simultaneous attacks where the organization sent two suicide attackers to strike different parts and/or targets in Israel. Hamas could also send attackers in a relatively back-to-back fashion. Perhaps the most infamous example of this occurred in May of 2003 where Hamas dispatched one suicide attacker on May 14, one on May 17, two on May 18, one on May 23 and finally one on May 27.⁴⁹⁸ Finally, Hamas made it a point to target Israeli civilians in public places. Suicide attackers detonated themselves in cafes, nightclubs, restaurants, and buses creating a palpable climate of fear within Israel.

⁴⁹⁶ See David Brooks, “Culture of Martyrdom,” (*The Atlantic*, June 2002). Article available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200206/brooks>. Accessed on 10/2/09.

⁴⁹⁷ Sheikh Ahmad Yassin quoted in Hassan, Nasra, "An Arsenal of Believers."

⁴⁹⁸ See GTD database.

The ferocity with which Hamas unleashed suicide attackers in the second intifada produced three tangible results. The first was that public support for suicide attacks rose dramatically. As aforementioned, Palestinian public support for suicide attacks in the first intifada had hovered between 25-33%. By the end of 2003, a poll revealed that 74.5% of the Palestinian population supported suicide attacks against Israel.⁴⁹⁹ The increase in support for suicide attacks during the second intifada is largely due to Hamas' organizational success in marketing martyrdom at the grass-roots level. Israel also contributed to Palestinian public support of suicide attacks by its controversial counter-terrorism policy of targeted killings.⁵⁰⁰ This policy only heightened the strong feelings of resentment that Palestinians had toward Israelis.

Secondly, the suicide attack campaign during the second intifada increased popular support for Hamas amongst the population. According to a poll conducted by the *Jerusalem Media and Communications Center* in June 2004, public support for Hamas rose to 22% while support for Fatah fell to 26%.⁵⁰¹ This increase in public popularity would translate into political gains for Hamas during the 2004-2005 municipal elections and later in the 2006 Palestinian

⁴⁹⁹ Mohammed Hafez, 'Manufacturing Human Bombs,' 9.

⁵⁰⁰ See Mohammed Hafez and Joseph Hatfield, "Do Targeted Assassinations Work? A Multivariate Analysis of Israel's Controversial Tactic during Al-Aqsa Uprising," (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 29) 2006).

⁵⁰¹ See "Opinion No. 51," (*Jerusalem Media and Communication Center*, June 2004). Available online at www.jmcc.org. Accessed on 10/5/09.

Legislative Council Elections, which effectively made Hamas the governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁵⁰²

Finally, Hamas' suicide campaign pressured Israel to engage in unilateral withdrawals of Israeli territory. As Ami Pedhazur notes, the deadly wave of suicide attacks directly "contributed to the acceleration of the Israeli withdrawal from cities in the West Bank, Judea, Samaria and Gaza Strip."⁵⁰³ The Israeli public, now thoroughly disillusioned with the peace process, "was willing to accept the idea of secession from the territories without a Palestinian commitment to peace or even an end to terror."⁵⁰⁴

To summarize what has been argued thus far, one must remember that Hamas has used suicide attacks out of a defensive necessity to achieve a strategic end. Suicide attacks in the first intifada sought to engage Israeli militarily and disrupt the Oslo Peace Agreements in 1993 and later the Declaration of Principles in 1996 between Israel and the PLO. In the second intifada, Hamas continued to disrupt the peace process, gained increasing popularity amongst the Palestinian public, which translated into political clout for Hamas, and prompted Israel to engage in territorial concessions. The next section investigates how martyrdom attracts individuals to become suicide attackers.

⁵⁰² Minna Saarnivaara, "Suicide Campaigns as a Strategic Choice: The Case of Hamas," (*Policing*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 2008), 429.

⁵⁰³ Ami Pedhazur, *Suicide Terrorism*, 65.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

4.4 THE ALLURE OF MARTYRDOM: A POWERFUL INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVE FOR DEATH

The question as to why an individual would wear a suicide vest and detonate it on a bus, in a mall or at a restaurant is a troubling one, which has produced various popular explanations one of which is that suicide attackers are poor, uneducated, or have psychological problems. Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova have dispelled the myth that suicide attackers are impoverished and uneducated youths. Their research indicates that suicide attackers are in their mid to late twenties, they are better educated when compared with the national population from which they come and rarely come from families plagued by poverty.⁵⁰⁵ They note that suicide attackers overwhelmingly come from the middle class and many have college degrees or post graduate degrees in engineering or the hard sciences.⁵⁰⁶ As for the psychological state of the suicide attackers, Nasra Hassan notes that they “all seemed to be entirely normal members of their families. They were polite and serious, and in their communities they were considered to be model youths. Most were bearded. All were deeply religious. Many of these young men had memorized large sections of the Koran and were well versed in the finer points of Islamic law and practice.”⁵⁰⁷ Contrary to the popular misconception that suicide attackers are insane or

⁵⁰⁵ Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, “Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?” (*Journal of Economic Perspective*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2003), 136. See also Alberto Abadie, “Poverty, Political Freedom and the Roots of Terrorism,” (*National Bureau of Economic Research*, October 2004). Available online at www.nber.org/papers/w10859. Accessed on 10/19/2009.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Nasra Hassan, “An Arsenal of Believers.”

psychologically disturbed, Hassan notes, that “[t]hey *are so normal for their communities and societies.*”⁵⁰⁸ If suicide attackers are not poor, uneducated, or psychologically disturbed, then something else must be drawing them to participate in the attack. This section argues that what primarily attracts the Hamas suicide bomber to become a human bomb is a potent mixture of martyrdom, and the post-mortem incentives it provides, and hatred of the Israeli ‘other.’ This combination creates an outlet for the hatred the bombers hold against Israelis as well as a belief that martyrdom is the highest goal one can achieve. Hamas uses written testaments and videos as a way to cement the individual’s commitment. This is a ‘martyrdom contract’ that ensures an individual will attain all the benefits of martyrdom if the person successfully completes the suicide mission.

4.4.1 Suicide, Martyrdom, Hatred and the Hamas Attacker

There is an uncomfortable tension for the potential Hamas suicide attacker. In order for the Hamas member to achieve martyrdom, the martyr-to-be must commit suicide. Just as in Judaism and Christianity, suicide is forbidden (*haram*) in Islamic teaching. According to Franz Rosenthal, the Islamic theological attitude towards suicide can be expressed as follows: “suicide is an unlawful act and the person who commits suicide will be doomed to continually repeat in

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid. Emphasis added.

Hell the action by which he killed himself.”⁵⁰⁹ This is supported by various *hadith*, the oral statements of the prophet Mohammad, which say:

- The Prophet was present when a wounded man killed himself. Then God said, ‘My servant anticipated my action by taking his soul in his own hand; therefore, he will not be admitted into Paradise.’⁵¹⁰
- The Prophet said, ‘Whoever strangles himself will repeat his deed in the Fire, and whoever kills himself by stabbing his own body with some weapon will repeat his deed in the Fire.’⁵¹¹
- The Prophet said, “Whoever kills himself with a steel instrument will be punished by the same manner in the fire of Hell.”⁵¹²

The numerous *hadith* that condemn suicide coupled with the Koranic injunction not to take one’s own life posed a problem for Hamas clerics seeking to legitimize suicide attacks. To get around this, Hamas clerics turned to a tenth century thinker named Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi. In his writings, Tawhidi discusses two lesser-known *hadith* where suicide was considered appropriate:

- One hadith reports of a man who fought on the side of the Muslims and was seriously wounded and in order to shorten his sufferings he fell on his sword and ended his life. Tawhidi notes that ‘since the Prophet had predicted that this man

⁵⁰⁹ Franz Rosenthal, "On Suicide in Islam," (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 66, No. 3, 1946), 246.

⁵¹⁰ Hadith quoted in *Ibid.*, 243-244.

⁵¹¹ Hadith quoted in *Ibid.*, 244.

⁵¹² Hadith quoted in *Ibid.*, 244.

would be doomed in spite of the valor he displayed for the Muslim cause, his suicide was an indication that the Prophet had not been mistaken.”⁵¹³

- The second involves a story that Tawhidi recounts: “[r]ecently we saw what happened to a learned Sayh. This Sayh had come to live in very reduced circumstances. Therefore, people began to avoid him more and more, and his acquaintances no longer wanted to have anything to do with him. This went on for a while until one day he entered his home, tied a rope to the roof of his room, and hanged himself, thus ending his life. When we learned about the affair, we were shocked and grieved. We discussed his story back and forth, and one of those present said: ‘What an excellent fellow! He acted like a man! What a splendid thing he did of his own free will! His action indicates magnanimity and a great staunchness of mind. He freed himself from a long drawn-out misery and from circumstances which were unbearable.’”⁵¹⁴

What both stories cited by Tawhidi have in common is that they address the *intent* of the person committing suicide. In the first story, the wounded soldier is not committing suicide to escape his life, but rather he commits suicide to free himself from the wounds suffered while fighting for the cause of Islam. In the second story, the man is lauded for removing himself from an unbearable situation. In fact, his action is praised as ‘magnanimous’ and one requiring a ‘great staunchness of mind.’ By focusing on intent, Hamas clerics and ideologues are able to skirt the Islamic injunction against suicide. This is best captured in two interviews done by Jerrold Post

⁵¹³ Tawhidi quoted in *Ibid.*, 244.

⁵¹⁴ Tawhidi quoted in *Ibid.*, 249.

with incarcerated Hamas operatives whose explosive devices failed to detonate. When asked whether his failed attack would have amounted to suicide, one responded by saying that “suicide is selfish, it is weak, it is mentally disturbed. This is *isthishad* (martyrdom or self-sacrifice in the service of Allah).”⁵¹⁵ The other objected to the term suicide and said, “a martyrdom operation is the highest level of jihad, and highlights the depth of our faith. The bombers are holy fighters who carry out one of the most important articles of faith.”⁵¹⁶ This sentiment is echoed by former Hamas leader and ideologue Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi who said, “suicide depends on volition. If the martyr intends to kill himself, because he is tired of life, it is suicide. However, if he wants to sacrifice his soul in order to strike the enemy and to be rewarded by Allah-he is considered a martyr [rather than someone who committed suicide].”⁵¹⁷ For the Hamas suicide operative, his intent is not to kill or to escape the world, but rather it is to embrace martyrdom in order to achieve the goal of a liberated Palestine. The operative is also enticed by certain post-mortem incentives to become a martyr.

Martyrdom has a long history in Islam because “it is rooted in the fact that from the beginning of the religion, Muslims died in the struggle to establish and expand the Islamic state,

⁵¹⁵ Jerrold Post et al. "The Terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists," (*Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 2003), 179.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 179.

⁵¹⁷ Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi quoted in "Debating the Religious, Political, and Moral Legitimacy of Suicide Bombings: Part I," (*The Middle East Media Research Institute, Inquiry and Analysis*, No. 53, May 3, 2001). Available online at www.memri.org. Accessed on 9/9/2009.

and their deaths in the course of this struggle were remembered and celebrated.”⁵¹⁸ As such, the martyr is portrayed as someone who has died valorously defending the faith having achieved a great reward that the living can only imagine. Hamas points to the numerous descriptions of Paradise in the Holy Koran as a way to help convince potential suicide attackers. Such verses include:

- Surah 38: 49-52-“For the righteous, [Paradise] is a beautiful place of [final] return...Gardens of Eternity, whose doors will [ever] be open to them; therein they will recline [at ease]: therein they can call [at pleasure] for fruit in abundance, and [delicious] drink; and beside them will be chaste women...of equal age.”⁵¹⁹
- Surah 78: 31-36-“Verily for the Righteous there will be a fulfillment of [the heart’s] desires [in Paradise]; gardens enclosed, and grapevines, companions of equal age; and a cup full [to the brim]. No vanity shall they hear therein, not untruth-recompense from thy Lord, a gift [amply] sufficient.”⁵²⁰
- Surah 55: 54-56-“They [the houris] will recline on carpets, whose inner linings will be of rich brocade: the fruit of the gardens will be near [and easy of reach]. Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny? In them will be [Maidens-

⁵¹⁸ Daniel Brown, “Martyrdom” in Richard Martin, ed., *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, (New York: MacMillan, 2004), 431.

⁵¹⁹ *The Holy Koran*, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

the houris], chaste, restraining their glances, whom no man or jinn before has touched.”⁵²¹

- Surah 37: 40-48-“But the sincere [and devoted] servants of Allah [the martyrs]- for them is a sustenance determined, fruits [delights]; and they shall enjoy honour and dignity, in gardens of felicity, facing each other on thrones [of dignity]; round will be passed to them a cup from a clear-flowing fountain, crystal-white, of a taste delicious to those who drink [thereof], free from headiness; nor will they suffer intoxication therefrom. And besides them will be chaste women; restraining their glances, with big eyes [of wonder and beauty]. As if they were [delicate] eggs closely guarded.”⁵²²
- Surah 44: 51-56-“As to the righteous [they will be] in a position of security. Among gardens and springs; dressed in fine silk and in rich brocade, they will face each other; moreover, we shall join them to companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes [the houris]. There can they call for every kind of fruit in peace and security; nor will they there taste death, except the first death; and He will preserve them from the penalty of the blazing fire. As a bounty from thy Lord! That will be the supreme achievement!”⁵²³
- Surah 83: 22-28-“Truly the righteous will be in bliss: on thrones [of dignity] will they command a sight [of all things]: thou wilt recognize in their faces the beaming brightness of bliss. Their thirst will be slaked with pure wine sealed: the

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

seal thereof will be musk: and for this let those aspire, who have aspirations: with it will be [given] a mixture of tansim [the purest wine]: a spring, from [the waters] whereof drink those nearest to Allah.”⁵²⁴

Other theological benefits to being a martyr include an immediate ascension into heaven. This means that the martyr avoids the two great trials: one by the angels Munkar and Nakir, and the second happening on Judgment Day. The martyrs are spared from the Day of Judgment because their “sins have been cancelled by their meritorious life and death.”⁵²⁵ The martyr is also able to be an intercessor for those friends and family members who might not escape damnation in Hell. Once in Paradise, “they share the place closest to the throne of God with the prophets, wear jeweled crowns, and are each given seventy houris (virgins of Paradise).”⁵²⁶ Additionally, upon the martyr’s death, his or her family receives a monetary payment. Families of Hamas suicide bombers receive from \$3,000 to \$5,000 U.S. dollars for a martyr’s death.⁵²⁷ Moreover, the title ‘family of a noble martyr’ is bestowed on the family, which is tantamount to an elevation in status.⁵²⁸

It should be noted that the Islamic martyr is like “an athlete, who anoints himself, enters the arena, meets his adversary in personal battle, reports victory [through death] and is crowned

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ A.J. Wensinck, "The Original Doctrine of the Martyrs," (*Semietische Studien Uit de Nalatenschap*, 1941), 92.

⁵²⁶ Daniel Brown, *Martyrdom*, 432.

⁵²⁷ Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs*, (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 131.

⁵²⁸ Ibid. See also Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 51.

with a wreath.”⁵²⁹ This makes martyrdom an active endeavor, which is to be sought after. As such, death and martyrdom are portrayed by Hamas as a noble virtue, while the natural or accidental death is banal, ignoble and to be avoided at all cost. Additionally, Hamas emphasizes that those who die ‘in the way of God’ (*fi sabil Allah*) are not dead, but rather are living. They quote Surah 2: 154, which says “And say not of those slain in God’s way, ‘They are dead;’ rather, they are living, but you are not aware.’ Similarly in Surah 3: 169-171: “Count not those who were slain in God’s way as dead, but rather living with their Lord, by Him provided, rejoicing in the bounty God has given them, because no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow, joyful in blessing and bounty from God, and that God leaves not to waste the wage of the believers.”

In sum, the martyr escapes death because he is able to transcend it. The Hamas suicide attacker attempts to follow in the footsteps of the prophet Elijah who was not killed but rather was taken to Heaven by a blazing chariot of fire.⁵³⁰ In the current context, the blazing chariot of fire has become the suicide vest, and the invitation to become a martyr has become a powerful incentive for the individual to don and detonate the vest. Martyrdom’s magnetism is best described by Hasan al-Banna who said:

“Brother! God gives the *ummah* (the Islamic community) that is skilled in the practice of death and that knows how to die a noble death an exalted life in this world and eternal felicity in the next. What is the fantasy that has reduced to loving this world and hating death? If you gird yourselves for a lofty deed and yearn for death, life shall be given to

⁵²⁹ A.J. Wensinck, "The Original Doctrine of the Martyrs," 105.

⁵³⁰ See II Kings: 2: 1-12

you...Know, then, that death is inevitable, and that it can only happen once. If you suffer in the way of God, it will profit you in this world and bring your reward in the next.”⁵³¹

The allure of martyrdom and the post-mortem benefits it confers on individuals is a primary motivating factor to convince an individual to strap on a suicide vest, but it is not the only one. Almost as powerful as martyrdom is the presence of an intense hatred harbored by the suicide operative for the Israeli occupier. As the first section of this chapter noted, the MB and Hamas are influenced by an ideology possessing a strong and virulent anti-Semitism. Such is the case for the individual suicide attacker. As psychologist Jerrold Post notes, those who live in the West Bank and Gaza have been raised in a climate of hopelessness and despair, with ‘hatred bred in the bone’ so that violence against Israeli civilians is not only tolerated but also encouraged.⁵³² This hatred demonizes and delegitimizes the humanity of the Israeli ‘other’ who is denigrated as less than human.⁵³³ The Jews are derided as being ‘the worst enemies of the Muslims believers,’ ‘the falsifiers of Divine Truth,’ and the ‘slayers and transgressors against the prophets who were sent to them.’⁵³⁴ The suicide operative is told to meditate on Koranic Surah al-Maida 5: 64, which says that ‘their hands [the Jews’] shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they

⁵³¹ Hasan al Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949): A Selection from the Maju’at Rasa’il al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna.* Translated by Charles Wendell, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 156.

⁵³² Jerrold Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-Cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism." (*Political Psychology*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 2005), 635.

⁵³³ Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, “Pedagogy of Hate,” (*Jerusalem Post*, January 4, 2004. Available online at <http://www.pmw.org.il/>. Accessed on 10/22/09.

⁵³⁴ Ronald Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews*, 11.

say...we have put enmity and hatred among them till the day of resurrection.” As Hilal Khashan observes, this “vilification invites dehumanization, which makes it appear as if it were morally permissible to unleash indiscriminate terror [and violence] against Jews.”⁵³⁵

The combination of martyrdom and hatred is a powerful lure for those individuals wanting to become a suicide attacker. By calling the suicide attacker a *shahid* Hamas has opened the gates of paradise to any individual willing to obliterate him or herself with a suicide vest. The martyr-to-be will join the ranks of Imam Hussein and other famous Islamic martyrs. Additionally, dying a martyr’s death allows the individual to have “all the things they have been denied in life, namely a paradisiacal existence.”⁵³⁶ The martyr is able to spend eternity in comfort and ease through his or her sacrifice. As Hamas ideologue Dr. Azzam al-Tamini confirms, “[f]or us Muslims, martyrdom is not the end of things, but the beginning of the most wonderful of things. In the next life one is in an everlasting bliss.”⁵³⁷ Finally, martyrdom becomes liberation for both the individual and the future Palestinian community, which in turn makes martyrdom an ideal that has intrinsic value. The martyr liberates his or her self from the travails of earthly life and contributes to the founding of a free and independent Palestinian state. Indeed, the “blood of the martyrs provides nourishment and sustenance for those who continue to struggle” against the Israelis.⁵³⁸ As such, the combination of martyrdom’s post-mortem

⁵³⁵ Hilal Khashan, “Collective Palestinian Frustration and Suicide Bombings,” (*Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 6, December 2003), 1053.

⁵³⁶ Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs*, 49.

⁵³⁷ Adam Pashut, "Dr. Azzam Al-Tamimi: A Political-Ideological Brief," (*Middle East Media Research Institute*, No. 163, February 19, 2004), 2.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

incentives and hatred for the enemy ensured that Hamas had plenty of volunteers during the second intifada who were willing to die. While the allure of martyrdom and hatred were no doubt strong, Hamas devised ways in order to solidify an individual's commitment to death through the use of videos and final testaments.

4.4.2 The Martyrdom Video and Final Testament: A Contract for Death

While preparation to become a Hamas suicide attacker is undoubtedly focused on the hereafter and hating the Israeli occupier, the individual must be primed to follow through with his or her mission.⁵³⁹ Two ways this is accomplished is through the martyrdom video and final testament. These are important methods because they bring the reality of death to the attacker. According to Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, the martyr videotapes “are generally of very poor quality, many having been recorded over pirated versions of movies like *Hulk Hogan Suburban Commando* and *Terminator 2*, themselves often the copies of copies of copies.”⁵⁴⁰ The tapes are frequently made the night before a suicide operation. The Hamas videos follow a similar format in that the candidate wears a green mask, brandishes as many weapons as he or she is physically

⁵³⁹ A former Hamas member who trained suicide attackers commented, “we focus his [the suicide attacker] on Paradise, on being in the presence of Allah, on meeting the Prophet Muhammad, on interceding for his loved ones, so that they too can be saved from the agonies of Hell, the houris, and on fighting the Israeli occupation and removing it from the Islamic trust that is Palestine.’ See Nasra Hassan, “An Arsenal of Believers.”

⁵⁴⁰ Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, *The Road to Martyr's Square*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 152.

able to hold, wears the suicide vest and clutches a copy of the Koran. The videos serve two main purposes.

First, the videotapes act as ‘plays’ of the upcoming attack in that the attacker tells the viewer exactly what he or she intends on doing. In this view, the video serves a practical purpose because it is a chance for the attacker to review and familiarize him or herself with the logistical steps needed to complete the suicide operation. One often sees the martyr doing routine work such as inspecting the suicide vest, cleaning a gun or sharpening a knife. Once the weaponry is examined, other actors pretending to be Jews enter the foreground.⁵⁴¹ Those playing the Jews wear hideous Halloween masks, signifying the Jews as the demonic enemy of Muslims. The martyr then slips into their midst, smiles at the cameraman and yells ‘Allahu Akbar’ (God is Great). After the cry, there is a fake explosion and the Jews fall to the ground, but the perpetrator remains standing. Some of the martyrdom videos in the second intifada have become a bit more sophisticated using special effects technology. One video uses animation that portrays “a disembodied arm [that] repeatedly stabs an Israeli soldier with a dagger. The arm is formed from the word ‘ Hamas,’ while bloody letters above spell out ‘Allahu Akbar.’”⁵⁴² This is a type of quasi-theater so that the operative is able to act out what he or she intends to do in a few hours.

Second, the filming of the video means that the individual’s martyrdom is imminent. One Hamas volunteer of a failed suicide attack commented on the immediacy of paradise: “[i]t is very, very near-right in front of [my] eyes. It lies beneath the thumb. On the other side of the

⁵⁴¹ It is assumed that the other actors are Hamas members that have had a role in the training or planning of the mission.

⁵⁴² Ibid., 152.

detonator.”⁵⁴³ It is here where the video takes on more than a theatrical significance. The video now becomes a type of ‘martyrdom contract’ between the individual and the terrorist organization. The individual is promised martyrdom *if* he or she succeeds in successfully detonating the suicide vest. It is at this point that the individual becomes the *al shahid al hayy*, the living martyr. The individual is told that he or she occupies some plane of existence between the living and the dead. This is the point of no return for the potential attacker. If the person backs out now then he or she is cast away in shame. According to Nasra Hassan, at this stage “the young men undergo intensified spiritual exercises, including prayers and recitations of the Koran...which feature such themes as jihad, the birth of the nation of Islam, war, Allah’s favors, and the importance faith. The living martyr does lengthy fasts...[and] he spends much of the night praying.”⁵⁴⁴ The living martyr also charges another Hamas member to pay off all his debts and he asks for forgiveness for actual or perceived offenses.⁵⁴⁵ Additionally, the living martyr is made to watch the other videos of martyrs who have gone before him or her. As one Hamas trainer says, “these videos encourage him to confront death, not fear it. He becomes intimately familiar with what he is about to do. Then he can greet death like an old friend.”⁵⁴⁶

While the candidate is in the living martyr state, he or she is asked to write his final testament. Like the video, the final testament follows a format. The living martyr recounts how he or she has come to be where he or she is. Usually, this involves a story of how the individual was wronged by Israel. In the testaments translated by the *Middle Eastern Media Research*

⁵⁴³ Nasra Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers."

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

Institute (MEMRI), many explain how the individual lost a family member or loved one as a result of Israeli violence.⁵⁴⁷ Attackers claim to have lost siblings, parents, cousins, wives, and friends, which feeds the intense hatred of the attacker. Additionally, the testaments speak to the shame and humiliation that comes with life under occupation. Some testaments cite the difficulty this creates with obtaining a well paying job. However, the overarching theme in this respect is that Israel is acting purposefully to affront the attacker's dignity. As such, the suicide attacker is enacting revenge as a way to strike back at his or her oppressor.⁵⁴⁸

Next, the testaments discuss a verse of the Koran or a *hadith* in detail. The purpose of this is to demonstrate theological acumen in some point of Islamic theology or jurisprudence. The living martyr becomes more than a defender of the faith, but also a propagator of it as well. Here the living martyr is able to wax about the joys of martyrdom and the necessity of jihad against Israel.

Finally, the testament turns personal. The living martyr addresses his or her family and friends. This is the martyr's living will as the attacker gives away any possessions he or she might have. The attacker also gives instructions to the family member. A reoccurring theme is that the family should not be sad after the attacker's death, but rather they should hold a celebration honoring the sacrifice that was made. Indeed, the attacker describes the celebration as a 'wedding party' in which the individual is married to Paradise.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ These testaments are available online at www.memri.org.

⁵⁴⁸ Avishai Margalit, "The Suicide Bombers," (*The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 2003). Available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/15979>. Accessed on 10/22/09.

⁵⁴⁹ A typical Hamas 'wedding' announcement sounds like this: ' Hamas announces the marriage of Shahid Hussein to Paradise on this day of August 3, 2004.'

For male attackers, the wedding translates into the ‘services’ of the *houris* or the black-eyed virgins.⁵⁵⁰ While it is a settled point of Islamic theology that the *houris* serve no sexual purpose in Paradise, Hamas clerics have twisted this to claim that the black-eyed virgins will satisfy every desire of the *shahid*.⁵⁵¹ Indeed, one Hamas cleric named Sheikh Ayman Sayda has conducted a number of interviews for Palestinian television saying that Paradise is a place of infinite pleasure where the “black-eyed virgins [are] ready for you [the martyr].”⁵⁵² Another Hamas cleric named Imam Shaeb claims that “after your death you will be resurrected again as a healthy young man of 25 years old. There in heaven you will be given beautiful *houris*, wine, and plenty of foods to eat. You will stay young for ever and death, disease will never come near you again.”⁵⁵³ According to this, the male martyr will regain a body that is in its sexual prime supposedly enabling him to engage in sexual acts with the *houris*. It is interesting to note that this sexual aspect of Paradise does not exist for female suicide attackers. In fact, there is not an

⁵⁵⁰ Here are some of the Koranic descriptions of the *houris*: Koran 52: 17-20-‘they will recline with ease on thrones arranged in ranks. And we shall marry them to *houris* with wide lovely eyes. Koran 37: 40-48-‘they will sit with bashful, dark-eyed virgins, as chaste as the sheltered eggs of ostriches. Koran 78: 33-34-‘And young full-breasted maidens of equal age will greet them with a full cup of wine.’ Koran 40: 45-‘Surely for the God-fearing awaits a place of security gardens and vineyards and maidens with swelling bosoms.’

⁵⁵¹ See *The Holy Koran*, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1290. Here Ali states that the *houris* will serve as ‘social companionship’ rather than sexual companionship.

⁵⁵² “Hamas Muslim Clerics Promote the ‘Love of Death,” (*MEMRI TV Project*). Available online at www.memri.org. Accessed on 11/1/09.

⁵⁵³ Syed Kamran Mirza, “Islamic Heaven,” (*Islamic Review*, November 12, 2005). Available online at <http://www.islamreview.com/articles/islamicheavenprint.htm>. Accessed on November 02, 2009.

houris equivalent for female martyrs in Paradise.⁵⁵⁴ Instead, female suicide attackers are “married to their religion” and are hailed as the “chaste defenders of Islam.”⁵⁵⁵

With the individual attackers being motivated by a complex mix of martyrdom, and the post-mortem incentives it provides, as well as an intense hatred of the Israeli occupiers, the martyrdom videos and final testaments are practical elements that create a contract between the individual and the terrorist organization. In order to gain the benefits of the hereafter and enact revenge, the Hamas suicide attacker must fulfill his or her end of the bargain by engaging in a successful suicide attack. This narrative of martyrdom and hatred was a powerful draw for individual attackers during the second intifada. Additionally, Hamas was able to create support for their suicide attacks amongst the Palestinian population through an ingenious campaign designed to market martyrdom. The next section addresses how Hamas was able to accomplish this.

4.5 MARKETING MARTYRDOM: HOW HAMAS MAKES SUICIDE ATTACKS RESONATE WITH THE PALESTINIAN POPULATION

The fact that public support for suicide attacks remained consistently high during the second intifada and beyond is a testament to just how well Hamas marketed martyrdom to the Palestinian public. Hamas used different mediums in order to inculcate the population with the

⁵⁵⁴ For a discussion of female suicide bombers in the Palestinian conflict see Mia Bloom, “Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend,” (*Daedalus*, Winter 2007), 1-9.

⁵⁵⁵ See Debra Zedalis, “Female Suicide Bombers,” (*Strategic Studies Institute*, June 2004), 10.

belief that what the suicide attacker was doing was an act of heroic sacrifice rather than suicidal homicide. Hamas achieved this by engaging with the Palestinian population on numerous fronts. The first involves the vast network of social services that Hamas runs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The most important of these social services are the mosques and schools that Hamas funds and operates throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which teach grade school and high-school aged children to aspire to become martyrs. Additionally, Hamas utilizes an array of social media, which include primitive methods of posters and street art, to more advanced techniques like using the television and the internet to create popular support for martyrdom. By making use of education and social media, Hamas fashioned a culture of martyrdom within population that came to support suicide attacks.

4.5.1 Teaching Martyrdom through the Mosque and Schools

Perhaps the two most important venues Hamas used to create support for martyrdom was the mosque and the school. The mosques served two main functions. First, It was the prime recruitment environment for Hamas during the first and second intifadas.⁵⁵⁶ Since the mosque acted as a sanctuary from interference of the Israeli authorities, Hamas could send its scouts there in order to identify individuals they believed would make a good suicide attacker. With some 700 mosques in the West Bank and around 600 in the Gaza Strip, this ensured Hamas a steady

⁵⁵⁶ Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 101.

supply of potential recruits.⁵⁵⁷ Second, the mosques funded by Hamas became locations where one could hear sermons denigrating the Jews, glorifying suicide attackers and praising the martyr's everlasting life in heaven as well as propagating the notion that Israel and Palestine are locked in a holy war with one another.⁵⁵⁸ Below are parts of sermons delivered during the second intifada that were obtained and translated by the *Middle East Media Research Institute*:

- Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan on the war between Israel and Islam-“ Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Wherever you meet them, kill them. Wherever you are, kill those Jews and those Americans who are like them – and those who stand by them – they are all in one trench, against the Arabs and the Muslims – because they established Israel here, in the beating heart of the Arab world, in Palestine. They created it to be the outpost of their civilization – and the vanguard of their army, and to be the sword of the West and of the Crusaders, hanging over the necks of the monotheists, the Muslims in these lands. They wanted the Jews to be their spearhead... Allah, deal with the Jews, your enemies and the enemies of Islam. Deal with the crusaders, and America, and Europe behind them, O Lord of the worlds.”⁵⁵⁹
- Sheikh Abd Al-Aziz in Saleh al-Jarbu on warfare with Israel-"It has become clear to us from past experience that [Israel] is a country warring against Islam and Muslims. Indeed, it is its greatest enemy. It uses war against Islam, and crimes and corruption that are inconceivable to humankind. Thus, it should be treated according to the laws of war on Islam, and not according to [laws] of peace.”⁵⁶⁰
- Sheikh Ismail Aal Radwhan on martyrdom-““[Even when] a martyr's organs are being chopped off, and he turns into torn organs that spread all over, in order to meet Allah, Muhammad, and his friends, it would not be [considered] a loss...

⁵⁵⁷ Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, 16.

⁵⁵⁸ Yonah Alexander, "Expanding Culture of Suicide Terrorism," (*The Washington Times*, July 9, 2003).

Available online at www.washingtontimes.com. Accessed on 9/23/2009.

⁵⁵⁹ "Contemporary Islamist Ideology Authorizing Genocidal Murder," (*MEMRI*, Special Report, No. 25, 1/27/2004). Available online at http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR2504#_ednref10. Accessed on 10/25/09.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

This is the honor given to our martyrs, the martyrs of the Islamic nation, who were killed due to their loyalty to Allah... The sacrifice of convoys of martyrs [will continue] until Allah grants us victory very soon. The willingness for sacrifice and for death we see amongst those who were cast by Allah into a war with the Jews, should not come at all as a surprise... Oh believing brothers, we do not feel a loss...[t]he martyr, if he meets Allah, is forgiven with the first drop of blood; he is saved from the torments of the grave; he sees his place in Paradise; he is saved from the Great Horror [of the day of judgment]; he is given 72 black-eyed women; he vouches for 70 of his family to be accepted to Paradise; he is crowned with the Crown of glory, whose precious stone is better than all of this world and what is in it.”⁵⁶¹

Such sermons are often taped and distributed in local libraries where people are able to listen to them.⁵⁶² The sheer number of mosques in the West Bank and Gaza Strip ensure that a large portion of the Palestinian population has come in contact with such sermons. Another way that Hamas is able to create support for martyrdom entails supporting schools that teach jihad and glorify martyrdom to its students.

Hamas funded schools dominate the West Bank and Gaza Strip because they provide elementary and high-school education for Palestinian children at low cost. In addition to teaching the essentials of reading, writing, mathematics and the sciences, the students at these schools are given a steady dose of propaganda designed to praise suicide attackers and denounce Israelis. Indeed, a study funded by the Jerusalem based *Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace* finds that a majority of the textbooks published by Hamas and Fatah “do not recognize

⁵⁶¹ Steven Stalinsky, “Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000-2003,” (*MEMRI*, Special Report No. 24, December 26, 2003). Available online at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR2403>. Accessed on 10/22/09.

⁵⁶² Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*, 98. As Levitt notes, there are many thousands of such sermons available to interested parties.

any rights the Jews might have in Palestine.”⁵⁶³ Israel is not represented on any maps in textbooks and Palestine is “represented as a sovereign state in the region in place of Israel, alongside Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.”⁵⁶⁴ The textbooks present the Jews as evil without a single, positive redeeming trait.⁵⁶⁵ They often claim that the Jews came to Palestine in 1948 with genocidal like intentions. As two textbooks note:

- “The coming of the Jewish throngs to Palestine continued until 1948 and their goal was taking over the Palestinian lands and then taking the original inhabitants’ place after their expulsion or extermination.” From the *National Education Textbook*, Grade 7.⁵⁶⁶
- “Your enemies killed your children, split open your women’s bellies, held your revered elderly men by the beard, and led them to the death pits.” From the *Reading and Texts Textbook*, Grade 8.⁵⁶⁷

As such, the Jews are “mostly portrayed within the context of their political rivalry with the Prophet of Islam in Arabia, or within the context of the present conflict, which automatically casts them [the Jews], in both cases, into the category of villain.”⁵⁶⁸ The textbooks also give credibility to anti-Semitic propaganda such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The Protocols are presented as fact in a tenth grade book entitled *History of the Modern and*

⁵⁶³ Arnon Groiss, "Palestinian Textbooks: From Arafat to Abbas and Hamas," (*The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace and American Jewish Committee*, 2008), 2.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

Contemporary World, which teaches tenth graders that there is a secret Jewish cabal aspiring to world domination.⁵⁶⁹

Perhaps most importantly, the textbooks exalt jihad and martyrdom for the sake of the liberation of Palestine. The *Center for the Monitoring of Peace in Palestine* conducted a series of yearly reviews from 2001-2008, which found that jihad and martyrdom were portrayed positively in practically all textbooks from grades 1 to 12. Additionally, there are examples where students had to read pro-martyrdom literature and complete assigned homework making them reflect on martyrdom:

- Homework-“Mention the names of Palestinian and Arab Jihad fighters who fell as martyrs while defending Palestine.” From *National Education*, Grade 7.⁵⁷⁰
- Homework-“Let us write down the biography of some of the martyrs of Palestine, who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their homeland.” *National Education*, Grade 7.⁵⁷¹
- “Your enemies seek life and you seek death. They seek spoils to feed their empty stomachs and you seek a garden the width of which is both Heaven and earth [i.e. Paradise]. Do not be sad to encounter them, for [the taste of] death is not bitter in the believers’ mouth.” *Reading and Texts*, Grade 8.⁵⁷²
- “Hundreds of Palestinians, men and women, have fallen as martyrs in the intifada for the sake of liberty.” *Reading and Texts*, Grade 8.⁵⁷³
- “The Muslim nation should be bent on constantly preparing for Jihad, as it is a Jihadic nation. The construction of the Muslim state’s military power is not merely for defensive preparation [purposes]. It is rather a definite matter so that it will be easier for the [Muslim] state to perform what God has imposed on it,

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁷⁰ Arnon Groiss, “Jews, Israel and Peace in Palestinian School Textbooks,” (*The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace*, November 2001), 51.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 51.

