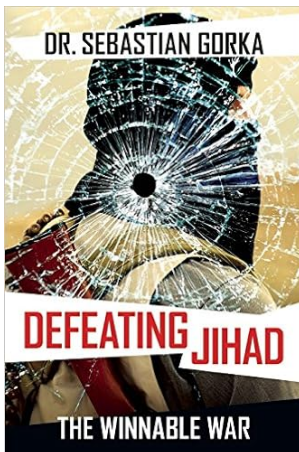


“Freedom is Precious and Fragile”: a review of Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War by Dr. Sebastian Gorka

by Jerry Gordon (April 2016)



[Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War](#)

by Dr. Sebastian Gorka

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Why is it in the 15 years since 9/11, after the loss of 7,000 American lives and \$2 trillion plus in treasure, we have failed to win the war against Global Jihad? That is the question answered in a new book, [Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War](#) by Dr. Sebastian Gorka, a recognized authority on counterterrorism and Distinguished Chair of Military Theory at the Marine Corps University. He is a much sought after guest on *Fox News*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *Sky News* and *The Lisa Benson Radio Show*. Listen to this podcast of a January 9, 2016 [broadcast](#) with Dr. Gorka and former commander of British Forces in Afghanistan, Co. Richard E. Kemp

(ret.) CBE.

It is not lost on many Americans that within months following 9/11, we failed to capture Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al Zawahiri in Tora Bora despite a US Special Ops team on horseback supported by C-130 Spectre gunships and an Afghan warlord's fighters had vanquished the Taliban. See: [Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of US Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan.](#)

Dr. Gorka suggests that mired in political correctness we failed to identify  the threat as the fanatical hybrid Islamic equivalent of the atheist tyranny of Soviet Communism. He argues that the next US President should revisit the case study of the 40 year containment policies that brought down the "evil empire." The next President and his national security team need to revisit the seminal "long telegram" by American diplomat in Moscow George Kennan which led to President Truman's 1947 declaration of war against Soviet Communism's threat to "bury us." The details of that plan are contained in Paul Nitze's 1950 NSC-68 document roadmap. Both documents are included in an appendix to Gorka's book.

Soviet tyranny is rivetingly depicted in Gorka's prologue about his Hungarian refugee parents who escaped to freedom during the 1956 Hungarian Revolt. He discusses his father's betrayal by the famed Soviet mole in MI-6, Kim Philby, which led to his imprisonment and torture under Hungarian Communists. Gorka learned from his parents, Paul and Susan, that "Freedom is as precious as it is fragile. If you are complacent, there will always eventually come a group that will try to take your freedom away from you by violence and through the subversion of your values."

Gorka contends "the current threat is hybrid totalitarianism that goes beyond man-made justifications for perfecting society along politically defined lines and instead uses the religion of Islam and Allah as justification."

He defines that threat as a "global jihadist movement [...] There is no middle ground. [...]The infidel must submit or be killed."

Gorka lays out the underlying Islamic doctrine in a masterfully succinct depiction of the various dimensions of historic Jihad doctrinal development. Accordingly, Gorka says that we lost our way following 9/11 in the brilliant opening stages of the misnamed GWOT (global war on terrorism) in both Afghanistan and Iraq. We forgot we came to both theaters of operation to quickly

crush and destroy the Jihadis who attacked us and became mired in mission creep endeavoring to remake both countries as functioning democracies against the historic realities of both tribal and religious sectarian divisions. The worst example of that was in Iraq. After crushing Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime and defeating its military, President Bush allowed his personal emissary, State Department official Paul Bremer, to become the "viceroy" of Baghdad. That left a 300,000 man unpaid and well-armed Army to revolt against the American occupation and its leaders. This facilitated an alliance with the al Qaeda in Iraq that morphed into ISIS and the self-declared Caliphate of the Islamic State.

Gorka contends that misuse of military, especially special operator assets, in counter insurgency programs to remake both Afghanistan and Iraq under Bush was a folly. President Obama's election as Commander in Chief worsened the problem by portraying the Iraq war as "bad" versus the Afghan one as "good" because the latter represented the epicenter of al Qaeda.

