

Al Qaeda and the Islamic State

Al Qaeda and the Islamic State:

A Threat to Europe's Security

By

Mari Carmen Forriol

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To my family

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INTRODUCTION

It was on 11 September 2001 that jihadist terrorism made its presence felt on the international scene, constituting one of the greatest threats of the 21st century. Two decades have passed since then and the global jihadist movement has not only changed the world's strategic landscape, but has become more visible in Europe since the terrorist attacks of 11 March 2004 in Spain and 5 June 2004 in London. At that time it became clear that global jihadist terrorism could strike Europe through its referents, linked groups, lone wolves and individual actors on European soil.

Experience has shown that, due to the complexity and extent of the phenomenon, it is not enough to effectively counter this threat to toughen anti-terrorist legislation and employ coercive actions, as the ideology behind Al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) cannot be fought with force and legal instruments alone, but needs to be tackled in all its dimensions, including those factors that lead to jihadist radicalisation.

As this is a global phenomenon that puts European society at risk, it was decided to focus the study on Western Europe, and in particular on the seven countries that have been hardest hit by this threat and in which the security forces of the states have responded most forcefully. The fact that these geographical areas have been chosen for the study does not mean that there are no countries such as Norway and Sweden where the terror caused by terrorist acts is not evident.

The book comprises seven chapters and concludes with some final considerations highlighting the problems posed by this threat to the security of European soil and what measures could be taken to address it, according to the author. The first chapter studies the precursors and foundations of the Salafist Jihadist ideology that underpins the global Jihadist movement. The second chapter examines the global movement's struggle for geographic and media leadership at the global level. In the third and fourth chapters, a study is undertaken of the most relevant Al Qaeda and IS affiliates on the world stage, although attention is focused on those established especially in Western Europe and North Africa. On the one hand, because Europe is our closest environment and, on the other,

because most of the attacks carried out in Europe over the last three decades have been committed by groups linked to Al Qaeda and IS or to their regional affiliates based in Africa, from where their members have been moving from the last decade of the 20TH CENTURY until today in order to enter the countries of southern Europe and sometimes stay there or move to other European countries. The fifth chapter is devoted to analysing how al-Qaeda and IS finance themselves through legal and illegal sources, and the channels of fund transfers they use to run the organisation and execute attacks. The sixth chapter is devoted to Jihadist radicalisation and will not only study the importance of the narrative disseminated by these organisations through their enormous media apparatus and how to deal with it, but also the European recipient of this message as a potential recipient of radicalisation. It also discusses the environments that are most conducive to radicalisation and some of the measures that the author of the book considers essential to tackle this phenomenon. The seventh chapter deals with the profile of European jihadist fighters, the motivations that led them to leave for Syria and Iraq, and the problems that their return poses for the security of EU member states.

In short, the aim of this book, by analysing some of the key aspects of the global jihadist movement, is to raise awareness among civil society and the European media that fighting jihadist terrorism and the organisations that champion it is a task not only for governmental and private institutions, but also for all citizens. For, to the extent that society is more aware of the threat that the leaders of the global jihadist movement pose to its security, it will be a safer, stronger and more resilient society.

CHAPTER 1

JIHADIST SALAFISM AND ITS IDEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS

To understand the ideology of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS), it is necessary to know the ideological precursors or movements such as Salafism that have inspired these organisations. Without knowledge of their ideological foundations, it is almost impossible to implement a strategy that is capable of confronting these organisations. For this reason, throughout this chapter we will study the schools or movements on which the Salafism that inspired jihadism is based.

The study will begin with Ibn Taymiyya and end with Sayyid Qutb, representative of contemporary Salafism and source of inspiration for jihadists such as Osama Bin Laden, Ayman Al Zawahiri, Mohamed Atta and Abu Bakr al Baghdadi.

1. Jihadist Salafism and its ideological precursors

The founders of Al Qaeda and IS are inspired by violent Salafism. However, the majority of Muslims do not support or practice such violence, because for them, peace, harmony and solidarity are Islamic values. In contrast, those who profess retrograde rigorism and aversion towards the non-Islamic world and practice jihadist terrorism are in the minority. They are convinced that engaging in violence is a sacred obligation and the best way to fulfil Allah's wishes and will. For them, 'participating in jihad in the path of Allah' is, next to prayer and obeying one's parents, one of the actions dearest to Allah.

This jihad advocated by the Salafist jihadists refers to one of the interpretations of this term taken from the Qur'an. Unlike the greater jihad (*jihad al-akbar*), which consists of the ascetic effort that every good Muslim must make for his spiritual perfection, the lesser jihad (*jihad -alasghar*) involves an effort to draw the infidel back to the path of Allah. This attraction can be executed through missionary means, through

politics or through violence and combat. According to the Qur'an, during his stay in Mecca, the Prophet encouraged believing Muslims to preach Islam without violence. However, it is in the chapters of the Qur'an, or suras, describing Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina that the Prophet founded the first community of believers (ummah). It is in the chapters referring to Medina that the expression "jihad in the path of Allah" appears, describing several episodes of combat. The Prophet calls for fighting those who fight them and that they should not be the ones to initiate the aggression, for Allah does not love aggressors. However, in other verses, such as verse 9, 29, he calls for fighting those who "having received the Scripture, do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, nor practise the true religion until they humble themselves and pay the capitation".

