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TESTIMONY OF TONY BLANKLEY BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS'S SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA *

The nature and the origin of the threat posed by radical Islam is vastly more than al Qaeda and the stakes are much higher than most people realize. The danger is posed by the increasing rate of change and ferment amongst Islam's fifth of mankind—-over a billion human souls.

One can take some measure of the rapidness of change in modern Islam by the
fact that scholars are currently not able to even agree on the terms they use to describe the process. They continue to struggle over nomenclature. Terms such as fundamentalist, neo-fundamentalists, Islamists, jihadists,

pietistic (or sheikist) salafism,
jihadist salafism, Wahhabist, Muslim
Brotherhood, radical, extremist,
militant, etc. are used in overlapping
and contradictory ways.

For instance, Olivier Roy, a leading
Parisian scholar of contemporary Islam
limits the use of the term "Islamist"
to Muslims who seek to apply Islam
comprehensively to a state—as opposed
to society in general. Whereas, many
western analysts use the term Islamist
as a synonym for armed jihadist or
radical.

But across the range of experts—from
American conservative analysts who are
deeply fearful of Islam to the top
European scholars who are much more
sympathetic to Islam's current
potential for good—there is a broad
area of agreement on the current state
of Islam and the West.

Most experts agree that the current
ferment originated in the founding of
the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928
by Hassan al-Banna—the first modern
grassroots, urban mass movement of
political Islam, designed to defeat

western imperialism and secularism by turning back to a supposedly pristine form of Islam as practiced by the founder, Mohammed, and the early generations that followed him.

In time the Brotherhood gave rise to both moderate reform and violent jihad. The latter was championed by Sayyid Qutb in the 1940-60's, whose book "Signposts on the Road", became the seminal justification for jihad and terror as a necessary response to the predicament of Muslim conditions.

In Muslim lands of the middle east and central Asia, Islamic theories emerged to challenge the legitimacy of their local Muslim leaders-who were seen as captives of the West and opposed to bringing into being genuine Islamic rule. Islamists and jihadist became primary enemies for the Muslim governments, which executed their leaders, such as Sayyid Qutb (who was executed by the Egyptian government in 1966.)

Interlacing these developments, of course, has been the impact of wahhabism, which gained the conversion of the founder of the House of Saud in 1744. This austere, purist strain of Islam remained an inconsequential desert sect until the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia. Backed by billions of petro-dollars since the 1970's, it has been spreading an aggressive anti-Western lesson throughout the Islamic world, and is one of the key tributaries that has helped form the current raging Islamic river which threatens to wash over the West.

One of the key shifts in modern radical Islamist thought has been the new centrality of individual jihad. Jihad had never been one of the five pillars of Islam—the five commitments that every Muslim must make to be a good Muslim: profession of faith, prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage.

But Sayyid Qutb and those who have developed his thoughts explicitly included jihad as a permanent and individual duty (fard'ayn). As Olivier Roy observes: "This is probably the best criterion with which to draw a

line between conservative
neofundamentalists and radical ones:
the latter are rightly called
jihadists. Among the few writings of
Osama bin Laden, the definition of
jihad as a permanent and personal duty
holds a central place. His concept of
suicide attack is not found in Islam."

Thus these radicals who claim to be
traditionalists have innovated the
concept of individual jihad. And that
therefore, such jihads are not from
the Muslim community, but are
individual decisions.

This is important because the
recruitment of terrorists today tends
to use appeals to individual
responsibility for upholding Islam, and
is ideally suited for the
internet age where individuals not
living in a Muslim land—perhaps sitting
alone in their apartment in Hamburg or
Rotterdam or Falls Church looking for
meaning in their lives on the internet—
make an individual decision to commit
to suicidal jihad.

So long as there were few Muslims in
the West and few connections between

the lands of Islam and Western lands,
the intricate theories of these
reforming, fundamentalist, literalist,
purifying strains of Islam were
happily ignored by all in the West,
except a handful of scholars.

The theoretical divisions between all
these different groups reminds one of
the similar plethora of factional
groups in the emerging left wing of
Western politics in the first quarter
of the twentieth century. Who , other
than the hand full of doctrinaire
activists, cared to learn the
distinctions between the socialist
workers party, the communist labor
party, the communist workers party,
etc.

But in the last thirty years the Muslim
population in Europe expanded
rapidly from a few hundred thousand to
over twenty million. And the coming
of a globally connected world—-and
particularly the emergence of the
internet in the last decade—has dumped
all this furious passion, theorizing

and action into Europe (and to a lesser but growing extent, into the United States).

It has done far more than merely transplant Islam's internecine struggle to the West. Currently Muslims in Europe and the U.S. are not merely disputing amongst themselves how Muslim nations should be run and how Muslims in the middle east and Asia should live their lives.

For the first time in modern history, Muslims are arguing over a three sided debate regarding whether their role in Europe is to: integrate into European society; ghettoize themselves, keeping separate from their European hosts; or convert Europe to Islam—-the Islamization of Europe as called for in bin Laden's declarations.

