



**What Americans
Need To Know About** *Jihad*
By Robert Spencer

A PUBLICATION OF THE DAVID HOROWITZ FREEDOM CENTER

PRICE: \$2

Bulk orders of 25 or more \$1 each.

Copyright ©2007.

David Horowitz Freedom Center

P.O. Box 361269

Los Angeles, CA 90036-9828

800-752-6562

Elizabeth@HorowitzFreedomCenter.org

www.TerrorismAwareness.org

ISBN 1-886442-56-8

Printed in the United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Goal Of <i>Jihad</i> Is World Domination - A Global Islamic State Under Islamic Law.....	5
The <i>Jihad's</i> Objective Is “Death To America.”.....	7
<i>Jihad</i> Demands The Killing Of “Infidels” Or Their Conversion To Islam Or Subjugation Under Islamic Law.....	8
The <i>Jihad</i> Ideology Requires The Oppression Of Women.....	9
<i>Jihad</i> Calls For The Extermination Of The Jews.....,	11
The <i>Jihad</i> Is Not About American Policy Towards Israel Or About Israel’s Policy Towards The Palestinians.....	12
The <i>Jihad</i> Is Not The Result Of Islamists’ Current Grievances About Afghanistan, Iraq Or Other Hotspots In The Middle East.....	14
The <i>Jihad</i> Advances Through Subversion Of Democratic Institutions.....	15
The <i>Jihad</i> Claims To Be Fighting “Crusaders,” But The Heart Of What Forms The Islamic World Today Was In Large Part The Result Of A <i>Jihad</i> Conquest Of Christian Nations.....	17

THE GOAL OF *JIHAD* IS WORLD DOMINATION – A GLOBAL ISLAMIC STATE UNDER ISLAMIC LAW.

Jihad is not, as some Western apologists claim, simply a striving for individual perfection. Nor is *jihad* merely a series of unrelated clashes involving groups of Islamists, each with their own limited objectives. Rather, *jihad* is a radical, expansionist, totalitarian ideology that seeks to establish a global Islamic state ruled by Islamic law, or *sharia*. The adherents of this ideology are willing and able to commit acts of violence to bring about their goals. They also use the democratic freedoms in Europe and the U.S. to advance their objectives by stealth means—agitating for special rights as “aggrieved minorities.”

These goals and motives of *jihad* are detailed in Islamic texts and by Islamic teachers. Osama bin Laden and other *jihad* leaders have repeatedly declared their intention to establish the Islamic social order globally. As Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad predicted: “The wave of the Islamic revolution will soon reach the entire world.” South African Mufti Ebrahim Desai of South Africa explained recently that “one of the primary responsibilities of the Muslim ruler is to spread Islam throughout the world.... If a country doesn’t allow the propagation of Islam to its inhabitants in a suitable manner or creates hindrances to this, then the Muslim ruler would be justifying in waging *Jihad* against this country...”

The fact that this *jihad* is justified by the Koran’s repeated exhortations for the faithful to do battle with the infidels renders negotiations with *jihadis* utterly useless. As Osama bin Laden’s lieutenant, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, stated in the summer of 2006: “War with Israel is not subject to a treaty, cease-fire, Sykes-Picot Treaty agreements, patriotism or disputed borders, but it is *jihad* for the cause of God until the entire region is for him only. *Jihad* seeks the liberation of Palestine, the entire country of Palestine and to liberate every land that used to be a territory of Islam, from Spain to Iraq.”

Syed Abul Ala Maududi, founder of the radical Pakistani political party Jamaat-e-Islami, supported this view: “Islam is a revolutionary ideology and program which seeks to alter the social order of

the whole world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets and ideals....Islam wishes to destroy all States and Governments anywhere on the face of the earth which are opposed to the ideology and program of Islam regardless of the country or the Nation which rules it... ” Maududi envisioned a unified Islamic state that would steadily expand throughout the subcontinent and beyond: “The Muslim Party will inevitably extend invitation to the citizens of other countries to embrace the faith which holds promise of true salvation and genuine welfare for them. Even otherwise also if the Muslim Party commands adequate resources it will eliminate un-Islamic Governments and establish the power of Islamic Government in their stead.” This was, according to Maududi, exactly what Muhammad and the first caliphs did. “It is the same policy which was executed by the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him) and his successor illustrious Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them). Arabia, where the Muslim Party was founded, was the first country which was subjugated and brought under the rule of Islam.”¹