⁵⁷² Arnon Groiss, “Jews, Israel, and Peace in Palestinian Textbooks,” (*The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace*, May 2003), 54.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 54.

namely, carrying the Islamic mission and announcing it to mankind.” *Islamic Systems*, Grade 12.⁵⁷⁴

- Jihad is considered a fundamental pillar of Islam and some of the jurists consider it ‘the Sixth Religious Duty.’ Moreover, it is the highest peak of Islam. Those of neglected Jihad were humiliated.”⁵⁷⁵
- “Palestine is the blessed land...Its soil has been watered by the blood of the heroic martyrs who died in battles for its liberation and defense since the [days of the Prophet’s] Companions to our own days.” *Islamic Education*, Grade 12.⁵⁷⁶
- “O my homeland, I would not cry in this wedding party [the martyr’s marriage to Paradise]. For our Arabness refuses that we cry over the martyrs.” *Arabic Language-Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 12.⁵⁷⁷

Students as young as six to eighteen-year-old young adults are exposed to a curriculum that glorifies jihad and martyrdom. For Hamas, this ensures that jihad and martyrdom are kept on the minds of those children growing up in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Children growing up believing that martyrdom is the highest virtue one can achieve are not shocked when a suicide attacker detonates himself in a public place killing civilians. In fact, the evidence indicates that children are being taught to idolize such an act. Other ways Hamas is able to increase public support for suicide attacks involves using various forms of media.

⁵⁷⁴ Arnon Groiss, “Jews, Israel and the West and Peace in the Palestinian Authority Textbooks For Grades 11, 12 and Muslim Schools in the West Bank,” (*Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education*, September 2007), 189.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Arnon Groiss, "Palestinian Textbooks: From Arafat to Abbas and Hamas," 16.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

4.5.2 Surrounded by Death: Posters, Television and the Internet

Perhaps the simplest yet most pervasive form of media that Hamas has utilized consistently during both the first and second intifada are posters. These posters use macabre images that combine death and happiness. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are littered with such posters giving the onlooker the impression that death “never felt so wondrous...so full of consequence and meaning, so self-fulfilling, so pleasurable, so lush and exciting.”⁵⁷⁸ The posters portray the martyr as someone who has left the troubles of this world and has collected a great reward in Paradise. The posters convey a simple point; martyrdom is the noblest of virtues, which should be sought after by anyone wishing for an end to the Israeli occupation. The violent content of the posters implore Palestinians to “beware of natural death [and] don’t die except in a shower of bullets.”⁵⁷⁹ With posters on street corners and billboards, one could “turn nowhere during the *intifada[s]* without encountering a call to death.”⁵⁸⁰ Indeed, the posters were a constant reminder that Palestine would only be liberated through the sacrifices of the martyrs.

The second intifada saw a proliferation of martyrdom posters in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As Hamas increased its use of suicide attacks, posters became the organization’s ‘calling card.’ This served as an important branding mechanism as it allowed the Palestinian public to associate the suicide attack with the Hamas organization. Indeed, within hours of a suicide operation a new poster was created hailing the act of the martyr. The more deadly the attack, the

⁵⁷⁸ Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, *The Road to Martyrs’ Square*, 122.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

larger and more elaborate the poster would be. According to Kevin Toolis, the posters represent a “competitive death league...[where] real glory, and the biggest print run of posters, is apportioned to those ‘bombing martyrs’ who make it through military checkpoints” or into civilian spaces and slay as many soldiers and civilians as possible.⁵⁸¹ Like the videos discussed in the previous section, martyrdom posters follow a similar and simple format.

The poster has a picture of the martyr, which is either a family photo, or one taken by a digital camera the night before the operation, and is transposed on a template. A typical Hamas poster has the martyr’s face cropped in the center or on the side. The terrorist organization then “formally introduces their latest killer: ‘The Islamic Resistance Movement [Hamas] proudly presents the executor of the Jerusalem martyrdom operation.’”⁵⁸² Enveloping the martyr is the template, which during the second intifada is a picture of the Al-Aqsa mosque since it has become a symbol associated with martyrdom. Underneath of the picture and introduction are Koranic verses extolling martyrdom. One of the most quoted verses is from Surah 33: 32, which states that “among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah; among them are those who had fulfilled their vow by dying, and others among them are awaiting [their deaths], and have not changed at all.”⁵⁸³ Other verses utilized by the posters emphasize the virtues of jihad and the pleasures of Paradise.

On a practical level, Hamas uses martyrdom posters to differentiate themselves from other terrorist organizations operating in Palestine. To this end, Hamas implants slogans or

⁵⁸¹ Kevin Toolis, “Walls of Death,” (*The Guardian*, 11/25/2003). Available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2003/nov/23/features.magazine47>. Accessed on 11/2/09.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ *The Holy Koran*, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

‘martyrdom catchphrases’ on their posters. For example, “‘ Hamas often capitalize[s] on the idea of personal salvation, as can be evidenced in slogans like...‘he who desires salvation follows Hamas.’”⁵⁸⁴ Another popular catchphrase comes from the Hamas charter stating, “Allah is its goal, the Prophet is its model, the Koran is its constitution, Jihad is its path, and death for the sake of Allah is its most coveted desire.”⁵⁸⁵ One other intriguing feature of the posters is that “the martyr is often addressed...as if still alive, [and] heroically invulnerable.”⁵⁸⁶ As aforementioned, the martyrs are never referred to in the past tense. This practice has made its way into Palestinian parlance as evidenced by an interview with a mother of a Hamas suicide attacker. When a Palestinian journalist asked how she felt about her son’s death she declared, “[m]y son is not destroyed, he is not dead; he is [in Paradise] living a happier life than I.”⁵⁸⁷ Posters are just one way that Hamas promotes martyrdom and violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Two other mediums Hamas has used effectively to market martyrdom are television and the internet.

Hamas created the ‘Al Aqsa Television Channel’ in an attempt to engage a larger Palestinian audience. This channel airs programming, which includes “ideologically tinged

⁵⁸⁴ Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, “Information and Revolutionary Ritual in Intifada Graffiti,” in Akiba Cohen ed., *Framing the Intifada: People and Media*, (Norwood: Alex Publishing Corporation, 1993), 9.

⁵⁸⁵ Hamas Charter, Article I, Section 8.

⁵⁸⁶ Anne Marie Oliver and Paul Steinberg, “Information and Revolutionary Ritual in Intifada Graffiti,” in Akiba Cohen ed., *Framing the Intifada: People and Media*, 23.

⁵⁸⁷ “An Interview with the Mother of a Suicide Bomber,” (*The Middle East Media Research Institute*, Special Dispatch Series, No. 391). Available at www.memri.org. Accessed on 10/22/09.

children’s shows, strident news talk, and religious inspired entertainment.”⁵⁸⁸ The channel also broadcasts anti-Semitic sermons preached from mosques in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the genre of children’s entertainment the most disturbing shows involve those starring Assud the Hamas bunny, Nassur the Hamas bear, Farfour the Hamas Mickey Mouse and Nahoul the Hamas bee, which are actors dressed in costumes that teach children about virtue and vice. These shows appear to be modeled after *Sesame Street* and have a number of child and adult actors who perform skits with Assud, Farfour, Nahoul, Nassur and a number of other puppets. The show is simply another means to indoctrinate Palestinian children with a love of martyrdom and a hatred for their Jewish neighbors. Recent episodes include:

- “Nassur the Hamas Teddy Bear Vows to Join Military Wing of Hamas and Die a Martyr’s Death.”⁵⁸⁹ This episode shows Nassur the bear trying out for the Izz al Din al Qassam Martyr’s Brigade. Nassur must demonstrate to the organization that he is spiritually, mentally and physically ready to become a martyr. Essentially, this video teaches children what they will encounter if they want to become a suicide attacker.
- “Assud Hamas Rabbit Wants to Eat Jews.”⁵⁹⁰ Assud claims that even though he is a rabbit he has a fierce desire to ‘kill and eat Jews.’ He hopes to become a member of Hamas so he is able to fulfill his desire to kill Jews.

⁵⁸⁸ Eric Westervelt, “Hamas Launches Television Network,” (*NPR*, February 3, 2006). Article available online at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5186883>. Accessed on 11/9/09.

⁵⁸⁹ “Al Aqsa TV, Clip #2028”, translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute TV Project. Available online at <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/2028.htm>. Accessed on 11/9/09.

⁵⁹⁰ See Palestinian Media Watch, available online at www.pmw.org.il. Accessed on 11/9/09.

- “Assud Is Tempted by Satan to Steal and He Has His Hand Chopped Off.”⁵⁹¹
This episode is one that teaches children that strict interpretation of shariah law is in their best interests. Assud is visited by Satan and steals something from a store. He is caught by the storeowner and is sentenced to have his hand cut off. After this happens, Assud tells the viewers that this is a ‘just punishment’ and that shariah law must be instituted throughout all of Palestine.
- “TV Bee, Nahoul, Weeps Over ‘Martyred’ Family.”⁵⁹² Here Nahoul receives news that two brothers died in a martyrdom operation. Nahoul weeps until a child actor comes to comfort him. Nahoul then stops weeping and tells the child that the ‘martyrs are alive in Paradise.’

A more recent development on these children’s shows is the use of martyr music videos, which urge children and young adults to become suicide attackers.⁵⁹³ In one Hamas music video, the lyrics are sung by “a women vocalist wearing an army uniform, and the visuals include children in frenzied war dances, interspersed between scenes of children participating in combat zones.”⁵⁹⁴ The lyrics glorify suicide attacks and becoming a *shahid*: “You will not be saved, Oh

⁵⁹¹ “Al Aqsa TV, Clip #1814,” translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute TV Project. Available online at <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/1814.htm>. Accessed on 11/9/09.

⁵⁹² “Al Aqsa TV, Clip #1639,” translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute TV Project. Available online at <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/1639.htm>. Accessed on 11/9/09.

⁵⁹³ Aaron Klein, “Kids Get Martyr Message in Music Video,” (*WorldNetDaily*, October 18, 2004). Article available online at http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=40967. Accessed on 11/9/09.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

Zionist, from the volcano of my country's stones, you are the target of my eyes, I will even willingly fall as a *Shahid* [martyr]. You are the target of my eyes, I will even willingly fall as a *Shahid*. Allahu Akbar, of the young ones!"⁵⁹⁵ Another music video that captured widespread attention is a video obtained by *Palestinian Media Watch*, which shows a young girl of five years old watching her mother prepare to become a suicide attacker. The video has the child asking her mother "what are you carrying in your arms instead of me?"⁵⁹⁶ The mother hides the suicide bomb and leaves her house. The video shows the mother approaching an Israeli checkpoint as soldiers push her away. The mother looks at the camera and explodes the bomb as a picture of the Al Aqsa mosque appears on the screen. At home the child learns of her mother's death as she watches television. The child claims, "only now, I know what was more precious than us. Instead of me you carried a bomb in your hands."⁵⁹⁷ The child then searches through her mother's dresser and finds an extra bundle of explosives and the white shawl that each martyr is given before leaving for a suicide mission. The video ends with the child exclaiming, "[m]y love for Muhammad will not be merely words. I am following Mommy in her steps!"⁵⁹⁸

The final medium Hamas uses to foster support for suicide attacks amongst the Palestinian population is through the internet. The website *al-fateh.net* is just one of many Hamas websites that act as virtual propaganda centers for Hamas. It explains to the viewer that the root of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a result of Jewish deception. The message gleaned

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ "Hamas Teaches Children to be Suicide Terrorists," (*Palestinian Media Watch*), video available online at <http://www.palwatch.org/SITE/MODULES/videos/pal/videos.aspx>. Accessed on 11/9/09.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

by visitors includes a healthy dose of “scathing hatred, disdain, and demonization of the ‘other’ ...[which includes] the U.S. and Europe, the Jews, Israel, and Zionism-as well as a call for establishing an Islamic state in entire Palestine and the annihilation of the State of Israel through violent liberation.”⁵⁹⁹ The website has an archive of martyr videos available for downloading and the final testaments of the martyr’s are available to those that want to read them.⁶⁰⁰ The website has instructions on how to teach individuals to construct and detonate an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Finally, there is a ‘*shahid* page,’ which is devoted to the purpose of putting potential martyrs in touch with the organization. The website also used a version of *Pay Pal* so one can use a credit card to ‘finance a martyr.’⁶⁰¹ The use of the internet to inculcate and promote martyrdom has serious implications according to Gilles Kepel:

“[t]hanks to the internet we now have bearded cyber-salafists who have taken the place of the ulema [the Islamic learned religious community] and they know only one [Koranic] interpretation: the literal one. To them everything that is digital is transcendental which creates a blur between the virtual and the afterlife in one separate world, disconnected entirely from the real world with its own laws. At the juncture of these two universes we can find a double death: the suicide of the martyr which relieves him from the tension-which is considered schizophrenic-between those two worlds and the slaughter of [Israeli] infidels.”⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ "Al-Fateh-The Hamas Web Magazine for Children: Indoctrination to Jihad, Annihilation and Self-Destruction," (*Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education*, 2009), 9. Article available online at www.impact-se.org. Accessed on 10/9/09.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 49.

⁶⁰² Gilles Kepel quoted in “Cyber Jihad,” (*Peak Talk*, August 4, 2005). Article available at <http://www.peaktalk.com/archives/001473.php>. Accessed on 11/9/09.

Though Israel is strongly opposed to these websites, there is no dearth of countries willing to host them.⁶⁰³ The use of the internet ensures that Hamas reaches a large audience both domestically and internationally. This allows Hamas to cultivate support for martyrdom and armed resistance against the Israeli other while presenting the suicide attacker as the Palestinian role model *par excellence*. The fruits of this poisonous ideology manifest itself in recent public opinion polls showing that the Palestinian public continues to favor suicide attacks against Israel.⁶⁰⁴ Despite the absence of suicide attacks since Hamas won the Parliamentary elections in 2006, the population is so saturated with the message of martyrdom that it is quite feasible that Hamas could revert to suicide attacks whenever it chooses.⁶⁰⁵

4.6 CONCLUSION

The case study in this chapter investigated Hamas, which used suicide attacks as a form of domestic terrorism against Israel. The chapter began with a discussion of the ideology that

⁶⁰³ "Hamas Markets Terrorism," (*Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, The Center for Special Studies, November 22, 2005). Available online at http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/tunis_e.htm. Accessed on 11/9/09.

⁶⁰⁴ The Palestinian Survey Research Unit finds that support for suicide attacks is 91% in the Gaza Strip as compared with 79% in the West Bank. See "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 27," available online at www.pcpsr.org. Accessed on 10/6/2009.

⁶⁰⁵ Matthew Levitt, email correspondence with the author, October 6, 2009. Levitt argues that Hamas has not given up on the tactic of suicide attacks but finds the use of missiles more productive and effective at this time.

Hamas inherited from the Muslim Brotherhood. This merited an overview of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, the two foremost ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood. Banna and Qutb advanced what the chapter termed as an Islamic liberation ideology. This ideology was riddled with anti-Semitism and espoused a worldview where the Jews and Muslims were engaged in an ancient religious struggle. For both Banna and Qutb, the only way to prevail in this conflict was to return to Islam. The failure of Pan-Arab nationalism strengthened Banna and Qutb's argument that Islam was the only solution to the 'Jewish problem.' Since Hamas was an outgrowth of the Muslim Brotherhood, they inherited the latter's Islamic liberation ideology.

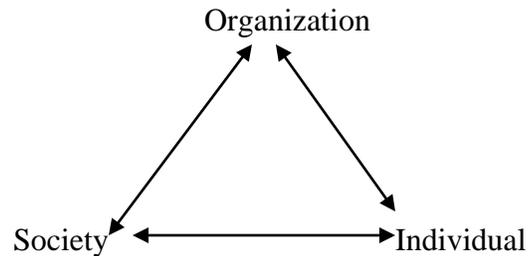
At the organizational level, Hamas adopted suicide attacks as a means to engage Israel militarily in order to achieve strategic goals. Despite their motivating ideology, which framed the conflict with Israel as a religious one, Hamas was careful in its use of suicide attacks during the first intifada. The main reason why Hamas used the tactic during the first Palestinian uprising was to derail the Oslo Peace Process and later the Declaration of Principles. In this case, Hamas was a spoiler organization, which acted to disrupt the peace process. During the second intifada, suicide attacks became a weapon to prompt Israel to withdraw unilaterally from Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. The number of suicide attacks during this time period increased as Hamas capitalized on the ideology of martyrdom, which ensured that Hamas had its military ranks full of individuals wanting to die a martyr's death.

At the individual level, the chapter found that the Hamas suicide attacker is motivated by a mixture of post-mortem incentives for martyrdom and an intense hatred of the Israeli 'other.' The Hamas martyr is elevated to a status in death that the person could not have achieved in life. The post-mortem benefits include direct entry to Paradise, the comforts of the seventy-two black eyed virgins, and the ability to save family members from going to Hell. Moreover, becoming a

suicide attacker gives the individual a way to strike against the ‘Israeli occupier.’ By turning the body into a bomb, the Hamas suicide attacker uses deception and cunning to level the battlefield in order to enact revenge against Israel. This section also investigated the use of final testaments and martyrdom videos as ways with which Hamas cements the desire to die within the individual attacker. These act as a ‘martyrdom contract’ where the attacker receives the benefits of martyrdom after accomplishing the mission. Such videos and testaments are also effective recruitment tools for others who want to become martyrs.

Finally, at the societal level, Hamas has successfully marketed martyrdom to the Palestinian population. By using mosques and schools, Hamas educates young children to aspire to become the future martyrs of the Palestinian resistance. These children read books and listen to sermons denouncing the humanity of Israelis while also advocating violence against them. Hamas also uses a wide variety of social media from posters, television and the internet to saturate Palestinian society with images of the martyrs. Indeed, the Hamas sponsored television station promotes shows that idolize martyrdom, which are targeted at youth and adults. Some of the children’s shows feature Sesame-Street-like characters that teach children to ‘kill Jews.’ Other innovative ways that the television station markets martyrdom is through the creation of martyrdom music videos. These videos have a wide audience from children to adults, which feature songs that laud martyrdom. Finally, Hamas has become a presence in the virtual world as it operates a variety of websites dedicated to disseminating martyrdom propaganda. What emerges at this level of analysis is a picture of an organization that has created an environment saturated with the belief that martyrdom and violent death is the only way to achieve an independent Palestinian state.

The interaction amongst the three-levels of analysis in the Hamas case study is triangular. In this operational structure, each level of analysis fluidly interacts with and supports the other.



At the top of the triangle is the Hamas organization, which as this chapter has argued, adopted suicide attacks to engage Israel. The organization fashioned a martyrdom narrative to both attract individuals and to engage the Palestinian public. Since Hamas relies on external recruits to become suicide attackers, the martyrdom ideology was critical as it used martyrdom's post-mortem benefits to entice individuals to become suicide attackers. Additionally, the martyrdom narrative was presented to the Palestinian population in order to create a wellspring of support not only for the tactic but also for Hamas. What is interesting to note is while Hamas has stopped using suicide attacks support for it remains relatively high. This means Hamas' ideology of martyrdom is incubating and continues to hold sway and influence over individuals and portions of Palestinian society. As a result, the entrenched ideology would make it quite easy for Hamas to transition back into using suicide attacks should the organization choose to do this.

The next chapter of the dissertation investigates how a transnational group like Al Qaeda utilizes suicide attacks.

5.0 SUICIDE ATTACKS AS TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM: THE CASE OF AL QAEDA

“The coming jihadist generation must know its roots and must digest the experiences of its forebears. The coming jihadist generation must build on these lessons so that it becomes a natural link in the chain formed by the journey of the glorious caravan toward the desired Islam, which is returning the rule of God to this earth. Knowledge has become the most important weaponry in this age, and the ignorant cannot lead in this struggle, however loyal to the obligation they may be.”

-Abu Musab al-Suri, *The Call to Global Islamic Resistance*

“Just as armies achieve victory only when the infantry occupies territory, the Islamic movement of jihad will not triumph against the world coalition unless it possesses an Islamic base in the heart of the Muslim world.”

-Ayman al Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*

"To those champions who avowed the truth day and night...and wrote with their blood and sufferings these phrases...[t]he confrontation that we are calling for with the apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates, Platonic ideals, nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the canon and machine-gun. Islamic governments have never and will never be established through peaceful solutions and cooperative councils. They are established as they [always] have been by pen and gun, by word and bullet, by tongue and teeth.”

-Al Qaeda Training Manual

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The morning of September 11, 2001, began as a beautiful and clear fall day. On the east coast of the United States, temperatures were mild and at U.S. airports weather conditions were nearly perfect. The sunny and clear skies ensured that all airline passengers would leave on time. Nineteen passengers, however, did not intend to reach their destination. As the day unfolded it became clear that these nineteen passengers, who were members of a terrorist organization called Al Qaeda⁶⁰⁶ [Arabic for ‘the base’], had nefarious plans that involved using airplanes to ram into pre-selected targets. The peaceful and tranquil September day soon turned into a nightmare. At 8:46 AM, American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. At 9:03 AM, United Airlines Flight 175 struck the South Tower. At 9:37 AM, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon and at 10:02 AM United Flight 93 hit ground in a desolate field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The North and South Towers collapsed at 10:28 AM and 9:59 AM respectively.⁶⁰⁷

The coordinated suicide attacks of September 11, 2001 killed some 2,750 people representing over twenty-five different countries.⁶⁰⁸ The suicide attacks were also the first major foreign assault on American soil since 1814, when the British Army and Royal Navy bombarded

⁶⁰⁶ While there are many ways to spell the name of the organization, for consistency the chapter uses ‘Al Qaeda.’

⁶⁰⁷ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 2-14.

⁶⁰⁸ Eric Lipton, “Struggle to Tally all 9/11 Dead by Anniversary,” (*New York Times*, September 1, 2002). Article available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/01/nyregion/struggle-to-tally-all-9-11-dead-by-anniversary.html?pagewanted=1>. Accessed on 12/20/2009.

the city of Baltimore.⁶⁰⁹ Additionally, the 9/11 attacks became the second most violent day in U.S. history following the Civil War battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862.⁶¹⁰

As the details about Al Qaeda [hereafter AQ] came pouring in, the U.S. realized that it faced a new type of non-state adversary that was determined to strike the United States and its allies. As Rohan Gunaratna notes, the AQ organization was not rooted in one location but operated on many different fronts in areas such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Pakistan, and the Philippines.⁶¹¹ As time went by it became clear that AQ also could operate in the West in such places as Great Britain, Spain and even the United States.⁶¹² Gone were the days when terrorism was confined to one territory or region. The transnational reach of AQ and its ability to use suicide attacks to target different countries makes it an important case study. As such, the chapter seeks to answer the following questions: What is the historical context of AQ? Why did AQ adopt suicide attacks and how has the AQ organization adapted in its use of suicide attacks? How does AQ's ideology motivate individuals to become suicide attackers? Finally, how does AQ make the attacks resonate in the populations that support them?

The first section investigates the historical context of AQ. This requires a brief examination of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It was in Afghanistan where Osama bin Laden and his lieutenant Abdullah Azzam created AQ. Osama bin Laden [hereafter OBL] met

⁶⁰⁹ Bruce Riedel, *The Search for Al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 1.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 95.

⁶¹² Ibid.

Azzam when the former came to Afghanistan to help the mujahideen fight the Soviet invaders. The financial resources OBL brought and his managerial experience gained working in his father's construction business helped him create an organization that trained, accommodated and provided logistical support for volunteers seeking to join the mujahideen. When the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, OBL saw this as a sign that faith could defeat a superpower. After the Soviet withdrawal, OBL and Azzam focused their attention on creating an international Islamic group that would encompass jihadists from many different countries. Azzam provided the framework for this organization but OBL, influenced later by Ayman al Zawahiri, differed on its objectives. Subsequently, as the U.S. became more involved in the region during the 1990s, OBL turned his attention to the last remaining superpower.

The second section investigates why AQ chose to utilize suicide attacks to strike the United States. Using the many written statements by OBL and Abdullah Azzam, the section argues that AQ adopted suicide attacks because they believed they were engaged in a defensive jihad. Azzam laid the foundation for AQ's conflict because he felt as though the West, with the U.S. in particular, was engaged in a cultural and physical assault upon Muslim lands. Azzam believed that the U.S. was the head of a culture inimical to the values of Islam. Instead, the values espoused by the U.S. and the West did nothing but promote vice and lead faithful Muslims away from their religion. After Azzam's death, OBL adopted this framework and condemned the U.S. for its activities in the land of Islam. The physical and cultural presence of the U.S. in land of Mecca and Medina, in OBL's view, was an assault that activated a defensive jihad whereby it was legitimate to attack the U.S. by any means necessary.

Another interesting feature this section explores is how the AQ organization has evolved. Between 1991 and 2001 AQ operated as a hierarchical organization. The suicide attacks that

occurred during this time period included heavy involvement by senior AQ leadership. Following the U.S. led invasion of Afghanistan much of AQ's leadership was killed or captured by U.S. and coalition forces spurring AQ to change from a hierarchical organization to a more diffuse and network centric group.⁶¹³ The 7/7 London bombing is presented as an example of the network-centric AQ that acts like a 'fifth column' in Western societies.⁶¹⁴ The recent arrest of U.S. born citizen Najibullah Zazi on September 24, 2009 is another example of the emerging AQ fifth column where individuals living in the U.S. and Western Europe are self-starting, self-radicalizing and self-activating.⁶¹⁵ What is worrisome about the network and fifth column forms of AQ is that those who join are integrated members of Western society.

The third section investigates the ideology of AQ. Unlike the previous case studies, AQ has an ideology that is transnational in its appeal. Indeed, AQ has formulated a potent meta-narrative, which includes broad, overarching themes that are referred to consistently in AQ's statements. The section argues that the meta-narrative represents a transnational Islamic liberation ideology that is grounded in three core principles: a hatred of the West and its culture, a belief in an inevitable clash of civilizations between the Islamic world and the West, and

⁶¹³ Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 138.

⁶¹⁴ A fifth column is defined as a group of sympathizers of an enemy that engage in sabotage within another country's national borders.

⁶¹⁵ Najibullah Zazi is alleged to have attended an Al Qaeda training camp in Pakistan in 2008 where he received training in weapons and explosives. He was arrested on September 24, 2009 with one count of conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction. See David Johnston and Scott Shane, "Terror Case is Called One of the Most Serious in Years," (*New York Times*, September 24, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/25/us/25zazi.html? r=1>. Accessed on 9/25/2009.

martyrdom. These principles are found in the writings of AQ's most important ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb, Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al Zawahiri, and Abu Musab al Suri. The jihadist meta-narrative can then be adopted by different sections of the Muslim community that operate both within the Islamic world and in the West. As such, different parts of the Muslim community easily project their grievances onto the narrative thereby giving the individual or group its own unique *raison d'etre* within the larger AQ meta-narrative. The reason why AQ and its associates have proven so durable is due primarily to the potency of this meta-narrative.

The fourth section looks into the ways that AQ attempts to achieve global resonance. Like the LTTE and Hamas, AQ operates an impressive propaganda campaign. Through the use of released statements, videos, ideological tracts and jihadist websites, AQ markets its ideology to cultivate support for its cause. Particularly, AQ highlights the shortcomings of its avowed enemy, the United States, through an unrelenting critique of U.S. action abroad. AQ's use of modern technology is a critical part of this project. The sheer growth in the number of jihadist websites in the last few years is staggering with thousands on the internet each one containing a wide-variety of content available for the potential user. While AQ will not achieve the popularity that Hamas did during the second intifada, AQ has a much larger pool to draw from. Even with global support declining for AQ, there is no such decline for anti-Western and anti-American sentiments, especially as the U.S. continues military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁶¹⁶ This combined with AQ's sophisticated use of modern technology ensures that there will be a global audience for AQ's Manichean liberation ideology.

⁶¹⁶ Juliana Menasce Horowitz, "Declining Support for bin Laden and Suicide Bombing," (*Pew Global Attitudes Project*, September 10, 2009). Article available online at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1338/declining-muslim-support-for-bin-laden-suicide-bombing>. Accessed on 12/20/05. For figures on rising anti-Western and anti-

5.2 THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF AL QAEDA

The history of AQ is rooted in the Khyber Pass, the inhospitable mountain range linking Pakistan to Afghanistan. The Khyber Pass stands as an important strategic location as it is the gateway to India. As Milton Bearden notes, the Khyber Pass “has witnessed the traverse of the world’s great armies on campaigns to and from South and Central Asia” from Alexander the Great, Timur, Babur, Mahumud of Ghanzai, Nadir Shah, to Genghis Khan and the Mongol horde.⁶¹⁷ More recently in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Anglo-Indian forces came through the Pass during the three Afghan wars of 1839-1842, 1878-1880, and 1919. A lieutenant in the British Light Infantry division succinctly summed up the history of the Khyber pass when he aptly commented that “[e]very stone in the Khyber has been soaked in blood.”⁶¹⁸

Before the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2002, the last global power to enter Afghanistan was the Soviet Union. Its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan brought OBL to the Khyber Pass where he and Abdullah Azzam formed the ‘Afghan Services Bureau,’ or the Maktab al-Khidmat [MAK]. OBL’s experience in Afghanistan was overwhelmingly positive. He believed that the mujahideen and the ‘Afghan Arabs’ of the MAK had defeated a global superpower. This newfound confidence prompted OBL and Azzam to consider forming a permanent group of Islamic warriors that could act as a rapid reaction force to defend Islamic lands when they were in danger. As the U.S. became more involved in the region, especially after Saddam Hussein’s

American sentiments see *Most Muslim Publics Not So Easily Moved*, (*The Pew Global Attitudes Project*, July 23, 2009), 16.

⁶¹⁷ Milton Bearden, "Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires," (*Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 6, 2001), 17.

⁶¹⁸ Alan Axelrod, *Little Known Wars of Great and Lasting Impact*, (Beverly: Fair Winds Press, 2009), 233.

invasion of Kuwait in 1990, OBL turned his attention to the last remaining superpower thus starting, in OBL's mind, a war between AQ and the United States.

5.2.1 Precursor to Al Qaeda: the Afghan Arabs and the Conflict with the Soviet Union

In hindsight, the time of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan speaks to a bygone era of superpower conflict between the Soviet Union and the U.S. The Cold War represented a time in history when two competing superpowers engaged in a global chess match whereby each power sought to gain an advantage over the other. This meant that the two powers, instead of directly fighting one another, engaged in proxy wars. At that time, the latest proxy war for the U.S. was the one in Vietnam, which did not go as planned. Instead of shoring up and establishing an anti-communist regime in Vietnam, the U.S. became bogged down in a deadly insurgency against a mobile, cunning and ruthless enemy. The horrific images of jungle warfare and the staggering amount of American casualties drained public support for the war. By 1973, the U.S. Congress approved the Case-Church amendment, which terminated all U.S. military action in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia causing the U.S. to leave the region in defeat.

In 1979, only a few years after the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The Soviet Union expected no real resistance from the U.S. given that its public was war weary coupled with the Soviet impression that the Carter administration was "weak, indecisive, and hesitant to use force as an instrument of national policy."⁶¹⁹ The rationale

⁶¹⁹ Milton Goldman, "Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan: Roots and Causes," (*Polity*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Spring 1984), 399.

for invading Afghanistan was simple. Soviet leaders believed that they had a strategic opening to take control of a territory with close proximity to the Persian Gulf and its vast oil resources. If the Soviet Union could gain access and possibly control those oil resources, it would have a significant advantage in its struggle with the United States. Just as important as the oil reserves, the Soviet invasion was a chance to extend their sphere of influence into Central Asia whereby the Soviets sought to plant a foreign ideology in Afghanistan.

After the Soviet's took Kabul, some 385,000 Afghan refugees left to neighboring Pakistan.⁶²⁰ The refugees entering Pakistan began to form a mounted resistance against the Soviets. At first, the guerrilla resistance was comprised solely along ethnic and tribal grounds. As such, the main tribes consisting of the Pashtuns, Balochis and Hazaras formed different guerrilla groups. These groups were uncoordinated, unorganized, and operated independently of one another. As Olivier Roy notes, this tribal and ethnic based resistance did not perform well since the groups were militarily ineffective and often resorted to fighting one another rather than their Soviet adversary.⁶²¹ Rather than uniting under tribal and ethnic loyalties, the Afghan refugees began to utilize the ideology of jihad to bring the fighters under a common banner. As a result, a number of fundamentalist groups formed as they rallied the refugees to fight for Islam with the goal of expelling the foreign invader. The fundamentalist fighters, also known as the *mujahideen* (translated literally as 'jihad warrior'), began to stage an effective resistance. Indeed, it was on the Pakistani side of the Hindu Kush Mountains where the jihad against the Soviets began in earnest. As Tahir Amin notes, the mujahideen succeeded in framing the

⁶²⁰ Robert Wirsing, "Pakistan and the War in Afghanistan," (*Asian Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1987), 57.

⁶²¹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985),

conflict against the Soviets as a war for Islam.⁶²² This religious war caught the attention of a young Saudi Arabian named Osama bin Laden who traveled to Afghanistan to fight alongside the holy warriors.

OBL arrived in the Khyber Pass sometime between 1980-1981. Here OBL met Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian religious scholar who was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Transjordan. The Afghan jihad began to gain international attention mainly because Azzam, and other Islamic theologians at the time, wrote essays and issued religious decrees [fatwas], which decried the invasion as a siege of the land of Islam. Azzam argued vigorously that a defensive jihad should be mounted.⁶²³ In a book entitled *Join the Caravan*, Azzam outlines the main reasons why a Muslim should join the fight in Afghanistan:

- In order that the unbelievers do not dominate an Islamic land
- The scarcity of men
- Fear of damnation and Hell-fire for those who ignore the call
- Fulfilling the duty of jihad, and responding to Allah's call
- To follow in the footsteps of Islam's pious forbears
- Protecting those who are oppressed in Afghanistan
- The hope and desire for martyrdom⁶²⁴

⁶²² Tahir Amin, "Afghan Resistance: Past, Present, and Future," (*Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1984), 395.

⁶²³ It is interesting to note that OBL frames his conflict against the U.S. almost the same way Azzam framed it against the Soviet Union. This will be explored later in this chapter.

⁶²⁴ Abdullah Azzam, *Join the Caravan Part III*, (London: Azzam Publications, 2001). Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/azzam/caravan/>. Accessed on 12/02/09.

The invitation to jihad drew thousands of Muslims who ventured from across the Islamic world to Afghanistan to defend the faith and fight the Soviets.⁶²⁵ With the steady stream of volunteers, the MAK “provided accommodation and logistical services to transport the flood of fighters to the front and provide for their needs.”⁶²⁶ The some 25,000 volunteers who flocked to the Afghan jihad were known as the ‘Afghan Arabs.’ OBL pledged “to offer ticket, residence, and living expenses for every Arab volunteer and his family who was willing to join his and Azzam’s new militia.”⁶²⁷ When the Afghan Arabs arrived, they made use of the training camps and safe houses that OBL and Azzam established. Additionally, those leaving the front lines from their battle with the Soviets had a place to rest and recuperate. These camps were located in Peshawar, a Pakistan city located on the Eastern end of the Khyber Pass, which became a central hub for the Afghan resistance.

While there is a great mythology around the effect that the Afghan Arabs had on the war effort, the reality is that their contributions were marginal at best. Of those 25,000 volunteers only 3,000 trained as fighters and no more than a few hundred actually saw combat.⁶²⁸ The Afghan refugees who fled the Soviets did the bulk of the fighting. The ferocity of these fighters, combined with generous financial and material support from the U.S., helped drive the conflict

⁶²⁵ The appeal of Azzam’s book was due, in part, to the favorable endorsement it received from Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz, the chief Muslim cleric of Saudi Arabia.

⁶²⁶ Jane Corbin, *Al Qaeda: In Search of the Terror Network that Threatens the World*, (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2002), 16.

