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JIHAD AS A PERVERSE CONCEPT OF MODERN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS

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Abstract

The object of this study is jihad, as one of the pillars of the world religion of Islam. The subject of the study is the concept of jihad in the interpretation of modern Islamic fundamentalists and adherents of the traditional Muslim faith. The authors set a goal based on the results of the analysis of approaches to the interpretation of jihad in the theological and scientific literature to identify the adequacy of its interpretation by representatives of traditional and fundamentalist Islam, to assess its impact on the activities of modern Islamic terrorist organizations.

Keywords

Islam – Jihad – Terrorism – Religion – Islamic fundamentalism

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Introduction

Jihad is a very important conceptual part of Islam and is essentially the sixth pillar of the faith, since it is one of the duties of all Muslims, regardless of their theological capabilities, orientations, and interpretations of the content of the religion. The fact that jihad is an obligation proclaimed by all sources based on divergent, sometimes even contradictory, texts of the Quran is the unanimous opinion of Muslim theologians. However, in the twenty-first century, jihad has become an integral part of the life of not only Muslims but the entire modern world and is identified with religious fundamentalist terrorism. In this regard, confusion between these concepts has become commonplace for the uninitiated.

Jihad is one of the least understood, relativistic categories of the Islamic religion. According to the researcher M. Demichelis, the word "jihad" has "two sides of the same coin":

- if one asks the average European about jihad, he/she will offer a universal translation of the term: "Holy war";
- on the contrary, if one asks this question to a Muslim, the answers will be very different: from a personal commitment to fighting sin every day to internal efforts to improve oneself and defensive war against external attacks, but an extremist interpretation is also possible – the fight against anti-Islamic behavior¹.

These two approaches compete with each other and go beyond all sects of Islam. The first one is a classic thesis, supported by traditionalists, and Islamic fundamentalists (Islamists) defend the second approach, and its radical direction. As world practice shows, this relativism generates a negative trend in the interpretation of jihad in the consciousness of mankind. H. Agdas agrees with this conclusion, and writes: "Because of the inability to understand the philosophy of the problem of jihad and its reality, people of modern times, as well as the Middle Ages, were and are deeply erroneous in their conclusions, and we must confess with great embarrassment that dangerous mistakes made it possible for opponents of Islam to criticize a pure and holy religion, such as Islam, which is nothing more than a reflection of the laws of nature and a manifestation of the greatness of God. <...> People who call themselves Muslims, but convinced that Islam should be spread by the sword, do not know about the inherent virtues of Islam, and their actions are similar to the actions of animals"².

At the same time, "jihad" – translated from Arabic means "*struggling in the ways of Allah*". In relation to Islamic theology, it is an effort that a person makes in various spheres of life to achieve ethical standards: work for the benefit of the family and society, academic success, service to humanity and the preservation of peace, etc. Therefore, the term "jihad" has primarily a moral meaning. At the same time, it should be noted that the verses of the Quran do not exclude the use of violence or armed jihad, but only in the case of external aggression. According to M. Gabriel, "60% of the verses of the Quran speak of a holy war"³.

¹ M. Demichelis, Corán y la Yihad. ¿Una religión violenta o la violencia dentro de una religión? Retrieved from: <https://institutoculturaysociedad.wordpress.com/2017/04/24/el-coran-y-la-yihad-una-religion-violenta-o-la-violencia-dentro-de-una-religion/>

² Religious Terrorism: Causes and Remedies. Retrieved from: <https://www.alislam.org/%20articles/religious-terrorism-causes-remedies/#top>

³ M. A. Gabriel, Islam et Terrorisme (Romanel-sur-Lausanne: Ourania, 2006)

"Of course, H. Call writes, there are numerous verses in the Quran that provoke violence (Quran 2: 190-195, 216-218, 243-252; 3: 142; 4: 71-78, 94-96; 5: 11; 8: 39, 59-66, 72-75; 9: 5-16, 29, 38-52, 81-96, 120-121; 16: 110; 22: 39-41; 29: 6; 47: 4- 11, 20-21, 35-38; 48: 15-17; 49: 15; 59: 1-17; 61: 10-13, etc.), including the war against non-Muslims. However, the word with the root "juhd" is in 35 verses. It is used in a general sense 22 times, 3 – in relation to spiritual acts, and only *10 times – in connection with warfare*⁴. In this regard, the hypothesis of our research is the postulate that modern religious fundamentalist terrorist organizations interpret jihad outside the borders of the traditional Muslim faith.

