THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM:
A CASE STUDY OF OSAMA BIN LADEN

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ABSTRACT  

Sociologists and psychiatrists often contend that culture, religion, social and economic factors are precursors to extremist Islamic ideology. According to Robert Robins and Jerrold Post in their groundbreaking book, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred*, paranoia is the hallmark of radical thinking. Post and Robins argue political paranoia is responsible for every social disaster in history and is among the root causes for the decline of the West. This thesis will test Robins’ and Post’s hypothesis by conducting a case study of Osama bin Laden. Specifically, I explore significant events in bin Laden’s life that drove him to cross the line from paranoia into psychopathy exhibited by his propensity to eliminate perceived enemies and his remarkable ability to manipulate others. This includes convincing a worldwide network of Muslims that the West seeks to destroy Islam.  

Using the work of Robins and Post to establish the foundational concept of political paranoia, along with Frances Fukuyama’s theory of the end of history, and Dr. Robert Hare’s notion of the psychopath, this thesis explores how these phenomena impacted bin Laden’s reasoning. To accomplish this, I examine bin Laden’s formative years to assess how family, religion and events in Egypt and Afghanistan shaped his thinking. The philosophy of Sayyid Qutb,
ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, is highlighted to demonstrate that al Qaeda’s ideology is simply a repackaging of Qutb’s works to justify martyrdom as an ethical form of jihad and piety. Notably, Qutb considered America to be morally bankrupt and secular government to be an affront to Islam. This notion was adopted by bin Laden to justify his hatred of the Saudi government and the West. In conclusion, I assert bin Laden sought to turn Islam against the West to establish a new Islamic regime with himself at front and center. After the September 11 attacks, a decade of war, and an economy that cannot sustain a bloated security apparatus, the West has been forced by terrorists like bin Laden to become paranoid for good reason.
DEDICATION

To my husband David
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GLOSSARY

Al Qaeda. “The base” is the name of the radical Islamic terrorist organization headed by Osama bin Laden, before his death, and Ayman al Zawahiri, both of whom were responsible for the September 11 attacks in the United States.

Caliphate. A political-religious state comprising the Muslim community, land, and people under its jurisdiction following the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Ruled by a caliph (Arabic khalīfah, “successor”), who held temporal and sometimes spiritual authority, the empire of the Caliphate grew rapidly through conquest during its first two centuries to include most of Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Spain.

Dhimmis. Non-Muslims living under Islamic rule. In exchange for voluntarily paying the jizya and accepting “second-class” status by obeying several social restrictions, Christians, Jews, and other “People of the Book” are guaranteed protection from a Muslim state under sharia law. The neologism dhimmitude denotes non-Muslim (usually western appeasement of Muslims).

Emir. Prince or military commander.

Fiqh. Islamic jurisprudence.

Fatwa. A legal opinion or decree issued by a recognized authority and derived from Islam’s roots of jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh).

Fard‘ayn. Obligatory jihad against apostates (non-Muslims) who occupy Muslim land.

Hadith. Traditions, words, and deeds derived from the Prophet Muhammad, which supplement and provides context for the Koran. All traditional schools of Sunni jurisprudence (madhhabs) regard the hadith as an extremely important source for determining the sunna and by extension the sharia. There are six authoritative collections, compiled by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasi‘I, and Ibn Maja. The collections of Bukhari and Muslim especially are considered second only to the Koran in authority.

Imam. Denotes a divinely appointed and infallible ruler whose word is law in Shi’a Islam.

Islam. Verbal imperative meaning “submit” to Allah based on monotheistic religion which began in seventh-century Arabia by the Prophet Muhammad now adhered to by 1.2 billion people.

Jahiliyya. Ignorance and refers to the period of pre-Islamic Arabia when most Arabs were pagans and idolaters. In contemporary usage, it refers to any condition, society, or person that does not live in accordance with Islam and its sharia.

Jihad. To “strive” or “struggle.” In the Koran and hadith, jihad means warfare in the service of Islam or “holy war.” A secondary meaning, upheld by Sufis in
particular, means the “greater” *jihad* is an internal struggle between a person and his vices.

**Jizya.** Under sharia law, a special tax paid by non-Muslims (*dhimmis*) living in Islamic states, founded on the Koran and *hadith*. In classical juridical writings, *jizya* is often used to place social restrictions on *dhimmis*.

**Madhbabs.** Literally, “road followed” or “ideology.” *Madhhab* are Islamic schools of thought and religious jurisprudence. There are currently four universally recognized schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam: Malaki, Shafi’i, Hanbali, and Hanafi, all named after their founders. They all agree on the fundamentals of the faith but differ over fine points of jurisprudence and methodology.

**Mufti.** An Islamic scholar from the *ulema* class who specialize in *sharia* law and who are authorized to issue legal judgments or *fatwas*.

**Mujahedeen.** (pl. *mujahidin*). A Muslim “holy warrior” etymologically related to the word *jihad*, a mujahid is one who wages *jihad*. *Mujahidin* are generally referred to as “jihadists” in English.

**Shiite.** Muslims who believe that Muhammad’s leadership of the umma was bequeathed to Ali and his descendants, to whom special legislative powers and spiritual knowledge were vouchsafed.

**Sharia.** Means the “way” and is drawn primarily from commandments, prohibitions, and precedents in the Koran and *sunna*. Sharia is a comprehensive body of laws governing Islamic society. Understood to be Allah’s Law and often translated as “Divine law” the *sharia* covers everyday issues such as: politics, economics, finances, business and contractual laws, dress codes, dietary laws, familial obligations, and sexual ethics.

**Sheikh.** An honorific title that means revered or wise elder who is an authoritative scholar of Islam.

**Sultan.** Means “power wielder” denoting an authority figure who rules through force.

**Sunna.** The way of life prescribed as normative in Islam, based on the teachings and practices of Muhammad and on exegesis of the Koran. Also called *hadith*.

**Taqiyya.** Means “to fear” and is based on Koran 3:28 and 16:106. *Taqiyya* is an Islamic doctrine allowing Muslims to dissemble their true beliefs when fearing persecution. Based on certain *hadiths*, some *ulema* expand the meaning of *taqiyya* to permit lying to advance any cause beneficial to Islam.

**Tawhid.** The affirmation of oneness or unity with Allah, sometimes translated as “monotheism.” *Tawhid* is the belief that Allah has no partners or associates in any way, shape, or form. Traditional Islam holds that most religions (especially Christianity and Judaism) express this basic truth but have been perverted through the belief or practice there is something else—whether a person (e.g.,
Jesus) or concept (e.g., democracy)—that is equal to or sovereign with Allah. It is enshrined in the Muslim profession of faith: “There is no God but Allah.”

**Ulema.** “The learned ones” including past and present scholars who made it their business to know and study every aspect of Islam. As guardians and interpreters of *sharia*, the *ulema* traditionally hold a prominent place in Muslim society. The consensus of the *umma*—which in reality translates into the consensus of the *ulema*—is second only to the Koran and *sunna* in authority and is seen as binding on the entire *umma*. Their backing is often sought (or bought) by governments of Muslim countries, as they confer religious legitimacy.

**Umma.** An international community or nation of Muslims which transcends ethnic, linguistic, and political definition.
CHAPTER ONE: POLITICAL PARANOIA

Our brain has developed a capacity to create for us a world of our own making and imagination. Very few of us live in the real world. We live in the world of our perceptions, and those perceptions differ dramatically according to our personal experiences. We may perceive danger where there is none. If the distortion is ever enough we may think we are living among enemies even while surrounded by friends.

– Willard Gaylin, The Rage Within

Introduction

Willard Gaylin, an American psychiatrist, bioethicist, and founder of the Hastings Center suggests, our perceptions shape our reality and different experiences shape our perceptions from infancy. This idea serves as the underlying theme of this investigation. Gaylin’s view is shared by Robert Robins and Jerrold Post, who cite Gaylin in their ground breaking book, Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred. According to Robins and Post, paranoia is the “quintessential political psychopathology and has had and will have a profoundly destructive effect on human affairs, for it is deeply embedded within human nature” (Robins and Post 1997, 6). Robins and Post identify seven characteristics of the paranoid personality; suspiciousness, centrality, grandiosity, hostility, fear of losing autonomy, projection and delusional thinking (Ibid., 7). Each paranoid characteristic is described using practical examples in daily life and on the political stage to demonstrate later

1 The Hastings Center is an independent, nonpartisan, and nonprofit bioethics research institute founded in 1969. The Center’s mission is to address fundamental ethical issues in the areas of health, medicine, and the environment as they affect individuals, communities, and societies. (Hastings Center Mission Statement)
how they developed in Osama bin Laden, Saudi Arabia’s most infamous terrorist.

As a point of comparison, Francis Fukuyama’s theory regarding man’s fight for recognition in his work, *The End of History and The Last Man*, is introduced to identify corollaries between Robins and Post’s notion of the paranoid personality. Next, Robert Hare’s chilling book, *Without Conscience*, is presented which describes a person devoid of feeling to determine if it has relevance to Robins, Post and Fukuyama theories. In so doing, a model for identifying behavioral indicators of individuals or groups that exhibit terrorist tendencies is developed that may be used by United States intelligence officials as a preventative measure to stop terrorist acts before they happen.

The seven characteristics of political paranoia are described next.

**Suspiciousness**

Robins and Post assert that suspiciousness is the principal component of paranoia. For someone with a suspicious nature, things are not what they seem. People with suspicious minds do not allow themselves to be distracted by “innocent facts” but claim to see right through them. They continuously search for hidden meaning and clues about enemies they know are out there. The authors describe a suspicious mind in terms of a scientific quest, but with a crucial difference. When “seeking truth, scientists reason deductively and inductively searching for an explanation for their observations” (Ibid., 8). In other words, a scientist tests his claims to prove or disprove his theory. In contrast, the paranoid is certain he already knows the truth and searches for
confirmation of his beliefs. The authors contend the suspicious paranoid will, with great ingenuity, interpret away facts that do not fit with his delusions. Robins and Post say, “Exercising reason without judgment, using facts without balance, the classic paranoid is thoroughly logical; it is his premises that are false. He is a fact collector but his facts only fit the logical system he has devised” (Ibid., 9).

Robins and Post claim the special psycho-logic of the suspicious paranoid is, in part, a delusional disorder called paleologic. Paleologic reasoning is associated with the primitive perceptions of a child or of a people trying to make sense out of something incomprehensible. This premise is based on Eilhard Von Domarus’ theory developed while studying the delusions of paranoid schizophrenics. According to Von Domarus, a normal person accepts identity only on the basis of identical subjects, but the paleologician accepts identity based on identical predicates. Consequently, any two things that share common features are considered identical. For example, if a child runs up to a strange man, who is not his father, shouting “Daddy” the child is suffers from paleologic. In the child’s mind, Daddy wears pants, the stranger wears pants therefore the stranger is Daddy. A more disturbing example is of a delusional woman, who is still a virgin, who believes she is the holy Virgin Mary. She is a virgin, Mary is a virgin; they are the same. To be clear, the women certainly share the same characteristic of virginity, but the meaning attached to each woman’s innocence is completely unrelated. For Robins and
Post, this “associational logic” explains the significance the paranoid person often attaches to two unrelated events (Ibid.).

In a larger framework, a paleologist victimized during the September 11 attacks may believe all Muslims want to kill Americans, even in the face of evidence that this is not true. Likewise, Islamic paleologists might believe the United States is out to destroy Islam because some Americans are still angry about the attacks. Robins and Post maintain therefore that politics dominated by paleologic means that tragedy and misfortune are often perceived as personal injustices, not accidents. It is demonstrated in chapter two that Osama bin Laden adopted this same reasoning after a series of traumatic but unrelated events occurred early in his life. It is argued later that paleologic reasoning was the root cause for the September 11 attacks on the United States.

**Centrality**

Centrality is based on the belief the paranoid person is the victim of malevolent intent. For instance, if a person makes a comment during a conversation that offends the other person, it is categorized psychologically as a personal attack; even if the comment had nothing to do with that person. When the person tries to explain the comment was not directed at him, no reason will suffice, it was meant as an intentional insult. This paranoid believes he is an object of “great interest” and everything that happens is proof that enemies conspire against him. Thus, defensiveness characterizes centrality. The individual instinctively assumes a defensive stance with everyone around
him because in his mind he is the center of attention. Anything is better than being ignored. To paraphrase Robins and Post, for the self-centered paranoid the world is comprised of real or imaginary people or organizations that conspire to inflict harm on him personally (Ibid., 10). The movie, *Shutter Island*, released in 2010 starring Leonardo DiCaprio is an excellent illustration of centrality. In the story, a detective investigates the disappearance of murderer in a hospital for the criminally insane. The dramatic conclusion of the movie reveals that DiCaprio concocted in his mind an elaborate plot of deceit and betrayal directed at him. In reality, DiCaprio’s character was severely traumatized by the murder of his family. To protect himself, he created a world of enemies conspiring against him to avoid facing a personal and horrific tragedy that his mind could not accept.

The controversy surrounding the Danish cartoons caricaturing the Prophet Muhammad in 2005 and early 2006 is another case of centrality. According to the *New York Times*, Muslims rioted worldwide burning Christian churches and storming embassies, killing more than 200 people to express their outrage (*Danish Cartoon Controversy* 2009). It was never acknowledged there is a long standing tradition of artistic representation in Islamic and Western art of Christian and Muslim Prophets. Prior to the scandal most depictions of Prophets appeared without incident. Al Qaeda, the infamous terrorist group founded by Osama bin Laden, claimed responsibility for the bombings as revenge for the insult. Similar to the character in *Shutter Island*, al Qaeda chooses to believe enemies conspire against Islam that is not based
in reality. Some unconfirmed reports suggest the cartoon was actually released by al-Qaeda to incite anger at the United States. Raymond Ibrahim reports in, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, that “al Qaeda typically gives Muslims reasons why they should hate the West that differ from those they give in political speeches” (Ibrahim 2007, 2). In other words, the truth changes depending on the audience. The bottom line is that artistic depictions of both Christian and Islamic prophets mean no disrespect toward our religions and most rational individuals understand this.

**Grandiosity**

Grandiosity implies that I am right and you are wrong and there is no room for debate. The paranoid, grandiose person knows the incontestable truth and displays contempt for those foolish enough to question his judgment. According to Robins and Post, this behavior usually leads to significant conflict in interpersonal relationships (Robins and Post 1997, 10). Most of us have encountered certain people who must always be right. I had a friend once who was affable and pleasant until someone disagreed with him. The moment anyone expressed an opinion, including me, that differed from his he turned vicious and retaliated with unprovoked personal insults. After a several months of attempting to have a balanced friendship with this person, I decided it was best to sever ties for my own well-being. On a larger scale, the ability to share ideas without attribution explains why grandiose leaders in China and North
Korea censor media coverage of world events like the *Arab Spring*.² These leaders will not entertain the possibility that democracy is a viable form of government because they fear losing control. It is well documented that anyone who speaks out against the Chinese or North Korean government is either killed or, in the best case, imprisoned. Grandiosity is not conducive to close personal relationships or collaborative partnerships personally or on the world stage.

**Hostility**

Hostility, like centrality, is another glaring trait in the paranoid’s character because of his inability to compromise with others. Robins and Post describe it best.

