



# Winds of Jihad

## Pathways to Violent Radicalization

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*"They that sow the wind, shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8-7)*

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A violent storm blowing its destructive winds from the shores of Syria to the shores of Europe. A storm that has begun its path of fury, thirty six years ago with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan is marked as the "butterfly effect" equally to the chaos theory in Mathematics. In a metaphorical way it explains how a butterfly flapping its wings in New Mexico has the power to cause a hurricane in china, and in order to have the power to do so it has to happen at the right point in time-space, to cause the hurricane to happen.

### *Carpe Diem*

The year is 1979 and the soviets have just ordered an operation code-named "[Storm-333](#)". An operation that in which Soviet Special Forces toppled the Afghan government in just 43 minutes, but has started a war that will last a decade.

Within this trajectory, the Soviet invasion of, and subsequent war with Afghanistan (1979-1989) stands out in particular as a lasting legacy of the Cold War. However, globally, its outcome continues to plague international society in the current struggle between the Western liberal democratic order and Islamic extremism.

Very few had the understanding that what has started as a local eruption of the Cold War, was perceived by the Muslim world as a direct act of aggression towards the 'Islamic Nation'. It sparked the lightning and created the instability and turbulence in which its vortex will generate a cataclysmic storm.

The Soviet decision to invade Afghanistan was primarily driven by their security concerns of a rapidly weakening Afghanistan, vulnerable to Western intrusion led by the local radical politician ([Hafizullah Amin](#)). After a failed attempt to stabilize the PDPA's regime (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) from collapse, and consequently facing an increasingly narrowing set of options, military intervention became the favored alternative.

By overthrowing Amin, the Soviets proclaimed, that they would slow down and ease the pace of Afghanistan's communist revolution, and protect the communist regime ([PDPA](#)) from collapsing as a result of its domestic unpopularity, and thereby give in to Islamist and Western forces.

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## *Casus Belli*

Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, local and International religious Islamic leaders were quick to announce a '[fatwa](#)' (Ruling of Islamic law) aimed at Muslims all over the world, and commanding them to join the fight for the liberation of Afghanistan.

Thousands were recruited in the process to join what became the holy war (Jihad) against the invading atheist enemy. They were immediately deemed as 'Mujahedeen' - A term reserved for holy warriors for the project of Islamic conquest led by the Caliphates in the early history of Islam during the Medieval era (7th through 9th Century).

Many of these young recruits were drawn into the ideological formation of Jihad and became its symbol. Among these Mujahedeen, a distinctive young man who has shaped his world view and perception of power in the region. Within just a few years he will become the most wanted man in the world, his name - Osama Bin Laden.

Osama was born to the family of billionaire Mohammed bin-Awad bin Laden in Saudi Arabia, a close friend of the Saudi Royal family. Killed in an Airplane crash in 1967, Mohammed leaves each of his children from twenty-two women he married a fortune estimated around 100-200 Million dollars. When Osama arrives in Afghanistan in the early eighties with his personal wealth, he is drawn into this landscape, first as a financier and then as a fighter.

From the very beginning, the Afghan Jihad was subject to various influences. The CIA, and Pakistani intelligence ([ISI](#)), along with the Saudi intelligence, persisted in supporting the most radical Islamist groups in the battle against the soviets.

The Afghan Jihad became an outlet for Islamist reformers crushed by repressive dictatorships. Rivalry among different groups of Arab volunteers in Afghanistan, the impatience of young men looking for a fight and the availability of funds, created the emergence of new schools of thought in which violence became more important than a political strategy.

Today it may sound strange, but back then, Islamic Jihadists in Afghanistan were considered by the west as 'freedom fighters' and were perceived by many as the oppressed and weak, who are fighting the just cause against the soviet bully.

In 1988, Osama Bin Laden founded a small organization that included only eight members made out mostly of his close friends. Almost instantly, it doubled, and within a month increased to one hundred members. Although at this stage, Osama bin Laden still doesn't view the west as the enemy and tries to formulate his own way and path through the newly created organization.

In the meantime, the war in Afghanistan is over and the Muslim fighters that took part in it are strongly infused with Jihadist ideology. Intoxicated with their victory over the communist-Atheist invader, and while struggles between groups for control intensify, they are now planning and looking for an opportunity to use their experience gained on the battlefield.