⁶²⁷ Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 63.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

to a stalemate.⁶²⁹ Despite the negligible effect of the Afghan Arabs, jihadist historian and ideologue Abu Musab al Suri maintains that what should be noted is that “the refugee tents and training camps of Pakistan and Afghanistan became centers of dialogue and discussion between various Islamic schools of thought, and the *environment was permeated by the notion of jihad.*”⁶³⁰

Al Suri touches on a significant point here. OBL and Azzam had succeeded in uniting Muslims from different nationalities under one banner. Up until that point in history, the Islamic community had been plagued by the divisiveness of nationalism. For OBL and Azzam, the last time that the Muslim community effectively rallied under the banner of Islam was the Ottoman caliphate.⁶³¹ Additionally, OBL and Azzam had witnessed the impotence of Arab nationalism especially as it pertained to its lackluster performance against the state of Israel during the 1967

⁶²⁹ Aid to the Afghan resistance began under President Carter who tasked the CIA with arming the Afghan insurgency. The aid increased under President Reagan who decided to provide the mujahideen with some \$900 million as well as Stinger antiaircraft missiles, 120mm mortars, and anti-minefield rockets. Other non-lethal equipment included boots, medicine, sleeping bags and Tennessee mules. See Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 209.

⁶³⁰ Jim Lacey, *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 84. Suri's contribution to Al Qaeda's ideology will be addressed later in this chapter. Emphasis added.

⁶³¹ The loss of the Ottoman caliphate is invoked in many of Al Qaeda's writings. Perhaps its most nuanced treatment occurs in the Al Qaeda Manual entitled *The Declaration of Jihad Against the Country's Tyrants*. The manual declares that the fall of the caliphate was a turning point in history when “our Islamic nation was afflicted with apostate rulers who took over...Muslims nation[s].” See *The Declaration of Jihad Against the Country's Tyrants, Military Series*, (Volumes 1-3, date unknown, publisher unknown), 8. Available online at www.ctc.usma.edu. Accessed on 12/02/09.

war.⁶³² They believed that nationalism was a hindrance to Muslim unity and should be discredited as a legitimate ideology. Islam, on the other hand, allowed the fighters to think outside themselves and their nationality to focus on something they all held in common and had complete faith in. The MAK's training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan had revived excitement in jihad and proved that the transcendent nature of Islam eliminated what OBL and Azzam saw to be the petty rivalries of nationalism. This created a cohesive and committed group of fighters who waged jihad and sought glory and martyrdom to achieve their goal.

The Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1988 was a result of numerous factors. The Soviets did not anticipate the fierce resistance that they would encounter in the Afghan mujahideen. The Soviet military brought some 105,000 troops to conduct a highly intensified counterinsurgency campaign against the guerrillas. The counterinsurgency campaign was costly as it claimed the lives of some 15,000-20,000 Soviet troops. Additionally, the Afghan strategy of staying in the mountains and keeping Soviet helicopter gunships at bay by using Stinger missiles negated the Soviet's air superiority.⁶³³ Although the mujahideen did not defeat the Soviet army, they used classic guerilla hit-and-run tactics that sapped the morale of Soviet forces prompting thousands of desertions.⁶³⁴ The mujahideen also controlled between 75-80% of the countryside thereby preventing the Soviet army from moving supplies and materiel to their military units. In the final analysis, however, the reasons for the Soviet withdrawal from

⁶³² This is described in detail in the previous chapter.

⁶³³ For a detailed account of Soviet tactics see Lester Grau ed., *The Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan*, (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press 1996) and Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester Grau, *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare*, (St. Paul: MBI Publishing, 2001).

⁶³⁴ Tahir Amin, "Afghan Resistance: Past, Present, and Future," 388.

Afghanistan are many and are best described by Baird O'Neill who argues that it is "explained by their [Soviet's] own blunders, environmental factors, external support [for the mujahideen from the United States], and, perhaps most important, a changed Soviet leadership with new and different priorities."⁶³⁵ The costly military stalemate, the millions of dollars in aid and weapons given to the mujahideen by the United States, and the election of a reformist candidate in Mikhail Gorbachev prompted the Soviets to abandon their adventure in Afghanistan.⁶³⁶

Azzam and OBL saw the Soviet retreat in a different light. For them, the superpower had lost because it was motivated by the godless ideology of Communism. With newfound elation, OBL and Azzam wrestled with the question of what do to next.

5.2.2 Establishing the Solid Base and Determining its Objectives

In 1989, Azzam published an article entitled 'The Solid Base' in the influential *Al Jihad* journal. The article is a theological tract, which entertains a radical thought namely the reestablishment of the Islamic caliphate. While many of Azzam's contemporaries devoted their intellectual energies decrying the fall of the Ottoman caliphate, Azzam's experience in Afghanistan made him believe that the conditions were right for the restoration of the caliphate. In the article, he argues that this new Islamic society "cannot be founded without a movement that has been

⁶³⁵ Baird O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, (Dulles: Brassey's, 1990), 97.

⁶³⁶ For a more nuanced treatment of Gorbachev's role see Sarah Mendelson, "Internal Battles and External Wars: Politics, Learning, and the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan," (*World Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 1993), 328.

forged in the fire of trials, and unless its members have developed in the heat of conflict.”⁶³⁷ The movement must be led by a vanguard of committed believers. Azzam believed that such a vanguard existed in the Afghan mujahideen and that they would become “the new guardians of the ummah’s faith, money, honor and life.”⁶³⁸

This vanguard constituted the ‘solid base’ [*al Qaeda al sulbah*] for the forthcoming Islamic society. The key to the vanguard’s success was a firm and thorough grounding in Islamic ideology. Without such a grounding, “the enormous sacrifices and disproportionate costs...[will] cause boredom and despair in time.”⁶³⁹ Azzam believed that the mujahideen’s victory in Afghanistan was a sign proving that Allah favored the idea. Moreover, he thought that Afghanistan was only the first step in a global project designed to reawaken the desire for an Islamic state. He argued that “this duty will not end with victory in Afghanistan...[but rather] jihad will remain an individual obligation until all other lands that were Muslim are returned to us so that Islam will reign again [as it did] in Palestine, Bokhara, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia, the Philippines, Burma, Yemen, Tashkent and Andalusia.”⁶⁴⁰ The banner of Islam would once again extend over the globe and it would be “necessary to continue the jihad, no

⁶³⁷ Abdullah Azzam, “The Solid Base,” in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli ed., *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 141.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 142.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Abdullah Azzam quoted in Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom*, 65.

matter how long it takes, to the last man...until we see the Islamic state.”⁶⁴¹ How this would happen was a matter of debate between Azzam and Ayman al Zawahiri.

Azzam’s strategy mimicked the MAK organization. He wanted to maintain the MAK where it was, in Pakistan, so that it could be a staging ground for other jihad campaigns elsewhere. As such, he wanted to focus his efforts on providing logistical aid and training to mujahideen passing through MAK’s training camps for deployment elsewhere in the global Islamic theater. Ayman al Zawahiri, who by this time was competing for the attention of OBL, thought otherwise and envisioned a much more aggressive role.

Instead of merely training and allowing jihadist to return back to their own Islamic theater as Azzam wanted, Zawahiri desired to have more operational control. He wanted an Islamic army of many divisions that would be sent wherever the commanders wanted. He believed that “just as armies achieve victory only when the infantry occupies territory, the Islamic movement of jihad will not triumph against the world coalition unless it possesses an Islamic base in the heart of the Muslims world.”⁶⁴²

Another point of contention between Azzam and Zawahiri involved stark differences over the issue of *takfir* or the branding of other Muslims as *kafir* [infidels].⁶⁴³ Azzam did not

⁶⁴¹ Abdullah Azzam, “The Solid Base,” in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 143.

⁶⁴² Ayman Al Zawahiri, “Knights Under the Prophets Banner,” in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 199.

⁶⁴³ This discussion is a footnote to Sayyid Qutb who made the argument in *Milestones* that self-proclaiming Muslims could be infidels. Qutb’s argument was a major departure from Islamic theology, which held

agree with Zawahiri and desired to avoid this issue altogether. Following the traditional Islamic interpretation, Azzam did not believe that one Muslim could call another a *kafir*. This amounted to questioning another Muslim's faith and the sincerity of the *shahada* or the profession of belief in Allah that every Muslim makes.⁶⁴⁴ Additionally, Azzam thought that following this action was bound to create *fitna* [discord] in the Muslim community. Zawahiri, on the other hand, believed that it was crucial to purge the Islamic *ulema* of those who pretended to be true believers. The debate was ultimately solved in favor of Zawahiri after Azzam was assassinated in Pakistan on November 24, 1989 while on his way to a Friday prayer service.⁶⁴⁵

With Azzam removed from the picture, OBL and Zawahiri became the leaders of the organization known as AQ. OBL believed that the goal of this new group was "to create an empire of all the world's one billion Muslims, ruled by a single leader...unit[ing] all Muslims and establish[ing] a government which follows the rule of the caliphs."⁶⁴⁶ Drawing from his experience in the MAK, OBL and Zawahiri fashioned a trans-national organization grounded in Islam.

OBL's ire would later be directed toward the United States in particular and the West in general after Saudi Arabian Prince Abdullah rejected OBL's offer to use the new organization to

that only non-believers could be labeled as infidels. See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (Cedar Rapids: The Mother Mosque Foundation), 77-86.

⁶⁴⁴ The shahadah, the most important of the five pillars of Islam and the foundation of a Muslim's faith, reads: la ilaha illallah, Mohammad rasul Allah [There is not god but God and Mohammed is His Prophet].

⁶⁴⁵ Conspiracy theories abound as to who killed Azzam. One claims that it was Osama bin Laden himself who wanted to eliminate Azzam in order to absorb the MAK organization. The other is that the Pakistani ISI eliminated Azzam as a favor to the United States.

⁶⁴⁶ OBL quoted in Jane Corbin, *Al Qaeda: In Search of the Terror Network that Threatens the World*, 23.

expel Iraq from Kuwait. The refusal by the Saudi prince angered OBL and he came to see the U.S. as occupying the holy land of Islam. Moreover, he developed a visceral hatred and resentment against the West's wider cultural dominance, which he saw as perverting and enslaving the Muslim world. For OBL, this one event marked the beginning of a war against the U.S. and the West. Drawing from Azzam's writings, OBL framed the conflict with the U.S. as a defensive jihad, which allowed him to adopt suicide attacks as the primary means of confronting the last remaining superpower.

5.3 THE DEFENSIVE JIHAD, SUICIDE ATTACKS AND THE EVOLUTION OF AL QAEDA

Although Sheikh Abdullah Azzam did not live to see the emergence of AQ, he, more than any other person, is considered the strategic founder of AQ.⁶⁴⁷ As was mentioned in the previous section, it was Azzam who came up with the idea to establish the *al qaeda al sulbah* [the solid base] to export jihad wherever Muslims are persecuted. Azzam's strategic importance endures because of the way he framed the impending conflict between Islam and the U.S. as a defensive jihad. Azzam argued that the defensive jihad was a compulsory individual duty for those Muslims who were physically able to fight. OBL adopted this defensive jihad framework and with the influence of Ayman al Zawahiri integrated suicide attacks into AQ's arsenal. The

⁶⁴⁷ Youssef Enein-Aboul, "The Late Sheikh Abdullah Azzam's Books," in Part I: Strategic Leverage of the Soviet-Afghan War to Undertake Perpetual Jihad, (West Point: *The Combating Terrorism Center, US Military Academy*, 2008), 2.

section argues that AQ adopted suicide attacks out of strategic necessity. Using this tactic was the only way the organization could successfully engage the U.S. in a defensive jihad. How AQ has utilized suicide attacks will then be examined. The period from 1995 to 9/11 was one where a hierarchical AQ used suicide attacks as a means to probe the U.S. and bait it into an open confrontation. AQ achieved this goal in the aftermath of 9/11 as the U.S. began combat operations in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. Just as the U.S. failed to anticipate 9/11 so did AQ fail to anticipate the results of U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan, which decimated its leadership. As such, the period from 9/11 to the present finds AQ having undergone a significant organizational evolution to a more network-centric and decentralized organization. The 7/7 London attacks will then be investigated as an example of the decentralized AQ organization.

5.3.1 Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri: The Defensive Jihad and the Need for Suicide Attacks

Abdullah Azzam was a prolific scholar and ideologue who was introduced to Islamic activism at just nine years of age when he joined the Muslim Brotherhood.⁶⁴⁸ He obtained a master's degree in Islamic jurisprudence from Damascus University in 1963 and went on to earn his doctorate in Islamic law from Egypt's Al Azhar University in 1973. Obtaining his doctorate from Al Azhar gave his scholarship added weight considering it is the oldest and most prestigious university of Sunni thought. Azzam articulated his views about the defensive jihad in two main works: *The Defense of Muslims Lands*, and *Join the Caravan*. The influence Azzam had on AQ cannot be

⁶⁴⁸ Azzam was born in 1941 and claims to have joined the Muslim Brotherhood's Transjordan branch in 1950.

overstated.⁶⁴⁹ As Islamic scholar Youssef Aboul-Enein argues, “Azzam is as significant strategically to AQ and its affiliates as Carl von Clausewitz is to the study of conventional warfare.”⁶⁵⁰ Each of Azzam’s works will now be considered in turn.

The Defense of Muslims Lands begins with a quote from a titan of Islamic fundamentalism, Ibn Taymia, who says, “[t]he first obligation after Iman [faith in Allah] is the repulsion of the enemy aggressor who assaults the religion and the worldly affairs [of the Islamic ummah].”⁶⁵¹ Azzam then launches into a theological discussion as he cites Koranic verses and various hadith that speak to the necessity of waging jihad. He claims that “this law [or defense] of jihad takes up many pages in the Book of God [the Koran], because truth cannot do without a force to protect it.”⁶⁵² Such a force existed during the time of the Prophet as it defended the faith from foreign aggressors and internal enemies. However, Azzam claims that this force no longer exists. He argues that “unfortunately, there were generations that succeeded the early Muslims

⁶⁴⁹ According to an interview given by Osama bin Laden on Al Jazeera TV in 1991, he said that “Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was not an individual, but an entire nation by himself. Muslim women have proven themselves incapable of giving birth to a man like him after he was killed.” Interview available online at www.memri.com. Accessed on 12/2/09.

⁶⁵⁰ Youssef Enein-Aboul, "The Late Sheikh Abdullah Azzam's Books," in Part I: Strategic Leverage of the Soviet-Afghan War to Undertake Perpetual Jihad, 2.

⁶⁵¹ Abdullah Azzam, *Defense of Muslim Lands*, Chapter 1. Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/azzam/defense/chap1.html>. Accessed on 12/05/09. Azzam cites Ibn Taymia throughout his work.

⁶⁵² Abdullah Azzam quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 102.

who neglected the rules of Allah. They forsook their Lord, so He forsook them. They deserted His rules, and so they were lost.”⁶⁵³

Perhaps the most negative consequence of this desertion of faith is that the present community has forgotten its obligation to wage jihad. Since the obligation to wage jihad is absent from the current condition of the Muslims ummah, the result of this neglect is catastrophic and he underlines this point by quoting a hadith where the Prophet Mohammad says “you will be rubbish like the rubbish of flood water. Allah will put *wahn* [disease] into your hearts and remove the fear from the hearts of your enemies because of your love for the world and your hate of death.”⁶⁵⁴ The Prophet’s statement is telling because the loss of faith is rooted in excessive ‘love of the world’ and a ‘hat[red] for death.’⁶⁵⁵ In Azzam’s view, love of the world has led to the disappearance of jihad leaving the Muslim community fearful and impotent.

After diagnosing the problem, he goes on to explain the two different types of jihad that exist against the enemies of Islam. First, there is the *jihad al talab* or the offensive jihad, which entails attacking unbelievers in their home countries as a way to spread the faith. He declares this a *fard kifaya* or an obligation that is directed towards everyone but is only performed by

⁶⁵³ Abdullah Azzam, *Defense of Muslim Lands*, Chapter 1. Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/azzam/defense/chap1.html>. Accessed on 12/05/09.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid. Emphasis added. The hadith Azzam quotes is from Sahih Bukhari and is thought to be a reliable and authentic hadith.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid. What is interesting here is that the ‘love of the world’ criticism is exactly the same charge that Osama bin Laden and Hamas ideologues level against the United States and Israel. Indeed, excessive love of the world or worldliness is, in the eyes of Islamists, a main weakness of Western culture.

some members of the Muslim community.⁶⁵⁶ Here he harkens back to the Islamic caliphate when it possessed great armies that were able to wage offensive jihad against the enemies of Islam. The second type is the *jihad al daf* or the defensive jihad, which entails expelling unbelievers from Muslim territory. It is under the *jihad al daf* where Azzam makes a new theological argument. Instead of calling the defensive jihad a *fard kifaya*, which is left to those who are able to fight he dubs the defensive jihad a *fard ayn* or a collective duty that is incumbent on every Muslim.

The movement from jihad as *fard kifaya* to *fard ayn* is Azzam's lasting contribution to jihadist thought. By linking the defensive jihad with a new interpretation of jihad as *fard ayn*, he makes jihad a compulsory duty for the whole Muslim community. The effect of making jihad a collective duty is best described by Azzam who says:

“Jihad under this [defensive] condition becomes Fard Ayn upon the Muslims of the land which the Kuffar [unbeliever] have attacked and upon the Muslims close by, where the children will march forth without the permission of the parents, the wife without the permission of her husband and the debtor without the permission of the creditor. And, if the Muslims of this land cannot expel the Kuffar because of lack of forces, because they slacken, are indolent or simply do not act, then the Fard Ayn obligation spreads in the shape of a circle from the nearest to the next nearest. If they too slacken or there is again a shortage of manpower, then it is upon the people behind them, and on the people behind them, to march forward. This process continues until it becomes Fard Ayn upon the whole world.”⁶⁵⁷

What Azzam does here is quite remarkable because in one paragraph he dismantles the rules that govern jihad.⁶⁵⁸ In Islamic law, there are certain conditions that must be met before an

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁶⁵⁸ For an overview on the laws that govern jihad and Islamic warfare see Sherifa Zuhur and Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Islamic Rulings on Warfare*, (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2004).

individual participates in jihad. One involves the consent of parents with regard to offspring and a husband with regard to a wife. If consent is not given, then the person who is seeking jihad should not be able to undertake it. The other condition pertains to a person who is in debt. The thinking goes that indebted persons should not be able to wage jihad because they potentially could leave their family with a financial burden they would incur should that person die.⁶⁵⁹ Since jihad involves the protection of Islam, it supersedes the parental authority over offspring, a husband's authority over his wife, and debt over the debtor.⁶⁶⁰ In fact, the necessity of the defensive jihad should be so self-evident that people should not even think about asking permission to wage jihad. He illustrates this with a story:

“[f]or instance, some people are walking along the seashore and amongst them is a group of good swimmers. They see a child about to drown. It shouts "save me!" and nobody moves towards him. One of the swimmers wants to move to save him but his father forbids him. Can any scholar in this day and time say that he must obey his father and let the child drown? Saving the drowning child is Fard on all the swimmers who witness him. Before anyone moves there is a call for all to save him. If someone moves to save him, the sin falls from the rest. But, if no one moves, all the swimmers are in sin.”⁶⁶¹

He follows the story with a quote from Ibn Taymia who said “if the enemy enters Islamic lands, the entire Islamic empire and nation are one in repelling the invader, they need no

⁶⁵⁹ This is why groups like Hamas ensure that the suicide attacker has at least one parent's permission and pays of all debts before undergoing a suicide attack.

⁶⁶⁰ Abdullah Azzam, *Defense of Muslim Lands*, Chapter III, Fard Ayn and Fard Kifaya. Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/azzam/defense/chap3.html>. Accessed on 12/05/09. Azzam is the first modern theologian to declare that wives can disobey their husbands to engage in jihad. It should be noted that the husband does not need to obtain permission from his wife to engage in jihad unless it would leave her in a desperate financial situation.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

permission to travel to the fringe of the Islamic lands to conduct jihad.”⁶⁶² Not only does Azzam abolish the rules governing jihad, but also he quotes Ibn Taymia to suggest that fighting is not limited to those who are closest to the incursion. Instead, Azzam extends the duty of jihad *ad infinitum* to the whole of the Muslim community.

The defensive jihad against the aggressor is of such importance that the *jihad bil nafs* [the jihad within one’s soul] is suspended indefinitely.⁶⁶³ Azzam is making the argument that jihad becomes the sixth pillar of Islam. Moreover, as illustrated in the anecdote about the drowning child, Azzam believes that those who should be engaged in jihad but are not are in a state of sin. He continues by saying that the “sin increases according to the power, possibilities, and capabilities: so the ulema, leaders, and preachers...are then considered greater sinners than the masses and the people.”⁶⁶⁴ Essentially, those with the most to contribute to the jihadi effort but fail to do so are the greatest sinners in Azzam’s eyes. As such, the neglect by those greatest in the Islamic community for the defensive jihad has led to an abandonment of faith thus causing Muslim territory to fall into the hands of the unbelievers. This situation is unacceptable to Azzam and in his next work he proposes a way to entice Muslims to participate in jihad.

While *The Defense of Muslims Lands* makes an argument for why defensive jihad is necessary, Azzam’s *Join the Caravan* is an open invitation to the Muslim community to partake

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Youssef Enein-Aboul, "The Late Sheikh Abdullah Azzam's Books," in Part III: Radical Theories on Defending Muslim Land Through Jihad, (West Point: *The Combating Terrorism Center, US Military Academy*, 2008), 8-9.

⁶⁶⁴ Abdullah Azzam quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 107.

in the jihad. He opens the work with a lengthy quote from one of the most famous warriors in Islamic history, Salahuddin Ayyubi who conquered and liberated Jerusalem from the Christian Crusaders in the twelfth century. Analyzing the situation of the Islamic community in the twelfth century, Salahuddin makes the following observation:

“We hope in Allah Most High, to whom be Praise, who leads the hearts of Muslims to calm what torments them and ruins their prosperity. Where is the sense of honor of the Muslims? The pride of the Believers? The zeal of the Faithful? We shall never cease to be amazed at how the disbelievers for their part have shown trusts, and it is the Muslims who have been lacking in zeal. Not one of them has responded to the call. Not one intervenes to straighten what is distorted

In defense of their religion they [the Christian Crusaders] consider it a small thing to spend life and soul- and they have kept their infidel brothers supplied with arms and champions of war- and all they have done and all their generosity has been done purely out of zeal for him they worship in jealous defense of their faith.

The Muslims on the other hand are weakened and demoralized [and] they have become negligent and lazy, the victims of unproductive stupefaction and completely lacking in enthusiasm. If, Allah forbid, Islam should draw reign, obscure her splendor, blunt her sword, there would be no one, east or west, far or near who would blaze the zeal for Allah's religion, or choose to come to the aid of Truth against Falsehood. This is the moment to cast off laziness, to summon from far and near all those men who have blood in their veins, but we are confident...in the help that will come from Him in sincerity of purpose and deepest devotion. Insha-Allah [God willing] the disbelievers shall perish and the Faithful shall have a sure deliverance.”⁶⁶⁵

The reason why Azzam quotes Salahuddin is because he finds great similarity between the past and present situations of the Islamic community. Salahuddin, like Azzam, encountered a Muslim community who did not desire to wage jihad against the Christian Crusaders.⁶⁶⁶ Salahuddin believed that the Muslims were abandoning their religious duty to liberate Jerusalem and called

⁶⁶⁵ Salahuddin Ayyubi quoted in the introduction to Abdullah Azzam's, *Join The Caravan*. Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/azzam/caravan/caravan.html>. Accessed on 12/05/09. Emphasis added.

⁶⁶⁶ See Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin and The Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1906).

them ‘negligent’ and ‘lazy.’ This undoubtedly resonated with Azzam who saw himself confronting a similarly passive and reticent Islamic community.

Azzam believes that one of the ways to entice people to wage jihad is through martyrdom. As Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milleli note, Azzam’s tract is not just an entreaty to join the caravan of Muslims resisting the unbelievers, but rather it is an open invitation to join the caravan of mujahideen who will be going to heaven to collect their reward after dying a martyr’s death on the battlefield.⁶⁶⁷ After recounting the seven special favors that a martyr receives in the afterlife, Azzam quotes the Prophet who said: “[i]n Paradise there are one hundred levels which Allah has prepared for the [martyred] Mujahideen; the difference between every pair of these is like the difference between heaven and earth.”⁶⁶⁸ As such, the defensive jihad is nothing less than a clarion call to death and martyrdom.

After Azzam’s assassination, OBL appropriated the defensive jihad framework and made it his own. This is evident in two *fatwas* issued by OBL in 1996 and 1998.⁶⁶⁹ The 1996 *fatwa* entitled, “The Declaration of War on American,” written in the Hindu Kush mountains near Khurasan, Afghanistan, adopts almost verbatim the language of Azzam. In it he declares, “it should not be hidden from you that the people of Islam had suffered from aggression, iniquity

⁶⁶⁷ Gilles Kepel, and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 115.

⁶⁶⁸ Abdullah Azzam, *Join The Caravan*, Chapter I: Reasons for Jihad. Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/azzam/caravan/part1.html>. Accessed on 12/05/09.

⁶⁶⁹ It should be noted that only a sheikh [religious cleric] may issue a fatwa. This requires undergoing a course of study in Islamic theology and jurisprudence. OBL did not have these theological credentials. However, he was given the rank of sheikh as an honorary title in reward for his role in organizing the Afghan Arabs during Afghanistan conflict.

and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist Crusaders alliance and their collaborators, to the extent that the Muslim's blood became the cheapest and their wealth as loot in the hands of the enemies."⁶⁷⁰ Bin Laden asserts that the 'Zionist Crusader alliance' is currently conducting an offensive and is driving Muslims out of Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Burma, Kashmir, the Philippines, Somalia, Chechnya and Bosnia Herzegovina.⁶⁷¹ This has led to horrifying "massacres that send shivers in the body and shake the conscience."⁶⁷² The Zionist Crusader alliance also has exerted its global influence to silence the rest of the world to their misdeeds. As a result, "a clear conspiracy [has] developed between the USA and its' allies under the cover of the iniquitous United Nations and the dispossessed [Muslims] were even prevented from obtaining arms to defend themselves."⁶⁷³

If this were not enough, OBL says in his 1998 fatwa that the physical and cultural presence of the U.S. in the land of Islam is an insult to the Muslim Community.⁶⁷⁴ Indeed, the occupation of the Arabian Peninsula is the greatest "calamity to have struck Muslims...[in] the heart of the abode of Islam and the cradle of prophecy, since the death of the Prophet and the

⁶⁷⁰ Osama bin Laden, "Declaration of War on America," August 23, 1996. Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/fatwas/declaration.html>. Accessed on 12/07/09.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Osama bin Laden, "World Islamic Front Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," February 23, 1998. Quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 52-53.

source of the divine message-the site of the Holy Kaaba, to which all Muslims pray.”⁶⁷⁵ Following Azzam’s lead, he argues that the root cause of the situation is due to the Islamic community’s abandonment of its faith.⁶⁷⁶ This has made so-called Islamic regimes unable to withstand the United States and, as such, these regimes have reneged on their duty to wage jihad to expel Islam’s adversaries. As a result of the ills heaped upon the Muslim community, OBL claims that he has no choice but to issue a declaration of war against the United States and its allies. In probably the most cited phrase from OBL he states:

“Killing the Americans and their allies-civilian and military-is *an individual duty* for every Muslim who can carry it out in any country where it proves possible, in order to liberate Al Aqsa mosque and the holy sanctuary [Mecca] from their grip, and to the point that their armies leave all Muslim territory, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim...We-with God's help-call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded [with martyrdom] to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder them of their possessions wherever and whenever they find them.”⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁵ Osama bin Laden, “Declaration of War on America,” August 23, 1996. Available online at <http://www.islamistwatch.org/texts/fatwas/declaration.html>. Accessed on 12/07/09. Bin Laden’s linking of the current situation to the death of the Prophet is significant. After Mohammad’s death, strife and warfare erupted as to who would be the Prophet’s successor. This produced Islam’s great schism thus creating the Sunni and Shia denominations. Bin Laden and other Sunni fundamentalists do not recognize the Shia denomination as legitimate and consider them to be heretics.

⁶⁷⁶ The abandonment of faith narrative is one that is found extensively in the Bible and the Koran. It follows a similar pattern where the faithful abandon their faith, are punished by God and then return to their faith.

⁶⁷⁷ Osama bin Laden, “World Islamic Front Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders,” February 23, 1998. Quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 54. Emphasis added.

OBL presents an uncompromising view of reality, which necessitates defensive jihad as an individual duty for all Muslims. Defense jihad is the means by which OBL and AQ will accomplish two primary goals: to expel the United States from Islamic holy lands and to re-establish the Islamic caliphate.

Through his sermons, one can observe that OBL was quite aware of the challenge he faced. Indeed, he said that “America is a great power possessed of tremendous military might and a wide-ranging economy.”⁶⁷⁸ However, he goes on to cite Hizbollah’s suicide attacks on U.S. marine barracks and U.S. disengagement from Somalia to demonstrate that America has weaknesses that can be exploited through asymmetric tactics. In two sermons he says:

- America “is built upon an unstable foundation which can be targeted, with special attention to its obvious weak spots. If America is hit in one hundredth of those spots, God willing, it will stumble, wither away and relinquish world leadership and its oppression. A small group of young Islamic fighters managed...to provide people with proof of the fact that it is possible to wage war upon and fight against a so-called ‘great power’ ...because they used Jihad.”⁶⁷⁹
- “We believe that America is weaker than [Soviet] Russia and from what we have heard from our brothers who waged jihad in Somalia, they found to their greatest surprise the weakness, frailness and cowardliness of the

⁶⁷⁸ Osama bin Laden, “Sermon on the Feast of Sacrifice,” (*MEMRI*, Special Dispatch #476, March 5, 2003). Available online at www.memri.org. Accessed on 11/22/09.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

American soldier. When only eight of them were killed [in Somalia] they packed up in the darkness of night and escaped without looking back.”⁶⁸⁰

- “I should like to remind you of the defeats suffered by a number of the great power...[like] the defeat of the American forces in the year 1402 of the Muslim calendar [1982] when the Israelis invaded Lebanon. The Lebanese resistance [Hizbollah] sent a truck full of explosives to the Americans Marines’ center in Beirut and killed over 240 of them.”⁶⁸¹

While OBL was aware of U.S. weaknesses and the potential destructive power of suicide attacks based on Hizbollah’s experience, the main proponent of the tactic came from his lieutenant Ayman Zawahiri.

In Zawahiri’s manifesto, *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, he makes the argument that the jihad movement “must move the battle to the enemy’s territory, to burn the hands of those who have set fire to our countries.”⁶⁸² The jihadist movement should expand the theater of battle into enemy’s territory because it will make the effects of their attacks all the more significant. Indeed, he argues that the movement must escalate the resistance to “be sure to inflict maximum casualties on the enemy, kill the greatest number of people, for this is the

⁶⁸⁰ “Interview with Osama bin Laden,” Al Jazeera, February 23, 1998, quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 59.

⁶⁸¹ Osama Bin Laden, “Sermon on the Feast of Sacrifice,” available online at www.memri.org. Accessed on 11/22/09.

⁶⁸² Ayman Al Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 202.

language understood by the West, no matter how much time and effort such operations take.”⁶⁸³ To this end, he advocates that the organization focus “on martyrdom efforts as the most successful way of inflicting damage on the opponent and the least costly to the mujahideen in terms of casualties.”⁶⁸⁴ The targets of the martyrdom operations, as well as the manner in which they are conducted, must be such that they will “dissuade [the enemy] from its brutal ways, arrogance, and violations of every sacred custom.”⁶⁸⁵

Zawahiri recognized that suicide attacks had an immense psychological value if they could be used against the U.S. because it would prove the country’s vulnerability, which would give the AQ organization legitimacy in the eyes of the Muslim masses.⁶⁸⁶ As such, it becomes clear that AQ’s adoption of suicide attacks came as a result of strategic necessity and the realization that AQ could not openly confront the Western superpower. Because they believed that faith could defeat a superpower as it had done against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan,

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 204.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ See the letter written under the penname Abu Huthayfa to Abu Abdullah, which is a common pseudonym for Osama bin Laden. In this letter, Abu Huthayfa says that the informal Al Qaeda “apparatus should emphasize martyrdom operations, [and] rely always on them and invest them in the [Arabian] Peninsula...[because they have] had great stimulating psychological effects on hundreds of mujahideen.” Quoted in “Letter to the Honorable Sheikh Abu Abdullah,” (Document AFGP-2002-003251, *United States Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center*, June 18, 2000), 3. Letter available online at <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/>. Accessed on 12/15/09.

AQ's founders turned to their faith and weaponized it in order to attack the U.S.⁶⁸⁷ This would become part of a burgeoning strategy to probe U.S. weaknesses and draw it into a prolonged and protracted conflict with AQ. The next section examines the periods from 1995 to 9/11 and from 9/11 to the present to investigate how AQ has adapted in its use of suicide attacks.

5.3.2 Al Qaeda: From 1995 to 9/11

From November 13, 1995 to September 11, 2001, AQ was responsible for five suicide attacks, which brought the organization to the attention of U.S. counterterrorism officials: the November 1995 suicide attack against a U.S. Army operated training center for the Saudi Arabian National Guard in Saudi Arabia; the 1996 Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia; the 1998 simultaneous bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; the October 2000 attack against the USS *Cole* in Yemen; and the infamous 9/11 attacks on U.S. soil.⁶⁸⁸ These attacks are representative of a time when AQ operated more as a hierarchical organization because it was involved in the organizing, planning and execution of each suicide attack. Each of the attacks, which will be considered briefly below, demonstrates an organization that appears, in hindsight, to be probing its adversary.

⁶⁸⁷ One theme invoked by Azzam, OBL and Zawahiri repeatedly is that of the struggle between David and Goliath. In this vein, Al Qaeda, the modern day David, would use martyrdom operations to fell the mighty Goliath, the United States.

⁶⁸⁸ ICT Database.

1995 Suicide Attack on Saudi Arabian National Guard and 1996 Khobar Towers Attack

AQ's first two suicide attacks occurred in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996 respectively. In the 1995 attack, five American and two Indian soldiers were killed with sixty injured when a large car bomb exploded just outside of the Saudi Arabian National Guard [SANG] training center in Riyadh.⁶⁸⁹ The explosives were placed in a truck, which was parked in a parking lot and then detonated by the driver. The SANG headquarters was a relatively soft target in that there was minimal security in the parking lot and the building was not nearly as fortified as an embassy.

Despite the lack of sophistication, the selection of the target was important. As James Dunnigan notes, the SANG is the Saudi crown prince's personal army.⁶⁹⁰ Moreover, the SANG was being trained by U.S. Army military personnel as well as a private company known as the Vinnell Corporation, a Fairfax, Virginia based company later acquired by Northrop-Grumman, which was first utilized by the U.S. military during the Persian Gulf War.⁶⁹¹

The 1996 Khobar Towers suicide attack was a great deal more sophisticated. It is believed that AQ, cooperating with Hizbollah, scouted the target site for months in an attempt to

⁶⁸⁹ Harvey Kushner, *The Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 22.

⁶⁹⁰ James Dunnigan, "What Really Happened When Al Qaeda Attacked," (*The Strategy Page*, September 3, 2003). Article available online at <http://www.strategypage.com/dls/articles2003/20030903.asp>. Accessed on 12/22/09.

⁶⁹¹ William Beeman, "Saudi Bombing-A Calculated Act with a Political Message," (*New American Media*, May 14, 2003). Article available online at http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=5a088c12620fcae70755524cb2ea8e1d. Accessed on 12/20/09. See also "Attacks on Foreigners in Saudi Arabia Since 1995," (*Agence France Presse*, December 6, 2004). Article available via Lexis-Nexis. Accessed in 12/20/09.

find weaknesses in the physical security of the building.⁶⁹² Additionally, the truck bomb was filled with some 5,000 pounds of plastic explosives creating a bomb that was much more powerful than the one used in 1995. The attack occurred on June 25, 1996 at 10:00 PM when an explosive laden truck was driven into a parking lot and then detonated.⁶⁹³ The explosion ripped off the outside wall of Building 131, which housed one hundred United States Air Force personnel killing nineteen American servicemen and wounding 372.⁶⁹⁴

While the U.S. military had strategic intelligence indicating that Khobar Towers was a possible target, the successful explosion of the truck bombs in 1995 and 1996 demonstrated that the U.S. was vulnerable to this form of attack.⁶⁹⁵ Moreover, it can be reasonably assumed that both attacks were directed at the U.S.-Saudi alliance. In OBL's view, the interaction between the Saudi royal family and the U.S. makes the former complicit in a most perfidious heresy; inviting Christian infidel forces into sacred Islamic land.