The last option has been seminally, perhaps prophetically, analyzed by Bat Ye'or in her recently published book "Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis".

It is in the minds of the twenty million and growing Muslims living in

Europe (and a much smaller, but growing number in the United States) that Danger is posed. Some large percentage of these people are content to be good , law abiding, culturally integrating citizens. But according to almost all estimates an increasing number feel some degree of alienation from the European culture. There are two reasons for this. Europeans tend not to greet immigrants as hospitably as Americans do-thus increasing the chance that the immigrant will resent European culture. But, importantly, because of the dynamic teaching and debate going on amongst Muslims in Europe, many Muslims are coming to believe that they have a religious duty not to integrate.

Amongst that group, some will be content to voluntarily secede from the local culture. Others will attempt to change European culture to Islamic form. And yet others will cross over into religiously justified (in their minds) violence.

Part of the analytical problem here is that both the peaceful and violent

separatists derive their motivations
from the same growing Salafist
movement, both wings of which insist
that there be no compromise with
non-Islamic governments.

In trying to understand both the nature
of the threat to us, and the range
of options open to us to combat that
threat, I need to pause here and note
the emergence of the ambiguously
motivated Islamic Party of Liberation
(Hizh ut-Tahrir al Islamiyya.) It is,
in the words of French scholar Olivier
Roy, a former Islamist party that has
turned neo-fundamentalist, while
keeping some of its Muslim Brotherhood
past, and insisting on building an
Islamist state in the form of a
caliphate that would rule over all the
Muslim people (the ummah).

It is organized by cells in forty
countries, is virulently anti-American
and is both a conveyor belt and
camouflage for terrorism—and yet it
does not explicitly advocate terrorism.
So what are Western governments to do
with such an entity.

The best recent study of this movement
was by Zeyno Baran for the Nixon
Center in Washington D.C., for which
she is the Director for International
Security and Energy Programs. She also
holds Stanford University's Firestone
Medal for her scholarship on Islam and
Democracy.

Her study points out that the Islamic
Party of Liberation shares the same
political objectives as terrorists
groups. It wants to replace the
"judeo-Christian dominated nation-state
system" with a borderless umma.
Because it doesn't call for violence,
it is both more appealing to many
Muslims and harder for a western
governments to characterize as an
outlawed organization.

"However", as the Nixon Center study
observes, "upon closer analysis it is
clear that [its] renunciation of
violence is only superficial. Violence
has been repudiated by [them], but
other groups working towards the same
goals that do use violence are never
condemned by [them]. The groups never
denounce terrorists attacks. In many
ways it is part of an elegant division

of labor. The group itself is active in the ideological preparation of the Muslims, while other organizations handle the planning and execution of terrorist attacks."

In other words, while al-Qaeda is the symbol and one of the implementers of terrorism, the Islamic Party of Liberation does the ground work of delivering the message and getting into the activist debate that ultimately leads to more recruits for terrorism

In this political communications struggle to win over the minds of European and American Muslims, as in most political communication efforts, the advocates try to manipulate and intimidate their target audience. So how do European Muslims get effected by this constant ideo-religious barrage?

The Canadian Muslim journalist and author, Irshad Manji at an Aspen Institute Berlin conference was remarkably frank in assessing both the nature and extent of Muslim extremism in Europe:

"It mostly depends on how you define extremism. If you mean "literalism", then it is more than widespread—it is mainstream. If you mean the overt preaching of violence, then it percolates on the margins. The key is to recognize that because literalism is mainstream in Islam today, the thin minority of Muslims who have any intention of engaging in terror are nonetheless protected by the vast majority of moderate Muslims who don't know how to debate and dissent with that proclivity.

"Let me explain why. We Muslims, even in the West, are routinely raised to believe that because the Koran comes after the Torah and the Bible (historically and chronologically), it is the final and therefore perfect manifesto of god's will. The Koran, we are taught, does not lend itself to the inconsistencies and ambiguities and outright contradictions and, God forbid, human editing like those earlier scriptures. Mainstream Muslims believe, as an article of faith, that the Koran is not like any other scripture. It is the summit of the holy books. This is a supremacy complex,

which even moderate Muslims share. And
this supremacy complex is dangerous
because when abuse happens under the
banner of Islam, most Muslims do not
yet know how to debate, dissent, revise
or reform. That's because we have
not yet been introduced to the
possibility, let alone the virtue, of
asking questions about out holy book.
The same cannot be said today for
moderate Christians and Jews.

"In that sense …Islamic terrorism, both
in the Netherlands and abroad, is
able to thrive because it is embedded
in a wider circle of fellow Muslims.
This is the reality that most Western
security experts have yet to grasp.

"…[Because] most Muslims have never
been given the permission to interpret
the Koran freely, they feel it is not
their place to denounce those who
"know better." Islamist terrorists are
expert in quoting the Koran for their
purposes. To question them, it is
widely felt, is to question the Koran
itself, and that is off limits."