However, such an opportunity was not long in presenting itself. It came from the Iraqi ruler-Saddam Hussein that provided the impetus (Unintentionally) to these Islamic Jihadist forces in the Middle East.

After a long and bloody eight-year war with Iran over territorial disputes and religious rivalries between the Iranian Shiites and Iraqi Sunni factions, Iraq remained with a massive debt to

several Arab nations including Kuwait, who sought their money back. Iraq, In turn, thought they were ingrates and ungrateful for defending the Arab emirs from the Iranian Islamic fundamentalism. Tensions grew bigger over Iraq's claims that historically, Kuwait was, in fact, an Iraqi territory, as well as ongoing claims that Kuwait has exploited the oil prices, consequently undermining Iraq's oil production as well as drilling-and-stealing Iraqi oil.

It leads the Iraqi leader to order the invasion and occupation of neighboring Kuwait in 1990. Alarmed by these actions, fellow Arab powers such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt called on the United States and other Western nations to intervene. Hussein defied the United Nations Security Council demands to withdraw from Kuwait by mid-January 1991, and the Persian Gulf War began with a massive U.S.-led air offensive known as Operation "[Desert Storm](#)".

In light of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and fearing that Iraq would next invade Saudi Arabia, Bin Laden offered to bring in mujahedeen to help defend the nation. Bin Laden offers help to Saudi royal family through his organization and resources, but in return, he is rejected ridiculed and treated with ostentatious contempt for his Importance and abilities by the Royal Saudi regime. As an alternative, the royal family turned to the West in order to protect the 'cradle of Islam'.

The rejection on one side and turning to the west for protection on the other shocks Bin Laden as he would describe it as "one of the hardest moments of my life". Angered, humiliated, and feeling betrayed by his Saudi patrons, he leaves for Sudan in 1992 and from there begins to wage his war against the infidels everywhere.

The Terror attacks in Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Tanzania and the attempted assassination of Egyptian leader (Mubarak) makes it clear to the west that a new era is beginning to unfold and they do not control it.

Time after time the west is mistaken in reading the Middle East map, and the assessment of the adversary. As in the case of the "Hamburg cell", which its members were under close surveillance by the German intelligence, managed to slip, reach the US and hijack the planes that brought down the Twin Towers in the 9/11 attacks.

A series of intelligence and operational failures, driven by random decisions and the maltreatment of intelligence resources in a combination of naive perception of the emerging enemy, has allowed terrorist cells to grow, gain operational capability and prepare their attacks from within western cities.

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### *Deus Vult*

In the aftermath of the 9/11 Terror attacks, the US declares a "Total War on The Evil Forces" and invades Afghanistan, but Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda remain elusive and undefeated. In this course of action, public pressure is mounting and there is a need for a concrete enemy that can be Militarily defeated. Within this pretext, the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein enters into the equation as the "Axis of Evil" instead of the real enemy - Al Qaeda and is announced as the main Military target by the US government.

As an outcome of that decision, Saddam was toppled. The west celebrates, and with them, the Iraqi [Shiites](#), which took power over overnight. The [Sunni](#) majority became an oppressed and persecuted group in their own country, in need for a redeemer - Osama Bin-Laden and Al-Qaeda are offering their services.

Providing them with pragmatic solutions, they are now practicing a religious-political ideology based on a belief in "Physical Jihadism" and the [Salafi](#) movement of returning to (what adherents believe to be) "true" Sunni Islam.

Many Arab Sunnis turned to Militarized Jihad groups with [Takfiri](#) ideology that formed during the Afghan and Iraqi Wars. One of these prominent groups was Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (Organization of Monotheism and Jihad) led by Jordanian National Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

His group declared an "All out war" and set the tone with grisly acts of violence against other Muslims, which were considered as Kafirs, as well as westerners, namely by broadcasted beheadings and car bombings perpetrated against US-Coalition forces and Shiites strongholds and localities. This group would play a major role in the emergence of the Islamic State as we recognize today.

In retrospective, this scenario was so transparent and obvious that one cannot comprehend to this day how the strategic masterminds of the west did not anticipate it.