Although there are as many as forty verses in the Qur'an that give a military meaning to the term *jihad*, this interpretation takes on greater proportion in the Hadith¹. In these passages we find not only references to a missionary and peaceful jihad, but to jihad in a military sense in which male Muslims are reminded that they are not only obliged to wage war, but to respond immediately to that call when summoned to wage war, and that jihad is linked to spreading Islam throughout the world and making it the universal religion. The Prophet also records the conditions to which jihad must conform, referring to inviting the enemy to surrender before attacking, and to convert to Islam or at least agree to submit to it. It also proposes that the infidels should be warned in advance of the attack, although this was not always the case. In fact, there are some hadiths which describe some treacherous killings as heroic acts blessed by Allah. Other hadiths proscribe the killing of women and children; however, there are accounts that downplay the seriousness of these crimes when executed against infidels. Another argument is that "the most perfect believer is precisely the one who fights in the path of Allah with his person and property". To reinforce this argument, some verses give an account of the rewards that Allah will bestow on those who fight and kill for His cause².

¹ Hadiths are compilations of the life and deeds of the Prophet, interpreted by the Prophet himself. They propose the prophet and his conduct as a role model for every believing Muslim.

² FORRIOL CAMPOS, M. C. *Jihadist terrorism in Europe from 1990 to 2012. Development and organisational aspects*. UCV. Directed by Pilar Pozo Serrano and Ginés Marco Perles. Published in 2013, p. 22.

Historically, the violent notion of jihad has remained throughout the centuries, as the umma has undergone numerous events that have led it from a memorable expansion in the early centuries to the loss of territory and authority.

After the early days of Islamic expansion, the defensive notion of violent jihad began to predominate, although this was not the same throughout the Islamic world, as there were border regions where fighting the infidel would continue to be considered a religious obligation. In these environments the acceptance of *holy war* remained in force because of the distinction drawn by classical Islamic jurists. For them, the world was divided into two parts: the territories under Islamic rule (*dar al Islam*) and the territories outside Muslim control (*dar al Harb*). Based on this legal distinction, the next resolution is that the only way to achieve a stable peace is to replace religious pluralism with the universalisation of Islam. This conclusion has encouraged today's jihadists to continue to believe that the war against the infidels will not end until the side of Allah achieves absolute and final victory.

The term *jihad* as 'holy war' was exercised during Saladin's 1187 campaign to wrest the city of Jerusalem from the Crusaders. More recently, this notion of *jihad* as 'holy war' was put into practice during the process of European colonisation in the 19TH century; at the outbreak of World War I, the Turkish sultan proclaimed jihad against the Allied countries in order to make Muslim soldiers in the ranks of the Western armies rebel against them; the Iraqi ulema also invoked jihad during the first Gulf War and gained the support of important Islamist leaders in Pakistan, Sudan, Tunisia and Palestine.

Understanding the meaning of jihadist terrorist acts carried out in the name of Allah involves analysing the origins of this rigorist thinking and going back to past centuries in which the bellicose sense of jihad was established.

To understand how the situation of terror in which the world finds itself today has come about, it is necessary to understand the origins of Salafism and the influence that some of the ideologues have left on this current of thought in Sunni Islam and on the leaders of the global jihadist movement.

Salafism refers to the companions of the Prophet, especially the first three generations of Muslims. This school of thought in Sunni Islam calls for a return to the origins, i.e. a return of believers to the practices as they were

lived at the time of the Prophet and his virtuous companions. To this end, they believe that the *sharia* (Islamic law) must be implemented; purify Islam from idolatry (*shirk*) and from all cultural influences and return to the original foundations of the religion and subject Islam to a total revision of the later traditions that have distorted its original nature, because over time Islam has lost its purity, because the Muslim community, through ignorance, superstition, having forgotten the original essences of the religion or having fallen under the influence of apostates or heretics, has turned away from revelation.

1.1. Ib Taymiyya, the father of Salafism

To understand the Salafist ideology and the outlook of the Sunni jihadist movements³, it is necessary to be clear about some basic concepts of the political theory of Islam, and therefore some of the ideas formulated by Ibn Taymiyya, the father of Salafism and a basic source of inspiration for many ideologues of 20TH century Salafist jihadism. Ibn Taymiyya was the theoriser of the takfir rebellions, and, like other later radical ideologues, idealised the founding era of Islam, what has been called the era of the *Salaf* or venerable ancestors, who received the faith during the rule of tyrannical and pagan rulers, and, after confronting these powerful enemies, succeeded in spreading the faith and building a just and peaceful society.⁴ For Taymiyya, the early splendour of Islam was due to the venerable ancestors' fidelity to the *Shariah*. According to this thinking, the subsequent defeats and crises suffered by Muslims were a consequence of the ungodly and sacrilegious deviations into which the Muslim community eventually fell. Thus, anticipating recent Salafist doctrines, Taymiyya defined any rule, belief or conduct contrary to the *Shari'a* as *yahiliyya*⁵.

³ In Islam, there is a division between the Sunnis, who represent the majority of the Muslim community, and the Shiites, who make up 15 % of the world's Muslim population. These emerged following the dispute over the political succession of the Prophet after his death. While the Sunnis believed that the succession was the responsibility of the Prophet's companions and their descendants, the Shi'a argued that religious authority came only from the Prophet's relatives, specifically his son-in-law Ali. After the death of this fourth caliph, the Shi'is developed a different religious trend from that of the Sunnis.

⁴ Justice was, together with community and authority, from the very beginning, the three essential basic notions. In this case, justice went beyond the equitable or distributive, for it was synonymous with honesty or righteousness.

⁵ The term *yahiliyya* is used to designate the ignorance or paganism in which men lived until the archangel Gabriel conveyed Allah's message to the prophet.

