

## IDEOLOGY OF JIHADISM IN SUNNI AND SHI'A VERSIONS



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### **The purpose:**

To show the relative novelty of this ideology and the new strands of intellectuals and ideologues who revisit Jihad in order to adapt it to the new settings in two different worlds: the Muslim world and Europe.

### **The suppositions:**

Jihadism presents itself in continuity with Islamic thought. This self-image is only partially correct. There are many new ways the radical Islamists construct their intellectual universe. New generations of Jihadists have come into being, from among the traditional as well as new, scientifically-minded groups. The new ideology, be it in the Sunni or Shi'ite world, presents remarkable convergences in promoting violent action.

### **The summary**

The ideology of Jihadism has undergone major developments during the last two decades. New intellectuals have begun writing down new books and articles regarding the Jihad and the related topics, from the theological, juridical, social, political and cultural perspectives, all within the framework of radical Islam. Their ideological production sheds light on the new trends within the Islamic extremist trends. They have many features in common but there are also major differences within them. They have many traits in common with the so-called fundamentalist thinkers. The aim of this study is manifold:

- To show the novelty in the Islamic radical thought in regard to martyrdom, jihad, democracy and more generally, towards what they call Taghut.
- To discuss their common denominators and their differences with the Islamic fundamentalists, mainly the two major trends in Islam, the Wahhabi and the Muslim Brotherhood
- To stress the distinctive features of the radical Shi'i islamists towards the Sunnis and their convergent characteristics

- To underscore their differences in strategy and tactics with the Fundamentalists
- To distinguish between the types of intellectuals within the “Jihadi” circles: the major ideologues and intellectuals, the regional ones, the local ones
- To point the ways this new type of ideology is spread not only in the Muslim world but also in Europe through local imams or intellectuals
- To underline the cultural traits of this literature which has been in most cases ignored or at best, undervalued by the major studies in this field

There are few works dealing with the ideology of Jihadism. This study specifically intends to:

- identify the major jihadist icons in the ideological field
- to select some of them that are the most significant
- to identify some that are not among the most significant but belong to the lower grades (the mediators)
- to present their ideology in a contextualized manner by showing their totalitarian nature.

More generally, within the totalitarian sphere, the Jihadist discourse is one with far-reaching consequences. Since the collapse of communism and the loss of legitimacy of the communist-type totalitarian vision, radical Islam has taken up the challenge. The new Jihadist intellectuals have developed a combination of Islamic ideas and totalitarian views that they legitimize in reference to the religious texts by revisiting them and by choosing those parts of the Islamic traditions and sacred writs in consonance with intolerant and anti-democratic views. The advantage of Islamic radicalism towards the other extremist ideologies is that it can claim legitimacy in regard to the prevailing dire situation in most of the Muslim countries, combining its radicalism with the crisis of the Muslim world and finding many callings within it and in the West, among the converts. Jihadism has become one of the major figures of totalitarianism in the post-communist world. Its intellectuals produce a new corpus that is certainly not deeply original in terms of "revisiting Islam" but very powerful in terms of its adaptation to the political, social and political conditions of the Muslims both in the West and in the Muslim world. This study aims at bringing out the totalitarian features of the Islamist radicalism.

### **Bio Farhad Khosrokhavar**

Farhad Khosrokhavar is full professor at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, France. He was a visiting professor at Yale University for spring 2008.

His main fields of study are Islam in Europe, in particular the radical forms of religion and Iranian society after the Islamic revolution.

He has published extensively, 14 books, three of which translated in seven different languages and more than 70 articles, mainly in French, a dozen in English.

He has been a Rockefeller fellow (1990), has given conferences in different European and American universities (Saint Antony's college in Oxford Britain, Princeton, NYU, Columbia, UCLA, USC, Stanford, Harvard, University of Texas at Austin...) and many think tanks.

His latest books are:

*-Muslims in Prison : a comparative perspective between Great Britain and France (avec*

James Beckford et Danièle Joly), Palgrave, London, 2005  
- *Suicide Bombers, The New Martyrs of Allah*, Pluto Press, Michigan University Press, 2005  
- *Quand Al Qaeda Parle: témoignages derrière les barreaux*, Grasset, Paris, 2006.  
- *Inside Jihadism*, Boulder, Paradigm Publishers, 2009.  
- *Avoir Vingt ans dans les pays des Ayatollahs*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 2009.  
He is currently guest professor at Harvard University.