ABSTRACT

An Evaluation of the Conceptual Similarities and Differences Between the Strategic Logic of
the Religiously Motivated Suicide Attacks of Tokkotai Kamikaze and Al-Qaeda Shahid

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Mentor: William A. Mitchell, Ph.D.

What motivated members of al-Qaeda to hijack commercial airliners and crash them into the sides of buildings? Is it similar to what motivated Japanese fighter pilots to crash their jets into the sides of American aircraft carriers? If so, what can these two seemingly disparate phenomena tell us about the nature of the relationship between religion and violence? Finally, were the attacks of the two groups both responses to American actions abroad (which is often described as "American imperialism")?

While Americans no longer face the threat of attack from kamikaze pilots, the attacks of September 11, 2001 by members of al-Qaeda demonstrated that the threat of suicide attack by Islamic extremists, or *shahid*, is very real. Despite the efforts of the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, and the branches of the United States military as well as dozens of their sister agencies in other countries, the number of religiously motivated suicide attacks perpetrated against the United States has increased exponentially since the invasions of

Afghanistan and Iraq, though the most devastating event remains the attacks on September 11, 2001.[1]

The only other time that the United States and its allies have faced suicide attacks of this volume and magnitude occurred in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Those attacks were carried out by the pilots of the *Tokkotai*, more commonly known as the *kamikaze* of the Empire of Japan. There are several significant similarities between the suicide attacks perpetrated against the U.S. by members of al-Qaeda and those perpetrated against the U.S. by the Tokkotai, most notably the utilization of religious rhetoric to justify suicide attacks.

This dissertation will compare these two groups, investigating the histories of their foundational religions (Shinto and Islam) and their radical interpretations (State Shinto and Jihadism), their historical interactions with the West, and their utilization of suicide attacks in their fight against perceived oppression by the United States.

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[1] Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 2.

An Evaluation of the Conceptual Similarities and Differences Between the Strategic Logic of the Religiously Motivated Suicide Attacks of Tokkotai Kamikaze and Al-Qaeda Shahid

by

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A Dissertation

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

All Japanese names are presented in the traditional order with family name first, given name last. All Arabic translations have been standardized. For instance, Usama bin Laden is changed to Osama bin Laden, and al-Qaida and al-Qai'da have been changed to al-Qaeda. The exception to this rule is the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. Also, all diacritical marks have been removed to further simplify. For instance, Takijirō Ōnishi is simply Takajiro Onishi, and Abū 'l-Alā Mawdūdī is simply Abul Ala Maududi. Finally, all dates are in accordance with the Western (Gregorian) calendar.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In his book *When Religion Becomes Evil*, author Charles Kimball describes

religion as "arguably the most powerful and pervasive force on earth." He explains

further that while religion has been shown to inspire both individuals and communities to

carry out acts of great love, self-sacrifice, and service, religion can also inspire great

violence:

> At the same time, history clearly shows that religion has often been linked directly
> to the worst examples of human behavior. It is somewhat trite, but nevertheless
> sadly true, to say that more wars have been waged, more people killed, and these
> days more evil perpetrated in the name of religion than by any other institutional
> force in human history.[1]

Such is the dualistic nature of religion, capable of inspiring both great good and wanton

destruction. While both proponents and opponents of various religious traditions argue

over the degree to which faith is able to inspire violence, there is no doubt that many

throughout history have called upon and utilized the name of a divine power to inspire

and justify many violent actions.[2] But is religion—with its particular beliefs, principles,

sacred texts, and rituals—really to blame for the violence perpetrated in its name, or is it

rather the religious believers who are violent, interpreting and reinterpreting scripture and

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[1] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (New York: Harper Collins
Publishers, 2002), 1.

[2] Examples include the Crusades (and the Muslim response), the Taiping
Rebellion, the attacks on September 11th, 2001 (and the Christian response), the Hindu
practice of *sati*, and the (Japanese) Confucian practice of *seppuku*.

teachings in ways that often times deviate from more traditional and historical

understandings?

Few would argue that religion *only* inspires violence. Those that would have the

difficult task of explaining away the actions of figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and

Martin Luther King, Jr., individuals who promoted non-violence based on their religious

beliefs, as well as avowedly non-violent religions such as Jainism and the Religious

Society of Friends. In the same way, those who say religion *never* inspires violence must

be able to disprove the religious justifications for violent actions such as the Crusades,

the Taiping Rebellion, and the attacks of September 11, 2001.[3] These events were

inspired by various interpretations of Christianity and Islam, two religions which many of

their followers consider peaceful.[4] Likewise, Buddhism is the core belief system behind

many of martial arts that developed in East Asia, though it is typically thought of as a

non-violent faith system.[5] Such is the case for most other religious traditions, at certain

times and settings advocating peace, at other times and settings leading to violence.

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[3] The first Crusade (as well as later Crusades) was initiated and blessed by Pope
Urban II and the Catholic Church. Hong Xiuquan, believing that he was the brother of
Jesus Christ, led a series of battles which became known as the Taiping Rebellion. The
attacks on September 11, 2001 were carried out by nineteen individuals who espoused a
radical interpretation of the Qur'an, stating that their mission to kill Americans was
commanded by Allah.

[4] Both the Bible and the Qur'an have verses which are said to promote non-
violence. For the Bible, see Matthew 5:9, 5:38-45, Luke 22:49-51, Romans 12:17-21,
and Hebrews 12:14. For the Qur'an, see Surah 4:90, 5:2, 5:32, and 8:61.

[5] The promoting of non-violence while at the same time teaching fighting
techniques can appear as a rather blatant contradiction to outsiders. Indeed, attempts to
account for this contradiction have not always produced cogent arguments. It is
important to note that even when a religion historically promotes non-violence,
circumstances, such as the need for protection from enemies, can prompt believers to
seek self-preservation over adherence to doctrine. The Shaolin Temple, located in the
Henan Province of China, is primarily known for its teaching of the Chinese martial art

So what are the circumstances that might cause religious believers to see in their religion inspiration and justification for violence? Are there certain conditions which prompt religious believers to "defend" themselves and their faith against a supposed "enemy?" Are certain religions or religious themes more prone to violence, and are there certain targets—believers from other religions, countries, or cultures—which are more likely than others to be the victims of such attacks? Are there any factors which impact the specific type or nature of the violent actions taken by these "religious warriors?"

To answer these questions, this dissertation will investigate the history, rhetoric, and religious justifications for the utilization of violence of two groups who used their individual religious traditions to justify violence during the 20th and 21st century. The first group, the *Tokubetsu Kogekitai* (or *Tokkotai*)—more commonly known as Japanese kamikaze pilots—are most famous for piloting their airplanes into Allied naval forces during World War II (WWII). The second group is al-Qaeda, the radical militant Islamic group who carried out, among others, the single most destructive suicide attack to date, the attacks of September 11, 2001. While there were many groups who used at least some form of religious justification for their violence during what one scholar has termed "the bloodiest century in human history," these two groups were unique for three

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Kung Fu rather than as a place of learning for Chan (Zen) Buddhism. The debate over whether Buddhism should be considered a religion or not will not be discussed in this dissertation. See Meir Shahar, *The Shaolin Temple: History, Religion, and the Chinese Martial Arts* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2008). Other martial arts based in Buddhism include the Japanese martial arts of Kendo, Shotokan Karate, and Judo, and the Korean martial art of Taekwondo. See Jeffrey K. Mann, *When Buddhists Attack: The Curious Relationship Between Zen and the Martial Arts* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2012).

reasons.[6] First, both groups formally declared war on the United States. The Japanese

attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 ushered the reluctant U.S. into WWII, ending with the

surrender of the former on September 2, 1945 after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima

and Nagasaki. Al-Qaeda officially declared war on the U.S. on August 23, 1996, though

attacks by the group had taken place before.[7] It was not until after 9/11 that the U.S.

declared war on al-Qaeda. Second, both groups preached a doctrine of self-sacrifice and

self-defense of both their people and their culture and religion against the United States.

State Shinto, the religion created and promulgated throughout Japan after the restoration

of the Emperor Meiji in 1868, had as its primary tenet absolute devotion to the emperor

to the point of death.[8] Likewise, al-Qaeda promotes self-defense through its particular

version of *jihad*.[9] Osama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaeda from 1989 until his death in

2011, wrote, "Men of the radiant future of our *umma* of Muhammad, raise the banner of

jihad up high against the Judeo-American alliance that has occupied the holy places of

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[6] Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

[7] Such attacks included the Yemen Hotel Bombings in 1992, and the Bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993. Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 139 & 176.

[8] In 1937, the Japanese Ministry of Education employed a group of top academics to define the term *kokutai*, or "national polity," of Japan. The result was the *Kokutai no Hongi*, which stated, "Loyalty means to revere the emperor as [our] pivot and to follow him implicitly. By implicit obedience is meant casting ourselves aside and serving the emperor intently…Hence, offering our lives for the sake of the emperor does not mean so-called self-sacrifice, but the casting aside of our little selves to live under his august grace and the enhancing of the genuine life of the people of the State." *Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, ed. Robert King Hall, trans. John O. Gauntlett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 80.

[9] Abdullah Azzam, mentor to Osama bin Laden, preached that *jihad* was the "sixth pillar of Islam." Both State Shinto and Jihadism are based off the traditional religious faiths of Shinto and Islam respectively. State Shinto will receive a more thorough explanation in Chapter 3, and Jihadism in Chapter 4.

Islam."[10] Third, and most significantly, both groups used the suicide attacks against their

enemies. During WWII, it is estimated that there were between 3,000-5,000 kamikaze

missions from 1944 to 1945, resulting in the deaths of between 15,000-16,000 Allied

Forces, with 40,000 wounded.[11] While al-Qaeda is mostly known for their attacks on

9/11, they were also responsible for the suicide attacks on the U.S. embassies in Dar es

Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya in 1998, and the attack on the U.S.S Cole in

2000.[12] A significant fourth characteristic (though not necessarily unique to the Tokkotai

and al-Qaeda) is both groups' use of rhetoric decrying various American policies and

actions in what I will be calling *American Imperialism*.[13] In a wartime propaganda book

entitled, *Read This and the War is Won* (*Kore Dake Yomeba Ware Wa Kateru*), Japanese

soldiers entering Southeast Asia and the South Pacific were told that "white men of

England, America, France, and Holland" had enslaved (among others) the peoples of

India, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia for the purposes of profit. By expelling

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[10] Osama bin Laden, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden.* Edited by Bruce Lawrence. Translated by James Howarth. London: Verso, 2005, 29.

[11] Total numbers are certainly higher if one considers the Japanese ground forces—both military and civilian—who took part in actions in which they charged Allied positions with little to no hope of survival. Such attacks were known as *banzai* charges. John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 331, Fn. 105; Robert C. Stern, *Fire From the Sky: Surviving the Kamikaze Threat* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 329-330; Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006), 13.

[12] While not a part of this study, suicide attacks have increased since the attacks of 9/11. According to the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism, there have been 134 al-Qaeda perpetrated attacks on the U.S. and its allies, mostly in Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, resulting in 2,661 deaths and 7,538 wounded since October 2011. Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism. http://cpost.uchicago.edu/ (Accessed on January 3, 2013).

[13] The term *American Imperialism* will be further explained in Chapter Two.

European and American influence in the region, Japan could ensure both peace in Asia and the world.[14] In his speech *To the Americans*, Osama bin Laden accuses the U.S. of promoting its own agenda at the expense of the rest of the world:

> That which you [America] are singled out for in the history of mankind, is that you have used your force to destroy mankind, more than any other nation in history; not to defend principles and values, but to hasten to secure your interests and profits. You dropped a nuclear bomb on Japan, even though Japan was ready to negotiate an end to the war. How many acts of oppression, tyranny, and injustice have you carried out, O callers to freedom?[15]

This dissertation analyzes the circumstances under which religion can be used to provide individuals and groups with the necessary justifications to carry out violent actions. More to the point, it seeks to answer the question of how State Shinto for the Tokkotai and Jihadism for al-Qaeda provided the religious justifications to declare war on and carry out suicide attacks against the United States. While this dissertation draws from and is heavily indebted to the works of previous scholars, it seeks to make a unique contribution to the scholarship on religion and violence by comparing two seemingly unrelated phenomenon—the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda—which have, at best, only been superficially compared, and demonstrating that both groups resorted to suicide attacks in response to the policies and relative power of the United States. In addition, the dissertation draws from the rich scholarly works concerning *American Imperialism*, and explains how animosity and dissatisfaction toward American policies by the followers of State Shinto and Jihadism have led both groups to lash out violently, using their religion to justify their actions.

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[14] Tsuji Masanobu, *Kore dake Yomeba Ware wa Kateru* [*Read This and the War is Won*]. Cited in *War Without Mercy*, 23-27.

[15] *Messages to the World*, 168.

Religion and Violence

During most of the 20th century, it seemed to many in the West that the influence of religion was dying out. *Secularization theory*—the phenomenon of religion playing an ever-decreasing role in society because of the spread of modernity, i.e. scientific knowledge, technology, capitalism, and democracy—had become prevalent in the West, and it was believed that as the West spread its influence across the globe, secularization would spread as well.[16] Yet occurrences such as the rise of Pentecostalism after WWII, especially in Latin America and Africa, the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, and the religious regeneration after the fall of the Soviet Union in its former Republics demonstrated that religion had not—and most likely would not—go away.[17] By the end of the 20th century, scholars began to develop new theories and paradigms which sought to explain the role that religion would play in the future. The most famous of these theories was the "clash of civilizations" thesis put forth by Samuel Huntington.[18]   His theory posited that the world be in a constant state of conflict between groups of different cultures and religions. These "civilizations" would compete with one another for power and resources, of which the conflict between the secular West and various Islamic communities would be the most destructive. However, in defining these cultural groups, Huntington overlooked the diversity of ideological belief within these communities.[19]

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[16] Peter Berger & Anton Zijderveld, *In Praise of Doubt: How to Have Convictions Without Becoming a Fanatic* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 3.

[17] Ibid., 4-6.

[18] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

[19] Huntington's work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, is criticized for its categorization of all the countries of the world into nine

With sizable religious minorities in, among others, Germany, France, Russia, Great Britain, India, China, Ethiopia, Brazil, South Korea, Canada, Israel, and the United States, it becomes problematic to categorize entire countries by a single religious tradition.[20]

Nonetheless, many of the conflicts that took place at the end of the 20th century did have religious components to them, though religious difference was usually not the root cause for the conflict. Rather, religious rhetoric was often used to rally co-religionists and demonize enemies before, during, or after the conflict, such as the Iran-Iraq War, the Soviet-Afghan War, the various wars that resulted in the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the First Gulf War, the First Chechen War and the Second Chechen War, the various conflicts between Pakistan and India, and the various conflicts fought between Israel and Lebanon and Palestine.[21] These conflicts could be interpreted as pitting one religious tradition against another, such as the war between the Soviet Union (Orthodox

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"civilizations." Criticisms relevant to this dissertation include, among others, placing Israel in the Islamic civilization (27, 90), Sri Lanka in the Hindu civilization (27, 138), and Kazakhstan in the Orthodox civilization (27, 163). Also criticized is his grouping of historic inter-denominational rivalries, such as exists between Sunni Islam and Shia Islam.

[20] In his critique of Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, Edward Said writes that Huntington did not thoroughly research nor seem to understand the "internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization, or for the fact that the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture, or for the unattractive possibility that a great deal of demagogy and downright ignorance is involved in presuming to speak for a whole religion or civilization." The last sentence of Said's article reads, "'The Clash of Civilizations' thesis is a gimmick like 'The War of the Worlds,' better for reinforcing defensive self-pride than for critical understanding of the bewildering interdependence of our time." Edward Said, "The Clash of Ignorance," *The Nation*, October 22, 2001. http://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance?page=full (Accessed on December 28, 2012).

[21] These conflicts often influenced religious believers from other countries to travel to the warzone and fight along side their co-religionists. Perhaps the most famous example of this was the Soviet-Afghanistan War, where fighters from Saudi Arabia, Palestine, and Egypt fought the Soviets along side their fellow Muslims in Afghanistan.

Christianity) and Afghanistan (Islam). However, it should not be assumed that simply because two groups of different faiths fight one another that religion is the cause of their conflict. The conflicts above were highly complex, with each side fighting for any number of reasons.

Indeed, to see these conflicts simply in the context of one "civilization" against another overlooks the many salient factors that contribute to violence. Believing, for instance, that Israel is threatened by its neighbors simply because it is not a Muslim country overlooks the fact that many in the Middle East—and now even in Europe— believe that Israel is illegally occupying Palestine, oppressing the Palestinians both economically and politically.[22] Scholars, if they are to explain the justifications for this and the many other conflicts in which religion plays a part, should look at the broader picture and not simply attribute acts of violence simply to one religion fighting another. They must be willing to look at all the factors that contribute to violence.

William T. Cavanaugh, professor of theology at DePaul University, states that no ideology has a monopoly on violence, contending that millions have died in the name of capitalism, atheism, Marxism, and democratic liberalism.[23] Additionally, he argues that

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[22] See Rick Gladstone, "Iran's President Calls Israel 'an Insult to Humankind,'" *New York Times*, August 17, 2012; Tariq Ali, "From the Ashes of Gaza." *The Guardian* December 30, 2008.

[23] Cavanaugh explains, "But what is implied in the conventional wisdom is that there is an essential difference between religions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism, on the one hand, and secular ideologies and institutions such as nationalism, Marxism, capitalism, and liberalism, on the other, and that the former are essentially more prone to violence—more absolutist, divisive, and irrational—than the latter. It is this claim that I find both unsustainable and dangerous. It is unsustainable because ideologies and institutions labeled secular can be just as absolutist, divisive, and irrational as those labeled religious." William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology & the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6.

these ideologies can often intertwine and lead to conflict. As an example, he cites the

European "wars of religion" which took place during the 16ᵗʰ and 17ᵗʰ century, and argues

that such wars were not fought over religious differences as their name would indicate,

but rather to achieve political and economic goals, pointing out that loyalties during the

16ᵗʰ and 17ᵗʰ century wars were not clearly demarcated along denominational lines.[24]

Cavanaugh's second related point is that the phenomenon of categorizing religion

as separate from the greater culture of a given society primarily occurred in the West, and

only after the rise of the nation-state in the 16ᵗʰ century.[25] Cavanaugh states that non-

Western cultures do not distinguish between actions that are sacred or profane, except in

cases where the aforementioned non-Western cultures were influenced by Western

nation-states.[26] Such an example, Cavanaugh notes, is America's influence on the

mujahedeen in Afghanistan during the Afghan-Soviet War:

> The point is not that Islamization is a creation of the CIA. The point is rather that
> there is no pristine religion called Islam that can be separated from Muslim
> encounters with Western powers. Understanding the *theopolitical* project of
> Muslim radicals is not a matter of understanding the timeless essence of religion,
> but rather requires analysis of how different theologies have been formed in
> encounters with modern forms of power…[A]ny attempt to isolate religion from

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[24] Cavanaugh argues, "Despite variations, all these thinkers present the cause of these wars as strife between Catholics and Protestants over religious beliefs, and the solution to these wars as the rise of the modern secular state…Are political, economic, and social factors important enough that we are not longer justified in calling these wars 'of religion?'" Describing his third chapter, he writes, "I show how much of the wars of religion involved Catholics killing Catholics, Lutherans killing Lutherans, and Catholic-Protestant collaboration…Historians generally acknowledge—as political theorists do not—that other factors besides religion were at work in the wars of religion: political, economic, and social factors." Ibid., 10-11.

[25] Ibid., 60-61.

[26] Cavanaugh argues "Religion is originally a Western concept, and it only becomes a worldwide concept through—and in reaction to—Western influence." Ibid., 99.

the political and social contexts of Muslim radicalism will fail to grasp the full reality of Muslim anti-Western sentiment.[27]

Cavanaugh argues that if Western scholars are to understand "religious" violence, then they must be aware of and study all factors that motivate such violence, including the social, political, economic, or ideological, and not automatically think of "religious" violence as uniquely different from the violence justified by these other motivations. He urges scholars to ask the question, "Under what circumstances do ideologies and practices of *all kinds* promote violence?"[28] Cavanaugh's argument, however, should not lead one to think that the specific tenets of the religion—its theology, texts, founders, and history—are inconsequential to understanding religion and violence, nor that religion does not motivate certain individuals and groups to commit violent acts, such as war or suicide attacks.[29]

It should be understood that motivations for wars can be intertwined, such as when a religious group is discriminated or persecuted against economically or politically. In these cases, motivations can be multifaceted, with many ideological motivations acting

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[27] It should be noted that the relationship between Islam and "the West" occurred within a century of Muhammad's death. While this does not necessarily invalidate Cavanaugh's statement, the intention of his statement most likely is not reflective of this fact. Cavanaugh, 229-230. Emphasis added. Earlier, he states, "Outside the West, the creation of religion and its secular twin accompanied the attempts of colonial powers and indigenous modernizing elites to marginalize certain aspects of non-Western cultures and create public space for the smooth functioning of state and market interests." Ibid., 121-122.

[28] Emphasis added. Ibid., 226.

[29] The same can be said for violence committed in the name of other ideologies. Cavanaugh states, "I have no doubt that ideologies and practices of all kinds—including, for example, Islam and Christianity—can and do promote violence under certain conditions." Ibid., 5.

on and within one another.[30] Indeed, violence carried out in the name of the divine can have additional motivations that may not be articulated, i.e. political motivations, economic motivations, nationalistic motivations, etc. Though Cavanaugh asserts that such motivations cannot be neatly separated into categories, that does not mean that scholars should not use their individual expertise to understand these motivations. Scholars of religion, politics, economics, geography, sociology, psychology, history, and area studies specialists should investigate impetuses for violence in light of their fields, but be aware that motivations can be interrelated. Truly, it is only by researching all the contributing factors to violence that one might be able to fully understand and possibly prevent it. "Religious violence" in particular must be studied very closely, for rarely (if ever) is religion the sole motivation for violence perpetrated by individuals or groups.

This last view is shared by Robert Pape, author of *Dying to Win* and director of the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (CPOST); Pape's main area of focus are contemporary (since 1981) suicide attacks, which he considers the direct result of foreign occupation: "…what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland."[31] There are however, a few scholars who would disagree with Pape's assertion. One such disagreement comes from scholars David Cook and Olivia Allison:

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[30] Speaking on the violence carried out by and against the West, Cavanaugh argues that, "We must restore the full and complete picture of violence in our world, to level the playing field so that violence of all kinds is subject to scrutiny... Understanding and defusing violence in our world requires clear moral vision, of not only the faults of others but our own." Ibid., 320.

[31] *Dying to Win*, 4.

According to [Robert] Pape, suicide attacks happen only as a result of insurgencies against democracies, where occupations (or the perception of occupation such as Saudi Arabia) have religious differences from the occupied. The problems with his thesis are that he dismisses or ignores the huge religious backing for suicide attacks in Islam, downplays the issue of individual initiative, and does not explain Muslim-on-Muslim attacks where there are no obvious Western interests (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Iraq, to a large extent).[32]

This is not to say that Islam—or even radical Islam—is the primary cause of suicide terrorism, but rather that Islam is one of several motivations responsible for suicide attacks.

Kamikaze pilots were, likewise, not solely motivated by their reverence for the emperor. Indeed, the commanding officer of the first official kamikaze mission, Lieutenant Senior Grade Yukio Seki remarked, privately, that he did not wish to lead attack. Before flying his last mission, he spoke:

I am not going on this mission for the Emperor or for the Empire. I am going for my beloved wife. I am going because I was ordered to. Should Japan lose the war, only the gods know what the enemy would do to my dear wife. A man dies for the lady he loves most. That's glorious.[33]

This was, however, a minority opinion as many kamikaze pilots remarked in their final journal entries and letters to family members that they sought to do everything they could to prevent the utter destruction of Japan by the Allied Forces, for their families and for the emperor.

Though motivations for violence can be classified as primary or secondary, they are rarely singular. Thus, in order to understand and prevent suicide attacks against the United States, scholars as well as government officials, religious leaders, military

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[32] David Cook and Olivia Allison, *Understanding and Addressing Suicide Attacks: The Faith and Politics of Martyrdom Operations* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 17.

[33] Albert Axell and Hideaki Kase, *Kamikaze, Japan's Suicide Gods* (London: Pearson Education 2002), 16.

personnel, and the public at large should appreciate the primary and secondary motivations behind such attacks, particularly when the perpetrators have clearly expressed the reasons for their attacks.

Are the religiously motivated suicide attacks carried out by members of the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda both responses to *American Imperialism*? Various explanations for the actions of these two groups have been put forth by scholars, however both groups openly justified their attacks on the U.S. with religious rhetoric. Yet they are not solely religious, and by analyzing these two groups, one will be able to better understand how the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda justify their suicide attacks against the United States.

Martyr Attacks

The phrase *religiously motivated suicide attacker* refers to an individual who, motivated by his or her religious beliefs, employs a method of attack which can only succeed by taking his or her own life.[34] Often times—and certainly with the two groups that will be discussed here—individuals believe that their sacrifice will be rewarded in the afterlife. The term "martyr attacks" will be used in this dissertation as a more expedient (though equivalent) replacement for *religiously motivated suicide attacks*.[35]

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[34] Such methods include car bombs, suicide vests, or ramming an aircraft into an enemy target. *Dying to Win*, 10.

[35] According to Jerry M. Long, professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Baylor University, the term "martyr" comes from the Greek word *matureo*, meaning "to witness something." This term is commonly used in English to refer to someone who has willingly died for his or her religious beliefs. This word is often used to describe religiously motivated suicide attackers. When combined with the word "attack," the term "martyr attack" easily replaces the more tedious religiously motivated suicide attacker. The use of the term "martyr attack" as opposed to suicide attack also is more often used by members of al-Qaeda, as suicide is strictly prohibited in Islam. The term can also be found in several sources, including Nicholas Fotion, Boris Kashnikov, & Joanne K. Lekea, *Terrorism: The New World Disorder* (New York: Continuum, 2007); Alice

Individuals who carry out martyr attacks can have additional motivations for their actions, but must express as one of their motivations religious belief.[36] While both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda have their own term for martyrs who carry out suicide attacks, both terms— kamikaze and shahid, respectively—refer specifically to martyrs within their own religious traditions. When referring to both groups in general, the term "martyr" will be used.[37]

Martyr attacks are rare in the historical record. Perhaps the earliest instance of a martyr attack is the Biblical tale of Samson as recorded in the Book of Judges.[38] In the story, Samson prays to God to restore his strength so that he can destroy the temple in which the Philistines are celebrating his subjugation. In one last act of divine inspiration and retribution, Samson cries out, "O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes…Let me die with the Philistines!" Samson then brings down the columns

LoCicero &Samuel J. Sinclair, *Creating Young Martyrs: Conditions That Make Dying in a Terrorist Attack Seem Like a Good Idea* (Bridgeport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008); Mitchell D. Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor: Plots Against the West* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2012).

[36] Martyr attacks should not be mistaken for martyr missions, which, as Pape describes, is "any operation that designed in such a way that the terrorist does not expect to survive it, even if he or she is actually killed by police or other defenders." Pape excludes these types of attacks from his work on martyr attacks "because suicide missions are hard to identify reliably since we rarely know for certain that an attacker who did not kill himself or herself actually expected to die." *Dying to Win*, 10-11.

[37] In the case of Islam, it is preferable to not use the term "suicide," as suicide is expressly forbidden in the Qur'an.

