Combatting Jihadist Terrorism through Nation Building:

A Quality-of-Life Perspective

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Islam is the world's fastest growing religion and its societies are among the most influential worldwide. But that has been case for more than 5,000 years given that the ancient peoples of the countries of the MENA region and, in recent centuries, following the death of the prophet in 632 of the Common Era. What became known as "Arabs" in recent centuries were and are peoples who all share with the rest of the world the beauty of their literature, poetry, song, and dance, the beauty of the Koran which builds on religious beliefs and written sacred texts, extraordinary artwork, and architecture, and the lingering puzzlements of the Giza plateau which shares the three great pyramids and likely the much older Sphinx among other architectural feats that have not been uncovered. Arab scientists also gave us the "0" digit that has proven to be so essential to modern mathematics, unparalleled advances in science and technology, a higher quality of paper, and, most important for the purposes of this book, a spirit of tolerance for persons of other religious and cultural background.

This volume traces an anomaly in the Arab/Islamic communities, that of intolerance, violence, and even terrorism. But all four authors have sought to weave together a coherent history and explanation of the small number of radical Islamists who engage in violence not only in their societies but in those of larger MENA region as well and the world. We believe we have succeeded in achieving our original intention in putting together this book within both a historical and contemporary content. All four authors believe that this monograph fills a major gap in the contemporary literature concerning the drivers of violence within and between Islamic communities and other nations. We hope that readers will agree with us on this important accomplishment (along with the rich array of references that also are found throughout the volume).

The Book's Organization

Though theoretically-based in its conception an organization the volume is, nonetheless written in a style and language that is easily accessible the educated reader. In all, the book is divided into eight chapters, each of which is history and extended contemporary references for use by educators in incorporating the most important part of the monograph's conferences into relevant international and comparative contentment on the theory, research, and quality of life intervention in various regions of the world with a special focus on the 411 million people living in the highly diverse nationals of North Africa and West Asia—the Middle East or MENA region of the world.

The first chapter (**Chapter 1:** *In Search of a Roadmap to Peace and Understanding*) introduces to the reader a quality-of-life model that addresses the drivers of Jihadist terrorism from which we deduce counterterrorism programs. Specifically, we provide suggestive evidence to show increased incidence of Jihadist terrorism is mostly motivated by increased negative sentiment of aggrieved Muslims toward their more affluent Western neighbors. This negative sentiment is influenced by a host of quality-of-life factors: *economic ill-being factors* (e.g., income disparities, poverty, and unemployment; and disparities in technological innovation), *political ill-being factors* (e.g., authoritarian tribal and exclusionary regimes), *religious ill-being factors* (e.g., increased Islamic religiosity, and lack of secularism), *globalization and media ill-being factors* (e.g., the global media), and *cultural ill-being factors* (e.g., perceived decadence of Western culture, and Western prejudice and discrimination).

Chapter 2 (*Jews, Christians, and Muslims: Historical Conflicts and Challenges*) summarizes the MENA region's rich social, political, cultural, and religious history and brings that history up to the present. We tried to demonstrate that the region's contemporary history of

Islamist jihadism and terrorism is rooted in socio-political forces that have been at play for many centuries, indeed, in the case of the region's Jews and Christians, for millennia. These drivers of terrorism, in turn, are based on the high level of grievance that members of the region's three major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have endured almost since their establishment. Conflicts with neighboring states, multiple periods of colonial occupation, and the forced displacement of large numbers of the region's people also contribute to the high levels of violence associated with comparatively low levels of quality of life and well-being for a disproportionate percentage of the region's population.

Chapter 3 (*Joblessness, Political Unrest, and Jihadism among the Region's Youth: Contemporary Challenges and Future Trends*) addresses the major economic driver of Islamist jihadist terrorism, namely unemployment among the youth in the MENA region. This chapter explores the critical relationship that exists between the region's patterns of economic development and its broad-based social gains since the year 2000 to the present. Special attention is given to the relationship that exists between economic frustration, the region's rapidly increasing numbers of young people, the sense of relative deprivation experienced by these young people and, in some cases, their turning to violence, even terrorism, as an outlet for expressing their frustration and sense of aggrievement toward others they believe to be responsible for their poverty and, more fundamentally, sense of economic anomie.

Chapter 4 (*Cultural Drivers of Jihadist Terrorism and Increasing Religiosity*) focuses on cultural and religious factors related to the rise of the Islamist jihadist movement. We make the distinction between the Islamic worldview and ideology and place much of jihadist beliefs that motivate terrorist action in the category of ideology. We discuss the cultural drivers of jihadism couched in the context of religious-cultural paradigms. Specifically, we explore cultural and

religious factors that drive the behavior or actions of radical Islamist jihadists toward violence, factors such as grievance and humiliation crisis, revenge and the need to defeat the enemy, establishment of the Islamic State and the re-establishment of the Islamic caliphate, the vanguard of the *ummah*, martyrdom and reward in the afterlife, glorification of Allah, defending sacred places, the temporal paradigm, and chivalric and heroic feats.

Chapter 5 (*Political Drivers of Islamist Jihad*) focuses of tribal and exclusionary political actions of authoritarian regimes in the MENA. We make the case that those political drivers are associated with Islamist jihadist terrorist actions. We describe the history of authoritarian regimes of Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan and jihadist terrorist incidents in these countries. We then concluded with a discussion about Tunisia, a country that experienced authoritarian rule but emerged from this experience with democratic bearings.

In **Chapter 6** (*Globalization, the Media, and Islamist Jihad*) we discuss five major themes directly related to globalization, the media, and their effects on the rise jihadist terrorism in the last 4-5 decades. These themes are (1) globalization and the breakdown of the welfare state; (2) globalization, consumerism, and postmodernism; (3) negative media portrayals of Islam and Muslims in Western and global media, (4) the use of global media by Wahhabis and Jihadi terrorists; and (5) the effects of media owned and operated by political Islamists.

Chapter 7 (*Current Response: Counterterrorism Strategies Focusing on the Supply-Side of the Terrorism Market*) describes how Western governments as well as governments in the MENA region respond to acts of Islamist jihadist terrorism. The focus seems to be on short-term public safety, or what we call "supply-side" strategies. These are strategies designed to dismantle the marketing organization of militant Islamic groups. Supply-side strategies cannot effectively address the problem of radical Islam without developing compatible demand-side strategies—

counterterrorism strategies designed to reduce demand. Thus, demand-side counterterrorism strategies serve to complement supply-side strategies. We tried in this chapter to describe current terrorism policy and action focusing on the supply-side of the terrorism market.

Finally, in *Chapter 8* (*Proposed Response: Counterterrorism Strategies Focusing on the Demand Side of the Terrorism Market*), we recommend counterterrorism strategies focusing on the demand side of the terrorism market. We do so by focusing of drivers of market demand: culture, religion, economy, politics, globalization, and media. We propose specific counterterrorism strategies that are directly deduced from our analysis of the drivers of market demand.

The volume will be published by Springer by mid-summer 2019 as part of the recently developed series on *Human Well-Being Research and Policy-Making*. In addition to the current volume, other books in the series include el-Sayed el-Aswad, Professor Anthropology (United Arab Emirates [UAE]), *The Quality of Life and Policy Issues among the Middle East and North African Countries (2019);* and, Vijay Kumar Shrotryia, Professor of Business (India), *Human Well-Being and Policy-Making in South Asia*.