⁶⁹² Dan Eggen, "9/11 Panel Links Al Qaeda, Iran," (*Washington Post*, June 26, 2004), article available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A6581-2004Jun25.html>. Accessed on 12/22/09.

⁶⁹³ "Khobar Towers," (*Federal Bureau of Investigation*, Press Release, June 21, 2001), article available online at <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel01/khobar.htm>. Accessed on 12/22/09.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵ William Cohen, "Personal Accountability for Force Protection at Khobar Towers," (July 31, 1997). Report available online at http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/khobar_dod/report.html. Accessed on 12/22/09. Cohen argued that the US did have enough strategic intelligence that they should have anticipated the attack.

The August 7, 1998 Simultaneous Suicide Attacks in East Africa 1996

The simultaneous suicide attacks in Kenya and Tanzania signals a turning point for AQ because it “marked the beginning of AQ’s involvement in the planning, direction, and execution of [suicide attacks], as well as its shift to a global strategy in which the ‘far enemy,’ especially the United States, would be targeted.”⁶⁹⁶ The planning for the East African embassy attacks began in earnest in December 1993 when AQ operatives are believed to have arrived in Nairobi.⁶⁹⁷ OBL tasked Ali Mohamed, a former Egyptian army officer who moved to the U.S., joined the U.S. Army and assisted in providing instruction to the 1993 World Trade Center attackers, to conduct detailed surveillance on a wide range of targets including the Kenyan embassy. OBL provided Ali Mohamed with funds to purchase sophisticated surveillance and communications equipment.⁶⁹⁸ Using the equipment, he would then send OBL surveillance reports complete with hand-written diagrams, pictures and video recordings of each potential target.⁶⁹⁹

As early as 1994, OBL and his leadership agreed to the selection of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania because they believed a car bomb could easily be parked and detonated close by each embassy.⁷⁰⁰ Based on their previous attacks at Khobar Towers and the SANG facility, AQ had learned that parking lots were an advantageous location to plant a car bomb given the relative lack of physical security close to the target.

⁶⁹⁶ Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom*, 86.

⁶⁹⁷ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 68.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

Explosive filled trucks were parked at the embassies at 10:30 AM. The first explosion occurred in Nairobi at 10:35 AM and the second in Dar es Salaam at 10:39 AM. In Nairobi the embassy was destroyed, due to the close proximity of the truck to the building, killing twelve Americans and 201 others.⁷⁰¹ In Dar es Salaam, eleven people were killed, none among the dead were Americas, and 85 wounded.⁷⁰²

The picture of AQ that emerged after the embassy attacks was one of a sophisticated organization that engaged in careful target selection and collected a wide range of intelligence. The attack had been meticulously planned and was meant to coincide with the eighth anniversary of the arrival of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia.⁷⁰³ Additionally, this marks the first time AQ used simultaneous attacks.

October 12, 2000 Attack on the USS Cole

The USS *Cole* suicide attack was a ‘do over’ of a previously failed attempt that occurred on January 3, 2000 when a boat filled with explosives approached the USS *The Sullivans*. Instead of arriving and exploding close to the ship, the small boat sank due to the weight of the explosives. The AQ operative in Yemen at that time, Abd al Rashim al Nashiri, was instructed by OBL to try again. In fact, attacking a U.S. ship was OBL’s idea as he “chose the target and location of the attack, selected the suicide operatives, and provided the money needed to

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 69.

⁷⁰² Ibid.

⁷⁰³ Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom*, 87.

purchase explosives and equipment.”⁷⁰⁴ Nine months later suicide attackers Hassan al Khamri and Ibrahim al Thawar received a second chance.

On October 12, 2000 Thawar and Khamri captained a boat filled with explosives toward the USS *Cole*, which was docked in the Yemeni port of Aden. Learning from the previous mishap, they utilized a fiberglass boat that was better able to transport the explosives without sinking. As they approached the *Cole*, both smiled and waved to the crew before detonating the bombs, which killed seventeen sailors and wounded forty.⁷⁰⁵

After the suicide attack, OBL believed that the U.S. would retaliate using military force. As a result, he evacuated AQ’s Kandahar airport compound in Afghanistan, fled to the desert where he rotated between five to six residencies spending only one night at each place, and sent his principal advisors Mohammed Atef and Ayman al Zawahiri to different locations so that all three could not be killed by U.S. air strikes.⁷⁰⁶ When no retaliatory measures came, OBL was dismayed but this only made him more determined to launch a bigger attack in the future.⁷⁰⁷

In order to reap the most propaganda value, OBL tasked Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to create a video recreating the USS *Cole* attack.⁷⁰⁸ The video produced “included a reenactment of the attack along with the images of the AQ training camps and training methods; it also

⁷⁰⁴ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 190.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁸ At the time of the detonation of the boat by the suicide attackers, an Al Qaeda operative named Fahd al Quso was supposed to be filming the incident from a nearby apartment. For some reason al Quso never arrived at the apartment thereby robbing Al Qaeda of a live action video of the attack.

highlighted Muslims suffering in Palestine, Kashmir, Indonesia, and Chechnya.”⁷⁰⁹ The videotape appeared in jihadist circles in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, and eventually on the internet at AQ’s *al sahab.com* website.⁷¹⁰

9/11 Attacks on the United States

The 9/11 attacks were a clear escalation in AQ’s use of violence and were a frightening display of AQ’s operational and technical abilities. It used the tactic of simultaneous strikes from the bombings in East Africa but decided to employ a different method of delivery. As Stephen Holmes notes, “these transcontinental flights were apparently selected because of the negligible number of passengers likely to be on board at the time and the 10,000 gallons of aviation fuel that, upon impact, transformed the planes into immense incendiary bombs.”⁷¹¹

The main architect of the 9/11 attacks was Khalid Sheikh Mohammed [KSM]. As the *9/11 Commission Report* states, KSM was “[h]ighly educated and equally comfortable in a government office or a terrorist safehouse, [who] applied his imagination, technical aptitude, and managerial skills to hatching and planning an extraordinary array of terrorist schemes.”⁷¹² Moreover, he was the mastermind of 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and failed plans

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ Al Qaeda’s extensive use of the internet for propaganda purposes will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

⁷¹¹ Stephen Holmes, “Al Qaeda, September 11, 2001,” in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 131.

⁷¹² *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 145.

including the Bojinka plot, an attempt to assassinate former Pope John Paul II and a plan to crash a plane into CIA headquarters.⁷¹³ Indeed, it was after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing perpetrated by KSM's cousin Ramzi Yousef when the former began thinking about attacking the U.S. using a 'planes operation.'⁷¹⁴

KSM's initial idea was a grandiose plan like the Bojinka plot involving the hijacking and crashing of 10 aircraft on both coasts that would hit targets from the CIA building, the FBI building, the White House, nuclear power plants, to the tallest buildings in Washington DC and California.⁷¹⁵ OBL did not believe that such a plan was feasible but he did like the idea of crashing planes into selected targets. Thus, in late 1998 or early 1999, it is believed that OBL made the decision to devote his resources to attack the U.S. using commercial airplanes as weapons.

Originally devised as a four-person operation, the plan grew to include nineteen hijackers. Each plane would have two pilots, one primary and one back-up, and a number of 'muscle hijackers' whose job it would be to storm the cockpit and control the passengers after

⁷¹³ Ibid., 147. Had it succeeded, the Bojinka plot would have resulted in at least 4,000 dead. The plan was to detonate bombs on board 12 US commercial jumbo jets flying from Asia to the US.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 153.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 153-154. According to the 9/11 Report, KSM also wanted to hijack an eleventh plane and land it at a US airport. OBL, who reportedly ordered a study on the effectiveness of hijackings, decided against this because he believed that hijackings did not "fit the needs of Al Qaeda, because such hijackings were used to negotiate the release of prisoners rather than to inflict mass casualties."

the planes were hijacked.⁷¹⁶ An interview by OBL after the 9/11 attacks details just how much thought and preparation went into the operation:

“We planned and made calculations. We...estimated the casualties of the enemy. We figured the passengers in the planes, those will die. As regards [to] the towers, we assumed they would include the people in the three or four floors the planes would crash into. That was all we estimated. I was more optimistic. Due to the nature of my profession [i.e. construction], I figured that the fuel in the plane would raise the temperature in the steel to the point that it becomes red and almost lose[s] its properties. So if the plane hits the building here...the portion of the building above will collapse. That was the most we could hope for.”⁷¹⁷

For AQ, the total cost of the operation was estimated between \$400,000 and \$500,000.⁷¹⁸ The economic damage caused by AQ on the U.S. was much more devastating. As Olivia Jackson notes, the 9/11 attacks halted U.S. stock markets for four business days causing the Dow Jones Industrial Average to drop 648.81 points when the markets reopened.⁷¹⁹ A CRS Report found that the 9/11 attacks cost the U.S. approximately \$34 billion in insured losses, \$576 million for rebuilding the Pentagon, \$7 billion for official victim compensation and \$7.8 billion in lifetime earnings lost by the 2,780 New Yorkers killed.⁷²⁰ Not only had OBL and AQ significantly harmed the U.S. economy, OBL would succeed in baiting the U.S. into the Middle East when on October 7, 2001 President Bush announced the beginning of combat operations

⁷¹⁶ “Outline of the 9/11 Plot” (Bush Administration Staff Statement, No. 16, June 16, 2004), 8.

⁷¹⁷ OBL quoted in Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2007), 370.

⁷¹⁸ “Outline of the 9/11 Plot,” 11.

⁷¹⁹ Olivia Jackson, “The Impact of the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks on the US Economy,” (*Journal of 9/11 Studies*, March 2008), 2.

⁷²⁰ Dick Nanto, “9/11 Terrorism: Global Economic Costs,” (*CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RS21937, October 5, 2004), 2-3.

[Operation Enduring Freedom] in Afghanistan. The U.S. would later expand its military presence in the Middle East when in 2003 it invaded Iraq [Operation Iraqi Freedom] “to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein’s support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people.”⁷²¹

Former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer noted that 9/11 was a strategic success for OBL because it succeeded in luring the U.S. into the Middle East. Moreover, he argues that the U.S. involvement in Iraq was playing into OBL’s strategy:

“...[the Iraq war] was the perfect execution of a war that demanded jihad to oppose it. You had an infidel power invading and occupying a Muslim country and it was perceived [by the Muslim world] to be unprovoked. The war has validated everything bin Laden said: that the United States will destroy any strong government in the Arab world, that it will seek to destroy Israel’s enemies, that it will occupy Muslim holy places, that it will seize Arab oil, and that it will replace God’s law with man’s law.”⁷²²

Scheuer’s analysis is convincing. Despite the noble motives of the United States, military action in Afghanistan and Iraq played into OBL’s defensive jihad framework. OBL was free to frame U.S. involvement in the Middle East as “a new crusade against the Muslim world...[that will] have dangerous repercussions and damaging effects on Islam and Muslims, to an extent that only God knows.”⁷²³ A 2006 National Intelligence Estimate would later find that the Iraq war was

⁷²¹ George Bush, “President Discusses Beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom,” (*President’s Radio Address*, March 22, 2003). Available online at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030322.html>. Accessed on 12/22/09.

⁷²² Michael Scheuer quoted in Ken Silverstein, “Six Questions for Michael Scheuer on National Security,” (*Harper’s Magazine*, August 23, 2006). Interview available online at <http://www.harpers.org/archive/2006/08/sb-seven-michael-scheuer-1156277744>. Accessed on 12/22/09.

⁷²³ Osama bin Laden, “Second Letter to the Muslims in Iraq,” in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), p, 67

becoming “the ‘cause celebre’ for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement” all of which align with the goals of OBL.⁷²⁴ While the U.S. led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan did play into OBL’s grand strategy, U.S. military success in capturing and killing senior AQ leadership forced the AQ organization to adapt. What has emerged in the post 9/11 AQ is an organization that is more diffuse, decentralized and network-centric.

5.3.3 Al Qaeda Post 9/11: ‘Secret Bands of Disconnected Cells’

According to Bruce Hoffman, U.S. military action in Afghanistan has killed or captured 75% of AQ’s leadership leaving AQ a different organization than it was on 9/11.⁷²⁵ In a 1,600 page tome, AQ ideologue Abu Musab al Suri investigates the post-9/11 AQ and addresses why the Americans were able to achieve such a quick victory over the mujahideen in Afghanistan.⁷²⁶ In his analysis he finds that the Americans relied on support from local collaborating Muslims

⁷²⁴ “Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States,” (Declassified Key Judgment of the National Intelligence Estimate, April 2006), 2.

⁷²⁵ Bruce Hoffman, “Al Qaeda on the Run or on the March?” (Paper delivered at the Unrestricted Warfare Symposium Proceedings, 2008), 27.

⁷²⁶ Abu Musab Al Suri, *The Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. At present a full translation of Al Suri’s entire work does not exist. However, Jim Lacey of the US Naval Academy has translated parts of Al Suri’s work. See Jim Lacey, *A Terrorist’s Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al Suri’s Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008). The following quotations of Al Suri come from this excellent edited version of Al Suri’s work.

powers; they used neighboring countries to transport logistical supplies; they relied on overwhelming air and missile superiority; and they used excessive and brutal force, which transformed the Muslim people into impotent witnesses.⁷²⁷ Based on the situation in Afghanistan, Al Suri reaches the following conclusions: open confrontation with the U.S. is impossible; U.S. measures to establish regional security have hampered the ability of hierarchical jihadi groups to operate in their domestic countries; and AQ must adapt to the current situation or face extinction.

While Al Suri lauds the 9/11 attacks and claims they were justified because “the United States, Israel, and Western Europe were plotting against [the Muslim world],” he realizes that the jihadist movement “has now entered a difficult stage.”⁷²⁸ The quick fall of Kabul and the cooperation lent by Pakistan, he argues, has led “to the complete destruction of the jihadist movement...[as] the Arab mujahideen...faced the worst genocide in their history.”⁷²⁹ Out of the roughly 1,900 AQ fighters in Afghanistan, he believes that some 1,600 have been killed or captured.⁷³⁰ As a result, U.S. military action has “decimated the senior leadership of those jihadist organizations, who represent the third generation of mujahideen.”⁷³¹

The main weakness that Al Suri finds with the AQ organization is its hierarchical, top-down nature. The plain fact is that the U.S. effectively targeted senior members of the AQ hierarchy, which have hampered the operational effectiveness of the lower tiers of the

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 94-96.

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 98.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 99.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 100.

organization. Instead of a top-down organization, he advocates a more diffuse one. With this in mind he concludes, “the sole method for confrontation that presents itself in light of this situation is by way of *secret bands of disconnected cells that are both varied and abundant.*”⁷³² Al Suri believed that relying less on hierarchy and more on independent, and disconnected cells would make the organization more resilient and better able to operate outside the Middle East, specifically in Western society.

Since 9/11, AQ has perpetrated suicide attacks targeting a synagogue in Tunisia (April 11, 2002), a nightclub Bali (October 12, 2002), the Paradise Hotel in Kenya (November 28, 2002), the Al Hamra residential complex housing in Saudi Arabia (May 12, 2003), Spanish commuter trains (March 11/2004), and London subway stations (July 7, 2005).⁷³³ The London subway and bus suicide attack will be investigated briefly as the example *par excellence* of Al Suri’s vision of a decentralized AQ that is making inroads in Western society.

July 7, 2005: Radicalization in London

At 8:23 AM four men are seen on closed circuit television [CCTV] waiting at the concourse close to the Thameslink platform for a train. Each is wearing a rucksack and is dressed casually.

At 8:30 AM the train approaches and CCTV catch the four men hugging, as “they appear happy,

⁷³² Ibid., 28. Emphasis added.

⁷³³ Some of the perpetrators of the Madrid attack died when a bomb exploded during a standoff with the Spanish Guardia Civil. However, it is thought that the bomb went off unexpectedly, which raises doubt as to whether it was an intended suicide attack.

even euphoric.”⁷³⁴ The men then split up and go separate directions. Twenty minutes later at 8:50 AM, there are three explosions: one at the circle line tunnel between Liverpool street and the Aldgate station; the second on the circle line outside of Edward Road; the third in a Piccadilly line tunnel close to King’s Cross Station. The fourth bomb detonates at 9:47 AM on the upper deck of a No. 30 bus traveling to Tavistock Square.⁷³⁵

The near simultaneous London suicide attacks is representative of Al Suri’s new vision of AQ. The self-starter cell was essentially an “autonomous clique whose motivations, cohesiveness, and ideological grooming occurred in the absence of any organized network or formal entry into jihad.”⁷³⁶ Three of the four perpetrators were British born Muslims of Pakistani descent, while the fourth was a Jamaican immigrant who later converted to Islam. As the *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London* points out, what is striking is that the backgrounds of these four young men appear “largely unexceptional.”⁷³⁷ They grew up in the neighborhood district of Holbeck, which is located just outside Leeds and were educated.

⁷³⁴ “Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005”, (House of Commons, May 2006), 4. Hereafter referred to as “The London Report.”

⁷³⁵ Ibid., 2. As the London Report goes on to say, it is believed that the fourth bomber, Hasib Hussain, failed to detonate his explosive device. CCTV captures Hussain at a Boot’s pharmacy in King’s Cross station purchasing what appears to be a 9 volt battery. It is thought that Hussain’s battery failed at the time of detonation. Hussain is then captured going into a McDonald’s and then boarding a no. 91 bus traveling to Euston Station. Hussain is then seen switching to a no. 30 bus traveling east. It is believed Hussain changed busses because the no 30 would have more people riding at that time in the morning.

⁷³⁶ Aidan Kirby, "The London Bombers as 'Self-Starters': A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques," (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 30, 2007), 416.

⁷³⁷ “The London Report,” 13.

Mohammad Sidique Khan graduated with a degree from Leeds Metropolitan University and was married.⁷³⁸ Shehzaed Tanweer was an avid cricket player and studied sports science at Leeds Metropolitan University.⁷³⁹ Hasib Hussain was also enrolled at a local college where he was reading for a degree in business management.⁷⁴⁰ Finally, Jermain Lindsay had taken classes at a local university and was married to, and had a child with, a British convert to Islam.⁷⁴¹ The group enjoyed “camping, canoeing, white-water rafting, paintballing and other outward bound type activities;” hardly the activities that come to mind when one thinks of aspiring suicide attackers.⁷⁴²

Although Tanweer and Khan had visited family members in Pakistan from November 19, 2004 to February 8, 2005, it is unclear just how much assistance, if any, the two received regarding their upcoming plot. After the attack, articles appeared claiming that the attackers had direct links with AQ or had received training from AQ.⁷⁴³ In fact, the Official UK Report on the London Attacks concluded that there was no reliable intelligence or information to corroborate

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., 17,

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ Peter Finn and Glenn Frankel, “Al Qaeda Link to Attacks in London Probed,” (*Washington Post*, August 1, 2005). Article available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/31/AR2005073100624.html>. Accessed on 12/30/09. Martin Asser, “Al Qaeda Shadow Looms Over London,” (*BBC News*, July 7, 2005), article available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4661273.stm. Accessed on 12/30/09.

the theory that Tanweer and Khan had visited AQ training camps or had informed AQ leadership of their plot.⁷⁴⁴

The jump to link the 7/7 attackers with AQ “conveys the unwillingness on the part of many individuals within the security community [in the United Kingdom] to seriously consider the possibility that this attack could have been conceived, planned, financed, and executed by just a handful of people—all of them British.”⁷⁴⁵ Indeed, the only common link amongst the London attackers is that they frequented places in Leeds that were known for Islamic extremism. For example, one of the gyms the four used was known as ‘the Al Qaeda gym.’⁷⁴⁶ The four also went to a nearby bookstore where it is believed they would access extremist websites, listen to anti-Western lectures by local Islamists, and buy extremist propaganda in the form of video cassettes and DVDs.⁷⁴⁷ Outside of this there is scant evidence that the four received any ideological indoctrination or operational training from AQ.⁷⁴⁸

What emerges in the aftermath of the London attacks is a picture of four individuals who self-started, self-radicalized and self-activated on their own without AQ’s assistance. Perhaps more importantly, three of the four attackers were British born citizens who were, by all

⁷⁴⁴ “The London Report,” 20.

⁷⁴⁵ Aidan Kirby, “The London Bombers as ‘Self-Starters’: A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques,” 419.

⁷⁴⁶ “The London Report,” 16.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ While there is an absence of an Al Qaeda recruiter or operational planner, this does not preclude the possibility of the four having meeting up with a more experienced recruiter or planner at some point in their preparations. However, there is no known evidence of this happening.

accounts, well integrated into society and did not display any outward signs of radicalization. Unlike Hamas suicide attackers, there is no evidence that the London bombers withdrew from their lives before the attack. On the contrary, the London bombers remained active in their daily lives and routines as they attended university, worked different jobs, and raised their children. Indeed, the families of the 7/7 bombers were shocked that their sons had become radicalized.⁷⁴⁹

This type of autochthonously forming group is Al Suri's realized vision of the new AQ. Although the AQ leadership may not be involved operationally with such groups per se, the groups can easily tap into AQ's ideological meta-narrative. This powerful narrative is proving able to radicalize Muslims who have been born in, lived in, and educated in the West. One needs only to look at recent plots by Najibullah Zazi and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to see that Al Suri's decentralized AQ is becoming a reality.⁷⁵⁰ AQ is becoming a fifth column of sorts that is found lurking *both* in stable Western liberal democracies and the world's unstable weak-states.⁷⁵¹ The presence of the fifth column will remain active, al Suri argues, as long as AQ's

⁷⁴⁹ "Family Who 7/7 Bomber Khan Left Behind," (*Yorkshire Post*, May 10, 2007), article available online at <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/Family-who-77-bomber-Khan.2867933.jp>. Accessed on 12/30/09.

⁷⁵⁰ Abdulmutallab is a Muslim citizen from Nigeria who attempted to detonate plastic explosives on Northwest Airlines Flight 253. See "Indictment in U.S. v. Abdulmutallab," United States District Court Eastern District of Michigan, January 6, 2010. The examples of Zazi and Ambdulmutallab will be examined in more depth later in this chapter.

⁷⁵¹ Jacob Heilbrunn, "A Fifth Column?" (*The National Interest*, 11/09/2009), article available online at www.nationalinterest.org. Accessed on 12/30/09. Al Qaeda is proving to be able to function in the United Kingdom, Spain, the United States as well as Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Heilbrunn goes on to argue that the actions of the Fort Hood shooter Maj. Nidal M. Hasan is another example of the Al Qaeda fifth column emerging in the United States.

ideology draws disaffected Muslims. If the ideology is strong, he believes the West can do little to deter future suicide attackers. The next section of the chapter investigates AQ's narrative and examines how it influences AQ suicide attackers.

5.4 AL QAEDA'S POTENT META-NARRATIVE AND HOW IT MOTIVATES AL QAEDA SUICIDE ATTACKERS

The AQ meta-narrative is the engine that drives the ideology of this transnational terrorist organization. For Western security analysts, academics and policymakers, examining this meta-narrative has proven difficult. As Jim Lacey notes, “for too long, analysts and even the general public [in the West] have observed the jihadi movement *from the outside and tried to understand it from our own perspective*. Too often our own biases have gotten in the way of accurately interpreting what we see. This misinterpretation of the movement's ideas...has led policymakers not only to underestimate the enemy, but also to advocate policies that are, at best, inappropriate.”⁷⁵² Instead of understanding AQ from the Western perspective, one must endeavor to understand AQ's perspective. This is done, in effect, by reading primary sources written by AQ ideologues. Through an examination of the ‘jihadist canon,’ which include the works of Sayyid Qutb, OBL, Abu Musab al Suri and Ayman al Zawahiri, the section identifies

⁷⁵² Jim Lacey, *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, x. Emphasis added.

an AQ meta-narrative that is rooted in three primary principles: a hatred of the West, a belief in a clash of civilizations between the Islamic world and the West, and martyrdom. The three principles of AQ's meta-narrative form the backbone of a transnational Islamic liberation ideology, which has become a powerful motivating force for AQ suicide attackers.⁷⁵³ The meta-narrative frames the conflict with the West as a religious one, dividing the world between good and evil and offering the reward of martyrdom to the suicide attacker. Indeed, the potency and durability of the meta-narrative has motivated and will continue to motivate suicide attackers who identify with it precisely because it allows the suicide attacker to project his or her grievances onto it.

5.4.1 Hatred of the West

The first principle of AQ's meta-narrative is a hatred of the West, which comes in two forms. The first is cultural. As Steve Simon and Daniel Benjamin note, the United States is "resented for its cultural hegemony...[because] [i]ts cultural reach threatens traditional [Islamic] values...[i]t offers temptation, blurs social, ethical, and behavioral boundaries, and presages moral disorder."⁷⁵⁴ Islamism's hatred of the West is rooted in the thought of Sayyid Qutb. Qutb's critique of the West is based on his belief that the West exists in a state of *jahiliyyah*

⁷⁵³ As has been said in earlier chapters, there is no one motivation that prompts someone to become a suicide attacker, but rather it is a confluence of motivations.

⁷⁵⁴ Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, (New York: Random House, 2002), 407.

[ignorance]. In Islamic theology, *jahiliyyah* is the state of ignorance that the Arabian community existed in before they accepted the revelation given by God to the Prophet Mohammed. According to Qutb, the West's "*jahiliyya* is evil and corrupt...[i]ts outward manifestations may be different during different epochs, yet its roots are the same. Its roots are *human desires*, which do not let people come out of their ignorance and self-importance."⁷⁵⁵

Since the West's state of ignorance is rooted in human desires, this has given rise to a corrupt culture. What is offensive to Qutb and other AQ ideologues is not only the depravity of Western culture but the West's cultural aggressiveness.⁷⁵⁶ Abu Musab Al Suri forcefully makes the point that the West has inundated the Muslim world with filth:

“...from satellite dishes and television screens to radio stations, Internet networks, international information, newspapers, and magazines to forums and educational centers, and so forth, you will see that most of it is the source of demons' gateway to humanity. Its very foundations are based on impermissible actions and abominations, from music, singing, entertainment, nudity, commingling of the opposite sex, fornication, and prostitution to the spread of fifth and corruptive thoughts.”⁷⁵⁷

Western culture is offensive to AQ ideologues since it is all-pervasive and because it leads Muslims away from their faith.

Western culture also has given rise to ideas such as democracy and secularism that Qutb and Ayman Al Zawahiri believe to be un-Islamic. For Qutb, secularism and the concomitant notion that religion should be relegated to the private sphere of a state is impossible because, as he argues, Islam is a total and inseparable system of beliefs governing all aspects of human

⁷⁵⁵ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, 132. Emphasis added.

⁷⁵⁶ Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs McWorld*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), 184.

⁷⁵⁷ Abu Musab Al Suri, quoted in Jim Lacey, *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, 34.

action.⁷⁵⁸ Because of this any governing body seeking to rule by man-made law is un-Islamic. As Qutb argues, “God’s rule on earth can be established only through the Islamic system, as it is the only system ordained by God for all human beings.”⁷⁵⁹ Zawahiri, echoing Qutb, declares “either legislation comes from God alone, and one refers to him in case of conflict, in accordance with our words [‘There is no God but God’], or one gives the right to legislate to others, like the people and their delegates, referring to them in case of conflict. This is *tantamount to worshipping gods, peers, and associates alongside God.*”⁷⁶⁰

The point that Qutb and Zawahiri raise is that democracy, a derivative of Western culture, competes against the loyalty a Muslim has for Allah.⁷⁶¹ They believe that Muslims cannot reconcile their loyalty to God with impious doctrines like positive law, secularism and democracy as well as all the temptation accompanying Western culture.⁷⁶² With the innumerable ways that Western culture acts as a stumbling block for the Muslim faithful, Qutb and Zawahiri recommend its rejection *in toto*.

⁷⁵⁸ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, 61.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁶⁰ Ayman Al Zawahiri, “Bitter Harvest: Sixty Years of the Muslim Brotherhood” quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 171. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶¹ Zawahiri goes on to claim that ‘democracy is a new religion...based on making the people into gods and giving them God’s rights and attributes. This is tantamount to...falling into unbelief.’ See Ayman Al Zawahiri, “Advice to the Islamic Community to Reject the Fatwa of Sheikh Bin Baz Authorizing Parliamentary Representations,” quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 184.

⁷⁶² Ayman Al Zawahiri, “Bitter Harvest,” quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 172.

The second root of Western hatred is the presence of Western forces in Muslims lands, which can be labeled ‘neo-Crusaderism.’⁷⁶³ As aforementioned, one of the main themes used by OBL and other AQ ideologues is the Crusades. In the AQ narrative, the Crusades were a nadir in Islamic history when the faithful abandoned their religion and, as a result, lost the holy city of Jerusalem in 1099 to the invading Christian armies. OBL sees a repetition of the same history occurring in the twentieth century.

As OBL argues, the Christian Crusaders have “been occupying the most sacred of Islamic lands, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the peninsula into a spearhead with which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.”⁷⁶⁴ OBL goes on to say that “Muslims are being drained of their blood, honor, possession, and land all over the world, at the hands of the hateful [Christian] Crusaders, led by that leader of international infidelity, America.”⁷⁶⁵ As such, OBL links the West’s neo-Crusaderism with the aggression, oppression and occupation of Islamic lands. As James Payne notes, the neo-Crusaderism theme accounts for approximately 72% of

⁷⁶³ The term ‘neo-Crusaderism’ comes from Azmuddin Ibrahim, “The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media,” (*Intellectual Discourse*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2008), 248.

⁷⁶⁴ Osama Bin Laden, “World Islamic Front Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders,” February 23, 1998, quoted in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 53-54.

⁷⁶⁵ Osama Bin Laden, “Moderate Islam is a Prostration to the West,” in Raymond Ibrahim ed., *The Al Qaeda Reader*, (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 22

OBL's written statements from 1994 to 2005.⁷⁶⁶ OBL, however, is not the only ideologue to address this subject.

Departing slightly from OBL, al Suri believes that the neo-Crusade is nothing new and in fact has been occurring for nearly two centuries. He argues that the Crusaders have conspired for two hundred years "to drive Muslims away from their faith, which they realize is the reason for Arab power and glory."⁷⁶⁷ As such, the American-led crusade against the Arab and Islamic world is bent on the systematic and "total elimination of the civilization, religious political, economic, social, and cultural existence of Muslims."⁷⁶⁸ For Al Suri, the neo-Crusade is tantamount to genocide and therefore the entire Muslims community is warranted to resist this oppression by any means necessary.

In this brief discussion of the first pillar of AQ's meta-narrative, one sees that it is rooted in culture, and subsequently values, as well as occupation. Robert Pape has provided the definitive account of the role that occupation plays in AQ's strategic calculus.⁷⁶⁹ However, he ignores the powerful role of culture and values. For Pape, culture and values do little more than play a supplemental role in that they provide context and symbols of resistance. The real issue,

⁷⁶⁶ James Payne, "What Do the Terrorists Want?" (*The Independent Review*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, 2008), 30. Payne performed a content analysis of twenty-four statements by Osama Bin Laden to reach his conclusion.

⁷⁶⁷ Abu Musab Al Suri quoted in Jim Lacey, *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, 2.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁶⁹ Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, (New York: Random House, 2005), 79-102. Pape also claims that religious difference matters but this is proving no longer to be relevant. Al Qaeda, in its manifestations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, has killed many more Muslims than Western Christians.

he argues, is the American presence in the Middle East. Pape narrowly defines this in terms of U.S. troops who appear to be occupying forces. However, he overlooks the fact that AQ ideologues also feel bombarded and held hostage by Western culture. Indeed, as Walter Laqueur notes, the cultural occupation is just as important to AQ as the physical occupation.⁷⁷⁰ This debate has caught the attention of OBL who asks the following question: “[w]hy all the lies and false claims that the conflict with the Americans is not over values of justice and the choice of freedoms? For indeed, *the conflict with the Crusading Americans is over values of justice-both in theory and practice; likewise with freedoms-in theory and practice.*”⁷⁷¹ The OBL quote is a reminder that AQ views this conflict as one involving cultural as well as the physical presence of the West in Islamic lands. Any attempt to ignore one at the expense of the other misinterprets what AQ ideologues say in their own writings.

The reason why AQ dwells on the cultural incompatibility between the West and Islam as well as Western neo-Crusaderism is because these factors haven proven successful at mobilizing the Muslim masses.⁷⁷² With rising anti-American sentiments in the Muslim world, the more OBL and AQ can highlight the perception of a Western assault on Islam the more of an audience

⁷⁷⁰ Walter Laqueur, "What Makes Them Tick?" (*Washington Post*, Sunday, July 24, 2005). Article available online at www.washingtonpost.com. Laqueur makes another important point when he asserts that Pape's argument that suicide terrorism happens to democratic states is 'not exactly a new discovery.' Terrorism, of whatever form, has largely been a method to target democracies.

⁷⁷¹ Osama Bin Laden, "Moderate Islam is a Prostration to the West," quoted in Raymond Ibrahim ed., *The Al Qaeda Reader*, 50. Emphasis added.

⁷⁷² Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom*, 70.

they will have. As such, the scope of the conflict is presented as a clash of civilizations where good [AQ] battles evil [the West].⁷⁷³

5.4.2 Clash of Civilizations

The clash of civilizations is the second pillar of the AQ ideology and, like the first, can be traced back to Sayyid Qutb. Qutb's commentary on the sheer incompatibility between the West and Islam ensures that the latter is destined to struggle with the former. OBL frequently invokes the 'Neo-Crusaderism' metaphor to describe the clash between Islam and the West as nothing less than total war as the West is confronting Islam on the economic, political, religious and cultural fronts. As Roel Meijer notes, ideologues like OBL claim that the West engages in a civilization war against Islam as "it aims to destroy the identity of Muslims, corrupt their morals, and terminate their religious feelings in order that Muslims lose faith in their creed."⁷⁷⁴

The root of the clash between Islam and the West is the latter's occupation of Islamic land. The first time OBL mentions this is in his 1996 fatwa where he says, "the latest aggression [against the Muslims community] was one of the worst catastrophes to befall the Muslims since the death of the Prophet...[i]t was the occupation of the land of the two holy mosques [Saudi Arabia], the cradle of Islam, the scene of the revelation, the source of the message, and the site of

⁷⁷³ See Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" (*Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer 1993). Huntington's article, and later book, became one of the most discussed and controversial analytical works in the field of International Relations.

⁷⁷⁴ Roel Meijer, "Yusu al Uyairi and the Making of A Revolutionary Salafi Praxis," (*Die Welt Des Islams*, Vol. 47, 2007), 432.

the holy Ka'bah...by Christian armies of the Americans.”⁷⁷⁵ Additionally, OBL argues that the war between the two civilizations is part of a long history of Western occupation:

“O Muslims: The situation is serious and the misfortune is momentous. By God, I am keen on safeguarding your religion and your worldly life...The West's occupation of our countries is old, yet new. The struggle between us and them, the confrontation, and clashing began centuries ago, and will continue because the ground rules regarding the fight between right and falsehood will remain valued until Judgment Day.”⁷⁷⁶

Another characteristic of AQ's clash of civilizations is that it is defined in explicitly religious terms. As OBL says, “the struggle [with the West] is an ideological and religious struggle and that clash is a clash of civilizations. They [the West] are keen to destroy the Islamic identity in the entire Islamic world. This is their real stand regarding us.”⁷⁷⁷ As Mark Juergensmeyer notes, the integration of religion absolutizes the conflict turning a worldly struggle into a sacred battle.⁷⁷⁸ Juergensmeyer goes on to say that OBL's use of religion gives

⁷⁷⁵ Osama bin Laden, “Fatwa Declaring Jihad on Americans,” London, *Al Islah*, September 2, 1996 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Report, “Compilation of Osama bin Laden Statements 1994-January 2004,” (FBIS, January 2004), 26.

⁷⁷⁶ Osama Bin Laden, “Message to Brothers and Sisters in the Whole Islamic Nation,” Audiotape played on Al-Jazeera, January 4, 2004 in Thomas Hegghammer, “Al Qaeda Statements 2003-2004-A Compilation of Translated Texts by Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al Zawahiri,” (Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2005), 50.