[38] I am indebted to Dr. Charles Kimball, director of the Religious Studies Department at Oklahoma University, who first informed me of this fact. Judges 13-16 (New American Standard Bible).

supporting the structure, killing some three thousand Philistines.[39] There are not very

many other examples of martyr attacks after the story of Samson. While followers of

almost every faith have had little problem justifying violence in the name of their religion,

the literature on martyr attacks is minimal. This is most likely because, as David Cook

and Olivia Allison explain, it is hard to imagine exactly what a martyr attack would like

without explosives.[40] Whether they took place or not, martyr attacks were not a part of

traditional martyr ideology of any religion prior to the 20th century, despite the fact that

the literature on martyrdom in such faiths as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and

Judaism, is extensive. It is therefore somewhat surprising that after the global advent of

explosives since at least the 16th century that the first utilization of martyr attacks on a

large scale did not take place until the WWII with the creation of the Tokkotai.

There are two key factors that make the comparison of Tokkotai kamikaze and al-

Qaeda shahid possible. The first is their relative standing in relation to the U.S. at the

time when both launched their campaign of martyr attacks. The utilization of martyr

attacks is almost always in response to a threat that cannot be overcome through

conventional means. In short, those who carry out martyr attacks lack the capabilities of

their opponent.[41] Indeed, much scholarship on martyr attacks holds that the purpose is

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[39] Judges 16:28-30 (New American Standard Bible).

[40] David Cook & Olivia Allison, *Understanding and Addressing Suicide Attacks* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007)*,* 11.

[41] Again, the beliefs of kamikaze pilot Yukio Seki are instructive. He confided to a journalist after he was chosen to lead the first kamikaze mission that "Japan's future is bleak if it is forced to kill one of its best pilots—myself." Many others in the military command felt the same. *Kamikaze, Japan's Suicide Gods*, 16. *Dying to Win*, 8.

not to win the conflict outright, but through a war of attrition, cause the enemy to give up the fight and leave.

In the case of the Tokkotai, kamikaze attacks were not a battle strategy at the start of WWII, but were resorted to in 1944 as the tide began to turn against the Empire of Japan. As the Allied Forces made their way across the Pacific, Japanese officials frantically sought ways to prevent the inevitable invasion of Japan. It was Vice Admiral of the Imperial Japanese Navy, Takijiro Onishi, who put forth the idea of the Tokkotai:

> The only feasible way to accomplish [a counter attack on American carrier-based air power in Leyte Gulf], he believed, was to employ body-crashing tactics: organizing the handful of Philippine-based aircraft into suicide squadrons, each plane carrying a 2SD-kg bomb and each targeting an American aircraft carrier.[42]

Al-Qaeda, on the other hand, had seen martyr attacks succeed against the United States, though in a much more protracted battlefield. On October 23, 1983, two trucks laden with explosives destroyed the U.S. Marine barracks and the French Multinational Forces' headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon. In total, 241 Americans and 56 French nationals were killed.[43] The U.S. Marine Barracks Bombing is still considered the first martyr attack carried out by Muslims—in this case, the Shi'a group known as Hezbollah—against the West, but more importantly, the attack had a caused the spread of martyr attacks across the globe. After the barracks bombing, U.S. president Ronald Reagan pulled U.S. forces out of Lebanon, accomplishing Hezbollah's major objective.[44]

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[42] David Sears, *At War with the Wind: The Epic Struggle with Japan's WWII Suicide Bombers* (New York: Citadel Press Books, 2008), 126.

[43] Magnus Ranstorp, "Terrorism in the Name of Religion." Edited by Russell D. Howard, Reid L. Sawyer, and Natasha E. Bajema, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment: Readings & Interpretations*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2009), 214-215.

[44] *Dying to Win*, 64.

This led to spread of martyr attacks, which were utilized by Hamas against Israel, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) against the Sri Lanka and India, Chechens against Russia, and al-Qaeda against the United States, as well as continued martyr attacks by Hezbollah against Israeli forces in Lebanon.

Of these groups and all those who have carried out suicide attacks since 1983, none was more devastating than the attacks on September 11, 2001. That day, 2,977 people lost their lives in New York, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania when four commercial airplanes were hijacked and crashed by nineteen men from various Middle Eastern countries. To date, it is the single most devastating martyr attack in terms of loss of life and total destruction. In addition to 9/11, al-Qaeda also orchestrated the bombings of the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and the attack on the U.S.S Cole. However, unlike the attacks by Hezbollah in 1983, it cannot be said that al-Qaeda has achieved any of its primary objectives with these attacks. Since 9/11, much of al-Qaeda's leadership has either been killed or captured, including Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda's leader and chief financier, who was killed on May 2, 2011. Despite these severe setbacks, al-Qaeda continues to recruit new members and carry out attacks on American military targets in several countries, but especially in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The second factor making comparison between the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda possible is their utilization of traditional religions to justify their martyr attacks. In Japan, resorting to kamikaze attacks can be seen as simply the natural conclusion of State Shinto. Based in the indigenous religion of Japan, State Shinto came into being shortly after the Meiji Restoration. Focused on the principles of loyalty unto death and filial piety, political elites sought to bring about the end of the Tokugawa Shogun, the ruling family

of Japan in power since 1600 CE, and reinstall the Emperor Meiji as the rightful and divinely descended ruler of Japan. Commenting on the religion that would become State Shinto, Peter Takayama writes:

> State Shinto [*kokutai*] was essentially a religion of Japanese nationalism....Confronted with the double threat of Western civilization and internal disintegration, the new Meiji government needed asset of truly national symbols to help strengthen the concept of the new nation-state and develop a national patriotism strong enough to replace the local and parochial loyalties of the past, the government leaders resorted to the emperor system and Shinto, asserting that a spirit of national unit could be created only by reaching back to earlier historical periods especially the seventh and eighth centuries, when the emperor and Shinto played prominent roles in governing the country.[45]

In a letter to his parents upon him being accepted in the Tokkotai ranks, Matsuo Isao wrote a letter to his parents:

> Please congratulate me. I have been given a splendid opportunity to die. This is my last day. The destiny of our homeland hinges on the decisive battle in the Southern Seas, where I shall fall like a blossom from a radiant cherry tree. I shall be a shield for the Tenno and die cleanly along with my squadron leader and other friends. I wish that I could be born seven times, each time to smite the enemy. How I appreciate this chance to die like a man! I am grateful from the depths of my heart to the parents who have reared me with their constant prayers and tender love. And I am grateful as well to my squadron leader and superior officers who have looked after me as if I were their own son and given me such careful training. Thank you, my parents, for the 23 years during which you have cared for me and inspired me. I hope that my present deed will in some small way repay what you have done for me. Think well of me and know that your Isao died for our country. This is my last wish, and there is nothing else that I desire. I shall return in spirit and look forward to your visit at the Yasukuni Shrine. Please take good care of yourselves.[46]

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[45] K. Peter Takayama. "The Revitalization of Japanese Civil Religion." Edited by Mark R. Mullins, Shimazono Susumu, and Paul L. Swanson, *Religion & Society in Modern Japan*. (Berkeley, CA: Asian Studies Press, 1993), 107.

[46] Raymond Lamont-Brown, *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Samurai* (London: Cassell Military Paperbacks, 2000), 36-37.

There is no lack of scholarship stating and addressing the manipulation of Islam by al-Qaeda.[47] However, it is vital to understand al-Qaeda's version of Islam, as it is essential to understanding the logic of the group's martyr attacks. Two verses from the Qur'an provide summary for al-Qaeda's justification of war against the United States:

> Permission is given to those who fight because they are wronged. Surely Allah is capable of giving them victory. Those who were driven out of their homes unjustly, merely for their saying, "Our Lord is Allah." Had Allah not repelled some people by others, surely monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is mentioned frequently, would have been demolished. Indeed, Allah will support whoever supports Him. Allah is surely strong and mighty.[48]

In his speech entitled, *To the Americans*, Bin Laden writes:

> The Islamic Nation that was able to dismiss and destroy the previous evil Empires like yourself; the Nation that rejects your attacks, wishes to remove your evils, and is prepared to fight you. You are well aware that the Islamic nation, from the very core of its soul, despises your haughtiness and arrogance.
> If you Americans refuse to listen to our advice and the goodness, guidance, and righteousness that we call them to, then be aware that you will lose this Crusade [President George W.] Bush began, just like the other previous Crusades in which you were humiliated at the hands of the mujahidin, fleeing to your home in great silence and disgrace. If you Americans do not respond, then your fate will be that of the Soviets who fled from Afghanistan to deal with their military defeat, political breakup, ideological downfall, and economic bankruptcy.
> This is our message to the Americans, as an answer to theirs. Do they now know why we fight them and over which form of ignorance, by the permission of God, we shall be victorious?"[49]

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[47] Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Fatwa on Terrorism* (London: Minhaj-ul-Quran International, 2010); Malcolm Nance, "How al-Qaeda Dupes Its Followers," *Foreign Policy*, December 15, 2009, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/12/15/how_al_qaeda_dupes_its_followers (Accessed on February 12, 2013); for a collection of Muslim statements speaking out against terrorism, see Charles Kurzman, *Islamic Statements Against Terrorism*, http://kurzman.unc.edu/islamic-statements-against-terrorism (Accessed on February 12, 2013).

[48] Qur'an 22:39-40. A shorten version of verse 39 is given in bin Laden's speech, *To the Americans*. *Messages to the World*, 161.

[49] *Messages to the World*, 172.

In both cases, religion plays a key role in both inspiring and justifying martyr attacks. Much more will be explained in greater detail in the following chapters.

The Study of Terrorism

Most Western scholarship is such that any discussion of martyr attacks is simultaneously a discussion of terrorism. The term "martyr attack" (as well as its similar iterations) is almost always associated with the term "suicide terrorism," so much so that the two are usually equated in the minds of most Westerners, i.e. suicide attacks are acts of terrorism, terrorists commit suicide attacks. To a certain extent, one can understand the logic of this connection, for many in the West, particularly in the United States, see the two terms as synonymous after 9/11. The U.S. government has declared members of al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden "terrorists," while President George W. Bush declared to the world, "You are either with us, or you are with the terrorists."[50] Even among the works of scholars and other experts, rarely is any study of suicide attacks not also a study of terrorism. To mention just one example:

> The lethal subset of this struggle is terrorism spawned by Islamic radical Jihadists. In this respect, the most prominent aspect of their methodology is suicide bombing and martyrdom operations—the subject of this important book by David Cook and Olivia Allison.[51]

Yet few would call the martyr attacks perpetrated by kamikaze pilots acts of terrorism. Indeed, one of the reasons for the small rise of recent publications concerning the Tokkotai is an attempt by scholars of Japan to distinguish between members of the

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[50] http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html, (Accessed on January 23, 2013).

[51] Note that the first mention of the phrase "suicide attacks" is preceded by the term "terrorism." Edward P. Djerejian, foreword to David Cook & Olivia Allison, *Understanding and Addressing Suicide Attacks* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), ix.

Tokkotai and members of militant Islamic organizations such as al-Qaeda.[52] However,

there is another, more legitimate reasons not to equate kamikaze with terrorism:

kamikaze attacks took place during, and were considered, acts of war. The FBI's

definition of international terrorism reads:

> International terrorism involves violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that
> are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any state, or that would
> be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or
> any state. These acts appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian
> population, influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or
> affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping. International
> terrorist acts occur outside the United States or transcend national boundaries in
> terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear
> intended to coerce or intimidate, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate
> or seek asylum.[53]

Though not clearly articulated, what places kamikaze as well as actions carried out by the

United States—bombing of civilian populations during WWII—outside of this definition

of terrorism is the fact that these actions are carried out by state governments during

times of declared war. The FBI's definition has been constructed *ex post facto*, and is

meant to include the actions of non-state actors who carry out violence against states, i.e.

martyr attacks perpetrated by al-Qaeda.

As is such, I would argue that the classification of Jihadist martyr attacks as

terrorism is not useful. The reason for this is threefold. First, the term "terrorism" is far

too broad to be useful in describing martyr attacks. According to the FBI's definition,

any violent action that seeks to coerce or intimidate a civilian population or government

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[52] Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[53] *Terrorism, 2002-2005*. http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/ terrorism- 2002-2005. http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/terrorism-2002-2005. (Accessed on December 17, 2012).

is terrorism. This definition would, therefore, be forced to cover such examples of terrorism such as ecological terrorism, narco-terrorism, cyber terrorism, nuclear terrorism, economic terrorism, interstate terrorism, and intrastate terrorism, each with their specific motivations for their actions and various histories. None of these examples of terrorism would add anything to a better understanding of martyr attacks.

The second reason for the disassociation of Jihadist martyr attacks and terrorism is the pejorative connotation of the term terrorism. To many in the West, terrorism is seen as an illegitimate use of force which is carried out by individuals most often deemed irrational or evil.[54] Such distinctions muddle the understanding of martyr attacks and can lead to important aspects of the phenomenon to be ignored or not researched in an impartial manner. While martyr attacks are not be excused in any way, the conclusion that such actions are carried out by individuals who lack reason (or who are simply "evil") does not further the understanding of the phenomenon, especially when these individuals often articulate clear and concise reasons for their actions. Because this dissertation seeks to compare martyr attacks carried out by both kamikaze and shahid, I feel it is important to place both iterations of martyr attacks on equal footing and have not one version of martyr attacks burdened with such a large body of scholarship.

The third reason is that al-Qaeda has formally declared war on the United States. This fact is significant because the U.S. government felt it had been attacked suddenly without warning. President George Bush made comparisons to Pearl Harbor, despite the

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[54] Daniel Pipes, *Militant Islam Reaches America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003); Eric Stakelbeck, *The Terrorists Next Door: How the Government is Deceiving You About the Islamic Threat* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 2011); Robert Spencer, *Onward Muslim Soldiers* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 2003); Brigitte Gabriel, *Because They Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006).

fact that Japan also made no formal declaration of war before the attack.[55] Even after

9/11, the U.S. did not declare war on al-Qaeda, but rather a war on terror, giving it greater

latitude in carrying out its policies and objectives. It is highly unlikely, however, that

either the U.S. government or al-Qaeda would say that they were not at war with one

another, as each seeks the destruction of the other. Actions taken during war are not as

scrutinized as when similar actions occur during peace, i.e. the taking of prisoners and

attacking enemy targets. Again, this is not to condone the actions of the Tokkotai or al-

Qaeda or even the U.S. government. It is merely to acknowledge that rules of

engagement change during war. Because both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda were at war

with the United States, identifying either groups' actions as terrorism it not productive.

American Imperialism

In his speech, *To the Americans*, Osama bin Laden explains that the American

public is responsible for the "tragedies and calamities" inflicted on Muslims "are only a

few examples of your oppression and aggression against us."[56] He cites over a dozen

examples where U.S. policies have brought pain, suffering, and death to Muslims, and

blames the American public for the persecution:

> You may then dispute that all the above does not justify aggression against
> civilians, for crimes they did not commit and offenses in which they did not
> participate. This argument contradicts your continuous repetition that America is
> the land of freedom, and freedom's leader in this world. If this is so, the

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[55] Al-Qaeda declared *jihad* on the U.S. on August 23, 1996 and again on February 23, 1998, in which bin Laden declared, "All these American crimes and sins are a clear proclamation of war against God, his Messenger, and the Muslims…To kill the American and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim in all countries, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Mosque." *Messages to the World*, 23, 60-61.

[56] Ibid., 164.

American people are the ones who choose their government through their own free will; a choice which stems from their agreement to its policies. Thus the American people have chosen, consented to, and affirmed their support for Israel's oppression of the Palestinians, the occupation and usurpation of their land, and its continuous killing, torture, punishment, and expulsion of the Palestinians. The American people have the ability and choice to refuse the policies of their government, and even to change it if they want. The American people are the ones who pay the taxes which fund the planes that bomb us in Afghanistan, the tanks that strike and destroy our homes in Palestine, the armies which occupy our lands in the Arabian Gulf, and the fleets which ensure the blockade of Iraq. These tax dollars are given to Israel for it ton continue attacking us and invade our lands. So the American people are the ones who fund the attacks against us, and they are the ones who oversee the expenditure of these monies in the way they wish, through their elected candidates.[57]

It is clear how Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda feel that the U.S. has oppressed Muslims. Going into greater detail, bin Laden elaborates further on the actions he feels contribute to the suffering of Muslims for the benefit of Americans. Both at the beginning and the end of the speech, bin Laden states that Allah will not allow his people to be oppressed, allowing Muslims to fight against the Americans and to seek their destruction or conversion to Islam.

In her book, *The Rape of Nanking*, Iris Chang writes that the arrival and forced opening of Japan by Commodore Matthew Perry and the U.S. left within the Japanese a fierce resentment for what they considered a grave humiliation. While some advocated war with the West, others advocated a different path of salvation:

As we are not the equals of foreigners in the mechanical arts, let us have intercourse with foreign countries, learn their drill and tactics, and when we have made the nation as united as one family, we shall be able to go abroad and give lands in foreign countries to those who have distinguished themselves in battle. The soldiers will vie with one another in displaying their intrepidity, and it will not be too late then to declare war.[58]

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[57] Ibid., 165.

[58] Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 22.

For the next ninety years, Japan competed against the U.S. and other Western powers for economic superiority and political stability in the Pacific. Through its meticulously controlled economy, Japan was able to move out of feudalism and into the Industrial Age. Within fifty years, the nation that until recently settled its disputes with swords and spears controlled territory in foreign countries and became the first non-European power to fight a European power to a stalemate. Yet with every advantage came a check on Japanese power.

With much of Europe fighting the Axis, Japan saw its opportunity to take control of European colonies in East Asia. The U.S. remained the only Western nation able capable of challenging the Empire of Japan. Hostilities came to a head in 1941. For reasons that will be explained further in Chapter Three, the U.S. halted its exports to Japan, effectively halting the Asian nations conquest of the continent.[59] Less than five months later, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

Some may contend that *American Imperialism* is but a subset of the phenomenon known as globalization, and that this term should be used in place of *American Imperialism*. Globalization as a concept, however, is too diffuse and varied a phenomenon for the purposes of this dissertation. The scholarship on globalization covers a plethora of topics and areas. Just like definitions of terrorism, definitions of globalization can be countless. Because of this, interpreting and defining globalization is difficult, for scholars are attempting to explain a concept that involves the entire world and all of its people. Globalization affects nearly all aspects of human life, including

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[59] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 223.

politics, economics, culture, and religion. Recent scholarship on globalization has been primarily focused on the negative. Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz argues that, "Globalization itself is neither good nor bad. It has the power to do enormous good…But in much of the world it has not brought comparable benefits. For many, it seems closer to an unmitigated disaster."[60] Therefore, this dissertation will focus primarily on the negative effects of the globalization process, for these are the aspects which primarily outraged both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda. Such negative aspects include the economic inequality between the West and the rest of the world and the political manipulation of non-Western governments by Western powers for economic gain and stability, which took place in Japan and continues to take place in the Middle East. In both of these cases, it was the U.S. who became the target for the "discontents" of both the followers of State Shinto and Jihadism, and led to utilization of martyr attacks.

It should not be said that martyr attacks are a direct result of *American Imperialism*. Many individuals in the non-Western world (and some in the Western world) complain that the U.S. involves itself in far too many countries, often decrying the apparent contradiction of the American promotion of democracy while using less than democratic means to achieve its goals. However, if *American Imperialism* led directly to martyr attacks, there would be thousands of religiously motivated suicide campaigns against the United States in every country around the world. Fortunately, this is not the case. Also, the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda are not the only two groups who have utilized martyr attacks against the United States. A more comprehensive study of all the groups to use martyr attacks against the U.S. would include Hezbollah, Hamas, the Taliban, and

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[60] Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 20.

many other individual attacks in countries such as Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Likewise, the U.S. is not the only victim of martyr attacks. Dozens of nations have been victim to martyr attacks, including Spain, the United Kingdom, Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia. Prior to the 2003 occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, Sri Lanka was the country who had experienced the majority of suicide attacks.[61] Additionally, not all martyr attacks are justified with religion. Both the LTTE attacks against the Sri Lankan government and Chechen attacks against Russia are admittedly secular campaigns of martyr attacks.

Such cases and examples are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Here, I deal only with the martyr attacks of the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda and their main target, the United States. I argue that both groups resorted to martyr attacks in response to *American Imperialism*. To this end, this dissertation will investigate the history, rhetoric, and religious justifications for the utilization of violence of both groups and how they used their individual religious traditions to justify violence during the 20th century. In this way, I hope to expand the literature of religion and violence.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter Two, I define and discuss the term *American Imperialism*, citing examples stated by both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda which were used to justify both their declarations of war as well as the implementation of martyr attacks against the United States. This chapter is primarily a discussion of each groups' individual history with the United States. For the Tokkotai, I explain the impact of Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival and forced opening of Japan, the rise of xenophobia in America against the

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[61] *Dying to Win*, 5-6.

Japanese—often described by as the Yellow Peril—and finally the import embargo implemented by the U.S. against Japan during the latter's period of imperialistic expansion after WWI. In the discussion of al-Qaeda, I cite America's support for Israel at the expense of the Palestinians and the stationing of U.S. troops and the establishment of American bases in Saudi Arabia as examples of *American Imperialism*. Both examples are mentioned by al-Qaeda as examples not only of the oppression of Muslims, but also as blasphemous to Allah.

Chapter Three will focus on the Japanese term *sonno joi*, which means to "revere the emperor, expel the barbarian." I explain how this apothegm became the battle cry as well as the motivating philosophy of those who sought to abolish the Tokugawa Bakufu and establish the Emperor Meiji as the divine ruler of Japan. Though the term fell out of use after the Emperor Meiji (and his advisors) chose to invite the foreigners from around the world into Japan, adopting their technology and philosophies, I describe the revival of *sonno joi* after WWI, this time providing the Japanese the motivation to revere their emperor by conquering and subduing their neighboring nations.

In Chapter Four, I trace the history of Jihadism as it was articulated by three writers—Hassan al-Banna, Abul Ala Maududi, and especially Sayyid Qutb—and how this ideology, created during a time of when Western civilization was failing in its promises of advancement and elevation for non-Westerners, emphasized two key principles in Islam—*tawhid* (oneness of Allah) and *jihad* (the Muslim duty to fight the infidel). I explain how Jihadism evolved from writer to writer, eventually becoming the defining ideology of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, and used to fight the Soviets during

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the war in Afghanistan and against the Americans, eventually leading to the attacks of September 11.

Chapter Five will be a discussion of the strategic and religious motivations of martyr attacks of both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda. Individuals from both groups were motivated by their particular religious beliefs, yet I explain that religion alone was not enough to convince a Japanese subject of the Emperor Showa nor a devout Muslim to carry out a holy war against the United States or carry out martyr attacks against Americans. I discuss how both State Shinto and Jihadism have as one of the core tenets of their individual belief systems the existence of a war between themselves and those who do not share their beliefs. Individuals from both State Shinto and Jihadism believe that themselves, their religion, and their fellow believers are under attack, and because the enemy they face is of superior strength, I explain how this leads the members of the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda to carry out martyr attacks against the United States.

I conclude this dissertation in Chapter Six, briefly summarizing my thesis and discussions in previous chapters as well as providing several concluding remarks regarding the relationship between religion and violence as well as the relationship between U.S. policy and the implementation of martyr attacks against Americans.

CHAPTER TWO

American Imperialism

The phrase 'American empire' makes many people feel uncomfortable. For many outside of the United States, it brings to mind the many examples of perceived subjugation and oppression carried out by the Americans throughout its history. For many Americans, it is an unfair, if not blasphemous, characterization of the necessary actions taken by the U.S. to ensure its security as well as the security of the world. For those Americans who believe the U.S. is an empire, it is the sad reminder by which their government, through the exploitation of millions of non-Americans, became the most powerful (and hated) nation in the world. To attempt to determine the veracity of any of these claims is beyond the purview of this dissertation. Along with the difficulty of judging actions and consequences comes the near impossibility of proving motivations and intentions of the thousands of people involved in thousands of possible examples that are said to have created the American empire through the past two and a half centuries. Whether the U.S. is or is not an empire is not the focus of this study. This dissertation concerns itself with the reasons that U.S. has been the victim of martyr attacks by members of the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda, two groups which have put forth anti-American rhetoric as their justifications for war and use of martyr attacks against the U.S.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the term *American Imperialism* will be used to denote any number of policies and practices carried out by the U.S. government (as well as corporations, private groups, and individuals which were supported by the U.S.

government) which have been used as justification by members of the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda for martyr attacks against American targets. This term should not be interpreted as a judgment of U.S. actions, but rather is used to describe how the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda saw American actions.[1] In this chapter, I will go through these justifications, explaining *American Imperialism* as it was understood by both groups, first the Tokkotai, and then al-Qaeda. Because of the large number of accusations of imperialism against the U.S., it is not possible to go into detail on all the examples of supposed *American Imperialism* in this chapter. Instead, only examples which were referenced most often have received attention here. For the Tokkotai, *American Imperialism* was defined through such events as Commodore Perry's opening of Japan in 1853, the public and official racism of the "Yellow Peril" by America, and finally, the American embargo of supplies to Japan in late 1941 and the final rejection of the Peace Treaty in November. Al-Qaeda's definition of *American Imperialism* includes the support of Israel against the Palestinians, the placement of American troops in Saudi Arabia. The historical context in which *American Imperialism* occurred is very important, and will be added when needed. While it is not necessary that to conclusively demonstrate whether or not the U.S. is an empire, this chapter will include examples cited by the proponents of State Shinto and Jihadism as well as additional examples to further underscore the motivations for both sets of martyr attacks.[2]

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[1] As is such, I will not preface *American Imperialism* with the term "alleged," "perceived," or "in the view of the Tokkotai and/or al-Qaeda."

[2] It must be mentioned again that this dissertation does not seek to excuse in any way the actions of either the Tokkotai or al-Qaeda. Attempting to understand the motivations of both groups requires that scholars investigate and research any and all stated and unstated reasons for martyr attacks. This dissertation is an attempt to do just

Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan

The first act of *American Imperialism* against Japan occurred on July 8, 1853 when Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry of the United States Navy sailed four of the infamous "black ships" into Uraga Bay and demanded the delivery of a letter he carried from President Millard Fillmore to the Emperor of Japan. Seven months later, this time returning with eight ships, Perry secured a treaty between the two nations, guaranteeing two safe harbors for American sailors who came ashore seeking refuge, the supplying of American ships, including the buying and selling of goods aboard the ships, and the establishment of embassies to further relations between the two countries.[3] This act broke the over than two hundred years of self-imposed isolation in Japan. Trade was restricted to the Dutch and Chinese, who were allowed to trade on a limited basis only a few times a year. Foreign sailors seeking supplies, trade, or refuge were turned away; in extreme cases, they were executed as they came ashore.[4] The Japanese themselves were forbidden from traveling abroad, and it was illegal to possess any foreign objects.

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that. I take no position on whether the U.S. is or is not an empire, as such a blanket statement cannot be verified, but rather show the accusations made against the U.S. as being an empire.

[3] Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 68-69.

[4] Beheadings were certainly not the official policy of the Tokugawa Bakufu. Shipwrecked sailors from foreign countries were to be taken to Nagasaki, where the Dutch would facilitate the sailors return to their homeland. Stories of sailors being executed on shore were "the result of Japanese being unable to make themselves understood by them [the Americans] and the fact that the Japanese way of life was different from theirs [the Americans]." Kamikawa Hikomatsu, *Japan-American Diplomatic Relations in the Meiji-Taisho Era* (Tokyo: Pan-Pacific Press, 1958), 7.