Methods

The methodological basis of the research was a retrospective analysis of scientific and theological works that reveal the essence and content of jihad. A systematic approach to this phenomenon has allowed identifying and justifying the role of jihad in the life of traditional and fundamentalist Islam. The epistemological potential of statistical and sociological methods of quantitative and qualitative research made it possible to adequately interpret the results of existing scientific research in relation to the hypothesis put forward by the authors. The novelty of the work and its results were determined by an original approach to identifying the characteristic features of jihad as one of the postulates of the Muslim faith, studying its systemic links with the sources of modern religious terrorism.

Discussion

The genesis of jihad dates back to Medina when the Prophet received a revelation that allowed him to fight those who fight him. "Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory" (Quran 22:39). If one turns to the interpretation of the ayat performed by Sheikh al-Saadi, it is possible to see that its context has two-time intervals and contains the struggle for gaining faith and restoring justice. The first relates to the birth of Islam when the followers of the Prophet were forbidden to fight with unfaithful and were told to patiently endure the suffering they caused. The second is connected with the Hejira, the migration of Muslims to Medina, and the subsequent acquisition of their power and strength. It was after this that they were allowed to fight the unfaithful who fight against them⁵. In other words, this verse is based on the moral norm of righteousness. Note that it is righteousness, and not the imposition of a specific religion because everyone has the right to profess the religion that he/she believes to be true for himself/herself. However, it should be noted that after the battle of Badr against the Meccans in 624, the Prophet was also given a divine command to fight the defenders of polytheism (Quran 2: 190-193, 47: 4-6). This already contradicts the previous revelation and divides humanity by religious affiliation.

That is exactly what the thinker and legal scholar of the Shafiq madhhab al-Mawardi did in the 11th century, dividing the world into the "House of Islam" (the gift of al-Islam), in which Islam gained supremacy, and the "House of war" (the gift of al-harb) or the "House of unbelief" "(Gift of al-kufr), which has no right to exist. The vast majority of early scholars suggested that the Islamic community, led by the caliph, had a collective duty to gradually expand Islamic territory and capture areas of infidels at least once a year. However, this dichotomy of the world is not found either in the Quran or in traditions. H. Arslan, a professor

⁴ J. Coll, El yihadismo: sus causas, su evolución y su realidad actual. Retrieved from: <http://anatomiadelahistoria.com/2018/02/el-yihadismo-sus-causas-y-su-realidad-actual/>

⁵ Interpretation of the Quran by as-Saadi. Retrieved from: <https://quran-online.ru/22/saadi>

at the Institute of Islamic Theology in Osnabruck (Germany), agrees with this, and notes that, according to most Muslim scholars, jihad has only two goals:

1. Self-defense and protection from external aggression;
2. Preventing religious persecution and establishing religious freedom so that all people can freely practice their religion⁶.

At the same time, there is a verse in the Quran that tells Muslims to fight the unfaithful: "And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion, all of it, is for Allah. And if they cease – then indeed, Allah is Seeing of what they do. But if they turn away – then know that Allah is your protector. Excellent is the protector, and Excellent is the helper" (Quran 8: 39, 40). Here it is possible to turn to the interpretation of the ayat by Sheikh al-Saadi again and emphasize that its content calls for fighting those who lead people astray from the path of Allah and do not serve him. This is what, al-Saadi believes, is the highest goal of jihad – a holy war against the enemies of religion. Due to jihad, Muslims protect their faith from the evil that unfaithful want to inflict on it. They protect the religion for which Allah created mankind, and strive to elevate it above all other faiths⁷. This is one of the problems of the essence of Jihad, and it is this classic concept that today's jihadists rely on when they try to legitimize their violence. At the same time, M. Khalil from the University of Michigan (USA) notes that medieval researchers of Islamic law identified two main forms of armed jihad:

- defensive jihad, the armed struggle against the invaders;
- aggressive jihad, a preemptive or offensive attack by political power⁸.