Like other Muslim thinkers, he was convinced that the ummah should "promote good and avoid evil" as an Islamic mandate. Therefore, the legitimacy of its rulers would depend on their ability to order the life of the Muslim community according to this mandate. However, realising that these rulers could commit political negligence, he claimed to recover the right of *iytiḥād*⁶, which made rebellion against the established power possible.

Ibn Taymiyya was one of the greatest apologists for jihad. In fact, he ended up defining it as the best voluntary service that man can devote to Allah, even better than prayer and fasting⁷. For according to Taymiyya, Islam will only succeed if force is used in the path of Allah.

Taymiyya prescribes two complementary modes of violent jihad. On the one hand, jihad and force are imposed as an obligatory reaction against those Muslims who claim to profess the faith of Islam but violate the *Shari'a*⁸, and whom Ibn Taymiyya suggests that the rulers punish ruthlessly. The other form of jihad he prescribes is against those groups outside the ummah, including infidels who attack the Muslim community, who resist embracing the true faith, and those who cling to the superstitious ignorance (*jahiliyya*) in which Muslims lived before Allah's revelation to the prophet.

In short, Taymiyya sees jihad as a holy war linked to three complementary objectives: the preservation of *Shariah* in Islamic communities, the defence of a besieged ummah and the spread of Islam throughout the world.

Taymiyya's ideas have not only had a great influence on Wahhabism and later reformist movements, but also on important figures in Salafism and jihadism today. Indeed, his religious condemnation of the Mongols as apostates is currently used by jihadist groups, on the one hand, to justify their attacks on Muslim governments that do not impose *Sharia law* on their community, and on anyone who does not accept the Salafist interpretation of Islam. Consequently, Ibn Taymiyya became a model for Wahhabism and other later reformist movements, and a source of inspiration for today's Salafist jihadists, in particular Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, who assume that Muslims should be judged according to their

⁶ The right to *ijtihād* refers to interpreting reality in the light of the sacred texts.

⁷ FORRIOL CAMPOS, M. C. *El terrorismo yihadista... op. cit.* in note 1, p. 24.

⁸ Such Muslims are called hypocritical Muslims.

inclination to wage jihad, with the *takfir* principle (excommunication) applying to those Muslims who refuse to adhere to it. The same is true of IS ideologues who take from this author the idea that if the Mongols of Hulagu Khan had razed Baghdad to the ground in the 13TH century and stained the Tigris with blood, the fighters of the Islamic State must stain the Mediterranean with the blood of the infidels of the hostile Church of Egypt. An idea put into practice by the Libyan branch of IS with the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians.

2. Contemporary Salafism

Within Salafism, two stages can be distinguished. The first stage comprises revivalism, a movement whose referent is Wahhabism, and the second stage comprises the reformist movement that arose in reaction to European colonialism in the 19TH century.

2.1. Wahhabism

The origins of contemporary Salafist movements can be traced to the revivalist doctrine that emerged in the late EIGHTEENTH CENTURY in various arenas in the Islamic world. These movements proclaimed a return to the time of the *salaf* (venerable ancestors). This return to the origins of the religion comprises, on the one hand, a religious orientation that entails the elimination in doctrine and customs of all non-Islamic elements that eventually contaminated traditional Islam. On the other hand, a political-religious orientation-, which coincides with the re-Islamisation of society and all its political structures.

The revivalist movements adhere to Ibn Taymiyya's idea of *ijtihad* (principle of free interpretation of sacred sources). In many cases this principle will be applied in combination with the literal interpretation of some sacred texts, as had been advocated by Ahmad Ibn al-Hanbal. However, the revivalists' claim to *ijtihad* also rested on a critique of the *taqlid* (literal reception of interpretations by classical interpreters) of the sacred sources. Indeed, for some revivalists the direct application of this interpretation to the reality of the world at the time was one of the causes of the decline of Islamic civilisation.

There are many revivalist movements that emerged in the late 18TH century across the Muslim world, but only Wahhabism will be mentioned in this section, not so much because of its influence on jihadist terrorism,

but because its predominance in Saudi Arabia helped to promote external jihad in various forms.

Wahhabism is named after its founder, Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab (1703-1792). Wahab was a thinker from the Arabian Peninsula who, in addition to taking Ibn Taymiyya as a point of reference, reproduced the doctrinal scheme of Hanbalism, insisting on the need to return to the sacred sources and their reinterpretation almost always in a literal sense, thus idealising the original era of Islam and vindicating the *Sharia*, which would be defined as the rule regulating social life and the basic criterion for granting or curtailing the legitimacy of political power. In line with this, Wahab reaffirms Allah as the one true God, and proclaims, as Taymiyya did centuries earlier, the oneness of God. This oneness is opposed to polytheism (*shirk*), which Wahhabism considers to be the cause of all the evils that man can suffer. It is thus the opposition between the oneness of God and polytheism that gives rise to the two theological premises on which Wahhabism is based. On the one hand, Wahab states that the profession of faith in the oneness of God (*Tawhid*) was not a sufficient guarantee of religious correctness if it was not accompanied by intense opposition to false gods (*taghut*). These false gods must be fought with jihad, for war must be waged against those who deny Allah. On the other hand, Wahhabi puritanism visualises polytheism and false gods everywhere. In fact, for Wahab and his followers, any creative input that human beings try to introduce into religion and political life is only an ungodly desire to live up to Allah. For Wahab, during the Ottoman Empire, idolatry was present among the infidels and ignorant, and polytheism was present among Muslims. It is for this reason that the Ottoman Empire went into decline and superstition had spread among the Arab Bedouins and among the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina who had relaxed their religious customs and practices. Such outrages against divine law explain the threats to the integrity of the ummah and the loss of power of Islamic communities. According to Wahab, this decline was not only a product of the circumstances of the time, but of the human innovations that Islam had been accumulating for centuries and that had been leading believing Muslims away from the straight path laid down by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Among these innovations were, on the one hand, the theological commentaries developed by Islamic jurists, and, on the other hand, displays of religious veneration of objects or persons who claimed to be intermediaries between men and Allah, such as saints, prophets, tombs, images. In Wahab's view, all men to whom divine powers had been attributed should be persecuted and material manifestations of human creativity should be eliminated.