Christianity, which had been brought with Portuguese missionaries in the sixteenth century was harshly persecuted.[5]

The letter written by President Fillmore was accompanied by a letter from Perry himself. Compared to Fillmore, which called for safe harbor of shipwrecked sailors and discussing the opening of trade relations, Perry's letter was more a threat of force should the Japanese not acquiesce to American demands.[6] Though Perry spoke of friendship, his warnings were much clearer:

> Therefore, as the United States and Japan are becoming every day nearer and nearer to each other, the President desires to live in peace and friendship with your imperial majesty, but no friendship can long exist, unless Japan ceases to act towards Americans as if they were her enemies…The undersigned holds out all of these arguments in the hope that the Japanese government will see the necessity of averting unfriendly collision between the two nations, by responding favourably to the propositions of amity, which are now made in all sincerity. Many of the large ships-of-war destined to visit Japan have not yet arrived in the seas, though they are hourly expected; and the undersigned, as an evidence of his friendly intentions, has brought but four of the smaller ones, designing should it become necessary, to return to Edo in the ensuing spring with a much larger force.[7]

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[5] W.G. Beasley writes that Christianity was "regarded as an instrument of foreign ambitions, to be stamped out by every means at his [Shogun Tokugawa Iemistu] disposal." W.G. Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan* (New York: St. Martin's, 1981), 38.

[6] President Fillmore's letter proposed that Japan and the U.S. "should live in friendship" with one another "and have commercial intercourse with each other." In contrast, Commodore Perry's letter warned that U.S. steam vessels had the ability to "reach Japan in eighteen to twenty days," adding that "the seas of Japan would soon be covered with [American] vessels." For primary documents, see http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/fillmore_perry_letters.pdf (Accessed on January 13, 2013). See also *The Modern History of Japan*, 58.

[7] Matthew Calbraith Perry, *From Commodore Matthew C. Perry to His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan*. http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/ fillmore_perry_letters.pdf (Accessed on January 13, 2013).

Perry's letter made very clear that he was willing to use force to achieve the goals of the U.S. It is debatable whether Perry's ships would have been able to bomb Japan into compliance, at least with the eight ships and thousand men that were available to him. While the Japanese were no in position to repel the Commodore, the means that would have been required to occupy and force Japan out of its isolation would have needed to have been more substantial. This fact says more the state of Japanese politics than it does about the Japanese military.[8]

Tokugawa Ieyasu officially became *Shogun*, on March 23, 1603. The title was bestowed upon him by Emperor Go Yozei, giving Tokugawa supreme authority throughout the land. He ruled Japan for the next thirteen years, taking steps to ensure the continued rule of his descendants. To further ensure their reign, the Tokugawa Bakufu (Tokugawa government) took increasingly harsh steps to isolate Japan from the outside world. Foreigners were expelled and trade, "which might provide guns and gold to disaffected vassals," was severely limited.[9] Hence for the next 250 years, Japan made no advancement but instead focused inward. The rest of the world, primarily Europe, advanced in both wealth and power through the consolidation of sovereignty and the scientific and industrial technology. It is because of the technology gap, explains W.G. Beasley, that Japan "depended on the willingness of other countries to accept the ban,"

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[8] As will be explained later, many of the Japanese samurai believed that the Shogun had betrayed the Japan to the Americans to save his political position.

[9] By the time of Ieyasu's grandson, Iemitsu, trade had taken on the stigma of excess. Beasley writes, "With the passage of time, trade itself came into disfavour, on the grounds that what the foreigners brought were luxuries and what they took were goods that Japan could hardly spare." *The Modern History of Japan*, 38.

and that in the event that the West wanted to force the island nation open, Japan was powerless to stop it.[10]

However, the arrival of Perry was not entirely a surprise. In truth, the opening of Japan to the West could have happened much sooner. Europeans had known about the existence of Japan since the time of Marco Polo, and had since made many expeditions to East Asian countries before the period of isolationism. Even during the Tokugawa period, government officials and scholars translated and studied European books for a Tokugawa advisers. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the world looked very different that it had two hundred years earlier. In the case of America, the former colony had not only become independent, but had spread across the continent and was looking to expand across the Pacific.[11] Yet this incursion was apparently never discovered by Tokugawa officials. In 1844, the Dutch king William II sent a letter to the Shogun urging the government to reassess its stance on isolation. The letter explained the Opium War in China, and sought to elucidate to the Japanese "the changes which industrialization [were] causing in Europe's relations with the rest of the world."[12] Japan rejected such suggestions, presuming that it could continue to enforce its policy. Commodore Perry's

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Marius B. Jansen writes of several instances where American sailors and ships were contracted by the Dutch East India Company for trade in Japan, a violation of the terms of the trade monopoly enjoyed by the Dutch. Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 264.

[12] According to Beasley, the main goal of the letter, "which took the form of friendly advice, was to convince the Shogun to reevaluate its position on the isolation, putting Holland in the position to gain from a change in policy. *The Modern History of Japan*, 43.

action in Japan not only opened Japan to the U.S., but to the rest of the European powers as well. In 1858, Townsend Harris secured another treaty for the U.S., this time securing the right of extraterritoriality for Americans in Japan, the establishment of custom duties, the right to dispatch a minister to the capital of Edo, and the opening of additional ports to U.S. ships.[13] Within twenty-five years, not only had Japan failed to keep Europeans away from its shores, but had been forced to sign unequal treaties with Britain, France, Russia, and the U.S. [14]

These events proved disastrous for the Tokugawa Bakufu. Despite the fact that many of the *daimyo*, Japanese land-owning nobles, agreed that the signing of the treaties was the only way to avoid all out war, many throughout the land came to see the Tokugawa government as weak and ineffective. Perhaps the most damning condemnation of Tokugawa weakness was the surprisingly vocal opposition to the Harris Treaty by the Emperor Komei. Peter Duus, scholar of Japanese history at Stanford University, writes that "In defying the emperor's wishes by signing the Harris Treaty, the

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[13] *Modern Japan*, 69.

[14] Both Russia and Britain had explored the idea of "opening" Japan prior to 1853. For Britain, the mission was never followed through with. According to Beasley, plans were made in 1845 by Superintendent of Trade in Hong Kong, Sir John Davis, and expected to be carried out during the summer of the next year. Davis, however, believing that a substantial nautical force would be necessary for the mission, could not secure the number of ships from the navy nor the support from London to force the issue. Unlike Britain, who sought trade, Russian interests in Japan were primarily strategic, understanding that the establishment of Western ports in East Asia further weakened their position in the region. Russia had made inroads into the Japan's northern borders, including the Kuril Islands and Ezo (present day Hokkaido), yet Japan was never seen as an important source of trade or resources. *The Modern History of Japan*, 43-44.

Bakufu had also betrayed its trust as delegate of the imperial power."[15]   This is the origin

of the saying, *sonno joi*, which meant 'revere the Emperor, expel the barbarian.' While

not necessarily the majority opinion, this saying became the rallying cry for the

restoration of direct rule by the Emperor.[16] Regardless of the fervor or opinion of the

Emperor, nearly all Japanese felt a sense of "fear and humiliation roused by the intrusion

of the foreigners."[17]

       There were other examples of official resistance to the Americans. After Perry's

arrival, the Tokugawa Bakufu circulated Perry's letter and asked the daimyo throughout

the land how they believed the government should handle the American demands.

Tokugawa Nariaki, a retired daimyo who was put in charge of maritime defense, opted

for war. He advised that the if Japanese should "put their trust in war, the whole

country's morale will be increased and even if we sustain an initial defeat we will in the

end expel the foreigners."[18] Peace and agreeing to foreign terms would "end in complete

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[15] *Modern Japan*, 71. It should be noted that the Emperor eventually signed the treaty, though he was angered that his wishes had not been followed. *The Making of Modern Japan*, 285.

[16] Duus writes, "The Emperor's opposition to the Harris Treaty in 1858 forged a firm link between anti-foreignism and veneration for the Emperor…Some loyalists rallied around the Emperor because they thought of him as the divine embodiment of the Japanese identity, while others saw him as the apex of the chain of loyalty that cemented the *kokutai* [national polity]." *Modern Japan*, 72.

[17] Ibid.

[18] The belief in initial losses leading to increased morale and eventual victory of the Japanese was shared also by Fujita Toko. He stated that if Americans invaded Japan, they would be cut down by thousands of samurai, whose deaths would be used to inspire the rest of the country to resist the Americans, leading inevitably to Japanese triumph. This understanding speaks to the tradition of an "inspiring death" which would be alluded to by, among others, the Kamikaze pilots of WWII. *The Making of Modern Japan*, 287.

collapse," both of the government and the country of Japan.[19] Nariaki continued in his diatribe against the Americans, saying "They were arrogant and discourteous, their actions an outrage. Indeed, this was the greatest disgrace we have suffered since the dawn of our history." He went on to say that all who had witnessed the actions of the Americans found them reprehensible, and asked why coastal defenses were built if they were not meant to repel foreigners.[20] Another daimyo, Ii Naosuke, counseled the Bakufu to initially accept the foreign treaties, believing that Japan was in no position to resist at the time. However, he wrote:

> We must construct new steamships, especially powerful warships, and these we will load with goods not needed in Japan…these will be called merchant vessels, but they will in fact have the secret purpose of training a navy. Forestalling the foreigners in this way, I believe, is the best method of ensuring that the Bakufu will at some future time find opportunity to reimpose its ban and forbid foreigners to come to Japan.[21]

Within ten years of the signing of the Harris Treaty, the Tokugawa Bakufu had collapsed. Regardless of their methods or reasons, the Japanese had failed to keep Americans and other foreigners residing in Japan. Thousands lost their lives, including many daimyo, for they had failed in their duty to protect Japan from foreigners. Many were assassinated, executed by lower ranking samurai who were outraged by their leaders inability to protect Japan from foreign domination as well as betraying the ideals which

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[19] Ibid., 281.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 282.

the samurai were said to espouse.[22] Dedicated as they were to the ethics of decisiveness

and daring—not to mention an indifference to death—and nurtured on stories of samurai

who committed the venerated act of seppuku, or ritual suicide, and traded their "pro

forma loyalty to their daimyo for a more intense personal commitment to the Emperor."

These samurai believed that their reckless devotion to their virtues would be able to

"drive the foreigners away or bring the country's leaders to their sense."[23]

Eventually, many of these samurai were put down by the Tokugawa Bakufu.

However, their actions and, more importantly their beliefs, would have serious

ramifications for the future nation-state of Japan. Loyalists samurai, seeing that their

campaigns of domestic terrorism and assassinations had failed to either change the

governments mind or expel the barbarians, turned their efforts *fukoku kyohei* (meaning

"rich country, strong army") and sought not only Western technology, but a strengthening

of the ties between the daimyo.[24] Despite serious efforts at both defense of the nation

and attempts to gain "Western knowledge," loyalty to the Tokugawa Bakufu was

shattered. Jansen writes that "The sense of danger from an intrusive West roused an ethic

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[22] This act of assassination by lower ranking samurai would occur again in the early 20th century, though the assassinations during that time were carried out by military officers against members of the Parliament and other government officials.

[23] Duus writes, "Shibusawa Eiichi, a young loyalist firebrand who later became a prominent business leader, recalled his mood at the time: 'What did it matter that the foreigners possessed hug gunboats and cannons? We had our samurai swords, we had honed our skills, and we would cut them down, one by one, mercilessly.'" Duus also recounts an incident where wooden statues of four shogun from the Ashikaga Bakufu were decapitated for their perceived disloyalty to Japan for having dealings with foreigners. *Modern Japan*, 72-73.

[24] Ibid., 76.

consciousness that quickly came to center on the Kyoto Emperor."[25] The Bakufu, unable

to dictate the terms of trade with the West, were blamed for the economic fluctuations,

particularly the rise in the price of rice, and the lowering or loss of the stipends paid to

samurai for their service and their loyalty.[26] In 1866, Iwakura Tomoni, a loyalist court

official said, "To [reassert national prestige and overcome the foreigners] requires that

the country be united. And for the policy and administration to have a single source, the

Court must be made the center of the national government."[27] What Iwakura intended

was for the government to be centered around the Emperor, who would be able to unify

the nation and inspire loyalty from all of Japan's subjects. On January 3, 1868, the

Emperor Meiji issued a decree abolishing the Tokugawa Bakufu and consolidating power

in the imperial court. For its failure to protect Japan, the Tokugawa Yoshinubo, the last

shogun of the Tokugawa Bakufu, was forced to abdicate, ending 250 years of rule and

Japanese autonomy.

It would be incorrect say that Commodore Perry's actions led directly to WWII or

the utilization of martyr attacks against the U.S. Many events took place during the

ninety years between the arrival of Perry and the start of WWII and the creation of the

Tokkotai. For many of those years, feelings between Japan and the U.S. were cordial,

and relations between the two nations were often based in mutual admiration and respect.

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[25] *The Making of Modern Japan*, 295.

[26] Beasley writes, "To all their [the samurai] other arguments against the treaties, therefore, arising from considerations of policy or from xenophobia, was added that of economic distress, which could, rightly or wrongly, be attributed to the foreigners' coming." Ibid., 78-79.

[27] *Modern Japan*, 77.

Yet from the outset, America had introduced to the Japanese a type of international relations that rewarded the controlling of foreign governments and the securing of resources and markets through power. Rivals were those attempting to do the same, and relations between states were governed by not simply by ensuring the continued trade of one's country, but the relatively weakening of others. In order to dictate its own agenda, Japan needed to become strong, both militarily and economically, and the actions and policies that resulted from Perry's arrival were attempts to ensure that Japan would not be ruled or coerced by foreign nations. In nearly every aspect, Japanese government official sought to unite their island nation for the cause of international security. Within fifty years, Japan went from being a closed nation based in feudalism to a world power. It had colonies of its own, in Taiwan and Korea, and had warred with China, Germany, and Russia, triumphant in all cases. Japan continued these policies into the 1930s, invading China and turning its sights on Southeast Asia and South Pacific. In this light, when the U.S. threatened Japanese blocked imports, Japan saw fit to retaliate against the U.S. by bombing Pearl Harbor in 1941. The planner of the attack, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, said that he had enlisted in the Japanese navy because, "I wanted to return Commodore Perry's visit."[28] As renowned history of Japan John W. Dower states, "After 1941, few Westerners cared to dwell on the rational and possibly legitimate aspects of 'Japan's case,' or the extent to which Japanese imperialism followed Western precedents."[29]

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[28] William L. Neumann, *America Encounters Japan: From Perry to MacArthur* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), 1.

[29] *War Without Mercy,* 29.

The Rise of the Yellow Peril

In his book *The Yellow Peril*, author G.G. Rupert attributes the term *Yellow Peril* to Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1895, the Kaiser commissioned an illustration which depicted the archangel Michael is seen warning the nations of Europe that "the nations of the East" will rise up and challenge the (Christian) nations of the West.[30] After the Japanese defeated the Russian military in 1905, Wilhelm II warned President Theodore Roosevelt that the Yellow Peril was growing and offered to German troops to help America defend itself from invasion by Japan.[31] Referring at times to Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans, the Yellow Peril was used to denote any number of possible negative outcomes for the peoples of the West brought on by people from East Asia. However, most of these dangers attributed to the Yellow Peril were not unique to the people of East Asia. In the case of America, various ethnic groups had been subjected to similar stigmas, including Native Americans, former slaves, Irish, Italians, and Mexicans. Often such concerns were linked to a fear of a loss of jobs and other opportunities, as well as a fear of foreign religions or cultures or historical relations between the offending country and the U.S. On the national level, the rise of non-Western states as an imperial powers worried the U.S. as well as other Western powers. Japan's emergence as a competitor in Asia

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[30] G. G. Rupert, *The Yellow Peril or, the Orient versus the Occident as Viewed by Modern Statesman and Ancient Prophet* (Choctaw, OK: Union Publishing, 1911), 1. Wilhelm II almost undoubtedly meant the illustration to be a serious warning to the countries of Europe.

[31] A poem written by Mori Ogai wrote a poem during the Russo-Japanese War while near a battlefield in Liaoyang: "Win the war, and Japan will be denounced as a yellow peril. Lose it, and she will be branded a barbaric land." By "barbaric" it is believed that Mori meant a nation with the strength to challenge the West. *The Pacific Rivals: A Japanese View of Japanese-American Relations*, Trans. by Peter Grilli and Murakami Yoshio (New York: Weatherhill, 1972), 71.

worried those with interests in trade, primarily China, while many other throughout the U.S. worried that the rise of Japanese military strength meant that Japan had the capability to attack American holdings in the Philippines or Hawaii, or even invade the U.S. through California or Mexico. American officials held varying opinions as to the level of threat Japan posed to the United States.

The Yellow Peril was therefore a collection of perceived threats believed to be brought on by the alien culture that was Japan. Such feelings had begun to multiply after the Russo-Japanese War ended in 1905, though had existed since the first Japanese laborers had made their way to Hawaii and west coast in the late nineteethn century. With the defeat of the Russians, the U.S. and Japan became to strongest powers in the Pacific Ocean, and many Americans believed it was only a matter of time before the Japanese moved against the United States.[32] William L. Neumann writes that the image of Japanese soldiers invading the U.S. became the main reason that Japan was viewed with such hostility by many Americans, and such fears were used to justify many disparate actions:

> It was used initially as an argument for the annexation of Hawaii, in order to prevent the use of the islands as an advance base for the projected invasion. The picture was presented to Congress by the proponents of a larger navy and by the opponents of Japanese immigration. The Japanese threat was also an additional reason for pushing action on the construction of an inter-oceanic canal.[33]

The demand for cheap labor was exacerbated by the exclusion of Chinese immigrants as a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 increased the rate of

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[32] Raymond A. Esthus, *Theodore Roosevelt and Japan* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1967), 4.

[33] Neumann, 116.

immigration of Japanese workers. By the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese were

steadily pouring into the U.S. whereby the Japanese population of the U.S. was over

24,000 living primarily on the west coast.[34] Yet the same forces that sought to ban

Chinese immigrants turned soon focused their attention on the immigrants from Japan.[35]

Many in California began to see the Japanese as a threat to both their livelihoods and

their culture; in 1905, the Asiatic Exclusions League was formed, and wielded significant

political power.[36] The political actions of this groups and others like it brought official

reactions for the Japanese government.[37]

The first was in response to the 1906 decision of the San Francisco Board of

Education to segregate the children from China, Japan, and Korea from the rest of the

student population. There were two official reasons for this action. The first was to

relieve the overcrowding of public schools. This was hardly an issue considering that

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[34] By 1910, it had reached over 72,000. Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation
http://heartmountain.org/Immigrants.html (Accessed on January 20, 2013).

[35] Rubin Weston writes of the first Japanese immigrants: "First they settled in the
urban centers, taking noncompetitive jobs. They then branched out into small businesses
and shops. *Once they became sufficient in number to offer competition to local laborers,
antagonisms developed*." [Italics added]. Rubin Francis Weston, *Racism in U.S.
Imperialism: The Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy, 1893-
1946* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 30-31.

[36] Neumann, 124. On March 1, 1905, a resolution was introduced in the California
legislature calling upon the California congressmen to urge the President and the
Secretary of State to limit the immigration of Japanese into the country. "The resolution,
which characterized the Japanese immigrants as 'immoral, intemperate, quarrelsome men
bound to labor for a pittance,' was passed unanimously by both houses of the state
legislature." Esthus, 130.

[37] A similar group (or possibly the same group by a different name), called the
Japanese and Korea Exclusion League had a membership of over 78,000 in California, of
which three-fourths are said to have been from San Francisco. Ibid.

there were fewer than one hundred students of either Chinese, Japanese, or Korean

descendent. The second stated reason, and far more likely justification for the act, was to

prevent the white children from having "their youthful impressions" influenced by

"association with Orientals."[38] At the time, the San Francisco segregation policy became,

in one author's words, "The most serious diplomatic crisis that had yet arisen in

Japanese-American relations, a crisis that was to leave such ugly memories on both sides

of the Pacific that the cordiality that had characterized previous relations could never be

fully restored."[39]

In response to the incident, Uyeno Kisaburo, head of the Japanese Consul in San

Francisco, filed a formal protest with the Board of Education, but was rebuffed.

Reporters in Japan described a mood of anti-Americanism in Japan.[40] To many Japanese,

the segregation was seen to be the official policy of the U.S. because it was enacted by

government officials.[41] The *Mainichi Shimbun*, a Japanese newspaper, even went to so

far as to call for war between the two nations:

> The whole world knows that the poorly equipped army and navy of the United
> States are no match for our efficient army and navy. It will be an easy work to
> awake the United States from her dream of obstinacy when one of our great
> Admirals appears on the other side of the Pacific…The present situation is such
> that the Japanese nation cannot rest easy by relying only upon the wisdom and
> statesmanship of President Roosevelt. The Japanese nation must have a firm
> determination to chastise at any time the obstinate Americans. Stand up, Japanese
> nation! Our countrymen have been HUMILIATED on the other side of the

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[38] Neumann, 124.

[39] Esthus, 128.

[40] Ibid., 135.

[41] Ibid., 137.

Pacific. Our poor boys and girls have been expelled from the public schools by the rascals of the United States, cruel and merciless like demons.
At this time we should be ready to give a blow to the United States. Yes, we should be ready to strike the Devil's head with an iron hammer for the sake of the world's civilization…Why do we not insist on sending [war]ships? [42]

President Theodore Roosevelt first heard of the situation from the Japanese delegation in San Francisco, and set to work to repair relations between the two countries. [43] To his credit, Roosevelt was "horribly bothered" by the "infernal fools in California, and especially in San Francisco." [44] He responded to a letter from Baron Kaneko Kentaro, promising to use his position as President to ensure the rights of all Japanese immigrants in the United States. [45] On December 4, 1906, Roosevelt went to so far as to recommend to Congress the passage of a bill that would have permitted Japanese immigrants to become citizens of the United States. However, the response which Roosevelt received was overwhelmingly negative, forcing him to acquiesce to what has become known as the "Gentlemen's Agreement." In March 1907, after months of negotiation and discussion between Japanese officials and San Francisco officials, including the mayor, the Board of Education, and the California governor and Supreme Court, Roosevelt and his advisors were able to convince the San Francisco Board of

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[42] *Mainichi Shimbun*, October 22, 1906. Cited in David M. Kennedy and Thomas Andrew Bailey, *The American Spirit: United States History as Seen by Contemporaries, Volume II* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 190-191. It is unclear whether the *Mainichi Shimbun* was a reputable newspaper or one that held xenophobic or jingoistic feelings towards the United States.

[43] For a more thorough explanation of this history, see Esthus, 126-166.

[44] Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt, October 27, 1906.

[45] Theodore Roosevelt to Kaneko Kentaro, October 26, 1906.

Education to rescind the segregation policy provided that the government of the Japan halt the issuing of passports to the U.S. mainland.[46]

The school segregation crisis, along with other events such as the riots against Japanese businesses in May 1907 and the Alien Land Act of 1913,[47] caused the deterioration of relations between the U.S. and Japan to a point that would not be restored until after WWII. Though the crisis did not lead directly to war, and relations on the official level were amicable, it set the course for a downward spiral between Japan and the U.S. While more likely a response to economic hardships experienced by Americans, complaints against Japanese immigrants took the form of racism and xenophobia. The perceived inability of Japanese immigrants to assimilate into American culture was given as justification for their exclusion, not just from California schools or business, but from the very shores of the United States.[48] Yet such accusations had been leveled against various peoples from other countries, and had been used by many throughout American history to deny rights and citizenship of numerous minority groups. What made the Japanese different from earlier versions of discrimination was that the Japanese were seen as a legitimate threat not just to American culture, but also American security.

For centuries, Japan had garnered much interest from the West for being a nation that seemed so similar to the nations of Europe and America despite having no links to

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[46] This concession by the Japanese government did not include passports to Hawaii, a loophole by which Japanese laborers made their way to the mainland. The U.S. and state government were expected to enforce the "Hawaii only" passports.

[47] The May 1907 riots were a series of attacks against Japanese businesses. See Esthus, 167-180. The Alien Land Act of 1913 was a bill passed by the California legislature which prevented the ownership of land by non-citizens. See Neumann, 132.

[48] At the time, Hawaii was not considered part of the United States.

Western civilization prior to the sixteenth century. These feelings were presumably

verified when Japan modernized its entire culture after the Meiji Restoration, quickly

adopting and adapting Western institutions and practices. Thomas W. Burkman, scholar

of Japanese international history of the 20th century writes that one of the major

motivating factors of the Meiji Restoration was a "desire for equality with the

Occident."[49] By and large, this process was encouraged by the Western powers,

primarily because it afforded them the opportunity for trade and influence in the Pacific.

Yet rather than grooming a weak state which they could control, Japan emerged as a rival,

capable of not simply learning Western practices, but using them against their teachers.

The Yellow Peril, as a description for the perceived threats posed by Japan against the

West, reflected this changing relationship. Though Roosevelt had expressed desires to

cooperate with Japan, his successor Woodrow Wilson took a decidedly more hostile

stance. Neumann writes that Wilson viewed China in a sympathetic light, mostly due to

the President's contact and association with missionaries from China.[50] Japan, on the

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[49] Thomas W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914-1938* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 80.

[50] In 1913, a Chinese official of the newly formed and highly unstable Republic of China sent out a call for prayer to the Christian churches in China, asking for Christians to pray that the welfare of the new government and that its sovereignty would be recognized (and supported) by Western powers. Neumann writes, "President Wilson told his cabinet that he did not know when he had bee so deeply stirred as he was by China's call for prayers." When a cabinet member questioned the sincerity of such an action, suggesting it might have been done to play on the sympathies of foreign Christians, "Wilson rejected the idea." Within a month, the U.S. officially recognized the government as legitimate authority in China. Neumann, 140.

other hand, and Wilson's standards of "international morality" were "applied rigidly and without insight in dealing with Japan."[51]

Yet by far, the most apparent and egregious proof to the Japanese of the America's fear of the Yellow Peril took place at the Paris Peace Conference at Versailles after WWI. Japan had three goals which it hoped to accomplish at Versailles, but its most important was provision which sought equal social status to all the victors at the conference. Japan sought to end the discrimination of the Occident against the Orient. As Europeans and Americans moved relatively freely throughout the non-Western world, while immigrants from the non-Western world were subjected to various types of racial and cultural discrimination. Japan itself had defeated both Russia and Germany, victories which it felt should have earned its citizens more respect than it was received. "Control of immigration," Neumann explained, "was a matter for domestic legislation, but an international recognition of racial equality was expected to discourage inequality in favoring white immigrants over oriental."[52]

The vote for the Racial Equality Proposal was passed by all parties except for Britain and the U.S. Because Wilson was chairman of the delegation, he was able to rule that because the motion did not pass unanimously, it had failed. Additionally, the U.S. had tried to sabotage Japan's claim to former German holdings which Japan had conquered during the war.[53] Responses from the Japanese, in the media, on the street,

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[51] Ibid., 141.

[52] Ibid., 152-153.