This gave rise to Obama relying on the "kinetic" tactic of killing Jihadi leaders of al Qaeda and its affiliates in what amounted to a "whack a mole" strategy that failed to win the war. That was compounded by Obama's doctrine that denied any mention of Islam and Jihad. Islam was depicted as a "religion of peace" in Presidential speeches in Ankara and Cairo. The strategy of temporary surges of combat troops was only a hiatus separating sectarian Shia / Sunni internal conflicts in Iraq or suppressing Taliban re-emergence in Afghanistan, now ironically supplanted by ISIS.

Gorka provides background to the emergence of Global Jihadism by following the evolution in post Qur'anic Islamic Doctrine. He dismisses the Jihad as "inner struggle" argument, instead concentrating on "jihad of the sword" which went through several stages of evolution over the 1,400 years since Mohammed. He cites the seven "swords" of imperialist Jihad:

- The suppression of apostate subjects, or "false Muslims";
- Revolution against "false" Muslim leaders;
- The anti-colonial struggle and the "purification" of the religion;
- Countering Western influence and *jahiliyyah*, or pagan ignorance of Allah;
- Guerrilla warfare against infidel invaders; and,

- The direct targeting of civilians in terrorist attacks

Gorka draws our attention to a constellation of three defining events in 1979 which were precursors to the rise of Global Jihadism; the Islamic Revolution in Shia Iran led by Ayatollah Khomeini, the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The toppling of the Shah's regime in Iran by Islamist Shia Mahdists demonstrated in Gorka's view the viability of a theocratic Caliphate that rejected western influences while supporting terrorism via both Shia and Sunni proxies in the Middle East against the US and Israel. The success of Iran's theocracy is reflected in the nuclear pact backed by the Administration and permanent members of the UN Security Council. The little known Grand Mosque takeover by armed Salafist extremists backed by Saudi clerics, while vanquished ironically with the aid of French commandos, forced a compromise between the Saudi King and the hard-line Islamists. The compromise supported the expansion of Wahabbist doctrine through the establishment of extremist mosques and madrassas throughout the Ummah and in the West. In the US that legacy is reflected in the North America Islamic Trust financing the expansion of nearly 2,200 mosques in the US and Canada. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan gave rise to the mujahedeen resistance led by Palestinian-Jordanian Sheik Abdullah Yusuf Azzam and his disciple bin Laden.

Gorka considers prominent among the grand masters of the Global Jihad Doctrine to be Azzam and Sayyid Qutb. Ayman Zawahiri, Egyptian surgeon and Muslim Brotherhood extremist, in the 1980's joined Azzam to treat the mujahedeen in Afghanistan. He later became bin Laden's deputy and is currently head of Al Qaeda Central. Al-Zawahiri infused Al Qaeda with MB doctrine. That influenced the 'rebranding' of what became Al Qaeda:

- Exporting jihadists to new guerrilla theaters around the world;
- Becoming the global face of jihad through propaganda;
- and
- Establishing cells across the world to execute terrorist attacks against the infidel.

Gorka credits Dr. Zawahiri with spreading the global jihad doctrine that eventuated in cells in more than 50 countries through his ideological biography *Knights under the Prophet's Banner*.

The new entrant in this Global Jihadist pantheon is Pakistani Brigadier General S.K. Malik who in the *annus horribilis* year of 1979 published, *The Qur'anic Concept of War*. (See: Lt. Col. Joseph C. Meyer (US Army (ret.) [review essay](#) in *Parameters*, the Strategic Studies Institute). He espouses the achievement of the ultimate Caliphate through acts of terrorism. Gorka writes: "It is the highly symbolic suicide attacks, the crucifixions, the beheadings, the bombings of civilian crowds, and the videos of immolations that will destroy the will of the infidel to go on."

Next up is American born Yemeni Sheik Anwar Al Awlaki, who left the US to lead Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The same Al Awlaki who was a fixture at Pentagon Ramadan dinners until his departure to Yemen. Gorka tags him as the 'bin Laden of the Internet." A 2010 issue of the AQAP magazine *Inspire* extolled the message: "Jihad against America is binding upon myself, just as it is binding on every other able Muslim." Both Awlaki and *Inspire* editor Samir Khan, another American jihadi, were taken out in US drone strikes ordered by President Obama.

Gorka's "long telegram" message about winning the war against the Islamic State (IS) Global jihad is grounded in these realities.