> The paranoid is belligerent and irritable, humorless and extremely sensitive to slight, combative and quarrelsome, tightly wound and bristlingly defensive. And this defensive posture contains a poised readiness to attack. To be around a paranoid is to sense that one must walk on eggshells lest he be provoked and lash out.

> The intensity of the paranoid’s inner hostility is so great that he becomes caught up in an ever-growing need for love. Because of his profound self-doubts, however, he is ready for rejection, and the search for love is bound to fail. The underlying insecurity and uncertainty may drive the paranoid coercively to extract proofs of love or loyalty. (Ibid., 10 - 11)

Like suspiciousness and grandiosity, the paranoid person is usually angry at perceived offences directed at him. This paranoid is hostile “toward perceived enemies and in a self-fulfilling prophecy” confirms the fear that others are out to get him if they express a belief that differs from his perspective. The authors

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² *Arab Spring* refers to the democratic uprisings that arose independently and spread across the Arab world in 2011. The movement originated in Tunisia in December 2010 and quickly took hold in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. (Council on Foreign Affairs, 2011)
make the distinction between openly defiant paranoid personalities in contrast to withdrawn paranoids who silently harbor grievances, but secretly plot revenge (Ibid.). This is a common practice in the corporate world. For example, if an employee is not well-liked by the boss he is often passed over for promotions in favor of less qualified individuals who are more responsive to the boss’ demands.

In chapter two, a picture of Osama bin Laden as a young man emerges which strongly supports the theory of a withdrawn paranoid. Bin Laden, a quiet kid, was forced to compete with numerous siblings. Bin Laden’s contact with his father was infrequent and without intimacy, likely leaving him feeling overshadowed by his siblings and craving attention. To compound matters, bin Laden’s father’s polygamous lifestyle diminished the value of his mother because she was discarded at a young age for a new wife. These factors, combined with the devastating effects on the Arab consciousness after the 1967 war with Israel, were precursors to Bin Laden’s growing hostility towards the United States. Arguably it was easier for Bin Laden to direct his anger outward than to objectively examine his own feelings over the Arab situation. Conceivably, Osama’s rage at the United States was a reflection of his frustration over being overshadowed by his siblings and anger at this father’s lack of attention. Expressing those feelings to his father was not within the realm of possibility for Osama bin Laden; children in Saudi Arabia do not have that luxury.
Fear of Losing Autonomy

“Like a coiled spring, the paranoid lives in a state of readiness” and his motto is “don’t tread on me.” These ideas reflect Robins and Post’s impressions of the paranoid’s fear of losing autonomy. This aspect of paranoia can be summed up as follows: fear of authority figures, exaggerated concern for personal safety, fear of all weakness, and the inability to accept compromise. Much like the paranoid consumed by centrality, this person lives in a “constant state of warfare with real and imaginary enemies seeking to control him and destroy his autonomy.” This seems to mirror the character in Shutter Island who is convinced that everyone is out to get him; to shield himself from his own personal tragedies. As Robins and Post point out, this paranoid is wary of any attempt by a superior force to impose their will on him and thus tries to maintain an exaggerated independence. The irony of this delusional thought process is that while the individual seeks to insulate himself from harm, he constantly puts himself in danger (Ibid., 11 - 12).

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein’s campaign against the Kurds in September 1988 is an extreme example this fear. Hussein killed 5,000 men, woman, and children in the Kurdish town of Halabja with mustard and nerve gas bombs (Charges facing Hussein, 2004). One can only surmise Hussein was afraid the majority Kurds would outnumber the minority Shia population. In 1990, Saddam invaded Kuwait believing he could seize the tiny oil rich country and use their resources to pay his debts. Iraqi soldiers tortured and executed hundreds of prisoners and looted Kuwait City. The invasion led to an
outcry from the international community and United States involvement in January 1991. As a result, Iraq was kicked-out of Kuwait and heavy sanctions imposed against Hussein (Johns 2006). Saddam’s efforts to protect himself from falling behind in debt backfired. Arguably, it was the beginning of the end for Saddam.

Projection

Robins and Post say projection is the “hallmark” of paranoia because it presents an “autistic” view of the world. Projection involves the tendency of “small people” to endow perceived enemies with exaggerated power and size. This was how Saddam probably viewed United States’ support of Kuwait after Iraq’s invasion. The authors define projection as an “aberration” of the normal state of shame. In other words, this paranoid cannot tolerate any type of pain so they project it onto others or into the environment. Projection serves two objectives: it makes the pain more manageable but distorts reality. Reality is distorted because it is based on the person’s perceptions rather than facts. The authors claim this person becomes more concerned with uncovering hidden motives than accepting truth. Projection is one of the most dangerous of the paranoid characteristics because it intersects with truth but is skewed by a distorted belief system (Robins and Post 1997, 12). A telling example of projection is the belief that America is out to destroy Islam when America’s primary objective is to protect its citizens. A common example of projection is a thief who feels justified in stealing from others because of perceived inequities between the rich and poor. In the perpetrator’s mind, he is the victim.
of an unfair system that is destroying him. Yet, he fails to realize he is victimizing others in the same way he perceives himself to be victimized.

**Delusional Thinking**

Robins and Post believe delusional thinking is a compilation of all seven characteristics of the paranoid personality. Suspiciousness, centrality, and grandiosity are manifested by the individual's certainty that others are out to get him. This is because he perceives himself to be the subject of “great interest.” This paranoid is so convinced of this reality that he will ignore obvious evidence that his judgment is skewed. Providing proof of flawed reasoning is viewed as betrayal by anyone brave enough to confront him. This leads to hostility which compels the paranoid to strike out to protect the self against losing autonomy and to maintain the upper hand. According to Robins and Post, the fear is so great that the individual will project his feelings on to others to manage overwhelming feelings of inadequacy. As stated previously, the problem is that reality and delusional thinking collide causing the paranoid to act on scenarios created in his mind, based on just enough fact to justify his position. Robins and Post sum up the paranoid’s thinking in the following statement.

The paranoid protects himself against unbearable reality by constructing an alternate reality. The newly constructed reality is a solace for the wounded ego. The paranoid’s centrality is a defense against insignificance. The need to sustain a positive self-image explains why the paranoid clings so tenaciously to the idea that he is the object of a conspiracy. Even though one would expect the paranoid to be reassured to learn that there is no persecutory plot, in fact this would be devastating. It would deprive him of his sense of importance. It is better to be persecuted than to be ignored. If he feels inconsequential,
the delusion of being the center of a conspiracy will make him feel important. If a person sees himself as a failure, attributing this failure to another’s malicious actions restores his self-esteem. (Ibid., 15)

The seven characteristics of paranoia described by Robins and Post demonstrate how deeply invested the paranoid person is to their perverse belief system. Without these beliefs they perceive themselves as insignificant. Examples like Osama bin Laden’s September 11 attacks on the United States, media censorship in China and North Korea, and Saddam Hussein’s massacre of 5,000 people are only a few examples of the extremes a paranoid will go to protect his beliefs. Paranoid political leaders are the most dangerous because their neuroses usually impact on a large number of people. On a more basic level, friendships are lost, good employees are marginalized, and people are robbed.

Before turning to the examination of bin Laden it is useful to contrast Robins and Post’s theory with other philosophical concepts as points of comparison. Francis Fukuyama’s book, The End of History and The Last Man, is briefly explored to assess if his notion of man’s need for recognition, derived from the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), may be attributable to an individual’s desire for power. Lastly, the reflections of Robert Hare in his compelling book, Without Conscience, is highlighted to see if what Robins and Post describe as paranoia characterized by cruelty and violence are the machinations of psychopaths without a conscience.
Francis Fukuyama

According to Friedrich Hegel, man’s method of gaining recognition is from emerging victorious from mortal combat with another contestant. Logically speaking, at first glance, the victor in this battle emerges as the master. Hegel explains:

And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance. . . . The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. (Fukuyama 2006, xvi)

Spring boarding from Hegel, Fukuyama describes man’s need for sustenance like food, shelter, and self-preservation as innate traits of being human. But, satisfying those physical requirements is not enough for man’s psychological fulfillment. Like Hegel, Fukuyama believes man has an innate desire for personal recognition. These authors believe the fight for recognition endows an individual with dignity and value based on one’s willingness to risk their life in a battle for “pure prestige” what Robins and Post would describe as grandiosity. For Hegel and by extension Fukuyama, this unique form of prestige is derived from the battle for recognition when a man overcomes animal instinct to achieve a higher purpose. In the following statement Fukuyama explains how man achieves mastery.

When the natural fear of death leads one combatant to submit, the relationship of master and slave is born. The stakes in this bloody battle at the beginning of history are not food, shelter, or security, but pure prestige. And precisely because the goal of the battle is not
determined by biology, Hegel sees in it the first glimmer of human freedom. (Fukuyama 2006, xvi - xvii)

For Hegel and Fukuyama, desire for objects outside of ourselves empower one with the ability to rise above animal instinct using “reason and calculation” to achieve those goals. Equally important, not only do human beings seek recognition of their own worth in this process, but they recognize the value of the objects for which they fight. Fukuyama describes the argument.

The propensity to feel self-esteem arises out of the part of the soul called thymos [spiritedness]. It is like an innate human sense of justice. People believe that they have a certain worth, and when other people treat them as though they are worth less than that, they experience the emotion of anger. Conversely, when people fail to live up to their own sense of worth, they feel shame, and when they are evaluated correctly in proportion to their worth, they feel pride. The desire for recognition, and the accompanying emotions of anger, shame, and pride are parts of the human personality critical to political life. According to Hegel, they are what drives the whole historical process.

By Hegel's account, the desire to be recognized as a human being with dignity drove man at the beginning of history into a bloody battle to the death for prestige. The outcome of this battle was a division of human society into a class of masters, who were willing to risk their lives, and a class of slaves, who gave in to their natural fear of death. (Ibid., xvii)

Hegel and Fukuyama point out however that man can never be satisfied with this form of recognition alone despite achieving a high level of personal freedom and recognition. Regrettably, in this scenario slaves are not empowered with the same value as other human beings. Therefore, since the master is only recognized by slaves, not other masters, he is left feeling inherently dissatisfied. For instance, Saddam Hussein did not view his
countrymen as human beings with value, only as instruments to carry out his will. Thus, Hussein was unable to satisfy his desire for recognition and power so he kept killing people until it led to his demise. As illustrated later, the same thing happened to Osama bin Laden.

Not surprisingly, the fight for recognition led to a new stage in history characterized by the French and American Revolutions which toppled the aristocracy and monarchical institutions. These revolutions in theory, if not always in practice, allowed all men to be recognized for their individual value and worth (Ibid., xvii - xviii). Fukuyama points out however that Hegel’s view of democracy differed markedly from leaders in the United States and Great Britain who primarily viewed democracy as “enlightened self-interest.” Specifically, America’s founding fathers like Jefferson and Madison believed individual rights existed to satisfy “a private sphere where men can enrich themselves.” In Hegel’s view, these remarkable men mollified their consciences with moral language that amounted to nothing more than platitudes. For example, Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence never freed his slaves because they were his primary source of income. Fukuyama clarifies Hegel’s meaning in the following statement.

Hegel saw rights as ends in themselves, because what truly satisfies human beings is not so much material prosperity as recognition of their status and dignity. With the American and French revolutions, Hegel asserted that history comes to an end because the longing that had driven the historical process—the struggle for recognition—has now been satisfied in a society characterized by universal and reciprocal recognition. No other arrangement of human social institutions is better able to satisfy this longing, and hence no further progressive historical change is possible.
The desire for recognition, then, can provide the missing link between liberal economics and liberal politics. Desire and reason are together sufficient to explain the process of industrialization, and a large part of economic life more generally. But they cannot explain the striving for liberal democracy, which ultimately arises out of thymos, the part of the soul that demands recognition. The social changes that accompany advanced industrialization, in particular universal education, appear to liberate a certain demand for recognition that did not exist among poorer and less educated people. (Ibid., xviii)

What Fukuyama, following Hegel's lead, is asserting is that democracy is the highest form of consciousness in a civil society. This is because democracy provides people with the freedom to pursue their dreams and achieve higher levels of economic prosperity and personal success. For Hegel, liberal democracy is the means not the end, of history's continuation. From this perspective, what the authors are saying is that the concept of political democracy marks the end of history from an ideological standpoint. In essence, the idea of liberal democracy can be equaled to the idea of God's benevolence. There is no higher form of social and political governance because it empowers all with the freedom to climb as high in the world as they are willing and capable.

From a practical perspective, since all human beings need recognition it is much easier to achieve within the framework of a democracy. This is because all people are recognized for their value rather than one person maintaining dominion over a few via a war for mastery. Ultimately, killing other people for control never completely satisfies. There is always another battle to fight. No matter the pinnacle of achievement the master will not be recognized or valued by everyone. This is why monarchies, aristocracies and dictatorships
fail. Sooner or later, people start to value the idea of human freedom more than the need for food and shelter and will die for that right just as Hegel prophesized. The Arab Spring discussed earlier proves this hypothesis. This movement uprooted the Egyptian and Libyan dictatorships and is now shaking Syria’s foundation. The Syrian President Bashar al Assad steadily massacres his people every day, yet still they fight.

So how does Hegel and Fukuyama’s theory link with the concept of political paranoia postulated by Robins and Post? The fight for recognition invokes the same feelings that stem from paranoia. Specifically, when one person treats another unjustly they get angry and hostile and sooner or later retaliate. When people are treated unjustly they become suspicious of everyone. They exhibit characteristics of centrality where every action is viewed as a personal attack even when it is not meant that way. In essence, the paranoid mind is nothing more than the distorted desire for recognition with no meaningful outlet. History has shown, these traits are the psychological breeding ground for terrorism, political corruption, and abusive relationships and can be linked to every form of violence known to mankind. It started with the formation of monarchies and it continues at present with dictatorships. Next, an attempt is made to understand if people who commit atrocities are paranoid or without conscience.
Robert Hare, PhD

According to Robert Hare in his book, *Without Conscience*, there is a marked distinction between the paranoid mind and the psychopathic mind; although the two overlap and can easily be confused. Renown author William March in his compelling novel, *The Bad Seed*, depicts how evil is masked in the face of innocence.

[Good] people are rarely suspicious: they cannot imagine others doing the things they themselves are incapable of doing; usually they accept the undramatic solution as the correct one, and let matters rest there. Then too, the normal are inclined to visualize the [psychopath] as one who’s as monstrous in appearance as he is in mind, which is about as far from the truth as one could well get. These monsters of real life usually looked and behaved in a more normal manner than their actually normal brothers and sisters; they presented a more convincing picture of virtue than virtue presented of itself—just, as the wax rosebud or the plastic peach should be, than the imperfect original from which it had been modeled. (Hare 1993, xvii)

The nature of the psychopathic personality from Hare’s perspective is to describe a person completely without conscience. In his words, psychopaths are social predators who charm, manipulate, and ruthlessly plow their way through life, leaving a broad trail of broken hearts, shattered expectations, and empty wallets. Completely lacking in conscience and in feelings for others, they selfishly take what they want and do as they please, violating social norms and expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret (Hare 1993, xi). Hare felt it was necessary to write this book because of the public’s exposure to the “depredations of psychopaths” and to help people understand what they are up against if or when they encounter a psychopath.
The biggest obstacle to identifying a psychopath as alluded to in March’s statement is that they look and sound downright normal. Hare cautions against just identifying psychopaths with serial killers, criminals, or terrorists because they could easily be neighbors or coworkers. Psychopaths are highly adept at masking true character behind a veneer of normalcy and even virtue from a textbook standpoint. What this means is that the psychopath’s actions are based solely on an intellectual understanding of expected norms. Typically, when one encounters a psychopath they feel like something is wrong with their self rather than the psychopath. The overwhelming feeling is that something is definitely not right but since one cannot easily pinpoint the problem, they usually ignore it. To illustrate the point, Hare uses case studies to showcase particular characteristics of psychopathy. In the interest of focus only two characteristics of psychopathy are highlighted in this analysis: lying and disobeying societal rules. Hare’s account of Ray’s story personifies both behaviors in a profound way.

