

# The Quranic Concept of War<sup>1</sup>

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“The universalism of Islam, in its all-embracing creed, is imposed on the believers as a continuous process of warfare, psychological and political, if not strictly military. . . . The Jihad, accordingly, may be stated as a doctrine of a permanent state of war, not continuous fighting.”<sup>2</sup>

— Majid Khadduri

Political and military leaders are notoriously averse to theory, but if there is a theorist about war who matters, it remains Carl von Clausewitz, whose *Vom Kriege (On War)* has shaped Western views about war since the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Both points are likely true and problematic since we find ourselves engaged in war with people not solely imbued with western ideas and values or followers of western military theorists. The Hoover Institution’s Paul Sperry recently stated, “Four years into the war on terror, US intelligence officials tell me there are no baseline studies of the Muslim prophet Muhammad or his ideological or military doctrine found at either the CIA or Defense Intelligence Agency, or even the war colleges.”<sup>4</sup>

Would this be surprising? When it comes to warfighting military audiences tend to focus on the military and power aspects of warfare; the tangibles of terrain, enemy, weather, leadership, and troops; quantifiables such as the number of tanks and artillery tubes—the correlation of forces. Analysts steer toward the familiar rather than the unfamiliar; people tend to think in their comfort zones. The study of ideology or philosophy is often brushed aside, it’s not the “stuff of muddy boots;” it is more cerebral than physical and not action oriented. Planners do not assess the “correlation of ideas.” The practitioners are too busy.

Dr. Antulio Echevarria recently argued the US military does not have a doctrine for war as much as it has a doctrine for operations and battles.<sup>5</sup> The military has a deficit of strategic, and, one could add, philosophic thinking. In the war against Islamist terrorism, how many have heard of the Muslim Brotherhood’s “Project”?<sup>6</sup> Is the political philosophy of Ayatollah Khomeini, who was in fact well-grounded in western political theory and rigorously rejected it, studied in our military schools? Are there any implications to his statement in 1981 that “Iran . . . is determined to propagate Islam to the whole world”?<sup>7</sup>

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To understand war, one has to study its philosophy; the grammar and logic of your opponent. Only then are you approaching strategic comprehension. To understand the war against Islamist terrorism one must begin to understand the Islamic way of war, its philosophy and doctrine, the meanings of *jihad* in Islam—and one needs to understand that those meanings are highly varied and utilitarian depending on the source.

With respect to the war against the global *jihad* and its associated terror groups, individual terrorists, and clandestine adherents, one should ask if there is a unique method or attitude to their approach to war. Is there a philosophy, or treatise such as Clausewitz's *On War* that attempts to form their thinking about war? Is there a document that can be reviewed and understood in such a manner that we may begin to think strategically about our opponent. There is one work that stands out from the many.

### ***The Quranic Concept of War***

*The Quranic Concept of War*, by Brigadier General S. K. Malik of the Pakistani Army provides readers with unequalled insight. Originally published in Pakistan in 1979, most available copies are found in India, or in small non-descript Muslim bookstores.<sup>8</sup> One major point to ponder, when thinking about *The Quranic Concept of War*, is the title itself. The *Quran* is presumed to be the revealed word of God as spoken through his chosen prophet, Mohammed. According to Malik, the *Quran* places warfighting doctrine and its theory in a much different category than western thinkers are accustomed to, because it is not a theory of war derived by man, but of God. This is God's warfighting principles and commandments revealed. Malik's attempts to distill God's doctrine for war through the examples of the Prophet. By contrast, the closest that Clausewitz comes to divine presentation is in his discussion of the trinity: the people, the state, and the military. In the Islamic context, the discussion of war is at the level of revealed truth and example, well above theory—God has no need to theorize. Malik notes, "As a complete Code of Life, the *Holy Quran* gives us a philosophy of war as well. . . . This divine philosophy is an integral part of the total Quranic ideology."<sup>9</sup>

### ***Historiography***

In *The Quranic Concept of War*, Malik seeks to instruct readers in the uniquely important doctrinal aspects of Quranic warfare. The Quranic approach to war is "infinitely supreme and effective . . . [and] points towards the realization of universal peace and justice . . . and makes maximum allowance to its adversaries to co-operate [with Islam] in a combined search for a just and peaceful order."<sup>10</sup> For purposes of this review, the term "doctrine" refers to both religious and broad strategic approaches, not methods and procedures. Malik's work is a treatise with historical, political, legalistic, and moralistic ramifications on Islamic warfare. It seemingly is without parallel in the western sense of warfare since the "*Quran* is a source of eternal guidance for mankind."<sup>11</sup>

The approach is not new to Islamists and other *jihad* theorists fighting according to the "Method of Mohammed" or *hadith*. The lessons learned are recorded

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and form an important part of Quranic *surah* and *jihadist*'s scholarship.<sup>12</sup> Islamic scholars both Muslim and non-Muslim will find much to debate in terms of Malik's view of *jihad* doctrine and Quranic warfare. Malik's work is essentially modern scholarship; although he does acknowledge the classical views of *jihad* in many respects.<sup>13</sup>

Malik's arguments are clearly parochial, often more editorial than scholarly, and his tone is decidedly confident and occasionally supremacist. The reach and influence of the author's work is not clear although one might believe that given the idealism of his treatise, his approaches to warfare, and the role and ends of "terror" his text may resonate with extremist and radicals prone to use terroristic violence to accomplish their ends. For that reason alone, the book is worth studying.