[53] Wilson had political motivations for his action to block a motion for racial equality in the lands of the Western powers. As a Democrat, Wilson relied on the support of southern states, who at the time still practiced racial discrimination against African-

and even in the legislature, to Wilson's actions in Paris were vitriolic, with a member of

the Japanese Diet proclaiming:

> America appears to think she is divinely appointed to rule the world with a big stick! What is the purpose of her colossal Navy if it is not to make her power supreme in every part of the Pacific? American statesmen profess an undying devotion to peace, and meanwhile they are building warships on a scale unparalleled in history. They preach the doctrine of racial equality and equal opportunity and yet refuse to admit education Japanese immigrants to American citizenship. They disclaim all intention of meddling with foreign politics, and at the same time continue to bombard us with arrogant notes about our policy in Manchuria, Siberia, and Saghalien. In these circumstances America has only herself to blame if sober Japanese are beginning to suspect her [America] of designs upon their [Japan] country and its most cherished interests.[54]

In 1923, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which had not only helped maintain

relations between Japan and Britain, but also Japan and the U.S., was officially

terminated. Though relations continued through the 1920s and 1930s, a serious cloud of

distrust between the Japanese and the Americans had developed. When Japan signed the

Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 with Germany and the Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact in

1941 with the Soviet Union, it made the U.S. and Britain worry that soon its holdings in

East Asia would soon be invaded as well. Yet Britain was fighting Germany in Europe.

France and the Netherlands had already been defeated. The U.S. was the only Western

power not at war in the 1930s, and the only Western power able to check the Japanese

advance across East Asia.

Americans, as well as Western states who were very much against any infringement on their practice of racial discrimination of the Japanese and other "Asiatics." Wilson was unable to block the passage of the other two objectives of the Japanese delegation, for which he was thoroughly criticized by his critics. Ibid., 154-156.

[54] Neumann adds, "Japan, like many other nations, would henceforth assume that professions of idealism coming from Washington were actually a shield to conceal the normal nationalistic ambitions of a growing country. And sometimes this assumption was valid." Ibid., 159-160.

The Embargo Against Japan

By 1940, Europe had become a battlefield. The once powerful colonial empires were either conquered themselves or fighting invaders. Germany, stripped of its East Asian colonies by Japan and the Paris Peace Conference after WWI, made colonies of its neighbors in WWII. The U.S.SR moved the majority of its military to its western border, first to acquire buffer states between it and Germany, and later to fight the Germans as they marched toward Moscow. With the Powers fighting one another in Europe, Japan saw its chance to dominate East Asia. Japan once again set its sights on the Chinese mainland, first in Manchuria, and then the rest of China.[55] Japan also sought the colonial possessions of French Indochina (Vietnam) and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), just as it had done in WWI to Germany. Other colonies in the region feared they too would soon be the object of Japanese ambition, including British India, Australia, and the Philippines.[56]

In a radio address, Japanese Foreign Minister Arita Hachiro gave voice to what would become known as the *Japanese Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*:

> The countries of East Asia and the regions of the South Seas are geographically close, historically, racially, and economically very closely related to each other. They are destined to cooperate and minister to one another's need for their common well-being and prosperity, and to promote peace and progress in the region. The uniting of all these regions under a single sphere on the basis of common existence and insuring thereby the stability of that sphere is, I think, a natural conclusion.[57]

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[55] Japan had fought a series of unsuccessful border wars against the Soviet Union in the late 1930s. The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact ended such hostilities,

[56] *Modern Japan*, 231.

[57] Arita Hachiro, "The International Situation and Japan's Position," June 29, 1940. Cited in William Theodore De Bary, *Sources of East Asian Tradition: the Modern*

Using this justification, Japan would "liberate" the many peoples of East Asia from white colonial rule. Yet the Co-Prosperity Sphere acted more as a "self-sufficient economic bloc," providing Japan with natural resources which had been coveted by the European powers. Duus writes that when Japan invaded French Indochina, the Japanese military wanted a staging area by which they would invade southern China, hoping to cut off Chiang Kai-Shek's supply lines, as well as acting a southern base from which they would conquer the resource rich Dutch East Indies, securing rubber, tin, and oil reserves which were necessary for the war effort.[58]

War in Europe and East Asia had effectively isolated the United States. With no check from Europe on the Japanese conquest (save for the indigenous people the Japanese sought to conquer), the U.S. became the only remaining imperial power able to halt the Japanese advance. Yet Americans were not as interested in foreign policy as they had once been. Even with Europe and East Asia at war, Americans and their leadership were more focused on domestic matters than what took place overseas. This was due primarily to the economic collapse known as the Great Depression, beginning with the stock market crash in October 1929. The Great Depression disrupted the global economy, shrinking the economies of the richest nations in the world, in some cases by half, resulting in feelings of insecurity and fear. Duus writes, "Throughout the Western world

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Period, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 622-623. The Japanese East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere will be further explained in Chapter Three.

[58] By early 1942, Japan not only controlled French Indochina and much of the Dutch East Indies, but most of South Eastern Asia, large portions of the Chinese coast; Japan had successfully expelled or captured Malaya and Hong Kong, as well at the Philippines and Guam, all British and American holdings respectively. *Modern Japan*, 232-233.

that year men began to doubt that their civilization would survive, sine the economic system no longer seemed capable of providing a livelihood for a large segment of the population." In the U.S., Americans demanded that their leaders turn their attention to helping Americans survive the economic hardship. Combined with the devastation and horror of WWI, Americans were unwilling to become involved in foreign problems.[59]

The Japanese had also been affected by the Great Depression. The U.S. was the primary trade partner of Japan, and when American demand for Japanese goods dried up, Japanese officials—especially those in the military—sought other assurances for Japan's stability. Not only would the securing of colonies and markets boost the Japanese economy, it would restore the honor which many in Japan—again, especially the Japanese military—believed was owed to their nation.[60] This included, among other actions, a more serious presence in Manchuria. By 1939, Japan had conquered much of China, and was moving towards the rest of East Asia.

During the 1930s, Japan received many of its imports from the U.S., including those necessary for military expansion. This placed Japan in a vulnerable position, subject to U.S. economic pressure. In 1940, President Roosevelt blocked the export of aviation motor oil, scrap iron, and steel, being the only check on the Japanese government the U.S. was willing to exercise at the time.[61] In 1941, Japan sought better

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[59] Ibid., 233.

[60] Neumann, 186.

[61] Duus explains America's new sense of morality: "Failing to appreciate the self-righteous idealism behind the American actions or the growing American concern that the global spread of democracy was threatened by a virulent new authoritarian nationalism, they [Japan] could only conclude that the United States was moved by arrogance, a sense of racial superiority, or a selfish hypocrisy…From the outset, however,

relations with the U.S., offering to withdraw from China provided that Manchukuo (Manchuria) was declared an independent state, and that the government of Chiang Kai-Shek was merged with the puppet regime of Wang Ching-Wei. This would have ensured Japanese hegemony in East Asia.[62] The U.S. made a counter offer, demanding several high-minded and idealistic provisions which contradicted many of the actions it had taken itself in East Asia, including its opening of Japan. Secretary of State Cordell Hull presented the Japanese delegation with a list of demands which had to be agreed to before negotiations would continue. They were (1) "respect for the territorial integrity of other nations; (2) respect for the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries; (3) respect for the principle of equality among nations; and lastly (4) the non-disturbance of the status quo in the Pacific except by peaceful means."[63] Nothing came of the talks, and in July 1941, Japan moved troops into French Indochina to stage its invasion of the Dutch East Indies. In response, President Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the U.S., and cut off American oil imports to Japan, to which Britain, British Commonwealth nations, and the Dutch East Indies followed suit.[64] Without oil, the gears of Japanese territorial expansion had ground to a halt.

Americans were as unresponsive to Japanese overtures as the Japanese were uncomprehending of American goals. For President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the China war was a simple case of 'totalitarian aggression. They were not inclined to make any concessions to the Japanese at a time when Nazi armies had occupied most of Western Europe and the fate of England was hanging in the balance." *Modern Japan*, 234.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 235.

Roosevelt and his cabinet believed that the embargo against Japan would have the effect of not only slowing the Japanese march across Asia, but also reverse it. Without the means to secure its new possession, Japan would be forced to release its control over its neighbors. Instead, the U.S. action further galvanized the militarists in Japan. The naval high command of Japan, which had always opted for restraint when dealing with the U.S., now proposed hostilities before oil reserves ran dry. The leadership of the Japanese army agreed. In one last attempt, Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro asked to meet with Roosevelt directly, but was turned away. His successor, Tojo Hideki, Japan's wartime Prime Minister, also made one last attempt to negotiate the end of the embargo in November 1941.[65] For ending the embargo, the Japanese would end its activities in the Dutch East Indies and China. The U.S. countered, saying it would not discuss anything unless Japan withdrew all of its troops from foreign lands, and recognized the Chiang Kai-shek government as the sovereign authority of China. Faced with the prospect of national humiliation should they accept the American proposals, the Japanese government decided to attack U.S. naval forces at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, with subsequent attacks taking placing in the Philippines, Guam, Malaya, Hong Kong, the Dutch East Indies, Wake Island, and Singapore. [66]

The oil embargo of the U.S. were the final step which led the Japanese decision to go to war with the U.S. This does not mean that it was the only decision which lead to war. A case can be made which links the attack on the U.S. to many other decisions

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford: CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 353.

which took place between 1853 and 1941. This section on the effect of *American Imperialism* on Japan's decision for war is not meant to be exhaustive; many books and articles have already been dedicated to that area of research. What I have attempted to demonstrate here is that Japan's decision to go to war with and utilize martyr attacks against the U.S. was not simply a decision made in November 1941, but rather that three key events that took place through the history of Japanese-American relations can help us understand the reasoning of the Japanese government. Hara Yoshimichi, president of the Privy Council,[67] stated:

> It is impossible from the standpoint of our domestic political situation and of our self-preservation, to accept all the American demands. We must hold fast to our position…On the other hand, we cannot let the present situation continue. If we miss the present opportunity to go to war, we will have to submit to American dictation. Therefore, I recognize that it is inevitable that we must decide to start a war against the United States. I will put my trust in what I have been told: namely, that things will go well in the early part of the war; and that although we will experience increasing difficulties as the war progresses, there is some prospect of success…Negotiations with the United States have failed to lead to an agreement. A war against the United States and Great Britain is inevitable if Japan is to survive.[68]

I now turn to al-Qaeda, the second group which has implicated *American Imperialism* as its reasons for declaring war on America and utilizing martyr attacks. Osama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaeda from about 1988 to 2011, has also been the most vocal representative for the group, setting their agenda as well as their goals.[69] In a letter

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[67] The Japanese Privy Council was the private advisory board to the Emperor of Japan.

[68] Ike Nobutaka, *Japan's Decision For War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 236-237.

[69] For this reason, it might be more accurate to say that section will focus on the reasons which Osama bin Laden declared war on America, and called members of al-Qaeda to use martyr attacks against the United States.

posted on the internet dated October 6, 2002 entitled, *To the Americans*, bin Laden laid

out an detailed list of the reasons that al-Qaeda had declared war on the U.S.[70] The list

detailed such discretions as the American destruction of the environment with its

pollution, to permitting usury, to permitting acts of immorality, including gambling, the

exploitation of women, and the infidelity that took place between former President Bill

Clinton and Monica Lewinsky.[71] Yet the issues most mentioned by bin Laden, both in

the letter and in other writings and speeches, for the declaration of war on the U.S. are

American support of Israel against the Palestinians, the stationing of American troops in

Saudi Arabia, and the suppression of democracy and support for dictatorial regimes in the

Middle East.[72]

Al-Qaeda and the Defense of the Palestine

The state of Israel was founded on May 14, 1948 by, among others, David Ben-

Gurion, a Polish Jew who went on to become Israel's first prime minister. The next day,

the nations of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq went to war with Israel, refusing to

recognize the new country.[73] In many ways, this war, known in Israel as the War for

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[70] *Messages to the World*, 160-172.

[71] Ibid., 167-168.

[72] The reader is asked to remember that this dissertation focuses primarily on the justifications for war and martyr attacks prior to and including the attacks of September 11, 2001. There will be a few exceptions, such as the letter *To the Americans*, which was written in 2002, especially when Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders refer back to previous justifications for war. However, justifications for war after 2001, particularly justifications that deal with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, will not be included in this study.

[73] R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 942.

Independence and to Arabs as *Yawm an-Nakba*, or "Day of Catastrophe," has continued

to the present day. To Jewish Israelis and their supporters in the United States, the state

of Israel represents the achievement of almost two thousand year old dream: the

[re]establishment of a Jewish state, a sanctuary where Jews can be free from the

persecutions they have so often experienced through the centuries. To the Palestinians

and their supporters, the state of Israel represents an occupying and oppressive regime,

established and maintained only with the support of the U.S. government at the expense

of Arabs living within Palestine. While official allegiances many have shifted in recent

years, the U.S. and Israel remain firm allies.[74] It is because of this relationship that

Osama bin Laden not only declared war on the U.S., but justified the use of martyr

attacks by al-Qaeda.

In a letter written to the Chief Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah

bin Baz, Osama bin Laden listed several "errors" the sheik had made concerning the

maintenance of the sanctity of Islam and the umma (community of Muslims) in Saudi

Arabia. On several occasions, bin Laden accuses bin Baz of defying Allah by blessing

the Oslo Accords,[75] which bin Laden believed was a betrayal of the Palestinians in favor

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[74] On November 29, 2012, the United Nations General assembly voted to recognize Palestine as a non-voting observer state. The U.S. and Israel were two of only nine countries to opposed the motion to the motion, while 41 countries abstained. David Yanofsky, "Here's how countries voted on Palestinian statehood today—and Israeli statehood 65 years ago." *Quartz*. November 30, 2012. http://qz.com/32657/heres-how-countries-voted-on-palestinian-statehood-today-and-israeli-statehood-65-years-ago/ (Accessed on January 25, 2013).

[75] Officially known as The Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, the Oslo Accords were a series of agreements intended to establish a framework for peace between Palestine and Israel. The agreement was signed by Palestinian Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister

of the state of Israel. Bin Laden writes, "The current Jewish enemy is not an enemy settled in his own original country fighting in its defense until he gains a peace agreement, but an attacking enemy and a corrupter of religion and the world." Bin Laden goes on to say that it is the job of the umma to fight on behalf of the Palestinians, "so that Palestine may be completely liberated and returned to Islamic sovereignty."[76] As the letter progresses, bin Laden's criticisms of bin Baz become much sharper; bin Laden states that bin Baz's juridical decree declaring the legitimacy of the Oslo Accords was deceitful, and that it achieved "a fake peace with the Jews, which is a huge betrayal of Islam and Muslims."[77]

Though al-Qaeda's main focus and purpose for its founding was the expulsion of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, once the war ended, bin Laden shifted his diatribes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, it should not be believed that bin Laden only realized the supposed plight of the Palestinians in the 1980s. According to Hamid Mir, renowned Pakistani journalist, Muhammad bin Laden, Osama's father, "was very, very, very anti-Israel, anti-Jewish because he was of the view that the land of Palestine belongs to [the Arabs]."[78] In a video produced by al-Qaeda which came available sometime in August 2001, bin Laden stated that the

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Yitzhak Rabin on September 13, 1993 on the lawn of the White House in Washington DC.

[76] *Messages to the World*, 9.

[77] Bin Laden goes on the question the sincerity of bin Baz's faith: "No normal Muslim would accept it, let alone a scholar like you who is obliged to show zeal for our religious community and our umma." Ibid., 11.

[78] Hamad Mir also recounts a story of how the elder bin Laden asked the foremen of his construction company to turn his businesses 250 bulldozers into tanks, and send

Jews are free in al Quds [Jerusalem] to rape weak Muslim women and to imprison those young cubs who stand up to them…We speak of the American government, but it is in reality an Israeli government, because if we look into the most sensitive departments of the government, whether it is the Pentagon or the State Department or the CIA, you find that it is the Jews who have the first word inside the American government. Consequently they use America to execute their plans throughout the world.[79]

There is no lack of statements by Osama bin Laden condemning Israel. Perhaps nowhere are bin Laden's opinion on the crimes of Israel more succinct than in the previously mention speech, To the Americans. In it, bin Laden states that the British gave Palestine to the Israelis and for fifty years, the Palestinians have experienced "oppression, tyranny, crimes, killing, expulsion, destruction, and devastation" at the hands of the Israelis.[80] Bin Laden states that Israel must be erased, and declares guilty every single individual who has contributed to Israel existence of seeking the destruction of Palestinians. He writes, "The blood pouring out of Palestine must be equally avenged."[81]

The motif of vengeance runs through much of bin Laden's writings and speeches on Israel. He states that the killing of Jews is permissible under Sharia (Islamic law) because the state of Israeli is responsible for so much death and destruction suffered by the Palestinians. In an interview with Tayseer Alouni, a correspondent for Al-Jazeera in Kabul, bin Laden explains:

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them to fight in Palestine against the Israelis. Peter L. Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: The Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 7-8.

[79] Bergen writes, "After the 9/11 attacks I came to realize that for bin Laden, and his rabidly anti-Semitic colleagues, the Pentagon *was* a Jewish target." Ibid., 291.

[80] *Messages to the World*, 162.

[81] Ibid., 163.

How come millions of Muslims are being killed? Where are the experts, the writers, the scholars and freedom fighters, where are the ones who have an ounce of faith in them?...Everyday we are being killed, children are being killed in Palestine…In the past, an Arab king once killed an ordinary man. The people started wondering how come kinds have the right to kill people just like that. Then the victim's brother went and killed the king in revenge. People were disappointed with the young man and asked him, 'How could you kill a king for your brother?' The man said, 'My brother is my king.' We consider all our children in Palestine to be kings. We kill the kings of infidels, kings of the crusaders, and civilian infidels in exchange for those of our children they kill.[82]

In the same interview, bin Laden states that, "We are in a decisive battle with the Jews and those who support them from the crusaders and the Zionists. We won't hesitate to kill Israelis who occupied our land and kill our children and women day and night."[83] Bin Laden explains that those who condemn the killing of "innocents" have not understood the loss of Palestinian children, or the loss of innocence from those children's eyes. He states that "[they] don't know how it feels when, in Palestine, our brothers are being hunted by army helicopters in the middle of their own homes with their families and children."[84] Bin Laden concludes by stating, "He who claims there will be lasting peace between us and the Jews is an infidel. He'll be denouncing the book and what's in it."[85]

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[82] Tayseer Alouni, Interview with Osama bin Laden. "Transcript of Bin Laden's October Interview." October 21, 2001. Trans. by CNN. http://articles.cnn.com/2002-02-05/world/binladen.transcript_1_incitement-fatwas-al-qaeda-organization?_s=PM:asiapcf (Accessed on January 25, 2013).

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

Whether the oppression of Palestinians at the hands of Israelis is taking placing or not is, again, not the focus of this dissertation.[86] While such facts play an important role in the political arena, I am more concerned with how al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden interpret *the condition* of the Palestinians Israel rather than what may or may not be actually *happening to* the Palestinians in Israel. This being said, it would not make sense for bin Laden and al-Qaeda to declare war on the U.S. for the oppression of Palestinians in Israel unless the U.S. had a hand in that oppression. To answer this point, we once again turn to bin Laden's speech, *To the Americans*:

> The American people have chosen, consented to, and affirmed their support for Israel's oppression of the Palestinians, the occupation usurpation of their land, and its continuous killing, torture, punishment, and expulsion of the Palestinians. The American people have the ability and choice to refuse the policies of their government, and even to change it if they want.[87]

From this statement, we see that bin Laden believes that the U.S. has an equal hand in the oppression of the Palestinians. When bin Laden announced his "World Islamic Front" in which he declared a jihad against the Jews and the "Crusaders," he stated that, in accordance with the will of Allah, it was incumbent upon every Muslim in the world to

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[86] This is, of course, not to say that the oppression of the Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli government cannot be determined. Many of groups exists which try to document such oppression, though few do so without an agenda of their own. However, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are two non-governmental organizations which seem to receive the least amount of criticism for their work documenting human rights abuses. Both groups document both Israeli and Palestinian abuses.

[87] *Messages to the World*, 165.

kill Americans and their allies, "in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Mosque."[88]

The U.S. has supported the state of Israel since the latter's independence was declared in 1948. Much of this support amounts to cash and weapons with which Israel uses to fight the almost non-stop conflicts between itself and its Muslim neighbors. It is doubtful that the Israeli state could have survived those early wars had it not had the support of the U.S. While Israel gains much from its alliance with the U.S., few would argue that the benefit is equal. During the Cold War, Israel provided the U.S. with a strategic ally in the Middle East against the Soviets, and few would deny that protecting the state of Israel is at least in some way an attempt to atone for the atrocities of the Holocaust during WWII. However, in recent years, the U.S. has expended much political capital defending the state of Israel. Accusations of human rights violations against the Palestinians harm the images of both countries, particularly America's, and Israel's most recent forays into Lebanon in 2006 and Gaza in 2012 did nothing to improve its public image.

For bin Laden, there is no legitimate reason that America could support Israel. He believed that the U.S. was simply against the establishment of an Islamic state, quoting Muhammad saying Muslims will be targets of non-Muslims because of their religion.[89]

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[88] The al-Aqsa Mosque is the mosque in Jerusalem and the third holiest site in Islam (behind Mecca and Medina). Bin Laden believed that the mosque was under attack because of the controversy that resulted when then-prime minister Ariel Sharon visited in 2000, setting off the Second Intifada. Ibid., 61.

[89] It is almost certain that this last operation by Israel led to the UN resolution vote which made Palestine a non-voting observer state. The vote took place eight days after the cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. Tayseer Alouni interview.

Focusing on George W. Bush's use of the term 'crusade,' bin Laden believed that the U.S. wish to retake the holy land, just as European Christians attempted to do during the Middle Ages.[90] Though he originally denied involvement in the 9/11 attacks, bin Laden later spoke about how the idea for attacking the World Trade Center Towers came about:

> I say to you, as Allah is my witness: We had not considered attacking the towers, but things reached the breaking point when we witnessed the iniquity and tyranny of the American-Israeli coalition against our people in Palestine and Lebanon—then I got this idea. The events that had a direct influence on me occurred in 1982, and the subsequent events, when the U.S. permitted the Israelis to invade Lebanon with the aid of the American sixth fleet. They started shelling, and many were killed and wounded, while others were terrorized into fleeing. I still remember those moving scenes—blood, torn limbs, and dead women and children; ruined homes everywhere, and high-rises being demolished on top of their residents; bombs raining down mercilessly on our homes…In those critical moments, I was overwhelmed by ideas that are hard to describe, but they awakened a powerful impulse to reject injustice and gave birth to a firm resolve to punish the oppressors. As I was looking at those destroyed towers in Lebanon, I was struck by the idea of punishing the oppressor in the same manner and destroying towers in the U.S., to give it a taste of what we have tasted and to deter it from killing our children and women.[91]

Infidels in Arabia

In early Augusts 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. One of the largest and most powerful militaries in the Middle East had attacked one of the smallest, and despite Iraqi saber-rattling prior to the invasion, Kuwait was unprepared for war. So too was Saudi Arabia, which believed that once Saddam Hussein had conquered Kuwait, it would not be long before he was marching toward Riyadh. Bin Laden, having just returned from Afghanistan after defeating the Soviet Union, offered his assistance to the Saudi

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[90] Though Bush later stated that he used the term "crusade" unintentionally, bin Laden believed that it was rather an indication of America's hidden intention in the Middle East. Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

monarchy. Bruce Lawrence, professor of religion at Duke University, writes, "The Saudi family not only rejected his proposal, but also invited half a million American and other foreign troops into the country to protect the dynasty." Additionally, the Saudi government had coaxed Chief Mufti bin Baz to bless the arrival of American troops and later allowed Saudi Arabian troops to fight with the Coalition Forces against the Iraqis.[92] Those who protested loudly were jailed and disciplined; bin Laden was forced into exile, eventually having his Saudi citizenship revoked and assets frozen. U.S. troops stayed in Saudi Arabia through the 1990s, maintaining the no-fly zone over Iraq, leaving finally in 2003.

Bin Laden's issue of infidels being allowed into the holy land is more complicated than the mere fact that Coalition Forces were standing on the same land mass as the Kaaba in Mecca. For him, infidel troops represented an invasion of morality contradictory to Islam—Westernism. In 1994, while in Sudan, Bin Laden wrote the letter previously mentioned above to bin Baz, and spoke of the establishing of a "rival authority" to Allah, by which he meant that laws were being established in the kingdom which violated Sharia. Bin Laden mentions usury, and how the existence of such a practice meant that the Saudi family was guilty of violating Allah's law, making them infidels "who have declared war on God and the Prophet.[93] Addressing bin Baz directly, bin

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[92] *Messages to the World*, xiii.

[93] Bin Laden writes, "We have heard from you only to the effect that practicing usury is absolutely prohibited, although this position ignores the fact that your words deceive people because you do not distinguish in your judgment between those who merely practice usury and those who legitimize it. In fact, the distinction between those two issues is very clear: he who practices usury is committing a serious and grave offense—but as for he who makes usury legal, in doing so he becomes an apostate and an infidel who has placed himself outside the religious community, because he has

Laden states that by allowing the "aggressive Crusader-Jewish alliance" to enter Arabia, bin Baz committed a terrible act, and "polluted [the umma's] holy places." Bin Laden also mentions a cross worn by King Fahd while at visiting Queen Elizabeth II in 1986; bin Laden called it a "terrible act" which demonstrated unbelief, and was mentioned to demonstrate bin Baz's relaxed attitude towards apostasy.[94] Bin Laden also believed that American troops would rule over the Muslims in Saudi Arabia, dictating the policies to the royal family, thereby not only creating a scenario that was not only forbidden, but one that had been facilitated by the Saudi government. [95]

Yet what is arguably most galling to bin Laden about the stationing of troops in Saudi Arabia is the fact that he believes it constitutes a betrayal of the Palestinians.[96] Lawrence writes:

> Thus in May 1991 a group of dissenters addressed petitions to bin Baz, arguing that the kingdom's apparent inability to defend itself without reliance on foreign troops was a consequence of the House of Saud's renunciation of Islam. The result had been the intrusion of Western values at the expense of Muslim principles, the corruption of Saudi princes and officials, and dependence on the United States, to the point of a sell-out of Palestinian rights to gratify Washington.[97]

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considered himself an equal and a partner to God in deciding what is permissible and what is not." Ibid., 6-7.

[94] The "cross" of which bin Laden speaks is not a cross similar to one that Christian might wear to demonstrate faith in Jesus, but rather a appears to be an honor bestowed upon King Fahd by Elizabeth II. For a photograph of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia wearing the cross, see http://www.kingfahdbinabdulaziz.com/jpghi/f147.htm (Accessed on January 28, 2013). Ibid, 7.

[95] Bin Laden explains that "Helping the infidel to take the land of Muslims and control them is one of the ten acts contradictory to Islam." Ibid, 255.

[96] The title of the letter bin Laden sent to bin Baz actually is "The Betrayal of Palestine." Ibid, 3.

[97] Ibid.