Mr. Manji went on to explain that: "A
second reason is the sheer fear of

persecution from fellow Muslims, even
in open societies such as Western
Europe and North America. Let me
illustrate. Despite the anger, venom
and death threats I receive for having
written a book called "The Trouble with
Islam" I'm much more surprised by the
support, affection and even love I
hear from fellow Muslims. But most of
the Muslims who write to me in
support, or who whisper "thank-you" in
my ear after a public event, tell me
that they can't be public about the
support. Nor do they feel that they can
be vocal about their own struggles with
the faith today. That's because they
fear "persecution." I have engaged
enough of the people who use this word
to report that they mean more than
ostracism. They mean physical reprisal
against themselves and their families."

The Muslim journalist and scholar,
Manji, describes a process of the
radical few intimidating into silence
the non radical many. This is not a
process unique to Muslim culture. A
very similar process happened in
Germany between
1919-1945.

Then, Germans felt humiliated, confused and swept-up in external forces and cultural intrusions. The Nazi's, a tiny minority were both well organized, aggressive and claimed to speak for an ancient and true German culture. They particularly targeted German youth

As they alienated the youth from their parents, so they both intellectually and physically intimidated "good" Germans into silence, then collaboration and eventually full support.

It became both dangerous to ones health and "unGerman" to oppose the Nazi movement. In essence in the 1920-30's in Germany, the Nazi's had both the "winning" ideas and the strongest fists. They seemed to have the wind of history at their back. Both by inspiration and intimidation they took over a nation adrift.

Muslims today, both those in traditionally Muslim lands and in Europe and the West are similarly situated. Radical Islam, accurately sometimes called Islamo-fascism, has all of those Nazi "advantages". They

find a Muslim adrift and humiliated by
the dominance of foreign nations and
cultures. They find a large youthful
population who increasingly disdain
their parents passive habits.

Just as the Nazis reached back to
German mythology and their supposed
Aryan racial origins, the radical
Islamists are reaching back to the
founding ideas and myths of their
religious culture.

And, just like the Nazi's, they are
fabricating a mixture of authentic
founding ideas with expedient new
ideas masked as authentically ancient.

For instance, young Muslims are
encouraged by the radical propagandist
Mullahs to make individual decision to
join jihad, and not to turn to
parents for guidance on marriage mate
selection. They are allowed to drink
alcohol, shave their beards or take on
other non-traditional Muslim life
styles in order to advance the jihad.

In many ways these new radical
fundamentalists are post-modern, not

pre-modern. They are certainly designing a distinctly Western version of Islam, that is less and less connected to the Islam of their middle eastern homeland .

It is akin to genetically modifying an organism to make it a more effective intruder in a new host. Radical Western Islam brings with it the combative strength and deep faith of its authentic traditions, while constantly modifying itself in such ways as to maximize asymmetrical advantage over liberal, secular European (and American) institutions.

The jihad decision is a particularly critical radical innovation. Traditionally, only the doctors of Islamic law, the ulema, were authorized to declare armed jihad. It was also the Ulema's job to distinguish between jihad and fitna. According to traditional doctrine the jihad is a force that restores harmonious order to the world, while fitna is the opposite— it is a seditious activity that threatens to fragment the faithful Muslim community.

Under the tradition, only the Ulema can legally declare jihad in its extreme form—as an armed struggle. They must first make sure it is not a false jihad or fitna.

By overturning the prerogative of the Ulema to make the final decision on armed jihad, and instead telling young Muslims that they may individually make the decision based on their own reading of the Koran, the radical neo-fundamentalists have vastly empowered themselves to organize and fight the West without the traditional collective restraints imposed by the Ulema.

In this way, they are similar to the Nazis of the 1920-30's, who successfully reduced or eliminated in the minds of German youth (and other vulnerable Germans, particularly the economically ravaged petty bourgeois) , the authority of traditional German institutions such as the church, the government, parents and the professors. Instead, the Nazi's propagandized the youth to individually return to the allegedly ancient "truths" about

their "Aryan race" and reject the guidance of their elders and the traditional institutions.

This Nazi mix of subverting traditional institutions and picking up useful modern methods, while urging a faux-return to ancient truths has been usefully called reactionary modernism. It is a vastly more potent and dangerous movement than mere nostalgia for the past or careful and dutiful adherence to the literal teachings of a culture or religion.

While fully exploiting young people's need to feel connected to something authentic and larger than themselves, it is free to expediently embrace such modern activities, customs or methods as their target audience of young Muslims might want to cling on to—or which might be useful in the struggle for dominance. The radical Islamists are able to rationalize concessions to modernity with ancient sounding mumbo jumbo, while still sounding like authentic fundamentalists, and the only true voice of Islam.

The Nazi's overwhelmed German society by these methods seventy years ago. And there is building evidence that the radical Islamists are moving ever more successfully down the same path— particularly within the younger generations of Western Muslims in Europe (and to a lesser extent in United States.)

