



## Congressional Briefing:

### A History of Radical Islam, Before and After 9/11

#### Suggested Further Readings by Professor John O. Voll:

*Co-sponsored by the Middle East Studies Association of North America*

“Radical Islam” is a very broad subject and in recent years interest in the subject has grown rapidly. One result is that there are many publications and other sources of information that deal explicitly with “Radical Islam” or a wide range of closely related topics. This resource list takes a narrow definition of “Radical Islam” as its focus. While many definitions are possible, this listing of resources will concentrate on information relating to Muslim individuals, organizations, and movements that advocate the dramatic, revolutionary (that is, “radical”) transformation of historic Muslim societies, and who articulate that advocacy through the concepts, vocabularies, and traditions of Islam, rather than more secular “radical” vocabularies and visions. In addition, this list will concentrate on those individuals and movements who accept violence and overt militancy as methods for bringing about this radical transformation, even though there are important Muslim groups who work for the radical transformation of Muslim and global society but reject violent methods as being against Islamic teachings.

The vision of a radically transformed community of believers (*ummah*) inspired many movements before the contemporary era. The pre-modern history of “Radical Islam” is interesting and it is useful to have at least a few sources providing analyses of these movements. However, the core of this resource list will be the “new radicalism” that emerged in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has evolved in the past decades. This list will provide some presentations of radical views that are available in English translation (simply a few examples and not a “representative sample”) and also some of the more widely-known analyses of this radicalism.

#### Historic Radical Islam

##### Texts:

Peters, Rudolph. *Jihad in classical and modern Islam: a reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2005). This volume provides translations of major medieval texts and a 20<sup>th</sup> century “modernist” text (by Mahmud Shaltut) on jihad and the second edition has an epilogue on jihad in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While jihad is not primarily associated with “Radical Islam,” it is an important part of modern radical conceptualizations.

Dan Fodio, Usuman [‘Uthman ibn Fudi]. *Bayan wujub al-hijrah ‘ala al-‘ibad* [Explanation of the duty on the followers to undertake a migration] (Translated into English by F. H. Masri; Khartoum: Khartoum University Press/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). A presentation by a major “radical” who led a jihad against the existing state in northern Nigeria at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It provides an interesting example of an articulation of a program for the radical Islamic transformation of society.

##### Analyses:

Lewis, Bernard. *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (New York, 1967). A thorough and readable analysis of one of the best-known radical organizations in medieval Islamic society.

Watt, W. Montgomery. *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh, 1973). Chapter One examines the history and thought of the Kharijites, a major radical movement in intellectual terms although it never had a mass following. Contemporary Islamic militants are sometimes accused of being “modern Kharijites.”

#### Modern Radical Islam (Early 20<sup>th</sup> century)

##### Texts:

Banna, Hasan al-. *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949): A Selection from the Majmuat Rasail al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna* (Trans. Charles Wendell. Berkeley, 1978). This volume provides a good introduction to the ideas of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Al-Banna did not advocate the use of violence in

bringing about the radical Islamic transformation of society but he provided foundational concepts and inspiration for later radicals who did advocate use of violence.

Mawdudi, Abu al-A'la. *The Process of Islamic Revolution* (Lahore, 1955). This is one of many available pamphlets and booklets in English presenting the views of the South Asian activist who established the Jama'at-e Islami in 1941 and remained its leader in Pakistan. He did not advocate use of violence in the radical Islamic transformation of society but provided important concepts and inspiration for later radical militants, especially Sayyid Qutb in Egypt.

#### Analyses:

Mitchell, Richard. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (reprint edition; New York, 1993). This is the classic study of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which provides an important portrait of the Brotherhood written in the 1960s, before it became popular to write about Islamic “fundamentalist” organizations.

Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York, 1996). An excellent and thorough study of Mawdudi's work and his influence on the development of contemporary “Radical Islam.”

### **Neo-Radical Islam**

#### Texts:

Faraj, Abd al-Salam, *al-Faridab al gha'ibah* [“The Absent Duty”]. There is an analysis and a translation of this radical tract from the 1970s in J. J. G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York, 1986). This is an important example of the militant radicalism of the 1970s, building on the conceptualizations of Sayyid Qutb.

Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones* (Indianapolis, 1993). This is a translation of *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*, which is arguably the most important statement of radical (neo-radical) Islam in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was and is read throughout the Muslim world and provides the intellectual-conceptual framework for what became Radical Islam.

#### Analyses:

Berman, Paul, “The Philosopher of Islamic Terror,” *New York Times Magazine*, 23 March 2003. This is a clear examination of the ideological framework of militant terrorism, especially as articulated by Sayyid Qutb. Berman views the emergence of this militant ideology from the post 9/11 perspective. Berman's analysis is more thoroughly presented in Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York, 2003).