The restoration of the caliphate--the unified Islamic state governed by a caliph who leads the Muslim community as successor of Muhammad--is a key imperative for jihadists today because only the caliph is authorized to wage war against non-Muslim states to bring them under the rule of Islamic law. This idea is not an invention or fantasy of marginalized jihadists, but is part of traditional, mainstream Islamic law: for example, a manual of Islamic law that in 1991 was certified by the most influential institution in Sunni Islam, Cairo’s Al-Azhar University, defines *jihad* as “war against non-Muslims.”² And it spells out the nature of this warfare in quite specific terms: “The caliph makes war upon Jews [and] Christians . . . until they become Muslim or pay the non-Muslim poll tax (*jizya*).”

With the goal of world domination for the religion of Allah, *jihad* proceeds by any means necessary, and until the goal is won.

¹ Syed Abul Ala Maududi, “Jihad in Islam,” Address at the Town Hall, Lahore, April 13, 1939. Reprinted at <http://host06.ipowerweb.com/~ymofmndc/books/jihadinislam/>.

² Ahmed ibn Naqib al-Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller* (‘Umdat al-Salik): A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law, translated by Nuh Ha Mim Keller, (Amana Publications, 1999), o9.0.

THE *JIHAD'S* OBJECTIVE IS “DEATH TO AMERICA.”

The chant of “Death to America!” has resounded in the Islamic world since the Ayatollah Khomeini’s Iranian revolution of 1979. Because of its efforts to establish viable democracies in the Islamic world, and because it represents the most formidable global alternative to the *jihadis’* vision of a world ruled by *Sharia*, the United States is regarded by those *jihadis* as the most formidable obstacle in their path.

The *jihadis* are very clear about their intentions. “America,” declared Al-Qaeda spokesman Suleiman Abu Gheith, “is the head of heresy in our modern world, and [as a result] . . . we have the right to kill 4 million Americans -- 2 million of them children -- and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands. Furthermore, it is our right to fight them with chemical and biological weapons.” The Saudi Sheikh Nasser ibn Hamed, in his “A Treatise on the Ruling Regarding the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction Against the Infidels,” gave an even higher figure for appropriate American deaths: “If a bomb was dropped on them [i.e. the Americans] that would annihilate 10 million and burn their lands to the same extent that they burned the Muslim lands – this is permissible....”

Osama bin Laden wrote in his “Declaration of *Jihad* against the Jews and Crusaders” in 1998 that “killing the Americans and their allies – both civilians and military personnel – is a commandment for every individual Muslim who can do this, in any country in which he can do this...”

Iran’s Ahmadinejad spoke openly in October 2005 about destroying America: “To those who doubt, to those who ask is it possible, or those who do not believe, I say accomplishment of a world without America and Israel is both possible and feasible.” His client, Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Hizbollah, explained in 2002 that this such an objective was not subject to modification: “Our hostility to the Great Satan [America] is absolute ...Death to America will remain our reverberating and powerful slogan: Death to America.”

Such words cannot be dismissed as a deviation from Islamic tradi-

tion; they are a new manifestation of an ancient impulse. This was explained by Sheikh Abd Al-‘Aziz Qari, preaching several years ago at the Ka’ba Mosque in Medina: “When we say that annihilating the infidel forces is a divine decree, it means that it is an immutable, valid law and a constant principle that does not change with time, place, people, and circumstances....That is, just as the country of Thamoud, the country of ‘Aad, the country of Midian, and other [countries] were annihilated, without a doubt the country of America and the country of the Jews will be annihilated.”

JIHAD DEMANDS THE KILLING OF “INFIDELS” OR THEIR CONVERSION TO ISLAM OR SUBJUGATION UNDER ISLAMIC LAW.

The goal of *jihad* warfare is not so much to force the unbelievers to convert to Islam, as to extend the hegemony of Islamic law and to make unbelievers submit as inferiors. Islamic history and jurisprudence—since the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself—have established three choices for non-Muslims facing *jihad*: conversion to Islam, submission under Islamic rule, or death. Muslim jurists have constructed an elaborate legal edifice that is without parallel in any other major religion: a codified, detailed mass of laws for the subjugation of non-Muslims in the name of Allah.