Dr. Hare met Ray on his first day on the job at a maximum security prison. When Ray entered Dr. Hare’s office he immediately began tossing around a knife while maintaining intense eye contact with Hare (Ibid., 11). Hare knew immediately if he pressed the alarm on his desk (of which Ray was aware) he ran the risk of being physically harmed. Hare also knew if he reported the violation to prison officials that word would get out to other inmates that he could not be trusted. Dr. Hare decided not to react to Ray who moments later confided the knife was not meant for him but for another inmate who violated
his protégé; a prison term used for a passive sexual partner. Although Ray did not stab the other inmate, he effectively entrapped Dr. Hare because he kept quiet about Ray’s violation of prison rules. Hare chose not to report Ray, not to protect Ray, but because he wanted to create an atmosphere of trust for other inmates who might actually want help; a fact that Ray immediately picked-up on. Psychopaths have an uncanny ability to recognize vulnerabilities in others and use it to their advantage. In this case, it was Dr. Hare’s desire to help other inmates. Hare said from the first meeting on:

Ray managed to make my eight-month stint at the prison miserable. His constant demands on my time and his attempts to manipulate me into doing things for him were unending. On one occasion, he convinced me that he would make a good cook—he felt he had a natural bent for cooking, he thought he would become a chef when he was released, this was a great opportunity to try out some of his ideas to make institutional food preparation more efficient, etc.—and I supported his request for a transfer from the machine shop (where he made the knife). What I did not consider was that the kitchen was a source of sugar, potatoes, fruit, and other ingredients that could be turned into alcohol. Several months after I recommended the transfer, there was a mighty eruption below the floorboards directly under the warden’s table. When the commotion died down, we found an elaborate system for distilling alcohol below the floor. Something had gone wrong and one of the pots exploded. There was nothing unusual about the presence of a still in a maximum-security prison, but the audacity of placing one under the warden’s seat shook up a lot of people. When it was discovered that Ray was the brains behind the bootleg operation, he spent some time in solitary confinement. (Ibid., 11 - 12)

What amazed Dr. Hare after Ray got out of the “hole” is he later appeared in his office as if nothing happened. Not only that, he asked Hare to support his transfer to the auto shop because he had a “knack” for fixing cars and this change would prepare him for the outside world. The same story Ray gave for making his case to work in the kitchen. Before Dr. Hare left the prison
to pursue doctoral studies, Ray had almost convinced Hare to ask his father to hire Ray as a construction worker in his company as part of his parole. When Dr. Hare shared this plan with other prison officials they laughed uproariously because everyone knew Ray was a liar. All had been hoodwinked by Ray at one time or another. Dr. Hare describes how Ray could convince anyone to believe just about anything:

Ray had an incredible ability to con not just me but everybody. He could talk, and lie, with a smoothness and a directness that sometimes momentarily disarmed even the most experienced and cynical of the prison staff. When I met him he had a long criminal record behind him (and, as it turned out, ahead of him); about half his adult life had been spent in prison, and many of his crimes had been violent. Yet he convinced me, and others more experienced than I, of his readiness to reform, that his interest in crime had been completely overshadowed by a driving passion in—well, cooking, mechanics, you name it. He lied endlessly, lazily, about everything, and it disturbed him not a whit whenever I pointed out something in his file that contradicted one of his lies. He would simply change the subject and spin off in a different direction. Finally convinced that he might not make the perfect job candidate in my father's firm, I turned down Ray's request—and was shaken by his nastiness at my refusal. (Ibid., 12 - 13)

To make a long story short, Ray was reassigned to the prison's auto shop, because of his newfound passion, and given an opportunity to fix Dr. Hare’s car prior to his departure from prison service. As mentioned, Dr. Hare was taking his family to Ontario where he would attend University to pursue his doctorate. Not long after the family embarked on the trip things began going wrong with the car, culminating in brake failure while going full-speed down a steep hill. Dr. Hare discovered the brake line had been cut, endangering the lives of his family and himself. Hare knew Ray had cut the brake-line in retaliation for his refusal to get him a job at his father's company. The idea of
potentially killing Hare and/or his family by tampering with the car did not enter Ray’s consciousness. Dr. Hare denied Ray’s request, end of story in Ray’s mind. Dr. Hare had to suffer for this betrayal. Ray clearly did not entertain the possibility that his lies were the reason for Dr. Hare’s rejection. Ray would do anything to get what he wanted; if someone got hurt along the way so be it.

In summary, Ray’s story personifies the characteristics of the paranoid personality but not man’s fight for recognition. This is because man is fighting for something that he deems valuable outside of his self. For the psychopath nothing has value outside of self. While political paranoia often manifests itself in horrific ways, in some cases there is a motivation that attributes value to a cause or a belief. For psychopaths, all sentiments relating to obligatory responsibility to a person or cause outside of themselves are conspicuously absent. Thus, I submit that terrorism is not the manifestation of a psychopathic personality but a paranoid personality who is fighting for recognition. However, there are many psychopaths who align themselves with extremist causes as a distorted way to manipulate people for their own ends. This is the fundamental modes operandi of a psychopath.
Making the Connections

As stated, the unique characteristic of a psychopath is their ability to smoothly blend into society with lies and manipulation without guilt or remorse. Characteristics that link psychopathic and paranoid behaviors to the fight for recognition are based on different issues, but all have the same destructive outcome. The paranoid twists reality to accord with his perception of events, in spite of any obvious empirical evidence to the contrary. This process enables him to stay at the center of the universe free from pain while blaming others for his predicament. The victor in mortal combat for mastery ultimately becomes dissatisfied because he is not universally recognized by others, only those he considers beneath him. This does not satisfy his innate need for superiority. So the cycle continues until he can accept the boundaries of a democracy, if he is able to do so.

For the psychopath, self-centeredness is often manifested in a similar manner as the paranoid and the fighter for recognition, but there is a monumental difference. The psychopath does not care about others. They have no feelings of regret or pain unless it affects them directly. They have no feelings at all, a concept hard to understand, but all too true. The only thing that triggers emotion in these individuals is watching other people suffer by their own machinations. It will be argued later that Individuals in this category present the greatest threat to national security in the United States (and the world). This is because psychopaths are hard to identify because they are so adept at blending into society. Should the psychopath get caught for a crime
or misdeed, he is brilliant at lying convincingly to persuade others it was not his fault. Identifying psychopaths should be a national priority because they are adept at identifying the vulnerabilities of others, especially paranoids who are easy prey. The combination of these behavior profiles is lethal and often deadly. Thus, psychopathy and paranoia are very similar and are equally dangerous. The difference is that paranoids have feelings which provide an opening for reformation if the person is willing. This is not the true for a psychopath because, hard though it is to fathom, there are just no feelings to work with. That said, the only possible means of reaching a psychopath is to convince him that it would be to his personal advantage to comply with societal rules from an intellectual standpoint. Even in this scenario, these individuals cannot resist manipulating others for their own amusement because nothing else will stimulate them. In the context of this psychological backdrop, Osama bin Laden is studied next to assess which, if any, of the three categories match his personality type.
Praise be to Allah; we beseech His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from our own evils and bad deeds. Whoever is guided by Allah will not go astray, and whoever is led astray has no guidance. And I testify that there is no god but Allah—alone, partnerless—and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

Allah Most High has struck American in its most vulnerable spot, destroying its might building, praise be unto Him. Look at America—filled with terror from north to south, east to west—all praise be to Allah! What America is tasting today is but a fraction of what we have been tasting for decades: Our umma has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for over eighty years. Its sons have been slain, its blood has been shed, and its sacred places have been defiled—all in opposition to what has been revealed by Allah. Despite this, no one has listened or responded. Thus did Allah Most High bestow success upon a convoy of Muslims—the vanguard of Islam—allowing them to devastate America utterly. I pray that Allah Almighty may raise them up to the highest [level of] Paradise. When these men retaliated [via the operations of 9/11] on behalf of their oppressed sons, brothers, and sisters in Palestine and elsewhere in the lands of Islam, the whole world cried out. And the infidels cried out, followed by the hypocrites [i.e., secular Arab governments and moderate Muslims].

Up until now, one million innocent children have been killed in Iraq, though they were guilty of nothing. Despite this, we have not heard anyone condemn this, nor have the official ulema issued a fatwa [against it]. As I speak, Israeli tanks and bulldozers are entering Palestine—in Jenin, Ramalla, Rafa, Beit jala, and elsewhere—in order to wreak havoc, and yet we hear no voices raised nor moves made. But after eighty years, when the sword falls down on America, the hypocrites stand up to lament these murderers who have scorned the blood, honor, and holy places of Muslims. The very least one can say about these people [Muslim “hypocrites”] is that they are morally depraved and dissolute apostates, who assist the butcher against his victim and help the oppressor against the innocent child. May Allah Most High protect [us] against them, and may He mete them the punishment they have earned.

They came to fight Islam and its people under the pretext of “fighting terrorism.” Hundreds of thousands, both young and old, were killed in the farthest region on earth—Japan—and yet [for them] this is not considered an atrocity, but rather a “debatable issue.” The same goes for Iraq: after bombing it, they consider it a debatable issue. Yet when a few of them were killed in Nairobi and Dar al-Salam, they bombed Afghanistan and Iraq, and all the hypocrites stood behind them.
the head of global infidelity—behind the Hubal of the modern era—America and its supporters. I say to you that these events have divided the entire world into two separate camps—one of faith, where there is no hypocrisy, and one of fidelity, May Allah protect us from it. Every Muslim must give what he can to strengthen the religion. The winds of faith and change have blown to remove falsehood from the [Arabian] Peninsula of Muhammad.

As for America and its people, I share with them these few words: I swear by Allah Most High, who raised the heavens without pillars, that neither America, no anyone living there, will ever enjoy safety until we can first see it as a reality in Palestine and before all the infidel armies quit the land of Muhammad.

--Osama bin Laden’s Oath to America
Figure 1. Smoke, flames and debris, World Trade Center tower. Photograph by Army Times.
Introduction

Based on the discussion in chapter one, there are many elements in Osama bin Laden’s statement that illuminate the notional profile of a paranoid personality described by Robins and Post. Bin Laden’s oath also highlights Fukuyama’s concept of the fight for recognition particularly when bin Laden implies the Muslim voice has not been heard. Bin Laden’s statement that Islam’s, “. . . sons have been slain, its blood has been shed, and its sacred places have been defiled—all in opposition to what has been revealed by Allah” also suggests strong feelings of victimization. Feelings of victimization are typically based on suspiciousness, hostility, loss of autonomy, projection, along with the need for recognition. However, the coldness and brutality of the September 11 terrorist attacks which killed 3,000 Americans (figure 1) speaks strongly to Dr. Hare’s description of the psychopath. This chapter examines bin Laden’s early years including family life, religion, and political factors in Saudi Arabia in the context of this framework to assess which character profile, if any, fits Osama bin Laden. As a result, this will shed light on why bin Laden left Saudi Arabia to fight in Afghanistan, the genesis of al Qaeda, and the philosophy of Sayyid Qutb whose ideas form the foundation of al Qaeda’s ideology.

Osama bin Laden: Early Years

Osama bin Laden was born on March 10, 1957 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden’s mother, Hamida, is from Damascus, Syria and was reputedly a great beauty in her youth. According to Peter Bergen in his book, The Osama
Bin Laden I Know, Hamida was chosen by bin Laden’s father because she was a Saudi Bedouin¹ and because she was young (Bergen 2006, 3). Jerrold Post reports in his persuasive study, Know Thy Enemy, that Osama’s mother was the least favorite of Muhammad bin Laden’s wives because of her free and independent spirit. Reportedly, because Hamida was independent, she clashed with her husband who probably expected women to obey orders without question. As a consequence as Post reports, by the time Osama was born, Hamida was ostracized by the family and nicknamed “al Abeda” (the slave). Since Osama was her only son, he too was nicknamed, ibn al Abeda (son of the slave) (Schneider and Post 2003, 19). Post states:

Unlike the other bin Laden children who had natural allies in their immediate circle of siblings, Osama and his mother had no such natural allies in the family and, as a consequence, there may have been a defensive alliance between Osama and his mother against the larger family which treated the “the slave and the son of the slave” with contempt. This familial exclusion was perhaps the basis of Osama Bin Laden’s later estrangement from his family. Reports are inconsistent as to how much of a presence Hamida was in her son’s life during his early developmental years, but it is clear that Mohammed bin Laden divorced Hamida prior to his death in 1967, when Osama bin Laden was 10 years old.² (Ibid., 19 – 20)

¹ The term Bedouin refers to one who lives in the open desert. The Arabic word “badāwa” is a generic name for a desert-dweller from which the English word ‘Bedouin’ is derived. In ancient times, the Bedouin people preferred to live in the open desert and relied on camels not only for travel but subsistence from camel’s milk. There are still Bedouin communities in many countries including: Egypt, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen among others (Jabbur 1995, 260 - 262).

² Note that many authors referenced in this paper differ on the exact spelling of Osama bin Laden and his family member’s names. When quoting the authors directly their spelling iteration is used, otherwise all other references are consistently presented throughout the text as Osama bin Laden or just bin Laden. Additionally, facts about the number of wives bin Laden’s father had, his upbringing, education, and wealth vary depending on reporting.
Osama bin Laden’s father, Muhammad bin Laden, is from Hadramaut, Yemen, a hierarchical society ruled by two dynasties. According to Brian Fyfield-Shayler who provided insight for Bergen’s book, Muhammad bin Laden’s ancestral village was low in the “pecking order” because they were laborers. Because of his humble beginnings, Muhammad bin Laden was clearly driven to succeed and probably passed the same drive on to his children. According to Bergen, Muhammad bin Laden only had four wives at any given time, thus “he was constantly divorcing the third and the fourth and taking in new ones.” However, the exact number of wives Osama bin Laden’s father actually had differs among authors. As Bergen points out, there was only one other family who could compete with Muhammad bin Laden’s marital conquests; the Saudi royal family. As a result of his father’s polygamy, Osama bin Laden is the seventeenth son out of fifty-four children and the only son from Muhammad bin Laden’s marriage to Hamida, Osama bin Laden’s mother. Not surprisingly, contact between bin Laden and his father was intermittent and happened only on formal occasions (Bergen 2006, 2 - 4). Osama bin Laden and his college friend Jamal Khalifa concluded later their fathers practiced polygamy “... in a wrong way ... they ... married and divorced, married and divorced; [they had] a lot of wives and sometime[s] they [did not] give equal justice [to] them [all] (Bergen 2006, 17). Although many reports imply that bin Laden held his father in high regard, one can surmise from this statement that

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3 According to Jerrold Post, Muhammad bin Laden, bin Laden’s father had ten wives (Schneider and Post 2003, 19).
on some level Osama felt his mother was treated unjustly. But, that did not stop bin Laden from following in his father’s polygamous footsteps, as reflected in the diagram of his large family depicted in figure 2.