⁷⁷⁷ Osama bin Laden, “O Iraqi People,” audiotape released on *Al Jazeera* on May 6, 2004 in Thomas Hegghammer, “Al Qaeda Statements 2003-2004-A Compilation of Translated Texts by Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al Zawahiri,” 60

⁷⁷⁸ Mark Juergensmeyer, “Religious Terror and the Secular State,” (Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, UC Santa Barbara, 2004), 2. Article available online at <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4w99n8tk>. Accessed on 12/15/09. Instead of using the ‘clash of civilizations’

AQ a strong sense of moral legitimacy allowing the organization to argue that it is employing just violence against an evil and corrupt foe.⁷⁷⁹

It must be noted that there is a tendency by social scientists to explain away the religious aspect of AQ's clash of civilizations. As Ami Pedhazur notes, "the depiction of AQ actions in general, and the organization's suicide operations in particular, in terms of a clash of religions or civilizations goes a bit too far."⁷⁸⁰ Likewise, Robert Pape argues that the clash is ethno-nationalist rather than religious.⁷⁸¹ Similarly, Stephen Holmes expresses doubt as to whether the analyst plausibly can assert that religious beliefs motivate AQ to plan and carry out attacks.⁷⁸² This reveals the strong tendency of some analysts to disregard the religious component of the AQ.⁷⁸³ Indeed, David Cook and Olivia Allison highlight this tendency when they assert that "many scholars and analysts shy away from considering the role of religion as a key determining factor in creating [Al Qaeda] suicide attackers, a factor that yet may be a cardinal, if not *the*

paradigm, Juergensmeyer developed what he termed the 'cosmic war.' Much like any Manichean world view, the cosmic war sees conflict in religious terms where good battle evil. See also Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁷⁷⁹ Mark Juergensmeyer, "Religious Terror and Global War," (Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, UC Santa Barbara, 2004), 3. Article available online at <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5k99k5mq>. Accessed on 11/12/09.

⁷⁸⁰ Ami Pedahzur, Ami. *Suicide Terrorism*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 116.

⁷⁸¹ Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, 79

⁷⁸² Stephen Holmes, "Al Qaeda, September 11, 2001," in Diego Gambetta ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, 132.

⁷⁸³ Javier Jorda and Luisa Boix, "Al Qaeda and Western Islam," (*Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring 2004), 4.

cardinal, factor in the contemporary creation of radical Muslim suicide attackers.”⁷⁸⁴ By not discussing the religious components of AQ, some analysts are refusing to recognize how the adversary frames the conflict. Instead, Pape, Pedhazur and Holmes are examples of analysts who seek to reframe the conflict from a secular, Western perspective where facts and values are separated. However simplistic or anachronistic the religious worldview might appear to the social scientist, the statements, video tapes, audio tapes, articles and books authored by AQ ideologues give one the impression that AQ *truly believes* that the West is engaged in a religious war against Islam and that it is the duty of every individual Muslim to help expel the West.⁷⁸⁵ This struggle is waged through jihad and martyrdom is the reward for those who give their lives willingly in this fight.

5.4.3 Martyrdom

Martyrdom is the last pillar of AQ’s meta-narrative. Since AQ is engaged in a defensive jihad, which according to Zawahiri is “one of the greatest and most individually binding jihads in this day and age...waged against those apostate rulers who reign over Islamic lands and govern without the sharia-the friends of Jews and Christians,” those who die in this struggle are hailed as

⁷⁸⁴ David Cook and Olivia Allison, *Understanding and Addressing Suicide Attacks: The Faith and Politics of Martyrdom*, (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007), xiv.

⁷⁸⁵ This is why the main counter-terrorism effort must center on countering the Al Qaeda ideology. This will be explored in greater detail in the conclusion of this dissertation.

martyrs.⁷⁸⁶ It was Zawahiri who was responsible for providing the theological justifications for making an AQ suicide attacker a martyr.

In an undated pamphlet entitled “Regarding the Duty of Jihad and the Superiority of Martyrdom,” Zawahiri provides the single, most nuanced treatment of what he calls ‘martyrdom operations.’⁷⁸⁷ The pamphlet asks two questions: is it legitimate for a Muslim to kill himself for the sake of Islam and is it legitimate to bombard the infidels if fellow Muslims are intermingled with them? Both questions are of critical importance because they deal with suicide and the potential killing of fellow believers because of the indiscriminate nature of suicide attacks. Zawahiri answers in the affirmative to both questions and his reasoning will now be explored. Suffice it to say that Zawahiri’s rationale has become the cornerstone in AQ’s justification for using suicide attacks.

Zawahiri begins his endeavor with a simple quote by the Prophet Mohammed, “war is deceit.” These three words form the basis of his entire argument about the justifiability of suicide attacks. Zawahiri claims that the Islamic community is engaged in a defensive struggle against a militarily superior foe. Since the mujahideen cannot confront this foe using conventional means, they must adapt by using deception. As Zawahiri notes, “deception in warfare requires that the mujahid bide his time and wait for an opportunity against his enemy,

⁷⁸⁶ Ayman al Zawahiri, “Loyalty and Enmity: An Inherited Doctrine and Lost Reality,” December 2002 in Raymond Ibrahim ed., *The Al Qaeda Reader*, 94.

⁷⁸⁷ Zawahiri termed the phrase ‘martyrdom operation,’ which made its way into Al Qaeda’s organizational vocabulary.

while avoiding confrontation at all possible costs. For triumph, in almost every case, is [achieved] through deception.”⁷⁸⁸

The suicide attack is the epitome of a deceptive tactic. Wearing and detonating a bomb-laden vest or driving a car filled with explosives into a target are not examples of open confrontation. Seeking to give his argument theological weight, he quotes Islamic scholars of the ulema who agree that “deception against the infidels in war is legal, unless it reneges an existing pact or treaty in which case it is unacceptable.”⁷⁸⁹ He cites other instances in the hadith where Muslim warriors dressed in disguises to surprise their enemies. By analogous reasoning, Zawahiri’s argument goes as such: deception is legal in warfare; martyrdom operations are a form of deception; therefore martyrdom operations are legal. For Zawahiri, the martyrdom operation is but one example when the Muslim community has used deception to combat its enemies.⁷⁹⁰

After establishing the legality of martyrdom operations, Zawahiri confronts the thorny issue of suicide. Instead of calling the act ‘suicide,’ he asks if the believer has permission to destroy oneself in order to ennoble and empower the Islamic religion. To address this, Zawahiri quotes a hadith cited by Suhaib, which tells the story of a young boy who works miracles in the name of Allah. According to the hadith, a non-believing king learns of the boy’s power and has the boy compete against the king’s magicians. To demonstrate his power, the boy picks up a pebble and declares that the small stone will fell an animal when thrown. After praying to Allah, the boy hurls the small stone killing the animal. The king’s magicians are unable to match this

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 142.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 143.

feat so the king decides to kill the boy because his faith is attracting the attention of the king's subjects.

The king tries twice to kill the boy, but each time the boy prays to Allah and is delivered safely from harm.⁷⁹¹ Finally, the boy tells the king that that "you will never kill me until you do what I tell you to do."⁷⁹² Desperate to eliminate this threat to his kingdom, the king agrees to listen. The boy instructs the king to "gather the people [of the kingdom] into an open field and crucify me on a tree. Then take hold of an arrow from my quiver, string it to a bow, and say: 'In the name of Allah, Lord of the youth,' then fire the arrow. If you do this, you will be able to slay me."⁷⁹³

The king did as instructed resulting in the boy's death. The act however made the king's subjects believe that it was Allah, not the king, who destroyed the boy. Allah appeared more powerful than the king and as a result the king's subjects came to believe in Allah and thereby adopted the Islamic faith. The king, angry that his people now believed in Allah, dug ditches and lit them on fire declaring that those refusing to recant Islam would be cast into the fire. The king's soldiers rounded up the new converts and began throwing them into the burning pit if they refused to renounce their faith. They did this until "a woman came [to the edge of the pit] with her child, and she hesitated jumping into the fire. So [a] youth said to her: O mother endure

⁷⁹¹ The first time the king tries to hurl the boy from a mountain, but the boy prayed to Allah who sent an earthquake to shake the mountain killing his captors. The second time the king orders the boy to be taken out on a boat and drowned if he does not renounce his religion.

⁷⁹² Ibid., 148.

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

[this ordeal] for you are in the right."⁷⁹⁴ The mother then proceeded to jump into the burning pit with her child shocking the king.

Zawahiri uses the hadith to argue that the believers who jumped into the fire pits did so because they refused to reject their religion. Instead of committing suicide, they died as witnesses to the truth of the Islamic faith. As a result, Zawahiri argues that “jumping into the fire of their own accord can never be [deemed] evil or suicidal. On the contrary, such a deed Allah loves and extols, associating it with many blessings.”⁷⁹⁵ Similarly, the mujahid who engages in a martyrdom operation is performing a like sacrifice because the mujahid willingly destroys the self for the greater good of the religion. The linchpin here, as discussed in the previous chapter, is the intent of the mujahid. If the intent is to empower Islam, then the mujahid is justified in taking his or her life.⁷⁹⁶ On the other hand, if the mujahid destroys the self out of despair then the person will be condemned to hell.

Now that Zawahiri has established the legitimacy of martyrdom operations, he turns to the question of whether they can be used if they kill fellow Muslims and other non-combatants. This is another hazardous issue because the Islamic *jus in bello* states explicitly that believers

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁶ Raymond Ibrahim notes that it is significant that Zawahiri uses a hadith as opposed to a Koranic injunction, is used as the primary justification for martyrdom operations. Ideally, Koranic verses form the foundation of an argument while hadiths serve as evidence. Here Zawahiri uses the hadith as both the foundation and the evidence. For Ibrahim, this suggests that Zawahiri could not find a Koranic foundation for his argument and had to rely solely on the hadith. See Raymond Ibrahim, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, 137-138.

and non-combatants should not be targeted or killed.⁷⁹⁷ Again unable to find a Koranic basis for his argument, Zawahiri turns to the hadith.

He quotes a hadith from Al Qurtubi who relates a story of a non-Muslim who takes a Muslim as a human shield. The non-Muslim refused to let his victim go so a group of archers fired arrows slaying the culprit and human shield. Zawahiri claims that the archers were justified in their action because the non-Muslim was a threat to the city's inhabitants. The archers had to kill the believer to protect the greater good of the city. Relating this to martyrdom operations, Zawahiri states, "if the good to be gained is imperative, certain, and universal, and this is definitely the case in a Defense Jihad, where Muslims battle those infidels who are attempting to take over Muslims lands, *then there is no problem killing those who should not be killed, by accident.*"⁷⁹⁸ The intent of the archers was not to kill the believer but rather to slay the non-believer in defense of the city. Similarly, the intent of the person sent on a martyrdom operation is to target the enemies of Islam not fellow Muslims.

Probably realizing the radical nature of his argument, Zawahiri utilizes another hadith relayed by Al-Jaas who described a time when the Prophet Mohammed besieged the inhabitants of the city of Taif in 630 AD. Al-Jaas noted that the Prophet attacked the city with catapults despite his ban on killing women and children. Zawahiri believes that the Prophet authorized the attack "knowing full well that women and children would be struck, for it was not possible to

⁷⁹⁷ Youssef Aboul-Enein and Sherifa Zuhur, "Islamic Rulings on Warfare," 15.

⁷⁹⁸ Ayman Al Zawahiri, "Jihad, Martyrdom, and the Killing of Innocents," in Raymond Ibrahim, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, 164. Emphasis added.

differentiate between them. This demonstrates that if Muslims are intermingled with the people of war, it is permissible to fire at them, *as long as the intended targets are the idolaters.*”⁷⁹⁹

In both instances, Zawahiri returns to the intent of the act. If the intent is to engage the enemies of Islam, then the death of believers and other non-combatants is justified. Not only are the attacks justified but also Zawahiri, citing Ibn Taymia, argues, “those Muslims who are accidentally killed are martyrs; and the obligatory jihad should never be abandoned because it creates martyrs.”⁸⁰⁰ Indeed, Zawahiri uses an extreme form of utilitarianism to weigh the death of the innocents against the damage inflicted on the non-believers by the suicide attackers.

Now that Zawahiri has answered both questions he proposed at the beginning of his treatise, he turns to the subject of martyrdom. If the suicide attacker desires to serve Islam, then the attacker will be a martyr.⁸⁰¹ He then quotes the Prophet Mohammed who enumerates the benefits of the martyr’s death: “[t]he martyr is special to Allah. He is forgiven from the first drop of blood [that he sheds]. He sees his throne in Paradise, where he will be adorned in ornaments of faith. He will wed the Aynhour [wide-eyed virgins] and will not know the torments of the grave and safeguards against the great terror [hell]. Fixed atop his head will be a crown of honor, a ruby that is greater than the world and all it contains. And he will couple with seventy-two Aynhour and be able to offer intercessions for seventy of his relatives.”⁸⁰²

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., 165.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., 168.

⁸⁰¹ On the other hand, if the attacker becomes a suicide attacker out of depression or despair he will not receive martyrdom. This reasoning is identical to Hamas’ ideology of martyrdom.

⁸⁰² Ibid., 143-144.

Zawahiri proceeds to dwell on each of the martyr's benefits at length as he cites liberally from the Koran. At this point, he asserts that the allure of martyrdom, if harnessed correctly, can be powerful. He argues that martyrdom's draw "is spreading, growing, and becoming stronger. By the grace of Allah, it has become a popular and trailblazing [ideology], confronting the new Zionist-Crusader campaign, in defense of all the plundered Muslim lands, and fighting all the apostate and collaborating regimes that rule our Muslim ummah."⁸⁰³ If AQ can project the benefits of martyrdom to the ummah, then AQ's ranks will be filled with mujahids who desire martyrdom.

In sum, Zawahiri, in one treatise, establishes the three primary pillars of an AQ meta-narrative that is global in its reach and scope. The reason why the meta-narrative is so effective is because it allows the individual suicide attacker to project his or her grievances onto it. The suicide attacker has a readied ideology that provides ample moral and theological justification for the act the attacker intends to commit.

5.4.4 Al Qaeda's Meta-Narrative and the Grievances of Suicide Attackers

Al Qaeda's ideologues have developed a clear, provocative and alluring epistemology. The previous section identified the three pillars that exist at the meta, or transcendent, level. These are the three ideas that occur most frequently in the writings of the AQ ideologues. Additionally, the AQ epistemology operates at the local level. The local level is where the individual attacker, who has specific grievances, projects them onto the meta-narrative. Once the individual attacker

⁸⁰³ Ibid., 179-180.

taps into the meta-narrative and plugs in those grievances the person has made the narrative his or her own. This is a dangerous point in time because the individual has the potential to become radicalized. The wills and statements of AQ suicide attackers demonstrate that the meta-narrative is very much alive and has proven able to motivate suicide attackers in Iraq, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and elsewhere all over the globe.

The wills and statements are the best indicators of why a person chooses to participate in a suicide attack. One example that is most illuminating is the final testament of London bomber Mohammad Sidique Khan. In his testament he states:

“Our driving motivation *doesn't come from tangible commodities* that this world has to offer. Our religion is Islam-obedience to the one true God, Allah, and following the footsteps of the final prophet and messenger Mohammed...this is how our ethical stances are dictated. Your *democratically elected government continuously perpetuates atrocities against my people all over the world*, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslims brothers and sisters. Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the *bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight*. We are at war and I am a soldier. *Now you too will taste the reality of this situation*. I myself, I make du'a [an act of supplication] to Allah...to raise me amongst those who I love like the prophets, the messengers, the martyr's and today's heroes like our beloved Sheikh Osama Bin Laden, Dr. Ayman al Zawahiri and Abu Musab al Zarqawi and all the other brothers and sisters that are fighting in the jihad...of this cause.”⁸⁰⁴

Khan, in his final testament, clearly utilizes two pillars of the meta-narrative. His first sentence of the testament declares that his motivation is other-worldly allowing one to infer that he is describing martyrdom. He then uses the ‘Neo-Crusader’ image as he discusses how a democratically elected government engages in atrocities [bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture] against the Muslim world. Because of this situation, he declares that he must make a *du'a* [an act of supplication] to Allah. This, presumably, establishes his motive for undertaking

⁸⁰⁴ Final testament of Mohammad Sidique Khan quoted in “Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005,” 19. Emphasis added.

the suicide attack. This fits within the framework developed by Zawahiri as Khan situates the attack as a religious act to further the Islamic religion. Perhaps most interesting in this statement is the sentence where Khan says, '[n]ow you too will taste the reality of the situation.' This statement exudes revenge as Khan delights in the knowledge that the United Kingdom will now experience what the Muslim world has experienced at the hands of the West.

Here is another more recent example taken from the testament of Abu Dajana Al Khorasani, the AQ suicide attacker and double agent who self-detonated at the CIA Khost Base Station in Pakistan on December 30, 2009:

"I decided to avoid publishing this...however, the sight of the blood of Muslims in Gaza, small children, women, and powerless people, who were killed by the bombs of the brethren of apes and pigs [an anti-Semitic reference to Jews], encourage me to publish the article, so that it may strengthen the resolve of [even] a single Muslim in the frontlines, and that I will gain reward from Allah.

My heart burns to ashes because of my love for jihad. Of, you who write about jihad and urge people to it, beware of falling in the same trap as me. What I fear most is that [when I die] I would meet a man who died as a martyr under the effect of my words, whereas I shall die in bed. This is a nightmare which makes me sleepless and it wrecks my nerves. I'm afraid that on the day of resurrection, standing before a mountain of [my] sins, I shall be asked to account for each and every one of them, and it shall be a long account, and I will be covered with sweat, while they [i.e. the martyrs] will be moving about the rooms of paradise in everlasting pleasure.

By God, if the reward for martyrdom for the sake of Allah had only been forgiveness of sins and the exemption from being called to account for one's sins, I should sacrifice my property and my life for it. All the more so, since the reward includes also the uppermost paradise...in the Company of the Prophet Mohammad. All the more so, since it includes being saved from the great anxiety [on the Day of Judgment]. All the more so, since it includes the right to intercede on behalf of seventy members of family...I looked at my extended family and counted more than 100 persons, both dead and alive, but I have not found among them any martyr, or father, or mother, or brother of a martyr. I don't know any martyr amongst whose seventy relatives, for whom he intercedes, I can be counted. So how shouldn't I worry, and how shouldn't I be alarmed?

Oh God, I beseech Thee not to let me die except as a martyr for Your sake. Oh God, I beseech Thee that I would [be given the chance to] massacre Your enemies...martyrdom-how enraptured in it free men are! It occupies their whole being, so they think of obtaining it before they fall asleep, and after they wage and even in their dreams...I want to be a mortar bomb which shall work like a taxi car bringing the largest possible number

of Jews to hell...I feel as though *I smell the fragrance of paradise...as though heaven's gates have become wide open....oh, that martyrdom for the sake of Allah shall be your wish.*"⁸⁰⁵

The final testament of the Jordanian doctor turned double agent again reveals many of the themes that exist in the AQ meta-narrative. In this first paragraph, he describes the plight of the defenseless Muslims living in the Gaza Strip who are killed by Israel [‘the brethren of apes and pigs’ is a standard anti-Semitic phrase used in Islamist parlance], which fits in with the ‘Neo-Crusader’ theme. Unlike the testament of the Khan, Al Khorasani does not dwell on revenge, but instead on missing the opportunity to become a martyr. His greatest fear is that he dies a normal death and meets a martyr in the afterlife. The fact that he will stand before a ‘mountain of sins’ where he must account for every one of them while the martyr floats freely through the halls of Paradise is almost too much for Al Khorasani to bear. The situation is made even more desperate when Al Khorasani claims to have searched his family lineage for a martyr but is unable to find one. Therefore, he truly is stuck with his sins until the Day of Judgment unless he chooses to become a martyr. In this context, it is clear that the post-mortem incentives of martyrdom are an integral factor behind his becoming a suicide attacker.

⁸⁰⁵ “Jihadi Forum Publishes Posthumous Article by CIA Khost Base Bomber,” (MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 2740, January 7, 2010). Article available online at www.memri.org. Accessed on January 8, 2010. Emphasis added. The double agent suicide attacker represents a new capability developed by Al Qaeda. As Bruce Hoffman argues, this is a possible example of Al Qaeda’s new ‘grand strategy’ in that it is using the US human intelligence process and turning it against the US. See also Bruce Hoffman, “Al Qaeda has a New Strategy. Obama Needs One, too.” (*The Washington Post*, B01, January 10, 2010). Article available online at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/08/AR2010010803555_pf.html. Accessed on 1/10/2010.

Al Khorasani then proceeds to declare his intent when he says, “Oh God, I beseech Thee not to let me die except as a martyr for Your sake.” This statement satisfies Zawahiri’s demand that the intent of the suicide attacker be to further the cause of Islam. Next, Al Khorasani describes how the desire for martyrdom becomes an omnipresent desire. It overtakes his thoughts and dreams as the day draws closer for his suicide attack. His statement about the smell of the ‘fragrance of paradise...as though heaven’s gates have become wide open’ is a reference to Al Khorasani as a living martyr. The living martyr who, as discussed in the previous chapter, occupies some plane of existence between the here and hereafter is sometimes said to be given glimpses of the after-life before becoming a *shahid*. The smells and dreams Al Khorasani describes are tantalizing bits of what is to come should he become a martyr.

This discussion is not meant to be exhaustive but rather to demonstrate that AQ’s meta-narrative can be many things to different suicide attackers. The attacker could be motivated by revenge, humiliation, and/or post-mortem benefits. While there is no one motivation for a suicide attacker, the meta-narrative demonstrates that there are reoccurring themes that allow the potential suicide attacker to project his or her own unique grievances onto the meta-narrative. This has led one commentator to argue correctly that AQ suicide attackers’ “list of grievances against the West is not only self-replenishing but endlessly creative.”⁸⁰⁶ What emerges is a transnational Islamic liberation ideology that respects no boundaries. This rigid yet flexible ideology allows for the individual to be radicalized regardless of their ethnic background or where they live. This is why the world is witnessing greater degrees of radicalization in Western

⁸⁰⁶ Charles Krauthammer, “Obama’s Guantanamo Obsession,” (*The Washington Post*, January 8, 2010).

Article available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/07/AR2010010703245.html>. Accessed on 1/8/2010.

countries such as Spain, the United Kingdom and even the United States. This type of ideology is categorically different than other groups such as ETA, IRA, and FARC whose ideology is linked to a particular cause and region. Instead, AQ's meta-narrative is global in its focus and goals. The next section examines how this ideology is broadcast and how it gains resonance in order to garner support for AQ's actions.

5.5 A GLOBAL IDEOLOGY AND GLOBAL RESONANCE?

AQ ideologues not only have spent much time fashioning a global ideology, but they also have given much thought to how the ideology can be spread. Abu Musab al Suri devotes an entire chapter to this question in his *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, which he calls "The Media and Incitement in the Call to Resistance." In this chapter, he provides a clear plan for how AQ can market their ideology and make it appealing to the rest of Muslim world. In order for the global ummah to receive the message, Al Suri argues that AQ must highlight atrocities committed by the West, and most notably the U.S. By constantly bringing up the sins and transgressions of the U.S., AQ will control the message, which is that the West wants to conquer the Muslim world and the only way to prevent this is to wage a defensive jihad. Therefore, AQ should focus on all aspects of U.S. foreign policy to frame any action the U.S. does as an attempt to subjugate the Muslim community. Next, Al Suri argues that the message should be available in a wide variety of mediums. From CDs, cassette tapes, to homemade movies, the message must be made accessible to potential sympathizers. Perhaps most importantly, Al Suri argues that all these mediums can be posted on internet websites. The internet gives AQ a transnational reach as the

proliferation of AQ affiliated websites gives the web browser unprecedented access to jihadi related materials.

5.5.1 Controlling the Message: Highlighting U.S. Sins Abroad

Al Suri believes that the AQ message “needs to be lucid, streamlined, and cogent. It must be a passionate and inspiring message that combines the promise of victory and rewards...for attempting to face foreign enemies.”⁸⁰⁷ Specifically, Al Suri argues that the root of the message should address the sins of the West, most notably the United States. By focusing on the foreign policy of the United States, Al Suri hopes that this will galvanize other Muslims and prompt them to join the jihad against the U.S. Since 9/11, the U.S. has invaded Afghanistan, Iraq and is conducting drone attacks inside Pakistan. U.S. action in Iraq and Pakistan, as well as the presence of other symbols like Abu Ghraib and Gauntanamo Bay, gives AQ an abundance of material that they can use to market their ideology and garner support.

Iraq

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, it became clear that AQ had used Afghanistan as a safe haven to train mujahideen and plan terrorist attacks.⁸⁰⁸ This prompted former President George

⁸⁰⁷ Jim Lacey, *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto*, 190-191.

⁸⁰⁸ “The 9/11 Commission Report,” 66.

W. Bush to declare a ‘global war on terrorism’ [GWOT]. As a result, the U.S. believed the only way to deal with the threat of terrorism “was to end Al Qaeda’s ability to use Afghanistan as a sanctuary for its operations.”⁸⁰⁹ The first front in the GWOT was Afghanistan as the U.S. initiated Operation Enduring Freedom [OEF] on October 7, 2001. The second front in the GWOT opened in Iraq on March 20, 2003 under the pretense that former dictator Saddam Hussein was harboring weapons of mass destruction.⁸¹⁰ Despite the best efforts of the Bush administration to disabuse the notion that the U.S. was at war with Islam, AQ claimed that the war was one against Islam.⁸¹¹

As the U.S. increased its involvement in Iraq, Abu Musab Al Zarqawi emerged as the leader of an organization called Al Qaeda in Iraq [AQI]. Zarqawi led a campaign of terror from 2003-2006 against coalition forces. He succeeded in igniting a sectarian civil war between Sunnis and Shias, which impeded U.S. efforts to bring order and security to the country. Zarqawi also became the creative force behind hundreds of propaganda videos that were

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid., 348.

⁸¹⁰ The US claimed that Iraq was harboring chemical and biological weapons on their Al Husseins, Al Samound IIs, and Ababil-100s missiles. A CRS report, written in 2003, made the case that it was possible that “US and British intelligence may have overstated Iraq’s WMD and missile capabilities.” This would prove true once the war progressed. See Andrew Feickert, “Iraq: Weapons of Mass Destruction Capable Missiles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles,” (*CRS Report*, Order Code RS21376, March 24, 2003), 5.

⁸¹¹ In a 2006 speech to the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush said, “My country desires peace. Extremists in your midst [Iraq] spread propaganda claiming that the West is engaged in a war against Islam. This propaganda is false and its purpose is to confuse you and justify acts of terror. We respect Islam.” President George W. Bush quoted in “Bush: Not at War with Islam,” (*Michigan Daily*, September 19, 2006). Article available online at <http://www.michigandaily.com/content/bush-us-not-war-islam>. Accessed on 12/20/09.

disseminated in order to turn public opinion against the U.S. and motivate foreign fighters to come to Iraq to wage jihad against the Americans.

There were two types of videos produced during Zarqawi's reign as leader of AQI. The first were videos of Iraqi suicide attacks. Like Hamas, AQI often made videotapes of the suicide attackers giving their final testaments as well as actual footage of an attack. One such video is of the infamous October 25, 2005 triple suicide attack on three Baghdad Hotels.⁸¹² The video begins with AQI's symbol, which is an open Koran with a rifle coming out of the middle with the Iraq flag at the end of its barrel.⁸¹³ The video then cuts to scenes of U.S. destruction in Iraq where buildings and homes are being raided by U.S. forces. After this, the footage changes to a hand held camera, which is taking surveillance of the two hotels, the Ishtar Sheraton and Meridian Hotel. During the scene with the hand held camera, a voice speaks about the route the suicide attackers will take. This is the practice run of the impending suicide operation. Next there is a cut scene and the martyrs-to-be give their final testimonies.

The similarity between AQI videos and the Hamas videos is striking. They follow almost the exact same format as the attacker introduces himself, discusses a selected Koranic verse, justifies why he is seeking martyrdom, rails against the unjust occupier, executes his will giving

⁸¹² The attack's infamy is due to the fact that it was a triple suicide raid that occurred in three stages. One attack was to detonate next to a concrete barrier, which allowed the two remaining cars to enter in order to get closer to the hotels. See Solomon Moore, "Triple Bombing Hits Baghdad Hotel Area," (*Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 2005). Article available online at <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/oct/25/world/fg-iraqbomb25>. Accessed on 1/2/10.

⁸¹³ The video is entitled "Al Qaeda's Preparation for the Triple Suicide Attack on Baghdad Hotels," (MEMRITV, November 26, 2005). Video available at www.memrity.org. Accessed 1/3/09.

away all his worldly possessions, asks forgiveness for his sins, and finally implores his family not to be sad after his death. After the final testaments are played, the video shows the attack happening in real time. Probably filmed at the nearby traffic circle, the video shows the first bomb detonating into the concrete barrier followed a few seconds later by the two bombs at the hotels. Finally, the camera cuts into an apartment where a group of people watch a news report on the suicide attacks. When the attack is replayed on the television, there is much yelling and jubilation. The video closes with an entreaty for those who seek jihad to come to Iraq to fight the Americans.

The aforementioned video is one of many productions of AQI and it is one of their more technologically sophisticated videos. It demonstrates the use of video software equipment since it is evident that the video was edited using a computer.⁸¹⁴ These videos take more time to prepare so AQI also made use of a much more simplistic method in their propaganda war. This involves a lone person with a video camera who is instructed to wait in order to film an upcoming suicide attack. The cameraperson sits at a safe distance filming until the suicide attacker detonates. The video is not edited, but instead is put immediately online.

The second type of video produced by AQI is the execution video. These videos, which proliferate amongst the jihadi websites of the world, are exercises in macabre sadism. However, they serve a purpose, which is to drive fear into the heart of the enemy and kindle the bloodlust of those who wish to become jihadis. The unfortunate victims of this atrocity vary from coalition troops, journalists, to Iraqi Shias and Sunnis. In the few videos that are accessible over the internet, the common thread is that the person is executed because of his or her involvement

⁸¹⁴ Such evidence includes slowing down the frames per second after the video has been recorded. Another alteration is enhancing the color during the explosion to make it appear more red and violent looking.

with the occupying power. In one such video, the victims are blind folded and the captors, armed with automatic weapons, read off a list of charges, which includes fighting, spying or aiding coalition forces.⁸¹⁵ After the charges are read, the captors proceed to kill the victims. The method of executions varies from decapitation by a knife, being shot in the head, or kicked into a fire-burning pit.

Pakistan

Another example AQ uses to display U.S. aggression is the latter's use of Predator drones in Pakistan. The drones, operated by the CIA, have killed some 400 militants, including Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud.⁸¹⁶ However, the Pakistani government claims that the attacks are fomenting anti-American sentiment because they have killed some 500 civilians.⁸¹⁷ Videos have appeared on AQ related websites claiming to show the destruction and civilian deaths caused by the drone attacks.

⁸¹⁵ Al Qaeda in Iraq video showing prisoners being burnt alive. Available online at <http://videogaleri.hurriyet.com.tr/Video.aspx?s=5&vid=2107>. Accessed on 1/4/10.

⁸¹⁶ Javed Siddiq and Dean Nelson, "US to Escalate Drone Attacks on Pakistan," (*The Telegraph*, December 4, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/6728577/US-to-escalate-drone-attacks-on-Pakistan.html>. Accessed on 12/4/09.

⁸¹⁷ Gareth Porter, "Errant Drone Attacks Spur Militants in Pakistan," (*Inter Press Service*, April 15, 2009). Article available online at <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46511>. Accessed on 1/4/09.

Symbols of Persecution: Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay

Aside from U.S. action in Iraq, the most potent symbols of American aggression come from Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. According to Thomas Hegghammer, “the damage caused by Guantanamo [Bay Prison] and Abu Ghraib is irreparable [for the United States]...and [these symbols] have been among AQ’s most widely used and most potent recruitment tools in the post-9/11 era.”⁸¹⁸ Despite arguments that Abu Ghraib was only a one-time occurrence and that prisoners at Guantanamo Bay are treated humanely, those images have been harnessed and exploited by AQ.⁸¹⁹ Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay have been described by AQ sympathizers as worse than ‘Nazi war camps’ where innocent Muslims are tortured and abused.⁸²⁰ Equating U.S. action with the Nazis has become a familiar occurrence. Another AQ sympathizer writing in Egypt described the treatment of Guantanamo detainees in this way:

“...they are blindfolded, their ears covered, and their noses sealed. They can’t see, can’t hear, and can’t smell; they are in masks of iron. Their hands, arms, necks, and legs are shackled in heavy choke chains. Twenty hours of sensory deprivation is sufficient to damage the senses of any man. If the Americans add another 20 hours, [one doesn’t know] whether he is alive or dead. If we then remove the shackles, he will not know how – or where – to walk! In the solitary confinement cells, the darkness is absolute. Suddenly, [the Americans] shine a brilliant light and make aggressive [loud] noise for a

⁸¹⁸ Thomas Hegghammer, “Irreparable Damage,” (*Foreign Policy*, May 4, 2009). Article available online at <http://experts.foreignpolicy.com/blog/6793>. Accessed on 1/5/09.

⁸¹⁹ Erick Stakelbeck, “Exploiting Abu Ghraib,” (*National Review Online*, May 12, 2004). Article available online at <http://www.investigativeproject.org/264/exploiting-abu-ghraib>. Accessed on 12/22/09.

⁸²⁰ Mustafa Sami, “Guantanamo Like Nazi Camps,” (MEMRI, September 30, 2005). Article available online at www.memri.org. Accessed on 12/23/09.

few moments; then quiet and darkness are restored. Those moments are enough to make the prisoners blind, deaf, and brain-damaged.”⁸²¹

With AQ highlighting the shortcomings of U.S. action in the Muslim world, it is fashioning a message that potentially has great appeal to the Muslim masses. This message is disseminated largely through the internet as AQ is able to present its ideology to a global community.

5.5.2 Distributing the Message: Al Qaeda Online

AQ affiliated websites and online forums are the new vehicle for propaganda, proselytizing and indoctrination. In the post-9/11 world, these forums are a central battleground in AQ’s war on the United States. As Zawahiri argues, “we are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. We are in a media battle for the hearts and minds of our ummah.”⁸²² In order to cultivate a global resonance for AQ’s ideology, affiliates and/or sympathizers of the organization use the internet mainly to transmit propaganda, and foster online e-communities.⁸²³

In regards to the transmission of propaganda and ideology, AQ affiliated websites have become the new libraries for the tracts, books, and articles written by AQ ideologues. The

⁸²¹ “American Torture of Al Qaeda Prisoners Worse Than Hitler’s Treatment of Jewish and Christian ‘Rivals,” (MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 340, February 1, 2002). Article available online at www.memri.org. Accessed on 12/22/09.

⁸²² Zawahiri quoted in Hanna Rogan, "Abu Reuter and the E-Jihad: Virtual Battlefronts from Iraq to the Horn of Africa," (*Culture and Society*, Summer/Fall 2007), 89.

⁸²³ Hanna Rogan, "Jihadism Online: A Study of How Al Qaeda and Radical Islamist Groups Use the Internet for Terrorist Purposes," (Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, FFI, 2006), 8.

former website Al-Nida, which was shut down in 2007, was one such online library filled with a comprehensive literature of various jihadi scholars, ideologues and trainers. The website also contained a large amount of recorded sermons from OBL, Zawahiri, Azzam and other regional imams sympathetic to AQ.⁸²⁴ Not only do websites have digital copies of primary sources, but also some produce their own propaganda. Probably the most infamous website in this regard is Al Sahab.

The Al Sahab [the clouds] website became a world-wide producer of AQ related propaganda. Since its creation in 2001, Al Sahab has released a total of 178 videos before the website went offline.⁸²⁵ In 2007, Al Sahab hit its production peak as it distributed 74 videos averaging a new release every three days.⁸²⁶ Operating somewhere out of Pakistan or Afghanistan, Al Sahab was the idea of KSM and Zawahiri. KSM confirmed this when in a court hearing he declared that “I was the Media Operations Director of Al Sahab...under Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri.”⁸²⁷ According to Kathy Gannon, Al Sahab was a sophisticated media machine as it employed experienced cameramen, video editors, couriers, and mobile minivan studios that were

⁸²⁴ Brynjar Lia, "Jihadi Web Media Production: Characteristics, Trends, and Future Implications," (Paper Presented at the 'Check the Web' Conference, Berlin, Germany, February 2007), 4.

⁸²⁵ "Al Qaeda Messaging Statistics," (*IntelCenter*, September 9, 2007), 8. Despite going offline in 2007, the Al Sahab still produces videos and they are distributed by other jihadist websites.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁷ "Transcript of Combatant Status Review," (Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024, March 10, 2007). Transcript available online at www.defenselink.mil/news/transcript_ISN10024.pdf. Accessed on 1/5/10.

used to edit and produce their videos.⁸²⁸ One of the reasons why Al Sahab became so popular was because it became one of the sole venues for the distribution of OBL and Zawahiri messages. The tapes of the AQ leaders then were played on the Qatari based satellite television station Al Jazeera.⁸²⁹ Another reason for its online popularity is the availability of sophisticated original videos designed to ‘educate’ its viewers. Perhaps the most famous of Al Sahab’s films is one entitled *Knowledge is for Acting Upon: The Manhattan Raid*, which is a documentary style production capturing the zeitgeist of the Muslim community before the 9/11 attacks.