One manual of Islamic law insists that people must be called to embrace Islam before being fought. But “if the infidels, upon receiving the call, neither consent to it nor agree to pay capitation tax [*jizya*], it is then incumbent on the Muslims to call upon God for assistance, and to make war upon them.”³

The goal of *jihad* is thus the incorporation of non-Muslims into Muslim society, either by conversion or submission. The laws consider non-Muslims *dhimmis*, or “guilty”, people because they have not only rejected Muhammad as a prophet, but have distorted the legitimate revelations they should have received from Allah.

While Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims may be allowed to

³ From the *Hidayah*, vol. II, p. 140, quoted in Thomas P. Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam* (W.H. Allen, 1895), “Jihad,” pp. 243-248.

practice their religions while living within the Islamic social order, they must do so under severely restrictive conditions that remind them of their second-class status at every turn.

All this is still part of the *Sharia* that *jihadis* today wish to impose upon the world.

THE *JIHAD* IDEOLOGY REQUIRES THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN.

The Koran is a veritable manifesto for the oppression of women. It stipulates that:

- Women are inferior to men, and must be ruled by them. (“Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other”-- Koran 4:34)

- A woman’s testimony is worth half that of a man. (“Get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as ye choose, for witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her”— Koran 2:282)

- A man may marry up to four wives, and have sex with slave girls as well. (“If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one, or a captive that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice”— Koran 4:3)

- A son’s inheritance should be twice the size of that of a daughter. (“Allah thus directs you as regards your children’s inheritance: to the male, a portion equal to that of two females”— Koran 4:11)

- A husband should beat a disobedient wife. (“Good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them”— Koran 4:34)

The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences has determined that *over ninety percent* of Pakistani wives have been struck, beaten, or abused sexually for offenses on the order of cooking an unsatisfactory meal. Others were punished for failing to give birth to a male child.⁴

The Koran injunction that women must “draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers” (24:31) have also had real life implications. In Mecca in March 2002, fifteen girls were trapped in a fire at their school. They shed their outer garments to help their survival and escape. But Saudi Arabia’s religious police, the *muttawa*, wouldn’t let the girls out of the building without their all-concealing clothing. The *muttawa* battled police and firemen who were trying to open the school’s doors. The girls all died.⁵

The Koran also takes child marriage for granted. Perhaps this is because Muhammad himself had a child bride. The Prophet “married Aisha when she was a girl of six years of age, and he consummated that marriage when she was nine years old.”⁶ This has touched millions of women and girls in societies where the Qur’an is absolute truth and Muhammad is the model for all human behavior. More than half of the teenage girls in Afghanistan and Bangladesh are married.⁷ The Ayatollah Khomeini told the Muslim faithful that marrying a girl before she began menstruating was “a divine blessing.”

Honor killings, although not sanctioned by the Qur’an or Islamic law, are a deeply rooted element of Islamic culture and thus of *jihad*. The shame a family incurs by the sexual impurity of a woman or girl, even if she is a victim of rape, is expunged by killing her. Even in relatively moderate Jordan, for example, Article 340 of the criminal code stipulates that “a husband or a close blood relative who kills a woman caught in a situation highly suspicious of adultery will be totally exempt from sentence.”

⁴ See Amnesty International, “Media briefing: Violence against women in Pakistan,” April 17, 2002, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/ASA330102002?OpenDocument&of=THEMESWOMEN>.

⁵ See Christopher Dickey and Rod Nordland, “The Fire That Won’t Die Out,” *Newsweek*, July 22, 2002, pp. 34-37.

⁶ Bukhari, vol. 5, book 63, no. 3896; cf. Bukhari, vol. 7, book 67, no. 5158.

⁷ See United Nations Children’s Fund, “UNICEF: Child marriages must stop,” March 7, 2001, <http://www.unicef.org/newsline/01pr21.htm>.

With Muslim migration into Europe, honor killing has come West, occurring in Britain, Norway, Germany, and even Canada. In Ottawa in September 2006, authorities began a manhunt for a young Muslim named Hasibullah Sadiqi, who allegedly shot to death his sister, twenty-year-old Khatera Sadiqi, and critically wounded her fiancé. According to a family friend, Hasibullah “wasn’t happy because they were engaged.”⁸ In a celebrated case in Germany in 2005, a young Turkish woman named Hatun Sürücü was murdered by her brother because of her taste for Western, non-Islamic ways.⁹

As the jihad spreads, Western countries will be seeing many more such cases in the near future.

