

Understanding the Jihad to Destroy Israel

by Andrew Bostom (Aug. 2006)

As the conflagration in southern Lebanon rages on, open calls for an annihilationist *jihad* to eradicate the State of Israel are once again echoing across the Muslim world. There is no confusing the intent expressed in such brazen statements:

[Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Commander] [*There is a need to topple the phony Zionist regime, this cancerous growth \[called\] Israel, which was founded in order to plunder the Muslims' resources and wealth*](#)

[Iranian President Ahmadinejad at an "emergency" meeting of the 57 Muslim member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Malaysia] [*...the main solution is for the elimination of the Zionist regime*](#)

These pronouncements from Iran's Shi'ite [regime](#) and [President Ahmadinejad](#), complemented by an independent statement from the immensely popular Sunni cleric, and "spiritual" leader of the Muslim Brotherhood [Yusuf Qaradawi](#), make clear that this jihad transcends the sectarian Shi'ite-Sunni divide within Islam.

"The Lebanese resistance is a Jihad (holy war). It is being waged by Shiites, who are also part of the Islamic Ummah [global community]" Qaradawi maintained. He further stated, "Shiites agree with almost all the fundamental principles of Islam, and the differences [between Sunni-Shi'ite] are only in supplementary matters."

Moreover, [Yemen's President Ali Abdallah Saleh speaking on Al-Jazeera](#) TV Tuesday, August 1, 2006 expressed the hope,

...that all the countries bordering with Israel, not just Syria, would enter the war...We will not enter the war officially, but we will open the borders to the fighters. We will allow the transfer of money and equipment, to support the Lebanese resistance and the Palestinian resistance in Gaza.

In accord with the principles of jihad, [President Saleh](#) further stated,

This war has become a duty incumbent upon us. Every Muslim has the individual duty to fight on this front... I believe this is a battle for the Islamic nation, not the Arab nation.

Past and present, Shi'ites and Sunnis certainly do concur on the centrality of [jihad war](#) in Islam, particularly when waged against non-Muslims for the extension, or maintenance, of the rule of Islamic Law. The distinguished Shi'ite theologian al-Amili (d.1622) wrote the [following \(p.213\)](#) about *jihad* war in the *Jami-i-Abbasi*, his seminal Persian manual of Shi'a Law:

Islamic Holy war [*jihad*] against followers of other religions, **such as Jews**, is required unless they convert to Islam or pay the poll tax.

The simultaneous bloodletting in Lebanon and northern Israel, as well as Gaza and southern Israel—but two examples of what [Samuel Huntington](#) aptly termed “Islam’s bloody borders” around the globe—flow from the timeless logic of jihad. All of historical Palestine—modern Israel (within the 1949 armistice borders), Gaza, Judea, Samaria, and modern Jordan—whose pre-Islamic inhabitants—Jews, Samaritans and Christians—[were conquered by jihad](#) in the fourth decade of the 7th century—is considered “*fay* territory”, a permanent part of the Dar al Islam, where Islamic Law must forever prevail. Israel, governed by a “usurper” infidel people, i.e., Jews, on such “*fay* territory”—no longer an appropriately oppressed *dhimmi* people living under the yoke of Islamic Law—must be destroyed in a collective *jihad* by the entire Muslim community. Qaradawi’s views—apparently shared by an overwhelming majority of contemporary Muslims who refuse to accept Israel’s legitimacy within *any* rump state borders—are in turn dependent upon a negationist, ahistorical Muslim narrative which erases the pre-Islamic identity of the indigenous Jews, Samaritans, and Christians of historical Palestine. During one of his widely viewed Qatar TV sermons this past February 25, 2006, [Qaradawi elucidated](#) these ideas:

All the school of Islamic jurisprudence – the Sunni, the Shiite...- and all the ancient and modern schools of jurisprudence – agree that any invader, who occupies even an inch of land of the Muslims, must face resistance. The Muslims of that country must carry out the resistance, and the rest of the Muslims must help them. If the people of that country are incapable or reluctant, we must fight to defend the land of Islam, even if the local [Muslims] give it up.

They must not allow anyone to take a single piece of land away from Islam. That is what we are fighting the Jews for. We are fighting them... Our religion commands us... We are fighting in the name of religion, in the name of Islam, which makes this Jihad an individual duty, in which the entire nation takes part, and whoever is killed in this [Jihad] is a martyr. This is why I ruled that martyrdom operations are permitted, because he commits martyrdom for the sake of Allah, and sacrifices his soul for the sake of Allah.

We do not disassociate Islam from the war. On the contrary, disassociating Islam from the war is the reason for our defeat. We are fighting in the name of Islam.