Thomas Friedman, The New York Times foreign policy columnist, reporting from
Paris in January of 2005 closed his column on the mood in Paris with the following anecdote about his interview of two French Muslim 18 year old girls who were born and raised in France.

"What did I learn from them? That they got all their news from Al Jazeera TV, because they did not believe French TV, that the person they admire most in the world is Osama bin Laden, because he was defending Islam, that suicide martydom was justified because there was no greater glory than dying in defense of Islam, that they saw themselves as Muslims first and French

citizens last, and that all their friends felt pretty much the same."

 As I discussed above, Muslims in Europe, and to a lesser extent in America,--particularly second and third generation Muslims—should not be considered part of a diaspora. Increasingly, they are no longer strongly connected to their family's country of origin. Nor do they intend to return. They are forming their own indigenous Muslim consciousness. Significantly, their connection to Islamic ideas come from the internet, books, video and audio tapes—all locations where radical ideas and mullahs dominate.

As the French Islamic scholar, Gilles Kepel describes it:

"On websites in every European language, whether jihadist or pietist, trendy jargon blends in with an intense polemic founded on obscure religious references to medieval scholars…In chat rooms, linguistic shortcuts mingle with a profusion of Islamic formulas. In the midst of an English text one

finds PBUH (for Praise be upon him) in Arabic script….All of this debate and intensity seems completely unrelated to the social and cultural reality of European Islam as it is lived in the worker's cities. Yet this strange language serves to express some of the tensions that pull members of these communities to one side and then the other."

The European internet has many radical Islamic "experts" and mullahs who function like Dear Abby. European Muslims pose questions—everything from whether to be polite to infidels, to how to prepare for jihad—and the "expert" provides an immediate answer, often a hodge podge of Koranic citations, quotes from ancient scholars and the expert's own advice.

It is in this constantly morphing digital environment that a new, increasingly radical Islam is emerging in Europe. Disconnected from their homelands, isolated from their non-Muslim neighbors and fellow workers, disconnected from their elders—a weird, disembodied globalized radical Islam

is appealing to Europe's young Muslims. But not just to the Muslims.

Converts to Islam is a growing element. Olivier Roy identifies four categories of converts: politicized rebels, religious nomads, former drug addicts and petty thieves, and Blacks, Latinos and persons of mixed race.

The first category is catching European youth who a generation ago would have been swept up in Marxist movements. John Walker Lindh—the California Al Qaeda caught in Afghanistan-- typifies the religious seeker. Drug addicts and thieves are seeking structure and support, while some young people of color find radical Islam a "rebuke" to a European or American society they feel has rejected them. Of course these converts are "an intense focus of terrorist networks" precisely because they do not "look" Muslim.

Prisons are obviously fertile recruiting grounds for terrorists. And, due to

a combination of a false sense of
tolerance and an almost inexplicable
ignorance, prison authorities in both
America and Europe are permitting
radical, Wahhabist mullahs into the
prisons—in much the same way as a
Catholic priest or a Methodist minister
might be invited in.

A generation ago, the American Black
Muslim movement, whatever else might be
said about it, went into the prisons
and reclaimed young criminals to a life
of good manners, gainful employment,
respect for women, self-respect and
usually lawfulness. Today the radical
Muslim recruiters are enlisting an
already battle hardened legion into the
ranks of Islamic terrorists.

It is hard to quantify the current
attitudes of Muslims in Europe because
recent polling is spotty, but the
Guardian Newspaper in Britain had done
some reliable polling. In March of
2004, 13% of British Muslims favored
more terrorist attacks on the United
States. Another Guardian poll from
November 2004 found that 86% of British
Muslims were against the use of
violence in Britain to gain political

objectives. This was cited as good news
by the liberal Guardian newspaper. But
in fact it is appalling that over one
in ten British Muslims (the 14% that
didn't oppose violence) would admit to
a pollster that they were in favor of
political terrorism in the country they
called home.

In November of 2004, 61% of British
Muslims wanted Sharia (Koranic-guided)
law rather than British law applied to
Muslims in Britain for civil
matters—assuming it did not violate
regular British law. And, in the same
sample, one in four British Muslims
(26%) believed that the Muslim
community has already integrated too
much into British society. That is up
from 17% in a previous poll.   Slightly
more, 33% think more integrating should
occur. But that number is down sharply
from 41% in a previous poll .

Although those absolute numbers are
fairly disturbing, the rapid movement
in the numbers should be seen as even
more alarming. A drop in support for
becoming integrated into their society
from over four in ten to barely three

in ten (with almost all of that drop in support not stopping at undecided, but moving from 17% to 26% to the belief that they have already integrated too much) is an unambiguous indicator that the radical, culturally assertive argument is quickly winning the day in the already established British Muslim community. Attitudes of new immigrants is overwhelmingly likely to be even more hostile to Western culture.

While there are few good numbers available to objectively measure the magnitude of this aggressive cultural attitude, some numbers and events are suggestive of the growing danger.

