

The real reason they hate us

American Legion Magazine / Apr 09, 2010
By Frank Gaffney, Jr.

For the first time in its history, the United States is trying to wage and win a war without accurately identifying the enemy or its motivations for seeking to destroy us. That oversight defies both common sense and past military experience, and it disarms us in what may be the most decisive theater of this conflict: the battle of ideas.



Such a breakdown may seem incredible to veterans of past military conflicts. Imagine fighting World War II without clarity about Nazism and fascism, or the Cold War without an appreciation of Soviet communism and the threat it posed.

Yet today, the civilian leaders of this country and their senior subordinates - responsible for the U.S. military, the intelligence community, homeland security and federal law enforcement - have systematically failed to fully realize that we once again face a totalitarian ideology bent on our destruction.

That failure is the more worrisome since the current ideological menace is arguably more dangerous than any we have faced in the past, for two reasons. First, its adherents believe their mission of global conquest is divinely inspired. Second, they are here in the United States in significant numbers, not just a threat elsewhere around the world.

What, then, is this ideology? It has been given many names in recent years, including political Islam, radical Islam, fundamentalist Islam, extremist Islam and Islamofascism. There is, however, a more accurate descriptor - the one its adherents use. They call it "Shariah."

Perhaps the most important thing to understand about Shariah is that it is authoritative Islam, which presents itself as a complete way of life - cultural, political, military, social and religious, all governed by the same doctrine. In other words, this comprehensive program is not simply the agenda of extremists hunkered down in caves in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Neither can its directives be attributed to deviants hijacking Islam.

Rather, Shariah - which translates from Arabic as "path to God" - is actually binding law. It is taught as such by the most revered sacred texts, traditions, institutions, top academic centers, scholars and leaders of the Islamic faith. Fortunately, hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world do not wish to live under a brutally repressive, woman-demeaning, barbaric and totalitarian program. Such Muslims are potentially our allies, just as those who do adhere to Shariah are our unalterable foes.

The immutability of Shariah-adherent Muslim hostility toward the rest of us derives directly from the central tenet of Shariah: Muslims are explicitly required to seek the triumph of Islam over all other faiths, peoples and governments.

The ultimate objective of Shariah is the establishment of a global Islamic state - Sunni Muslims call it "the caliphate" - governed by Shariah. The means by which this political outcome is to be achieved is called "jihad."

Since 9/11, many Americans have become unhappily acquainted with the terrifying, violent strain of jihad. Under Shariah, violence - often described by non-Muslims as "terrorism" - is the preferred means of securing the spread and dominion of Islam, as it is the most efficient.

While Shariah deems jihad to be the personal obligation of every faithful Muslim capable of performing it - man or woman, young or old - they can forgo the violent form when it is deemed impracticable. In such circumstances, the struggle can be pursued through means that are, at least temporarily, non-violent. Taken together, the latter constitute what renowned author and expert Robert Spencer calls "stealth jihad." Adherents to Shariah call it "dawah."

Examples of stealth jihadism abound in Western societies, notably Europe and increasingly in the United States. They include the demand for symbolic and substantive accommodations in political, economic and legal areas (for example, special treatment or rights for Muslims in the workplace, in public spaces and by government); the opportunity to penetrate and influence operations against government at every level; and the insinuation of the Trojan horse of "Shariah-compliant finance" into the West's capital markets.

If stealth jihad seems less threatening than terrorism, the objective is exactly the same as that of violent jihad: the subjugation to the Dar al-Islam (House of Islam) of all non-Islamic states that, like the United States, make up the Dar al-harb (House of War). It follows that those who seek ostensibly to impose Shariah through non-violent techniques - notably in the West, the organization known as the Muslim Brotherhood - are our enemies every bit as much as those who overtly strive to defeat us by murderous terrorism.

Many Western elites, including the Obama administration, have been seduced by the seemingly benign quality of the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, we know from the 2008 prosecution of the Holy Land Foundation - the largest terrorism-financing trial in U.S. history - that the Muslim Brothers' mission in the United States is "a kind of grand jihad to destroy Western civilization from within ... by their own miserable hands."

