

Know What You Are Fighting: Armed Salafism Criminology's Contribution to Understanding Salafist Fundamentalism

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Salafism:¹ Indoctrinate and Radicalize the Masses

Social deprivation alone does not cause deviance. Composed of diverse endogenous and exogenous factors, the *criminogenic mass*² requires a condensing element to trigger passage to action. This element, the philosopher's stone of any alchemy of engaging in a criminal act, comes from preachers, who prepare magic formulas to anesthetize the masses.

Condensing element: preachers developing formulas aimed at anesthetizing the masses. These discourses of indoctrination adopt a vocabulary borrowed from theology or poetry; their (sometimes invented) style is always hypnotic. In some ways forged for the occasion, even the term *salafia* became a quasi-reference for terrorist leaders. Already weak crowds are fascinated by the appeal of a new collective identity, legitimization, and a banner to follow. The candidate for indoctrination then declares himself or herself "Salafist" to avoid any drift in identity.

In the Arabic language, the literal meaning of the word "salaf" is ancestor, with no specific connotation. This term preexists Islam, and the Muslim tradition did not add any additional attributes until the arrival of the movement known as "permissive,"³ which allows each person to go outside the tradition and the teachings of the four Sunni schools of law recognized as the sole references (*Madhhab*: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali). These orthodox schools form a sort of Islamic Vatican invested with the power to interpret the authorized domains; they prohibit the vulgarization of

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¹ Salafism: ancestor, plus the suffix "-ism." A Muslim tradition advocating that one follows the companions of the Prophet, those who lived alongside him or who succeeded him, to preserve the purest traditions. However, the interpretation of this concept by terrorists is limited to its most war-like aspects and was falsified to justify the privatization of Islam and usurp the power to declare criminal fatwa.

² Mass is used here in its scientific meaning of cluster or aggregate, not crowd.

³ "Permissive," not in the common meaning of lenient but as permission given to the faithful to escape the supposed constraints of the four Sunni schools of law.

sensitive notions for the survival of the nation of *idjtihad*,⁴ *jihad*,⁵ and especially the notion of *Takfir* (excommunication of a Muslim).

Globally renowned Muslim scholars, the most credible ones that are recognized as such by the international community, such as Averroes (Ibn Roshd), refrained from this type of adventure. The sorrows of Muslims come from non-initiates venturing their own interpretation of the statements of the Quran, as Averroes wrote in a work titled “On the Harmony Between Religion and Philosophy.”

The “permissive” movement flaunts the rules of these traditional schools and redefines the mission of those who are authorized to interpret the statements of the Quran by using the term “*salaf*.” Thus a new type of religious scholar appeared who diminished the Prophecy and allowed anyone to become a legal expert, driving the masses down the path to fanaticism.

As a source of fascination for the extremists, the writings and ideas of Ibn Taymyya serve as the basis for Salafist extremism. This medieval theologian (1263–1328)—while claiming to be from the most rigorous school, Hanbalism—is a bottomless source for Islamists, from Djamel Eddine El Afghani to Oussama Ben Laden, who have cited him indiscriminately from the beginning of the reformist era (birth of Wahhabism in the mid-eighteenth century) to today. Ibn Taymyya advocated the obedience of leaders on the basis of the Quran and the Sunna but placed significant importance on their morality and their behavior, the only criteria for their legitimacy—considerations which the assassins of Sadat used to justify their crime.

Ibn Taymyya was an innovator in Islamic thinking throughout his life, leading the faithful toward an individual spirituality and renouncing the cult of saints. An exceptional figure in the history of Islamic thought, Ibn Taymyya was the first to oppose the teachings of the four major Sunni schools mentioned above. He was condemned by judges belonging to the four major schools and finished his life in prison.

In his numerous statements on *jihad*, Ibn Taymyya considered the Mongolian invaders to be apostates, even though they had converted to Islam. Fighting them was therefore the duty of all Muslims. The notion of *Takfir* (apostasy) then took on a new meaning. Oussama Ben Laden, Ayman Zawahiri, the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria, and El Qaïda in the Islamic Maghreb all drew their arguments from the same well to fight the Soviets, then the Americans and the French. Although used at the time

⁴A concept designating the intellectual effort of interpreting some of the verses of the Quran provided by scholars of Islam, theologians with recognized expertise. The vulgarization of this concept is at the source of the misfortune suffered by Muslims.

⁵Often assimilated with the notion of combat, this concept has known different meanings through its history. Its etymology refers to physical or psychological effort; to the performance that someone gives, passively or actively, to reestablish balance in a given situation or to reach a better situation. *Jihad* also aims to teach allies or adversaries the virtues of sacrifice, asceticism, and altruism. *Jihad* can be undertaken for oneself, to discipline body and mind by ordeals of effort in the hope of reaching purity or resistance when facing difficult times. The notions of sacrifice and asceticism are inherent to *jihad* without referring to war of physical combat. The notion of destruction is completely foreign to the notion of *jihad*.

only for the Mongols, the expanded notion of Takfir later created murderous fatwas aimed at Muslims and non-Muslims in Algeria, Egypt, and elsewhere.

Jihad does indeed figure in the doctrinal corpus of the Sunni schools, but the four theologians Malek Ibn Anas, Ibn Hanbal Ahmed, Chafi-i Ibn Idris, and Abou Hanifa Annuman⁶ approached it carefully, without indicating who is qualified to authorize it. In reference to the Crusades, these four schools limit themselves to discussing how to share the spoils of war, the tithe owed by non-Muslims living in Islamic lands, and the protection of children, the elderly, and women of the enemy during war. In any case, these theologians deemed jihad to be licit during wars declared by or against enemies. Referring specifically to the notion of legitimate defense, a jihad aimed at passive communities—especially Muslim communities—is clearly inconceivable for them.

Until Ibn Taymyya, it was prohibited to interpret sacred texts, or at least reserved for an elite and limited to specific areas. Most Muslim philosophers approved of this requirement and did not dare to defy the prohibition, in particular the esoteric meaning of the text. However, some philosophical movements, Moutazila, Ash'ari, Mutakallimun, and that of Ibn Roshd (Averroes), were opposed as to the nature of the texts available for interpretation, their esoteric and exoteric meanings, and the interpretations to reveal to laypeople. Heretics and infidels were the names given to those who, whatever their level of learning or social rank, dared to interpret the Verses in relation to certain sensitive questions and who told laypeople the meaning of their interpretations.

It took five centuries for Ibn Taymyya to be resuscitated by the Wahhabi “reformists”⁷ who, like him, dared to cross the threshold of the once prohibited temple; five centuries for the four schools to be accused of traditionalism and anachronism in relation to the evolution and metamorphoses of society, and first of all the Muslim nation (Oumma islamia).

“Reformism”: Anodyne Term, Diabolical Tool

Thus some “reformists,” claiming to be law experts of the faith, grant themselves the role of sponsor, and their teachings and messages serve as the justification for terrorism. We should first note that the role of sponsor differs from that of a leader or an active warlord in the field. The former remain in their ivory towers, from which they pronounce verdicts or statements that, through a suggestive effect, turn to condemnation. Hardened in the field but often uneducated, leaders use these edicts in the field as the basis for their dictates; they take up the speeches by the sponsors expressing themselves at a distance. The meaning of these speeches often escapes the leaders, but they contain enough phrases capable of inciting aggression.

The crowd understands only excessive emotions: to seduce it, use violent

⁶ The four leaders of the schools that bear their names.

⁷ “Reformist” is used here in its religious meaning, not the political one. It refers to those who want to return to the origins of the religion to purify it.

assertions. Therefore, the art of speaking to crowds requires special skills:⁸ “the creation of legends that circulate easily through crowds is not only the result of total credulity but also the prodigious deformations that events undergo in the imagination of the assembled individuals. The crowd thinks in images,” asserts Gustave Le Bon.

The “reformist” movement with the most activist legal experts is Wahhabism. Historically, it was the first to appreciate the audacity of Ibn Taymyya, who is one of the main sources for Mohammed Ibn Abdel Wahhab (1703–1791), a theologian whose alliance with the Saudis led to Saudi Arabia in 1924. Proposing an Islam purged (according to them) of the disputes between the four schools, the Wahhabis called for a return to authentic Islam by means of *idjtihad*. Refuting recent interpretations, the Wahhabis adopted Salafism: the return to ancestors. This movement also reproached the four schools for only engaging with legal interpretations and avoiding the social and political domains secularly. Thus an official clergy of Wahhabi scholars appeared in Saudi Arabia, while the Al Saud tribe was mainly warriors.

In the rest of the Arab-Muslim world, the reform began in the nineteenth century with Djamel Eddine El Afghani (1838–1897) and continued with his successors, the Egyptian Mohammed Abdou (1849–1905) and the Syrian Rachid Redha (1865–1935). Denouncing medieval Islam, El Afghani promoted “*nahdha*,” awakening, a rationalist and dynamic Islam; against the four schools, he preferred the freedom of interpretation—for which some domains remained prohibited for any *idjtihad*. He also called to fight against the colonizers who, in his view, had contaminated the leaders of Muslim countries. Redha was the first to call for an Islamist party. During his time, the fall of the Turkish caliphate provoked, among other things, calls for its restoration.

The first Society of the Muslim Brothers was created in 1928 by the “reformist” (and maternal grandfather of the preacher Tarik Ramadan) Hassan El Banna, assassinated in February 1949, most probably by the Egyptian government, because of his activism. In Egypt, the “Brothers” constantly criticized the government for betraying Islam; according to them, the liberation of the country and the nationalization of the Suez Canal were due to Islamists, as the assaults were led by the cry “Allah ou Akbar,” God is great, and not the name of the country.

Today, the Islamists still use the same arguments. On November 11, 2003, Abassi Madani, leader of the disbanded ISF,⁹ said the same thing on the program “*Sans frontières*” on the Al Jazeera network, calling the Algerian government the successors of the colonizers. Soon before, the same talk came from the Saudi Islamist Taki El Dine El Aouadji. On the same television channel, he called the Wahhabi priests official clergy and accused Saudi leaders of being allied with the Americans against the Arab nation.

⁸ Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: PUF, 1998), 26.

⁹ Islamic Salvation Front, an extremist party that dabbled in terrorism before and after its legalization, was officially disbanded by the authorities in March 1992.

The first reformists did not all call for violence to build the Islamic state. Some preferred entryism from the top, infiltration of state institutions, like El Mawdoudi in India and Pakistan and Hassan Tourabi in Sudan; the same for the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, most of the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt, and the movement of Said Hawa in Syria. This trend aimed in fact to infiltrate the government, as Islamization should, in their view, start from the top. Participating in governments and elections, or placing officials at the head of the state, this “entryist” trend worked to build the Islamist state over the long term. The Islamic jihad of Zawahiri, the henchmen of Sayyid Qotb, and the GIA critiqued and even condemned this “entryist” trend.

The brutal repression in early Islamist history; the condemnations, executions, or assassinations of extremist leaders like Sayyid Qotb and Hassan El Banna; the events in Hama, Syria in 1982¹⁰ drove these entryist-Islamists to act with greater prudence. Nevertheless, the “Brotherhood” organizations linked to the Djamaa Islamia of Mawdoudi and the Wahhabis engaged in energetic proselytism when the opportunity arose. These practices, including expeditions to punish the “deviant behavior” of believers, such as the use of alcohol, prostitution, and homosexuality, were often justified by the *Dâawa Ila El Sahwa*, predication and the call for awakening, to protect the values of Islam. In Saudi Arabia, as in Algeria, militias or parallel forces of order were organized with this intent. In Arabic, the volunteers of this “parallel police” are known as *moutataouines*.

I would emphasize that at this stage, at least for the so-called moderates, the notion of Takfir, of designating someone as an apostate, does not yet cover governing rulers. While discrepancies in behavior—of believers and rulers—are often highlighted, they do not yet speak of apostasy or generalized unbelief, concepts previously reserved for colonizers. Considered in this way, “reformism” usually takes its political arguments from daily life. The secularization which, notably in Turkey, led to the disappearance of the Caliphate, pushed the Islamists to align their propaganda along this axis.

Added to this were the “Brotherhood” arguments according to which socialism and communism had invaded the lands of Islam and that post-independence leaders had been corrupted by colonial ideas.¹¹ According to these “reformists,” the Oumma islamia had fallen back into the situation of the Arabs before Islam, *Djahilia* (ignorance and perverted behavior). Re-Islamization of the lands of Islam was thus an obligation for true Muslims. This justified a politicized Islam that renounced traditionalism and opened the doors to *idjtihad* for everyone.

According to these fundamentalists, Islamic society is first defined by the nature of its political power. Thus, despite their differences, a continuity did exist between entryists who called themselves pacifists and radicals who called for violence

¹⁰ The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood suffered unprecedented repression in the city of Hama, where hundreds of Islamist insurgents died.

