Knowledge Mapping the Structure of Ideologies

If we are involved in a struggle with a militant ideology, we would do well to understand the structure of the reasoning that the opposing ideology uses. This is a preliminary attempt to characterize the contemporary militant jihad ideology.

The creation of modern jihad ideology

How Mawdudi and Qutb reinterpreted the concept of "jihad" and built the rationale in 1960s and early 70s

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God is sovereign over everybody and everything on the earth

- "All Westernized forms of government usurp God's authority"
- "All Western democracies lead inevitably to chaos, greed, mob rule, capitalism fosters class warfare"
- "Western governments contain the possibility of "evil, oppression, and tyranny"

Jihad in Islam

- "God's commandments are the only law as revealed in the Koran and Sunnah (the customs and habits of the Prophet Muhammad)"
- "Humans have "no right to make up their own laws"

Qutb's thought begins with these central ideas

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Any attempt to deny sovereignty of God is Jahiliyya (ignorant barbarism)

- "Nationalism (which makes the state a supreme value) is Jahiliyya (ignorant barbarism)"
- "Democracy (in which the people usurp God's rule) is Jahiliyya (ignorant barbarism)"
- "Muslims must revolt against the secular culture"

Muslims are "duty-bound to overthrow every corrupt secular dictator"

Jihad (holy war) against corrupt Muslim rulers is necessary

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Universal Jihad against the modern jahiliyya (ignorant barbarism) is required *

Jihad is the "revolutionary struggle to seize power for the good of all humanity" and is "in the last resort an armed struggle"

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* "No other Muslim thinker had ever made this claim before" (Armstrong, 2000)

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Sayyid A. Qutb

(1906-1966)

Pakistani journalist, politician, writer

Jihad in Islam

Abul Ala Mawdudi

(1903-1979)

Pakistan journalist, politician, writer

Islamic way of life

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No one is obliged to take orders from anyone else

- "Religion is the ruling system in matters of faith"
- "There can be no coercion in matters of faith"

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Secular so-called Muslim rulers (e.g., Nasser) had departed from God and God's law

- "Muslims must revolt against the secular culture"

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“No other Muslim thinker had ever made this claim before” (Armstrong, 2000)