By the way, ISIL leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi called for aggressive jihad on July 1, 2014, addressing the Mujahideen and Muslim Ummah in the month of Ramadan. In this Epistle, he also divided the world into two camps: "The camp of Muslims and Mujahideen and the camp of Jews, crusaders – their allies, and with them, the rest of the nations and unfaithful, led by America and Russia, mobilized by the Jews"⁹.

However, H. Wiederstein notes, jihad was not interpreted as a war against the unfaithful until the 12th century. Only the scholar Ibn Taymiyah (Muslim theologian and critic of the "innovations" in religion) began to openly promote jihad as a war against the "unfaithful"¹⁰. If the enemy enters Muslim land, Ibn Taymiyyah said, there is no doubt that those who are nearby should defend it. If they are lazy or incapable, then mobilization is directed to those who surround them, and then around them, until it covers the whole world, East and West, because Muslim lands are one land. In such circumstances, it is necessary

⁶ H. Arslan, Dschihad für Religionsfreiheit. Retrieved from: <http://www.islamiq.de/2017/07/16/dschihad-fuer-religionsfreiheit/>

⁷ H. Arslan, Dschihad für Religionsfreiheit. Retrieved from: <http://www.islamiq.de/2017/07/16/dschihad-fuer-religionsfreiheit/>

⁸ M. Khalil, So, what really is jihad? Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/so-what-really-is-jihad-118660>

⁹ L. Ludko, Russia is the main enemy of the new Caliphate. Retrieved from: <http://chernovik.net/content/inve-smi/rossiya-glavnyy-vrag-novogo-halifata>

¹⁰ H. Wiederstein, Wie Dschihadisten den Koran missbrauchen. Retrieved from: https://www.focus.de/wissen/mensch/religion/islam/tid-26570/islamismus-die-falschen-vorstellungen-der-salafisten_aid_783604.html

to move in the direction of the occupied territory without the permission of the parents or the owner¹¹. However, according to H. Wiederstein, this interpretation should be considered in a historical context, because at that time the invasions of the Mongols brought the Muslim world into a state of shock. Baghdad was so destroyed that the Muslim metropolis never recovered from it¹².

In the 14th century, the Syrian scholar Ibn al-Qayyim listed many enemies that Muslims need to fight: the soul of Satan, hypocrites, unfaithful, heretics (false teachers), and apostates. At the same time, he considered the means of jihad:

- *heart* as a defense against satanic whispers;
- *language* to tell the truth;
- *hands* to stand up for the right things;
- *the sword* to fight against the unfaithful and enemies of Islam¹³.

In these approaches, it is possible to see both spiritual and material objects among objects of jihad, and both peaceful and armed among the means of struggle. A specific division of objects and means can be found in the structure and content of jihad, which, according to the Muslim faith, is divided into "large" and "small".

The "big" (great) jihad is aimed at combating deviations in the individual consciousness of the Muslim himself/herself. Its goal is to fight against social and spiritual vices in oneself (evil, lies, deception, debauchery, temptations, etc.). The ways of achieving this goal are chosen to cultivate self-discipline in oneself and to follow in the process of one's life the path drawn by Allah. The essence of the great jihad was revealed by the Prophet himself. As noted by Professor of the University of Bayreuth (Germany) R. Sesemann, Muhammad said after his return from battle: "Now we are back from the small jihad to the big jihad." When one of his companions asked what big jihad was, Mohammed replied: "*it is a fight against your own bad qualities*"¹⁴.

A comparative analysis of the dogmas of world religions shows that the essence of the great jihad reminds very much of the "four noble truths" accepted in Buddhism (6th century before the Christian Era), where the goal of the Buddhist is self-education:

1. *A person goes through the path of suffering*, which is a consequence of his past karma (karma is an "action" that has a consequence within one existence, merges into the next, and affects its character).