¹¹ The allusion here was aimed at the alliance between Egypt and the USSR under Khrushchev, who became the friend of D. Abdel Nasser in the context of the Cold War between the two major powers at the time.

and rejected any dialogue. The Society of Muslim Brothers became the matrix for dozens of organizations, the most extreme of which embraced the fundamentalism of Sayyid Qotb. This matrix also generated fanatical groups like El Hidjra Oua Takfir (excommunication and exile) and the “victorious sect” of the GIA. The common traits of these different groups are

- establishment of an Islamic state without national borders;
- “de-clericalization” authorizing everyone to take inspiration from the life and practices of the pious ancestors (*salaf*) who experienced the pure Islam of its origins. This was in defiance of the teachings of the four traditional schools, which were criticized for their opposition to change and anachronism;
- Manicheism: for all of these Islamists, the only truth that exists is the one they preach. Any other variant is heresy.

Yet these modern and contemporary Islamist ideologues are far from possessing the knowledge and the class of the masters of the Muslim schools of philosophy, especially those of the medieval period, such as Ibn Roshd, Ibn Sina (Avicenna in its Latinized form), Ibn Badja (Avempace), Ibn Tofayl (Abubakar), and El Farabi. For the first two of these philosophers, the use of Hellenic philosophy is justified by the teachings of the Quran.¹² They are the undisputed masters of a rationalist Islamic thought that, at its time, influenced European and Jewish thought.¹³

Terror, Individual and Group Psychology

Clinical Aspects

Feelings of injustice and guilt, the desire to belong to a group, and victimization by society profoundly mark the minds of extremists and push the naïve to enlist and then act, believing themselves invested with a divine mission. The most frequent bait used to convince human bombers wracked with guilt is to absolve their major sins through adherence to the extremist cause and to grant them the status of martyrs. Of course, digging up trauma and painful experiences and transposing them on current

¹² For Arab philosophers, demonstration by syllogism, dialectic, and oratory are the main intellectual means to interpret anything, including divine law in its overt expression.

¹³ Enjoying universal renown, the first two philosophers, the pioneers of Islamic rationalism, strongly influenced European and Jewish philosophy. Combining the teachings of the Quran with the Hellenic syllogism and logic, Averroes demonstrated that Islam did not contradict the demonstrative, oratorical, or dialectical methods of the Greek philosophers. He worked his entire life to demonstrate that divine teachings recommend and approve of the use of reason and demonstrative methods. Far from being Manichean, Islam, according to this philosopher, encourages the reference to ancestors, with the word ancestor referring to scholars of a variety of nationalities and time periods. Maimonides, whose praise of Averroes is well-known, exhorted his successors to translate his works into Hebrew.

situations: all of this helps with release and clearly pushes to action—“acting out,” as some specialists would call it. The formats of individual psychology of passage to action are thus transposed to the group.

Understanding that group psychology is only a sum of individual psychologies, the preachers of death collect unifying doctrinal elements. Based on biased terminology, their erudition sometimes borrows from theology and politics, and sometimes from a fantasy that promises paradise to “criminal souls,” to cite a pioneer of criminology.¹⁴ A celestial metapsychology compensates for terrestrial psychological suffering. According to the individual psychological procedure where returning a person to his or her tender childhood reawakens repressed trauma, the psychology of group action proceeds in the same way, by turning back and atavistic regression.

Criminalizing the target (for example, the existing political power) requires virulent and defamatory discourse loaded with references to lend it some credibility. The goal is to change the nature of the target into a form of death drive, to make potential fanatics hate it. The image of the sovereign on whom power confers the symbols of authority and paternity—strength, legitimacy, omnipresence, providence—is often targeted by this diabolical procedure. Directly or not, each of these symbols touches each person, his or her individual motivations, and his or her personal history. Touching on these symbols can therefore massively unleash aggressive potential.

Incriminating the chosen target starts with discourse using a specific etymology. The term tyrant (or despotic sovereign), *taghout* in Arabic, becomes the ideal means to incriminate a ruler for unbelief, along with an accompanying cortege of fantastical representations. Islamist propaganda expands this concept to injustice, the exploitation of peoples, iniquity, and terror to elicit collective anxiety and frustrations. The ensuing psychological state imposed on the mind is a burning desire to take revenge on a sovereign who has betrayed the people and the social contract.

These feelings of betrayal and vengeance relate to the archaic psychological structure of the child, to its mental complexes and conflicts. Raised to rank of an heroic exploit, the criminal act made sacred comes to destroy the image of the sovereign. The narcissistic omnipresence of the all-ego is present here, rejecting any other sovereignty. Criminal projects, the progressive incrimination of targets evolve and change over time and space, with the destructive rage of the terrorist striking its targets each time that they counteract the advance of the destructive drive.

According to the preachers of death, the concept of *taghout* encompasses all of the agents of the state, their relatives, and their subordinates: anyone who rejects the demands of the terrorist. The following is a document sent by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) to all terrorists when the president of the Algerian Republic announced clemency measures. For the GIA, the term *taghout* designates:

¹⁴ *Ames criminelles* [Criminal souls] is the title of a work by Étienne De Greeff, published by Casterman in 1949 (Paris: Casterman, 1949).

1. The devil preaching submission and obedience to the state,
2. The unjust ruler who disobeys the divine verdicts, such as those who produced a constitution contrary to Islam,
3. Those who claim to know the hereafter,
4. Those who knowingly substitute people for God.

The word then also refers to everyone who refuses the authority of the terrorists. The same text requires criminals who would join terrorist groups to consider violence, which they call “jihad,” to be the only path to an Islamic state; that they pledge obedience to the terrorist leader “Emir”; and that they avoid appearing inquisitive.

This incrimination then expands to encompass the entire “unbelieving and infidel” society. As already noted, this mechanism acts in both the individual and the group, reinforced even more in the latter by the power conferred by anonymity and impunity. It serves to legitimize blind violence and unleash aggressive impulses that had previously been contained by internal psychological censure, a mental representative of collective consciousness.

Committing a crime: this decision has to mature; it goes through stages. First it fleetingly crosses the subject’s mind under the effect of sudden aggressive impulses. These urges are brief, subject to the immediate censorship of a moral conscience. Encouraged by incriminating and provocative discussions, aggressive thoughts reach the consciousness. A dialogue is established between it, prisoner of the ambiance of the moment, and the demands of impulse, which is known as mitigated acquiescence.¹⁵

Hesitation then overcomes a consciousness constantly subjected to discourses seeking to anesthetize the censorship mechanism and free the unleashing of aggressive impulses. Consent to violence grows in a half-paralyzed consciousness. The idea of committing the act emerges. When this threshold is crossed, violence is set free. The same is true of the groups that evaluate the legitimacy of their involvement before finally passing to a criminal act. During discussions, arguments are made but all end up legitimizing violence.

From the so-called “pacifist” proselytizers to the extremists calling for exile and expiation, the idea of violence evolves constantly until the final and total acceptance of terrorism. The various terrorist factions in fact only represent the successive stages in the maturation of the criminal idea. All of these movements want to subject others to their edicts, first peacefully, then by intimidation, and finally by cruelty and terror. At the start of the communiqué quoted above, a verse of the Quran (without reference), pushes to sadistic violence. It states: “fight them, God will torture them by your hand.” The word torture here acts as a trigger for primal sadistic impulses, as we will see below.

¹⁵ An expression often used by the Belgian psychiatrist and criminologist Étienne de Greeff.

Tyrannicide, a Contemporary Concept

The writings on tyrannicide by many ancient and medieval authors inspired the terrorist thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: this ancient logic frequently illustrates the discourse of Algerian terrorists with verses of the Quran taken out of their original context. Aimed first at tyrants, the murderous rage of Algerian terrorists then spread to all those who rejected their fanaticism, first senior civil servants and then the entire society of unbelievers. Cutting throats, mutilation, and torture were also aimed at the families of state employees.

For every terrorist, incriminating the target has the precise psychological function of obliterating the moral conscience. A separation must be made in the conscience to block the psychic mechanism that activates morals and ethics and is supposed to ensure respectable behavior in a civilized society. At the opposite end of usual social norms, new “values” invade the mind of the potential criminal. They push the person to make the criminal act sacred, to legitimize the destruction of the victim. Every terrorist ideology endeavors to incriminate its target and make society as a whole guilty, to purge the effect of their mental representative, the superego. These maneuvers allow terrorists to claim the right to propose new moral standards and to pronounce rules governing those under their influence, in a way remaking the social contract of which government leaders (according to the terrorists) flout the clauses.

Specific to group psychology, this phenomenon also touches individual psychology. During the development of his or her personality, the individual in search of a personal identity attempts to fashion his or her personality in the image of an ideal model chosen from his or her entourage, often the father, but not always. This father can be replaced by a symbolic father when the real father is absent or when there is an inadequate image in the child’s mind. With his or her symbolic power, the school master also figures in the child’s imagination. As more encounters follow, other ideals enrich the relational universe of the subject.

If the range is limited, the choice will be reduced, or forced: psychological repercussions can seriously harm the development and the direction of the subject. The collapse of the ideal model chosen leads to deception, lack of confidence in the Other, as symbol of an authority holding social values and ethical norms.¹⁶ In this case, the markers of identity can be displaced and attach to another person who can supposedly promulgate and dictate the norms and values adapted to the psychical structure of the subject under anxiety and stress.

However, the split taking place in the consciousness provokes a break in the imagination in the place represented by the ideal self, which then splits in two. The first houses the aggressive and sadistic impulses, the second benefits from the redirected investment of the life impulses and its psychic representatives: love, consideration, idealization, respect, and veneration. Since they must start by investing in the

¹⁶ This hypothesis, developed later in this text, was developed by August Aichhorn, *Wayward Youth* (New York: Viking Press, 1935).

imagination the single object idealized in an ambivalent way, these two sorts of drives are dissociated and directed toward two different objects, each with characteristics similar to the first idealized person who combined these heterogeneous traits.

Carrying the idea of authority itself, the symbolic representative of the father (or other idealized subject), the government and its representatives form the split part of the initial image of the father through the effect of the psychological work of incrimination and culpabilization. At the same time, the preferred part attaches to the idea of a new justice established by the sponsors, who use suggestion to occupy the place of the ideal self, a symbolic position reinforced by adapted discourses. Poor education, latent mental conflicts: some individuals give themselves blindly to uneducated preachers who claim to teach faith and hold the truth—despite being subject to hallucinations and neuroses themselves. Even if the psychology of some of the “doctors of the faith” is pathological, yet their influence remains decisive.

Submission to leaders comes uniquely from a morbid identification with the moral consciousness inherent in the mind of a child. To this end, the image of these “doctors” inhabited by their own internal conflicts relates to a certain tyrannical image of the father, replaced by the symbol of authority known as the state. For this transposition to occur, however, other sociopolitical and economic factors have to support it. When extremism prevails, children are subject to an always tyrannical and accusatory superego. In this system of education, the natural human predispositions are deprived of any affective or intellectual dimension. God is mixed in with everything and his omnipresence leaves no chance for the child’s mind to develop according to a logic of curious questioning.

Superstition and fantasy prevail and impose themselves with impunity, since the reference to God and his relentless will blocks any questioning beyond a certain limit. It is enough to invoke the will of God to trigger erroneous interpretations and delirium, following the logic of omnipotence of the narcissistic self, ready to call on all deities. The final objective is to bring about narcissistic pleasure established as the first divinity. However, the symbolic absence of parents is experienced with indifference by children left to themselves and to “blocks of prohibitions.” Any attempt at explanation, any audacious question is considered here to be blasphemous. These psychological conditions predispose children to delinquency and an unhealthy suggestibility.¹⁷

¹⁷ On this subject, see Farid Bencheikh, *La symbolique de l’acte criminel* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998).

Leaders and the Concept of “Condensation”

A collective behavior can only be completely understood by reference, in space and time, to its social origins, but the major orientations of the activities of groups or masses cannot reveal their secrets if we fail to study the influence and roles of individual actions, those of the leaders as well as those of the mass.¹⁸

Made up of endogenous and exogenous factors, the criminogenic mass does not act on credulous souls, does not transform them into murderous machines, without a crucial precipitation or condensation (in the chemical sense). Indeed, someone who suffers from hunger or from psychological or relational problems does not necessarily become a criminal. By itself the proverb “An empty stomach has no ears” does not explain the passage into action. The criminogenic mass comes up against prophylactic social barriers at every turn; what is known as the “moral consciousness” can awaken at any moment from internal or external stimuli. Nevertheless, if the condensation of criminogenic factors is progressing well, all that is missing is the element to trigger the creation of a human bomb. To do this, the discourse of the preachers of death must provide a powerful anesthesia. These leaders therefore play a dominant role.