### ***Introduction***

The preface by Allah Bukhsh K. Brohi, the former Pakistani ambassador to India, offers important insights into Malik's exposition. In fact, Brohi's 13-page preface lays the foundation for the book's ten chapters. Malik places Quranic warfare in an academic context relative to that used by western theorists. He analyzes the causes and objects of war, as well as war's nature and dimensions. He then turns attention to the ethics and strategy of warfare. Toward the end of the book he reviews the exercise of Quranic warfare based on the examples of the Prophet Mohammed's military campaigns and concludes with summary observations. There are important *jus en bellum* and *jus ad bellum* implications in the author's writings, as well as in his controversial ideas related to the means and objectives of war. It is these concepts that warrant the attention of planners and strategists.

Zia-Ul-Haq (1924-88), the former President of Pakistan and Pakistani Army Chief of Staff, opens the book by focusing on the concept of *jihad* within Islam and explaining it is not simply the domain of the military:

*Jihad fi sabilallah* is not the exclusive domain of the professional soldier, nor is it restricted to the application of military force alone.

This book brings out with simplicity, clarity and precision the Quranic philosophy on the application of military force within the context of the totality that is JEHAD. The professional soldier in a Muslim army, pursuing the goals of a Muslim state, cannot become 'professional' if in all his activities he does not take the 'colour of Allah,' The nonmilitary citizen of a Muslim state must, likewise, be aware of the kind of soldier that his country must produce and the only pattern of war that his country's armed forces may wage.<sup>14</sup>

General Zia states that all Muslims play a role in *jihad*, a mainstream concept of the *Quran*, that *jihad* in terms of warfare is a collective responsibility of the Muslim *ummah*, and is not restricted to soldiers. General Zia emphasizes how the concept of Islamic military professionalism requires "godly character" in order to be fully achieved. Zia then endorses Malik's thesis as the "only pattern of war," or approach to war that an Islamic state may wage.

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### ***Battling Counter-initiatory Forces***

In the preface Ambassador Brohi details what might be startling to many readers. He states that Malik has made "a valuable contribution to Islamic jurisprudence" or Islamic law, and an

“analytic restatement of the Quranic wisdom on the subject of war and peace.” Brohi implies that Malik’s discussion, though a valuable new version, is an approach to a theme already well developed.<sup>15</sup>

Brohi then defines *jihad*, “The most glorious word in the Vocabulary of Islam is *Jehad*, a word which is untranslatable in English but, broadly speaking, means ‘striving’, ‘struggling’, ‘trying’ to advance the Divine causes or purposes.” He introduces a somewhat cryptic concept when he explains man’s role in a “Quranic setting” as energetically combating forces of evil or what may be called, “counter-initiatory” forces which are at war with the harmony and the purpose of life on earth.<sup>16</sup> For the true Muslim the harmony and purpose in life are only possible through man’s ultimate submission to God’s will, that all will come to know, recognize, and profess Mohammed as the Prophet of God. Man must recognize the last days and acknowledge *tawhid*, the oneness of God.<sup>17</sup>

Brohi recounts the classic dualisms of Islamic theology; that the world is a place of struggle between good and evil, between right and wrong, between *Haq* and *Na-Haq* (truth and untruth), and between *halal* and *haram* (legitimate and forbidden). According to Brohi, it is the duty of man to opt for goodness and reject evil. Brohi appeals to the “greater *jihad*,” a post-classical *jihad* doctrine developed by the mystical Sufi order and other Shia scholars.<sup>18</sup>

Brohi places *jihad* in the context of communal if not imperial obligation; both controversial formulations:

When a believer sees that someone is trying to obstruct another believer from traveling the road that leads to God, spirit of *Jehad* requires that such a man who is imposing obstacles should be prevented from doing so and the obstacles placed by him should also be removed, so that mankind may be freely able to negotiate its own path that leads to Heaven.” To do otherwise, “by not striving to clear or straighten the path we [Muslims] become passive spectators of the counter-initiatory forces imposing a blockade in the way of those who mean to keep their faith with God.<sup>19</sup>

This viewpoint appears to reflect the classic, collective duty within *jihad* doctrine, to defend the Islamic community from threats—the concept of defensive *jihad*. Brohi is saying much more than that; however, he is attempting to delineate the duty—the proactive duty—to clear the path for Islam. It is necessary not only to defend the individual believer if he is being hindered in his faith, but also to remove the obstacles of those counter-initiatory forces hindering his Islamic development. This begs the question of what is actually meant by the initiatory forces. The answer is clear to Brohi; the force of initiative is Islam and its Muslim members. “It is the duty of a believer to carry forward the Message of God and to bring it to notice of his fellow-men in handsome ways. But if someone attempts to obstruct him from doing so he is entitled as a matter of defense, to retaliate.”<sup>20</sup>