¹¹ A. Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' Fatāwā al-Kubrā* [La compilation des grandes opinions juridiques] (Beyrouth: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2005)

¹² H. Wiederstein, *Wie Dschihadisten den Koran missbrauchen*. Retrieved from: https://www.focus.de/wissen/mensch/religion/islam/tid-26570/islamismus-die-falschen-vorstellungen-der-salafisten_aid_783604.html

¹³ Dschihad zwischen Frieden und Gewalt. Retrieved from: <https://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/islamismus/210988/dschihad-zwischen-frieden-und-gewalt>

¹⁴ Dschihad zwischen Frieden und Gewalt. Retrieved from: <https://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/islamismus/210988/dschihad-zwischen-frieden-und-gewalt>

2. *The reason for suffering is longing or attachment to the wrong things or the right things in the wrong way.* The main problem of a person is the wrong placement of values, giving things or people a meaning that they cannot match.

3. *Suffering can be stopped.* The cessation of suffering is achieved by breaking the chain of rebirth and achieving nirvana.

4. *The way to achieve nirvana is to follow the "noble eightfold path".* It constitutes the moral foundation of Buddhism¹⁵.

Islam, like Buddhism and other religions (for example, Christianity, "The Sermon on the Mount"), is primarily concerned with the morality of its adherents. It seems that is why the professor of religion and international relations at Harvard University (USA) D. Little said after the attacks of September 11, 2001, that jihad "is not a license to kill". Professor D. Mitten, faculty adviser at the Harvard Islamic Society, who believes that true jihad is "the constant struggle of Muslims to overcome their internal basic instincts, follow the path to God and do good in society". Professor of history R. Mottahede also agrees: "most educated Muslim thinkers, relying on impeccable science, insist that jihad should be understood as a struggle without weapons"¹⁶.

However, there is another type of jihad in Islam, which is called "small". It has an external orientation and aims to fight for the spread of Islam throughout the world and its protection in the event of a threat. In the process of attacking the "territory of Islam", every Muslim must participate in jihad to protect the Islamic population. Small jihad was also used if some Muslims refused to follow the ruler and thus became "unfaithful", hence were legitimate opponents of Islam. In the colonial period, warlike jihad received a new impetus in some regions of the Islamic world. This served as a legitimation of resistance to the European invaders. However, in 1928 in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organization reanimated his idea. In the middle of the 20th century, the Egyptian philosopher S. Qutb, the most prominent of the fundamentalist ideologists of the time, spoke out in his writings against British and French colonialism and the growing role of the United States. Developing the theory of an Islamic system competing with communism, capitalism, and what he considered a corrupt liberal democracy, S. Qutb created a theory that many leaders of fundamentalist terrorist organizations adhere to today. For example, it inspired the birth of the Palestinian Hamas movement against Israel and a series of attacks, in particular the assassination of Egyptian President A. Sadat (1981). Since the late 1970s, Islamists who are ready to use violence have represented themselves in a global jihad against European colonialism and communism (Afghanistan, Algeria, India, Russia, etc.). At the same time, S. Bar, a researcher at the Institute for Politics and Strategy (Israel) writes that it should be noted that until the 1980s, attempts to mobilize Muslims around the world for jihad in one region of the world (Palestine, Kashmir) were unsuccessful. Only the introduction of a limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan (1979) was a turning point in this process since it revived the concept of participation in jihad as a "personal duty" for every capable Muslim to evict "unfaithful invaders" from a Muslim country¹⁷.

¹⁵ M.Yu. Zelenkov, World religions: history and modernity (Rostov on Don: Phoenix, 2008)

¹⁶ D. Pipes, Jihad and the Professors. Commentary (2002). Retrieved from: <http://www.danielpipes.org/498/jihad-and-the-professors>

¹⁷ S. Bar, The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism. Policy Review (2004). Retrieved from: <https://www.hoover.org/research/religious-sources-islamic-terrorism>

In this context, the interesting approach of scientists from the University of Alberto Hurtado (Chile) K. Ortiz and I. Caro, who identified three types of modern jihadism: internal, external, and global.