An Anesthesia Known as Takfir

An Egyptian teacher born in 1906 and executed in 1966, Sayyid Qotb applied the notion of Takfir as used by Ibn Taymyya in reference to the Mongols, to the land of Islam. According to Qotb, Muslim society of the twentieth century found itself in the situation of the Arabs of the Djahilia (period of ignorance before the advent of Islam). Rejecting any compromise with the government, Qotb called for violence as the only way to achieve the Islamic state. The notion of Takfir then spread to senior civil servants and the ulemas who rejected fundamentalism. Jihad then became a duty for all Muslims.

Qotb, who respected Hassan El Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, took up his ideas and radicalized them. To justify his innovative doctrine and condemn the immobility of the traditionalists, he also used the notion of Fiqh haraqi (dynamic jurisprudence) created by his predecessor, El Afghani. Sayyid Qotb thus became a leading figure in fundamentalism who was cited by the terrorists of every country touched by Islamism. His ideas freed the criminal potentiality leading to action. A highly criminogenic trio, the jihad authorized by Takfir, that idjtihad created, became the main tools of Islamist terrorism.

The already radical ideas of Qotb passed to the extreme in Egypt and then from there moved to other countries. Extremist parties and groups proliferated, some secretly and others legally. Among them was the Society of Muslims (Jama'a islamiyya)

¹⁸Dicks, Henry V, *Licensed Mass Murder: A Socio-Psychological Study of Some SS Killers* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). [*les meurtres collectifs*, P15, Calmann-Levy. 1973.] [Translator’s Note—This passage was back-translated from the French version of the text.]

of the young engineer Mustapha Choukri, which promoted El Hidjra Oua Takfir (exile and excommunication). Choukri's method consisted of taking to the wilderness, like the Prophet and his companions escaping their enemies from Koreich, and of cursing a society of unbelievers, which Choukri saw as having returned to "Djahilia" and therefore to be fought by the sword. In Algeria, the GIA contained elements of this sect.

Again in Egypt, the electrician Abdelsalam Farag founded a virulent and sectarian "jihad organization." On October 6, 1981, Farag had President Sadat assassinated, because he was seen as a traitor for negotiating with Jews. Other Egyptian leaders then fell under the strikes of the Takfiris, as well as some foreigners (Luxor attack). Following these terrorist attacks, a number of these Islamists were arrested in Egypt, while others went into hiding or fled the country. On leaving prison, those who had been imprisoned rejoined those in exile, like Ayman Zawahiri, who became the deputy to Oussama Ben Laden.

Another incubator of Salafism: Saudi Arabia, where the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists rose up against the official Wahhabi clergy and accused the royal family of trafficking and pillaging the wealth of the people. At the end of the 1970s, the group of Jouhaimine Al Outaïbi, close to the Muslim Brotherhood, accused the Saudis of corruption and finally invaded the Great Mosque of Mecca with a hundred armed men, calling for jihad against an unjust government. Quickly surrounded and eliminated, Outaïbi accused the Saudis of collusion with the infidel West at the expense of Islam.

Outaïbi's revolt is still the object of some nostalgia in Saudi Arabia, where the Islamist opposition sometimes launches similar attacks for the same reasons: the government is giving away the lands of Islam to the Americans, who use them to strike other Muslims; the official, so-called "Wahhabi" Saudi clergy are traitors, among others.

Syria was not spared from the activities of Sayyid Qotb's disciples. The strong repression carried out by Syrian authorities during the events in Hama (mentioned above) was not unmotivated. During the 1960s and 1970s, many Islamist actions shook the regime. Under the direction of Marwane Hadid,²⁰ an agronomy engineer and landowner, *El Taliâ El Moukatila* (Fighting Vanguard) carried out multiple bomb attacks against figures in the regime.

On the ideological level, El Mawdoudi (Indian subcontinent) and other religious leaders, particularly in Saudi Arabia, legitimized the holy war in Afghanistan. El Mawdoudi's *Djamat Islamia* (Islamic Group) mobilized volunteers to fight in Afghanistan. In terms of logistics and organization, the contribution of the Saudi billionaire heir Oussama Ben Laden, with support from Zawahiri and Abdallah Azzam was indispensable for organizing the Arab Mujahidin. In the end, Oussama Ben Laden

²⁰ Marwane Hadid was arrested and executed in 1976.

created his own organization in Afghanistan around 1988: he called it El Qaïda (the foundation).

When Abdallah Azzam died with his two sons in a car bomb explosion in 1989, the religious authority of the combatants in Afghanistan crumbled and a Salafist radicalization began. Once united under a common cause, groups animated by their own ideal, preexisting the war, declared themselves to be the sole possessors of religious legitimacy. Formed primarily of Algerians and Libyans, the El Hidjra Oua Takfir (exile and excommunication) group took hold among the Arab “Afghans.” This provoked an avalanche of fatwas and counter-fatwas aimed at the Pakistani and Afghan authorities.

Invasions of Muslim Countries and Feelings of Injustice

A confusing geopolitical picture...loss of the ability to distinguish between friends and enemies...This was the period when El Qaïda collaborated with the Americans against the Soviets. Some even claimed that this monster came from the entrails of the American intelligence services. Most of all, these ventures fed a feeling of injustice in the invaded or dominated countries. From the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria to the unending conflict in Palestine, this feeling of injustice legitimated violence seen as legitimate defense, as the foreign invasions of Arab-Muslim countries were seen as part of a single aggression against the Muslim nation.

Extremists used the pretext of these events to assert themselves on the national and international scene, as so-called defenders of the Oumma. Recruitment campaigns increased in number, using every means of communication and propaganda. Soon the violence aimed at the foreign aggressor was turned against the Muslim states involved. Therein was the trap: the war in Afghanistan received massive support from Muslim countries. Internal quarrels and wars between these countries ceased for the duration of the war against the communist enemy.

However, the unanimous condemnation of the Soviet invasion kindled the emergence of a nebula of combatants from several countries and followings. Long free of terrorism, Afghanistan became the platform, the condenser of the anti-Soviet guerilla. It was the starting point for the terrorism committed by these Mujahidin once they returned home. The Afghan war was an aubaine for these Islamists, who could finally proclaim a propaganda that was once repressed in their countries of origin.

If reformism represented the ideological matrix of Salafism, the war in Afghanistan provided hardened combatants. It mobilized the forces and the potential of organizations seeking to pass into action. This war also allowed each believer to test his or her faith and sense of sacrifice: the gates of paradise were now open to future martyrs. In their countries of origin, where the jihad of their dreams was now legitimized by all, including by those who usually opposed it, the victory in Afghanistan allowed the Mujahidin to intimidate those they called tyrants and oppressors.

Absurd or Scandalous Foreign Invasions, a Godsend for Terrorists

The entire world watched with dismay the senseless interventions of the invaders of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya: bombardment of civilians, extra-judicial incarceration and torture (Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo prisons), and more. Without forgetting a hostility toward Islam aimed in general at Muslim populations. Later becoming criminogenic, all of these factors allowed the barbarian “Emirs” and preachers to intensify their propaganda and recruit. Globalized, terrorist recruitment even reached Western countries, where volunteers calling themselves “jihadists” joined the “Islamic state.” A phenomenon that confirmed my hypothesis that the feeling of injustice acted with no distinction of race, religion, or geographic location. Rooted in the personal history of each person, this feeling represented the perfect unifying element of the aggressive tendencies of beings weakened by living conditions close to psychological misery. Due to its universality, this unavoidable data authorize criminologists to use the concept of induction as a common fact.

Algeria: Salafism, Terrorism, and Mass Crimes

Killers of so many innocents around the world, the Khmer Rouge, Aum Shinrikyo, the Taliban, the Red Brigades, El Qaïda, Daesh, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and others: they all follow a simplistic ideology that promotes a better life and legitimizes and glorifies criminal acts by incriminating the target or possible victims. Whether the ideology is Marxist or Islamist, the process is the same. However, the propagation of pseudo-religious indoctrination interests me here. Today, the most virulent terrorist groups adhere to a Salafism that fascinates believers and atheists from all backgrounds. My knowledge of the Algerian terrorist groups will help expose the meanders of this Manichean thought that has made so many young people into the reserve army of terror.

El Qaïda received media attention for its dramatic actions, but the atrocity of the acts committed by the GIA and the GSPC marked the history of Islamist extremism. The atrocities committed by these groups—slicing the throats of children, mutilation, habitual rape—must lead researchers to turn their attention to the processes that allowed these exactions. If one asked a normally constituted person whether he or she would prefer to die suddenly in an airplane crash against a building or to suffer hours or even days of abuse and mutilation before having his or her throat cut, the response would be clear.

²¹ We can read these condemnations in issues 10, 12, and 13 of *El Djamaa*, a subversive document edited by the GIA starting in 1995. “

²² This descriptive means “Algerianists,” those who wanted to nationalize the Islamist cause by opting for an Algerian-style reformism in Algeria first, and it appeared in the early 1980s when the Islamist movement began to emerge in the University of Algiers.

Algeria, its Own Brand of Salafism

Compared with other extremist movements, Algerian extremism is quite unique. At first neo-Salafist, in reference to Sayyid Qotb, Hassan El Banna, and Wahhabism, this movement later moved away from these trends and beliefs and, in the early 1990s, proclaimed itself the sole standard bearer of Salafism in the world. The victorious sect, as the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) presented itself, did not hesitate to criticize the fathers of the Salafism it once defended.

The Egyptian “reformists,” Sayyid Qotb, Hassan El Banna, and even the Algerian philosopher Malek Bennabi, were thus excommunicated and condemned for apostasy.²¹ The GIA considered the leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) to be Djazarists,²² “dialoguers,” or simply traitors. Fayçal B., a GIA activist and assassin of Abdelkader Hachani (head of the executive office of the ex-FIS) justified his act by saying that the Djazarists were all traitors, people to cut down. The GIA, like the dissidents it created, recruited its own clergy and exegetes and mobilized those among their followers who knew how to write, whether they had theological knowledge or not.

The other singularity of Algerian extremism is that all the trends that the FIS attempted to unify aligned with Salafism. Yet with what Salafism? Doctrinal divisions punctuate the history of this movement. Sometimes, several groups cite the same source while interpreting it differently. They all refer to Ibn Taymyya but tear each other apart on the main points of his doctrine. These facts have been well noted by Séverine Labat, who writes: “From Ibn Taymyya to Ali Belhadj, the filiation claimed by the (Algerian) neo-Salafists seems at the very least to be hard to trace. They borrow from every tradition (...). The Salafists will cut off ties with those reformists that they deem to have compromised with Western thought.”

When an Era of Violence Began

Taking inspiration from the teachings of the Algerian Ulemas before independence, influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist movement in Algeria received accreditation from the authorities starting with the liberation in 1962 and created the organization El Qiam (values). A graduate from the University of Bordeaux with a degree in the humanities, its founder, Tidjani El Hachemi, wanted to rehabilitate the Islamic values degraded by colonialism but claimed to have no political intentions. Yet he took inspiration from the thought of Sayyid Qotb and Hassan El Banna and situated himself as a successor to Djamel Eddine El Afghani

²³ In an interview given to the magazine *Confluent* in 1964, cited by François Burgat, *L'Islamisme au Maghreb* (Paris: Payot, 2008), 150.

²⁴ A school of Islamic theology located in Tunisia, similar to Al-Azhar in Egypt.

²⁵ A sect that was active in the fifth century of the common era in Persia that promoted libertinage and was the source of constant revolts.

and Mohammed Abdou.²³ El Qiam was dissolved in late 1966, due to its virulent anti-Egyptian attacks, following the execution of Sayyid Qotb. Angered, its members strongly condemned the Egyptian government, particularly in a message to President Nasser. Rebuilt by some of its co-founders, the disbanded organization then called for violence.

At the same time, other Islamic currents emerged under different names, including those of the international “Brotherhood.” Identified with communism, Algerian-style socialism became the target of Islamist critiques that quickly became condemnation of the government. Abdelatif Soltani, one of the founders of El Qiam and a graduate of Zaïtouna,²⁴ was very vehement toward the authorities. In writings published clandestinely, he accused them of Mazdaquism,²⁵ notably in the title of his text “Mazdaqism at the Origins of Socialism.” In his pamphlet “Siham El Islam” (Arrows of Islam), he accused the government leaders of usurping the historical legitimacy of a war of liberation that was fought in the name of Islam. Despite his excesses and his taste for violence, he occupied important functions, as imam, official preacher, and high school teacher. Instigator of the first Islamist gathering at the Central Faculty of Algiers and cosigner of the platform calling for an Islamic state, he was finally placed under house arrest until his death in 1983.