Wahhabism has had a major religious and political impact not only in the Arabian Peninsula, but also in other parts of the Muslim world. Two decades after Wahhab made a pact with Muhammad Ibn Saud in 1774 whereby Saud would impose Wahhabism wherever he ruled and, in return, Wahhabism would sanctify as jihad this tribal leader's struggles with other tribes. This alliance enabled them after two decades to dominate the holy cities of Medina and Mecca and to conquer the city of Kerbala, the holy city of the Shiites. Eventually, in all the territories conquered by Wahab's followers, *Sharia law* was imposed, heretics were persecuted and all holy property was destroyed. Although the first Saudi state fell to the Ottomans in 1818, the Saudis and Wahhabis maintained their alliance of combat and conquest for decades. In 1932 they succeeded in creating the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, after which the Wahhabi ulema regained control of religious orthodoxy and set about legitimising the new monarchy. Intimidated by the events of 1979, such as the seizure of Mecca, the triumph of the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, King Khaled decided to avoid the risk of new internal uprisings by taking decisions that benefited the jihad outside Saudi Arabia. These decisions included granting freedom to the military of the *sawha* (the awakening)⁹, granting the Wahhabi ulema new powers in education and religion, and increased surveillance of customs, especially for women. The Saudi regime used oil revenues to provide economic aid to spread Wahhabism outside Saudi Arabia and to finance the resistance against the Soviets in Afghanistan. As a result, from the 1980s onwards the Saudi government and some sections of the population succeeded in spreading an extremist and extremely anti-Western version of Islam throughout the world, while supporting the creation of a group of fighters whose victory in Afghanistan served as a stimulus for the development of new terrorist campaigns in the name of Allah.

2.2. Muslim reformism

Muslim reformism is a movement that emerged in Muslim societies to fight colonialism and reform religiosity in order to overcome their fragility vis-à-vis the West. This movement developed between the late 19TH and 20TH centuries, at the height of the colonisation boom, in Egypt and Damascus, as a reaction to foreign ideas of modernity that sought to impose on Muslim civilisation with the intention of erasing the cultural vestiges of the Muslim community. Among its leading figures were al-

⁹ *Sawha* is a radical current influenced by the work of Sayyid Qutb.

Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. They shared important postulates with Ibn Taymiyya and Wahab, but differed from them, on the one hand, because they held a more modern and rationalist position that defended the right to free interpretation of the sacred sources, and, on the other hand, because they expressed an initial admiration for certain elements of Western life and culture, which led them to advocate taking advantage of all the resources offered by Western societies to improve the position of Islam in the world.

Al Afghani, concerned about the situation at the time and considering that the foundations of Islam were weakening in favour of materialism and superficiality, began to denounce the differences between the juristic schools and to advocate the union of fundamental common beliefs. To reunite the community, he saw the need to recover the Islamic references of the *Salaf*¹⁰ and *ijtihad*¹¹, and a new reading of the Qur'an, bringing it in line with modern times, thus freeing believers from myths and superstitions. If anything characterises al-Afghani, apart from carrying his pan-Islamist ideas (uniting all Muslim communities under one authority) and offering an interpretation of jihad as an individual rather than a collective duty, it is that he promoted the political liberation of the Muslim people. But above all, he was an orthodox Muslim, an admirer of Western progress, from which he believed Muslims could benefit, albeit only on an instrumental level. His aim was to reconcile science, theology and philosophy, constructing a pan-Islamist discourse that shared the same struggle and the same objective, in order to put an end to the differences that divided Muslims.

His most important disciple, Muhammad Abduh, kept the reformist spirit alive and profoundly influenced Egyptian society in the late 19TH CENTURY. He advocated the use of rationality as the only way to recognise the perfection of the divine message contained in the Qur'an, for it was precisely this rational approach that discouraged the misguided imitation of Islam's early ancestors.

¹⁰ The *Salaf* are the first three generations of the defenders of Islam.

¹¹ The term *Ijtihad* refers to the reflective effort, contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah, that ulema or muftis and Muslim jurists undertake to interpret and apply the founding texts of Islam and transcribe them in terms of Islamic law.

2.3. Contemporary Salafism

Salafism is not a homogeneous group within Islam, as there are significant differences among Salafists on how best to defend and promote Islam. Salafism can be divided into three categories: quietists, politicians and jihadists. All share the same religious creed, but differ in the means by which they promote their beliefs¹². These groups advocate aspects that are common to all of them: monotheism, rejection of innovation, literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, implementation of *Sharia*, condemnation of all forms of idolatry, opposition to theological diversity, and repudiation of schools of Islamic jurisprudence. The quietists, on the other hand, understand that such an irreproachable Islamic society will emerge through preaching and education, and when Muslims adopt the proper procedure. This group opposes the tactics employed by political Salafists and jihadists, as they consider their actions counterproductive. On the other hand, political Salafists or activists seek to propagate their interpretation of Islam by using government and state institutions, establishing political organisations and participating in electoral processes. They argued that the methods used by the quietists were inadequate and that it was necessary to use political action to achieve the primary goal of Salafism, which was the implementation of Islamic law. Jihadist Salafists, on the other hand, combine their Salafist beliefs with an extreme and total commitment to jihad, which for them is as important as any of the five pillars of Islam. They advocate armed struggle and see themselves as the group chosen to establish Islamic law. They consider political Salafists to be in error because they recognise political systems that are anti-Islamic and legitimise institutions that promote idolatry and secularism.