Figure 2. Osama bin Laden's wives and children. Diagram by Reuters.

Osama bin Laden’s father provided well for his children. He sent his sons, including Osama bin Laden, to the prestigious Al Thaghr School where Fyfield-Shayler served as head-master from 1964 - 1974. Fyfield-Shayler recalls bin Laden stood out from his classmates because of his height,
because he was far more courteousness than other students, and because he only displayed average intelligence. Fyfield-Shayler reflected that the 1967 war between Egypt and Israel had a big impact on the Al Thagr School. Many children wanted to go and fight for the Islamic cause, but the school kept them in class, advising them the best way to fight back was to get a good education (Bergen 2006, 7 - 8). Like his classmates, the 1967 war had a powerful impact on Osama bin Laden as well.

Accordingly, at age ten, Osama bin Laden contended with sibling rivalry, anger over his father's death, lack of intimacy with his primary caretakers, anger over his mother's treatment, and disillusionment over Israel's crushing defeat of Egypt. Arguably, all aspects of Osama bin Laden's world toppled in a short span of time and how that manifested in his consciousness is reflected in his actions as a man. Robins and Post would argue bin Laden projected his anger outward into the environment. In their words, projection is the “tendency of people who are small or frightened to attribute exaggerated size and power to their enemies” (Robins and Post 1997, 12). From this perspective, bin Laden's initial response was to cultivate a pious persona to elevate himself above those around him. Using the same religious platform later, he made himself God and condemned 3,000 innocent Americans to death by bombing the World Trade Center three decades later. Three decades seems like a long time to hold a grudge, but that act successfully put Osama bin Laden at the center of the universe, exactly where he wanted to be. These facts support
Robins and Post’s theory about the debilitating effects of projection, loss of autonomy, and delusional thinking.

As mentioned, bin Laden’s father rose from abject poverty. He started off as a dock worker in Jeddah and became one of Saudi Arabia’s most prominent construction moguls. Muhammad bin Laden was best known for his renovation of mosques in the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Muhammad bin Laden was also known for his generous endowments to education and was a well known at the Al Thagr School where Osama bin Laden and his brothers were students. Muhammad bin Laden reportedly contributed one-million dollars towards the establishment of King Abdul Aziz University in 1965 where Osama bin Laden attended college a decade later (Bergen 2006, 5). As a result of Muhammad bin Laden’s philanthropy, the bin Laden name became highly respected by both the Saudi royal family and commoners alike. Osama bin Laden also admired his father. In an interview with Al Jazeera in 1999, bin Laden described his father in glowing terms.

As it is well known, my father, Sheikh Muhammad bin Awad bin Laden, was born in Hadramaut [in southern Yemen]. He went to work in Hejaz at an early age, more than seventy years ago. Then God blessed him and bestowed on him an honor that no other building contractor has known. He built the holy Mecca mosque and at the same time—because of God’s blessings to him—he built the holy mosque in Medina. Then when he found out that the government of Jordan announced a tender for restoration work on the Dome of the Rock Mosque [in Jerusalem], he gathered engineers and asked them: “Calculate only the cost price of the project.” When they did, they were surprised that [my father] . . . reduced the cost price in order to guarantee that God’s mosques are well served. He was awarded the project.

Because of God’s graciousness to him sometimes he prayed in all three mosques [in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem] in one single day.
It is not a secret that he was one of the founders of the infrastructure of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. My father died when I was ten years old. (Ibid., 2)

Thus, Osama bin Laden adopted his father’s piety and went to great lengths to practice his faith and ensure those around him did the same.

Osama bin Laden, lived with his mother and step-father in Medina and Hejaz, but their contact prior to this arrangement is unknown. Bin Laden’s mother is a moderate Muslim who, along with his siblings, watches TV and listens to music. Osama’s childhood friend Batarfi said bin Laden would often “bother” his brothers for staring at maids. He would also wake his brothers up to ensure they attended morning prayers. Unlike his siblings, bin Laden was “different in a quiet way” and would get “upset if something was not done the Islamic way. But they [his Syrian family] all loved him” (Ibid., 15). At seventeen, Osama married his beautiful Syrian cousin, Nawja (figure 3).

Thus, while bin Laden resided with his mother, his father’s influence from a religious standpoint stayed with him. As mentioned earlier, this is how bin Laden began to elevate himself above his siblings and others. Ironically, bin Laden ignored his father’s advice about politics. Nonetheless, for a devout
Muslim, the picture of bin Laden’s first wife suggests that he appreciated beauty. Even more surprising is the picture of bin Laden on vacation in Sweden with his family (figure 4). Are those bell-bottom jeans bin Laden is wearing? Is that a pink Cadillac? Obviously, western values were not always abhorrent to bin Laden at least not in the 1970s.

![Figure 4. Fourteen-year old bin Laden with 21 siblings in Sweden, 1971. Photograph by Camera Press.](image)

Rohan Gunaratna in his book, *Inside Al Qaeda*, describes the relationship between Saudi King Faisal and Muhammad bin Laden as “affectionate” (Gunaratna 2002, 17). When bin Laden’s father was killed in a helicopter crash in 1968, the King was visibly upset and at least 10,000 people, including Osama, attended his funeral. After Muhammad bin Laden died, King
Faisal met with the bin Laden children and told them they were under royal decree and placed their father’s estate in trust until they came of age (Ibid.). Muhammad bin Laden’s death meant multiple construction projects were left incomplete. Salem, bin Laden’s older brother, assumed responsibility for the company in 1973. By then the close relationship with the royal family had diminished, but Salem rekindled the bond with his charming personality and silly antics (Bergen 2006, 10).

Salem was different than Osama bin Laden. Salem was educated in England and very westernized. He had no facial hair, was fluent in English, liked discos, and played songs on the guitar like “Where Have All the Flowers Gone.” Salem was charismatic and amusing and played court jester to the Saudi King. Although Salem sometimes overstepped his boundaries, he always managed to be welcomed back into the royal fold. Salem was made responsible for distributing Muhammad bin Laden’s trust, which according to Bergen, was approximately $300 million dollars. Bergen estimates Osama bin Laden received about $20 million dollars before he was cut off by his family in 1994 (Ibid., 9 - 10).4 As stated, bin Laden’s father urged his children to stay away from politics and religious debate. Muhammad bin Laden declined several political posts offered by King Faisal. After Muhammad bin Laden’s death the only child who sustained an interest in politics, contrary to his father’s

4 According to Jerrold Post, Muhammad bin Laden’s fortune amassed to $2 – 3 billion dollars by the time of his death in 1968. Post indicates the numbers vary but the most common estimate of Osama’s share of his father’s wealth was approximately $57 million dollars, which differs from Bergen and Gunaratna’s reports (Schneider and Post 2003, 19).
wishes was Osama, beginning in 1973 on (Gunaratna 2002, 16 - 17). Notably, bin Laden’s political interests escalated around the same time Salem was made executor of Muhammad bin Laden’s estate. Again, another significant event that highlights bin Laden’s diminished role to that of his charismatic brother Salem who also controlled the purse strings.

Figure 5. Bin Laden’s brother Salem and family in 1975. Photograph by Corbis.

Osama bin Laden attended King Abdul Aziz University to study economics and management in preparation to join the family business. Gunaratna notes, as does Fyfield-Shayler, that bin Laden was an average student, but with a keen interest in government and politics. Bin Laden left the university in his third year. Gunaratna clarifies, contrary to other reports, that bin Laden did not study engineering, complete his degree, or visit Sweden in
1971 to learn how to fly. Bin Laden did engage in religious instruction at university with Muhammad Qutb, brother of Sayyid Qutb, ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ibid., 17). Osama also studied Islam with Abdullah Azzam a key figure in providing aid to the Afghans in the war against the Soviets (Abdullah Azzam). Both religious scholars had a profound impact on bin Laden’s thinking. According to Jamal Khalifa, bin Laden’s best friend at King Aziz University, Qutb’s advice made sense to young students in light of Islamic awakening brought on by Egypt’s defeat by Israel.

This Sahwa [Islamic awakening] came and [it became clear that you] have a responsibility to advise others to reach Islam everywhere, to make the Dawa [preaching of Islam].

In ’76, ’77 we used to read [Qutb’s books] Milestones and In the Shade of the Koran. So Sayyid Qutb was concentrating on the meaning of Islam that it’s the way of life. It influenced every Muslim in that period of time.

Mohammed Qutb [Sayyid Qutb’s brother who was a visiting professor at King Abdul Aziz University in the late 1970’s] used to give [myself and bin Laden] lectures. He was giving us very good lessons about education—how to educate our children. (Bergen 2006, 19)

Osama bin Laden set himself apart from friends and family by his increasingly rigid religious behavior. To paraphrase Osama’s younger brother Yeslam, “Osama was more religious than the rest of us,” he did not listen to music or watch TV and would not allow his children to do so. Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said, “Osama was just like many of us who became part of the [Muslim] Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia. The only difference which set him apart from me and others [is that] he was more religious . . . more literal, more fundamentalist.” Khashoggi remembers Osama would not shake hands with women, would not smoke, would not play cards, or even put a picture on the
wall. Khashoggi reflected that Osama bin Laden had a “harsh or radical side” and viewed common practices as demeaning to Islam (Bergen 2006, 20 - 21). Khaled Batarfi, bin Laden’s neighbor in Jeddah, said he was vigilant in practicing Islam and expected others to do the same.

Osama used to do all his prayers in the mosque. He was a very religious guy and everyone else was behaving like there is a sheikh (religious figure) around. You know how kids joke—in Osama’s presence we watch our words, don’t use bad words, because it’s like having a priest around. You watch your mouth and your behavior. He was a natural leader; he leads by example and by hints more than direct orders. He just set an example and expects you to follow and somehow you follow even if you are not 100 percent convinced. I remember I was driving my car going to play soccer and I saw him standing near his door, so I had to stop because he saw me. So the problem was I was wearing shorts, [which is not strictly Islamic]. So I was trying to avoid him seeing me, and then when I had to stop, I had to get out and kiss him. So he saw me and I was very embarrassed, talking small talk while I was thinking, what I’m going to say if he said, “So why you are wearing shorts?” Finally at the end he just looked at my legs and said, “Good bye. And from that day on, I didn’t wear shorts. So he has this charisma . . .

And we used to go to his house and sing religious chants about Muslim youth and Palestine. [His view was] “Unless we, the new generation, change and become stronger and more educated and more dedicated, we will never reclaim Palestine.” He was saying that all the time, whenever the subject arose. (Ibid., 14 - 15).

As submitted already, Osama’s marked dogmatism is cultivated by the influence of Sayyid Qutb and Abdullah Azzam.

**Sayyid Qutb**

According to John Calvert in his book, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*, Sayyid Qutb (1906 – 1966) as a young man worked for the Egyptian Ministry of Education. Qutb was part of the secular literary movement in Egypt, a poet, and social critic (Calvert 2010, 1 - 5). Qutb was mentored by
Abbas Mahmud al-‘Aqqad and Taha Husain, both of whom had a cynical view of western culture and literary questions. Al-‘Aqqad, along with Qutb, were also members of the Wafd opposition party who were highly critical of the Egyptian government (Hardie and Alter 1953, 2). Despite his growing discontent, Husain encouraged Qutb to maintain his post with the Ministry of Education. From 1948-1950, the Education Ministry sent Qutb to the United States with the hope that exposure to the west would make a favorable impression on him and “induce him to abandon the oppositional activities that were increasingly taking on an Islamic aspect” (Ibid., 2). That plan backfired, since after his visit Qutb’s perception of America was even more negative and perhaps responsible for Qutb’s view of Islamic of law as a viable alternative for governance (Ibid., 2). In the introduction to Qutb’s book Social Justice in Islam Alger who wrote the introduction points out:

While noting American achievements in production and social organization, Sayyid Qutb laid heavy emphasis on materialism, racism, and sexual permissiveness as dominant features of American life. His sojourn in the United States coincided, moreover, with the first Palestinian war, and he noted with dismay the uncritical acceptance of Zionists thesis by American public opinion and the ambiguity of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice. (Ibid., 2 – 3).

To compound matters, Qutb was further dismayed by America’s “ecstatic” reaction to news that Hasan al Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and staunch defender of Islam was assassinated in 1949 (Ibid.,

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5 Originally the delegation that Egyptian nationalists hoped would represent them at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, led by Saad Zaghlul until his death in 1927 and then by Mustafa al-Nahhas, it was Egypt’s most popular party and gained the most votes in any election not rigged by the government. Banned after the 1952 Revolution, it was revived in 1978 (Goldschmidt Jr. 2008, 131).
3). When British official James Heyworth Dunne told Qutb the Muslim Brotherhood was “the only barrier to establishing western civilization in the Middle East” he became even more alarmed (Ibid., 3). Qutb probably feared Islamic values were in danger of being compromised by immoral western practices. Thus, when Qutb returned from America he joined forces with the Muslim Brotherhood (referred to then as the Muslim Brethren), the leading Islamic movement in Egypt, and became one of their primary spokesmen. To better understand Qutb and, by extension bin Laden, it is important to provide a snapshot of a few historical facts that contributed to Qutb’s disenchantment, along with many other Egyptians, of secular government. In this context, the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a viable alternative to secular governance makes more sense.

In 1928, Hasan al Banna established the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Following in the ideological footsteps of, Ibn Taymiyya

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6 Ibn Taymiyya was a staunch defender of Sunni Islam based on strict adherence to the Qur'an and authentic sunna (practices) of the Prophet Muhammad. He believed that these two sources contained all the religious and spiritual guidance necessary for salvation in the hereafter. He rejected the arguments and ideas of both philosophers and Sufis regarding religious knowledge, spiritual experiences and ritual practices. He believed that logic is not a reliable means of attaining religious truth and that the intellect must be subservient to revealed truth. He also came into conflict with many of his fellow Sunni scholars because of his rejection of the rigidity of the schools of jurisprudence in Islam. He believed that the four accepted schools of jurisprudence had become stagnant and sectarian, and also that they were being improperly influenced by aspects of Greek logic and thought as well as Sufi mysticism. His challenge to the leading scholars of the day was to return to an understanding of Islam in practice and in faith, based solely on the Qur'an and sunna (Pavlin 1998, 655 - 656).

7 Wahhabism is a term widely used in Western literature of Western scholarship to refer to Sheikh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al Wahhab’s religious reform movement, which was supported by the Al Sa’ud family, and which ultimately led to the establishment of Saudi regional power in the middle of the eighteenth century. This movement – not a new religion or sect – called for a return to the original principles of Islamic and for purifying Islam of bin’a (sinful innovations) (Al-‘Uthaymin 2009, xiii).
al Banna’s objective was to return to the seventh century political atmosphere where Islamic teachings governed all aspects of Muslim life. The end of colonialism, in between the first two world wars, invigorated al Banna’s movement and appeared to provide a viable alternative to Egyptian King Farouk secular policies.