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This formulation would appear to turn the concept of defense on its head. To the extent that a Muslim may proclaim Islam and proselytize, or Islam, as a faith, seeks to extend its invitation

and reach—initiate its advance—but is unable to do so, then that represents an overt threat justifying—a defensive *jihad*. According to Brohi, this does not result in the “ordinary wars which mankind has been fighting for the sake of either revenge or for securing . . . more land or more booty . . . [this] striving must be [is] for the sake of God. Wars in the theory of Islam are . . . to advance God’s purposes on earth, and invariably they are defensive in character.” In other words, everywhere the message of God and Islam is or can be hindered from expansion, resisted or opposed by some “obstruction” (a term not clearly defined) Islam is intrinsically entitled to defend its manifest destiny.<sup>21</sup>

While his logic is controversial, Brohi is not unique in his extrapolation. His theory in fact reflects the argument of Rashid Rida, a conservative disciple of the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh. In 1913 Abduh published an article evaluating Islam’s early military campaigns and determined that Islam’s early neighbors “prevented the proclamation of truth” engendering the defense of Islam. “Our religion is not like others that defend themselves . . . but our defense of our religion is the proclamation of truth and the removal of distortion and misrepresentation of it.”<sup>22</sup>

### ***No Nation is Sovereign***

The exegesis of the term *jihad* is often debated. Some apologists make clear that nowhere in the *Quran* does the term “Holy War” exist; that is true, but it is also irrelevant. War in Islam is either just or unjust and that justness depends on the ends of war. Brohi, and later Malik, make clear that the ends of war in Islam or *jihad* are to fulfill God’s divine purpose. Not only should that be a holy purpose, it must be a just war in order to be “Holy War.”<sup>23</sup>

The next dualism Brohi presents is that of *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, the house of submission and the house of war. He describes the latter, as “perpetuating defiance of the Lord.” While explaining that conditions for war in Islam are limited (a constrained set of circumstances) he notes that “in Islam war is waged to establish supremacy of the Lord only when every other argument has failed to convince those who reject His will and work against the very purpose of the creation of mankind.”<sup>24</sup> Brohi quotes the Quranic manuscript *Surah, al-Tawba*:

Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.<sup>25</sup>

Acknowledging western critics who believe that Islam is in a state of perpetual struggle with the non-Islamic world, Brohi counters in a clearly dismissive tone by explaining that man is the slave to God, and defying God is treason under Islamic law. Those who defy God should be removed from humanity like a cancerous growth. Islam requires believers “to invite non-believers to the fold of Islam” by using “persuasion” and “beautiful methods.” He continues, “the first duty” of a Muslim

is *dawa*, a proclamation to conversion by “handsome ways.” It is only after refusing *dawa* and the invitation to Islam that “believers have no option but in self-defense to wage a war against those threatening aggression.”

Obviously, much turns on how threats and aggression are characterized. It is difficult to understand, however, based on the structure of his argument, that Brohi views non-believers and their states as requiring conversion over time by peaceful means; and when that fails, by force. He is echoing the doctrine of Abd al-Salam Faraj, author of *Al-Farida al-Ghaibah*, better known as *The Neglected Duty*, a work that is widely read throughout the Muslim world.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, Brohi examines the concept of the *ummah* and the international system. “The idea of Ummah of Mohammad, the Prophet of Islam, is incapable of being realized within the framework of territorial states.” This is a consistent view that underpins many works on the concept of the Islamic state.<sup>27</sup> For Muslims, the *ummah* is a transcendent religious and cultural society united and reflecting the unity (*tawhid*) of Islam; the idea of one God, indivisible, one community, one belief, and one duty to live and become godly. According to the Prophet, “Ummah participates in this heritage by a set pattern of thought, belief and practice . . . and supplies the spiritual principle of integration of mankind—a principle which is supra-national, supra-racial, supra-linguistic and supra-territorial.”<sup>28</sup>

With respect to the “law of war and peace in Islam” Brohi writes it “is as old as the *Quran* itself. . . .” In his analysis of the law of nations and their international dealings, he emphasizes that in “Islamic international law this conduct [war and peace] is, strictly speaking, regulated between Muslims and non-Muslims, there being, from Islamic perspective, no other nation. . . .” In other words, war is between Muslims and non-Muslims and not in actuality between states. It is transnational. He adds, “In Islam, of course, no nation is sovereign since Allah alone is the only sovereign in Whom all authority vests.”<sup>29</sup> Here Brohi is echoing what Islamic scholars such as Majid Khadduri have described as the “dualism of the universal religion and universal state that is Islam.”<sup>30</sup>