2.3.1. *The ideologues of political Salafism*

The most representative ideologues of 20TH century activist or political Salafism are Hassan Al Banna and Maududi.

Al Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928. This organisation, which was politicised, first implemented its project at the religious, educational and social levels. However, the alternative of a political and social order based on the application of *Sharia law* became increasingly radicalised as its confrontation with the Nasser regime

¹² WIKTOROWICZ, Q. Anatomy of Salafi movement, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 29, no. 3, Routledge, NY, April-May-, 2002, p. 208.

intensified, and repression, executions and martyrs resulted from these machinations.

Al Banna saw Islam as a global worldview that encompassed all aspects of life. Thus, all problems were ultimately reduced to a distancing from religion. The only possible solution was the reconstruction of an all-Islamic social order, i.e. the re-Islamisation of the Muslim community and its customs. Al Banna thus strove to establish a new regime capable of ensuring the "morality" of his subjects, a regime that would replace party politics, which only served to divide Muslims, with a *Shari'a-based* policy aimed at forging closer ties with other Muslim countries and restoring the caliphate¹³.

Al Banna demonised Western materialistic and atheistic culture and the policies pursued by Westerners, which he saw as the cause of the spiritual degradation and political, economic and military decadence of Muslim countries. For he was convinced that the aim of European colonisation and policies was to disintegrate the Islamic world, as revealed by Western opposition to the Ottoman Empire and support for Arab nationalist parties whose success would prevent the unification of the Muslim community. It is this aversion to the West that would lead al-Banna to think of jihad as a sacred duty in the sense of both spiritual endeavour and holy war against the enemies of Islam. Al Banna saw jihad as a duty of each and every Muslim. For, according to him, Muslims at that time were under the yoke of foreigners and were subjects of the infidels.

Abdul A'la Maududi founded, in India, the Islamist organisation Jamaat i Islami, of which he was the religious leader from 1941 to 1972. This organisation was conceived as an authoritarian political party, aimed at forming a vanguard (the Salih Jammāt) to seize state power and lead the state in the path of Allah. This idea, like many of Maududi's others, was developed in India as political power was being held by the British Empire and was beginning to be transferred to the Hindu majority to the detriment of the Muslim minority. In 1947 Maududi went to Pakistan, where he exerted great influence on Pakistani politics. In 1977 General Muhammad Zia ul Haq led a military coup d'état, triggering a shift to confessional politics. This increased Maududi's influence. The general took up many of Maududi's recommendations and imposed *Sharia* as the fundamental law, especially in criminal law, even going so far as to create special *Sharia*

¹³ ELORZA, A. *Umma*, Alianza editorial. 2002, p. 167.

courts to overturn un-Islamic laws. Thus Pakistan moved definitively towards Islamism and Maududi saw his expectations largely realised.

Maududi's starting point is a radical critique of the societies of his time for having allowed their morals and customs to be degraded, while many elements of Western culture and lifestyle were spreading in Muslim societies. Just as the international dominance of European countries, nationalism and democracy only served to divide Muslims and spread secularism. This is how Maududi reclaims the term *yahiliyya* established by Taymiyya, and will make it, along with Qutb, a staple of jihadist Salafism. For, for these ideologues, the modern era bears a similarity to the pre-Islamic era, insofar as in modernity there is also an ignorance of the true Islam, a product of the contamination of the Western world with the Muslim world.

On the political theory of Islam, Maududi believes that the core of this theory lies in the principle of Allah's absolute sovereignty, from which an Islamic model of state and society is deduced. Maududi warns that no one person has the right to exercise the dominion of authority over his fellows, nor to invent laws to regulate collective life. These rights belong to Allah, whose status as the one and only perfect God makes him the sole sovereign. It is for this reason that there should be no laws other than those dictated by the sovereign God, and if there are any, they will only be legitimate if they do not contradict Allah's dictates. These dictates will become the fundamental law in any worthy state. Thus, only those governments that comply with the revealed law should be obeyed, and every believing Muslim should disobey those rulers who break the *sharia*. For, unlike secular democracies, Islam rejects the philosophy of popular sovereignty and erects its politics on the basis of Allah's sovereignty and man's vicegerency. Thus, full adherence to the ideology of Islam is a prerequisite for participation in political life. On the contrary, this right will be forbidden to all non-Muslim citizens living under an Islamic regime. Maududi thus dreams of a state that will have to coerce its citizens in order to save them from the *yahiliyya*, which is the beginning of all depravities and conflicts.

For Maududi, jihad follows the principle of Allah's absolute sovereignty, so identifying this sovereignty implies recognising this right to impose on his creatures certain sacrifices¹⁴ and obligations that will benefit them

¹⁴ The 5 pillars of Islam are: the profession of faith (*shahada*), the duty to pray 5 daily prayers (*salat*), the annual fast of Ramadan, the obligatory donation of a

personally and spiritually. However, the greatest sacrifice that every Muslim believer must make is jihad against the enemies of Islam who perpetrate oppression.