Another Brotherhood document, titled "The Rulers," was seized in a 2004 raid and describes how the organization will try to overthrow the U.S. Constitution in five phases:

- Phase I: Discreet and secret establishment of elite leadership
- Phase II: Gradual appearance on the public scene, and exercising and utilizing various public activities
- Phase III: Escalation, prior to conflict and confrontation with the rulers, through the massmedia
- Phase IV: Open public confrontation with the government through the exercise of political pressure
- Phase V: Seizing power to establish an Islamic nation, under which all parties and Islamic groups will become united

"The Rulers" makes plain that all the above-mentioned phases "are preliminary steps to reach the (fifth) phase."

The Muslim Brothers know that by masking their ideological agenda as a religious program, they can use Western civil liberties and tolerance as weapons in their stealthy jihad. For this strategy to succeed, however, they must suppress any discussion or understanding of the true nature of Shariah.

Adherents to Shariah insist that their law prohibits any slander against Islam or Muhammad. Under such a catch-all restriction, virtually any kind of conversation about - or critique of - Islam can be considered impermissible if Muslims find it offensive. Particularly in Europe, the ever-present prospect of violence, like that which followed the September 2005 publication of Danish cartoons poking fun at Muhammad, is generally sufficient to induce self-censorship.

In this country, the application of such prohibitions seems unthinkable, given the guarantees of free speech enshrined in the Constitution's First Amendment. Unfortunately, the Obama administration last year co-sponsored with Egypt a relevant and deeply problematic resolution in the U.N. Human Rights Council, promoted for years by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a group of 57 Muslim-majority nations that stridently embraces Shariah and seeks to legitimate and promote its advance around the world.

The resolution calls on members of the United Nations to prohibit statements that offend Islam. It also calls for criminal penalties to be applied to those who make such statements.

The U.S. implementation of such a resolution would obviously be a matter not just for the executive branch, which supported it, but for Congress and the judiciary as well. It is a safe bet that any formal effort to supplant the First Amendment in this way would meet with great resistance.

To a stunning degree, U.S. leaders have been effectively conforming to Shariah slander laws for some time now. For instance, presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama have both repeatedly described Islam as a "religion of peace," without acknowledging the requirement for jihad its authorities demand, pursuant to Shariah.

At the Muslim Brotherhood's insistence, the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department have barred the use of perfectly accurate terms like "Islamic terrorism." The U.S. government has also embraced the Muslim Brothers' disinformation by translating jihad as nothing more than "striving in the path of God."

Under the Bush and Obama administrations, the favored name for the enemy has been "violent extremism" - a formulation that neither offers clarity about the true nature of our foe nor lends itself to a prescription for a successful countervailing strategy. Even when al-Qaeda is identified as the enemy, it is almost always accompanied by an assurance that its operatives and allies have "corrupted" Islam. Ignored, or at least earnestly obscured, are two unhappy realities: such enemies are implementing Shariah's dictates to the letter of the law, and they have millions of fellow adherents around the world who view Islam's requirements the same way.

One of the most egregious examples of this practice of unilateral disarmament in the battle of ideas is the January report of the independent review of the Fort Hood massacre, co-chaired by former Army Secretary Togo West and former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vernon Clark. Their 86-page unclassified analysis purported to dissect an event allegedly perpetrated by Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan - a medical officer whose business card described him as "Soldier of Allah," whose briefings justified murder of his comrades in the name of jihad, and who shouted the Islamic martyr's cry "Allahu Akbar!" ("God is great!") as he opened fire, killing 13. Incredibly, the words "Islam," "Islamic terror," "Shariah," "jihad," and "Muslim Brotherhood" were not used even once in the West-Clark report.

Such political correctness, or willful blindness up the chain of command, doubtless caused Hasan's colleagues to keep silent about his alarming beliefs, lest they be punished for expressing concerns about them. Now, reportedly, six of them have been designated as the scapegoats for what is manifestly an institutional failure.

The painful truth is that however we rationalize this sort of behavior, our Shariah-adherent enemies correctly perceive it as evidence of submission, which is the literal meaning of the word "Islam," and what Shariah demands of everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Indeed, Shariah offers non-believers only three choices: conversion to Islam, submission (known as dhimmitude) or death. Historically, dhimmitude was imposed through successful Muslim conquests. In more recent years, tolerant Western nations have increasingly succumbed to stealthy jihadism, backed by more or less direct threats of violence.