Being one of the most distributed pieces of propaganda created by Al Sahab, the video can be found easily online.⁸³⁰ It begins with a clip from OBL who is delivering a lecture on the state of the Islamic ummah. In it he says, “the ummah in our time is lost and alienated.”⁸³¹ The narrator then proceeds to recount a familiar litany of grievances against the Muslim community. In the next four minutes, the viewer gets an introduction to the entire AQ meta-narrative. The culture of the West is derided, the Islamic community has fallen victim to the ‘Neo-Crusaders,’ and the only remedy for the situation is to wage jihad and seek martyrdom. After this, the narrator claims that the videos of OBL and Zawahiri are being distributed all over the world and

⁸²⁸ Kathy Gannon, “Al Qaeda’s Media Machine,” (*MSNBC News*, June 23, 2003). Article available online at www.msnbc.com/id/6363306. Accessed on 12/20/09.

⁸²⁹ Hanna Rogan, "Al Qaeda's Online Media Strategies: From Abu Reuter to Irhabi 007," (Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 2007), 49.

⁸³⁰ This researcher found the entire 55 minute video on Google Video. Available online at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=2227985208017300997#>. Accessed on 1/4/10.

⁸³¹ Ibid.

are contributing to an awakening of the Islamic community. The video then proceeds into each area of the meta-narrative and produces historical footage as evidence.

In its critique of Western culture, the video shows Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Once a stronghold for Islam, the narrator claims that its leaders have been wooed by the West's love for money. One of the most striking images is of a luxury mall in Dubai. In the mall the video camera captures people dressed in Western clothes walking to and from the mall shops. As shoppers buy 'indecent' clothing, a group of women wearing full burqas looks on. The commentator notes that the West's culture dehumanizes women because it treats them as objects.

The video then shows historical footage that demonstrates the West's crusader mentality. It has video of British delegates meeting with Zionist leaders before the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. It shows American troops during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom as they operate with impunity in the sacred land of Islam. The video condemns the Saudi Arabian government for inviting the U.S. forces into their land. It chastises them for abandoning their faith and not believing that the Islamic mujahideen could not have dealt with Saddam Hussein.⁸³² There is also a segment of two American guards at Guantanamo Bay leading a shackled prisoner from his cell. The video reiterates the claim that the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan were planned long before the 9/11 attacks. The reason the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, the video argues, was to control Middle Eastern oil. Again, the video returns back to OBL who says that "the armies of unbelief and atheism have invaded the Muslim

⁸³² This is a direct reference to the fallout OBL had with the Saudi royal family, which consequently led to OBL's expulsion from Saudi Arabia.

world.”⁸³³ OBL goes on to note that the anti-Islamic forces are an offense to Islam and must be expelled.

Addressing the third feature of the meta-narrative, the video has extended footage of Zawahiri who is giving a public lecture on the individual duty of every Muslim to wage jihad against the enemies of Islam. The lecture discusses the legality of jihad and the post-mortem incentives given to those who die in God’s path. Zawahiri then chastises the religious ulema for not doing more to convince young people to meet their deaths through jihad.

During the fifty-five minute propaganda film one receives the entire explanation for why jihad must be waged against the West. The film’s extensive use of the martyrdom videos of the 9/11 attackers is powerful. Throughout the film, the final testaments of Wail Al Shihri and Hamza Al Ghamdi are used to emphasize certain points of the meta-narrative.⁸³⁴ The recitation of the wills show each attacker declaring their love for jihad and intention of martyrdom while decrying the actions committed by Israel and the United States against the Islamic community.

Such a video is intended to target both an internal and external audience. Internally, the video could be used to strengthen morale and provide ideological support. The clips of AQ ideologues could help cultivate the fortitude needed to undertake an operation. Externally, it serves as a lure to get new people interested in AQ’s ideology.⁸³⁵ This is an easy way for AQ’s ideology to make inroads in different parts of the world. Indeed, a website like Al Sahab could

⁸³³ Ibid.

⁸³⁴ From the video, it is evident that the testaments of each attacker were copied and digitally overlaid on a new background giving them a visual sophistication.

⁸³⁵ Brynjar Lia, "Al Qaeda Online: Understanding Jihadist Internet Infrastructure," (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 2005), 2.

prove an ideal vehicle in maintaining and sustaining pro-jihadi subcultures in the West as it draws new recruits into its sphere of influence.⁸³⁶

The second way AQ uses the internet is through the creation of online e-jihad communities. Al Suri realized that the internet gave AQ a truly global reach. He argued that the aim of the internet should be to “spread a Jihadist cancer to face the bad cancer of the [U.S. led] world order.”⁸³⁷ Part of the way this can be accomplished is by creating small enclaves of sympathizers. Instead of meeting in a physical location, Al Suri advocated that jihadists begin meeting in cyber-space.

While internet websites like Al Sahab are instrumental in spreading AQ related propaganda and ideology, the websites are vulnerable. All websites have an internet protocol [IP] and a host, which acts as the website’s virtual address and information repository where information is stored. After 9/11, it became a common occurrence for governments, especially the U.S., to target the companies hosting pro-AQ websites thereby taking their material offline.⁸³⁸ As a result, websites like Al Sahab proved to have a short life span online because they were located and shut down quickly. This has prompted a shift from official websites to web forums that are hosted inadvertently by online media companies like Yahoo, Google, and American Online.

⁸³⁶ Brynjar Lia, "Jihadi Web Media Production: Characteristics, Trends, and Future Implications," 3.

⁸³⁷ Al Suri quoted in Paul Cruickshank and Mohammad Hage Ali, "Abu Musab Al Suri: Architect of the New Al Qaeda," (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2007), 9.

⁸³⁸ Mac Fiddner, "Medieval Ideology and 21st Century Technology: Al Qaeda, Terrorism, and the Internet," (Paper presented at the International Studies Association, 2008), 3.

These web forums can be little more than blogs, message boards, email distribution lists and links to external websites.⁸³⁹ The message boards are an interesting feature because the creator of the board acts as a moderator and is able to grant or deny membership to potential visitors. It should be noted that a message board was the precursor to the Global Islamic Media Front, which gained notoriety as the online location for AQ's training manuals. Begun in 2003, it was a popular message board site hosted by Yahoo! Group and ran by a person with the online name of 'Abu Banan.' As Brynjar Lia notes, "it quickly grew to become a key hub for AQ related material, and had more than 7,000 members."⁸⁴⁰

The transition to web forums allows for the creation of what John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt term a 'all channel network' where one person is connected to an entire group.⁸⁴¹ Such a network lacks a central hub or node because if the web forum is shut down it can migrate to another forum under a different name. The all channel networks fostered by these web forums provide AQ supporters a sense of community, which they might have difficulty finding in real life, especially if they live in the West.⁸⁴² While it is difficult to determine whether or not internet groups and communication actually lead people to become full fledged AQ members,

⁸³⁹ One jihadi website called ansar-jihad, has a registration feature allowing the visitor to enter an email address to receive jihad updates. The website (www.ansar-jihad.net) declares: 'Don't be the last to know. Hurry up and join us. Receive the latest news of the jihad...and everything the mujahideen release.' See Hanna Rogan, "Al Qaeda's Online Media Strategies: From Abu Reuter to Irhabi 007," 67.

⁸⁴⁰ Brynjar Lia, "Jihadi Web Media Production: Characteristics, Trends, and Future Implications," 12.

⁸⁴¹ John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwar: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 8.

⁸⁴² Deborah Touboul, "Francophone Internet Forums Shed Light on Concerns and Issues of Islamists in Europe," (*The Project for the Research of Islamist Movements*, Herzliya, Israel, September, 2005), 11.

what is important is that these networks ensure the distribution of AQ's ideology on a global scale.

5.5.3 The Diffusion of the Meta-Narrative: Al Qaeda in Iraq and Inspired Individuals

The effects of the diffusion of Al Qaeda's meta-narrative is most apparent in the way it attracts volunteers to become martyrs for Al Qaeda in Iraq [AQI]. In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. led a coalition of allies to engage Afghanistan and then Iraq as part of a strategy that the U.S. called the 'global war on terror.' As Mohammed Hafez notes, despite the best efforts of the Bush administration to dispel notions that the U.S. was at war with Islam, "the war on terrorism, with its emphasis on combating Islamic extremism, enraged many Muslims who felt targeted because of their religion."⁸⁴³ Indeed, Hafez goes on to argue, "Muslims around the world perceived the conflict in Iraq, which the United States presented as part of the war on terrorism, as an unjust conflict that could only be explained as an attack on Islam by a hegemonic bully."⁸⁴⁴

The fact is that the U.S. led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan reinforced AQ's meta-narrative and made it more potent. Table 5 below is based on the Sinjar papers and demonstrates that AQI suicide attackers were lured by the meta-narrative and came from a variety of places.

⁸⁴³ Mohammed Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq*, 166.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

Table 5. AQI Suicide Attackers August 2006-August 2007.⁸⁴⁵

Country	Number of Suicide Attackers	Percentage
Saudi Arabia	44	43%
Italy	8	8%
Kuwait	7	7%
Iraq	7	7%
Syria	6	6%
Libya	3	3%
Jordan	3	3%
Belgium	2	2%
France	2	2%
Spain	2	2%
Lebanon	1	1%
Tunisia	1	1%
Morocco	1	1%
Britain	1	1%
Turkey	1	1%
Unknown	11	10%

⁸⁴⁵ The data for AQI's suicide bombers comes from Ibid., 251. The primary sources of the data were obtained from AQI's *Biographies of Eminent Martyr* and *Martyrs in Iraq*, which are documents that are available for download on the Majdah Forum and are available online at www.majdah.com/vb.

It is not surprising to see Saudi Arabia as the country comprising most of AQI's suicide attackers.⁸⁴⁶ Indeed, the Sinjar papers confirm Saudi Arabia as the country with the highest number of foreign fighters in the AQI organization.⁸⁴⁷ However, it is intriguing to note that the country with the second highest number of suicide attackers is Italy. Even more surprising is to see suicide bombers coming from other Western countries including Belgium, France, Spain, and Great Britain, which account for roughly 14% of AQI's suicide bombers during this time period. It must be said that the data presented here is far from comprehensive. The 102 observations listed above undoubtedly represent a fraction of the total number of suicide bombers in Iraq. A conservative estimate of the number of suicide attacks in Iraq made by this author places the total number of suicide attackers at around 1,500.⁸⁴⁸ Despite this, the data in the Sinjar papers demonstrates that the meta-narrative has attracted, and continues to attract, suicide attackers from

⁸⁴⁶ It should be noted that 3 of the 102 suicide bombers listed were women all hailing from Saudi Arabia.

⁸⁴⁷ The Sinjar papers are a group of documents found by U.S. forces after a raid was conducted in the desert near Sinjar, which is situated next to the Syrian border. According to analysis conducted by West Point's Counter Terrorism Center of the Sinjar Records, Saudi Arabians comprised 41% of foreign fighters in the AQI organization. See Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Al-Qaida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Papers," (West Point *Counter Terrorism Center*, Harmony Project, December 2007), 7-8. Article available online at www.ctc.usma.edu/harmony/pdf/CTCForeignFighter.19.Dec07.pdf. Accessed on 5/19/2010. See also Richard Opiel, "Foreign Fighters in Iraq are Tied to Allies of U.S.," (*New York Times*, November 22, 2007). Article available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/22/world/middleeast/22fighters.html?ref=todayspaper>. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

⁸⁴⁸ This is a rough estimate based on open source data obtained from the Global Terrorism Database and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The major difficulty is that information regarding the suicide attacker's country of origin is hard to obtain.

both within and without the Islamic world. As more information regarding the attacker's country of origin is discovered, one can expect to see a variety of nationalities represented including higher concentrations from Western countries. In much the same way as the war in Iraq attracts young men and women to become suicide attackers for AQI, the meta-narrative also inspires individuals to attack the U.S. and its allies.

Two of the most recent and pertinent examples of this are the cases of Najibullah Zazi and Umar Farooq Abdulmutallab. Zazi an Afghan immigrant and a legal permanent resident of the U.S. was "at the center of what the authorities described as one of the most serious threats to the United States since 9/11."⁸⁴⁹ His plot involved a 'martyrdom operation' where Zazi would have detonated homemade bombs on the New York subway. The attack was planned to coincide around the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.⁸⁵⁰ According to Zazi's court confession, he was radicalized based on the injustices the U.S. was committing against Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan. This motivated Zazi to join the Taliban so that he could "fight alongside with the Taliban against the U.S."⁸⁵¹ Zazi left with a group of individuals bound for Pakistan where he joined a terrorist training camp in Peshawar. As Zazi states,

⁸⁴⁹ A.G. Sulzberger and William Rashbaum, "A Guilty Plea Made in Plot to Bomb New York Subway," (*The New York Times*, February 22, 2010). Article available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/23/nyregion/23terror.html>. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁵¹ "Najibullah Zazi Reveals Chilling Details on Al Qaeda Training and Terrorist Plot to Blow Up Subways," (*New York Daily News*, February 23, 2010). Article available online at http://www.nydailynews.com/news/ny_crime/2010/02/23/2010-02-23_najibullah_zazi_reveals_chilling_details_on_al_qaeda_training_and_terrorist_plot.html. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

“[w]hile we were in Peshawar, we were recruited by Al Qaeda [and] taken by Al Qaeda to [a] training camp in Waziristan where we received weapons training. During the training, Al Qaeda leaders asked us to return to the United States and conduct [a] martyrdom operation. We agreed to this plan. I did so because of my feelings about what the United States was doing in Afghanistan. Later, I received more training from Al Qaeda about how to construct the explosives for [an] attack in the United States [and] to carry [out the] martyrdom operation. I arrived in New York City on Thursday, September 10. And we intended to obtain and assemble the remaining components to build a bomb over the weekend. The plan was to conduct [a] martyrdom operation on [the] subway lines in Manhattan as soon as the materials were ready. [The planned] martyrdom operation meant that I would sacrifice myself to bring attention to what *the United States was doing to civilian[s] in Afghanistan* by sacrificing my soul for the sake of saving other souls.”⁸⁵²

Zazi’s rationale for acting fits into AQ’s meta-narrative. Zazi was radicalized because he believed that the U.S. was waging a war against Muslims. Not only that he says that the U.S. intentionally was targeting Muslim civilians in Afghanistan. This drove him, and a few others, into a training camp in Pakistan where he received explosives and weapons training. What is interesting here is that Zazi calls the plan a ‘martyrdom operation.’ While Zazi does not speak at length about martyrdom in his court confession, there is little doubt that his AQ handlers reinforced the notion that Zazi would become a *shahid* if his suicide attack were a success.

Abdulmutallab is a Nigerian Muslim who earned a degree in mechanical engineering from the University College London and a master’s degree in international business at the University of Wollongong in Dubai. On December 25, 2009, he attempted to ignite an explosive mixture of triacetone triperoxide with acid contained in a syringe while onboard a flight bound for Detroit.⁸⁵³ The son of a prominent and wealthy Nigerian banker, Abdulmutallab grew up a

⁸⁵² Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁸⁵³ Kevin Krolicki and Jeremy Pelofsky, “Nigerian Charged with Trying to Blow Up US Airliner,” (*Reuters*, December 26, 2009). Article available online at <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFLDE5BP03M20091226>. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

devout Muslim but it is believed that he became radicalized while a student in London where he attended the infamous Finsbury Park Mosque and heard the incendiary sermons given by Anwar Al-Awlaki.⁸⁵⁴ After his arrest, Abdulmutallab told authorities he had received training from an Al Qaeda affiliate that operates in Yemen and Saudi Arabia.⁸⁵⁵ He confessed that the Al Qaeda cell in Yemen had provided him with the device that was sown into his underwear.⁸⁵⁶

Internet posts on Abdulmutallab's Facebook page provide a glimpse into what motivated the young Nigerian. According to one post, Abdulmutallab had 'jihad fantasies' in which "I imagine how the great jihad will take place, how the Muslims will win *inshahallah* [Allah willing] and rule the whole world, and establish the greatest empire once again!!!"⁸⁵⁷ He also displayed characteristics of sexual frustration and lamented that he could not marry. In one post,

⁸⁵⁴ Dina Temple-Raston, "Officials: Cleric Had Role in Christmas Bomb Attempt," (*NPR*, March 13, 2010). Article available online at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123894237>. Accessed on 5/19/2010. It is believed that Awlaki has links with three of the 9/11 hijackers, the 2005 London subway bombers, and the 2009 Fort Hood shooter. The argument that Abdulmutallab was radicalized in London is debatable. Another theory is that he was radicalized during his first visit to Yemen in 2004-2005, which was before he became a student at University College London.

⁸⁵⁵ Eric Schmitt and Eric Lipton, "Officials Point to Suspect's Claim of Qaeda Ties in Yemen," (*New York Times*, December 26, 2009). Article available online at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/27/us/27terror.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=bomber%20charged&st=cse. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

⁸⁵⁶ Harry Siegel and Carol Lee, "High Explosive- U.S. Charges Abdulmutallab," (*Politico*, December 25, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1209/30973.html>. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

⁸⁵⁷ Guy Chazan, "Web Offers More Clues on Suspect," (*The Wall Street Journal*, December 30, 2009). Article available online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126211655382209295.html>. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

he declared, “I seriously don’t want to wait for years before I get married. But I am only 18...[and] it would be difficult for me to get married due to social norms of getting to the late 20’s when one has a degree, a job, a house, etc before getting married.”⁸⁵⁸ Additionally, he was ‘incensed’ at the U.S. for its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and for incarcerating Muslims in Guantanamo Bay.⁸⁵⁹

The Zazi and Abdulmutallab cases demonstrate the diffuse manner by which each level of analysis interacts with the others. Both examples have individuals who came into contact with and were radicalized by the AQ meta-narrative. The individuals then made the decision to seek out AQ training camps for further instruction. At the camps, both men received explosives training and were given the resources needed to carry out a martyrdom operation. What these examples demonstrate is that the new face of AQ fits neither into Marc Sageman’s ‘bunch of guys’ theory nor Bruce Hoffman’s centralized AQ structure.⁸⁶⁰ Both Hoffman and Sageman view suicide attacks from an organizational and collectivist perspective. The difference between

⁸⁵⁸ Leonard Greene, “Sex Torment Drove Him Nuts,” (*The New York Post*, December 31, 2009). Article available online at http://www.nypost.com/p/news/national/sex_torment_jiHq0SZCZ0zevbRKdpiEKM. Accessed on 5/19/2010. As the discussion of benefits of martyrdom in the previous section indicates, there are post-mortem sexual benefits reserved for the shahid.

⁸⁵⁹ Sean O’Neill, “Al Qaeda Groomed Abdulmutallab in London,” (*Times of London Online*, December 30, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article6971098.ece>. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

⁸⁶⁰ Marc Sageman and Bruce Hoffman, “Does Osama Still Call the Shots? Debating the Containment of Al Qaeda’s Leadership,” (*Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008). Article available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64460/marc-sageman-and-bruce-hoffman/does-osama-still-call-the-shots>. Accessed on 5/19/2010.

the two theories is a manner of degree. For Sageman, the AQ organization is less important than the collective bond formed at the grass-roots amongst the ‘bunch of guys.’ For Hoffman, the AQ organizational hierarchy is more important because it arms, trains and funds future suicide attackers. Both analyses are convincing. Sageman is correct in saying that an important bond is developed at the grass-roots level with individuals who become radicalized. Look no further than the London subway bombings and how four Britons formed a cell in the heart of the United Kingdom. Likewise, Hoffman is correct in his estimation that the Al Qaeda organization still has the power to ‘call the shots’ as it trains and helps individuals plan for future suicide attacks. What both analysts overlook is that all three levels of analysis are at play. Moreover, their focus on the organizational level, while warranted, may be misguided. The AQ organization is becoming more diffuse yet it still serves a role in training individuals. The ‘bunch of guys’ have to go somewhere for training so that they can prepare for a suicide attack. However, what motivates the individual and why/how the person is radicalized to seek out Al Qaeda are critical questions that neither Hoffman nor Sageman adequately address. These questions require moving beyond the organizational level towards an integration of the organizational, individual and societal levels of analysis.

5.6 CONCLUSION

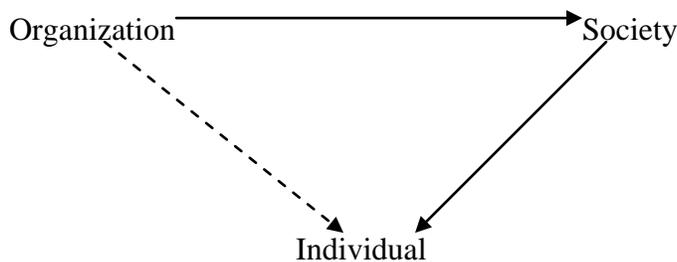
This chapter investigated AQ as a case study of an organization that used suicide attacks at the transnational level. Through the extensive use of primary source texts, the chapter analyzed AQ at the organizational, individual and societal levels of analysis.

At the organizational level, AQ chose to use suicide attacks because the tactic fit within the defensive jihad framework developed largely by Azzam and later adopted by OBL. Azzam framed the conflict for the future AQ organization as one between an aggressive West and a defensive Islamic ummah. For Azzam, the Islamic community's weakened state came as a result of its abandonment of faith. To help the Islamic community repel its enemy, he argued that jihad became an individual duty incumbent upon all believing Muslims. After Azzam's death, OBL adopted this framework and used it to justify the use of suicide attacks. Since AQ faced a militarily superior enemy, the only way it could be defeated was a reliance on faith through the use of its 'martyrdom operations.' The section also investigated how AQ has used suicide attacks in the pre and post-9/11 contexts. The pre-9/11 context reveals an organization that was probing the weaknesses of its adversary and attempting to bait it into a conflict. The post-9/11 AQ is made up of disconnected cells brought together by AQ's ideology that operate as a fifth column where cells can self-start, self-radicalize, and self-activate without the direct support of the AQ organization.

At the individual level, the chapter analyzed AQ's meta-narrative and how it motivates individual suicide attackers. The section identified the three pillars of the meta-narrative, which include an animosity towards the West, a belief in a clash of civilizations, and the allure of martyrdom. The section argued that the individual suicide attackers tap into the meta-narrative and project their own grievances into it thus making it his or her own. The wills, videos, and final testaments of AQ suicide attackers demonstrate the ability of the meta-narrative to provide the suicide attacker with a Manichean worldview that provides a religious justification for violence.

At the societal level, AQ is cognizant of its need to cultivate a global resonance for its methods and ideology. Using the writings of Al Suri, the section identified how AQ controls and distributes its message. By focusing on U.S. action in the Middle East, especially Iraq and Pakistan, AQ propaganda is unrelenting in its presentation of the U.S. as a 'Neo-Crusader' force that seeks to conquer the entire Islamic world. This propaganda has found a home in the virtual world. Al Sahab was presented as an example of a website that allowed visitors to download ideological tracts and watch videos of AQ leaders and past AQ suicide attacks. In addition, the use of online web forums is another way for supporters to spread AQ's ideology on a global scale. While a website can be shut down, the web forums can change online locations with relative ease making them difficult to monitor. The internet is an asset that gives the AQ ideology a potentially transnational audience. Perhaps even more important, the website and web forums may contribute to AQ recruitment efforts especially for the disaffected few who find themselves living in the West.

For a post-9/11 Al Qaeda, the linkages between each level of analysis is hard to determine given the scope of the organization and lingering questions as to how much [or lack thereof] operational control Al Qaeda exerts over attempted suicide attacks. Despite this, the operational structure is diffusive among the three levels of analysis. It is useful to think of the interactions as an upside down triangle [▽].



At the left point of the triangle is the Al Qaeda organization with the line going to the right connecting to the societal resonance level of analysis. This interaction is perhaps the most important because this demonstrates the transmission of Al Qaeda's meta-narrative to a global audience. From the right side of the triangle, the line goes down to the individual. Here is where the individual comes into contact with the meta-narrative and is able to project his or her grievances onto it. Now the connection from the bottom of the triangle [the individual] to the left of the triangle [the organization] is represented by a dotted line because the connection is tenuous.

The AQI discussion demonstrates clearly that Al Qaeda still has an organizational component even though it is a regional one. Recent failed attempts by Najibullah Zazi and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab demonstrate that the organizational control Al Qaeda has over suicide attackers is weaker than it was pre-9/11. What matters more is that Al Qaeda radicalizes the individual through its meta-narrative prompting the individual to seek out the organization [usually in Pakistan and Yemen] to receive operational training usually for a short period of time. The critical component here is the meta-narrative, which resides at the societal level of analysis. It is the meta-narrative that radicalizes individuals, which prompts those individuals to seek out training at an Al Qaeda training camp.

The next section concludes the dissertation as it presents the findings of the case studies, examines the circumstances by which organizations cease to use suicide attacks and investigates the policy options available to governments dealing with this tactic.

6.0 CONCLUSION

“I am bound to shoot myself because the most important act of my self-will is to kill myself...I am killing myself to show my defiance and my new terrible freedom.”

-Kirillov in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Devils*

“When they stood him among the pillars, Samson said to the servant who held his hand, “Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.” Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. Then Samson prayed to the Lord, “O Sovereign Lord, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.” Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.”

-Judges 16: 25-30

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The impetus behind this dissertation was the realization that the research on suicide attacks tended to focus almost exclusively on one level of analysis. Breaking from this tendency, the dissertation proposed a model that investigated suicide attacks at the organizational, individual and societal levels of analysis. As such, the dissertation asked three primary research questions: why organizations use suicide attacks, why individuals become suicide attackers, and how the attack resonates in the target population. The dissertation has argued that organizations use suicide attacks out of defensive necessity and for strategic purposes, individuals are motivated to become suicide attackers by a religio-nationalist liberation ideology that promises the attacker post-mortem incentives for the attacker's death, and that societal resonance is achieved when the organization draws on religious, cultural and nationalistic narratives that enable the organization to present the tactic to the target population in a favorable light.

In order to answer these questions, the dissertation used four carefully selected case studies where suicide attacks were employed. Rather than focus on case studies that dealt exclusively with terrorism, the cases were selected at different points on a conflict continuum, which include suicide attacks in war, suicide attacks in irregular war, suicide attacks in domestic terrorism, and suicide attacks in transnational terrorism. As a result, this dissertation is part of a growing research field that systematically analyzes the different variants of suicide attacks along multiple levels of analysis.

The conclusion of the dissertation is divided into four sections. The first is a discussion of the case studies where insights drawn from each are highlighted and compared. The second probes possible reasons why suicide attacks have been abandoned by the organizations that

utilize them and the policy implications gleaned from these examples. The third section addresses the implications for future research called for by this dissertation. Finally, the last section investigates the instances of failed suicide attacks.

6.2 COMPARISON OF CASE STUDIES

The four cases examined in this dissertation demonstrate that suicide attacks have been used along different points of a conflict continuum. Despite the constant media attention given to suicide terrorism since 9/11, the cases remind the researcher that suicide attacks have been used in warfare, irregular warfare *and* terrorism. The model utilized by this dissertation presents an analytical framework that recognizes that suicide attacks are best studied along three-levels of analysis. As a result, the model identifies the organizational interests, individual motivations and societal resonance as crucial factors that make the use of suicide attacks possible. It should be reiterated here that this model is not a causal model and, as such, it does not seek to predict future instances of suicide attacks. Such predictions, especially in the social sciences, are wrought with uncertainty mainly because of the large number of variables that contribute to the emergence of a phenomenon like suicide attacks.⁸⁶¹ Instead of focusing on prediction, the dissertation seeks to uncover and analyze certain relationships and features that exist at each level of analysis. The findings of the dissertation will now be discussed.

⁸⁶¹ Peter Medawar, "Some Follies of Quantification," (*Hospital Practice*, July 1973), 179.

6.2.1 Organizational Motives: Driven by Necessity

The common thread at the organizational level of analysis is that suicide attacks are a tactic adopted out of defensive and strategic necessity. In the kamikazes case study, the Japanese adopted the idea for the 'special attacks' because the Japanese Navy had been decimated at the Battle of Midway. This defeat carried a number of consequences for Japan, the most important of which was the cutting off of Japan's war materiel from the Philippines. Without these natural resources, the Japanese war machine could not manufacture guns, ammunition, and other items necessary to win the war. Additionally, the U.S. advance and occupation of Japanese territory violated the commonly held belief that Japan's homeland was protected by the gods and was inviolate to outside forces. As such, Takijiro Onishi sought a tactic that would turn the tide of the war. The kamikazes were a last ditch effort by Onishi to halt the American advance toward Japan and to showcase the Japanese fighting spirit to intimidate the Americans and persuade them to discontinue fighting.

In the Tamil Tigers case study, the LTTE faced a superior foe in the SLA. As irregular warfare between the LTTE and the SLA intensified, LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirabakaran looked for a new weapon that could stop the SLA advance into the Tamil stronghold of Jaffna. This new weapon came by way of the Captain Millar's suicide attack when he drove a truck filled with explosives into a SLA camp thereby halting their advance. This act of self-sacrifice made an impact on Pirabakaran. He adopted the tactic and created a suicide squad dedicated solely to carrying out suicide attacks. Pirabakaran and his Black Tigers turned the suicide attack into an offensive weapon that could target the SLA and assassinate heads of state. The Black Tigers would go on to become main innovators of suicide attacks as they pioneered different ways to deliver the suicide attacker (via land, sea and air) as well as the use of female suicide attackers.

Hamas faced circumstances similar to the LTTE. During the first intifada, it could not achieve a military victory against Israel's well-trained and well-armed army. Instead of confronting the Israeli military directly, Hamas turned to terrorism in an effort to sabotage the peace process that was unfolding between the Israeli government and Fatah. In this way, Hamas used suicide attacks to achieve strategic goals. During the first intifada, suicide attacks acted as a spoiler to disrupt and ultimately derail the Oslo Peace Process and the Declaration of Principles. In the second intifada, Hamas turned to suicide attacks again in order to prompt a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. By targeting buses, restaurants, malls and other public locations frequented by Jewish civilians, Hamas pressured Israel to abandon this territory.

Finally, AQ adopted suicide attacks because they fit well into the defensive jihad framework formulated by Azzam. In this framework, the aggressive and imperialistic West, led by the United States, represented an existential threat to the health and vitality of the Islamic ummah. AQ financier and co-founder OBL realized that AQ could not hope to engage the United States in military combat. Instead, OBL believed that AQ had to rely on the faith of its members and harness it to attack the U.S. As such, AQ weaponized its interpretation of the Islamic faith through the use of suicide attacks, which AQ dubbed 'martyrdom operations.' AQ has used a variety of suicide attacks to target the United States culminating in the deadly 9/11 attacks. AQ justifies the use of suicide attacks as appropriate responses to American aggression and atrocities committed in the Muslim world.

It is interesting to note that in all four cases, the only one that achieved limited success was Hamas. Japan failed to stop the U.S. advance in the Pacific, the LTTE was unable to achieve a separate Tamil state, and AQ thus far has been unable to make the U.S. withdraw from

the Middle East. Hamas, on the other hand, was able to successfully disrupt the Israeli-Palestinian Peace process and prompt Israel to withdraw from Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. While it should be noted that Hamas has not realized their ultimate goal, which is the destruction of the Jewish state if one goes by the Hamas constitution, the achievement of this partial success increased Hamas' popularity in the Palestinian territories and also contributed to its Parliamentary victory in 2006.

6.2.2 The Individual: Liberation Ideology and Post-Mortem Incentives for Death

While the dissertation has reiterated that there is no single motivation that can be isolated as causing a person to become a suicide attacker, the case studies do reveal similar features that undoubtedly helped a person become a suicide attacker. In all the cases what is most noticeable is the presence of an ideology that allows the individual to grapple with the harsh realities of the choice he or she makes. This ideology is a combination of nationalism and/or religion that makes the individual feel as a liberator for the cause. Additionally, in all the cases examined here there are certain post-mortem benefits that exist for the person who decides to become a suicide attacker. It is no exaggeration to say that the ideological motivation and post-mortem benefits figure highly in the individual strategic calculus of the person weighing the decision to become a suicide attacker. Simply put, the cases demonstrate that individual motivations play a crucial role for the person who becomes a suicide attacker.

In the diaries of the kamikazes what emerges is the portrait of a young Japanese pilot who is motivated by nationalism and familial sentiments. The pilots feared the conquest of their sacred homeland by the Americans. They believed that the Americans were ruthless brigands who would kill their mothers, rape their sisters, and pillage Japan's land. The pilots did not die

for the emperor, but rather died for their families and the idea of an untarnished Japan. The pilots believed they would be the force that would liberate Japan from the impending conquest of the Americans. Moreover, the pilots tapped into the Bushido war ethic that taught them to embrace death with determination and fervor. The Bushido war ethic was a mindset that idolized and extolled the noble death. The kamikaze pilots believed they were following in the Bushido warrior tradition, which helped them to rationalize and make sense of their actions. Finally, the kamikaze pilots believed that they would meet each other again at Yasukuni shrine. Their deaths in defense of the sacred Japanese homeland meant they would become *kamis* and they would reside at Yasukuni shrine, the most holy location in all of Japan. They would become spirits that would protect Japan as well as objects of worship by their own families and the nation.

The LTTE Black Tiger is one who sees the liberation of Tamil Eelam as a *cutantiram* or a 'holy aim.' Despite some descriptions of the LTTE as a secular organization, there are strong religious elements operating in the ideology that motivate the Black Tigers. Fashioned by LTTE leader Pirabakaran himself, this ideology focuses on the martyr's role in the achievement of an independent Tamil state. Drawing heavily from Hinduism, Pirabakaran adopts the notion that the Black Tiger is a *tiyaki* or 'one who abandons.' Thus, the *tiyaki* is the Tamil martyr who abandons his or her life in order to free the Tamil homeland from the shackles of Buddhist-Sinhalese dominance. Through rituals like the cyanide ceremony, the Black Tiger, as well as the rest of the LTTE, are desensitized from the fear of death. Additionally, the LTTE *tiyaki* is buried in 'martyr cemeteries' where they become local deities. Much like the kamikazes, the *tiyakis* become the object of familial worship, as they are believed to have the power to bring fortune to those who pray to them.

The written testaments and videos of the Hamas suicide attacker reveal the strong religious allure of becoming a *shahid* or martyr. By becoming a *shahid*, the Hamas suicide attacker receives a number of post-mortem benefits among which are direct entry into Paradise, the comforts of the seventy-two black eyed virgins and the ability to save family members and friends from languishing in hell. Aside from the post-mortem benefits for the attacker, the families of the martyr's receive financial support and are elevated in social status. Additionally, the written testaments and videos demonstrate an intense hatred that the suicide attacker harbors for the Israeli other. This hatred enables the suicide attacker to dehumanize the target thus making it perfectly acceptable to target innocent Israeli civilians. Finally, through the use of the written testament and final video, Hamas creates a martyrdom contract with the martyr-to-be. The martyr is promised the rewards if the attacker is willing to undertake the suicide attack. This acts to cement the suicide attacker's conviction so that he or she will not back out at the last moment.

The case of AQ highlights the existence of a transnational meta-narrative that AQ seeks to export around the globe. This meta-narrative is rooted in the belief that the West is taking control of the Muslim world. As a result, the meta-narrative is comprised of a hatred toward the West, a belief in the inevitable clash between Islam and the West and martyrdom. What makes this meta-narrative unique is that it allows the AQ suicide attacker to project his or her grievances onto it. Once this is done, the individual attacker makes the narrative his or her own, which provides a rationale for action. At the heart of this is the belief that the liberation of the Muslim world will come through a reliance on faith. For the AQ attacker, the suicide attack becomes an act of religious devotion. Because the act takes on a religious significance, the AQ suicide attacker is also promised the post-mortem benefits of martyrdom. Similar to the Hamas

suicide attacker, the AQ operative can look forward to the seven benefits of Paradise when he or she dies a martyr's death.

As the Hamas and AQ cases demonstrate, the promise of martyrdom for the individual suicide attacker is real. While it is tempting to see the allure of martyrdom as just a ploy used by the organization to convince someone to carry out a suicide attack, this ignores the written testaments and videos left by AQ and Hamas suicide attackers. Specifically, this mindset ignores the fact that these individuals are motivated by deeply held beliefs. It is also interesting to note that in both the Hamas and AQ cases, a significant amount of effort has been invested in fashioning theological arguments that reject the act as 'suicide.' Since suicide is forbidden in Islam, theological justifications were needed to bypass this potentially damning fact. Both Hamas and AQ ideologues would come to the conclusion that suicide is a matter of intent and that their martyrs do not intend to kill themselves out of despair, anguish, or hopelessness. Instead, the overriding intent is to follow in the tradition of martyrs who have died for the Islamic faith and to act as the liberators of Palestine from the Israelis or the Muslim world from the West.