2.3.2. The ideologues of jihadi Salafism

In the 1960s, the foundations of Jihadist Salafism began to be laid, which, like Islamic reformism, political Salafism and other movements, sought its foundations in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, but broke with traditional interpretations of the sacred texts, questioning the jurisconsults and traditional ulema and claiming the interpretative effort of the sacred texts. However, what differentiates jihadist Salafism from other Islamist movements is its application of a rigorist, radical and violent interpretation.

Sayyid Qutb was the father of jihadist Salafism and his works have been the bedside reading of Osama Bin Laden, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, Ayman Al Zawahiri, Mohamed Atta and some of those responsible for the 11 March 2004 attacks, as well as Abu Bakr al Baghdadi.

Sayyid Qutb was born in Egypt and in 1948 moved to Texas, where he lived for three years. During his stay in the US, he developed his aversion to the world and lifestyle of the Western world. He was the first of the ideologues to consider the US as a model of Western depravity. On his return to Egypt, Qutb decided to join the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1954, when the Muslim Brotherhood attempted to assassinate Nasser, many of its members were imprisoned, including Sayyid. It was during his imprisonment and after coming into contact with Maududi's writings that Sayyid adopted a more radical position on his warlike vision of jihad and on his conception of a new *jahiliyya*, fully in congruence with Taymiyya and Maududi. The ideological foundations of contemporary jihadist Salafism laid down by Sayyid Qutb always go hand in hand with the principles laid down by Ibn Taymiyya and Maududi. What Sayyid does is to recast the traditional arguments with an apparently novel language that served him to compose the integrist framework of argumentation on well-defined foundations.

Qutb assumes the Salafist principle that human beings do not have the right to create laws and rules different from those established by the *Shari'a*, for Allah alone is sovereign. It is because Muslims have yielded to the temptation to introduce innovations in the revealed message that

small part of private income for charitable purposes (*zakat*) and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

contradict divine law, and because Western dominance has spread the principle of popular sovereignty and secular, materialistic values, that the Muslim world has fallen into ignorance. The only solution will be to re-establish full respect for divine law and implement an Islamic government. The aspirations of Sayyid's political project are intertwined with those of al-Banna, but his plan of action is not. For Sayyid, unlike al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood, did not believe that society could be changed by re-Islamising customs, nor by promoting prayer and Islamic teachings, for he had little confidence that these methods could alter the situation of total depravity in which Egyptian society found itself. The only feasible solution for him was the establishment of a true Islamic state. In order to achieve this, a vanguard movement had to be formed first, capable of overcoming the difficulties that arose, and he accepted that if necessary, violence could be used to overcome the obstacles that stood in the way of the establishment of this Islamic regime. This is how he legitimises the use of jihad to establish the Islamic system throughout the world. According to him, this jihad should only be carried out violently against institutions and systems, never against individuals, who must be saved by reasoning. For it is a Qur'anic precept that religion cannot be imposed, but that systems that prevent the spread of religion or that prevent Muslims from exercising their religion in freedom must be fought against. Hence, the Qur'anic message that God alone is sovereign implies that His laws and precepts cannot be superseded by any man-made system of laws, for in an Islamic system no man or institution can arrogate to itself powers that belong to God alone. The way to establish divine sovereignty on earth cannot be achieved by preaching and example alone, but needs a certain degree of coercion, i.e. if progress is to be made towards the establishment of an Islamic society, armed struggle against ignorant and oppressive regimes is necessary. However, before resorting to armed struggle, a process has to be followed, for open struggle is the ultimate solution to be employed.

According to Qutb, whatever system is established in the world must be under the authority of God, with laws that come only from Him, but, also in an Islamic system, there is room for all kinds of people to profess their own beliefs, as long as they obey the laws of the land, which in this case are based on divine authority.

In short, what is most remarkable about Qutb's thought is his justification of political violence, as long as it is for a legitimate cause, such as fighting the *jahiliyya* in the name of God, and the influence of his radical principles on the Arab and Muslim world and on later jihadist organisations.

Sukri Mustafa (1924-1978), after dissenting with the methods of the Muslim Brotherhood, became a staunch follower of Qutb, becoming even more radical than his mentor. After being imprisoned between 1965 and 1971, he synthesised his ideology, taking the *takfir* theory to its highest expression by arguing that if the Egyptian society of his time was mired in *jahiliyya* and the world was run by the devil, every single person in that world, even Muslims who do not make an effort to distance themselves from it, must be considered impious, and in the face of such impiety Shukri allows the declaration of jihad. In the late 1970s, Shukri participated in the founding of the *Takfir walHijra* movement, whose title ("excommunication and exile") summarises a fundamental part of the political-religious project -of this movement¹⁵. Shukri's programme was inspired on the one hand by the edict of excommunication against Egyptian society and the corrupt world, and on the other hand by the story of the Hijra. Shukri urged his followers, his proselytes, to emulate the prophet by isolating themselves in the desert or camping among the most deprived communities in the big cities in order to adapt their lives to the *Sharia*, to purify and strengthen themselves, and then to conquer Egypt and transform it into an Islamic state¹⁶. Shukri advocated a return to primordial Islam and the rigorous application of Qur'anic precepts, which should govern all aspects of life and provide the solution to contemporary problems. His main objective was to seize power and establish the world caliphate, governed by the *Sharia*. For Shukri, jihad is legitimised by Allah and the Prophet, making it an act of veneration that opens the gates of paradise as a reward. Shukri and his followers, unlike Qutb, see the need to wage jihad not only against those Muslims who do not support the jihadist cause, but also against the political authorities and security forces, but also against civil society for democratically electing and sustaining their rulers in power.