- *Internal* – the struggle of terrorist organizations against Muslim regimes that they consider usurping or illegal (Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, etc.).
- *External* – jihad against the occupation regimes (Hamas in Palestine, illegal armed groups in the Chechen Republic of Russia, Islamists in the Kashmir region, India, etc.).
- *Global* – a holy war in which the entire planet Earth is a jihad space and where terrorists seek to fight against unfaithful, up to the complete conversion of mankind to Islam¹⁸.

There is also an approach in scientific publications that considers jihad as an ideology of religious terrorism. In particular, a researcher at the West Point Military Academy (USA) A. Moghadam believes that Salafi jihad is more like an ideology than a religion. Its conclusion is based on the fact that its functions essentially coincide with the functions of other ideologies: explanatory, diagnostic, identification¹⁹. However, in our opinion, it is difficult to agree with this. This is due to the fact that jihad is more a means of implementing the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism. Islamic fundamentalist terrorists believe that the true believers of Islam are now obliged to wage a defensive jihad to regain land that was once under the control of pious Muslims. These territories include parts of Spain and other areas of Europe "before the gates of Rome", and, of course, Israel. After the Muslims reclaim their land, the jihad will go on the offensive in conquest mode to ensure that the rest of the world is safe for Islam.

Dr. S. Kwaje, Information Commissioner for Sudan, noted that the mission of Islamic fundamentalism is for every Muslim extremist to spread Islam by the power of the sword with the sole purpose of creating the ummah in all Muslim countries and ultimately throughout the world through international war Islamic jihad. This is the desire of Allah: the war of fundamentalists of Islam – not to be confused with the Muslim religion – against the rest of the world, including not only fundamentalist Arab countries such as Egypt and Algeria²⁰. "At the same time, the fundamentalists forget or deliberately distort the teaching. According to the writer R. Maqsd the point is that true Islamic jihad always insists that killing in the name of religion is a dangerous delusion. Oppression in the name of religion is impossible. People should never be forced into something they don't believe in"²¹. S. Dagli agrees with this, noting that the small jihad is subject to strict rules. The three most important ones are:

¹⁸ K. Ortiz; I. Caro, La yihad sunita del Estado Islámico y Al-Qaeda: islamismo, antiimperialismo... y nihilismo político-mesiánico? Estudios internacionales (Santiago) Vol. 50 num 189 (2018). Retrieved from: https://scielo.conicyt.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0719-37692018000100037#B36

¹⁹ A. Moghadam, The salafi-jihad as a religious ideology. CTC Sentinel Vol. 1 num 3 (2008). Retrieved from: <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/the-salafi-jihad-as-a-religious-ideology/>

²⁰ A. Maldonado; R. Delgado, Mundialización y terrorismo: la sociedad del «riesgo mundial». Retrieved from: http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1405-14352006000300011

²¹ R. Maqsd, Islam (Moscow: FAIR-PRESS, 2005)

- *the killing of civilians (i.e. non-combatants), especially the elderly, women and children, is **prohibited**;*
- *the religion of other people **can never be the cause** of war against them;*
- *violence is allowed only in self-defense **or in the protection of innocent third parties***²².

Additionally: *do not attack unarmed places of worship, never attack at night, do not destroy crops, and do not kill animals, do not cripple, do not conduct jihad just to boast.*

Before each war, D. Dakake writes that the Prophet Muhammad instructed his fighters: not to rob, not mutilate the enemy and spare women and children. When he saw a woman lying dead after the battle, Muhammad said: "She was not a fighter!" Again, he instructed his people not to kill children, women, or other witnesses. According to a well-known tradition, the Prophet's companion and first Caliph, Abu Bakr, also forbade the unnecessary destruction of trees and the killing of animals during war²³. However, the current practice of jihad by Islamic fundamentalists shows that they not only deviated from these rules but also perverted them. For example, al-Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri believes that the only language the West understands is the language of violence, and this justifies the killing of civilians. Muslims who have suffered from their attacks, as happened in Mali or France, are considered necessary martyrs for the revolutionary cause²⁴. Aggression and murder are a great sin. The Quran says: "Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely" (Quran 5:32)²⁵.