6.2.3 Societal Resonance: Instilling the Message

The third level of analysis looked at how the suicide attack was presented to its target audience. These attacks do not happen in a vacuum and, as the cases demonstrate, each organization that used suicide attacks employed a variety of methods to present and instill a narrative justifying the tactic to the target audience. In the Japanese case, the kamikazes became an expression of the national will. This did not happen overnight but rather through the propaganda and

indoctrinating efforts of the Japanese government. Through the promotion of the *Kokutai No Hongi* following the Meji Restoration, the Japanese people were introduced to a state created ideology based on militarism and exceptionalism. Through the efforts of the Ministry of Education, a nationalistic narrative was put forth to teach the individual to subvert his or her will to that of the national will. The Japanese people believed that their homeland and their emperor were sacred and inviolate. The emperor was hailed as *hitogami* or a ‘god man’ who was the direct descendent of the gods that created Japan. Additionally, loyalty to lord and land was the highest virtue that a Japanese citizen could cultivate. Consequently, when the kamikaze attacks were announced, the Japanese people hailed them as ‘warrior gods’ who nobly died for their country. In this case, the attacks achieved resonance because the government utilized the narrative of a state-based and nationalistic ideology that it had propagated to its citizens since the Meji Restoration.

In the Tamil case, resonance for the LTTE’s suicide attacks came primarily through the efforts of former LTTE leader Vellupillai Pirabakaran. Pirabakaran created and fostered a narrative that developed and cultivated the cult of the martyr in northern Sri Lanka. He achieved this by establishing events that linked the Tamil community with the sacrifices made by the Black Tigers. One such event that is celebrated domestically and internationally is the Great Heroes Day celebration. This celebration served to introduce and extol the sacrifices made by the Black Tigers toward the goal of achieving an independent Tamil state. Additionally, the Great Heroes Day celebration prompted the societal veneration of the Black Tigers by the Tamil community. The veneration of the martyrs increased when the LTTE began to bury their dead at the martyr cemeteries that exist in the north of Sri Lanka.

These martyr cemeteries, like the Yakusuni Shrine, housed the spirits of the martyrs who then became objects of worship by the Tamil people. Additionally, the Tamil Tigers took their message to the internet in order to reach the Tamil diaspora living in Western Europe and North America. With websites like *tamilnet.com*, *eelamweb.com*, *tamilcanadian.org*, *tamilnation.org*, the diaspora could learn about the sacrifices made by the Black Tigers. Moreover, the websites became repositories for LTTE propaganda where videos and speeches given by LTTE leader Pirabakaran could be accessed. The Tamils thus became the first organization that used suicide attacks to have an online presence. This movement to the digital world is one that is being followed by organizations like Hamas and AQ and its affiliates.

Hamas succeeded in making suicide attacks resonate through an aggressive campaign to market the martyrdom narrative to the Palestinian population using a variety of different mediums. Perhaps the most ubiquitous medium during the first and second intifadas was the presence of martyr posters plastered on walls and billboards throughout the Gaza Strip. These posters would be placed within hours of a suicide attack and served to call attention to the sacrifice made by the *shahid*. During the second intifada, Hamas shifted tactics and focused on schools and television. Hamas sponsored curriculum for students that unabashedly praised the sacrifice of the martyrs and demeaned the humanity of their Israeli neighbors. By educating children with this mindset, Hamas was not only creating future sympathizers but also future martyrs. Additionally, Hamas created the Al Aqsa television channel that has a variety of programming that extols the sacrifices of the martyrs. From martyr music videos directed at young adults to children's programs with Sesame-Street-like characters, the television gave Hamas unprecedented access to disseminate its religious narrative and build support for its martyrs during the second intifada. Moreover, like the LTTE, Hamas has a presence on the

internet. Through its al-fateh website, children and adults can access music videos, articles, and sermons that promote hatred toward Israelis and are sympathetic to the Hamas martyrs.

The AQ case is a bit different from the others in that it seeks to create global resonance for their use of suicide attacks. As advocated through the writings of Abu Musab al Suri, AQ fosters resonance for suicide attacks mainly by propagating a narrative that highlights U.S. action in the Middle East. To this end, AQ is trying to fashion a narrative that depicts the U.S. as a 'neo-Crusader' force that is attempting to subjugate the Muslim world. Additionally, AQ draws upon potent symbols of U.S. oppression, which in the past has included the Abu Ghraib scandal, allegations of torture by those detained at the Guantanamo Bay prison facility and the increasing number of Predator drone attacks inside Pakistan. This has proven a shrewd tactic, as AQ has tapped into a growing wellspring of anti-American sentiment that exists both within the Muslim world and in the West itself especially among various diaspora communities.

Like the LTTE and Hamas, AQ is fashioning a formidable online presence giving it the ability to distribute its narrative to a large audience. Through the use of websites like Al Sahab, AQ is able to dispense a vast amount of propaganda to those with access to the internet. Before it was shut down, the Al Sahab website became a mouthpiece for ideologues like Ayman al Zawahiri and the former leader of AQ in Iraq Abu Musab al Zarqawi. What is different from AQ affiliated websites as opposed to those sympathetic with Hamas or the LTTE is the amount of information that is available. The AQ websites allow interested visitors to read selections of the jihadist ideologues, which are increasingly being translated into Western languages like English, Spanish and French, download manuals on how to make a bomb or a suicide vest, and watch the videos of martyrs from the jihadist battlefields in Iraq and Pakistan. The websites are beginning to serve a social networking purpose as well. With the emergence of chat rooms,

threads and blogs interested parties are able to share ideas and information online with one another. This allows for an unprecedented exchange of information and is potentially a powerful recruiting device for those interested in AQ's ideology and goals.

What emerges at this level of analysis is the variety of measures that organizations use to make the suicide attack palatable to their target population. Whether it is through the internet, state sponsored propaganda or theological tracts what is important is that the organization fashion a coherent narrative that can be presented easily and succinctly to the target population. As these cases demonstrate, this occurs when the organization draws from the historical, religious and cultural dynamics embedded within each society. While there is no one factor that ensures that the tactic will be accepted, one common feature that emerges is the simplicity of the message. In the Japanese case, the special attack pilots were heroes. As for the Black Tigers, Hamas and AQ operatives, they were revered as martyrs. The way the simple yet powerful message was packaged and presented to the audience helped to foster support for suicide attacks because it provided the target audience with a legitimating rationale for carrying out the attacks.

6.2.4 Exploring Linkages at Each Level of Analysis

Another feature that emerges in this dissertation is that the case studies represent different operational structures, which allow the researcher to view the interactions and linkages at each level of analysis. Figure 2 demonstrates the differing operational structures and the linkages that exist in each case study.

<i>Case Study</i>	<i>Operational Structure</i>	<i>Linkage at Organizational [O], Individual [I], Societal [S] Levels</i>	<i>Points of Disruption</i>
Kamikazes	Hierarchical	Linkage is strong at O level and flows from top to bottom.	Organizational level
LTTE	Lateral	Linkage flows laterally from O to I and O to S. Linkage strongest at O-S level.	Organizational level
Hamas	Triangular	Strong and mutually reinforcing linkage at O, I, S levels.	Organizational and Societal Level
Al Qaeda	Diffuse	Weak linkage at O-I level. Strong linkage at S-I and O-S level due to meta-narrative.	Individual and Societal Level

Figure 2. Operational Structure and Linkages

The kamikaze case study was found to have a hierarchical structure where the most important entity was the organization. The Japanese High Command made the decision to use the special attacks and it made its decision known to the individual pilots as well as Japanese society. As a result, the linkages amongst each level of analysis subsequently flowed down from

the organization, to the individual and to society. There was a strong linkage between the organization and the individual because the special attack pilots came from the ranks of the Japanese military. Indeed, becoming a kamikaze pilot was an honor and the Japanese High Command developed training programs in order to attract the best young pilots in Japan. The linkage between the individual and society was also strong due to the fact that the Japanese populace had been sufficiently indoctrinated with the state's ideology of militarism and exceptionalism, which allowed them to identify with the sacrifice the kamikaze pilots were making. Indeed, the majority of the Japanese public did not question the state's strategy but instead accepted it in full leading to an outpouring of support for the individual pilots.

The LTTE case study is an example of a lateral operational structure. Like the Japanese High Command, the LTTE organization emerges as the most critical focal point. The LTTE did not need to go outside of the organization to find recruits, but rather, like the Japanese case, the LTTE tapped Black Tigers from among its own ranks. As such, the LTTE had its pick of only the most determined and committed recruits. However, unlike the Japanese case, the LTTE did not have a population that had been fed state sponsored propaganda. Instead, the LTTE, through the efforts of Pirabakaran, fashioned an ideology and presented it to the Tamil population so that the Black Tiger attacks would resonate in the Tamil community. As a result, there is a strong linkage between the organization and the society because the LTTE created the conditions that prompted the Tamil population to support its use of suicide attacks.

The Hamas case study is an example of triangular structure with strong linkages flowing out from each level of analysis. Unlike the LTTE and the kamikazes, Hamas looked outside of its ranks for recruits. This required the organization to fashion a narrative that could be used internally to attract suicide attackers as well as externally to prime the population to accept the

tactic. The martyrdom ideology proved the perfect lure for individuals and it fit into the larger narrative of the Palestinian struggle against Israel.

Another feature that distinguishes the Hamas case study is the way that each level of analysis interacts and reinforces each other. Hamas created the narrative to attract the individuals, the individuals became suicide attackers to achieve martyrdom, and the attacks resonated in Palestinian society through the veneration and glorification of the martyrs' sacrifice, which in turn prompted more individuals to want to become *shahids*. While Hamas has abandoned suicide attacks for the time being, the attacks continue to retain resonance largely through continuing efforts to keep the Palestinian population martyrdom conscious. As was argued in the Hamas chapter, the fact that suicide attacks continue to resonate with the population lays the groundwork for Hamas to return to this tactic in the future.

The operational structure of Al Qaeda is more difficult to determine given its transnational nature. However, in the aftermath of U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan what emerges is a diffuse operational structure. While the pre-9/11 AQ was centralized, the post-9/11 AQ is less centralized and more diffuse. As a result, the linkage between the AQ organization and the individual is weak. However, the linkage between the AQ organization and its target audience is strong due to the AQ meta-narrative. The meta-narrative has become the most critical point in this structure. As such, the linkage between societal level and individual is of great importance. It should be noted that this linkage is nowhere near as strong as the one that exists between the individual and society in the Hamas case. This is due in part to population and geography since Hamas is dealing with a smaller number of people in a limited geographic space. Al Qaeda's meta-narrative, however, is broad, has a global reach and is not constrained by geography. Also, it does not have the depth that Hamas' martyrdom ideology has at the

societal level.⁸⁶² Despite this, even if AQ's meta-narrative attracts and radicalizes one percent of its target audience, this potentially provides an ample number of individuals who might be willing to become suicide attackers.

6.3 PATHWAYS OUT OF SUICIDE ATTACKS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

While it is important to examine why organizations use suicide attacks, what motivates individuals to become suicide attackers and how suicide attacks resonate in their target audience, it is equally important to analyze the reasons why organizations stop using this tactic. There are four primary pathways for organizations to abandon the use of suicide attacks: the organization is defeated militarily, the organization is co-opted by the political process, there is a failure of the tactic to resonate amongst the target population, and a counter-narrative develops that supplants and delegitimizes the organization's operating ideology. Each of these, and the policy implications they raise, will now be considered.

Military Defeat

⁸⁶² The author is indebted to Dr. Phil Williams for this point.

The first reason an organization will abandon suicide attacks is if it is militarily defeated. As the Japanese case highlighted, the kamikaze special attacks were adopted to prevent the American advance toward Japan. The disastrous Leyte Gulf battle where much of the Japanese Navy was destroyed signaled both the beginning and the end for the Japanese special attack squad. The Japanese turned to the kamikazes a final time in the Battle of Okinawa. Although the attacks sank some thirty U.S. warships, they were unable to prevent the U.S. from taking Okinawa. At this stage in the war, Japan had a shortage of planes and pilots who were capable enough to crash a plane into a moving target. According to Admiral Matome Ugaki, Japan lacked the resources to produce kamikaze pilots and as he assessed the situation he declared that it had “become impossible for us to continue organized resistance.”⁸⁶³ However, he believed that the same spirit of self-sacrifice that motivated the kamikazes could be channeled into the remnants of the Japanese army as they prepared to make a final stand on the Japanese mainland. This kamikaze inspired resistance would never materialize because two months after the U.S. took Okinawa, atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August 15, 1945 Emperor Hirohito offered Japan’s unconditional surrender.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶³ Gordon Prange et al. *Fading Victory: The Diary of Admiral Matome Ugaki*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 659.

⁸⁶⁴ Ugaki refused to accept Japan’s surrender so he made the decision to become the last kamikaze pilot. As he notes in his diary, “I’m going to follow in the footsteps of those many loyal officers and men who devoted themselves to the country, and I want to live in the noble spirit of the special attack...Believing that our empire will last forever and the special attack spirit of the Ten Air Force will never perish, I am going to proceed to Okinawa, where our men lost their lives like cherry blossoms, and ram into the arrogant American ships, displaying the real spirit of a Japanese warrior.” Ugaki quoted in *Ibid.*, 664-665.

Like the kamikazes, the Tamil Tigers abandoned the tactic after the Sri Lankan Army issued the LTTE a major defeat. Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa began a military counteroffensive in January 2009 in an attempt to weaken the LTTE. Through the use of overwhelming force, the Army cornered a majority of the LTTE leadership in a coconut grove in Jaffna.⁸⁶⁵ In a last ditch effort, the LTTE unleashed a number of Black Tiger suicide attacks in an attempt to drive the Sri Lankan Army back so that LTTE leader Pirabakaran could escape. As Sri Lankan military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said, “[s]uicide cadres are coming in front of the troops in the frontline and exploding themselves.”⁸⁶⁶ The attacks were unable to repel the Sri Lankan Army and a senior LTTE commander released a statement saying, “[w]e have decided to silence our guns. Our only regrets are for the lives lost and that we could not hold out longer.”⁸⁶⁷

Initially, there were fears that the LTTE would regroup in an attempt to retaliate but this did not materialize because LTTE leader Pirabakaran was found dead. In order to quell rumors that Pirabakaran actually escaped the ambush alive, the Sri Lankan government released photos

⁸⁶⁵ C. Bryson Hull and Ranga Sirilal, “Sri Lanka’s Long War Reaches Climax, Tigers Concede,” (*Reuters*, May 17, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE54D1GR20090517>. Accessed on 2/17/09.

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁷ “Tamil Tigers Admit Defeat After Battle Reaches ‘Bitter End,’” (*London Times Online*, May 18, 2009). Article available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6305401.ece?token=null&offset=0&page=1>. Accessed on 2/17/10.

showing that he had been shot in the head.⁸⁶⁸ Following this announcement Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the LTTE's Head of International Relations, released a statement saying that "Supreme Commander (Pirabakaran) attained martyrdom fighting the [Sri Lankan government's] military oppression."⁸⁶⁹ This ended the nearly twenty-six-year-long civil war that has claimed the lives of 70,000 people.⁸⁷⁰

Although Rajapaksa is credited with defeating the LTTE, claims have surfaced that the Sri Lankan Army engaged in war crimes against the LTTE and Tamil civilian population. A report published by Human Rights Watch accuses the Sri Lankan Army of indefinitely detaining, torturing and executing suspected LTTE members and sympathizers.⁸⁷¹ While the Tigers have been dismantled, the way it was done should give all terrorism analysts pause. As Sri Lankan Member of Parliament Mangala Samarweera notes, the carnage of the Sri Lankan assault against the Tamils "has fostered calls among formerly moderate Tamils to call for a separate state. I fear hundreds of Pirabakaran's have been created."⁸⁷² Even though the LTTE has surrendered, it will

⁸⁶⁸ C. Bryon Hull and Ranga Sirilal, "Tamil Tiger Founder Pirabakaran Dead at 54," (*Reuters*, May 19, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSCOL326349>. Accessed on 2/17/10.

⁸⁶⁹ "Tamil Tigers Acknowledge Death of Pirabakaran," (*The Times of India*, May 24, 2009). Article available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/Tamil-Tigers-acknowledge-death-of-Prabhakaran/articleshow/4572635.cms>. Accessed on 2/17/2010.

⁸⁷⁰ "Sri Lanka Timeline," (*BBC*, February 10, 2010). Article available online at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1166237.stm>. Accessed on 2/17/10.

⁸⁷¹ Peter Bouckaert, "Discovering Sri Lanka's War Crimes," (*Human Rights Watch*, January 22, 2010). Article available online at <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/01/22/uncovering-sri-lankas-war-crimes>. Accessed on 2/17/10.

⁸⁷² Mahinda Samarasinghe quoted in "Tamil Tigers Admit Defeat After Battle Reaches 'Bitter End.'"

be intriguing to see if another charismatic leader emerges and if the group returns to suicide attacks. This may ultimately depend on how well President Rajapaksa and Tamil leaders handle the reconciliation process that is currently underway in Sri Lanka.

This discussion raises an important policy question of whether organizations that utilize suicide attacks can be dealt with exclusively by means of force. The Japanese example is out of the scope of this discussion because the kamikaze attacks occurred during a time of warfare. However, the Sri Lankan and Hamas cases are much more pertinent. The Sri Lankan government consistently engaged in an offensive, military approach to dealing with the Tigers. The same can be said of the Israeli government, which adopted a policy of targeted assassination against Hamas leaders during the second intifada. The benefit of the offensive strategy is that there is tangible success in eliminating terrorist or insurgent leaders. However, this on its own is not enough to stop the group from using suicide attacks. On the contrary, it can lead to a cycle of reciprocal violence in which government action provokes violent retaliation. Additionally, such offensive strategies serve to cement and bolster the organization's motivation for engaging in violent conflict.⁸⁷³

⁸⁷³ Critics of offensive measures to stop organizations from using suicide attacks propose defensive means. Robert Pape has argued that the solution to the problem is a policy of unilateral withdrawal. Those countries targeted by organizations using suicide attacks should simply withdraw from the territory in question. When applied to the United States this line of thinking would have the U.S. withdraw from those countries where it is perceived as a foreign occupier. The major flaw with this argument is that withdrawing could be seen by the organization as an instance when suicide attacks compelled a foreign power to retreat, which could provide incentives for future use of the tactic.

Co-opted by the Political Process

The second way an organization might discontinue the use of suicide attacks is if it is co-opted by the political process. The January 26, 2006 Palestinian elections stunned observers when Hamas took 76 out of 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative elections.⁸⁷⁴ For Hamas, this marked a shift as the organization moved into a governing type role once occupied almost exclusively by Fatah. Since Hamas' election in 2006, it has not utilized suicide attacks. It should be noted, however, that before the elections Hamas was still attempting to use suicide attacks. Indeed, in November 2005, only weeks before the parliamentary elections, Hamas engaged in two failed suicide attacks targeting public areas in Sderot, Israel.⁸⁷⁵ It appears that Hamas' election changed the strategic calculus of the organization, which prompted it to suspend using the tactic. This does not mean that Hamas will never return to using suicide attacks. To the contrary, with Hamas' potent ideology of martyrdom still deeply embedded in the West Bank and Gaza Strip it is quite conceivable to imagine the organization returning to suicide attacks if it desires.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁴ Scott Wilson, "Hamas Sweeps Palestinian Elections, Complicating Peace Efforts in Mideast," (*Washington Post*, January 27, 2006). Article available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/26/AR2006012600372.html>. Accessed on 2/17/2010.

⁸⁷⁵ GTD Database. According to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a total of 29 suicide attacks were foiled in 2005. See "List of Hamas Suicide Attacks," (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Available online at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>. Accessed on 2/17/2010.

⁸⁷⁶ Matthew Levitt, email correspondence with the author, October 6, 2009.

Failure of Resonance

A third reason why an organization might stop using suicide attacks is due to a failure of the attacks to resonate with the target population. A good example of this is the Irish Republican Army [IRA]. Although the IRA did not utilize suicide attacks per se, they did come very close with one tactic called ‘proxy bombing.’ The proxy bomb involved individuals, often branded as collaborators with British security forces, who were forced to drive into targets with cars carrying explosives.⁸⁷⁷ Although the IRA’s use of proxy bombs can hardly be considered a campaign since they used the tactic only three times in 1990, the response the attack generated is of interest. The proxy bomb consisted of using a vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) in which the IRA would kidnap accused collaborators and force them to drive a vehicle into a pre-selected target. The IRA coerced the driver by telling him that his family was being held hostage and that they would be killed if the person refused. The first proxy bomb attack was a simultaneous attack that occurred on October 25, 1990 and involved Patrick Gillespie, a 42-year-old cook who was forced to drive a vehicle packed with a 1,000 lb bomb into a military checkpoint near Derry, and John McEvoy, a 65-year-old cancer survivor who drove a VBIED into an army checkpoint at Cloghogue. The first attack killed five British soldiers while the second killed one guard.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁷ A.R. Oppenheimer, *IRA The Bombs and the Bullets: A History of Deadly Ingenuity*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 100.

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 100. Miraculously, McEvoy bailed out of the car before the bomb exploded but he would later die of cancer seven months after the attack.

The public fallout after the attacks was vocal and swift. Leading the criticism was Irish Roman Catholic Bishop Edward Daly who said that the IRA's use of proxy bombings represented "the complete contradiction of Christianity."⁸⁷⁹ At the funeral of Patrick Gillespie, Bishop Daly publicly challenged the IRA and their use of the tactic when he said, "some say they [the IRA] are followers of Christ...some of them may even still engage in the hypocrisy of coming to church, but their lives and their works proclaim clearly that they follow Satan."⁸⁸⁰ As a result of the public outcry and pressure from the Catholic Church the IRA ceased using the tactic. This is a pertinent example because it underscores the importance that societal resonance plays when an organization adopts such a controversial tactic.

An essential policy implication flowing from this example is the importance of changing popular attitudes to reduce support for suicide attacks. This requires that governments targeted by suicide attacks make a concerted effort to communicate clearly and effectively in order to rebut the narrative and ideology put forth by organizations using suicide attacks. Additionally, the targeted government must identify and engage key public figures who are willing to publicly rebuke the organization's use and legitimization of suicide attacks. If the underlying ideology can be challenged and undermined, then public support for suicide attacks could begin to wane.

⁸⁷⁹ "Evolution in Europe; Bishop Rebukes IRA for Car Bomb Attacks," (*The New York Times*, October 28, 1990). Article available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/28/world/evolution-in-europe-bishop-rebukes-ira-for-car-bomb-attacks.html>. Accessed on 2/17/2010.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

Developing and Promoting a Counter-Narrative

A final way that an organization might stop using suicide attacks is if the narrative that justifies the attack is called into question and undermined. This is pertinent especially for the U.S. and its global struggle against AQ. As J. Scott Carpenter argues, “there is a growing consensus that countering the narrative that drives this extremism is a critical element in the overall effort to prevent extremist acts of violence.”⁸⁸¹ As such, the policy implication flowing from this example finds that delegitimizing the AQ narrative must be a critical requirement of any strategy the U.S. designs to confront AQ.⁸⁸² In order to achieve this, the U.S. government must do the following: understand the narrative, craft and promote a counter-narrative, and find the appropriate messengers within the Muslim world to carry the counter-narrative.

As William Casebeer and James Russell argue, in order to undermine AQ’s narrative one must be intimately familiar with the narrative it is exporting.⁸⁸³ This means the analyst must be well read in the jihadist canon, which include the writings of Hasan al Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Ayman al Zawahiri, Abu Musab al Suri and many others. The reading and analysis of primary sources is critical in this regard. For too many, exposure to AQ ideologues comes through secondary sources as quotations found in scholarly research papers or books. Instead, those in charge of creating counter-terrorism strategies would be well advised to consult the ideas that are

⁸⁸¹ J. Scott Carpenter et al., "Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism," (*Journal of National Security Law and Policy*, Vol. 3, 2009), 303.

⁸⁸² William Casebeer and James Russell, "Storytelling and Terrorism: Towards a Comprehensive 'Counter-Narrative Strategy,'" (*Strategic Insights*, Vol. IV, Issue 3, 2005), 3.

⁸⁸³ Ibid.

found in the writings of AQ ideologues. If one does not know the genesis and the ideational composition of the narrative, then it will prove difficult to construct a counter-narrative that invalidates the one AQ is promoting.⁸⁸⁴

A counter-narrative against AQ is one that attacks the ideas propagated by AQ that the West and Islam are part of an epic struggle between good and evil, the notion that the West is inherently inimical to Islam and is warring against it, that jihadist icons like Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al Zawahiri are ‘heroes’ of the Islamic faith, and that those who die in suicide attacks are ‘martyrs.’ The U.S. must engage in a counter-propaganda campaign that refutes each of those points. Additionally, the U.S. must foster a vigorous public relations campaign in a manner similar to AQ. Indeed, AQ has grown adept at releasing videos and statements through various internet websites and television stations like Al Jazeera and the U.S. should follow suit. Indeed, in the global digital age one can easily find statements and videos released by AQ through public accessible websites like YouTube. Frank Cilluffo suggests that the U.S. use graphic visuals released on the internet or broadcast via TV satellites that includes footage of dead men, women and children and interviews with those maimed by AQ suicide attackers.⁸⁸⁵ For every video released by AQ glorifying a suicide attack, the U.S. should counter with its own video demonstrating the human cost of the suicide attack on innocent non-combatants. More importantly, “85% of the casualties from all Al Qaeda attacks in 2004-2008 where Muslims,

⁸⁸⁴ In this regard, West Point’s *Counter-Terrorism Center* provides an indispensable service for academics and analysts interested in Al Qaeda as they have one of the largest collections of translated primary source documents on Al Qaeda ideologues in the United States.

⁸⁸⁵ Frank Cilluffo, "The Internet: A Portal to Violent Islamist Extremism," (*Testimony Before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee*, May 3, 2007), 6.

compared with 15% Westerners.”⁸⁸⁶ AQ continues to kill many more fellow Muslims than Western targets, which is a fact that must be exploited by the U.S.

Finally, the counter-narrative needs a legitimate messenger to deliver it. One major hindrance to the U.S. in this regard is that it suffers from a lack of credibility in the Islamic world. As Steven Kull notes, there is a general perception in the Islamic world that the United States “has entered a war against Islam itself” and that the United States seeks “to weaken and divide the Islamic world.”⁸⁸⁷ As such, attempts by the U.S. to promote a new counter-narrative will be met with skepticism and possibly resistance. Instead, the U.S. needs to identify clerics, academics, journalists, civic leaders, and governmental leaders in the Islamic world who are opposed to AQ’s ideology and encourage them to promote the counter-narrative that “would work globally and locally to dismantle a number of ideas fundamental to the [Al Qaeda] worldview.”⁸⁸⁸

Another part of this component requires that the U.S. seek out those individuals who have abandoned and renounced the jihadist narrative. As Jarret Brachman notes, one such person is Sayyid Imam al Sharif [also known as Dr. Fadl], a former mentor of Al Zawahiri, who has since rejected AQ. In a series of prison writings al Sharif has denounced AQ, OBL and Al Zawahiri

⁸⁸⁶ Peter Goodspeed, “Al-Qaeda Killing Mostly Muslims,” (*The National Post*, December 14, 2009). Article available online at <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=2340654>. Accessed on 5/19/10.

⁸⁸⁷ Steven Kull, “Impact of Negative Attitudes Towards U.S. on Efforts Against Jihadist Groups,” (*Testimony Given Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight*, May 17, 2007). Testimony available online at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/81.htm>. Accessed on 2/17/10.

⁸⁸⁸ Jeffrey Cozzens, “Identifying Entry Points of Action in Counter Radicalization.” (*Danish Institute for International Studies*, Working Paper No. 2006/6), 20.

using shariah and Koranic based arguments.⁸⁸⁹ He also advocates for the establishment of a shariah court to prosecute OBL and Al Zawahiri for misrepresenting and distorting Islam.⁸⁹⁰ The ideas propagated by al Sharif and others like him should be used as a counter-weight to AQ's narrative.

It should be noted that developing a counter-narrative is a difficult task because it too must resonate with the target audience. In order for this to occur, the U.S. must be knowledgeable of the narratives and stories at play in the Islamic culture. This requires that the U.S. devote resources to developing cultural intelligence capabilities. Cultural intelligence capabilities, which include Arabic linguists and personnel who have familiarity with and/or spent significant time in the Islamic world, must be cultivated at the diplomatic and military levels. This is of critical concern because creating a counter-narrative without "understanding the culture of the population you wish to influence is a recipe for ineffectiveness at best and in the worst of cases can backfire altogether."⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁹ Lawrence Wright, "The Rebellion Within: An Al Qaeda Mastermind Questions Terrorism," (*The New Yorker*, June 2, 2008). Article available online at http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/06/02/080602fa_fact_wright?currentPage=all. Accessed on 2/17/10.

⁸⁹⁰ "Major Jihadi Cleric and Author of Al Qaeda's Sharia Guide to Jihad," (*MEMRI*, Special Dispatch No. 1785, December 14, 2007). Article available online at <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/2636.htm>. Accessed on 2/18/10. Al Sharif wrote the book while serving a life sentence in an Egyptian jail and it is entitled *Document of Right Guidance for Jihad Activity in Egypt and the World*.

⁸⁹¹ William Casebeer and James Russell, "Storytelling and Terrorism: Towards a Comprehensive 'Counter-Narrative Strategy,'" 12.

6.4 LEARNING FROM FAILED SUICIDE ATTACKS

One area in need of exploration is the collection and analysis of information obtained from failed suicide attackers and their dispatchers. While these ex-post facto interviews are rare, there are a limited number available on the internet that could give the researcher a better understanding as to what drives individuals to carry out a suicide attack. Based on the material available via open sources, this section presents a brief discussion of failed suicide attackers and their dispatchers.

Failed Hamas Suicide Attackers

Terrorism researcher Yoram Schweitzer has done extensive interviews with failed Hamas suicide attackers and their dispatchers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Schweitzer has interviewed some eighty failed suicide attackers and their dispatchers who are in Israeli prison. Two interviews with the dispatchers of suicide attackers are most revealing.⁸⁹² In a conversation with one dispatcher named Sarahne, Schweitzer asked if he felt any emotion when a suicide mission succeeded. The dispatcher said that he felt an overwhelming joy when the mission was successful and was depressed when a mission failed. Schweitzer then asked Sarahne what his goal was as a dispatcher. Sarahne's response was that his main goal was to kill as many people as possible and to help the suicide attacker achieve martyrdom. The other interview was with a female dispatcher named Ahlam. What is striking is that Ahlam laments that her suicide bomber did not kill more people. She says she was angry and that "there should have been more [people]

⁸⁹² Yoram Schweitzer, "Conversing with the Adversary," (Interviews available via *YouTube*). Available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imx0AnNxUmY>. Accessed on 5/20/10.

killed.”⁸⁹³ What is interesting about these interviews is how unrepentant the dispatchers are. They speak with pride about the role they played in helping their suicide attacker achieve martyrdom. Moreover, both Sarahne and Ahlam smile when they speak of their involvement with the suicide attack. There is a sense of joy there that is unnerving for the viewer. This speaks to the potency of Hamas’ martyrdom narrative that exists in Palestine.

In Mohammed Hafez’s interviews with failed Hamas suicide attackers, a strict fatalism is found. The suicide attackers declare that the suicide vest did not work because Allah did not want it to work.⁸⁹⁴ There is little talk about the technological failures of the suicide device. Instead, the reasons for failure are put in relation to the suicide attacker’s desire to become a martyr. The explanation indicates the belief that it was not the attacker’s time to die. The attackers remain unrepentant and are confident that the suicide vest failed to go off for a reason. These examples underscore the powerful individual drivers that prompt individuals and their handlers to agree to be part of a suicide attack.

Failed Suicide Attackers in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has seen a dramatic rise in suicide attacks since 2004. Additionally, Taliban and Al Qaeda forces are experimenting with new ways to dispatch suicide attackers. Recent attempts have included attackers riding bicycles, the use of women, and people pretending to be vendors or injured to lure coalition forces close enough for detonation. While interviews with failed

⁸⁹³ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁴ Mohammed Hafez, “Suicide Bombers in Iraq,” (Presentation at the World Affairs Council). Available online at http://fora.tv/2008/03/25/Mohammed_Hafez_on_Suicide_Bombings_in_Iraq. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

suicide attackers in Afghanistan are rare, there are two interviews that are available via the internet. The first involves two seventeen-year-old boys who were sent to kill a regional Afghani governor who began collaborating with coalition forces.⁸⁹⁵ Abdul Qubosh, the first attacker, argued that the governor was a legitimate target because he was an “infidel collaborator with the Americans.”⁸⁹⁶ The second attacker, Farman Ullah, told the interviewer how the two young boys became suicide attackers. He said that the Taliban came to their madrassa and spoke about how jihad was a compulsory duty for all able-bodied Muslims. Ullah described how the recruiter promised martyrdom for those who would become suicide attackers. Ullah was told that “virgins come to the site of the explosion and wait to take you to Paradise.”⁸⁹⁷ When he agreed to become a suicide attacker, his handler told him that “God was going to ignite the vest.”⁸⁹⁸ While Ullah appeared to believe this statement, it is likely that the handler would be the one to detonate the vest at a distance. This is an interesting occurrence, which might signal a shift to the remote detonation of suicide vests.

The other failed suicide attacker is a male in his twenties who appeared on *Jirga*, an Afghan news program.⁸⁹⁹ He claims that he is from Waziristan and was sent to help the Taliban fight against the Americans. The host asks if the young man ever considered that his action

⁸⁹⁵ “Interview with two failed Afghan Suicide Bombers.” Interview available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDOQR4s7_DQ. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁹ “Interview with a Suicide Bomber,” (*Jirga*, July 5, 2009). Interview available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qD-Nny3EP98&feature=related>. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

would have caused the deaths of many innocents. The attacker responds by saying, “[w]e have no repentance, no sorrow for killing. Our leader orders us to kill two people and hundreds are killed in this process even then we will do so.”⁹⁰⁰ The host then asks the young man if he obtained permission from his parents to wage jihad. The young man responds by saying that “permission is not essential when jihad becomes obligatory.”⁹⁰¹ Perhaps the most intriguing part of the interview is when the host asks the failed bomber if there has been any change in his thinking. The young man declares that his thinking has not changed and that he would choose the path of a suicide attacker again.

Failed Suicide Attacker in Iraq

Perhaps the most infamous failed suicide attacker in Iraq is Ranya Ibrahim. Ranya, a fifteen-year-old girl, was sent by AQI in August 2008 to detonate a suicide vest at an Iraqi police station in Baqouba, the capital of Iraq’s Diyala province.⁹⁰² Police claim that they spotted her moving awkwardly toward the station and told her to stop her advance. This is when Ranya claimed that she was wearing a suicide vest. Police handcuffed her to a nearby cart, removed parts of her clothing and detached the suicide vest. In September 2008, Ranya gave an interview to Iraq’s

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid.

⁹⁰² Natalia Atelava, “Iraq Suicide Bomber, 16 Jailed,” (*BBC News, Baghdad*). Article available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8184478.stm. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

Al-Baghdadiya television channel to discuss why she participated in the attack.⁹⁰³ Ranya claims that she was unaware that she was involved in a suicide attack. She tells the interviewer that she had no idea that her mother and husband were fitting her with a suicide belt. She also declares that she was given peach juice and bread that contained some sort of narcotic. After eating the food, she said that she felt dizzy and was seeing double. According to Ranya's testimony, she was an unwilling participant in the suicide mission. The implication here is that AQI is resorting to coercion in order to compel individuals to become suicide attackers. If this is the case, then this could be a signal that individual allure to become a suicide attacker is weakening. On the other hand, Ranya's interview might be nothing more than an example of someone who 'got cold feet' and decided at the last minute to abandon the mission.⁹⁰⁴

Failed Suicide Attackers against the United States: Richard Reid and Saajid Badat

The cases of Richard Reid and Saajid Badat merit attention because of how intertwined they are. They are also an example of two different outcomes from Al Qaeda recruits who wanted to detonate an explosive device on an American airline. Reid and Badat first met in 1999 while both were attending an Al Qaeda training camp in Pakistan. In November 2001, Badat and Reid

⁹⁰³ "15-Year-Old Iraqi Would-Be Suicide Bomber Tells Her Story on Iraq TV," (*MEMRI TV*, Special Dispatch No. 2057, 9/22/2008). Interview available online at <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/3120.htm>. Accessed on 5/20/2010. Video of interview is available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnao-vuCck8&feature=related>.