King Farouk ascended to the Egyptian throne in 1936. He was young, handsome and initially beloved by Egyptians. However, King Farouk under threat of forced abdication by the British to ensure the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty\(^8\) was upheld Germans occupation, appointed a pro-British cabinet to his government in 1942 (Goldschmidt Jr. 2008, 130 - 132). Thereafter, King Farouk reportedly went into a moral decline and “became obese, dissolute, and unpopular” (Ibid., 132). Richard Cavendish in *History Today* describes King Farouk’s personality.

His appetite for women was insatiable and his aides kept him supplied with prostitutes and European chorus girls. He also proved to be embarrassingly prone to kleptomania at home and abroad.

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\(^8\) In 1936 the British and Egyptians sought to strengthen ties because of the rise in Europe of authoritarian governments. Italy was governed by the Fascist Party under Mussolini who wanted to join Europe’s great powers by gaining colonies. Most Egyptians, including the Wafid, viewed the Fascists as a threat to their independence and democratic government. In addition, they feared that any war among the European powers might become a replay of World War I, during which Egypt was used as an Allied military base. If war came, an Anglo-Egyptian treaty might enable Egypt to limit British interference. The British were concerned about their deteriorating position in Europe and the Middle East sought to strengthen their military presence in Egypt. They wanted to deal with Nahhas, the Wafdist leader because they knew the Wafid alone could influence Egyptian popular opinion. The two sides reached a 20-year treaty of alliance. The British recognized Egypt’s independence, agreed to reduce their troops to 10,000 during peacetime, and sponsor Egypt for membership in the League of Nations and to call for abolition of Capitulations. In turn, the Egyptians accepted a 20-year British occupation of the Canal Zone and allowed British troops to stay in Cairo and Alexandria until adequate barracks, roads, and bridges could be built at Egyptian government expense (Goldschmidt Jr. 2008, 122 – 123)
Farouk had inherited his father’s autocratic dislike of Parliamentary democracy and of the Wafd political party, which was running the administration until a rigged election in 1938 got rid of them. They were followed by Farouk backed coalition governments that aroused increasing dissatisfaction until the British, angered by the King’s pro-Italian, pro-Axis sympathies, imposed a Wafd ministry on the country in 1942. That in turn enflamed nationalist opposition and after the failed war against Israel in 1948 a group of army officers mounted a coup in 1952 forced Farouk to abdicate. The monarchy was abolished the following year and Farouk lived in exile abroad until he dropped dead in a restaurant in Rome in 1965 at the age of 45, of a heart attack after a gigantic dinner. (Cavendish 2011)

King Farouk was ultimately deposed by Arab nationalist, Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser, a former Egyptian officer who firmly opposed the king’s policies in 1952. For a period, President Nasser won the hearts and minds of his Arab constituents for his pan-Arabism. However, Egypt’s defeat by Israel in the 1967 war and Nasser’s inability to win concessions back for Egypt in subsequent negotiations, leading to more conflict, turned the tide of public against him.

Against this historical backdrop, Arabs were fed-up with self-serving leaders, who appeared to be subservient to the west. Therefore, al Banna’s notion of shunning all things modern and returning to ancient Islam by forming the Muslim Brotherhood was seen by many as a viable alternative, including Sayyid Qutb and later Osama bin Laden. Therefore, for al Banna, the corridor

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9 Pan-Arabism is an ideology espousing the unification or close cooperation and solidarity against perceived enemies of countries of the Arab world, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Sea. Pan-Arabism is closely connected to Arab nationalism, which asserts that the Arabs constitute a single nation. Its popularity was at its height during the 1950 - 1960s. Advocates of pan-Arabism often espouse socialist principles and strongly oppose western political involvement in the Arab world. It also sought to empower Arab states from outside forces by forming alliances and, to a lesser extent, economic co-operation (Sela 2002, 160 - 166).
to the future stemmed from the past as Ibn Taymiyya and al Wahhab proclaimed centuries before (Mockaitis 2010, 27 - 28). According to Gary Servold in his analysis contained within, *Know Thy Enemy*, the Muslim Brotherhood's motto is: “God is our purpose, the Prophet our leader, the Qur’an our constitution, Jihad our way and dying for God’s cause our supreme objective” (Servold 2003, 41). Servold describes the far reaching influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the following statement.

The Muslim Brotherhood or “Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimum” (in Arabic) represents the “mother movement” of the Islamic fundamentalist. With branches in '70 countries all over the world,” the Muslim Brotherhood is the most pervasive grass roots Islamic fundamentalist movement in the world. The Brotherhood was the first wide-ranging, well-organized, international Islamic movement of modern times. (Ibid.)

Qutb’s vocal support of the Muslim Brotherhood did not go over well with the Egyptian government. In 1954, Qutb and other members of the Muslim Brotherhood were imprisoned for a decade. During Qutb’s incarceration his writings “became increasingly radical and even revolutionary, claiming that all so-called Muslim societies were anti-Islamic (*jahili*).”

The Muslim community has long ago vanished from existence.” It's "been extinct for a few centuries." How can this be? Well, without the "laws of God," i.e. *Shari’ah* law, Islam does not exist, so today's Muslims, or people who call themselves Muslim, live not in an Islamic world, but in *Jahiliyyah*, pre-Islamic ignorance. (*Milestones* 1964, 9)

Qutb was treated harshly in prison and some believe this was a significant factor in the development of his radical perspectives. Qutb was

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10 It is unclear who initially published Qutb’s book *Milestones* in 1964. What is clear is that the book was hugely successfully and resonated on a visceral level with many in the Arab community.
released from prison in 1964 but arrested again the following year for allegedly conspiring against the government. Qutb was executed in 1966 and generally viewed as a martyr by the Muslim community, including Osama bin Laden. Prior to his death Qutb wrote two books, *In the Shade of the Qur’an* and *Milestones*, which succinctly articulated his radical views. These books resonated profoundly with Muslims throughout the Arab world and became the ideological inspiration for many extremist groups in Egypt and elsewhere, including Al-Qaeda (*Sayyid Qutb: Introduction* 2012). Qutb’s influence on al Qaeda is evident in the following statement by Ayman al Zawahiri\(^\text{11}\) issued in 2001.

Sayyid Qutb’s call for loyalty to God’s oneness and to acknowledge God’s sole authority and sovereignty was the spark that ignited the Islamic revolution against the enemies of Islam at home and abroad. The bloody chapters of this revolution continue to unfold day after day. Sayyid Qutb played a key role in directing the Muslim youth to this road in the second half of the twentieth century in Egypt in particular, and the Arab region in general. (Bergen 2006, 19)

According to *The Guardian*, Qutb was the most influential advocate of jihad or Islamic holy war in modern times. Qutb legitimized violent resistance to Muslim regimes whose implementation of Islamic law was deemed imperfect. While Qutb’s books were most popular in Saudi Arabia, his writings were translated into many Islamic languages. In fact, Qutb’s ideas on religious

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\(^{11}\) Ayman al Zawahiri, a Pakistani surgeon, was founder of the founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and would later become Osama bin Laden’s second in command in al Qaeda. The relationship between bin Laden and Zawahiri is discussed in more depth in chapter three.
law later attracted the admiration of, Burhanuddin Rabbani,\textsuperscript{12} who translated Qutb’s books into the Afghan, Dari dialect. Qutb’s writings have been read and extensively debated by Islamic fundamentalists for decades and some have written polemics against Qutb’s radical interpretation of Islam (Irwin 2001).

What is key to this discussion is that Qutb hated America and viewed our way of life as materialistic and immoral. Robert Siegel at National Public Radio reflected in 2003 that Qutb’s conclusions about the United States are the result of a clash between cultures that does not reflect how Americans see themselves (Siegel 2003). Equally important, Qutb viewed secular government as evil based on what he witnessed during King Farouk’s reign, the failed policies of the Wafd Party, and the impotence of Nasser’s reign. Egypt’s defeat by Israel, a country supported by the west, only confirm the belief for many Arabs the west was an enemy of Islam. Interestingly enough, the royal family in Saudi Arabia has maintained with the west since the 1940s (Congressional Research Service 2011). This may explain why Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden’s ideological mentor, discussed next convinced bin Laden to leave Saudi Arabia to fight the Soviet’s in Afghanistan. This may also shed light on bin Laden’s growing disillusionment with Saudi Arabia which led him to sever ties in 1994.

\textsuperscript{12} Burhanuddin Rabbani “spearheaded the anti-Soviet jihad with military, logistical, and financial support of a multinational coalition organized by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), comprising the United States, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and China among other countries (Gunaratna 2002, 16-17).
Abdullah Azzam

Abdullah Azzam is often described as the ideological mentor to Osama bin Laden. Azzam was born in 1941 in northern Palestine and supposedly joined the Muslim Brotherhood before he came of age. Azzam obtained a bachelor’s degree from Shariah College and Damascus University. After Israel captured the West Bank in 1967, Azzam went to Jordan to join the resistance. When the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was expelled from Jordan in 1968, Azzam then traveled to Egypt where he studied for a doctorate in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) at al-Azhar University. In 1979, Azzam was expelled from al-Azhar for Islamic extremism and left Egypt for Pakistan (Gunaratna 2002, 18). As with Qutb, Azzam felt jihad was a sacred obligation for all Islamic communities and individual Muslims. In his insightful book, *Osama Bin Laden: A Biography*, Thomas Mockaitis states Azzam’s concept of Islam actually went further than Qutb’s. Azzam believed all Muslim lands should be freed from “domination by non-Muslims” (Mockaitis 2010, 38 - 39). For Azzam, if apostates or nonbelievers occupy any parcel of Islamic land, Muslims have a right to eradicate their presence via jihad including Palestine and Spain which had been under Muslim rule five centuries earlier.

Mockaitis says Azzam’s rhetoric “worked on bin Laden’s conscience.” Mockaitis speculates prior to the Afghan war, bin Laden believed that being a good Muslim meant prayer, piety, and resisting temptation. Yet, this idea has little merit if viewed against the backdrop of Qutb’s life and writings which had deeply impacted bin Laden’s thinking as demonstrated by his increasingly rigid
behavior toward friends and family. In that context, it suggests that bin Laden may have been preparing himself for jihad all along. The answer to that question was known only to bin Laden. For this purpose, what matters is that Azzam convinced bin Laden to take up the Afghan cause against the advice of his family. As Mockaitis says, religious zeal overcame self-doubt and bin Laden left for Afghanistan in 1984. Bin Laden later confided to a Syrian journalist that, “I feel so guilty for listening to my friends and those that I love to not come here and stay home for reasons of safety” and “I feel that this delay of four years requires my martyrdom in the name of God” (Ibid., 39). Despite bin Laden’s desire to make up for lost time, he did not initially engage in direct combat with the Soviets. Instead, he used his vast wealth, which had multiplied to $250-300 million dollars (Gunaratna 2002, 19), to facilitate deployment of other mujahedeen to Afghanistan. Based on bin Laden’s guilt and unfulfilled need for recognition, Azzam capitalized on bin Laden’s uncertainty and manipulated him in to engaging in jihad. Azzam was
sixteen-years bin Laden’s senior and for a time bin Laden greatly respected Azzam’s commitment to the Islamic cause as well as his religious credentials.

Arguably at age twenty-two bin Laden was flattered by Azzam’s attention. Bin Laden’s unsatisfied need for intimacy with his dad found the perfect outlet in Azzam. Bin Laden’s desire for martyrdom may have been related to a frustrated desire to outshine his older siblings; most of whom had become extremely westernized. Recalling, these siblings referred to bin Laden and his mother as “al Abeda” (slave and son of a slave) as a child. Equally important, the political environment in the Arab world provided bin Laden with the perfect venue to unleash his anger using Qutb’s radical ideas as his ideological sword along with Azzam’s drive to remove apostates from Arab lands. The war in Afghanistan at long last infused bin Laden with the power that he seemed to be missing his whole life. As Bergen reports in the following statement, on a visceral level the war in Afghanistan changed bin Laden.

War changes a man. The Afghan war certainly changed bin Laden. The humble, young, monosyllabic millionaire with the open checkbook who first visited Pakistan in the 1980s would, by the middle of the decade, launch an ambitious plan to confront the Soviets directly inside Afghanistan with a group of Arabs under his command. That cadre of Arabs would provide the nucleus of al Qaeda, which was founded in 1988 to wage jihad around the Muslim world.

Bin Laden’s military ambitions and personality evolved in tandem. He became more assertive, to the point that he ignored the advice of many of his old friends about the folly of setting up his own military force. That decision would also precipitate an irrevocable (but carefully concealed) split with his onetime mentor, the Palestinian cleric Abdullah Azzam. (Bergen 2006, 49)

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13 In fact, bin Laden’s cousin is a lingerie model which likely did not sit well with the pious bin Laden who would not even shake hands with a woman.
Gunaratna reports that bin Laden and Azzam grew apart. This is not surprising if we recall Robins and Post’s description of the hostile paranoid’s inability to compromise with others. In this case, bin Laden and Azzam disagreed over a proposal to the Maktab al Khidamat (MAK)\textsuperscript{14} from Egyptian fighters requesting permission to train mujahedeen in terrorist tactics. The Egyptians were anxious to build their own fighting force to wage a campaign back home. However, Azzam insisted those funds be used for the Afghan cause because integrating Arabs and Afghans factions would boost morale by teaching Afghan’s about Islam, aid in education, and attract donations from wealthy donors (Bergen 2006, 50). To underscore this conviction, Azzam issued a fatwa stating the use of jihadi funds to train mujahedeen in terrorist tactics violated Islamic law (Gunaratna 2002, 21 - 22).

Many Muslims know about the hadith in which the Prophet ordered his companions not to kill any women or children, etc., but very few know that there are exceptions to this case. In summary, Muslims do not have to stop an attack on mushrikeen [polytheist], if non-fighting women and children are present. But, Muslims should avoid the killing of children and non-fighting women, and should not aim at them . . . Islam does not urge its followers to kill anyone among the kufar except fighters, and those who supply mushrikeen and other enemies of Islam with money and advice, because the Qur’anic verse says: “And fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you.” (Ibid.)

\textsuperscript{14} MAK is also referred to as the Afghan Services Bureau. MAK was an international recruiting organization founded by Azzam and bin Laden. Additional detail is provided about the Afghan Services Bureau in chapter three.
Making the Connections

It was too late. Bin Laden had already secretly decided to restructure MAK and the nascent al Qaeda in his own image, “as an unflinchingly hostile global terrorist force, established with the aim of destroying America and Israel and re-establishing the Caliphate by means of a worldwide jihad” (Ibid., 23). To ensure this happened, on November 29, 1989 a bomb containing 20 kilos of dynamite, activated by remote control, killed Azzam and his two sons. While bin Laden was never directly linked to Azzam’s death, most agree he was complicit in executing the operation (Ibid.). Azzam’s death provided bin Laden with the means to take control of MAK while assimilating Azzam’s religious credentials into his own persona to endowing the budding al Qaeda organization with religious creditability. In short, bin Laden turned the tables on Azzam and apparently relinquished his conscience in the process. Never again would bin Laden be second to any man. Bin Laden had evolved from a shy, pious boy into the ruthless, terrorist we know today. Osama bin Laden entered the cold world of psychopathy and the flaming towers of the World Trade Center on September 11 never let us forget that. The real Osama bin Laden had arrived.
CHAPTER THREE: THE MILLIONARE WARRIOR

The war today between the Muslims and the Americans is not just about oil, not just about a maritime strait, and not just about controlling a land or a sea. It is not just a war over Palestine, Iraq, or Afghanistan. True, these are all among the reasons for the conflict, but in its essence, heart, and core, this is a war about the belief in Allah’s unity. America wants to destroy the Islam that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. They want to replace it with the falsified Islam just as their forefathers falsified Christianity and Judaism.