It should also be noted that according to the Muslim faith, armed struggle is allowed only under strictly defined conditions. Religious scholars should explicitly approve this. In some cases, the duty to fight extends to all people who are capable of weapons, in other cases, it is enough for some members of the community to fight for others. In any case, the fight can only be directed against clearly defined opponents, and not against civilians. In addition, jihad is always associated with the condition that it is conducted under the guidance of a spiritual leader, not a prayer leader in a mosque, but the Supreme Commander of all Muslims. Professor of the Department of Religious Studies at Brown University (USA) M. McBride explains the terrorist violence by using the verses of the Quran that can justify their actions, but they ignore or rethink those that explain that violence is forbidden. In this sense, he emphasizes, other religions do the same with their holy books. He cites the Bible as an example: "Both the Quran and the Bible are open to different interpretations. Usually peaceful prevail²⁶".

²² C. Dagli, Jihad and the Islamic Law of War. In: War and Peace in Islam: The Uses and Abuses of Jihad (Cambridge: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre and the Islamic Texts Society, 2003)

²³ D. Dakake, The Myth of A Militant Islam. In: Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004)

²⁴ M. Aguirre, Justifica el islam la violencia indiscriminada? Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2015/11/151127_finde_islam_violencia_terrorismo_ataques_coran_yihadismo_mr

²⁵ The Quran. Retrieved from: <http://falaq.ru/quran/krac/>

²⁶ Una interpretación del Corán que aterra al propio islam. Retrieved from: https://www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/internacional/2016/03/28/interpretacion-coran-attera-propio-islam/0003_201603G28P4991.htm

Thus, F. Bussoletti writes, jihadist terrorism today follows a path that is characterized by:

- *an exoteric (obvious) aspect* – a religious one that involves all Muslim believers scattered around the world who want to share Quranic vows and customs;
- *an esoteric congregation* (hidden from the majority) – a Masonic congregation that collects and/or greets in militant and underground structures all those who, in an effort to satisfy certain inalienable needs of the Maslow pyramid, "embrace" Salafi and Wahhabi brotherhoods, taking up arms against an enemy, a real or potential, which is considered the architect of their social isolation²⁷.

Results

Islam is a religion of unconditional devotion to the Supreme and the religious leader of the Ummah. This is what the Islamic fundamentalists are playing. In their sermons and religious texts, they avoid mentioning the big jihad in the Quran and refer only to the small one: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you <...> And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you <...> And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush!" (Quran 2: 190-191; 8:12-13; 9:5)²⁸. Moreover, the interpretation is about who is considered unfaithful, who is fighting Muslims, etc. given by the Islamists already in a subjective, beneficial interpretation. According to J. Kepel, all modern jihadist movements begin with their acceptance of the position of defensive jihad. This jihad is proclaimed by the ulama. However, these ulama do not always agree with each other, because everyone interprets only himself/herself as the only expert on the conditions for the proclamation of jihad²⁹.

Conflicts between peoples, religions, and people are part of the life of world civilization. The Quran recognizes this: "[They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right – only because they say, "Our Lord is Allah". And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might" (Quran 22:40). This verse once again allows stating that jihad is a rebuff to those who first oppress the faithful. It puts an end to injustice and hostility on the part of attacking enemies and helps the faithful to openly follow the precepts of religion.

However, Islamic terrorists, adhering to this approach, interpret jihad one-sidedly as a fierce struggle, forgetting that they attack the representatives of another religion first. Jihadists choose those verses from the Quran that, in their opinion, justify their atrocities. Islamic terrorists legitimize their activities as an act of violent jihad permitted by the Quran, mainly due to religious sanctions that allow the use of violence as an act of protection and preserve the will of God in Islamic communities. In this case, they are guided by the principle of "ijtihad" and present jihad as a legitimate prerequisite for applying the radicalization of their actions.

²⁷ F. Bussoletti, Terrorismo, al-Baghdadi è morto, ma il jihadismo no. Retrieved from: <https://www.difesaesicurezza.com/difesa-e-sicurezza/terrorismo-al-baghdadi-e-morto-ma-il-jihadismo-no-tuttaltro/>

²⁸ The Quran. Retrieved from: <http://falaq.ru/quran/krac/>

²⁹ G. Kepel, "Jihad", Pouvoirs Vol. 1 num 104 (2003): 141.