Sivan, Emmanuel. *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, 1985). This is a thorough study of the ideology of the militant radicals of the 1970s in the tradition of Sayyid Qutb. Sivan provides an especially important analysis of the importance of pre-modern thinkers like Ibn Taymiyyah in the articulation of the neo-radical ideology.

### **Terrorist Radicalism of the 1990s**

#### Texts:

Azzam, Abdullah al-. *Defence of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation After Iman and Join the Caravan*. Translations available at [www.religioscope.com](http://www.religioscope.com). At the site, search for “Azzam.” Important writings from the late 1980s by an important intellectual of Palestinian origins who was a major organizational leader in the Afghan jihad and played a significant role in developing the concept of a unitary global jihad, rather than seeing local jihads as separate causes. He was a major influence in shaping the thought of Bin Ladin.

Bin Laden, Osama. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (ed. Bruce Lawrence, Trans. James Howarth; London, 2005). This is a remarkably complete collection of Bin Laden's pronouncements between 1994 and 2004. Bruce Lawrence provides important interpretive commentary.

Zawahiri, Ayman al-. *His Own Words: A Translation of the Writings of Dr. Ayman al Zawahiri* (trans. Laura Mansfield; TLG Publications, 2006). This is basically a translation of “Knights Under the Prophet's Banner,” the major work by Bin Ladin's chief intellectual advisor.

Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, *Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in al-Qa'ida from 1989-2006* (Harmony Project, <http://ctc.usma.edu>, 2007). This is a very important collection of translated documents and analysis of the internal relations within the major organization of radical Islam in the 1990s.

#### Analyses:

Esposito, John L. *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York, 2003). This places the radicalism of the 1990s, and then of 9/11, in an historical perspective that has a global perspective and does not accept the “clash of civilizations” paradigm.

Gerges, Fawaz A. *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge, 2005). A thorough analysis based on a wide range of writings by jihadis and radicals of the debates within the broader movement of Radical Islam regarding tactics and goals.

Lewis, Bernard. *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York, 2004). This analysis is by the scholar who originally defined the conflicts involving relations between Islam and the West as a “clash of civilizations” and provided an important inspiration for Samuel Huntington.

### **Post-9/11 Radical Ideology**

#### Texts:

Maqdisi, Abu Muhammad ‘Aasim al-, “Democracy: A Religion!” Translated by Abu Muhammad al-Maleki and Abu Sayf Muwahhid. <http://downloads.Islambase.co.uk/booksEN/DemocracyReligion.pdf>. This is an essay by al-Maqdisi, who is described by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point as currently “the key contemporary ideologue in the Jihadi intellectual universe.” (*Militant Ideology Atlas*, p. 8 see below) He is a major definer of post-9/11 radical Islam.

Suri, Abu Mus‘ab al- [Mustafa Setmariam Nasar]. “Global Islamic Call.” Two chapters of this important tract are translated in Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus‘ab Al-Suri* (New York: 2008). Al-Suri has been described as the chief ideologue defining the post-9/11 more decentralized al-Qa’idah. Lia’s book is a very important analysis of post-9/11 radicalism.

Zawahiri, Ayman al. “The Power of Truth: Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri.” In December 2007, al-Zawahiri accepted questions via Internet and his answers were released in April 2008. A summary and analysis of his answers to hundreds of questions is provided in Jarret Brachman, Brian Fishman, and Joseph Felter, “The Power of Truth: Questions for Ayman al-Zawahiri,” 21 April 2008, on the site of the Combating Terrorism Center, United States Military Academy at [www.ctc.usma.edu](http://www.ctc.usma.edu). This collection represents a comprehensive presentation of Bin Ladinism in 2007-2008.

#### Analyses:

McCants, William, ed. *Militant Ideology Atlas*. Executive Report, November 2006, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. [www.ctc.usma.edu](http://www.ctc.usma.edu). This short reference work provides a remarkably inclusive directory of the major ideologues who are currently shaping the conceptual content of Radical Islam in the post-9/11 era.

Rashwan, Dina, ed. *The Spectrum of Islamist Movements* (Berlin, 2007). This work, initially published by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (Cairo), provides detailed analyses of the major Islamist movements and thinkers in the post-9/11 era.

Roy, Olivier. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York, 2004). This book provides an important analysis of the main lines of Muslim thought and activism, with special attention given to “post-Islamism” and “Neofundamentalism,” which are key concepts in post-9/11 Radical Islam.

Sageman, Marc. *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, 2008). This analysis concentrates more on organizational structure than ideology but provides a thought-provoking picture of the organizational character of post-9/11 Radical Islam.