- The Islamic State: the world's first trans-regional insurgency. IS has recruited over 75,000 Jihadis from more than 100 countries, including 6,000 from the West, among them the returning vets in the Brussels network who perpetrated the Paris November 2015 and Brussels March 2016 massacres.

- The Islamic State: the richest jihadist group ever. IS is the richest terror sub state given an estimated 'GDP' of \$500 million from smuggled oil sales, *Jizya* extortion payments from its 6 million subjects, and sales of antiquities in the black market. Then there is the estimated \$853 million stolen from the Iraqi National Bank vaults in Mosul. Gorki estimates that IS wealth amounts to 1,600 times the \$500,000 that Al Qaeda used to fund 9/11 that caused billions in damages.

- A deadly combination: belief in Armageddon and social media expertise. Gorka stuns the reader by revealing what is so compelling a message for tens of thousands of Jihadis to flock to the Caliphate. The lands it occupies in Al Shaam in Syria and Iraq are the mythic Islamist end times venue

for the final holy war against the hated kuffars, infidels. That coupled with the adept social media in the *Debiq Magazine* and the slickly produced graphic videos depicting terror acts of beheadings, crucifixions and burnings communicate the end times of the only war that counts to conquer the world in the way of Allah, Jihad.

- The empire is back: ISIS succeeds where all others have failed.
Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi by declaring the Caliphate on the lands of the final war for Islamic victory in its end-times vision attracted fundamentalists who lamented the loss of the last Caliphate with the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Gorka demonstrates how compelling that has been for US jihadists:

Of the ISIS terrorists arrested or interdicted inside America since the Islamic State was declared, just over half had sworn *bayat* (fealty) to the new Caliphate and were preparing to leave the country to fight for ISIS in the Middle East. Of the rest, 19 percent were acting as talent-spotters or facilitators, like those management-level terrorists who vetted the young men and bought them their plane tickets to Turkey so they could cross into Syria to fight for the new empire. Most shocking of all, 29 percent of the ISIS supporters caught or killed in the United States saw no need to go anywhere to become a jihadi.

So what is Gorka's version of the "long telegram" to contain this barbaric IS threat?

ISIS and the broader global jihadist movement pose an existential threat to the United States because they are based upon the inherently undemocratic ideology of *takfiri jihad*, which denies that Western democracy and *Islam* can peacefully coexist. One must destroy the other. The *jihadists* can never be our partner, only a deadly foe. They are not interested in peace or stability, because they see their mandate as universal and unstoppable. According to *Abu Bakr and his Islamic State*, all the people in the world must eventually live under *the Islamic caliphate*. The further spread of *Jihadism* must be stopped, and the ideology must be undermined from within.

His suggestions to win against this threat:

- Deploy the truth: you cannot win a war if you cannot talk honestly

about the enemy. He urges dropping the opaque doctrine of the Administration and facing the reality that Islamic doctrine is the wind behind the sails propelling the success of the Islamic State.

- Take a step back: help others fight their own wars. This is Gorka's praise of special operators, Green Berets, Delta Force, Marines, Navy Seals and Air Force, to act as trainees of alliance countries threatened by the Islamic State. He suggests that cadres of US officers and senior enlisted personnel be embedded with tactical units down to the brigade level to train them in the use of equipment and tactics to demonstrate that they are the Muslim forces facing IS.

- Winning the war at home: education and human intelligence. Gorka emphatically rejects the 'lone wolves' explanation for domestic Jihadi attacks, instead calling them part of the IS Global Jihad network. He suggests a national program to educate state and local counterterrorism echelons in the Global Jihad threat doctrine of IS. He also praises the model of counterintelligence developed by the NYPD following 9/11. The controversial, but highly effective, NYPD community policing program tracked both New York and outlying centers of Islamic fundamentalism that foiled dozens of terrorist attempts. Unfortunately, given a legal settlement between the City of New York with MB affiliate CAIR, Muslim Advocates and the ACLU the NYPD counterintelligence program has been virtually gutted under the Administration of Mayor Di Blasio.

Nevertheless, Dr. Gorka's book *Defeating Jihad* is a must read to understand the global Jihad threat doctrine. The prescriptions he recommends to win the war against the Islamic State are based on precedents used effectively during the Cold War.

Also see Jerry Gordon's collection of interviews, [here](#).

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