Bin Laden's feelings toward the Palestinians have already been mentioned above. Yet it must be noted that to bin Laden, the umma, comprising every Muslim on Earth, is one entity. Bin Laden stated that it was the duty of all Muslims to fight on behalf of the Palestinians. If one part of the umma (Saudi Arabia) in any way legitimizes, assists, or seeks help from infidels (the U.S.), who are believed to be harming the umma (Palestine) elsewhere, it constitutes a betrayal of the umma as a whole, and therefore a betrayal of Allah. Though it might be a bit of a factual overstatement, bin Laden stated that the "Crusaders [had] managed to achieve their historic ambitions and dreams against the Islamic umma" when they established bases in Saudi Arabia.[98]

On February 23, 1998, bin Laden formed the "World Islamic Front" and declared a jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders. He stated that the Arabian Peninsula was under constant threat from Crusaders, most recently from America. Bin Laden stated that since 1991, "America has occupied the holiest parts of the Islamic lands…plundering its wealth, dictating to its leaders, humiliating its people, terrorizing its [Saudi Arabia's]." For bin Laden, there can be no doubt about America's aggression towards Muslims, giving the First Persian Gulf War, as well as its attempts to control the governments of Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia, as an examples.[99] To bin Laden:

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[98] Bin Laden believed that the U.S. had gained control over the Islamic holy places as well as the Holy Sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina, later mentioning plundering of these sanctuaries. He gives no specific details as to how the U.S. has plundered mosques in Saudi Arabia. Ibid, 16.

[99] Ibid, 60. Bin Laden's sympathy for Iraqis should not be misunderstood as support for Saddam Hussein. He writes, "It is true that Saddam is a thief and an apostate, but the solution is not to be found in moving the government of Iraq from a local thief to a foreign one." Ibid, 255.

All these American crimes and sins are a clear proclamation of war against God, his Messenger, and the Muslims…On this basis, and in accordance with God's will, we pronounce to all Muslims the following judgment: To kill the American and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim in all countries, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] and the Holy Mosque [in Saudi Arabia] from their grip, so that their armies leave all the territory of Islam, defeated, broken, and unable to threaten any Muslim.[100]

Osama bin Laden declared war on America because he believed that America had attacked Muslims first. America provided support for Israel, which bin Laden saw as an illegal and oppressive state. Despite its talk of democracy and human rights, bin Laden felt that the Palestinians were suffering under Israeli rule. America was also responsible for the corruption of holy land when it was invited by Saudi government to establish bases on the Arabian Peninsula. Bin Laden felt that there could be no fellowship between Muslims and non-Muslims that would not result in the corruption of the Muslims, and the fact that it took place in the birthplace of Muhammad was especially offensive. From its bases in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. was able to war against Iraq, killing millions of Iraqi soldiers as well as a millions of Iraqi women and children with its oppressive sanctions against the country. Other examples were cited by bin Laden as well, mostly concerning the direct or indirect killing and suppression of Muslims by Americans in Lebanon, Pakistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya, Algeria, Afghanistan, and the Philippines. Whether America's oppression and destruction of Muslims was objectively true and to what extent is not purpose of this study. This dissertation focuses the justifications of al-Qaeda, whether they be real, imagined, or exaggerated, that led the group to declare war on the U.S. and utilize martyr attacks against Americans.

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[100] Ibid, 61.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the examples of *American Imperialism* which both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda used to justify its declaration of war against the U.S. and its utilization of martyr attacks against American targets. For the Tokkotai, the landing of Commodore Matthew C. Perry in Uraga Bay in 1853, the inherent racism of the Yellow Peril promoted by both American individuals and government officials against the Japanese, and the American embargo against imports necessary for Japan's territorial expansion in the 1940s demonstrate a few of the examples of *American Imperialism* the Japanese experienced. For Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, the unconditional support for Israel over the Palestinians, and the stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia constituted two of the most blatant and "evil" examples of *American Imperialism* experienced by Muslims in their 1,400 year history. To this point, little has been said about how *American Imperialism* has influenced both groups to utilize martyr attacks against the United States.

The following chapters will trace the history of martyr attacks of both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda. In Chapter Three, I will explain the history of *sonno joi*, translated as "revere the emperor, expel the barbarian," as well as the creation of State Shinto, the ideology of Imperial Japan. I will the articulation of this concept by authors who articulated Japan's national polity, or *kokutai*, and how sonno joi was used in the mid-1800s to depose the shogun and install the emperor, as well as justify an expansion of Japanese influence beyond its seashores.

In Chapter Four, I discuss the creation of Jihadism as it was articulated by three of authors—Hassan al-Banna, Abul Ala Maududi, and Sayyid Qutb. I explain how the

writings of these authors influenced the founders of al-Qaeda, particularly Osama bin

Laden, and were used to justify war against the United States and to carry out martyr

attacks against American citizens.

CHAPTER THREE

Sonno Joi: Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarian

In the West, the term "State Shinto" is often understood as the state-sponsored ideology that pervaded nearly every aspect of Japanese culture from the 1860s to 1945. Because of its scope, significance, depth, and long history, there is no dearth of scholarship concerning various aspects of State Shinto. Numbers only increase when scholars seek to identity the ideological foundations of State Shinto even before 1860. Many go back to the Tokugawa Bakufu or further, and some back as far as the mythical founding of Japan as documented in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*.[1] Ironically, few scholars actually use the term "State Shinto," particularly when discussing Japan in the nineteenth century.[2] This is because the term was rarely used by scholars who are said to have articulated what Western scholars call "State Shinto." These scholars—including Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769), Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), Aizawa Seishisai (1781-1863), Inoue Kowashi (1843-1895), and Hozumi Yatsuka (1860-1912) to name just a few—were more apt to use terms such as *kokutai* (national polity), *kokugaku*

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[1] The *Kojiki* (*Chronicle of Ancient Matters*) and *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicle of Japan*) are the two oldest extant written works in Japanese history, which were completed in the 8th century and document the creation of Japan as a divine act of the *kami*, or supernatural spirits.

[2] It would appear that the term "State Shinto" came to prominence because of its use in *The Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shinto*. This should not, however, be interpreted as the term "State Shinto" being an incorrect or less accurate term.

(national learning), *saisei itchi* (unity of government and religion), or simply Shinto (after it was officially interpreted after the Meiji Restoration).[3]

However, the definition of these terms did not remain constant from their first articulation through the end of WWII. As with any ideology, much debate and evolution of the ideas took place, making the tracing of the ideology which motivated the Japanese to declare war on and utilize martyr attacks against the U.S. very laborious. For instance, the *kokugaku* pertained to the study of all native Japanese culture, from politics and philosophy to art and literature, while the Japanese *kokutai* was used to justify both absolute monarchial rule as well as representative democracy.[4] Pre-1945 scholars dedicated their entire careers to articulating an understanding of and promoting these terms to the Japanese state, while post-1945 scholars, in turn, have spent their careers tracing the understandings of these originals scholars and how they were either accepted or rejected by the Japanese state.

The various interpretation of these and other terms fell in and out of favor both within the government and among the general population, being much more a consequence of the current issues facing Japan at the time than an indicator of Japanese loyalty or patriotic fervor. To attempt a comprehensive study of these and related terms from the pre-Meiji era (conceivably going back to the 8th century) to the end of WWII is beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is also unnecessary to understanding the

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[3] All terms remained in scholarly use and were discussed until 1945. The definitions of *kokutai* and *kokugaku* changed after Japan's defeat in WWII, but remained in use with different interpretations. *Saisei itchi* was mostly abandoned.

[4] *Kokutai*, often translated as "national essence" or "national polity," was a term used by various individuals in Japan to describe the unique and superior morals, qualities, and characteristics of the Japanese nation and its culture; it is somewhat similar to the French term, *raison d'état* (minus the understanding of superiority).

motivations which led Japan to declare war on the U.S. and implement martyr attacks against the Allied forces. These motivations can more simply and concisely be summed up in a explanation and examination of the Japanese term *sonno joi*, which translates (though not literally) to "revere the emperor and expel the barbarian."

In this chapter, I explain the history of the term *sonno joi*, which was first used by Aizawa Seishisai in the *Shinron* (*New Theses*), which was written less than thirty years before the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853. Aizawa's beliefs grew out of his association with the Mito school (*Mitogaku*), a neo-Confucian school of thought prominent among many scholars and government officials during the Tokugawa Bakufu. Earlier scholars who contributed to the Aizawa's understanding of *sonno joi* will also be discussed, such as Kamo no Mabuchi, Motoori Norinaga, and Hirata Atsutane. I then move (briefly) to the situation after the arrival of Commodore Perry, and the turmoil it caused in Japan. Eventually, the movement would fail as foreigners poured into Japan, and the Meiji government promoted the adoption of Western practices, including science, technology, and culture. Yet the philosophies and understandings that supported the movement did not disappear, particularly reverence for the emperor and the feelings superiority of the Japanese nation.

The 1930s saw the return of the philosophies and understandings which had inspired those early advocates to "revere the emperor and expel the barbarian" reappeared as Japan faced political instability both domestically and internationally and a new wave of militarism spread across Japan. I document this return of *sonno joi*, and explain how the very processes that had brought about modernity in the 1860s had also brought insecurity by the 1930s. I explain how the Manchurian Incident and subsequent Second

Sino-Japanese War provided the opportunity for right-wing factions within Japanese

society to push for more aggressive policies abroad and more traditional values at home.

There were calls for a "Showa Restoration" and a return to the philosophies that had

inspired the country during the later half of the 19th century. Though nothing on the scale

of the Meiji Restoration took place during the 1930s, the economy began to improve as

the government tightened its control over the economy and Japan went to war with China.

An attempt was made to resolve the political turmoil when in 1937, Prime Minister

Fumimaro Konoe commissioned the writing of the *Kokutai no Hongi* (*Fundamentals of

national Polity*), which I demonstrate as modern articulation of *sonno joi*. Finally, I

explain how the ideals of *sonno joi* led to WWII and its last attempt to revere the emperor

and expel the barbarian—the Kamikaze martyr attacks of the Kamikaze.

This chapter is neither an exhaustive treatise on the entire history of *sonno joi*

(much less the principles of *kokutai* or *kokugaku*), nor on the history of the Kamikaze.

Such studies already exist, and are beyond the scope of this dissertation.[5] What concerns

us here are the few foundational works of key individuals that most influenced Japanese

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[5] For the history of *sonno joi*, see Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, Expanded Edition. Edited by Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 2000); Harry D. Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Walter Skya, *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultranationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Delmer M. Brown, *Nationalism in Japan: An Introductory Historical Analysis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1955); Daniel C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1963). For history of the Kamikaze, see Albert Axell and Hideaki Kase, *Kamikaze, Japan's Suicide Gods* (London: Longham, 2002); M.G. Sheftall, *Blossoms in the Wind: Human Legacies of the Kamikaze* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2005); Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms : The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Naito Hatsuho, *Thunder Gods: The Kamikaze Pilots Tell Their Story* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1989).

understandings of principles which were reflected in *sonno joi*. These works were highly

influential in the 20th century, when Japan's imperial ambitions needed highly motivated

citizens to accomplish the "will of the Emperor." Many scholars, government officials,

and religious leaders contributed to the understanding and application of *sonno joi*,

though the ideas the divinity of the Emperor, the supremacy of Japanese culture, the

mission to rid the country of foreign influences can be traced back to the writings of

several individuals as they articulated their understanding of revering the emperor and

expelling the barbarian. More than anything else, what this chapter demonstrates (and

what Chapter Four will demonstrate with *jihadism* and al-Qaeda) is that *sonno joi*, as it

was understood prior to WWII and the creation of the Tokkotai, was a combination of

indigenous beliefs being affected by external threats.

Sonno Joi in the Pre-Meiji Era

In 1825, the Tokugawa Bakufu issued a decree that all Western ships that came

within cannon range of Japanese shores were to be attacked and repelled.[6] Soon after,

Aizawa Seishisai wrote the *New Theses* justifying the order, yet the significance of

Aizawa's work went beyond its justification of Tokugawa Bakufu edicts. Throughout the

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[6] This was a response to two incidents with British ships. In 1808, the HMS *Phaeton* entered Nagasaki Bay flying Dutch flags. Their purpose was to seize Dutch ships and supplies (at the time, England and Holland were on opposing sides of the Napoleonic wars). The coastal defenses of Nagasaki were either old or inoperable, such that the *Phaeton* had the entire harbor out-gunned. The Phaeton received supplies and left before Japanese reinforcements could arrive to force the British to leave. The second incident occurred in 1824, when another British ship actually sent sailors ashore near Kagoshima to capture supplies. Fighting ensued, and the British ship left with its seized supplies. This as well as other incidents by Western ships initiated calls for the Tokugawa Bakufu to shore up its coastal defense from possible intrusions from foreign vessels. One advocate, Sato Nobuhiro, even went as far as to suggest that Japan conquer China in order to attain resources on its way to Thailand and India, meeting the British at their borders instead of them coming to Japan. Brown, 66-68.

work, he states that unless Tokugawa Bakufu modifies its policies to meet the foreign threat, Japan will fall victim to the barbarians.[7] The *New Theses* represented the culmination of two key concepts that had been evolving separately but along the same path for over two centuries—*sonno* (revere the emperor) and *joi* (expel the barbarian). Throughout the work, Aizawa states repeatedly two salient understandings of Japan. The first is that the imperial family is descended from the sun goddess, Amaterasu, who also created the islands and people of Japan; this divine ancestry has remained unbroken since the creation of the world.[8] Here we find the origin of the term *sonno*, which calls on all Japanese to revere the emperor, because he is a descendent of the creator of the world. The second understanding mentioned by Aizawa is that because Japan was divinely created, it makes the emperor, the people, the country, and the culture of Japan superior to all other rulers, peoples, countries, and cultures around the world.[9] Interaction with foreigners threatens to contaminate Japan's *kokutai* (national polity), and introduce foreign elements which not only weaken the Japanese people, but dishonor the emperor

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[7] *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume Two: 1600 to 2000, 2nd ed.* Compiled by Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 622.

[8] This claims of divine emperors and the divine creation of Japan and its people are documented in Japan's two oldest extant documents, the *Kojiki* (*Chronicle of Ancient Matters*) and the *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*).[8]

[9] While the legend holds that the rest of the world and its people were also created by the actions of Shinto deities, they were more the result of a combination of mud and sea foam. Japan was the only one created and reigned over by Amaterasu and her descendants, placing the rest of humanity in an inferior position. Daniel C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1963), 14.

and Amaterasu.[10] This second understanding reveals the concept of *joi* (expel the

barbarian). Scholar Bob Wakabayashi explains that the concept of *joi* had been

conceived by Confucian scholars "in highly abstract, cultural terms; for them, it had

meant sweeping away, or eradicating 'what is barbarian.'" He continues:

> They had seen it as eliminating alien ideas, customs, and values by edifying
> commoners in Confucianism. *Joi* in this abstract, cultural sense entailed erecting
> barriers to prevent Japanese commoners from being "transformed" by foreign
> ways. In 1825, the term changed in meaning from eradicating "what is barbarian"
> to eradicating "the barbarian."[11]

 Together, the two concepts of *sonno* and *joi* support and justify one another. Though not

conceived of as a religion, these two concepts had the affect of promoting the worship of

the emperor.[12]

As a Confucian scholar, Aizawa interpreted the "barbarian intrusion" as a "portent

from Heaven signifying daimyo and samurai decay," in the same way other natural

disasters would signal a ruler's loss of the "Mandate of Heaven."[13] Aizawa believed that

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[10] Ironically, the term "kokutai" is not Japanese in origin, but was rather borrowed from Chinese. In Chinese, the term, *Guoti*, had traditionally meant "the nation's honor" or "dynastic prestige;" it did not have any connection to religion or divinity as it would in Japan. Later scholars would add that to the definition. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 13.

[11] Ibid., 9.

[12] Later, with the creation of State Shinto, the concepts of *sonno* and *joi* would succinctly describe the main tenets of the imperial Japan

[13] The "barbarian intrusion" not only pertained to Westerners, but also the Chinese. Wakabayashi, 6.

the only way for the Tokugawa Bakufu to retain its right-to-rule and end the foreign threat was to enact *chuko*, or political reform through moral reinvigoration.[14]

Historical context sheds light on the importance of Aizawa's work. The establishment of the Tokugawa Bakufu in 1603 initiated the most stable unification of Japan in several centuries (if not ever). Still, the consolidation was tenuous, and government officials desperately sought ways to maintain their authority. Most feared was foreign influence that could lead to domestic rebellion. An uprising of Japanese Christians in 1638 convinced the Tokugawa Bakufu to expel all foreigners from the country and outlaw Christianity and all other Western philosophies, effectively closing Japan to the rest of the world.[15] While a limited number of Dutch and Chinese trade ships were permitted to trade in a few ports several times a year, all other foreigners could be executed for coming to Japan. Unlawful possession of European books and goods were confiscated and destroyed.

The physical isolation was mirrored by an intellectual isolation. Cut off from the rest of the world, Japanese intellectuals were forced to debate and exchange ideas with only one another. Theories and beliefs of economics, politics, science, religion, and culture did not, however, remain static, but rather evolved within the context of Japan (and its *kokutai*).[16] Contributing to this internal exchange of ideas was the policy of the

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[14] Wakabayashi, 6. Some scholars believe that "Even though he could not openly declare it, Aizawa felt that the shogun lacked the authority to make a final decision in favor of such a policy." *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2, 619

[15] Brown, 46. It should be noted that the first "expulsion of the barbarian" involved the expulsion of Christianity, a foreign ideology which threatened the state sponsored versions of Confucianism and Shinto.

[16] One of the earliest know explanations of the term "kokutai" is found in a 14th century piece authored by Kitabatake Chikafusa entitled *On the Legitimacy of the*

Tokugawa Bakufu to encourage academic study among the daimyo and samurai. Delmer M. Brown states that this policy was enacted because it was believed that if the daimyo and samurai spent more time in pursuing knowledge, they would have less time to foment political upheaval.[17] Brown writes that "Only gradually did the policy of encouraging learning yield results that were significant in the growth of national consciousness." By the late 17th century,

> Not only was there a more lively exchange of ideas throughout a larger segment of the population [than in previous generations], and throughout a larger part of the country, but there emerged certain intellectual movements that were a direct expression of, and stimulus for, national consciousness. Of particular importance was the new emphasis upon *kokutai*.[18]

It should be remembered that these early articulations of the *kokutai* emphasized loyalty to the Tokugawa Bakufu, the main reason for their promotion by the government. Indeed, much time and effort was spent on extolling the virtues of loyalty and filial piety, two inherently Confucian principles, as innate principles of Japanese *kokutai* which could be exploited to solidify the position of the Tokugawa Bakufu.[19] Yet Japanese scholars had

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Imperial Line (*Jinno Shotoki*). Kitabatake, seeking to inspire greater feelings of loyalty to the Emperor, emphasized "the uniqueness, the greatness, and the divinity of the Japanese Imperial line," and placed a great deal of "emphasis on the idea that a special relationship existed between the Emperor and his people, to which he applied the word *kokutai*." Delmer M. Brown, professor at the Institute for East Asian Studies at Berkeley, writes that the meaning of *kokutai* "was expanded to include all the unique qualities, possessions, and ideals of the Japanese nation, and it finally took on an extremely mystic character" among 17th and 18th century nationalist writers. Ibid., 32.

[17] It was also believed that studying Tokugawa-approved scholarship would breed in the daimyo and samurai a certain level of loyalty. Ideas that might lead to rebellion were severely repressed. Ibid., 50.

[18] Ibid., 51.

[19] Brown mentions one scholar in particular, Fujiwara Seika, who demonstrated to Tokugawa officials the utility of Confucianism in promoting loyalty to the government. Yet Fujiwara is remembered most (even considered the founding father of the *kokutai* by Brown) for his innovative efforts to show that the two most important tenets of

always stressed that ultimate authority resided in the Imperial family, not the Shogun, an emphasis that the Tokugawa government had never (openly) challenged.[20] Despite their power, it was the emperor, not the shogun or his officials, who was descended from Amaterasu. It was this belief (*sonno*), according to the Japanese intellectuals, that was the basis of Japan's *kokutai*. During this time of isolation, the divinity of the emperor— unaffected by (and in response to) foreign philosophies (such as Christianity), and with renewed emphasis his divinity through the study of *kokutai*—became heavily entrenched in the Japanese mind, and used to legitimate many theories of state, culture, religion, and authority.

The emphasis on Japanese studies (*kokugaku*) brought renewed interest in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*, which function as the founding documents of the Japanese nation. [21] It is from these two works that advocates and scholars of *sonno* gained their legitimacy and justified their beliefs, which were then disseminated to the general public. This speaks to the importance of the creation and articulation of the *kokutai*, as well as the Shinto religion in general and many aspects of Japanese culture prior to 1945 (though some elements—such as the reverence for the imperial family—remain). While very

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Confucianism, loyalty and filial piety, were compatible with Japanese Shinto. Brown writes that since Fujiwara "did not reject the tradition of the divine descent of the Imperial line and had much to say regarding the special relationship between the Japanese people and the Emperor, he supported the two elements of the kokutai which remained central to all subsequent discussions of the subject." Ibid.

[20] Indeed, it was from the Emperor that the Tokugawa Bakufu and previous shogun governments received their mandate to rule. There was never any serious attempt by any of the shogun families to overthrown the Emperor and establish themselves as descendants of Amaterasu. Such an action would have severely destabilized the entire nation.

[21] Both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* have been described as "the bible of Japanese nationalism." Ibid., 17.

detailed studies of both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shok*i exist, Duus' summary of both works

will suffice:

> The development of nativist thought or *kokugaku* (national learning) in the 18th century was an even more potent expression of cultural ethnocentrism. Reacting to the heavy influence of Confucian ideas on Japanese culture, nativist thinkers tried to discover a Japanese "Way" that antedated the influx of morals, ideas, and institutions from China. By searching through the myths legends, and semi-legendary history set down in the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) and the *Nihongi* (*Chronicle of Japan*), they hoped to find out what the Japanese had been like before they were warped by Chinese learning [*kangaku*] and Chinese culture…In this reading of the Japanese texts, China became a corrupting force not a civilizing one.[22]

It is from both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* that scholars of the *kokutai* developed their

ideas for Japanese uniqueness and superiority, therefore leading to a promotion of

"revering the emperor and expelling the barbarian." Countless references are made to

both of these works in discussion of *sonno*, *kokutai*, and *kokugaku* literature, all of which

cite the interpretation and story found in both *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*.

While *kokugaku* studies had always been a significant field of academic study in

Japan, the isolation of the 17th and 18th centuries saw the scholarship expand and evolve

like never before.[23] Yet due to its insular quality and sponsorship by a single government,

the scholarship from *kokugaku* did not arise without bias. In focusing their study on the

ancient culture of Japan, scholars began to see the Japanese *kokutai* as superior to that of

all other nations. This led to an even more insular focus of Japanese studies, with scholars

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[22] *Nihongi* is another way of interpreting the characters for *Nihon Shoki*. *Modern Japan*, 39. For a more detailed study of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, see John S. Brownlee, *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991).

[23] This would have serious consequences on Japan in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

coming to believe that the *kokutai* had been defiled and corrupted by foreign ways and ideas. Several examples of this scholarship directly affected the articulation of *sonno joi*.

In 1657, Tokugawa Mitsukuni, a Confucian scholar (and member of the Tokugawa family), sponsored the creation of *The Grand History of Japan* (*Dai Nihon-shi*), an extensive—and self-aggrandizing—history of arts, religion, and traditions of Japan. Mitsukuni's work "deepened the interest in Japanese culture and therefore paved the way for more intense study of antiquarian subjects," particularly as it related to the myth of the Imperial family.[24] As scholars worked on Mitsukuni's history in the city of Mito, they developed their own theories and interpretations of various philosophies and imparted this knowledge to their students. This facilitated the creation of the *Mito* school (*Mitogaku*). The prestige and influence of the Mito school slowly increased with time, due in part to its sponsorship of the *Dai Nihon-shi*, as well as its close relationship with members of the Tokugawa family.[25]

One scholar who rose to during this time of intense Japanese self-study was Kamo no Mabuchi. A gifted student from a young age, Kamo became the tutor to the son of Tokugawa Yoshimune, which "gave him the opportunity to concentrate on his nativist scholarship while gaining a window on affairs at the heart of the Bakufu."[26] But Kamo is most remembered for his disdain for Chinese culture, particularly as it had infiltrated the

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[24] The project took over almost 250 years to complete, and was finally completed in 1906, meant to coincide with the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War, which "had given rise to a flood of emperor-centered nationalist sentiment." *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2, 101. The Emperor Meiji, spoke of Mitsukuni, "You proved to be the originator of the movement for reverence and loyalty to the throne, thus making of yourself a wise forerunner of the Imperial Restoration of 1868. Brown, 55.

[25] *Sources of Japanese Tradition,* vol. 2, 617.

[26] Ibid., 483.

Japanese *kokutai*. Brown writes that Kamo was one of the first scholars to not only

elevate the *kokutai* to a superior position over that of other cultures—particularly

China—he also "made charges against the Chinese and attributed the misfortunes in

Japanese history to the evil influences of Chinese learning." [27] In *A Study of the Idea of*

Our Country (*Koku Iko)*, Kamo writes:

> In ancient times, when men's dispositions were straightforward, a complicated
> system of morals was unnecessary. It would naturally happen that bad acts might
> occasionally be committed, but the straightforwardness of men's dispositions
> would prevent evil from being concealed and growing in extent. [28]

The "complicated system of morals" which Kamo speaks of is a reference to

Confucianism. He criticized the Chinese for "being bad at heart" despite their adherence

the rigid morality of Confucius, which led to the chaos in their nation. Kamo states that

though China had numerous royal dynasties rule over them, with each new ruler being

preceded by regicide or rebellion, "Japan has been faithful to one uninterrupted line of

Sovereigns." [29] Kamo's writing was, therefore, not only a glorification of Japan and its

superior status, as well as a demonization of Chinese culture, but an indictment against

those Japanese scholars who had adopted Chinese culture, resulting in misfortune visited

upon Japan for adhering to an inferior and false culture. [30]

Kamo's most famous student, Motoori Norinaga, would go on to have an even

greater impact are the articulation of *kokutai*. Brown writes that it was Kamo no

Mabuchi who advised the young Motoori to pursue his interest in the *Kojiki*, believing

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[27] Brown, 55-56.

[28] Ibid. It should be noted that Kamo no Mabuchi was the son of Shinto priest.
The Making of Modern Japan, 206.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

that if properly analyzed and distributed, the *Kojiki* "would supply important and valuable information concerning the nature of Japanese life in the glorious days before Japan was subjected to contaminating influences from the continent."[31] According to Matsumoto Shigeru, the *Kojiki* represented to Motoori a "book of truth," and the "more precisely and the more deeply [Motoori] studied the book, the more fully the truth which it contains, namely, the genuine Way of the Kami, would be revealed."[32] Motoori's *Commentary on the Kojiki* (*Kojiki-den*) took more than thirty years to write, completed in 1798. [33] Matsumoto asserts that the project "was inseparably combined with Norinaga's quest for meaning. He continues:

> But, at the same time, it had a sociocultural significance. Through his efforts the Kojiki, the most ancient text in Japan, was for the first time made fully explicit, understandable, and meaningful, so that it could come to the foreground as a significant source of meaning and identity for the Japanese people.[34]

Motoori would go on to acquire great fame for his work, as well as many students who helped him copy the *Kojiki-den*, and carried on his work after he died. (Atsutane)

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[31] Ibid., 56.

[32] Matsumoto Shigeru, *Motoori Norinaga, 1730-1801* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 82.