Thus, jihadist Salafists consider themselves to be "warriors of God" or "fighters for the cause of Allah". According to their interpretation, acts of violence justify Islam, or they simply declare it "the order of Allah". Jihadists are calling for a worldwide fight against the alleged enemies of Islam. They praise and propagandize violent criminals who died in hostilities as "martyrs" for the cause of Allah. For example, shortly before his death, the founder of ISIS, al-Zarqawi, stated that Shiites are the greatest evil of mankind, and their destruction is a top priority. However, the Quran says: "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing" (Quran 2: 256).

Here, our results coincide with the opinion of N. Lahoud of the West Point Military Academy (USA), who believes that there are three key features to advance the cause of jihadism:

- 1) idealistic commitment to a righteous cause;
- 2) individualism in the interpretation of religion;
- 3) the belief that today Muslims are waging a defensive war (Jihad al-DAF), which makes their jihad not only legitimate but also an individual duty imposed on each of them³⁰.

At the same time, while imposing Sharia law on the entire civilization, the Islamists forgot that Sharia sets the rules by which a Muslim can use jihad or renounce it:

- *protecting the territory of Muslims from attack by invaders;*
- *the enemy must start the conflict first;*
- *it should not be used to conquer other territories;*
- *should be started by a religious leader, and all possible measures should be taken to resolve the problem peacefully;*
- *protecting the faith of Muslims from attacks and the possibility of practicing Islam;*
- *protecting Muslims from oppression, which could mean overthrowing a tyrant;*
- *punishing a person who breaks an oath*³¹.

In the context of our results, the well-known American Islamic expert D. Pipes also argues: "In the course of history, the meaning of the word jihad has changed. Muslims who used a more radical form of jihad believed that those who professed their faith differently from them were "unfaithful" and therefore legitimate targets of jihad. This is why Algerians,

³⁰ N. Lahoud, "The strengths and Weaknesses of jihadist ideology", CTC Sentinel Vol. 3 num 10 (2010). Retrieved from: <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-strengths-and-weaknesses-of-jihadist-ideology/>

³¹ J. Lorenzo-Penalva, Yihad, martirio y evolución del terrorismo islámico global. Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE). Retrieved from: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2013/DIEEEE0106-2013_EvolucionTerrorismoIslamico_J.LorenzoPenalva.pdf

Egyptians, and Afghans, as well as Americans and Jews, have so often been victims of jihadist aggression. Muslims of another group interpreted the concept of "jihad" differently, giving it a mystical meaning. They did not recognize the official definition of jihad as an armed conflict, and called on Muslims to get away from worldly concerns and find spiritual values"³². For example, the terrorist organization Jabhat Fatah al-Sham believes that its fight against the Syrian regime is supported by religious texts and that its fighters hope to fulfill the "wish of Allah" for the "Islamic Caliphate". However, they forgot the following words of the Quran: "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, It is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing"³³.

Another result of the study is the conclusion that the basis for the obligation to fulfill jihad is the "irreversibility" of Islamic identity for individual Muslims and Muslim territories. Therefore, any land (Afghanistan, Palestine, Kashmir, Spain), which was once under the influence of Islamic law, cannot be returned to secular control under any pretext. In this interpretation, jihad for Islamic fundamentalists becomes the "personal duty" of all Muslims on Earth. For example, the terrorist organization al-Qaeda, which emerged in the late 1980s from Maktab al-Khidamat, a recruitment and fundraising network for the resistance to Soviet actions in Afghanistan, declared Jihad against alleged enemies of Islam after the end of the conflict with the USSR (1989). Its goal is to create a transnational Islamic Caliphate by removing, if necessary and by violent means, governments in Muslim countries that it considers "non-Islamic". According to al-Zawahiri, Western civilization glorifies human rights and freedoms, while such singing serves their interests³⁴.