### ***The Divine Philosophy on War***

General Malik begins by categorizing human beings into three archetypes: those who fear Allah and profess the Faith; those who reject the Faith; and those who profess, but are treacherous in their hearts. Examples of the Prophet and the instructions to him by God in his early campaigns should be studied to fully understand these three examples in practice. The author highlights the fact that the “divine philosophy on war” was revealed gradually over a 12 year period, its earliest guidance dealing with the causes and objects of war, while later guidance focused on Quranic strategy, the conduct of war, and the ethical dimensions of warfare.<sup>31</sup>

In Chapter Three, Malik reviews several key thoughts espoused by western scholars related to the causes of war. He examines the ideologies of Lenin, Geoffery Blainey, Quincy Wright, and Frederick H. Hartman each of whom spoke about war in a historical or material context with respect to the nature of the state system. Malik finds these explanations wanting and turns to the *Quran* for explanation, “war could only be

waged for the sake of justice, truth, law, and preservation of human society. . . . The central theme behind the causes of war . . . [in] the *Holy Quran*, was the cause of Allah.”<sup>32</sup>

The author recounts the progression of revelations by God to the Prophet that “granted the Muslims the permission to fight . . . .” Ultimately, God would compel and command Muslims to fight: “Fight in the cause of Allah.” In his analysis of this *surah* Malik highlights the fact that “new elements” were added to the causes of war: that in order to fight, Muslims must be “fought first;” Muslims are not to “transgress God’s limits” in the conduct of war; and everyone should understand that God views “tumult and oppression” of Muslims as “worse than slaughter.”<sup>33</sup> This oppression was exemplified by the denial of Muslim’s right to worship at the Sacred Mosque by the early Arab Koraish, people of Mecca. Malik describes the situation in detail, “. . . the tiny Muslim community in Mecca was the object of the Koraish tyranny and oppression since the proclamation of Islam. . . . The enemy repression reached its zenith when the Koraish denied the Muslims access to the Sacred Mosque (the Ka’aba) to fulfill their religious obligations. This sacrilegious act amounted to an open declaration of war upon Islam. These actions eventually compelling the Muslims to migrate to Medina twelve years later, in 622 AD. . . .”<sup>34</sup>

Malik argues that the pagan Koraish tribe had no reason to prohibit Muslim worship, since the Muslims did not impede their form of worship. This historical example helps to further define the concept that “tumult and oppression is worse than slaughter” and as the *Quran* repeats, “graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members.” Malik also notes the *Quran* distinguishes those who fight “in the cause of Allah and those who reject Faith and fight in the cause of evil.”<sup>35</sup> In terms of Quranic just war theory, war must be waged “only to fight the forces of tyranny and oppression.”<sup>36</sup>

Challenging Clausewitz’s notion that “policy” provides the context and boundary of war; Malik says it is the reverse, “‘war’ forced policy to define and determine its own parameters” and since that discussion focuses on parochial issues such as national interests, and the vagaries of state to state relations it is a lesser perspective. In the divine context of the *Quran* war orients on the spread of “justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere.” According to the author war is to be fought aggressively, slaughter is not the worst evil. In the course of war every opportunity for peace should be pursued and reciprocated. That is every remonstrance of peace by the enemies of Islam, but only as prescribed by the *Quran*’s “clear-cut philosophy and methodology” for preserving peace.<sup>37</sup>

Understanding the context in which the *Quran* describes and defines “justice and peace” is important. Malik refers the reader to the battle of Badr to elucidate these principles. There is peace with those pagans who cease hostilities, and war continues with those who refuse. He cites the following *surah*, “as long as these stand true to you, stand ye true to them, for Allah doth love the righteous.”<sup>38</sup> Referring to the precedent setting Hodaibayya treaty in the ninth year of the *hijra*, or pilgrimages to Mecca, Malik outlines how Allah and the Prophet abrogated those treaties with the pagan Meccans.

Pagans who accepted terms voluntarily without a treaty were respected. Those who refused, the *Quran* directed, were to be slain wherever found. This precedent and “revelations commanded the Muslims to fulfill their treaty commitments for the contracted period but put them under no obligations to renew them.”<sup>39</sup> It also established the precedent that Muslims may conclude treaties with non-believers, but only for a temporary period.<sup>40</sup> Commenting on western approaches to peace, Malik views such approaches as not standing the “test of time” with no worthwhile role to play even in the future.<sup>41</sup> The author’s point is that peace between states has only secular, not divine ends; and peace in an Islamic context is achieved only for the promotion of Islam.