[33] Jansen writes, "Norinaga was a master of rigorous philological study, but he also held a highly irrational belief that the Kojiki mythology was historically authentic. He argued that what was recorded in that classic had to be true, and that adherence to its teachings constituted the 'Way.'" According to Jansen, Motoori apparently believed that the *Kojiki* was a historically accurate account of history because recounted and kept alive through oral tradition by Japanese authors who only learned to lie and distort the facts after they learned the Chinese language and culture. *The Making of Modern Japan*, 207.

[34] Matsumoto, 131.

According to Matsumoto, after the death of Motoori, his student Hirata Atsutane "expressed a radical and enthusiastic commitment to his cause, thereby giving a more political note to the kokugaku movement than had Norinaga."[35] Another source remarks:

> If we credit Motoori Norinaga with having made National Learning a subject worthy of a great scholar's attention and thereby having given the reconstituted Shinto "tradition" the authority of a sacred canon, it remained for Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) to popularize Shinto nativism by asserting the singular supremacy of Japan, its culture, Way, and people.[36]

Hirata was never a direct student of Motoori (he began his study of the *kokutai* after Motoori's death), but he was instrumental in strengthening Shinto "as a religious, political, and intellectual force."[37] To do this, Hirata "was willing to look anywhere for support of his doctrines," modifying and adapting many foreign ideas and claiming them as Japanese.[38] This had the affect of moving the *kokugaku* and discussions of *kokutai* firmly into an overarching religious and national system with the emperor at the head and an emphasis on filial piety "as the basis of all good actions, and upon devotion to the memory of one's ancestors as the mainspring of all virtue."[39] But perhaps Hirata's most significant contribution to the concept of *sonno joi* was "the great emphasis [he placed] upon the theory that every Japanese was a descendant of the gods. This concept, which became a common ingredient in subsequent nationalist thought, was extremely important

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[35] Ibid., 177. Matsumoto goes on to say that Atsutane a very politically emphasized version of the kokugaku, and therefore contributed to the understanding of the kokugaku at the end of the Tokugawa period and beginning of the Meiji period. Ibid., 229, fn. 1.

[36] *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2, 509.

[37] Brown, 65.

[38] *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2, 510.

[39] Brown, 65.

in the rise of nationalism, for beliefs in divine ancestry strengthened racialism, a powerful

element in the growth of many forms of modern nationalism."[40]

It was within this context that Aizawa wrote his *New Theses*. Many scholars see

the work as a result of the evolution of Confucian thought within Japan, which

culminated in the promotion of the phrase "revere the emperor, expel the barbarian"

(*sonno joi*). By 1825, Confucian scholars in Japan had begun to see their nation, and not

China, as the "Divine Realm" and the "Middle Kingdom." Bob Wakabayashi, professor

of modern Japanese history at York University, writes that:

> Aizawa achieved the ultimate synthesis of Confucian and nativist rationales for
> claiming Japanese superiority, and he linked the idea of Japan as Middle-
> Kingdom to the existing state structure more forcefully and convincingly than
> anyone had before. In short, his *New Theses* contained tenets of proto-
> nationalism: the idea and belief that all Japanese, despite their unalterable
> differences in social status, owe ultimate loyalty to the existing *bakuhan* state as
> the only form of political organization proper to an independent and sovereign
> Japan.[41]

Thus the *New Theses* represented the culmination of *kokugaku*, *kokutai*, and the Shinto

beliefs of the divinity of the emperor and the people of Japan.

Aizawa's work had a very deep impact on the country of Japan. After Perry's

arrival, *sonno joi* became the clarion call of many *kokugaku* scholars, lower daimyo, and

samurai in particular who believed that the Tokugawa Bakufu should resist the foreigners

and not allow them access to the island nation. It was believed that interaction with

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[40] Brown continues: Hirata's teaching played a truly vital role in the rise of
national Shinto, a central theme in Japanese national sentiment; he is therefore an
outstanding figure in the early growth of Japanese nationalism. In 1840, the Bakufu
finally realized that Hirata's efforts were providing too much support for the Sonno
movement, and consequently ordered him into exile." Brown, 66.

[41] Wakabayashi uses the term *bakuhan* to refer to the Tokugawa Bakufu.
Wakabayashi, 9.

foreigners would corrupt Japan's *kokutai*, which saw Japanese cultural expressions as superior to all others. Yet threats that faced Japan in 1825 when the *New Theses* was written were very different from the threats which it faced in 1853.[42] It became painfully obvious to Tokugawa officials that could not resist American (and later, European) demand for relations, and thus were forced to acquiesce to foreign demands. Not to do so would be "to suffer colonization."[43] Those dedicated to the works of Kamo no Mabuchi, Motoori Norinaga, Atsutane Hirata, Aizawa Seishisai turned against the Tokugawa Bakufu, claiming that not to do so would be a betrayal of the emperor, the people of Japan, and the divine ancestors. Yet even they came to realize that the disaster that awaited them should they war with the Westerners.[44]

So instead, they turned their anger towards the Tokugawa Bakufu and sought to return the emperor to direct rule of the nation.[45] For the next fifteen years, loyalist forces and Tokugawa forces clashed for authority in Japan. When Aizawa learned that his

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[42] Ibid., 134.

[43] Ibid., 136.

[44] Tokugawa Nariaki, ruler of Mito and the Mito school during Perry's arrival, stated, "When Westerners came in the past, they never intended to start a war. When we fired on them [as ordered in 1825], they would in fact go away. But now they come spoiling for a fight; they are waiting for us to attack. If we do, we will just be playing into their hands." Ibid., 135.

[45] The title of shogun had originally had its origin in the 12th century and "had its inception in the subjugation of the Ainu, then known as the Northern Barbarians. Generals commissioned by the imperial court to lead campaigns of suppression were designated 'barbarian-subjugating generalissimos' (sei-i tai shogun), subsequently abbreviated to simply 'generalissimo' (shogun). The original function of the shogunate therefore was to cope with 'barbarians.' But the Tokugawa were obviously unable to discharge this responsibility. By yielding to the demands of the barbarians from America, the shogunate had abandoned its trust and forfeited its authority to rule." *Sources of Japanese Tradition, 618.*

writings were being used to motivate insurrection, he repudiated his justification for armed resistance to the West, advocating for an opening of Japan.[46]

In 1868, the Emperor Meiji was restored as the head of the Empire of Japan. The last Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinubo, relinquished his authority to the emperor, and though the country was still in a state of turmoil, the concept of *sonno* had been satisfied. Yet the concept of *joi* had been a failure. The leaders of the Meiji government adopted the phrase, *fukoku kyohei,* which translated to "rich country, strong military." This policy helped inspire the rapid modernization Japan experienced beginning the 1870s. In line with the principles of *fukoku kyohei*, Meiji officials—made up of former daimyo and samurai—pursued a policy of centralization of authority under the emperor. The first goal of this government was to strengthen the nation of Japan. This was done through a careful administration of both the economy and the political system, as well as maintain the security and sovereignty of the emperor both at home and abroad. The Meiji government instituted tax reforms, conscription acts, and national education reforms, all intended to move the nation from barbarism to modernity. To accomplish this, the government invited thousands of foreign advisors—politicians, scholars, educators, businessmen, and craftsmen—to Japan to build up both the physical infrastructure and the cultural infrastructure of the nation. Meiji officials, who by no means had come to see the West as their betters or superiors, nonetheless understood that in order to resist the barbarian, one must learn from the barbarian.

This is an incredibly brief and simplified version of the most significant revolutions to ever take place in Japan.[47] It is hard to overstate the changes that occurred

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[46] Wakabayashi, 137.

during this time, both to the government, the people, and the culture. Yet what concerns us here is the role of *sonno joi*, which quickly fell out of popular use before the end of the 19th century. However, the understandings which had supported the saying (divinity of the emperor and Japanese people and Japanese superiority) would not fade into the past. Indeed, as Japan modernized that became an industrial and then a world power, the superiority of the Japanese nation became even more ingrained. The Japanese were keenly aware that they were the only non-Western country in the world to modernize to the level it had by the beginning of the 20th century; the defeat of the Russian empire only served to provide further proof to the world that Japan was a divinely blessed nation.

Along with the financial and political gains came a strengthening of the culture as well. Scholars concerned with maintaining and solidifying the concepts of *kokutai* and *kokugaku* continued to study and disseminate their knowledge just as their predecessors had in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Return of Sonno Joi: The Kokutai no Hongi and the Kamikaze

Between the writings of Aizawa and the end of WWII there was no halt to the articulations of the Japanese *kokutai* or study of the *kokugaku*. Scholars continued their studies and continued to expound upon the their interpretations of Japanese culture. However it is during this time period that the government had begun to openly and broadly promote the reverence for the emperor as divine. The understandings of the pre-Meiji scholars mentioned here became part of the canon for what became known in the

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[47] For more detailed descriptions of the Meiji Restoration, see W.G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972); Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000).

West as State Shinto. At its core, State Shinto had two beliefs: the first was that the

emperor was divinely descended from the creator of the world, and the second was that

the Japanese people, because of their connection to the emperor, owed him absolute

loyalty, even to death. While thousands of documents contained this understanding of

State Shinto and hundreds of treatises sought to explain the divinity of the emperor and

the encourage loyalty to him, there is no better example of this than the *Kokutai no Hongi*,

or *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*.

Written in 1937, the *Kokutai no Hongi* represented a government effort to clearly

articulate the underlying philosophy of the nation of Japan after a period of confusion

over the definitions of *kokutai*.[48] Brown explains that after WWI, the ideas of democracy,

socialism, and communism began to be held in equal if not higher esteem than the

kokutai and imperial institution.[49] Also contributing were the writings of scholars such as

Professor Minobe Tatsukichi, which brought force the idea that the emperor was an organ,

rather than the head, of the state. Brown writes:

> In those days, the theory did not seem radical and was accepted by most legal
> scholars. Then, with the upsurge of interest in democratic ideals and institutions
> during [WWI], *kokutai* and the unique religious qualities of the Imperial
> institution were given even less attention…Scholars even dared to write objective
> studies on the "age of the gods," clearing away some of the religious mystery
> surrounding the origin and rise of the Imperial family.[50]

[48] The translation used here by John Owen Gauntlett translates the *Kokutai no Hongi* as *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, which is the title of Gauntlett's translation. This translation is a more descriptive than direct. A more accurate translation would be "Fundamentals of National Polity." *Kokutai No Hongi, Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*. Translated by John Owen Gauntlett. Edited by Robert King Hall (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949).

[49] Brown, 206.

[50] Brown goes on to say that the health and mental competency of the Emperor Taisho (who was thought to be mentally handicapped), followed by the appointment of his son, Hirohito, as regent in 1921 further weakened the prestige of the imperial

However, with the ascension of Hirohito to emperor in 1926, a new wave of fervor for the *kokutai* and imperial institution swept over Japan. Brown mentions the various "national reconstruction programs" which were sponsored by Emperor Showa during the 1920.[51] The Great Depression of 1929 hit the Japanese economy very hard (as it was closely tied to the American economy) and renewed calls in Japan by conservatives to rely less on foreigners and foreign systems. The Manchurian Incident spurred Japanese pride among the military as well as the citizenry.

These renewed feelings of loyalty to the emperor and traditional understandings of Japan let to the Minobe Incident in 1935, in which Minobe was publicly condemned and verbally attack for his writings which failed to recognize the divine sovereignty of the emperor. Though many supported his interpretation of the Constitution and the role of the emperor, the public backlash against his ideas was so great that he was forced to resign his post in the Japanese Diet, and the government banned and publicly discredited several of his works.[52] Minobe narrowly escaped assassination in 1936.[53]

It as in this environment that the *Kokutai no Hongi* was commissioned by Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro and issued by the Thought Bureau of the Ministry of Education, representing the Japanese government's collective understanding of Japan's *kokutai*, to reaffirm the place—both the rights and responsibilities—of the emperor and

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institution, with its lowest point coming after an assassination attempt on Emperor Taisho's life in 1923. Ibid., 206-207.

[51] Ibid., 207.

[52] Ibid., 207-208.

[53] *The Modern History of Japan*, 254.

the people.[54] Walter Skya, professor of Japanese militarist thought during the 19th and 20th century, writes that while the Japanese were eager to accept and adopt the scientific and technological progress the West had made after the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853, "Japanese reaction to the Western political revolution was mixed. Elements of nationalism, liberalism, and even socialism were hastily grafted onto the native emperor-centered Shinto religion in awkward and conflicting ways."[55] This had led to the confusion that had arisen after WWI. Special commentaries of the *Kokutai* no Hongi were issued to teachers, "with the result that its doctrines became the basis of an intensive propaganda directed at the young, rejecting revolutionary, anti-capitalist elements in the thinking of the radical right, but remaining anti-liberal in the extreme."

In nearly every way, the *Kokutai no Hongi* referenced and affirmed the principles of *sonno joi*. On numerous occasions, it mentioned the divine origins of the imperial family:

> The unbroken line of Emperors, receiving the Oracle of the Founder of the Nation, reign eternally over the Japanese Empire. This is our eternal and immutable national entity [*kokutai*]…Our nation was founded when its Founder, Amaterasu Ohmikami (Heavenly-Shining-Great-August-Deity), handed the Oracle to her Imperial Grandson Ninigi no Mikoto and descended to Mizuho no Kuni (Land of Fresh Rice-ears) and Toyoashihara (Rich Reed-plain).[56]

Loyalty to the emperor was described and justified as absolute:

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[54] The opening paragraph of the Kokutai no Hongi reads, "This book has been complied in view of the pressing need of the hour to clarify our national entity and to cultivate and awaken national sentiment and consciousness. Our national entity [kokutai] is vast and boundless, so that it is feared the book has fallen short in the penning of its true significance." Gauntlett, 50.

[55] Walter Skya, *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultranationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 263.

[56] Both "Mizuho no Kuni" and "Toyoashihara" are names for Japan. The passages goes on to quote the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. Gauntlett, 59.

Loyalty means to reverence the Emperor as [our] pivot and to follow him implicitly. By implicit obedience is meant casting ourselves aside and serving the Emperor intently. To walk this Way of loyalty is the sole Way in which we subjects may "live," and the fountainhead of all energy. Hence, offering our lives for the sake of the Emperor does not mean so-called self-sacrifice, but the casting aside of our little selves to live under his august grace and the enhancing of the genuine life of the people of the State.[57]

It also proclaimed and defended the absolute authority of the emperor:

The Emperor is the holder in essence of supreme power; so that the theory which holds the view that sovereignty lies in essence in the State and that the Emperor is but its organ has no foundation except for the fact that it is a result of blindly following the theories of Western States. The Emperor is not merely a so-called sovereign, monarch, ruler, or administrator, such as is seen among foreign nations, but reigns over this country as a deity incarnate in keeping with the great principle that has come down to us since the found of the Empire.[58]

The pollution of foreign influences on the *kokutai*:

Our nation has in the past imported, assimilated, and sublimated Chinese and Indian ideologies, and has therewith supported the Imperial Way, making possible the establishment of an original culture based on her national entity [*kokutai*]. Following the Meiji Restoration Occidental cultures poured in with a rush, and contributed immensely toward our national prosperity; but their individualistic qualities brought about various difficulties in all the phases of the lives of our people, causing their thoughts to fluctuate.[59]

The *Kokutai no Hongi* was the rebirth of the principles of *sonno joi*. It promoted the ideas of the *kokutai* which were elaborated by scholars such as Hirata Atsutane and Aizawa Seishisai. What makes this document even more significant is that it clearly defined the government's position on the *kokutai*. That they chose to do so using many of the same principles used by the advocates of *sonno joi* demonstrates that the reverence for the emperor and the expulsion of the barbarian had not ceased in 1868. Indeed, these

[57] Ibid., 80.

[58] Ibid., 165.

[59] Ibid., 178.

principles would continue on into WWII, ultimately culminating in the creation of the Tokkotai and the creation of the Kamikaze martyr attacks.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the history and use of the term *sonno joi*, and how it became both motivation and philosophy for Japan during the most turbulent time in its history, the Meiji Restoration. I introduced several *kokugaku* scholars who contributed to the understanding of the *kokutai*, beginning with the writings of Kamo no Mabuchi at the turn of the eighteenth century and culminating with the writing of the *Kokutai no Hongi* in 1937. For three hundred years, scholars, politicians, religious leaders, and even peasants struggled to come to terms with the articulation of the *kokutai*, seeking to balance their understanding of the natural world with their understanding of the supernatural world, particularly after the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853. Though *sonno joi* gave way to the saying, *fukoku kyohei*, it was not long before Japan once again sought to isolate itself from foreign ideologies and influences. It is in this context that *sonno joi* returned, this time providing the justification necessary to expand the borders and control of the emperor beyond the shores of Japan as well as motivation to fight an enemy of superior strength and capability.

CHAPTER FOUR

Jihadism and Al-Qaeda

The concept of jihad plays a very important role in Islam. In Arabic, the term means "to struggle or strive with regard to one's religion," yet as with almost any religious concept, *jihad* is open to various interpretations. [1] David Cook, professor of Islamic thought and history at Rice University, explains that shortly after Muhammad began to preach the teachings of Islam, he and his early followers found themselves under constant attack from rival groups within Mecca. Their flight to Medina, an event known as the *Hijra*, provided no respite from persecution. Cook writes:

> It was in this context that *jihad* arose, and the campaigns to gain adherents and control territory constituted the focus of the community's activity during the last nine years of the Prophet's life. Muhammad is recorded as having participated in at least twenty-seven campaigns and deputized fifty-nine others—an average of no fewer than nine campaigns annually…This evidence demonstrates categorically the importance of *jihad* to the early Muslim community. [2]

Since the attacks of 9/11, many scholars have attempted to explain the meaning and place of *jihad* in Islam, both in the past (to find its roots) and the present (to find its contemporary meaning). There are typically two sides to the description of *jihad*. For those in the first group, *jihad* means to fight and kill non-Muslims. They take as their evidence Surah 9:5 from the Qur'an, known as "the verse of the sword," which reads, "And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of

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[1] David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 2.

[2] Ibid., 6.

ambush."[3] This verse is said to abrogate all other verses understandings of war and peace with non-Muslims in the Qur'an, and is predominantly the definition used by groups such as al-Qaeda to justify their war against the United States.[4]

In the second group we find those who believe that *jihad* is split into two concepts, the greater *jihad* and the lesser jihad. The distinction comes from a story written in the ninth century of Muhammad saying to several soldiers returning from fighting with non-Muslims, that they "had done well in coming from the *lesser jihad* to the *greater jihad*." When asked what the "greater *jihad*" meant, Muhammad said, "For the servant of God to fight his passions," meaning that it is more important for the Muslim to fight his own sinful nature than to fight non-Muslims.[5] This understanding of *jihad* is primarily espoused by those who believe that the nature of Islam—and therefore jihad—is non-violent, and that its true purpose is to fight internally against one's self rather than to fight externally against non-Muslims.

Cook believes that this second understanding of *jihad* is a radical reinterpretation of the concept, which is dated two hundred years after the Prophets death. He states that such attempts are primarily espoused by Western scholars—either moderate Muslims or supporters of a moderate interpretation of Islam speaking to a Western audience—and

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[3] Within the context of the verse, the polytheists were those Arabs who believed in the various deities prior to Muhammad's revelation. At various times, this definition has been said to include non-Muslims, such as Christians and Hindus, and even applied by zealous Muslims to less zealous Muslims. Qur'an 9:5.

[4] Ironically, this position is held by those who would most often be described as radical militant Islamic fundamentalist (or some variation thereof) as well as those anti-Muslim activist who see Islam as a violent religion seeking to conquer the West and kill all non-Muslims. Cook, 10.

[5] Ibid., 35.

goes on to explain that there is very little historical evidence for this position of the true interpretation of *jihad* being internal.[6] Other scholars, such as Nouman Ali Khan take a less literal and more contextual understanding of the concept of jihad, particularly as it is understood from Surah 9:5. Khan states that the history of *jihad* is not one of "perpetual warfare," where Muslims were constantly killing non-Muslims; he points out that Christian and Jewish communities thrived under Islamic rule. During an informal discussion of the verse, he states, "To think that this is how Muslims think all the time is insanity. And to think that's what God wants all the time is disingenuous to the context of the Qur'an. It's not genuine, it's not authentic." Khan goes on to say that the verse is meant to apply only to the battlefield, again speaking to a contextual understanding of the verse.[7]

This dissertation, however, does not concern itself with the authenticity of one interpretation over another. While one understanding may be more accurate to the teachings of Muhammad, and while it is a valid debate for Muslims and those studying Islamic theology, only the interpretation of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda is examined here. Therefore, it is not necessary to develop a detailed or historical understanding of the concept of *jihad* separate from the interpretations of al-Qaeda. The supremacy of either the greater *jihad* or lesser *jihad* (and whether or not there is any distinction between the two) is beyond the scope of this dissertation, as is the debate surrounding the level of violence allowed in Islam or by the Qur'an. Our main concern here is to

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[6] Cook writes, "Attempts to rewrite history occur solely in Western-authored presentations of jihad, or those with Western audiences as the primary focus. It is ironic, but the fact remains that few Muslim scholars or even apologists writing in non-European languages have ever made the exaggerated claims seen above. Ibid., 36.

[7] Nouman Ali Khan, *Jihad Isn't Perpetual Warfare*. http://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=vxQyP_ztEGY (Accessed on February 19, 2013).

understand and examine the ways with which the concept of *jihad* (and other related concepts and terms) has been used by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda to justify their war against the U.S. and their implementation of martyr attacks against America and its allies. For this reason, I use the term *Jihadism* rather than *jihad* to distinguish it from the more general Islamic understanding "to struggle or strive with regard to one's religion." Here, I will be using the definition of Farhad Khosrokhavar which describes Jihadism as an ideology "for which violence is the sole credible strategy to achieve Islamic ends" insofar as it relates to the mission of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.[8]

In this chapter, I provide the historical context in which Jihadism was developed, examining briefly the history of the West's influence in the Middle East from the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century. I then go into the writings of the three individuals who wrote in the early to mid-twentieth century, and how they perceived *jihad* to be the only solution to Western oppression. The authors discussed here are Hassan al-Banna (*On Jihad*), Abul Ala Maududi (*Jihad in Islam*), and Sayyid Qutb (*Milestones*). These authors borrowed from each other and expanded each others ideas, with Qutb having the most profound impact on the understanding of Jihadism for Osama bin Laden and the founders of al-Qaeda. Along with bin Laden, both Abdullah Yusuf Azzam and Ayman Zawahiri were heavily influenced by these early writers. It is by examining the writings of al-Banna, Maududi, and Qutb that were are able to trace the ideological roots of al-Qaeda, and understand why they declared war on the U.S. and utilized martyr attacks against Americans and their allies.

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[8] Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), 1. It should be noted also that this definition of Jihadism only pertains to al-Qaeda, and not other radical Islamic groups.

A History of Western Dominance

Though it could be argued that the most significant incursion by the West into Muslim territories of the Middle East occurred during the Crusades, few would doubt the significance of Western incursions into the Middle East during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[9] Their significance lies in the fact that these later encounters represented the first time that the West had a decided advantage over the Muslims in both economic and military power.[10] This had not been the case for much of the history between the Middle East and Europe, which had mostly been in the favor of the Middle East since the first Muslim troops had crossed the Iberian Straits in the early eighth century. Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., scholar of Islamic history at Pennsylvania State University, contends that "Without the Renaissance, the Reformation, the age of exploration and discovery, the expansion of trade, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, Europe would not have surpassed the Muslim world in the 18th century."[11]

Napoleon's invasion of Egypt had opened interest in European expansion into the Middle East. Unlike the colonization in East Asia, which was based on attempts to gain resources and open markets, colonization of the Middle East was based primarily on maintaining a balance of power between European nations, particularly between Western Europe and Russia. This is not to say that trade interests played no part in the colonization of the Middle East. For example, English interest in Egypt came from the

[9] There had been other encounters, such as the Reconquista in Spain and Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, as well as the Muslim invasions of Vienna in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[10] Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 7th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), 147.

[11] Ibid., 150.

former's desire to have a quicker route to its colonies in India; rather than going around Africa, it sought to move from the Mediterranean through the Persian Gulf to the Indian and Pacific Ocean. This facilitated a relationship with the Ottoman Empire, not just Egypt, increasing British interests in the region, including Turkey, Palestine, and other lands that bordered the eastern Mediterranean.[12] The French, the Dutch, and the Russians, had similar reasons for their adventures into the Middle East, and the rivalries between these nations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would have serious repercussions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Of course, this relationship between the Europe and the Middle East was not unique. The same scenario played out in both South and East Asia as well as Latin America as Europeans competed with each other. This is because Europe's power increased dramatically in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. As they spread their influence during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, other nations were forced to either adapt or be swept under.[13] Goldschmidt summarizes the scene well:

> Asian states tried to stay independent by grafting onto their traditional society those Western customs and institutions that they believed to be sources of power…the Ottoman Empire followed this path, which seemed moderate, logical, and appropriate for countries with deeply ingrained norms and values…Muslim countries wanted to strengthen their armies and navies, their governments and their economies, but not to cast off a lifestyle they had built up and followed for centuries. Reformers had to choose with care the institutions and practices they borrowed from Europe, but they soon learned that a Westernizing program in, say, defense could not be blocked off from the rest of society.[14]

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[12] Ibid., 154.

[13] Ibid., 159.

[14] Ibid.

This situation was much different from the one that Muslims had been accustomed to in previous centuries. Whereas the conquered peoples of Muslims armies had historically been allowed to keep their cultures and traditions intact—provided they were not offensive to Islamic culture and tribute was paid—Europeans were much more invasive in their administration. Rather than simply demanding tribute or claiming territory, the Europeans sought to establish their culture in the Middle East. The cultural implications for this interaction are famously elaborated in Edward Said's monumental work, *Orientalism*.[15] Said states that Europe saw the Middle East (along with the rest of the non-Western world) as fundamentally inferior, and in need of instruction and "civilization," which meant Westernization. For many reasons which Said elaborates, the West sought to extend its reach into the Middle East for economic, strategic, and cultural reasons.

Many new technologies and ideas entered into the Ottoman Empire from Europe, but none had a more profound and long-lasting effect on the Middle East than the idea of nationalism.[16] Fundamentally, Muslims had been expected to see themselves as one grand community of believers, the *ummah*, which was supposed to transcend tribal, regional, or linguistic loyalties or identifications. Though this was not the case in practice—Muslim interaction was based on loyalties to tribe, region, and language— nationalism in the European context was anathema to Muslim culture, for it not only

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[15] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism, 25th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003). Also valuable, though less so to this chapter, is Said's expansion of the concept of Orientalism to the non-Muslim non-Western world—including the inhabitants of East Asia, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia—which he discusses in his work *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

[16] Goldschmidt, 175.

violated the laws of the Ottoman Empire (who sought to provide the overarching loyalty to all Muslims), but the laws set forth by Muhammad.[17]

Nationalism was not systematically taught to the Muslims by their European teachers. While the wealthy had been able to educate their children in European schools and in Europe (where they were taught European culture), most Muslims had simply come into contact with Europeans through much more benign encounters, such as tourism and trade. Yet, as Goldschmidt explains, it was along these rather innocuous channels that European culture spread: "One could not learn the techniques of Europe, most often taught in French, without absorbing some of the ideas of Europe…as Middle Easterners learned to how to work like Europeans, some also started to think like them." As scholars in the Middle East began to learn about and internalize European culture— " Western customs and institutions that they believed to be sources of power"—Muslims began to adopt and adapt what they learned to their own context.[18] Though attempts to establish a nationalism along linguistic or regional failed, the seeds had been sown for later scholars and activists to articulate and create their own nationalisms.[19]

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[17] Goldschmidt writes, "In all three monotheistic faiths, the rise of nationalism has meant substituting collective self-love for the love of God, enhancing life on this earth instead of preparing for what is to come after death, and promoting the communities welfare instead of obeying God's revealed law." The Christians in Europe had made this transition, but the Muslims in the Middle East had not. Ibid., 176.