His other “companions in arms” and co-founders of El Qiam took up the relay and founded the FIS. Leader of Wahhabism in Algeria and spiritual master of Ali Belhadj, Omar El Arbaoui died in 1984, but remained the posthumous religious guide of the first terrorist group of Mustapha Bouyali. Abdel Baki Sahraoui is also an influential founder of Algerian Islamism. A member of the association of Ouléma, co-founder of El Qiam, this teacher went to French school and served in the (French) seventh regiment of Algerian infantrymen. He was arrested in 1981 for activism and incitement to violence and held until 1983. This FIS militant was then an imam in Evry and in the mosque of the rue Myrha (in Paris) where he was killed in 1995.

From the Central Faculty of Algiers to the “Jihad” of Mustapha Bouyali

In the 1960s, the mosque of the Central Faculty of Algiers harbored the tenants of Islamism and “reformism”; they argued, usually without violence, between factions that accused each other of being Djazarists (French speakers who sold out to the “regime”) or Arab-speakers won over by ideas from Egypt or Arabia.

In the early 1980s, clashes—including the death of the student Kamel Amzal on November 2, 1982—caused the closing of the mosque. That same month, Islamists organized a protest during which Abbassi Madani fustigated the authorities. Appreciated by the Islamists, this event outraged the Brotherhood. An Arabic speaker with a diploma in literature, Mohammed Saïd, freed from prison in 1984, balanced French and Arabic speakers at the head of a growing movement.

²⁶Including Ali Belhadj, Abdelkader Chebouti, Mansouri Méliani, and Azzedine Baa.

At the turn of the decade between the 1970s and 1980s, Algeria underwent massive protests by Islamists who imitated the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups in Egypt and Syria, but moreover, the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood of Algeria began to organize in a paramilitary way. Contingents of young Islamists left to train for “armed struggle,” especially in Afghanistan and Syria. Networks brought future combatants through Nice and Lille. Under cover of a “small pilgrimage” (*Omra*) Islamists passed from Saudi Arabia to Peshawar, where they were welcomed by international Islamist organizations. Are these indications still current, for the support networks of future terrorists? Certainly precious information for Western antiterrorism experts, who should pay more attention to the history of terrorism in the world.

A former fighter in the war of independence, member of the National Liberation Front and the Front of Socialist Forces, Mustapha Bouyali formed militias in the early 1980s aimed at “fighting evil and promoting good.” His incendiary sermons at the El Achour mosque in Algiers brought together fanatics who would later participate, at every level, in the acts of violence of the FIS and GIA.²⁶ Desiring to establish the Islamic state by jihad, Bouyali went into hiding and started his guerilla against the government, which he accused of betraying the revolution and forgetting Islam, in the name of which the country had been liberated. Eliminated in 1987, the key events of his trajectory are as follows:

-November 1982: assassination of a gendarme checking identification at an intersection in Ben Aknoun, Algiers.

-August 21, 1985: theft of the funds of a national company.

-August 27, 1985: attack on the Soumaâ police academy, killing one police officer; and theft of a quantity of weapons.

Brought before the State Security Court in 1985, his accomplices revealed other deadly plans thwarted by the security services: assassination of political figures, bombing of the Hotel Aurassi and the Algiers airport, among others.

Islamic Salvation Front and Terrorism: Preparation, Threats, Attacks

The abundant writing²⁷ on the creation of this party and its legalization allows us to bypass its beginnings. I will discuss the composition of the FIS in the following section, as well as its declared and secret objectives, and finally, its role

²⁷ The FIS has been the subject of several books by Algerians and foreigners, all of which are easily available.

²⁸ An allusion to their participation in elections.

²⁹ Two letters written in detention and published in the press thanks to his lawyer and his brother.

in the downward spiral the country experienced. I would note that the FIS led to the creation of a terrorist nebula with conflicting arguments that is nonetheless united by its desire to spill blood on one of the lands of Islam, and if capable of doing that, then doing it in the rest of the world. The fact that some leaders of the FIS declared that an extremist fringe was outside their control does not lessen their guilt, since none of the FIS leaders (living abroad or in Algeria) ever condemned these “uncontrollable” elements.

Some FIS leaders, like Anouar Haddam, on the contrary, approved attacks like the one against the headquarters of Security of the Wilaya in Algiers, causing dozens of civilian victims, notably in a passing bus. Other FIS leaders turned these attacks into a business or leverage to force concessions from the authorities. Even though these leaders were later charged by the GIA with being “opportunist” and “participationist,”²⁸ all of these terrorist groups were the legitimate children of the Islamic Salvation Front.

Another aspect of the history of the FIS interests us here. Up until the eve of the first round of elections on December 26, 1991, the leadership of the legal FIS hesitated to participate in a vote that a portion of its leaders strongly opposed—including Ali Belhadj, who later admitted as much.²⁹ To settle their differences on this point, the FIS leaders decided on December 19, 1991, 1 week before the vote, to consult an undisputed Muslim authority: Muhammad Nacereddine El Albani. Soon afterward, El Albani called these elections heretical. While this revealed the true nature of the FIS, other events exposed its extremism and thirst for violence, even before it was disbanded by the administrative chamber of the Court of Algiers on March 4, 1992, confirmed on April 29 by the Supreme Court. In an activist rage sparked by the preachers of the FIS, one of its groups held hostage a police brigadier in the Kaboul mosque in Lakhdaria, 80 kilometers to the east of Algiers. He was found dead on June 26, 1991, before the arrest of the two sponsors, Madani and Belhadj.

The provocative aggressions and protests of the crowds guided by volunteers returning from Afghanistan in combat fatigues touched the entire country. Chanting the slogan “fighting evil and preaching good,” Islamist militias locked down neighborhoods while eliminating alcohol and requiring the hijab. During the march on the presidency organized on April 20, 1990, by the FIS, which demanded the liberation of the prisoners of the Bouyali affair, the protest was led by former Afghans who, a few months later, led the most bloodthirsty groups.³⁰

³⁰ Including Azzedine Baa, Mansouri Méliani, and Abdelkader Chebouti.

According to Ahmed Merrani,³¹ one of the founders of the FIS, the MIA (Armed Islamic Movement) was created well before 1991 by former companions of Bouyali. At the same time, the SIT (Islamic Workers Syndicate) was created for reasons foreign to syndicalism—for many Islamist leaders rejected the very concept of a syndicate, which they saw as “heretical.” This opportunistic creation in fact served their war plans. Founded by Saïd Makhloufi, one of the founders of the FIS, and Saïd Eulmi, this SIT was formed quickly, according to military standards. From the base to the summit of the hierarchy, its officials carried the rank of sergeant, captain, and general.

The formal recruitment of the FIS thus began before its creation.³² Starting in January 1991, Saïd Makhloufi distributed a brochure to mosques calling for civil disobedience, which was reported in the local media.³³ During the period of the legal FIS, its leaders, playing both sides, manipulated the emerging terrorist groups and those already created under a variety of names: MIA, El Bakoun Alla El Ahd, Faithful to the Promise, and others.

Thus even as a congress of the FIS was being held in Batna (July 1991), initiated by Abdelkader Hachani, the number three of the FIS who became the number one after the arrests of Madani, Belhadj, and Mohammed Saïd, secret meetings were being held in the Zbarbar Mountains under the leadership of Chebouti, Méliani, Mkhroufi, Moh Leveille or his deputy Layada, Azedine Baa, and other terrorist leaders. The Batna congress aimed to reorganize the party on a new foundation following the directives of its two imprisoned leaders. Hachani then declared that they gave orders to maintain the legalistic line.

During the Batna congress, the Majlis El Choura, the newly reconstituted advisory council, suspended Saïd Makhloufi and Khemreddine Kherbane. Makhloufi went into hiding to reorganize the disparate entities and reconcile the self-proclaimed leaders of the jihad. Kherbane went to Afghanistan to organize the return of Algerian combatants. He then became the vice president of the executive authority of the FIS abroad.

These underground meetings aimed to unify the disparate groups that, in the field, were beginning to target police and the military. Before the FIS was even disbanded, there was the Gemmar attack in the region of El Oued, in the southeast of the country, where a barracks of border guards was attacked on November 28, 1991, by “Tayeb al-Afghani,” whose name was Aïssa Messaoudi, a veteran of Afghanistan. In the night of February 8–9, 1992, six police officers were killed in Bouzerina, in the capital, by the group of Moh Leveille. Named Mouhammed Allel, he then proclaimed

³¹ Ahmed Merrani, *La fitna* (Algiers: self-published, 1999).

³² The leaders of the SIT would be found again at the heads of the worst terrorist organizations: Saïd Makhloufi, Cherati Yekhllef, first mufti to have used fatwa to legitimize the assassination of police officers and their families, an Abdelrahim Hocine, author of the attack on the Houari Boumedine Airport on August 29, 1992.

³³ I See the newspaper *Alger Républicain* (January 23–30, 1991).

himself the first leader of the GIA, a precedence that was recognized by his successors. Still in February 1992, a group led by Méliani machinegunned the guard post of the admiralty.

As every terrorism expert knows, however, forming groups, gathering weapons, identifying targets, scouting places, keeping watch, and finally passing into action takes months or even years. After the first terrorism attacks and during search operations, security services found underground bunkers and caves, proof that preparations had begun long before 1992. For a better understanding of the terrorist projects of the FIS, even before it was created, we should read the letter (published in the press) that Ali Belhadj wrote in prison: it shows how his Salafism was purely for war. He assimilates the “peaceful” strike launched by the FIS in May and June of 1991 with the Battle of Ouhud fought by the Prophet and his companions against the unbelievers of Koreich. Faithful to his positions from before the election of December 26, 1991, he condemns those who abstain, even Muslims or members of the FIS, those who refuse to fight.

This letter shows the dual nature of the FIS. The armed groups formed after the legalization of the party, continually active since that time, all had its benediction. The fact that some refer to the position of the FIS at the time of creation of these groups as complicit pacifism is not enough to absolve it. This party had its hand in terrorist movements and beliefs.³⁴

Passage to Action and Criminal Self-Affirmation

Mafia, cartels, and terrorist groups: all of these criminal organizations use violence to ensure their supremacy. This trial by force aims to show rivals, or the populations under their sway, that criminal capabilities are available. And only criminal leaders can carry out these significant abuses. The terrorist leaders active in Algeria are all veterans of Afghanistan, habitual offenders, and criminals known to the security services. For example, the famous terrorist leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar, known as Laouar, or One-Eyed, who at the beginning of his criminal career, before the period of terrorism in Algeria, was an arms trafficker.

For reinforcements, the criminal gangs recruited their “soldiers” among sympathizers, for force or by indoctrination. However, this category was already in a favorable pre-criminal situation, even if the group’s past did not count many criminal acts. According to criminologist Raymon Gassin: “the effect of overdetermination attached to the multiplication of dangerous situations is not blind; it first affects the weakest personalities, those with a threshold of delinquency high enough not to fall into crime under normal circumstance but too weak under new criminogenic

³⁴ The Djazarists Mohammed Saïd, Saïd Makhloufi, and Redjem Abdel Rezak; the Bouyalists Chebouti and Méliani, those calling themselves Hidjra Wa Takfir overseen by Sediki Nouredine and Dr Ahmed Bouamara, called Ahmed the Pakistani, the small groups of Bab El Oued and of the Mitidja in general directed by Achir Redouane or by Moh Leveille all, except one, formally obeyed the orders of the FIS not to act before the first round of the elections in December 1991.

circumstances.”

Preparing the violence behind its pseudo-political actions, the FIS created the Islamic Salvation Army, the leaders of which all declared their allegiance to it. Thus, no matter how these groups later judged the FIS, some condemning it for opportunism, other reproaching its “willingness to dialogue,” and still others rejecting any connection with it, this filial link was established by the statements of the leaders of this party. Even today, Abbassi Madani claims authority over these groups.³⁵ Proclaimed by the FIS leaders, this paternity was proven by the Salafist continuity between Ali Benhadj and Abbassi Madani, and of the terrorist emirs Djamel Zitouni, Antar Zouabri, and Hassan Hattab—even if, out of pride or for tactical reasons, the latter sometimes denied this filiation.