As the Prophet gained control of Mecca he decreed that non-believers could assemble or watch over the Sacred Mosque. He later consolidated power over Arabia and many who had not yet accepted Islam, “including Christians and Jew, [they] were given the option to choose between war and submission.” These non-believers were required to pay a poll-tax or *jizya* and accept the status of *dhimmitude* [servitude to Islam] in order to continue practicing their faith. According to Malik the taxes were merely symbolic and insignificant. In summarizing this relationship the author states, “the object of war is to obtain conditions of peace, justice, and faith. To do so it is essential to destroy the forces of oppression and persecution.”<sup>42</sup> This view is in keeping with that outlined by Khadduri, “The *jihad*, it will be recalled, regarded war as Islam’s instrument to transform the *dar al-harb* into *dar al-Islam* . . . in Islamic legal theory, the ultimate objective of Islam is not war per se, but the ultimate establishment of peace.”<sup>43</sup>

### ***The Nature of War***

Malik argues that the “nature and dimension of war” is the greatest single characteristic of Quranic warfare and distinguishes it from all other doctrines. He acknowledges Clausewitz’s contribution to the understanding of warfare in its moral and spiritual context. The moral forces of war, as Clausewitz declared, are perhaps the most important aspects in war. Reiterating that Muslims are required to wage war “with the spirit of religious duty and obligation,” the author makes it clear that in return for fighting in the way of Allah, divine, angelic assistance will be rendered to *jihad* warriors and armies. At this point *The Quranic Concept of War* moves beyond the metaphysical to the supernatural element, unlike anything found in western doctrine. Malik highlights the fact that divine assistance requires “divine standards” on the part of the warrior *mujahideen* for the promise of Allah’s aid to be met.<sup>44</sup>

The author then builds upon the *jihad* warrior’s role in the realms of divine cause, purpose, and support, to argue that in order for the Muslim warrior to be unmatched, to be the bravest and the most fearless; he can only do so through the correct spiritual preparation, beginning with total submission to God’s will. The *Quran* reveals that the moral forces are the “real issues involved in the planning and conduct of war.”<sup>45</sup> Malik quotes the *Quran*: “Fighting is prescribed for you . . . and ye dislike a thing which is good for you and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not.”

The *Quran* instructs the *jihad* warrior “to fight . . . with total devotion and never contemplate a flight from the battlefield for fear of death.” The *jihad* warrior,

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who dies in the way of Allah, does not really die but lives on in heaven. Malik emphasizes this in several Quranic verses. “Think not of those who are slain in Allah’s way as dead. . . . Nay, they live finding their sustenance in the Presence of the Lord.” Malik also notes that “Not equal are those Believers . . . Allah has granted a higher grade to those who strive and fight . . . .”<sup>46</sup>

The Quranic dimensions of war are “revolutionary,” conferring on the *jihad* warrior a “personality so strong and overbearing as to prove themselves equal to, indeed dominate, every contingency in war.”<sup>47</sup> This theme of spiritual preparation and pure belief has appeared in the prolific *jihad* writings of Usaman Dan Fodio in the early 1800s and repeated by the Saudi writer Abdallah al-Qadiri in 1992, both emphasizing the role of the “greater *jihad*.” Becoming a purer and more disciplined Muslim serves the cause of Islam better in peace and war.<sup>48</sup>

Malik, like Brohi, acknowledges critics who say that Islam has been “spread by the sword,” but he responds that Islam is spread through restraint in war and in “the use of force [that] have no parallel.” He then argues that restraint in warfare is a “two-sided affair.” Where the enemy (not defined) fails to exercise restraints and commits “excesses” (not defined) then “the very injunction of preserving and promoting peace and justice demands the use of limited force . . . . Islam permits the use of the sword for such purpose.”<sup>49</sup> Since Malik is speaking in the context of active war and response to the “excesses of war” it is unclear what he means by “limited force” or response.

The author expands on the earlier ideas that moral and spiritual forces are predominate in war. He contrasts Islamic strategic approaches with western theories of warfare oriented toward the application of force, primarily in the military domain, as opposed to Islam where the focus is on a broader application of power. Power in Malik’s context is the power of *jihad*, which is total, both in the conduct of total war and in its supporting strategy; referred to as “total or grand strategy.” Malik provides the following definition, “*Jehad* is a continuous and never-ending struggle waged on all fronts including political, economic, social, psychological, domestic, moral and spiritual to attain the objectives of policy.”<sup>50</sup> The power of *jihad* brings with it the power of God.

The Quranic concept of strategy is therefore divine theory. The examples and lessons to be derived from it may be found in the study of the classics, inspired by such events as the battles of the Prophet, e.g., Badr, Khandaq, Tabuk, and Hudaibiyya. Malik again references the divine assistance of Allah and the aid of angelic hosts. He refers to the battles of Hunain and Ohad as instances where seeming defeat was reversed and Allah “sent down Tranquility into the hearts of believers, that they may add Faith to their Faith.” Malik argues that divine providence steels the *jihadi* in war, “strengthens the hearts of Believers.” Calmness of faith, “assurance, hope, and tranquility” in the face of danger is the divine standard.<sup>51</sup>

***Strike Terror into their Hearts***

Malik uses examples to demonstrate that Allah will strike “terror into the hearts of Unbelievers.”<sup>52</sup> At this point he begins to develop his most controversial and conjectural Quranic theory related to warfare—the role of terror. Readers need to understand that the author is thinking and writing in strategic terms, not in the vernacular

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of battles or engagements. Malik continues, “when God wishes to impose His will on his enemies, He chooses to do so by casting terror into their hearts.”<sup>53</sup> He cites another verse, “against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts) of the enemies of Allah . . .” Malik’s strategic synthesis is specific: “the Quranic military strategy thus enjoins us to prepare ourselves for war to the utmost in order to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies, known or hidden, while guarding ourselves from being terror-stricken by the enemy.”<sup>54</sup> Terror is an effect; the end-state.