[18] Ibid., 159.

[19] Goldschmidt writes that the pre-twentieth century nationalism failed to increase either the wealth or the relative strength of the people, causing some critics to conclude that nationalism in the Middle East only appealed "to the youths who had lost their religion because of Western education." However, Goldschmidt comments that though history is written by the victors, "Sometimes we study losers whose grandchildren would be winners." Ibid., 192.

It was not until after WWI that nationalism in the Middle East truly began to take shape both intellectually and politically. The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent abolition of the Caliphate forced Middle Eastern nations to find alternative sources of identity and authority (both political and religious). This endeavor was made even more pressing by the fact that the victors of WWI had begun to carve out for themselves various "spheres of influence" from the domains of the Ottoman Empire. It is in this process that we find the earliest source of European perceived betrayal of Muslims which concern our study. Goldschmidt summarizes the situation well:

> The Arabs had been roused from centuries of political lethargy. First by American teachers and missionaries, then by the revolution of the Young Turks, and finally by the blandishments of Britain and France during WWI. From the West they learned about rights and freedoms, democratic governments, and national self-determination…They helped the British and French defeat the Ottoman Turks in WWI, but later on the Allies failed to keep the pledges they had made to the Arabs. In the lands of the Fertile Crescent, where Arabs were clearly in the majority, where they hoped to form independent states, where someday the Arab nation might revive its former power and glory, the victorious Allies set up mandates that were mere colonies in disguise.[20]

It is within this context that we find the writings of Hassan al-Banna, Abul Ala Maududi, and Sayyid Qutb. These three scholars articulated new ideas and emphasized traditional views which were taken by their contemporaries to forge an ideology that saw the West as both corrupt and oppressive, seeking to keep Muslims weak and divided so that they could be exploited for their land and resources. The authors (and others) posited that the only solution to this "Christian" tyranny was a return to the true teachings of Islam, with a renewed emphasis on the oneness of Allah (*tawhid*) and resisting the non-believers (jihad). These are the tenets of an early jihadism. It might be more accurate to call this type of jihadism a *proto-jihadism*, these authors did not advocate for violence against

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[20] Ibid., 210.

fellow Muslims and non-combatants that was promoted in the jihadism of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.[21]

All three of these writers were very prolific, writing dozens upon dozens of books and booklets as well as giving speeches and sermons concerning their teachings on jihadism. Though a thorough treatment of each author's work would be very helpful in understanding their views on the West, Islam, and jihad, this is unnecessary here, for we are solely interested in the ways in which al-Qaeda took the ideas of al-Banna, Maududi, and Qutb and used them to declare war on and implement martyr attacks against the United States. For this reason, I focus on the three most extensive articulations of jihadism by these authors: *On Jihad* by Hassan al-Banna, *Jihad in Islam* by Abul Ala Maududi, and *Milestones* by Sayyid Qutb.[22] These three works make up the foundation (among others) of the jihadism that would later be developed by Abdullah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Osama bin Laden. As is such, it is more useful to trace the core of al-Qaeda's understanding of jihadism and explain their connection to these earlier authors, rather than provide simple summaries of all of these authors' works.

With this being said, the next section focuses on the three main elements of jihadism. The first is the problem, which is the corruption of the West, both in culture and government, and the oppression that the West visits on Muslims in the Middle East. The second element is the solution, a refocusing on and returning to the true Islam, particularly on the oneness of God, or tawhid; it is only on returning to and implementing

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[21] It would not be accurate to classify the jihadism of Al-Banna, Maududi, or Qutb as nonviolent as they have been interpreted to allow for fighting against Western armies and governments, which will be elaborated on later in the text.

[22] Other works by these authors will be used to further explain and support the ideas of these three main works.

Islam both in the culture and the government that Muslims will be free of Western oppression while at the same time doing the will of Allah. The third and final element is the means by which the solution is carried out: jihad. Because the West will not willingly give up its control over the West (much less convert to Islam), it is necessary for Muslims to resist and fight the West, and be willing to suffer and die for the cause of Allah and his people.

The Corruption of the West

Hassan al-Banna wrote *On Jihad* in the early 1930s. At the time, his home country of Egypt had been under the influence of British rule for some fifty years, the last ten of which it was under direct control of the crown. In 1928, al-Banna founded the Society of the Muslim Brother, an Islamic group who sought to establish a government in Egypt dedicated the teachings of the Qur'an.[23] Al-Banna writes, "Today, my brother, the Muslims as you know are forced to be subservient before others and are ruled by disbelievers. Our lands have been besieged, and our *hurruma'at* (personal possessions, respect, honour, dignity and privacy) violated."[24] Abul Ala Maududi, one of the founders of the group Jamaat-i-Islami, more clearly laid out the injustices of the West in his work, *Jihad in Islam*. Maududi was a Muslim of India, which also was at the time ruled by the

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[23] John Calvert writes, "During this formative period in his life [when he was enrolled at Dar al-Ulum in 1923] al-Banna, the pious young man from the provinces, became alarmed at the moral condition of the country, which he blamed on Western influences." Calvert, 81.

[24] In the Preface to the work, Dr. A.M.A. Fahmy writes, "The Muslims world today is faced with tyranny and injustice. Indeed oppression and hardship is not just limited to the Muslim world, rather any non-Muslim states are subject to oppression at the hands of the world's leading military and economic powers." Hassan al-Banna, *On Jihad*. http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/jihad/ (Accessed on February 20, 2013).

British crown (though to a much greater extend than in Egypt.) Maududi writes that the West interprets the term *jihad* as "holy war," yet writes that it is the West that is truly warlike:

> They themselves present the picture of robbers who armed to the teeth with all kinds of deadly weapons, have set upon the world pillaging it for the capture of new markets of trade, resources of raw materials, open lands for colonisation and mines yielding valuable metals, so that they may procure fuel for their ever-burning fire of avarice. They fight not for the cause of God but for the satisfaction of their lust and hunger. [25]

Maududi goes on to say that the West will invade and subdue any country which has resources which it wishes to exploit, and that the whole Earth has been subject the "holy war" of the West. [26]

Yet of the three authors, there was none more familiar with or critical of the corruption of the West than Sayyid Qutb. Like al-Banna, Qutb was born in Egypt and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (though only after the assassination of al-Banna in 1949). Yet prior to this, Qutb had been somewhat of a moderate Muslim. Growing up, he had valued education from a young age, including Western learning, and had scoffed at those who believed that Egyptians should receive only Islamic works. [27] This is not to say that Qutb was a proponent of the West; he, like al-Banna, had seen the corruption and oppression of British influence in his country. Though he had been raised as a devout Muslim, he saw the influence that religion could have when applied to non-religious issues. John Calvert, noted Western biographer of Qutb, describes a squabble the young

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[25] Abul Ala Maududi, *Jihad in Islam*. http://www.muhammadanism.org/ Terrorism/jihah_in_islam/jihad_in_islam.pdf. (Accessed on February 22, 2013), 1-2.

[26] Ibid., 2.

[27] Calvert, 72.

Qutb had with another scholar over types of poetry, in which the other scholar had used

Islam to bolster his argument:

> In Qutb's mind, the reference to the Islamic religion was a smokescreen: "Religion, religion…This is the battle cry (saiha) of the feeble and the weak person who defends himself with it whenever the current threatens to sweep him away (jarafahu al-tayyar). Following al-'Aqqad, Qutb asserted that religion should be limited to "the performance of the good and the reform of the individual soul for the life of the individual.[28]

His opinions changed after he traveled to America. After college, he was hired by

the Egyptian Ministry of Education and sent to study the educational system of America.

It is at this point that many scholars believe that Qutb went from being a moderate

Muslim to a fundamentalist Muslim. He returned to Egypt in 1950 and promptly

published "The America I Have Seen," a journalistic account of his travels through the

United States. Qutb's ideas had come to their full maturation in Milestones:

> The leadership of mankind by Western man is now on the decline, not because Western culture has become poor materially or because its economic and military power has become weak. The period of the Western system has come to an end primarily because it is deprived of those life-giving values which enabled it to be the leader of mankind.[29]

But Qutb's innovation which separated him from the writings of both al-Banna and

Maududi—and would be adopted by Osama bin Laden—was his belief that the pre-Islam

state of ignorance, *Jahiliyyah*, had returned: "If we look at the sources and foundations of

modern ways of living, it becomes clear that the whole world is steeped in

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[28] Ibid., 72.

[29] *Milestones*, 7-8. Qutb continues, "All nationalistic and chauvinistic ideologies which have appeared in modern times, and all the movements and theories derived from them, have also lost their vitality. In short, all man-made individual or collective theories have proved to be failures." Ibid., 8.

Jahiliyyah…This Jahiliyyah is based on rebellion against God's sovereignty."[30] Qutb

went on to describe that the Jahiliyyah which spoke of was not the same as the one that

had existed before the revelation of Muhammad, but rather "takes the form of claiming

that the right to create values, to legislate rules of collective behavior, and to choose any

way of life rests with men, without regard to what God has prescribed." [31]

In his declaration of *jihad* against the West (the Jews and the Crusaders), Osama

bin Laden wrote,

> Firstly, for over seven years America has occupied the holiest parts of the Islamic
> lands, the Arabian peninsula, plundering wealth, dictating to its leaders,
> humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbours, and turning its bases there into a
> spearhead with which to fight neighbouring Muslim peoples.[32]

Later, in his message "To the Americans," bin Laden enumerates the multitude of reasons

why the West is a debauched and corrupt society, listing among others the practices of

usury, pollution, homosexuality, fornication, adultery, drug use, alcohol, inventing the

AIDS virus, denying democracy to those the West wishes to control, and torture at

Guantanamo Bay.[33]

The Oneness of God

It is obvious that all of these writers based their views of the West in relation to

their understanding of Islam. All three were devout Sunni Muslims from an early age,

and believed that the troubles which faced the *ummah* were punishment for (or at least a

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[30] Ibid., 10-11

[31] Ibid., 11.

[32] *Messages to the World*, 59-60.

[33] Ibid., 160-172.

natural consequence of) Muslims not pursuing the laws of Allah, mainly disregarding the tawhid, or the oneness and sovereignty of Allah. This is emphasized in the first half of the *Shahada*, the first act of a Muslim convert, which states "There is no god but God." By adopting Western culture, with its emphasis on representative government and secularism, Muslims had failed to observe the oneness of Allah. Muslims had also allowed themselves to be governed by non-Muslims, namely Christians, Jews, and Indians, who did not recognize the authority of Allah, and therefore were usurping his sovereignty. Commenting on Surah 3:64[34], Maududi states

> This was the call for a universal and complete revolution. It loudly proclaimed "Sovereignty belongs to no one except Allah." No one has the right to become a self-appointed ruler of men and issue orders and prohibitions on his own volition and authority. To acknowledge the personal authority of a human being as the source of commands and prohibitions is tantamount to admitting him as the sharer in the Powers and Authority of God. And this is the root of all evils in the universe.[35]

Al-Banna agreed, saying "The Muslims in war had only one concern and this was to make the name of Allah Supreme, there was no room at all for any other objective."[36]

Qutb stated that the "humiliation" and "exploitation" of Muslims was due to the nations "greed for wealth and imperialism under the capitalist systems are but a corollary of

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[34] "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah ." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]."

[35] Maududi, 11.

[36] Hassan al-Banna, *On Jihad*. http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/ books/jihad/ (Accessed on February 20, 2013). Al-Banna says in another work, *Peace in Islam*, that "Islam tells us that disunity, fragmentation and hostility in the name of religion are a sin totally inconsistent with its teachings and beliefs. The duty of humanity, therefore, is to adopt this religion and unite under it. This is the one true path and the natural way for mankind." Hassan al-Banna, *Peace in Islam*. http://web.youngmuslims. ca /online_library/books/peace_in_islam/.

rebellion against God's authority and the denial of the dignity of man given to him by God."[37] Here we see the more benevolent side of Jihadism, namely that by instituting Islam around the world, people will experience true freedom and liberty and his dignity will be fully realized. This is confirmed by both Maududi[38] and al-Banna[39] in their own writings.

Again, bin Laden's speech *To the Americans*, is useful. Following Islamic law when waging jihad, he gives his enemies (the Americans) the chance to convert to Islam to avoid war. He writes,

> The first thing we are calling you to is Islam. The religion of the Unity of God; of freedom from and rejection of the association of equals to Him…of complete submission to His law; and of the discarding of all the opinions, orders, theories, and religions which contradict the religion He sent down to the Prophet Muhammad. Islam is the religion of all of the Prophets, and makes no distinction between them…It is the religion of showing kindness to others, establishing justice between them, granting them their rights, and defending the oppressed and the persecuted.[40]

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[37] *Milestones*, 11.

[38] Maududi writes, "God has instilled the correct spirit in man and has shown him the right way to life. The reason why human beings deviate from this straight path is that they forget God and consequently forget their own real worth...If you do not offer devotion to the One God, you shall never be free from the bondage of these small and false gods." Maududi, 12-13.

[39] In *Peace in Islam*, al-Banna writes, "Wars are a social necessity: Civil life in Islam is aimed towards peace. Nevertheless, Islam deals with reality and as long as there are people that follow their own desires and self-interest, there will always be conflict and war. But if war is for the sake of stopping an aggressor, aiding truth and achieving justice, then it is a virtue since it encourages goodness and prosperity for the people. It is a source of evil, social vices and degradation for mankind when it is used as a tool for the wrong-doer, corruption, transgression and oppression of the weak. Islam came to deal with this reality." Hassan al-Banna, *Peace in Islam*. http://web.youngmuslims. ca/online_library/ books/peace_in_islam/.

[40] *Messages to the World*, 166.

The Call to Jihad

The most significant contribution that al-Banna, Maududi, and Qutb made to al-Qaeda was the prescription of *jihad* against the non-believers. I have already stated a basic meaning of the term *jihad* as "to struggle or strive with regard to one's religion," and it was this tenet of jihadism that the three authors spent the most time articulating. Al-Banna's work, *On Jihad*, was mainly comprised of verses from the Qur'an and the Hadith which promoted and explained the idea of jihad. The very first line of his work reads, "*Jihad* is an obligation from Allah on every Muslim and cannot be ignored or evaded."[41] He also quotes Surah 2:216, which reads, "*Jihad* is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike something which is good for you and that you like something which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know."[42] He adds, "…throughout every period of their history (before the present period of oppression in which their dignity has been lost) [Muslims] have never abandoned *jihad* nor did they ever become negligent in its performance…"[43] Al-Banna adds that those who *jihad* against the non-Muslims receive rewards both in this life and the next.[44]

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[41] Hassan al-Banna, *Peace in Islam*. http://web.youngmuslims. ca/online_library/books/peace_in_islam/.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid. One wonders what al-Banna would have said concerning the conquest of Spain and the expulsion of the Muslims by the Catholics.

[44] Al-Banna writes, "Furthermore, Allah has specifically honoured the Mujahideen with certain exceptional qualities, both spiritual and practical, to benefit them in this world and the next." Ibid.

Maududi points out the West's hypocrisy in that Muslims are chastised for waging war for their ideals while the West can wage war whenever and for whatever it wants. He writes

> In these words [Surah 9:43-45], the Qur'an has given a clear and definite decree that the acid test of the true devotions of a party to its convictions is whether or not it expends all its resources of wealth and life in the struggle for installing its faith as the ruling power in the State. If you suffer the authority of an inimical doctrine in the State, it is a proof positive that your faith is false and the natural result of this is, and can only be this, that your nominal devotion to the doctrine of Islam will also finally wear off.[45]

Maududi states that those who live under a non-Islamic system may hate it at first, but if they do not fight, they will learn to endure it and eventually support it. "At this stage, no other difference except hypocritical professions of devotion to Islam, an abominable falsehood and a deceitful title will distinguish you from the infidels.[46] Maududi also speaks to the idea of the greater versus lesser jihad, calling it an offensive distinction: "It is offensive because the Muslim Party assaults the rule of an opposing ideology and it is defensive because the Muslim Party is constrained to capture state power in order to arrest the principles of Islam in space-time forces.[47]

Qutb's writes that *jihad* is to be the means by which the "Jahili system which prevents people from reforming their ideas and beliefs but forces them to obey their

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[45] Maududi, 21.

[46] Ibid., 21.

[47] Ibid., 26. Al-Banna also spoke out against the distinction, calling it "unsound." He adds, "Nevertheless, even if it were a sound tradition, it would never warrant abandoning jihad or preparing for it in order to rescue the territories of the Muslims and repel the attacks of the disbelievers. Let it be known that this narration simply emphasises the importance of struggling against one's ego so that Allah will be the sole purpose of everyone of our actions." Hassan al-Banna, *Peace in Islam*. http://web.youngmuslims. ca/online_library/ books/peace_in_islam/.

erroneous ways and make them serve human lords instead of the Almighty Lord" is abolished.[48] He adds that "Since the objective of the message of Islam is a decisive declaration of man's freedom, not merely on the philosophical plane but also in the actual conditions of life, it must employ jihad." Qutb also addresses the greater versus lesser *jihad* debate, saying those Muslims who believe in the distinction are depriving Islam of its means to carry out the abolition of "injustice on earth, to bring the people to worship God alone, and to bring them out of the servitude to other."[49]

By now there is no doubt that al-Qaeda has adopted the understandings of *jihad* set forth by these three authors. Yet there is a significant discrepancy between the *jihad* advocated by al-Banna, Maududi, and Qutb, and that of Osama bin Laden. That difference is summed up by Khosrokhavar:

> The forefathers of Jihadism were for universal Jihad, but they still bore in mind mercy toward noncombatants and forbid aggression against them. This was true for al Banna, who belonged to the generation of the 1960s and not that of the new Jihadists, who are by far more intolerant than their forefathers: "It is forbidden to slay women, children and old people, to kill the wounded, or to disturb monks, hermits, and peaceful people who oppose no resistance. Contrast this mercy with the murderous warfare of the "civilized" [Western] people and their terrible atrocities! Compare their international law alongside this all-embracing, divinely ordained justice!" Today Jihadism is much more radical in practice than in theory.[50]

Maududi did not allow for violence in his organization.[51] Yet with both al-Banna and Qutb, there were allowances for violence. Both called for militant arms of their

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[48] *Milestones*, 55.

[49] Ibid., 56.

[50] Khosrokhavar, 64.

[51] Thameem Ushama and Mohammad Osmani, "Sayyid Mawdudi's Contribution towards Islamic Revivalism". http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/14934970/166565846/ name/maududi.pdf. (Accessed on February 22, 2013).

individual movements, the "secret apparatus" for al-Banna and the "vanguard" for Qutb. Even with these allowances, both were against the killing of non-combatants, a policy which al-Qaeda obviously does not observe.

The attacks on 9/11 were not carried out with non-combatants in mind; indeed, bin Laden has stated that he sees no difference between the American military and its government on the one hand, and American civilians on the other. His argument goes that because the American people live in a democratic state and vote for their elected representatives, that they are responsible in the actions of their government and military. He also adds that the American people are the ones who make up their military, saying "This is why the American people cannot be innocent of all the crimes committed by the Americans and the Jews against us."[52]

Summary

The foundation of al-Qaeda's philosophy has their roots in the early twentieth century, when Muslims perceived the West as both corrupt and oppressive. They felt that their only recourse was to turn back to their religion, in which they found not only reasons for this humiliation and oppression, but the means to their salvation. *Jihad* was the only way to resist the West, promising that if Muslims remained faithful, they would be freed. Whether they did or not cannot be determined. However, what is certain is that they still felt humiliated and oppressed at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Yet they had had several victories, including the Islamic revolution in Iran and the victory against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. This last event was monumental in the formation of al-Qaeda and the thinking of Osama bin Laden. He believed that he had not only seen, but

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[52] *Messages to the World*, 165.

helped facilitate, the recommendations of al-Banna, Maududi, and especially Qutb and

called for thirty years before. He believed, much like the proponents of *sonno joi* in

Japan, that the West could be defeated by a group of dedicated individuals who did not

fear death but welcomed it as a chance to honor their deity. In the final chapter, I discuss

the final conclusion of when religion is used to justify martyr attacks against an

overwhelming force, namely the United States.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Strategic and Religious Logic of Martyr Attacks

Many in the West have a difficult time understanding the "logic" behind martyr attacks. This is often because though the Western individual may be able to understand the motivations that are said to inspire the martyr's actions individually—dying and killing in the name of religion or comparable cause—he is unable to justify taking one's own life to kill in the name of religion. Besides the general aversion to meaningless violence and taking of life—which are (usually) considered crimes in the West—there exists in much of the West an aversion to taking one's own life. The inevitability of one's death is a frightening reality, which makes the idea of initiating one's own death for any reason incomprehensible to many, particularly by means as violent as blowing oneself up.[1]

Though many would voice their willingness to die to save their loved ones and even their fellow citizens, doing so in the way of the martyr is difficult for many Westerners to understand for two reasons. The first reason that martyr attacks are difficult to comprehend is in the thought of killing others by ending one's life. While the Western individual may be willing to die for many causes (such his or her religious beliefs or the security of his or her country), he or she does not typically seek to die, preferring rather to accomplish his or her mission and live.[2] Martyr attacks by definition

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[1] This does not include those individuals who commit suicide to escape what they believe to be an unbearable existence.

[2] It is very rare to hear of a military mission carried out by Western states which require the death of the individual soldier.

depend on the death of the martyr in order to be accomplished; it can therefore be stated that the goal of a martyr attack to end one's life.

The second reason is that the martyr seeks his or her justification for action in religion, which contradicts a general understanding in the West of religion promoting non-violence and peace. Though it has not always been the case (as the Crusades clearly demonstrate that religion has in the past been used in the West to justify violence), most Westerners interpretations of religion could not promote suicide attacks without serious innovation to the foundational theology.[3]

In this chapter, I discuss the influences of both State Shinto and Jihadism in inspiring the members of the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda to implement suicide attacks against the United States. The short-lived history of the Tokkotai began in 1944, and continued until the end of WWII in August 1945. Although al-Qaeda still continues to carry out martyr attacks throughout the Middle East, I examine the period from 1988 to 2001, which saw the creation of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and the execution of several martyr attacks, including its most devastating attack on September 11, 2001. Motivations and justifications that led both the Empire of Japan and al-Qaeda to wage war on the United States were also used to inspire martyr attacks against the U.S. and its allies. Because these motivations and justifications are examined in previous chapters, they are only briefly discussed here. What will be presented in this chapter is how these motivations and justifications inspired martyr attacks in the followers of State Shinto and Jihadism. I

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[3] Related to this idea of the religion justifying violence, Farhad Khosrokhavar explains that martyr attacks as justified by Jihadism "have deep roots in the cultural and historical dimensions of Islam. The ideological dimension is of paramount importance; its sources in the traditions and self-understanding of Muslims is undeniable. As a global movement, Jihadism in the Muslim world has its credentials in the history of Islam within a subculture of violence." Khosrokhavar, 295.

also discuss the more secular and strategic reasoning behind such attacks, analyzing them as a tactic of war and coercion. Though I have already remarked on the problem of classifying martyr attacks as "suicide terrorism," scholarship on terrorism is helpful in explaining the reasoning behind martyr attacks, and a broad overview of the subject as it relates to the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda is discussed in this chapter. [4]

The Logic of Suicide Terrorism

Nearly every study of suicide terrorism seeks to explain why certain groups and individuals resort to suicide attacks.[5] Such studies often focus on one or more specific aspects of suicide terrorism such as analyzing the suicide attacks of a particular group, suicide attacks against a particular target, or suicide attacks which take place in a particular setting or circumstance. Sometimes, authors focus on suicide terrorism in general, seeking to explain two or more examples of suicide terrorism or provide general insights into the phenomenon itself. However, making definitive statements on suicide terrorism can be difficult, similar to the difficulty in trying to make definitive statements on subjects such as religion, democracy, or aesthetics. This is because the individuals who carry out suicide attacks come from many different backgrounds and circumstances, and trying to demonstrate that a certain group, characteristic, or circumstance is more or less prone to suicide attacks can be challenging, and also counterproductive to

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[4] In this chapter, I will be using the terms "terrorism" and "suicide attacks" because these are the terms predominantly used in the literature on terrorism. The term "martyr attacks" will not be used interchangeably with "suicide attacks," as the former describes a religious conviction in the individual while the latter does not. Also, I will only be discussing suicide terrorism in this section and not the much broader field of terrorism.

[5] My own research has not found any studies which do not at least mention briefly the motivations of suicide attackers, yet such a study could exist elsewhere.

understanding the phenomenon. Even assertions based on empirical data are often not able to definitively describe all suicide attacks.

In Chapter One, I briefly discuss the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism, directed by Robert Pape, professor of political science at the University of Chicago. Pape's website is one of the best resources for those seeking to understand and study suicide terrorism in our world today because it documents all the known cases of suicide attacks that have taken place since 1981. Along with the database, Pape published one of the most well respected books in the field of suicide terrorism, *Dying to Win*, in 2003.[6] The thesis of this book has already been mentioned, as well as a critique by David Cook and Olivia Allison in their work, *Understanding and Addressing Suicide Attacks*.[7]

Though Pape's thesis provides useful insights into a better understanding of suicide terrorism, Cook and Allison's critique demonstrates a significant flaw in Pape's study, particularly as it pertains to Jihadism and al-Qaeda. Similar criticisms can be leveled against nearly every study of suicide terrorism that attempts to make generalizations about the phenomenon of suicide terrorism. This is because the phenomenon of suicide attacks is carried out by individuals who express many different

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[6] *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006).

[7] Pape's thesis for *Dying to Win* reads, "The data shows that there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, or any of the world's religions…Rather, what nearly all suicide terrorists have in common is a specific secular or strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Religion is rarely the root cause, although it is often used as a tool by terrorist organizations in recruiting and in other efforts in service of the broader strategic objective." *Dying to Win*, 4. For critique of Pape by Cook and Allison, see David Cook and Olivia Allison, *Understanding and Addressing Suicide Attacks: The Faith and Politics of Martyrdom Operations* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 17.

motivations for their actions. This is not to say that generalizations can not be made or prove helpful to a greater understanding of suicide attacks, but rather shows the complexity of suicide warrants individual and small scale comparative study.

Several similarities between the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda we have been discussing here exist and can provide insight for our discussion in this chapter. First, both the groups justified their suicide attacks in religious language. In Chapter One, I mentioned a letter written by Matsuo Isao which mentioned in very religious terms how honored and enthusiastic he was to be selected as a kamikaze pilot. [8] Also significant to understanding the religious nature of the Tokkotai is the *Yasukuni Jinja*, a Shinto shrine dedicated to the souls of those who have died in military service protecting the empire. Though all soldiers who died in battle are memorialized there, kamikaze pilots received elevated recognition for their deeds.[9] As for al-Qaeda, there is no lack of religious justifications for their suicide attacks. In nearly every public speech of bin Laden, there are numerous references to Islam, Allah, Muhammad, and the duties of Muslims. For example, in his declaration of *jihad* against the Americans in Saudi Arabia, Osama bin Laden writes, "We of the radiant future of our *ummah* of Muhammad, raise the banner of *jihad* up high against the Judeo-American alliance that has preoccupied the holy places of Islam." [10] Bin Laden's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, does the same in his works *Jihad,*

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[8] Lamont-Brown, 36-37.