-- Anwar al Awlaki, Associated Foreign Press May 2010

Introduction

There are four factors that dramatically altered Osama bin Laden’s personality from a shy, pious, young man into the ruthless psychopath recorded in history books, based on events in or around the region depicted in figure 7. These include: 1) the war in Afghanistan and bin Laden’s pivotal role in that war; 2) bin Laden’s association with Abdullah Azzam along with his subsequent transference of allegiance to Ayman al Zawahiri; 3) bin Laden’s innate jealously of the famous Afghan war hero Ahmad Shah Massoud; and 4) his complete dedication and commitment to keeping himself at the center of universe by killing in the name of God. To accomplish this, it is established how bin Laden exploited the knowledge of Azzam and al Zawahiri to promote himself as a pious Muslim and advance his own agenda. Next, it is illustrated how bin Laden used his proclaimed commitment to Islam, to garner support from followers around the globe using media outlets and people to promote his piety and greatness as a holy warrior. Drawing from Robins, Post and others, I link back to psychological factors that compelled bin Laden to abandon his home and family in Saudi Arabia to follow the path of extremism.
The extensive list of acts carried out and/or inspired by al Qaeda illustrates how dangerous bin Laden became after he morphed from paranoia into psychopathy. This analysis is not intended to shed new light on events that brought bin Laden to the world stage. Rather, it is an attempt to understand...
how certain events, people and situations affected the man we know as Osama Bin Laden that transformed him from a skittish boy into a millionaire warrior with psychopathic proclivities.

**The War in Afghanistan**

As mentioned already, the war in Afghanistan fundamentally changed bin Laden’s personality in part due to Azzam’s powerful influence and in part because of his empowerment from participating in the Afghan conflict. As indicated in chapter two, Azzam with bin Laden’s help, was instrumental in rallying Muslims around the world “to defend Afghanistan against the Godless Soviet Union” (Post 2003, 20). Bin Laden enthusiastically assisted Azzam with establishing the now infamous international recruiting network, Maktab al Khidamat also known as the Afghan Services Bureau, in 1984. The Afghan Services Bureau advertised throughout the Arab world, the United States, and Europe, encouraging young Muslims to fight in the Afghan jihad. According to Post’s research in, *Know They Enemy*, this massive recruiting effort brought Muslims flocking to Afghanistan from everywhere including: 5,000 from Saudi Arabia, 3,000 from Algeria, and 2,000 from Egypt. The individuals comprising this group became known as the “Afghan Arabs” and this group later formed the nucleus of bin Laden’s loyal followers; and would become pivotal in his psychological development as a leader (Ibid.). It was around this period that Azzam and bin Laden began having significant differences of opinion both ideologically and operationally. Abdullah Anas, the Algerian co-founder of the
Afghan Services Bureau, summarizes the growing rift between bin Laden and Azzam.

We passed through stages of coalitionship with Osama. Osama used to love Sheikh Abdullah [Azzam] and he loved mujahedeen and loves jihad. He ate what we ate, slept in what we sleep in.

We became very [good] friends, because Osama is very, very well brought up. We were working under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah as a group, and people who loved Sheikh Abdullah and obeyed his orders and his policy are automatically the Arab family. And the relationship between us and Osama, it went deep year by year and month by month. It’s really friendly, intense. So this Osama, in this period, my judgment, he’s just an angel.

The second part of [our relationship with] Osama is when he started in 86’ to take distance from Abdullah Azzam, but not in a rude way, or in an unacceptable [way]. Externally [the relationship] seemed very fine. Very, very few people [knew otherwise], no more than five or six people. We were not allowed to say it. In that period, Sheikh Abdullah did continue his policy without consulting Osama and Osama continued on his own way.

I think Osama started to believe in himself. [He was] twenty-eight. He wasn’t happy with the group very close to Sheikh Abdullah. We were not under his orders.

Our relationship as a friend continued, but our relationship as a colleague of work completely stopped. (Bergen 2006, 47 – 48)

As Anas points out, bin Laden started going his own way. Bin Laden believed a unified Arab military force could stand-up against the Soviets because they were willing to martyr themselves, unlike the Afghans. Bin Laden was disdainful of Afghans who, when faced with serious opposition, would often just abandon the battlefield. On the other hand, bin Laden’s “Arab force could deliver an important psychological victory for the Afghans and the entire Arab world if [they] stood up against the Soviets” (Ibid., 50). From bin Laden’s perspective, the impact of watching a young person martyr themselves on the battlefield delivered the right kind of psychological jolt. In his mind, this act
neutralized the enemy far more effectively than facing off on the battle field using weapons. To some degree this is what happened in 1987. To paraphrase Gunaratna, “the mujahedeen mounted a daring and spectacular attack against a powerful Soviet offensive involving land and air power. It was one of the most famous battles of the war and, due to the high risk encountered, was known as the “Lion’s Den Operation.” In 1989, bin Laden defeated the Soviets in another decisive battle at Jaji (figure 8) raising him to hero status among his Afghan-Arab followers.

These victories supported bin Laden’s belief that a unified Arab force could defeat the Soviets using unconventional methods; i.e., martyrdom

\(^1\) Jaji is located in the Khost and Paktika Provinces respectively along the Pakistan border.
(Gunaratna 2002, 21). However, not all of bin Laden’s followers agreed with the martyrdom approach. According to Bergen, Jamal Khalifa, bin Laden’s close friend from university provides his account of confronting bin Laden about his tactics at the Jaji base in 1986.

I decided to go myself to see what’s going on there. I stayed three days in the Masada. I started to ask the people how it’s going. They said every day we have plenty of shaheeds [martyrs]—people dying. I said “Why? They are not trained and they are very young. They don’t have experience and they are facing the Soviets. It’s not a joke.”

Then I went to Abu Ubaidah; he was the chief of staff [for bin Laden]. I asked Abu Ubaidah: “Is this the right place to have this kind of camp everybody can see?” He said, “No.” I said, “You are a person who knows the danger of this place.” I was really very angry. You know, in Islam—blood, it means something. You can throw away the Koran, but not drop the blood of a person.

So I said, “Okay, I am going to face Osama.” So I sat down with Osama in his tent. I told him “Osama—everybody is against this idea, why you are here? Don’t you know that this is very dangerous?” He said, “We came to be in the front.” I said, “No, we did not come to be in the front. We came to [act as supporters of the] Afghans.” I told him, “every drop of blood bleeds here in this place; God will ask you about it in the hereafter. Everybody is saying this is wrong, so Osama, please leave the place right now.” Everybody was hearing our argument, our voice become hard. I was really very angry; this is our first time to be like this. I told him, “Look, you will leave the place or I will never see you again.” He told me, “Do whatever you want.” So I left. (Bergen 2006, 51-52)

Bergen says bin Laden demonstrated the “zeal of a fanatic” when he told Syrian journalist, Basil Muhammad, he hoped his new base would draw heavy Soviet firepower.” In bin Laden words, “God willing, we want the Lion’s Den [in Jaji] to be the first thing the enemy faces. Its place as the first camp visible to the enemy means they will focus their bombardments on us in an extreme manner” (Ibid., 52). Jaji was bin Laden’s first brush with massive
publicity and the formerly shy millionaire increasingly came to relish the spotlight. But, the battles at Jaji were no more than a public relations victory compared with Ahmad Shah Massoud’s gallant resistance to numerous major Soviet offensives against his stronghold in the Panjshir Valley in 1980s (Ibid., 50).” As with his older brother Salem, bin Laden was once again unwittingly over shadowed by someone with far more charisma than himself, Ahmad Shah Massoud, discussed in more depth later.

The Jaji campaign brought bin Laden closer to his Egyptian brethren, including Ayman al Zawahiri, a surgeon in Pakistan who later became Osama bin Laden’s second in command in the al Qaeda organization (Ibid.). As Post points out, leaders cannot be leaders without followers and bin Laden’s role as a leader in Afghanistan was “transformational.” Using his own money to build hospitals, clinics, and roads in support of the Afghan mujahedeen, combined with his inflated war hero status thanks to global news coverage, deeply empowered bin Laden. As depicted in the rare image of bin Laden smiling (figure 9), bin Laden had good
reason to smile; he was coming into his own. To promote his image as an unpretentious, holy warrior, bin Laden renounced his opulent life style to live an austere existence in caves with his followers. This deeply impressed the humble men that bin Laden led. Reportedly, like Azzam, bin Laden preached about their holy mission compelling his followers to adulate him (Post 2003, 20-21). One of bin Laden’s followers described him as follows: “He not only gave us his money, but he also gave himself. He came down from his palace to live with Afghan peasants and the Arab fighters. He cooked with them, ate with them, dug trenches with them. This is Bin Laden’s way” (Gunaratna 2002, 20). When the Afghan mujahedeen eventually triumphed over the Soviets, with billions of dollars in aid from the United States and Europe, bin Laden’s leadership status was solidified among his comrades. Osama bin Laden had found his niche. However, as Jerrold Post observes, with the defeat of the Soviets, bin Laden needed new enemies to hate. Bin Laden found his first outlet in targeting the celebrated Afghan fighter Massoud and he later shifted his focus to the United States and his own homeland Saudi Arabia. Post explains:

With the defeat of the Soviet Union, the warrior king bin Laden and his loyal warriors had lost their enemy. As Eric Hoffer has observed, the power of a charismatic leader derives from his capacity to focus hatred against a single enemy, as Hitler did in the 1930s, unifying the German people in their hatred of the Jews. While in Sudan in 1993, bin Laden found his previous allies, the United States, with a military base on Saudi soil in the wake of the crisis in the Gulf. Decrying this “desecration” of holy Saudi soil by the infidel Americans, bin Laden had seamlessly transferred his enmity from the first defeated superpower, the Soviet Union, to the remaining superpower, the United States. As if to reinforce bin Laden’s messianic vision to his followers, over the next
decade al Qaeda had a series of triumphs against this new enemy. (Post 2003, 22)

Before the war ended, bin Laden spent most of his time on the frontlines of the Afghan conflict. Azzam continued to "popularize the concept of jihad along the Pakistan-Afghanistan borders." It is well known his writings on political Islam influenced other Islamic movements and some reports suggest may have Azzam founded Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist organization. Contrary to public opinion, Gunaratna confirms Azzam founded al Qaeda “The Base” in 1987 - 1988, to harness the massive mujahedeen organization his ideology had created (Gunaratna 2002, 21). Al Qaeda’s original mission, as conceived by Azzam, was to channel the mujahedeen into fighting on behalf of oppressed Muslims worldwide, it was meant to be an Islamic “rapid reaction force” to defend fellow believers on short notice (Ibid., 21 - 22). Azzam never intend that al Qaeda be a military organization. This is reflected by the fatwa Azzam issued in objection to the Egyptian proposal to train mujahedeen in terrorist tactics cited in chapter two. Azzam objected to killing non-combatant women and children.

On the other hand, bin Laden’s aim was to mobilize al Qaeda into a global fighting force to recreate a caliphate and unite the Muslim world under one umbrella (Ibid, 21). Bin Laden, like Qutb before him, wanted to eliminate secular rule from Muslim countries; including his homeland Saudi Arabia, and countries that cooperated with the west in particular. The idea of uniting Islam

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See the discussion on Qutb’s radical ideology outlined in chapter two.
into a single entity greatly appealed to the Arab mujahedeen and al Zawahiri in particular. In fact, it was the synergy between bin Laden and al Zawahiri on this issue that ultimately drove bin Laden to abandon Azzam for al Zawahiri. Thus, a worldwide Caliphate under Muslim rule, perhaps with bin Laden at the head, became the pivotal concept that facilitated the global spread of al Qaeda. Bin Laden used this platform for over two decades after the Afghan conflict to try and manipulate a showdown between Islam and the west until his death in May 2011. Bergen sums up the ideological differences between Azzam and bin Laden’s vision of al Qaeda.

The founding of al Qaeda marked an irrevocable split between bin Laden and his former mentor Abdullah Azzam. This split would have fateful consequences. Azzam advocated a concept of jihad that was essentially a traditional interpretation of the nature of jihad: the reclamation of once-Muslim lands from non-Muslim rule in places such as Palestine, what was then the Soviet Union, and even southern Spain, which had been under Muslim rule five centuries earlier.

The predominantly Egyptian militants who surrounded bin Laden at the end of the eighties advocated something more radical: the violent overthrow of governments across the Muslim world they deemed “apostate,” a concept of jihad that Azzam and many of his followers rejected, as they wanted no part in conflicts between Muslims. The split between Azzam and the ultra-jihadists around bin Laden may have even cost Azzam his life; he was assassinated by unknown assailants in November 1989, a year after al Qaeda had been secretly founded. (Bergen 2006, 74)

As stated previously, most believe bin Laden was responsible for Azzam’s death. Given bin Laden’s growing stature in the Afghan Service Bureau and the embryonic al Qaeda organization there is merit to this argument. From this perspective, having tasted the exhilarating sense of power, bin Laden was done playing second to Azzam and icons like Massoud
both of whom had the audacity to question bin Laden’s vision; which substantiates Robins and Post’s theory of centrality outlined in chapter one. For bin Laden, Azzam stood in the way of restoring Islam to its rightful place in the world with his misguided preaching about restraint. Azzam outlived his usefulness and it was time for bin Laden to take control.

To paraphrase Gunaratna, bin Laden was not an original thinker but an opportunist, a businessman who surrounded himself with a good team, managed it well, but borrowed heavily from others. Bin Laden’s cunning was established when he left Pakistan for Saudi Arabia after Azzam’s death (Gunaratna 2002, 23). While it cannot be pinned down exactly when bin Laden left Pakistan, it provided him with an alibi to distance himself from Azzam’s murder. Arguably, al Zawahiri, bin Laden’s new best friend, was instrumental in convincing bin Laden to leave Pakistan. Recall, others have observed that while bin Laden is clever, he is not overly intelligent. This notion gives credence to Dr. Hare’s theory about the psychopath, who is brilliant at manipulating others to do their will. I believe this was the core of bin Laden’s success, along with his money. For example, Abdullah Anas who helped run the Afghan Service Office reports that bin Laden had a “poorly conceived plan to take Kabul. In his words:

Osama, he had to create an organization and to keep everything under his control, but as an organizer, I think he had many mistakes during this period. In 1991 he had a project to enter Kabul [then under the control of the Afghan communists] and he spent 100 million rupees (more than 1.5 million dollars) and after a few weeks, everything collapsed and the people took his 100 million rupees. Osama as an
organizer—completely a catastrophe, I consider him. (Bergen 2006, 104 – 105)

Post reports it is widely believed that al Zawahiri was also bin Laden’s pen which supplied his speeches and writings with a veneer of academic authenticity that he likely could not cultivate otherwise. Nevertheless, Azzam’s removal cleared the way for bin Laden, probably with al Zawahiri’s help, to assume full credit for winning the conflict against the Soviets. Post sums it up as follows.