Malik identifies the center of gravity in war as the “human heart, [man’s] soul, spirit, and Faith.” Note that Faith is capitalized, meaning more than simple moral courage or fortitude. Faith in this sense is in the domain of religious and spiritual faith; this is the center of gravity in war. The main weapon against this Islamic concept of center of gravity is “the strength of our own souls . . . [keeping] terror away from our own hearts.” In terms of achieving decisive and direct decisions preparing for this type of battlefield first requires “creating a wholesome respect for our *Cause*”—the cause of Islam. This “respect” must be seeded in advance of war and conflict in the minds of the enemies. Malik then introduces the informational, psychological, or perception management concepts of warfare. Echoing Sun Tzu, he states, that if properly prepared, the “war of muscle,” the physical war, will already be won by “the war of will.”<sup>55</sup> “Respect” therefore is achieved psychologically by, as Brohi suggested earlier, “beautiful” and “handsome ways” or by the strategic application of terror.

When examining the theme of the preparatory stage of war, Malik talks of the “war of preparation being waged . . . in peace,” meaning that peacetime preparatory activities are in fact part of any war and “vastly more important than the active war.” This statement should not be taken lightly, it essentially means that Islam is in a perpetual state of war while peace can only be defined as the absence of active war. Malik argues that peace-time training efforts should be oriented on the active war(s) to come, in order to develop the Quranic and divine “Will” in the *mujahid*. When armies and soldiers find limited physical resources they should continue and emphasize the development of the “spiritual resources” as these are complimentary factors and create synergy for future military action.

Malik’s most controversial dictum is summarized in the following manner: in war, “the point where the means and the end meet” is in terror. He formulates terror as an objective principal of war; once terror is achieved the enemy reaches his culminating point. “Terror is not a means of imposing decision upon the enemy; it is the decision we wish to impose . . .” Malik’s divine principal of Islamic warfare may be restated as “strike terror; never feel terror.” The ultimate objective of this form of warfare “revolves around the human heart, [the enemies] soul, spirit, and Faith.”<sup>56</sup> Terror “can be instilled only if the opponent’s Faith is destroyed . . . It is essential in the ultimate analysis, to dislocate [the enemies] Faith.” Those who are firm in their religious

conviction are immune to terror, “a weak Faith offers inroads to terror.” Therefore, as part of preparations for *jihad*, actions will be oriented on weakening the non-Islamic’s “Faith,” while strengthening the Islamic’s. What that weakening or “dislocation” entails in practice remains ambiguous. Malik concludes, “Psychological dislocation is temporary; spiritual dislocation is permanent.” The soul of man can only be touched by terror.<sup>57</sup>

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Malik then moves to a more academic discussion of ten general categories inherent in the conduct of Islamic warfare. These categories are easily translatable and recognizable to most western theorists; planning, organization, and conduct of military operations. In this regard, the author offers no unique insight. His last chapter is used to restate his major conclusions, stressing that “The *Holy Quran* lays the highest emphasis on the preparation for war. It wants us to prepare ourselves for war to the utmost. The test . . . lies in our capability to instill terror into the hearts of our enemies.”<sup>58</sup>

### ***Evaluation of The Quranic Concept of War***

While the extent and reach of Malik’s thesis cannot be confirmed in the Islamic world neither can it be discounted. Though controversial, his citations are accurately drawn from Islamic sources and consistent with classical Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>59</sup> As Malik notes, “Quranic military thought is an integral and inseparable part of the total Quranic message.”<sup>60</sup> Policy planners and strategists striving to understand the nature of the “Long War” should consider Malik’s writings in that light.

Malik makes clear that the *Quran* provides the doctrine, guidance, and examples for the conduct of Quranic or Islamic warfare. “It gives a strategy of war that penetrates deep down to destroy the opponents’ faith and render his physical and mental faculties totally ineffective.”<sup>61</sup> Malik’s thesis focuses on the fact that the primary reason for studying the *Quran* is to gain a greater understanding of these concepts and insights. The Prophet Mohammed, as the *Quran* attests, changed the intent and objective of war—raising the sphere of war to a Godly plane and purpose; the global proclamation and spread of Islam. This obviously rejects the Clausewitzian politics and policy dyad: that war is simply policy of the state.

Quranic warfare is “just war.” It is *jus en bellum* and *jus ad bellum* if fought “in the way of Allah” for divine purposes and the ends of Islam. This contradicts the western philosophy of just war theory. Another important connotation is that *jihad* is a continuum, across peace and war. It is a constant and covers the spectrum from grand strategy to tactical; collective to the individual; from the preparatory to the execution phases of war.