The *takfir* movement influenced the thinking of jihadist ideologues such as Al Zawahiri, who not only considered Muslims who did not agree with his extreme ideas to be traitors of Islam, but also declared the rulers of Arab-Muslim countries -and the Muslims who supported them, and the Shiites, to be apostates -for having cooperated with the enemies of Islam throughout history. -The extreme ideas of the *takfir* -movement have served Ayman Al Zawahiri to justify the suicide of martyrs, since in Islam

¹⁵ DE LA CORTE IBÁÑEZ, L. & JORDÁN, J. *La jihad Terrorista*. Editorial Síntesis, 2007, p. 101.

¹⁶ KEPEL, G. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: the Prophet and the Pharaoh*, University California Press, Berkeley, 1985, p. 71.

these acts are expressly forbidden by the Koran and the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet), according to which the punishment reserved for the suicide is to burn in hell and to relive eternally the act of dying using the same means that the subject used to take his own life. Al-Zawahiri argues, in order to justify the suicide of the "martyrs", that they acted for the greater glory of Allah and for the sake of Islam, so whoever gives his life for Islam should not be considered a suicide, but a heroic martyr whose selfless sacrifice will make him worthy of paradise.

Abu Azzam was not only an ideologue of jihad, but articulated it through the Maktab al Khidmat (the Service Bureau), which he set up with Osama Bin Laden in Peshawar. This office was responsible for recruiting foreign volunteers for the Afghan jihad against the Soviets. Many of them, after the war, went from place to place, spreading the ideas of jihadist Salafism and recruiting followers. Those persecuted in their home countries settled in the West and continued to preach jihad from there, as in the case of the imams Abu Qutada and Abu Hamza in the UK.

Abdullah Azzam, from his Salafist perspective, claimed that the reading of the holy sources in the context of his time made clear the obligatory nature of jihad in defence of the lands of Islam, and failure to comply with this precept was a fault similar to not praying or fasting¹⁷. Azzam, unlike the *takfir* movement, did not advocate the excommunication of apostate Muslims, as for him the defence of the lands of Islam from the invasion of the infidels and achieving the unity of the umma was of utmost importance.

In his *fatwa Defence of Islamic Lands. The first obligation after faith*, Azzam announces the obligation of every Muslim, regardless of nationality, to fight a defensive jihad against any enemy invading Muslim lands where Muslims are unable to defend themselves. Accordingly, he formulates a number of legal interpretations related to the Muslim's obligation to wage holy war in the event that an Islamic territory is attacked by infidels¹⁸. With this *fatwa*, Azzam seeks to justify the universal obligation of every Muslim to mobilise for jihad when the infidel invades even the smallest proportion of Muslim territory. Moreover, since jihad is a non-delegable obligation that binds every Muslim in the world, no permission from an outsider is required to wage holy war against the

¹⁷ DE LA CORTE IBAÑEZ, L & JORDÁN, J. *La jihad... op. cit.* in note 1, p. 115.

¹⁸ Abdullah Azzam. *Defence of Muslim Lands: The first obligation after Imam*. Translated from Brothers in Ribbat, 1985. Chapters 2 and 3.

infidel, i.e. no parental or guardian's permission is needed in the event that the infidel attacks an Islamic country. He also recalls that whoever is in a position to fight and ignores the individual obligation to do so incurs a greater sin than one who neglects to pray or fast in Ramadan.

3. Jihadist Salafism, the inspiration for Al Qaeda and the Islamic State

Jihadist terrorism, like any model of terrorism, alludes to a particular ideological justification and seeks to achieve objectives that are directly associated with or influenced by this ideology. In the case of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, their ultimate goal is to achieve the establishment of a universal caliphate, and to achieve this all infidels must convert to Islam. Therefore, all non-believers must be fought with jihad for the cause of Allah. For this is the only way to make Islam the only religion on earth and to establish the universal caliphate, or, in other words, a form of government and way of life in which a single, theocratic, world-wide leadership rules all mankind under the guidance of the *Sharia*. To achieve this goal, this ideological current advocates:

Firstly, to fight the declared and confessed enemy, which in this case are the infidels, and in particular Christians and Jews, and Muslims whom they regard as apostates. If the aim is to reinstate the Islamic caliphate, violence, beheading and terror must be used against those who refuse to follow the religion. If, in order to restore the greatness of Islam, re-Islamise Muslim societies and spread Islam throughout the world, moderate Muslim-led governments must be overthrown, they must be deposed.

Following the Koran, which states that in times past all humanity was one nation and that it is the duty of every Muslim to restore that unity, the jihadists decide to fight all religions and ideologies that deviate from the primordial Islam, as they are convinced that in the more or less near future humanity will end up as believing Muslims. Therefore, according to jihadists, it will not be possible to live in security until all countries, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, are governed by the rules of Islam. Consequently, jihad has become the best action that can be taken to liberate non-Muslims from false beliefs and ideologies, and to combat false Muslim believers, apostates, heretics and infidels.

The jihadist Salafists see in early Islam a glorious era, not only in terms of its political-religious organisation-, but also because it was governed by

the rules of the Qur'an and the Hadith. But this glorious era, according to the jihadists, disappeared when the Western materialistic power structure marked by primitive ignorance (*yahiliyya*) introduced unbelief into the Muslim world. This *jahiliyya* can only be confronted by waging jihad against the infidel and against Christians and Jews, whether they live on Muslim soil or not. For, since the Medina phase, combat has become the only instrument to be used so that "the religion may be all Allah's" (2, 193)¹⁹.