JIHAD CALLS FOR THE EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWS.

In the Islamic world Jew-hatred is rampant and virulent. Sheikh Ahmad Abu Halabiya, in a Friday sermon in the Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Aal Nahyan mosque in Gaza that was broadcast live on official Palestinian Authority television in October 2000, summed up prevailing attitudes when he exhorted his hearers to “have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Wherever you meet them, kill them. Wherever you are, kill those Jews and those Americans who are like them...”

President Ahmedinejad of Iran goes even farther in dehumanizing Jews: “They [the Jews] have no boundaries, limits, or taboos when it comes to killing human beings. Who are they? Where did they come from? Are they human beings? ‘They are like cattle, nay, more misguided.’ A bunch of bloodthirsty barbarians. Next to them, all the criminals of the world seem righteous.”

Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizballah, has articulated his opposition to Israel in purely theological terms, situating it within the context of Koranic anti-Semitism: “Anyone who reads [the Koran]

⁸ Jon Willing, “Brother Suspect In Killing,” Ottawa Sun, September 21, 2006.

⁹ Sven Roebel, “The Murder of a Turkish Woman in Berlin: A German Court Goes Face to Face with Honor Killings,” Der Spiegel, September 12, 2005.

cannot think of co-existence with them, of peace with them, or about accepting their presence...because they are a cancer which is liable to spread again at any moment.” Nasrallah calls Jews the “grandsons of apes and pigs” (cf. Koran 2:62-65, 5:59-60, and 7:166).

Jihadis point frequently to the Islamic tradition in which the Islamic prophet Muhammad says of the last days: “The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!”¹⁰ This verse is quoted in the Charter of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement.

According to the radical clerics of jihad, Koranic attitudes toward the Jews justify suicide bombing attacks even against civilians. The Middle East Media research Institute reported that a website associated with Egypt’s Al-Azhar University stated in early 2002: “The great Imam of Al-Azhar Sheikh Muhammad Sayyed Tantawi, demanded that the Palestinian people, of all factions, intensify the martyrdom operations [i.e. suicide attacks] against the Zionist enemy, and described the martyrdom operations as the highest form of operations.”

THE *JIHAD* IS NOT ABOUT AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL OR ABOUT ISRAEL’S POLICY TOWARDS THE PALESTINIANS.

America’s support for Israel is the most common explanation given today for jihad violence. Many, particularly on the American Left, believe that if the U.S. decreases its support for Israel, and if Israel surrenders further territory, jihad violence will cease. But this view is ahistorical; the Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, the first modern Islamic terrorist organization and the direct ancestor of Hamas and Al-Qaeda, was founded in 1928 – twenty years before the founding of the State of Israel. Its objectives have not markedly changed since then.

¹⁰ Sahih Muslim, book 41, no. 6985.

The founding of the Muslim Brotherhood was not a response to Zionism, but to the abolition of the caliphate by the secular Turkish government in 1924. Indeed, the *jihad* group Hizb-ut-Tahrir ascribes all the ills of the Islamic world today not to Israel or to American depredations in Iraq or elsewhere, but to the abolition of the caliphate: “Since that day the Islamic *ummah* [nation, community] has lived a life full of calamities; she was broken up into small mini states controlled by the enemies of Islam in every aspect.”¹¹

Although American and European officials continue to press forward with initiatives to grant the Palestinians various land concessions in exchange for peace, there has never been any indication from the other side that such concessions will bring out the coveted cessation of hostilities. In fact, *jihadis* have frequently rejected the path of negotiation and compromise in no uncertain terms. The Qatar-based Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi, whose influence among Muslims is international and who has been hailed as a moderate by Western analysts, has stated flatly: “There is no dialogue between us [Muslims and Jews] except by the sword and the rifle.” Mahmoud Zahar, the Hamas Foreign Minister, has echoed this sentiment, saying: “Even if the U.S. gave us all its money in return for recognizing Israel and giving up one inch of Palestine, we would never do so even if this costs us our lives.”