Malik highlights the fact that the preservation of life is not the ultimate end or greatest good in Quranic warfare. Ending “tumult and oppression,” achieving the war aims of Islam through *jihad* is the desired end. Dying in this cause brings direct reward in heaven for the *mujahid*, sacrifice is sacred. It naturally follows that death is not feared in Quranic warfare; indeed, “tranquility” invites God’s divine aid and assistance. The “Base” of the Quranic military strategy is spiritual preparation and “guarding ourselves against terror.”<sup>62</sup> Readers may surmise that the training

camps of al Qaeda (The Base) were designed as much for spiritual preparation as military. One needs only to recall the example of Mohammed Atta's "last night" preparations.<sup>63</sup>

The battleground of Quranic war is the human soul—it is religious warfare. The object of war is to dislocate and destroy the [religious] "Faith" of the enemy. These principals are consistent with objectives of al Qaeda and other radical Islamic organizations. "Wars in the theory of Islam are . . . to advance God's purposes on earth, and invariably they are defensive in character."<sup>64</sup> Peace treaties in theory are

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temporary, pragmatic protocols. This treatise acknowledges Islam's manifest destiny and the approach to achieving it.

General Malik's thesis in *The Quranic Concept of War* can be fundamentally described as "Islam is the answer." He makes a case for war and the revitalization of Islam. This is a martial exegesis of the *Quran*. Malik like other modern Islamists are, at root, romantics. They focus on the *Quran* for *jihad* a doctrine that harkens back to the time of the Prophet and the classical-*jihadist* period when Islam enjoyed its most successful military campaigns and rapid growth.

The book's metaphysical content borders on the supernatural and renders "assured expectations" that cannot be evaluated or tested in the arena of military experience. Incorporating "divine intervention" into military campaigns, while possibly advantageous, cannot be calculated as an overt force multiplier. Critics may also point to the ahistorical aspect of Malik's thesis; that Islam is in a state of constant struggle with the non-Islamic world. There are examples of Muslim armies serving side by side with Christian armies in combat and campaigns are numerous, with Iraq being but a recent example.<sup>65</sup>

Malik's appraisal of the *Quran* as a source of divine revelation for victory in war can likewise be criticized by historical example. Were it fully true and operationalized then the 1,400 years of Islamic military history might demonstrate something beyond its present state. War and peace in Islam has ebbed and flowed as has the conduct of war across all civilizations, ancient and modern. Islam as an independent military force has been in recession since 1492, although the latest *jihadist's* threat of terror against the international system is, at least in part, a possible reaction to this long recession. Malik's thesis essentially recognizes this historical pattern; indeed, Malik's book may be an attempt to reverse this trend. The events of 9/11 may be seen as a validation of Malik's thesis regarding the spiritual preparation and the use of terror. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were intended to seed "respect" (fear) in the minds of Islam's enemies. These acts were not only directed at Western non-believers, but also the Muslim leaders who "profess the faith but are treacherous in their hearts" (allies and supporters of the United States). The barbarity of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and others in Iraq reflect a focus on extreme terror designed to wilt the will of Islam's enemies.

Malik and Brohi both emphasize the defensive nature of *jihad* in Islam, but this position appears to be more a defense of a manifest destiny inevitably resulting in conflict. In their rendering of *jihad* both, not surprisingly, owe an intellectual debt to the Pakistani Islamist theorist, Abu al-Ala

al-Mawdudi. Al-Mawdudi is an important intellectual precursor to the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb, and other modern Islamic revivalists. As al-Mawdudi notes, “Islamic *jihad* is both offensive and defensive” oriented on liberating man from humanistic tyranny.<sup>66</sup>

The author’s most controversial and, perhaps, most noteworthy assertion, is the distinction of “terror” as an ends rather than as a means to an end. The soul can only be touched by terror. Malik’s divine principal of war may be summarized in the dictum “strike terror; never feel terror.” Yet, he does not describe any specific method of delivering terror into the heart of Islam’s enemies. His view of terror seems to conflict with his earlier, limited, discussion of the concept of restraint in warfare and what actually

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constitutes “excesses” on the part of an enemy. It also conflicts with the character and nature of response that the author says is demanded. Malik leaves many of these pertinent issues undefined under a veneer of legitimating theory.

In spite of certain ambiguities and theoretical weaknesses, this work should be studied and valued for its insight and analysis relate to *jihadists’* concepts and the asymmetric approach to war that radical Muslims may adapt and execute. With respect to global *jihad* terrorism, as the events of 9/11 so vividly demonstrated, there are those who believe and will exercise the tenets of *The Quranic Concept of War*.

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## NOTES

1. Brigadier S. K. Malik, *The Quranic Concept of War* (Lahore, Pakistan: Associated Printers, 1979). Quranic War or Quranic Warfare refers to Malik’s treatment in his book.
2. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins Press, 1955), p. 64.
3. R. D. Hooker, “Beyond *Vom Kriege*: The Character and Conduct of Modern War,” *Parameters*, 35 (Summer 2005), 4.
4. Paul Sperry, “The Pentagon Breaks the Islam Taboo,” *FrontPage Magazine*, 14 December 2005, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=20539>.
5. Antulio Echevarria, *Towards an American Way of War* (Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2004).
6. Patrick Poole, “The Muslim Brotherhood ‘Project,’” *FrontPage Magazine*, 11 May 2006, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=22415>.