In June 2004 Ken Macdonald, British Director of Public Prosecutions reported that he might re-open criminal investigations of 117 Muslim British Women who had been murdered because they were suspected to be victims in "honour killings", in which Muslim men, under Muslim traditional laws are allowed to kill their wives, daughters and sisters if they believe they are "perceived to bring dishonor on their families."

In January 2005 British Muslim cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed was reported by the London Times to have been monitored by that newspaper broadcasting on his internet site condoning suicide terrorist attacks and urging young British Muslims to join al-Qaeda. "I believe the whole of Britain has become Dar ul-Harb (land of war). In such a state the kuffar (non-believer) has no sanctity for their own life or property" , he said. He went on to advise one Muslim woman that she was permitted to become a suicide bomber.

After the broadcast, Mr. Bakri told the London Times that he was not calling for violent action in the U.K. He said his definition of Britain as Dar ul-Harb was "theoretical."

A few days later he was monitored telling his listeners "Al-Qaeda and all its branches and organizations of the world, that is the victorious group and they have the emir and you are obliged to join. There is no need to mess about."

Two nights later he broadcast that the voices of dead Mujahidin were calling young Britons to fight. "These people are calling you and shouting to you from far distant places: al jihad, al jihad. They say to you my dear Muslim brothers, "'Where is your weapon, where is your weapon? Come on to the jihad."

While the British authorities could detain him if he were deemed a terrorist associate under the Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Act, they had not yet done so after those broadcasts.

On a slightly different front, the British Advertising Standards Authority reported in January 2005 that British Muslims have stepped up a campaign of defacing or tearing down public billboards that feature adds that elements in the Muslim community consider inappropriate, such as ads for perfume, hair dye, undergarments and ads for television shows of which they disapprove.

In April 2004 Germany's Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BFV,

one of three German intelligence services) issued a major report on Islamic extremism in Germany. While it could only identify 57,300 specific individual Muslims as "radical" (German bureaucrats are justly renowned for their careful attention to detail supported by impeccable record-keeping), Otto Schilly, the German Interior Minister stated that the extremist Islamist groups command a much larger number of covert sympathizers and had extended its influence to a wider swathe of the Muslim population than a year before. He added that they are reaching many more people with their "disintegrative activities" that were "in particular attracting a younger following."

Minister Schilly expressed concern that the largest Islamic organization in Germany, Milli Gorus, while still technically a legal operation under German law has developed "a strong anti-western and anti-democratic character." The organization specifically tries to indoctrinate Muslims living in Germany. "We're very

critical of their youth work" , said Schilly.

In November 2004 German television broadcast the words and images of a German Turkish Imam urging his Bavarian prayer room to "take advantage of democracy to further our cause

In Norway in December of 2004, the Norwegian Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, expressed disappointment that "Most of Norway's top politicians, but very few Imams participated in a torchlight protest march against violence and terrorism." The March was to express outrage at the murder in nearby Holland the week before of film maker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim terrorist.

This boycott by leading Muslims in Norway came just days after the spokesman for the Islamic Council in Norway, Zahid Mukhtar, had said on national television that he could "understand that Muslims had been provoked by van Gogh's latest film, and that he could understand why someone murdered him."

Meanwhile, in Canada the debate about whether to establish Shairah law for Canadian Muslims is heating up. Shariah is the broad collection of laws compiled over a thousand years of Muslim jurisprudence based on the Koran and its commentaries, the Sunnah or Hadith. In 2004 Ontario Attorney General Marion Boyd suggested the possibility of applying Shariah under a 1991 Canadian arbitration law. Muslims in Canada have been engaged in a heated debate which Farzana Hassan-Shahid, the President of Muslims Against Terrorism, Canada, describes as "now being perceived as a battle between devout Muslims, and those who are Muslim in name only, whose sole objective …is to denigrate Islam and vilify Muslims." This argument, that if you are not radical you are not a good Muslim, is of a piece with the Nazi argument in the 1920's and 1930's that if you are not a Nazi, you are not a good German and not a good child of the fatherland.

The radical Islamist's assertion that Shariah should apply in Canada or Europe is another example of how they are manipulating Islamic traditions

for the modern purpose of jihad and cultural aggression. Shariah was meant to apply in Muslim lands. Europe (and, obviously North America) were not such lands. Non-Islamic lands were designated either Dar al-Harb, the land of war, or Dar al-Sulh, the land of truce. The traditional, non-jihadists have historically designated Europe the land of truce—thus neither Shariah nor jihad would be legitimate.

But radical groups such as the European Fatwa Council-which is the legal arm of the British-based Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE) has re-designated Europe as part of "the land of Islam". Thus, they assert that Muslim's are entitled to be judged by Shariah law, rather than the enacted law of which ever country they happen to be living in.

Whether in Britain, where 61% of British Muslims want to live under shariah, or Canada, where the fight is just now heating up, it is almost inevitable that the side calling for a return to an alleged traditional, devout Islam are going to win these battles within the Muslim communities.