Profiles of Assassins: The Leaders of Armed Groups

Present during the violent meetings that the legal FIS organized in the mosques, these armed groups passed into action at the first occasion they could strike. The evolutions of this criminal-terrorist nebula then depended on their recruitment and the rivalries between emirs. As the notion of *idjtihad* was “liberated” by the fathers of Algerian Salafism, including Soltani, Cherrati, and Belhadj, themselves disciples of the hardcore Egyptian, Syrian, and Wahhabi Salafism, the notion of “*jihad*” spread to the armed groups. The popularization of these sensitive concepts turned the emirs and their troops, with little knowledge of religion, into “soldiers of Islam,” missionaries invested with a divine mission to reestablish justice on earth.³⁶

Thus emerged the ignorant, habitual offenders, and notorious bandits, “bad boys,” according to Ahmed Merrani, one of the founders of FIS. Their guerillas gathered together deviants,³⁷ the lost enrolled by the FIS through threat of reprisals or promising paradise and the absolution of their sins, and veterans of the war in Afghanistan, old hands in criminal violence. To the regret of the FIS elite, these thugs led the bloodiest terrorist groups and sometimes gave orders to somewhat educated subjects that had rallied to terrorism. The logic of the “*tarmac*”³⁸ prevailed over the strategy of the “intellectuals” of the FIS, whose original project was to have the thugs supervised by educated leaders. The theocratic or technocratic elite lost control of a

³⁵ During the Al Jazeera program mentioned above.

³⁶ At the limits of the psychotic psychological process, this system is omnipresent among the terrorist groups of the world, despite the differences in their slogans.

³⁷ The word deviant is used here in the criminological sense and does not only include delinquents who have crossed the threshold allowed by criminal law, it also concerns the malcontented masses that are distinguished by their morally condemnable behavior but that cannot be considered to be infractions.

³⁸ Expression used by the terrorists to indicate the capability to pass into violent action with the goal of proving the supremacy of criminal know-how. See on this topic, *El Seif El Batta*, the cutting sword, a document produced by the successive emirs of the GIA, which appeared in issues 10, 11, and 13 and their magazine *El Djamaa*.

crime syndicate that it had created from scratch.

In April and July 1992, the meetings held in the Zbarbar mountains, then in August 1992 in Tamezguida, failed to unify the armed groups within the FIS: in question, the megalomania of the future emirs. Nevertheless, the virulence of the thugs leading the armed groups allowed the FIS to intimidate Islamist opinion and the authorities.

Suffering from a probable inferiority complex, already belittled by the preachers of the FIS during the time it was legal, considered to be henchmen and shady characters, the leaders of the GIA took revenge for the slights suffered by justifying the executions of their acolytes by that for which they were reproached before. A release by the head of the GIA Djamel Zitouni explained the assassination of Djazarists by the disdain they showed to the other terrorist groups and their leaders.³⁹ Thus enraged against the state and against their own associates, equipped with fatwas legitimizing violence, and interpreting “sharia” to suit their liking, these groups launched a bloody war—against everyone.

The ultimate attempt to impose Redjem Abdelrezak⁴⁰ at the head of the GIA, leader of the former FIS reputed to be erudite and Djazarist in culture, was easily countered by his future assassins. Two days after the elimination of Cherif Gousmi, fourth head of the GIA after Abdelhak Layada, killed by the security services on September 26, 1994, a communiqué announcing the coronation of Redjem was denied shortly after by Redjem himself. He withdrew under threats from Djamel Zitouni, who took charge of the GIA thanks to the allegiance of his peers.

A chicken salesman known to the police for various crimes, Zitouni succeeded the previous heads of the GIA; the first, Mohammed Allel, alias Moh Leveilley, bandit and seller of spare parts, was the first to commit terrorist acts. Leveilley was assisted by the criminal Ali Zouabri, former head of the Islamic bazaar in Boufarik (Blida region) and older brother of Antar Zouabri, future GIA leader. The second head of the GIA, Abdelhak Layada, a sheet metal worker from Baraki, was the driver of Moh Leveilley. The third “emir” was the Afghani-Algerian Sayeh Attia, known as Djafar El-Afghani, eliminated by the security services on February 4, 1994, during whose brief “reign” the first throat cutting massacres began.

Cherif Gousmi, alias Abu Abdelrahman, only took charge of the GIA from February to September 1994 but was the first to organize it according to sharia law as this terrorist envisioned it. Gousmi developed a GIA charter, giving it a semblance

³⁹ Zitouni legitimizes in this way the assassination of Redjem Abdelrezak, Mohammed Saïd, and Saïd Makhloufi: they wanted to take charge of the GIA considering that at the time, its leadership consisted of uneducated people. Redjem reportedly recommended that Zitouni go learn Arabic and theology with Mohammed Saïd...

⁴⁰ Spokesperson of the FIS in charge of communication.

of organization. It included the objective of creating an Islamic state by restoring a caliphate of which he proclaimed himself the supreme leader. It also had a code of behavior and rules for selecting the “emir.” Functions and ministries were created, with positions reserved for the incarcerated and exiled FIS leaders. The ministry of war was entrusted to the future emir Djamel Zitouni. Jihad through attacks aimed at unbelievers and their accomplices remained the vital objective of the GIA.

The Criminal Horde Takes Charge

The successors of Gousmi, Djamel Zitouni, Antar Zouabri known as Abou Talha, and then Ouakli Rachid known as Abu Tourab, pushed the terrorism to a climax. Apostatizing the people as a whole, its own acolytes and support networks, and then the rest of the world, the sect was established by training its own clergy, recruited from among its hardest members. Like the Taliban, it created a madrasa, a “religious” school, in the mountains of Cheriaa near Bilda, to train the sons of living and dead terrorists in “holy war.” It was also an indication for operational services. Massacre, devastation, and a burnt earth policy became the watchwords of the sect.

Within the group, the spirit of neighborhood gangsterism was resurgent: controlling territory, elimination of rivals, personal enrichment, and trials of strength through constant criminal one-upmanship. It was all aimed at civilian populations, or mujahedin accused of being traitors, which they saw as justifying their decapitation and other atrocities. When the dream of paradise promised in the legal FIS meetings waned, the state of nature⁴¹ where everyone acts as they like became the horizon of the sect. Rapes, assassination, theft: everything that offers immediate satisfaction is allowed.

Massacres of Innocents: Legitimizing Criminal Acts

Drawing on the Islamist literature familiar to the fundamentalists and driven by the concept of *idjtihad* that they found there, the GIA groups incriminated all of those who prevented them from imposing their diktats and purifying the group to make it an “authentic” sect. In doing so, they treated as *Djazarists* or *Khaouaridj* (those who turned away from Islam after the death of the Prophet) those of their own accomplices who became troublesome; they were accused of violating the tradition of pious ancestors; outsiders to the group were treated as unbelievers or infidels. Here is a selection of their pseudo-arguments taken from their tracts and magazines:

⁴¹ A term borrowed from Thomas Hobbes that reflects the situation in which terrorist groups lived, where everyone has rights over every person and every thing.

The soldiers of the Islamic group, the only clear-sighted legal emblem in this land, with permission from all-mighty God, remain on the path of struggle against apostates, unbelievers, and impostors, by torturing them, mutilating them, and mistreating them, by destroying them and decapitating them, to come closer to God on earth and in the heavens.⁴²

Didn't the Prophet blind the eyes and cut off the feet and hands of apostates and throw them into a chasm until they died?⁴³

Know that tradition and Sunna will be followed at all costs. The Caliph Abou Bakr El Sedik addressed a message to Khaled Ibn El Oualid to tell him not to hesitate to mutilate Taliha and his companions. Khaled Ibn El Oualid, acting to avenge Muslims, proceeded to put his captives to death: some were burned, others stoned or thrown from the mountain tops. They then had a human being decapitated and boiled the head three times on the orders of Khaled Ibn El Oualid. What Ali Ibn Abi Taleb did with the khaouaridj⁴⁴ is the best example. He burned them and did not hesitate to mutilate them. We are therefore following this Salafist tradition...If we find other Sunna and other traditions more intense in terror, we will not hesitate to follow them and revive them to benefit from God's satisfaction. We are determined to fight and mutilate; we are on the path of our ancestors."

Abou El Moundhir⁴⁵ said: "We will remain in this tradition, to follow the example of Khalid and Abu Bakr Sedik and the other companions of the Prophet, who did not hesitate to kill, mutilate, and burn, but we are not satisfied, because we have not yet reached the same number of dead as they have. In a single battle, the Battle of Yamama, against the Beni Hanifa, they killed almost 10,000 people, and some say the number was 21,000, and that they killed 14,000 in a day. By himself and in one battle, Ali Ibn Abi Taleb killed almost 400 khaouaridj whom no one could identify because they had lost their heads.

These heads served as steps in the Great Mosque of Damas! God said in verse 39 of El Anfal: "Fight them so that there is no sedition and so that the entire religion is not sedition." He also said in verse 10 of El Touba: 'Fight them, God will torture them using your hands and the malediction will be cast upon them."⁴⁶

⁴² A verbatim statement of the terrorist Abou El Moundhir, as printed in the magazine *El Djamaa*, issue 13.

⁴³ Statements in the review *El Djamaa*.

⁴⁴ Those who moved away from the tradition of the Prophet after his death remained Muslim but according to some conformists, they adopted different practices.

⁴⁵ A terrorist recruited into the group to act as official mufti.

⁴⁶ This terrorist reasoning is omnipresent in the GIA groups; it represents the essence of the process of legitimization of barbaric acts. This chapter was transcribed in full as it appeared in their subversive magazines and propaganda documents used to indoctrinate the elements of the sect, as reported in the presentation by Ahmed Zerouk in the Algiers colloquium mentioned above.

You know, the GIA does not kill at random and we say that we will kill those who have turned against us, whom we call apostates, thus we do not pass new judgments nor improvise fatwas, but these are the judgments of God and His Prophet that we apply. What you hear in the villages and cities about throat-cutting, know that the victims fell under the verdicts of the promotion of virtue and the fight against vice;⁴⁷ they are the transvestites, those who neglect prayer and drink alcohol, women in indecent clothing as well as those who voted. This is the explanation of the operations carried out by the mujahedin.

Another category of persons targeted by the mujahedin, and whose assassination is justified by the principle of promoting virtue and combatting vice, is the category that refuses to pay the tithe to the mujahedin, the Zakat. The emirs of the regions and company and detachment leaders were ordered to designate soldiers worthy of confidence and others who were physically strong to force people to pay the Zakat to the mujahedin. The ones who hide or refuse to pay are apostates and risk the death penalty. Thus the places where alcoholic beverages are produced must be burned, even if their owners are inside with their companions.⁴⁸

We should note the path traced by the death drive, which strikes any obstacle in its way. A brutal and growing Manicheism incites these criminal minds that have returned to the state of nature, to the war of all against all, the social ties broken and the foundations of morality and good sense banished under this subculture of devastation unfolding without restraint or obstacle, in a spectacular regression of humanity to the primitive stage.

How do they justify the killing and mutilation of children and women that are neither impious nor apostate? In the same texts, we can read:

The assassinations of children, women, and other innocents are part of a combat strategy: surprise attacks, ambushes, and the use of explosives. No one can deny it, as recorded by El Boukhari in speaking of Saab Ibn Djathama, who said that the Prophet was questioned about the children and women affected by the attacks against unbelievers and found among them; he responded that they were considered to be like them, in other words unbelievers. As stated by El Sounouy, "it is reported by the men of science Abi Hanifa and Chafii that one can kill children and women inside buildings."

It is also reported in the judgments of El-Maouardi: "It is allowed, if the army encircles the enemy, to invade them by throwing stones and with catapults. The

⁴⁷ Punitive expeditions were carried out during the period of legality of the FIS and continued into the period of Zitouni and Zouabri. These are infamous militias for the eradication of evil and preaching the good found in Islamist groups throughout the world.

⁴⁸ These arguments are omnipresent in the extremist discourse of different sorts of terrorists. They were largely analyzed, for the first time and in particular by military presenters, during a colloquium on terrorism held in Algiers in October 2002.

Prophet ambushed the people of Taïf, and he did the same. It is allowed to destroy their houses and to burn them, even if there are children and women inside.”

Ibn Taymyya declared that if the killing of children and women is prohibited by religion, it becomes permissible if there is a necessity, as in attacks with catapults. If the people forced to stay with the unbelievers are killed, they will be sent to God according to their intentions. Ibn Taymyya teaches us that the mujahedin cannot distinguish between those who are forced to stay with the enemy and those who are not.

We should note in passing that these arguments have no meaning for real Muslim scholars. The reference remains dated at the recent period of the birth of pseudo-reformism. There is no serious indication on the attribution of these statements to the Prophet and his companions.

To allow terrorists to satisfy their sadism by removing all scruples; to live their paradise on earth and to let terror reign; to dominate the population, to execrate the de facto authority, they are given improvised fatwas. Here are a few examples:

There is no interest, no utility in slowing the promotion of virtue and the fight against vice, or in hindering the application of the verdicts of Islam. There is only interest in applying sanctions, in exercising intimidation, in expiation and generalization of the commandments of Islam, in applying murder, blows, and exile to all—only God knows what is good for people.