In the view of the Salafists, history points to the unique and immovable model to be followed. That is why they set their model of life in the time of the prophet, and do not understand that the future is likely to be better than the past. Thus, while in the West technology is seen as an instrument to build a future open to innovation, the Salafist Jihadists see it as a tool to achieve this model anchored in the values of the Prophet's time and to establish the universal caliphate.

Jihadism identifies democracy as one of its main enemies. Its followers strive to combat it both ideologically and through violence. For, according to them, it is democratic principles that have contaminated Islam with alien influences that have sought to pervert its beliefs and alienate its followers from Allah and his commands. Although jihadism has seen democratic procedures as one of the instruments used by the West to subjugate Muslim communities, it was not until the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq and the political transformations brought about by the Arab Spring that its anti-democratic discourse began to gain momentum.

The ultimate objectives of jihadism are composed of an articulation of political and religious aims. This discourse is based on an exclusively spiritual content that is doctrinally nourished by the most radical Salafism and, in coherence with its reading of Islam, aims to carry out a programme of religious purification of the Muslim subject and society. It is believed that the origin of the hardships suffered by the Islamic world lies, on the one hand, in the religious deviation of a large part of the community of believers, and, on the other hand, in the fact that the umma has long suffered from a pernicious religious leadership, whose sole purpose has been to turn believers away from the beliefs of Islam. Closely related to these religious interventions are political aspirations.

¹⁹ Azora 2, 193.

The strategic goal of jihadist Salafism is to establish Islamist regimes in all Muslim countries in order to restore the caliphate. This proposal ties in with a hallmark of the Muslim vision of power and politics. Since in early Islam there was only one power that encompassed the political and religious spheres, the authority that the political framework deploys over Muslims is, according to the jihadists, protected by a divine mandate that demands a moral and religious purpose for the exercise of power. It is for this reason that at the head of a community there must be a caliph, as successor to the prophet, who is the custodian of the moral heritage and legitimate Muslim government. Moreover, this political project requires the total disappearance of the current political regimes and the abolition of borders between these countries, which implies a transformation of the Islamic political map. The implementation of Allah's will in the world leads them to confront head-on all experiences of government, even those regimes that are explicitly inspired by the *Sharia*, such as Saudi Arabia, for having forced their citizens to be governed by laws executed by men in total opposition to Allah's principles, for having consented to the pernicious influence of the infidels and for having established alliances with the enemies of Islam. It is these violations that turn rulers into "idol worshippers", sources of apostasy. The political revolution that jihadist Salafism seeks to achieve focuses mainly on the abolition of the borders separating the countries where Muslims live, which, for jihadism, are fictitious divisions created by the West to weaken believing Muslims and fragment the umma, one of the most effective instruments to prevent Islamic resurgence.

Jihadists reject integration into the institutions promulgated by the Muslim Brotherhood because of the intransigence with which they perceive their intrinsically sinful nature and contrary to the divine will of the rulers of these regimes. For, to the jihadists, an apostate is worse than a non-believer, since the latter has not perceived the truth of Islam and always has the possibility of converting. The apostate, on the other hand, has disowned God and therefore the gravity of his sin is greater, hence only destruction is envisaged for them.

On the other hand, the jihadists' rejection of laws enacted by men inevitably leads to opposition to any form of government inspired by democratic principles and to any body that claims for itself any kind of legislative competence. Therefore, the will of the people is irrelevant in the conduct of political and social affairs, for there is only one course of conduct for the true Muslim, and that is conduct that conforms to Islamic precepts. In fact, any will that deviates from God's precepts lacks moral

legitimacy, and must therefore be punished. On the other hand, the jihadist perception of Western policy is based on the idea that there is an agreement by these societies to massacre and plunder the Muslim world, because no Western government has seen its continuation endangered by popular contestation of its policies. For jihadists, the citizens of Western democracies elect their rulers and support their decisions; therefore, no distinction can be made between combatants and non-combatants. In the case of Muslim-majority countries, jihadism has reacted virulently when democratic procedures have made their appearance in these countries. Its animus has led it to indiscriminately employ the serious charge of apostasy against any Muslim who went to the polls, as did Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, when US-sponsored elections were held in Iraq.

Experience has shown that Jihadist terrorist organisations flourish more easily and achieve a higher level of lethality in democratic political regimes, or at least those with a wide margin of respect for citizens' freedoms and rights. The limits and guarantees that these regimes impose on political power mean that it is precisely in these systems that terrorism enjoys an environment that facilitates its survival and guarantees its access to the public space through the media. Dictatorial regimes, on the other hand, have virtually no limits to oppressive activity against terrorists, which makes them a strong enemy for any of these organisations. However, one of the vulnerabilities of these dictatorial regimes lies in the fact that much of the foundation of their power and legitimacy lies in their ability to monopolise violence within their territory. Therefore, if terrorism prevails in the face of the state offensive, the foundations on which power rests may be undermined. In this respect, democracies have an advantage over jihadist terrorism in that, while they are more vulnerable to terrorist acts, they are more resilient to their onslaught, as the legitimisation of power is not based primarily on their ability to maintain law and order.

However, it is not all good news for jihadist organisations operating in and from the Arab Muslim world. Thanks to the process of political democratisation and modernisation that has begun, their ruling classes have undertaken political reforms in these countries in order to give their regimes greater international legitimacy, which has been a major setback for the jihadist groups operating in the region. These reforms have further isolated these jihadist groups from their potential support base.

It is these ideological foundations of jihadist Salafism that inspire Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. In the latter, its ideology continues to be a