Once a Muslim in the West has accepted that first premise of returning to "devout" Islam, as opposed to "Islam in name only", it becomes progressively harder to oppose the terrorist elements within their community. For example, in the same Guardian newspaper poll of November 2004 in Britain that found 86% opposed to the use of violence to gain their political ends, only about 70% told pollsters they would turn in a fellow Muslim if he was a terrorist.

So in Britain by the end of 2004 , already about one in ten Muslims admit to be willing to commit terrorist acts, and one in three admit to be willing to protect Muslim terrorists from lawful authorities, while six in ten want to be governed by Muslim Shariah law rather than British law. And, virtually every law enforcement organization, intelligence expert and Islamic scholar believes the trend continues to move towards such attitudes and away from traditional, law abiding and assimilating intentions.

Muslim parts of Paris, Rotterdam and other European cities are already

called "no-go zones" for ethnic Europeans, including armed policemen. As the Muslim populations expand and their level of cultural/religious assertiveness expands, more and more European geography will be "reclaimed" for Islam. Europe will become pock-marked with increasing numbers of "little Fallujah's" that will be impenetrable by anything short of military units.

Thus, as the partially ersatz westernized internet-communicated fundamentalism expands its reach in to European (and to a lesser, but probably increasing extent American) Muslim communities, not only will Islamic cultural aggression against a seemingly passive and apologetic indigenous population increase, but the zone of safety and support for the actual terrorist will expand.

For much of the West, but particularly for Europe, there is a blind denial

that anything transforming in the world
is really happening. For these
people-- which includes most of the
European elites and far too many
American politicians and journalists—it
remains business and politics as
usual. They are as sheep that cannot
sense the wolf pack in the woods. Or
if they see the odd wolf tail, they
can't imagine that the other end of
the animal could at any moment be
sinking its teeth into their throats.
They have never been slaughtered
before; surely they won't be
slaughtered now. So they go on
munching.

Even for those who recognize the
magnitude of the danger, there exists
an inability to consider responses
other than those that flow out of
current practices and mentalities.

The central shortcomings of the West's
feeble response, to date, derive from
the natural human instinct to forget
the distant past and to assume that the
more or less benign trends of the
recent past will continue. In fact,
human history unfolds much more by

discontinuities from the past and dynamic social responses to the present.   From the extraordinary explosion of Alexander the Great, to the birth of Christ, to the French Revolution to the American Civil War to the rise of Hitler, shocking discontinuities from the status quo have defined the path of history.

King Darius of Persia never imagined—even as he faced Alexander at the beginning of the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C., that within three years he would be dead, his Achaemenid Dynasty ended and the great hegemonic Persian Empire crushed and conquered as a result of that outnumbered Macedonian upstart.

American farmers in 1860 never dreamed that within months their husbands, sons and brothers would be killed in battle, and America would be transmogrified by continental war. And Londoners in the summer of 1939, my parents included, would have been disbelieving if they had been told that soon 40,000 of their fellow Londoners would lie dead in the streets from

German bombing, and that within five years Great Britain would never be great again.

There is no more misleading phrase in the English language than "if current trends continue." Stability is an illusion. Change is all. For both individuals and peoples, current trends never continue for very long. The better way to think is to ask when the current trends will stop, and what will follow them.

The first discontinuity that must be recognized, as I mentioned, is that the danger is not merely Osama bin Laden and a few thousand terrorists who may kill several thousand people and knock down some buildings. Although, Bin Laden and those he has inspired, alone, are a mortal threat. Rather, we are confronted with Islam in ferment and insurgent as it has not been in at least a half a millennium—if not a millennium and a half.

A great people, a proud culture, and a powerfully faith-inducing religion--

a fifth of mankind—is unleashing an expansive energy at magnitudes that cannot yet be measured. Efforts to count the "jihaddist" percentage is pointless, if not dangerously misleading. There is a dynamic process underway that may peter out before it touches one in a hundred Muslims. Or, it may impassion a vastly greater number. The latter is the far more likely eventuality.

A force of Muslim energy is being released that has not been seen at least since the rise of the Ottoman Turks in the 15th century. In the following two hundred years that energy overwhelmed Bulgaria, Serbia, Andrianople, Kosovo , most of the rest of the Balkan Peninsular Constantinople, Budapest, Transylvania, Walachia, Moldavia, Persia, Egypt, Syria, and Greece. Only at the gates of Vienna in 1683, was the surge finally stopped—and then only barely.

Today we face a force of human passion and exertion that may well match a similar expansion that burst out of Renaissance Europe, and came to be

known in the West as the Age of
Discovery—but was know everywhere else
as the age of conquest, imperialism and
colonialism.

And let it be noted, the quality of the
human stock that surged out of 15th
century Europe was in no way superior
to that which today peoples the
Islamic world.

But one must be careful with historic
analogies to avoid literalism. History
is a guide to human potentialities, it
is not necessarily a blueprint or
predictor of particular strategies or
tactics.   The Ottoman Turks rode
forth on horseback with curved swords
in hand. The energy of Islam today
insinuates itself through the forces of
globalization and the internet.