That trend, worrying as it is, may be giving way in this country to a new campaign: jihad of the sword. The past year saw a fourfold increase in the number of actual or attempted terrorist attacks in the United States. Sadly, that statistic will likely be surpassed in the year ahead. Four of the nation's top intelligence officials have testified before Congress that it is certain new acts of violence will be undertaken in the next three to six months. Worse yet, a blue-ribbon commission has calculated that the probability of the use of weapons of mass destruction somewhere in the world by 2013 is now over 50 percent.

Is this dramatic upsurge in violent jihad directed at the United States unrelated to our behavior? Or does it reflect a growing calculation on the part of our Shariah-adherent enemies that violence against the United States is now, once again, practicable?

Either way, the time has clearly come to make a far more serious effort to defeat both the violent and stealthy forms of jihad being waged against this country. If we are to do so, however, we have to start by telling the truth.

Our enemy is not "violent extremism," or even al-Qaeda alone. Rather, it is the millions of Muslims who - like the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda and their allies - adhere to Shariah and who, therefore, believe they must impose it on the rest of us.

We are at war with such individuals and organizations. Not because we want to be. Not because of policies toward Israel or the Middle East or anything else we have pursued in recent years. Rather, we are at war with them because they must wage jihad against us, pursuant to the dictates of Shariah, the same law that has guided many in Islam for some 1,200 years.

What is at stake in this war? Look no further than The American Legion's Americanism Manual, which defines Americanism as "love of America; loyalty to her institutions as the best yet devised by man to secure life, liberty, individual dignity and happiness; and the willingness to defend our country and Flag against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

Such values cannot coexist with Shariah, which demands the destruction of democratic nations like the United States, its governing institutions and liberties. Shariah would supplant them with a repressive, transnational, theocratic government abroad and at home.

The extraordinary reality is that none of this - the authoritative and malevolent nature of Shariah, its utter incompatibility with our civilization, and its adherents' determination to force us to convert, submit or die - is concealed from those willing to learn the truth. To the contrary, the facts are widely available via books, the Internet, DVDs and mosques, both here and overseas. Interestingly, on Dec. 1, 2005, Gen. Peter Pace, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called on his troops to expose themselves to precisely this sort of information: "I say you need to get out and read what our enemies have said.

Remember Hitler. Remember he wrote 'Mein Kampf.' He said in writing exactly what his plan was, and we collectively ignored that to our great detriment. Now, our enemies have said publicly on film, on the Internet, their goal is to destroy our way of life. No equivocation on their part."

As it happens, Maj. Stephen Coughlin, a lawyer and Army Reserves intelligence specialist recruited by the Joint Chiefs to be their expert on the doctrine and jurisprudence of jihad, took Pace's admonition to heart. He wrote a master's thesis inspired by the chairman's quote, titled "To Our Great Detriment: Ignoring What Extremists Say About Jihad."

Coughlin's briefings explicitly and repeatedly warned military leaders of the enemy's "threat doctrine" - drawing from, among Islamic texts, passages the Fort Hood suspect used to justify his massacre. Unfortunately, engaging in such analysis, let alone acting on it, was powerfully discouraged in January 2008 when Coughlin was dismissed from the Joint Staff after he ran afoul of a Muslim Brother then working for Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England.

In short, we are today confronted by the cumulative effect of a sustained and collective dereliction of duty, one that is putting our country in extreme peril. Our armed forces - like their counterparts in the intelligence community, Department of Homeland Security and law enforcement - have a professional duty to know the enemy and develop appropriate responses to the threat doctrine. If this dereliction is allowed to persist, it is predictable that more Americans will die, both on foreign battlefields and at home.

The American people also need to become knowledgeable about the threat of Shariah and insist that action be taken at federal, state and local levels to keep our country Shariah-free. This toxic ideology, if left unchecked, can destroy the country and institutions that are, indeed, "the best yet devised by man to secure life, liberty, individual dignity and happiness."

Originally published in the [American Legion Magazine](#)

Frank J. Gaffney Jr. is president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington and host of the nationally syndicated program "Secure Freedom Radio."