Iran’s Ahmadinejad has declared his genocidal intentions toward Israel on many occasions: “Our dear Imam [Ayatollah Khomeini] ordered that the occupying regime in Jerusalem be wiped off the face of the earth. This was a very wise statement. ... The Zionist regime is counterfeit and illegitimate and cannot survive. ... The big powers have created this fraud regime and allowed it to commit all kind of crimes to guarantee their interests.”

Likewise Hamas, which Western leaders persist in trying to bring to the bargaining table, states unequivocally in its Charter, quoting Hassan Al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood: “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it...”

“There is no solution to the conflict in this region,” says Hizballah’s Hassan Nasrallah, “except with the disappearance of Israel.”

¹¹ James George Jatras, “Is There a Khilafah in Your Future? The Coming Islamic Revolution,” *Chronicles*, February 2005.

Fatah, the terrorist faction headed by the late Yasser Arafat, defines as its principal goal the achievement of the “complete liberation of Palestine, and eradication of Zionist economic, political, military, and cultural existence.” Candidly opposed to “any political solution offered as an alternative to demolishing the Zionist occupation in Palestine,” Fatah has made its organizational emblem a grenade and crossed rifles, superimposed on a map of present-day Israel.

THE *JIHAD* IS NOT THE RESULT OF ISLAMISTS’ CURRENT GRIEVANCES ABOUT AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ OR OTHER HOTSPOTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Italian journalist Magdi Allam recently noted that “the West thinks the Islamic terrorism that struck New York, London and Madrid is a reaction, a kind of uprising of the poor against the wealthy.”¹² The *jihadis* are under no such illusion. With a canny understanding of how to sway public opinion in the West, they and their allies in the American and European Left have learned to portray themselves as victims and their actions as an effort to fight back against colonial oppression.

Underscoring the fact that the *jihad* proceeds from theological imperatives within Islam, not from political grievances, is the fact that *jihadis* are active today in virtually every corner of the globe. The international media focus on conflict in Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan, but the *jihad* continues in a lower key and largely out of sight on a daily basis in places such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, Chechnya, the Balkans, and Nigeria, to say nothing of the “soft *jihad*” being waged in Europe.

Samuel Huntington observes in *The Clash of Civilizations*: “Wherever one looks along the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peacefully with their neighbors.... Muslims make up one-fifth of the world’s population but in the 1990s they have been

¹² Assaf Uni, “Hamas’ terror is not a reaction to the occupation,” Haaretz, May 23, 2006.

far more involved in intergroup violence than people of any other civilization... In the early 1990s Muslims were engaged in more intergroup violence than were non-Muslims, and two-thirds to three-quarters of intercivilizational wars were between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam's borders *are* bloody, and so are its innards."¹³

The *jihad* likewise targets all religious groups. Historically it has been even more virulent against Hindu India than against Christian Europe; Hindus, since they were not "People of the Book" as the Qur'an calls Christians and Jews, were treated even worse by their Islamic conquerors.

There is nowhere in the world where one can escape the *jihad*. Wherever Muslims are found, which is in almost every country on the planet, there are adherents of the ideology of *jihad* and *Sharia* supremacism. Peaceful Muslims have made no large-scale, organized attempt to delineate a countervailing vision of Islam that calls for indefinite peaceful coexistence as equals with non-Muslims, freedom of conscience, or for the laying aside of elements of *Sharia* that are at variance with otherwise universally accepted human rights norms.

THE *JIHAD* ADVANCES THROUGH SUBVERSION OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

Because of the imperative to subjugate unbelievers and dominate the world in the name of Islam, *jihadis* work wherever there are Muslim settlements in the West to undermine democracy and constitutional law. They use democratic institutions and their own status as aggrieved minorities denied the fruits of equality to subvert the democratic process itself.

Using the West's respect for minority rights and culture, *jihadis* push for the adoption of *sharia* law, first in their own communities and then in Europe generally. Oussama Cherribi, a member of the

¹³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Touchstone, 1997. Pp. 256-8.