It has long been observed by scholars
that the Protestant Reformation would
not have been possible without the
invention of movable type by
Guttenberg. The doctrinal requirement
of a direct relation between the
Protestant Christian and his bible
without the intermediation of a church

hierarchy was only possible when bibles were cheap enough to print that everyman, or at least every small village, could afford one.

The printing press made that possible. And the century-long wars of religion between Catholic and Protestant armies and peoples that ensued, killed five to eight million European Christians, including a third of all Germans.

Today , it is beginning to be noticed by astute observers, such as former senior CIA official Michael Scheuer, that the world-wide rise of Islamic ferment would not be possible without the internet. The internet uniquely creates virtual communities of interest. For actual Islamic terrorists, it constitutes a place to be trained in every aspect of the terrorist's art; and renders unnecessary physical training camps such as bin Laden set up in Afghanistan only a decade ago—and which we fought a war in 2001 to dismantle.

Similarly, for anyone, Muslim or otherwise, who wants to intellectually

engage in the passionate debates that currently roil Islam, the debate, the passion, the propaganda, even the threats and intimidation are only a keyboard away. According to one count, the number of explicitly terrorist-supporting internet sites has risen from 12 to over two thousand
in only a couple of years. The number of web sites more generally engaged in Islamic ferment are too numerous to yet be counted.

Beyond that unknown, but obviously growing, number of Muslims around the world, who are committed to terrorism, perhaps as great a threat as terrorism arises from the Islamic diaspora's growing cultural and religious assertiveness. This is particularly the case in largely secular Europe, where Muslim cultural assimilation must be considered a failure even before September 11th.

Curiously, despite (or perhaps because of) America's deeper and more pervasive religious faith and practice, American Muslims have better assimilated into our culture. As a nation of immigrants, our culture has

always welcomed other peoples more instinctively than have the more ethnically homogenous European nations. But even in America, the danger of Muslim cultural assertiveness, and in some unknown number, support for Islamist terrorists, is a potential danger that must be monitored and contained. At this point it is not knowable whether the still gathering worldwide Islamic ferment and insurgency may come to grip and taint our current and growing Muslim population.

And, what takes this danger beyond prior historical precedent is the high likelihood that biological, chemical, radiological or (less likely, but possibly) even nuclear weapons of mass destruction will come into the hands of radical Muslims, raising the quite plausible specter of genocidal warfare anytime in the next few years or decades.

A big part of the problem in understanding the threat comes from not

having any obvious words to describe
it. As linguists explain, an important
role of language is its capacity to
evoke cognitive images which mold our
notion of reality. The right word or
phrase creates an understanding and
opens in our minds concepts of things
we can't see.

For example without the word "love",
sentences, paragraphs, sonnets, whole
volumes would be needed to create and
communicate the idea. While there are
different kinds of love, yet the use of
that one word effectively conveys a
whole set of sentiments and
relationships which most people
immediately understand. The word is
not a description, but an evocation of
an idea.

And the wrong words create the wrong
mental concepts. From the beginning,
the phrase War on Terror has been a
deeply flawed description of both the
danger and our response. As I
discussed, above, the danger is more
than terrorist attacks. It includes,
along with actual terror strikes,
immigration, cultural aggression, a
conflict of values, religions and life

styles. Professor Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" is a closer approximation of the danger.

But even the word "clash" evokes the linear image of a line of confrontation. And indeed, Professor Huntington, writing in 1994, described a geographic arc of danger from the middle east to Indonesia. In fact, in today's globalized and internetted world , the forces we must confront are ubiquitous. They are ahead of us, behind us and within us.

So also is the word 'war' inadequate to evoke in our minds the kind of conduct in which we are involved. WW II is what we think of as a war: millions of uniformed soldiers, thousands of ships, tanks and airplanes engaged in the activity of materially destroying the enemy's martial assets, seizing geographic locations and eventually marching into the enemy's capital and hanging or imprisoning their leaders.

But the word war is right, if inadequate, in one crucial mental element. It correctly evokes the sense of physical danger and the need for

extraordinary action and possible
sacrifice. It is also partially
correct, in that in the course of this
struggle, there will be conventional
military battles. Afghanistan and Iraq
were wars as conventionally understood.
There will surely be several others.

Another problem with the word war is
its recent metaphoric usage: Over the
last quarter century Americans have
been called to wars against cancer,
drugs, obesity and poverty, among other
bad things we have in our lives.
Thus, the war on terror seems to fall
somewhere between a clichéd metaphor
and a literal phrase that doesn't seem
to meet the literal definition of
the term. The term not only fails to
describe or accurately evoke the
nature of the activity we are engaged
in, but it induces cynicism.

Perhaps no aspect of our response has
been thrown into more disarray over
this terminological confusion than our
legal system. As a nation of
constitutional law and precedent, the
legal status of an activity is vital
to determining its constitutionality.