Regardless of who was responsible for the death of Azzam, bin Laden was left as the undisputed leader of the movement. Between the dismissal of U.S. help and the removal of Azzam from his leadership role, in the minds of both the leader and his followers, bin Laden became solely responsible for the victory over the Soviet superpower and the expansion of the jihadist movement. (Post, 22)

However, Azzam was not the only obstacle bin Laden’s path. Massoud was another weak link that interfered with bin Laden’s rise to the top for two reasons. One, Massoud’s brave exploits outshined bin Laden’s minor accomplishments in the Afghan conflict. Two, after the war, Massoud hoped to establish a democratic regime in Afghanistan which conflicted with bin Laden’s belief that Islamic law should govern Muslim society.

Ahmad Shah Massoud, born September 2, 1952, was known as a French speaking, poetry loving ethnic Tajik (Afghan hero Massoud’s assassination 2011). Every year from 1980 to 1985, the Soviets launched two massive offensives against Massoud’s position, each attack larger than the last. Yet, Massoud with anywhere from 1,000 - 5,000 mujahedeen fighters held 30,000 Soviet troops armed with tanks, field artillery and air support, at
Bay and successfully thwarted each attack. These heroic feats earned Massoud the nickname "Lion of Panjshir" (Ahmed Shah Massoud 2001). Unlike many other Afghan fighters, Massoud was not a fan of bin Laden. Massoud believed bin Laden’s Afghan Arabs were so disorganized that he refused to let them participate in operations with his forces. Moreover, Massoud believed bin Laden’s forces were much more concerned with martyrdom than with defeating the Soviets. According to Mockaitis, Massoud had serious misgivings about bin Laden’s personal motives in the war (Mockaitis 2010, 43). After the war, Massoud was hailed as a hero by Afghan’s for his pivotal role in freeing Afghanistan from Soviet occupation. To this day, Massoud’s picture is still displayed in many car windows, shops, guard huts, and billboards (Afghan hero Massoud’s assassination 2011). Bergen says Azzam and Massoud had a good working relationship. However, bin Laden, with al Zawahiri’s help; spread malicious rumors about Massoud suggesting he was a French spy who entertained whores among other baseless accusations. This served the dual purpose of discrediting Massoud and Azzam who defended Massoud against those lies (Bergen 2006, 69). A Guantanamo Bay detainee testifying before a United States military tribunal describes how fighters were treated in bin Laden’s camp that supported Massoud.

I met him [bin Laden] before 11 September. I met him maybe 14 or 15 years ago, while on Jihad, in the war against Russia. I followed some of the leaders of the mujahedeen in the past. [Ahmad Shah] Massoud: I liked him and thought he was a very good man. I said to the [Arab] mujahedeen, “That he is good and God bless him.” They got
mad when I said I like Massoud. If I had known they didn’t like him, I wouldn’t have spoken. For saying that, they punished me; they bothered me; they beat me; they hit me very badly. They accused me of being a spy. (Ibid., 70)

Again, this behavior harkens back to the behaviors of centrality and grandiosity in the sense that anyone who displays a differing opinion than one’s own is an enemy.

After the Afghan war, Massoud became Minister of Defense in the new Islamic State of Afghanistan. Massoud’s fierce rival, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, with support from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, bombarded Afghanistan one month after the new government was established. When the Uzbekistan-backed Abdul Rashid Dostum formed an anti-government coalition with Hekmatyar in 1994, Afghanistan descended into civil war yet again (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar 2010). Fighters under different warlords rampaged across the country, looting, raping and killing Afghan civilians. The atrocities were so wide-spread that a group of Islamic students in Kandahar formed to oppose the guerrilla fighters and protect Afghan civilians. That group called themselves “the Taliban” meaning “the Students.” Massoud tried to engage the Taliban in talks about democratic elections but they had no interest in participating. Unfortunately, the Taliban committed the same atrocities against the Afghan people as Hekmatyar’s coalition, but held on to power. The Taliban received support from Pakistan and al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia. The Taliban returned the favor by extending sanctuary to al Qaeda when bin Laden was cast out of Saudi Arabia (Beverly 2007, iii). As Mockaitis points out, a far more organized
and focused bin Laden had Massoud killed just days before the September 11 attacks (Mockaitis 2010, 43). Kallie Szczepanski in her auto biography of Massoud describes how al Qaeda executed his assassination.

... al-Qaeda operatives made their way to Ahmad Shah Massoud's base, disguised as reporters, and killed him with their suicide bomb on September 9, 2001. The extremist coalition of al Qaeda and the Taliban wanted to remove Massoud and undermine the Northern Alliance before making their strike against the United States on September 11. (Szczepanski, n.d.)

Like Azzam, Massoud got in bin Laden’s way, and it cost him his life. Killing people who stood in his way, appears to be recurring pattern in bin Laden’s life. Again, reflecting on Robins and Post’s description of the paranoid personality and the depths to which a paranoid will go to defend their position, the outcome for Azzam and Massoud could not have been any different. Considering Dr. Hare’s characterization of psychopath, as a person without a conscience, Osama bin Laden’s story after gaining notoriety on the Afghan stage provides a compelling example. The Guantanamo Bay detainee who got a beating for expressing kind words about Massoud was lucky he did not die for that slip of the tongue.

Another critical aspect of bin Laden’s rise to worldwide acclaim is the publication of Jihadi Magazine, not surprisingly, Azzam’s brainchild. Jihadi Magazine began as an Arab language magazine published monthly that brought news of the Afghan war and Arab efforts to support the jihad cause. Within six months of publication the magazine advanced from an amateur production in black and white to a well-conceived lay out featuring color
photos. The magazine served as a vital recruiting tool and fund-raising mechanism for the Afghan jihad to the Arab world. Magazine readership eventually surpassed just Arab audiences and expanded throughout the United States to: New York, Boston, Phoenix, Tucson, Minnesota and Washington, DC. The first article for *Jihad Magazine*, Issue 1, released December 1984, reads:

To all supporters of Jihad on Earth. We remind you that the Afghan Jihad is a necessity for the Muslims, even if the number of Russian enemies and others double your number. And, in God’s name you will defeat your enemies. Because one of you is superior to ten of your enemies, and even in the worst case, you are double them.

The call to Jihad in God’s name is a part of this Earth and it is the satisfaction of the conscience. And it leads to eternal life in the end, and is a relief in your earthly chains. (Bergen 2006, 32 – 33)


Thanks be to God and we thank him and ask him for his help and forgiveness. Every time the word Jihad is mentioned, sin springs up and runs away. And every time the Muslims talk about defending their rights, the Western Media comes in and libels the name of the Muslims, and portrays them as extremists and beasts.

Maybe the Muslims forgot the wars that occurred in the last century between France, Britain, and other European countries. And maybe the Muslims forgot the hardships of two world wars, created by the West and lasting twenty-five years, which killed fifty-million people, and left people injured, maimed, and wounded. It was a gruesome war, built on greediness and small hopes. And maybe the Muslims are not aware of the cultural war being waged on them to libel the name of Jihad, in order to portray the Muslims as bandits and bloodthirsty warriors, and in order to make the Muslims leave Jihad, and so they create stories about killing hostages so they can portray Muslims as killers.

America is the New World leader, or better yet, a country that has built its empire on the backs of its original inhabitants [the Native
Americans] who they wiped out and who now number less than a million, who have been put into little reservations as if they were museum pieces. And they still use kerosene lamps instead of electricity in the Midwest. And those were the red Indians who were the original inhabitants of America. We are not ashamed of our religion or the order given to us by God. We say it frankly without playing with words or deception. Plain and straight:

1. Jihad is a religious duty for the Umma [Muslims around the world], so as to free the people and give them Islamic justice and protection of the religion.

2. That the religion of God and the blessed religion is that of all of humanity, and we want to spread it all over all four corners of the world.

3. Jihad in God’s will mean killing the infidels in the name of God and raising the banner of His name. And we do not want to make this great Jihad only words to be said on podiums, or articles to be published in newspapers. Jihad is done in the will of God only if you fight the infidel with the sword until he submits to Islam.

Nothing is left to block you from the Afghan jihad. (Ibid., 34 - 35)

Azzam paints a harsh picture of America. Yet, the picture is designed to instill fear in the reader. Azzam reminds his audience that America was built on the backs of Indians who were slaughtered and cast aside like “museum pieces.” He reminds his audience that fifty-million people were killed, injured, or maimed in the first two world wars; of which, the west was a part. Reading between the lines, Azzam implies this could be the same fate of Muslims who infringe on western sovereignty. For Azzam, jihad is a sacred religious duty meant to free oppressed Muslims, not to wage war for its own sake. Azzam reminds the reader that Muslim’s are not blood thirsty beasts, only human beings who crave freedom from oppression. Azzam’s plea appears to be more consistent with Fukuyama’s claim in chapter one that individuals will fight and
die for and freedom. In this instance, Fukuyama’s concept seems to resonate with both Azzam and Massoud’s natural desire for the freedom to carve out a place in the world for the Islamic community to live and flourish. After Azzam’s death, bin Laden distorted Azzam’s message to align with his own radical belief that martyrdom in the name of God is honorable and will be rewarded in the hereafter. Notice how bin Laden couches himself as God’s messenger in the February 1998 Fatwa, *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders*.

In compliance with God’s order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God, “and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,” and “fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God.”

We – with God’s help – call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God’s order to kill the American and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. (Post 2003, 24)

Thus, in Fukuyama’s framework bin Laden wants to be the master, craving ever greater glory through murdering adversaries. Additionally, Fukuyama’s framework does fit bin Laden’s personality profile because he does not value anything outside of himself. This is demonstrated by his own unwillingness to martyr himself, but used his money to recruit others to do so. The fact, that bin Laden gleaned particular satisfaction from sending children to martyrdom is the best example yet to demonstrate his spiral into psychopathy.
Consequently, *Jihad Magazine* was one vehicle that served that purpose. It gave bin Laden the power over life and death using religion as justification. *Jihad Magazine* was forerunner to *Inspire Magazine*, an online publication released on the internet two decades later.

**Inspire Magazine**

*Inspire Magazine* was written for American and British readership to communicate messages from bin Laden and to spread al Qaeda’s anti-American messages (Joscelyn 2010). The main thrust of the magazine was to portray the west, America in particular, as being at war with Islam. Most of the material in *Inspire* was produced by al Awlaki and edited by Samir Khan\(^3\) whose particular specialty was online propaganda. Six issues of *Inspire* were

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\(^3\) Anwar al Awlaki was a self-proclaimed Islamic cleric born in the United States. Al Awlaki was an ardent supporter of al Qaeda and bin Laden in particular. Al Awlaki was instrumental in recruiting disgruntled westerners to the jihadi cause. Al Awlaki was complicit in a number of terrorist attacks against the United States and was a master at presenting himself as an Islamic scholar with few credentials to back him up. His lack of credentials was a source of contention and derision among reputable Islamic scholars. This was a source of contention with Islamic critics. Samir Kahn was also follower of al Qaeda and editor of *Inspire Magazine*. 
released from July 2010 - September 2011. The last issue of Inspire was published just weeks before al Awlaki, his son, and Samir Kahn were killed in a drone strike by the United States. Two special articles of Inspire include:

- May Our Souls be Sacrificed for You! -- Anwar al Awlaki
- Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of your Mom -- The al Qaeda Chef

Consequently, media manipulation and personal deception were critical components of bin Laden’s success and al Qaeda’s extensive global outreach from its inception. As an example, excerpts from The al Qaeda Documents4 show how they use informants to learn about enemy intentions (Venzke 2002, 75). Al Awlaki played that role when he became Imam at the Dar al Hijra Mosque in Falls Church, VA. While Imam at Al-Hijra, al Awlaki hosted two guests, al Hazmi and Hani Hanjour, two of the September 11 hijackers in April 2001 (Barclay 2010, 16). In summary, al Awlaki played the role of American citizen to help facilitate al Qaeda’s objectives for September 11. Of course, he later indignantly denied the allegations. The point is, al Qaeda messages are designed to be inconsistent and are tailored for specific audiences to maximize affect. Al Awlaki was the brains behind “Operation Hemorrhage” the crafty idea of killing America with a 1,000 cuts. The objective is to capitalize on the security phobia sweeping the United States by engaging in frequent inexpensive small-scale attacks.

4 The al Qaeda Documents comprise a volume of excerpts taken directly from the al Qaeda Training Manual. The manual was translated into English and introduced at the embassy bombing trial in New York in 2002. The documents were confiscated by the Manchester Metropolitan Police during the raid of an al Qaeda member’s home. The manual provides insight into al Qaeda’s targeting selection, intelligence gathering, operational security measures, and communication techniques.
To bring down America, "we do not need to strike big," the editors of Inspire boast. "Attacking the enemy with smaller but more frequent operations" will "bleed the enemy"—a strategy of death "by a thousand cuts." One article claims that the recent effort to bomb FedEx and UPS cargo planes, which the magazine calls "Operation Hemorrhage," cost only $4,200: two Nokia phones at $150 each, two H-P printers at $300 each, plus "shipping, transportation and other miscellaneous expenses." (Inspire Magazine, 2010)

The importance of deception is illustrated in the al Qaeda training manual’s prerequisites for potential members. In keeping with bin Laden’s façade of righteousness, religious imagery permeates the language (Woodward 2010).

The al Qaeda Organization

The al Qaeda Documents’ outlines prerequisites for joining al Qaeda. Each criterion is accompanied by a rationale and historical examples of past military successes and failures so applicants can better understand the reasoning behind each dictum. Ironically, al Qaeda draws extensively from tactics used by the Jews, Russians, Romans, and first two World Wars, as models for their military organization. These examples provide insight into al Qaeda’s mindset and illuminate the lengths they will to go to achieve their objectives. Robins and Post referenced this manual to emphasize the particular emphasis al Qaeda places on mental stability or what the manual refers to as “tranquility and unflappability.” As stated, membership requirements are immersed in religious symbolism which serves to bind recruits on a deep psychological level to follow these mandates to the letter as a moral duty. As discussed previously, these conditions also support the Islamic scholar Qutb’s rationale for looking back on the past as the key to the
future. Notice also many of the strategies that bin Laden used to defeat the Soviets and eliminate adversaries like Azzam and Massoud correspond to the instructions outlined in the manual. The following excerpts are taken directly from *The al Qaeda Documents* section “Necessary Qualifications and Characteristics for the Organization’s Member” but formatted differently and reworded for clarity.

1. Al Qaeda members must be a Muslim.

   *Rationale:* How can an unbeliever, someone from a revealed religion [Christian, Jew], a secular person, a communists, etc. protect Islam and Muslims and defend their goals and secrets when he does not believe in that religion [Islam]? The Israeli Army requires that a fighter be of the Jewish religion. Likewise, the command leadership in the Afghan and Russian armies requires anyone with an officer’s position to be a member of the communist party. (Ibid., 20)

2. Al Qaeda members must be committed to al Qaeda’s ideology.

   *Rationale:* This commitment frees organization members from conceptual problems. (Ibid., 20)

3. Al Qaeda members must be mature.

   *Rationale:* The requirements of military work are numerous, and a minor cannot perform them. The nature of hard and continuous work in dangerous conditions requires a great deal of psychological, mental, and intellectual fitness, which are not usually found in a minor. It is reported that Ibn Omar said, “During Ahad [battle] when I was fourteen, I was submitted [as a volunteer] to the prophet. He refused me and did not throw me in the battle. During Khandak [trench] Day [battle] when I was fifteen, I was also submitted to him, and he permitted me [to fight]. (Ibid., 20)

4. Al Qaeda members must be willing to sacrifice their lives.

   *Rationale:* He has to be willing to do the work and undergo martyrdom for the purpose of achieving the goal and establishing the religion of majestic Allah on earth. (Ibid., 20)
5. Al Qaeda members must be good listeners and be obedient.