No matter what we do with our mind or our feelings to know what is good or what is not, we will not be able to do it, so one must only apply them.⁴⁹

These terrorist justifications come from issues of the magazine *El Djamaa*, the group, published under Zitouni in early 1996. The justifications of mass killings and massacres of innocent children come from June–July 1996, soon before the massacres in the suburbs of Algiers and in Ramka, in the heights of Relizane. More than 700 people died in this carnage committed with axes, knives, pickaxes, and explosive devices. Among the victims, there were more than 80 infants killed with pickaxes and knives. In Bentalha, Sidi Moussa, and in a hamlet of the town of Beni Messous, a number of women and elderly persons were also killed.

These practices began under Zitouni and continued under Antar Zouabri, to a lesser degree, due to a lack of resources as the sect had been weakened—under their

⁴⁹ Same references, the *El Djamaa* magazine and the international colloquium, in particular the presentation by Ahmed Zerouk, a military magistrate.

successor, the emir Ouakli. They added a horrifying dimension to Algerian Salafism, one that was unprecedented in the history of pseudo-Islamist terrorism. And the leaders of the FIS never condemned these massacres. Except in a few, rare exceptions, the Islamist movement active at the time did not reject the horror of these group massacres either.

FIDA: The Return of the Djazarists

Long hoping to infiltrate terrorist groups like the FIS, the Djazarist movement, which wanted to bring together intellectuals of the Islamist movement, ended up creating its own armed group, which carried out its first attacks in mid-1996 in Algiers.⁵⁰ Organized in a tight-knit fashion, its smaller numbers included graduates from universities and specialized institutions. In the capital, the FIDA targeted the police, public figures, and intellectuals. Among its victims were a former minister of the Interior and the psychiatrist Bousebi. The mystery surrounding this group was only revealed when this group and its leadership were eliminated in two major operations in Ben Aknoun and Dely Brahim.

The FIDA wanted to head all of the armed groups, according to the “tarmac” logic promoted by the FIS. It thought that success in larger operations would ensure its notoriety among the terrorists. Although the FIDA attacks were first attributed to the GIA, this group quickly understood the maneuvers of the Djazarists that they had suspected since the start of terrorist attacks. Zitouni then had the FIDA leaders captured: Saïd Makhloufi, Mohamed Saïd, Lamara Abdel Wahab, Mahfoudh Tadjine, and Redjem Abdelrezak. According to the sectarian and “purifying” logic of the GIA, they were tortured, mutilated, then put to death.⁵¹

GSPC and LIDD: GIA Dissidents

Two important area heads of the GIA, Hassan Hattab and Ali Belhadjar, rejected Zitouni’s practices with his accomplices. Feeling that Zitouni was threatening their own lives, they drew back with their followers to form independent groups. Hattab formed the GSPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat). After joining the Jazara and becoming one of its leaders, Belhadjar named his group LIDD (Islamic League for Dawa and Jihad). Although the name did not refer to Salafism, he unhesitatingly claimed a connection to it. Antiterrorism experts suggested, however, that the strategy of these two groups was instead to take charge of armed groups.

⁵⁰ Founded by Mohammed Saïd, Abdelrezak Redjem, who had pledged their allegiance to the GIA at the time of Cherif Gousmi in 1994, and by Doctor Lamara Abdel Wahab, the terrorist group known as FIDA, the Islamic Front for Armed Jihad, acted in great secrecy, unlike the GIA.

⁵¹ He recounted this episode himself in a release entitled “Justification of the Elimination of the Djazarist Traitors” published in *El Djemaa*.

Reinforced by Hattab's men, Belhadjar organized the ambush in which Zitouni died with two of his companions. Belhadjar later gave himself up to the authorities with his accomplices, with all of them benefitting from the law on civil concord. Withdrawing with his group to the mountains in the east of the country, Hattab continues to engage in terrorism to this day.

The "reformist" ideology profited all of the Salafists immensely. It allowed them to establish themselves "legitimately" according to their own criteria, since *idjtihad* is licit for everyone. All of the Algerian terrorist groups acted under the Salafist banner, each serving "the cause of Islam" according to their own whims and fantasies.

Terrorists Imitating Organized Crime

Controlling Territories

"Classic" terrorists copy the military system: hierarchies, division of labor, training, and discipline. In my view, terrorism today is much closer to the major criminal societies, a characteristic that we can find in all of the new terrorisms, including in their objectives, which are supposed to differentiate them. Under the cover of political discourse and demands, terrorists today in fact aim for quick gain and personal wealth by using the methods of professional criminals, as can be seen with the GIA and other groups active in Algeria.

In contrast to the military world, the choice of leader of these terrorist neo-groups is inspired by criteria inspired by the underworld: criminal capabilities, dangerousness, and know-how determine his aptitude to lead the group and win the trust of the executives and "soldiers" of the organization. The leader names himself by counting on his clan, a process similar to designating a mafia godfather, which is then confirmed by allegiances. Once named, this leader is almost indisputable, in position for life. In every terrorist group, there is an executive council to rule on internal disputes, allegiance to the "emir," and legitimize different behaviors. This council also produces fatwas on homicide, rape, racketeering, and other criminal acts. Sponsored and led by the Emir, who names his closest colleagues to the council, or removes them, it functions like the councils of mafia "families."

The terrorist group controls a territory and does not venture into another group's territory, as all recognize they are rivals. When a group does wish to conquer another group's territory, it starts by attacking the local population or state symbols to intimidate the population or its rivals by giving them notice to withdraw. These practices of marking territory also aim to show the local populace that the rival cannot protect them.

Sharing the Spoils, Unnatural Alliances

In these groups, the “spoils” come from racketeering, theft, and heists. It is shared in the same way as criminal gangs. One-fifth of the spoils is reserved for the “emir” and the rest goes to the head of the group that led the operation and that takes the lion’s share. The remainder goes to the “soldiers.” This procedure is called *El Feii*, a mythical reference to sharing the spoils of war. If women are taken (captives called *Sabaya*), the emir chooses first and takes the most beautiful ones.

The acts of violence are left up to the initiative of the heads of groups, regions, or zones, depending on the opportunities available. These group leaders then notify those above them once the crime is committed. Failure in an action is often punished.

The head of a large group has a praetorian guard formed of the most trustworthy members, with local origin and family ties the most decisive. Known as the “Green Phalange” of the GIA, this guard accompanies the leader in his movements and executes the undesirables in the group. Beyond its constant mission of protecting the emir from internal plots or assassination attempts from the outside, this guard contributes to important operations, supports the combatants of the group, and watches over the spoils of the emir. Calling themselves “upholders of the law,” these extremists advance the argument (that all terrorists around the world use) according to which “any means are legitimate when serving a sacred cause,” with terrorism representing a profitable market.

In addition, there are the alliances between terrorists and traffickers, in Algeria and beyond, because the “sacred cause” authorizes these unnatural alliances with criminals of all stripes. The terrorists find in the traffickers an offer of indispensable products but also a source of enrichment. Out of avidity, the criminals trade with the terrorists, share their know-how, and engage in mutual exchanges of services. In analyzing the cases solved, the security services see mixed networks (bandits and terrorists) trafficking vehicles, arms, munitions, and drugs, all contraband that brings money to the terrorists.

A number of smugglers and traffickers are allied with terrorist groups; and terrorists join organized crime in the opposite direction. A striking example is that of the Algerian terrorist leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a smuggler in the south of the country who became the emir of region nine of the GIA and remains active to this day.

Terrorist Means and Methods of Action

The active groups in the Sahel act according to the opportunities available, but their methods are all quite analogous. They use improvised explosive devices, firearms, or melee weapons. Their victims are killed in ambushes, individual attacks, or group massacres. Ruse and surprise are their favorite means of maximizing the success of their attacks. To protect themselves better, the terrorists choose their targets according to their vulnerability: isolated populations and members of the security services traveling unarmed in high-risk zones are their favorite targets.

Booby-traps are also one of their weapons of choice. When hiding explosives, terrorists have used the bodies of people and animals, mailboxes, and tracts (digging out the wall behind the tract), as well as jackets “forgotten” in movie theaters and even bird cages. Terrorist groups also engage in kidnapping, either for ransom or for rape or execution after torture and mutilation. Traitors to the cause because they voted or refused assistance; apostates, accomplices of the tyrant: the victims all fall under the effect of the criminal verdict known as fatwa, with the main objective being to spread terror.

Normative Tools of the Terrorists: Fatwa, Idjtihad, Jihad

Terrorist methods are usually studied from the perspective of materials. This approach is certainly important in preventing this scourge, but the psychological dimension of the phenomenon should be just as important as its material aspects. Not always easy, this potential approach would renew the study of new criminal threats. The idea here is to analyze the genesis of the fatwas for criminal purposes, their psychological path, and the way they conceive of the passage into action, following this “process of legitimization of action” observed by the pioneers of modern criminology.

What is a fatwa? At the beginning, it was a legal act, a consultation motivated by the absence of a Quranic verse or an explicit statement by the Prophet related to the behavior of Muslims with other Muslims, with non-Muslims, or with God. The fatwa is developed by intellectual effort (*idjtihad*) starting from something said by the Prophet or an obscure verse for the layman or by analogy with the sayings and acts of the Prophet and his companions.

It is pronounced by a doctor of the faith, a legal expert recognized as such, whose morality and knowledge qualify for this exercise, which is important in the life of Muslims. Without this competency, the jurisconsult is condemned to heresy and blasphemy. Elder of the judges of Cordoba, the premonitory philosopher Ibn Roshd (Averroes) deemed that the misfortune of Muslims, the hostility between them, their hatred and intestine struggles, came from incompetents venturing into the domain of religious interpretation. Their speculations pushed Muslims to divide into sects, and then to kill each other.⁵²

The intellectual mechanisms, psychological support, and indirect paths that they take make indirect fatwas a danger to society: their deformations awaken primal instincts and encourage emotional surges. Many legal experts have thus found in jurisprudence the opportunity to leave behind their scruples and accumulated earthly goods.⁵³ These fatwas knowingly turned to subjective ends have a major influence on the minds of laypeople. Even worse, their effect is contagious. “It is through a fatwa

⁵² Ibn Roshd, “On the Harmony Between Religion and Philosophy.”

⁵³ *Ibid.*

that I went into hiding and through another that I repented,” a terrorist and former member of the GIA told me.

By being manipulated, these made-to-order fatwas influence minds and lead to high-risk situations. As the one pronouncing them has the symbolic power to influence the masses and his mental hold works at a distance (in both space and time), these fatwas influence the commerce of ideas. When pronounced by terrorists who are self-proclaimed legal experts, such as Abou El Moundhir, the deputy of the former head of the GIA, Antar Zouabri, these perverse fatwas have often been more effective than the most polished political speeches or the most touching patriotic epics.

Mentally struck with delusions of grandeur, these pseudo-legal experts go so far as to substitute themselves for the divinity, who is seen as mortgageable in return for self-sacrifice. By identifying with the master of the universe, by deifying the group, the delusional person reaches a state of extreme beatitude and thinks he is enjoying supreme power. The force of a fatwa also comes from the fact that they are reborn from their own ashes, that they regenerate, like an old scientific theory that sees the universe as closed, with matter reproducing itself by itself.

In reality, the Muslim tradition does not include fatwa that can always and everywhere justify crime. Thus predators believing they enjoy the symbolic power to decree commandments have in their hands an almost absolute weapon: seductive phraseology for the laypeople. The symbolic power of preachers and the mental weakness of the masses that they captivate make these fatwas an irrevocable sentence. The credulity of the masses and the symbolic power of fatwas offer fake men of religion an undreamt-of opportunity to order crimes from a distance with impunity.

Benefitting from a patent theological void and the moral, social, economic, and cultural crisis that has affected Algeria since the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Islamists seduced the masses with their manipulated discourse. However, the symbolism of the Arabic language does not contain any meaning that pushes, either by metaphor or suggestion, to resuscitate the death instinct. According to universal ethical rules, the notions of martyrdom and sacrifice come from a heroism dedicated to peace and should not be subject to appropriation.

Using this new vocabulary, the unique lexicon of a literature improvised for the occasion, a new generation of seasoned “Minbarist”⁵⁴ preachers rose from nothing and called for a “privatized” religion. They specialize in the indoctrination of anonymous masses, using everything that could feed their concern and their anxiety. In a deep identity crisis, prey to social evils and the failure of the welfare state, these abandoned youth take hold of the first model at hand to structure their existence and take them out of the torment of wandering and anonymity.

There is no drama for societies worse than “moral anomie,” or “demoralization” as sociologists⁵⁵ call it after adopting Durkheim’s concept. A theological, legal,

⁵⁴Minbar is the wooden tribunal present in each mosque from which the imam gives religious sermons.

⁵⁵Thomas and Znanieck in their studies of Polish immigrants to America.

and intellectual void: these gaps open the way to deviancy in human behavior—criminality, terrorism, and plots against states. A deviant subculture takes form and pseudo-legislators appear whose social function would be to promulgate new ethical norms. A conversion then occurs, a distortion of the dominant values.