During the various states of war over
the last two hundred years, our
Supreme Court has upheld government
intrusions on civil liberties,
including enforcement of laws of
sedition, censorship, and internment of
both enemy aliens and, in the case of
the Japanese, American citizens. But
whether such intrusions have been
constitutionally permitted has depended
on the actual circumstances and—
importantly--whether or not Congress
has authorized a state of war.

As Chief Justice William Rehnquist
wrote in 1998: "When the President acts
pursuant to an expressed or implied
authorization of Congress, his
authority is at its maximum, for it
includes all that he possesses in his
own right plus all that Congress can
delegate…If his act is held
unconstitutional under these
circumstances, it usually means that
the Federal Government as
an undivided whole lacks power."

Currently, while we are engaged in a
"War on Terror", the President has not
sought a full state of war status. He
has merely gained authorization to

fight limited actions in Afghanistan
and Iraq.

But, of course, if he sought a
declaration of war, against whom would
it be declared? On December 8, 1941
Franklin Roosevelt declared war on
"The Japanese Empire." On April 2,
1917, Woodrow Wilson declared war on
the "Imperial German Government."
Against whom would President Bush and
Congress declare war in the War on
Terror?

Certainly there are several countries
which harbor and give succor to
terrorists. Conceivably, each of those
countries could be the subject of war
declarations. But often the terrorist
support in those countries come from
rogue elements. And even if they are,
as governments, guilty of war terror
making against the United States, such
countries do not include all the
terror warriors who are or may become
aligned against us.

Many, if not most of those combatants
making or planning war terror against
us are in fact private citizens in
countries like Britain, France, Germany

and Holland , which governments would catch and stop them if they could. In the parlance of military strategists, the enemy are "non-state actors."

Thus, because there is no government against which to declare comprehensive war, the maximum authority of the federal government to prosecute the war cannot be invoked. And yet we are at maximum peril.

The traditional constitutional war powers are fairly massive and very intrusive. President Bush has not requested such authority and thus he has not yet exercised them.

But why has President Bush not sought full constitutional war-fighting authority from Congress?

After all, even the President's most virulent opponents would concede the man is bold and assertive. And those who know the President best are convinced that he is fully seized of the existential threat that America currently faces from insurgent Islamists. Good heavens, the man has been prepared to upset the entire

international order, flout the United
Nations, outrage our closest European
allies, de-stabilize friendly middle
east governments, fight two wars and
risk his presidency—so determined is he
to try to protect our country.

And yet he has not sought nor exercised
full war powers. I would suggest that
even George the Bold has hesitated
because he correctly judges that a
majority of the public, the politicians
and the media do not believe we are
actually in a war. And that in the
absence of a word, a phrase or a
concept that convincingly describes
this dangerous-as-war-but-different
condition, the public can only assume
that we are in a state of less than
war.

In fact,I believe we are in a condition
more than war--at least as America has
understood a war threat since our
founding.

This strange war-but-not-war condition
that we find ourselves in was
shrewdly described by William S. Lind,
former Democratic Senator Gary Hart's

military advisor, and four Army and Marine Corp officers in a recent Marine Corp Gazette article describing what they call 4th generation warfare between a nation-state and non state actors:

"In broad terms, fourth generation warfare seems likely to be widely dispersed and largely undefined; the distinction between war and peace will be blurred to the vanishing point. It will be nonlinear, possibly to the point of having no definable battlefields or fronts. The distinction between "civilian" and "military" may disappear. Actions will occur concurrently throughout all participants' depths, including their society as a cultural, not just a physical entity."

In an odd way, we face a similarly vexing and confusing situation to that which the American Indians faced when confronted with European explorers in the 15th,16th and early 17th centuries.

The Europeans were not exactly an army, and warfare did not exactly

breakout. Indeed, often both sides seemed almost friendly and cooperative. Had the Europeans been seen as a threat, the Indians could have slaughtered them in short order. Even with their guns, there were only a few hundred Europeans, while there were hundreds of thousands of Indians.

Only gradually did the part colony, part exploration, part trading quest, part military intrusion gain in magnitude, change in intent, establish beachheads and eventually overwhelm the native population. The Indians lost despite their vast material and numerical advantage and their superior knowledge of the geography of what turned out to be a battlefield---because they had no point of reference in their history to properly judge what they were seeing before their very eyes.

The challenge for American and the West today is to be mentally alive to the fact that what we are experiencing with the Islamist insurgency is something different from anything we have experienced before. For Europeans, it

is something different even than the earlier Muslim expansions.

Because it is something new for us, our laws, traditions, ethical codes, concepts of friend and foe have not evolved to recognize and manage such a threat. As the greatest American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "The Life of the law has not been logic, it has been experience."

As our law and cultural institutions have not experienced this new phenomenon of a great cultural insurgency in a globalized, internetted , biological, chemical and nuclear weapon-present world, we must consider with a cool logic to what extent our self-imposed historic standards of conduct are sufficient to protect us from this new danger.

* Abstracted, abridged and modified from my book, The West's Last Chance: Will We Win the Clash of Civilizations?