The current plight of [Iran's Jews](#) (since the 1979 Khomeini-lead restoration of a Shi'ite theocracy which [mimics their tragic historical legacy of four centuries of brutal subjugation](#) under Iranian Shiite rule from 1502-1925) is what today's Jews in Israel could anticipate as an **optimal** outcome should the forces of jihad prevail, and destroy the autonomous Israeli state. Shortly after the recent outbreak of hostilities along the Israeli-Lebanon border, even in the face of Ahmadinejad's unabashed and repeated calls for Israel's annihilation, [Iran's small remnant Jewish community \(in the southern city of Shiraz\), was cynically exploited](#)—holding a pro-Hezbollah rally covered on state-run television. Earlier, [Professor Reza Afshari's seminal 2001 analysis](#) of human rights in contemporary Iran summarized the predictable consequences for Jews of the Khomeini “revolution”:

As anti-Semitism found official expression ...and the anti-Israeli state propaganda became shriller, Iranian Jews felt quite uncertain about their future under the theocracy. Early in 1979, the execution of Habib Elqaniyan, a wealthy, self-made businessman, a symbol of success for many Iranian Jews, hastened emigration. The departure of the chief rabbi for Europe in the summer of 1980 underlined the fact that the hardships that awaited the remaining Jewish Iranians would far surpass those of other “protected minorities”.

[Afshari](#) also captured the crushing psychosocial impact on Iran's remaining Jews of restored Shi'ite theocratic rule—the recrudescence of a fully servile dhimmi mentality:

The Jewish leaders had to go so far as to openly denounce the policies of the State of Israel. It was disquieting to read a news item that reported the Jewish representative in the Majlis criticizing, in carefully chosen words...actions of his co-religionists in Israel, especially when upon the conclusion of his remarks the other (Shi'ite) deputies burst into the chant 'Death to Israel!' The contemporary state violating the human rights of its citizens left behind a trail of pathological behaviors [emphasis added]...Equally baffling, if not placed against the Jewish community's predicament, was the statement by the Jewish leaders concerning the arrests of thirteen Jews charged with espionage for Israel in June 1999. 'The Islamic Republic of Iran has demonstrated to the world that it has treated the Jewish community and other religious minorities well; the Iranian Jewish community has enjoyed constitutional rights of citizenship, and the arrest and charges against a number of Iranian Jews has nothing to do with their religion.' The bureaucratic side of the state needed such a statement, and the Jewish leaders in Tehran had no choice but to oblige.

Having returned their remnant Jewish community to a state of obsequious [dhimmitude](#), Iran's current theocratic rulers focus their obsessive anti-Jewish animus on the free-living Jews of neighboring Israel. This goal—reimposing dhimmitude (again, at *best*) on the Jews of Israel by jihad—is shared by the Sunni Islamic umma as well, from Sheikh Qaradawi, to the ideologues and clerics of Hamas and the “moderate” Palestinian Authority. For example, [Palestinian Authority \(PA\) Sheik Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Madhi](#) expressed these sentiments with regard to Jews during a Friday sermon broadcasted live on June 6, 2001 on PA TV, from the Sheik 'Ijlin Mosque in

We welcome, as we did in the past, any Jew who wants to live in this land as a Dhimmi, just as the Jews have lived in our countries, as Dhimmis, and have earned appreciation, and some of them have even reached the positions of counselor or minister here and there. We welcome the Jews to live as Dhimmis, but the rule in this land and in all the Muslim countries must be the rule of Allah.

More recently, interviewed by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Karby Legget in late December of 2005, Hassam El-Masalmeh, who heads the Hamas contingent at the municipal council of Bethlehem, [confirmed the organizations plan to re-institute the humiliating Koranic poll-tax on non-Muslims \(i.e., jizya\)](#). El-Masalmeh

stated explicitly,

We in Hamas intend to implement this tax someday. We say it openly – we welcome everyone to Palestine but only if they agree to live under our rules.

Writing in the midst of the 1976 Islamic jihad against the Christians of Lebanon—spearheaded by the Palestinian Liberation Organization under Yasir Arafat—Bernard Lewis observed then,

We are prepared to allow religiously defined conflicts to religious eccentrics...but to admit that an entire civilization can have religion as its primary loyalty is too much...This is reflected in the present inability, political, journalistic, and scholarly alike, to recognize the importance of the factor of religion in the current affairs of the Muslim world..

If our political, journalistic, and scholarly “elites” ever arrive at this understanding, perhaps they will grasp the accompanying vocabulary of the Muslim combatants and their spokespersons, in the context of [the jihad against Israel](#). “Resistance” means a genocidal jihad, whose “justice” amounts to the violent restoration and forcible maintenance of [dhimmitude](#) for those surviving Jews (and Christians) in a vanquished Israel.

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