7. Farhand Rajaei, *Islamic Values and World View: Khomeyni on Man the State and International Politics*, (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983), p 71.
8. Irfan Yusuf, "Theories on Islamic Books You Wouldn't Read About," *Canberra Times*, 21 July 2005,  
[http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?class=your%20say&subclass=general&category=editorial%20opinion&story\\_id=410105&y=2005&m=7](http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?class=your%20say&subclass=general&category=editorial%20opinion&story_id=410105&y=2005&m=7).
9. Malik, pp. I-ii.
10. Ibid., p. 1.
11. Ibid., pp. I-ii.
12. See for example the discussion by Dr. Mary R. Habeck, "Jihadist Strategies in the War on Terrorism," *The Heritage Foundation*, 8 November 2004,  
<http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl855.cfm>.
13. David Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005). There is approximately 1,400 years of *jihad* scholarship beginning with Mohammed and his military campaigns. Classical approaches to *jihad* as described by Mohammed's successors, Abu Bakr for example, and the challenges presented by the struggles of succession to Mohammed.
14. Malik "Forward."
15. Ibid., "Preface," p. I.
16. Ibid., p. I. Note the Christian concept of the Trinity contained in the Nicene Creed is considered polytheistic according to Islam. The Trinity is not *tawhid*.
17. John Esposito, *Islam, the Straight Path* (3d ed.; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), pp. 12-14, 89.
18. Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 72; Khadduri, pp. 65, 70-72; Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, pp. 35-39.
19. Brohi, "Preface," p. ii.
20. Ibid., p. iii.
21. Ibid., p. iii.
22. Cook, pp. 95-96. Cook places these concepts of *jihad* doctrine in the lineage of contemporary and radical theory.

23. The indexed term for *jihad* is redirected to the term “Holy War” in this classic book of Islamic law or *sharia* by Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller*, ed. and trans. Nuh Ha Mim Keller (Beltsville, Md.: Amana Publication, 1997).

24. Malik, “Preface,” p. v.

25. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

26. Cook, p. 107; Christopher Henzel, “The Origins of al Qaeda’s Ideology: Implications for US Strategy,” *Parameters*, 35 (Spring 2005), 69-80.

27. Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Concept of an Islamic State: An Analysis of the Ideological Controversy in Pakistan* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987).

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28. Malik, “Preface,” p. x. While in the Western tradition the state is viewed as a territorial and political body, based on “temporal elements such as shared memory, language, race, or the mere choice of its members.” Khomeini rejected this view, seeing the secular, political state and nationalism as Western constructs of imperialistic design to damage the cohesion of the *ummah* and impede the “advancement of Islam.” Rajaei, pp. 7, 67-71.

29. *Ibid.*, p. x.

30. Khadduri, p. 63.

31. Malik, p. 6.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21. (Baqara: 190).

34. Malik, p. 11.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 22. (Baqara: 217) and (Nissaa: 76).

36. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

38. Malik, p. 29. (Tauba: 7).

39. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

40. Khadduri, p. 212. Jurists disagree on the allowable duration of treaties, the operative concept is that the dar al-Harb must be reduced to dar al-Islam over time.

41. Malik, p. 27.
42. Ibid., pp. 33-34.
43. Khadduri, p. 141.
44. Malik, p. 40
45. Ibid., pp. 37-38. (Baqara: 216).
46. Ibid., pp. 42-44. (Al-I-Imran: 169-70) and (Nissa: 95).
47. Ibid., pp. 42-44.
48. Cook, pp. 77, 124.
49. Malik, p. 49.
50. Ibid., p. 54.
51. Ibid., p. 57.
52. Malik, p. 57.
53. Ibid., p. 57.
54. Ibid., p. 58.
55. Ibid., p. 58.
56. Ibid., pp. 58-59.
57. Ibid., p. 60.
58. Ibid., p. 144.
59. Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1996), pp. 44-51, 128.
60. Malik, p. 3.
61. Ibid., p. 146.
62. Ibid., p.58.

63. "In Hijacker's Bags, a Call to Planning, Prayer and Death," *Washington Post*, 28 September 2001.

64. Malik, "Preface," p. iii.

65. Four notable examples are the Crimean War where French, British and Ottoman Forces allied against the Russians; Fuad Pasha of the Ottoman Army served as a coalition partner with French Army during the 1860 Rebellion in Syria; more recently Muslim Arab and Kabyle soldiers served in the Harkis of the French Army in the French-Algerian War; and, of course, today in Iraq. Malik would address some of these events as alliances of convenience serving Islam's interests in accord with the *Quran* and *Sharia Law*, others as *takfir* or treason.

66. Cook, pp. 99-103. Peters, p. 130.

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