The lack (or disintegration) of moral references, political crises, and economic changes place individuals in a situation of stress and imbalance, obliterating moral references. As social morality weakens, criminogenic pseudo-fatwas appear, calling for death, massacre, and devastation.

Programmed and carried out by Algerian terrorism, the assassination of intellectuals did not aim merely to strike opponents of fundamentalism but expressed the clear desire of those ordering the crimes to take over the function of knowledge in the society. According to Lacassagne, social microbes only develop in a broth of culture that can contain it and ensure its survival. Prospering in a climate of spiritual poverty and nihilism, these sponsors aimed to strike the thinking head of the state after targeting its secular arm.

The Global Strategic Power of Deviant Fatwas

Thanks to technology, this power is reinforced by an abundant and diverse—but effective—literature that represents a bottomless source for minds disposed to action. We are witnessing the birth of “Fatwa-natic” or the “Cloud of Fatwa” at the disposal of users of all ages and beliefs, a concept borrowed from information technology that nonetheless reveals reality.

The GIA does not share our views on building the Islamic state. We have our own idea of holy war; however, despite our differences, for the supreme good of this nation, I suggest that you work more on destroying America and we will be responsible for France and its allies.

We will take care of America; may God guide you to destroy the unbelievers of Europe who did so much harm to Islam and to Muslims.

From the end of 1995, these exchanges come from the correspondence between Djamel Zitouni and Ayman El Zawahiri, the right hand of Oussama Ben Laden.

The GIA put its threats into action by hijacking an Airbus of Air France (December 1994) and then struck France (attacks in the summer of 1995) and assassinated the seven monks of Tibhirine (March 1996). El Qaïda first struck American interests in Nairobi and Dar El Salam (August 1998) then the Twin Towers in Manhattan (September 2001).

If these exchanges between the terrorist leaders had been published before these events, they would have the subject of great mirth. How, observers would have asked, could poorly armed criminals having difficulty ensuring their own survival dare to strike these powers? “Using fatwas to create human bombs!” would be the response of someone knowledgeable in the “terrorist thing.” These fatwas pronounced under

the noses of the security services of these same powers, from New York to Paris, and in London.

Even today, the physical, military dimension of the antiterrorism struggle is privileged, continuing to ignore the psychological dimension of what could generate terrorism on its own. Before September 11, some states preferred ignoring the new terrorist reality, its international scale, and its ideology. Others knew of the danger but thought they were protected by their systems of defense.

Even worse, states were harboring and equipping terrorists due to selfish strategies. The countries targeted, like Algeria, vainly attempted to give alerts on the global danger of the phenomenon. The massacres and devastation committed in Algeria caused controversy, as moderates believed the affair was limited to Algeria. With September 11, the world realized the extent of the terrorist peril, even worse than organized crime, even in the most powerful countries.

Sounding the alarm, these events produced unprecedented international cooperation in the face of the terrorist threat. In the process of being studied or already underway, a panoply of measures were adopted with the idea of fighting this scourge until it is eradicated. At first, these efforts involved preventive and repressive techniques and strategies of defense. A colossal offensive was then launched to stop the evil at its source. However, the material aspect of the fight took precedence over its intellectual or moral aspect.

The intellectual matrix of the “terrorist nebula,” the ideology that turns a person into a savage beast, a deadly machine, or a human bomb to be used at any place or time, was neglected in favor of technical and operational terrorism. More dangerous and pernicious than criminal know-how, less expensive, and prospering in the shelter of individual and collective religious freedoms, the method of mass indoctrination has drawn little attention from specialists.

The defeat of the Taliban and the GIA reduced to the state of wandering cells in the process of elimination did not, however, obliterate the psychological mechanisms or the discourses developed to create the feeling of power and temptation of martyrdom through the sole path of Jihad. The military defeat of terrorists did not do anything to reduce the affective charge legitimizing terror. Contrary to what we think, the international mobilization and solidarity after September 11 and the blows dealt to terrorism in Algeria, Afghanistan, through Europe and America, had no effect on the feeling of power and faith in a cause that fanatically denies the power of the enemy, no matter who it is. Fatwas cannot be fought with high technology; material means are inappropriate here.

Represented today by the United States and a few other countries in Europe and Asia, high-tech military power is not very effective against fatwas,⁵⁶ this “process of legitimization of criminal action,” according to Étienne de Greeff. These states

⁵⁶ Fatwa meant here in the distorted sense used for criminal ends.

should pay as much attention to this criminogenic psychological phenomenon as the smuggling of nuclear or biological material, which are inoffensive without the prior existence of this phenomenon. Finally, I prefer Étienne de Greeff's expression ("process of legitimization of criminal action") to that of fatwa, since this process has inspired every terrorist group since antiquity and constitutes the common trait of several entities, ideologies, and religions, as emphasized by Walter Laquer in *Terrorism*.

Suicide Attacks

Two preliminary observations:

- By exposing the mental state of the candidates for "sacrifice," suicide attacks reveal the symbolic reality of the criminal groups to which they belong.
- The candidates freely join a group whose customs remind them of their own, whence their identification with the group.

Care should be taken to avoid simplistic analyses that would mislead us and hinder the crucial development of strategies to combat it. Knowledge certainly dissipates fear, but while an erroneous vision diminishes fear for a short time, it subsequently favors the spread of crime.

First difficulty: analysis always happens after the fact, in the absence of the suicidal subject. This occurs even if we have information on the person, his or her close relations, and the sponsoring group; sometimes we have the person's final statement (even extravagant ones). Against common sense and the instinct to live, the suicidal act nonetheless expresses the reaction of one being to a feeling of psychological imprisonment.

Identification of the Individual with the Group

The overt strategy of sponsors aims to shake the state and make it yield to the terrorists' demands, but the suicidal act is the result of covert work focused on the unconscious, thanks to which the preachers of terror penetrate into the minds of credulous novices. Manipulating the minds of individuals, these preachers mix together the psyche of the candidate for suicide with the collective experience of the group, while claiming to "liberate" the individual, "save" his or her soul—which is in fact caught up in a criminogenic discourse.

Mixing together individual psychology and that of the group is the only way to "fabricate" a human bomb. If we recall Durkheim's statements on (individual) suicide, which express, according to him, "the relaxation (collective) of social bonds, a sort of collective asthenia, or social malaise, just as individual sadness, when chronic, in its way reflects the poor organic state of the individual." Then these pseudo-religious

systems appear, demonstrating to people that life has no meaning. In reality, Durkheim states, these systems “merely symbolize in abstract language and systematic form the physiological distress of the body social.”

Under these circumstances, suicide is a position taken in relation to the group and to society. It denounces the disorganization connected to individual suffering and collective distress, as already seen. The candidate feels psychologically surrounded: he or she is told that salvation of the soul will only come from the unavoidable explosion which will serve the good cause. An indoctrination equivalent to deifying the diabolical, by beatification of suffering.

Success in a suicide operation is a threefold accomplishment for the group because at the same time

- it impresses its own “soldiers;”
- it leaves a mark on public opinion;
- while at the same time loosening the psychological encirclement that it suffers.

Using a human bomb to loosen the vice that paralyzes the group, both psychologically and spatially, is a feat of the psychology of terror carried out by sponsors who are experts in manipulation. Here the word vice refers both to the real situation of the group and the psychological state of the candidate for suicide. Loosening the vice is the first goal of the group to escape pressure, encirclement, and destruction.

Psychology of the Candidate for Suicide

A candidate for suicide can be identified by a visible fascination with the preachers of terror. He or she is then indoctrinated using a hodge-podge of verbiage that nevertheless seems homogeneous since the subject is there the whole time as one chosen by heaven for a divine mission. A mass forms around the feeling of injustice that he or she feels, one with ingredients that combine and are orchestrated to transform the subject into a human bomb. But what is meant here by “mass” and “ingredients”? The “mass” is all of the material and psychological elements accumulated by the subject into his or her mind, throughout life, up to the decision to join the group—an act that is not a break with his or her former life but an extension of it. A variety of discourses and practices (the “ingredients”) place the subject, unknowingly, at the mercy of the sponsors. In the subject’s mind, the sponsors psychologically become the real authority: the subject is in the service of the criminal horde.

⁵⁷ Article published in the newspaper *Le Monde*, Tuesday, March 24, 2015.

Suicide Attacks, a Psychological Method

Let us return to the “suicide attack.” To understand the meaning of this type of act, let us listen to the direct witnesses and try to imagine the event. Suicide attacks evoke the key words: explode, blow up, specifically to blow oneself up, surprise, destroy in destroying oneself; strike spectacularly one’s surroundings, defy, stun, provoke a thousand questions in the mind. The crucial idea being to “blow oneself up by blowing up one’s surroundings. This is what appears first in the mind when we imagine a suicide attack. In thought and within the limits of reason, let us accompany the suicide attacker to guess his or her thoughts in the moments preceding the act. What does he or she hope for? What irresistible psychic force drives this person to blow him- or herself up? And could we experience the same mental disposition? (There is the question).

For the suicide attacker, the act envisaged and executed makes one truth explode forth; it challenges all moral, ethical, and especially psychological rules; and it brutally undoes solid ties to the impulse to live. It reveals his or her unique truth, even for the virtual family or the group, which symbolically replace the real family. Despite their proximity, the elements of the group each have their own history.

In speaking of the individuals who join Daesh, Olivier Roy esteems that they “already entered into dissidence and are seeking a cause, a label, a grand narrative to sign with the bloody signature of their personal revolt.” He adds that “by breaking with their families, the ‘jihadists’ are also in the margins of the Muslim community: they almost never have a past of piety and religious practice; on the contrary, the violence to which they adhere is modern. They kill like mass killers do in America or Breivik in Norway, in a cold and calm manner. In Syria, they only make war: none of them is integrated or interested in civil society. They have no integration in the Muslim societies that they claim to defend.”⁵⁷ They belong to Salafism, an “individual Islam,” rejecting the idea of culture, where one builds oneself alone.

That said, the choice of this ultimate solution refers to the situation before the suicidal act of which the real and symbolic objective is to loosen the psychological vice. In the subject’s mind, this situation excludes any conventional expression. To understand the situation of the subject before the act, we can compare two forms of suicide.

“Ordinary” Suicide and Suicide Attacks

Suicide attacks are usually considered according to the interpretative categories used for the psychology of suicidal people: in both cases, the person uses his or her body and life to attempt to explain a complex emotional state. The act is thus raised to the level of language or at least symbolic expression. The suicidal person wants to

⁵⁷ Article published in the newspaper *Le Monde*, Tuesday, March 24, 2015.

bear witness, to bring forth an otherwise unspeakable truth about him- or herself. For example: “I don’t accept it, even if I can’t get rid of it! You won’t get me, despite your power!”

This message is addressed to someone close, like a real or symbolic father: to the family, to friends, to society, in a psychological process of transposition by projection. The image of power, of the state, becomes the target, with the transference of aggressive feelings coming from the similarity between real and symbolic power. The suicidal act ensures a psychological function of a reparative, punitive (of the other or oneself), or vindictive “ordeal.”

The criminogenic masses suggest to the suicide candidate that the only way out, the only escape, is suicide, the unspeakable to be saved is often connected to the couple dignity-humiliation. Even guilt, a powerful motor of processes of self-depreciation, sees the dignity acting there as a reparative process.

Acting on the environment by attacking one’s own life: this is how “Being” in its various attributions and manifestations imposes itself on common, social, and moral values. “Being” does not mean only living in the biological sense; blowing oneself up also expresses this “Being”: a way of existing beyond the dominant reason by defying it. Candidates for suicide attacks are not desperate, but on the contrary, tragic actors, motivated by the conviction that their deadly sacrifice will support their cause.

Differences Between the Two Forms of Suicide

Criminal suicide, or “suicide attack,” since other people are victims, differs in many ways from suicide that does not harm others. In a suicide attack, the candidate suffers external pressures through indoctrination that reinforce a preexisting suicidal tendency and facilitate the passage into action. Physically inoffensive for others, the aim for a solitary suicide is psychological offense. While there are pressures, they are unconscious and come from the soul of the suicidal person, even if, for that person, they come from another or others.

Self-destruction to merge with the universe is symbolic of inoffensive suicide. In a suicide attack, the notion of destruction is patent, highly visible, and materialized in the form of a real explosion: it is a question of negating the environment, fusing with the other in the explosion, embracing existence by means of violent action. And while this notion goes beyond the simplistic formula and theories on pathology, it cannot be reduced to a nihilist theory. The concept of “nirvana,” the search for absolute peace, omit in this case some aspects related to how language functions.