A new impetus that gave rise to the modern interpretation of jihad by Islamic terrorists was aggressive anti-Americanism, which, according to Professor S.I. Illarionov, "got its development after the introduction of the American military contingent into the territory of Saudi Arabia in 1991 in connection with the start of Operation Desert Storm. Then the leader of the al-Qaeda religious terrorist organization, Osama bin Laden, accused America of occupying Islamic shrines on the Arabian Peninsula and supporting Israel"³⁵. Note that this approach is particularly relevant in the third decade of the 21st century. Senior leaders of religious fundamentalist organizations make public statements promoting their ideology, praising attacks by other groups, and encouraging and calling for violent jihad against the West.

S. Amgar notes that as applied to the Muslims of modern Europe, it should be emphasized that the jihad in their execution proceeds from two strategic logics, depending on whether it occurs in the West or in the Arab-Muslim world – even if they can intersect:

- in Europe, it can be described as violence that is an expression of a desire to destabilize Western governments so that they stop supporting the Arab-Muslim regimes that the Salafists are fighting against;
- in the case of jihad organized by young Muslims from Europe to Muslim countries, it should be considered defensive. For European jihadists, hostilities show a desire to support the Muslim population, who has been the victim of aggression, often committed by

³² D. Pipes, What is Jihad? New York Post (December 31, 2002)

³³ The Quran. Retrieved from: <http://falaq.ru/quran/krac/>

³⁴ Statement of Ayman al-Zawahiri in an interview with al-Sahab, conducted four years after the attacks of 9/11. Retrieved from: <https://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=f3rahg23>

³⁵ S.I. Illarionov, Terror and anti-terror in the modern world order (Moscow: LLC "RIC" ProfEco", 2003)

Western powers³⁶.

Thus, it can be argued that, as modern history shows, no Holy book other than the Quran is used so often today to support forms of violence or oppression. However, like the Bible and the Torah, the Quran contains very outdated concepts of justice, and its Suras both incite violence against other faiths and call for tolerance. For example, here are two excerpts describing this multi-vector approach:

- *violent approach*: "So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens. That [is the command]. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others. And those who are killed in the cause of Allah – never will He waste their deeds" (Quran 47:4).

- *conciliatory approach*: "Not for you, [O Muhammad, but for Allah], Is the decision whether He should [cut them down] or forgive them or punish them, for indeed, they are wrongdoers" (Quran 3:128).

Indeed, it is said in the hadith of al-Bukhari (34): "The first of people against whom judgment will be pronounced on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who died a martyr. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognize them. [The Almighty] will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I fought for you until I died a martyr. He will say: You have lied – you did but fight that it might be said [of you]: He is courageous. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire"³⁷. It seems that this is what awaits the "true" fighters for the faith, consisting of Islamic fundamentalist terrorist organizations. Thus, the results obtained allow asserting that the hypothesis of our study, which is that modern religious fundamentalist terrorist organizations interpret jihad outside the borders of the traditional Muslim faith, has been confirmed.

Conclusion

The study showed that the concept of jihad by Islamic fundamentalists comes from an offensive reading based on the manipulation of the Quran text and contradicts the principles of traditional Islam. Since terrorism is nihilistic, its purpose is not to replace the current order with another based on Sharia, as fundamentalist propaganda claims, but simply to destroy the existing order and create chaos.

Thus, the jihad practiced by Islamist terrorists today is not Islamic jihad, it is a stubborn self that incites evil, or insidious acts based on futile desires to reach the heavens that have spread among Muslims. In addition, the modern practice introduced into the minds of Muslims to justify their attacks on representatives of other religions and called "Jihad" by Islamist emissaries is also not such in accordance with Sharia, but is a clear violation of the instructions of Allah and the Messenger and a grave sin. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between Islam, which is a traditional religion, culture, and civilization that has

³⁶ S. Amghar, "Le salafisme en Europe. La mouvance polymorphe d'une radicalization", Politique étrangère num 1 (2006): 65-78.

³⁷ SAHIH AL-BUKHARI MUKHTASAR. Retrieved from: https://www.islam-love.ru/components/com_jshopping/files/demo_products/Sakhikh_al_Bukhari_-_rus.pdf

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made a significant contribution to the development of humanity, and Islamism, which seeks to combine religion and politics to achieve self-serving goals.

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