   Rationale: In the military, this is known as discipline. It is expressed by how the members obey orders given to him. That is what our religion urges. The Glorious says, “O, ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger and those charged with authority among you.” In the story of Hazifa ben al Yaman – exemplary in his obedience to Allah’s messenger – sent him to spy on the Kureish and their allies during the siege of Medina. Hazifa said, “As Muhammad called me to stand, he said, ‘Go get me information about these people and do not alarm them about me.’ As I departed, I saw Abou Soufian and placed an arrow in the bow. I then remembered the words of the messenger – “do not alarm him about me.” “If I had shot I would have hit him.” (Ibid., 20)

6. Al Qaeda members must keep secrets and conceal information.

   Rationale: Secrecy should be used even with the closest people, for deceiving enemies is not easy. Allah messenger says, “Seek Allah’s help in doing your affairs in secrecy.” It was said in proverbs, “the hearts of freemen are the bombs of secrets” and “Moslems' secrecy is faithfulness, and talking about it is faithlessness.” Mohammed used to keep work secrets from the closest people, even from his wife A’isha. (Ibid., 21)

7. Al Qaeda members must be free of illness.

   Rationale: The military organization’s member must fulfill this important requirement. Allah says, “There is no blame for those who are infirm, or ill, or who have no resources to spend.” (Ibid., 21)

8. Al Qaeda members must possess patience.

   Rationale: The member should have patience for enduring afflictions if he is overcome by enemies. He should not abandon this great path and sell himself and his religion to enemies for freedom. He should be patient in performing the work, even if it lasts a long time. (Ibid., 21)

9. Al Qaeda members must possess tranquility and unflappability.

   Rationale: The member should have a calm personality that allows him to endure psychological traumas such as bloodshed, murder, arrest, imprisonment, and reverse psychological traumas such as killing one or all of his comrades. He should be able to carry out the work. (Ibid., 21)
10. Al Qaeda members must possess intelligence and insight.

*Rationale*: When the prophet – sent Hazifa ben al Yaman to spy on the polytheist and [Hazifa] sat among them, Abou Soufian said, “Let each one of you look at his companion.” Hazifa said to his companion, “Who are you?” The companion replied, “So-and-so son of so-and-so.” In World War I, the German spy, Julius Seelber entered Britain and worked as a mail examiner due to his mastery of languages. From letters, he obtained important information and sent it to the Germans. One of the letters was from a lady to her brother’s friend in the fleet. She mentioned her brother used to live with her until he was transferred to a secret project involving commercial ships. When Seelber read the letter, he met the woman and blamed her for her loose tongue in talking about military secrets. Forty-eight hours later the secret was given to the Germans. (Ibid., 21)

11. Al Qaeda members must be cautious and prudent.

*Rationale*: In battle against the King of Tomedia, the Roman General Speer sent an emissary to discuss a truce between the two armies. In reality he sent him to learn about the Tomedians’ ability to fight. The general picked one of his top commanders for the task and sent officers, disguised as slaves. During the mission, one of the king’s officers, pointed to one of the disguised slaves and yelled, “That slave is a Roman officer. The Tomedians were diverted by an officer who slapped the Roman and berating him for claiming status he did not deserve. The officer accepted the slap quietly. He bowed his head in shame as slaves do. The Sifax men believed the Roman was a slave because they could not imagine a Roman would accept hits without defending himself. (Ibid., 22 - 23)

12. Al Qaeda members must have truthfulness and counsel.

*Rationale*: The commander of the faithful asserted this characteristic is vital in those who gather information and work as spies against Muslim enemies. The commander sent a letter saying “if you step foot on your enemies land, spy on them.” Choose those who you count on for truthfulness and advice, whether Arabs or inhabitants of that land. Liars’ accounts do not benefit you; the deceiver is a spy against you and not for you. (Ibid., 23)

13. Al Qaeda members must have the ability to observe and analyze.

*Rationale*: The Israeli Mossed received news some Palestinians were going to attack an Israeli El Al airplane. The plane was going to Rome
with Golda Meir, the Prime Minister on board. The Palestinians managed to use a clever trick that allowed them to wait for the arrival of the plan without being questioned by anyone. They beat a man who sold potatoes, kidnapped and hid him. They made two holes in the top of the peddler’s cart and placed two tubes next to the chimney through which to Russian missiles could be launched. The Mossad officers traveled the airport looking for the Palestinians. One officer passed the potato cart twice without noticing anything. By the third time, he noticed three chimneys, but only one was working. He steered toward the cart and hit it hard and the Palestinians were captured. (Ibid., 24)

14. Al Qaeda must “act, change positions, and conceal oneself.”

*Rationale: An example is what Noaim Ibn Masoud did in his mission to cause agitation among the Koraish, the Ghatfan, and the Jews of Koreitha. He controlled his reactions and skillfully played his role. Without showing signs of inconsistency, he showed his interest and zeal towards the Jews and the Koraish at another. (Ibid., 24 - 25)*

**Making the Connections**

The point of this analysis has not been to outline every aspect of the al Qaeda network nor map every detail of Osama’s bin Laden’s life. That would be impossible. Rather, this investigation is an attempt to highlight certain events that made bin Laden into the man we know today from a psychological perspective. By tracing bin Laden’s childhood we see a small boy who was ridiculed as ibn al Abeda (son of a slave) because his mother did not hold favor with Muhammad bin Laden because she was independent. A picture of a boy emerges who had to compete for his father’s affection within a pack of fifty-four other children, not to mention Muhammad bin Laden’s other wives, a connection that never materialized. Bin Laden was a boy who had everything and nothing. Thus, he had to distinguish himself so he mattered. He accomplished this by demonstrating an overzealous, piety that made him stand
out in stark contrast to his westernized siblings. Recall, bin Laden’s charismatic brother Salem was given responsibility for dispersing the family fortunate to his siblings after his father’s untimely death. One can only speculate how that went over with Osama. Given bin Laden’s reaction to those who stood in his way, like Azzam and Massoud, and his lack of respect for human life, it is plausible he had something to do with Salem’s death. Salem was an expert pilot, yet he crashed his plane in fair weather conditions in 1988 just like his father 20 years prior (Bergen 2006, 73). This combined with the fact that the September 11 attacks were carried out by planes may not be a coincidence. Interestingly enough, Bergen reports that Salem was one of the few people who were not afraid to stand-up to Osama (Ibid.). Lastly, Salem’s death corresponds with the timeframe that bin Laden was raised to hero status in Afghanistan and acquired his over inflated sense of self-importance. No scholars studied in this analysis were able to reconcile the strange occurrence of Salem’s death. It is left to the reader to make their own assessment.

Bin Laden did distinguish himself by his intellect, only by his adroit ability to manipulate others. By the time bin Laden went to university he found an outlet by studying Qutb’s writings which permeate al Qaeda’s rhetoric, after Azzam was assassinated. As stated throughout this investigation, bin Laden’s entrance on the Afghan stage was the pivotal moment when the true Osama bin Laden emerged. This is when bin Laden’s obsession with dictating life and death allowed him to play the role of God at least in his own mind. Sending children between the ages of 15 – 25 (Hanson 2007, 267) to their death in the
name of God made bin Laden feel immensely powerful. The extensive list of attacks suspected of or inspired by al Qaeda that follows shows the devastating effectiveness of bin Laden's tactics. For example, in the list below note that bin Laden recruited mentally impaired women from mental hospitals to conduct suicide bombings in a busy market place; 100 innocent people died that day. His depravity knew no bounds. He became the center of the universe thanks to the media who showered him with the attention he craved. I submit bin Laden’s master plan was ultimately to dominate the world. Osama bin Laden had money, ideological support, and people lining up to die for his cause; eerily analogous to Hitler. Conversely, in the end, Azzam’s dire warning about the United States came true and Osama bin Laden was killed on May 1, 2011. Bin Laden will have to contemplate that in the next world which I am very certain is not paradise.

A listing of terrorist acts suspected or inspired by al Qaeda follows.
Terrorist Acts Suspected or Inspired by al Qaeda

- February 1993: Bombing of World Trade Center.
  - 6 killed

  - 19 killed

  - 224 killed

- October 2000: Bombing USS Cole Yemen.
  - 17 killed

- September 2001: World Trade Center / Pentagon.
  - 2,992 killed

  - 12 killed

  - 202 killed

- November 2002: Suicide attack hotel in Mombasa, Kenya.
  - 16 killed

- May 2003: Suicide attack western housing compound Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
  - 34 killed

- May 2003: Four bombs targeting Jewish, Spanish, and Belgian sites in Casablanca, Morocco.
  - 33 killed

- August 2003: Suicide bomb Marriott Hotel Jakarta, Indonesia.
  - 12 killed, 150 injured

- November 2003: Suicide car-bombers attacked two synagogues in Istanbul, Turkey.
  - 25 killed, hundreds injured

- November 2003: Truck bombs detonated at London bank and British consulate in Istanbul, Turkey
  - 26 killed
- March 2004: Ten bombs on 4 trains exploded simultaneously during the morning rush hour in Madrid, Spain.
  - 191 killed, over 1,500 injured

  - 22 killed

- September 2004: Car bomb outside the Australian embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.
  - 9 killed

- December 2004: Terrorists entered the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
  - 9 killed

  - 52 killed

  - 22 killed

  - 57 killed

- January 2006: Two suicide bombers carrying police badges blow themselves up near a celebration at the Police Academy in Iraq.
  - 20 killed

- April 2007: Suicide bombers attack a government building in Algiers.
  - 35 killed, hundreds injured

- December 2007: Suicide attacks near United Nations offices and government buildings in Algeria.
  - 60 killed

- January 2008: A suicide bomber detonates at a home where mourners were paying respects to the family of a man killed in a car bomb.
  - 30 killed

- February 2008: Two women suicide bombers believed to be mentally impaired, attack crowded pet markets in eastern Baghdad. Al Qaeda recruited female patients at psychiatric hospitals to become suicide bombers.
  - 100 killed
- April 2008: A suicide bomber attacks funeral for two nephews of a prominent Sunni tribal leader, Diyala Province, Iraq
  - 30 killed

  - 12 killed, 44 injured

- May 2008: Al Qaeda suicide bomber detonates explosives in Iraq.
  - 10 killed, 12 injured

- June 2008: A car bomb explodes outside the Danish Embassy in Pakistan. Al-Qaeda claims responsibility saying the attack was retaliation for the 2006 publication of political cartoons in the Danish newspaper depicted the Islamic prophet Muhammad
  - 6 killed, dozens injured

- June 2008: A female suicide bomber detonates near a courthouse in Baquba, Iraq.
  - 15 killed, 40 injured

- June 2008: A suicide bomber detonates at a meeting between sheiks and Americans in Karma, west of Baghdad.
  - 20 killed

- August 2008: Al Qaeda killed worshippers in three separate attacks as they made their way to Karbala to celebrate the birthday of 9th century Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi.
  - 24 killed

- August 2008: Suicide bomber drives an explosives-laden car into a police academy in Algeria.
  - 43 killed

- September 2008: A car bomb and a rocket strike the U.S. embassy in Yemen as staff arrived to work. Twenty-five suspected al Qaeda militants were arrested for the attack.
  - 16 killed

- November 2008: Three bombs explode minutes apart in Baghdad, Iraq. Officials suspect the explosions are linked to al-Qaeda.
  - 28 killed, 60 injured
December 2009: A suicide bomber kills eight Americans civilians, seven of them CIA agents, in Afghanistan. It’s the deadliest attack on the agency since 9/11. The attacker is reportedly a double agent from Jordan who was acting on behalf of al Qaeda.

- 8 killed

April 2011: Men claiming to be Moroccan members of al Qaeda Arabian Peninsula appear on the internet and threaten to attack Moroccan interests. The following week a bomb killing 15 people, including 10 foreigners, explodes in Marrakesh, Morocco.

- 15 killed

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^5 Hundreds of other attacks took place as well but not all could be listed here in the interest of space. The point is Osama bin Laden’s desire to kill knew no bounds and his ability to find new ways to conduct attacks is alarming.
CONCLUSION

We recognize that at times our nation has acted with arrogance and ignorance toward other societies. . . . For many people, including many Americans and a number of signatories to this letter, some values sometimes seen in America are unattractive and harmful. Consumerism as a way of life. The notion of freedom as no rules. The weakening of marriage and family life. Plus an enormous entertainment and communications apparatus that relentlessly glorifies such ideas and beams them, whether they are welcome or not, into nearly every corner of the globe. . . . We pledge to do all we can to guard against the harmful temptations—especially those of arrogance and jingoism—to which nations at war so often seem to yield. . . . We wish especially to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Muslim societies. We say to you forthrightly: We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies.

--Letter from the United States to the Saudi Government

The letter cited here is from the United States Government to the Government of Saudi Arabia (Ibrahim 2007, 18). From the tone of the letter, the United States is apologizing for our way of life and for causing offense to the Muslim community. This letter does not have the tone of a country that seeks to destroy Islam; just the opposite. Yet, other Islamic governments burn our flags, bomb our embassies, and ridicule our way of life, while they secretly envy us for our freedoms. In many ways this behavior is analogous to Osama bin Laden. He hated the United States but at the same time he envied us not only because of our freedom but because he could not control us. Above that, bin Laden needed someone to hate and who better than a country flourishing with cultural diversity, sophistication and compassion for others; and the good character to admit when we are wrong. What an accomplishment for bin Laden to bring down a great power like the United States. To accomplish such a feat, bin Laden would have been the envy of the Islamic world.
Was Osama bin Laden a paranoid personality? Was he fighting for recognition? The answer is yes to both questions but not for the reasons one may think. It was not childhood hurts, although in fairness to bin Laden, he had plenty. It was also not because bin Laden had a desire for a democratic society at the base of the fight for recognition in the Hegel-Fukuyama scenario. Osama bin Laden fought for power. He discovered during the war in Afghanistan that he could wield power over life and death which intoxicated him because it gave him, in his own mind, Godlike power. It did not matter who was hurt as long as he could present himself as a victim with a justifiable platform to stand on. Nothing works better than religion. However, if religion did not work, bin Laden would have found something else. It just might not have attracted worldwide attention. Recall Ray’s character in Dr. Hare’s description of the psychopath. Ray first wanted to work in the prison kitchen, then the auto shop, then Dr. Hare’s father’s construction firm. Ray was a brilliant manipulator but not too bright at actually doing the work which may have given him the ability to go further. Osama bin Laden was not that bright either but he had something Ray did not have--money. But, Ray and bin Laden share one important characteristic--neither had a conscience--this is the hallmark of a psychopath. The United States Intelligence Community should familiarize themselves with the psychopathic personality and measure character by deeds--not words. A holistic approach to intelligence assessments should place emphasis on psychology and historical precedents rather than policy.
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