Dutch Parliament, has noted the declaration of an imam in Holland: “The *sharia* (Islamic law) does not have to adapt to the modern world because these are divine laws. People have to bend to the *sharia*.”¹⁴

Defense of the *Sharia* includes defense of stoning. Hani Ramadan, a prominent Muslim leader in Switzerland, was dismissed from a teaching position in Geneva after publishing an article in the French journal *Le Monde* in September 2002, defending stoning as punishment for adultery.¹⁵ After his dismissal Swiss courts, swayed by arguments about “democratic pluralism,” ruled twice in Ramadan’s favor.¹⁶

While some Muslims in the West adopt Western values, many others see their goal as nothing less than the establishment of Islamic states in Europe. Giuseppe Bernardini, a Roman Catholic Archbishop in Turkey, says, “The ‘dominion’ has already begun.” He notes that Saudi “petro-dollars” have been used “not to create work in the poor North African or Middle Eastern countries, but to build mosques and cultural centers in Christian countries with Islamic immigration, including Rome, the center of Christianity. . . . How can we ignore in all this a program of expansion and re-conquest?”

Bernardini recounted a conversation he had with a Muslim leader who said to him: “Thanks to your democratic laws, we will invade you. Thanks to our religious laws, we will dominate you.”¹⁷

Jihadis in Europe have been forthright about their intentions. In England, Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad, who worked to expand Islamic power in Britain for many years before finally leaving the country in the wake of the July 7, 2005 *jihad* terror attacks in London, long boasted about exploiting the contradiction between freedom of speech and self-preservation. He openly declared his intention to “transform the West into Dar Al-Islam.”

The transformation of Britain into an Islamic state could come about by means of an “invasion [from] without.” In that case, Bakri says, “we will be its army and its soldiers from within.” But if no

¹⁴ Oussama Cherribi, “Imams and Issues: The Politics of Islam in European Public Space,” presentation at the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, August 30-September 2, 2001. Reprinted at <http://pro.harvard.edu/papers/033/033005CherribiOu.pdf>.

¹⁵ Hani Ramadan, “La charia incomprise,” *Le Monde*, September 10, 2002.

¹⁶ “Controversial Muslim scholar wins in court,” *SwissInfo*, May 21, 2005.

¹⁷ John L. Allen, Jr., “Europe’s Muslims worry bishops,” *National Catholic Reporter*, October 22, 1999.

such Islamic state arises, Bakri says that Muslims will convert the West to Islam “through ideological invasion . . .”

**THE *JIHAD* CLAIMS TO BE FIGHTING “CRUSADERS,”
BUT THE HEART OF WHAT FORMS THE ISLAMIC
WORLD TODAY WAS IN LARGE PART THE RESULT
OF A *JIHAD* CONQUEST OF CHRISTIAN NATIONS.**

Mandated by the Koran and Muhammad, *jihad* is a constant of Islamic history. From the earliest days of Islam, Muslims acted on these commands. First Muhammad unified the Arabian peninsula under his rule and directed that all religions be forbidden there except Islam. Then the Muslims turned to the larger non-Muslim world. Predominantly Christian lands, particularly the Byzantine imperial holdings of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, surrounded Muslim Arabia. Four of Christendom’s five principal cities – Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem – lay within striking distance of Arabia. The Byzantine Empire’s great rival, Persia, also lay in the path of the holy warriors.

Muhammad himself made the first Islamic overtures to these neighbors. He sent letters to the leaders of Persia, Byzantium, and Abyssinia, exhorting them to “embrace Islam and you will be safe.”¹⁸ None did, and Muhammad’s warning proved accurate: none of them were safe. In 635 (just three years after the Muslim Prophet’s death), Damascus fell to the invading Muslims. The next year, Antioch also fell. It was Jerusalem’s turn two years later, in 638. Many native Christians were killed; others were enslaved. The same pattern prevailed when the Muslims reached Cilicia and Caesarea of Cappadocia in 650.

The *jihadis* rapidly swept through North Africa and by 711 were in a position to invade Spain, so that Europe was beset from both the East and the West. By 715 the Muslims were well on their way to conquering all of Spain (which they held, of course, for over 700

¹⁸ Muhammed Ibn Ismaiel Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari: The Translation of the Meanings*, translated by Muhammad M. Khan, Darussalam, 1997, vol. 4, book 56, no. 2941.

years), and pressing into France. Charles Martel, “the Hammer,” stopped them in 732 at the city of Tours.

Edward Gibbon, author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, observed that if the Muslim incursion into France had been successful, “perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet.”¹⁹

When Gibbons was writing at the end of the 18th century, the *jihads* of the great Islamic empires seemed to be nothing more than a memory. Today, *jihad* has been reborn with a ferocity Gibbon couldn’t have dreamed of. Once again, it intends to create the future of the world.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