[9] The *Yasukuni Jinja* was built after the Russo-Japanese War in 1906. The temple sits in downtown Tokyo and is visited by thousands of Japanese each year. *Yasukuni* holds similar significance to that Arlington National Cemetery in the United States, except that there are no remains at *Yasukuni Jinja*; rather, the souls of those who died in battle reside within the temple complex.

[10] *Messages to the World*, 29.

Martyrdom, and the Killings of Innocents.[11] In *Loyalty and Seperation: Changing an Article of Faith and Losing Sight of Reality*, Zawahiri writes:

> We must scorch the earth beneath the feet of the invaders, or they will never leave. In conclusion, we call on the community, and especially young fighters, to have endurance and remain steadfast. You must have endurance to bear the responsibilities of religion, and especially the highest of its obligations: jihad along God's path.[12]

The second similarity between the two groups is their relative strength (or lack thereof) in relation to the American military. Though Japan had been able to defeat the U.S. in several battles at the beginning of WWII, the U.S. had gained a decided advantage by 1944 and was closing in on the Japanese mainland. Seeking any means to halt the American advance, the Japanese military high command created the Tokkotai at the behest of Vice Admiral Onishi Takajiro, who stated that

> The country salvation depends on the appearance of the soldiers of the gods. Nothing but the sacrifice of our young men's lives to stab at the enemy's carriers can annihilate the enemy fleet and put us on the road to victory.[13]

Al-Qaeda, on the other hand, had not been engaged in its war with America for very long before it resorted to suicide attacks. Osama bin Laden had early on realized and accepted the relative weakness of his forces in comparison to that of the United States, yet he also believed in an inherent weaknesses of his enemy. While suicide attacks had not worked for the Japanese, they had worked for Hezbollah in Lebanon, not

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[11] *Fault Lines in Global Jihad*. Edited by Assaf Moghadam and Brian Fishman (New York: Routledge, 2011), 35-36.

[12] Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Loyalty and Separation: Changing an Article of Faith and Losing Sight of Reality*. Cited in Al Qaeda in Its Own Words, Ed. by Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 234.

[13] Lamont-Brown, 31.

only in killing Americans and Israelis, but also in affecting American policy in the Middle East. The 9/11 attacks reflected this logic as well as an understanding of the vulnerabilities of the American civilian population. Bin Laden's goal was not simply to kill Americans and humiliate the United States, but also to drag the American military into war, thereby weakening both its economy and its image as a defender of democracy and, most importantly, its ability to interfere in politics and societies of predominantly Muslim countries. Describing Jihadists in general but applying to al-Qaeda, Nelly Lahoud, professor at West Point, writes:

> The jihadis do not simply desire to liberate occupied Muslim lands, but they also want to uproot what they perceive to be authoritarian and corrupt regimes at home and to replace them with a state that governs according to the justice of Islam. They are convinced that as long as their *jihad* is performed for God's sake—i.e. not driven by mistaken worldly objectives such as nationalism, consumerism, or democracy—God will fight on their side and grant them victory.[14]

The Religious Logic Kamikaze Attacks

The creation of the Tokkotai was an act based more on necessity than revelation. As has already been mentioned, the Japanese military high command was desperate to stop the American advance and prevent the invasion of Japan. Japan's early victory had spread its military too thin, with troops stationed far away from the homeland in places such as Burma and the Aleutian Islands, as well as peppered throughout the Pacific, guarding military installations consisting of little more than a runway and a few buildings. By 1944, many Japanese ships and planes lay at the bottom of the ocean. Authors Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook write that such setbacks and defeats were

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[14] Nelly Lahoud, *The Jihadis' Path to Self-Destruction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), xvii.

purported to be "great sacrifices prior to Japan's great victory," by the Japanese

government. They continue:

> It was also emphasized that America, as an individualistic and liberal nation, had to try to fight a short war in order to keep pacifist sentiments under control at home. The Japanese public was repeatedly reassured by military men, government officials, and their favored intellectuals that if only Japan fought in the true Yamato Spirit, America's will to battle would collapse in rancorous homefront disarray.[15]

However, when the idea of kamikaze attacks was presented to them, many senior

officers were against the idea. Author Peter Hill writes that reasons for this rejection by

the military superiors were more than "a distaste for sending men to certain death."[16] He

explains three inherent flaws that these senior offers saw with such methods. The first

was that such tactics represented a high and irretrievable loss both in materials and men,

two commodities in which the Japanese military was sorely lacking. The second was that

the actual crashing of a plane—even one loaded with a full arsenal of bombs—was not

believed to be capable of doing enough damage so as "strike a mortal blow to aircraft

carriers" and other warships. Thirdly, the tactic was nearly impossible to assess after the

mission, as the pilot who accomplished his mission would be dead and unable to suggest

improvements for future missions.[17]

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[15] Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: The New Press, 1992), 339.

[16] Peter Hill, "Kamikaze, 1943-5." *Making Sense of Suicide Mission*, Edited by Diego Gambetta (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2005), 2.

[17] Hill notes also that there might have been the additional reason that senior officers believed that they could still win the war through conventional means. What is significant was that there seemed to be few if any concerns for the soldiers' lives beyond their utility to the military. Hill, 2.

Despite many misgivings, the Japanese high command was forced to implement Onishi's recommendations. Authors Albert Axtell and Hideki Kase write, "Patriotism and loyalty were put to the supreme test when Japan was cornered after the Americans invaded the Japanese-occupied Philippine Islands at the end of 1944."[18] The U.S. would soon set its sights on Okinawa, and if Okinawa fell, the U.S. would have a base from which to launch both its bombing campaigns and amphibious assaults. The first kamikaze attacks took place on November 25, 1944 in the Leyte Gulf, resulting in damage to five aircraft carriers and one destroyer.[19] By wars end, between 3,000 to 5,000 Tokkotai pilots had lost their lives in kamikaze missions; however, such actions failed to win the war for Japan or prevent its invasion and subsequent occupation by Allied Forces. On August 16, Onishi committed *seppuku*, taking twelve hours to die but refusing medical attention. His suicide note expressed his gratitude and remorse to those he had sent to their death:

> I wish to express my deep appreciation to the souls of the brave special attackers. They fought and died valiantly with faith in our ultimate victory. In death I wish to atone for my part in the failure to achieve that victory and I apologize to the souls of those dead fliers and their bereaved families. I wish the young people of Japan to find a moral in my death. To be reckless is only to aid the enemy. You must abide by the spirit of the Emperor's decision with utmost perseverance. Do not forget your rightful pride in being Japanese.[20]

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[18] *Japan's Suicide Gods*, 11.

[19] Hill notes that on the same day, "ninety-three fighters and fifty-seven bombers were deployed in conventional attacks, resulting in no damage to the enemy. This was take as vindication of the superiority of Kamikaze attacks over conventional methods." Hill, 5. This presumed advantage would be short-lived.

[20] http://ww2db.com/person_bio.php?person_id=170 (Accessed on February 23, 2013).

The inspiration for the suicide attacks of the kamikaze is not hard to understand when seen as the natural conclusion of the religious justifications that motivated Japan to go to war with the United States. As Daniel C. Holtom writes:

> To understand Japan and the inner forces that shape her and the problems with which she wrestles within her own borders it is essential to know something of the ramifications of Shinto in the thought and practice of the people. Support for such a statement can be found in the fact that from childhood the Japanese are taught that attitudes and usages connected with the shrines of Shinto are vitally related to good citizenship.

He goes on to say that these attitudes are deliberately promoted by the government through the educational system for the promotion of the *kokutai*, which has the effect of "representing to the people the values of good citizenship and for firmly uniting the nation about the Imperial Throne."[21] Nearly every aspect of Japanese society from the Meiji period to the surrender of 1945 had sought to prepare the Japanese citizen for service to the emperor, "even to death." Since 1890, loyalty to the emperor had been drilled into children from a very young age as they were taught to transfer the feelings of love they had for their parents to the imperial family. Every day, students were required to recite the *Imperial Rescript on Education* by heart, a document which spelled out the duties of a loyal Japanese citizen to the emperor.[22] The document makes reference to the divine ancestry of the imperial family, which "founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof." The *Rescript on Education* goes on to state that divinity of the emperor and the loyalty

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[21] Daniel C. Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan: A Study in Modern Shinto* (London, Kegan Paul International, 1938), 3-4.

[22] The document reads, "*The Imperial Rescript on Education*, October 30, 1890. http://www.danzan.com/HTML/ESSAYS/meiji.html (Accessed on February 23, 2013).

which the Japanese citizenry have to him are what make Japan great. The document also

prescribes sacrificial loyalty:

> …should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers. The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places.

Hill comments that the *Imperial Rescript on Education* was also included in textbooks

and that it "was the foundation of all moral education in Japan."[23] The *Kokutai no Hongi*

did the same for all members of society, saying that "Indeed, loyalty is our fundamental

Way as subjects, and is the basis of our national morality [*kokutai*]. Through loyalty are

we [sic] become Japanese subjects; in loyalty do we obtain life; and herein do we find the

source of all morality."[24]

      This is not to say that all kamikaze pilots were thoroughly enthusiastic to go on

their missions were inspired by a loyalty to the divine emperor. Many diaries survived

from the pilots that went on missions as well as those would-be kamikaze who did not go

on missions before the war ended. Many of these diaries and survivors tell a story of a

much more diverse set of feelings concerning death in service to the emperor. Emiko

Ohnuki-Tierney, professor of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, has two

works which presents the strongest argument against the idea of a monolithic loyalty of

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[23] Hill, 16. A copy of the *Imperial Rescript on Education* was posted in every classroom along with a picture of the emperor. It is known that principles and teachers where known to have committed suicide when they failed to properly recite the *Rescript* by heart. Derek Heater, *A History of Education for Citizenship* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2004), 189.

[24] Gauntlett, 83.

all kamikaze pilots.[25] In both *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalism* and

Kamikaze Diaries, Ohnuki-Tierney examines five pilots in depth and mentions others

who expressed doubts about their missions and desires to live and not fight. Yet even

these five pilots did not fail to express at least some feeling of devotion to their emperor.

On such pilot of was Sasaki Hachiro, who wrote in his diary that though he was against

war, he would not refuse to be drafted into the military for he was grateful to be "able to

live well in this emperor's state under his benevolence."[26] Also of significance was

Hayashi Ichizo, a Tokkotai pilot as well as a Christian. He writes to his mother,

> All men born in Japan are destined to die fighting for the country. You [his mother] have done a splendid job raising me to become an honorable man…Mother, please be pleased that someone like me [using a phrase expressing humbleness] was chosen to be a tokkotai pilot. I will die with dignity as a soldier.[27]

Perhaps the most famous detractor was Lieutenant Senior Grade Seki Yukio, the

first squadron leader of the Tokkotai. He confessed to a journalist, "Japan's future is

bleak if it is forced to kill one of its best pilots—myself." Before boarding his plane for

his first and only mission, he remarked,

> I am not going on this mission for the Emperor or for the Empire. I am going for my beloved wife. I am going because I was ordered to. Should Japan lose the war, only the gods know what the enemy would do to my dear wife. A man dies for the lady he loves most. That is glorious.[28]

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[25] Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[26] *Kamikaze Diaries*, 55.

[27] Ibid., 173-174.

[28] *Japan's Suicide Gods*, 16.

While additional accounts of those like Seki and the pilots mentioned by Ohnuki-Tierney exist, it is important to remember that they and 3,000 to 5,000 more Japanese went on their missions. While motivations may have varied, it is likely that many were indeed inspired by their belief in the divinity of the emperor and their responsibility to him as they aimed their planes at Allied battleships.

The Religious Logic of Shahid Attacks

Though the number of suicide attacks carried out by al-Qaeda is far fewer than those of the Tokkotai, the religious logic of the implementation of martyr attacks is no less significant or prevalent. Because of the smaller size and central leadership provided by Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda was able to more easily maintain and promote its mission to its followers. For this reason, there is no known record of dissent among the shahid who carried out the martyr attacks against the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the U.S.S. Cole, or the martyrs of the 9/11 attacks.[29]

The organization that would become Al-Qaeda was founded during the Afghan-Soviet War sometime between 1988 and 1989. The founders, Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam, had sought to export the *jihad* that had taken place in Afghanistan and defeated the Russians to other countries around the world and fight non-Muslims control of Muslims countries. As noted earlier in Chapter Two, the main subject of bin Laden's scorn became the United States. Bin Laden then began to orchestrate attacks against American targets seeking to expel the U.S. from the Middle East in the same way that

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[29] This, of course, does not mean that these individuals did not have doubts about their mission or the religious beliefs that inspired them. It simply means that there is no known record of doubt. However, it seems safe to assume and they died believing the teachings of al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

Hezbollah had in Lebanon in 1983. In 2004, bin Laden remarked that he had been inspired to attack the World Trade Center towers in 1982 when the Israelis, with the help of the American navy, invaded Lebanon:

> They started bombing, killing, and wounding many, while others fled in terror. I still remember those distressing scenes: blood, torn limbs, women and children massacred. All over the place, houses were being destroyed and tower blocks were collapsing, crushing residents, while bombs rained down mercilessly on homes…The whole world heard and saw what happened, but did nothing. In those critical moments, many ideas raged inside me, ideas difficult to describe, but they unleashed a powerful urge to reject injustice and a strong determination to punish the oppressors. As I looked at those destroyed towers in Lebanon, it occurred to me to punish the oppressor in kind by destroying towers in America, so that it would have a taste of its own medicine and would be prevented from killing our women and children...Against the background of these and similar images, the events of September 11 came as a response to these great injustices.[30]

Another event that had a profound impact on bin Laden and the mission of al-Qaeda was the United Nations sanctions on Iraq. These sanctions, which were leveled against Saddam Hussein, directly resulted in the deaths of 500,000 Iraqis, many of them children. Bin Laden brought up this example many times, especially in his speeches condemning American actions.[31]

Despite these secular reasons for his war against the United States, bin Laden always justified his war against America in very religious terms. Both the occupation of Palestine and suppression of the Palestinians and the existence of American troops in Saudi Arabia—which threatened to corrupt Islamic culture—were described as bin Laden as affronts to Allah. In his declaration of *jihad* against the Americans stationed in Saudi Arabia, bin Laden writes, "All these American crimes and sins are a clear proclamation

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[30] *Messages to the World*, 239-240.

[31] For in depth account, see Hans C. von Sponeck, *A Different Kind of War: The UN Sanctions Regime in Iraq* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

of war against God, his Messenger, and the Muslims. Religious scholars throughout

Islamic history have agreed that *jihad* is an individual duty when an enemy attacks

Muslim countries."[32]

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[32] *Messages to the World*, 60-61.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This dissertation has addressed several questions concerning the motivations for members of the Tokkotai and members of al-Qaeda to carry out martyr attacks against the United States. I examined several examples of *American Imperialism* as perceived and cited by the Japanese Empire and al-Qaeda as justifications for their individual declarations of war and implementation of martyr attacks against the United States. For the Japanese Empire, I cited the opening of Japan by Commodore Matthew Perry, the rise of anti-Japanese feelings—or Yellow Peril—in the U.S. on both the federal and local levels, and finally the American embargo against Japan on goods necessary for imperial expansion during the late 1930s and early 1940s. For al-Qaeda, I cited American support for Israel at the expense of the Palestinians and the stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia. Both events were described by al-Qaeda as affronts to Allah, though for slightly different reasons. In Palestine, Americans were supporting the oppression of Muslims by the Israeli government. In Saudi Arabia, the close proximity of American troops to the two holiest cities in Islam coupled with the influence the U.S. government had on the Saudi royal family and within the Arabian peninsula represent—in the minds of Osama bin Laden and his followers—the weakening and corruption of Islam. These American actions (and similar ones in other countries) represent the biggest threat to the creation of Islamic states throughout the world.

I found that State Shinto—as it was expressed by the pre-Meiji era apothegm, *sonno joi*—provided both the religious and the patriotic fervor to not only abolish the

Tokugawa Bakufu and restore the Emperor Meiji to direct rule of Japan, but by the 1930s

had become the ideology to promote Japanese militarism as it began to chafe under

Western dominance. By that time, the Japanese people, both in and out of the

government, had begun to see themselves as superior to both their neighboring countries

and the West, and sought to rid their homeland of foreign influences which could not be

assimilated into their mission of territorial expansion. The *sonno joi* principles of

revering the emperor and expelling the barbarian held new meaning as Japan sought to

assert its authority in the region, eventually leading it to war with the United States.

I traced the history of Jihadism as it was articulated by three writers—Hassan al-

Banna, Abul Ala Maududi, and Sayyid Qutb—whose work emphasized the *tawhid*

(oneness of Allah) and *jihad* (the duty of every Muslim to fight the infidel). These two

principles were to guide Muslims in expelling the corrupt Western influences that had

been used to oppress the followers of Allah. I explained the context in which these

emphases evolved and how these writings would eventually be adopted by al-Qaeda to

justify its war against the United States (and to a lesser extent, non-Muslims).

I explained the strategic and religious motivations for martyr attacks, focusing on

the reasoning behind the kamikaze and shahid attacks. What became clear is that while

these individuals may be motivated by their religion to carry out martyr attacks, religious

motivation alone has been shown to be insufficient to justify the act of an individual

sacrificing his or her life to kill his or her enemies. If this were not true, and religious

justification was the sole cause of martyr attacks, then the number of martyr attacks

occurring in non-Muslim countries would be much higher, and not predominantly in

Afghanistan and Iraq.[1] There would be many more attacks in Europe and North America, and the targets for these attacks would primarily be civilians and other "soft targets."[2] Yet we do not see this, and therefore, there must also be a strategic motivation for martyr attacks.

In the case of the Tokkotai, it was believed (incorrectly) that kamikaze attacks would be able to prevent the defeat of Japan in WWII. Beyond these attacks, it was believed that the superiority of the Japanese race would be able to resist the Americans, for only the Japanese had a divine being as the head of their government and be able to maintain their unique *kokutai*. By destroying the U.S. Navy *en route* to Tokyo, the Japanese high command believed (or at least hoped) the U.S. would lack the capability and the will to invade mainland Japan; the empire could then negotiate a favorable armistice.[3] Those kamikaze who voiced their lack of belief in the divinity of the emperor still spoke of defending the nation from the Americans. Yokota Yutaka, a surviving member of the *Kaiten* squadron, said in an interview:

> There's an old expression, 'Bushido is the search for a place to die.' Well, that was our fervent desire, our long-cherished dream. A place to die for my country.

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[1] This is the reason, for instance, that Osama bin Laden said that al-Qaeda has never attacked Sweden. *Messages to the World*, 238.

[2] "Soft targets" describe those targets that are easier to attack because a government either does not believe said target will be attacked, or lacks the capability to sufficiently protect it from attack. Soft targets are usually not as well protected as "hard targets." "Soft targets" include hospitals, schools, restaurants, and shopping malls, whereas "hard targets" might include military bases, government buildings, and prisons.

[3] The Japanese government nevertheless had prepared its citizens for an American invasion. One woman speaks to the fact that every day at her factory job was begun with bamboo spear training in which she and her fellow factory workers practiced fighting with bamboo spears. She speaks of stabbing in the neck, and how the government promoted the saying *ichioku gyokusai* or "One hundred million shattered jewels" to defend Japan. *Japan at War*, 324-325.

I was happy to have been born a man. A man of Japan. I don't care if it makes me sound egotistical, but that's how I felt. The country was in my hands.[4]

For al-Qaeda, martyr attacks are aimed at coercing the United States to leave predominantly Muslim countries while at the same time undermining American strength both militarily and economically, as well as the barbarous goal of simply killing non-Muslims. Osama bin Laden was encouraged not only by the departure of U.S. and French troops from Lebanon in 1983, but also the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1988. For bin Laden, it was more than superior tactics that helped the *mujahideen*—or those who carry out *jihad*—defeat and lead to the collapse of the atheistic Russian superpower; Allah had granted his followers a victory.[5] Bin Laden was further encouraged by the humiliation of American troops in Somalia in 1993.[6] In an interview with Al-Jazeera, bin Laden remarked:

> We believe that America is much weaker than Russia, and we have learned from our brothers who fought in the *jihad* in Somalia of the incredible weakness and cowardice of the American soldier. Not even eighty of them had been killed and they fled in total darkness in the middle of the night, unable to see a thing…People can, if they fear God—who knows that it is in his power—wage *jihad*, and who knows that the situation now still needs the right conditions. God knows best.[7]

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[4] *Japan at War*, 309. The example of Seki Yukio, the kamikaze squadron leader who disavowed the emperor but went on his mission to protect his wife, was mentioned in Chapter Five. For other examples, see *Kamikaze Diaries*.

[5] For a long time, bin Laden denied that the U.S. had helped the *mujahideen* defeat the Russians in Afghanistan. However, Michael Scheuer, former director of the Osama bin Laden unit at the CIA, states that the Afghan-Soviet War was fought and won by the *mujahideen*, not the Americans. Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2004), 41-42.

[6] *Messages to the World*, 109.

[7] Ibid., 82.

This dissertation began with a discussion on the relationship between religion and violence, asking several questions concerning the roles that religion can play in violence and the role violence can play in religion. In brief, the first question asked if religion or the religious believer was responsible for violence, and the second question asked under what circumstances can religion provide the necessary justification for violence. Taking the cases of both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda, and their foundational religions of Shinto and Islam respectively, I have determined that it is the religious believer who bears the responsibility for violence. This is because there are thousands if not millions of individuals who espouse the beliefs of either Shinto or Islam that do not partake in or support violence. The reason that both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda promoted violence against their enemies is because their members did not espouse a traditional understanding of their foundational religions, but rather a variant articulation which was formed primarily as a defense against the West.

In the case of the Tokkotai, State Shinto was formulated and promoted only after the Meiji Restoration to help the Japanese people modernize and defend their nation against Western takeover (though as I have explained, its roots go back at least to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries). State Shinto promoted absolute loyalty to the emperor, his kingdom, and his subjects. Where once devote followers of Shinto were expected to observe holy days and visit and pray at shrines, devote followers of State Shinto were expected to dedicate all their endeavors to the emperor; the most loyal subjects were those who sacrificed their lives in service to the emperor. When WWII began, the loyal Japanese subject was expected to fight the enemy with the same fervor with which one would defend a family member.

For al-Qaeda, Jihadism was a belief system created and promoted shortly after WWI when the European powers began to administer and influence the governments of predominantly Muslim lands. Jihadism emphasized an extreme promotion of the oneness of Allah (*tawhid*), and the duty of every Muslim to fight against non-Muslims (*jihad*), which became the sixth pillar of Islam. Muslims who did not dedicate themselves to fighting the "infidel" were to be considered unbelievers, or *kafir*, and subject to the same violent treatment as non-Muslims. Indeed, Jihadists saw these non-devout Muslims as aiding in the destruction of Islam, which they believed to be the goal of the West.

In both of these cases, both the Empire of Japan and the predominantly Muslim countries were faced with the threat of civilizational assimilation by the West. Having their identity and culture threatened prompted a backlash which promoted the defense of the indigenous culture. The Tokkotai and al-Qaeda represent that backlash, elements within each individual context which sought to resist the West by promoting their unique cultural identities and individual religions. In order to utilize Shinto and Islam in this fight, both religions had to be modified to certain degrees in order to explain both the threat to the people (the West, especially the U.S.) as well as the solution (war, and eventually martyr attacks).

Despite the vastly different contexts in which Americans have faced the martyr attacks of the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda, there are several lessons which can be learned by comparing both groups. First, both the Tokkotai and al-Qaeda utilized suicide attacks because of their relative weakness when compared to the American military. This similarity is significant because it is more likely that the U.S. will hold a decidedly significant military advantage over any opponent it might face in the near future. Though

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the possibility of the U.S. engaging in a war with Japan is practically zero, the possibility

that the U.S. will become involved in a war with a predominantly Muslim country (in

addition to the ongoing action in Afghanistan and Iraq) is much higher. It has already

been shown that should the U.S. continue to be involved in the politics of the Middle

East, American troops are likely to encounter martyr attacks perpetrated by the

indigenous population (or even possibly from foreign fighters from al-Qaeda or similar

groups).

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as they demonstrate this prevalence of

suicide/martyr attacks in predominantly Muslim states. In his 2003 book, *Dying to Win*,

Pape states that the majority of suicide attacks occurring from 1983 to 2003 were carried

out by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.[8] In his 2010 book, *Cutting the Fuse*, Pape writes:

> Events, however, have not turned out as the presumption would have expected.
> Far from declining, anti-American-inspired terrorism—particularly suicide
> terrorism—is more frequent today than before 9/11 and even before the invasion
> of Iraq. In the 24-year period from 1980 to 2003, there were just under 350
> suicide terrorist attacks around the world—of which fewer than 15% could
> reasonably be considered directed against Americas. By contrast, in the six years
> from 2004 to 2009, the world has witnessed 1,833 suicide attacks—of which 92%
> are anti-American in origin.[9]

Though Americans have officially ended their occupation of Iraq, suicide attacks between

Sunni and Shia Muslims continue as a tactic of war and coercion, and have demonstrated

that this violent action alters not only the politics and policies of Iraq, but of other

countries and populations as well.[10] The violence threatens to push the country into civil

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[8] *Dying to Win*, 3-4.

[9] *Cutting the Fuse*, 2.

[10] Inter-denominational violence between Sunni and Shia Muslims in Iraq has
increased significantly since the departure of American troops. Most attacks are carried
out by Sunni Muslims against Shia Muslims due in part to the fact that the government

war, and the Western powers—weary from their mission in Iraq—are either unable or unwilling to prevent it. The same is true of the population in Afghanistan where American troops are scheduled to leave in 2014. The country is ruled by many factions, including government forces, the Taliban, and tribal leaders whose loyalties remain primarily to their own people. The situation is extremely volatile; events in Afghanistan have already spilled over in Pakistan, as the U.S. mission to capture/kill Osama bin Laden demonstrated.

My final point of this dissertation is that despite the best intentions and efforts of the United States government and military, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have seen the growth of suicide bombing campaigns waged by different factions within both countries; if one were to include the violence in addition to the suicide bombing, the picture becomes even more grim. American intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq has seen a dramatic increase in violence in these two regions. While this is not to judge the United States for the situations in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is vital to understand the implications and consequences that can occur as a result of American action. Whether America is or is not an empire is a valid debate and it would be wise for both scholars and policy-makers to continue to thoroughly investigate this question. Beyond this, it is also important to study the way the United States is perceived by countries around the world, especially those which have a substantial number of individuals which seek to kill Americans and weaken the U.S. government. However, this debate is beyond the scope of this paper. The questions surrounding America's status as an empire have serious

controlled by the Shia. "Suicide Bomber Hits Iraq Shiite Shrine City of Karbala." *Al Arabiya News*. March 3, 2013. http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/03/ 269364.html (Accessed on March 3, 2013).

consequences for American foreign as well as domestic policies, not to mention the safety of Americans both at home and abroad. Further research is necessary to make definitive conclusions or to advocate for serious change in American foreign policy. Suffice it to say that Americans—as citizens, voters, and members of the government and the military—should become acutely aware of the consequences that America's actions have abroad, especially when there is a possibility to inspire those in other countries to wage war in the name of their god.

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