⁹⁰⁴ In Ranya's case, this appears to be the most plausible explanation. The reason being is that her vest was armed and that her thumb was on the detonator when police approached her.

made another trip to Pakistan where they were given shoe bombs containing plastic explosives.⁹⁰⁵ They returned to Britain in December and separated as they prepared for their missions. Reid traveled to Belgium and then France where he purchased a round-trip ticket from Paris to Miami.⁹⁰⁶ Badat, on the other hand, returned to his home in Gloucester and purchased a ticket to Amsterdam where it was believed that he would board a flight bound for the U.S.⁹⁰⁷ The two kept in contact via email in order to maintain the resolve to carry out the attack that they had acquired in Pakistan. However, during his time at home, Badat began to lose interest in carrying out the suicide attack. As Sean O’Neill and Stewart Tandler argue, “Badat was back in Britain with the [shoe] bomb. But, at home in Gloucester, removed from the fanatical dedication of his comrades, he was beginning to have second thoughts.”⁹⁰⁸ As a result, Badat sent an email to his handler indicating that he was wavering and would not participate in the attack.⁹⁰⁹

The plans by Reid and Badat represent two different types of failures. Reid succeeded in boarding the plane as well as staying in the ideological jihadi milieu, but his attack was foiled as

⁹⁰⁵ Michael Elliot, “The Shoe Bomber’s World,” (*Time*, February 16, 2002). Article available online at <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,203478-1,00.html>. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

⁹⁰⁶ “Timeline: The Shoe Bomber Case,” (*CNN*, 1/7/2002). Article available online at <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/US/01/07/reid.timeline/index.html>. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

⁹⁰⁷ “United States V. Sajid Mohammed Badat,” (*Department of Justice, United States District Court of Massachusetts*, September 1, 2004). Article available via *LexisNexis*. See also, “British National Indicted For Conspiring with ‘Shoe Bomber’ Richard Reid,” (*Department of Justice*, October 4, 2004).

⁹⁰⁸ Sean O’Neill and Stewart Tandler, “The Shoe Bomber from a Gloucester Grammar,” (*London Times Online*, March 1, 2005). Article available online at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article416746.ece>. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

a result of a technical failure.⁹¹⁰ Through no fault of his own, Reid's shoe bomb failed to detonate due to a technical misfire and his chance to achieve martyrdom disappeared. Reid had the ideological drive and motivation to carry out the attack but the equipment given to him at the training camp failed to work. Badat, on the other hand, experienced a failure of resonance. What is important for the analyst in the Badat case is to take note of what happens when a radicalized individual is removed from the ideological rich environment that Badat undoubtedly found at the training camp in Pakistan.

Once away from the organization, Reid and Badat relied on one another to fortify their commitment to their mission. While Reid and Badat emailed one another to keep their resolve strong, Badat's commitment wavered after he left the training camp. In order to prevent this, Reid and Badat had a handler who was tasked with sustaining and cultivating the desire for martyrdom they obtained while in Pakistan. In Badat's case, the ideology he had accepted began to lose its allure after being in his hometown and living in his parents' house. In the end, Badat's failure was due to the inability of the ideology to make martyrdom appealing. This theme appeared during Badat's court hearing on February 28, 2005 as his lawyers argued that Badat had undergone a genuine metanoia away from the jihadi ideology. They argued that Badat could not mentally accept being a "courier of death" in exchange for glorious martyrdom.⁹¹¹

⁹¹⁰ The author is indebted to Phil Williams for this point.

⁹¹¹ "Shoe bomb Plotter Given 13 Years," (*BBC*, April 22, 2005). Article available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4474307.stm. Accessed on 5/20/2010. Badat received a thirteen-year prison sentence for conspiracy to destroy a U.S. plane. Judge Adrian Fulford justified the sentence by saying that "turning away from crime in circumstances such as these constitutes a powerful mitigating factor."

This discussion demonstrates a possible weakness in the post-9/11 AQ. While the meta-narrative might radicalize and entice people to become suicide attackers, the Badat example demonstrates that once a person is removed from the organizational environment, in this case the training camp, it is possible for the individual to reject the ideology. Al Qaeda depends on radicalized individuals who buy into the meta-narrative and who are willing to carry out suicide attacks. Once the operative leaves the training camp, he or she is vulnerable to second thoughts and doubt. As the Badat case demonstrates, being away from the ideological rich environment of the training camp can pose a problem. This is why Al Qaeda and its affiliates task handlers to keep in contact with the operatives. However, the simple fact is that the longer the time between the attendance of a training camp and a planned suicide attack could prove to be Al Qaeda's greatest weakness in its war against the West. If the individuals are kept from carrying out their attack, they might begin to doubt the ideology and, like Badat, abandon the desire to become a martyr.

6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

2009 was a deadly year for suicide attacks. The figure below shows that 149 suicide attacks killed 1,568 people and injured 6,670.

Month	Attacks	Dead	Wounded
January	8	48	107
February	7	15	45
March	12	32	112
April	9	91	234
May	19	131	605
June	21	226	587
July	11	24	135
August	14	215	2,015
September	17	164	491
October	11	281	1,131
November	12	113	350
December	8	228	858
Total	149	1,568	6,670

Figure 3. Suicide Attacks in 2009.⁹¹²

Additionally, suicide attacks continue to be a deadly weapon killing 11 and wounding 45 people per attack. The geographic breakdown of the attacks is listed in Figure 4.

⁹¹² Data obtained at the National Counter Terrorism Center, Worldwide Incidents Tracking System. Available online at <https://wits.nctc.gov/FederalDiscoverWITS/index.do?N=0>. Accessed on 5/20/2010.

Country	Attacks
Afghanistan	56
Iraq	45
Pakistan	38
Russia	5
Somalia	5

Figure 4. Suicide Attacks in 2009 By Country.⁹¹³

Figure 4 shows that most suicide attacks continue to take place in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is not surprising given the continued U.S. presence in these countries. The occurrence of suicide attacks in Pakistan, Russia and Somalia would be important case studies to consider for future research. Indeed, it would be useful to use the method of analysis proposed here for a systematic investigation of suicide attacks in Pakistan, Russia and Somalia. Pakistan would be a worthy case study as it is the sight of a dramatic increase in suicide attacks especially in the last two years. Moreover, Pakistan and its ungoverned tribal regions have become AQ havens where radicalized individuals such as Richard Reid and Saajid Badat are further radicalized and instructed in ways to carry out suicide attacks.

⁹¹³ Ibid. For a more detailed breakdown of the attacks see Appendix C.

Another area for research would be to use the model to address the growing phenomenon of female suicide attackers in Islamist groups. It appears that Islamist groups, like the AQI, are turning to women because they offer certain advantages over male suicide attackers. However, what motivates a female suicide attacker and how this new variant of the suicide attack would be perceived are questions that have not been adequately addressed.

A final general point that this dissertation highlights is the necessity of the political scientist to employ the methods and techniques used by the sociologist, theologian and anthropologist. Indeed, this dissertation has found that narratives and ideologies comprised of religion and nationalism play large roles in convincing an individual to become a suicide attacker and help a society to accept the tactic. Political scientists should not ignore these unquantifiable variables but rather should integrate them in their analyses.

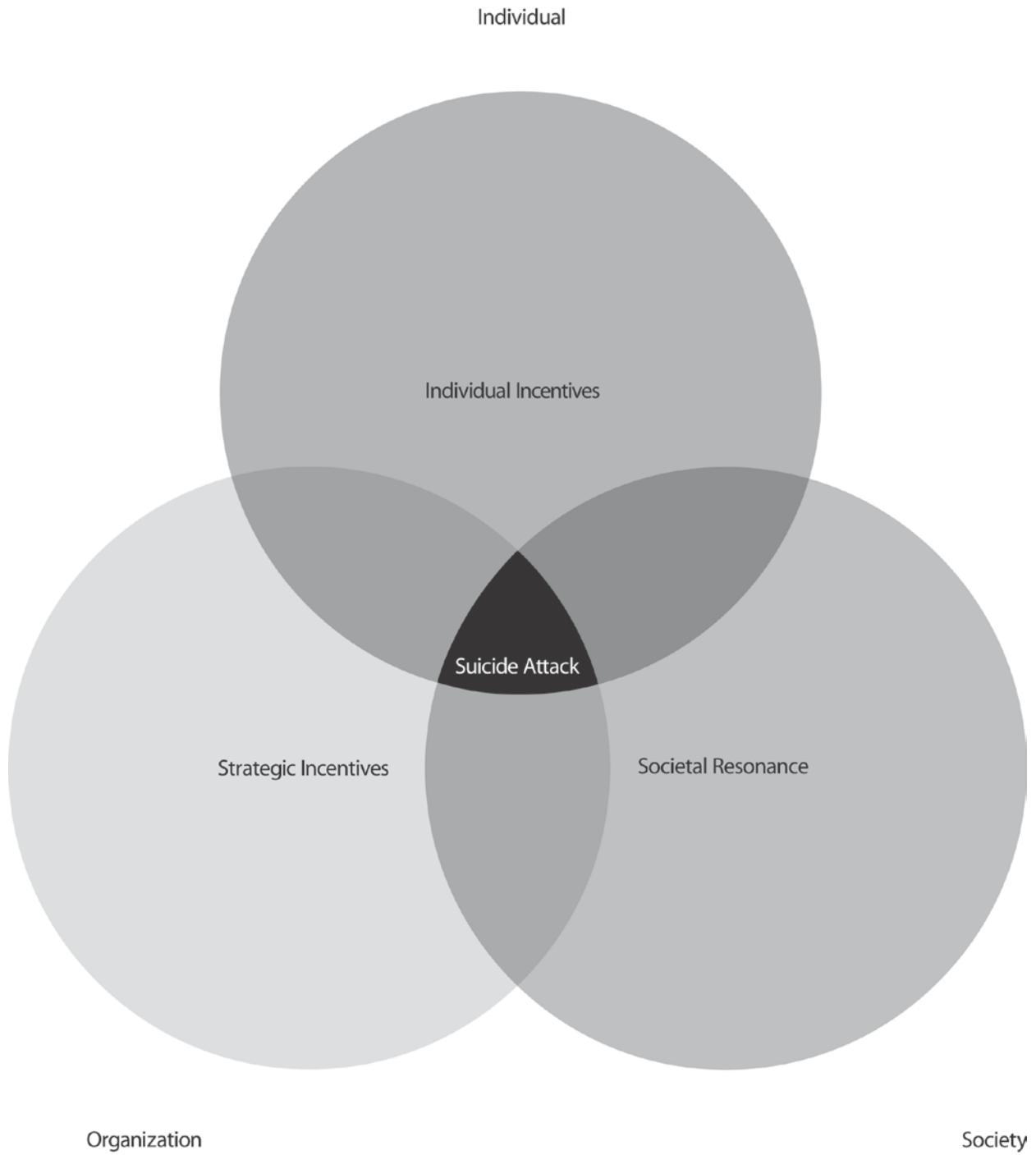
6.6 IN CONCLUSION

Suicide attacks continue to claim the front pages of the world's newspapers. They are a potent and indiscriminate instrument of death that kills and maims men, women and children alike. They are a frightening tactic that contradicts the most inherent and basic biological instinct of self-preservation. For those who witness suicide attacks, it is hard to imagine why such a tactic should be used. They appear to be illogical, irreverent and irrational. However, as this dissertation has demonstrated, suicide attacks are a form of *deliberate death* that serve multiple purposes. For the organization, the attacks are a strategy used by the weak against the strong for strategic ends. For the individual, the suicide attack is the ultimate expression of courage or faith

by a person who is motivated by an ideology of liberation who is also promised something in the hereafter in return for sacrificing his or her life in the present. For the target population, suicide attacks must resonate and gain traction if the tactic is to be accepted. As such, a more complete understanding of suicide attacks requires a model that integrates and utilizes the organizational, individual and societal levels of analysis. With suicide attacks showing no signs of abating, it is hoped that this dissertation has contributed toward a type of integrated analysis that will help academics and policymakers understand and combat this troubling and vexing phenomenon.

APPENDIX A

SUICIDE ATTACKS AT THREE-LEVELS OF ANALYSIS [SEE BELOW]



APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Bhikkhus-a term used to describe Buddhist monks.

Black Tigers-a secretive suicide squad utilized by the LTTE.

Bushido-literally translates into ‘the way of the warrior.’ Founded as an ethical system in feudal Japan, it governed the behavior and etiquette of fighting nobles also known as samurai.

Cutantiram-a Tamil term translated as the ‘holy aim’ and is used to describe the Tamil Tiger’s struggle against the Sri Lankan state.

Dawa-an Islamic term used to denote charitable activities.

Fatwa-an Islamic term that denotes a legal pronouncement issued by an Islamic religious authority.

Great Heroes Day-an LTTE holiday created to remember the fallen martyrs that occurs every year on November 27.

Hadith-narratives and stories that can be attributable to the words or actions of the Prophet Mohammed.

Hitogami-literally translated as ‘god-man’ or ‘deity-incarnate’ and was a term used when speaking about the Japanese emperor.

Houris-an Islamic term referring to a beautiful female companion that exists in Paradise.

Jihad-an Islamic term used to denote either an inner struggle of self-improvement or an outward military struggle against an enemy.

Kami-spirits venerated in Shinto religious rituals that had the ability to bring good or bad fortune to those who prayed to it.

Kupi-a small vial of cyanide that each Tamil Tiger wears around his or her neck.

Kamikaze-literally translated as 'divine wind.' Refers to the special attack squad whose mission was to fly planes into US ships.

Mahavasma-an ancient text depicting how Buddhism came to Sri Lanka.

Suicide Attack-a politically motivated violent attack perpetrated by a self-aware individual (or individuals) who actively and purposely causes his own death through blowing himself up along with his chosen target. The perpetrator's ensured death is a precondition for the success of his mission.

Shahada-an Islamic term used to describe the Muslim declaration of belief.

Shahid-an Islamic term that is used to describe a martyr or one who dies for the Islamic faith.

Tiyaki-a Tamil term that translates as 'one who abandons.'

Tiyakam-a Tamil term that translates as 'abandonment.'

Ummah-an Islamic term meaning the community of believers who make-up the Islamic faith.

Waqf-an Islamic term denoting a plot of land endowed to the Muslim community.

APPENDIX C

SUICIDE ATTACKS IN 2009 SORTED BY COUNTRY

D=Dead, W=Wounded, T=Total, VBIED=Vehicle Born Improvised Explosive Device,
IED=Improvised Explosive Device

Date	Incident	Subject	Country	City	D	W	T
23-Jun-09		2 civilians killed in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Ghazni, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Ghazni	2	0	2
10-May-09		3 civilians, 2 soldiers, 2 police officers killed in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Now Zad, Helmand, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Now Zad	7	0	7
19-May-09		2 police officers killed, 8 others injured in suicide VBIED attack in Arghandab, Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Arghandab	2	8	10
12-Jun-09		4 drivers, 4 civilians killed, 20 civilians, 9 drivers wounded in suicide VBIED	Afghanistan	Gereshk	8	29	37

	attack by Taliban in Gereshk, Helmand, Afghanistan					
1-Apr-09	6 police officers, 5 bodyguards, 4 government officials, 2 civilians killed, 16 people wounded in suicide VBIED, suicide IED and armed attacks by Taliban in Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kandahar	17	16	33
18-Jun-09	1 civilian killed in suicide VBIED attack in Sheberghan, Jowzjan, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Sheberghan	1	0	1
17-Jan-09	1 civilian killed, 3 children, 3 police officers, 2 civilians injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Chaparhar, Nangarhar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Chaparhar	1	8	9
6-Jul-09	6 civilians killed, 10 others, 4 soldiers injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kandahar	6	14	20
3-Jun-09	6 private security guards killed in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Spin Buldak, Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Spin Buldak	6	0	6
10-May-09	18 civilians and children, 2 soldiers, 2 police officers killed, 30 civilians and	Afghanistan	Gereshk	22	30	52

	children injured in suicide VBIED attack in Gereshk, Helmand, Afghanistan					
11-Dec-09	3 civilians, 2 police officers killed, 16 civilians, 5 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Sharan, Paktika, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Sharan	5	21	26
22-Jun-09	10 civilians killed, 34 civilians, 7 children wounded in IED and suicide VBIED attack by suspected Taliban in Khowst, Khowst, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Khowst	10	41	51
16-Jul-09	3 police officers killed, 4 others injured in suicide VBIED attack in Khash Rud, Nimruz, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Khash Rud	3	4	7
30-Oct-09	3 government employees killed, 3 others injured in suicide VBIED attack in Kandahar, Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kandahar	3	3	6
27-Nov-09	3 police officers injured in suicide VBIED attack in Balabolok, Farah, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Balabolok	0	3	3
13-Nov-09	10 contractors, 9 soldiers, 3 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	0	22	22

18-Aug-09	5 civilians, 2 UN workers, 1 soldier killed, 51 civilians, many soldiers, 3 UN workers injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabol, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	8	74	82
4-Jul-09	1 security guard killed, 5 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Lashkar Gah, Helmand, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Lashkar Gah	1	5	6
13-May-09	7 civilians killed, 21 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Khowst, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	None	7	21	28
10-Jul-09	2 private security guards injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban near Ghazni, Ghazni, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Ghazni	0	2	2
8-Sep-09	2 civilians killed, 6 civilians, 4 soldiers injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabol, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	2	10	12
29-Aug-09	2 civilians killed, 23 others, 3 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Shah Juy, Zabol, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Shah Juy	2	26	28
3-Jul-09	Several homes and shops damaged in suicide VBIED attack in Mazar-e	Afghanistan	Sharif Mazar-e	0	0	0

	Sharif, Balkh, Afghanistan					
6-Jun-09	3 civilians, 1 child killed, 6 civilians, 5 children wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected Taliban in Spin Buldak, Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Spin Buldak	4	11	15
1-Feb-09	4 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	0	4	4
5-Nov-09	1 civilian killed in suicide VBIED attack in Konduz, Konduz, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Konduz	1	0	1
12-May-09	5 civilians, 4 police officers killed, 25 civilians, 2 police officers, 1 soldier wounded, 20 government employees taken hostage in suicide VBIED, suicide IED, and armed attacks by Taliban in Khowst, Khowst, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Khowst	9	28	57
27-May-09	2 civilians killed, 2 soldiers injured in suicide VBIED attack in Gilan, Ghazni, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Gilan	2	2	4
1-May-09	Airport targeted in suicide VBIED attack in Guzara, Herat, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Guzara	0	0	0
25-Apr-09	Police convoy targeted in suicide VBIED attack near Spin	Afghanistan	Spin Buldak	0	0	0

	Buldak, Kandahar, Afghanistan					
1-Mar-09	1 child killed, 3 civilians, 2 children wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Jalalabad, Nangarhar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Jalalabad	1	5	6
26-May-09	3 soldiers, 3 civilians killed, 1 civilian, 1 child, 1 soldier wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Hizb-i-Islami in Kapisa, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	None	6	3	9
20-Mar-09	1 police officer killed, 2 others injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Dilaram, Farah, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Dilaram	1	2	3
2-Jun-09	2 children, 4 civilians killed, 1 child wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Sayyadan, Parvan, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Sayyadan	6	1	7
17-Jan-09	3 civilians, 1 child, 1 soldier killed, 14 civilians, 6 soldiers, 1 contractor injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	5	21	26
15-Dec-09	8 civilians killed, 39 civilians, 5 security guards wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected Taliban in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	8	44	52

4-Sep-09	3 security guards killed in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Delaram, Nimruz, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Delaram	3	0	3
15-Aug-09	7 civilians killed, 88 civilians, 3 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	7	91	98
4-Mar-09	3 contractors wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Charikar, Parvan, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Charikar	0	3	3
15-Mar-09	2 civilians killed, 14 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	2	14	16
5-Jun-09	2 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Lashkar Gah, Helmand, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Lashkar Gah	0	2	2
11-Nov-09	2 civilians killed, 3 civilians, 2 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Shah Juy, Zabol, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Shah Juy	2	5	7
28-Jun-09	1 child killed, 4 police officers, 3 children, 2 civilians injured in suicide VBIED attack in Behsud, Nangarhar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Behsud	1	9	10
9-Oct-09	5 private security guards	Afghanistan	Jadran Wazah	5	4	9

	killed, 4 others injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Wazah Jadran, Paktia, Afghanistan					
20-Nov-09	18 civilians, 2 police officers, 1 government employee killed, 22 civilians and police officers, 8 children injured in suicide VBIED attack in Farah, Farah, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Farah	21	30	51
8-Oct-09	17 police officers and civilians killed, 83 police officers and civilians injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	17	83	100
25-Jul-09	2 police officers, 1 civilian, 1 child wounded in armed and suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Khowst, Khowst, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Khowst	0	4	4
21-Mar-09	7 civilians, 1 police officer killed, 3 civilians, 3 children wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Chaparhar, Nangarhar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Chaparhar	8	6	14
19-Jan-09	1 child killed, 7 civilians, 5 children, injured in suicide IED and VBIED attack by Taliban near Khowst, Khowst, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Khowst	1	12	13

13-Aug-09	1 police officer wounded in suicide VBIED and rocket attacks by suspected Taliban near Zaranj, Nimruz, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Zaranj	0	1	1
15-Mar-09	2 civilians killed, 7 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	None	2	7	9
17-Sep-09	10 civilians, 6 soldiers killed, 55 people, 4 soldiers injured in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Kabul, Kabul, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kabul	16	59	75
14-May-09	1 police officer killed, 4 police officers, 1 civilian wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Spin Buldak, Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Spin Buldak	1	5	6
22-Jun-09	3 soldiers killed, 2 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Taliban in Zheray, Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Zheray	3	2	5
12-Sep-09	1 government employee, 1 child killed, 3 government employees wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Kandahar, Kandahar, Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Kandahar	2	3	5
21-Jul-09	2 police officers, 3 civilians killed, 4	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	5	20	25

	police officers, 16 civilians including several children wounded in suicide VBIED and VBIED attack by suspected Sunni extremists in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq					
12-May-09	5 police officers killed, 11 civilians, 4 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Kirkuk, At Ta'mim, Iraq	Iraq	Kirkuk	5	15	20
30-Dec-09	29 civilians and police officers, 1 local government official killed, 102 civilians and police officers, 3 local government officials wounded in suicide IED and VBIED attacks by ISI in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	30	105	135
6-Jan-09	5 police officers, 3 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	0	8	8
20-Jun-09	4 police officers killed, 3 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Al Karmah, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Al Karmah	4	3	7
7-Apr-09	1 police officer killed, 4 civilians, 4 police officers, 1 tribal official wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Al Fallujah, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Al Fallujah	1	9	10
8-Dec-09	3 police officers, 12 students, 112	Iraq	Baghdad	127	513	640

	government employees and civilians killed, 513 civilians, government employees, and students wounded in multiple suicide VBIED attack by ISI in Baghdad, Iraq					
22-Nov-09	4 police officers, 3 civilians killed, 6 police officers, 5 civilians, wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Al Karmah, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Al Karmah	7	11	18
25-Feb-09	Police checkpoint targeted in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	0	0	0
20-Nov-09	1 vehicle damaged in suicide VBIED attack in Kirkuk, At Ta'mim, Iraq	Iraq	Kirkuk	0	0	0
25-Oct-09	70 government employees, 57 civilians, 24 children, 4 soldiers killed, 707 government employees and civilians, 10 children, 3 private security contractors wounded in double suicide VBIED attack by ISI in Baghdad, Iraq	Iraq	Baghdad	155	720	875
22-Apr-09	2 paramilitary members, 1 civilian wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Zummar, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Zummar	0	3	3

10-Sep-09	1 civilian killed, 8 civilians, 4 bodyguards wounded in suicide VBIED attack in As Sa'diyah, Diyala, Iraq	Iraq	As Sa'diyah	1	12	13
29-Oct-09	1 civilian killed, 2 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Ba'qubah, Diyala, Iraq	Iraq	Ba'qubah	1	2	3
17-Sep-09	2 police officers, 1 civilian killed, 3 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Tall 'Afar, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Tall 'Afar	3	3	6
28-Sep-09	7 police officers killed, 17 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack near Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	7	17	24
15-Jul-09	4 civilians, 2 police officers killed, 12 civilians including children, 4 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	6	16	22
24-Jan-09	5 police officers, 1 civilian killed, 6 police officers, 9 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Al Karmah, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Al Karmah	6	15	21
30-Aug-09	1 soldier, 1 civilian killed, 10 civilians, 2 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Baghdad, Iraq	Iraq	Baghdad	2	12	14

	Iraq					
19-Aug-09	101 government employees, civilians, and children killed, 1,203 government employees, civilians, and children wounded in suicide VBIED and VBIED attacks by ISI in Baghdad, Iraq	Iraq	Baghdad	101	1203	1304
1-Jun-09	1 child killed, 3 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Jalula', Diyala, Iraq	Iraq	Jalula'	1	3	4
24-May-09	2 civilians killed, 44 civilians, 1 police officer wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected Sunni extremists in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	2	45	47
31-Mar-09	4 police officers, 4 civilians killed, 29 civilians, 9 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected ISI in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	8	38	46
27-Sep-09	4 police officers killed, 8 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	4	8	12
3-Aug-09	3 police officers, 2 civilians killed, 6 police officers, 4 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in As	Iraq	As Saqlawiyah	5	10	15

	Saqlawiyah, Al Anbar, Iraq					
11-Oct-09	10 civilians, 9 police officers killed, 77 civilians, 4 police officers wounded in multiple VBIED and suicide VBIED attack by suspected ISI in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	19	81	100
10-Sep-09	24 civilians and children, 1 paramilitary member killed, 41 civilians and children, 2 paramilitary members wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected ISI in Wardak, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Wardak	25	43	68
19-Feb-09	1 police officer killed, 2 others, 5 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	1	7	8
7-Sep-09	5 police officers, 4 civilians killed, 12 civilians, 4 police officers, 3 children wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	9	19	28
1-Jan-09	3 police officers killed, 1 civilian wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	3	1	4
6-Jun-09	3 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	0	3	3

	attack in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq					
29-Aug-09	9 police officers, 5 civilians, 1 child killed, 19 police officers, 9 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected ISI in Ash Sharqat, Salah ad Din, Iraq	Iraq	Ash Sharqat	15	28	43
24-Apr-09	1 civilian killed, 20 civilians, 6 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Jalula', Diyala, Iraq	Iraq	Jalula'	1	26	27
4-Mar-09	2 police officers killed, 13 civilians, 8 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	2	21	23
10-Apr-09	6 soldiers, 2 police officers killed, 41 police officers, 27 civilians, 2 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by ISI in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	8	70	78
12-Aug-09	4 police officers, 4 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Ar Ramadi	0	8	8
5-Oct-09	25 paramilitary members wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Rabi'ah, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Rabi'ah	0	25	25
18-Mar-09	1 police officer killed, 3 others, 1 civilian	Iraq	Mosul	1	4	5

	wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq					
30-Jul-09	2 children, 1 civilian killed, 30 civilians, including children, wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Al Qa'im, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Al Qa'im	3	30	33
6-Mar-09	Police officers targeted in suicide VBIED attack near Tikrit, Salah ad Din, Iraq	Iraq	Tikrit	0	0	0
20-Jun-09	47 civilians, 35 children killed, 211 civilians including children wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected ISI in Taza Khurmatu, At Ta'mim, Iraq	Iraq	Taza Khurmatu	82	211	293
22-Jun-09	4 police officers, 3 civilians killed, 6 police officers, 4 civilians, 3 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Abu Ghurayb, Al Anbar, Iraq	Iraq	Abu Ghurayb	7	13	20
17-May-09	1 police officer killed, 3 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	1	3	4
7-Aug-09	39 civilians killed, 276 others wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected ISI in Shirakhan, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Shirakhan	39	276	315

14-Jan-09	1 soldier, 1 civilian killed, 5 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Mosul, Ninawa, Iraq	Iraq	Mosul	2	5	7
14-Nov-09	7 civilians, 4 children, 1 police officer killed, 35 police officers and civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by TTP in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	12	35	47
5-May-09	3 civilians, 3 children, 1 soldier killed, 20 civilians, 12 children, 9 soldiers, 4 police officers, 3 government officials wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Bara, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan	Pakistan	Bara	7	48	55
9-Jun-09	14 civilians, 5 NGO workers, 2 UN employees, 1 journalist, 1 security guard killed, 42 civilians, 18 UN employees, 7 security guards, 2 NGO workers injured in armed and suicide VBIED attack in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	23	69	92
15-Dec-09	30 civilians, several children killed, 90 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Dera	Pakistan	Khan Dera Ghazi	33	90	123

	Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan					
12-Mar-09	3 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Charbagh, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Charbagh	0	3	3
18-Dec-09	10 civilians, 2 children killed, 20 civilians and children, 12 police officers injured in suicide VBIED attack in Timurgara, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Timurgara	12	32	44
2-Jul-09	40 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan	Pakistan	Rawalpindi	0	40	40
18-Jul-09	Unknown target in suicide VBIED attack in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	0	0	0
13-Nov-09	7 soldiers, 7 government employees, 3 civilians killed, 11 government employees, 69 soldiers and civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by TTP in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	17	80	97
29-Sep-09	3 civilians, 1 cleric killed, 1 civilian injured in suicide VBIED attack by suspected TTP in Bannu, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Bannu	4	1	5

18-Apr-09	25 soldiers, 2 police officers killed, 48 soldiers, 7 police officers injured in suicide VBIED attack by TTP in Doaba, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Doaba	27	55	82
6-Feb-09	3 civilians, 3 students, 1 soldier injured in suicide VBIED attack in Jamrud, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Jamrud	0	7	7
24-Oct-09	1 police officer killed in suicide VBIED attack in Islamabad, Pakistan	Pakistan	None	1	0	1
26-Sep-09	7 civilians, 5 police officers, 1 child killed, 40 civilians, 31 police officers, 9 children wounded in suicide VBIED attack by TTP in Bannu, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Bannu	13	80	93
18-Sep-09	40 civilians killed, 80 others injured in suicide VBIED attack by Lashkar i Jhangvi in Kohat, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Kohat	40	80	120
30-Jun-09	4 civilians killed, 11 others injured in suicide IED and VBIED attack in Kalat, Balochistan, Pakistan	Pakistan	Kalat	4	11	15
29-Aug-09	3 police officers killed in	Pakistan	Qila	3	0	3

	suicide VBIED attack in Qila, North-West Frontier, Pakistan					
11-May-09	7 civilians, 2 soldiers, 1 child killed, 14 soldiers, 13 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected TTP in Darra Adam Khel, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Khel Darra Adam	10	27	37
16-Nov-09	4 civilians killed, 31 others, 8 students, 2 police officers, 2 soldiers injured in suicide VBIED attack in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	4	43	47
10-Nov-09	27 civilians, 7 children killed, 100 civilians and children injured in suicide VBIED attack in Charsadda, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Charsadda	34	100	134
8-Dec-09	8 civilians, 4 soldiers killed, 30 civilians, soldiers, and children injured in armed and suicide VBIED attacks by Taliban in Multan, Punjab, Pakistan	Pakistan	Multan	12	30	42
18-Aug-09	4 soldiers, 3 civilians killed, 3 others injured in suicide VBIED attack near Miram Shah, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan	Pakistan	Miram Shah	7	3	10

15-Apr-09	10 police officers, 9 civilians killed, 7 police officers, 9 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Charsadda, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Charsadda	19	16	35
12-Jun-09	3 soldiers, 2 civilians killed, 75 soldiers, 30 civilians and children wounded in suicide VBIED attack by TTP in Nowshera, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Nowshera	5	105	110
16-Oct-09	10 civilians, 3 police officers, 2 children killed, 25 police officers, civilians, and children injured in suicide VBIED attack in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	15	25	40
22-Jun-09	2 police officers killed, 4 civilians, 3 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected Taliban in Batgaram, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Batgaram	2	7	9
28-May-09	3 police officers killed, 3 others injured in suicide VBIED attack near Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	3	3	6
15-Oct-09	8 civilians, 3 police officers killed, 15 civilians, 4 police officers, several	Pakistan	Kohat	11	22	33

	children wounded in suicide VBIED attack by TTP in Kohat, North-West Frontier, Pakistan					
13-Nov-09	9 police officers, 2 soldiers, 3 civilians, 1 child killed, 15 police officers, 2 civilians, 4 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by TTP in Bannu, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Bannu	15	21	36
28-May-09	2 civilians, 1 police officer killed, 6 police officers, 5 civilians injured in suicide VBIED attack in Dera Ismail Khan, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Dera Ismail Khan	3	11	14
26-Sep-09	11 civilians killed, 94 others wounded in suicide VBIED and armed attack in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	11	94	105
5-Feb-09	12 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED and armed attacks in Mingaora, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Mingaora	0	12	12
10-Aug-09	1 civilian killed, 3 others injured in suicide VBIED attack in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	1	3	4
30-Mar-09	5 soldiers, 2 civilians killed, 5 soldiers, 4	Pakistan	Bannu	7	9	16

	civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack near Bannu, North-West Frontier, Pakistan					
21-Feb-09	Police checkpoint targeted in suicide VBIED attack in Lakki Marwat, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Lakki Marwat	0	0	0
21-May-09	3 children, 2 civilians killed, 15 soldiers, 6 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected TTP in Jandola, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan	Pakistan	Jandola	5	21	26
27-May-09	14 police officers, 9 civilians, 5 soldiers, 1 child killed, 326 people injured in suicide VBIED and armed attacks by TTP in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan	Pakistan	Lahore	29	326	355
9-Oct-09	46 civilians, 8 children killed, 166 civilians and children injured in suicide VBIED attack in Peshawar, North-West Frontier, Pakistan	Pakistan	Peshawar	54	166	220
5-Apr-09	12 civilians, 5 children, 1 soldier killed, 21 civilians, 12 children, 6 soldiers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by suspected Taliban in Miram Shah, Federally	Pakistan	Miram Shah	18	39	57

	Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan					
22-Jun-09	1 bodyguard, 1 police officer, 1 civilian killed, 3 bodyguards, 1 top government official, 1 civilian wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Caucasus Emirate in Nazran, Ingushetiya, Russia	Russia	Nazran	3	5	8
1-Sep-09	1 government employee killed, 8 police officers, 6 civilians wounded in suicide VBIED attack in Makhachkala, Dagestan, Russia	Russia	Makhachkala	1	14	15
17-Aug-09	20 police officers, 5 civilians killed, 194 civilians, 76 police officers, 10 children wounded in suicide VBIED and armed attack by Caucasus Emirate in Nazran, Ingushetiya, Russia	Russia	Nazran	25	280	305
17-Dec-09	1 person killed, 10 soldiers, 7 civilians, 3 children, 3 police officers wounded in suicide VBIED attack by Caucasus Emirate in Nazran, Ingushetiya, Russia	Russia	Nazran	1	23	24
11-Sep-09	1 police officer, 1 civilian killed, 6 police officers, 3 civilians wounded	Russia	Nazran	2	9	11

	in suicide VBIED attack in Nazran, Ingushetiya, Russia					
18-Jun-09	1 government official, 16 soldiers, 1 former ambassador, several tribal elders, 9 civilians, dozens of people killed, 2 government officials, scores of people wounded in suicide VBIED by al-Shabaab al-Islamiya in Beledweyne, Hiiraan, Somalia	Somalia	Beledweyne	54	62	116
22-Feb-09	12 peacekeepers, 2 civilians killed, 15 peacekeepers wounded in suicide VBIED and mortar attack by al-Shabaab al-Islamiya in Mogadishu, Banaadir, Somalia	Somalia	Mogadishu	14	15	29
24-May-09	7 soldiers and police officers, 3 civilians killed, 4 soldiers, 5 police officers and civilians wounded in suicide VBIED by al-Shabaab al-Islamiya in Mogadishu, Banaadir, Somalia	Somalia	Mogadishu	10	9	19
17-Sep-09	16 peacekeepers, 1 civilian, 1 police officer, several soldiers killed; 21 peacekeepers, 3 soldiers, 1 private security guard, 14 people wounded in suicide VBIED attacks by al-Shabaab al-	Somalia	Mogadishu	21	39	60

	Islamiya in Mogadishu, Banaadir, Somalia					
24-Jan-09	29 civilians, 1 police officer killed, 30 civilians, 7 children wounded in suicide VBIED and armed attacks by al-Shabaab al-Islamiya in Mogadishu, Banaadir, Somalia	Somalia	Mogadishu	30	37	67

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