Coming back without preconceptions to the salient aspects of the phenomenon, as phenomenology teaches us, shows that a “suicide attack” is not a detachment, a disinterest in the positive aspects of life. Far from being a demission, suicide attacks actively participate in the persistent status of “being there”; it confirms its power without authorization from anyone, no matter what its power or role, father, state, or anything that symbolizes authority.

Failure, which often occurs in ordinary suicide, is not an option for a candidate determined to commit a suicide attack. When normal suicide aims to expose psychological distress, failure is sometimes planned, consciously or unconsciously, by the subject. For the suicide terrorist, real suicide is the failure. For that person, the action is not suicide: he or she hopes for a better life and death is only a preliminary step. Mental conditioning is such that the candidate is already living in the beyond. Failure destroys this state of mind and makes any repetition unimaginable.

Operational Data

Suicide Attack: Global Strategy, Personal Message

As we have seen, the personality of the candidate for suicide merges with the group, by identification or projection. However, this fusion paradoxically does not have the same meaning for this candidate and his or her sponsors, even if the discourse and justifications appear to be the same. The candidate's message is addressed to a micro-society: family, neighborhood. The message of the sponsors is aimed at national and international opinion as well as their own troops.

The content of the messages can be similar, though addressed at different contexts: "you cannot imagine what I am capable of"; except that for the suicide attacker, the "I am" is conjugated in the present and for the sponsors, in the present and the future. The suicide attacker is thus the tool of a global approach. The sponsor makes the adversary culpable for the death of others: "by your faults, there are still more deaths," the message of certain targeted actions should be explained by analyzing the context of their occurrence and their localization and succession in time and space.

Attacks, Tools of Communication

Sponsors supervise the official discourses that a spectacular act can contradict, even at the price of the death of the suicide attacker or other innocents. Since communication is an integral part of the war, attention should be paid to the public statements on terrorism, which can appear as a provocation and provoke a violent response:

- "They are crazy";
- "They are teenagers indoctrinated by adults";
- "It is a residue of terrorism."

It is equally dangerous to not call a terrorist organization by the name it gives itself. Terrorists believe that responding to official statements with an attack discredits them better than a thousand statements. These "speech-attacks" expose the "cracks" in the official narrative and reinforce the credibility of the sponsors in the eyes of their

henchmen and their potential recruits.

In general, official statements after an attack are not addressed to the criminals but to public opinion and often lack any message to hesitant Islamists. After a suicide attack, asserting that “the terrorists use tricks and any means to commit their misdeeds” or rather that “they manipulate indoctrinated teenagers” is very different. On the one hand, parents know they should worry for their children; on the other, sponsors have to deny to reassure their troops. For example: a 16-year-old adolescent blew himself up in front of barracks, then, a short time later, the suicide attack of a 60 year old at UN headquarters (in Algiers). A successful strategy for terrorists who, all at once, reassure their troops and discredit the official discourse.

Candidates: the Choice is not by Chance

The simplistic discourses of the sponsors draw a wide variety of candidates for suicide, although they all have a certain intellectual apathy. The providers of suicide-attacks thus use this variety of different profiles to counteract official propaganda and reinforce their own. When, after the September 11 attacks, the president of the United States calls the “kamikazes” crazy or unstable; when their social milieu is said to be favorable to this type of criminality; when their education or age is criticized, the communication strategy being used is not very relevant.

The providers of suicide attacks often choose the place of the attack, age of the “kamikaze,” gender, social category, and education to contradict officials having to explain such a complex phenomenon in the immediate aftermath. In the future, the choice of a woman to commit such an attack thus becomes plausible if it serves the communications strategy of the terrorists.

Studying the Crime Scene, an Irresistible Need

Filming the location, visiting it before and after the act is a constant. Even if reconnaissance of the location is necessary, visiting the setting of a suicide attack betrays an unconscious need: useful information for investigators. The “on location” presence of the suicide attacker or an accomplice is almost guaranteed, before or after. Thus the sponsor of the Paris attacks on November 13, 2015, returned to the Bataclan at the very time when the police occupied the building.

This occurred because in the crowd, among the emergency workers, a presence is necessary after the attack to listen to the immediate reaction. For the terrorists, contemplating desolation and horror is an important objective.

The Sponsors, Producers of Human Bombs

Psychologically, indoctrination has to stimulate the unconscious designs of the candidate chosen for showing submission to the group and the leader, who is known as a symbolic orphan. Through charisma, the leader acquires total ascendancy over the candidate, who sometimes comes spontaneously to propose his or her services. Out of material and especially moral debt, the candidate for suicide ends up only hearing the discourse accusing the Other.

A frightening figure of the archaic father, the charismatic leader celebrates the funeral rites of the heroes; he carries on the memories of martyrs to ensure the stock of future suicide attackers is filled. Yet this charisma is not enough to change a person into a murdering machine, the tool of a global criminal organization. Knowing procedures of indoctrination and the primal impulses of the human mind, Salafist preachers use them coldly to produce human bombs. Let us look at the mental components that serve this undertaking.

Terrorist Utopia and Suicidal Tendencies of Terrorists

The suicidal tendencies of terrorists are a crucial component of their psychology. Normally repressed, this tendency resurfaces when the individual joins a terrorist group. Counting on antisocial violence to resolve internal mental conflicts, and therefore delivered to the death impulse, this “radicalized person” is quickly caught up in the very violence that will kill him or her in the end. This complex mental mechanism characterizes the terrorist psychology.

Even when narrow minded, this terrorist sees that society has means of defense that are much greater than his or her own. Before striking, the idea of martyrdom emerges into his or her mind and no discourse or appeal will contradict his or her certainty of a tragic end—a sought-after or even coveted fatalism. Personal consent to die triggers adherence to the project of terror. Fatalism and scorched-earth policies define terrorist practices.

Once made positive, the mystical attraction of death no longer blocks temptations; on the contrary, the fear of suffering gives way to the sadomasochistic pleasure of inflicting on others a pain identified as that of the victim, while waiting for inevitable death or capture. At any moment, a terrorist can die in action: death is therefore glorified to encourage those who hesitate; it delivers the terrorist from the existential anxiety and pain of a life experienced as a vice. This use of suicidal tendencies is also practiced in various sects.⁵⁸

Outside the deadly-anesthetizing discourses that aim to make death desirable, the names that units, or “phalanges” give themselves in Algerian terrorist groups speak volumes, such as, Phalange of Death and Phalange of Martyrs. Terrorists also say a goodbye prayer to the soul of the volunteer departing on a suicide mission. They celebrate the occasion with a real funeral ceremony and its rituals, like a real burial.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See on this subject. Farid Bencheikh, *La Symbolique de l'acte criminel, une approche psychanalytique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998).

Published in England by accomplices of the GIA, the publication *La clairvoyance* “El Tabsira” contains (in issue 203) a message to Algerian terrorists worried about death: “The best medication that we can prescribe for you, dear brother, is to think of the end of your life, the inevitable truth that removes any hesitation, arrogance, and pride. Asked about the subtleness of believers, the Prophet responded that the most ingenious believer is the one who always has death on his mind, who is the best prepared to confront the hereafter.”

Death drive, vertigo of annihilation, nirvana: converting the fear of death into a desire for annihilation shields terrorists from anxiety and hesitation. Whoever admits that the same psychic energy animates love and hate and refrains from moral judgment can see that suicide attacks by explosives reveal a relationship of fusion with the other. Here, a mental mechanism acts through which the fear of death and pain transforms into a spectacular desire to merge with the universe, through a deadly explosion.

Pain and death become desirable by stimulation of the latent desire in all human beings to escape existential anxiety. The force of evil is manipulated to reverse all moral obstacles. An old tradition, the banalization of pain and glorification of death thus become frightening weapons of the terrorists today. Faced with the mortification of their bodies and those of the victims, the terrorists use mysticism to inspire contempt of, or even desire for death. Often taken out of their original context, Quranic verses are used to persuade those who hesitate. A better life is promised to the martyrs of the holy war against the unbelievers.

The history of terrorism teaches us that always and everywhere, consciences are anesthetized according to the same procedure. Fascists or Russians, terrorists, and their families, were convinced to die for the “Holy” cause. The same was true for the Japanese, Indian, and Arab terrorists. Martyrs earning eternal life also sheds light on the history of Irish terrorism, from its beginnings until today. Further back in history, Flavius Josephus depicted religious faith, the vision of the death of Zealots as venerated and joyous. The Thugs shared the same attraction for death. In each case, disdain for death reinforced the struggle.

Whether it was from a religion or a nihilist philosophy, this exaltation of death, to be attractive, had to combine with the death drive and suicidal tendencies of a person. A text by the GIA signed by the terrorist leader Djamel Zitouni explains the defeat of Muslims in terms of a hatred for death and attachment to life. He cites a reported saying (*hadith*) of the Prophet: “If you hate death and hang on to life, God will weaken you compared with your adversary despite your power.” To embellish the idea of death and draw out the impulse toward destruction, these writings highlight the Quranic verses and statements of the Prophet describing paradise and eternal life, where all pleasures are allowed. Death thus becomes an object of desire and pleasure for terrorists.

These quotes abound in the discourses of the preachers of death, where the status of martyr goes to those who die in combat. Death is seen as the celestial vault giving access to a better life but also washing away all sins committed by the individual while alive. Finally, while indoctrination is indeed one of the most dangerous pieces of the mechanism described above, when it is isolated, it is inoffensive. With no effect on minds sheltered from the explosive mass,⁵⁹ indoctrination only plays the role of detonator.

Conclusion

Experience and study encourage me to offer some recommendations, while at the same time emphasizing the limits of my research due to the recentness of the phenomenon and the difficulties of approaching the subjects presented above.

[The recommendations mentioned here are more general in focus, not including more specific recommendations concerning Algeria]

- Expand the involvement of the penitentiary administration in the antiterrorist struggle to distinguish those who have truly repented from the diehards.
- Involve schools, an essential vector for transmitting a culture of peace and protecting against indoctrination.
- As the fight against terrorism is not fought by the security services alone, and the new forms of terrorism appear particularly virulent, there is an imperative need to establish a center for the study of the psychological and cultural aspects of terrorism, including specialists of different backgrounds. Its motivated and substantiated opinions would go straight to decision makers who could integrate them into a global antiterrorist struggle.
- The psychological and cultural aspects of terrorism should be taken into account by specialists and officials: military combat alone is not enough.
- The birth of the “Fatwa-natic” phenomenon, or the “Cloud” of fatwa, is a challenge to the international community. Cultural, psychological, and civilizational borders are now permeable to extremist “ideals.” The “Cloud” penetrates the homes of believers and non-believers, conservative families of every observance, schools, companies, and even the machinery of states. Developing self-defense technologies, especially computerized ones, is now an urgent necessity.
- Media and political strategies need a shared approach to the phenomenon, one based on clear concepts with no conflation between them. An informed specialist has difficulty understanding the almost official unanimity behind calling terrorists Jihadists. Even magistrates use this term, which in its original meaning designated

⁵⁹ The mass is the platform on which a person evolves from birth, and even before, and is composed of the set of psychological, social, historical, economic, and political elements which combine to decide the person's future.

legitimate combatants. For the terrorists, this is an explicit recognition of the pertinence of their misdeeds.

This also adds grist to the mill of some critics, who see Westerners as knowingly using this vocabulary to appear to be fighting Islamist armies and not terrorist groups, in reference to the Crusades.

Finally: Should We Engage in Dialogue with Terrorists?

Even indirectly, it is vexing to engage in dialogue with criminals, because it is against our sense of morality and ethics, especially for those whose power comes from laws. The aversion is even greater when the criminal targets the rule of law to replace it with a fanatic and dictatorial system. This is true, of course, if “dialogue” is understood as concession or a reversal (even symbolically) of roles. This “dialogue” can also mean skillful responses, messages addressed to the psychological hostages of the terrorists or aimed at protecting potential victims. These practices should serve as the basis for communication with a neutralizing effect, targeting less at public opinion than the criminals themselves, since communication is an integral part of the fight.

This communication would appear less as a negotiation than as a symbolic retaliation to terror. While indifference aimed at minimizing or ridiculing the adversary is sometimes used as a communications strategy in war, we should not forget that in individual psychology, indifference pushes the individual to make him- or herself heard by any means, even the most explosive ones. Indifference to terror runs the risk of strengthening indoctrination. I would also emphasize that a mechanism of identification encountering indifference sends the candidate for suicide a negative image of the tyrannical father or another symbol of authority. And affective coldness explains the psychological vulnerability of a weak individual fascinated by the sponsors.

Official statements after an attack carry heavy consequences for the future. Sponsors are always on alert and already thinking of the response that will weaken the credibility of officials and they will use all the means at their disposal to this end. To leave an impression and counter the initial official discourse, the terrorist response has to be quick. That, then, is an important operational point to conclude this study: the legacy of dramatic but instructive experience.