As an Afterthought wisdom, some will claim that the removal of the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was not the best idea and that the USA should have left Iraq intact under his rule. The authoritative governing dam has been breached, and what has started the "Arab Spring" as a window of hope for democracy, has turned into an Islamist Tsunami.

In the Arab world, a governmental chaos has been created. Within two weeks Hosni Mubarak, one of the prominent leaders in Arab countries disappeared. The Egyptian ruler was toppled from his chair in an orchestrated revolution, which created chaos and a power vacuum that was immediately filled by Islamist elements.

Again the west and western perception of the Islamic world has failed by trying to instill the same formula which has been tried, tested, and miserably failed in Iraq. This was a formula of "Instant democracy", with the 'flavor' of quick democratic elections, and with ostensibly democratic attributes, however not taking into account the dangers of leadership with radical ideologies.

All while the United States have continued their hunt for Osama bin-Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, they are finally successful, when a military code-named "[Operation Neptune Spear](#)" is carried out. Yet this event marks another milestone which reshuffled the cards again.

As a realization of the Arab Spring, growing protests against the tyranny of another Arab leader Bashar al-Assad quickly turns to an all-out war in Syria. Sunni-dominated rebel groups battled the forces of the Shiite-Alawite dominated government. In the midst of this conflict, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) rose to power. ISIS has become the predominant radical and well-organized Islamist organization that has conquered territory in Iraq and Syria, further driving many Syrians from their homes.

The stated purpose of ISIS is to establish a renewed [caliphate](#), or rule according to the earliest leaders in seventh-century Islam, and to become the highest authority in the Islamic world, destroying everyone it considers the enemies of Islam.

ISIS became synonymous with mass murder of civilians, graphic videos of beheadings of captives, and the destruction of archeological treasures. They have seized the golden opportunity to come into the scene as a major player and to declare it as the historical return to the true Islam. Its members are declaring Oath of allegiance to the Caliph ([baay'a](#)) and therefore religiously validating the reason for all radical Muslims, and converts to join them by fluffing their true identity and purpose of a meaningful life.

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## *Si vis Pacem Para Bellum*

This brings up the bigger issue of Europe's troubled relationship with Islam. It is an old acquaintance, one that goes back more than 1,300 years. A relationship that is marked by countless wars and occupations as well as cultural exchange. This relationship has entered a new phase, one dominated by the largely Muslim migration to Europe, usually in search of work or freedom.

However in the last decade, the increasing winds of Jihad have swept with them thousands of ideologically radicalized fighters, recruited from around the world, including Europe, and the United States. The globalization of martyrdom has also encouraged jihadists to conduct much more suicide operations.

The spread of suicide bombings should be of great concern to Europe and the United States in defending its interests and citizens around the world because they are virtually impossible to defend against. Whilst compounding this, the wide dissemination of the exploits of jihadist groups energized potential and actual jihadists across the world. They have traveled to Iraq and Syria to join the ranks of ISIS and Al-Qaeda, as well as making their way into other similar Islamist radicalized groups such as Ansar Al-Sharia in places like Libya, and Yemen, in which the west, its values, and way of life, is targeted in support of extreme violent Islamist ideology, only later to be returned to their homelands.

Another starting point in the Radical-Jihadist Islam has been marked, as it have declared War on the whole world and it's winds are blowing stronger than ever before, leaving us with a foreseeable conclusion that while we may not know what form the next threat will take, we can be certain that there will be one, and that it is already developing now.

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1^ [http://www.academia.edu/20407780/Why\\_did\\_the\\_USSR\\_Soviet-union\\_invaded\\_Afghanistan](http://www.academia.edu/20407780/Why_did_the_USSR_Soviet-union_invaded_Afghanistan)

2^ <http://miu-ir1.academia.edu/Stevenpk/Papers>

3^ <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/10/09/why-did-the-soviet-union-invade-afghanistan-in-1979/>

4^ <http://www.brainia.com/essays/War-Persian-Gulf-Iraq/265461.html>

5^ <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2005/10/muslims-europe-2005.pdf>

6^ <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2007/03/iraq-effect-war-iraq-and-its-impact-war-terrorism-pg-6>

7^ <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article17137.htm>